

Tim Goodwin
FitForArchery.com
Presents
Archery Warm Ups

The warm up strategies that promote consistent shooting from your very first shot of the day...



STOP!

Why the hell are you warming up like that?

I've had the strangest reaction to the warm up routine I use with my personal training clients, my group training program, ForestFit, and in preparation for any physical activity I do.

Having shot for the last 24 and more years I have come across two camps when it comes to warming up, those that do and those that don't! For many years I have been in the "don't" camp. And to be really honest with you I have not had any of the adverse effects apparently related to not doing a warm up before shooting.

I would pick up my 60 pound peak weight compound and start shooting.

In fact the only injury I have had that stopped me from shooting in all this time was when I decided to play a game of squash with my wife and got severe whiplash!

However I have met more than enough people who spend the first twenty minutes upon arriving at the shooting ground, bend and stretch and swing their arms around in big circles, who then end up being injured.

Many people would say I have been "lucky" or that "youth is on my side" but over the last 5 years my studies in to health and fitness as part of my chosen profession have taught me a thing or two about "warm ups" and what effect they have on an athlete's body!

May be there is some science behind the reasons I have not been injured through archery!

What follows is a brief examination of warming up and I'll present my own warm up system that keeps my body in check through all of my rigorous physical training routines, how it promotes better posture, function and kinesthetic awareness!

Why Do We Warm Up?

Not such a stupid question.

“A tiger lays motionless in the tall grass, the sun beating down on his back... he’s been waiting there for a few hours, he is hungry, he has not seen any wildebeest for weeks and he needs some meat to keep him from starving!

And then he hears something approaching... its lunch... and it’s a big juicy wildebeest, the tiger knows he must be quick otherwise the animal will be gone in a flash.

When the right moment comes he jumps up from his motionless state and says

“Hang on for just a moment Mr. Wildebeest, just gotta do my warm up!”

The tiger then starts to stretch his hind legs, flexes his front shoulders, rounds and then flexes his back, cracks his toes in to place. Then the legs start getting swung around, gently rotates his head, and then finishes with a nice and gracefully light jog on the spot.

The tiger turns around, but the Wildebeest has disappeared, probably laughing all the way to his mates to tell them about this stupid (and hungry) tiger!”

In nature animals don’t do a warm up before doing some physical activity so why should we?

I do actually believe we SHOULD do a warm up, but for the exact reasons why a tiger doesn’t need to do a warm up.

The tiger needs, and has, a perfectly functioning musculoskeletal and neurological system. If tiger didn’t then it would not survive in the wild for very long, any dysfunction would massively impact its ability to catch its lunch!

The 21st century human body generally does not have a perfectly functioning musculoskeletal and neurological system. In fact most of the clients I meet on a daily basis have a severely dysfunctional body caused by poor nutrition and exercise habits and the predominantly seated posture they adopt every day.

The warm up we do should work to address some of these dysfunctions and protect us against performing poor movement patterns that can ultimately lead to injury.

The problem I see in most people's warm up routines is they do not address these basic needs.

Stretching

The most common form of warm up I see is "stretching".

There is not much wrong with the stretching that goes on, it is just not done at the right time or with the right muscles, which negates its intended purpose.

It seems that stretching has gone down in folk lore as being what you do to the muscles **you are about to use** in your activity. For archery, this means a whole load of stretching of the muscles off the upper and middle back.

There is evidence to suggest this is completely the opposite of the muscles needing to be stretched.

Stretching actually causes a muscle to become "inhibited", this means it will quiet down or switch off completely. *It's a bit like stretching all the strings on your guitar before you play... it'll play like crap!*

So stretching the muscles in the upper and middle back, the ones you are about to try to use to draw the bow back, will inhibit them, no wonder the first few ends of shooting are commonly the worst. It will account for the reasons why your bow feels odd, too long a draw, too short a draw or all manner of common complaints.

Maybe the inconsistency is with you and not your equipment?

