



# *Model Railroading Education Series –*

# Equipment Tips

---

*Presented by:*

*NMRA NCR 3 Rivers Division*



# Equipment

---

- Primarily includes Locomotives, Rolling Stock (cars), and Structures.
- ***When purchasing equipment, you get no more than what you pay for.***
- The “really good stuff” can be pricey; used stuff abounds at train shows, swap meets, and bargain tables.
- Visit local hobby shop(s) to establish relationship with crew and to see what is available.

# Definition of Terms

---

- **Ready-To-Run (RTR)** – Equipment that can be taken from the box and placed directly on the track with minimal assembly by the modeler. Some modelers call it *Ready-To-Repair*.
- **Shake-the-box** kit – Designed for the beginner with relatively little for the modeler to do. Hence, “shake the box” and it is assembled.
- **Craftsman** kit – Provides all materials necessary to build structure or rolling stock together with necessary plans and instructions, but which requires great degree of skill to assemble.

# Beginner's Options

---

1. Train Set – Provides little bit of everything you need to start. Great variety of accessory pieces offered, if you want them. Quality varies.
2. Pieces / Parts – Selective, individual purchases directed by your interests. Total price probably higher than #1 because you choose quality.
3. Used / Recycled – *Buyer beware. Good bargains available. What you see is what you get. Jewels in the rough. Opportunities for exercising your skills.*  
– Do not ignore this source.



# Equipment Examples (I)



RTR – Be careful. Might have truck-mounted, horn-hook couplers and might be underweight.



RTR – Note fragile detail parts. Might not be good choice for children.

# Equipment Examples (2)

---



Athearn Blue Box – Best example of traditional Shake-the-box-kit.



Shake-the-box-kit – Modern example.

# Purchasing Guidelines: Locomotives – HO scale

---

- Locomotives sized for 18-inch curves – 4 axle diesels, short wheelbase steam locomotives.
- All wheels provide electrical pickup – more points of contact mean better performance.
- All wheels provide pulling power – some models have drive gears on one set of wheels and other wheels go along for the ride.
- Full and solid drive wheels – some models have rubber ‘traction’ tires which provide little pulling power and no electrical pickup.
- Working couplers on both ends.

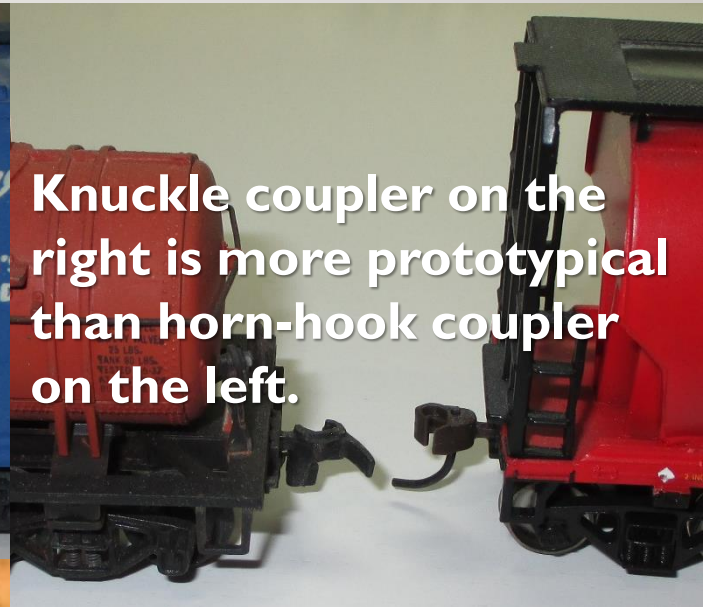
# Purchasing Guidelines: Rolling Stock – HO scale

---

- 40- and 50-foot cars – models of modern 86-foot cars do not stay on 18-inch curves.
- Body-mounted couplers – couplers are attached to car body, not to wheel truck.
- Working Knuckle couplers – Do not purchase old Horn-Hook couplers; they do not operate well.
- Sufficient weight – 40-foot car should weigh about 4 ounces; light cars will be pulled off the track when going through curves.



# Rolling Stock Suggestions



Knuckle on body

Recommended not to use truck-mounted couplers.

Horn-hook on truck

# Equipment Tips

---

Questions? Ask us.

National Model Railroad Association

North Central Region

3 Rivers Division

<http://div3.ncr-nmra.org/>

