



1st Edition

Dear Reader,

This document is best used as a step-by-step, guided tour from beginning to end as it divulges details in an intuitive but organic manner. If you are a total newcomer and barely understand what the game is about, this is the perfect method for you. If you already have some knowledge and would like to skip ahead or just want to use this as a reference, you can view the table of contents below and click on a linked section to navigate there.

This guide is work-in-progress, and I aim to keep updating it to stay current with new patches and even transcribe it into video format if enough people find it useful. Your feedback (both positive and negative) is most welcome, and if you have more detailed questions or just want to chat about Tarkov and find potential squadmates, feel free to join our community discord server at <https://discord.gg/xa5pr8n> as we have several players that are passionate about EFT, myself included. You are also welcome to follow my channel at <https://www.twitch.tv/rainlyte> to ask me any specific questions live even if I'm streaming something else. I'm always happy to help new players.

Enjoy!

[Section 1: Game Introduction and Pre-purchase](#)

[1.1 Who is this "Escape from Tarkov"?](#)

[1.2 What do players do in EFT?](#)

[1.3 How can I access EFT?](#)

[1.4 Which edition should I get?](#)

[Section 2: Getting Acquainted Post-Purchase](#)

[2.1 Menu Icebreakers](#)

[2.1.1 Choosing a PMC](#)

[2.1.2 Meet the Dealers](#)

[2.1.3 There Are Many Like It, but This Stash Is Yours.](#)

[2.2 Your First Kit of Gear](#)

[2.2.1 Rigs and Backpacks](#)

[2.2.2 Arming Yourself](#)

[2.2.3 Quick Overview of the Health System](#)

[2.2.4 Meds for Your Kit](#)

[2.3 First Offline Raids](#)

[2.3.1 Maps and Times](#)

[2.3.2 Settings and Controls](#)

[2.3.3 Extraction](#)

[2.3.4 Bloodlust Through PVE](#)

[2.3.5 Magazine Handling](#)

[2.3.6 Meds, the Quick Bar, and You](#)

[Section 3: Online Raids](#)

[3.1 The Way of the Scav](#)

[3.1.1 The Benefits of Scav Mode](#)

[3.1.2 Scav Mode Activated](#)

[3.1.3 Doing the Wiggle](#)

[3.2 Preparing for PMC Raids](#)

[3.2.1 "Guns. Lots of guns."](#)

[3.2.1.1 Initial Rifle: The Simonov Semi-Automatic Carbine](#)

[3.2.1.2 Initial SMG: The Vityaz-SN](#)

[3.2.1.3 Other Good Weapon Choices](#)

[3.2.2 Streamlining Your Meds](#)

[3.2.3 Insurance](#)

[3.3 The Art of War](#)

[3.3.1 Spawning](#)

[3.3.2 Points of Interest](#)

[3.3.3 Pacing](#)

[3.3.4 Soundscapes](#)

[3.3.5 Shooting and Armor](#)

[3.3.6 Squads](#)

[3.4 Looting](#)

[3.4.1 Loose Loot](#)

[3.4.2 Container Loot](#)

[3.4.3 Body Loot](#)

[3.4.4 Bags in Bags in Bags](#)

[3.4.5 What to Loot?!](#)

[3.4.5.1 Looting Weapons](#)

[3.4.5.2 Looting Armor](#)

[3.4.5.3 Looting Headgear](#)

[3.4.5.4 Looting Barter Goods](#)

[3.4.5.5 Looting Keys and Keycards](#)

[3.5 Completing Tasks](#)

[3.6 Other Locations](#)

[Section 4: Trading](#)

[4.1 Dealers Revisited](#)

[4.1.1 Trading with Dealers](#)

[4.1.2 Increasing Loyalty Level](#)

[4.2 Flea Market](#)

[4.2.1 Buying from the Market](#)

[4.2.2 Selling to the Market](#)

[4.2.3 Market Reputation and Offer Slots](#)

[4.3 Where to Sell What](#)

Section 1: Game Introduction and Pre-purchase

1.1 Who is this “Escape from Tarkov”?

Escape from Tarkov (EFT) is currently a session-based, multiplayer, first-person shooter game with RPG elements and a full-looting system. EFT strives for realism in aesthetics, sound design, and mechanical details, so if you want a high stakes, immersive modern combat simulator you've come to the right place. The game is under development and may transition into a more open-world, massively multiplayer framework in the future. This also means that changes are made and content gets added fairly frequently, and you can usually expect progress wipes every few months.

1.2 What do players do in EFT?

Players take on the role of mercenaries (or “PMCs”) trying to survive the chaotic, war-torn fictional Russian city of Tarkov after a comms blackout. Phrased another way: you're a very angry bald man fighting over Kalashnikovs and pineapple juice. The core gameplay loop, simplified, is as follows:

1. Equip your PMC with gear from your “stash”: a safe inventory space. Additional gear may be available from NPC dealers or other players via the flea market.
2. Join a “raid” (an individual EFT session). Spawning in a location of Tarkov, you will proceed to engage enemies, loot equipment, and most importantly get to one of your designated extracts before the raid timer expires (or you do).
3. Once out of the raid, move any excess loot into your stash, storing and/or selling items as needed. Then return to step 1.

Don't let the simplicity fool you; the current loop is elegant and highly replayable. There are also several caveats to the loop that keep things fresh:

- Scavengers (or “Scavs”) are opportunistic, armed civilians that stir up raids. Most scavs are AI bots, however players can also enter a raid as one.
- NPC dealers offer tasks that give you objectives to work toward and reward you with cash, reputation, and unlocks new items for purchase.
- The Flea Market allows you to buy, sell, and barter with other players (a game in itself).

- PMCs have many passive skills that can be improved affecting your proficiency with everything from magazine loading to metabolism.
- There is a truly massive database of items to discover and acquire. Some of the best loot is behind locked doors, so collecting keys to valuable locations is its own journey.
- Deep weapon modding customization using countless realistic weapon mods.
- Probably many more things I'm forgetting.

1.3 How can I access EFT?

EFT is not a free-to-play game. If you don't want to wait at the rare chance of getting a temporary trial key or for the possibility of an open beta at some point in the future, you can get in now by pre-purchasing the game which gives access to the ongoing closed beta. To do this, create an account on the official website (escapefromtarkov.com) and then decide which "edition" to pre-purchase. All editions play together, and currently they all have access to almost all the same content (same locations and game modes available, same gear available to purchase).

1.4 Which edition should I get?

The primary differences between each edition are:

1. The size of your stash (safe inventory space where you store item between raids). There is currently no way to increase your base stash size in-game, but there are specialized containers that can virtually increase stash space. It is rumored that there will be ways to increase your stash size in-game in the future, and that the stash system itself will be overhauled to an interactable 3D space.
2. The size of your secure container (listed under the "additional equipment" for each edition). Your secure container can be brought to every raid and gives you a small space to retain items even if you die. From the purchased editions, the smallest is 2x2, and the largest is 3x3. Also, 2x3, 4x2, and 3x4 containers are acquireable against increasingly late-game achievements.
3. The EOD edition includes free access to future DLC, as well as granting a "Unique in-game ID" which at the moment seems to refer to having your name printed in gold with a flanking golden crown, if that matters to you.

The other “additional equipment” you start with, and the “initially good standing with traders” are nice but much less important than the above. Gear is so transient given the high lethality combat combined with full-looting, and you will naturally level up dealers as you complete tasks anyway. How many of these various edition benefits will carry over to the main game when it is complete is currently unknown to the best of my knowledge. It is safest to assume that these benefits will only be effective for now.

If you want to give EFT a go and don't feel ready to splurge a ton of cash, consider starting with the lowest priced “Standard” edition of the game. Standard is the lowest barrier to entry and refunds seem very difficult to get, so this way you are risking the least cash if it turns out not to be for you. If you later realize you love it, then you can upgrade to one of the higher tiers and be better informed as to what that upgrade means. The game does occasionally (but not often) go on sale for various holidays. Sales often apply to upgrades as well.

Section 2: Getting Acquainted Post-Purchase

2.1 Menu Icebreakers

2.1.1 Choosing a PMC

After downloading the launcher and installing an up to date version of EFT, you can click “Play” and get into the game! Your first decision will be to choose a name (that's on you), and which private military company your main character will be from: USEC or BEAR. There are currently very few gameplay differences between the two, but USEC has English voice overs and BEAR has Russian voice overs when issuing voice commands (only really used for fun if you want), and the player model/uniform are slightly different, so use these factors to decide.

2.1.2 Meet the Dealers

You should now see the main menu. First select “Trade” and note the several “dealers” (these are NPCs that each specialize in trading different goods), as well as a tab for switching to the Flea Market (this is where you barter with other players). For now, select the first NPC dealer (Prapor). In Prapor's screen you see his wares on the left,

and your stash on the right. You'll notice his wares are all black because they haven't been examined yet – right click on each and examine them all. Next notice the “Tasks” panel at the top left. Click on this to see the task he has available for you; select it, read the briefing if you want and the objectives/reward details, and finally click “accept” to take on the task. Now that you know how to navigate dealer menus, check the others out as well, examine their wares, and accept any tasks they may have.

2.1.3 There Are Many Like It, but This Stash Is Yours.

Next, head back to the main menu and click “Character” instead. You are now looking at your private stash on the right and your character's equipped inventory on the left. Since all of your equipment is at risk in a raid, you should always consciously have equipped every piece of gear and know why you brought it. Therefore the first thing I recommend you do is unequip to stash (drag and drop or better yet use control [CTRL] + left mouse button [LMB]) everything **except** for your secure container in its dedicated pouch slot and the melee weapon in your scabbard. Neither of these are lootable by others when they are in these slots, so you should never move them. Any items inside your secure container are also safe even when you die.

