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# GADGET CROSSBOWS



52-IN-52

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# GADGET CROSSBOWS

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The crossbow is one of the earliest weapons most societies develop, generally shortly after gaining access to reliable metal production (often copper or bronze). It is also generally the first stocked weapon any given culture produces, and the first ranged weapon to store potential energy for later release without constant effort from the wielder. Though generally slower to fire and bulkier in design than comparable bows (and much bulkier than slings, though often with greater range), a crossbow is easy to learn the proper use of. Even after a military has access to early firearms, it often keeps crossbows in use for quite some time, and specialty uses of crossbows are sometimes maintained well into the era of developed firearms and even energy weapons.

And all that, of course, with without accounting for magic crossbows, crossbows made by mad geniuses, exceptional artificers, and the availability of mythological metals such as mithral and adamantine.

With entities of super-genius intellect, magic allowing direct communication with crafter gods, and mystic materials from dragonhide to world-oak wood to dire wolf sinew, the possible designs that could be created for crossbows (without even getting into crossbows that are themselves magical) is vast, and varied.

Welcome to the world of Gadget Crossbows!

## GADGETS

Each gadget lists a percentage after its name. This is the additional cost added to a crossbow that has this gadget. This cost assumes the crossbow was built with the gadget included when first made. Adding a gadget to a crossbow later can be done, but takes an additional 20% of the crossbow's base cost. These costs are always based on the unmodified crossbow's original cost.

**Armor Mount (+20%):** The crossbow is mounted on a vambrace, hip armor, or shoulderpad of a suit

of armor. The armor must be bought separately. The crossbow can be fired with just one hand (though it still takes two to reload), and is ready for use as long as it's loaded, with no need to draw it out or put it away. Armor-mounted crossbows are less accurate, and take a -1 penalty to attack rolls.

**Bayonet (+10%):** The crossbow has a piercing weapon attached to it (which must be bought separately). The piercing weapon must be one that can be used 1-handed, and must weigh less than the crossbow. Attacks with the bayonet weapon take a -1 penalty for the awkward mounting of the weapon.

This is a stirrup gadget. A weapon can only have one stirrup gadget.

**Blood Groove (+50%):** The bolt channel has a notch in the far end and a clamp that presses bolts into it when they are fired, causing each to have a channel that runs from just behind the bolt head along the front third of the shaft. When this bolt strikes deeply enough, this causes initial blood flow from the wound to be heavier than usual. If the crossbow's attack roll exceeds the target's AC by 5 or more, the target takes another 1d4 damage on the next round as it bleeds. The blood groove is not deep or long enough to keep the wound channel open after that. The bolt can be pulled free prior to this bleed effect, but that also deals 1d4 damage.

This is a stirrup gadget. A weapon can only have one stirrup gadget

**Bolt Clip (+200%):** A clip, rack, magazine, or similar system has been built into the crossbow to hold bolts. Each time the crossbow is cocked, a bolt is automatically stripped from the clip and properly seated. A bolt clip reduces a crossbow's reload by 1 (to a minimum of 0).

**Bolt Drum (+300%):** A bolt drum functions as a bolt clip, except the bolts are kept in a rotary system that can be dialed to load any bolt desired, rather than the bolts being loaded into the weapon in the order they were loaded into the bolt clip.

# GADGET CROSSBOW



**Breaching Piston (+10%):** The crossbow has a small sliding mini-battering ram built into the stock that can be engaged by the string and prods to be driven forward by the crossbow's full force when a bolt is not loaded. It takes three interact actions to engage the piston and place the crossbow against a braced, stationary target (such as a door or chest), and hook it in place so the full force is applied to the object. If this is done and the attack is successful, the breaching piston does double the normal crossbow damage to the braced stationary target.

This is a stirrup gadget. A weapon can only have one stirrup gadget.

**Breakdown Design (+25%):** A crossbow with a breakdown design can be taken apart into

multiple small pieces. While broken down, the crossbow grants you a +2 circumstance bonus to Stealth checks made to Conceal and Object. It takes 1 minute to take apart or reassemble a breakdown weapon.

**Concealed Storage (+5%):** A secret compartment, lined in a thin sheet of lead, is built into the crossbow, largely in the stock. It can store one item of 1 bulk, or 2 objects of light or negligible bulk. The compartment is not obvious at a glance or even when the crossbow is used, but can be found with a dedicated search of the crossbow.

**Corner Hinge (+5%):** The crossbow is literally hinged in the middle, and can be bent at a 90-degree to fire around corners. If you are adjacent to an

object that causes targets of your ranged attacks to receive cover, and nothing else grants them cover, the bonus to AC they receive from cover is reduced by 1.

**Cross Shield (+25%)**: The crossbow has a shield built into the front of it, which must be bought separately. As long as the crossbow is wielded properly, the shooter gains the benefit of the shield. The crossbow's additional front weight causes attacks made with it to suffer a -1 penalty to their attack rolls. The shield cannot be used to make attacks, even if the wielder has an ability that would normally allow them to do so.

This is a stirrup gadget. A weapon can only have one stirrup gadget.

**Custom Grip (+5%)**: A custom grip is carved to exactly and perfectly fit your hand. As a result it is uncomfortable and awkward for anyone else, who suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls with your crossbow. Custom grips are exceptions to the rule requiring gadgets to be part of a crossbow's initial manufacture if an additional cost is to be avoided.

**Dual-Action (+40%)**: A dual-action crossbow has multiple systems for recocking it. One is the standard crossbow mechanism, while the second is an action gadget bought at a separate cost. Each time the dual-action crossbow is reloaded, the wielder may decide which action to use, taking all its benefits and penalties.

