

# Don't Show Your Face

**I'm a firm believer in the effectiveness** of camouflage. That being said, I don't think it matters much which particular pattern you use, as long as it matches your environment. It also has to have a pattern large enough (and with enough contrast) to break up your outline. And lastly, the fabric shouldn't shine in the sunlight.

Remember, deer are not fashion conscious. They have no idea what pattern is in style and what pattern is outdated. My favorite camo clothes are my oldest. These clothes are dull, mottled, have no sheen and are soft, supple and quiet.

I spend a great deal of time each fall glassing for deer. I get to see a lot of bowhunters in the field, at a distance. I try to figure out exactly what it was that first allowed me to spot these camo-clad hunters. Movement is obviously the first thing that catches my eye; it is very easy to pick up a guy who is walking or moving his hands. The next easiest thing to spot is camo clothing (or a bow) that is shiny. Next is clothing that just doesn't match the environment; it is usually too dark. Dark camo makes the hunter look like a black, human-shaped blob at a distance. After those three, the next easiest to spot is the un-camouflaged hands or face of a hunter.

## Face Paint vs. Facemasks

I have to smile when I see a bowhunter decked out in the newest, high-tech, high-dollar, designer camo, yet he has nothing to camouflage his face or hands. Unless you are naturally very dark skinned, your pale face and hands will shine like a beacon in the sunlight! It is imperative to camouflage your face and hands. The purpose of this article is to convince you my way of accomplishing this cover-up is the best way. I use face paint for both my face and my hands. Let me explain why.

The primary reason I use face paint is to improve my accuracy. We hold a long-distance broadhead shoot every summer here in Arizona. Its purpose is to encourage us to be as accurate as

possible with our hunting equipment. The rules are simple: you must shoot what you hunt with. I haven't shot this tournament every year, but of all the years I have shot in it, I have won — with one notable exception. That year, I decided I was going to hunt using a facemask. So, adhering to the spirit of the rules, I wore a facemask as I shot. It was an eye-opening experience. I could not maintain the same level of consistency as I could without the mask. I am a fanatic when it comes to accuracy and was appalled at the results. Needless to say, I never used a facemask again!



*Field Editor Randy Ulmer believes camouflaging your face and hands is essential for successful bowhunting. He prefers face paint over a facemask because it is more comfortable and allows him to shoot more accurately.*

Here are some other reasons I don't like facemasks:

- Facemasks are hot! Most of my hunting is done in the Desert Southwest during the early season. Putting a cloth bag over my head and running around in the sun can be miserable. Face paint is much more comfortable, especially if it is water based.

- Facemasks are not comfortable. When I'm sneaking through the woods, my senses are fully alert. A facemask makes me feel a little claustrophobic and less in tune with my surroundings.

- Facemasks impair hearing. The movement of the mask on my ears makes noise. I can't hear as well and it shifts around on my head as I move.

- Facemasks tend to partially block peripheral vision. When I draw my bow, I turn my head to look right along the bridge of my nose. This is not my normal line of sight. So, occasionally, when I'm wearing a facemask and come to full draw, my facemask is in the way of the peep. I also hate having stuff around my face and ears. Finding a mask that fits perfectly is not easy. This leads to more movement as I try to adjust it.

- Facemasks affect your anchor point. A repeatable anchor is fundamental for accurate, consistent shooting. A facemask impairs my ability to anchor correctly. Even the ultra-thin head nets seem to affect my anchor and execution.

## The Best Face Paint

Through the years, I have tried every face paint on the market and have never found one that completely satisfied me. I've even resorted to making my own paint. I just wanted something that didn't smell, didn't shine, stayed put and came off relatively easily.

Well, I was walking down an aisle at the Archery Trade Association Show this past January when I saw a guy in a booth with his face covered in camo paint. After checking out the product, I tried to buy most of what he had on display! It's called Carbomask ([www.carbomask.com](http://www.carbomask.com)). It's made with activated charcoal and natural clays. It isn't shiny, it doesn't smell, it stays put and it washes off easily. The company even claims it controls scent. Even if that is true, I'm not sure it matters because the paint covers such a small part of your total body area that the overall effect would be negligible.

If you don't use anything to cover up your face and hands, you need to start. If you currently use a facemask, give face paint a try. I think you'll find the benefits more than worth the trouble. ➡