

TALKIN' BOUT



Talkin' Bout Tools: Mil-Surp Tools 101

Article by Jamie Mangrum

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We get a heck of a lot of email on the Surplusrifle.com web site asking what tools people should be using when working on mil-surp firearms. So, we decided that maybe it was a good idea to just develop an article or two on the subject that we could point people to when the question arises. This article is part **one** of a **two part series** of articles on the subject.

This article titled: "**Talkin' Bout Tools: Mil-Surp Tools 101** (*Tools Required for Disassembly and Reassembly*)" will just cover the tools required to disassemble and reassemble a rifle.

The second article will be titled: "**Talkin' Bout Tools: Mil-Surp Tools 201** (*Tools Advanced: Repair and Modification*)" and will cover much more advanced topics including drill presses, scope mount jigs, tapping equipment, etc. Basically what tools are needed to perform advanced maintenance, repairs, and alterations to mil-surp firearms.

I have found that you can use the wrong tool and take days to accomplish a task or use the correct tool and finish the same task in minutes. If you plan on purchasing more than one mil-surp firearm then it is worthwhile to invest in some basic tools, if you have not already. You may find you already have everything you need or you may have found a way to accomplish a task that works better for you than what is presented in this article. If you do discover a better way of doing something please let us know and we will update the article at a later date with reader submitted ideas.

Good Sources of Tools

When working on firearms there are three places that are your friends when it comes to purchasing the correct tools:

- <http://www.midwayusa.com>

- <http://www.brownells.com>
- <http://www.harborfreight.com>

Pins, Drifts, and a Good Non-Marring Mallet.



General Description: Most rifles have a myriad of pins that need to be removed or drifted out when disassembling. The best value, if you do not already own a set of punches, is a kit made by Lyman. The set includes a brass hammer with three interchangeable heads, one each of brass, steel and nylon and 1/16", 3/32", 1/8", 5/32", 3/16" and 3/8" steel pin punches and one brass drift punch. The kit comes in a wooden tray for easy access. I have used these kits extensively both in my home work shop and at the range for many years. They will last a lifetime if taken care of and are a great value for any home gunsmith. The mallet and brass drift are the perfect combination to drift the front rifle sight back and forth while adjusting the windage.

Price: Between \$20 and \$35.

Alternatives: I have a collection of punch sets that I have purchased at hardware stores and Harbor Freight as I need them. I also have found that a good solid hickory hammer handle is a fantastic non-marring mallet that has universal use and is very cheap.

An Extra Pair of Hands

General Description: I have found for so many disassembly and reassembly jobs that you



need a third or fourth hand. Since most wives do not like working on firearms there is an inexpensive and durable alternative that complains a heck of a lot less! Ranging from holding a trigger in place while you drive in a retaining pin or depressing a band spring on a rifle stock while you slide either an upper or lower band off - quick grip style clamps are just the ticket. They generally have rubber coated grips so what you are holding does not get scratched and can be operated with a single hand.

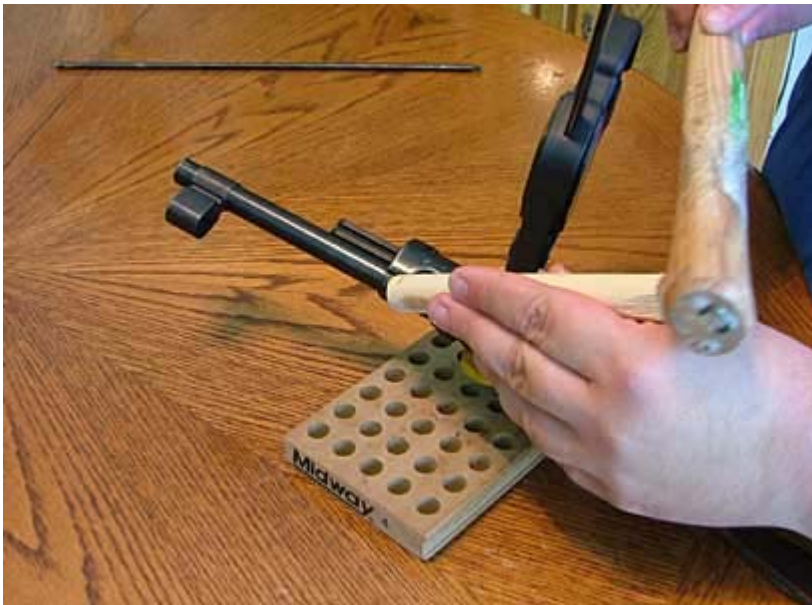


Price: Between \$5 and \$10 each.

Alternatives: Rubber bands, string, or possibly genetic limb enhancement/augmentation (I.E. and extra hand).

Dowel Rods

General Description: You really need to own an assorted supply of wooden dowel rods. Removing barrel bands and trigger guards is best accomplished in this manner. You will find that you won't damage, gouge, or mar the metal or wood surfaces of the rifle when tapping parts on or off with a dowel.



Price: Between \$.25 and \$1.00 each.

Alternatives: Cut pieces of small gauge PVC tubing, acrylic dowels, etc. Basically anything that can be used in the same manner yet still does not damage what you are working on.

Correct Screw Drivers

General Description: Imagine this - you are trying to loosen a screw on a trigger guard and you strip out the head. Your first concern and daunting task is how do you remove the bummer? The second issue is now you are going to have to pay \$1.00 to \$5.00 for a replacement screw from a mil-surp parts supplier. How do you prevent this catastrophe from the start? Make sure to have screw drivers that correctly fit the screw heads you are working with.

MidwayUSA and Brownells both carry an assortment of set and individual screw drivers. They all work pretty much the same it is really driven by your preference.



Price: Between \$25 and \$40.00 for a set.

Alternatives: Imagine this - you are trying to loosen a screw on a trigger guard and you strip out the head. Actually you can do what I have done and purchase the driver handles and then buy the bits in bulk.

Assorted Sundries

You will need to round out your tool set with a collection of needle nose and cutting pliers, jeweler's screw drivers of varying sizes, and a good quality locking pliers.



A Magic Block of Wood



General Description: The older types of reloading blocks are the best thing to have on your work table when disassembling a firearm. There are so many uses it is ridiculous! Turn it over and you can use it to disassemble bolts. When you are taking a rifle or pistol apart that has countless pins and springs there is no better temporary storage than the drilled holes in the top. You will find pins and springs go in and do not roll around on the table only to get lost. I love these things!

Price: Between \$1 and \$10.00 each. Heck, you could make you own for less.

Alternatives: The newer plastic trays can only be used for holding parts. If you bang on them they will break easily. Egg cartons also work pretty good for holding loose parts, but try banging on them.....



And Another Pair of Hands



General Description: I cannot tell you how many times I have needed to keep a rifle in place while I am working on it. Not to mention how easy a locking stand makes cleaning a rifle after a long day of shooting. The Tipton Gun Vise is worth every penny you spend on it. It is impervious to cleaners and chemicals and really easy to clean up after you make a mess. It is that extra pair of hands you find you always need when you are removing the rear sight blade on your SKS or pushing a cleaning patch down the bore of your 1917.

Price: \$50.

Alternatives: None!



Granted this list is not all inclusive of everything you may need as you start to disassemble and reassemble firearms, but it is a good place to start. As you find ways to accomplish these same tasks feel free to email us with your ideas. Also stay tuned for the second part of this article coming out soon on advanced tools for advanced projects.

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