

A Beginners Guide to Archery - Archery Basics

Archery basics for beginners

Advice for a complete novice looking to start up and buy your first recurve bow and arrows. Find out more about the fantastic sport of archery. We hope this simplified beginners guide to archery will start to aim (sorry!) you in the right direction.



Archery questions

Browsing through all the products on our website may feel overwhelming. This article will help avoid confusion and frustration. There is no such thing as a silly question. Every top archer in the world started with nothing. No kit or knowledge of how to shoot a traditional recurve bow or longbow.

Please ask about anything. We have the expertise on hand to guide you. If you want to know what the best wood for bows is or whether you should shoot one type of arrow over another give us a call.

The first thing we would say if you are starting is to go and find a beginners course to join. Contact your local archery club, or contact one of our own Archery GB coaches who can train you. We run archery lessons at the shop here in Birkenhead.

Find your local club from these links. Archery GB is the UK governing body for target archery. [Archery GBs Club Finder](#). The NFAS is the UK body for 3D field archery [NFAS \(National Field Archery Society\) website](#). Learning how to shoot with a qualified coach will give you the best possible start in the sport. You will then know everything you need to get you started.

All Archery GB courses use a beginner's Recurve bow to start you off. Every session is standard to all beginners regardless of location.

Types of archery

Each kind of archery has unique scoring systems, rules and categories. Try them all and see which ones you most. Here's a basic overview to get you started

^ Bodkin Points shooting at round paper faces at fixed distances as seen at the Olympics

- Field Archery: Unmarked distances. Shooting at 3D animals or paper faces in a woodland setting
- Clout Archery: Shooting to a flag at set distances depending on age and gender up to 180 yards away. Score zones on the floor around the flag
- Flight Archery: Shooting an arrow to gain a greatest distance. Scoring for best distance in the chosen bow type.

Types of archery bow

Recurve Bow

The bow most beginners start with and associated with the Olympics. Modern style with stabiliser rods, balance weights and sights. Traditional recurve bow without the bells and whistles. Usually made from wood and laminates.

Compound Bow

The most high-tech of bows born around the 1970s and made for greatest accuracy. Consists of cams to make drawing higher bow weights easier to hold at full draw. Used with a mechanical release aid.



Traditional Bows

ENGLISH LONGBOW

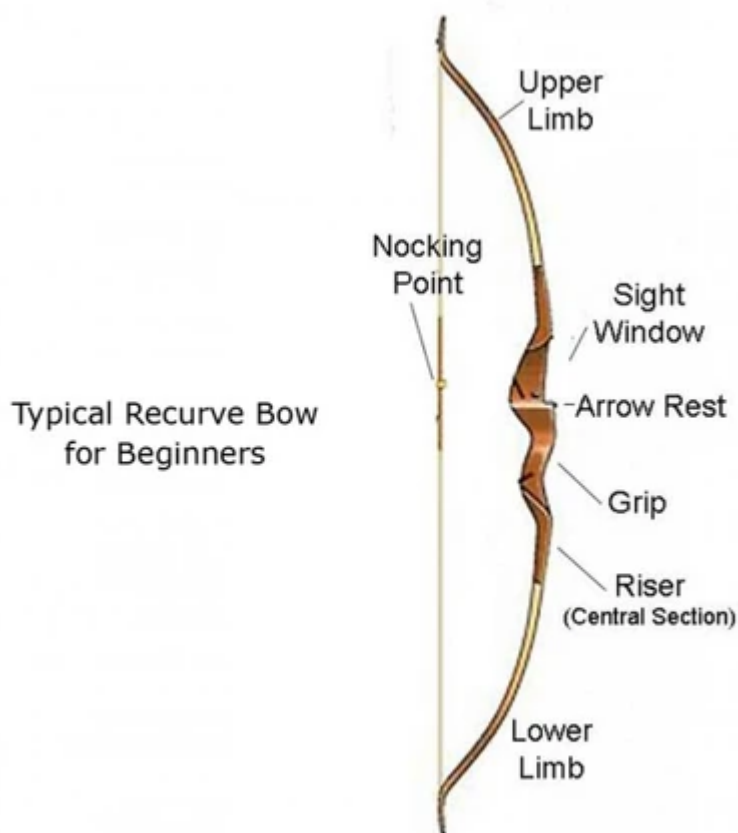
If you think of archery, then the odds are that you were thinking of Robin Hood. An English Longbow is the most basic (and the most fun) form of archery you can enjoy. A simple stick and string that utilises the archers' skill and instincts. It's the most challenging but also the most rewarding of the bow types. Each bow is unique with no two bows alike. Shot with wooden arrows and feather fletchings.