The warm up at the end of this report will not do any specific stretching in the traditional sense of the activity, however the warm up will stretch certain muscles that do need stretching.

All That Arm Swinging

Another common form of warm up is the dynamic warm up, which does actually have a place in your warm up routine. However, there is a time and a place for specific dynamic warm up movements, and a lot of the wild arm swinging you commonly witness is not something I would be happy to prescribe.

When I polled a number of people about why they warmed up in this manner, many didn't know and were just copying what they saw other people do before their shooting session.

Again not necessarily an issue, as I hope people will start copying the warm up routine I present here, however I would like to have people understand the principle behind the routine they are doing.

The arm swinging, if you choose to do it, should start slowly in a controlled manner.

I see a lot of arm swinging done with zero control, which creates a hyper-mobility at the shoulder joint, stretching ligaments beyond their normal range of motion, and creating a wear on the joint surface. Ultimately this creates impingement type injuries, frozen shoulder, torn rotator cuffs as well as meniscus wear.

Our joints have a range of motion that should be limited by our ligaments and skeletal structures. Our muscles should do the job of actively moving the limbs through that range of motion in a controlled manner. All the wild arm swinging takes us beyond that "controlled" range of motion and in to injury.

There are literally dozens of other warm up routines I have played witness to, some better than others but often without any particular science behind them. This little report will hopefully put that right with a little simple science and large helping of common sense in to your warm up.

The Warm Up

This warm up was devised to achieve a couple of key goals for each and every client that I train. I use the same basic routine with everyone and then have specific targeted manipulations, in addition to this based routine, I perform with individual clients in relation to their overall physical condition.

The goals for this warm up are as follows.

1. Progressive mobilization of all the main joint structures in the body to lubricate the joint surface with synovial fluids
2. Activation of inhibited muscles to aid optimal posture and function.
3. Mentally prepare the client for the activity they are about to participate in.

The first two are possibly of most interest, the third is kinda obvious, and something that I know that all people who do a warm up tries to achieve. Before shooting, many archers have a mental routine and get to a certain psychological state before they pick up the bow for the first time.

On the first goal the first word, “progressive” is the key word in the sentence. We start with a small range of motion, and progressively increase this in a controlled manner. We want to lubricate the entire joint surface with a lubricating substance known as synovial fluid that is automatically secreted on to the head of the joints to reduce the friction at the joint.

The second goal is something that almost no one thinks about when they warm up.

We often think about the body getting warmer but rarely do we think about “waking up” a muscle to make it work better.

Some of the biggest challenges we face as part time athletes is that we have a day job that means much of the week we are working in an office of performing tasks in a static manner, often with poor posture. This causes certain muscles to go to sleep and forget what their function is, when they should function and how they should function.

By doing the warm up in a certain way we can wake up these dormant muscles, get them to function more effectively and help your standing posture, improve the function of key shooting muscles, as well as quiet down some of

the muscles that are working too much and cause the onset of fatigue early on in your shooting day.

Let's get in to the routine itself and we can explain more as we go on.

The warm up routine described can be done prior to every single workout or shooting session. It does not take too long to complete, normally a maximum of 5 minutes.