2.2 Your First Kit of Gear

2.2.1 Rigs and Backpacks

Let's go over what kit you will want to bring into a raid. Currently, the only space you have to hold loot are the weapon and gear slots on your person, as well as four single slot pockets and the space inside your secure container. It's a good start but to hold a bit more you'll want a backpack and tactical rig. Head back to the dealers via the main menu and select Ragman. Click on the green “Scav Vest,” click on the “Fill items” button to move currency from your stash to the trade area, and finally click “Deal!” to make the purchase. You should now have a fresh new scav vest in your stash. Click on the beige “Tactical sling bag” and purchase one of these as well.

Head back to your character's stash via the main menu, and equip your new scav vest (drag and drop over the tactical rig slot, or simply use [ALT] + [LMB]). Equip the sling to your backpack slot as well. You may notice these are much smaller than the previously

equipped rig and pack, but appropriately they are only a fraction of the price and will be adequate for your first very dangerous raids.

2.2.2 Arming Yourself

Now you'll want to equip a firearm so you're not bringing a bayonet to a gunfight. Equip one of your PM "Makarov" pistols (remember you can drag and drop but [ALT] + [LMB] is faster for equipping). This sidearm is the cheapest firearm in the game, and while it's not particularly competitive against an assault rifle, it will do fine for your first offline raids while you're sorting out your settings, getting a feel for the controls and mechanics, etc. Double click the equipped pistol or right-click and "inspect" to get to its inspection window. Toward the bottom of this window you can see what attachments are on it. The Makarov is simple and can only take a magazine (mag), which it likely has loaded already. Drag and drop the mag from this window to your vest, and pull three more of the same PM mag from your stash into your vest as well.

Now look back at the Makarov's inspect screen and notice under the "caliber" section it lists "9x18mm". This is the ammunition you will need to use for it to function, and just like the magazines you will likely have some spare ammunition of this type in your stash too. Pull a stack of 50 to your secure container making sure it's 9x18 and not 9x19. Every magazine should have a small "x/8" on its icon, denoting how full it is out of its max capacity. If any of them are not full, drag and drop ammunition from the stack in your secure container onto that mag to fill it. Finally, drag and drop one of the mags onto your Makarov so it is loaded. Congratulations: you are armed and mildly dangerous.

2.2.3 Quick Overview of the Health System

Aside from a weapon and bags, you'll want to bring some medical supplies (or "meds") in the (very likely) event that you get wounded, but to understand what these meds are for you need to understand how the health system works. At the top left of the Character screen there are several tabs – click on "Health." Notice the body image is broken into several parts, each of which has a number of hitpoints (HP). We will call all of these parts (even the torso/stomach) "limbs."

When you are damaged, for example by being shot, the limb that gets hit will take damage based on the round that was fired and other factors. If a limb takes damage but still has some HP left, you can spend some time to heal that limb using meds such as the AI-2 (you should have several of these orange squares in your stash already). Sometimes when you are shot, you will start bleeding, in which case you will start to drain hitpoints until it is bandaged with (surprise!) a bandage (you should have some of these already in stash as well).

If any limb gets reduced to zero hit points it goes black and, bad things start to happen. First, the limb can no longer be healed. Second, you will suffer some sort of deleterious effect:

- Black leg: slower, limping movement, HP loss when sprinting, difficulty jumping.
- Black arm: slower aiming, trembling sight picture, difficulty with searching inventories.
- Black torso: cough constantly and loudly, giving away your position.
- Black stomach: coughing and very rapid dehydration that in turn kills you.
- Black head is extremely rare as you will usually just die from a headshot.

If these issues aren't bad enough, when a black limb gets hit, it will either A) spread a multiple of the damage across the rest of your body or B) instantly kill you. The last status effect I want to mention are fractures. Sometimes when you are shot or fall a good distance you may fracture a limb. Fractured limbs are problematic to use and can be repaired using a one-time splint (check your stash for some of these too). There are more status effects and nuances to the health and damage system but this should be enough to get you started, now let's focus on what meds you want to bring in.

2.2.4 Meds for Your Kit

Grab an AI-2 (for healing limbs), a bandage (for stopping a bleed), and optionally a splint (for fixing a fracture). The last thing you will definitely want are pain meds – purchase some analgin painkillers from Therapist. Painkillers can help you cope with certain negative effects (most notably allowing you to move at a non-limping, somewhat normal speed on a black leg so you don't have to limp for half an hour). Compare prices at Therapist and try to keep the most expensive meds in your secure container, and anything left over in your pockets/vest. The benefit of having magazines and meds in your pockets or vest is that these are the only slots you can directly reload from and hotkey supplies (more on this later).

2.3 First Offline Raids

2.3.1 Maps and Times

That's it, you are now geared for a raid. Before you head in, check out the wiki's page for the Customs location and scroll down to find several maps of the area <https://escapefromtarkov.gamepedia.com/Customs> -- choose one that shows you the extracts most easily and includes the expanded zone. Keep your chosen map open so you can alt tab to it (even better is if you can have it on a second monitor or tablet). Customs is an ideal location to focus on first as it is used in many early dealer tasks, isn't abnormally large or small, and has a good, diverse set of environments to get you acquainted with the game. Head back to the main menu and this time select "Escape from Tarkov." Choose the Customs location, and note the two time phases listed at the bottom. Select the one that is between 06:00-18:00 so that you don't load into Customs at nighttime, then press next. Skip the 'map' screen by pressing next again. Now you should have the option to enable "Offline Mode" – do so and make sure PVE, random time/weather are all *disabled*. Click next and then start the raid.

2.3.2 Settings and Controls

After some loading and a timer, you should be in. It's just you and Customs with no enemies, so now is a great time to play around with settings. Move around, look around, and feel it out for a bit. From the [ESC] menu you can click the little cog at the bottom right where you have some options to try. In the game settings screen you can reduce head-bobbing if that is bothering you, and you can also adjust field of vision if it is too tight (try not to ramp it up too much as it may negatively affect iron sight accuracy). You can also enable "Always show interface elements" if you always want to see in your UI the stamina bar, health overview, quick bar, etc.

Get the sound levels right (be aware that gun shots are realistic and very loud), and tinker with graphics if you would like to feel out framerate and visual quality. Lastly, take a quick peak in controls/keybindings; most things should be standard FPS fare, but some things like sidearm/pistol being bound to [1] may feel unnatural. Don't worry about all the controls yet, just get the basics down and change anything vital. Cheat sheet below:

Move:	W/A/S/D	Sprint:	Shift	Aim:	Right click
Lean:	Q/E	Sneak:	Caps lock	Shoot:	Left click
Crouch:	C	Speed:	M wheel	Reload:	R
Prone:	X	Inventory:	Tab	Fire mode:	B
Jump:	Space	Interact:	F	Check mag:	Alt+T

2.3.3 Extraction

Now if you feel ready to start exploring, look at the map you chose earlier and start walking around until you find enough landmarks to identify where you are. Double tap [O] rapidly and you should get a timer at the top right along with several potential “extracts”. Normally in an online raid you would have to get to one of these before the timer expires, otherwise you would lose everything on you. Since you are in offline mode, no progress (positive or negative) will be saved and you can use escape to exit raid at any time with no penalties despite warnings it may give. But although you technically don't have to worry about extracting you should take the opportunity to practice it so that you are better prepared for a real raid.

Notice in the list of extracts that some are annotated with question marks. These are conditional extracts and may require payment (with in-game currency), have a longer extraction timer, or simply only be available from time to time. There is always a guaranteed extract however that is not annotated with question marks. Use the map to navigate to the guaranteed extract. When you've reached a valid extract, there is an invisible zone that you can stand in which should start a brief extraction timer on your screen.

At the end of the timer you will have successfully extracted the raid; congratulations! In an online raid, this would mean you survived and could keep all the loot you had on you. Feel free to explore the location as much as you want over as many separate raids as you want (just make sure you're selecting offline mode each time). Note that there are two “sides” to each location, each of which has its own static set of spawns and guaranteed and conditional extracts. So depending on which side you spawn in future raids, you may have the same set or the other side's set of extracts available.

2.3.4 Bloodlust Through PVE

When you feel ready, you can also “enable PVE” on the offline screen to have scav bots spawn on location as if it was a regular raid so you can start learning about combat and looting. As mentioned, the Makarov is a cheap pistol – it has a restrictive ammo capacity with poor accuracy and stopping power, especially at range. You will want to sneak as close as possible, [right-click] to aim down sights, and lay in a headshot or two quickly (watch out for helmets and visors as they will stop a 9x18 round with ease). You can loot downed bodies with [F] when you get close. More on looting in section [3.4 Looting](#).

2.3.5 Magazine Handling

After you've done some shooting, use [R] to reload when you get an opportunity. Be aware that double tapping [R] will perform a tactical reload that drops the outgoing magazine on the ground instead of securing it, saving you a fraction of a second. This can save your life in a hot situation but make sure you're not doing it by mistake and losing your mags all over the place. Also ensure you have enough free space in your vest or pockets for your active mag before reloading, otherwise it will also be dropped.

