

About to take the plunge and visit a shop for the first time? Here are a few things to bear in mind...

# BUYING YOUR FIRST KIT



**S**o you've finished your beginner's course, and you're thinking about moving up a step and getting your first bow. If you're like most people, you're probably used to buying things online – something most of us have had to do in the past couple of years.

For buying your first bow and arrows, our advice is still to go to a specialist archery shop – and ideally, take someone with you!

You may not even be sure what type of bow you want to buy at first. Some shops and ranges offer a free lesson before purchase, so that you can try before you buy. Try and find a shop with a wide selection of bows, so you can try them all. Bear in mind that your first visit to an archery shop may take a couple of hours or more.

A bow needs to be the size and weight that is right for you. Everyone is a slightly different size and strength, and arm lengths vary. Trying to shoot a bow or arrows that are the wrong size will frustrate you and slow your progress at best and could be dangerous at worst.

The first thing to do is to measure your draw length – they will likely be able to do this at wherever you did your beginners'

**Above:** Don't try buying a bow or arrows on your own: always get some help.

**Photo credit:** ATA

**>> It's also fairly common to get given a bow that belonged to someone else.**

**Remember: the bow has to fit you, not the other way around <<**

course and they will be able to do this at any archery shop. This is the most important measure for getting the right length arrows. Your arrows should be matched to the weight of the bow you intend to buy, so it's best to buy them both together.

You may have the cash for the best gear on the market; the flagship compound or the top-end recurve limbs, but the most expensive is not always right for everybody. In fact, some top-end gear is less 'forgiving'

and requires careful, systematic adjustment to get the best out of it.

For recurves, you will likely change the the poundage of your limbs in the first year or so, often more than once. So, it's best to buy some lower-priced ones starting out. Some shops have a limb-exchange program to assist you with this.

As well as a bow and arrows, you'll need a long list of other accessories too, depending on which type of bow you want to shoot. Many of the better archery shops will sell everything you need as a package, with a small discount. It is well worth taking advantage of this. One of the good things about modern archery gear is that is essentially modular; each part will usually work on all bows and with every other part. So as soon as you feel the need to upgrade just one thing, you can.

It's also fairly common to get given a bow that belonged to someone else. Remember: the bow has to fit you, not the other way around, and it has to be safe to shoot. You wouldn't go skiing and buy a random pair of ski boots – you'd get boots in your size and skis that work for you. If you've been given a hand-me-down bow, be sure to get it checked out at an archery shop or by a coach. For safety and other reasons, we don't recommend buying (or even trying) second-hand arrows, at all – unless you are very experienced. Always buy your first set of arrows new.

Sometimes people who have given up the sport sell entire starter bow packages on eBay, [sellmybow.com](http://sellmybow.com) or somewhere else. These can be a bargain compared to buying new, but there are many pitfalls that only an experienced archer might be able to spot.

Everyone was in the same boat once: nervous that they would be buying the right thing or not. Don't worry. Archers are a friendly lot, and will often go further than you think to help beginners. This part of the journey is one of the most fun. [Enjoy it!](#)



**Above:** For your first set of arrows, get a recommendation from the archery shop