

## The Practical Deer Rifle

If you're reading this it may be because you're thinking of getting a gun but don't really know anything about guns. What kind of gun and what cartridge should it fire? Let's concentrate on rifles because having one makes you one of "*We The People...*" IMHO, your rifle should be an AR-15 type that fires the 7.62x39 Russian cartridge (aka "the x39.") The rest of this (below) is my attempt at explaining why I think so.

The *Practical* Deer Rifle.



Let's be very clear about something. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment is about an armed public. It's ***not*** about personal defense and it's ***not*** about hunting. However, in rural America a deer rifle is a defacto man card. The same can be said for a Practical Rifle, tho further explanations are often needed. Saying it's a "deer rifle" needs no further explanation. For those who are thinking of getting a rifle for the first time, the AR-15 that's been chambered for the 7.62x39 cartridge is a decent deer rifle that's also suitable for home defense *and* militia activity. Your spouse may even *let you* have one if you call it a "deer rifle" instead of an Assault Rifle. The term "Practical Deer Rifle" works well.



Having an AR-15 rifle doesn't have to be any more expensive than any other deer rifle. Buying the upper and the lower separately can save you **a lot** of money.

The legal matters of the subject are all about the part known as the lower receiver. In conversation these are often spoken of as just "the lower." Here (below) are a couple "lowers" and their attendant cost. These are very good deals. Most complete AR-15 lower assemblies (like these) cost a hundred dollars more than these.



That does NOT mean they're any better than what you see here. In fact, lowers that cost more might not be as good as these. These are from **Palmetto State Armory**, a very reputable company.

In order to have a complete AR-15 rifle you need an "upper" to go with the lower. It's the upper receiver that has the barrel and bolt. It's the part that goes BANG. However it's just a collection of metal parts without being attached to a lower. The *upper* and the *lower* are assembled together to make a working rifle.

## 7.62x39, 16" Parkerized Heavy Barrel, 1:10 Twist, Carbine length Gas System, 12" MLOK Rail Upper

In stock on 30 Sept 2021

SKU#: 487-UA762CHB16110PBUR-12M3

This intermediate cartridge of Russian origin offers a widely available and low cost ammunition option. With significantly more stopping power than a 5.56 and slightly **less power** than the 30-30, 7.62x39 is a great solution for most hunting situations.

Bear Creek Arsenal AR-15 billet upper receivers are made from 7075 aircraft-grade aluminum billets.



With no S&H and no Tax this ready-to-go upper chambered for 7.62x39 can be in your hands for about \$275. If you can find a better deal, *Buy it!*

**BearCreekArsenal.com**

Between the “uppers” and “lowers” (above) you could have a complete hunting package for under \$500. (That's less than the cost of a new Glock pistol. Hmm?) You can also spend more than \$2000 for an AR-15 with lots of bells and whistles. As with many things, a long list of extras doesn't really make it better. However, if you choose the right caliber and cartridge your practical rifle can also be a decent “deer rifle” as well. **The 7.62x39 is the right caliber if you want to have a Practical Deer Rifle.**

The AR15-x39 should be very attractive for a first time rifle buyer who wants just **one** rifle that he can hunt (deer) with that's also effective for the protection of his home, property, loved ones and his community. These guns are not cheap but when one gun can effectively cover two or three or more realistic uses it starts looking more like a wise purchase. Over the decades there have been many different cartridges developed just for use in AR15 rifles and they can all be fired from **the same** “Lower Receiver.” This means the annoying process of a “back ground check” is reduced to a one-time experience. You can buy an Upper through the mail in whatever caliber you prefer and attach it to your Lower and go shooting without dealing with “Big Brother” and his annoying (and possibly unconstitutional) regulations.

Let's look at the guns and the features that will help the new owner come to early success in their expectations. Again, with an AR15 rifle chambered for the 7.62x39 cartridge, (aka the x39) you can have a “Practical Deer Rifle.” As a matter of strict practicality the x39 is a good choice for a beginner's deer rifle as well as for the aspiring militia-man. The AR-15 platform is easy to learn to shoot and maintain. What's more, it can become any of a wide variety of rifles the owner may want as his knowledge and experience grows. That single fact is what fuels the popularity of the AR-15 type rifles. It's why they're the most popular rifle in the USA.

