



When to Increase the Draw Weight on your Bow (String Weight)

Index

Key Indicators that You Might Be Ready:	2
• Comfort and Consistency at Your Current Weight:	2
• Effortless Drawing:	2
• Good Form is Ingrained:	2
• Plateau in Performance:	2
• Desire for Increased Arrow Speed and Kinetic Energy:	3
• Under the Guidance of a Coach:	3
When It's Likely NOT a Good Time to Increase:	3
• Struggling with Your Current Weight:	3
• Inconsistent Form:	3
• Fatigue Sets In Quickly:	3
• Experiencing Pain:	4
• Making Significant Form Changes:	4
• Without Proper Guidance:	4
General Guidelines (but individual progress varies):	4
• Gradual Increases:	4
• Listen to Your Body:	4
• Don't Rush:	5
• Quality Over Quantity:	5

We get asked from time to time about when to increase string weight on the bow the Archer is currently using. Answering this question can sometimes be problematic due to us all being a little or somewhat different in body shape, mass, agility, experience, flexibility and more.

Increasing your bow's draw weight is a significant step that should be considered carefully and at the right time to avoid injury and ensure continued progress. Here's a breakdown of when it might be a good time to consider increasing your string weight:



Key Indicators that You Might Be Ready:

- Comfort and Consistency at Your Current Weight:

This is the most crucial factor. You should be able to draw, hold at full draw for a comfortable amount of time (at least 15-20 seconds), aim steadily, and execute a smooth release consistently and accurately. If you're struggling with any of these aspects, increasing weight is likely premature.

- Effortless Drawing:

Drawing your current bow should feel relatively easy towards the end of your practice sessions, not like a struggle from the very first arrow.

- Good Form is Ingrained:

Your shooting form should be consistent and repeatable. You shouldn't be making significant form errors due to the strain of the draw weight. Increasing weight with poor form will only exacerbate those errors and potentially lead to injury.

- Plateau in Performance:

If you've been shooting at the same weight for a significant period and feel like your accuracy and range are no longer improving, a slight increase in draw weight *could* potentially offer a new challenge and help you break through a plateau. However, ensure all other aspects (form, tuning, etc.) have been optimised first.

- Desire for Increased Arrow Speed and Kinetic Energy:

Higher draw weights generally result in faster arrow speeds and greater kinetic energy, which can be beneficial for longer distances and flatter arrow flight. This should be a secondary consideration after comfort and consistency.



- Under the Guidance of a Coach:

Ideally, any increase in draw weight should be discussed with and supervised by a qualified archery coach. They can assess your form, strength, and overall readiness.

When It's Likely NOT a Good Time to Increase:

- Struggling with Your Current Weight:

If you experience any pain, shaking, or difficulty drawing or holding your current bow, increasing the weight is definitely not advisable.

- Inconsistent Form:

Increasing weight will make it harder to maintain proper form, leading to inaccuracy and potential injury.

- Fatigue Sets In Quickly:

If you tire easily during your shooting sessions at your current weight, a heavier bow will only worsen this.

- Experiencing Pain:

Any pain in your shoulders, back, elbows, or wrists while shooting is a clear sign that your current weight might already be too high or your form is incorrect. Increasing weight will likely aggravate these issues.

- Making Significant Form Changes:

If you're currently working on correcting significant aspects of your shooting form, it's best to stick with a comfortable weight until those changes are ingrained.



- Without Proper Guidance:

Increasing string weight without the advice of a coach can lead to bad habits and injuries.

General Guidelines (but individual progress varies):

- Gradual Increases:

When you do decide to increase, do so in small increments (typically 2-5 pounds at a time). This allows your body to adapt gradually.

- Listen to Your Body:

Pay close attention to how your body feels. If you experience any discomfort or pain, immediately reduce the weight.

- Don't Rush:

There's no set timeline for increasing draw weight. Focus on building a solid foundation of form and strength at your current weight.

- Quality Over Quantity:

It's better to shoot accurately and consistently with a lighter draw weight than to struggle with a heavier one.

In summary, the best time to consider increasing your bow's string weight is when you are consistently comfortable and accurate at your current weight, have solid and repeatable form, and ideally, under the guidance of a qualified archery coach. Prioritise proper technique and avoid pushing yourself too quickly to prevent injury.

Author: Peter Hill

Lead Coach - Wymondham Archers

