

CARE AND CLEANING OF COLT FIREARMS

The most popular gun oils are Marvel Mystery, SLA in the green squeeze bottle and Rigg (heavy oil used more for military models). All have their claim to excellence, but the down side is two fold. You CAN NOT use them on nickel-plated or silver-plated guns and they attract dust.

Renaissance wax can be used on blued or nickel-plated guns. This same type of product is used by the London Arms Museum. It is a micro-crystalline wax polish and dries instantly. It does not attract dust and does not show finger marks from handling. It can be put on nickel guns, unlike oil, to prevent moisture from “lifting” the nickel finish.

Wenol metal polish and Flitz, the metal polish from Germany, can be used carefully on the modern guns. Collectors of older guns prefer the light haze that develops over a long period of time and they will use wax.

Older silver-plated guns can be polished. Many collectors prefer to do nothing and allow the oxidation that brings out an iridescence of pinks and blues that makes an untouched silver-plated gun spectacular. The only exception would be a silver-plated gun that has turned virtually black. In this case, take out the Flitz or Wenol and go cautiously, or use a soft cloth only.

On the modern plated guns a careful monitoring with a soft cotton cloth suffices. If you can find a micro fiber cloth, it is an even softer cloth for plated guns.

To wipe down your guns, get a bag of quality gun cleaning patches that are 100% flannel, 3” by 3” and finished on both sides. Use several patches as necessary in the cleaning process. Do not reuse the patches. Throw them out when finished with your cleaning. Any good silicone cloth can be used on guns with blued finish. Be sure you keep your cloth is free of contaminants. Keep your cloths fresh. Another recommended lubricant is Tri Flow.

Use oil for the barrel and cylinders of any gun that DOES NOT have gold, nickel or silver-plated finishes on them. Use a cleaning rod with a soft applicator in applying the oil, but be sure it is a light coat and does not run onto the outside finished surfaces. If you do get some over-run, take a clean gun patch with regular rubbing alcohol and wipe it off.

Ivory, pearl and wood grips that are very old can command premium dollars. Remember – ivory, pearl and wood grips are organic material and like any similar material will age and crack. For ivory and stag grips, soak them in pure Johnson’s Baby Oil. Get a plastic pan or zip lock bag and fill it enough to completely cover the

grips. Let them soak for 48 hours and then remove them, wipe them off and refit them to the gun. Reusing the baby oil is no problem, so put it back in the bottle. Doing this once a year will help prevent checking and cracking of the grips.

For wood grips it is important to refresh them from inside out. Remove the grip. If they are one piece, put lemon oil in the channels sparingly and let the oil soak in. Be very sure your lemon oil is low or free of petroleum distillates. If the oil soaks in quickly, give it another shot. For two piece grips, do the same on the inside surfaces. This is the only way to replenish civilian wood grips that have a hard varnish on the outside. Do not put oil on the outside of the grips if it is not necessary as it attracts dirt.

Just wax pearl grips. This will seal the surface and keep moisture out which can crack a grip. Additionally, the wax presents a beautiful luster to the pearl.

Remember that wax can be used on the outside of hard varnished wood grips and rubber grips to keep them protected. Please remember that for U.S. military gun grips which have an oiled finish. DO NOT WAX THEM. Just put the lemon oil in the channels.

Leave hard rubber grip screws slightly loose so as not to warp them. Over tightening the screw may leave you with useless grips. This also applies to a lesser degree for all grips. Over tightening can accelerate cracking, checking and breaking of a great set of grips.

STORAGE TIPS

Leave your gun rugs partially open to allow air to flow. An air tight gun rug spells disaster over a long period of time.

If you are storing your guns in a safe in a humid area, put desiccant in to dehumidify the safe. Replace the desiccant when it becomes ineffective. There are variations of this product, but one changes color when totally saturated. It can be put in the microwave oven to dry out and then reuse in your safe. There is also “Golden Rod” or other methods to control moisture. These products are readily available.

Do not leave a cased gun in its case unless you have done one of two things: Put tiny plastic blocks between the gun and the velvet or wood to allow air to circulate around the gun. An alternative is to cut wax paper out as a silhouette of the gun and place it between the gun and the case. This avoids the down side of the gun from being in direct contact with moisture. Modern guns are shipped in plastic sleeves

that have no impurities. They can stay in the sleeves, but monitoring is recommended.

Consider collector grade Break-free lubricant for long term storage of guns.

PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION

For guns that have lots of finish, but for some reason there is a very small piece of rust on the gun that detracts from the gun's appearance, take a dime in mostly silver and press the edge into the rust spot. It should pop the rust right off. A dime is mostly silver so you are dealing with a softer metal that will break the rust off yet not mar the gun finish. If, after you have removed the rust spot and find the blueing gone, touch up the spot with a felt tip pen specifically designed to touch up these spots. They are readily available in gun shops.

Not all collectible guns are in pristine condition and may need some judicious conservation. We are talking about conservation – not refinishing a gun – to stop deterioration brought on by years of neglect. Some guns are badly rusted or the mechanisms are frozen. The first thing to do is disassemble it. If the screws are rusted tight, try using Break-free or Gibbs rust remover. If the screws still will not turn, then put the entire gun assembled, but minus the grips, into a high detergent motor oil and let soak for a week. High detergent motor oil is the best product for soaking completely through all parts of the gun and lifting rust. Monitor this process carefully.

If you are able to disassemble the gun, make sure you place the small internal parts and screws in to a separate container in the detergent motor oil, so you do not lose them. Be particularly careful with the screws since they are different sizes. A good idea would be to make a screw holder, marked as to whether they came from the frame, grip straps, etc.

After a week, take the gun, if assembled, and disassemble it and repeat the same process. If the gun was unassembled when first soaked, remove the parts and take a stiff scrub brush with stiff plastic or broom-like bristles and scrub the gun carefully. **DO NOT USE A WIRE BRUSH.** This should remove all the flaked and lifted rust that the detergent motor oil loosened. Then clean the gun thoroughly with Hoppes #9 gun cleaner, being careful to go over every piece thoroughly. If the rust is particularly bad, soak these parts for 24 hours in the Hoppes and repeat the cleaning process with gun cleaning patches.

By replacing patches constantly you should eventually see little or no rust coming off on the gun patches and know that you have cleaned the gun part as well as possible. Internal parts should then be oiled well with one of the afore mentioned oil

products. The outside of the re-assembled gun should be waxed liberally with Renaissance wax.

In summation, collectible firearms will retain their original finish, if properly maintained at regular intervals. The frequency of maintenance care will vary depending on individual storage conditions, but good common sense will always prevail. Do not allow stains, fingerprints and tarnish to become corrosive. Should your gun develop finish deterioration, do not become over-zealous in attacking the trouble spots.

There are some differences in the care and cleaning of older guns versus newer guns, so read the recommendations carefully. If you have any questions, feel free to email secretary@coltcollectors.com.

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