The only cartridge that gives a respectable challenge to the x39 for militia use is the common 5.56NATO or 223 Remington. Both 223 and x39 cartridges are available wherever ammo is sold. Both offer adequate accuracy through most of their realistic useful range. Both can be used for taking deer-size game with one very important difference. The x39 is **legal** for deer hunting nearly everywhere rifles are allowed and the 223 **is-not** normally legal for deer hunting. This is **one** of the three most important differences between these two cartridges.

The **second** big difference is that the x39 ctg **hits harder** than the 223. Much harder. They hit harder because the bullet is nearly 50% bigger than a 223 and about 100% heavier. That's why the x39 **hits harder**. They **hit** so much harder that the effect can often be seen by the shooter or observers. US Soldiers armed with M16s firing the 223

have complained bitterly for decades about its perceived lack of knockdown. Soldiers often face enemies armed with the x39 and they get many opportunities to witness the differences between the effects of both cartridges. Battlefield soldiers around the world say, with one voice, that the x39 hits harder. The same reasoning is used by states that allow the x39 for deer hunting but deny the use of the 223. The medical science of the matter tells us that one is actually about as lethal as the other. It's the impact effect that's of greatest interests to most soldiers. The x39 visibly hits harder. For soldiers there's little else to consider. Soldiers are practical men.

The third difference is a little more practical for most shooters and hunters. The cost of the x39 ammunition is normally a little Less-Than the 223. This fact defies logic but it's the truth. To be sure, both these cartridges are much cheaper than most other rifle cartridges and that's enough to make either of them popular for many shooters. In these modern times the price gap between the two has grown smaller but it's still a fact that you'll normally pay less for x39 ammo than for comparable 223 ammo. Ammo cost is a difference that can make the difference for many shooters.

Once you've made the decision to have your own AR15-x39 rifle it's time to start thinking about what you want it to look like. To be properly called a “practical” rifle it should have a set of functioning “iron sights.” They just attach to the top wherever convenient and the gun is instantly functional.

Most guys will also want a scope of some kind. You can drop a lot of cash on a scope if you don't remain calm. As a beginner, the scopes that cost between \$80 to \$200 will easily meet all your realistic needs. The author's philosophy for a scope on a practical rifle requires that it be fairly simple. The most important and basic reason for having a scope is to help you see the target. If it does that you can go hunting with it.

### The AR-x39 Practical Deer Rifle.

Now, let's concentrate our thoughts on hunting deer with your AR-x39 rifle.

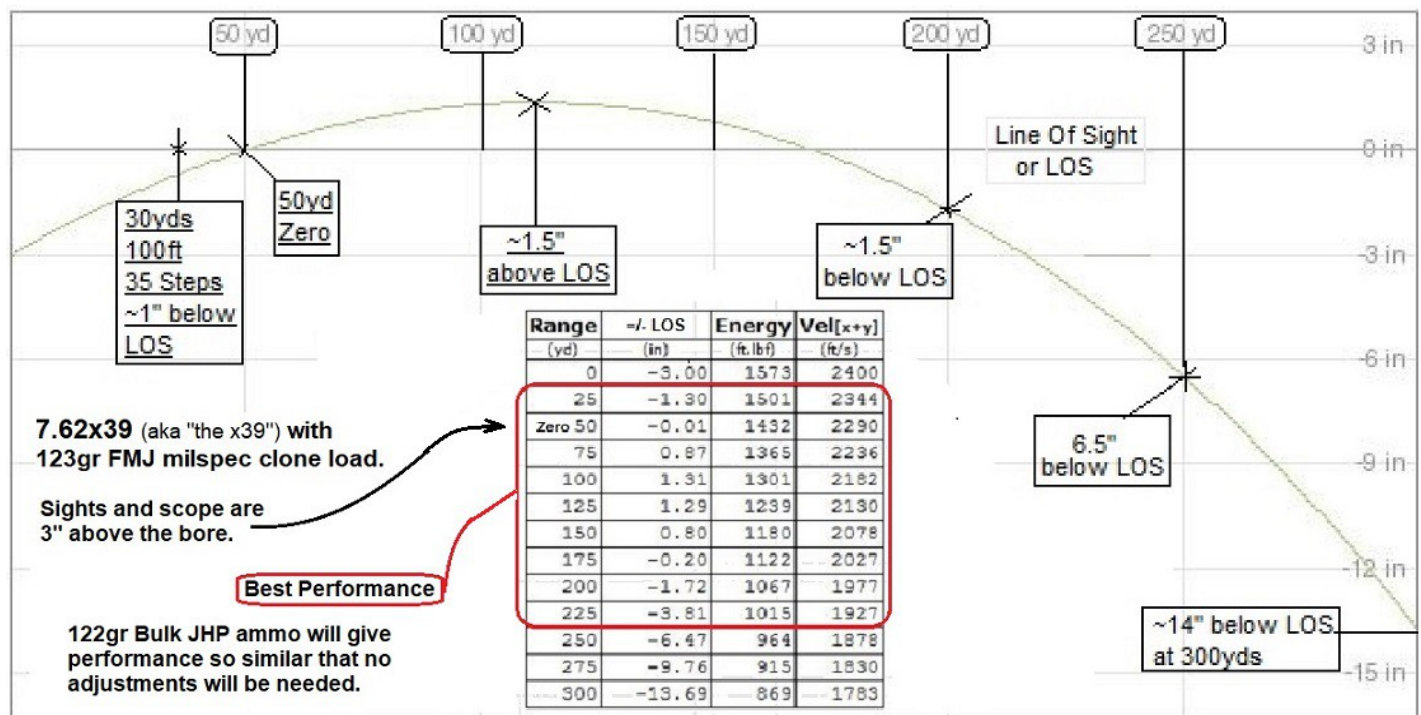
Most deer-size game, (anywhere in the world,) is shot closer than 200 yards. Of those, most are taken in less-than 100 yards. Of those, most shots are made between 40 and 70 yards. You might hunt for years and never shoot a deer as far away as 100 yards. It's your ability to deliver **one accurate shot** that effects your success the most. You've got to learn the anatomy of the deer (or whatever game you hunt) *and* be somewhat familiar with the flight-path (called trajectory) of the bullet in the load you're using.

