

muzzleloading hobby

...nition, disallow certain types of bullets and prohibit the use of scopes. If the primary purpose is to hunt deer, .50-caliber rifles are legal in all 50 states. A good step in the right direction is to read the state game regulations before purchasing your firearm, as these may vary from state to state.

3. What style am I interested in, Modern or Traditional?

The same percussion barrel, shooting the same powder charge or load, does not state whether it is in a traditional side-lock or a modern in-line firearm. Both firearms are similarly accurate over the same ranges.

Off-hand rifles come with accuracy-enhanced set triggers and look like the original backwoods models of centuries ago. There are also hybrids, like the Thompson/Center Hawken rifle, which are not copies of any historical rifle.

Other possibilities are using replica American Revolutionary and Civil War muskets or rifles for hunting. These larger caliber long rifles range in caliber from .58 to .75 and can take big game most accurately at 50 yards because they are smoothbore barrels that do not have rifling (spiral groove cut inside the barrel) for longer and deadlier accuracy.

These firearms are fun to shoot, but as many shooter know, they shoot high and the bullet floats similar to a knuckle ball as they pass through the air. Shooters as a rule of thumb aim about a foot and a half lower than their target bulls-eye or vital area at about 100 yards. New sights can be put on long rifles, but the firearm as it is issued evens the playing field between the

hunter and animal.

4. The Size

Smaller bodied shooters such as children, and some women should shoot long rifles designed more for their size. Several makers, such as Connecticut Valley Arms, Knight and Remington offer shorter stocks that are much lighter in both models.

A rifle weighing roughly 10 pounds with a well-designed stock and effective recoil pad should be used to comfortably lob the heavier bullet down range. Rule of thumb is the heavier the rifle, the lighter the kick.

5. Price

Finally, price is listed as the last factor, but may be the most important consideration for most shooters. The good news is that even guns costing less than \$100 will reliably take a deer year after year.

For a few bucks more, buyers can purchase real wood stocks that they can finish on their own.

These usually run between \$30-\$50 more, but are worth it, especially if the wood grain is beautiful. There is nothing like building your own rifle from a kit; that is one of the satisfying parts of the sport.

If you can afford a few hundred dollars more, in the \$600 dollar range, there are models in either flintlock or percussion cap with fancier metal and wood work.

A good rule of thumb is to buy the best your budget can afford from a respectable maker. A buyer can always upgrade if they find black powder their fancy.



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