

Rifles

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Rifles

Rifles give you the reach to defend with planning instead of reacting at the last moment with a handgun. A rifle is carried when you are expecting trouble.

The market for a rifle can be more confusing than that for a handgun, as there have been hundreds of thousands of different rifles produced. There are hundreds of calibers, each having it's own unique characteristics, countless different actions, optics and other accessories. Do not rely on knowledge gleaned from television and Hollywood most of is exactly opposite the truth.

Before you feel like we are getting all right wing technical talking about guns remember that the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense taught us to openly carry our rifles to intimidate our oppressors.

Starting Out

Your first practice rifle should be a .22lr caliber. 22s are easy to find, cheap, fire cheap ammunition and thus are excellent practice weapons. Once you are comfortable with your .22, you can move on to a high powered rifle. The .22 cartridge is quieter than a centerfire rifle and if firing BB or CB caps they are almost silent although these rounds will not cycle a semi-automatic they are great for low signature training. A semi-auto .22 rifle and thousands of rounds fired at the range over time will do wonders for your shooting skill. Clean up all of your fired brass during training, not only is this littering it is evidence with fingerprints. Brass can also be recycled, which can recoup some of your shooting costs, or reloaded yourself if using a center fire rifle.

RIFLE MISCONCEPTIONS

The M16/5.56mm is unreliable/has no stopping power/is a bad rifle

The M16 rifle, also known as the AR-15 in its civilian variant is a decent rifle even if it is a bit expensive on a limited budget. It is very accurate, modular, has very little recoil, is light in weight and compact in size, and allows individual troops to carry far more ammunition. If it is properly cleaned and maintained, it is a very dependable rifle, and modern .223/5.56 ammunition, while mostly used by hunters for small game and varmints, has enough power for survival hunting of most animals.

The AK series of rifles is incredibly inaccurate

While not as accurate as some contemporary designs, many AK47's are capable of shooting a 3 inch group at 100 yards, which is more than good enough for eliminating a human sized target. The accuracy of the AK series is badly hindered by the crude sights, which have changed little since World War 1. After market replacements, which run around \$30, can greatly increase the accuracy of the rifle. They have even been adapted as sniper rifles with bipods and scopes.

Fully automatic firearms are easy to get

Unless you have Class 3 dealers license or are willing to pay outrageous prices and get government approval you can't legally buy a fully auto firearm in the US. Depending what you are up for a tax evasion on machine gun transfer tax charge will likely be a flag on top of the mountain charges you are wanted for. Many older semi automatic rifles can be modified by someone with general metal work skills and knowledge of firearm mechanics, however even possessing a part that can turn a semi into an automatic is a felony. People have even been arrested for tying a string to the trigger and charging handle to improvise. The ATF doesn't play around, so don't push them. That said, most guerrilla operations are chronically short on ammunition and the waste of full automatic fire is only justified by a squad or platoon size unit pinning down opposing units or during a hasty retreat from a superior force.

If you must waste munitions when out trying to impress the boys, a trigger actuation device for a semi-auto firearm can do the job fairly cheaply, and is legal as a device for quasi automatic or burst fire but often interferes with you accessing the trigger normally and can catch on brush causing accidental misfires.

PURCHASING A RIFLE

When purchasing a rifle, many things should be considered, including caliber, ergonomics and size, sights, accessory and part availability, ammunition cost and a multitude of other factors.

A note on caliber

When talking about high powered rifles, anything .223 and above is adequate for survival hunting of North American animals and combat, although it may be too light for the exceedingly rare attack from large predators, especially in Canada and Alaska. Availability, ergonomics, and cost are far more important factors in your decision. Most military pattern semi automatic and bolt action hunting rifles have fairly mild recoil. Handling recoil depends on experience as a shooter and physical size and strength. A healthy, average to large sized adult should be able to handle most common rifles once they have mastered the grip, but inexperienced smaller shooters could have trouble. It is worthwhile to remember that a good shooter with a bad rifle can do far more damage than a bad shooter with a good rifle.

Try very hard to acquire a rifle chambered in the ammunition used by local military, captured or black market ammunition can then be used by more fighters than just those equipped with captured weaponry.

For old surplus bolt actions, the obsolete and oddball caliber ammo is super cheap, often less than \$100 for 1000 rounds, if you can find it. Try to stick to a common caliber even if buying a sporting rifle. Civilian sport loadings are expensive but generally more accurate and maintain a common zero than most military surplus ammunition. However, you should not discount military ammo, as some of it is very high grade. Use the internet and do some research, there is lots of information to be found, as gun nuts tend to be quite obsessive. Sport loadings, despite their expense, are almost always soft point, hollowpoint or ballistic tip, all of which are capable of doing much more damage to a non metallic target than military full metal jacketed "humane" ammunition.

