

# First Traditional Bow and Accessories- suggestions

## **Bow –**

Recurve or longbow? While certainly a personal preference, the grip, physical weight and balance of a modern recurve will typically lessen the learning curve over most longbows. However, whatever bow you chose must appeal to you on some gut level. If you're not happy with it, you're not going to want to shoot it!

These days, I'm hard pressed to recommend anything other than an ILF rig for a new shooter. The functionality, versatility and tuneability can not be matched with any one piece or simple takedown bow. Most adult males interested in traditional archery should start in the 30 - 35# range AT THEIR DRAW LENGTH. The bow must be light enough so that the draw weight doesn't factor into the shot sequence.

## **Risers –**

The 23" Hoyt Excel ILF riser is an excellent choice for archers preferring a longer bow in the 64" – 68" range, The 21" Excel a better cruiser length bow and can be equally at home on target range or in the hunting field, lengths are between 62" and 66".

Any of the longer risers are more suited for dedicated target rigs.

## **Limbs –**

The Samick Privilege and Sebastian Flute Axiom limbs are inexpensive and excellent shooting limbs. Stick to wood core limbs with fiberglass or carbon surfaces, as carbon core limbs provide no advantage to beginner or intermediate shooters. The older KAP T-Rex limbs are also good, but were discontinued a while back. Hoyt limbs are good shooters, but tend to be pricier, without any added benefit.

Lancaster Archery Supply (LAS) / Trad Tech Archery (TT) is selling Samick limbs with a matte black finish, that are quite reasonable in price and possibly more aesthetically pleasing to potential traditional bow hunters. Performance is similar to the standard Samick target limbs, but they are available in higher draw weights.

Limb length (short, medium or long) depends on draw length. Most people with or near a 28" draw should opt for a 62- 64" or longer bow for the first time out.

Most ILF limbs will gain or lose 1# per inch of riser length. For example, a 40# pair of limbs rated on a 23" riser will actually weigh 42# on a 21" riser and 38# on a 25" riser

The Black Max limbs have been weighed / rated on a LAS/TT 17" riser and not the more standard 23" and 25" risers. Due to the difference in the angle the limbs attach to the riser, the limbs will weigh approximately the same on a 21" riser as they do on a LAS/TT 17" riser. (Yes, it can get confusing. If you have doubts about the weight, call the vendor and have them weigh the combination YOU ARE BUYING before they send it out.)

You should be able to find an Excel riser and appropriate starter limbs in the \$250 – 300 range with a little shopping around.

The above bows are called "take down" bows meaning they come apart into a riser section and a pair of limbs. Other than the obvious advantage in transport, this design allows you to buy extra limbs when you decide you want more weight or change length, without having to buy a whole new bow.

## **Vintage bows –**

Another option for new traditional archers is a vintage bow. Bows made in the late 1960's through the early to mid 1970's are available from some dealers, eBay and even (sometimes) garage sales. The same criteria applies: keep the weight in the mid 30#

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range, the length over 62" and the price as low as possible! If possible, examine the bow for cracks or glue line separations before buying.

## **Strings –**

For modern ILF bows, a 14 strand D97 string of the appropriate length will handle any weight from 20# - 50# and provide perfect nock fit when used with a .020" serving and small groove "G" nocks (see below). For vintage bows, only use DACRON strings, typically a 12 strand string will be appropriate for bows in the recommended weight range. Having a spare string is also a good idea.

## **Bow stringers –**

Bateman or Cartel bow stringers. Yes, you need one! Please do not string any bow by hand with the "step- through" or "push-pull" methods – for your safety and that of the bow!

## **Rests –**

For modern bows with plunger holes – NAP Centershot Flipper or a rest/plunger combination. For vintage bows – Bear Weather rest or similar. Most vintage bows will allow you to shoot off the shelf, but for a new shooter, it adds an unnecessary complication.

## **Stabilizer –**

Not really necessary on a traditional bow, but I've been using them so long most recurves just don't feel right without them. A short, 4" – 6" hunting stabilizer can be bought or made.

## **Bow cases –**

Several hard cases are available from Neet, Cartel, and a number of others for take down bows. One piece bows can be carried in hard or soft cases.

## **Arrows –**

Start with aluminum arrows. Even the Easton Blues are acceptable, if you can deal with blue arrows. Any xx75 grade aluminum shaft is fine. Typically traditional shooters use screw in points of 100 – 125 grains on aluminum arrows.

## **Quiver –**

Personal choice. Almost any side, hip or back quiver will work. Consider one with an accessory pocket to carry things like extra nocks, strings etc...

## **Tabs (finger protection) –**

For target oriented shooters – Cavalier/AAE. The tab size is based on the width, not the length. For bow hunting archers – SAM (Super Archery Mitt) currently sold by Martin archery. It has an unusual design, but is the most (finger) protective one out there.

There are a number of other tabs on the market, from Saunders, Neet, etc., and most are usable for new shooters; avoid tabs with "hair" layers. Their durability isn't great.

I would avoid "gloves" for new shooters. While they seem simpler, they can make the release trickier and finding the right size may be problematic. For more experienced shooters, it becomes a matter of preference.

**Arm guard –** Any one you like, just keep it simple! (Yes, you'll need one.)

## **Accessories –**

Nocking points, bow squares, etc. can be fabricated from some household items or borrowed from the local range or club.