

Arrow Fletching

This LOOKS complicated and long and involved – it's not really?

Well – ok – long I'll grant you – time consuming mebbe – but most of that can be put down to the joys of waiting for paint and/or glue to dry? – What it really is, is fiddly. (and messy – turn off any fans you may have in your work area BEFORE starting! **Grin**)

ANYway.... – you'll need:

Sharp pointy scissors

Several straight firmly fletched feathers (not 'fluffy' in other words)

Thick glue (I like Aileen's)

Very small diameter dowels or, my favorite, shish-kabob skewers)

Sandpaper and/or a nailfile

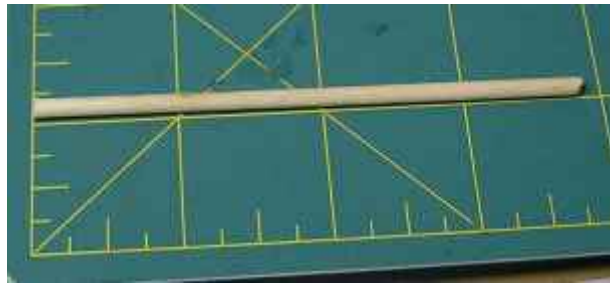
You **might** also want:

A dremel with a grinding wheel bit

Arrow heads

So then!

Determine the length of your arrows.... – put your dowel in your quiver and mark it to cut off about an inch from the top of the quiver.



Cut as many dowels at that length (generally 3-4 inches) as you want arrows (I generally make five) Sand the shafts and ends smooth

IF you're using separate arrow heads read on – if you're using a 'bullet head' (ie. pointy painted stick! **Grin**) skip down to the next bar graphic



Break out your dremel! (or drill, or, mebbe, possibly this could be done with an exacto and sandpaper – I wouldn't want to try it though)



VERY carefully grind slots into the ends of your arrow shafts – if you're 'detail oriented' (hubby calls it 'ate up') – you can grind slots in both ends – one to fit the arrow head, another notch to fit the string when she pulls her bow.....



Sand the ends smooth again.

Paint and/or stain your arrow shafts.... I used a ½ & ½ mix of black and matt sealer. (only figuring out afterwards that it was going to make the rest of these pictures a real bear – but hubby promised me an ebony wood bow.... **Grin**)

Break out your feathers and scissors.



Here we get into lots of pictures with not a lot to say about them – but still.

Carefully trim off the feathers along one side of the shaft – being careful not to cut the shaft, but to get as close to it as possible.



Now, again, very carefully, and cutting JUST the shaft, cut 1/2" to 3/4" pieces off your feathers. The very tip of the feather won't be useful, but go ahead and cut them all the way down to the bottom of the feather, and/or to the point where it becomes fluffy.

Don't stress over a thick shaft, just cut it in 1/2 vertically. (being careful not to cut into the feathers of course..)



Alrighty! – we have feather bits! – lots and lots of feather bits? – you'll need three 'bits' for each arrow, I'd cut extra if I were you.... – lay them all out and look at what you've got – try to match up the patterns



THAT was the hard bit! – it's easy from here on in?

Pour a pile of glue somewhere 'safe' (so your cut feather bits won't accidentally run into it)

Pick up a feather bit, run the shaft through the glue
Stick it on your arrow shaft! (*grin* teasing teasing)

If you've cut a notch for the string, one 'bit' goes perpendicular to the notch with the other two framing the other $\frac{1}{2}$ -

If didn't muck about with a notch, just place them in even thirds.



Trimming the feathers.... (yes, more feather cutting)

I tried to use feathers of a couple different types – if you're feathers are 'wide' – start with a vertical cut parallel to the arrow shaft and about $\frac{1}{4}$ " out (give or take)



If your feathers are long and narrow start with a horizontal cut perpendicular to the arrow shaft (aren't you glad I took lots of pics? LOL)



You WILL want to use both cuts on all feathers so that they end up looking like this:



Of course, what that picture REALLY shows, is the next step! – you’ll notice that your feather shafts are bright white – really eyecatching aren’t they? – Also , if you used Aileen’s – your glue has dried all shiny – not a good look.

Paint it. – the shafts, the glue, everything – making sure to cover the cut ends at the top and bottom of your feathers.....

POOF – you’re all done! **grin**

