

The “View from the Shed”

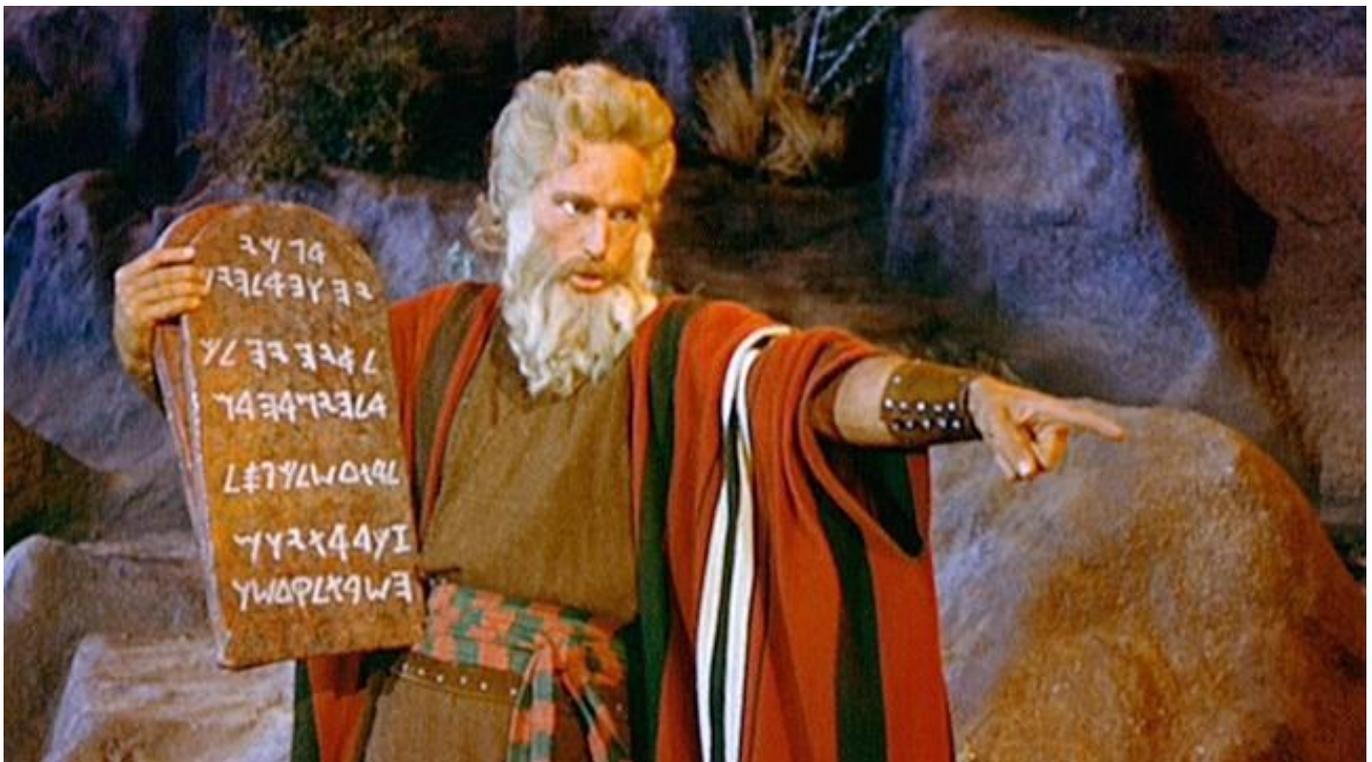


Archery Equipment: Part 1

What should I buy first?

Before I launch into this advice I think I should come clean. I am writing this with the advantage of hind sight, and many years in the “Club”.

Some people will disagree with the order and others with the reasons. The purpose of this document is to advise, not to dictate “I am not Moses coming down from Mount Sinai with the archery equivalent of the “stone tablets” (Even if he appears to be wearing a bracer!!)



Please read the advice, weigh it up in your mind and then do what you think is best for you!!!

Since becoming an archer, I have followed **most** of this advice, but sometimes I thought I knew better than the people around me. Don't misunderstand me there been times when I was right! But there were times when I got it wrong and it cost me dearly.

It is my intention to work through a logically sequence from new archers to the seasoned competitors looking at when and why you might want to buy additional kit and some advice on the kit that is out there.

This is likely to take a number of issues of the “View from the Shed” so please be patient, so let me take a look back to those heady summer days, at the end of your beginner's course

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Well protection is the first thing you need: (As soon as possible)

TAB'S

This should always be one of the first items to buy; this small item as you know stops the flesh on the finger pads from being damaged by the bow string. There are always people who would rather not use one and when you are using the lower poundage bows you can get away without using one, but be warned the damage is cumulative!

Over the years Tabs have evolved and as well as protecting the fingers they now carry out a multitude of other functions. The sequence that follows plots the types and the major changes in design.

