

Technical Bulletin - Back to the Basics

By Guy Krueger, Education and Training Manager

This quarter we will take a step back and talk about the basics of the shot process. Specifically, we will look at stance and posture. Now, you may be reading this and say, I know about stance and posture. This technical bulletin is not going to go into the details of what a correct stance and posture will look like, but it will instead offer observations and questions so you can reflect on how invested you are in the foundation of the shot process. I want to challenge you to take a closer look and ask yourself if you or your archers consistently perform these basic skills correctly.

Stance and Posture

We recommend an open stance as pictured in the diagram to the right for compound and recurve athletes. This same concept is communicated through all levels of our coach education. There are some important things to consider here though. First, something that is often forgotten is that we recommend an open stance for a few reasons, but most notably because it provides a more stable structure as a result of the torsional rigidity from coiling, and it increases the feeling of back tension in the drawing side.

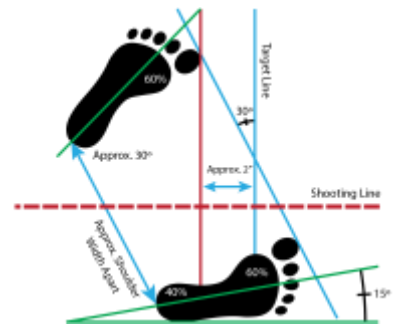
It is also important to consider the degree to which someone's stance is open depends a lot on their flexibility in their torso. More flexible archers may be able to have a more open stance and vice versa for less flexible athletes.

Finally, with stance, it is also important to remember that 60% of the archer's weight should be on the balls of their feet. The distribution of weight greatly affects the archer's posture.

Posture

The best archers in the world across the board are extremely disciplined in their posture. Regardless of the technique or style of form, the best archers in the world follow some key concepts when it comes to posture.

These key concepts are:



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- Flat Back
- Knees locked
- Body Centered
- Head position remains still during execution

Observations

Over the years, it has been an observation of mine that a lot of archers and coaches want to run before they can walk. Especially with our young archers, I notice that not enough emphasis is placed on mastering the correct stance and posture before learning and mastering other steps of the shot process. A response I often hear is that “it’s not that important”. This comment couldn’t be further from the truth because so much depends on the body’s posture.



The body’s posture is determined largely in part by the head position. Body posture and head position have a very big impact on draw length, shoulder position, and scapula position. Small inconsistencies in posture can affect these areas on each shot causing greater inconsistency at the target. Incorrect head position can also cause the bow string to interfere with the chest protector, which can lead to false indications when tuning. Without developing a strong foundation, the archer is going to be limited on their overall potential. The analogy can be made that building an archer’s ability is similar to building a skyscraper. The higher the ability/skyscraper, the stronger and more well-engineered the foundation needs to be.

Summary

As we enter the end of the outdoor season, this is a good time to ask yourself if you or your athletes have best foundation possible. As you take the time to evaluate your current performance level and abilities, consider the effects of your posture and stance. Challenge yourself to improve your foundation so that you can reach higher limits.