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INTRODUCTION

This guide introduces you to the essential equipment for recurve archery before you visit a specialist store. Understanding these basics will help you make informed decisions when purchasing equipment that matches your size, strength, and ability.

Seek assistance from a coach or visit a specialist archery equipment shop to make sure that you are selecting equipment tailored to your needs. Starting with appropriate equipment will make your introduction to archery more enjoyable and successful.

Shopping online is fine when you know what you need but not when you are just beginning unless you an experienced archer or coach is assisting you.

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO RECURVE ARCHERY EQUIPMENT

Remember: archery is about precision first, power second. The ideal draw weight is one you can control consistently while maintaining proper form throughout your shooting session.

STYLES OF RECURVE ARCHERY

There are two basic styles of recurve archery:

- **Olympic Style** - Uses a bow with a sight and stabilizer bars. This is the only bow style (besides compound) used in Olympic competition.
- **Barebow Style** - As the name implies, this style has very few accessories compared to Olympic style.

Both styles use the same basic bow equipment, but Olympic style includes additional components.

WHY IS EVERYTHING IN LBS AND INCHES?

As modern archery equipment was standardised in the US, weights and measures are not metric, i.e. inches and pounds are the common measurements for anything that is attached to the bow or to arrows. For example, a sight is attached to the riser by an SAE threaded bolt but the small screws on the sight that hold it together, could be either Metric or SAE, depending on its country of manufacture.

THE RISER

The riser is the middle section of the bow that you hold. These risers and the limbs for them are interchangeable between brands and the connections are known as International Limb Fittings or ILF.

METAL RISERS



Metal risers come in 3 standard lengths, 23, 25 and 27 inches. The latter is not common, **so 25 inch is the length most often used**. These risers and the limbs for them are interchangeable between brands and the connections are known as International Limb Fittings or ILF.

Riser prices range from about \$150 to \$1000+. Something in the range of \$350 to \$600 is good and would provide satisfactory use for at least 2-3 years. There are cheaper metal risers (\$150-250) but they are not as well finished as the \$350+ risers.

WOODEN RISERS

You can also get wooden riser take-down recurve bows. The advantage is price, as a bow with limbs would be about \$150. Limbs can be changed to alter draw weight. The disadvantage is that the risers are not ILF compatible. So, at some stage in the future, you will be moving into the ILF bows. However, these are good to start with if you want to keep the cost down, especially for young children.



LIMBS



Limbs attach to the riser and store energy when the bow is drawn.

Limbs come in three lengths, Short (S), Medium (M) and Long (L). On a 25-inch riser, this would result in bows that are 64, 68, or 70 inches long. The wooden risers are often shorter than ILF risers, so the limb lengths are different.

Medium limbs are the best choice for beginners and recreational archers as they offer a good balance between speed and stability

Long limbs are best for anyone over 180cm (5'9") tall and for long distance target archery. Greater height usually means longer arms and therefore a longer draw length. They deliver a smoother draw and greater stability.



The markings on the limbs refer to the length of the total bow when attached to a riser (in this case 23" or 25"), and the draw weight in lbs (ie, 32 or 34 lbs depending upon the bow length) at a 28" draw length.

Short limbs provide faster arrow speeds and more manoeuvrability. They are often preferred for hunting, field or 3D archery.

The cost of basic ILF compatible limbs start from around \$150

UNDERSTANDING DRAW LENGTH

Draw length is what determines the minimum length arrow that is safe for you to use. It is measured from the back of the arrow shelf to your anchor position.

Measuring your draw length:

- Stretch your arms out in front of you with fingertips touching
- Measure the distance from below your larynx to your fingertips
- **Average draw length for someone 180cm tall is 28 inches**

UNDERSTANDING DRAW WEIGHT

Draw weight is the effort needed to pull back the bow. It essentially measures how "heavy" or difficult the bow is to pull back.

All draw weights are measured at 28 inches draw length with draw weight increasing about 2 pounds per inch beyond 28 inches.

