

HOW TO MAKE A QUIVER THAT WORKS

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Many years ago at an event I had a very earnest gentle explain to me that my back quiver wasn't period at all. Nope, not even close to being period.

Hmmm, I said to myself. Looks like time for some research. Here's what I found. Most of the representations of archers that I found, and there weren't many, show archers with arrows tucked through their belts, arrows stuck in the ground or simply laid upon the ground. Knowing what I know about hunting, the last thing you want is razor sharp arrow heads tucked into your belt waiting for you to trip on a tree root and drive them into your vital organs. Likewise, there is no way you can tuck enough arrows into your belt to see you through a battle.

So, I looked a little harder. There, in the Bayeaux Tapestry, I found quivers. The panel that shows the Norman archers shows archers with hip quivers and one other archer with a back quiver. Further digging turned up more representations of archers with mostly hip quivers. I also found representations of horse archers and crossbowmen all with hip quivers. I take this as hip quivers may have been more common but back quivers certainly existed and were used in period, so there.

Now that we have that out of the way, you can find perfectly good quivers at sporting goods stores but they look, well, modern. I want you to take the time to make your own.

A good, basic, hip quiver can be had simply by taking a mailing tube big enough to hold a dozen arrows. Reinforce the bottom by cutting a couple circles of plastic from, say, a margarine lid and putting them inside. Then take some plain white cotton duck and a little spray adhesive and cover the tube. With a craft knife, cut a slit near the top for a strap to hang it from your belt. If you do basket weaving, I've seen two very nice quivers made of wicker. Or you can go with my favorite, leather.

TOOLS

- Light to medium weight tooling leather
- Paper for pattern
- Marker, tape measure and straight edge
- Scissors for paper and for leather
- Leather punch and/or punch awl
- Leather needle and waxed cord or sinew

DESIGN

I start by laying at least a dozen to a score of arrows on a piece of paper and folding the paper to loosely hold the arrows as shown in fig 1. I say loosely because if you pack the arrows in the quiver you will damage the fletching. Use the straight edge to make the pattern edges nice and neat. Go through your leather and see which pieces will be right for the job. The more pieces you have to stitch together, the more chance you have for a critical failure at an inconvenient time, like in the middle of a timed round.



Fig 1

ASSEMBLY

Cut out your pattern and transfer to the leather. If you have a piece of leather long enough, you can simply fold the leather over at the bottom of the quiver. Depending on how thick your leather is, you may not even need to reinforce it. If, however, you have shorter pieces of leather, you may need to stitch the bottom of the quiver. The tips of your arrows will eat the stitching. Cut and glue in a reinforcing piece as shown in fig 2.



Fig 2

If you are making a back quiver, have a friend hold the leather that will be the bag in place across your back. Now, you need to measure from the bottom of the bag diagonally across your chest to the back of the opposite shoulder. Using your straight-

edge, lay out a strip that long and two or three inches wide. Once this strip is cut out, attach it to the bottom of the quiver bag as shown in fig 3.



Fig 3

Once the strap is attached to the bottom of the bag, you can punch lacing holes and stitch up the sides of the quiver bag. Then, with arrows in the quiver bag, have a friend help hold it in place and fit the strap for comfort. Stitch the strap into place and you have a back quiver ready to go as shown in fig 4.



Fig 4

A hip quiver is pretty much the same deal. Once you have the bottom of the bag done, punch the lacing holes and start stitching up the sides. You can either attach a loop

of leather to the top of the bag to hang it straight down from the belt or you can attach a loop into one side seam at an angle as shown in fig 5.



Fig 5

All you have left to do is to trim any excess leather and make your new quiver look spiffy. The great thing is no two quivers are going to be exactly the same. Now, go out there and make yourself a quiver to be proud of.

See you on the range.

