

## **How Do I Clean My Firearm?**

The rule of thumb is to clean in the same direction of travel as the bullet. That is to clean from the chamber to the muzzle.

Many of us were taught incorrectly. We spent hours jamming patches from the muzzle to the chamber using an old cleaning rod with a brass or plastic end to hold the patch. Each time we did this, we introduced junk into the receiver. This is never a good idea.

Currently, there are cleaning kits offered that will solve this problem and they do a really good job of cleaning a firearm. Otis® makes a kit that has been adopted by our military and works very well in the field. I have used bore snakes on the range and had good results. Bore snakes are pieces of a rope like substance with a weight on one end that you drop down the barrel from the chamber end. The rest of the snake has brushes and bulk to clean the barrel. This works well on the range or on a hunt, but does not clean anything but the barrel and chamber.

You will need several items before you begin to clean your gun:

- 🔫 A work space. My wife doesn't like me to use the dining room table even with a gun cleaning mat.
- 🔫 A cleaning kit. There are lots of different ones on the market. Make sure it is usable on your caliber of firearm.
- 🔫 Patches made for your caliber. Try and get lint free patches.
- 🔫 Cleaning solvent. We all started out using Hoppe's #9. There are newer ones available. I really like some of the non-petroleum solvents. They will not harm the polymer based pistol frames.
- 🔫 Brushes. I had to stop using my wife's tooth brush (she noticed the taste).

### **NOW, BEFORE YOU BEGIN, MAKE SURE AGAIN THAT YOUR FIREARM IS UNLOADED AND THE AMMUNITION IS NOT IN THE SAME AREA!**

Disassemble your firearm according to your owner's manual. If you do not have the manual, go online and you will find it. This is a good time to look at the firearm for areas of wear. The uneven accumulation of gunk may be signs of uneven wear. Too much gunk is usually a sign of too much lubrication and too infrequent cleaning.

- 🔫 I like to run a dry patch to identify the junk I will remove through the cleaning process.
- 🔫 Apply solvent to a patch and run it thru the bore.
- 🔫 Run the bore brush thru the bore several times.
- 🔫 Clean the chamber area and the locking area for the bolt of a rifle using solvent and a good brush.

- 🔫 Clean the action of the firearm. Pay attention to the trigger mechanism, mag and slide release, and feed ramps.
- 🔫 Now run clean patches down the bore until they come out clean. If this seems to take too long, try another solvent patch and bore brush run.
- 🔫 Continue until all is clean.
- 🔫 Now is the time to run an oil patch down the bore. This is where too much oil is introduced to the firearm. If you live in a humid climate, you must use a preservative coating of oil to prevent rust. If you live in the desert, like me, you can use dry lubes.
- 🔫 Check the owner's manual for the preferred oil points for the action.
- 🔫 Inspect the clean firearm as you reassemble. Now is the time to identify pieces that may need to be replaced. Look for wear cracks and thin spots on metal pieces.

Functional check your firearm. If you put another mag in the weapon, make sure it is unloaded!!

There are other items and methods that you can use such as ultra sonic cleaners and complete disassembly before cleaning, but these will be the subject of another article.

**Remember: A clean gun works better and is safer.**