Over time you will end up with partially/completely spent mags that need to be refilled – when safe, press [TAB] to access your inventory where you can drag the ammo stack you brought on top of a non-full mag. This will start loading in one cartridge at a time in a painfully slow manner that may have you cursing. You are very vulnerable when doing this so choose the moment with care. Right click and “check magazine” to get a quick estimate on how full an unknown mag is; this same thing can be accomplished for a mag loaded into your current weapon by pressing [ALT] + [T].

2.3.6 Meds, the Quick Bar, and You

A quick health overview will contextually show up at the top left of your screen, but in your [TAB] inventory you'll notice a tab at the top-left called “Health”; this shows you a more detailed breakdown of your situation. If any of your limbs are missing some (but not all) of their HP, you can drag and drop your AI-2 over that specific limb to heal it. If you have a bleed status on a limb, you can drag and drop a bandage over it, and so on. If you're not fussed about prioritizing specific limbs and just want to use meds quickly, you can simply right click and “Use” them (this is all that's needed for painkillers as well).

To use meds even faster, drag and drop them from your inventory onto the numbered quick bar at the bottom of your screen (or hover over the med and click the number you want to assign it to). Now by simply pressing that number in-raid, your character will start the animation of using it right away. As mentioned earlier, this only works for meds in your pockets and tactical rig (not backpack). Grenades can also be bound this way.

Section 3: Online Raids

Quick note: I assume you are eager to get into some online raids, so I have put this (long) section first, but you will likely need to do some trading before long. Whenever you feel like you need to learn more about the dealers and flea market, jump to [Section 4: Trading](#) and get any information you need there before coming back to finish this section. You can even do so now.

3.1 The Way of the Scav

3.1.1 The Benefits of Scav Mode

You: Rainlyte, I want to do a real raid. Like a big, fancy merc.

Me: I know, but I have to tell you about Scav Mode first.

You: But whyyyy?

Me: I've made a sweet list to explain exactly why.

Pros:

- When deploying as a scav, you get a free set of gear thus risking none of your own
- You get to keep all of that plus anything else you loot *if* you can extract with it
- Other AI scavs won't shoot you by default
- Sweet voice lines

Cons:

- You cannot choose the gear you get as it is procedurally generated -- it may be imbalanced, low quality, etc.
- There is a cooldown timer for raiding as a scav again (time may vary with updates)
- You deploy partway into the raid, so you have less context about what is going on
- You have no secure container
- Your passive skills are separate (and usually worse) from your PMCs, and leveling them up here will not improve your PMC
- You cannot complete tasks as a Scav with the exception of certain gathering missions
- Your extracts are much more varied

3.1.2 Scav Mode Activated

Despite the above listed cons, getting a free set of gear every X minutes is a fantastic deal for new players, and it's also fun and pragmatic to experiment with new weapons you might not have purchased. It's always worth considering a cheeky scav run when it's off cooldown. To enter raid as a scav, simply click "Escape From Tarkov" from the main menu, and choose the scav to the left (the model preview gives some insight into your gear) instead of your PMC, and then select a location and deploy as normal.

I won't give too much advice specifically for scav runs as the upcoming sections will help with both scav and PMC runs, but I will say you should focus on learning to recognize AI scavs vs other player scavs, vs PMCs. This mostly comes with experience, but AI scavs tend to spawn in certain areas, patrol and move a certain way, and like to use voice lines. As a general rule it's best not to attack them unless you want to risk it for their gear, as this causes all AI scavs in the general vicinity to turn hostile toward you. In contrast if you leave them alone, they will aid you against all PMCs and hostile player scavs as well.

Player scavs can best be distinguished by their movement, if they loot, and if they have more than one firearm. Shooting at them will cause nearby AI scavs to go hostile, so you'll have to make a judgment call as to if you can trust them not to shoot you. PMCs will almost always be hostile, and can be told apart thanks to their USEC or BEAR player model/uniform which may be visible if they're not too heavily armored (and if they are, that would usually be the alternate giveaway).

3.1.3 Doing the Wiggle

If someone you encounter "wiggles" by leaning left to right rapidly with [Q] and [E], they are implying that they are friendly and want to know if you are too. This doesn't necessarily mean you can trust them, but you will have to decide how to react. If you want to show friendliness back, make sure to wiggle as well right away. Don't wiggle and then shoot. Don't be that person. Rainlyte will be so disappointed with you, and you will bring shame upon your family. You can start running some scav raids intermittently if you'd like now. Next up I'll go over using better firearms, advice on looting, and more that will be helpful for both your scav runs and proper online PMC raids.

3.2 Preparing for PMC Raids

3.2.1 “Guns. Lots of guns.”

You: *Here’s the thing, Rainlyte: while I appreciate the idea of the occasional cheeky pistol run, I have mixed feelings about going into a raid with this 5000 ruble pea shooter.*

Me: *Fair. That’s fair. Behold...*

3.2.1.1 Initial Rifle: The Simonov Semi-Automatic Carbine

This beautiful specimen is the Simonov Semi-Automatic Carbine, usually called the “SKS”. It fires juicy 7.62x39 mm rounds from a 10-round internal magazine with good accuracy and reasonable handling even without mods. At short-range you can rapidly tap the trigger for quick re-firing and the accurate semi-auto fire really excels at medium-range skirmishing, making this a fairly versatile weapon. The weapon itself can be purchased from Loyalty Level 1 (LL1) Prapor. The weapon comes with the internal magazine so you don’t need to purchase mags for it (although you can later get external 20-round mags to improve capacity and reload time).

LL1 Prapor has the compatible 7.62x39mm PS ammunition. One of the great things about the SKS is that this ammo is fairly priced, ubiquitous, available early, and has a great balance of flesh damage and penetration against low and mid-level armor. Pick up 60 rounds of this so that you can fill the internal mag, keep 20 rounds in your pocket and the rest in your secure container. Remember to re-insert the internal mag after loading it. You can also drag ammo onto the rifle itself to put one round directly in the chamber, giving you an extra round in your opening salvo.

Additional notes on the SKS:

- Reloading is a bit slow and ejects the chambered round if there is one. Make your shots count so you don’t get stuck reloading at a bad time.
- There are two variants of the SKS: the standard SKS is purchased from LL1 Prapor and the OP-SKS (“Hunting Rifle”) is bought from LL2 Skier. The OP-SKS looks and handles almost identically but has a slot for a dovetail mount (used for attaching a compatible reflex sight or scope). By default the SKS has a dark brown body and the OP-SKS has a light tan body, however these bodies are interchangeable and to further complicate things there is even a third black polymer body with several attachment points. Nothing to worry about, just be aware of so you don’t get confused when you find different SKSs. The OP-SKS and especially the black polymer version are generally more expensive.

3.2.1.2 Initial SMG: The Vityaz-SN

This Russian submachine gun allows you to delve into the wonderful world of automatics early on and at a great price. The 19-01 Vityaz-SN fires the more humble 9x19 mm round but does so out of a cheaper and higher capacity 30-round magazine with a firing mode for 700 RPM full-auto. The Vityaz excels in close quarters combat (CQC) where the full-auto will shine and allow for easy upper-chest and head sprays. CQC also mitigates most of the downsides the Vityaz has, such as lower accuracy and slower-traveling bullets that drop quite a lot. When using the Vityaz, avoid open areas with long sight lines such as to force close-range engagements and capitalize on its advantages.

LL1 Prapor has the gun itself, the compatible Standard PP-19-01 mags (buy an extra two of these), and subsonic 9x19 mm PSO gzh rounds. The other ammo option is 9x19 mm Pst gzh from LL1 Mechanic, which sacrifices some flesh damage but is better at defeating the lightest body armors and visors (often making it the better choice). Choose one and purchase 150 rounds -- enough to fill all three mags and keep a spare stack of 60 in your secure container. Once you've loaded all the mags, put one back in the Vityaz, put one in your scav vest (remembering to leave the other 1x2 slot in your vest empty so that you don't drop a magazine when you reload), and keep the last one in your backpack/sling.

Additional notes on the Vityaz:

- Since the Vityaz has a full-auto firing mode, you will want to start tracking if you are in full-auto or single fire mode. When in raid, tap [B] to switch mode (notice the text popup at bottom-right). You can also use [ALT] + [B] to check mode without making noise.
- One great thing about the Vityaz is that it can take some of the same ubiquitous mods that AKs use, and it also has an integrated dovetail mount for attaching a reflex sight. We will go into more depth with gun modding later.

3.2.1.3 Other Good Weapon Choices

There aren't many great weapon options with the LL1 dealers, but once you've read [4.2.1 Buying from the Market](#) (which you can sneak ahead and read now if you'd like), you will learn how to buy all sorts of gear from other players that you don't have dealer access to as long as you're happy with their listed prices. For example, as long as

people are reselling them, you can purchase the SKS-A5 external mags which otherwise requires LL2 Peacekeeper. Just make sure to read that section first to get some pointers on using the market and not get scammed.

Below is a quick guide on a few common weapons with notes on whether it's best avoided or a good pickup plus super quick notes. This will mostly focus on cheaper weapons, as I would probably recommend storing or just selling the more expensive ones until you get a decent grasp of EFT's mechanics.

Assault Carbines:

VPO-136: Good, budget, semi-auto version of the AKM. Uses same caliber as SKS.

VPO-209: More recoil and worse armor pen (different caliber) than the 136. Not great.

VPO-101: Semi-auto rifle firing devastating 7.62x51mm rounds. Great against armor.

Assault Rifles:

AKS-74U: Short, collapsible, but crazy high recoil 5.45 AR. Best avoided.

AKM variants: Good in semi-auto with 7.62x39 PS. Has full auto but very little control.

