

Equipment Buying Guide

The following document is advice for any novices who are thinking of buying their own kit. In general we don't recommend people buying their own bow for the first couple of months, as it's best to learn correct technique with the light club bows first.

However, from around Christmas time onwards it's a good idea to start thinking about getting your own stuff. What you'll need:

Tab, Armguard, Finger Sling - If you don't already have a tab or an armguard I would suggest you get one ASAP. The club ones are very basic and it's nice to have your own so you can use the same one each session. If you shoot recurve I would suggest a tab with a platform to help get a consistent reference point. You can get a decent tab from around £9 and armguards start at around £3. I would also suggest you buy a finger sling if you have not already done so, as it's very important to use one to ensure you're not gripping and twisting the bow when shooting.

Quiver - It's a good idea to get a quiver, so you don't have to keep bending down to pick arrows up off the floor. There's no need to buy anything expensive (unless you want to), you can get something perfectly good for around £20.

Riser - Personally I'd recommend buying a reasonable quality riser, although obviously this depends on your budget, basically just try to avoid the very cheapest models. You should be able to get something perfectly decent for around £150-£200 which will last you a long time. Alternatively you could buy a second hand riser off eBay, you can get some very good older top of the range risers off eBay for low prices. However, I'd recommend asking advice from a club coach or experienced archer before bidding, just to make sure you're getting a good deal.

Limbs - I'd suggest you go for cheap limbs for your first set, around £50. Once you've been shooting for a bit longer you'll probably want to increase your draw weight, so there's no point in paying £100+ for limbs that you'll change in a few months. Don't be tempted to buy heavy limbs now in the hope that you'll "grow into them", buy something you can manage. Merlin's offer a deal where if you buy limbs from them and later wish to upgrade to a higher poundage, they'll do it for a reduced price.

Pressure Button - Shibuya DX would be my recommendation. It's a good solid button that will last you for years. They've been used to win past Olympics, so they've been proven, and they only cost £20. Alternatively you can save £15 and buy a cheap button, but it'll probably fall apart, then you'll end up buying a Shibuya anyway!

Arrow Rest - Any simple stick on metal rest will do, there's no real need to spend a lot, although I'd probably avoid the Cartel one if I was you. There's not even anything wrong with the white plastic Hoyt rests that are used on club bows - they've also been used to win Olympics despite costing less than £2.

Stabilisers - A basic longrod (e.g. Mybo Inceptor) is perfectly acceptable and costs less than £30, there's no real need to spend a lot on them for now. I would not advise buying side rods straight away, they do help to stabilise the bow, but they also add additional weight and are probably more likely to make your arm tired than increase your score at the moment.

Sight - If possible buy a reasonably decent sight, avoid cartel, or any other cheap sights if you can - they rattle loose and will move/fall off mid round, causing lost points. If you can afford it, I would recommend spending around £60 on a sight, something like the Avalon Tec One or SF Velocity Carbon would be fine.

Arrows - For indoor shooting aluminium arrows are perfectly acceptable, I suggest either the XX75 Platinum or X7s, they cost around £3 - £4 each. You will need at least 6, although I'd recommend getting a set of 8 or even 12, as you are likely to break some. When shooting outdoors (after Easter) you will probably be better off with aluminium/carbon composite arrows as they're lighter and thinner in diameter, ACCs are a good arrow and cost around £8 each.

Advice on bow length

Risers are generally 25" long, with some models also available in 23". There are also a very limited number of high end models available in 27", although these tend to be very expensive and it's unlikely anyone will need one as a first bow.

Limbs come in short, medium and long. When used in a 25" riser short limbs will make a 66" bow, medium limbs will make a 68" bow and long limbs will make a 70" bow. If you have a very short draw length you may want to buy a 23" riser with short limbs to make a 64" bow. Otherwise I would recommend a 25" riser with the appropriate length limbs.

As a rough guide, bow lengths should be as follows:

Draw length less than 24" draw = 64" bow (23" riser with short limbs)

Draw length 24" - 27" draw = 66" bow (25" riser with short limbs)

Draw length 27" - 29" draw = 68" bow (25" riser with medium limbs)

Draw length more than 29" draw = 70" bow (25" riser with long limbs)

A few people have also asked whether limbs made by one manufacturer will fit in a riser made by a different manufacturer. The vast majority of modern recurve bows use ILF (International Limb Fitting), which is a system developed by Hoyt, who refer to it as HDS (Hoyt Dovetail System). This means that whatever riser you buy, any limb *should* fit in it. There may be a few cases of particular models of limbs not working well with particular risers, but as a general rule this shouldn't be a problem.

There may be some very old bows around on eBay which don't use the ILF/HDS system, but it's unlikely that anyone will find one. If you're unsure, ask an experienced archer to check for you. There are also a small number of newer Hoyt bows (the Formula series) which use a slightly different system. I would avoid these models if possible, as it will severely limit your choice of limb and they are also very expensive for a first bow.

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