

S shoes



It crossed my mind as I threw out a pair of decrepit old sneakers than I needed a new pair of shoes that I could use for archery. But what to buy? Was there, as with Golf, a dedicated “archery shoe” that I could purchase? Or was it just personal preference? I decided it was worth my while to do some research.

Success in archery depends on stability and consistency, and it is a commonly agreed opinion that an archer’s weight should be about 60 or 70% on the balls of the feet. Keeping your weight forwards improves your balance and can reduce the tendency of the body to rock backwards while standing on the line. The importance of your stand gives you balance and stability, and a good foundation to make your shot.

I wanted to know if anyone had created an Archery shoe, and the two top brands in the world, Adidas and Nike, actually had!

In 2007, Nike approached the US Olympic Training Centre and wanted to create the ultimate archery shoe for the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. Nike created a prototype shoe: flat-soled, and had a unique low-heel design that forced the archer to slightly lean forward to achieve a perpendicular posture to the earth. This was called the Nike Akribis, and only 20 or so pairs were ever made. Unfortunately for me, it was restricted to Olympic



competitors, and cannot be purchased anywhere.

In competition with Nike, Adidas produced their own archery shoe for Beijing, based on a cross-training design: the Adistar Archery. They have a high ankle support and only come in white, and for some reason, only in men’s sizes. They were designed to optimize stability and comfort, with a rubber outsole to provide traction and a midfoot plate for stability. You can only order them from overseas, but be prepared to pay the price.

There were plenty of discussions online about what types of shoes were recommended for shooting. It is a hot topic among archers, and in speaking to many



archers I know, also a very personal one. Everyone’s feet are a different shape, so there doesn’t seem to be any right answer! However, there is a general consensus that the right *kind* of shoe is important.

The issue with most shoes is that most of them are made for running. In archery, you are either standing still or walking, which requires a totally different type of shoe. Shoes should be well fitting, supportive, hard-wearing, breathable and preferably with waterproof potential for a variable weather day outside. Various archers have split their shoe-wearing into two types: indoors and outdoors (and others add the third option: wet-weather).

Interestingly enough, it appears both FITA and Field Archers prefer the same type of shoe: a “flat bottom” shoe. The most highly-recommended shoes are skate shoes or golf shoes. Some also think fencing shoes are good. Skate-board shoes (for example Vans, Keds, Converse sneakers) have an excellent flat sole, and some come with good arch support or you can modify them by having a high-arch insole inside. Golf shoes are a close second, because of the fact they are designed for lots of walking. They have good support, plenty of grip and are mostly waterproof.

As far as weather goes, boots should only be worn in the worst of conditions because almost all manufactures create them with elevated heels. Gore-tex covered hiking shoes may help keep your feet stay dry in wet grass, but few, if any, have the proper flat sole. Any shoes that cause your back to hurt after a day of shooting should be avoided.

Pondering these arguments and disappointed at the lack of dedicated, available archery shoes, I went for my trusty favourite – the colourful and classic Chuck Taylor basketball sneaker.

Story: Caro Geelen