



Terry Wunderle

## You need a Good Bow Arm

By Terry Wunderle

At least 90% of an archer's "misses" are caused by the bow arm. If you have flaws in this part of your form and address them, your scores will definitely increase.

Proper shoulder placement is the foundation for a good bow arm. During a shot it should be down in a set position. To understand this concept, raise your shoulder and drop it without the bow in your hand. Note that while in this state the shoulder is not being held by tightened muscles. This is how the shoulder should be set when your bow is at full draw. If your draw length is too long, you will not be able to maintain this position because the shoulder has to come up and out to maintain pressure. When done correctly, you can apply forward pressure with the force coming from the scapula as it pushes forward. As a comparison, this same muscular action can be experienced by straightening your arm and sliding it up the side of a wall.

During a shot, the bow arm should be straight or slightly bent at the elbow. The wrist should be locked and the fingers relaxed. The bow arm should have and continue to hold a steady, consistent pressure at the target. When the arrow is released, the bow arm should maintain this consistent pressure through the shot, as if you were trying to push the arrow into the target with the bow hand. If done correctly, the execution will be a smooth, fluid motion and the bow arm will finish straight at the

target. When the arrow is released and the bow arm breaks sharply to the right or left, you have an indication that the pressure is not directed at the target. Remember, where the bow arm is directing the pressure is the path the arrow will take. If the bow drops when the arrow is released, the reason is because you haven't continued the forward pressure to complete the shot. Directing the bow toward the target will solidify the shot process and greatly enhance your chances of a successful impact point.

Your sight picture can help you identify when your bow arm and form are breaking down. If you see the sight pin dropping out of the desired impact point, it's a strong indication that forward pressure is being lost. The main culprit for this is over-aiming. If too much aiming is involved in the shot process, muscles in the scapula and arm become relaxed in an attempt to guide the pin. Get out of the shot and start over. Whenever you see quick, jerking movement in the sight pin, it is a sign that there are tight muscles in the shoulder or bow arm. This is frequently produced when the shoulder is high and not set properly. Again, let down and begin again.

By cleaning up a faulty bow arm, the archer should be rewarded with the elimination of most "misses."

[Read more of Terry's shooting tips in his book, Archery: Think and Shoot Like a Champion, found at [wunderlearchery.com](http://wunderlearchery.com)]

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