

Dear Roland,

I enjoy your website.

Do you have a particular make of ultrasonic cleaner to recommend?

I have a Beretta AL 391 and I have tried several different cleaners.

Still haven't found a good way to clean the piston and cylinder parts.

Thank you,

Frank

Dear Frank:

<http://www.lrultrasonics.com/industries/dental/quantrex.html>

The Q140 would be a good size. I wouldn't bother with the model with the heater. There is so much energy going into the solution from the ultrasonic transducers that the solution heats up pretty quickly. I don't see the benefit of the heater for most users.

I can attest that 10 years ago, when I was still in practice, the majority of dental offices used ultrasonics from this manufacturer or the predecessor and I can say I never heard of units going down or breaking. In most offices they are used constantly during office hours. I had one for 18 years and I believe it is still working. When Americans want to build good stuff, they really can do so.

Having said this, if you are really going to keep the Beretta piston clean here's what I suggest. Get it really clean, and then every time you finish using the gun, clean it with the ultrasonic. If you don't let the powder gunk cake on in multiple layers, it should not take much time in the ultrasonic to clean it off. I've put dirty Beretta pistons in the ultrasonic for 12 hours and still not gotten all of the gunk off. I've had to go to a wire brush to get down to bare metal.

One might wonder, "What kind of ultrasonic cleaning solution should I use?" I tried everything from straight household ammonia to Simple Green, to Alconox, laundry detergent, dishwashing detergent (hand and machine) to dedicated general purpose ultrasonic cleaning solution. They all pretty much worked about the same. Remember to check the level of solution in the ultrasonic tank. A lot evaporates because of the energy going into the solution. This is a good reason not to use ammonia or other smelly stuff unless you put it in a sealed container. Also, don't use anything flammable. You'll vaporize the stuff and you could cause an explosion or fire.

Having said all of this, the Beretta piston gets dirty on the surfaces that don't matter. That is, the surface that interfaces with the cylinder is self-cleaning, and the interior of the piston that gets really dirty, well it doesn't matter. The gun will still work just fine with a piston that is dirty *inside*.

But you already know this, and you want a piston that is clean and will be cleaned easily. The ultrasonic will do that. Just use it every time you finish using the gun. It will take less time in the ultrasonic.

Roland Leong,  
Gear Guy  
Shotgun Report