

*"What do I need to get started in rocketry?"*

This is perhaps the most common question we get, so here's the basics on what a beginner needs to get flying...

First thing is, not surprisingly, a rocket! For beginners of most any age we recommend a basic kit, such as one of our [Neo or Theta series kits](#) to start with. Younger modelers actually find a bit larger kit with larger pieces easier to work with, so the 18mm sizes would probably be better than the 13mm sizes. Another option is a "Ready-To-Fly" (RTF) model which is all ready constructed and decorated when you get it, needing some very minor effort to get it ready to launch. There are also "Almost-Ready-To-Fly" (ARF) kits which require some very simple construction. Although we firmly believe in the value, learning and fun you get from actually *building* a rocket, we know some people just want to try things out before investing too much time, so we do carry a few RTF models which you can find [here](#).

You'll need a few basic tools to construct and fly your rocket, some of which you may already have on hand: a hobby knife, adhesive (most basic kits can be built with yellow wood glue such as Elmer's Carpenters Wood Glue or Titebond), sandpapers (220 and/or 320 grit will work for most purposes), masking and/or cellophane ("Scotch") tape, a straight edge (preferable metal). Some kits may require other tools or adhesives, but these should be enough to get you started.

To get the rocket up into the air, we use commercially made model rocket engines. The ones you'll start with are designed to be used once and then the spent engine is disposed of and a new one is used for the next flight. These are very safe and reliable when used according to the directions - you should never try to make your own engines or to reload a used engine! Each rocket kit will list the engine(s) that can be used in it, usually it's best to start with one of the lower powered engines (these will be the first ones listed in the recommended engines). For more details and info on rocket engines you can read "*About Model Rocket Engines*" on our [Tips & Info page](#). You will also need recovery wadding - this is used to protect your recovery device (parachute or streamer) from the hot ejection charge of the engine.

To safely start your rocket on it's flight, you'll also need an electronic launch system and a launch pad. A basic launch system is normally powered by AA or 9 volt batteries and comes with cables to allow you to be a safe distance away from the rocket when it launches. The launch pad gives your model a steady base to take off from and the attached launch rod allows your rocket to get up to speed so that it's fins can do their job of stabilizing the model for a straight flight. You can find launch equipment on our site [here](#).

We also carry [Starter Sets](#) that include a rocket (or rockets) and launch equipment all in one package. If you're near an organized model rocket club (and more on that shortly), most of them have their own launch equipment, so if you plan to fly with a club, you would not necessarily need your own launch system and pad.

And of course, you'll need someplace to fly your rocket... depending on the model and the engines used, you can get away with a space as small as a softball field. As large and open an area as you have access to that is free from lots of trees and power lines is preferred. Be sure never to fly on private property unless you have permission. And it should go without saying that you should *never* attempt to fly your rocket indoors!

If you can locate a model rocket club in your area, they will normally have a launch site and have regularly scheduled launches, so that really helps out if you're having difficulty in finding a place to fly. Also clubs usually welcome beginners and are glad to help you get started - they are a great place to

learn about rocketry! Check the [National Association of Rocketry](#) (NAR) and the [Tripoli Rocketry Association](#) websites for clubs near you.

We recommend that you read the NAR Safety Code before you build and fly your rocket - it will help you have a safe and fun time flying rockets! You can find it [here](#).

So that's the basics on what you need to get started - check out the other Resources on the site for more details, and if you have any questions please ask by clicking on the Contact Us link at the top of the page!