

A look at some last-minute archery season tips

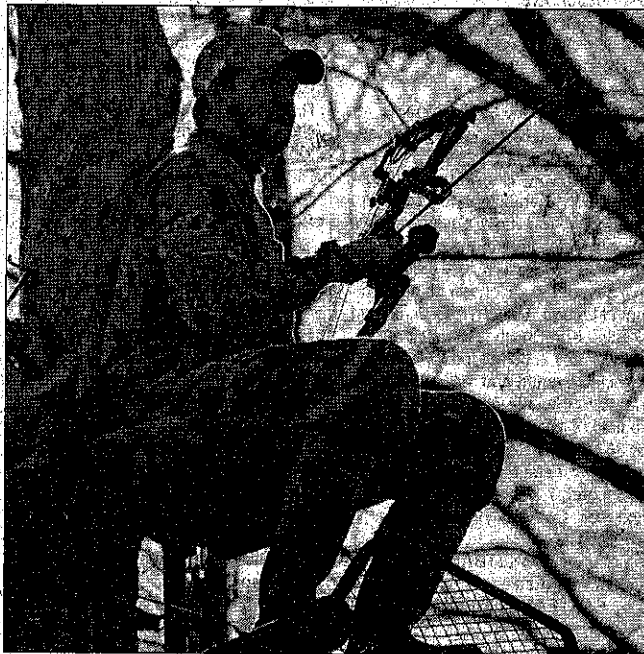
BY PHILLIP GENTRY
FOR THE JOURNAL

As outdoorsmen and women, we often wait till the last minute to prepare for that one thing we look forward to.

A couple of months ago, we were complaining about it being too hot to go fishing and wishing that hunting season would get here. Now that it's here, we often wish for more time to get ready, having spent last weekend dove hunting and now facing the bow-season opener for whitetail deer in the Up-state starting next week in Game Zone 2, and at the beginning of next month in Game Zone 1.

Sometimes hunters get so caught up in scouting for areas to hunt that the tackle that's being used to hunt with takes a back seat. Now's the time to assess your archery gear to see if there's any maintenance that needs to be done.

Start with your strings. Look for fraying or fuzzing in the strings and/or servings and cables. Fraying is often the first sign that a string needs to be replaced. If everything looks OK, take time to apply a generous coat of string wax. It's almost impossible to over-wax a bow, especially if you follow up the waxing by taking a piece of cloth or old worn leather and work the wax into the string.



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Archery season for deer is right around the corner, and a few tips could help you harvest that opening-day buck.

An estimated 95 percent of bow hunters now use carbon arrows because of their durability and better flight than aluminum arrows. Be sure to flex arrows from each end, listening for cracking or popping that might signal a weak spot in the arrow wall. Many times, archers will shoot at the same spot several times before pulling arrows, and close shots cause the shafts to slap together, which can damage the arrow on the inside with no obvious signs of damage on the outside.

If you suspect damage, discard the arrow — it's not worth the risk of a

serious injury.

Make sure fletchings, nocks and inserts are all tight and secure and replace those as needed. An arrow that was used in a prior bow kill is often still good for another use — just check to make sure the components are still sound.

If you use mechanical broadheads, make sure the moving parts are limber and not stuck in the broadhead. Check the tuning on fixed heads to make sure the arrow will still fly straight. It's also a good idea to check sharpness of the points and blades by scratching them across your thumbnail.

When shooting your bow, listen for rattling sounds or vibrations that signal something may be working loose. Visually inspect your sight screws, cam modules and limb bolt areas. Tighten these areas if they are loose, but make sure not to overtighten these bolts and screws if you need to make some adjustments.

If you haven't made time to shoot your bow, make time now. A couple hours in the backyard or at the range will not only be good for the equipment, but it will be good for you, too. There's nothing like a little bow time to help condition those smaller muscles and ligaments that only seem to get used pulling a bowstring.

Now is also a great time to assemble the rest of your hunting gear that you'll be depending on, such as binoculars, a rope for raising and lowering your weapon, mosquito repellent, deer stands and maybe the most important piece of gear you own, a tree stand fall arrest system.

A lot of successful hunting has to do with both luck and skill, but a hunter who enters the field well prepared is almost always the one who enjoys a successful hunt.

PHILLIP GENTRY is an outdoor writer and the host of PG & Boatgirl Outdoors. Download the podcast on Apple, Google Play, Spotify or at pgandboatgirl.com.