



So, you want to outsmart a monster whitetail buck? Well, I'm here to tell you that you can do it, BUT it won't be easy. I've learned an awful lot over my 50 year hunting career that's allowed me to score multiple record book bucks, and I'm happy to share some of my knowledge with you, my fellow deer hunter.

I estimate that about ninety percent of the hunters who put their tag on a big buck just happened to be at the right place at the right time. The other ten percent is yielded by hunters who are after a particular big buck.

This latter group of hunters are a different breed from the ones who go out a couple times a year hoping to see a deer with antlers. It's not uncommon for a hunter who is after a truly big buck to pass up ten to twenty different bucks, and maybe finish the season empty handed. That's the price you pay when hunting trophy bucks.

Big bucks are large for a reason--they instinctively know how to keep out of harm's way. They are wise & more leery than younger bucks, and generally only move during early morning or late evening, and after dark. The rut is the exception to this rule--deer can and will be moving at any time.

The chance of taking a trophy buck may only present itself once a year, if at all. So when that time comes, you must be prepared. If people say I'm lucky when it comes to hunting big bucks, I tell them, "It seems like the harder I hunt, the luckier I get."

Another avid hunter and very good friend of mine, Wally Carr, defines luck as, "when the path of opportunity crosses the path of preparation." How true it is, and being prepared means eliminating mistakes.

I've been hunting for about 50 years, and for about half of those years, I've been concentrating on trophy bucks. Over those years I've noticed the five BIG mistakes whitetail deer hunters commonly make:

1. Determining Distance

Judging distance is obviously more important for an archery hunter than a gun hunter. For a gun hunter with modern day equipment, not knowing the difference between 100 or 200 yards doesn't mean much. The sportsman using a rifle will still hold for the same spot.

However, for a bowhunter, not knowing the difference between 20 and 30 yards is a mistake. Not knowing the difference between 30 and 40 yards is a major mistake!

Modern-day range finders take the guesswork out of knowing distance when you are sitting in a tree stand. If you are hunting on the ground and see an animal that you want to shoot, you probably won't have the time to pull out a range finder, find the distance, put the range finder away, then draw back your bow and shoot. So, you need to develop your eye for distance.

One helpful tip is that the average person's step is about one yard long. Get into the habit of picking out an object in the direction you are walking.

Guess the distance in yards to the object, and count the number of steps it takes to get there. Do this several times a day throughout the year. This method will help you become more adept at judging distances.

Another way to sharpen your skills in judging distance can be accomplished while you are in a tree stand. Pick out an object and guess the distance. Use your range finder to determine how good your guess was.

Also, determine the distance of different objects within your sight as soon as you get settled in your stand. When an animal does come into view you won't waste valuable time by having to pull out your range finder. You will have the information needed in advance.

2. Inadequate Time on the Practice Range

Another very common mistake that hunters make is not spending enough time on the practice range. It takes a lot of time and effort to determine where a particular buck is staying and where he is traveling. More than likely, it will be very difficult to get a good shot at him. So, if that opportunity presents itself, you better be ready!

If you are using a rifle, sight it in from a bench rest, then start practicing off-hand. Be as good as you can be, because an off-hand shot might be the only opportunity you will have at the buck of your dreams.

If possible, practice shooting at moving targets. Also, shoot from various positions such as kneeling and sitting. Try walking rather quickly, and then shoot while you are out of breath. By following these simple tips you will become a much better rifleman.

If you are truly serious about hunting big bucks you're going to want to take up bowhunting if you haven't already. Bowhunting offers all sorts of advantages to the trophy hunter. They get the first strike advantage because archery season precedes gun season in most states.

Probably the biggest advantage bowhunters have is they get to hunt during the "magical" peak of the rut in most areas. This is huge because it's your best chance to see big bucks moving during daylight hours.

You should purchase a good quality bow and arrows from a reputable archery shop first. The pros will make sure that the bow fits you and suits your personal needs. They will also assist you in selecting the proper arrows and other accessories you need.

It's also a good idea to have your bow properly tuned by the archery pro. A properly tuned bow means good arrow flight, and good arrow flight will save you countless headaches, particularly when shooting broadheads as we'll see in the next section.

