

TRADITIONAL ARCHERY SURVIVAL GUIDE

Choose smart. Tune well. Hunt efficiently.



BOW

ARROWS

TUNE

RECOVER

KNOWLEDGE • SKILL • DISCIPLINE • SURVIVAL

Independent educational field guide • verify current laws, local conditions, and expert guidance

SYSTEM PRIORITIES

START WITH THE SYSTEM

Choose a bow you can shoot when cold, tired and compressed by terrain

Traditional archery rewards simplicity, but only after disciplined setup. The useful survival bow is the one that draws smoothly in layers, carries safely through cover, and launches every field arrow with predictable impact.

1 Core principles

- Accuracy and repeatability outrank maximum draw weight. A bow that breaks form is too heavy for the job.
- Select the complete system - bow length, draw weight, string, shelf or rest, shaft spine, point weight, and fletching.
- Favor simple, repairable components that can be inspected and serviced with a compact field kit.
- Tune broadheads and small-game heads before deployment; never assume field-point accuracy transfers automatically.
- Conserve arrows through close-range shot selection, a reliable backstop, visible cresting, and deliberate recovery.

A romantic bow that cannot be drawn cleanly after a week of cold work is expensive firewood.

2 First-hour priorities

- Confirm local law and the current competition equipment brief before choosing the bow or arrowheads.
- Measure actual draw length in the clothing and shooting posture you expect to use.
- Shoot the candidate bow repeatedly from kneeling, seated, and uneven-ground positions.
- Build and number a matched shaft set, then record total mass, balance point, brace height, and nocking point.
- Prove broadhead and small-game impact at realistic distances before locking the nine-arrow mix.

The official Season 12 gear list currently published by HISTORY specifies one primitive recurve or longbow and nine arrows. Verify the current season brief.

FIELD RULE

Bring the bow only when you can already shoot it well. In a long-duration challenge, accuracy and arrow recovery matter more than impressive specifications.

RECURVE VERSUS LONGBOW SELECTION MATRIX

CHOOSE DELIBERATELY

Recurve versus longbow selection matrix

Both styles can work. Score the bow against your body, shooting skill, shelter space, brush density, repair plan, and likely shot opportunities.

Factor	Recurve	Longbow	Field decision
Overall length	Often shorter for equivalent draw length	Usually longer and more gradual	Favor the bow that moves safely through local cover and stores without limb pressure.
Draw character	Can feel sharper near full draw	Often smooth and progressive	Choose the curve that preserves anchor and release under fatigue.
Portability	Compact models travel well	Long limbs can snag or crowd shelter	Practice carrying, sitting, kneeling and entering camp.
Forgiveness	Good when tuned; sensitive to grip torque	Often stable with a clean release	Shoot both from field positions, not only a flat range.
Stringing	May require a bow stringer and method practice	Stringing method varies by design	Use the manufacturer-approved method and carry repair material.
Cold-weather use	Compact limbs may clear bulky clothing better	Longer geometry may feel smoother	Test with gloves, shell, hood and low light.
Repairability	Take-down parts may be replaceable but add joints	One-piece simplicity, fewer interfaces	Inspect tips, fades, limb surfaces, grip and string daily.
Best choice	The one that groups reliably	The one that groups reliably	Skill and fit decide; labels do not.

Decision note: Use a controlled trial: identical target, realistic clothing, five cold-start shots, kneeling and seated strings, and a fatigue round after camp work.

BOW AND ARROW TUNING WORKFLOW

REPEATABLE BEATS HEROIC

Bow and arrow tuning workflow

Change one variable at a time and record the result. Tuning is a controlled diagnosis, not a séance involving feathers and optimism.

1

ESTABLISH THE BOW BASELINE

Set brace height and nocking point inside the maker's recommended range. Confirm string condition, limb alignment, shelf or rest, silencers, and serving.

2

MATCH THE SHAFT FAMILY

Use shafts of the same model, spine, length and insert system. Number them, weigh them, spin-test them, and reject damaged components.

3

TUNE WITH SAFE PRACTICE POINTS

Compare bare-shaft or controlled field-point groups at short range. Adjust nocking point, brace height, center shot or shaft dynamic spine in small steps.