Beginners should start with lower draw weights as muscles need time to develop. As you gain experience, you can progress to heavier draw weights. Indicative ranges of draw weight for beginners are as follows

- **Men:** 20-25 pounds
- **Women:** 15-20 pounds
- **Teenagers:** 15-20 pounds
- **Children:** 10-15 pounds

THE BOW STRING

THE STRING



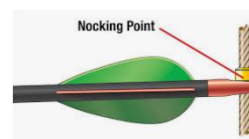
The string must match your bow length and will usually be sold to you at the same time as you buy your bow. However, remember that a string for a 68" bow is not 68" long – it is shorter.

The cheapest cost under \$20 and are made of Dacron (polyester). They are perfectly OK for beginners.

When purchasing, make sure the string matches your bow length and has the correct number of strands (typically 12-14 strands for beginners' draw weights)

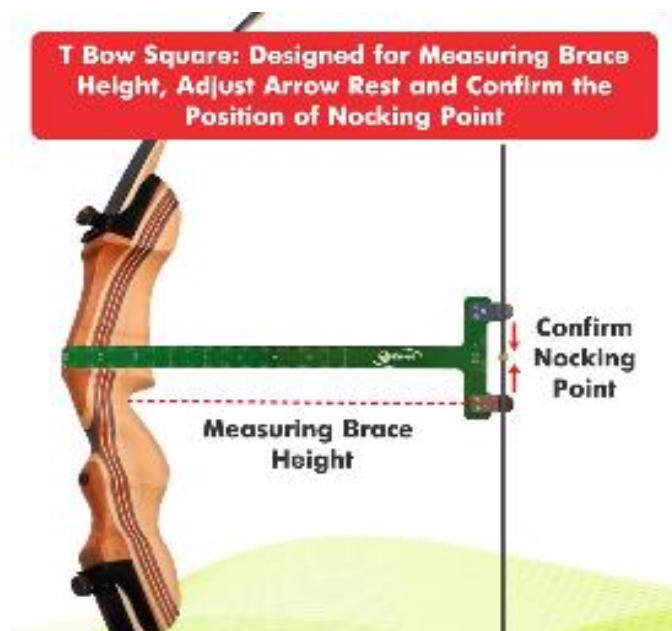
THE NOCKING POINT AND NOCK SIZE

The nocking point is what stops the arrow sliding up the string when you pull the string back. The archery shop will probably put on a metal one. This is OK to start with as it is easier to adjust as you get used to shooting your bow. **However, nocking points are better made with serving twine and can be wound on at the club when needed.**



Nock size should be such that arrows should snap onto the string with moderate resistance and stay on when the bow is pointed down. However, they should release when the string is lightly plucked.

MEASURING BRACE HEIGHT AND NOCK POINT POSITION



For both measurements you will need an archery ruler – they cost around \$15 or much less online.



BRACE HEIGHT

Place the ruler against your bow's pivot point (deepest part of the grip) and extend it perpendicular to the string. Read the measurement where it touches the string

This is your brace height (typically 8.5-9.5 inches for a recurve bow). **Twist your bow string to adjust brace height.**

NOCK POINT POSITION

Place the ruler against your bowstring with the T crossing the string then position the bottom of the T-square at your arrow rest. Mark the string approximately **1/8 to 3/16 inches (3-5mm) above the perpendicular line.**

This is where you'll install your nocking point.

ARROWS



Buy your first set of arrows at a local archery shop where they will match the arrows to your bow and physical characteristics. **Arrow length should be your draw length plus 1-2 inches (25-50mm) for safety.**

Start with the cheapest arrows that match your draw weight (about \$10 each). They are usually sold in sets of 12 but you need a minimum of 8.

As your draw weight increases with limb changes, arrows may need to be changed.

ARROW REST



A stick-on plastic rest such as a Hoyt Super Rest (\$5) is **an essential accessory** and suitable for the first 6-12 months or until consistent form is developed. Upgrade to a magnetic flip rest when arrows are consistently grouping. Avoid thin wire rests



PLUNGER



A plunger for a recurve bow is a small, adjustable device that attaches to the bow's riser. It's also sometimes called a "button" or "cushion plunger." It has two main functions:

1. It creates proper clearance between the arrow and the bow when you shoot
2. It absorbs some of the sideways movement of the arrow as it leaves the bow

Think of it as a small spring-loaded button that sticks out from your bow's riser. When you shoot, your arrow flexes (bends) and the plunger helps control this flexing in a consistent way.

