

OIL OR GREASE?

Dear Technoid,

I need some advice on the proper lubrication of an over/under shotgun, what areas need to be lubricated and with what form of lubricant. I have heard that in some places you should use oil and in others use grease. Could you please try to clarify this for me and any suggestions on the lubricants you use is greatly appreciated.

Thanks in advance,

Julio

Dear Julio,

This question pops up every now and then. At one time, many years ago, I had it all figured out. Now I've learned more and am very much less certain that there is only one right way. Now I think that there are a number of right ways.

For many years I used Lubriplate grease on my O/Us. I'd put a dab of that mayonnaises on the receiver shoulders and hinge. It seemed to work OK and when my Belgian Brownings finally did start to loosen up after many, many rounds, it wasn't the fault of a worn hinge pin or scored shoulders. They just needed refit locking lugs, a part designed to wear.

Then Lubriplate gave way to lithium grease. That seemed to work fine also. Is it better than Lubriplate? Probably. Technically the longer lithium chemical strands offer more lubricity, but practically I couldn't spot any difference. They both worked fine.

Then some years ago I bought a subgauge Perazzi and talked to Giacomo Arrighini (THE Perazzi man) at some length about lubrication. Giacomo wanted only TriFlo Teflon oil on the bearing surfaces of the Perazzi. He felt that grease was more likely to attract dirt than a light Teflon oil. My experience is certainly no match for Giacomo's, but I'm just not a fan of thin oils on bearing surfaces. I worry about the oil migrating into the head of the stock and softening the wood. I compromised and used a heavy oil, Slip 2000, on the bearing surfaces of that gun.

The stuff is marvelous. Not only does it lube the surfaces, but it seems to shine them. Now, after many thousand rounds, the shoulders and other bearing points of that gun are unscored, flawless and shine more than they did when new. The Slip 2000 is heavy enough so that it doesn't seem to migrate. I love the stuff.

So, which do I use- lithium grease or Slip 2000? Both. I use grease on some guns and oil on the others. There's no rhyme or reason.

BUT... here's the important part. No matter which lube I use, the first time I break the gun down after shooting it, I very carefully wipe off ALL the previous lube. I mean "carefully" and I mean "all". That way there is no possibility of grit attaching to the lube when I put the gun back

together. Then, the next time I assemble the gun to go shooting, I relube it, knowing that the lube is going on a clean surface.

I think that starting with clean surfaces is far more important than which particular lube you use on those surfaces. In that light, I should add that the Slip 2000 oil seems a bit easier to clean off of the gun than the grease is. For that reason I might give it the nod.

The above comments are directed at bearing surfaces like hinges and shoulders. For small non-bearing parts like trigger mechanisms and ejectors, I use a light oil. TriFlo is great, as is Rem Oil. The best way to use these light interior lubes is to spray it on and then blow most of it off with compressed air. You don't want to over lube the interior of the gun as those light oils really migrate and will soak the wood if you use too much.

Best regards,

Bruce Buck
Shotgun Report's Technoid