

Next use a small, flat blade screwdriver to remove the extractor. It should pull straight out from the back of the slide. Be careful not to mar the sharp rear edge of the slide while doing this. The extractor should slip free easily.

Cleaning Tip:

Near the bolt face is a common place for grit to accumulate. If left alone, it could build up underneath the extractor and cause a failure to extract. The bolt face can be cleaned with an old toothbrush, and the extractor hole can be cleaned out with a Q-tip and solvent.



GRIPS & GRIP SCREWS



Disassembly of the frame and all lower parts should be done only on a well lighted workbench. Do not attempt this procedure in the field unless you would like to order replacement parts!

Begin by removing the grip screws and grips. Use a proper fitting screwdriver or hex wrench if the gun is so equipped. Stubborn grips may be pried loose by inserting a large flat blade screwdriver inside the magazine well and gently prying on the bottom just above the grip screw bushing. Never pry on the grips from their edges.

If you encounter difficulty removing the grip screws, see pages 1-12 and 1-13.

SPECIALIZED DISASSEMBLY

Tools Needed:

1. Small brass or plastic hammer
2. Flat screwdriver for grip screw bushings (preferably with special bit for grip screw bushings)
3. Pliers
4. 1/16" punch
5. Naturally, a well lighted workbench is necessary,
6. Small bench mounted vise is handy



Shown is a special bit made especially for removing 1911 grip screw bushings. It is a well fitted screwdriver bit, surrounded with a steel tube to keep the bit centered on the bushing. This is a very helpful item to have if you intend to remove or replace grip screw bushings. They are available from Brownells.

GRIPS SCREW BUSHINGS

The grip screw bushings will sometimes come out only with a well fitting screwdriver. I wouldn't suggest their removal unless it is absolutely necessary.

Be prepared to replace the bushings and possibly re-tap the holes in the frame. Brownells stock the correct size tap, if you need one.



TROUBLESHOOTING: PROBLEMS WITH GRIP SCREWS OR GRIP SCREW BUSHINGS

Frequently, grip screws are tighter in the bushings than the bushings are in the frame, so both parts come out instead of only the desired screw. The wrong solution is to grab the bushing threads with a pair of pliers and try to force the screw out with a screwdriver. This will ruin the fine threads on the bushing, making it unusable. Older Colts had the bushings staked in place, making them difficult, if not impossible, to remove. These guns seldom had the problem mentioned above, but most gunsmiths prefer the newer type that can be easily removed.

There is a simple solution for this problem. It's easy and cheap, but also slow. It amounts to placing a drop of red Loctite® on the bushing and simply screwing it back into the frame. The screw will not get any tighter in the bushing, but the bushing must be tight in the frame for the next step. Don't go overboard though, and strip out the threads. When you try to remove the screw a day or so later when the Loctite® has cured, the bushing should be held in place with the Loctite®, and the screw will probably remove easily.

Once the stuck screw is out, the bushing can be left as is, or removed if necessary by applying heat as mentioned earlier on page 1-11. Future disassembly should not be difficult if common sense is used while reinstalling the grip screws. Never use Loctite® on the grip screws themselves. If you have issues with grip screws working loose, a small lock washer or rubber washer placed under the head of the grip screw is an easy fix.

As for the installation of new grips, many of the custom grip makers use a tighter tolerance on the bushing holes than the factory does. This makes the grips fit tighter. This is desirable, but if they are too tight they cannot be installed and removed easily. The worst thing to do is to force the grips on with a thumb on each side of a snug bushing. I have seen beautiful exotic wood grips broken in half this way.

The proper way is to set the grips over a single bushing to check for proper fit. If one bushing will not go into the grip panel, it is certain that the grip panel will never go over both bushings together. If both bushings will fit easily, but the grips will still not go on the gun, there is a slight out-of-location problem that can be easily corrected with a small rat-tail file, or miniature cutter in your Dremel tool. Go slowly here, you can always cut more later, but you can't put it back. Identify the interference area, and only cut away the tight spots. Do not enlarge the entire hole if it doesn't need it.

Ed Brown Products has available 1911 hex head grip screws. They look really nice, although that is not their purpose. They prevent screwdriver slips that could ruin a set of nice grips, or mar the finish of the gun itself. Even if custom grips are not used, they speed up grip screw removal for routine cleaning.