



# No Time to Lose

The time between the indoor and outdoor season might feel like a bit of a lull, but it is also a great chance to re-evaluate your technique and make sure your equipment is in tip-top condition so you're not caught out when the outdoor season starts, as **Duncan Busby** advises

**T**he time between the indoor and outdoor seasons can be frustrating; with the last of the indoor tournaments taking place in March and the first of the outdoor beginning in April, there is often limited time to prepare yourself for the change in distances.

Since the weather this time of year is often unpredictable and it discourages a lot of archers from moving outside until absolutely necessary, this can become a relatively unproductive period. So how should you be using this time effectively when you cannot practise?

When I have finished my final indoor tournament, I like to take a week or two away from my bow. This time off allows me to wind down at the end of what has usually been a busy and emotionally demanding season, and regain some of the enthusiasm I may have lost along the way. I always find this break leaves me eager to pick my bow up once again and begin the outdoor season.

Of course you may not feel the need to take any time off, but this is also a good opportunity to reflect on how you shot indoors: what worked and what didn't? You'll then be able to put this information to good use over

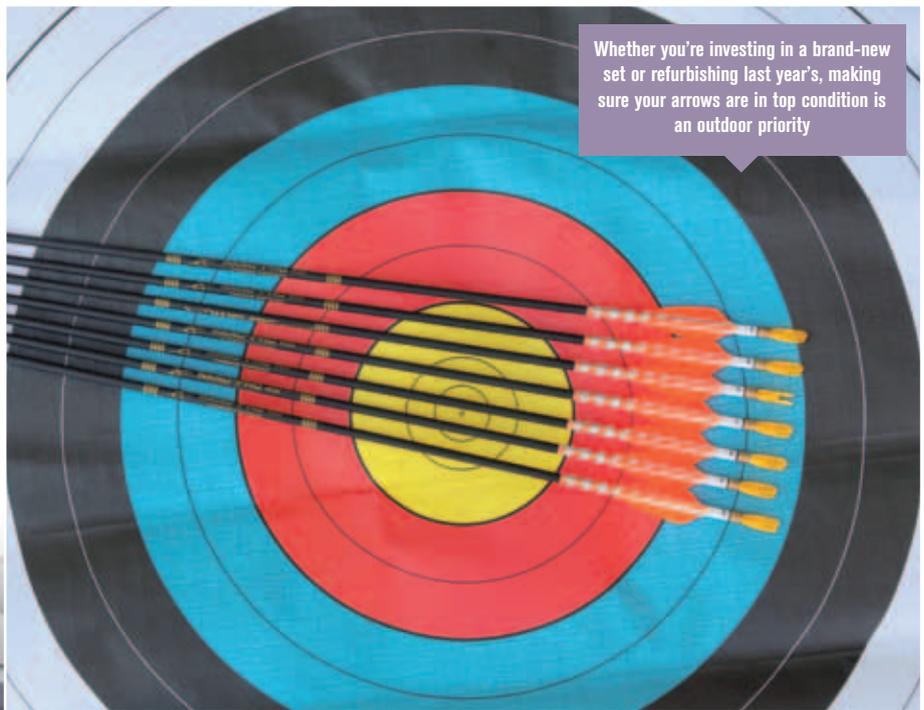
the coming year – even if you didn't compete at any tournaments, it's still important to see how your shooting has progressed.

It's also necessary at this point to plan your upcoming season; entry forms come out early and the more popular shoots will fill up fast, so spend a day entering the tournaments you want to attend – the Archery GB tournament calendar is a good place to start. This will ensure that you're not left disappointed later in the year.

There is nothing worse than turning up to the first outdoor shoot of the year only to realise that you haven't got your spotting

scope or that your line tent has a leak. There is a lot less equipment to remember when shooting indoors and it's easy to forget something vital when you haven't needed it for the last five months. So spend some time digging out all your outdoor gear and check it over. If you start to get these items together now, you'll avoid any last-minute panic. It's also advisable to make sure you remember a good set of waterproofs and thermals, since you never know what our unpredictable weather will throw at you.

The beginning of the season usually involves the re-assembly of your outdoor setup and the fitting of any new equipment, so this is the perfect opportunity to change your bow strings too. Most strings will last for



Whether you're investing in a brand-new set or refurbishing last year's, making sure your arrows are in top condition is an outdoor priority



Give your spotting scope, line tent, waterproofs and thermals a once-over to check everything is in good working order – you never know what they will have to put up with

anything between one or two years depending on how much you shoot and how well you look after them, but as any new set of strings will take time to settle in, it's best to change them before you have tuned your bow and any competitions have started. If you are keeping the same set of strings you used indoors, don't forget to move your peep sight down slightly so that your anchor point is not affected, and remember to adapt your nocking point for smaller outdoor nocks.

If you like to wind your poundage down for indoors, now is the time to start gradually increasing it back up – it's best to do this over several weeks so you don't risk injuring yourself.

Whether you are investing in new arrows or refurbishing your existing set, it's important to make sure that they are in perfect working order. Arrows can take quite a beating over the course of the season, so choose quality components and fit them correctly: that way, they should last the entire year without much problem. I'd advise fitting brand new nocks even if your existing ones look okay – if they have been used before, you cannot guarantee their condition – and make sure that every vane is secure and undamaged. There's nothing worse than missing out on a new personal best because your arrow has behaved unpredictably.

If the weather is too bad to shoot outdoors, you can still do some basic tuning at 18 metres. A paper test will allow you to see whether your rest position and arrow spine are correct. Then, when you get a chance to move outside, you'll be able to move onto walk back and group tuning at the longer distances.

If you are still unable to leave your indoor facilities, I would recommend blank boss

# Equipment



Unpredictable outdoor conditions can limit your shooting time, but any practice you can get at this time of year will be worth it

shooting. This will also give you the opportunity to work on any form issues you may have identified during the indoor season. Blank boss is a great way to increase your stamina; having to shoot in ends of six instead three can be surprisingly tiring and, since outdoor rounds are significantly longer, you will need to increase your fitness levels. Even if you do end up shooting indoors with your outdoor setup, it's never a waste of time. Practice is practice, and shooting an 18-metre round with skinny arrows can still be quite a challenge.

Though March and April can seem an ambiguous time in the archery calendar, these few short weeks can give you the opportunity to prepare effectively for the coming season. Whether you want to make changes to yourself or your equipment, getting prepared for outdoors now will save you valuable time later in the year, so when May finally comes along, you'll be ready, whatever the weather. ☺



The beginning of the outdoor season is a perfect time to replace your strings if they are getting old or worn

