

5 ITEMS TO HAVE IN YOUR RANGE TOOL KIT

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Most gun owners, when going to the range, have a range bag containing hearing and eye protection, ammunition, speed loaders, and other items related to shooting. These are the items needed for the safe and proper use or shoot the firearm. Unfortunately, many gun owners fail to have the items necessary to deal with a stoppage, that requires a bit more attention and time than a stovepipe or a double feed.

A stovepipe is when the semi-automatic firearm fails to completely eject a fired case from the breach. The brass sticks up through the breach and is held in place by the slide. A double feed is when two cartridges are in the breach at the same time so that the firearm cannot go in battery or in other words, is not ready to fire. Usually in a double

feed, a spent case remains in the chamber because the brass was not ejected, and the slide picks up another round out of the magazine and tries to feed it into the chamber.

The NRA's method of dealing with a stovepipe or a doubled feed is to first keep the gun pointed downrange and in a safe direction. Next, the shooter should remove the source of ammunition, such as the magazine. The shooter then should work the action or the slide back and forth several times, removing the offending cartridges. Lastly, lock the action open and visually and physically, with your finger, inspect that the chamber is empty and clear, and you have a safe gun.

Most other types of stoppages, sight alignments, and minor repairs require specific tools. Every shooter should have a range tool kit with them when they go to the range. A tool kit should include a small screwdriver set, Sighting-In Tools, a pick set, a punch set, and a cleaning rod.

Small Screwdriver Set



Every range tool kit should have a small screwdriver set. A good set would have interchangeable bits that include slot, Phillips head, torx, allen, star, etc. There always seems to be a screw, somewhere on a gun that needs to be tightened. These screwdriver sets are relatively inexpensive and compact.



In addition to making minor repairs, a small screwdriver set is great for adjusting the elevation and windage of a firearm's optic. Also, firearm attachments to the gun's picatinny rail usually requires some type of screwdriver. A small screwdriver set is the most versatile tool you can take to the range when shooting.

Sighting-In Tools

A bore sight and a sight press are useful tools for adjusting the rear or front sight on many firearms. A bore sight can be used to check the alignment of the optic and the barrel. The bore sight has two pieces, the arbor, and the bore sighter. You must choose the correct caliber arbor and screw it into the bore sighter. The arbor is then inserted into the barrel of an unloaded firearm, with the bore sighter in alignment with the firearm's optic. Looking through the rifle's scope, you then adjust the elevation and windage to the center of the bore sighter. This gets you "on paper."



A sight press is another sighting-in tool. This tool is very useful in adjusting the rear sight on a firearm where the sight is pressed in, or dove tailed. This is common in modern firearms, especially striker fire pistols. A sight press is used by removing the slide of an unloaded firearm and placing it in the device. The person adjusting the sights then pushes down on the top of the device and turns a handle on the side. This forces the pressed in sight to move either to the right or left.



Pick Set

Pick sets are important items to be included in your range tool kit. Picks can be used to quickly fix a problem so you can repair the firearm without leaving the line. Picks can be used to remove a stuck spent case or a stuck cartridge that is in the breach. They can also be used to remove debris from under the extractor if it fails to remove stuck brass which usually leads to a double feed.



Picks are great for getting into tight and small areas. Pick sets come with different angle picks and sometimes a “dental” mirror. These tools can reach what other implements cannot. These sets are very affordable and should be in every range tool kit.

Punch Set

A punch set can also keep you shooting on the line. Whereas guns from the past were screwed together, many modern firearms are held together by roll pins. Roll pins are inserted and removed by punches. A punch is a tool that has a round end the size of the roll pin, and the other side is usually hexagon-shaped to tap with a brass or plastic hammer. Punch sets usually come in a kit of different size punches, and with a hammer with a brass head and a plastic head.



Sometimes roll pins tend to work their way out because of the recoil of the firearm. When this occurs, it can cause the firearm to become inoperable. If you have a punch set handy, you can correct the problem rather quickly, and return to shooting. Also, if you have the knowledge or have been trained, roll pins can be punched out for thorough cleaning of the firearm, and can be used to replace worn parts.

Cleaning Rod

Cleaning rods have more uses than just cleaning the barrel of firearm. Cleaning rods can be used to clear obstructions in the barrel or chamber. Obstructions can occur under different scenarios. One way an obstruction can occur is by a squib load situation. A squib load is a cartridge that has less than normal pressure. Squibs can be identified by reduced noise, reduced recoil, reduced muzzle flash, or a combination of these. Sometimes in a squib load, the bullet gets stuck in the barrel of the rifle or pistol. A squib can also occur when the wad gets stuck in the barrel of a shotgun. In some cases, a cleaning rod can be used to push the obstruction free of the barrel.



The cleaning rod can also be used to clear an obstruction in the chamber. If the wrong cartridge is inserted into the firearm, or if a cartridge is inserted directly into the chamber of a rifle of a control feed action. In both of these situations, the round could become stuck in the chamber because the extractor on the bolt cannot grab the extractor groove of the cartridge. Once again, a cleaning rod can be used to remove the stuck cartridge.

It is important to remember that gun owners should only attempt minor repairs on their firearm that they feel comfortable with or that they have been trained to do. Everything else should be taken to a qualified gunsmith.

A proper tool kit at the range can help keep you shooting or enable you to adjust the sights on your firearm to increase your accuracy. Having the proper tools can also prevent you from damaging your firearm by using what you have on-hand to fix the problem. By having the right tool with you, you will have the right tool for the job!