



after peeling off bark, choose side of branch/stave that is most free of knots (curves and twist can either be avoided or used for extra character or to increase strength). Next the dimensions/shape of bow are drawn on (flat bow in this case).

leave an inch or so either end and draw in central line, then find centre of handle. Then draw in details of nocks and handle.

Now the cutting starts and if I have a lot of wood to remove, I use the granfors camping axe, but normally just the mini and a drawknife

Note at this stage you are just roughing out and not cutting down to the dimension lines - any hasty mistakes at this stage and any subsequent stage could ruin or force you to shorten your bow - it is also a good idea to get into the habit of cutting from the handle towards the nocks. This helps ensure an even amount of wood is taken off both limbs and will help with tillering later on.

After the roughing out, I have used a draw knife and shaving horse to start cutting down to the dimension lines - the picture shows the process of cutting out the handle. This is best done from either side as shown in photo, cutting down as far as the middle of the handle first and then turning bow around to finish.

Once you have finished this stage, the profile of the bow should be roughly rectangular or square.



This is the stage when you start cutting out the stave to start making a more pyramid shape profile always cutting along ridges on the wood.

This photo shows a more pyramid profile, from here your aim is to keep cutting along the ridges until you achieve a more D shaped profile. Take your time here - if you cut too much off your bow may not end up very strong, so keep checking its strength, as shown in the photo below and stop cutting along its entire length when it is near a strength you want.



As a guide, I could just bend the yew at this stage and stop cutting - you can see areas along the bow in the photo where each limb does not bend.

The next stage is floor tillering, in this stage you only remove wood where the limbs do not bend. From here on you are only removing wafer sizes of wood. It takes time and you may be tempted to use power tools to speed it along, but don't. I have ruined many bows that way. **Remember you can always take wood off, but you can't put it back on.** Do not bend the wood to far as this could ruin the stave and produce a set, but after removing the smallest amount of wood, you do need to bend it slightly about a dozen times so that you can see the difference that removed wood has made.

Once each limb seems to bend evenly (does not have to be exact) then temporary nocks are cut into each end and the tillering is done using a strong string which is longer than the bow. This I will cover in another file.

Picture of tools I use in these stages for all bows.

Shaving horse

Drawknife

Sportmans axe

mini axe

camp axe

carpenters axe

plus bench with vice and clamps when using rasps(will be shown with ash board file).

