

Equipment Guidelines for Beginning Skeet Shooters

As a beginning skeet shooter, it is easy to become overwhelmed by the number equipment choices one has to make to get started in the sport. Guns, chokes and ammunition are all topics of consideration for a beginning shooter. Below are some important criteria to look for and general guidelines to help a beginner choose their initial skeet shooting equipment:

Shotguns

- Skeet targets are sometimes presented as “doubles” (two targets in the air at the same time); therefore a skeet shotgun must be **capable of firing two shots** in rapid succession. Semi-automatic or double barrel (primarily over and under) configurations are the most suitable tools for the job.
- The next consideration when choosing a shotgun is **gauge**. Most beginners should select a 12 or 20 gauge. Beginners should avoid .410 bore shotguns (at least initially) since they are better suited for more experienced shots. In most competition skeet shoots, all four gauges are used for different events.
- Another important factor when choosing a shotgun is **gun fit**. Most shotguns are made as “one size fits all” so post-purchase gun fitting is often necessary and can be done with a few simple, inexpensive modifications. Most beginners will benefit from seeking out a competent shooting instructor or gun fitter to assist them with fitting their new gun. A properly fit gun will result in more consistent success and greater comfort while shooting.
- Skeet shotguns should have open chokes (see below) or be equipped with interchangeable choke tubes.
- Most competition shotguns today are “tube sets”, meaning they are 12 gauge over/unders that have titanium barrel inserts to convert the 12 gauge gun to 20 gauge, 28 gauge, or .410 bore in a matter of minutes. Selecting an entry-level 12 gauge target over/under is a good option if you think you may ever want to shoot sub-gauge events in a tournament.

Ammunition

- **Shot size** for skeet cannot be larger than 7.5 or smaller than 9 (the higher the number, the smaller the shot). Beginning shooters should choose a single shot size (8 or 9 shot is preferable) if possible to keep their routine simple. A one ounce shot charge in the 12ga is all that is needed.
- Beginning shooters should use only **moderate to low velocity ammunition**. Avoid high-velocity or “Super-Handicap” loads. Instead choose brands labeled “Light” or “Ultra-Light”. If in doubt, look at the velocity in feet per second (FPS) printed on the box and choose shells at or below 1200fps if possible. Avoid ammunition with DRM EQV (measure of powder) equal to ‘MAX’ or ‘3’. High velocity shells result in more recoil and discomfort causing the shooter to lift their head and / or flinch.

Chokes

- As a beginning skeet shooter, the only consideration in choke selection should be an **open choke**. Improved cylinder or skeet chokes are preferable. Most skeet targets are shot at a maximum distance of 25 yards, which makes these chokes ideal.