If we keep our hunting shots within 200yds we can be sure the load has enough power for ethical hunting if you just make a good shot. If you hunt in the woods instead of open ground you can be fairly assured that your shots will be under 150yds. That means the bullet will be close to the Line-Of-Sight (LOS) for most of your realistic

shooting opportunities. Within that distance the AR15-x39 has adequate accuracy and power for most deer hunting. For the specific purpose of hunting, the x39 cartridge deserves plenty of our attention and respect.

With a 50yd zero, all the normal bullet weights for the x39 will be about 1-inch above or below the Line-Of-Sight (LOS) out to about 175yds. That means the bullet will hit within an inch of where you aim. The next graph shows the flight path of a typical x39 Milspec cartridge. A 50yd zero works well for nearly any load you fire in the x39 rifle.

Fortunately, ammo that's suitable for hunting is available for bulk purchase through the mail. Many bulk sales sites offer 122gr JHP ammo. Some offer JSP ammo. Both are adequate for hunting deer within normal deer hunting distances. The trajectory of these loads is so similar to Milspec ammo that adjustments will be small if needed at all. Here's the trajectory graph for the x39 cartridge with a 123gr FMJ (Milspec) load.



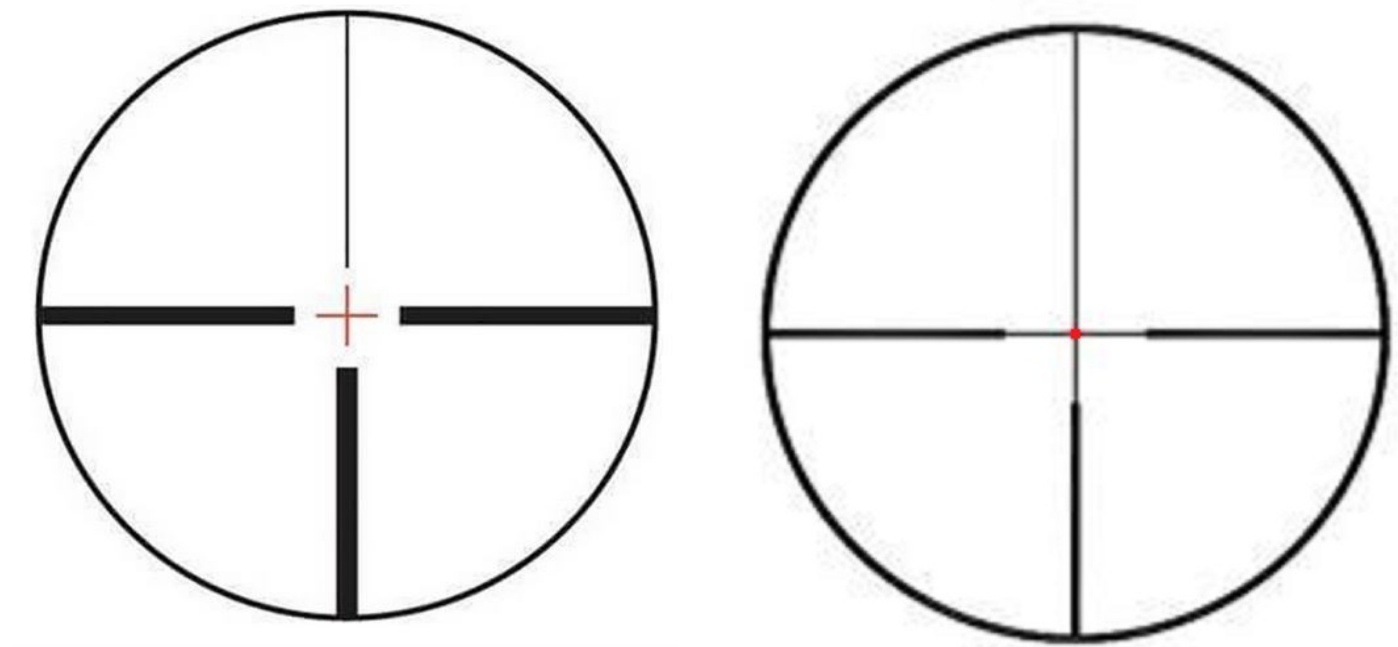
When these loads get to 300yds they're just 14" below the LOS. At 200yds there's not enough difference between Milspec ammo and hunting ammo to bother talking about.

It will still be up to the hunter (YOU) to make a good shot. Making a good shot controls the subject of hunting under all circumstances everywhere. Just making "a hit" is not good enough. Every hunter must develop adequate shooting skill. It's your responsibility to learn how to do it.

Fortunately for the beginner shooter/hunter, the AR15-x39 practical deer rifle has features that make it pretty easy to rapidly develop suitable skill with it. It's short

enough and light enough to be “handy” and the recoil is not intimidating.

