

ARROW REST GUIDE

The function is pretty simple - to hold your arrow in position and support the arrow until you fire the bow. This notwithstanding, not all arrow rests are created equal, there are dozens of different rests to choose from. Some are inexpensive; some are not. Some are simple to install and use; many are not. Some are good for hunting; others are not. You get the idea. There is no one perfect rest for everyone and every application. Like most things you buy, each type of arrow rest has pros and cons to consider. And while it probably isn't necessary to buy the most expensive model, a quality arrow rest, in conjunction with a quality sight, will undoubtedly improve your accuracy and success in the field. If you're looking to improve your shooting, installing a quality arrow rest is a great place to start. As such, we suggest you consider this choice carefully.



ARROW REST TYPES

If you're shooting a modern centre-shot cutaway bow, you have a wide variety of arrow rest designs to choose from. Modern bows are generally drilled and tapped to the same AMO specs, so any brand of arrow rest fits virtually any bow. For example, you don't have to choose a PSE rest to go with your PSE bow. You can choose virtually any rest on the market.

OK...so where do we begin? Let's start with arrow rest type.

Most arrow rests can be placed in 1 of 5 categories:

- Shoot-Thru arrow rests
- Containment arrow rests
- Drop Away arrow rests
- Pressure/Plunger arrow rests
- 3D & Specialty arrow rests

So let's briefly take a look at each type of rest and discuss their respective pros and cons.

CONTAINMENT ARROW RESTS

Containment-style arrow rests are a favourite of many hunters, as they totally eliminate the possibility of the arrow falling from the rest. They are easy to install and very easy to tune. Containment style arrow rests either totally encircle the arrow, or simultaneously contact the arrow in 3 spots, rigidly holding the arrow until it is shot. The Containment Arrow Rest is an excellent choice for youth and new shooters too. Many new shooters, especially those who are still wrestling with their shooting form, quickly become frustrated with arrows that fall from the rest.

Containment arrow rests allow new shooters to focus on their technique and the actual shot, rather than worrying about the arrow rest. Most containment rests sell for \$75-199 and they work well with most any type of arrow.

Unfortunately, the containment rest isn't perfect either. Some argue that since the rest is in contact with the arrow for a longer period of time, the containment style rest is less forgiving to errors in shooting technique. While this may be true in the strictest technical sense, it is not the most common complaint from containment rest users. The most common gripe is fletching damage. Though not all containment rests are designed to make contact with the arrow's fletchings, the most popular of the containment rests (The Whisker Biscuit) is designed this way. With repeated shooting, this type of rest eventually wrinkles vanes and tatters the edges of feathers. But since the rest makes equal contact with all 3 fletchings simultaneously, the net effect on arrow flight is negligible - less a tiny deduction in speed. On the other hand, containment rests with 3-point contacts (like e.g. the Bodoodle Zapper) are designed NOT to make fletching contact. But they can be particularly fussy about nock and fletching alignment, much like a shoot-thru rest. Some of the 3-point containment rests are designed with fairly small clearance gaps which cannot accommodate most offset and helical fletchings. So a straight fletch may be required if you choose a 3-point type containment rest.



All things considered, the containment rest offers some significant advantages, especially for hunting. Whether you hunt from the ground or a treestand, a containment rest ensures that your arrow is ready to shoot at all times. Though this may not be important for 3D target and recreational archers, we suggest bowhunters to strongly consider this option.

MARKET TRENDS

No discussion of containment rests is complete without some specific mention of the Whisker Biscuit phenomenon. While hardcore enthusiasts continue to debate the pros and cons of the Whisker Biscuit, this arrow rest has come to totally dominate the containment rest market - and perhaps the larger arrow rest market for that matter. While the Whisker Biscuit still gets a "love it or hate it response", it is by far the most popular choice among new bowhunting enthusiasts and the recognized standard in containment arrow rests. In fact, there have been dozens of "knock-offs" over the past few years - similar rests that are made specifically to compete with the Whisker Biscuit. And while many of them have posted good technical challenges, they cannot force consumers to release their bear-hugs on the Whisker Biscuit. Fletching damage or not, countless thousands of bowhunters adore this rest.

DROP AWAY ARROW RESTS

Drop Away arrow rests have been around for a while, but they have really surged in popularity and design sophistication in the last few years. Some people refer to them as "fall-away" rests. But as either name suggests, the drop away arrow rest is designed to drop out of the way, and eliminate concerns about fletching clearance. At full draw, a Drop away arrow rest holds the arrow firmly up into position, but when the bow fires - the drop away rest moves completely down and out of the path of the arrow. This allows even the largest helical fletchings to pass by the arrow shelf without the slightest bit of contact. Most drop away arrow rests have large notches or prongs that cradle arrows much better than shoot-thru rests, so there's less chance your arrow will fall off a drop away rest. So theoretically, the drop away rest gives you the best of both worlds.



There are several different styles of drop away arrow rests. Most are actuated by the movement of the bow's cable slide or buss cable, a few models are actuated by the bow's forward inertia at the shot. Some even use even movement of the bow's limbs. Many models also offer micro-adjustability and vibration dampening features too. Drop away rests are arguably the most advanced rest designs available today.

As you might suspect, this fancy gadgetry comes at a price. Most of today's popular drop away rests are priced from \$100-300. Most drop away rests are best installed by a qualified archery professional, as the setup and tuning procedure can sometimes be tedious. The drop away rest must remain up and in-place until the arrow has a chance to gain some speed and establish its trajectory, but it must fall completely out of the way before the fletching arrives at the rest. Getting the timing right can be a little tricky. If the rest falls too early, the arrow flight is erratic and tuning is impossible. If the rest falls too late, you get major fletching contact. The faster your bow is, the less the margin of error you'll have available to get things to happen in just the right rhythm. Admittedly it isn't exactly neurosurgery, but be advised that in most cases setting up your new drop away arrow rest may not be as simple as just bolting it on.

