



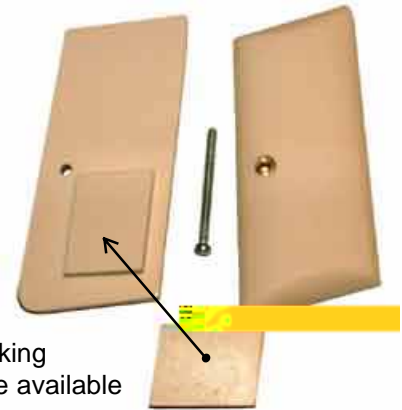
Fitting Spacers and Raised Sections to your Flat Grip Panels

Tombstone Gun Grip kits are provided as two flat panels, plus whatever spacers, screw kits, etc., may be shown on the webstore for that particular grip. Grips that are made with raised areas on the back, either a spacer to join two panels into a single, one-piece style grip, or various derringer or semi-auto grips that fit into cut-out areas in the grip frame or magazine well side-wall to keep the grip from rotating about its mounting screw, or the raised section in the rear of a grip for a firearm like the Browning Hi-Power, are all provided with add-on spacers which you can sand lightly to exact shape for your particular gun, and then epoxy glue to the back of the flat grip panels.



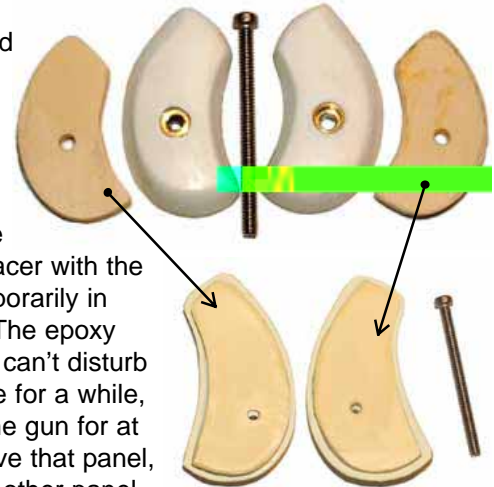
To prepare the grip panels, first sand them to the exact outline which fits your gun. They will be close, but a little hand fitting makes them just right. A standard foam-core fingernail sanding board is ideal for this work. You can pick those up at almost any cosmetics counter or drug store.

Wipe the flat backside of the grip panels with acetone on a cloth, to remove fingerprints and primer the surface for the epoxy. Prepare your gun by wiping a liberal amount of Vaseline or other non-stick release agent on the frame where the grips might possibly seep a little extra epoxy glue. Usually this isn't a problem, but if you should epoxy a grip to your gun frame, acetone will dissolve the epoxy and not harm the grip or the metal of your gun. Also wipe the smooth, flat side of the spacer or spacers with acetone to clean and prepare them.

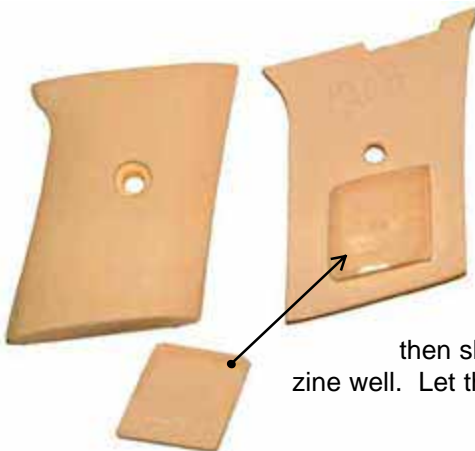


Acetone is very flammable, so don't smoke or use it around open flame or sparking electrical equipment. It is often used as fingernail polish remover, but should be available at a hardware store as a cleaning solvent.

There are now several ways to align the spacer with the grip and the gun frame. You can use a mounting screw to align a semi-auto grip onto the gun, and tape it so it cannot turn out of alignment, then use a pencil to mark through the opening in the magazine well side walls (with magazine removed, of course) and trace the opening shape on the back of one grip panel, then the other. You can remove the grip, apply a film of 5-minute epoxy glue (the kind you get in two tubes and mix together, which sets up in about 5 minutes and cure completely in an hour or so) to the spacer, and align the spacer with the outline drawn on the grip. The spacer must first have been carefully sanded at the edges so it fits into the cut-out on the gun frame.



