

# Get Set

**Andrew Smith** looks at what the beginner recurver can expect from their first session with their brand-new bow



**T**he scene is set; you have completed your beginner's course and bought your equipment, excited by the prospect of using it for the first time. This is your first step towards being in total control of your archery, but what should be an exciting time sometimes does not end up being all that simple, so here are a few pointers.

## Get familiar

Once you've bought your new bow, I always think it is a good idea to put it all together a few times at home. It is surprising how many people end up being flustered assembling their kit for the first time at the club, especially with others looking over their shoulder, keen to see what they have bought.

## A quick checklist

- The limbs and the string are fitted the right way up
- The bracing height is not too high or too low (the shop should explain this or a coach can help)
- The longrod (if used) should be fitted just below the grip
- Do not forget to take your finger sling and tab
- If using a wire or magnetic rest don't forget to fit your button. For bows with two threaded holes it goes in the closest one to you when holding the bow
- With ILF bows you will find that the limbs do rattle in the limb pockets when unstrung – don't be tempted to screw them down tight with the limb bolts

## Buy a notebook

Unless you have a photographic memory it is a good idea to get a small notebook, where you can record sight marks, scores, bow and arrow specifications, shooting reminders, even what the weather was like when shooting. It builds up into a great reference for future sessions.

## The once over

Don't be surprised if your club coach wants to give your bow and accessories the once over. If you have bought it from a shop this should be a simple cursory glance as it should be correct and set up ready to shoot.

If the kit has been bought online or by mail order, chances are it has arrived in boxes and will need setting up. Second-

## Equipment

hand equipment will normally arrive set up for the previous owner, and will need to be checked over and adjustments made as necessary. Sometimes it is the club coach, other times it will be down to you and ad hoc help from fellow archers, which is not always the most ideal start, as it could end up taking most of your first club session.

In archery there are many opinions, and you may hear someone tell you your kit is not quite right. If you bought your equipment from a shop then don't worry, as you can give them a call or pop in and if something is not right the shop will fix it. However, most of the time it is just different points of view, and people are usually happy to explain and put your mind at rest.

### Bow Tuning

There are many articles, books, DVDs and YouTube videos covering this subject and for the first six months I would advise leaving all of these on the shelf. Providing your bow has the basics set up correctly (limb alignment, draw weight, centre shot and the correct spine arrows), you will progress much quicker by perfecting your form than playing with screwdrivers, allen keys and grub screws.



A cracked or dented shaft won't do you any favours, so check them regularly



Don't worry if you find you have initial problems with a button and wire arrow rest

### Arrow Rest and Button

If you have a wire magnetic type rest and a button fitted to your bow, it is likely that the first few times you shoot the arrow will fall off the rest, more so if you have been used to shooting with the white plastic rest with a hook. Providing it has been fitted to the bow correctly then the most common reason for this is that the middle finger or part of the tab is touching the underside of the arrow shaft, which lifts the arrow as the string is drawn back.

It is not uncommon for a shop to fit the white plastic rest at first, with the intention of adding the button and magnetic rest combination at a later date. This helps the archer to gain confidence in their equipment without the annoyance of the arrow dropping off the rest.

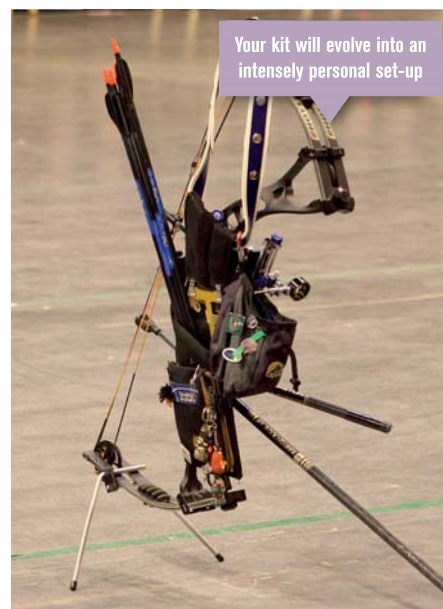
### Arrows

I cannot stress enough that, regardless of ability, your arrows are very important. Having correct spine arrows will improve your accuracy and negate the need to waste time tuning them.

Obviously a shop should supply you with the correct ones, but if you buy second hand or online the onus is on you to get it right – and there are many bargains to tempt you into buying the wrong type. If they are wrong all is not lost, accept your mistake and buy the correct ones and either keep them (they may work at a later date as you up your draw weight or shoot short distances indoors) or sell them on. I'd advise against wasting time and spending money bodging them, as although you might have a chance at getting somewhere close it will always be a compromise.

### Sight Marks

Resist the temptation to immediately shoot longer distances than you were with the club equipment. If you start at 20 yards and work up, you will get your first sight mark and reduce the pressure whilst getting used to your new equipment. During this time, learn how your sight works, not just



Your kit will evolve into an intensely personal set-up

the mechanics of the adjustments, but also the effects of moving the sight pin.

### Bow Maintenance

■ Make sure the string has some wax rubbed into it – this keeps the twisted strands together and keeps the dirt and water out

■ Avoid over-tightening screws and bolts and check them regularly – especially locking screws on the cheaper sights

■ If your kit gets wet, dry it all off as soon as possible. Never put your bow away wet, archery might be an all-weather sport but not all equipment is made with this in mind

■ Most aluminium arrows can be straightened if they get bent, although they will never shoot as accurately as a straight shaft, but arrows with cracked shafts should never be shot. Discard cracked or creased shafts, and replace cracked or broken nocks and damaged fletchings

I am not expecting you to encounter all of the scenarios mentioned above and all clubs are different, but if you do hopefully you will know what to do. Above all, shooting your own equipment is always very personal, so get comfortable and enjoy. ☺