Whether you get a 223 or a x39 or anything else, the maximum distance at which you can effectively use that rifle is going to be about 300 yards. Even with a scope it takes serious training and lots of practice to extend your effective range much beyond 300yds. So, all you need for awhile is an **adequate** scope that doesn't cripple your bank account. Remember, the primary reason for the scope is to help you see the target. A scope can help you see a deer that's too far back in the woods for your eyes to pick it out. Here are some reticle examples that excel for the first-time rifle buyer. Their price range starts under \$100 to about \$200. The author personally uses and recommends these reticle designs.



These are variations on the German #4 Reticle which is very versatile. Any of them can be had in a scope that cost less than \$200 including S&H. The Leopold Optics company makes a scope with a reticle and power range designed for hunting feral pigs. They call it the Pig-Plex™ and it's nearly perfect for the kind of rifle we're talking about. That scope offers a lot of utility to the shooter regardless of whether he's hunting or practicing for CQB. It's in the \$400 price range and is obviously another spin-off of the German #4 reticle. The German #4 reticle was developed before WWII and has remained popular ever since no matter the price range of the scope. For an AR15-x39 rifle you can't do much better. These are mostly 1x-to-6x variable power scopes. That power range is the most popular for these guns regardless of price range. The scopes shown here have an illuminated center. It looks black until you turn it on or if the battery fails. The lower power is good for low light and an illuminated center



is said to be best for “Close Quarter Battle.” (CQB) You might want something else but one of these designs are a good place to start. You can get a usefully functional scope and a good 1-piece mount for **as little as \$80** too. Remember that.

So, what is your rifle gonna look like when it's done? It'll prob'ly look a lot like this:



This basic package shows enough “bells and whistles” for most uses. This rifle package might be \$500 or it might be over \$3000 and one is as effective as the other.

