



**Welcoming back lapsed members to archery**

**25,000**

people have left Archery GB in the last few years – but the good news is many of them are ready to come back.

**43%**

say they plan to return (and another 27% hope to return).

We'd like to work with club leaders and coaches to bring as many people as possible back into archery – and ensure that getting back is as easy and enjoyable as possible.

#### **Reasons for leaving**

Member retention is something many sports clubs struggle with, not least in the middle of a pandemic. While the reasons people leave archery are often not in our control, we know from speaking to former members and through other research that simple changes to the way people are supported can make a big difference to their continued participation.

Archery GB has partnered with researchers from the University of Birmingham to try to understand the psychology that brings about a decline in motivation, and how to turn it around, to reduce dropout. **Empowering Archery™** is our new training offer and is integral to how we support club leaders and coaches. The Empowering Archery workshop helps attendees to create an optimal environment for their members to take part, feel highly motivated, and enjoy the positive health benefits of archery. This approach has been proven to reduce dropout rates from sport.

#### **Refresher Session vs Beginner Course**

**Providing a refresher session for returners has benefits for both the returner and the club**

- ✓ It shows returners that the club wants them back, by actively offering something tailored to them
- ✓ It helps the returners pick up where they left off without the need to repeat a whole beginner's course
- ✓ It gives returners the chance to meet volunteers from the club, ask questions and generally feel at ease
- ✓ It provides a less onerous means for clubs to recruit members, allowing other resources to be committed to training beginners



## Refresher Session

When you already know about archery, repeating a beginner's course can be an unnecessary obstacle to returning. That's why, providing returners with the Refresher Session can be a more effective way of recruiting people back into archery.

1. First of all, give the returner the choice to complete either a refresher session or a beginner's course.

Help the returner decide by asking them how much they remember about archery. Someone who is still fairly familiar with the equipment, the rules, and technique will find a refresher session helpful to gain back their confidence and top up their knowledge. If they are not so familiar with these aspects, and will likely need more than one session to return, then invite them to your next beginner's course instead.

2. Use the refresher session to ease the returner back into archery, get to know a few people, and help them feel confident to come to the club's training sessions.

You'll want to ensure those coming back into the sport are able to do so safely. Design a session that enables the returners to practice the essentials. For example:

- Following the range rules and procedures
- Preparing their equipment ready to shoot
- Basic shot technique
- Arrow collection

The coach can remind them of anything they have forgotten to help ensure they are ready to return to shooting. Continue the session until you are sure that they are competent enough to participate safely. If you have any concerns, discuss these with the returner and decide if a beginner's course is more suitable for them.

3. Think about how you'll welcome the returner into the club.

It can be quite nerve wracking joining a club, even when we already know the sport. A Refresher Session is an ideal opportunity to help returners to start to build relationships with your other members. For example:

- Pair the returner with one of your club members during the Refresher Session; someone who is helpful and can be at the club the first few times after the returner joins. They can shoot next to the returner; help answer questions and be there to support them on the range.
- Regularly schedule coaching sessions for new members and novices, so they have a means to practice and get to know more people. Take a look at our Boost Archery programme for more ideas about this. (Go to [www.archerygb.org/boost](http://www.archerygb.org/boost))

## 3 Tips to Welcome Back Returners

Lloyd Brown, Archery GB's Coach Development Manager, has some simple tips to help coaches welcome back returners:

1. Give your returners a sense of voice and choice



When welcoming a member back to our sport, it's important to find out what their goals are, and why they want to get back into the sport. Find ways to help them achieve their goals and to participate in the sport in the way they want to participate.

**2. Help your returners feel like they belong in your club**

Welcome them back and introduce them to your club members. Perhaps give them an option to be matched up with an existing member to help guide them through their re-introduction to the sport. This helps foster that sense of belonging and the social aspects of our sport. Let them know that you care about them and really want to see them enjoy our sport.

**3. Create ways for your returner to feel competent at archery**

Set up a club competition that caters for all levels, introduce them to your club coaches and other members, invite them to volunteer, encourage and celebrate their efforts.

*Insurance: The club is insured whilst assessing the ability of a potential returning member, whilst under direct supervision, for up to six sessions.*