AK-74 variants: Good 5.45x39 AR but use at least PP or B_ ammos to deal with armor.

Bolt-action rifles:

Mosin infantry/sniper: Fires 7.62x54R that can penetrate anything but slow bolt action.

Pistols:

PM (Makarov): Cheapest gun in the game. Low capacity but can still 1 tap to face.

TT: Similar to PM but *slightly* more expensive, better penetration, better handling.

MP-443 Grach: 9x19mm pistol with good capacity and Pst Gzh ammo for light armor.

P226R: Slightly better ergo/recoil than Grach but lower capacity and bad rate of fire.

Glock 17: The best of the 9x19 sidearms and heavily modifiable. Great pistol.

Shotguns:

MP-153: Great semi-auto 12 gauge. A bit long and heavy but otherwise top suggestion.

MR-133: Slow pump-action 12 gauge. Not recommended.

M870: Similar to MR-133, better in most ways but still pump-action. Not ideal.

Saiga 12: Semi-auto 12 gauge with external mag and fast rate of fire. Decent option.

TOZ-106: Very cheap but very bad. Slow bolt action, low capacity, low damage.

SMGs:

PP-9 Klin: Uses 9x18 makarov ammo but high rate of fire. Very fun and ok in CQC.

PP-91 Kedr: Like Klin but *slightly* slower rate of fire. Still ok in CQC.

Saiga-9: Semi-auto version of the 19-01 Vityaz, removing its redeeming quality. Bad.
MP5: Very nice, stock, Western SMG. Faster rate of fire, better ergo/recoil than Vityaz.

Quick note: In the future I would like to add a section here on simple gun modding. For now, know that you can add compatible mods to a gun by dragging it on top, and you can remove mods from a gun by inspecting it and dragging a mod out of its slot. There is also a dedicated “modding” view if you right click on a gun and select the option. This lets you easily see what other mods could fit in a given slot if you have that mod in your stash. For more specifics on what attaches to what I would recommend checking the wiki’s page for a given weapon or mod which will show you what it can link to. There are also Tarkov gun modding websites out there, just make sure what you’re looking at is up to date! Knowing what fits and what doesn’t takes a lot of experience hopefully this information can get you started.

3.2.2 Streamlining Your Meds

You: *Meds seem great, but there’s a lot to keep track of and they seem to run out fast.*

Morpheus: *What if I told you there are first aid kits that combine the limb healing functionality of the AI-2 with the bleed-stopping power of a bandage, all while having more durability for each inventory slot taken?*

You: *I would ask who you are and where Rainlyte is.*

Obi-Wan: *You would notice this is the best thing you or anyone has ever heard.
 *waves hand**

You: *I noticed this is the best thing I or anyone has ever heard.*

There are four more advanced med kits; you won’t have access to these right away, but you are very likely to find them in raids and should know what they do as they will simplify your handling of meds. Comparison chart below:

Kit Name	Use Time [s]	Durability [HP]	Heal Limbs	Stop Bleeds	Fix Fractures	Size
Car First Aid*	3	220	✓	✓		1x2
Salewa**	3	400	✓	✓		1x2
IFAK	3	300	✓	✓		1x1
Grizzly	5	1800	✓	✓	✓	2x2

* Keep an eye out for an early Therapist task that unlocks the ability to purchase these.

** The first Therapist task requires a handful of these, so make a point of saving them.

With recent additions and changes to available anesthetics, you have a lot of options to choose from. To summarize: I would recommend Analgin Painkillers as a standard option every raid because it is quick to use, has several charges, and is cheap enough to be disposable. Vaseline, Golden Star, and Ibuprofen are good for endurance in that they are slow to use with lots of charges and huge durations. These are convenient to have as backups in your secure container if you have space, but will get pricey when you're forced to eject them, so definitely optional at your discretion. Finally, the Morphine Injector is the fastest possible to use with a solid effective duration, its main drawback being single charge only and very expensive. This is appropriate when going in with your best gear and wanting every advantage. Quick chart below:

Anesthetic Name	Use Time [s]	Charges	Duration/Charge [s]	Remove Contusion
Analgin	3	4	170	
Augmentin*	5	1	200	
Vaseline	6	10	500	
Golden Star	7	10	600	✓
Ibuprofen	5	12	500	✓
Morphine	2	1	380	

* Augmentin has poor characteristics and can be sold to Therapist for 50% more than the purchase price of Analgin. Use in raid if it's your only option, but otherwise sell right away.

All of these anesthetics are 1x1 slot in size. There are many more injectors out there, and many meds have various minor effects that may not be listed above. This is only intended as a quick guide, but you can always check the wiki or alternatively double-click or right-click and inspect the item in-game to see all of its effects detailed. Note that certain effects such as toxication and radiation are not currently implemented, and are therefore irrelevant for now.

3.2.3 Insurance

A.K.A. *Not All Who Wander are Lost*

Me: *You like your gear, don't you?*

You: *Ye.*

Me: *You love it like your child, don't you?*

You: *What?*

Me: *All I'm saying is: if you insure your kit, Prapor will send you a nice message a day or two later calling you a crumpet or something.*

You: *... .. what?*

When you go into a proper, online PMC raid you will notice one of the screens you have to click past is an insurance screen. Insured gear will be returned to you even if you die as long as it is not carried out of the raid by anyone. This is amazing, and I suggest insuring your entire kit every raid. It costs about 10% of the gear's value and from experience I will say you tend to get gear back way, way more than 10% of the time.

It may feel like your gear will always get stolen if you die, but consider that people don't always have the space, time, interest, or courage to loot you. And that's if your body is even found – sometimes your killer will get killed by a third party before looting or you will die to some random scav in some random corner of the map that never gets explored.

To insure your gear, click “Insure All” on this screen, and then click the highlighted “Insure” button to pay the insurance fee. If you want to select/deselect specific items, you can just left click on them instead before clicking “Insure”. Insured items will have a golden shield at the corner of their icon. The choice of which dealer to insure with only affects the speed with which insured items will be returned if able, as well as associated cost increase. I usually just insure with the default (Prapor) as I prefer cheap insurance and am not in a hurry to get equipment back.

Currently you can also drop your own insured gear in raid and as long as it is not found and extracted with by someone else, you will get it back via insurance. This is often referred to as “ditching” gear. Consumables like ammo, grenades, and meds cannot be insured and are therefore higher priority for your secure container until you find something more valuable.

3.3 The Art of War

You: *But Rainlyte, you've spent all this time talking about everything except combat. Isn't this, like, a shooter?*

Me: *... sure.*

You: *So how do I shoot good?*

Me: *[long speech about how this is an introductory guide and there's no time]*

You: *You don't know how to shoot good, do you?*

Me: **bead of sweat rolls down temple**

I'm pretty sure you could write a book or a thousand on this topic. Some people might even have done already. Anyway, I'll briefly go over a few basics that might help you out in wartorn Tarky.

3.3.1 Spawning

After you start a raid as a PMC, you will start a process of matchmaking with other players and loading the level etc. When this is done, you should get a new screen with a red "Get Ready" label and an unnecessarily precise (and yet ironically inaccurate) "Deploying in: xx:xx:xx" counter. As long as you see this screen you can rest assured you're loading in at the beginning of the round. On rare occasions or if you have less active servers selected, you may not see this screen which indicates you have loaded into the map after the match has started. You can use [O] to see if you're just late by a few seconds or many minutes. You should be extra careful in these situations because you have less context about what is happening in the match. In Scav raids you will always load in late -- this is normal.

When spawning, pay attention to your spawn location and make a mental (or written) note of it. In section [2.3.1 Maps and Times](#) we went over the importance of having a map for the location you're in. If your chosen map shows player spawns: great! Make sure to cross reference them with where you're actually starting to make sure they're up to date. Unfortunately many otherwise lovely community made maps don't show spawn locations and spawns do sometimes move between patches. But knowing roughly where other PMCs have spawned is very helpful so start noting these spots. Also pay attention to which spots are on which 'side' of the map. You can tell which side you've spawned on by double tapping [O] to bring up the extract options; these will always be on the opposite side of the map from where you've started as a PMC.

Once you know where spawns are you have some idea of where to expect enemies at raid start which can warn you what angles to be extra aware of. Enemies could be where they spawned, they could be moving toward you, or they could be moving toward another spawn point. If you hear shooting shortly after raid start, you may have a very good idea of who is in conflict and where they are which can allow you to focus on other directions more once it is resolved. Enemies can also be moving towards point of interest, which we will discuss next.

3.3.2 Points of Interest

Each location has points of interest (POI), or areas with higher than average traffic. These may be because of nearby spawns/extracts, chokepoints, tasks, good loot, or other factors. Knowing where these are comes with experience, but for example on Customs these POIs could be said to include:

- The “Big Red” Customs building and surrounding courtyard (West of the river). This is the focal point of a few tasks, one of the only sources of loot on this third of the map, and is also surrounded by all of the West side spawns making it extra hot early game.
- The “Construction” area in the middle of the map. Several tasks happen here and scavs often spawn here as well, making it useful for even more missions. Because of the scavs you can often expect firefights here, which tends to attract additional PMCs and player scavs thus perpetuating the cycle. There is also a vantage point for sniping making it an attracting point to hold.
- The “Dorms” to the North. Many tasks are handled here and it is also the best source of loot on the map. Simply walking in or around dorms will almost certainly make everyone close by notice since the area is so dense. Scavs and even Scav Boss “Reshala, the Dealmaker” and his guards can patrol here, often resulting in a bit of a warzone.
- “New Gas” Station (East of Dorms) has some loot and is another patrol space for scavs and Reshala. It is also overlooks the shortcut that lets you into the Southern half of the East side of the map making this a chokepoint for anyone that doesn’t want to go into the large expanded zone to the North.
- “Old Gas” Station is an isolated nook toward the South East of the map that has pretty good loot, often spawns scavs, and also has a couple of extracts.
- “Boilers” and the surrounding buildings to the far East has several spawns and extracts, scav patrols, as well as some loot making it another hot spot.

