



## Trapshooting and Snake Oil

Virtually every internet bulletin board or discussion page relating to trapshooting sooner or later (usually sooner) addresses the question “What should I use to lubricate my gun?”. And everyone who responds has a different suggestion. Some tell you what not to use; others swear by one particular brand of snake oil that they claim can’t be equaled by anything else. One product which is frequently recommended has the highly improbable name “STOS”, which is an acronym for “Slicker than Owl [Stuff]”. Who’s right? And just how slick *is* owl [stuff]?

Well, the quick answer is they are all right. Or at least most of them. (WD-40 is NOT a good idea.) You can start with the concept that your shotgun operates at less than 1 RPM, the metal in a shotgun is hardly exotic, and the pressure on moving parts is quite low (at least while they are moving). So almost any oil or grease is going to do the job of making sure your gun doesn’t hang up or squeak or wear out. But if you take the analysis a little farther, you encounter some interesting facts.

First, grease has the same advantage and disadvantage – it stays put. That means that if you use grease in your gun, it’s going to stay greased for quite a while. But that is also a significant disadvantage, because the grease attracts dirt and other contaminants. So the longer the grease stays in there, the more [stuff] winds up in there too. To make matters worse, grease is hard to get out of there.

Oil has its own set of advantages and disadvantages. It doesn’t attract and carry as much [stuff] as grease but it is by its nature pretty light, so it evaporates or thins out much faster than grease. If you oil your gun only infrequently, the result is the same as letting old dirty grease stay in your gun - a lot of wear and possible malfunctions.

The solution I hit on is to oil my guns every time I shoot them, and wipe them clean at the end of each shoot. This may sound like a lot of work, but it adds less than 5 minutes to a shooting session. I use this gizmo for an oiler which lets me put a single drop of oil (and no more) each place it is needed. You can buy one from Midway or Brownell. The Club office has a very similar bottle for sale, already filled with oil.



At the end of the shoot, I just use something that looks like an old washcloth to wipe out the receiver and wipe off the sides of the monbloc. I can tell you it works – I have two guns which have more than 50,000 rounds through them and both receivers look almost unfired.

There *is* a place for grease in a gun – the chokes. I grease chokes fairly liberally before inserting them, and then wipe off the excess. Why grease there? Because the chokes don’t move and constantly grind impurities between themselves and the barrel walls. The lube is there to prevent corrosion and adhesion –i.e., to make sure the choke comes back out. I take the chokes out three or four times a year, clean the plastic out of the inside and wipe the old grease and [stuff] off the outside. By the way, if you have trouble getting the exterior of your chokes free of accumulated black residue, try using a kitchen scrub pad – the yellow ones with green nylon abrasive back on them. I found the green side takes accumulated black stuff off chokes pretty quickly, although your wife won’t want to use the pad after you’re done.

One other tip on using oil. After you give your receiver and trigger group a thorough cleaning with brake parts cleaner (I do this two or three times a year), apply a fairly liberal coat of oil all over the trigger group and receiver. (Did I mention that “Gunscrubber” is just brake parts cleaner repackaged at a much higher price?) Then I use a lot of compressed air to blow all the excess oil back out of the mechanisms. This leaves a very thin coat of oil everywhere, which is exactly what you want.

Finally, whether you think I’m right or wrong about oil and grease, you have authority on your side. The Perazzi factory recommends that their guns be lubed with grease. The main Perazzi service operation in the U.S. says you should use oil on your Perazzi. But whatever you use, wipe out the inside of the gun frequently – the real problem is accumulated [stuff] inside your gun.

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