Cleaning your Scope!

To clean your telescopic sight (Scope) properly, requires the right tools and the correct way of using these tools. The total scope clean involves the following in order of importance;

1. Lens cleaning.
2. Brushing dirt from scope body, turrets and sliding surfaces.
3. Rust prevention measures for steel screws and mounts.

If the cost is $150 for a scope, or $4150 the cleaning method remains the same.

The previous 3 areas of scope cleaning were written in order of importance. The actual order that you clean a scope varies somewhat from this. Scoped rifles are used in a variety of environments and scope cleaning regimés may vary in frequency. Some scopes are water-proof to varying degrees and others are not. Water removal is important for the prevention of rust, harming of internal components and fogging of lenses. Dust on scopes however is not overly harmful if not removed, but very harmful to lenses if not removed correctly. Below is a list of cleaning procedures in order from start to finish.

1. If wet, dry the scope with a clean dry cloth

The type of cloth used is not really important so long as the water is removed and not transferred from one part of the scope to the other. If really wet, allow the scope to air dry after wiping and avoid using a high pressure air hose as water can be pushed further into the scope parts.

2. Brush all dirt / debris from external parts of the scope.

One of the best brushes for this job is an old shaving brush. If one is not available these can be purchased online or from shaving shops. $180 best badger English shaving brushes are not need for this job, $20 boar bristle ones are just fine. In fact the slightly stiffer boar bristles get into the scope crevices better.

Fig 1 Boar bristle shaving brush.

3. Brush all dirt / debris from the scope lenses.

A different brush is used for lens cleaning. Purpose designed lens cleaning brushes are called for here. The softer bristles are kind on the lens surface but are stiff enough to flick away fine debris.

Fig 2 Purpose designed lens cleaning brush.

The trick here is to invert the scope lens and brush from underneath the lens. The debris will now fall away under gravity after being flicked with the brush. Periodical checking every 5 - 6 strokes of the brush will allow the cleaner to see if any remaining debris is present. The fastest way to scratch the fine lens coatings away is to go to the next step with super abrasive debris still left on the lens.

4. Wipe lenses with pre-moistened purpose made disposable cloths.

The reason we suggest the use of disposable pre-moistened lens cleaning cloths is that they provide the user with a fresh clean start every time this cleaning process is required. This cleaning process removes oils and salts from the lens. If the same non-disposable cloth is used each time oils from fingers and lenses contaminate the cloth to such an extent that cleaning with it becomes futile. The cloth itself has to be properly cleaned. A great deal amount of oil is continually secreted from human fingers.

This being said, even the disposable cloths have to be handled with care when using them. Once removed from the packet, fold the cloth in half, leaving the middle third of the cloth for the actual cleaning of the lens.

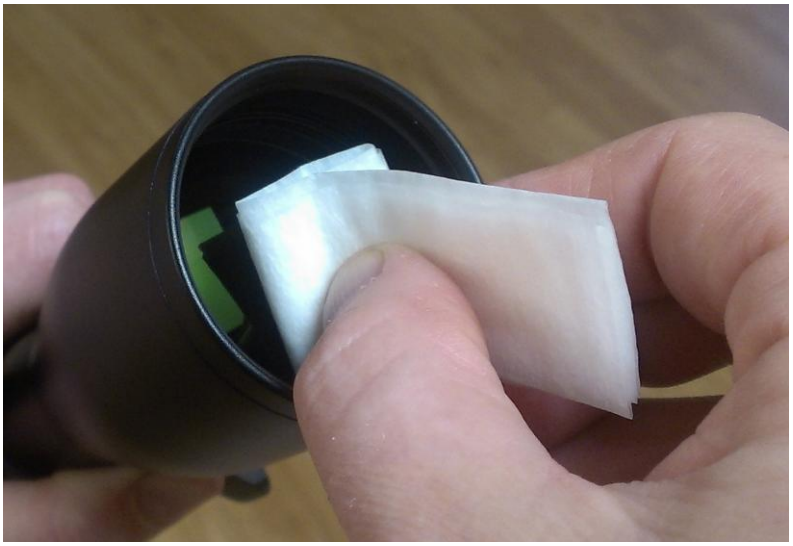

Fig 3 Proper application of disposable lens cleaning tissue.

This can be done without touching this section of the cloth. In a circular motion wipe the lens right down into the corners with just enough pressure to do the job. Some steaks may be present after this step which is why the next step exists. A word of warning here, please don't ever use facial tissues or t-shirt material etc, these may cause irreparable damage to the lens coatings and use quality pre-moistened cloths only.

5. Clean lenses surfaces with carbon compound impregnated pad such as the LensPen®

The best way to remove the streaks left over we have found is with the use of a carbon compound impregnated cup such as those designed and created by company LensPen®. These little devices turn relatively clean lenses into showroom masterpieces. Only a few small circles covering the lens are required and the visual difference from start to finish is very obvious. We only recommend good brands of these pens by reputable companies. Buying a pen with LensPen® written on it for $1.20 from China over Ebay will not see you with a quality product as it will be a rip-off of the original.

Fig 4 Carbon compound impregnated cups remove any last streaks and oil.

After this process is completed, scope caps or any device protecting the lenses from dust, oil and other debris should be placed on so the last part can be undertaken.

6. Check and oil if necessary any steel components to the scope mounts.

Steel scope mounts and screws are susceptible to corrosion despite the anti-corrosive treatment they may have gone through at the manufacturing process. These should be checked each time the rifle is put away in a de-humidified gun safe. A very small amount of oil or rust preventative (Silicon oil compound) should be applied to the screw heads and mounts if required. Try and not to get any oil between the mounts and the scope body as a build up of this can affect scope / rifle zero.

After this has been applied, with a clean rag, wipe the entire outside of the scope surface, including mounts, lightly, to remove any sweat or oils from your hands. Now it is ready for storage.