Compound Archery –

**Learning Compound Archery** – Many of the steps involved in compound archery are similar to recurve archery. If you haven’t already, review the Easton video “Steps to Learning Recurve Archery”. Notice the stance and posture, the set position, and the grip, we will utilize similar steps or positions in compound shooting. We will begin shooting compound archery by learning, and then practicing, a series of steps. At first, we can learn and practice these steps using a stretch band in front of a full length mirror. Knowing what you look like when you shoot, (and what you should look like) is valuable to the archer. Eventually we want to be able to self coach. When you practice, move through these steps slowly and deliberately, after each step stop and evaluate your position, if it is not correct, correct it or start over. Using this process, like the BEST method in recurve, one step leads to the next. If a step is done incorrectly the final result will be incorrect also. In archery this series of steps is referred to as shot execution. In this module we are showing the technical side of the shot execution. We also want to incorporate a mental aspect to the shot execution, but that will be covered in a later module.

**Step 1 – Stance and Posture** – There are two stances that are acceptable for compound archery, the square stance and the open stance. The square stance is obtained by placing the feet parallel to the shooting line, keeping the toes even. The body stays perpendicular to the shooting line.

![Square Stance Feet Position](image1.png)

![Open Stance Feet Position](image2.png)

To create the open stance, the feet are placed at an angle to the shooting line, front foot 2-3 inches behind the rear foot (align the front foot toe with the instep of the rear foot). Rotate the upper torso to become perpendicular with the shooting line. The posture in both stances should be relaxed, upper body positioned over hips (not leaning forward or backwards), legs straight but not locked, with slightly

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more weight on the balls of the feet than the heels. Deciding on a stance is a personal decision, however the beginner may find it easier to start with the square stance.

**Step 2 – Grip and Set** – Nock an arrow and attach a release device. NOTE: Keep your trigger finger off of the release mechanism until the aiming step. Grip the bow using the meaty part of the hand between the thumb and first finger. Knuckles should be at a 45 degree angle, fingers slightly curled, thumb pointing towards the target (use of a finger sling is highly recommended). Rotate draw arm elbow out away from body. Turn head to target.

![Set Position – Note; square stance, head facing target, draw elbow rotated outwards. Below – Grip.](image)

**Step 3 – Set Up and Draw** – From the Set Position raise the bow arm and draw arm simultaneously, while keeping shoulders down (i.e. do not raise the shoulders). This is a good step to practice in front of a mirror with a stretch band. Try to keep your shoulders relaxed while doing this step. The bow arm can be raised slightly above horizontal, or as in the picture below, horizontal. From the Set Up Position draw the bow back to your anchor point, initiating the motion with the lower back muscles. Note; it is often difficult for beginning archers to know how to utilize the correct muscles to draw the bow with. If the archer uses a wrist style release, it will force the use of the correct muscles. Draw the bow, keeping the back of the hand flat with the wrist, try to minimize any twisting of the hand.
The Set Up Position. Note the archer is using an open stance.

**Step 4 – Anchor** – The anchor is the end of the drawing step. At this step you should be in proper alignment; draw arm elbow in line with arrow, bow arm straight, shoulders down (make sure the bow arm shoulder is not rolled in towards the string), back flat and head still facing the target. Proper compound alignment is the same as proper recurve alignment.

Proper Alignment at full Draw – Note draw arm elbow alignment with arrow and back
Below: Back at Full Draw

Anchor using a reference such as the string touching your nose or the back of the knuckles touching the jaw bone etc. The actual reference will depend on the type of release and your peep sight position. The reference will shift if you shoot at different distances due to the necessity of aligning the peep.

Anchor Point – This archer uses the second and third knuckles against the jaw as a reference.
**Step 5 Aiming** – Begin the aiming process slightly before or after anchoring. Align peep and front sight then shift eye focus to the target. Lower bow until center of target is aligned in the sight, move finger to trigger position. Increase pressure on the release trigger by focusing on the back muscles, (picture moving your draw arm elbow straight backwards in an arc). Set bow arm by pushing towards the target.

**Step 6 – Release and Follow Through** – Continue focusing on your back muscles while maintaining eye focus on the target. Gradually increase pressure on the trigger until release occurs. Once the arrow is released the bow should move forwards to the target, while the release hand should move away from the target. Allow the bow to move forwards and then drop.

Bow moving straight towards target after release – Note separation of palm and grip

After Release – Bow is dropping, release hand moving backwards
Problems:

1. Punching - Punching refers to the practice of an archer overaiming until the sight is perfectly aligned, then consciously firing the trigger to try to release the arrow at exactly the same time. The result is usually that the hand will stay stationary or move forward, back tension is lost and the release will be choppy. Punching can be hard to overcome, try to reemphasize the steps outlined above, focusing on one item, at a time. Try shooting blank bale without a target face (you should be doing this anyway). Deemphasize aiming, compound archers have a wonderful aiming system, not available to recurve archers, but it still should not become the entire focus of the shot.

2. Posture – Posture can become a big problem with compound archers due to (at least some of the time) the increased poundage’s they are able to shoot. Archers may have a tendency to form a hollow back or to lean backwards. Both should be avoided. Just like in recurve archery beginning archers should shoot with a low bow weight, and learn to develop good form. Practicing with a stretch band in front of a mirror is also a good way to solve posture problems. If you are coaching the use of a camera is a good way to show the archer how his posture looks while shooting.

3. Gripping the Bow – Gripping the bow is a common problem with compound archers. Gripping the bow will result in a torque (rotational force) applied to the riser of the bow. Do not use the wrist strap (or sling) that is commonly found on compound bows and use a finger sling instead. A homemade sling made from a shoe lace tied into a loop is the best. It can be adjusted to the exact size and the shoe lace material tends to have more grip. A stabilizer will help direct the fall of the bow.
4. Bow moving to the Left/Right After Shot – If the bow moves to the left or right (depending on whether you are shooting right hand or left hand) it is because you are not setting your bow arm during the transfer to the back muscles. Practice with a stretch band in front of a mirror to correct, when you start to try to move your elbow backwards, push towards the target with your bow arm. You are trying to engage your triceps and the latisimus dorsi muscles. You can also try a scooping motion when you raise the bow initially during the set up.

5. Bow Arm Dropping – Bow arm dropping is the simultaneous dropping of the bow arm with the release. You want to maintain your bow arm position and allow the bow to move forwards and drop naturally after the release. Correcting the above can be accomplished by practicing the sequence mentioned above in problem 4. Bow arm dropping is sometimes related to peeking, which occurs when the archer drops the bow quickly to get a better look at his shot. In this case emphasize keeping focus on the target with your eye until the arrow has landed.