4

CONFIRM HUNTING-HEAD FLIGHT

Install sharpened or practice-matched heads safely. Compare impact and orientation with field points. Broadhead flight must be proven, not assumed.

5

LOCK AND DOCUMENT

Record final brace height, nocking point, shaft mass, point mass, fletching, balance, and observed impact. Recheck after string or component changes.

ARROW SYSTEM AND COMPONENT BUILD

ONE TUNED FAMILY

Build arrows as a matched system

Shaft spine, total mass, point weight, nock fit, and fletching must work together. A mixed-purpose quiver still needs common impact behavior and predictable recovery.

1 Arrow build order

- Select one shaft family and cut every shaft to the same measured length.
- Match spine to actual draw weight at actual draw length, not the number printed on the bow alone.
- Use secure inserts or adapters and verify every point seats square to the shaft.
- Set nock fit so the arrow clicks securely yet leaves the string without excessive pinch.
- Fletch consistently: same feather length, profile, orientation, offset or helical, and index position.
- Weigh and spin-test finished arrows; group close-mass shafts for the most critical heads.
- Number and crest shafts so flight history, damage and recovery are easy to track.

2 Head and fletching roles

- Cut-on-contact two-blade broadheads: maximum penetration and simple resharpening for lawful big-game opportunities.
- Judo or spring small-game heads: snag vegetation and reduce loss on ground-level shots.
- Solid blunts: durable impact for stump practice and suitable small-game applications where lawful.
- Flu-flu fletching: high drag and visible recovery for short bird opportunities; test point-of-impact separately.
- Three 5-inch shield feathers: stable broadhead control and visibility at realistic distances.
- Three 4-inch parabolic feathers: quicker, lower-drag small-game shafts where flight remains stable.
- Four low-profile feathers: durable blunt setup with strong steering and compact clearance.

3 Nine-arrow principle

- Four broadhead-capable arrows preserve large-game opportunity while leaving room for daily-calorie tools.
- Two judo or small-game arrows handle brush-edge targets and are easier to recover than broadheads.
- Two durable blunt arrows support practice, stump checks and lawful small-game work.
- One flu-flu bird arrow provides high visibility and short flight; it must be tuned as its own system.
- All nine should share compatible shaft and nock architecture so repairs, observations and impact remain predictable.

A practical starting mix: arrows 1-3 broadheads, 4-5 judo or small-game heads, 6-7 blunts, 8 flu-flu bird arrow, 9 spare broadhead-capable hunter. Adapt to local species and law.

THE 9-ARROW LOADOUT

A practical mixed quiver for Alone-style traditional hunting.

#	PURPOSE & TARGETS	HEAD TYPE	FLETCHING
1	 BIG GAME	 125-145 GRAIN TWO-BLADE BROADHEAD	 3 x 5 IN SHIELD FEATHERS
2	 BIG GAME	 125-145 GRAIN TWO-BLADE BROADHEAD	 3 x 5 IN SHIELD FEATHERS
3	 BIG GAME	 125-145 GRAIN TWO-BLADE BROADHEAD	 3 x 5 IN SHIELD FEATHERS
4	 SMALL GAME / BRUSH	 125 GRAIN JUDO OR SMALL-GAME HEAD	 3 x 4 IN PARABOLIC FEATHERS
5	 SMALL GAME / BRUSH	 125 GRAIN JUDO OR SMALL-GAME HEAD	 3 x 4 IN PARABOLIC FEATHERS
6	 BLUNT HITTER	 BLUNT OR SMALL-GAME BLUNT	 4 x 3 IN LOW-PROFILE FEATHERS
7	 BLUNT HITTER	 BLUNT OR SMALL-GAME BLUNT	 4 x 3 IN LOW-PROFILE FEATHERS
8	 BIRD ARROW	 BLUNT OR JUDO HEAD	 FLU-FLU FLETCHING
9	 SPARE HUNTER	 125-145 GRAIN TWO-BLADE BROADHEAD	 3 x 5 IN SHIELD FEATHERS

WHY THIS MIX WORKS



Preserves several broadheads for larger opportunities.



Gives multiple small-game options.



