



EQUIPPED FOR OUTDOORS

OUTDOOR ARCHERY CAN BE A WHOLE DIFFERENT GAME TO INDOORS — DUNCAN BUSBY HIGHLIGHTS THE ADDITIONAL KIT YOU'LL NEED TO GET THE BEST OUT OF THE OUTDOOR SEASON



TAKE YOUR SHOOTING LOCATION INTO ACCOUNT WHEN CHOOSING YOUR FOOTWEAR FOR OUTDOOR SHOOTING

Many of you will be eagerly looking forward to the upcoming outdoor season; the chance to shoot outdoors even on a dreary day can be infinitely more enticing than shooting in a dimly lit and stuffy sports hall. But if this is your first season shooting outdoors you may be finding the whole idea rather daunting; longer distances, different rounds and the extra equipment you'll need can all make outdoor shooting seem more complicated, so how should you ensure you are ready for the season?

Whatever discipline you decide to shoot, there are some items that are essential for both target and field archery. First, you must prepare for any weather eventuality by investing in a set of good waterproofs. It's no fun shooting in inclement weather and even less fun if you are inappropriately dressed for it. Your waterproofs should not restrict your range of movement, but

they should fit well; any baggy or loose clothing can catch your bowstring, so you may also need to use a piece of tubigrip or an arm guard with your wet weather gear.

A decent pair of waterproof boots with good grips is another must. They'll keep your feet dry as you walk to and from the target and help you to stay upright on slippery field courses. I have also found a good pair of walking socks invaluable when you're doing a lot of miles; there's nothing worse than rubbed and sore feet at the end of a long day shooting so I'd suggest wearing something double layered and breathable for maximum comfort.

Keeping warm in cold weather is important for your muscles; it will ensure they are working at their optimum level and it'll reduce your chances of injury. However, as with your waterproofs, you should avoid adding too much bulk, as it will impede your movements. Several

TECHNIQUE

A SET OF WATERPROOFS YOU CAN SHOOT IN WILL BE ESSENTIAL FOR STAYING COMFORTABLE



IT'S NO FUN SHOOTING IN INCLEMENT WEATHER AND EVEN LESS FUN IF YOU ARE INAPPROPRIATELY DRESSED FOR IT

A SPOTTING SCOPE IS A VALUABLE AID FOR TARGET ARCHERS AT THE LONGER DISTANCES ...



thin layers of thermals can be far more effective, and as you can add or remove one at a time it'll be far easier to adapt to a change in temperature. I'd also recommend wearing a hat – a peaked baseball cap will keep the sun out of your eyes on a bright day, and a woolly hat in wintery weather will stop you losing any heat from your head.

Invest in good optics; as you'll be shooting longer distances you'll need to use either a pair of binoculars or, for target archers, a spotting scope and tripod. You don't need to spend a lot of money but make sure that whatever you choose can withstand rain and will allow you to see the target clearly.

Get yourself a comfy seat; archery requires you to be on your feet for many hours and being able to take your weight of them can be a relief. For field archery a chair/backpack combination works best, as this allows you to carry around all your supplies for the day and also gives you somewhere to sit. Target archery allows you the additional luxury of using a line tent with your



... BUT FIELD ARCHERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO FIND A PAIR OF BINOCULARS USEFUL

chair; this can give you a place to shelter from the weather and it provides you with storage for all your excess equipment and supplies. Archery backpacks and tents are available from most outdoor stores and pro shops at a reasonable price, and for a full weekend of shooting are worth their weight in gold.

Don't forget that, unlike indoor archery, outdoor rounds are usually shot in ends of six, not three, so make sure you have enough fletched arrows.

As scoring can be a little different, especially in the case of field archery, you will need to familiarise yourself with these new rounds, but don't worry too much if you are unsure about anything as there'll be plenty of experienced archers around you who will be happy to help you out if you need it.

Getting sight marks outdoors is no different than for indoor target archery; it just requires you to shoot more distances, but the process can be a lot more technical when you compete at field archery. As you cannot possibly get individual sight marks for every distance you'll need to shoot, as the ranges and angles are so varied, you'll need to make a sight tape instead.

This is a scaled printout, almost like a mini ruler similar to the one on your sight, only this has been calculated specifically to your bow's speed. There are many computer programs available that allow you to create this tool, and I'd recommend investing in one if you plan to compete in this discipline. I personally use Archers Advantage.

Creating a sight tape is a fairly simple process; once you have entered in the necessary information about your bow the programme will require you to input accurate reference sight marks (usually at 20m and 60m), it will then calculate and create a scaled sight tape for you, for every possible distance between 12m and 90m.

Remember, once you have attached the tape to your sight and checked its accuracy, you should make it as waterproof as possible so it doesn't run or fade in the rain; one option is to use waterproof paper in your printer, though I've found coating it in Sellotape works quite well.

Shooting outdoors can be challenging and fun; the variety it offers means there's always something new to try and with a bit of preparation and planning you can be sure you're ready to enjoy this upcoming season, whatever the weather throws at you. ☺



LAYERING UP TO STAY WARM IS A BETTER OPTION THAN ADDING BULKY CLOTHING

