

Three Essential Tips for Choosing the Right Hunting Crossbow

Crossbow hunting's popularity has surged in recent years in North America. This increased popularity has brought with it an increase in both the number of crossbows available on the market as well as the features and technology available to hunters in the market to buy crossbows. Even experienced hunters can have a hard time sifting through all of the different options and technologies available in today's bows. The purpose of this article is to help "simplify" the process of choosing the right crossbow for you by focusing on three essential tips for choosing the right hunting crossbow.

Tip 1. - Know the Basics

If you are new to crossbows take the time to understand the basic features available in a crossbow as well as crossbow terminology. This will help you immensely when you are trying to buy a bow. Here is a summary of the basic features and crossbow terminology.

Physical Weight and Dimensions - Crossbow sizes and weights can vary significantly. Also, two crossbows that appear to be the same size can have a difference in weight of 2-4 pounds. We will talk about the importance of crossbow size later in the article. For now, just remember that the size and weight of your crossbow is important and can vary significantly between bows.

Draw Weight - A crossbow's draw weight tells you the amount of effort required to cock the bow. Draw weights are measured in pounds. The higher the draw weight, the more difficult it is to draw the crossbow string. Typically, the higher a crossbow's draw weight the more power a particular bow has.

Limb Style - There are two popular categories of crossbow limbs in today's crossbow models. The first is referred to as a recurve crossbow and the second is a compound crossbow. There are some sub-categories of these bow types that we won't get into here. There are advantages and disadvantages to each limb type that are too numerous to name here. For now, just keep in mind that you will need to decide which limb type is right for you when you choose your crossbow.

Arrow Speed - Different crossbows fire arrows ("bolts") at different speeds. The speed of a crossbow is stated in feet per second or "FPS." Generally, larger more powerful bows will have higher FPS. Speed is important to hunters as faster bows give the animal less time to react to the sound of the crossbow.

Tip 2. Consider Your Game

Different bows are best suited to different types of game. Animals that are quicker require more crossbow speed or FPS. For larger animals, the draw weight and power of the bow is more important. You need to make sure you have enough draw weight to penetrate the game's hide and fat. Choose your crossbow with the game you will be hunting in mind. If you are hunting large bear or elk, don't show up to the hunt with a 150 pound crossbow; it won't be enough to get the job done. Here are some general guidelines to help make sure you have enough power for your chosen game:

- Rabbit - Draw weight of 150 pounds. FPS of 220 or greater.
- Antelope, deer - Draw weight of 150 pounds to 175 pounds. FPS of 220 or greater.
- Elk, caribou, large bear - Draw weight of 175 pounds or greater. FPS of 220 or greater

Tip 3. Consider the Hunter

One of the most common mistakes crossbow hunters make is buying the wrong crossbow for their body type. Hunters commonly assume that bigger and faster is better and end up with a crossbow that they cannot comfortably handle. If you have a smaller stature a lighter more compact bow is probably the way to go. I strongly recommend handling a crossbow before making a purchase. Even if you plan on buying online, visit your local retailer and handle the bow you are thinking about buying. If possible, try to cock and fire the crossbow a few times so that you get a feel for the weapon. Also remember that the type of hunting you plan on doing may impact the right bow for you. If you will be walking miles on the trail each day, a few extra pounds on your bow can add up.

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