



**CARBON-FIBER
FIREARMS**

Are They Worth the
Extra Money?

**STOCKED
UP** How Stock Fit
Affects Accuracy

Gun Digest

WE KNOW GUNS SO YOU KNOW GUNS

THE MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2020
VOLUME 37 • ISSUE 16

Glock Upgrades

Aftermarket Parts That
Improve Performance



PLUS

You and Your Handgun:
Mindset, Tactics and
Marksmanship

Dos &
Don'ts For
Upgrading
Your AR

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Decibullz
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Behind the
Brand: H-S
Precision

Know
Your Cartridge:
.338 Win. Mag.

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RimX's 500-Yard .22 LR



The Corona Cartridge

Hornady's Curve-Flattening 6mm ARC



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FORM AND FUNCTION

There are Glock upgrades that look good. And then there are upgrades that tighten groups.

Modifying your Glock to look good on social media isn't hard—but carefully choosing what modifications you make that enhance your Glock's performance while retaining factory reliability is a lot harder. With a sea of choices, separating the high-quality parts that enhance your pistol from those that are nothing more than tinsel can be a challenge.

Just because you can find high-quality parts that can tailor your pistol to fit whatever role you use your Glock doesn't mean that Glock Perfection needs perfection. In stock form, the Glock is probably the single best duty pistol ever produced and is more than

capable of nearly every handgun owner worldwide.

Even though your pistol is fine, there are some good reasons to modify it. The question is, what are the most beneficial modifications to make? After shooting more than a quarter-million rounds through Glocks—ranging from entirely stock to the highly modified ATEi space blasters—most have taught me that some upgrades are worth their weight in gold ... but others can make the pistol worse.



Either a Glock plug or a magazine well removes that empty cavity in the rear that can catch during your reload.



A Glock 19 C makes a great concealed carry gun with a few enhancements that help it perform like a much larger one with a compensator.

LOOKING COOL IS OK— SOMETIMES

Sure, that awesome slide you found on eBay might net you bazillions of followers on The Gram, but will it transform you into a paper-shredding shoot-bot with an odd penchant for skinny jeans? No, it probably won't.

Just because a Glock isn't focused on function doesn't mean that it's wrong; aesthetically focused builds have a place in the world. That said, building a Glock with generic parts purchased on Wish.com isn't OK if you intend to use that gun in a defensive role.

Being put in the position to use a firearm defensively sucks enough; think of how much more it would suck if that AliExpress trigger kit failed and the gun didn't go *bang*.

BUYING SKILL

Despite what the internet tells you, a new trigger or barrel on your Glock isn't going to make you a better shooter. The truth is, most modifications actually mask your shortcomings as a shooter, and you can't buy skill.

Most shooters see improvement as

a result of two factors: mechanical advantage and the psychological impact. Mechanical advantage is a pretty simple concept; sometimes, the part makes the system work more efficiently. Making the pistol better was the intention, but be careful not to ignore the things you need to work on as a shooter.

The psychological impact is harder to spot and can fool you into thinking that a part held you back. Yes, the trigger feels crisper and shorter—you might even shoot marginally better with the new trigger installed. Truth is, you shoot the same as you did before: Skill-building takes work, not parts.

NO, YOU AREN'T PAYING FOR THE NAME

If there's one lesson I've learned as a shooter that I could pass on to every new gun owner, it would be to buy quality the first time. Purchasing a copy of an established product or a bargain product that's supposed to do the same job as

MODS THAT AFFECT RELIABILITY

- › Aftermarket recoil springs
- › Aftermarket striker springs
- › Non-Glock strikers
- › Non-Glock spring cups
- › Gen 1-4 barrels in Gen 5 guns
- › Aftermarket frame pins
- › Aftermarket minus connectors

DIY STIPLING WITH THE OT DEFENSE STIPPLE KIT

- › Remove finger grooves and existing texture with a Dremel.
- › Use the Dremel to undercut trigger guard, if desired.
- › Trace the borders of the textured area.
- › Outline the traced borders.
- › Fill in the area inside the border in sections to not overheat the polymer.
- › Trace the index points if desired.
- › Apply texture to the index points, if desired.

Note: There's a risk you will permanently damage your frame; having a professional perform frame modifications is highly encouraged.

PROPER MOS OPTIC INSTALL

- › Degrease all screws.
- › Apply VibraTite VC-3.
- › Allow VibraTite VC-3 to dry for at least 45 minutes.
- › Install MOS plate and torque screws to 15 in-lb.
- › Install optic and torque screws to 15 in-lb.

Note: Use the same procedure for the recommended C&H Precision Weapons plate.

the brand-name one often comes with hidden costs attached.

Cheap red-dot sights will fail, cheap iron sights can damage your slide's sight dovetails, and inexpensive triggers can cause a gun to fire unintentionally. Even something as trivial as aftermarket metal frame pins can wallow out the holes in the frame and ruin your gun entirely.

If you've had parts that the internet has labeled "jUsT aS gUd" fail and are forced to buy a replacement, the more expensive brand might have cost you less money in the long run.

ADD AN MRDS OR NEW SIGHTS

It should go without saying that replacing the plastic dovetail protectors with some proper sights will improve the overall shooting experience. You can shoot a Glock effectively with stock sights, but do you want to if there are better options?