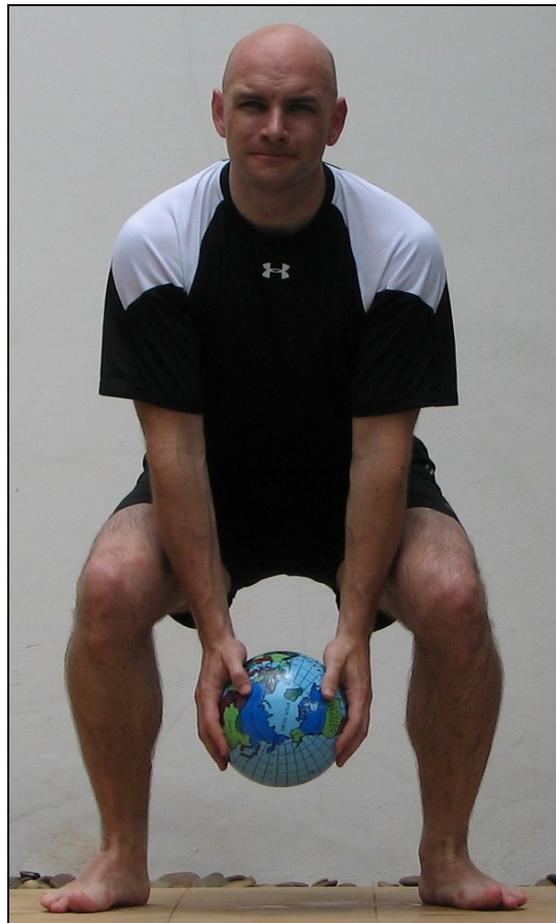
Go through each movement doing at least 15 repetitions of each movement, before moving on to the next.

Start by doing a short range of motion, just taking it to the point your body will allow it to. You'll find you can increase the amplitude of the movement as you do more repetitions.

If you feel particularly tight in a certain movement continue with more repetitions until you start to feel a little less tight.

Vertical Wood Chop

1. Start Position: Hold a medicine ball or light dumbbell with your arms extended overhead.
2. In one continuous motion bring the ball down in front of you like you are chopping wood.
3. You will have to bend at your knees to complete this.
4. Return to starting position and repeat.



This first movement is designed to gently wake up the the muscles around the ankle, knee and hip joint, as well as provide a gentle stretch for the lower back, muscles under the arms (latissimus dorsi) as well as waking up the muscles in the butt and upper back area.

Try to focus on squeezing you butt as you stand tall on each repetition and squeeze between the shoulder blades as you lift your arms above your head. This will activate two of the main areas where you are likely to have inhibited muscles

Diagonal Wood Chop

1. Start by holding a medicine ball at knee level in a semi-squat position.
2. Rotate your trunk and extend your knees while raising the ball up towards the opposite shoulder. Keep your arms fairly straight during this movement.
3. Return to the starting position and repeat for prescribed repetitions.
4. Repeat with the other side.