Most beginning archers start with a simple stick-on arrow rest without a plunger. This is fine for learning the basics. Once you're comfortable with proper form and consistently hitting the target, adding a plunger is a natural next step to improve accuracy. A simple plunger costs around \$40.

FINGER TAB



There are two types of finger tab – split finger which is used for Recurve and solid which is used for Barebow. Barebow tabs have markings which are used to position the fingers on the string (string walking) when aiming at different distances. They can be cut to size cost around \$35 **and are an essential**

accessory.



SIGHT (RECURVE ONLY)



For most beginners, an aluminium sight in the \$50-80 range provides the best balance of quality and value. Look for solid construction, smooth adjustments, and clear markings. Don't go cheap!

Remember that a sight is only as good as your form - focus on consistent anchor points and release technique while learning to use your new sight.

FINGER SLING

A finger sling is a simple loop that connects your thumb and index finger, allowing you to shoot with a relaxed grip without dropping your bow. This promotes better form and more consistent shooting. **They are recommended** once you have mastered your form



A finger sling can be made from a shoelace or thick cord. Ask a coach or a more experienced archer how to make one. Alternatively, you can purchase simple loops either online or from an archery store (around \$3-5)



WEIGHT (BAREBOW)

Adding weights to a barebow is an important step in the progression of a barebow archer. They are used to improve your stability when aiming. However, they should not be used during your first few months of archery because you are still developing form and technique, and the additional weight can cause fatigue before proper muscle has developed.



When your form has improved and you are comfortable with an open-hand grip technique, then the addition of a 250g weight attached to the lower bushing should improve your stability and accuracy. They cost around \$40

STABILISER BARS (RECURVE)



Stabilizer bars are essential accessories for Olympic recurve archery that significantly improve accuracy and shot consistency. They reduce bow movement during and after the shot, dampen vibration for a smoother shooting experience, and balance the bow for improved aiming stability.

Beginners should not use stabilisers for the first few months whilst concentrating on form. They should then add a simple front rod only (26"-28" long) costing between \$40-70 and made of lightweight aluminium or carbon. It should include a basic end weight.

After about a year, progression to an entry-level complete stabiliser package costing between \$150-200, should be considered.

ARM GUARD



An armguard is an **essential accessory** as a string bruise to your inner arm is extremely painful and the bruise lasts for a long time! They come in many forms from the simple (but effective) to the large and decorative. Cost ranges between \$20-35



CHEST GUARD



A chest guard (sometimes called a "chest protector") is a piece of protective equipment used in archery to prevent injury from string contact to the chest of both male and female archers. They provide a smooth surface for the bowstring to glide past and prevent loose clothing from interfering with the shot. **They are recommended**

The chest guard is typically worn on the side of the chest that faces the bow (left side for right-handed archers, right side for left-handed archers). It's made of durable, smooth material like plastic or leather and is secured with straps that go around the archer's back and sometimes over the shoulder. They cost around \$20-30

HIP QUIVER

For a target archery beginner, a suitable hip quiver is an **essential accessory**. They should be lightweight, comfortable, and easily accessible for your arrows. They cost around \$20-50 depending on brand and features.



A bow stand is another **essential accessory**. It keeps your bow off the floor or grass and safe from knocks when you are not shooting. They are not complicated, and cost around \$20.

BOW BAG OR CASE



A backpack, or bag or a hard case keeps all your gear together – especially when you are lugging it from place to place. A backpack will cost between \$100-200 and a hard case up to \$350. **They are recommended**

CLOTHING RECOMMENDATIONS

- Tight-fitting T-shirt (bulky clothing catches the string)
- Soft-brimmed hat for sun protection
- Sun sleeves or sunscreen for arm protection
- CLOSED shoes (sandals and thongs not allowed)