**Ammo:** Sadly and thanks to the Democrats, the days of cheap ammo are gone. So, try not to fall into the wasteful practice of “blasting” even though the ammo may have been referred to as “blasting ammo.” Blasting is when you load up a full magazine or two (or more) and blast away at soda bottles on the hill side just a short distance away. It's lots of fun but it's also exceedingly wasteful because it has no value as training or

practice. It might be worthy of the term, “familiarization.” If you just can't resist blasting, put 3 to 5 rounds (cartridges) in each magazine. With just a few rounds in two or more magazines it might rise to the level of practice of the very-necessary skill of changing magazines efficiently. (You *can* also practice magazine changes in your garage without shooting at all, right?)

Whenever you have a time and place to do some shooting, you should try to improve your shooting skill in some way. A lot of shooting time is spent “shooting for group.” That means you place a paper target at some known distance, (count your steps to whatever distance.) Get as steady as you can and concentrate on trying to make small groups of bullet holes on that paper. If your rifle is “zeroed” for 50 yards, (highly recommended) you should be able to make 3-shot groups that are *no bigger than* 1.5-inches at that distance. Then move out to 100 steps and try to make groups that are not bigger than 3 inches. Take your time and concentrate. If you do it on the first try, see if you can do it again. The point is to develop a reliable level of skill.

Once you're able to regularly make fairly small groups, it's time to try the same thing from different positions. Try some positions you might actually use while hunting. Leaning against a solid object while standing or kneeling is a very realistic form of practice because that's how a lot of hunting *and* combat shots are made. It's the most common shooting position you're likely to use for any real-life reason.

The fans of Practical Shooting often get so focused on combat style shooting that they lose sight of using that firearm to harvest game for the table. The full definition of a *Practical* firearm is one that can be used for any conceivable use of the gun from 10 feet to about a quarter-mile. That's a big deal and *necessarily* includes hunting.

However, hunting requires better accuracy than combat does. When practice is focused on combat it only requires *hits* whereas hunting requires making *one shot* that strikes a specific place on the body of the target animal to yield an efficient harvest. In order to be *legally* used for hunting, the rifle must fire a cartridge that's allowed (by law) for hunting. This brings up some legal specifications. Most prominent is the caliber. The x39 is legally “*enough gun*” wherever rifles are permitted.

Now we get to the specific elements of hunting. Try to remember this very important fact... about 80% (or more) of *all* hunting shots at deer are made at **less-than** 100 yards. And fully half of *those* shots, (or more) are made within 50~75 yards. With these facts in place your “practical rifle” that's chambered for the x39 cartridge can be perfectly suitable, (legal *and* ethical) as a deer rifle.

Other than learning to shoot it, an AR-15 rifle chambered for the x39 cartridge offers






much and demands little. Dollar for dollar the ammo is about the same as 223 in cost all around the world. No matter where it comes from or how much it costs, shooting live ammo in your rifle is the best way to learn how to use the gun for hunting. Riflemen like to talk about the size of the groups their rifle can make at 100 yards. Groups of about three-inches are a maximum acceptable standard around the world. Most guns can do better if the shooter's skill is equal to the task. Groups of 1.5" to 2" are very common at 100yds. Fortunately, most deer hunting shots are made at less-than 100 yards. That means you'll likely become *skilled enough* to go hunting in just a few trips to the rifle range and firing only about 20~30 shots on each trip.

A big deal for most new shooters will be that this cartridge does-not come with punishing recoil. That will be something you'll really appreciate when you finally get a chance to shoot a more powerful cartridge. All rifles come with *some* amount of recoil. Bigger cartridges come with bigger recoil. Get used to the idea of learning to deal with recoil. The x39 doesn't have much recoil but it does have enough to notice.

The noise will make it seem bigger than it is. Guns of all kinds are deafening. The movies give no indication about how loud gunfire really is. Gunfire is so loud that you and everyone standing nearby will need hearing protection. Never go shooting without hearing protection. Never. Enough said.