Also described as an American longbow. Developed in the 1930s. Howard Hill helped to make this bow style popular. The American Flatbow replaced the English longbow for target shooting. Olympic-style recurve bows are a modern development of the American flatbow. Flat bows use fibreglass and wood veneers such as red oak and black locust in the bow construction.

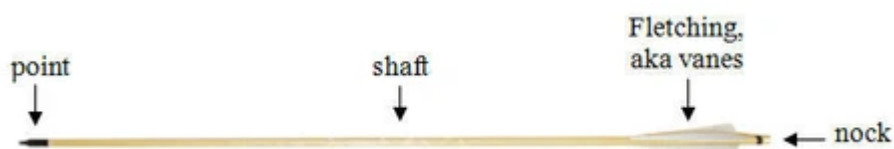
HORSE BOW

A bow style centuries old used by archers in the Eastern/Asiatic world. Shorter than a Longbow with recurved limbs and some have rigid limp tips (Siyahs). Usually shot from horseback but can also used without the horse!

Archery basics - a beginners recurve bow



Equipment basics - arrow shaft



Longbow Vs Recurve

Not sure what bow style will be for you? Need some help with some wooden bow basics? This should help your decision.

LONGBOW

It depends on your definition of 'Longbow'. In the UK a Longbow is usually the term for the classic English Longbow of medieval times with a D shaped profile. In Europe and the rest of the world, a Longbow can be an American Flatbow also known as an American Longbow. Developed in the 1930s and used for target shooting and hunting.

RECURVE BOWS

There are lots of variety on these bows. Olympic style recurves have weights, stabilisers, clickers, long rods and sights. Traditional recurves are either one-piece or takedown. With a takedown, you change the limbs to change the bow poundage.

What is a longbow?

For this article, we are using the term Longbow to mean an English Longbow. Made from either one piece of wood such as yew or osage orange. The tighter the growth rings the better for compression strength. Often termed as a 'self-bow'. Good bows are also crafted from many straight grained wood laminates. Speed and performance are key to good wood choices.

This bow generally has a longer length of 72" and above. This bow of old ages is shot 'off the hand' without a shelf or sights. It's a very simple bow in design yet one of the hardest bows to master. Steeped in nostalgia and romance, everyone loves an English Longbow. Should that be Welsh Longbow? Another article to come on that I'm sure!

What is a recurve bow?

Recurve bows are shorter in length than a Longbow. Easier to use in difficult environments. Perfect for dense forests or from horse-back where a longer bow would be a hindrance. The recurved tips of the bow enable enhanced speed and power to the shot.

Why shoot a longbow?

Do you want to connect with your battle-hardened ancestors of old? Do you like to smile a lot and have lots of fun? If the answer is yes, then this is going to be the bow for you. Styles include Victorian style target bows and longer draw length military warbows. This is what we love about traditional archery.

Shoot a Longbow with feather fletched wooden arrows. Never shoot one with carbon shafts! You will soon find out why this bow puts that massive smile on your face when shooting wooden arrows. You can learn to shoot an English Longbow in minutes and enjoy a lifetime of fun learning how to master it. Take a look at the video to see how easy it is to shoot an English Longbow.

Why shoot a recurve bow?

Most people when learning will start with a recurve bow. There is a reason for this. Recurve bows are easy to use by everyone no matter what age, and they are very forgiving to shoot.

Shooting your recurve arrows from a shelf rather than your hand is easier. The handle on a recurve is like a pistol grip. If you want a vast choice of arrow materials, then this may be the bow type for you. If transport is an issue and you would prefer to pack the bow up into a small case then think about a takedown recurve.

What size longbow do I need?

A longbow should fit to your height plus a couple of inches as a rough guide. If you shoot one that is too short, you will find the bow won't feel smooth to draw. Too long and there is a waste of energy with the extra height of the limbs at full draw.

How to string a longbow

There are several methods to string a Longbow. There are push-pull and step through methods. We always tell our customers to use a double loop longbow stringer. This method puts an even strain on the limbs and avoids twisting the limbs.

It's also safer as you have complete control of the stringing process. Using a stringer will keep your bow in peak condition and lengthen its lifespan.

How to shoot a longbow

How to shoot the English Longbow

How to shoot a recurve bow

Traditional Archery Tips - how to shoot a recurve bow

Which is better longbow or recurve?

Want an honest answer? That all depends on you, your style of archery, your form and what you want to get from a bow. There is no 'this bow is better than that bow'. With traditional archery, it is all down to the feel of the bow and how you connect with the shot.

We always say the bow chooses the customer. We have years of experience working with archers so we know that what works for one archer won't work for another. Come down to the shop and shoot two identical bows you will see what we mean!

What's next?

If you need advice on archery equipment or help in how to shoot your bow then please do [contact us](#) and we will try our best to advise.