

Step Outdoors

Fletching refers to the fins or vanes attached to an arrow, each fin is known as a fletch. Traditionally, the fletching consists of three matched half-feathers attached near the back of the arrow or dart's shaft, which are equally spaced around its circumference. Today, modern plastics may be used instead. Fletches are traditionally attached with silk thread to the nock (rear) end of the arrow, or glued. The fletching is used to stabilize the arrow through air resistance in flight. Some fletches act to impart a spin on the projectile, but all are there to create a drag on the tail of the projectile to ensure that it does not tumble during flight.



Plastic Fletching

The fletching is equally spaced around the shaft with one placed such that it is perpendicular to the bow when nocked on the string. This fletch is called the "index fletch" or "cock feather", (the others sometimes being called the "hen feathers") and is a reference for the nocking of the arrow. Three fletches is the most common configuration, though more may be used. Oversized fletchings can be used to accentuate drag and thus limit the range of the arrow significantly; these arrows are called *flu-flus*. Misplacement of fletchings can often change the arrow's flight path dramatically.

Arrows must be matched to the bow with respect to spine (deflection) and length. Variations in Field Point or Broad head weight, size and number of fletches will affect arrow flight. Arrows that are under or over spined will not fly true and affect accuracy and penetration. Arrows that are too light can cause damage to the bow.

ACTIVITY

Identify the different arrows by comparing and contrasting the variety of shaft materials, fletchings and arrowheads on each. What situations would you use each type of arrow?

EXTENSION

Using an arrow spinner check arrows for straightness.

REFERENCES

<http://en.wikipedia.org/>