

## Information for the Beginning Rifle Shooter

We are asked more often than any other, questions about starting a shooting program or just getting started in position rifle shooting. This is actually a very complex question because there are so many variables. Are we asking about a young 4H shooter who is 4' 9" tall or a high school junior who is 6' tall or perhaps an adult who just wants to try the prone game? Remember, this is a precision sport and perfection is very, very difficult.

First, in my opinion, the best way to start is by joining a club, and the best type of club is one that has equipment to loan. I coached the Langley Junior Rifle Club for 25 years, and we had a good measure of success teaching people of all sizes and ages how to shoot. The club had an inventory of used equipment that was not new or even very pretty, but it was safe and serviceable. We insisted that new shooters use the club equipment until they developed the basic skills and understood what they would need for their own equipment. They were then able to begin acquiring their own gear from either the new or used market.

If that situation is not available, then I will offer the following: First, to shoot, you must have a gun. It may be an air rifle or smallbore rifle. Please be cautious because the newest or biggest is not the best whether you can afford it or not. The proper first rifle will be sized to your stature and have simple adjustments. That will allow you to learn the basics of safety, hold, sight alignment, and trigger control without the distractions of infinite adjustments to the equipment. The gun must be heavy enough to hold steady and accurate enough to deliver the shot you have fired. A light-weight plinker will do neither.

Along with the gun, you must use ammunition that is accurate. Cheap, non-target ammo can be more expensive in the long run and a very real handicap to the learning process. If the shot fired does not go where the shooter released it, the shooter learns nothing and, in fact, will become discouraged quite quickly. Fewer shots fired with accurate ammo are much more valuable than many shots fired with ammunition that is not accurate.

After you have the gun and ammunition, there is a wide variety of possible accessories. Again, used and low cost are better than the latest and greatest. After you gain the experience, you can begin to acquire the best equipment. If the standing position is part of your game, it should be learned after the basics but before the other positions. With that in mind, I will list equipment in the order I think it should be acquired.

- Shooting Stand - allows the shooter to rest the rifle between shots
- Shooting Glove - protects the hand from the rifle and later the sling
- Spotting Scope and Stand - allows the shooter to learn from his shots
- Shooting Jacket - helps stabilize the body and reduces the effect of pulse
- Sling - holds the weight of the rifle in prone, sitting and kneeling
- Shooting Mat - increases comfort and stability in prone, sitting and kneeling
- Shooting Pants - increases stability in standing and offers non-slip surfaces in kneeling
- Shooting Boots - increase stability in standing

The following three pages will provide information on equipment to purchase for the following shooters: small beginner, high school beginner and adult beginner.



The Anschütz 1451 Target rifle is by far the best value in an introductory rifle considering both the quality and cost. We need rifles like these being used to teach young people Olympic style shooting all over the United States.  
-Olympian Ann-Marie (Pfiffner) Johnson

**Equipment Options and Specifics For the Small Shooter:**

**Rifle**

- An Anschütz 1451 Target (similar to the “Achiever”) is a relatively light-weight smallbore rifle with good accuracy and an excellent tool for learning.
- The Anschütz 2002 Compressed Air Junior and the Feinwerkbau P70 Junior are both good precision starter air guns.

**Shooting Stands**

- Shooting stands can be made or purchased. The commercial stands will do the job more efficiently and last longer.

**Shooting Gloves**

- Shooting gloves are widely available on the used market as are inexpensive new ones.

**Spotting Scope**

- A spotting scope, such as the Kowa 501 series, is relatively inexpensive and will do the job quite well from 10 meters to 50 meters.
- A 3-position scope stand is appropriate such as the Gunsmithing Ultralight.

Gunsmithing, Inc.  
Deluxe Shooting Stand



**Shooting Jackets**

- Shooting jackets are available used or new in off the rack sizes.
- Prices have recently come down a lot and are now very reasonable. They are a very good value for the new shooter who may quickly grow into a larger size.
- The AHG Anschütz M165 coat has all the features of the best custom coats.

Anschütz Economy Model Jacket

**Sling**

- Any sling that is ISSF legal will do the job just fine. They seldom wear out so look first at the used market.
- The least expensive new sling is the Gehmann Synthetic.

**Shooting Mat**

- Any shooting mat will do the job, but look at the new Winstead mat for low cost and excellent value.

**Shooting Pants**

- Shooting pants are also available used or new in off the rack sizes.
- The AHG Anschütz M144 double canvas is an excellent buy.



Winstead Shooting Mat



Anschütz M133 Shooting Boots

**Shooting Boots**

- Look for used shooting boots first.
- The AHG Anschütz M133 is the best value if you need to purchase new boots.



