



grandchildren call it a do-rag) that covers more of my head and also comes in camo.

► I keep my body hydrated well by carrying a Camelbak (www.camelbak.com) with me into my tree stand. Then I have water there that I don't have to search through my backpack to reach and make unnecessary moves that may spook deer.

Several companies make Camelbaks in various camos, so that wherever you hang it in your tree stand, it can't be detected by deer.

► I use the MAX Wipes—also known as a Shower in a Bag—in the middle of the day to keep down odors if the day is very hot. These 10" x 12" individual wash towels contain the Scent-A-Way MAX formula (www.hunterspec.com) to help eliminate odors, along with Aloe Vera and vitamin E to leave skin clean, soft and protected.

BUG ELIMINATION

Several items will eliminate pesky mosquitoes, gnats, ticks and flies. If you use a spray-on type of insect repellent, you very well may spook your deer, due to the insect repellent's odor. But

during the early season, I really believe that being able to sit still is a critical key to not spooking deer.

However, when you have flying, creepy, crawling, biting and stinging critters attacking your hide, sitting still may be impossible or almost impossible.

So, I utilize various insect repellants for two reasons

► Lyme disease is a terrible ailment to have to deal with, and ticks carry Lyme disease. So, my first layer of bug protection is Repel Permanone spray and Repel Permethrin clothing and gear spray (www.repel.com). Most sporting goods store sell these products.

You spray it onto your hunting clothes and boots and let it dry. It's advertised to not only protect you from bugs, but it doesn't spook deer. You should be able to wash your clothes several times without having to retreat them with this product.

► Lethal's scent-free Bug Spray <http://www.lethalproducts.com>. Many of the most avid hunters I know use Lethal's products. According to the site, this bug spray is more effective than DEET, repels bugs and ticks for up to 12 hours and has no scent. Too, you can spray your ground blinds, tree stands and



hunting equipment with the Lethal Field Spray with OdoBan.

Hunters can now sit in their blinds or tree stands without getting eaten alive by all those pesky mosquitoes and other bugs while staying concealed. This product is certainly a game changer in scent-elimination technology.

► My third line of defense is a ThermaCell www.thermacell.com. I've worn and carried the product since it was first introduced and found it to be extremely effective in keeping mosquitos away, whether I'm gardening, hunting, canoeing or fishing.

In the early season when the weather is hot, the deer are more than likely to be in shady areas close to water. During daylight hours, the shade protects deer from the heat, and the animals need water to stay hydrated. If you hunt in these types of areas, you'll usually encounter plenty of mosquitoes, gnats, flies and ticks.

That's why I use the three-step insect repellent program. I'm not really sure which one of these products is the most effective at keeping biting, stinging and aggravating critters away from me, but I do know that by using all three, I don't get bitten, and I don't have flying critters around my head.

Although plenty of information has been written about how to take deer during early bow season, I personally believe that knowing how not to spook deer is the most important item to consider for early season success.

If you can eliminate the reasons that deer won't walk into your kill zone, you're a 100-percent better bowhunter than if you don't take these precautions. Good luck on your early season hunts. 🍀