

How to Clean your Firearms

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Safe, responsible gun owners clean their firearms after every use. This includes hunting trips into the field, even if a round wasn't fired. Some of us are not quite that diligent. But that's okay; now is a perfect time to do some cleaning.

If you don't have a gun cleaning kit, order one online from your favorite outdoor retailer. You can also replace used solvents and oils by ordering online. Solvents may take a while longer to get to you as they require special handling to mail.

This is not a "how-to" for your exact gun, but should give you some basics steps. Each type of firearm is different, not just the style but action types and the ability and need to take it apart for cleaning. It is very important to adhere to your owner's manual.

Prep time:
15 minutes

Cleaning time:
30 to 60 minutes

Supplies:

Solvent

Oil

Cotton patches

Patch holder

Cleaning rod and accessories

Metal cleaning brush designed for use on firearms

Cotton swabs

Old toothbrush

Bore-snake

Latex gloves

Rags or paper towels

Mat, newspaper or rags

Flashlight or headlamp

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- Ventilation is important when utilizing powerful solvents. Find a place that is well lit and has good air flow. The garage with the door open or outside of your house is best.
- Use a surface that is not used for eating. Avoid the kitchen table and countertops.

Procedure:

1. On a sturdy table, lay out newspapers or rags to protect the surface. A special mat for cleaning guns is also an option.
2. Completely unload the firearm. Be sure to open the action and check to make sure there isn't a round in the barrel. Check the magazine to ensure that it is empty. Place ammunition in another room or inside a locked storage container.
3. Reference your owner's manual for cleaning instructions and disassembly. If you do not have it, owner's manuals are often available on the web. Search for your gun's specific make and model.
4. Search the Internet for a how-to video. Watch before and during the cleaning process. This allows you to visualize the steps as well as have someone talk you through it. Many gun manufacturers have made videos with their in-house gunsmith.
5. Follow the directions for disassembling the firearm. If you have trouble remembering details, number the parts when you take them off of your firearm. When it comes time to put them back together you can follow the steps in reverse order. TIP: It might even help to take digital photos to refer to during disassembly. You can place the parts in an old muffin tin to keep them secure. Do not take the firearm apart more than the owner's manual suggests.
6. Keep your hands protected. Put on latex gloves.
7. Use the solvent to clean all the parts, except any wood or plastic, and the inside of the barrel. Apply solvent to a rag or use the toothbrush dipped into the solvent to clean the removed part.
8. Use the cotton patches, patch holder and cleaning rod (or the bore-snake) to swab the barrel from breech to muzzle, if possible. The cotton patches and swabs work well to get into crevices and hard to reach places. Use the flashlight to look into the barrel. If any stubborn residue persists, attach the metal cleaning brush to your cleaning rod and push down the length of your barrel multiple times. You know the barrel is clean when your cotton patches no longer pick up residue. Wipe off all excess solvent.
9. Reassemble your firearm. Lightly oil all the moving parts. Make sure not to over-oil your firearm. Oil can cause build-up, resulting in excessive pressure. If you are not immediately going shooting, but storing your firearm for a while, run a light coating of oil down the bore with a cotton patch and cleaning rod. Wipe all exterior parts with a light coating of oil; this will prevent rust from moisture including sweat and body oils.
10. Once your firearm is reassembled, check to make sure all the parts function properly. Check the safety, the trigger and the action. Keep all ammunition put away during this step. If the firearm is not working properly, disassemble, then reassemble again. If you continue to have issues you may need to consult a gunsmith.

Be safe, have fun, and shoot straight.

Reference:

<https://www.nrafamily.org/articles/2019/12/30/how-to-clean-your-gun/>