WHAT RIFLE DO I WANT?

Selecting the right rifle for you can be difficult, but like any other firearm, you should try to fire or at least hold and point any rifle you're eyeing before buying it.

Bolt actions

The most common variety of centerfire rifle in the world is the bolt action. It is a very simple and rugged design, consisting of a manually operated bolt which pushes a round from the ammunition magazine into the chamber. Most modern bolt action sport rifles are well suited for entry level sniper and counter sniper work since they are scope ready and good for use to at least 200-300 Meters with proper training and regular practice, commercial rifles are usually of superior utility and accuracy for the price to surplus weapons, however many surplus rifles are very cheap and still perfectly usable weapons.

When buying a bolt action, it's important to weigh ammo costs. Many hunting weapons use very expensive (Albeit high quality and powerful) ammunition, as they are designed to be used a few times a year on a hunting trip. .223 is a good caliber, as it shares ammunition with military rifles, bringing down price. In the civilian realm, .243 Winchester and 30-06 are good, common rounds. .243 is a good medium caliber, flat shooting round and is an excellent choice for deer and smaller animals. Remember, people weigh about the same as a white tail deer. Not that we're suggesting anything, here...

30-06 is a more powerful round, which is suitable for larger game and longer distances.

One word of wisdom. Don't bother buying a scope until you can shoot with iron sights. You gain a false sense of security using a scope, but it's actually harder to shoot at targets within 100 yards with a scope than without. Once you master the fundamentals, then look for optics.

Semi Automatic

A semi automatic weapon is one which fires one round per trigger pull, and automatically cocks and reloads the weapon after each shot. Most so called "assault rifles" in the US are actually semi-automatic. First developed in the late 1800s, semi-automatic weapons didn't become popular until after World War 1. During WW2, the semiauto rifles had become standard issue for US Army units, and were also mass produced by the Russians, Germans and others. Most semi-auto hunting rifles while lighter are not reliable for combat use when a proven military arm is available.

The SKS Russian/Chinese carbine is cheap and reasonably handy it fires the same 7.62x39 as the AK-47. The 7.62x51 NATO FAL, CETME, and G-3 semi-automatic rifles which all feed from 20 round detachable magazines have good accuracy and excellent reliability, but are now very expensive unless you can find a sucker since the post cold war bonanza of cheap weapons has mostly dried up. The CETME, while usually less expensive, can suffer from jamming issues due to incompetent importers using poorly designed parts.

The AR-15 is fairly expensive (~\$700 2007US\$) although its virtues of accuracy, small size, light weight, and light ammunition are recognized worldwide, it is very well suited to urban operations. If you build your own AR-15(easy if you have technical ability) you can usually stay under \$400, but remember since there are hundreds of manufacturers quality varies. Look for an unfinished 80% receiver (you need to drill the holes) if you want to build an off the books gun but realize that the Feds are probably tracing every delivery from these places.

The venerable AK-47 also cannot be overlooked. It's not overly large or heavy, has mild recoil and a common round, is fairly inexpensive (\$450 for a good Yugoslavian model is a fair price) and can be very easily and cheaply modified if you so desire. Good aftermarket sights greatly increase it's usefulness.

The Ruger Mini-14 in .223/5.56 and Mini-30 in 7.62 Soviet are readily available, handy, and reliable rifles. The KelTec SU-16 .223/5.56 survival rifle is a simple light pack gun, it folds into its own stock with room for a standard 30 round M-16 magazine. These are legal "non-assault-rifles" in most states with type and feature specific gun bans.

There are several pistol caliber carbines on the market ranging from expensive police models to cheap weapons which use the same magazines as some handguns. These are easier to aim than a pistol and with a large capacity magazine could be useful for the low price. Be sure to look for models which do not jam on a regular basis and are easy to clear when jammed, use of a common magazine to your handgun is also a plus.

Other Mechanisms

Lever action, break open, pump, trapdoor and other ways of loading a weapon are also available, depending on your budget or what you can find this may be all that is available. Train with what you have available and remember to make your shots count.

