

# Archery – Level 1

Archery has many different formats, but we will be concerned with just two, target and field.

**Target Archery:** Target archery is the only form of archery allowed in the Olympic games and has over a hundred member nations throughout the world. These nations are represented by the Fédération Internationale de Tir à l'Arc (F.I.T.A) which is the international governing body for the sport.

There are quite a number of different target archery rounds, but generally, target archery consists of archers shooting a fixed number of arrows at a specified distance. The target is circular with 10 concentric rings. The inner ring is gold color and scores 10, to the outer ring of the white color scoring 1. After an end of arrows, usually 3 or 6, all arrows are scored. At the end of the day, the person with the highest score wins! Simple but fun!

A wonderful and probably unique aspect of archery is the opportunity for competitors of any ability to compete.

**Field Archery:** One of the great attractions in archery is the diversity of shooting styles, the seemingly endless variations of equipment and of course the great variety in courses and targets that can be shot. In all of these variations there is one single intent, and that is to hit the specific point on the target that you are aiming at. Like any sport, unless the objective of the sport can be achieved with some regularity it's not much fun. As with any other sporting pursuit practice is the way to improvement.

Hitting what you are aiming at is the main ingredient of target archery and any number of its variants. There are those who seek to achieve such things as the furthest distance.

One of the common objectives of archery is to hit what you are aiming at, there are far easier ways of hitting something at which you aim, the use of a rifle for example. This leads one to conclude that archers are enjoying doing it the hard way, using their own strength and coordination to achieve a successful hit. Interestingly enough the sport recognizes this and allows a wide variety of equipment which can be used to help hit the target. Sights, stabilizers and bows that provide a mechanical advantage are all catered for within the laws of the sport, providing various divisions to ensure fair competition.

So what's different about Field Archery? Well despite what the name says it certainly is not normally shot in a field this is much likely to be done by Target Archers who typically will shoot in a flat field. The ideal Field Archery course will be set in woods with steep slopes and as many variations in ground as can be achieved safely.

There are various rounds that are shot by Target Archers they will typically shoot greater numbers of arrows from fewer fixed distances. The process of shooting is tightly controlled by a Field Captain who will ensure that the arrows are shot within a specified amount of time and that all the archers collect their arrows and record their scores together. Archers are allowed to sit and rest between shooting, some will have special tents in which they can shelter from the weather. Target archery demands very high levels of concentration, with the archers needing to be fit physically and mentally to achieve success.

Field archery, meanwhile, means a day of shooting in the woods and necessitates walking from one target to the next. The distances walked will be determined by the available space and the course setter's ability to set out 14 or 28 targets in a safe manner. The sort of round and distances shot can vary widely. A Hunter and Field round comprise 28 targets each, with four arrows being shot at each target. These rounds are shot from marked distances varying from 20ft up to a maximum distance of 80yards. Most of the targets require the archer to move forward to the next distance between each arrow. Other rounds will include shooting at monochrome or colored pictures of animals, these can be either from marked or unmarked distances. In some rounds all the arrows that hit the target will score, whilst in others the first arrow that hits from a total of three arrows will score, depending which arrow or which zone on the picture is hit. In some cases the shots will be made more difficult by clever use of the intervening ground or the positioning of the peg from which you have to shoot forcing the archer to not only estimate the distance but allow for the slope of the ground or perhaps the incline of a tree which can influence the bow alignment especially for those that choose to shoot without sights. Other factors which can influence the shot will include the lighting conditions, in woods this may mean from shooting from the dark to the light or the other way round both contributing to the difficulty of the shot. This wide variety of terrain, shooting conditions and rounds are the true attraction of field archery, it is without doubt more physical than target archery, but it still demands high levels of concentration but with a wider spectrum of skills.

## **Bows:**

In order to choose the correct bow for yourself, you need to determine if you are right or left handed. To make this choice or to '**choose hand**'. A right handed archer would hold the bow in their left hand and draw the string with their right hand. Choose 'right handed' if this is you.

The second is '**choose length**'. This refers to the bow length. Bow length relates to your arrow length. To help you judge approximately what arrow length you need, fully stretch your arms out in front of you with your palms together and your finger tips fully extended. Ask someone to measure from the centre of your chest to the tips of your fingers. Add ONE INCH to this measurement and this will give you an approximate arrow length. Use the chart below to help you pick the right bow length. If in doubt, go with the longer bow length.

