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Hey Enso Center Archers,

This week, we've put together a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) guide for archery gear, everything (and then some) that you might want for the range.

We're covering bows, arrows, strings, clothing, protective gear, bow and arrow transports and carriers as well as tools and targets.

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### **Archery - Basic Gear FAQs**

Some of the equipment listed below comes in a variety of styles. At Enso Center, we have a range of equipment available to our students to try. By trying different equipment, students may find that some gear works better for them than others.

#### **Basics**

##### **What do I need to know about bows?**

There are three main types of bows – recurve, compound, and longbow. The Enso Center bows are a mix of longbows and recurves. Recurves get their name because the ends of the bow curve away from the archer. Longbows get their name because they often resemble a long, straight stick, with no major curvature. Bows can be left-handed or right-handed to suit the individual, some of the Enso Center bows are both. Our bows also have an arrow rest that the arrow sits on for shooting. Some bows are made without these and the arrow rests on the archer's hand for shooting.

##### **What does bow weight mean? Do I need to lift weights to do archery?**

Bow weight is a measure of how much effort is needed to draw the bow. At Enso Center, our bows range in draw weight from 6-35 pounds of pull. Students can try a range of draw weights under supervision to determine the best option for them. You can lift weights if you want to, but it may not change your archery abilities ;-)

##### **What about arrows?**

Arrows can be wooden, aluminum, carbon, or a carbon / aluminum combination. Enso Center students use mainly carbon arrows during class. If you have your own equipment, your arrows should be long enough for you to draw without bringing the point inside the handgrip and with a stiffness (spine) to match your bow.

Arrows have fletchings, either feathers or plastic vanes, which act as propellers to spin and stabilize the arrow in flight. Most of our arrows at Enso Center have vanes, these hold up better over time and do not become waterlogged in our Pacific Northwest weather.

Our arrows have field points (small tips) when outside or blunts when inside. We do not use broadheads (large, often bladed tips) as they cause too much damage to our targets.

##### **Do I need specialty clothing?**

A bracer or an arm guard is used to keep loose clothing from getting in the way of the string and to stop the string from hitting the arm, which may cause bruising. The bracer is worn on the inside of the arm holding the bow and usually fits between the elbow joint and the wrist. Some bracers have additional length to protect the inside of the bicep. Enso Center has both styles of bracers, which students are welcome to use during class.

##### **What about gloves or hand gear?**

A tab is a semi-triangular piece of leather worn across the inside of the fingers on the draw hand to provide some protection from the string. An alternate option is a shooting glove, which covers the ends of three fingers and attaches at the wrist. These gloves can cover the back of the hand or the back and palm. Enso Center has both styles of finger protection available for our students to use.

## **Other Items**

### **What about something to hold the arrows?**

A quiver is a device designed to hold arrows. A side or back quiver attaches to a strap around the archer's waist or over a shoulder. Other options include bow quivers (a small attachment on the side of the bow) and ground quivers (something placed on or into the ground to hold arrows). Enso Center uses ground quivers (pylons) during our classes.

### **Do I need a tool for stringing my bow?**

A bow stringer can be used to string and unstring bows. It is usually a long string with a cup at one end and a loop and foam block at the other end. Enso Center has one and can give students instructions on their usage. The instructors have our bows strung and ready for use before students arrive and will help students who bring their own equipment.

### **Do I need anything to protect my bowstring?**

The bowstring is made up of multiple strands twisted together. These strands can rub together and create added friction during shooting which shortens the life of the string. Applying bow string wax helps provide lubrication to stop the fibers from rubbing against each other and protection against water damage. Bowstring wax should be applied regularly.

## **Nice to have items**

### **Should I have a case for transporting my bow?**

You may want a hard or soft-sided case for transporting bows between home and the range. These can be simple like a fabric tube (sock) sewn to be a few inches longer than the bow when it is unstrung or a plastic pipe with end caps. Or archers can purchase one to go with their equipment. Some cases are built to contain the arrows and other equipment as well as the bow. A bow case will help protect the bow from banging into things in the vehicle and provide some weather protection against heat, cold, or water.

### **Anything else?**

At the end of class, a cloth is handy to remove any condensation or dust and allow the archer an opportunity to check their equipment for any damage caused during practice. A cloth is also handy during class to wipe down any arrows that missed the target and became covered in dirt.

## **Instructor/Range Tools**

### **What other items will the instructor or range generally have available?**

**Pliers** come in handy for pulling out arrow tips that have come off an arrow and stayed in the target or target stand. Most of the arrows at Enso Center have screw-in tips; we check those regularly during class to make sure they don't come out. But we still have a pair of pliers handy.

Pliers can also be used to make minor repairs during practice. Such as reattaching a nock point to the string or holding a new tip in place while the glue dries.

**Nock Pliers** are a specialty tool used to remove or affix a nock point onto the bow string. The nock point is a marker for loading the arrow during shooting.

A **Bow Square** is used to measure brace height (resting distance between the bow and string) and to mark where the nock should be.

The range will have a variety of **Targets** for students to shoot at. At Enso Center, we vary between standard ring targets, balloons, seasonal items, and lighted targets.