Includes one dedicated bird arrow.



Keeps one spare hunting arrow.

MARK YOUR ARROWS



NUMBER SHAFTS

Label 1-9 for quick ID.



USE VISIBLE CRESTING

Make each type easy to see.



SEPARATE BROADHEADS FROM BLUNTS

Avoid mix-ups in the moment.

LEGEND: HEAD & FLETCHING COMBINATIONS



125-145 GRAIN
TWO-BLADE
BROADHEAD



125 GRAIN
JUDO OR
SMALL-GAME HEAD



BLUNT OR
SMALL-GAME
BLUNT



BLUNT OR
JUDO HEAD



3 x 5 IN
SHIELD
FEATHERS



3 x 4 IN
PARABOLIC
FEATHERS



4 x 3 IN
LOW-PROFILE
FEATHERS



FLU-FLU
FLETCHING

CHOOSE SMART. TUNE WELL. HUNT EFFICIENTLY.

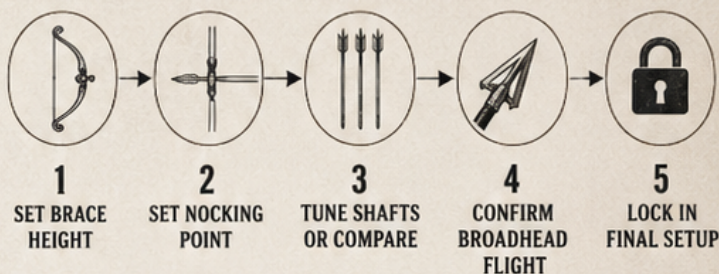
TUNING, PRACTICE & FIELD MAINTENANCE

Confidence comes from repeatability before the first shot in camp.

1 SIMPLE TUNING SEQUENCE

- 1 Set Brace Height**
Adjust to the bowyer's recommended range for your bow. Small changes matter.
- 2 Set Nocking Point**
Start at the manufacturer's recommendation or a proven baseline.
- 3 Tune Bare Shafts or Compare Field Points and Broadheads**
Ensure both fly the same. Adjust rest center, nocking point, or spine as needed.
- 4 Confirm Broadhead Flight**
Shoot fixed or mechanical heads and confirm consistent impact with field points.
- 5 Lock in Final Setup**
Recheck all settings. Mark measurements. Record arrow specs and results.

TUNING WORKFLOW



2 PRACTICE PRIORITIES

- ▶ Kneeling shots – stable under stress and uneven ground.
- ▶ Seated shots – simulate real hunting positions.
- ▶ Cold-weather shooting in layers – maintain draw, anchor, and follow-through.
- ▶ Stump shooting – draw from natural rest points.
- ▶ Short-range accuracy – focus on clean hits inside 20–30 yards under calm form.

3 ARROW RECOVERY & CONSERVATION

- ▶ Watch your arrow's flight and mark the hit location.
- ▶ Always check behind the target before moving in.
- ▶ Carry bright cresting for easier visual recovery.
- ▶ Conserve arrows—take only high-probability shots.
- ▶ A recovered arrow is a future meal.

4 FIELD MAINTENANCE

- ▶ Dry feathers fully after rain, dew, or damp conditions.
- ▶ Check nocks for cracks or looseness.
- ▶ Inspect broadheads for damage or bends.
- ▶ Touch up edges lightly with a stone.
- ▶ Rotate arrows to balance wear and prolong life.

5 CAMP REPAIR KIT IDEAS



Spare Nocks



Serving Material



Glue



Feather Repair Tape



Small Sharpening Tool



String Wax

FINAL ADVICE

Bring the bow only if you can already shoot it well.
On Alone, skill and arrow conservation matter more than romantic ideas about archery.

FIELD SHOOTING AND CONSERVATION SCENARIOS

ADAPT BEFORE CONDITIONS FORCE IT

Field shooting and conservation scenarios

The best field shot is not the one you can imagine making. It is the one that remains ethical, recoverable and repeatable under actual conditions.

1 Cold start in heavy layers

- Warm fingers and shoulders before drawing.
- Clear the string path from sleeve, chest strap and loose fabric.
- Use a conservative draw cycle; do not force a cold limb or body.
- Take a known-distance stump or target check only when safe and arrow recovery is certain.
- Stop if anchor, release or balance changes.

