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Newbie alert!! I use that term very affectionately because at one point or another we were all newbies. In this series of articles I will be helping you make some wise choices so you can avoid some potentially dangerous and economically disastrous decisions. Let me remind you as we start that the best thing you can ever do is find a great gun shop that will form a mutually beneficial relationship with you. Let's begin to outline some things you will need to know as you start your shooting sports journey.

Every person has to be introduced to the shooting sports in some way shape or form. Inevitably the question arises, "What should be my first gun?" The answer is the same whether we are talking about rifles or pistols. The first gun that you need is something in 22lr which stands for 22 long rifle. You can find pistols and rifles in this great caliber. For many years this has been the standard firearm purchased by dads and grandfathers for their children. There are several reasons that make the 22lr the obvious choice.

First, the 22lr is a very easy caliber to shoot. There is virtually no recoil at all because of its diminutive size. This makes it an ideal gun for older children and new adult shooters. A fatal flaw in shooting is a flinch. A flinch is a jerky movement of the trigger finger that often results from the anticipation of the loud sound of the gun and the sharp recoil that comes with shooting it. If you have never flinched, grab 44 magnum and a couple hundred rounds of ammo for an enjoyable day of plinking. When you return you may have developed a flinch. A flinch will cause you to be terribly inaccurate (All those stories about the broad side of the barn). By learning good trigger control with the 22lr, you will be a better shooter later on.

Second, the 22lr is by far the most economical round to shoot. Most major stores will sell a 500 round box for around \$10. This will afford a lot of practice time at the range and allow you to take money that would have been spent on ammo and buy a quality set of ear and eye protection.

Finally, the 22lr is manufactured by both pistol and rifle makers. Some manufacturers, such as the Sturm-Ruger company, sell both pistols and rifles. This means that you will be able to practice your pistol and rifle skills with only one caliber of ammunition in your range bag.

As you grow in the shooting sports it is only natural to want to expand your collection and diversify the caliber of firearms that you own. My own collection has grown through the years, but the guns that continually get the most range time are a Smith and Wesson 22A, a H&R revolver, and a Ruger 10/22 rifle. All three guns have served me well and anything similar will make a great addition or starting off point for your collection.