

Ropes guide archers between the shooting area and their target.



3 Smart Things About Gun Silencers

1 THEY WERE ONCE SOLD IN HARDWARE STORES.

The first commercially successful product was patented by MIT grad Hiram Percy Maxim in 1909. Marketed as a gentlemanly way to shoot, silencers were widely used in the 1920s and '30s. One ad portrayed a well-dressed marksman firing at a target in his living room fireplace while a dog lounged at his feet.

2 AFFECTIONATELY KNOWN AS "CANS,"

silencers are metal cylinders lined with internal baffles that channel expanding gas from the gun blast into hollow chambers, reducing its velocity as it leaves the muzzle. This can cut noise by as much as 40 dB.

3 THEY'RE LEGAL IN 39 STATES

and fairly easy to buy. You have to pay a \$200 tax, fill out some ATF paperwork, and wait a few months, but that's about it. The \$200 fee was instituted in 1934 to discourage the use of silencers, but it has never been adjusted for inflation and is now little deterrent for most people.

—James Card



3 SMART THINGS: JESSE LENZ



Camera tripods are used to line up shots.

Archers shoot from 30 meters. Target size varies to mimic different distances.



BEST Sports Adaptations for the Blind

How visually impaired athletes get their game on.

ARCHERY

Blind archers use camera tripods equipped with homemade tactile sighting devices. To direct their shot at the target, they place their bow hand against a pin or metal bar that has been positioned by a sighted spotter.

TENNIS

Players swing a shortened racket at a Nerf-like ball with a rattle inside. They navigate via thick string taped to the floor of the badminton-sized court. The number of bounces allowed (up to three) depends on the degree of blindness.

BASKETBALL

A tiny sound emitter inside the ball produces a constant high-pitched tone to indicate its location. A second device on the backboard emits a lower-pitched, intermittent beep that tells players where to aim their jump shot.

CHESS

(Who says chess isn't a sport?) Black and white squares are set at different heights, and black game pieces are marked with pins. Players learn to feel the difference between, say, a bishop and a rook.

SHOOTING

Using rifles with laser sights and photoelectric cells, competitive shooters aim at a black, white, and gray target. The sensor triggers different tones as the laser beam passes over each shade, indicating when to pull the trigger.

BOWLING

Bowlers use side railings to get lined up, but beyond that everything else is the same. Twelve legally blind US bowlers have scored perfect games; the record for a completely blind person is 263.

—DANIEL KRIEGER