



Shotgun Maintenance

Taking Care of your Shotgun

Time:

50–60 minutes

Materials:

- Shotguns of various actions for disassembly demonstrations
- Cleaning rods, bronze brushes of appropriate gauge, solvent, gun oil, wiping rags, swabs, cleaning patches, bore snake, or gun cleaning kits
- Screw driver or punch to remove pins
- Cloth or non-marring mat to place shotgun and parts upon while cleaning

Space Required:

A classroom with tables, range club house, or shop with work bench, ensure there is adequate ventilation.



Before the Meeting:

Assemble gun cleaning equipment and supplies to have available prior to start of session. Emphasize that no live ammunition is brought to the shotgun cleaning sessions. Optional - portable gun cleaning rack.



Lesson Objectives

Youth will understand the importance of cleaning a shotgun, and learn of the equipment and supplies used to clean a shotgun.

New shotgunners will practice the proper methods of cleaning a shotgun.

Shooters will gain an understanding of shotgun cleaning frequency and determine level of cleaning needs.



Background

Safety is the foremost concern during any shotgun cleaning session. It is imperative that all firearms are checked and double checked ensuring no live ammunition is in the action or magazine when these are brought to a cleaning session. Cleaning of shotguns is done for several reasons. The first is that this process allows the shooters to have a safe functional firearm during their shooting sessions and they become familiar with their shotgun. During the cleaning process they will also carefully inspect their shotgun with the aim of preventing any mishaps due to worn or broken parts. Another reason for shotgun cleaning is that keeping their shotgun in the best condition ensures the monetary value is maintained, neglected firearms experience increased wear and often rust when exposed to humidity resulting in loss of investment.



Activity I Instructions: (15 minutes)

1. Demonstration of how to disassemble a pump and break action shotgun while discussing the steps involved in the various degrees in the cleaning process.
 - a. Shooters observe the basic cleaning processes for minimum, field stripping, and deep cleaning.
 - b. When available have a copy of the manufacturer's shotgun manual for each specific models for each shooter to review factory recommendations for cleaning.
2. Each new shooters after observing the cleaning process will identify the equipment and supplies needed to conduct a cleaning at different level of shotgun usage.



Reflect and Apply Questions:

1. Why is it important to determine the level and frequency for shotgun cleaning?
2. What might happen if the cleaning of a shotgun is neglected?



Activity 2 Instructions: (45 minutes)

1. Shooters will practice and demonstrate basic shotgun cleaning techniques using their personal shotgun. First level of cleaning is with a shotgunning session with very little use or when carried afield under dry conditions.
 - a. After ensuring the chamber and magazine are free of any ammunition the shooter will swab the bores of the barrel or barrels via a single pass with rod with lightly oiled patch or bore snake.
 - b. The shooter then will use lightly oiled or silicone cloth to wipe down all exposed metal parts.
2. Shooters will practice and demonstrate the basic shotgun cleaning techniques with their personal shotgun, as they would after a heavy shooting sessions or when used in wet or dirty conditions.
 - a. After ensuring the chamber and magazine are free of any ammunition the shooter will begin by field stripping their shotgun.
 - b. This includes removing the barrel & forearm from the action. The shooter will use a bronze brush and solvent to remove fouling from the bores of the barrel or barrels and continue by swabbing until fouling is removed, and lightly coat bore with oil by swabbing.
 - c. Dependent upon action type of the shooter's shotgun, they will remove fouling from the action and operating mechanism using solvents and lightly oil parts. (note: if shotgun actions are semi-automatic a dry operating surface maybe required)
 - d. Reassemble the action and operating mechanism reattaching the barrel and forearm and finish with a lightly oiled or silicone cloth to wipe down all exposed metal parts.

Reflect and Apply Questions:

1. Why might a shooter choose to only do a minimum cleaning on their shotgun?
2. When might a shooter decide to take their shotgun to a gunsmith for a more complete disassembly and deep cleaning?

Other Related Resources:

Wyoming Shotgunning 4-H Leaders Booklet, WY State Development Training Team, Roy Kern

References

Georgia 4-H S.A.F.E. website – <http://www.georgia4h.org/safe/disciplines/shotgun>
National Rifle Association Basic Shotgun Shooting Course, NRA Washington DC
Wyoming Game and Fish Department Hunter Education Student Manual



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REFLECT AND APPLY
ANSWER SHEET



Activity 1 Reflect and Apply Questions

1. Why is it important to determine the level and frequency for shotgun cleaning?

After each shooting session the shooter will need to assess the amount of rounds fired and evaluate both the degree of fouling and any environmental conditions which may impact the degree in which their shotgun's need for cleaning. It is important to clean their shotgun adequately to ensure trouble free operation and to determine if other preventive maintenance is needed.

2. What might happen if the cleaning of a shotgun is neglected?

When cleaning of a shotgun is neglected excessive wear occurs which may lead to safety concerns, potential inefficiencies in the firearms performance, and a reduction in the value of the shotgun.



Activity 2 Reflect and Apply Questions

1. Why might a shooter choose to only do a minimum cleaning on their shotgun?

After a light session a shooter may determine only minimal fouling was done and decides to do a minimum cleaning consisting of a simple bore swipe and rub down to eliminate any fouling from handling. When overly oiled a shotgun may collect more grit which may be counterproductive to the benefits of the cleaning process. If the shooter will be shooting again the next day or if the conditions were favorable a light cleaning may be sufficient.

2. When might a shooter decide to take their shotgun to a gunsmith for a more complete disassembly and deep cleaning?

New shooters will gain a better understanding of their shotgun with each cleaning session. When cleaning an inspection should be conducted, if something does not fit together properly or appears not to be right the shooter should consult with a shooting sports leader to look for signs of excessive fouling, wear, or other indicators of repair needs. Upon this closer inspection the shooter needs to bring their shotgun to a gunsmith before shooting this shotgun again.



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