

## The Care and Feeding of Archery Equipment

By Lord Paul Stoddard, Starkhafn Captain of Archers

**Overall Theme**-“Take Care of Your Weapons and Your Weapons will Take Care of You”

### **A. Bow Storage-How do I keep my Bow?**

1. Store bows horizontally-not vertically (lowers risk of potential chipping/cracking of Tips or twisting of bow limbs);
2. Please unstring your bow when not in use (lessens potential twisting of bow limbs);
3. Please do not put things on top of your bow during storage;
4. Please keep bows in air-conditioned locations (Heat Kills in the Desert, particularly in the Summer);

### **B. Bow Cleaning (Applicable to most Commercial Bows)(Welcome to Zen Cleaning)**

**Necessary Items:** Microfiber Clothes (Walmart-Packs of 2, 6 and 12), Simple Green (All Purpose Cleaner), Goo Gone Spray Gel (can be found at Wall-Mart or Lowes), Mothers' California Gold Brazilian Carnauba Cleaner Wax (Tall Container-Not Paste-Can be found at any automobile supply store); 1 or 2 camp towel-(can be found at Walmart for less than \$5)

#### **1. Methods**

- a. Wipe Down Bow with moistened Microfiber Fiber cloth on top of camp towel;
- b. If foreign element(s) are still on bow, use Simple Green on cloth and gently continue to work out element;
- c. If foreign element(s) still on bow, spray Goo Gone onto cloth (light spray) and wipe gently (Particularly on areas where your Strike Plates/Arrow Rests are if you are removing/replacing them);
- d. Wipe Down bow with clean water on moistened Microfiber cloth;
- e. Wipe Dry with micofiber cloth;
- f. Starting with limbs, apply a **thin** layer of Brazilian cleaner wax with cloth;
- g. Let dry until sticky (do not allow to become completely dry, i.e. pasty) (usually time-is 5 to 10 minutes; In Summer heat, it will be sooner)
- h. Rub in gentle circular motions, buff, and clean wax off of limbs; Continue to buff for desired look);
- i. Do the limbs first, then do the primary body of bow;
- j. How many coats of wax? During the Summer, I suggest-1 coat on limbs and 2 coats on body of bow; In Winter-1 coat overall-Why? You are handling the body of the bow during the Summer. It will pick up sweat, salt, and other particulars sooner than the limbs).

### **C. Bow Examination and Regular Maintenance**

**Necessary Items:** Microfiber Cloths (available at Walmart), 1 stick of bow wax-recommend-Bohing Tex-Tile Bowstring Wax (\$5-\$8-in price and available at Three Rivers, Amazon, Aces and Arrows, and Bass Pro Shop); a Black Sharpe (will be used in installing arrow rests/limb silencers by outlining the shelf in preparation for cutting down to proper size), and Scissors (to cut the arrow rest/limb silencers to conform to your bow);

**Examine bow** before and after every shooting session. Please look for chips/cracking on limbs and/or tips. If you see cracking, what next? If surface only, probably “crazing” which is fairly

common in older bows. The bow will likely be safe to continue to shoot. If deeper, stop AND take your bow to a professional. Bow Breakage during shooting is not fun.

**Examine Bow String**-If Tacky (Good); If Dry (Bad)-Rub Bow wax with Fingers until it permeates string. How Often do you wax? During the Summer, do it as often as necessary. What is necessary? In our Barony, it will likely be almost every other shooting session (Welcome to the Las Vegas heat). Please examine the string before and after shooting session.

**Examine Bow Limbs**-Are they straight? Do they match up?

What happens if they are not matching up? You have twisting in Limbs. Please go see a Professional about the limbs. There are a variety of ways to possibly straighten out the limbs. Let a professional take care of it.

**Once Strung, examine the fit on the string on the tips of the bow.** Pull back string to ensure that bow string is properly on tips (Slowly) before each session (Do not dry fire under any circumstances).

**Take Care of You, the Archer, before each session. Warm up before you shoot** (do stretching exercises. You have to take care of you as well as your bow and related equipment).

If shooting in a desert environment like Starkhafn-**Hydrate!** If you have questions about whether you have drunk enough water/Gatorade, drink more. In 105-110-degree heat, heat exhaustion or heat stroke become real possibilities.

#### **D. Bow Equipment**

1. **Strike Plate**-Strike Plates will replace about once a year to year and half-(usually because the adhesive on the back is coming off. My recommendations-(Bear Hair Rest and Plate-\$12.99 on Amazon, Leather Strike Plate-Under \$3 at Three Rivers Archery)(I prefer strike plates are hardened plastic)
2. **Arrow Rest**-The replacement is dependent upon usage. For many of us, once every 4 to 6 months. My recommendations use Bear Style Calf Hair Rests (\$4.50 at Three Rivers Archery, or a Bear Rest and Plate (\$7.99 on Three Rivers Archery). I would also recommended-a **Wild Turkey Feather Arrow Rest** (which will run \$16.50 at Three Rivers Archery). The Turkey rest will increase speed of your arrows. The downside-is that you will need good form to utilize the advantage.
3. **Limb Silencers**-These dampens string slap noise on Recurves. Their use is **Optional**. If you take care of your bow's brace height, you will usually eliminate most shot noise. Please follow the brace height instructions for your bow. Most bows have a 7 ½ to 8 ½ inches brace height. Some are greater. Look for what is good for your bow and follow it. I still use limb silencers even after adjusting the brace height.

