

How to Make Archery Practice More Effective – and Fun

October 31, 2014 by [Nikki Haverstock](#)

Archery practice at the Warrior Games

Archery practice at the 2012 Warrior Games. Photo: U.S. Marine Corps

During graduate school I took a “Sports Philosophy” class taught by an amazing professor. I didn’t know what to expect when signing up for the class, but it ended up having huge impacts on my coaching style and my understanding of why I love archery.

One of the class exercises was called “movement biography.” This assignment examined our personal histories of movement and sports, dating from our earliest memories and including injuries, setbacks and accomplishments. We also examined our relationship with athletics. The patterns we discovered helped us better understand WHY we love playing sports.

Learning why you love archery can help motivate you to [reach your goals in this – or any – sport](#). The “how” is simple: Once you know what motivates you (your “shooting philosophy”), you can match your archery practice habits with your philosophy to create a schedule and practice environment that inspires you.

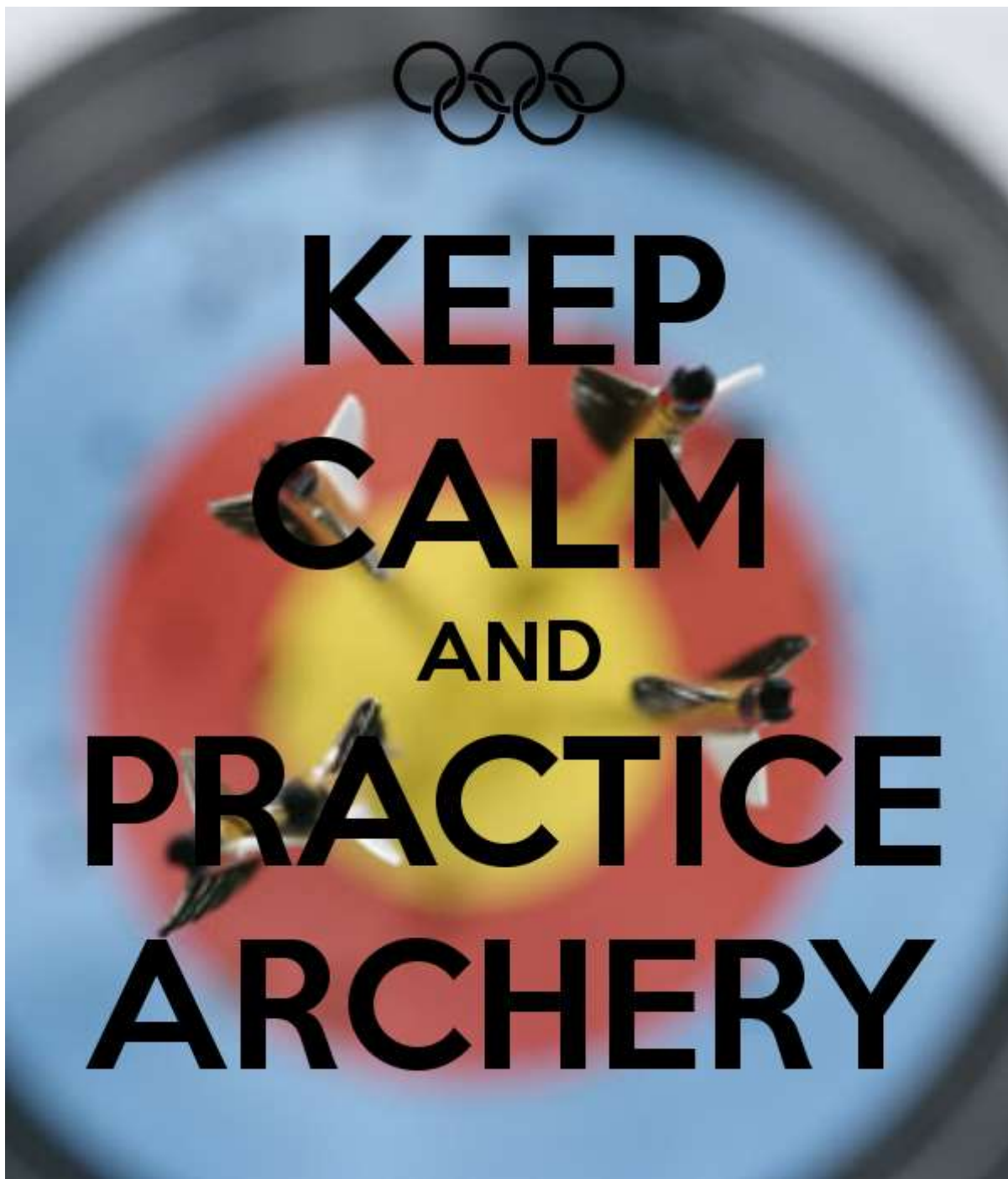


Olympic hopefuls like Joe Fanchin, right, spend countless hours practicing. They must be sure their practice habits are aligned with their sports philosophy. Photo credit: Teresa Johnson

It's common to sometimes feel unmotivated to shoot, even though you love archery. The problem is that sometimes your shooting philosophy doesn't mesh with what you're actually doing. When you understand WHY you love archery, you can develop a healthy relationship with the sport that motivates you to practice and enjoy the process.

First, realize there's no "right" reason to love archery. Your reasons will likely differ from your friends' reasons for loving it. I learned my reasons from a 25-page document that took a semester to finish (yikes!). You can start learning your reasons with just a few questions.

Picture your ideal day or some of your favorite days of shooting archery, and ask yourself a few questions. This exercise is about YOU, so focus on the real answers; not answers you think you should give or what others might want you to give. Here we go:



This advice is on target, but your archery practice is only as good as your philosophy

— Are you alone or are friends and family part of the experience?

— Are you meeting new people?

— Are you competing? Do you like pushing yourself to the limit or is competing a distraction?

— Are you somewhere familiar that feels like home, or are you exploring new terrain and areas?

- Are the experiences around shooting important? For example, do you enjoy rising early and hiking to your first target of the day?
- What are you shooting? Are you mastering a set format like an indoor round, or do you shoot a different type of archery each time (for example, target, field or 3-D)?
- How do you interact with others? Do you avoid other people or is it important to help them?

These are not all the questions you can ask, but they're a good place to start. Once you've answered them, look at your shooting schedule and decide if it matches things you identified as important. Do you love to meet new people, but find yourself shooting alone too often? Do you love competing, but you haven't signed up for a league because it conflicts with your favorite TV show?

Once you know your greatest reasons for loving archery, you'll find it easier to match those reasons with practice opportunities, which naturally reinforces your true motivations.