

A Rough Guide to Buying a Recurve Bow

Or

Cheap isn't always bad - expensive isn't always good

Buying archery equipment is a process filled with traps that can be detrimental to both your wallet and possibly even your health. I've listed a few of the things to watch out for but please remember to ASK one of the experienced archers about any purchase you are thinking about.

Risers: The most important part of your bow and probably the bit that you will have for the longest time before replacing. Consider spending a little more on your riser than the rest of your bow. This is your point of contact with the bow and the bit that defines its look and feel. The riser is less an interchangeable piece of kit and more the heart of your bow - you should love it. Bizarrely colour is important – pick a colour you really like. Note the section below on riser/limb and bow size.

Limbs: The powerhouse of your bow. Here you should not initially go for the most expensive and most powerful you can afford/draw. Initial limbs should be inexpensive and have a poundage that you can draw with a little effort but not that you exhaust/hurt yourself (called overbowing). With practice your strength will increase making it likely you will replace these limbs after a year and can be sold on to the next generation of noob. Most limbs/risers are ILF (International Limb Fitting) but some of the Hoyt ones aren't (they have their own ideas about limbs) so ensure your limbs match your riser.

Strings: You definitely don't need high performance (read twitchy) string material like 452x, 8125 or 8190. A simple inexpensive string ie fastflight or Dacron will suffice until your release is clean and you will benefit from the strings performance rather than being punished by it. Make sure the string length matches your bow length (see over) otherwise there will be problems with the bracing height.

Sights: The most problematical part of a bow. Cheap sights will shake themselves apart very quickly. The vibration that runs through the bow on release is ferocious and any slackness in build quality will be ruthlessly highlighted. Here paying a bit more is less about the future and more about the present – there is little more annoying in archery than a bow that rattles or screws that come loose every shot to say nothing of losing your sight mark if your sight block falls off/slips down.

Button: A button is a spring loaded cushion for the arrow as it leaves the bow. As long as the button is smooth in operation it will do the job. Some packages come with a button which is not very good so even with free kit you should consider an upgrade to the Shibuya DX. Its that good and will do you till you make the Scottish squad.

Rest: An often overlooked piece of kit, cheap will often come back to bite you here. For all its smallness, a rest needs to be solid as it takes some ferocious stresses in the early days of your archery—when your release is less than smooth. The larger wrap round launchers can be a bit pants (personal experience) while the smaller magnetic flipper arm rests can vary widely in quality. Expect to pay around £8-10 for something that wont let you down in the middle of a competition. Take care that the rest fits the shape of your riser—some are so slim a large arrow rest will overhang the back of the riser. An item where having a spare is a good idea (ask Geo about spare rests!)

Arrows: The best noob arrow that we always recommend is the aluminum Easton XX75. They are not expensive, are well made, durable, have good longevity and are always useful when shooting indoors. They far outperform/outlast the Jazz/Blues arrow (which are more a 'fun in the garden' arrow) for modest extra outlay.

Longrod: Worth getting a cheap inexpensive longrod early. These balance the bow and change its feel significantly. You don't need short rods/v bar at the start. Cheap is good value here and doesn't need to be upgraded until your groups approach the tightness exhibited by our treasurer with club cash. Unless you are petite—30" best.

Important Note: Bow Length

A bows length is made up of the Riser + Limbs. You should have a bow that is appropriate for your height and/or draw. Roughly this means ...

< 5' 6" = 64" 5' 6"-5' 10" = 66" 5' 10"-6' 0" = 68" 6' - 6' 2" = 70" >6' 2" = 72"

Also your draw length can determine bow size (note overlaps)

< 27" Draw length = 64" 24-29" = 66" 27-31" = 68" > 29" = 70"

Production risers come in two main sizes and two special order. The main ones are 23" and 25" and the specials (read expensive and rare) are 21" and 27". Limbs come in 3 sizes ... short, medium and long so when combined with a riser this gives the following combinations... (Note strings should be purchased to match bow size)

	Short limbs	Medium limbs	Long limbs
21" Riser	62"	64"	66"
23" Riser	64"	66"	68"
25" Riser	66"	68"	70"

To put that into physical reality — Geo shoots a 70" bow as he is 6' 1" and has a draw length of 32" while Dunky shoots a 68" bow as he's 5' 11 and has a draw length of 28 3/4". Helen being on the petite side and not having an orang-utan like draw (like geo) shoots a 64" bow - 23" riser + short limbs - to suit her 25.5" draw.