



Today's hunt prep topics discuss the basics of preparing you for your hunt, we want to give you some tips on equipment, physically preparing for your hunt, and finally some other tips that will help you make the most of your trip out west this fall!

Licenses:

NON-RESIDENTS ONLY:

Starting in 2025, Colorado Parks & Wildlife Commission approved an initiative to make all Bull Elk Archery Non-Resident Licenses convert from OTC (Over the Counter) to a Limited License (Application and Draw Required). Therefor all Non-Residents will need to apply for a Limited License and successfully draw that license in order to hunt with us this fall. Application results will be posted on-line in late May – Mid June. You should also receive an email from Colorado Parks & Wildlife letting you know your draw results.

We will help you apply for your license starting the first week of March. The application deadline is around April 2, so we have a couple weeks to complete the process each year. You can set up your on-line I-Paws account prior to March 1, but using the link below. NOTE – please keep your CID Number (You will be assigned a CID Number once your account is set up) and password so we can log-in together on the phone to complete the application process in March. If anyone needs help setting up their account, please contact Earl and he will help with this process. NOTE – you will need your Hunter Safety Number in order to complete the process. If you do not have a hunter safety number, contact Earl to help you obtain a Hunter Apprentice Certificate. This Certificate will allow you to hunt with a Mentor or Outfitter for a period of 2 years, after that you will have to have a Hunter Safety number to hunt in Colorado with or without an Outfitter or Mentor

<https://www.cpwshop.com/customeraccount.page>

COLORADO RESIDENTS ONLY:

Your license will be an Unlimited Archery either-sex OTC (Over the Counter) license. You did not need to apply for this license, and it will be available for purchase starting in early August, we will notify you of the specific date as we get closer.

You will be able to purchase your Unlimited Archery either-sex OTC on-line (by logging into your CPW I- Paws Account) or in person at a CPW (Colorado Parks & Wildlife) vendor. You can find locations on CPW's website by clicking the link below and entering a location zip code or city:

<https://www.cpwshop.com/issuerlist.page>

NOTE: YOU WILL NEED YOUR HUNTER SAFETY INFORMATION TO PURCHASE YOUR LICENSE. IF YOU'RE PURCHASING IN PERSON, YOU WILL NEED TO SHOW YOUR HUNTER SAFETY CARD, AND YOU NEED TO CARRY YOUR HUNTER SAFETY CARD ON YOUR PERSON WHILE HUNTING IN COLORADO.

Hunting Out West:

For anyone who has not hunted the western states prior to this trip, it can be a bit overwhelming...the first thing you will notice is you can see a long way!! I grew up in Michigan and my hunts were mostly looking at thick timber with shots of 100 yards at the most. There is an enormous difference in trying to judge distance and just seeing game in the vast open landscape of the west. It takes some time for eyes to adjust and be able to pick up an elk, sometime even as close as 100 yards. The most important piece of equipment to help with this adjustment is a quality set of binoculars (minimum of 10 x 42), not only having them with you, but using them consistently to find game. Judging distance takes time in this open landscape, so another great tool to have is a rangefinder. Most of you will have a guide with you on your hunt, they will be equipped with both good binoculars and a good range finder, but it's just as important for you to have these important tools with you as well so add them to your packing list. If anyone is looking to purchase either for your trip, do not hesitate to reach out if you need any advice on what to look at.

Physical Readiness:

Taking good care of yourself, getting some sort of physical activity, and drinking plenty of water before and during your trip will help you all in terms of being prepared for your hunt from a physical standpoint. I would consider our hunts on the easy side of a western deer hunt, but open terrain and dry air can influence your health if you are not in the best of shape. Our altitude is around 4,000 feet above sea level, so not a huge impact on your health, but it will have an impact on sighting in your rifle...see more info on this below under the Weapon Preparation section of this email.

Weapon Preparation:

Does not matter if you are hunting with a bow, muzzle loader, or rifle, the name of the game is practice! Let us break this down:

Archery:

- When sighting in your archery tackle, it is imperative that you practice from several positions. I like to practice standing, sitting, kneeling, and all forms in between. Try to put your self in a hunting position while shooting. Use obstacles in front of you, to your side, behind you, and practice drawing your bow in positions you normally would not at the range. I constantly practice by leaning around things and drawing my bow sideways and coming up to the target like I am drawing down on a monster bull while hiding as low as possible but rising to make the shot.
- If your range has longer range targets always start at the longest-range targets and move to closer targets as your practice session goes on. My range has a 100-yard target, I will normally start at 100 and move to 40 or 30 at the end of my session. When I start at 100 yards, shooting 50 or 60 yards is not so scary and my confidence is much higher making me a better shot at 50 or 60 yards. Do not forget to shoot at close targets as well, I spend significant time at our 10 yard and 5-yard targets, but I like to shoot with my eyes closed at 5 yards so I can learn to “feel” the bull’s eye. Relying on my instincts versus my sight makes me a far better archer!
- Get your archery tackle to your archery shop early for tune-ups or upgrades. The later you wait the busier they are. I like to have all this work done prior to April before everyone else starts to think about getting ready for the fall!
- We do not allow mechanical broadheads for our big game hunts, we request you use “cut on contact” fixed broadheads only. “Chisel Points” are also not allowed, cut on contact is the way to go. Understand that a lethal shot is a double lung shot, single lung shots normally result in a lost/wounded animal and nobody wants that! In order to get a double lung shot, it is important to have enough kinetic energy to penetrate a lot of tissue and possibly bone in order to get into the body cavity, penetrate the shot side lung and get into the offside lung. Speed has little to do with “kinetic energy.”, it is more about bow draw weight, arrow/broadhead weight, and having a very sharp tough edge on the broadhead to cut as much tissue as possible. ‘Chisel Points” and expandable broadheads typically loose too much energy upon entry to penetrate into the offside lung. If anyone needs recommendations on the broadheads we have seen work the best, contact us and we can discuss this subject in great length!
 - *NOTE – If you are hunting pronghorn or Mountain Lion, mechanical or “chisel point” broadheads are allowed.*