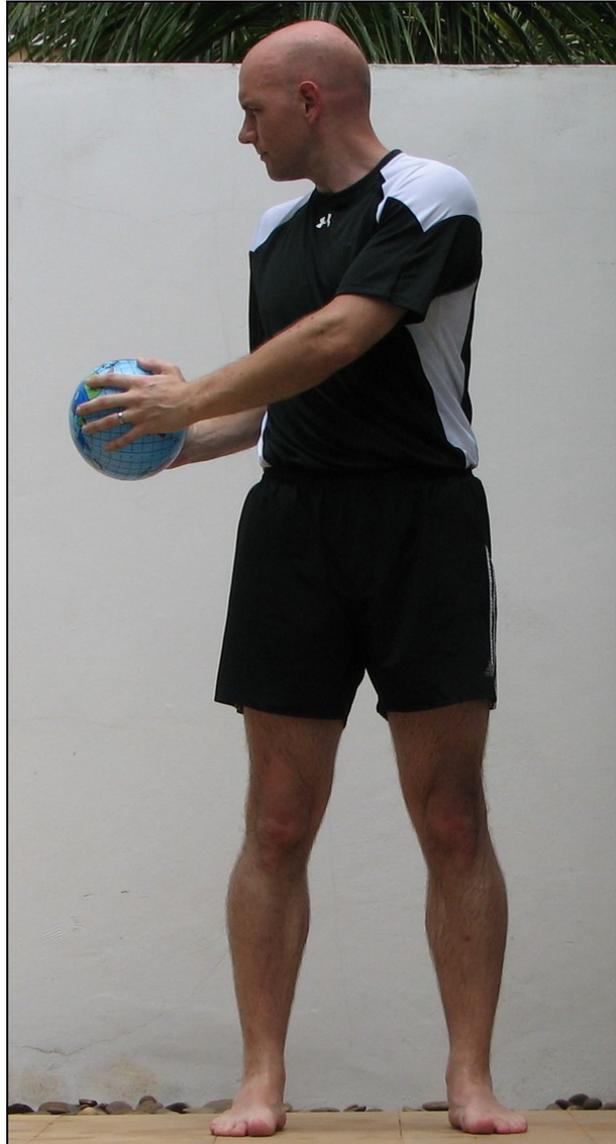


The diagonal wood chop movement is quite challenging to do at first as it requires a little coordination. Once you've figured out which way your arms and hips are meant to go you'll get a nice gentle stretch of the muscles on the inside of the leg (adductors), as well as waking up the gluteus medius muscles on the outside of your butt.

The arm movement will wake up the core musculature, including the six pack (rectus abdominus), the internal and external obliques, as well as the deeper transverse abdominus muscles. Not only that it will gently stretch the often very tight chest muscles (pectorals) as well as activate the muscles in the upper back musculature.

Torso Rotations

1. Stand tall with feet about shoulder width apart holding a single light dumbbell with both hands just in front of you with arms bent to 90 degrees.
2. Keeping your hips and legs still rotate the upper body, neck and head to the left in a smooth controlled motion.
3. Rotate back immediately to the opposite direction, all the time keeping the hips and legs still.



This seemingly simple movement is one where I see the most mistakes. The key is to separate the upper and lower body. Gently squeeze your butt (a little activation on this inhibited muscle) and then rotate from the waist upwards, there should be ZERO movement of the lower body.

We are also trying to gently stretch the commonly tight lower back musculature (erector spine).

Front/Back Leg Swings

1. Start by standing with your feet shoulder width apart. You can stand on a small step or on the ground. Support yourself against the wall or door frame.
2. Keeping your upper body perpendicular to the ground swing one leg forward and backward.
3. Do not swing your leg so hard that you cannot keep your upper body from moving.
4. Repeat for 20 repetitions and repeat with the other side.



Now gluteus inhibition is rife amongst our population, almost 90% of the clients we assess have some kind of gluteal dysfunction. Because we spend so much of our daily life in a seated posture our butt's have simply forgotten what their real function is! And no it is not to provide a soft cushion between bone and seat cover!!

This part of the warm up will only help with this inhibition if you perform it correctly; doing it without concentrating on the purpose will make your posture and function worse so take note.

When you swing your leg think of what the joint structure is it is a ball and socket. We want the ball to swing in the socket, and NOT for the socket itself to swing. Allowing

your pelvis to swing (the socket) will mean you are working muscles in the lower back rather than working the muscles of the butt!

To help you get this right, every time you swing your leg back, squeeze your butt! If it helps push two fingers in to the meat of the butt cheek... apologies for the crudeness of this but it is really important to get this working properly

Achieve this and you'll have a much better functioning body, you'll be using the right muscles to help you walk to and from the target, as well as helping you stand on the line with a strong, stable posture.

Lateral Leg Swings:

1. Start by holding onto a secure object and raise your outside leg out to the side.
2. In a smooth and continuous motion swing your leg back and forth across the front of your body.
3. Swing through your full range of motion but keep your upper body stable throughout the movement.
4. Repeat for 15 repetitions and then flip sides and repeat with the other leg.



Second only to the glute maximus dysfunction is glute medius dysfunction. And this simple warm up will help to correct this dysfunction.

Once again think about the joint as a the ball swinging in the socket this time laterally. You'll want to minimise the hitching up of the hips when you swing your leg out. (A little harder to achieve than the front leg swings)

You'll get a nice little stretch of those adductor muscles again and a waking up of the glute medius muscles to boot. Placing your finger tips on the side of the butt, about an

inch behind the boney prominence at the top of the leg, to feel the muscles of the butt activate as you swing your leg.