There are of course hundreds of different versions ranging from the cheap to the very expensive.



The “Basic Tab” used at the club just a single 2mm piece of leather, available in three sizes. Costing £2.00 (in 2018)

The next in line was the Olympic style tab these introduced a number of innovations in one swoop.

The red section seen the right is a platform (the shelf on top of a tab that acts as a solid reference point under the jaw bone) hidden on the reverse side of the photo, is a finger spacer (the plastic wedge that fits between your index and middle finger to prevent you from pinching the arrow).

There is also an elastic loop for the middle finger that stops you dropping it. The tab faces can be replaced when damaged.

The thickness of leather face can easily be changed to suit different archer's requirements.

These tabs have a limited range of adjustments and come with black platform (junior), yellow (small), red (medium) and blue (large). Costing £10.50 (in 2018)

These are the best entry level type Tab and I would recommend the A+F Tab to any archer moving to their first platform tab.



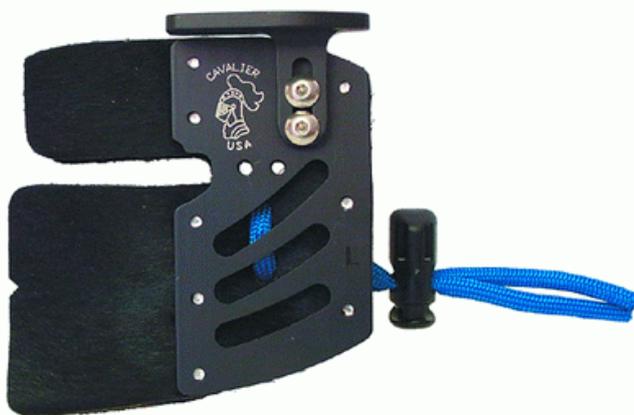
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In recent years there have been a number of advancements in both technology and design as the competing companies vie for our custom.

These include the replacement of leather tab faces with composite plastic based fabrics. The main advantages are that the wear rate is greatly reduced and the shooting characteristics of the Tabs face do not change if they get wet, unlike leather faces which tend to become “slipperier when wet”. This means you don’t have to be on your guard in inclement weather to ensure your tab is always dry.

Other innovations and different styles of Tab:



The Cavalier Elite Tab is a more refined version of the A+F Tab with no real design changes.

Costing £24.00 (in 2018)



The SOMA Fivics Saker 3 Tab has a fully adjustable platform, finger spacers and an additional finger hook for the little finger, this it is claimed adds to the stability of the tabs when the bow is drawn

Costing £36.00 (in 2018)



Some of the modern styles of tabs are actually designed to be uncomfortable if not held correctly, forcing you to readjust. They do take some getting used to.

On this SOMA FIVICS Saker 1 the tab the mounting plate extends into the palm of the hand, the purpose of extension is to stop the hand curling and help to ensure with a clean release.

Costing £55.00 (in 2018)

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Another new design from KAYA adds an adjustable thumb hold on the inside of the tab; again, this is trumpeted as aid to stability. Very pricy and as yet unproven

Costing £30 (in 2018)



And finally, FIVICS have brought the “Polite 2” Tab to market. This Tab has two versions, a three fingered version (Below left) and a two finger version (Below right) these tabs have reduced the platform to just an aluminium ridge. They have also made the Tab into a trigger shaped tool. FIVICS have recognised that some archers hold the string using two and not three. They have used the same size colour code as the A+F type Tabs. Being new they also come with a heavy price tag.

Both costing £42.00 (in 2018)



My final piece of advice is, buy a Tab that feels good in your hand and is the correct size.

I suggest walking along the shooting line and looking at what other archers are using, ask their opinion of their Tab (ask to try it!) And if all else fails I have a collection of at least 6 different types in my kit box that you welcome to try.

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BRACER'S

If a Tab is the first item you should buy then the second should be a Bracer. For centuries these have been worn by archers of every colour and creed. They are used to protect against the string catching on clothing and to stop soft tissue injuries to the inner forearm (unless you are one of a tiny minority of people who just don't need one).



The original style of leather Bracers worn by the English archers at Crecy during the hundred years war can still be seen in use today.

The traditional leather, lace up, style Bracers are mainly used today by Longbow archers.

Being made of leather there is little in the way of give in the bracer itself, but the level of protection is high.

The choice of modern Bracers available today is extensive, but they all carry out the same function as the traditional style and are usually lighter, smaller and easier to put on and take off.

Remember a bracer is there for protection. Choose wisely and make sure it is large enough to cover the entire area, and that it fits snugly (not too tight) and it must be comfortable as you will be wearing it for many hours.