**Equipment Options and Specifics For the High School Shooter:****Rifle**

- An Anschütz 1903 smallbore rifle is appropriate. It has excellent accuracy and good weight with which to learn.
- A used 1407 or 1807 or 1907 would also be an excellent choice. Be aware that the older guns may require some updating, such as an adjustable cheekpiece.
- The Anschütz 2002 Compressed Air or the Feinwerkbau P70 are both good precision air guns.

*Anschütz 1903  
Smallbore Rifle***Shooting Stands**

- Shooting stands can be made or purchased. The commercial stands will do the job more efficiently and last longer.

*Anschütz Standard I and  
Standard II  
Shooting Gloves***Shooting Gloves**

- Shooting gloves are widely available on the used market as are inexpensive new ones.

**Spotting Scope**

- The older shooter is more likely to do more outdoor shooting, and a better spotting scope might be a good idea.
- The Kowa 600 series costs more but will do just about everything a shooter needs for smallbore or air.
- A 3-position scope stand is appropriate, such as the Gunsmithing Ultralight.

**Shooting Jackets**

- Shooting jackets are available used or new in off the rack sizes.
- Prices of new jackets have recently come down a lot and are now very reasonable. They are a very good value for the new shooter.
- The AHG Anschütz M165 coat has all the features of the best custom coats. We are talking about new shooters here, so the custom coats are still not appropriate. After the shooter becomes more experienced and decides to really pursue this sport, look into custom jackets, as there are very real benefits.

**Shooting Sling**

- Any sling that is ISSF legal will do the job just fine. They seldom wear out so look first at the used market.
- The least expensive new sling is the Gehmann Synthetic.
- Others are more finely adjustable, such as the Thune or Sauer or Anschütz.

*Gehmann Synthetic Sling***Shooting Mat**

- Any shooting mat will do the job, but look at the new Winstead mat for low cost and excellent value.

**Shooting Pants**

- Shooting pants are also available used or new in off-the-rack sizes.
- The AHG Anschütz M144 double canvas is an excellent buy. The comments above about coats apply here as well.

*Thune Evolution Shooting Boots***Shooting Boots**

- Look for used shooting boots first.
- The AHG Anschütz M133 is the best value if you need to purchase new boots.
- Other brands or models offer more features, such as the Anschütz 130 for men or 131 for women or the Sauer or Thune or Kustermann.

**Equipment Options and Specifics For the Adult Joining the Sport:**

Most of the comments about the high school shooter apply, but your budget will have a lot more influence here.

**Rifle**

•If you are the type of person who wants the very best, it will be very tempting to buy the top of the line free rifle, such as the Anschütz 2013, but that will be a mistake. You need to start out with a gun such as the Anschütz 1907 or 2007 or 1911, for the prone shooter to learn the basics.



Anschütz 1911  
Smallbore Rifle

**Shooting Stands**

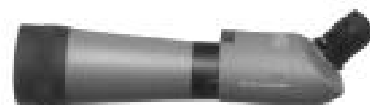
•Shooting stands can be made or purchased. The commercial stands will do the job more efficiently and last longer.

**Shooting Gloves**

•Shooting gloves are widely available on the used market as are inexpensive new ones.  
•There is a very large variety of new gloves to choose from as you gain experience.

**Spotting Scopes**

•Choose a spotting scope by selecting the largest diameter objective lens of the highest quality you can afford.  
•The Kowa 800 series is probably the best on the market today. 25 power is plenty, and the Kowa long eye relief eyepiece is ideal if it will fit your budget. It is also available on the 600 series.  
•A 3-position scope stand is appropriate, such as the Gunsmithing Ultralight.



Kowa 821

**Shooting Jackets**

•Shooting jackets are available used or new in off-the-rack sizes. Prices have recently come down a lot and are now very reasonable. They are a very good value for the new shooter.  
•The AHG Anschütz M165 coat has all the features of the best custom coats. We are talking about new shooters here so the custom coats are still not appropriate. After the shooter becomes more experienced and decides to really pursue this sport, look into custom jackets, as there are very real benefits.

**Sling**

•Any sling that is ISSF legal will do the job just fine. They seldom wear out, so look first at the used market. The least expensive new sling is the Gehmann Synthetic. Others are more finely adjustable, such as the Thune or Sauer or Anschütz.



**Shooting Mat**

•Any shooting mat will do the job, but look at the new Winstead mat for low cost and excellent value.  
•The Thune is the most deluxe and was the one selected for the Atlanta Olympics.

Thune Deluxe Shooting Mat

**Shooting Pants**

•Shooting pants are also available used or new in off-the-rack sizes.  
•The AHG Anschütz M144 double canvas is an excellent buy.  
•The comments above about coats apply here as well.



Anschütz M130 Stenvaag  
Shooting Boots

**Shooting Boots**

•Look first for used shooting boots. If you can find your size, good.  
•Otherwise the AHG Anschütz M133 is the best value.  
•Other brands or models offer more features, such as the Anschütz 130 for men or 131 for women or the Sauer or Thune or Kustermann.