

Selecting a Compound Bow

Consider these factors before you buy any bow.

Draw Weight

When selecting a bow, the draw weight should be such that the shooter can draw the bow back quietly, slowly, smoothly, and be able to hold it for 45 seconds. An adult male with average physical strength will be most comfortable with a 55-60# draw weight. An adult female with average strength will be most comfortable with a 30-35# draw weight. As a person shoots, the draw weight may be increased with increased strength and experience. A seventy pound bow for men and a fifty pound bow for women usually work out nicely as they can be backed off 10 or 15 pounds and then increased as strength develops. If the bow is to be used for hunting, Maine requires a minimum of 35# draw weight for hunting deer.

Draw Length

Your bow has to fit. Your local pro shop is the best place to get an accurate measurement. Bow manufacturers provide a range of draw lengths at which each model bow can be set. This typically involves changing a "module" on the cam, changing the anchor point of the string on the cam, or other relatively simple procedures. Some bows, however, are draw length specific and cannot be changed. **The biggest mistake some beginning archers make is buying a bow at a yard sale or from a buddy that does not fit and that is usually too old to get parts for that will make the bow fit them.**

Speed

Most bows will not achieve the IBO rated speed. IBO speed is, however, good for comparing various bows. Bows with IBO speeds of 275 to 290 fps have designs that are highly forgiving of small lapses in form and are best for inexperienced archers. Bows possessing IBO speeds of 290 to 315 fps are the mid-performers - combining decent speed with shootability. Bows with IBO speeds over 315 fps are best reserved for experienced archers. Don't let this deter you from buying the bow you want, just be aware that it might take you a while to shoot it at its best performance level.

Brace Height

The bow's brace height is the distance from the string to back of the grip while the bow is not drawn. **The longer the brace height, the more stable the bow. The shorter the brace height is, the faster the arrow will travel.** Since a bow with a short brace height is more difficult to shoot accurately, it is recommended that novice and intermediate shooters stick with brace heights over 7 inches.

Let-Off

The draw weight of the compound bow decreases at the end of the draw stroke. This is known as let-off. It is common for bows to have let-off in excess of 75%. A bow with a 70# draw weight and 80% let-off will require the shooter to hold back only 14 lbs. once the bow reaches full draw. The only disadvantage to the high (over 75%) let-off cam is a small reduction in arrow velocity vs. the lower let-off cam system.

Cost

As with most things, a person can spend as much as one wants for a bow. **It is recommended that novice and intermediate shooters proceed in a conservative manner until:**

1. They decide they really want to take up archery either as a target shooter or as a hunter.
2. They know exactly what they like.

Most archery accessories may be transferred from bow to bow, so once an individual knows exactly what features are preferred it is relatively easy to upgrade the bow without having to purchase all of the accessories.

We carry a full selection of bows to fit everyone's budget. Call or stop in and see what we have to offer.