

ASK BILL

Question

Another archer and I were talking the other day and he said he wanted to ask me about bow shoulder position. He said he will raise his shoulder to a certain position that feels OK and will be shooting pretty well for a while and then he won't be able hold as steady. He wanted to know my opinion on how much to raise the bow shoulder and how to know when you have it in the correct position.

Answer

The short answer is, "You don't want to raise your bow shoulder." The reason for this is that it takes muscles to raise the shoulder. It also takes muscles to extend the shoulder toward the target. We don't want to do either one because when those muscles become tired after shooting for a while you won't be able to hold the bow as steady. We want to relax these muscles so they won't interfere with holding steady when they get tired.

To learn the correct bow shoulder position I recommend you start without your bow. Simply stand in your shooting position with you hands at your sides with shoulders down and relaxed. Then, while keeping your bow arm straight, raise your bow hand and point your index finger at the target. If you lift only your hand and arm, your shoulder will still be down where it was when your hand was down by your hip. It will take conscious muscle effort to raise your shoulder. Next you can practice raising your bow and leaving your shoulder down.

To get the feel of the 'shoulder down' position it may help to intentionally raise your shoulder and then lower it a few times to see what high and low feel like. The low position is what you want.

Comments

This topic is much easier to demonstrate in person than to explain using the keyboard. If you are not sure what I am describing I can show you very quickly in person when you see me. The part about extending the shoulder is also very easy to show in person so please ask when you see me. Both the raising and the extending of the bow shoulder are very detrimental to minimal sight movement and I think we all would like that sight to move as little as possible so keep those bow shoulders down.