There are many landmarks and microcosms within and around each of these that each have their own associated heuristics, but this gives you a big picture of some of the

most important zones to be aware of within Customs. Over time you will learn to figure out where these POIs are in other locations as well.

3.3.3 Pacing

When you're new, if you get properly immersed you'll notice Tarkov is a pretty damn scary game. Tension builds, gunshots (and everything else) sound very real and can make your heart skip a beat if they catch you off guard which they often do. This, combined with the full looting aspect of the game, might cause you to play overly cautious; afraid of enemies being in every bush, around every corner, listening through the floor below, etc. This is normal.

But you don't have to be a slave to it. Playing extremely slow will definitely improve your survival rate, but it has two huge negative effects: 1) it can waste a lot of time unnecessarily and 2) it can cause you to miss many opportunities as everything unfolds (and all the loot gets looted) while you're sitting in a dark corner. It's also very boring.

I am personally an advocate of an "undulating pace playstyle"™ (not really a trademark) wherein you contextually alternate between moving quick and slowing down. When to do which is of course the key, but typically I move quick right at raid start when I have some idea of where enemies are, as well as when moving *between* POIs. I will mostly slow down only when first approaching/entering a POI or an area where I've heard movement and/or gunshots recently. Within an actual POI I will usually take a balanced approach of moving reasonably fast (but not sprinting), and am always ready to shoot around each corner.

Also a quick note on stamina: it's a horizontal bar at the bottom left of your screen. Keep an eye on it when you're sprinting, jumping, or aiming a lot. If it runs out, you won't be able to move and aim properly until you recover. Recovery takes a while to kick in so don't keep interrupting it by intermittently aiming/sprinting as this will make you wait for the overhead all over again.

3.3.4 Soundscapes

Being aware of sounds is very important in EFT. Gunshots are loud and therefore often further away than you think, but even far out gunshots are good to pay attention to. It

gives you context for what is happening in the raid and can be useful for choosing how to navigate the map based on your objective.

Sounds become increasingly important as you get into denser environments and POIs, particularly indoors. In situations where you're aware of someone close by and you suspect they don't know about you, consider slowing and quieting down completely by crouching and dropping move speed to minimum with [CAPS], avoiding loud surfaces like metals and wood, avoiding jumping, dropping, opening inventory/searching, reloading, etc. Any sound you make, even pivoting, can give you away and cause a patient assailant to ambush you later. If you don't give them any sounds and you know they're coming, you can be the ambusher instead. In a prolonged firefight, you can also keep an ear open for giveaway sounds like reloading, starting a med cycle, etc. These can be great opportunities to push an attack.

Last note here is on headsets that you may have seen in game, such as ComTacs. These are headgear you wear that will typically amplify low level sounds (like someone creeping or switching firing mode from some distance) and muffle louder ones (like gunshots) to help you pick out more subtle noises. This can be very useful when you're trying to position someone that you can't see, especially indoors. Each of the headset types have their own performance and ranges, so you will have to experiment to find the one you like or whether you even like them at all. Most helmets will at least partially muffle your ability to hear, but the ones that are compatible with headsets allow you to bypass this issue by wearing them at the same time. This can get costly though.

3.3.5 Shooting and Armor

My primary recommendation with shooting is to practice going for face shots when possible and using semi-auto fire (remember [B] changes fire mode if your gun has more than one mode) in most situations with most weapons. This is especially important early on if you don't have good access to armor piercing ammunition. If your ammo can't pierce the target's armor, it could take as many as dozens of clean chest hits to even start dealing damage to them. Or you could just get that one clean face shot. I say face shot instead of headshot because most armored targets will have helmet protection on the sides and back of their head. Some of them will unfortunately have a visor in front as well in which case you may well be screwed. If you have a shotgun or high RPM SMG you can consider focusing one of their legs in this situation; it's not efficient but it will kill them if you lay enough rounds in. This is referred to as "leg meta".

Speaking of armor you will notice most armors have an armor class alongside what parts of the body they protect. The wiki has a very useful page that shows you parameters for all ammo types, including armor pen values:

<https://escapefromtarkov.gamepedia.com/Ammunition> As a general rule, you want your ammo armor pen value to be 10x the armor class you are trying to defeat for it to reliably penetrate. So if you want to defeat PACA Soft Armor which has armor class 2, you will want your ammunition to have about 20 or more armor pen. If you only had 10 armor pen, you would likely have to get a number of shots in first to start reliably penetrating, but each 10-step below that would require an increasingly impractical number of landed hits to start doing work.

So aiming down sights (ADS) and using semi-auto is the way to go for precise fire, but when is full auto useful? Mostly in very close quarters, particularly indoors. In many of these situations you may not even have time to ADS and should learn to aim with point-firing instead (essentially visualizing where your rounds will land from the default view). Full auto can also be useful at some closer mid-ranges if you can get a prone firing position. This is often tough because of obstacles and foliage making it difficult to see, but it gives you fantastic recoil control. Unmodded assault rifles, especially the smaller, lighter, collapsible ones and the heavier caliber ones will have a tremendous amount of recoil, so with these weapons you should be even more picky about when you're in tight enough quarters to use full auto.

Lastly I want to briefly touch on longer range shooting. Bullets in EFT *are* affected by gravity, so if you're firing from some distance consider that you may have to aim higher than you think. This is especially true with lower calibers (such as 9mm, which falls surprisingly fast) and when firing toward a target at a higher elevation. I won't go over sniping in depth as there are better guides out there for that, but suffice to say many reflexes and optics will allow you to change their zeroing with [PG UP] and [PG DOWN] if you think you can estimate their distance, and you can hold your breath with [ALT] to steady your sights (just remember to keep an eye on your stamina at the bottom left).

3.3.6 Squads

Squads and solo players all play together in EFT. It's not particularly fair, but it is the current, immersive state of affairs. With that in mind, if you have friends you can

consider squadding with them. I recommend starting with duos at most because of something I like to call “The Bane of Squads” AKA miscommunication.

Squads in EFT do not get any UI indicators for where their squad mates are. You should spawn close together (except during some Scav raids), but aside from that, it will be entirely up to your visual recognition and comms to make sure you don't shoot at your teammate. Identifying friend from foe is very challenging for most new players and tends to remain that way until you get well acquainted with the game and gain good communication practices and chemistry with your teammates. This is why I suggest duos to start, because every additional person you add to squad will exponentially exacerbate the amount of “is that you?”, “is who me?”, “are you there?”, “where is there?”, “I'm by a tree”, “buddy, we're playing Woods”, etc. Every time you hesitate to shoot someone because you think it might be your squadmate, you put yourself at huge risk of getting shot yourself by a live enemy in a game where every split second counts.

So with this in mind, take advantage of these difficulties when engaging enemy squads, and don't take for granted the focus and freedom of action you have when playing solo. Don't get me wrong: I think a well coordinated squad is much more powerful than a solo player. But even if you are solo, you have some advantages and should leverage them.

3.4 Looting

A.K.A. *Loot Goblins Anonymous*

You: *Rainlyte, I've played some Bethesda RPGs and, well...
I need to feed my digital hoarding addiction.*

Me: *I understand completely.*

*And you will need lots of stuff to replace all the stuff that you lose when you die and stuff.
Also: stuff.*

You: *How do?*

3.4.1 Loose Loot

If you see loose items in-raid, you can pick them up simply by interacting with them ([F] by default) as long as you have space in your inventory. If it's an item you haven't examined yet, that option will often be preselected in the contextual interact menu when you hover over the item. Scroll to the pick up option before pressing the interact button if

you want to pick up immediately and examine later. A few examples of spaces with loose loot:

3.4.2 Container Loot

While a lot of great loot can be found loose in the game world, much of it is hidden away in closed containers such as ammo crates, duffle bags, weapon crates, lockers, safes, and more. To get loot out of these, you interact with it ([F] by default) which starts a process of searching through the container.

You will notice a shaded grey silhouette in the container's inventory if it has any items – this represents the space occupied by items there and can hint at what might be inside. You can use this information to start shuffling your own inventory around while the search process happens. You can cancel searching with the red “X” button above the inventory being searched, which can be useful if it's blocking some of your other commands. You can also quickly exit the inventory view by hitting your inventory key ([TAB] by default). The wiki has a page on looting that has many images of lootable containers if you want to know what to keep an eye out for:

<https://escapefromtarkov.gamepedia.com/Looting>

3.4.3 Body Loot

On your trek through Old Tarky you're likely to come upon bodies. Bodies from player scav, AI scav, scav bosses (this is starting to sound like Bubba listing shrimp dishes to Forrest Gump), their guards, raiders (more on these later), and of course USEC and BEAR PMCs. Whether you created the body or just found it, you loot it the same way: get close and press your interact key [F]. If you want the least chance of being spotted, go prone first with [X]. If you would prefer to be ready to sprint immediately, consider at least going into crouch first to make yourself a smaller target with [C].