Carbines

Carbines are a shorter, more versatile alternative to the original rifle. Some can easily cause damage 500-1000 yards away (if you're that good of a shot). An average pistol cartridge carbine can usually cause semi-accurate damage from about 100-200 yards away, while rifle cartridge chambered carbines are usually just as accurate as their rifle equivalents, as differences in accuracy with barrel lengths from 16" (carbine length) to 24" (rifle length) is minimal. With modern ammunition, in all but the largest of calibers, differences in the velocity of the bullets are minimal as well. Carbines are great for picking-up and going, and many have a pistol-styled grip. A good carbine can easily run \$500+, though Hi-Point firearms makes inexpensive, and fairly reliable carbines. They are not precision instruments, but Hi-Points are more than capable of getting the job done. A Hi-Point .40 carbine can be picked up at your friendly gun dealer for as little as \$240 (USD), at the time of this writing. For those who desire a slightly higher quality gun, Beretta makes a very nice law-enforcement-grade Cx4 Storm carbine, however these can be very pricey, at \$625 (USD), at the time of this writing. When choosing a pistol caliber carbine try to buy a few oversized magazines, holding at least 30 rounds. It may be worth considering a heavier, more powerful caliber for your carbine, but the primary choice should be based on available ammunition.

Build a Long Gun

Like mentioned in Handguns section a firearm can be built by someone needing lethal protection from marauders Corpgov or other. Making a rifle that is able to match the accuracy of a manufactured model is very difficult without access to a good machine shop, precision chamber reamers, and manufactured barrel blanks. Unrifled improvised long guns can be made that will fire rifle ammunition although even greater care must be exercised than with handguns due to a larger power load.

Check out <http://www.thehomegunsmith.com/> for detailed instructions on how to make a number of firearms and ammunition using common plumbing supplies. Though the author does charge for these plans, they work and are safe.

STEN Submachinegun

Slam fire submachineguns are some of the most effective firearms and can be made with basic shop equipment. These weapons if carefully made can be very reliable and provide good firepower even if they are a bit wasteful, the STEN was made select fire so you can choose single shots or auto fire. Plans can be found online and are included in some versions of this book. If you are using a different caliber adjust the dimensions and bolt weight accordingly. If you are creative an electric drill, hand tools, and a welder are all you need although a lathe and drill press with a side slide to mill the bolt really helps. Print out the blueprints on paper to scale and glue them onto the metal you are working. You can use the tools from Means of Production and the electrical mask cutting method for sheet metal and tubing to make your handy little STEN guns.

If rifled barrel blanks are unavailable you can use seamless mechanical tube or seamless hydraulic tube look in Handguns for a compatibility chart. At ranges under 10 meters the loss of accuracy will not be too great if you can't rifle the barrel. Barrels must be reamed and honed to the diameter and depth of the cartridge you plan to use. If a reamer is unavailable you must slowly drill to the proper depth too far and the weapon will not function too shallow and cases will bulge or burst which often causes a jam and makes the cartridges unreloadable. Micrometer the case and use a drill bit of the proper diameter, 10.03mm wide by 18.15mm deep chamber for a 9mm, the chamber must stay straight, smooth out the chamber with fine sandpaper and a wooden dowel after reaming. The Sten gun bolt can be made from cast brass, since there was wear problems with the early brass bolts we suggest adding a steel sear contact point made of steel.

The STEN is an excellent design to use as it is reasonably reliable, easy to make, and well engineered given the restrictions on cost and tools. The STEN was designed from the start as both a partisans and a soldiers weapon. It did not require a specialized gunsmith shop to build only simple tools. The STEN can be broken down into a barrel, stock, and tube which will easily fit into a small pack or toolbox. Estimates of material cost for the STEN today is about \$30.

For a semi-auto version to match local or national laws weld in a slotted block in place of the the selector switch to prevent going to auto. In the United States the selector mod is not enough, the weapon must be modified to fire from a closed bolt and either have a standard barrel and only a pistol grip or a 16in barrel and rifle stock. Designs are seen on the net for a closed bolt using a modified bolt with an M-16 firing pin, and a spring loaded striker which is caught by the standard STEN trigger group.

Obtain a piece of hardened steel about .5mm than wider exact diameter of your unrifled barrel tube. Determine the rifling twist/inches ratio and lay out 1mm strips of tape on a graph the length of your twist (1 in 9 would be 9 inches long) by the circumference of your rod. You need to evenly space the strips perfectly parallel and face up. Roll the metal onto the tape strips, your rod is now striped. Make sure the tape is on tight and electrolytically etch off .5mm from the rod. Cut off the unetched end, remove tape, and press the rod through your barrel with a screw press.

Original Rifles

There are two commonly available types of rifles; the bolt action and the semi-automatic. War surplus bolt action rifles are cheap and usually pretty accurate, but have a slower rate of fire than a semi-automatic. A semiautomatic is preferable in nearly all cases. The SKS carbine is probably the best semi-automatic for the money (about \$300). Among bolt actions, the Mosin Nagant, Mauser, British Enfield, and the Lee Harvey Oswald Special, the Mannlicher-Carcano, are all good buys for the money (about \$100-\$200).



Rifles

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