Below and on the next page is a selection of the styles available:



Costing £9.00 (in 2014)



Costing £3 (in 2018)

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Costing £8.00 (in 2018)



In the last few years a new type of Bracer has become available; it is basically a neoprene sleeve that you wear like a traditional leather bracer.

Some types just pull up over the hand and others have zips or Velcro strips to ensure a good tight fit, these are more expensive than the other designs but the number of people using them is growing. They appear to be particularly useful for people who need full forearm protection.

Costing between £16.00 & £55.00 (in 2018)



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Now your little fingers and forearm are protected its time to think about improving your style, surprisingly, if you have chosen your Tab and bracer wisely, you have already started down that path. The reason for this is, that you will be less concerned about injuring yourself and therefore able to concentrate on other things. Such as your style.

At this point it is wise to just practise, practise and practise. Shooting as many arrows as possible to build up both strength and muscle memory.

As an “attende” on one of our courses you will have been matched with a bow rated between 16 - 24 pounds, this is mainly for safety reasons. Most people can pull that weight of bow, without struggling and the pulling of the bow in turn starts to train the muscles without over stressing them, and causing injury.

However, at the end of the four weeks your body will have started to adapt and build muscle allowing you to increase the poundage you can draw safely.

With your beginners course now firmly behind you it is time to prepare for the indoor season. You should, by now, have settled on the bow and limb weight you intend to use when the club moves indoors.

There is one other inexpensive item of kit which is often overlooked, but well worth buying:

A BRACING GAUGE

Costing £5.00 (in 2018)



If you watch carefully when the senior archers are assembling their bows many of them use a bracing gauge to check the distance from the arrow rest to the string with the bow strung, but undrawn.

This is an important measurement that is related to the tuning of their bow. Today I will just cover the basic use of the gauge and its implications, returning to this subject in greater depth when I talk about tuning later on in this series of guides.



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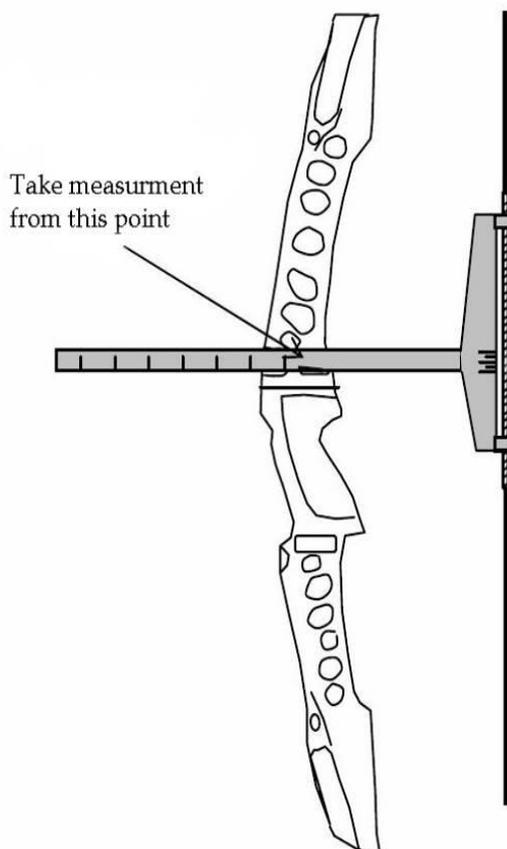


The Basis's Then:

The use of a bracing gauge at this point will ensure your bow set-up is consistent, which will in turn ensure any change in performance is not down to the equipment but the archer!

Set-up One:

This should be done the first time that you put a new string on to your bow and after any adjustments or alterations have been made to the string. So as to ensure your bow performs in the same way every time you draw it you must adjust and record the **Bracing Height**.



Clip the gauge into position on the string and place the arm on the top of the arrow rest.

Note the measurement at the centre of the pressure button (if fitted) and the centre of the pressure button.

All bow manufacturers provide initial bracing heights for their bows with different combination of long and short limbs and risers. The example shown below is for the Hoyt RX

You should use the low end of the height range at this point (When you fine tune your bow you are very likely to adjust this height). Record this height somewhere so you will be able to refer to it should you forget it.

BRACE HEIGHT RANGE CHART (STANDARD LIMBS)

Riser Length	Long Limbs	Medium Limbs	Short Limbs
25" Riser	8 3/4 - 9 1/2" 22-24 cm	8 1/2 - 9 1/4" 21.5-23.5 cm	8 1/4-9" 21-22.8 cm
27" Riser	8 3/4 - 9 1/2" 22-24 cm	8 1/2 - 9 1/4" 21.5-23.5 cm	8 1/4-9" 21-22.8 cm

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Adjusting the Bracing Height

To adjust the bracing height, you will need to release the string off the end of one limb.

- To increase the bracing height, you should add twists to the string, checking first, of course, which way the string is twisted.
- To reduce the bracing height just remove some of the twists.