Looting bodies is the most risky form of looting because it is common for other players to watch the body (lying in ambush, protecting a friend's gear, etc) and players tend to die in more heavily trafficked, combat-rich areas. It is also the most complicated and time-consuming because most bodies have several pieces of equipped gear as well as several searchable inventories. For these reasons you should make a point of learning

how to loot bodies as quickly as possible based on your current risk assessment of the situation. I suggest this protocol for looting bodies:

1. If there are searchable inventories (rig, pockets, backpack) and you intend to search them, start this process on one of them immediately by clicking in that inventory's zone. Repeat this step as soon as you finish searching an inventory but continue meanwhile.
2. Put anything high-value in your secure container if there's space or if you can upgrade what's in there already.
3. Equip any primary weapons, sidearms, armor, or headgear* that you have empty slots for. Remember to use the hotkey [ALT] + [LMB] to equip immediately.
4. If any of the aforementioned gear would be an upgrade and you've run out of equippable slots, consider putting your own gear into a bag slot or simply discarding it to the ground (right click and "Discard" or hover over the item and use the [DEL] key). Then equip the upgrade with [ALT] + [LMB].
5. If you want to upgrade to their rig or backpack, start treating it as your own while it's on their body. Empty anything unimportant from theirs (using hover + [DEL]) to make space for items from your own rig/backpack**, which should then move over to theirs. When their rig/backpack is the way you want it and yours is empty of anything you intend to keep, ditch your own with [DEL] and then use [ALT] + [LMB] to equip theirs.
6. Repeat any of the above as needed until you have finished looting*** or determined it's time to leave or been domed due to our good friend greed.

* Some headgear will block you from wearing other headgear. Tighter and/or visored helmets usually block headsets, and the chunky aesthetic face masks often block helmets for example.

** If they have enough space in their own backpack or you're willing to do some shuffling, you can instead put your backpack in theirs and then equip theirs, thus keeping both.

*** If you're not shuffling bags around nor equipping but just looting some individual items into your bag/pockets/rig, remember to use [CTRL] + [LMB] for quicker looting.

3.4.4 Bags in Bags in Bags

As you may have noticed, bags can fit inside of other bags as long as the exterior bag has an empty section inside as big as the outside of the interior bag. You may have to read that sentence a few times for it to make sense. This feature means you can extract with several bags, each of which essentially take up none of your space, but there are downsides:

- Unless all of the backpacks are the same size in and out, they will begin to restrict your inventory space by cutting the remainders of space into artificial sections.
- You can't pick up loose objects in-raid into a backpack that is already filled with other backpacks nor into the last backpack in the stack.
- Although you can loot items from a container/body search screen, you will have to double click through earlier bags first to find empty sections to work with.

These negatives will cost you time and very possibly get you killed while shuffling everything around, so it's wise to avoid excessive bag stacking, especially early in the raid. If you're about to extract, it's much easier to rationalize stacking an extra couple of bags if they're handy.

Bag stacking like this is also brilliant for saving space in your private stash since you can keep all of your bags inside the footprint of the largest bag you want to keep. For stash use I don't recommend utilizing the leftover sections inside the bag stack too much however. You will quickly find it is a logistical nightmare remembering where everything is hidden, and navigating to the end of the stack deletes your time.

3.4.5 What to Loot?!

This is a frequently asked but difficult question to answer simply because of the enormous array of items in EFT. A comprehensive list of exactly what to loot would be too clunky for this guide. That said, I will give general guidelines and a few concrete examples of the most valuable items out there to get you started. You will learn how to finetune your looting game with experience.

First I want to point out an important heuristic: value-per-slot (VPS) is often king. For example, a 1-slot item worth 10k RUB has a VPS of 10k, whereas a 4-slot item worth 20k only has a VPS of 5k. It is not rare at all to find yourself with all equipment slots, rig, pockets, and backpack all full at the end of a successful raid, and with this in mind you will usually want to keep smaller items with higher VPS over larger items that have a higher individual value. This is especially important for your secure container because there are so few slots to work with. The next subsections each give a general overview

of item looting within broad categories (for simplification, prices listed here will be in the total value for an item, not VPS).

3.4.5.1 Looting Weapons

Take advantage of your two primary weapon slots and your sidearm slot. When you find other weapons in raid, your first instinct should be to use [ALT] + [LMB] to equip it, or if those slots are full then compare your options. Loaded and operational weapons that compliment your setup well (e.g. a close range SMG if you already have a sniper rifle, or a versatile assault rifle if you already have a shotgun) should be highest priority for your second primary weapon slot. In some cases you may want to prioritize a less practical weapon that is just bigger or more valuable to get the most monetary value out of that equipment slot. The choice and risk is yours.

You can also put weapons in your bag slots of course, but do note that many weapons have surprisingly poor VPS when unmodded. If a 10-slot Vepr is only selling for 15k rubles on the flea market, that means you're getting a measly 1.5k VPS by keeping it in your backpack. There are many barter items worth 5x that amount, and some are even worth 10-100x. If the same gun has an upgraded handguard/stock, foregrip, tactical device, optics, etc it quickly starts becoming a viable choice for your bag space as any one of those items may be worth as much as the weapon itself.

Some of these mods may be detachable, which is a good way to retain some loot if you can't pick up the whole gun. Suppressors and optics are usually the best for this and tend to be worth 15-25k rubles per slot, making them great options for secure container space if you don't already have high value items in there. Some weapons can have their mag removed or stock folded/removed to reduce its footprint. An unloaded MP5 can fit into 1x3 slots for example, while both collapsible and modern AKs can have their stock folded to save two slots on one end.

Lastly, some weapons are simply worth quite a lot on their own. As a general rule, Western (US/EU) weapons tend to be more expensive, while Russian weapons tend to run a bit cheaper, but there are many exceptions. The RSASS is the most expensive gun that comes to mind, worth roughly 150k rubles. Aside from that, I would put them in (rough) brackets as follows (bear in mind that based on time since wipe, current meta, new content, flea market fluctuation, and more factors these prices can all vary quite a lot, so check the flea market for current rates):

50-100k rubles:

Certain marksman rifles	e.g. M1A, VSS/AS VAL
Russian sniper rifles	e.g. DVL, SVDS
Special automatics	e.g. HK MP7, RPK-16
Western assault rifles	e.g. Colt M4A1, HK 416, MDR

25-50k rubles:

Most AK variants	e.g. AK-100-series, AK-74M, AKM variants
Most bolt-action rifles	e.g. M700, SV-98, Mosin (sniper variant)
Some semi-auto rifles	e.g. ADAR, OP-SKS, VPO-101
Some shotguns	e.g. M870, MP-153
Special pistols	e.g. Glock 18C, SR1MP
Western SMGs	e.g. MP5, MPX

<25k rubles:

Almost all pistols	e.g. any not listed above
Most shotguns	e.g. MR-133, Saiga 12, TOZ-106
Russian SMGs	e.g. PP-9/1 Klin/Kedr, Saiga-9, 19-01 Vityaz
Some AK variants	e.g. AKS-74U, VPO-136, VPO-209
Some rifles	e.g. Mosin (infantry variant), SKS

3.4.5.2 Looting Armor

Armor is a great pickup if you don't have any as you can equip it to simultaneously carry it and get the benefit of its protection. If you came in with your own armor and you find an upgrade, you can consider ditching your own (especially if insured) so you can carry the upgrade -- just make sure its durability isn't knackered (often the case when someone gets gunned down) if you intend to wear it. Durability also has a huge impact on value, as damaged armor needs to be repaired to be effective. This is an expensive process that also permanently reduces its maximum durability (and by proxy: its effectiveness).

As with weapons, you can carry armor in your backpack but depending on type it may not have very good VPS and taking up a minimum of 3x3 slots they also tend to be very bulky, restricting what else you can pick up. The reference below can give you a rough estimate of if it's worthwhile (remember to factor in durability and current rates):

>120k rubles:

Armor Class 5/6	e.g. 6B43 6A, FORT Redut, Gen4 AK/FP, Zhuk-6A
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70-120k rubles:

Armor Class 4/5 e.g. 6B13, 6B23-2, Gen4 HMK, Gzhel-K, Trooper TFO

30-70k rubles:

Armor Class 3 e.g. 6B23-1, Kirasa, MF-UNTAR, Zhuk-3 Press

<30k rubles:

Armor Class 2 e.g. Module-3M*, PACA Soft

* Although this is among the cheapest armors in the game, you need several of these for the first Skier task and should therefore make a point of collecting them early on. For this same reason, this armor is often massively inflated in value immediately after a wipe when everyone is doing the task.

3.4.5.3 Looting Headgear

Some headgear can have very impressive VPS and is in many cases a better option for your bag than bulky armor. As always, if you have free equipment slots or can upgrade, equip to those first. When equipping, remember that some headgear will block your ability to use other pieces of headgear. Tight helmets in particular will often exclude the use of headsets. Some helmets have visors and the visor may be damaged, impairing your visibility and reducing its value. However visors, especially from the more expensive helmets, can be worth a huge amount on their own (especially if undamaged). You will have to consider your options quickly and decide what to equip, what to bag, and what to leave behind. Rough reference below:

>100k rubles:

Helmets: e.g. Altyn, Crye Airframe, Fast MT, Maska 1Sch, Ronin, Vulkan

Night Vision: e.g. AN/PVS-14, GPNVG-18

50-100k rubles:

Helmets: e.g. LZSh, SSSh-95, Striker ACHHC/ULACH, Zsh-1-2M

Night Vision: e.g. N-15

25-50k rubles:

Headsets: e.g. FAST RAC, Sordin, Tactical Sport

Helmets: e.g. 6B47, Kiver

Night Vision: e.g. PNV-10T

<25k rubles:

Headsets: e.g. GSSh-01, ComTac 2

Helmets: e.g. Jeta, Kolpak, SSh-68

Masks: e.g. all aesthetic masks

3.4.5.4 Looting Barter Goods

There is a massive amount of barter items such as electronics, building materials, tools, and more. The wiki quests page (<https://escapefromtarkov.gamepedia.com/Quests>) has a “quest items to keep” image linked at the top that is a useful reference. Some of these tasks may be very far down the line so don’t feel compelled to hold on to everything on the list. Some of these need to be “found in raid” (denoted with a small checkmark next to the number needed) however, which does mean buying them on the market later won’t be viable for the task (and their value will be lower on the market since other people need to find them on their own).

