

## Why the Crosman 160 or QB78 is the Ideal First Sporting Airgun

Airguns are a great way to introduce people to shooting. One can teach proper trigger control, sight alignment, sight picture, and most importantly, safe gun handling. They are also relatively inexpensive to operate compared to firearms. In most locales, airguns can safely be shot inside the house or in the backyard. Be sure to check your local ordinances.

Airguns range from Insanely accurate, low power Olympic .177 caliber "paper-punchers" to high power .75 caliber single shot hunting rifles. Airguns, like tools, perform best when function meets purpose. Avoid airguns marketed by "feet per second" as it is a poor indicator of an airgun's utility and accuracy. Airguns are most accurate when shooting between 380 and 930 feet per second. A fast miss is still a miss, which is why **accuracy is the single most important aspect** of airguns. If velocity is your primary aim, buy a .22 long rifle firearm and you'll be much happier.

Airguns have several different powerplants. They can be powered by metal springs, gas springs (gas rams or gas spring), carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), or compressed air. Only safe, reliable, and accurate airguns are worth owning. Each powerplant has its advantages, but the CO<sub>2</sub> powered airgun is the best choice for most beginners.

For new airgunners, I recommend avoiding airguns powered by springs. They have unique recoil characteristics and require special techniques to shoot accurately. Avoid these unless you are willing to commit the time necessary to learn the technique to shoot them accurately—at least 1000 shots. These "springers" are priced from \$30 to over \$1000 dollars. The lower priced ones are not accurate and difficult to shoot. If you go this route, the spring rifles worth purchasing are the Dianna RWS 34 (\$270), any Weihrauch (HW30s, HW95, HW97k, HW98, etc \$400-\$900), the Air Arms TX200 (\$700) or Air Arms Pro-Sport (\$800). One other recommended spring airgun is the IZH60/IZH 61 (about \$150).

A subset of spring airguns are ones that use gas springs (gas struts) instead of steel coils. These

are specialty air guns, generally hunting rifles. They are more difficult to cock and shoot accurately than spring airguns. I recommend waiting on these. Some quality spring airguns can be changed to gas springs using aftermarket kits if one desires.

Spring airguns and gas rams present an additional danger as you have to "cock" and compress the spring. People have had fingers smashed, broken stocks and broken noses, black eyes, etc. if they did this unsafely and the spring released at the wrong time. Hence, I recommend beginners avoid these types of airguns. If you get one, read the manual carefully. Read the manual carefully!

Another category of airguns use high pressure compressed air (filled from scuba tanks). Often called PCP airguns, for Pre-Charged Pneumatic, these require a scuba tank or specialized high pressure manual pump (\$300) to provide the 3000 to 4500 psi air. Although insanely accurate (used in the Olympics), they can vary in power from target shooting (.177 Olympic rifles) to big bore .355 to .75 caliber hunting guns. These are expensive, \$500 - \$3500-even up to \$10,000.

Pump airguns are another airgun powerplant. The Benjamin 392/397 and Daisy 953, 853, and 753 rifles are the only ones I would consider. The Daisy's require a single "pump" and are very low power target airguns. The Benjamin 392 is pumped 3 to 7 times and has more power for potential light hunting (squirrels and rabbits). Pumping airguns between each shot can be difficult for children and tiring for adults. Pumping also makes it much more difficult to keep the airgun pointed in a safe direction. As the manual of arms is not consistent with bolt action firearms, these airguns make a poor analogue for firearms training. I recommend waiting on these. These airguns cost between \$100-\$500.

Airguns I recommend for beginners are powered by CO<sub>2</sub> (carbon dioxide) and use the CO<sub>2</sub> cartridges or paintball canisters.

Here's why I recommend CO2 airguns:

- CO2 airgun have little to no recoil making shooting pleasurable (spring guns recoil)
- CO2 airguns are easy to shoot accurately (it's more fun when you hit your target)
- There is no pumping between shots
- They give you lots of shots before you have to replace the CO2 cartridges or refill the paintball tank. Both are easily available.
- They are much less expensive than PCP airguns.
- CO2 airguns are easier and safer to use than spring guns with no difficult spring or gas ram to compress

**My recommended airgun for introducing people to the shooting sports is the QB78 (uses CO2 carts) or the QB79 (uses Paintball tanks).**

The QB7x is based upon the American Crosman 160 (production ceased in 1971). **Versions of the QB78 (QB77, QB79, AR2078, AR2079) cost between \$105 to as much as \$350.**

**For that money, you are getting an airgun made of traditional steel and wood, is easy to shoot, accurate, and, most importantly, operates the same way as a single shot bolt action rifle.** Thus, one can easily and safely transition from this QB78 airgun to a real firearm like the single shot bolt action Cricket, Chipmunk, Remington 510, Anschutz, Savage Rascal, etc.

Even better, QB replacement stocks can be had for \$25; thus it is rather painless to cut down a stock to fit a child or smaller shooter. I recommend buying a spare stock (or 2nd rifle). This allows you to size the stock to the child. More importantly, they can "paint and decorate" it to their liking.

I also recommend the .22 caliber over the .177 caliber for two reasons—it is easier to handle the larger .22 caliber pellet, and the .22 caliber pellet makes targets react more lively. You can hunt rabbits and squirrels with the .22 out to about 25 yards with careful shot placement.

I recommend buying the QB78/QB79 rifle from Steve Archer at Archer Airguns:

<http://www.archerairguns.com/qb78-airgun-family-air-rifles-s/27.htm>

If you choose a standard stock rifle, I do recommend his "Gold Service" maintenance upgrade.

If you choose the Custom Deluxe QB78/QB79, the options I recommend, in order of priority are:

- 1. Hammer Debounce Device (HDD )(for more shots while making the rifle a bit quieter)**
- 2. True 2 Stage Trigger Kit (better trigger)**
3. Valve XP Tuned (more pellet velocity/speed),
4. and Bolt XP Tune (even more pellet velocity)

Other great CO2 airguns are the Daisy 887(\$450), the Tau-200 (\$600), and CZ200. . These great CO2 airguns are more for target shooting.. For those prices, you could get several QB78s and have lots of fun competing within the family against each other. These are not \$1000-\$5000 Olympic pistols or rifles, but more than accurate for the backyard (pellets touching at up to 25 meters).

These recommendations are based upon decades of personal experience. I've owned or shot many airguns spanning all powerplants and cost levels (\$30-\$3500). I've coached athletes competing in the U.S. Junior Olympics. Olympic shooting requires vastly different equipment than sport shooting. This is a sport shooting recommendation.

**Airguns can be dangerous and are not toys.** **The QB78 is often used for squirrel hunting.** **Always wear eye protection.** **Most importantly, ensure you have a safe target and area beyond the target.** Keep your shooting between 10 and 30 meters. Use a safe target backstop like a box stuffed with clothes/rubber mulch **with** a wood or metal backstop.

**Always be safe. Take a firearms safety course.** No one I've recommended the QB78 family of airguns has been disappointed. If you are, I'll buy it from you minus 15%. I have yet to buy one. Most people buy more QB78/79 airguns or come see me about their next purchase. I own three QB78s and too many other Olympic and sporting airguns; Anschutz 2002, Theoben Dual Magnum, ZM2002, HW95, RWS34, HW30S, Steyr LP5, LP10E, IZH46M, FWB Model 2, Theoben Rapid MKI, and too many more...