Let the epoxy start to cure, but before it becomes too hard to move the spacer, put the grip back on the gun (remember to have Vaseline on the frame anywhere that surplus epoxy might get on the gun), Align the spacer with the cut-out, and align the grip perfectly with the gun frame, then tape it temporarily in place for at least 15 minutes. The epoxy will set up hard enough so you can't disturb the alignment (it won't fully cure for a while, so don't get anxious to shoot the gun for at least a few hours). Then remove that panel, and do the same thing with the other panel.



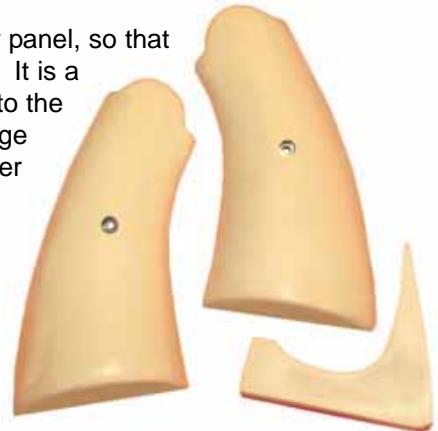
Another way to align spacers on the back of a semi-auto pistol grip so they snugly fit into the cut-outs in the grip frame is to attach one grip panel to the gun (after it has been fitted otherwise) and align it, tape it in place so it cannot rotate, and put a little epoxy on the back of the spacer, then slide the spacer into position through the other side or bottom of the magazine well. Let the epoxy cure, then remove that panel and repeat with the other one.

The spacers may be too thick to allow the magazine to slide into the mag well without interference, but after the epoxy has cured, it is a simple matter to rub the spacers on a piece of sandpaper, tacked to a flat piece of wood, by using the grip panel as a "handle". Just thin the spacers until they no longer touch the magazine (if the spacers are the same or a little less thickness than the walls of the magazine well, the spacers should not touch the magazine).



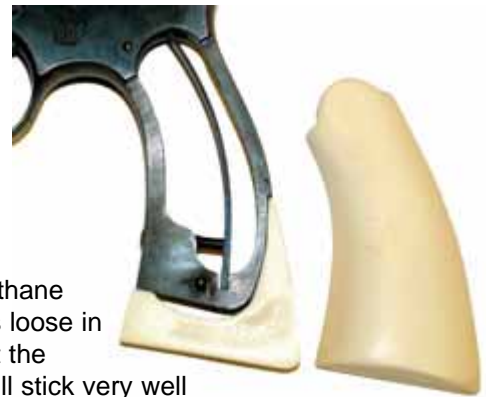
Grips which have wrap-around rear sections or extensions below the frame will need to be assembled, epoxied and cured, and then the panels and the extensions lightly sanded to blend the edges smoothly. Often the original factory grips will have two spacers that contact in the center, but it is easier and just as strong to have one spacer that spans the entire frame of the gun, so that the entire spacer and one panel are a single piece.

One or more small dowel pins can be used to secure the spacer to the other panel, so that there is no movement at the junction once the grip is assembled on the gun. It is a good idea to put a drop of epoxy on one end of the dowel pin and press it into the thicker section (usually the spacer), while leaving the other end free to engage and disengage a shallow hole in the opposite grip panel. This makes it easier to take the grips off the gun for cleaning and maintenance.



If you should get the spacers a little undersized, you can build them back up at one or more edges with epoxy or stock bedding compound, if you first protect the metal of the gun with a release agent. Stock bedding kits normally provide the best release agent for the particular epoxy used in them. Vaseline will work OK for most 5-minute general purpose epoxy glues.

Also, bear in mind that auto-loader grips held on with one screw can be kept from rotating about the screw by any two solid points of contact that stop movement in either direction of rotation. Some of the early Jay Scott grips did not even use the spacers, but instead used one or two small screws driven into the back of the grip, so that the screw heads contacted the inside of frame and prevented rotation. These were quite successful, so fitting a spacer to even a modest part of the inside outline of the grip frame cut-out will provide even better support.



Most 5-minute epoxy glues are quite strong and bond well to the polyurethane resin used in making the grips. However, if you find that the spacer pops loose in recoil, it very likely indicates that the epoxy wasn't mixed properly, or that the surface of the spacer and the grip back simply wasn't cleaned. Epoxy will stick very well if it is applied to a clean, dry surface from which all fingerprints have been removed. Yet it can be removed if desired by using acetone to soften the bond. Some cleaning solvents may weaken the epoxy, but so far, that has not been the experience of thousands of users of their own hand-finished Tombstone grips.



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