

380 Auto

The 380 Auto was introduced to U.S. shooters in 1908 when Colt chambered it in the Pocket Automatic, a compact and well-built pistol designed by John Browning. The cartridge was also introduced in Europe as the 9mm Browning Short. In an era when some people considered a 32-caliber pistol a "big gun," the 380 Auto created quite a splash. It was compact enough to be adapted to any pistol that could handle the 32 Auto cartridge yet offered a distinct ballistic advantage. Remington and Savage—names associated today with rifles and shotguns—designed and produced semi-automatic pistols chambered for the 380 in the decades between the World Wars.

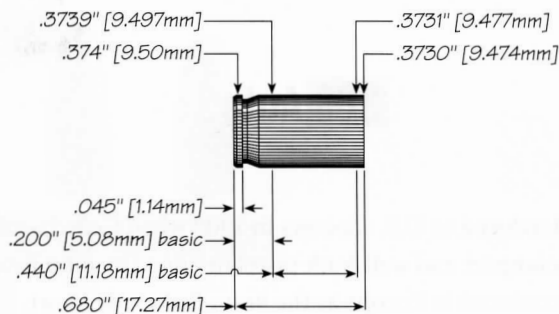
Following the Second World War, no American gun makers chambered pistols for the 380 but there were plenty of new and surplus imported guns available. Factory ammunition was limited to a single load—a 95-grain FMJ bullet with a nominal muzzle velocity of 950 ft/sec. Because there is so much variation in chamber and bore dimensions, many factory loads did not meet this specification in production pistols.

In the 1970's new, high-quality pistols began to appear on the market. At the same time, ammo makers offered hollow point bullets to improve the terminal effects of the cartridge. The 380 Auto has always been a popular back-up gun for peace officers and is often chosen for home defense. It will never challenge the performance of the 9mm Luger but is far ahead of the 32 Auto for defense when loaded with modern JHP ammunition.

Most 380 pistols have rudimentary sights better suited for concealed carry and trigger pulls are often heavy. As a result, the 380 isn't much of a target or hunting pistol. There are exceptions of course: quality Walthers, SIG's, Berettas and others can give exceptional accuracy with good ammo.

Although not as widely reloaded as other centerfire pistol cartridges, the 380 requires few special techniques other than a shorter loading block and a tight case neck fit (to avoid bullet set-back on feeding). There is now a good choice of .355" bullets for the 380, including the high-tech Speer Gold Dot 90-grain hollow point. Do not seat bullets deeper than we show here.

The 380 headspaces on the case mouth so light taper crimping is required. This also produces a nicely finished case mouth that helps feeding reliability. These loads do not exceed the 21,500 psi pressure limit established for the 380 Auto cartridge.



Max. Case Length: 0.680"
Trim-to Length: 0.670"
Max Cart. OAL: 0.984"
RCBS Shell Holder: #10

Cart. Case: Winchester
Primer: CCI 500
Test Firearm: Walther PP
Barrel Length: 3.8"



0.355"	380 Auto GDHP
Weight, grains	90
Ballistic Coefficient	0.101
Sectional Density	0.102
COAL Tested:	0.970"
Speer Part No.	3992

Propellant	START CHARGE		MAXIMUM CHARGE	
	Weight, grs	Muzzle Velocity, ft/sec	Weight, grs	Muzzle Velocity, ft/sec
AA No. 2 Impr.	3.5	982	3.9	1056
AA No. 7	6.3	941	7.0C	1050
Viht. N320	3.1	953	3.4	1044
Unique	4.1	877	4.6C	1034
231	3.6	978	4.0	1031
Power Pistol	4.4	944	4.8C	1020
H. Universal	3.8	821	4.3	994
700-X	3.2	812	3.6	988
AA No. 5	4.8	845	5.4	984
Bullseye	3.0	885	3.4	981
TiteGroup	2.8	885	3.2	976
WSL	3.2	825	3.6	972
American Select	2.8	841	3.3	955



0.355"	380 Auto TMJ RN
Weight, grains	95
Ballistic Coefficient	0.131
Sectional Density	0.108
COAL Tested:	0.970"
Speer Part No.	4001

Propellant	START CHARGE		MAXIMUM CHARGE	
	Weight, grs	Muzzle Velocity, ft/sec	Weight, grs	Muzzle Velocity, ft/sec
231	3.6	945	4.0	1027
AA No. 7	5.9	971	6.5	1019
700-X	3.1	912	3.4	1012
Unique	3.8	918	4.2	1006
Viht. N320	3.0	893	3.4	998
Bullseye	3.0	874	3.3	990
H. Universal	3.6	854	4.1	979
Power Pistol	4.2	883	4.7	974
AA No. 2	3.3	887	3.7	965
WSL	3.1	849	3.5	960
AA No. 5	4.6	871	5.0	949
American Select	2.8	824	3.3	935
TiteGroup	2.7	851	3.1	930

Maximum Loads should be used with CAUTION • C = Compressed Load • *Magnum Primer used with this powder.