



Archery with Kevin Healy



Kevin has been instructing the students at Saipoyi Elementary School in Standoff Alberta. He takes the children in groups of 10 and has them each stand beside a holder that contains the arrows the children will learn to shoot. The arrow holders are called Quivers.



He has them stand along a rope that is formed as a line for the children to line up on as well as to stay behind at all times for safety. First thing is first. SAFETY. Kevin makes sure all of the children get familiar with the line of rope that sits in front of them on the ground.

It is called the 'Safety Line'. The children are not to cross that line until he tells them its time. When all the children have lined up with their bows, he instructs them to make a hook their first three index fingers.

The hook of your fingers are going to pull this area on the strings of the bow. This area is the finger tab. There are three notches on the tab. The first finger goes on the top tab, then the second two go onto the bottom two.



Then there is a space in between. Do you know why? That is where the arrow goes. When you take the arrow, you take it at the base of the feathers then pull it up.



This is what it will look like, how you hold your arrow. Your bow should be at your side. Then bring the arrow up over the bow and put the end in the space between the finger tabs. Listen, it should make a noise. Now I want everyone to stand looking at the back wall.

Draw your arrows and bring your bow up twisting toward the target.



Indigenous Archery



From: Fine Art America

Indigenous games such as archery have evolved from necessity and spirituality that required great speed, strength and occasionally magic to what is now considered among some as recreational entertainment [1,2].

The indigenous people of North America adopted the bow and arrow in 500 C.E. after using spears, or the atlatl, reflecting each community's needs, cultural patterns and social or ceremonial uses [2]. The bows used by people on the plains and Iroquoian nations, were double-curved shaped (reflexed-deflexed) that was very energy efficient. A combination of wood and sinew backing enhanced the bow's tensile strength [2].



Archery is considered a game of dexterity that players used to hone their physical and mental skills for procuring food. The Blackfoot people ran with the bow and arrow and spears prior to their relationship with horses. Young boys as young as five were often given their first bows by their grandfathers, as it was their responsibility to make the bow and arrow and teach archery to the boys [1].

From: Archery Historian

Blackfoot games were derived to achieve mastery in archery: the stationary arrow, the walking arrow, the moving target and hoop target (hoop and arrow). The stationary arrow game uses the bow and arrow, targets, and an embankment and was usually played in spring and summer. The target would sit in the embankment. Skills were refined for use in hunting and warfare. As a game, two or more people would shoot the arrows at a target and scoring was determined by the arrow that came the closest to the target [1].

Numerous non-native observers thought of some games as 'speed shooting'. "The Plains nations had a quicker fire-power than gunmen". The archer would hold a clutch of arrows in his bow hand and fire a succession of arrows rapidly into a high arc with the goal of keeping 10 arrows in the air at once.

References

1. Sommerfeld, D.M. (1971). *Comparison of Blackfoot and Hopi games and their contemporary application: a review of the literature.* (pg. 21 -27) M.A. Thesis. University of Lethbridge, Alberta Canada.
2. King, C. R. (2004). *Archery.* In *Native Americans in Sports.* (pg. 19-22). Copyright ©. Taylor and Francis Group.



Developing Stronger Executive Function Skills Through Hand-Eye Coordination and Target Shooting of Bow and Arrow

Archery is an activity of dexterity that requires coordinated skill and with repetition, strengthens various cognitive skills while preparing for the accurate hitting of a target with the use of a bow and arrow.

- ♦ *Activities requiring visuospatial (placement) and temporal (timing) skills, such as that necessary to archery has been found to enhance working memory (on-line memory) skills to keep movement of the hand in line with coordination of the eye with holding the bow, aiming with the arrow and hitting the target. These skills are thought not to diminish with practice, rather they make movements more precise and efficient (Starkes, Helsen & Elliott, 2010; Seo, et. al., 2012).*
- ♦ *Continued practice and use of the coordinated skills learned in archery enhance preparatory attention, inhibition of distracting elements, visuospatial working memory, monitoring and cognitive flexibility with motor coordination that develops accuracy of hitting a target (Seo, et. al., 2012).*
- ♦ *The areas of the brain that are responsible for focus and attention, working memory, inhibition and making accurate decisions are also exercised with active goal-related activities (Abe & Hanakawa, 2008).*
- ♦ *Games such as Archery may enhance the handedness in children, which has been considered to strengthen the development of executive functions and language functions in the brain (Mori, Iteya, & Gabbard, 2006).*

References

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