

Return to Archery – 2021

Written by John Searle



Two important questions for you

In this 'article' I want to ask you two very important questions. This is crucial at this time – many of us have not picked up our bow in 12 months. In that time our muscles will have got used to the fact that we haven't been shooting. Too much relaxation, (sofa surfing and eating snacks), like we have all had in the last year, is going to make getting back to archery a little more difficult than you might imagine. We need to remind those archery muscles how they work (remember how it felt doing a beginners' course?).

Question Number 1: Have you outgrown your equipment?

This section is especially important to younger shooters (but essential to all of us as our bodies change over time with age and other factors).

Have you grown since you last used your bow? (In any direction – not just for kids!)

Do you know how to check your drawlength and arrow length? These are only rough measurements which will need to be double checked by your coaches. Here are a couple of ways to do a rough check for yourself, although you will need the help of a friend/family member and a tape measure – if you find that there is an issue, then simply get your coach to measure you properly using a specialist measuring arrow.

Method 1:

Stand up, and spread your arms out to the side. Get someone to measure the span between your fingertips. Once you have that measurements (in inches for preference), divide it by 2 – the result is a rough approximation of your drawlength. Your arrows should be this length + 2 inches. For real novices we would add an additional 2 inches to this number (because as the muscles get stronger and develop, they pull further).



Method 2:

Stand up, raise your bow arm out to the side, and raise your hand into a 'STOP' position. Then raise your other hand to your nose, making sure that it is upright and facing to your bow arm (see photo). Get someone to measure from your hand that is in front of your face to the far side of your raised bow arm hand. This again gives you an approximation of your

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drawlength. Now add 2 inches to this measurement (once again, for real novices we would add another 2 inches).

Now you have your measurement, you can check it against your current arrows by simply measuring from the groove in the “nock” to the end of the shaft before the point begins.



Question Number 2: Are you over-bowed?

That sounds like you may have too much equipment, but is just a term for having a bow that is too heavy, too much, for your current abilities.



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Do you find that drawing your bow is more difficult than when you last used it? The picture above shows some common errors in correct technique.

You may find that your bow shoulder is raised, and you are having difficulties controlling your drawing arm. Perhaps you don't succeed in getting the string back to your anchor position, or your back muscles don't get involved with drawing back the string.

Correct technique is important in archery – look at the differences in the picture below, compared with the one at the beginning of this question.



With long layoffs you will find that your 'archery muscles' will become weakened.

Be honest with us, your coaches, and yourself. This test can be conducted every couple of weeks after doing the exercises in preparation as regularly as you can. Don't be disheartened, it's something we can get around. Contact one of us for a chat by text, phone or email if you are concerned, we can suggest specific exercises dependant on whereabouts you feel the issue, or on what is proving difficult. We have the knowledge and experience that we are willing to share and for you to utilise so we can all get back to having some quality time at archery.

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Let's Get Prepared Together

Along with these questions and advice we have included some exercise sheets.

We have put together a basic set of 5 clini-band exercises (sheet included) for you to start using now. This is really important; they don't take long and can be fitted around your day. In addition, we have compiled the AGB warm-up/cool-down exercises (sheet included), please start slowly – we don't want to hear that you've injured yourself doing too much, too soon.

Start working with a clini-band to increase your strength and stamina and ask your coach if they can provide you with a practice bow in order to progress back to your own bow (even during lockdown, safe distances allowed). Regular practice will greatly assist in getting back to shooting safely.

Try to get into a routine of exercising just a little every day, working up in time as you feel it getting easier. Then introduce the next set of exercise sheets that I will send, next email. This will allow you to use a combination of our clini-band, AGB's strength & conditioning, and basic warm-up exercises to get back into a rhythm where you feel stronger generally.

Start your skills & drills exercises with a clini-band – little in the way of draw-weight will allow you to concentrate on your technique. Increase your repetitions before moving on to using your bow.

Once you feel that you are ready – try the skills and drills with your bow.

Remember, don't dry-fire the bow. It's potentially both dangerous and expensive.

Alongside doing a little every day to get your mind and body ready for a return to shooting - communication is the key.

We need you to talk to your coaches about how you've got on – he or she can give you guidance if you are having any issues, they can advise if you are ready to do more extensive skills and drills or help you decide what exercises are best for you and your situation.

Please don't be surprised to get a message from one of us about how you are doing with your personal preparation.

Our contact details along with Di's info are on every sheet, Di can get you answers utilising the knowledge and experience of our club membership.

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