

Antique Weapon Care - Summary

Handling

Wear gloves when handling your collection. No protective coating appropriate for conserving an artifact (see below) can stand up for long against repeated bare-handed handling.

- Nitrile examination gloves are recommended when cleaning and coating your collection.
- Once an item has been coated, wear plain cotton gloves.

Dusting

When dusting, use a soft cotton cloth very lightly dampened with water.

- Dry immediately with a clean cloth.

Storage

Avoid humidity.

Cleaning

1. Cleaning Wood Stocks

- a. Separate wooden and metal parts. They are cleaned and coated differently.
- b. Unless absolutely necessary, leave unfinished interior wooden surfaces alone.
- c. Clean exterior of stock as follows:
 - (1.) Use a few drops of a mild detergent (Kodak Photo Flo) in a gallon of warm, distilled water, applied with a slightly damp soft cloth, and rinsed with clean cloths dampened with distilled water.
 - (2.) Dry with soft cloths immediately after rinsing.
 - (3.) Clean again with mineral spirits, using a soft cloth to apply.Work in fresh air or a well-ventilated area.

2. Cleaning Barrels and Other Metal Parts

- Use nylon or animal-bristle bore brushes.
 - Use mineral spirits to soften accretions.
- Work in fresh air or well-ventilated area.
- Swab clean with a cloth patch.

[If something slightly stronger is needed, try applying small amounts of wet tooth powder with a cotton swab and rinse with water.]

Disassembly and Reassembly

Probe the floor of every external screw slot with a sharp point. Dirt can be packed into a "clean-looking" slot.

All foreign matter must be removed for the screwdriver to fill the slot completely and work safely.

Coating

Coating Stocks

- Use paste waxes only. Preferably carnauba-based furniture waxes such as Kiwi Bois, Mohawk or Behlen, or Black Bison on wood stocks. Use pigmented paste waxes such as "walnut". "Clear" waxes can collect in pores and appear as white specks against a dark wood background. Can use Renaissance Wax on wood.

Coating Metals

Use a microcrystalline wax, such as Renaissance Wax as a protective coating.

Apply and buff out with a soft cloth or brush. Coat all parts this way - inside and out. Ferrous metals (iron, steel) should be preheated for a half hour or so to about 210 degrees F so that the wax will form a complete seal.

[It can always be removed later if necessary (mineral spirits, brushes, rags and lots of elbow grease).]