**Recommendations**-There are several types of Silencers including Calf Hair String Groover Silencers (can be found at Three River's Archery-\$5.99 Each (Need 2) or Traditional Archery-Recurve Bow Bowstring Groove Silencers (can be found on Amazon-Pack of 2-\$8.29). There are other silencers out there which are also good.

4. **Bow String**-Here is the request-Keep it within the Family (SCA Family)

a. Simply Traditional-<http://www.simplytraditional.net/products-page/custom-flemish-twist-bow-strings/>

Suggestions- 7 ½ to 8-inch brace height, 2 Bundle String (Choose Your Color), B55 String (For most traditional bows), 12-14 strings, .24 Halo (Will fit your arrow notches on most

arrows). They are my “go to” vendor for bow string and I have never gone to another vendor once I found them.

Other Vendors Include the follow:

- b. Merrill Marketing (SCA Vendor-Can be found on the Internet);
  - c. Viking Archery Supply-SCA Vendor-Can be found on the Internet);
  - d. Wicked Twisted Bowstrings (SCA Vendor-Can be found on the Internet);
  - e. Bow String Depot (Non-SCA Vendor-Can be Found on the Internet)
  - f. Make your Own String-Ask SCA members to help or train you (we have several in the Barony)
  - g. My String-I use a Flex Classic B55 Dacron White Recurve (12 Strands)(available on the internet as well as Aces and Arrows).
5. **Bow Stringer**-Please use one if you have a vintage bow. It will save your limbs My recommendations-try Selway Limbsaver Recurve Bow Stringer (can be found on Amazon-for \$11.93 or Three River Archery-Limbsaver Recurve Bow Stringer which costs \$15.99 with a product number SKU: 5096)
- a. **Always Unstring Your Bow when it is not in Use**-Why? You want to avoid twisted limbs, or overstressed Limbs. Limb Breakage is a Spectacular Thing-but not when it is your Bow and you are using it.
6. **Archery Glove**-It is up to individual preference-Opinions in the SCA run from No Glove (not period) to highly decorative gloves and everything in between.  
**Practical Approach**-Good Gloves can be picked up at reasonable prices from a variety of vendors.  
**My Recommendations**-Try a 3 Finger Leather glove (I recommend a **Damascus Shooting Glove-SKU 4036X which you can find at Three Rivers Archery for \$17.99**);  
**Our practice Loaner Gear** has two different types of gloves: (1) the Reel Neet Suede Shooting Glove (covers fingertips only and runs about \$13-\$15-Amazon) and (2) the Archery Max Handmade Brown Leather Three Finger Archery Gloves (can be found on Amazon-and runs \$16-\$18). If you want a “Off the Hand” Glove -See the All Need Inc.-Two finger Henry Glove (can be found on Amazon and runs \$12-\$17) or ask the period archers about gloves and see what they recommend.
7. **Arm Guard**-There are different schools of thoughts in the SCA about arm guards. They range from no arm guard at all (Love Pain?) to elaborate bracers as archery bling and everything in between.  
**Recommendation-Be Practical**-I use OMP Mountain Man 2-Strap Ventilated Leather Suede Arm Guard (can be found on Amazon at \$12.19). I have used them for 8 to 9 Years and have never found better. Please note that our heat will cause dye to bleed on your arm (usually when temp is above 105 to 110 degrees).
8. **Quiver**-What do you want? Simple or Fancy? Hip, Back, Shoulder? Quivers can run from \$11 to \$900 depending upon what you want and what your wallet can handle.  
**If Starting Archery**-Go Simple.  
**My recommendations-(1) the Allen Youth Tube Hip Quiver** (can be found on Amazon for \$11.00) or (2) the SAS Archery Side Tube Quiver with Belt Clip (Amazon-\$13.00). Use a hip quiver that is large enough to hold 12 arrows-Why? Most shoots require 6 arrows. You will

want room for extra arrows and your quiver will also store your arrows (dual purpose). Back quivers are great for Elves and hiking but a pain when you are starting out.

