

Servings and Repairs

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The serving can very easily be replaced. You'll need a serving tool (the Bjorn one is good), some serving (use whatever is currently on the bow - probably soft twist), and a wee bit of practice. The last item is the most important :-)

You'll probably find four types of serving available; soft twist, braided, monofilament, and fastflite.

I would advise against using monofilament serving; it is very difficult to work with, and if it breaks, it can't be repaired in the field (it instantly unravels all of the way). The good side of it is that monofilament serving gives a really clean loose for finger shooters.

Braided and soft twist are both quite easy to work. Braided is a bit more hard wearing, but is thinner and may crush strings (it's important not to do this if you use Kevlar strings). Both give a similar loose. I tend to use soft twist now, because it's slightly easier to work, and can be field repaired easily.

I've no experience with FastFlite or Kevlar servings, I can't comment on them.

Describing the process of serving is quite tricky without diagrams, but I'll try anyway:

Start by attaching the end of the serving thread to the bowstring at one end of the final position of the serving (this just makes it easier to wind over the tail in the next step). Stretch the thread out to the other end position of the final serving, and start winding it round the bowstring string, back over the tail you've stretched out. The initial part has to be done by hand, rather than using the serving tool. After about 3/4 of an inch, you can cut the tail that you're winding over, and remove the tail from the bowstring.

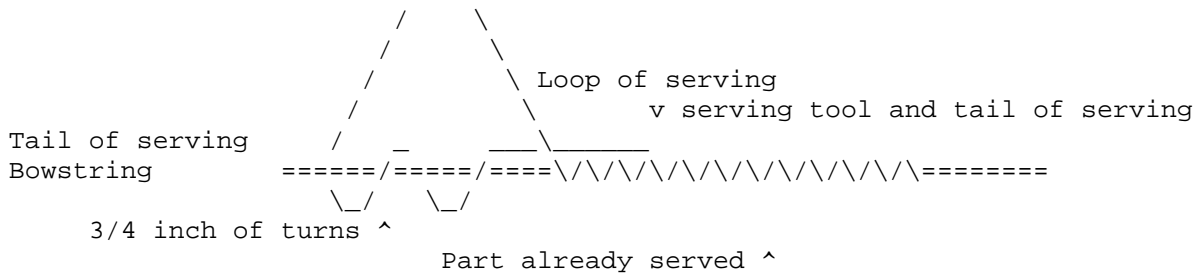
Crude ASCII diagram:

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Serving tool end  -----v
                  \      /
Tail of serving   -----/-----\
Bowstring         =====/=====
                  \      /
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You can now use the serving tool to do the body of the serving, but don't set the tension too tight or too loose; you should be able to pull the serving out from the serving tool with a small amount of force. You can also adjust the nock fit by adjusting the tension at this time. Serve up to about 3/4 inch from the end of the serving with the tool.

The final part is the most tricky; pull out the serving tool until you have about 15 inches of serving free between the served part of the bowstring and the serving tool, keeping the tension on the serving you've just done at all times. You now need to hold this free serving out in the middle, forming a loop, and start winding the serving tool around the bowstring, in the same direction as you were going, inside the loop. When you've done about 3/4 of an inch of serving inside the loop, pull the serving tool out away from the loop, leaving a tail of serving.

Crude ASCII diagram:



You now need to wrap the loop of serving around the bowstring, over the tail of serving. As you do this, the innermost part of the loop will wind around the bowstring as the outermost part of the loop unwinds, until you have unwound all of the turns inside the loop, and you are left with a simple loop. Put the end of a pencil, or a marlin spike through this loop and keep it in tension. Take hold of the serving tool and pull the tail of serving; as you do this, the loop will shrink until it is all gone. Cut off the tail of the serving and you're done. (Phew!)

Some points:

The bowstring must be under tension (on the bow or a jig).

Leave a large enough loop to get the serving tool through; it doesn't matter if you waste a little serving. Similarly, leave a large enough initial tail.

I would recommend that all archers, of whatever discipline, should learn to make and serve bowstrings, and set up and fletch arrows. Doing it yourself is the only way of ensuring consistency of quality, tension and length of bowstrings, and drag angles and weights of arrows.
