

Do You Clean Your Firearms?

Are you one of those people who actually clean their guns? Really? Ok, if so, this blog post is for you!

All kidding aside, it's important to clean and maintain your firearms for maximum performance and reliability. There are a lot of moving parts and most barrels tend to shoot more accurately if they're cleaned commensurate with the amount of round through the rifle. Most of us know how to clean our bolt actions and ARs because it's easy to access their parts, but lever guns are a slightly different story. To that end, let's have an overview and tips you'll want to check out.

Safety First

Before getting started, the obligatory "don't poke your eye out" safety briefing. Make sure the gun/mag tube is unloaded and the chamber empty. Ok, moving on.

Once More unto the Breach

Pertaining to lever actions, there's an elephant in the room. It's more difficult to access the breach than it is for ARs or bolt action rifles. Cleaning from the muzzle is generally not recommended because repeated use of a cleaning rod from the muzzle can wear or damage the crown which hurts accuracy.



Notice how the rod contacts the crown/rifling. This is not recommended, particularly with steel or aluminum cleaning rods.

Fortunately, there are several products that making cleaning from the breach end a breeze without disassembling the rifle. Using either a Bore Snake or some sort of pull-through cleaning kit like the ones made by Otis, it is simple to clean the barrel while protecting the muzzle.



A “pull-through cleaning system,” like the Hoppes Bore Snake or Otis cleaning kit, are two styles of systems that let you clean from the breach-to-muzzle.

Simply prepare each of these following their instructions, slide or drop them through the barrel starting at the breach until it comes out the muzzle, grab, and then “pull-through.”

It is important to pull these straight through the bore as this will minimize the contact with the muzzle. The bore snake can be used dry or “wet” with your favorite solvent.



Pulling the Bore Snake straight through the bore to minimize contact with the crown/rifling.

If using it with solvent, apply it to the section just ahead of the embedded brush, and the large swab end of the bore snake will remove the solvent as it passes through. These are simple yet effective cleaning devices that are well suited for use in lever actions. Pull through kits that use brushes and patches like the Otis can be used just like a cleaning rod with a series of wet and dry patches, brushes, or any combination thereof.



Some pull-through kits, like the Otis, use brushes and patches like conventional cleaning kits.

Attach the needed cleaning implement, push the other end through the bore, grasp, and pull through. Again, be sure to pull the cable or rope straight through the bore to minimize contact with the muzzle.

Put A Muzzle (Protector) On It

If you have to use a rigid cleaning rod, that's great. Just make sure you use one with a muzzle/crown guard. Simply slowly insert your cleaning rod with the desired cleaning implement, making sure the guard is seated against the crown, then push the rod through the barrel. Keep the muzzle guard seated against the crown, push the rod into the action, and as you pull the rod back out through the barrel.



Carefully insert the cleaning implement and rod into the muzzle, careful to not contact the rifling, until the muzzle guard can be seated against the crown.

Use your favorite sequence of patches, brushes, jags, etc. We recommend using a couple of patches soaked in your favorite bore solvent, then gently scrubbing with a nylon bore brush followed by a few more wet patches, then dry patches until the solvent is removed. Then apply a very light coat of oil. Big Horn Armory barrels are stainless steel, so you don't have to worry too much about corrosion, but a light coat of oil is still recommended.

Get in on the Action

Big Horn Armory lever actions are rugged and only require simple maintenance to keep them running at their peak performance. Open the action all the way. The bolt, lever pin, and locking bolt are the main points of care and lubrication.



With the action open all critical parts can be cleaned and lubricated.

If they need cleaning, use a patch or bore mop lightly dampened with your favorite solvent and wipe them down to remove dirt or debris. Dry the parts with a dry patch or lint-free cloth. Then apply a light coat of oil. Some sort of pinpoint-type oiler like the one shown below is perfect for putting the lubricant where you want it and not where you don't want it.



Clean or wipe off the actions moving parts.



Apply a light coat of firearms lubricant to the moving parts of the action.

For the lubricant, there are many fantastic formulas available and what you want to use will mainly be your personal preference. If you plan on using your rifle in extreme cold, stay away from grease-type lubricants as they tend to thicken or “gum up” in extreme cold and can make the action sticky. A very light gun oil is best in this application. Otherwise, any good-quality firearms lubricant will work great.

If you have any questions definitely let us know on our social media.



©2021 Big Horn Armory Inc.
www.bighornarmory.com