



REFLECTIONS

BY JUDD COONEY

SEAT-OF-THE-PANTS BOWHUNTING

The person who coined the phrase: “Your mind can only absorb what your butt can endure,” must have been a bowhunter who had spent hour upon hour sitting on an unpadding treestand seat, in a pit blind or perched on a precarious stool in a ground blind with their tender buns gradually going numb or, even worse, being rubbed raw by whatever rough surface they were sitting on.

I doubt if there’s a bowhunter out there who hasn’t sat motionless for hours waiting for a trophy critter to ease within range, enduring the discomfort of an uncomfortable, butt-numbing seat that was gradually becoming unbearable. Finally, something has to be done to alleviate the situation and after carefully scrutinizing every visible inch of the terrain around your stand you ease from one cheek to the other or raise your hindquarters a bit to take the seemingly unendurable strain off your backside and restore the feeling and blood flow to your tender tush. However, about the time you feel that indescribable sense of relief from the blood flowing through your lower body, you hear the heart stopping, throat clogging, alarm snort of a buck, woof of a bear or sharp bark of an elk that has sneaked “up close and personal,” and picked up your subtle movement.

Over the many years I’ve bowhunted and guided bowhunters, I’ve seen and tried about every type of seat cushion, pad and contrivance I could make or buy to make my client’s bowhunts and myself a bit more comfortable. None have filled the bill under most bowhunting situations and conditions, and most have left a lot to be desired.

When you spend 15 hours in a pit blind day after day antelope hunting or photographing, the damp dirt seat has a way of chapping parts of your anatomy that were never meant to be chapped, and the slightest rock or root has a way of growing in inches direct proportion to the hours you spend sitting on it. Treestand seats are another story altogether, and I have yet to find a seat on

one that is comfortable over the long haul, although there are a few that are tolerable for short periods.

The chairs and stools for ground blinds aren’t much better. The chairs that are somewhat comfortable are a bugger when it comes to getting into shooting position and most are noisy and have a tendency to break down under hard hunting use. The smaller folding stools are a bit unstable and I’ve had several bowhunting clients end up on their back in the blind with their feet in the air, wondering what the hell happened. All the non-cushioned chairs will numb your butt after a few hours of sitting, but can be greatly improved with the addition of a good cushion.

A couple of years ago I thought I’d found the ideal bowhunting stool for blind hunting. It was a stout, lightweight, folding three-cornered affair with solid back. You could sit back in comfort, and yet, when the moment of truth came, you could lean forward, drop a knee on the ground, and you were in a solid position to draw. Great—except that the tri-cornered design shut off circulation to both your legs and your butt and the front protrusion didn’t exactly allow comfort for any other extremities after a short time especially when you leaned forward.

A few years back one of my bowhunting clients brought a homemade cushion to antelope camp that was almost the perfect TB solution. His inventive wife had covered a 16x2-inch-thick chunk of dense, but soft foam with a waterproof Gore-Tex shell, and added a second outer cover of soft, quiet camouflage fleece. She attached a length of cord along the top so he could tie the seat cushion around his waist for transporting. I managed to wheedle this seat cushion from the client, and made constant use of it for several seasons until one of my hunting clients managed to abscond with it.

Two years ago I got my first Hunt Comfort cushion, and it was love at first use. These cushions were originally designed to



NICHOLAS WRIGHT/WWW.HUNTINGILLUSTRATION.COM

protect the tender posterior of wheelchair-bound outdoor-loving people. These cushions are the cat’s meow for bowhunters, and are so comfortable and adaptable that they’ll actually increase your hunting time on a stand of any kind.

The Hunt Comfort cushions www.huntcomfort.com come in various sizes 2 to 3 inches thick, consisting of an upper and lower layer of dense memory foam and an inner layer of honeycomb-like blue gel. The cushion is covered with a soft, quiet and waterproof camouflage cloth, complete with carrying strap and a couple additional snap fasteners.

These cushions have helped make sitting in a treestand, pit blind or on the ground about as comfortable as possible, and make hunting stools and chairs downright comfy. I wouldn’t think of going turkey hunting without one of these cushions attached to my vest, and I attach the smaller Climb On cushion to my daypack for all bowhunting situations. One of these cushions resides permanently in the seat of my truck and has virtually eliminated back pain and a sore behind from long drives. Another is on the chair in front of my computer to make the hours spent there as painless as possible.

A hunting cushion may seem irrelevant to the success or failure of your bowhunt. However, being comfortably situated in your ambush site, be it a treestand or ground blind, can add to the effectiveness of your bowhunting efforts by maintaining your comfort where you can keep your mind on the challenge of the hunt and your quarry and not on your aching buns. ←
