

Shot Technique

1. Bow hand
2. Finger position
3. Pre-draw
4. Front arm
5. Aim
6. Draw
7. Expand
8. Release
9. Bow arm

That's it really !

OK. You're right – there is much more to it than that! You need to have the “full shot” in your mind before you can boil it down to just those few steps.

So, here is a shot process which I find works for me.

Just before you get going, here are a few thoughts: -

Is it the best technique?

No, not necessarily! There are many variations on how best to shoot a recurve bow. This is simply the approach which I use.

Will it work for you?

Maybe. Sadly, there are no guarantees but this should help you think more about what you are doing and possibly help achieve greater consistency and hence greater accuracy.

Is it a full description of a technique?

No. It is intentionally just a check list and is only a very high-level description of how to shoot. In fact, good instruction books will have an entire chapter dedicated to pretty much each and every item on this checklist. Furthermore, it's best to work with a coach on all of this.

So, what is this supposed to be?

It is simply intended to be a reasonable place to start. Nothing more than a viable check list to guide you through the key stages of shooting an arrow. The desire is to provide a framework for each shot you take.

In addition to potential improvements to your archery, this will also offer two things. Firstly, the ability to speed up diagnosing why/where things may be going wrong. Secondly, the ability to try new things out (**one** at a time!), possibly as part of receiving coaching, without messing up the other parts of the shot. If the new thing you are trying is not working for you, the intent is that by using this framework you will be able you swap out the new thing and reinstate your original technique without too many unwanted side effects.

Here is the process. You need to commit this to memory as much as you can but don't worry because after you have been following each and every step on each and every shot, it will soon become easy to remember!

To begin with here are a few, potentially obvious, comments: -

- For each shot, go through each item in sequence.
- Do not move onto the next item until you are sure you have successfully carried out the current item.
- If something goes wrong or you are not completely happy with the progress you have made on the shot, then don't worry, simply stop and start the shot again from the beginning.
- If there is something on the list which is new to you, something which you don't understand or something which you don't know how to do, don't worry - have a word with your coach about it.

A) Getting ready to shoot: -

1. Check your foot position on the shooting line as this is fundamental to achieving the correct stance. Foot markers are a good idea. In reality, you will probably only need to do this step once as you arrive at the shooting line but it does no harm to keep an eye on it.
2. Load the bow – check that the orientation of the fletches is correct.
3. Seat the bow hand properly. Check your hand position on the grip with the fingers fully relaxed and knuckles at about 45 degrees. Do not grip the bow at all – your finger sling or bow sling will catch the bow on follow-through.
4. Check your finger position on the string.

B) Preparing the shot: -

5. Turn your head towards the target and focus on the gold.
6. Pre-draw – about $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ of your draw length. Note that the elbow of your drawing arm must always be forward of your drawing shoulder during the pre-draw. The purpose of the pre-draw is to enable you to confirm your finger position on the string and settle your bow hand into the grip, again confirming the correct positioning.

C) Executing the shot: -

7. Draw
 - a. Raise the bow arm and set up a strong front shoulder and bow arm.
 - b. Aim – move the sight pin/aperture into your line of vision with your focus on the gold.
 - c. Draw. Apply pressure directly towards the target with your bow arm while simultaneously pulling the string back directly to your reference point (anchor point) using your shoulder and back muscles.
 - d. Once at your reference point, do not stop keeping the pressure on your bow arm and continue expanding your drawing arm backwards. The drawing movement will obviously slow right down but it must never stop completely (Hence “reference point” rather than “anchor point”!).
8. Aim
 - a. Finalise/check your aim, keep pulling/expanding gently all the time. A smooth and stable draw will mean that only minor adjustments to the aim may be needed.
9. Shoot
 - a. Click/release. This should happen fairly quickly given the continual expansion of the shot initiated during the “Draw” phase of the shot. The release is nothing more than the relaxation of the fingertips of the drawing hand after which point the laws of physics take over.
 - b. Follow-through. The bow will punch towards the target courtesy of the front arm pressure and the drawing hand should move backwards along the jaw line given the continual expansion of the drawing arm.
 - c. Keep the bow arm up in the full draw position until the arrow has hit the target.

The shot process above contains a large amount of information so it is useful to condense it into a small number of check points for you to execute on every shot you take: -

1. Seat the bow hand properly
2. Check finger position on the string
3. Pre-draw
4. Strong front shoulder and arm
5. Aim
6. Draw – no stopping!
7. Finalise the aim while expanding
8. Click/release and follow through
9. Keep the bow arm up

Or even shorter: -

1. Bow hand
2. Finger position
3. Pre-draw
4. Front arm
5. Aim
6. Draw
7. Expand
8. Release
9. Bow arm

There is nothing to stop you writing this on a piece of paper and attaching it to one of your bow limbs for reference while you are actually on the line shooting.

Finally, this list is not cast in stone, definitive or perfect – it's only my personal shot process after all! You may wish to modify it for your shot process – it must work for *you*. Also, this is not a replacement for a coach and the recommendation is that this list is used (and potentially modified specifically for you) in conjunction with your coach.

Enjoy!