Your arrow Length	Bow Length
14-18	48"
18-20	54"
20-22	58"
22-24	62"
24-26	64"
26-28	66"
28-30	68"
30+	70"

The third option is '**choose weight**'. This is the poundage of the bow when pulled to 28". If the bow is pulled more than 28" then the poundage will increase. If you pull the bow less than 28" the poundage will decrease. A little bit of judgment has to be used to determine the bow weight. The poundage change is approximately 2# per inch.

Typically, a man would choose the 28# draw, a woman the 24# draw. Also consider your draw length. If you are a man with a short 26" draw, then maybe you should consider the 32# bow. Or a woman with a long draw might want to lower the poundage.

If you are not sure, go with a lower poundage, as even at 20# these bows are powerful!

That's it! You should be able to select your first bow now.

## **Arrows:**

You should have worked out your correct arrow length by now. Select the length from the '**Length Selection**' option. There is nothing wrong with shooting arrows a bit too long, so if you are in between sizes, always go long.

The next is '**Spine Selection**'. This might take a few minutes to work out, but the right spine arrow ensures it will fly straighter and group tighter. Spine is the stiffness of the shaft. Heavier bows require a stiffer arrow, and lighter bows weaker arrows. The correct spine depends on two factors. The first is the length of the arrow (which you should know by now) and the second is the weight of the bow.

Taking into consideration the change of bow weight when a bow is pulled a different distance than 28" you can work out the actual bow weight you will be holding.

## **Getting started:**

There are many different techniques to shooting a bow. The one detailed below is designed to give quick, good, consistent results for new archers with no previous shooting experience.

If this is your first attempt at shooting your bow, it is recommended that a Bracer be used to protect your bow arm from being caught by the string.

### **Stance**

Stand relaxed, with your feet parallel to the target and slightly apart.

### **Grip**

Keep a relaxed grip on the bow handle.

### **Finger position**

Position the string in the first groove of your first three fingers and slide your hand up directly under the arrow until there is no gap.

### **Preparing the shot**

Raise your out stretched bow arm level with the target, maintaining some flex in your elbow so your bow arm is not completely extended. This will help give clearance to the string on release. Keeping your bow arm out stretched; raise the elbow of your drawing arm so it is at least level with your shoulder height, or slightly above. Turn your head to look directly at the target.

### **Drawing the bow**

In a smooth motion, keeping your bow arm level with the target and the elbow of the drawing arm up, draw the bow string back to the side of your face.

### **Anchoring**

A consistent anchor point is the key to accuracy. Draw the string fully back to your face and use the top of your hand to feel for a comfortable, repeatable position, like the corner of your mouth. The string should be

just in front of the eye so you can look directly down the arrow shaft, and not view it at an angle.

Look closely at the picture on the left and try to replicate the position.

### **Aiming**

If the string is in front of your eye, you should be able to look directly down the arrow to judge your left/right alignment. The up and down alignment is the hard part! This will only come with experience.

Focus on the centre of your target. (normally the aim duration is between 3-6 seconds).

### **Loosing / Release**

LET GO!

### **Follow through**

Everything should remain as if you were still aiming. The only exception to this is that your drawing hand will have moved back slightly upon release. Try to keep your head, bow arm and body in the same position as when you were aiming. Keep focusing on the target. Hold this pose for approximately 2 seconds after the release.

And finally... Retrieve your arrow from the centre of the target.

Your done!

### **Caring For Your Bow**

Your bow requires minimal maintenance, but does need some care and attention to keep it in perfect order. Following these simple steps should ensure years of trouble free use.

- We always recommend that you use a **bow stringer** when stringing your bow. Proper use of a bowstringer will prevent your bow's limbs from becoming twisted. A bow stringer also provides the safest method of stringing your bow as the limb tips are away from you during the stringing and unstringing process.
- Unstring your bow when not in use.
- **Never** 'dry fire' your bow. This means shoot without an arrow. The weight of an arrow

slows the string down and cushions the shock. A 'dry fire' can severely damage your bow

- Store your bow in a cool, dry place and avoid prolonged exposure to excessive heat and moisture. **Never** leave your bow in the car on a sunny day. This could seriously damage your bow. Do not store your bow when wet. Dry first with a soft cloth. **Never** use heat to dry your bow.
- **Never** use bow strings of a length other than specified correct for that bow.
- When assembling your limbs to the handle, do not **over tighten** the limb bolts. A snug fit is all that is required. Over tightening could damage your limbs.
- Shoot only arrows specified suitable for your bow. Arrows which are **too light** may cause damage to your bow.
- Change your bow string at least once a year. If you find a loose or broken strand or excessive wear on the bow string then **replace immediately**.