

Things you can do to slick up the 87 shotgun

1. Remove main spring by compressing with a pair of needle nose pliers. If you look at the main spring you can see that it is much thicker at the "V" than at the opposite ends. With a dremel or grinding wheel, Thin the side that has the claw so that it is the same thickness from the claw end down to the "V". You don't have to go all the way to the "V" but you do want to get within about 1/4" or so. The lever will cycle much softer and smoother now. You will still want to be firm at the end of the stroke for extraction of the shell. There is no fixing that, but getting there will be much nicer now.

2. Remove stock by removing the rear screw on the tang (larger screw) and pulling off the stock. You will see a screwed in leaf spring for the lever catch. You want to bend (use vice or vice grip pliers) the spring just forward of the screw hole so the spring just touches the catch to hold it down when the screw is tightened. As you did with the main spring, grind off the excess metal from where you made the new bend back toward the catch (about 1/2 way). You end up grinding about a 2 inch length of the spring. Put the lever catch spring back in and now push the catch. See how much easier it moves. You can take off more with the spring in place until it moves with a nice light pressure. Your lever will now lock and unlock much easier. Put the stock back on and screw in the stock screw.

3. Just forward of the stock screw that you have just screwed in, is a smaller screw. Unscrew this one about a 1/3 of a turn to maybe 1/2 of a turn. You have now adjusted your trigger from about a 6 or 7 lb pull to around a 2-1/2 or 3 lb pull. Much, much better isn't it!!! You will want to practice with live ammo a bit to find your sweet spot. I initially went a little too light (a bit over 1/2 a turn) on the trigger and when cycling for the second shot would brush the trigger on the return throw of the lever setting off the second shot before I was ready to shoot. So I tightened it back up a bit till I found my happy place.

4. Remove screw for magazine tube and take off the cap. Remove spring and follower. Take the follower and with a 5/16" bit, drill out the center of

the follower. Doing this will give a firmer 2 shot drop catch instead of the 5/16" dimple that you get from a factory stock follower. Now, before you put the follower and spring back in, get an empty 12ga hull and cut off about 1/2 of the hull or so. Insert it into the open end (the spring end) of the follower. Keep trimming until the brass end of the hull is flush (or just about flush) with the end of the follower. Now reassemble the follower, spring, end cap, and screw. The insertion of the hull mod will make the follower sit more square and give a tiny bit more pressure on it.

5. This one is purely cosmetic: Doesn't really function better, but looks cooler! Remove main spring again. Remove the 2 carrier screws (one on each side of the receiver) Pull carrier out the top. Remove the lever pin (breech-block pin) and remove the lever breech-block assembly (2 pieces). Sand (400 grit) the sides of the breech-block assembly piece by piece on a flat table. A little oil helps with the sanding. When you have a nice shiny finish, reassemble and have fun.

There you go! You now have a much better looking and functioning model 87 without shelling out \$150.

Bramble Mountain Buzzard

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