Now, just because you have the rifle doesn't mean you can shoot it yet. You'll need at-least one magazine. They're sold separately. They come in various sizes identified by the number of cartridges (rounds) they hold. They all cost about the same. In some places the first one to obtain will be a 5-round magazine. The 5-rd looks the same as a 10-rd but has a mechanical block in it to limit the number of rounds it'll hold. Once you have a magazine it's time to get some ammo and start learning to shoot. The x39 magazines look like M-16 magazines but are made specifically for the 7.62x39 ctg.

|  |   |          |         |  |        |     |        |                    |                |
|--|---|----------|---------|--|--------|-----|--------|--------------------|----------------|
|  <div>ASC 7.62X39 AR-15 5-Round Stainless Steel Magazine<br/><b>Color</b><br/>Flat Dark Earth                      1              \$14.99<br/>You only <b><i>need</i></b> <u>one</u> of these, (for Hunting.)</div>                       | <b>Order Summary</b> (for <u>one of each</u> of these)<br><table><tr><td>Subtotal</td><td>\$44.97</td></tr><tr><td>Shipping Method (USPS - Priority Mail)</td><td>\$7.99</td></tr><tr><td>Tax</td><td>\$2.37</td></tr><tr><td><b>Grand Total</b></td><td><b>\$55.33</b></td></tr></table> | Subtotal | \$44.97 | Shipping Method (USPS - Priority Mail) | \$7.99 | Tax | \$2.37 | <b>Grand Total</b> | <b>\$55.33</b> |
| Subtotal   | \$44.97   |          |         |  |        |     |        |                    |                |
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| Tax  | \$2.37  |          |         |  |        |     |        |                    |                |
| <b>Grand Total</b>   | <b>\$55.33</b>  |          |         |  |        |     |        |                    |                |
|  <div>ASC 7.62X39 AR-15 10-Round Stainless Steel Magazine<br/><b>Color</b><br/>Flat Dark Earth                      1              \$14.99<br/>You only <b><i>need</i></b> one of these (for hunting) but may <u>want</u> 2 of 'em.</div> | <div>Remember, each 2nd Ammendment <u>Rifleman</u> should have <u>at-least</u> 100rds on his person when he goes to answer the call for a local militia response.<br/>(It would be very helpful if he'd had some Training and some some practical drills too.)</div>                      |          |         |  |        |     |        |                    |                |
|  <div>ASC 7.62X39 AR-15 20-Round Stainless Steel Magazine<br/><b>Color</b><br/>Flat Dark Earth                      1              \$14.99<br/>You'll prob'ly want to get 6 of these, (eventually.)</div>                                 |   |          |         |  |        |     |        |                    |                |

And these are prob'ly the best prices available anywhere.

Work on learning to shoot **accurately**. Work steadily on developing better skill. When asking yourself how skilled do you need to be, the answer is always... a little better. Learn to do it correctly in the first place or it could be a slow process. Not only that! Shooting skill is surprisingly perishable and long periods with no shooting will always diminish your skill. A paper target will always show it.

**Details.** You're going to need some type of sights and probably a scope. They're sold separately. You'll eventually want some type of sling. If you go for practical shooting activities you'll need pouches for the extra magazines and at-least one pouch known as a "drop bag" to put empty magazines in when you change from one to the next. At around \$20 each you don't just throw magazines down when they're empty. You'll soon want some type of harness to hold & carry the magazine pouches and other stuff. At that point you're getting well into the practical side of having an AR-15 rifle.

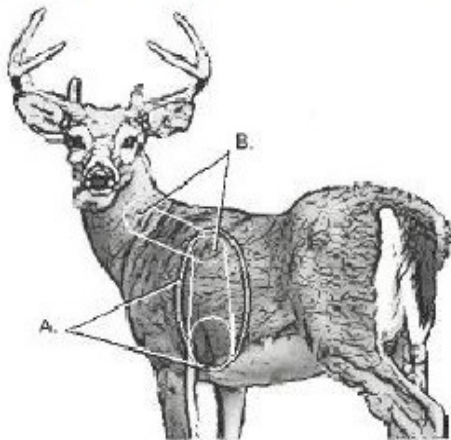
You're also going to want a "soft-side" padded case to keep the gun and its extras in one place as you move from the house to the car. It gets to be a lot to carry if you don't have something made just for that purpose. All this stuff is sold separately but it adds up. That's why most folks *assemble* their practical rifle **kit** a little at a time.

Don't let all this scare you. Most of this stuff can be had for \$20~\$30 per item and often less if you shop around. Here (below) are a couple useful hunting target images.

Hits that are within the areas marked as...

A, will be easier to hit and quickly fatal.

B, are likely to drop the animal on the scene.



The whitetail deer is the primary game for the handgun hunter. It will always be important to aim carefully at the correct portion of the animal's body, (not just "at the deer.") The amount of power is not nearly as important as the accuracy of the shot.