You're Done...

Yep, all that leg swinging and arm waving does have a purpose. BUT each element must be done in a controlled manner to get the most from the warm up, without causing any damage to your body.

So Why Have I Created This Report?

I'm going to be really honest with you! I have a sneaky ulterior motive for creating this report. Don't worry I am not trying to injure my entire competition by making you do some dodgy moves.

On the contrary I want to help you improve your shooting form with effective exercises that will improve your function and posture.

This report on warm ups is pulled directly from a new training program that is almost ready for release to the general shooting public. This new program has more unique insights in to training your body to become a more effective shooting machine.

So in return for getting this free report I want to ask that you do two things for me.

1. Actually use the information you have been given here. Put it in to practice right away and see what a difference it can make to your practice and tournament form.
2. Secondly I want you to provide me with some feedback on the information you have got here. Have you found the format easy to follow, the language used easy to understand, and the subject matter easy to digest. This will help me present the material in my me program in exactly the way you need it. Go to <http://fitforarchery.com/warmup> and provide your comments on the blog post there.

If you have really liked this report, feel free to pass it on to your shooting colleagues, or get them to download their own copy by going to the same web page above.

Over the next few weeks I'll be sending you more details about my new program, and if you feel it is something you'd like to get, we'll give you the opportunity to get a special "early adopter" bonus.

Anyway, thanks again for taking the time to read this report, I hope to provide you with some more cool and useful free content in the coming weeks.

Tim Goodwin

<http://fitforarchery.com>

Who the hell is this guy?

You are right to be skeptical about some bloke on the internet, you probably don't know me from Adam! (sorry English turn of phrase!)

Whilst I do not wish to bore you with my full resume, I think it is important you understand where I come from and what have been my motives for preparing this program.

My chosen career path and academic background, whilst useful to back up what I have prepared for you, what is more important is you appreciate that I am not simply an enthusiast or scribe passing on information that might be obtainable from any magazine or website.

I have been an archer, on and off for over 24 years at the time of writing. I started at a very young age, being introduced along with my family. Those early forays saw me achieve very little... basically I was crap at archery and I knew it. I quit the sport to take up more socially acceptable sports in the eyes of my school friends.

At the point that I returned to the sport early in my University career, after a long period of cycle racing, I was quite fit. This level of fitness declined as I moved from student to office worker, and the "creep" of excess levels of body fat was inevitable with reduced activity and poor eating habits associated with working in an office environment.

Despite this creep my Archery steadily improved with the help of my long time coach taking me from making up the numbers at tournaments to Scottish

Champion, British Champion and regularly competing in the top ten at the European Five Nations series.

In late 2003 I decided that I was either going to have to quit my job in IT, or kill my boss! With my fitness levels at an all time low, I decided the best course of action was to become a fitness professional. This meant walking away from a "safe" IT career and spending an extended period away from my wife to retrain and get the diplomas I felt necessary for me to set up my own fitness business.

This change was absolutely necessary for my physical and mental health, as the ever expanding waist line and increased levels of stress could easily have resulted in a heart attack before the age of 40!

Since that time I have now competed at three world championships for my chosen country of Luxembourg and ranked as highly as 26th in the world for Field Archery.

What this has taught me is that performance on the archery field can be impacted not only by your shooting form, but your body fat levels, stress levels, postural imbalances associated with the office worker, and imbalances created by over-use due to training for shooting.

And the little disclaimer...

With all that said all the stuff contained within this report should not be used without even thinking about the ramifications of following a program of physical activity without first consulting a qualified health professional.

Following the information in this report is done so at your own risk, although my belief is that it will make a substantial difference to your shooting form, this does not constitute definite improvements in results nor guarantee increased earnings from shooting.

If you are not sure about any of the movements described in this report, it is my recommendation that you seek the advice of a fitness professional to help you out.

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