**Hair-Trigger (+15%)**: A hair-trigger is a system by which very little pressure need to be applied to the crossbow's firing mechanism (which may not be a literal trigger, depending on its design) in order for it to fire. If you are already wielding the weapon and get to act in the first round of a combat, you can choose to gain a +2 bonus to your initiative check. If you do, the first action you must take is to fire the hair-trigger weapon, or you lose that action.

You cannot have both a hair-trigger, and a safety trigger.

**Lever-Action (+40%)**: A lever-action crossbow has a single lever (generally mounted on the bottom or side, though top-mounted level-action crossbow designs exist) that combines all the mechanical actions needed to prepare a crossbow to fire into

a single open-and-return motion. Because a lever-action's total work is restricted by the travel distance of the lever, lever-action crossbows have lighter pull-weights than comparable crossbows of similar design, and suffer a -1 penalty to damage rolls (minimum 1 damage).

A level-action reduces a crossbow's reload by 1 (to a minimum of 0).

This is an action gadget. A crossbow can only have one action gadget added to it, unless it is a dual-action crossbow (see above).

**Multiple Bolt Track (+10%)**: A multiple bolt track crossbow has grooves for two crossbow bolts, rather than one, and it fires them simultaneously at the same target. Special double bolts can be bought (at 150% the cost of normal bolts) that are connected by a thin wax bridge that breaks off as they are loaded, allowing the crossbow to be loaded and fired in the same time as a normal crossbow. Otherwise, loading the crossbow takes as long as loading two crossbows of the same type.

Attacks with the multiple bolt track crossbow that fire two identical bolts gain a +1 bonus to the attack roll, as it is more likely at least one bolt will hit.

**Potion Bracket (+100%)**: A potion bracket is a special bracket that can hold one spring-loaded clamp that can have a single potion, elixir, or alchemical bomb affixed to it. This bracket takes three actions to load with a clamp, and potion. Each clamp is a one-shot device that costs x10 as much as a single crossbow bolt. When a bolt is fired from the crossbow, a thumb-trigger can cause the clamp to be released from the bracket, attaching itself to the front of the bolt. If the attack roll is successful, the bolt shatters the potion, causing its contents to be spread on the target as if the potion had been applied to it. No other damage is done.

This is a stirrup gadget. A weapon can only have one stirrup gadget.

**Precision Targeting System (+25%)**: A spyglass, adjustable rangefinder, and multiple sites can be carefully adjusted to make the crossbow much more accurate than usual, but only in theoretical conditions. You gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls when not in combat.

# GADGET CROSSBOWS

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**Pulleys (+100%):** Rather than just having recurved prods pulled back by a crank or leaver, a series of pulleys allow even more potential energy to be stored in the string. These pulleys rotate off-center as the string is drawn back, allowing the weapon to be cocked with the normal amount of effort to be fired as normal, or additional load time can be taken to add considerable additional draw weight. When the crossbow is already loaded, another Interact action can be taken to add that additional force, which is stored in the pulleys. When kept in this state, the crossbow does an additional 1d4 points of damage on a successful hit. However, the pulley system cannot maintain this additional draw for more than 1 minute. After that time, the additional power is lost as the string manages to go slightly slack.

**Safety Trigger (+15%):** The crossbow includes a safety, a small stud or lever that can be engaged to prevent the crossbow from firing, and that safety is tied into the firing mechanism, and requires a firm, long pull to deactivate the safety and fire the crossbow. If you are wielding a crossbow with a safety trigger, and confusion (or a critical failure effect if one is used) indicates you attack or damage yourself with the crossbow, you don't.

A weapon cannot have both a safety trigger, and a hair-trigger.

**Sling Bolt (+5% cost):** A sling bolt allows you to attach a shoulder sling strap to your crossbow (which is included with sling bolt cost, and has a negligible price to replace). The sling wraps around your torso and one shoulder in a comfortable and convenient way. If you drop your crossbow, it simply falls against your body on the sling. This also happens if you are disarmed of the crossbow, unless the check to disarm you is 5 or more higher than required.

**Stabilizers (+35%):** Stabilizers are a set of long rods that are typically set up in a triangular configuration, extending out from the body of the crossbow. A stabilizer compensates for the fact that for a moment after the string is released, the bolt remains in contact with the crossbow for a fraction of a second, and it can be thrown off course by things that happen during that time. The stabilizers absorb vibrations and reduce shock, helping to keep the bolt on target. A crossbow with a stabilizer has the penalty for firing into the second range increment reduced by 1.

**Stock Sheath (+5%):** The stock of the crossbow has been modified to act as a sheath for a smaller, lighter melee weapon.

**Underslung (+50%):** The crossbow is itself mounted beneath another stocked ranged weapon (normally another crossbow, though it is possible to mount a crossbow underslung a musket, if such weapons are available). The second weapon must be bought separately, and must have at least as much bulk as the crossbow. The two weapons are loaded and fired separately, but can both be held ready at the same time. They are treated as two separate weapons in all regards except for being able to hold them both in a ready position at once.

An underslung crossbow that is mounted beneath a crossbow of the same type is often called a double crossbow.

**Windlass-Action (+20%):** A windlass-action crossbow has a full two-handled windlass built into the back of the weapon to allow a much stronger pull weight to be added to the prods, at the cost of making the weapon slower and more awkward to reload. A windlass-action crossbow gains a +1 bonus to each damage die it has. A windlass-action increases a crossbow's reload by 3.

This is an action gadget. A crossbow can only have one action gadget added to it, unless it is a dual-action crossbow (see above).

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