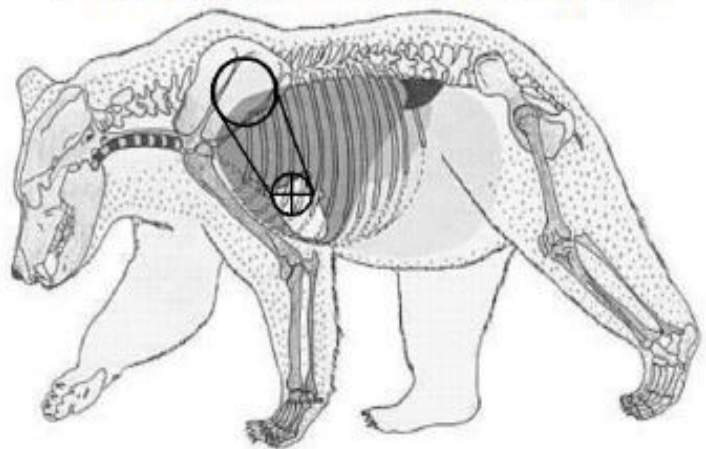
If a good shot is made you'll be able to collect your trophy. Practice until you are ready when this target appears at 30 yards.

Only the hunter can make a bad shot!

Take a deep breath and aim carefully!

This image shows the major bones and vital organs of Bears. All bears are essentially the same with respect to where they are most vulnerable.

The bigger the bear, the more important it will be to make a good shot because they are normally considered to be dangerous game. The bigger and closer the bear the more danger they represent.



Here are some items and their website locations of the stuff you'll eventually want.

This is the "Dump Pouch" mentioned above.

<https://www.ebay.com/itm/372749871883?var=641567208400>

This is one of the sellers of used GI Magazine Pouches. Used GI Surplus is usually good stuff and this company has plenty to choose from: <https://www.ebay.com/itm/114340394532>

This is a used GI Surplus combat vest. You attach magazine pouches and all manner of combat gear to it. Same seller as the previous item. <https://www.ebay.com/itm/372270717061>

Here is a "soft-side" gun case that'll hold most of your gun stuff in one package.

<https://www.ebay.com/itm/124764843329?var=425798117676>

This is a compass pouch but will do nicely for holding a 5-round magazine.

<https://www.ebay.com/itm/173650767446>

This is a \$80 scope that is nearly perfect as a basic battle/hunting rifle. (Highly recommended.)

<https://www.ebay.com/itm/184784970398>

This is a suitable sling for the rifle. It comes with hardware for attaching to the upper described above. <https://www.ebay.com/itm/114319353305?var=414594187212>

This is a set of flip-up/fold-down sights for the rifle. You can spend much more than this on sights but since you'll rarely use them there's no need to get carried away with the subject. Have a look...

<https://www.ebay.com/itm/223696672992?var=522414951834>

This is **The BEST** web site for buying bulk ammo. It's the only buyer I use. Always buy in bulk. You can always sell the excess to other gun guys but you'll prob'ly want to keep most of it once you have it. This is the proverbial "Blasting ammo" and it'll have a few failures-to-fire which is actually very-good training. It forces you to deal with a very common problem on the battlefield, (failure to fire.)

<https://www.ammoman.com/762x39-wolf-fmj-122-grain-full-metal-jacket>

This is the page for the Hollow-Point ammo on the same website as the above ammo.

This is the stuff to get for "legal hunting" (even though the FMJ ammo kills efficiently at normal deer-hunting distances when a good shot is made.) It's available in 1000rd pkgs or sometimes in 640-rd sealed "tins", (you'll see what I mean.) Both are good deals. Remember that when you see the prices.

[https://www.ammoman.com/762-x-39?jacket\\_type=83](https://www.ammoman.com/762-x-39?jacket_type=83)

This is the website that offers the BEST **magazines** IMHO and the best prices for them. I Do-Not recommend the 30-rd magazines at all. (Get **one** 30rd mag if you can't help yourself and you'll quickly figure out why you don't want one any more.)

<https://gunmagwarehouse.com/all-magazines/rifles/asc-magazines--ar-15-magazines--7-62-x-39mm>

Some of these websites are difficult to figure out. That's why I have them opening to the specific item. Take your time. You just got a whole lot of information all at once. Take some time to educate yourself.