9. **Metal Hangers**-Feeling Fancy? You can pick magnetic hangers at Lowes for \$3 to \$4. They are great for archery practices where there are metal beams nearby. They also help keep your bow off of the ground (and avoiding other folks stepping on your bow during practice). By the way, a cart also helps serve this purpose as does an arrow holder.
10. **Bow Cases-Bow on the Go or Traveling with your Weapon**
  - a. Please do not pack on top of your Bow;
  - b. Please do not leave your bow in the car (especially if strung) (Heat kills in our climate).
  - c. Keep your bow in an air-conditioned place;
  - d. **Soft Case**-I would recommend bow socks. What type? Try Three River Archery-Standard Bow Sock-(Item Number 4051 at \$16.00) or the Guguluza Archery Bow Case 68 inch Length Silicone Treated Bow Sack for Long Recurve Tradition Bow-(try Amazon-for \$15). In most situations, a bow sock will be enough protection for your bow to prevent scratches or chipping.
  - e. **Soft Case-Individualized Bow Socks-You** can make your own bow sock with your own choice of fabric or have one of your fellow archers make one (keep it within the SCA family). They can be **highly individualized and you will be able to identify your bow from others (an advantage at competition or if you have other archers in the family). It also is a way of helping local artisans (which is always a good thing). Do not use "Fast Flight" Bowstrings on Vintage Bows!! Many of the vintage bows cannot handle the "modern strings". If you have any questions, drop by and see a bow/archer vendor.**
  - f. **Hard Case**-(Use for Airline/Bus Travel). Some folks just don't like you carrying bows around their airplanes or bus. The question is how much \$ do you want to spend? Hard Cases can run from "do it yourself" to several hundred dollars.  
**My recommendation**-Try the Three Rivers Archery-Standard Recurve Travel Hard Case (Item Number 5132X-for \$140).
  - g. **Cart and the carrying of Stuff**-  
This purchase is a matter of Individual Preference. Do you need it? Maybe, maybe not. Is it useful? Very. More stuff =greater need for a cart.  
Carts can be purchased at Lowes or other hardware stores. If shopping on the Internet-try the Mac Sports Collapsible Folding Outdoor Utility Wagon-(look on Amazon-\$89.24)-They are great for getting your gear to and from the site. For Heavy Duty Usage, try the Timber Ridge Folding Camping Wagon/Cart (Amazon-\$130). It Looks like the SUV of folding cart, built for off road driving, and has HUGE WHEELS.
11. **Rangefinder**-How much \$ do you have? -They can run up to \$400 to \$600. Do you need it?-Unlikely unless you are setting up ranges or hunting. Do you need a \$600 rangefinder which will go up to 1000 yards? If you can shoot over 1,000 yards, please join an Olympic Team or go professional. In the SCA, you may need a finder for **20 yards to 90 yards maximum and only if you are helping set up ranges**. My recommendations for rangefinders that won't bust your budget, try (1) SIG Sauer Kilo850 4x20- mm Laser Rangefinder, Black-( about \$120 on Amazon); (2) Nikon 8397 Aculon AL11 Laser Rangefinder-(about \$140-on Amazon) or (3) the Leupold-RS-650 Micro Laser Rangefinder 120464 (about \$205 on Amazon)

## 12. Feeding of Bows (Arrows)

- a. **Considerations-Asking archers about their arrows is a little like discussing politics with political junkies. Everyone has an opinion, and no one is going to change anyone's mind. So, how fancy do you want to go and how much are you willing to Spend?**

**Basic Considerations**-Wood, Carbon/Fiber/Aluminum. The SCA requires wood. If you are shooting on outdoor ranges, please think about using the carbon fiber or aluminum arrows. Most 3D targets/outdoor ranges will eat your wood arrows alive.

- b. Get arrows that match the spineage of your bow. Most arrows will run within 4 to 5 pounds of the poundage of your bow. Talk to your vendors.
- c. Types of Wood arrows? Cedar (Most Common/Preferred), Bamboo (More Exotic) and many things in between.
- d. Recommended Vendors-There are multiple arrow makers in Barony (Keep it within the family and support your local artisans). Use them for your needs if you can.
- e. Professional arrow makers?  
<https://www.nofrontiersarchery.com/>  
[John Fredenberg-Glacier Traditional Archery-  
http://www.glaciertraditionalarchery.com/](http://www.glaciertraditionalarchery.com/)  
Great customer service, great prices, very responsive.
- f. Talk to Other Archers about their arrows and vendors (get ideas and see what works for you).

## 13. Targets

- a. **Individual vs. Industrial Use-**

**For Individuals**, think about acquiring a **shooting block** (look for one that is light weight/Portable) (Three River's Archery, Bass Pro-Under \$75). They allow for private practices. There is a lot of shooting blocks on the market. Just remember-You carry to and from your shooting location.

**For Baronial Use**, many of the old standbys have closed business. Saunders mats are a thing of the past and so are many of the old straw mat vendors.

For Archery Backstops-I would recommend-<https://www.egertargets.co.uk/>

It is also on Facebook and has U.S. Vendor. The downside is that they are expensive. The upside is that they take punishment like no one's business. If you are shooting a lot, the money is worth it.

**For Mats**-Please use the 3 feet by 3 feet exercise mats or floor mats. The upside is you can put them in front of your backstops as a buffer. You will shoot them out but you can replace them. They come in packs of 8 to 20.

**For Archery Stands**-Drop by and See Us. We are currently on Version 3 or 4. We use Tripods and Quadpods rule in Starkhafn for stands. Average price-\$40 to \$60 per stand. Some Assembly required.

**For paper targets**, the standard is 60 cm. You can pick up a 10 pack almost at any archery store or on Amazon/Three Rivers.

**Final Thoughts**-“Be Safe, Have Fun”