2 Small game in brush

- Confirm the target and a safe backstop.
- Use a judo or blunt head suited to the animal and legal method.
- Shorten distance until the vital area is a high-confidence target.
- Watch the complete flight and mark the impact location.
- Search methodically before abandoning the arrow.

3 Larger game opportunity

- Use only a proven broadhead arrow.
- Wait for angle, range and body position you have practiced.
- Do not shoot through uncertain cover or toward water, rock or skyline.
- Observe impact, direction of travel and landmark references.
- Follow local legal and ethical recovery requirements.

4 Daily camp maintenance

- Unstring only as recommended for the specific bow and storage plan.
- Dry feathers and string; keep gear away from direct fire heat.
- Inspect nocks, shafts, inserts, heads, serving, limb tips and grip.
- Touch up broadhead edges carefully and protect them in the quiver.
- Rotate arrows so wear does not concentrate on one shaft.

FAILURE MODES AND CORRECTIONS

DIAGNOSE THE SYSTEM

Failure modes and corrections

Most archery failures announce themselves through changed sound, impact, feel or visible damage. Stop before a small defect becomes a broken bow or injured hand.

Failure signal	Likely cause	Best correction
Groups open suddenly	Fatigue, clothing contact, loose nock or rest, brace-height drift	Stop. Inspect equipment, shoot a close controlled group, and correct one variable at a time.
One arrow flies differently	Bent shaft, damaged feather, loose point or nock, mass mismatch	Quarantine the numbered shaft; spin-test and repair or retire it.
Broadheads plane or miss field points	Poor tune, excessive steering demand, unsquared components	Return to shaft tune, component alignment and verified broadhead practice.
String frays or serving separates	Abrasion, dry fibers, bad nock fit, limb-tip damage	Do not shoot. Repair or replace the string and inspect every contact point.
Bow develops crack, lift or unusual creak	Limb damage, delamination, impact or unsafe heat exposure	Unstring safely if appropriate and retire the bow pending expert inspection.
Arrows repeatedly disappear	Poor backstop, low-visibility cresting, excessive range or rushed recovery	Change the shooting location and head type; shorten distance and mark every impact.

FIELD CARD, RED FLAGS AND SOURCES

CARRY THE STANDARD

Archery deployment and daily inspection card

A nine-arrow kit is a finite resource. Protect the bow, protect the shafts, and refuse shots that trade long-term capability for hope.

FIELD CHECKLIST

- ☐ Current rules and local hunting regulations verified.
- ☐ Bow draw weight proven from field positions in full clothing.
- ☐ Brace height and nocking point measured and recorded.
- ☐ String, serving, silencers and limb tips inspected.
- ☐ All shafts numbered, weighed, spin-tested and damage-free.
- ☐ Nocks fit consistently and inserts are secure.
- ☐ Broadhead arrows group with practice references.
- ☐ Small-game and flu-flu arrows have separate impact records.
- ☐ Broadheads sharpened, protected and separated from blunts.
- ☐ Quiver carries securely without crushing feathers.
- ☐ Repair kit includes compatible nocks, serving, adhesive, feather repair material, wax and sharpening tool.
- ☐ Every shot has a safe backstop and a recovery plan.

STOP / REASSESS

Cracked shaft, loose insert or nock, lifted splinter, damaged carbon or unexplained vibration.

Limb crack, delamination, twisted limb, damaged tip or new creaking sound.

Inability to reach anchor cleanly while cold or fatigued.

Target, background, legal status or recovery route is uncertain.

Broadhead impact is not verified with the current setup.

AUTHORITATIVE STARTING POINTS

HISTORY - published Alone gear list
<https://www.history.com/shows/alone/articles/gear-list>

USA Archery - education and safety
<https://www.usarchery.org/>

National Bowhunter Education Foundation
<https://www.nbef.org/>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
<https://www.fws.gov/>

Archery and hunting involve serious risk. Follow local law, certified instruction, safe-range rules and ethical recovery standards. Never shoot without a positively identified target and safe background.