Now every time you assemble your bow you should quickly check the bracing height to ensure it does not alter week by week.

As the string has to be removed at the end of each session and can easily become untwisted it is wise to use some method to stop this happening, some archer's tuck the loop at one end of the string through the loop at the other.



I use “Twist Keepers” shown to the right and well worth the 50p investment.

Remember that other things can also affect the bracing height such as a new string which will stretch slightly in the first few weeks of use. Things like the weather conditions can also have an effect on your bracing height.

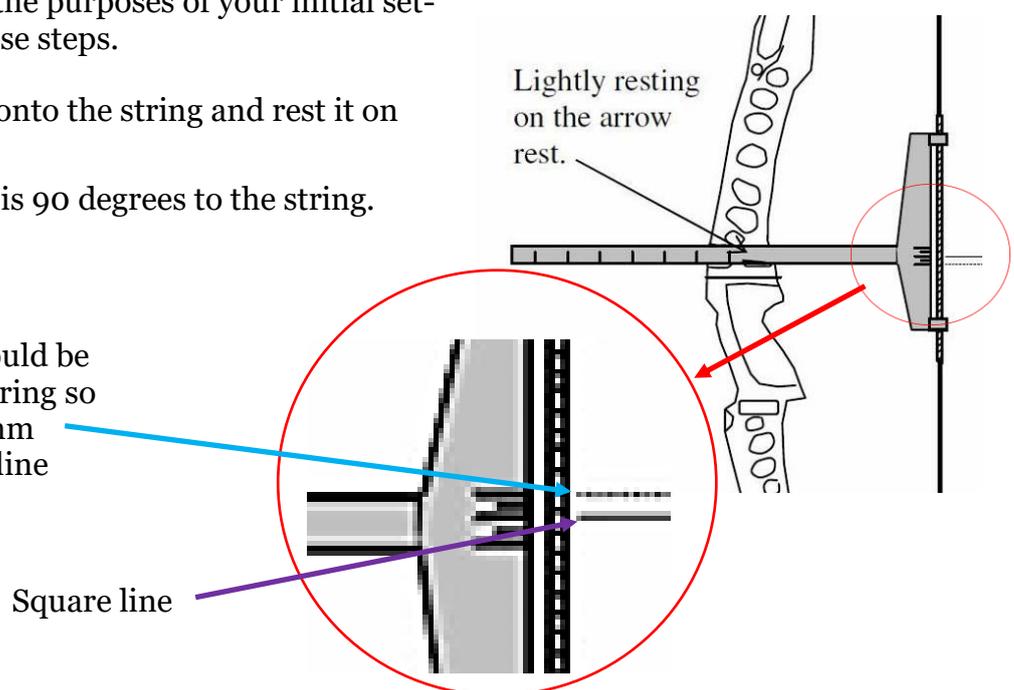
Initial Fitting of Nocking Pointing

It is essential that your Nocking Points are fitted (initially) at the correct point on your string;

This is a subject that I will be returning to in greater depth when I cover tuning later on in this series of guides. But for the purposes of your initial set-up you should follow these steps.

1. Place your gauge onto the string and rest it on the arrow rest.
2. Ensure the gauge is 90 degrees to the string.

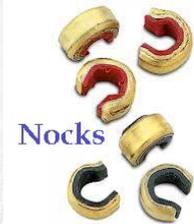
3. The first nock should be placed onto the string so the top edge is 5mm above the square line



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4. Using nocking pliers squeeze it gently into place.
5. Ensure no sharp edges protrude from the nock. These will cut into and your Tab damaging it.
6. Check the nock sits squarely on the string. If it does not then remove and refit it, as this will affect the release of your arrows.



7. Now place an arrow on the string above this nock and fit a second nock above it. This must also sit squarely on the string
8. It is essential to ensure that the arrow sits firmly between the nocks but is not squeezed between them.



9. Some archers shoot with only one nock point; this is normally a result of them needing extra speed from their string and is a short-term remedy used to overcome issues caused by having arrows that are too stiff.

Just for clarity there are other ways of creating nock points including tying your own and using Beiter plastic nock points but I have chosen to go with the most straight forward way used by 90% of archers.

At this point in process I hope you will have learned a little more about a sport I enjoy so much and that you will have started to put in place the ground work needed to progress steadily during the indoor season.

Don't be concerned if the archers who joined at the same time as you appear to be doing very much better.

Archery is a very personal sport and every one progresses at their own rate.

The Indoor season is the time when most archers work on their style, because getting your style right at the beginning is a lot less stressful than trying to correct bad habits later on.



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Remember always good have a goal in mind, however far away it may seem!!!



I will sign off at this point. Please let me have any feedback (Good or Bad) and if you want a subject explained let me know !!!!

Good shooting

Ian E