NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

NOW IS THE PERFECT TIME TO TAKE STOCK OF WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE IN THE NEW YEAR, SAYS DUNCAN BUSBY, AND SET OUT YOUR PLANS FOR ACHIEVING IT

RESOLUTIONS

1. Make only one resolution. Your chances of success are greater when you channel your energy into changing just one aspect of your shooting.
2. You don't have to wait until each new year to think about your resolution. Instead, take some time out and reflect on what you really want to achieve in the long term.
4. Don't run with the crowd and settle for everyone else's resolutions. Think about what you really want out of your shooting.
5. Don't try to do it all in January; if your goal is worth attaining it will take time – much more than a mere month can offer. This is particularly important if your goal is dependent on the shooting season.
6. Break your goal into a series of steps, focusing on creating sub-goals that are concrete, measurable and time-based.

January has always been a time for looking forward to the future. But it's also a good time to look back on the past and reflect on the changes we want, or need, to make in the new year.

Most of us will make a new year's resolution – maybe to shoot more, score higher or win a particular tournament – but few of us will actually achieve our goal because we don't have a plan of how to achieve it or it feels like too much of a mountain to climb. It's hard to keep up the enthusiasm months after the celebrations have ended, but it's not impossible. So how do you get your resolutions working for you and make 2017 is your best year yet?

Though it can be rather difficult to identify a goal that is attainable and will stick, reflecting on the mistakes and mishaps of last year is a good place to start. Where could you have done better? What do you want to change? There's no need to be down on yourself, just take a look at your weak points and see what you can do about them this year; there are many areas to choose from, so simply find one that applies to you.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR BOW CAN BE A WORTHWHILE AIM FOR 2017, AS IMPROVING YOUR SHOOTING TECHNIQUE CAN OFTEN REQUIRE ADAPTATIONS IN YOUR EQUIPMENT SETUP

IMPROVE YOURSELF

We all have some part of our form or technique that we'd like to improve; whether it's finding a better alignment to the target or learning to execute our shots using correct back tension, there always something we can perfect.

Our equipment too can always use a little tuning or adjustment; not even the most successful of archers leaves their kit in exactly the same set-up all year long. As your form and technique develop over time you will continue to need to adjust and adapt your equipment to suit your ever-evolving shooting style.

Our mental game is also often overlooked and it should not been seen as an exclusive field only for the pros – having a good outlook and attitude is essential to shooting well and, more importantly, to enjoying the sport, whatever level you shoot. So spend some time working on these areas or find yourself a good coach to help you through your issues with an unbiased and trained eye.

TRY A NEW EXPERIENCE

We can all get stuck in a rut with our shooting at times and trying something new is a perfect way to regain any enjoyment you may have lost over time. If you've always been a target shooter give field archery a go. If you've never picked up a compound bow find out what the professional archery world is going crazy over. You could even enter yourself into a tournament you've never attended before. New challenges are what keep us passionate about this sport and only by broadening our range of experience can we grow into more skilled archers.

IMPROVE YOUR FITNESS

Archery can test the fitness of even the most athletic of archers; some field courses

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WANTING TO SHOOT LIKE A PRO IS ALL WELL AND GOOD, BUT WILL TAKE A LOT OF WORK AND PLANNING AND MIGHT TAKE LONGER THAN A YEAR

NEW EXPERIENCES, SUCH AS TOURNAMENTS YOU'VE NEVER SHOT BEFORE, CAN HELP PREVENT YOU GETTING STUCK IN AN ACCIDENTAL ARCHERY RUT

in particular require an enormous amount of strength and stamina just to get round, and you'll find that even the most sedate of target archers will walk around 2.5 miles when shooting a World Archery 1440 round. So whether it's walking more to boost your fitness or hitting the gym to increase your muscle strength, improving your health may also improve your shooting, particularly when you're no longer struggling to keep up with your fellow archers.

LEARN SOMETHING NEW

Archery can be an extremely technical sport to learn and though it's not entirely necessary to know the ins and outs of setting up and tuning your bow, it can be extremely beneficial to learn some of the basics; such as where your nock point should be, what your optimum sight picture looks like, and the correct arrow spine for your bow, along with many other technical aspects of your equipment. You may not always have access to a coach or shop, and learning a few essential bits of information can teach you to how to manage your equipment as well as problem solve quickly and easily. Even qualified coaches should find the opportunity to expand their knowledge; a lot of information, particularly with regard to compound archery, is picked up over the years from experience and other archers. No one can know absolutely everything there is to know about this sport so find something you'd like to learn about and become an archery expert in your chosen field.

HELP OTHERS

Archery is one of the few sports that allows competitors of all abilities, ages and sexes to compete together. This really is a sport for all and as a result we should all help each other when we can; whether you share your kit out when another archer has had an equipment failure, mentor a young and inexperienced junior or pull arrows for a disabled archer, we can all remember a time when we felt grateful for someone else's kind and friendly assistance, as a result we should continue to make archery the social sport it is, and you may even pick up a few things along the way that will improve your own game.

Once you've chosen your goals for the coming year, you should identify how you're going to achieve them. For example, if you want to shoot like a pro it's not enough to stick a picture of Mike Schloesser in your range, copy his setup and fantasise about being on a podium. Adopting role models and dreaming about achieving your goals are both powerful ways of keeping enthusiasm through the tough times, but you cannot rely on willpower alone without an achievable plan of action. It's easy to feel overwhelmed by the goal you have set and allow negative feelings to affect your performance, but we're more likely to succeed if we break our resolution into smaller goals that are specific, measurable and time-based.

7. Tell your friends and family about your goals; you're more likely to avoid failure when you have support from other archers.
8. Give yourself a small reward whenever you achieve a sub-goal, thus maintaining motivation and a sense of progress.
9. Make your plans and progress concrete by writing them down. There's something to the act of putting pen to paper (or finger to keypad) that takes it from being just an idea to being real. It's not out in the universe until it's down on paper.
10. Expect a few setbacks from time to time. Treat any failure as temporary rather than a reason to give up altogether.
11. Sometimes a year is not enough; as 2017 comes to a close, take some time to reflect on the resolutions you made this January. How did you do? Did you work at it hard enough? What happened that disrupted your plans? Did you achieve what you wanted or do you need another year? Just remember to give yourself some grace, you've laid the groundwork to achieving your dreams and you can take the next year to perfect them if necessary.

Learning from the previous year's mistakes and choosing to improve is essential to making your new year's resolution successful. But even if you don't manage to achieve everything you planned, every year is just another chance to get it right.

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