As the name implies, barter items are often used for barter deals with dealers. Knowing which barter items are good value or not comes with experience, but to get started if you’re curious about an item you can look it up on the wiki to see what dealer and at what LL might offer a deal for it. Sometimes there will be several and sometimes none. You can also search for tarkov barter tools online that may be a more convenient way to look these deals up, however I will not recommend any specific third party sites as I cannot vouch for their security and accuracy.

I may expand this part of the guide in the future, but for now I will just mention a few of the particularly high value barter items:

>750k rubles:	e.g. LEDX skin transilluminator
~150k rubles:	e.g. Bronze Lion, Physical bitcoin, Portable defibrillator
~100k rubles:	e.g. Fuel conditioner, Prokill medallion
~75k rubles:	e.g. Rooster, Graphics card, Ophthalmoscope, Paracord, Roler, Vase
~50k rubles:	e.g. Badge, Cat, DS beard oil, Gunpowder, Powerbank, VPX FSM, Clock

3.4.5.5 Looting Keys and Keycards

I will immediately say you should secure any Lab keys and electronic keycards you find, as almost all of them are worth at least 100k, while some are worth many millions. As for mechanical keys, many of the most expensive keys are quest related. You can again use the “quest items to keep” image linked at the top of the Tarkov wiki’s quests page (<https://escapefromtarkov.gamepedia.com/Quests>) to see which these might include.

I strongly recommend getting your hands on a keytool (~750k rubles) or documents case (~325k rubles) as your first large purchase. A keytool takes up one slot but has 16 slots for keys inside. A documents case takes up two slots and offers the same 16 slots inside, but also accepts cash currencies in those slots which is very useful. Technically, a keytool plus a wallet is the best option as it takes up the same amount of space while giving you an extra four slots inside (plus the added versatility of being able to drop the wallet if you need to). However, being less than half the cost, a docs case is a great starter choice. With either of these you will be able to bring a full set of keys in your secure container, and just as importantly it will allow you to secure any key you find in raid. This way you can figure out if it's valuable or not in the safety of your stash later instead of getting flustered in raid.

As with barter goods, there are far too many keys to cover thoroughly. This section is very cursory for now, but I may expand it later. A few notable keys to keep an eye out for early on:

All Lab keys and keycards: As mentioned, these are all worth something, if not a fortune.

Customs Office Key: Unlocks offices in Customs building; decent loot and required for tasks.

Factory Exit Key: Unlocks a secure room and all exits on Factory; unlocks shortcut on Customs

Marked Key: For Marked Room in Customs dorms; may contain keytool, docs case, ammo box.

3.5 Completing Tasks

You: *Rainlyte, I want to do all these sweet missions but some of them seem incomprehensible, and on a completely related note I have reason to believe that Prapor and Skier have been drinking. A lot.*

Me: *Fear not. The wiki and fine people that maintain it will light your path, and I will plant flowers on its flanks.*

If you're struggling with a task and you're not fussed about spoilers, search for the task name on the wiki or browse at: <https://escapefromtarkov.gamepedia.com/Quests> This has a lot of great info on any given task, including where to find prerequisite keys and more specific descriptions for finding items/points of interest. The great thing about the wiki is that it gets updated reasonably quickly when there are changes and updates. If

you'd rather roleplay or just like the challenge of figuring it out on your own, then more power to you! I would avoid the wiki task pages if you fall into that category.

You already know how to get new tasks and view them at the dealer's menu, but know that you can also view all of your current tasks in one overview via a tab at the top left when in your character menu. The individual dealer task tabs are still useful for seeing when new tasks are available and for dealing with hand-ins however.

After completing a task, use the dealer task menu to "Hand in" any required items and then click "Complete" to finalize it. New tasks may now be available on the left. To collect tangible rewards, use the small mail icon at the bottom right of the UI to access messages from the dealer whose task you completed, then click "Get" to access the rewards. Items pulled out from this view can not be put back in, however you can leave these rewards in limbo almost indefinitely as far as I am aware. If you have several task rewards stored, you can access all of the rewards at the same time by clicking "Get all" from that dealer's panel in your mail menu instead.

Knocking out tasks is a sound goal for many reasons:

- Tasks give you direction and purpose in-raid so you're not just milling about.
- Rewards usually include cash and gear that you can use right away.
- You may also unlock the ability to purchase new items (shown with yellow padlock).
- Tasks give player experience and dealer reputation (rep) which you will need for reasons explained in the next section.

3.6 Other Locations

Over time you'll start exploring and raiding locations other than Customs, either because tasks are pushing you into them or because you'd just like some variety. When first engaging one of these locations, I suggest using the same method we used in [2.3.1 Maps and Times](#) to get acquainted: learn some landmarks and extracts and importantly find a map for the location that you like, etc. Here is a brief overview of each location so you know what to expect:

Factory: A small map that is all indoors and almost exclusively close-quarters. Not much loot worth noting but great for quick raids and CQC practice.

Woods: A very sparse map that is almost exclusively outdoors with very few POIs and lots of space between them. The focal point of the map is a logging camp in the center and surrounding vantage points. Not much loot but good for sniper practice.

Shoreline: A big map with a variety of POIs and environments, including a large “resort” in the center with multiple wings and dozens of rooms. Tons of loot, especially if you have the valuable resort keys. This is also the setting for many mid and late game tasks.

Interchange: Another big map centered around a massive indoor mall that has dozens of stores including a few furniture/hardware mega stores, all of the pertinent garages and service entrances, and even some of the surrounding parking lots, roadways, and a utility station. One of the better maps for looting without keys, making it a prime candidate for Scav raids.

The Lab: A special map that requires a single-use “TerraGroup Labs access keycard” to even enter. The map is entirely indoors and underground with lots of CQC but many mid-range sightlines as well. It has several special extract triggers and alarms, as well as unique scavs known as “raiders” that rove in coordinated, well armed groups. Keycards that unlock rooms here cost a fortune, but there is some decent loot even without them, especially thanks to the raiders. You cannot start a scav raid in The Lab.

Section 4: Trading

4.1 Dealers Revisited

4.1.1 Trading with Dealers

Quick recap on buying from dealers:

- 1) Open that dealer’s menu from the Trading Menu (accessed from Main Menu)
- 2) Make sure “Buy” tab is selected at top-left
- 3) Click on desired item in dealer’s Showcase on the left
- 4) Click “Fill items” button at bottom to fill any cash or barter requirements
- 5) Click “Deal!” button at top to finish purchase

Now to sell something, simply:

- 1) Open that dealer’s menu from the Trading Menu (accessed from Main Menu)

- 2) Select the “Sell” tab at the top-left instead
- 3) Drag desired sale item(s) from your stash on the right or use [CNTRL] + [LMB]
- 4) Click “Deal!” button at top to finish sale

Bob Ross: “It’s that easy.”

4.1.2 Increasing Loyalty Level

When starting, you only have access to loyalty level 1 (LL1) of each dealer, which means they only offer you gear limited to that level. Each dealer has four LLs which can be progressively unlocked. To level up a dealer you need to meet the prerequisites at the top right of that dealer’s menu. These pre-reqs include:

- Player Level: increased by gaining XP via performing raids* and completing tasks.
- Dealer Reputation: your reputation with the dealer is increased by completing their tasks.
- Cash Spent: buying from and selling to a dealer both count toward this figure.

* A great way to boost your XP every raid is to make a point of interacting [F] with every body you find.

When you reach all three of these pre-req thresholds, you will unlock their next LL and the array of gear options that come with it. Note the small numbered tabs above the dealer's inventory; these let you filter by LL if you only want to see a given level's wares at a time (after you've unlocked at least LL2 of course). The vertical row of small tabs to the right of their inventory let you filter by item type instead. Some wares are only made available by completing specific tasks, and not simply by unlocking the LL it resides in.

You may now be wondering who to focus on leveling up first and what they offer at higher LLs. This may change between patches and especially after wipes, but the wiki has a page for each dealer showing their wares for each LL toward the bottom (e.g. here is prapor’s page: <https://escapefromtarkov.gamepedia.com/Prapor>) and this will usually be updated within a reasonable timeframe after new changes are made. I can also give you a quick, general overview (guidelines, not rules) of categories that each dealer focuses on selling:

- **Prapor:** workhorse Russian military firearms and associated ammo and mods.
- **Therapist:** meds, drinks, food, and maps.*
- **Fence:** anything that actual players sell to him, but at inflated prices.**
- **Skier:** civilian/hunting weapons and ammo/mods, as well as euros.***
- **Peacekeeper:** Western firearms and ammo/mods, as well as dollars.
- **Mechanic:** tons of mods, Glocks, and high-end modded weapon barbers.

