

Ed Brown Bobtail® Jig

Installation of the Bobtail® housing requires drilling a new mainspring housing hole through the frame. These instructions used properly with our jig allow this precise job to be completely correctly.

1. Completely disassemble lower half of the gun down to the bare frame. Wear safety glasses and use caution as some parts are under high spring tension. If you don't know how to do this safely, see our 1911 Bench Reference for complete, illustrated instructions.
2. Once you have a bare frame and Bobtail® housing to work with, clamp the Bobtail® jig horizontally in a machine vise, holes facing up. It makes no difference which way, as long as both holes are facing up. Either a drill press or milling machine is acceptable for this job.
3. Center the machine spindle over outermost hole in the jig. Depending on how close you like to work, this can be indicated in precisely, or merely run a 5/32 (.1565) drill or reamer through to center it up. We highly recommend you use the most accurate method you have, as this hole location is critical to a good job.
4. Slide the frame on the jig all the way to the innermost hole and place the original mainspring housing pin in that hole to hold the frame in place. A small piece of tape over the bottom hole will hold the pin securely so it doesn't fall out.
5. **IMPORTANT:** Start the new hole with #2 center drill. Do not try to use only a drill as it might walk around and spoil the job.
6. Once the hole is started with a center drill, install a 5/32" drill in the spindle and drill the hole through ONE side of the frame only.
7. Remove the frame from the jig and deburr the new hole inside the frame. Now slip the Bobtail® in place and make sure it lines up. With all the differences in frames, rail locations, hole locations, and what have you, there could be a difference in the way yours fits. If there is a slight misalignment, do the next step. If the hole lines up with the housing go to step 8.

OPTIONAL: In case the hole you have drilled in the frames needs to be moved slightly to line up perfectly with the housing, it can be moved with a 5/32" end mill in the spindle. Replace the frame on the jig, replace the drill with a 5/32" end mill and move it over the direction it needs to go. Once this is done, reinstall the Bobtail® housing and drill the hole through the other side of the frame. Now you know it will line up perfectly on the other side. Another way is to move the hole over slightly with a small rat tail file.

8. Once you are satisfied that the jig drilled hole lines up with the Bobtail®, replace it on the jig and drill the hole completely through frame using 5/32 drill. Note: This is actually a bit tight. The factory specs on this hole are .157 + .002. Feel free to run a .158 reamer through the hole and Bobtail® when you are finished. Make sure you DO NOT have the spring assembly inside the Bobtail® when you do.

9. Now you can install the Bobtail® and easily see how much material needs to come off the gun. We machine most of it away with an end mill with the frame clamped securely in a machine vise. It can be ground away with a pedestal grinder, filed away, or use whatever method you like. In any case, the finish work is done with a file and polish wheel. When done properly, the original housing pin hole will just barely disappear. Try to keep a nice contour around the bottom of the frame where the original line of the frame meets the radius of the Bobtail®.

10. Now you can remove the Bobtail® housing and carefully blend the two angles around the radius of the new round butt.

11. Then install the grips and mark with a scribe where the need to be cut off. Cut these off with a disc or belt sander square, then reinstall and gently cut a nice angle that blends well with the Bobtail® housing. Refinish with linseed oil.

12. Glass bead finish and re-blue any parts necessary. Reinstall the internal parts of the Bobtail® upon reassembly as usual.

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