There's no denying the benefit of a properly functioning drop away arrow rest. For those who shoot large fixed-blade broadheads, which can be troublesome to stabilize, the drop away is a big advantage - as it permits the use of large helical fletchings when all is functioning properly. Since most drop away rests create less friction between the arrow and the arrow rest, you can count on gaining a few extra FPS for your trouble too.

MARKET TRENDS

The drop away rest is the preferred choice for many experienced bowhunters and technical enthusiasts. As the sophistication and utility of drop away designs continue to improve, competition shooters are gradually moving from prong-rests to top-quality drop away rests too. Unlike the containment rest market, there doesn't seem to be a dominant drop away design, but there are countless models and configurations to choose from. However, most of them are fundamentally similar in their operation.

SHOOT-THRU ARROW RESTS

The Shoot-Thru arrow rest is commonly called a "prong" rest, and is a popular choice. They're fairly simple to install and they work well for most applications. A shoot-thru rest typically has two prongs, spaced about 2/3 of the arrow diameter apart, creating a sort of cradle for the arrow. The arrow sits on top, settling on the gap between the two prongs. These prongs are usually spring-loaded, allowing them to flex down and forward at the moment of the shot to prevent flight disruptions and permitting additional clearance for the fletching as it passes by. After the shot, the spring-loaded prongs automatically return to their original position and you're ready to shoot again.



This type of rest is called a "Shoot-Thru" because the bottom feather or vane (usually the odd-coloured one known as the "cock-fletch") passes between the two prongs when you shoot the arrow. When the arrow-nock and rest-prong alignment is correct, the cock-fletch passes cleanly thru the two prongs without making contact. When properly setup, this type of arrow rest is very accurate and reliable. A basic "Quicktune 800 Style" Shoot-Thru rest costs less than \$65 and actually works quite well. If you want more features and easier adjustability, you can purchase a premium Shoot-Thru rest, like the Spot Hogg Golden Premium for around \$240. Of course, there are plenty of mid-grade models to choose from too.

Unfortunately, the shoot-thru rest does have a few disadvantages. First, if a feather or vane contacts one of your prongs as it passes by, the arrow flight will be notably disrupted and the fletching may be damaged. Straight vanes usually clear with no trouble, but offset and helical fletchings will often require a little more tinkering to achieve good clearance. So proper tuning, correct arrow spine selection, and nock alignment is critical when using shoot-thru rests. Shoot-thru rests are also best used with a mechanical release. Unlike mechanically released arrows which tend to oscillate vertically, finger released arrows tend to oscillate horizontally. This side-to-side movement (archer's paradox) can make proper fletching clearance very difficult to achieve for finger shooters using shoot-thru style rests.

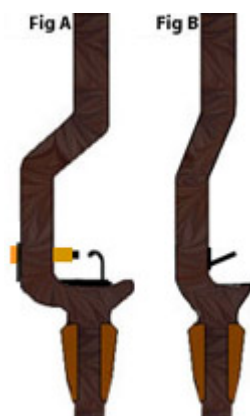
And finally, the biggest disadvantage of shoot-thru rests is the lack of arrow containment. Once you nock your arrow into position, there's nothing to keep the arrow from falling off the rest prongs. A strong wind, a canted bow, a shaky drawstroke, or even a little buck-fever could all cause your arrow to fall from the prongs of a shoot-thru rest. For some users of shoot-thru rests, this is never a problem. For others, it's a constant headache. There are a number of add-on products which function as "arrow holders" for shoot-thru rests. However, we do not recommend them, as they often disrupt arrow flight and/or are cumbersome to use.

MARKET TRENDS

While the Shoot-Thru rest was once the standard for both hunting and competition shooters, it has lost considerable favour to containment and drop-away rests over the last few years. And although many competition shooters still prefer the prong-rest, bowhunters are largely moving away from this type of arrow rest.

PRESSURE/PLUNGER RESTS

The term "Pressure Rest" is practically synonymous with "Finger-Shooter Rest". They're sometimes also called "Shoot-Around" rests. This is a special type of rest that "pushes back" from the side, to help counteract the horizontal oscillation of an arrow released with fingers. Finger shooting is becoming less popular, as more and more shooters elect to use mechanical releases. But fortunately, several manufacturers still make rests that are specifically designed to accommodate the finger-released arrow.



These rests will allow the finger shooter to adjust the amount of tension (pressure) the rest exerts on the arrow, to get the best possible tune from a finger-released bow. Please note that some of these designs may only work with a centre-shot cutaway riser bow (figure A). If you shoot an older bow without the benefit of a centre-shot cutaway riser (figure B), you may need to choose a standard Flipper or Springy rest. Some Pressure Rests won't have enough horizontal travel to accommodate the centre-shot on an older bow.



SPECIALTY ARROW RESTS

We group all other miscellaneous arrow rests as Specialty Arrow Rests. These may include:

- Flipper Rests for non centre-shot cutaway and traditional bows
- Springy Rests for finger-shooters
- Specialty competition 3D rests (sometimes called Lizard Tongues)
- Bow fishing rests for heavy fiberglass arrows.
- And all other miscellaneous arrow rests.

These rests are purpose-specific and should not be used for most bow hunting applications. If you are unsure which specialty rest is appropriate for your bow, contact your professional archery shop for assistance.