Become familiar with your bow, arrows and other accessories. Start shooting as far in advance of bow season as you can. When you think you have practiced enough, practice some more!

As summer turns into autumn, your shot groups should get smaller and smaller as you practice with your bow. Repetitive shooting builds up your strength enabling you to draw the bow easier, and allows you to hold the bow at full draw for longer periods of time. Repetition also develops muscle memory improving your stability and consistency.

Be sure to practice while sitting, kneeling, and at elevated positions by utilizing tree stands, porches or decks. You will greatly increase your chances of making a good shot by following all of these suggestions. Otherwise, your big buck story may not have a happy ending.

3. Broadhead Selection

Broadhead selection is extremely important for a bowhunter. Almost all broadheads will do the job if they shoot well from your bow. Different types of broadheads will shoot differently from the same bow, guaranteed.

They are two primary categories of broadheads. There are mechanicals, and fixed blades. Each type has its own set of pros and cons. You must choose for yourself what works best for your set up.

Generally, mechanical broadheads will fly much the same as field points. Fixed-bladed broadheads, on the other hand, are more likely to group differently than field points.

A huge mistake many archers make is shooting field points until it is time to go hunting. They screw on their broadheads and go hunting, then wonder why they wound an animal with a misplaced shot.

4. Over-Hunting

Another major mistake that you have to learn to avoid if you want to bag a big buck is over-hunting an area. Your best chance in any spot is the first time you hunt it.

The more times you hunt from a particular spot, the less deer you will see there. Every deer that passes through your area may become aware of your presence by sight, sound, or smell.

Deer will become leery about going that way again. Deer can still smell your scent where you were walking long after you leave. They can, and will choose another route the next time. A good rule of thumb is to only hunt an area one or two days in a row, then give it a rest. Hunt another area for a couple of days, and then return to your original area.

One more thing here - many hunters don't consider their entry and exit to and from their stand. This is a gigantic mistake. Always pick a route that will allow you to slip in and out undetected by their eyes, ears and nose.

5. Not Paying Attention

The most common mistake deer hunters make is not paying attention to the wind. An expert hunter constantly monitors the direction of the wind and carefully selects a spot that will put him downwind from deer.

Setting up in low spots with hills on each side is the most difficult place to hunt from. The wind will constantly change directions sending your scent into all directions. Try to avoid places like these with unpredictable winds.

Try setting up along a ridge, on the point of a hill, or on a large flat area. The wind will be less likely to change directions in these kinds of places.

If you know, or think you know, where a deer is staying, and the wind is blowing from your direction towards the direction you think the deer is-- don't go there! Approach the area from another side. If this is not possible, wait for another day.

If you decide not to wait and continue hunting, always keep the wind in your face. This will help eliminate the chances of a deer smelling you and leaving the area even before you have a chance to see it. There are many types of wind detectors available. So pick one you like and use it a lot.

I can't overemphasize the importance of paying attention to the wind. We humans are visual creatures. We navigate primarily by what our eyes tell us.

Deer, on the other hand, primarily rely on what their nose tells them. It's hard for us to understand, but it's almost as if they 'see' scent plumes and air flows, and they use that information to safely find what they are looking for.

I know that biologists will cringe at that analogy, but I think you get the picture. Pay attention to the wind!

Well, I mentioned way more than 5 big mistakes here in this Special Report. I hope you don't mind. I guarantee that if you eliminate these common mistakes, your chances of taking the buck of a lifetime will skyrocket!

GOOD HUNTING!

Richard Blausen



Richard Blausen is known as "Pennsylvania's Master Deer Hunter", and with good reason. No one has been more successful at taking big bucks in PA than Dick, even long before the state mandated antler restrictions. Although he lives in Western PA and usually hunts close to home, he's been successful all across the country.

Richard's expertise has been featured on outdoor TV shows and in numerous hunting magazines, both as an author and as the subject of articles. He has served on the pro staff with many of the top name names in the archery industry.

He's also one of the founders of a great new website, www.TrophyBuckSecrets.com, where you can find online videos, podcasts, articles, trophy galleries, discussion forums, and many other resources to help passionate whitetail deer hunters like you connect with the buck of your dreams and with other hunters.

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