

# SAFETY: Practice hunting from a height similar to stand



Photo by John N. Felsher

A bow hunter waits for game while sitting high up in a tree stand.

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stands should practice from something at approximately the same height. Also wear clothing typically used for hunting, including jackets or gloves, despite the heat!

In the offseason, many bow hunters compete in archery tournaments that use life-size three-dimensional depictions of deer, bears, turkeys and other animals for targets. Even if not shooting in a tournament, bow hunters might want to visit a range to shoot 3-D targets in a hunting situation. For example, place targets at unusual angles or partially hidden behind brush or a tree trunk to simulate how a deer might really appear on opening day.

“Safety is always a big issue,” advised Karen Lutto, a hunting consultant. “A loose bolt can not only ruin a good hunt, but ruin a life. Always wear a full harness when in a tree stand. Always let someone know where you’re going and approximately when you’re going to return so they can go looking for you if you don’t come back on time.

Hunt with a buddy whenever possible. Be prepared, even if going on a short hike or afternoon hunt. Carry a cell phone and some basic survival supplies like water, food, matches, a flashlight and a knife.”

When getting into or out of a stand, always unload the gun. It only takes seconds to reload. Many hunters tie lines to their unloaded guns or bows to pull their equipment up into the stand or let it down to the ground at the end of the hunt. Falling with a loaded gun or razor-sharp broadheads pointed at a person could make a really bad situation much worse.

Besides stands, guns and bows, sportsmen also should check other equipment, such as decoys, boots, jackets, calls, flashlights, vehicles, tires, etc. Nothing ruins a good hunting trip like something going wrong at the worst possible time and place. Long before the season begins, sportsmen can prevent future mishaps and missed opportunities with good early preparation.



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