

The Traditional Archery Shot Sequence

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Have you ever had one of those days at the range when you just want to snap your bow in half out of frustration? You hold off, but only just barely, because you know the root of your accuracy woes are grounded in none other than yourself. No matter how junky a bow you own, odds are it is perfectly serviceable. All of the traditional bows we have nowadays, to include the “vintage” models of decades past, are better than anything our ancestors were toting around. They got by just fine thinking they had the finest cam-less Cadillacs around, so you’ll do well to know you have nothing left to do but practice. Outlined below are 22 tips I have acquired through extensive research and practice to improve form and achieve consistent precision in all archery shooting endeavors.



- ✘ Know how you are going to execute the shot sequence before you even begin the approach; hope is not a course of action
- ✘ Your feet should be comfortably planted roughly shoulder width apart without your body straining to find balance
- ✘ Acquire the target with your eyes
- ✘ Grip the bow as deep in your hand and as high up on the bow grip as possible; the bow should be gripped firmly without squeezing it
- ✘ Grip the string in the crease behind the first digits of your three middle fingers – this allows the hand and forearm to relax
- ✘ Raise the bow in a vertical line up to the target
- ✘ Your bow arm should be comfortably stable with your bow arm’s elbow pointed (mostly) behind you rather than downward
- ✘ Slightly canting the bow allows a wider field of view and helps keep the arrow on the shelf
- ✘ Avoid the push-pull draw method; it is safer for your shoulder to preset the bow arm at full extension before drawing back
- ✘ From shoulder through palm, use your whole bow arm to “push through the target”
- ✘ Drawing the string to your first anchor point should also initiate inhalation
- ✘ Use your back muscles to help pull the string back
- ✘ Use your back muscles to maintain back tension and hold at your anchor point; think of back tension as pulling your elbow backward with your back muscles
- ✘ Bend at the waist to adjust for elevation; your entire upper body pivots as a single unit
- ✘ Aim small, miss small; focus more on your target than your sights (if you use any)
- ✘ Relax your fingers to let the string slide off and rip through; do not pluck your fingers off
- ✘ Create a second, consistent follow-thru anchor point on the same plane as the arrow
- ✘ Your release should also initiate exhalation
- ✘ Your back tension and follow-thru anchor point should prevent a static release and plucking
- ✘ Follow through with your form after the shot; the bow should not kick left, right, up, or down
- ✘ Prioritize quality over quantity during practice sessions – practice with a purpose
- ✘ Proper rest is just as important as practice



The tips listed above will help novice and expert shooters alike. They are by no means invariable or a guarantee for success. Instead, they are here for you to adapt and develop to create a shot sequence that works with your body and end goals. Structured, yet creative, practice sessions will help cement your muscle memory for shooting success. Grab that old stick-and-string, hone in with a consistent routine, and wear that target out!