

ASK BILL

Question

Bill,

Is there a way to know what my draw length is supposed to be? When I went to the pro shop to buy a bow they just told me they only had one that fit me. Is there a way to know ahead of time what I should buy?

Answer

Yes there is and I just learned about this a couple years ago. I have since found it other places on the internet and it is not new at all but it was new to me not too long ago. This method gets you very close and is close enough for purchasing a bow. The first thing you do is measure your wingspan. That is the length from middle finger tip to middle finger tip when you stand with your back to a wall with your arms level with your shoulders and the backs of your hands against the wall. Take this measurement in inches. For a 71 inch wingspan you should shoot a 28 inch AMO draw length. Pretty much all the bows are now rated in AMO draw length so this makes it simpler than having to convert from true draw to AMO draw. Since not everyone has a 71 inch wingspan we need to know what to do. For every inch longer than 71 inches you add $\frac{1}{2}$ inch to the 28 inch draw length and for every inch shorter than 71 inches you will subtract $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the 28 inch draw. For instance, I measure just a little less than 73 inches so my draw length is a little less than 29 inches. The table below may help.

Wingspan	AMO draw length	Wingspan	AMO draw length
68"	26.5"	72"	28.5"
69"	27"	73"	29"
70"	27.5"	74"	29.5"
71"	28"	75"	30"

The method gets you really close and then I can tell by looking at your form if small adjustments are needed to get things lined up correctly. Mainly, I look at your draw arm elbow to see how it is lined up with the arrow and how high or low it is.

Comments

Most people who don't get competent help end up with a bow that is too long because the most popular draw length bow the shop will stock is the good old stand by 30 inch. That 30 inch bow is a good fit for most people who have a 75 inch wingspan. 75 inches is 6 feet 3 inches. Most people have a wingspan really close to their height so that 30 inch bow will fit most people who are around 6 feet 3 inches tall. As we all know, most people shooting a bow are not 6 feet 3 inches tall but there sure are a lot of those 30 inch bows out there in the hands of the average bow hunter and most of the time it is not the bow hunter's fault. He just bought what he was told or the only thing available.

Thanks, Bill Schuh.