

Cleaning and Maintenance

To keep your rifle functioning properly it is imperative that you clean it periodically and after you've been to the range, or in inclement weather.

The objective is to first remove all the fouling and then lubricate the rifle to protect it and ensure proper operation. This segment will provide you with quick methods for cleaning and maintenance. Periodically, or after being in bad weather, you should perform a more detailed disassembly and cleaning. As you become familiar with the rifle you'll develop your own methods and preferences for cleaning. As long as you accomplish the goals of keeping the parts clean, properly lubricated and protected from the environment, you'll have decades of use from your rifle.

To properly clean your rifle you will need at the minimum; a cleaning rod with a patch holder and a properly sized brush for your caliber, a chamber brush, some patches for your caliber, a shop rag for cleaning the inside and outside of your rifle, a good solvent, an M16 tooth brush to get into those hard to reach areas, and finally a good quality lubricant. A can of TCE or another high quality flushing agent and good rod guide to protect the chamber and throat will be helpful as well.

1. First put on a pair of safety glasses, and make sure you're in a room with proper ventilation. Some of these solvents can contain noxious and harmful vapors.

2. Make sure the rifle is unloaded and that there is no live ammunition in the area.

3. Close the bolt.

4. Push out the take down pin and the pivot pin and separate the two halves.



5. Clean the lower receiver first.

6. Use a patch soaked with solvent to wipe down all of interior surfaces of the receiver including the magazine well.



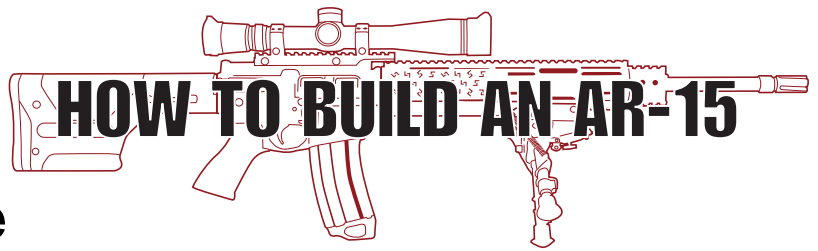
7. For hard to reach areas, like the fire control group, a flushing agent will work well to get rid of the gunk that accumulates there.

8. Once the lower receiver has been cleaned with the solvent, wipe away any excess until dry and apply a light coating of oil to the interior and exterior surfaces. A light spray of a high quality lubricant/protectant in the fire control group is all that is needed.

9. Remove the bolt carrier group and charging handle from the upper receiver.



10. Disassemble the bolt carrier group and wipe all the exterior and interior surfaces with patches soaked with solvent. Because the bolt carrier group is exposed to high amounts of carbon from the burning propellants of the gas operating system, this area can get really dirty. Keep cleaning these parts with your shop cloth and your M16 brush until all the fouling is removed.



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A special area of concern is the back of the bolt just behind the gas rings, where hot burnt gases deposit fouling in this area. You will need to make sure to get all of the caked carbon build up off of this area. Wire brushes and solvents are recommended, be careful not to improperly scrape or cause damage to this area of the bolt.



11. Wipe away all of the solvent until no residue is present.
12. Apply a light amount of lubricant to the bolt and carrier surfaces.
13. Clean out the interior and exterior surfaces of the upper receiver with patches soaked in solvent.
14. Wipe away the solvent and apply a light coat of oil to the interior and exterior surfaces.

Next, pin the upper and lower receiver together at the pivot pin. Then put the rifle on to the lower receiver vise block in your vise to hold it in place. We like to use the Sinclair Cleaning Link to keep the two halves together and gain access to the chamber.



Start by cleaning out the inside of the chamber and locking lug recesses. A good brush for this is our AR15 Chamber Brush.

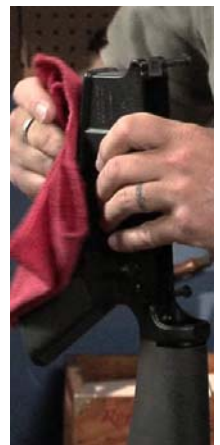
15. Next install your bore guide into the receiver and, run a properly-sized patch soaked in solvent up the barrel from the breach to the muzzle. Run this patch back and forth a few times to make sure the solvent soaks the entire interior surface of the barrel.



16. Run the brush fully up and down the barrel to remove fouling.



17. Wipe up the solvent and residue with a clean patch. Repeat the solvent, brush, and clean patch steps until the patches come out of the barrel clean. Apply a light coating of oil with a patch to the inside of the barrel to wipe away any residual solvent.



Once you've completed the cleaning of your rifle with a patch you're ready to put everything back together and go to the range to test fire it.

Beyond cleaning there are a couple of things that you should keep in mind for proper storage. First be sure to secure all of your firearms to prevent unauthorized access and mishaps. Keep your ammunition stored in a separate, locked area in a cool, dry place. And take precautions, like desiccant packs, to control moisture.