- Tune each and every arrow with each and every broadhead, make sure they all fly the same. This takes a lot of time, but if you are lucky enough to get a shot at a bull, the last thing you want to do is think about your equipment, you purely want your instincts to take over and all the practice and confidence will culminate in the quick recovery of your trophy.
- I will mention this again as it is especially important, try to mentally put yourself in the moment of truth when practicing as much as you can!
- If you are thinking of replacing any tackle, including arrows and broadheads, do it early and practice as much as you possibly can to ensure everything is in working order way before your hunt starts. If things are not in sync when you arrive, it is too late, and your confidence will be exceptionally low.
- Single Pin Adjustable Sights seem to be gaining in popularity. In our experience, these sights do not work well when hunting game on the ground, they work great in a tree stand where you have the luxury of time to make a final yard adjustment, however when your on the ground at eye level and things are unfolding quickly, making a final yardage adjustment might mean the difference between taking advantage of your one opportunity or missing your one opportunity!

Other Equipment:

<https://www.coloradobghunting.com/gear/>

<https://www.skregear.com/ref/172/?campaign=I&AOutfittersClientProgram>

Our website has a great gear recommendation list, and you can even purchase equipment through two of our newest preferred partners – SKRE Clothing and Outfitter Gear List by clicking on the links above. For now, lets just talk basics:

Things you WILL need!

Binoculars

Range Finder

Good Pack (You do not need a huge pack, just big enough to carry water, food, extra cloths)

Rain Gear (Early Seasons Aug/Sept)

Cold Gear (Later Seasons - Oct/Nov)

Good Hunting Boots/Quality Socks

Good Gloves/Head ware

Headlamp/Flashlight

Weapon

Arrows/Broad heads

Proper Clothing/Camo Clothing (Layers especially important) **

Camp Cloths
Toiletries
Chap stick is especially important

Things you will not need:

Knives/skinning equipment
Spotting Scope
GPS
2 Way Radios
Sleeping Bag
Towels
Game Calls
Pillows
Eating utensils

Our lodge is fully equipped to handle all your needs, so all you need to pack is your hunting equipment/clothing.

The Most Important Factor of Equipment; know your equipment and practice with it with BEFORE your hunt:

Every year clients show up with brand new equipment just purchased off the internet or their hunting store of choice. Booking a hunt comes with all the excitement of not only the adventure, but the chance to purchase new equipment. As exciting as this is, it can also be overwhelming, there are so many gadgets being marketed to hunters today, one could go broke just purchasing camo!

Our advice is to keep it simple; you do not need half the things you may think you need! Refer to the previous email I sent out that had an equipment list if you have any questions, it will save you money and hassle of packing things you will not need!

Binoculars

Should be at least 10x42.

Rangefinders

A good handheld rangefinder is important, one that figures out the shooting angle and lets you know the true yardage with the angle incorporated.

Clothing

Should be light in weight in the early seasons. Layers are especially important all seasons as we can see temps in the 70's in the afternoon and teens to 20's in the morning. Gore-Tex is a must. You will want to bring rain proof clothing in the early season, and snow gear in the later seasons. Camo pattern is not so important, but function is extremely important! Check out our Trusted Partner SKRE Clothing, they offer a wide range of clothing that works great for fall/winter in Colorado or anywhere in North America.

Boots

Mountain Hunts - We hunt a lot of boggy areas in the early season, so a waterproof lightweight boot that goes up the calf along with boot gators going up the calf almost to the knee are a must, later seasons you will want a heavier boot that wicks moisture easily! It should be good for sitting and stalking! Leave muck boots and other rubber boots at home, they do not work well on this type of hunt!

Plains Hunts: Light boots that wick moisture is the key to the plain's hunts!

Packs

Early season, smaller light packs work well, keep in mind you will not be hunting all day in most cases, so you just need a pack to carry your personal items, extra clothing, water, and snacks. Do not overdo it with a huge pack you would use if hunting in the back country for days.

You will want to carry your weapon in your hands, it just does not work well to have your weapon on your pack, sometimes things happen fast, and you can miss your opportunity if your weapon is strapped to your pack!