

The French Tuning Method

by John Dudley

Is it really possible that something as small as a piece of paper can dictate if we are content with how our bow is performing? Well, sad enough, yes. I know personally I have been known in the past to put far too much into getting a perfect bullet hole through paper. Over the years I have found out that it doesn't pay off to invest too much into this technique. I think for an archery pro shop it is a simple way to show the customer receiving their new bow that the bow is tuned to be ready to shoot. I think for this purpose paper tuning is fine and definitely a good starting point for anyone. However, I would recommend that you don't put all your eggs in this basket and take a look at what matters most to serious archers and that is where the arrows land. What I would like to do is let you know about the technique that I have used for the last 7-8 years to tune my bow. The method I am referring too is the "French Tuning Method"

The French Tuning Method may or may not really be French. That I don't know. What I do know though is that it works and I owe much of my success to this method. The concept itself is relatively simple but the time involved can sometimes be much longer than shooting through some paper. Although, the time involved will really be up to you and how far you are willing to go to find your ideal set up. Now I want to be clear and let you know that I'm not saying paper tuning is totally taboo now. Paper tuning is a good starting point even for this new method and I have found that if I have an absolutely perfect arrow spine that the two methods sometimes work the same. I have had times where I started with a bullet hole and went through the method only to find that the paper test was all I needed. However, more times than not, extra adjustments from the French Method have helped the overall grouping ability of the set up.

Start by setting your nock at 90 degrees and your center shot at the position that you know is close to where the factory recommends. Sometimes I use paper first to get this close on bows I'm not familiar with. I know on my Mathews I usually just go with 13/16". Once you have done this, start by sighting your bow in at 3 yards. Yes, I said 3 yards! Make a very small spot to aim at



A properly French Tuned bow will have the same horizontal impact at close range as it will at any longer range.

maybe about the size of a pencil eraser. Make several shots and only move your sight until you are hitting the dead center of this small mark. Make sure you are executing good shots and know that they are impacting dead center. Now without moving your sight you will move back to 55 yards. Shoot a 6 arrow group. Again, your ability to know you are executing good shots will make sure this method works. For the average person sighting in at 3 yards should allow them to hit the mark between 52-57 yards. This varies depending on speed of arrow, anchor point and sight length. For me personally I can hit the spot at about 60 yards the exact same as 3 yards without moving my sight. What you will look for is where your arrows are grouping. Your arrows will be in one of three places. Either, in the center, to the left or to the right of the dot you are aiming at. Once you have determined this you will need to know what adjustments to make. If your arrows are impacting to the left of spot you will need to move your arrow rest to the right. If you are impacting to the right of the spot you will have to move your arrow rest to the left. How much you move the rest will be determined by how far you missed the spot by. It doesn't take much adjustment to move the arrow a long way at that distance. Now, if you are hitting the center then consider yourself either lucky or good!

After, you have moved your arrow rest in the opposite direction of where the arrows were hitting at the long distance you will need to move back to 3 yards and sight your bow in again, moving nothing other than the sight itself. It is critically important that after every adjustment you move back to the close distance and move your sight to make up for your movement to the arrow rest. Once you have sighted in again at 3 yards then you will need to repeat the method and go back to the longer distance and shoot another group. Again, one of three things will happen. You have either moved your arrow rest too far, not enough or just right. By now I'm sure you understand how this method works. The bottom line is you will need to get your bow impacting the same horizontal line at 3 yards as you have the longer distance without moving your sight. This has always assured me that my horizontal path of my arrow is accurate.

If you are comfortable with your horizontal line you can make a mark on your arrow rest and make a few adjustments to your nock height to see if it helps your grouping. I have found that the nock height can have a lot to do with the left and right tune

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depending on how the arrow is being driven into the arrow rest. Sometimes I have had bows that work better by going into the arrow rest hard while others have tuned better with the arrow not having much pressure on the arrow rest. I like my Trophy Taker spring steel rest because I can easily change the blade thicknesses to try for better groups and also be able to micro adjust the vertical and horizontal adjustment. I usually use the French Method to get a good position for my horizontal alignment on my arrow rest then I try raising the nock point and sighting in at 3 yards then checking my long range mark. If they stay the same then I just focus on grouping size. Sometimes I use my tiller adjustment for fine tuning the nock height as well. You can also take this a step farther by doing this with different grain points and different arrow shafts. You will find that different spine arrows will make your center shot alignment change some depending on if it is stiffer or weaker.

After you have been successful with this standard way of French tuning you can also test at 3 yards and then out even further than 55 yards if you are comfortable with knowing your accuracy and realistic range to be accurate. What is critically important is to be conducting this method on perfectly flat ground and be shooting on a day without any wind. This will help eliminate different variables that could alter the correct tune of your bow. You may want to even try using the same arrow shaft but use different vanes, offsets and sizes to see the differences in how they affect your center shot. I know that paper tuning at times is easy and seems logical, but my best shooting bows were not always bows that shot perfect bullet holes through paper. They were, however, bows that had been set up using the French Tuning Method. I hope this works out for you the way it has for me!

Good Shooting, John Dudley



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