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If you've recently taken up the sport for the first time, you'll find your early progression much more enjoyable if you try to set yourself a handful of goals for your first six months of shooting. Of course, what you want and what another new starter may want may differ, but you will share a desire to improve.

Very few of us have managed to avoid the statement: 'Get out of your comfort zone' at some point in our lives, but in

this case let's qualify it (see comfort zone diagram). If you've taken up archery (within AGB) you'll have completed a beginners' course, which will have provided you with some confidence to shoot safely. With a bit of time, practice and experience, if you do nothing more you'll find yourself in a comfort zone. But the problem with a comfort zone is that you don't learn anything there: you're no longer challenged and you don't have new experiences.

I'd suggest you make a conscious effort to move away from this point, but don't do it recklessly (for example, don't try to go shooting from 18m straight to 70m – there lies your danger zone). You'll most likely become disheartened and disillusioned, and buy the first fishing rod you can find on eBay. But equally, if you stay forever in a comfort zone, you'll probably get bored, and wonder why on earth so many people love this sport.

So as soon as you're settled at your club, I'd suggest moving to your own progression zone. Here are a few things you could pick and mix from:

Right: *Setting a few realistic goals when first taking up the sport can help archers stay motivated*

- ✦ Do some scoring if you haven't done so already. The popular 252 scheme is a perfect start. If you're already on this pathway, try exploring what you need to do to achieve a classification.
- ✦ Once you have a decent group at 18m (20 yards), try moving up just one distance, and once you can achieve the same grouping, move again. You can calibrate this via 252, or just get a piece of string, loop it around all your group, and measure it.
- ✦ Try a different bow type to the one you're using. Best done with the help of a coach (so you're not in that danger zone!).
- ✦ Try shooting a different discipline. If you've started off on target, see if your club also offers clout, or if your club has a relationship with a field archery club.
- ✦ Try shooting with (or without!) a roof over your head. Shooting indoors v outdoors is a different experience, and the earlier you discover the alternative, the less likely of you being unsure of it later on.
- ✦ Try some basic equipment set-up and maintenance. You may have covered it on your beginners' course, but especially if not, ask for some help in doing a proper set up check, or try re-fletching your arrows. These things will help to develop your future understanding of the kit.
- ✦ If your club offers coaching groups (such as a Boost course), jump at the chance. It will put you amongst others who are eager to learn, supported by qualified guidance.
- ✦ Do a local competition. Once you have got some sight marks for the

ARCHERY GOALS FOR BEGINNERS

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Right: Aim for the Progression zone

appropriate distances, see if you can join some of your fellow club members at a local competition. Again, don't be over-ambitious at this stage, and don't expect to come home clutching silverware, just go and experience the day: you're likely to find it very enjoyable.

This doesn't attempt to be a complete list, or suggest that you should try to do all of these things immediately. Pick and mix the things which look most interesting to you, and celebrate your achievements, even if it just that you've tried it.

If you're just starting out in the sport, check out www.startarchery.co.uk microsite for news and stories aimed at new archers.

