

Bow and Exercise Band Drills

Exercise Band Drills

Drills

The duration of each drill will depend on current situation of the archer. If you feel any discomfort while carrying out the drills, stop immediately and seek suitable advice. The suggestion is that you try spending 5-10 minutes on each and see how many are required until positions become correct during shooting. The aim is to enhance muscle memory, consistency and to keep your muscles active between shooting sessions thereby improving stamina.

Posture

Ensure the pelvis is neutral and knees unlocked, lower back should not be arched in either direction, although there will be a natural shallow to the lower back.

All subsequent drills require good posture to be maintained. The exercise band should be tied in a loop for these drills so that it provides a reasonable resistance. The definition of “reasonable” in this context will be different for each archer but it should be enough so that you feel your muscles working during the drills. Please consult your coach for more guidance.

Set

On the exercise band, position your bow hand per the bow handle and your string fingers ready to draw.

Set-up

Lift arms to bring forearm in front of your face keeping shoulders low, the lift should be arms only and should not involve any shoulder movement.

Three Step Sequence: –

- 1- Keeping good posture raise arms to shoulder height,
- 2- Turn head toward bow arm,
- 3- Fold your drawing arm (effectively, this is you simulating the drawing of the bow) ending with hand touching neck keeping your elbow at correct height.

Elbow rotation – Rotate your upper arm in both directions to improve control during shot and to strengthen the rotator cuff. To start with, it may be helpful to

try this with the bow hand held against a fixed vertical structure, e.g. door frame, so that you can rotate your elbow more easily.

Release motion: -

Replicate the draw and release motions without the exercise band – this is simply to practise the movements and instil some muscle memory.

Begin with your drawing hand in your reference point (see “Note” below) with fingers curled, draw hand along chin and jaw keeping your fingers relaxed but curled. Do this slowly at first then speed up.

Advance to using other hand to create more tension in your back. When doing this, the relaxation of the fingertips of your drawing hand should result in your drawing hand moving back along your jaw with the same movement you practised at the beginning of this release motion exercise.

3 second expansion: -

This time using the exercise band, come to your reference point then using back expand draw for 3 seconds with continued movement. This should be done using the Three Step Sequence detailed above. Keep upper traps (trapezius muscles) relaxed throughout.

After you have practised this a few times, further repetitions should be completed by executing a release of the exercise band per the release process outlined above. Be sure that the index finger of your drawing hand follows your jawline as it moves back after the release and that your drawing hand comes to a natural stop behind your ear.

Note: The “reference point” has previously been called the “anchor point”. However, the word “anchor” implies that you stop pulling or expanding during the shot which is incorrect. You must never stop during the execution of a shot, therefore, “reference point” is a more correct term.

Six Step Sequence: -

1. Posture
2. Set
3. Set-up
4. Head rotation
5. Draw
6. Release

This puts all the above into practice.

Bow Drills

Bow drills can be simulated with heavy exercise band if space is limited or if a boss is not available.

- 1) 5+1 - draw for 5 seconds then half relax to the pre-draw position for 1 second, keeping both hands at eye level, then repeat. Repeat this 5 times to make one set. Each set will last 30 seconds (5x6). Repeat for 3 sets with a rest 30 seconds between each set.
- 2) The 10 second hold. It is recommended that this is done in front of a boss and using an arrow, particularly if archer uses a clicker. Raise and draw bow to full draw, expanding through clicker (if used) maintain this expansion position for 10 secs, repeat another 2 times with a 30 sec rest between sets. If you feel safer or more comfortable not putting the arrow under the clicker, then it's fine not to use the clicker.
- 3) 30 second hold - maintaining form throughout, if the hold starts to collapse then come-down. Note the time you managed to maintain full draw and try to improve the hold over a period. This drill should be done once only per session drill done once only.
- 4) 10 rapid draws of the bow using both right and left hands to relax muscles.

The aim of these bow drills is to build up your strength and stamina.