- **Ragman:** everything rig, backpack, clothing, and armor related.

* Food and maps have almost no use currently. Drinks are good when your stomach gets holed however, and meds are useful in every raid.

** Fence buys and sells to you at terrible rates, and can't benefit from leveling, so is best avoided entirely unless you enjoy refreshing the page and trying to snag rare barter items.

*** Euros and dollars are the two other mainstream currencies in EFT, both of which are worth slightly over 100 rubles (actual rates vary). Skier sells a few goods for euros, and Mechanic exclusively accepts euros. Peacekeeper exclusively accepts dollars

If you're struggling to reach a dealer's cash spent pre-req but have the other pre-reqs done, you can consider brute-forcing the cash spent by simply buying wares and selling those same wares back to them. This is expensive as you lose the (large) difference between the buy and sale price, but has historically been very helpful if you want to level certain dealers that don't have enough useful/expensive wares up in a reasonable time frame. Balance for this sort of thing should improve as the game continues to develop.

4.2 Flea Market

You: What is this? A market for fleas?

Me: What? No...

You: ...

Me: no.

The flea market (which I will just call the "market") is your other option for trading in EFT, and it is potent. In the market you buy from and sell to other players rather than the NPC dealers, and exchanges here can affect global prices at the dealers dynamically, leading to a somewhat player-driven economy. There are some pros and cons to the market:

Pros:

- You can sell items that dealers sell for just under purchase price, thus getting almost the full value of the item minus a relatively small listing fee.
- Conversely, you can sometimes find dealer items for less than their normal price tag.
- You can sell items that dealers don't value properly, such as keys and rare barter/task-related items, for the full value that the market will take.
- You can purchase items that dealers do not sell and that you are struggling to find.

Cons:

- Purchasing and selling at the market does not count toward your dealer rep, which can slow down your progression of unlocking higher LLs for consistent access to core gear.
- You can only simultaneously list different goods equal to your number of offer slots.
- If your listing doesn't sell, you will be out your listing fee with nothing to show for it.
- It's surprisingly easy to get scammed or make a playthrough-crippling listing error. I will go over some tips on how to mitigate these issues, and I suggest reading this entire section before you actually start using the market so you don't make such an error.

4.2.1 Buying from the Market

To start buying, click on “Trading” in the main menu and select the “Flea Market” tab instead of the Dealers tab at the top of the screen. From here you can use the hierarchy on the left to start browsing through various items, and even more convenient is the search field above that. As an example, try typing “AKS” into the search field and you should see several items in the database match that criteria. Click on the entry for “AKS-74U” and you should see a bunch of listings showing up in the large central panel.

At the top of this panel there are several sorting column headers – I suggest sorting by price so that the lowest price shows up on top. This is where immediately you can run into a few pitfalls. First of all: pay attention to the currency in the price for a listing you are interested in. Make sure the number is in RUB if you are expecting (RUB); if the price is in (EUR) or \$ (USD) you may be paying over 100x what you intended. Next, scroll down the listings until you reach the bottom, and at the bottom left of the panel there should be a field with the number “15”; expand this field and increase it to 50 to increase the number of listings you see per page. Now if you scroll up and down you will notice the top listings have a golden background while the lower ones do not. The gold means those players paid a higher listing fee to have their listing show up at the top of the list as a “premium listing”. This means even when sorting by price, premium listings show up first, so scroll down to the top of the regular listings to find the *actual* best price.

Next, I suggest checking your filters. Click the cog toward the top of the screen and make sure “show only functional items” and “remove bartering offers” are both ticked while “remove game merchants’ offers” is unticked. The first ensures you won't be buying incomplete weapons that are missing critical mods. The second removes “barter” listings that people put up (essentially looking to trade one item for one or more other items instead of just currency). I suggest beginners hide these listings because the vast majority of them are scams looking for super high value items, and they clutter your listing panel making it a pain to sift through. Keeping merchant deals visible on the other

hand is great, because it gives you a convenient baseline to judge other listings if it's a ware that dealer sell. If you have the item unlocked with that dealer, you can even purchase it directly in this view which is handy.

Lastly, to actually buy something, click the “purchase” button to the far right of the listing, enter the amount to purchase, verify the price is what you’re expecting, and press “yes” or click [Y]. If you have the money and space, the item should now be in your stash.

4.2.2 Selling to the Market

To sell something on the market, click “+ Add Offer” at the top of the flea market page. This will show a miniature view of your stash. Left click an item to select it. Make sure the item shown at the top right and the volume is what you expect it to be. Under “Requirements”, click the “+” symbol to the right of the top row. Type in the amount of rubles you want for each item in the listing in the currency field that shows up, then press “Add”. Lastly, double check that the item, volume of items, sale price, and listing fee are all as expected, and finally you can press “Place Offer” (you don’t have to do this now if you don’t have anything you want to sell yet).

You can view your listing counting down to become available on the market if you’re looking at the appropriate item page, or alternatively through the “My Offers” tab. You can also attempt to cancel the listing if you’ve made a mistake or changed your mind, but *do not* count on this working and always double check your offer before placing it. All sales cash and failed listing items will be sent to you via the Messenger service (again, button at bottom of the screen) from Ragman. Open individual messages from him or click “receive all” to see a full inventory of what he has for you.

When in the Add Offer view, the tickbox “Require for all items in offer” turns your listing into a package deal. I don’t recommend using this as it will make your listing less attractive and is rarely needed even for bulk items these days thanks to streamlined cash retrieval. If you do use it, remember to set the sale price what you are expecting for the *entire package*, not per unit.

As a general guideline, I recommend always double checking what the lowest offers are for any item you want to sell before you place a listing up. You will almost always want to undercut the lowest listing unless there are outliers that you want to wait out or buy

out. The other exception is if you have variable, non-commodity items such as armor (that can have different current and max durabilities) or weapons (that may be modded or unmodded), in which case you will have to scout the current offers and price it as appropriately as you can. Setting a competitive price is important, otherwise your listing is very unlikely to go through which means A) one of your few offer slots will be tied up until the listing expires or you cancel it, and B) when the listing does expire or is cancelled you will lose market reputation.

4.2.3 Market Reputation and Offer Slots

Market reputation, shown next to a hexagon icon with three bars to the right of “+ Add Offer” at the top of the flea market screen, determines how many sale offers you can have active at one time. Getting more offer slots is highly desirable, but a very slow process. For every 100k rubles purchased or sold on the market your reputation will go up by 0.01. As mentioned, you can also lose rep by having listings expire or cancelled.

At various market rep thresholds you will gain or lose offer slots, as shown on the wiki's page on trading: <https://escapefromtarkov.gamepedia.com/Trading> TLDR: the thresholds you're most likely to run into any time soon are: gaining a 4th slot at 10.0 market rep, a 5th slot at 30.0, and a 6th *and* 7th slot at 50.0.

4.3 Where to Sell What

You have a few competing pressures for selling to the various dealers and the market. The biggest factors are **1)** Who will give you the most money, **2)** Putting progress into your dealer LL pre-reqs, and **3)** Increasing your flea market reputation to unlock more offer slots. The prioritization of these factors is up to you, but I would suggest focusing on aspects 1 and 2 intermittently -- aspect 3, market reputation, is nice in the long term but it takes a tremendous amount of processing on the market to unlock even one extra offer slot, and you will naturally end up selling there on occasion anyway when the value is far superior. Later on you can focus on this more intensely.

You know how to search the market for current listings which can give you an idea of what you might get if you sell it there, and if you go to any dealer's page via the Trading menu you can see the amount they will give you for each item in your stash (shown as a number on each item's icon). In this way you can find out whether the market or one of

the dealers will give you the most cash for your item of interest. As a side note: avoid disassembling weapons from this view as prices don't usually update properly which can confuse you -- it's best to do any disassembling and changes to your stash from your Character menu and then leave your stash static when trading.

You may have noticed that some dealers won't purchase certain items, and that each dealer offers you different amounts for the same items. There are some cases where two dealers have alternately better prices for certain items but these cases are rare and marginal. In general, here is the order of dealers to sell items for highest cash value, and (roughly) what they buy:

1st	Therapist:	Barter items, Consumables, Meds
2nd	Skier:	Armor, Clothing, some Gun mods*
3rd	Ragman:	Armor, Barter items, Clothing
4th	Peacekeeper**:	Armor, Barter items, Clothing, Guns, Gun mods
5th	Mechanic:	Electronics, Guns, Gun mods
6th	Prapor:	Almost anything
7th	Fence***:	Almost anything, knives

* Specifically: optics (unmounted), muzzle devices, handguards, foregrips, and pistol grips

** Peacekeeper pays in dollars which is important to bear in mind if you need rubles for your sale. He is also among the easiest to meet cash pre-reqs with because you can simply buy dollars from him and then either keep those dollars or sell them at a minimal loss on the market.

*** A quick reminder that Fence is almost never worth dealing with and has no LL benefits. The only exception is if you have knives that you don't want to store for barter and aren't selling on the market.

Aside from making the most money you'll also have to decide when to just sell to a dealer that you simply need more cash spent pre-req progress with. Double check [4.1.2 Increasing Loyalty Level](#) to figure out which will have items you will want consistent access to the soonest and cross reference this with your other pre-reqs. Ideally you do this when the price difference versus the flea market is negligible anyway.

Oh my goodness.

You've reached the end.

Please see note at the very top of this document if you have feedback or just want contact details.

Thank you for reading and happy raiding!