For iron sights, adjustable sights are the way to go so you can tailor your sights to ammunition changes. Dawson Precision makes some of the best ones out there. My recommendation is the all-black rear with a fiber-optic front sight, a reasonably fast setup with just about the most precision you can get out of irons.

Of course, the ideal solution is to add a red dot to your pistol. Regardless of the way you want to look at it, a red-dot is going to offer you a more precise aiming system without sacrificing speed or durability. If you don't own a MOS slide, calling a shop like ATEi to get your slide milled for an optic is a great solution.

GET A MANTIS

Remember how I said you couldn't buy skill? The Mantis X10 Elite is almost like buying skill, the only difference is you need to put in the work with high-quality dry-fire practice. I know, a Mantis isn't exactly a bolt-on Glock mod.

For those unfamiliar with the Mantis, it's a small box that contains a bunch of sensors you can slide onto your light rail. Once you pair the sensor to your phone through Bluetooth, any movement the pistol makes will be relayed to the app on your phone, which you can then use to identify why you're shooting low left with your Glock. At roughly the cost of a pre-Covid case of 9mm or less, a Mantis offers more benefit to the dollar than anything else.

The top-of-the-line Mantis X10 Elite even allows you to gather data on live-fire practice, what the pistol is doing


in recoil and fine-tuning your draw. If you're serious about getting more out of your Glock (or any pistol, for that matter), one of the Mantis models should be on your shopping or Christmas list.

FRAME STIPLING

One of the weak points of Gen 3 and older Glocks is the lack of effective texture on the pistol sides. Glock did listen to the end-user and brought the RTF2 and RTF3 textures to market, but the aftermarket was already melting more aggressive patterns into grips with wood burners.

Since this practice started, stipple work has evolved with shops like Great Lake Custom Works offering grip pack-





Upgrading your OEM plastic sights to fibers is a worthy investment. Choose adjustable if your budget can handle it.

ages that change the way the gun feels by offering finger groove removal, deeper trigger guard undercuts and index points that act as a makeshift gas pedal.

Being able to tailor your pistol to the level of texture that fits your needs best isn't a parlor trick to be ignored; it has a considerable effect on the shooting experience. Having a top-tier shop like Great Lakes or TXT Custom gun works can set you back a couple of hundred dollars, but removing the chance of a ruined frame is well worth it.

That isn't to say that you can't do a reasonable functional job at home with an OT Defense DIY Stipple Kit; take care not to warp the magwell or remove too much material with a Dremel tool. If you're intent on doing it yourself, take your time and go slow.

Do you need to throw the kitchen sink at your Glock to shoot better? No. Learn to shoot better and then modify your pistol.

THINGS TO BUY THAT MAKE YOU BETTER

- › Mantis (X3 or X10 Elite)
- › Snap caps
- › Bull's-eye targets (example: NRA B8 & B8 Repair Centers)
- › Shot timer
- › Book a training class
- › Ammo ... and shoot a lot of it
- › 1-, 2- and 3-inch adhesive bull's-eyes
- › Laser Pistol (SFTD or SIRT)
- › Laser training software (LASR App, LASR X)
- › Glock plastic Dummy Round, 50-count box



CHOOSE A TRIGGER

Choosing a trigger isn't as simple as buying the one with the coolest colors, the best marketing or even the lighter trigger pull weight. My goal with trigger changes isn't to reduce pull weight or shorten reset distance—it's to reduce the trigger reach.

The distance from the backstrap to the trigger face, or trigger reach, will do a lot to improve the shooting experience if you select the right one. Yes, the OEM trigger works fine, but switching

to a flat-face trigger can help those with shorter fingers get a proper grip on the gun without doing weird things with their grip. Remember, the Glock is a double-action pistol, and the trigger finger should be deeper in the trigger guard ... just like you shoot a double-action revolver.

If you have shorter fingers, you might look at the Overwatch Precision DAT V2 or TAC triggers, TangoDown's Vickers trigger or Agency Arm's trigger, which is the best of the bunch, in my opinion. Those with longer fingers

Stock barrels are surprisingly accurate, and you don't need a flashy barrel to shoot well.





might look at the Apex Tactical trigger or even stick with the OEM trigger and install a minus connector to get the pull into the 5-pound range.

ENHANCED CONTROLS

Upgraded controls are generally the next thing that I recommend addressing if you find the stock ones aren't cutting the mustard. Gen 4 and Gen 5 pistols are pretty good right out of the box; you might want to think about an enhanced slide release, though. Gen 3 pistols are another matter and probably would benefit from a magazine release that makes it easier for those with shorter fingers to hit the button.

For slide releases, the raised and rearward swept Kagwerks slide release is the one that I choose for my guns because it allows me to adopt an extremely high grip on the pistol and still have the slide release function as intended. Tango-Down's Vickers release is also a great one, but it can suffer failure to lock back with a high enough grip.

When looking for a new slide release, avoid metal ones when using OEM Glock magazines. The metal release will deform the mag catch cutout and eventually cause a malfunction by allowing the mag to slip out of place during recoil. The OEM extended release are good options, as is the Vickers magazine release.

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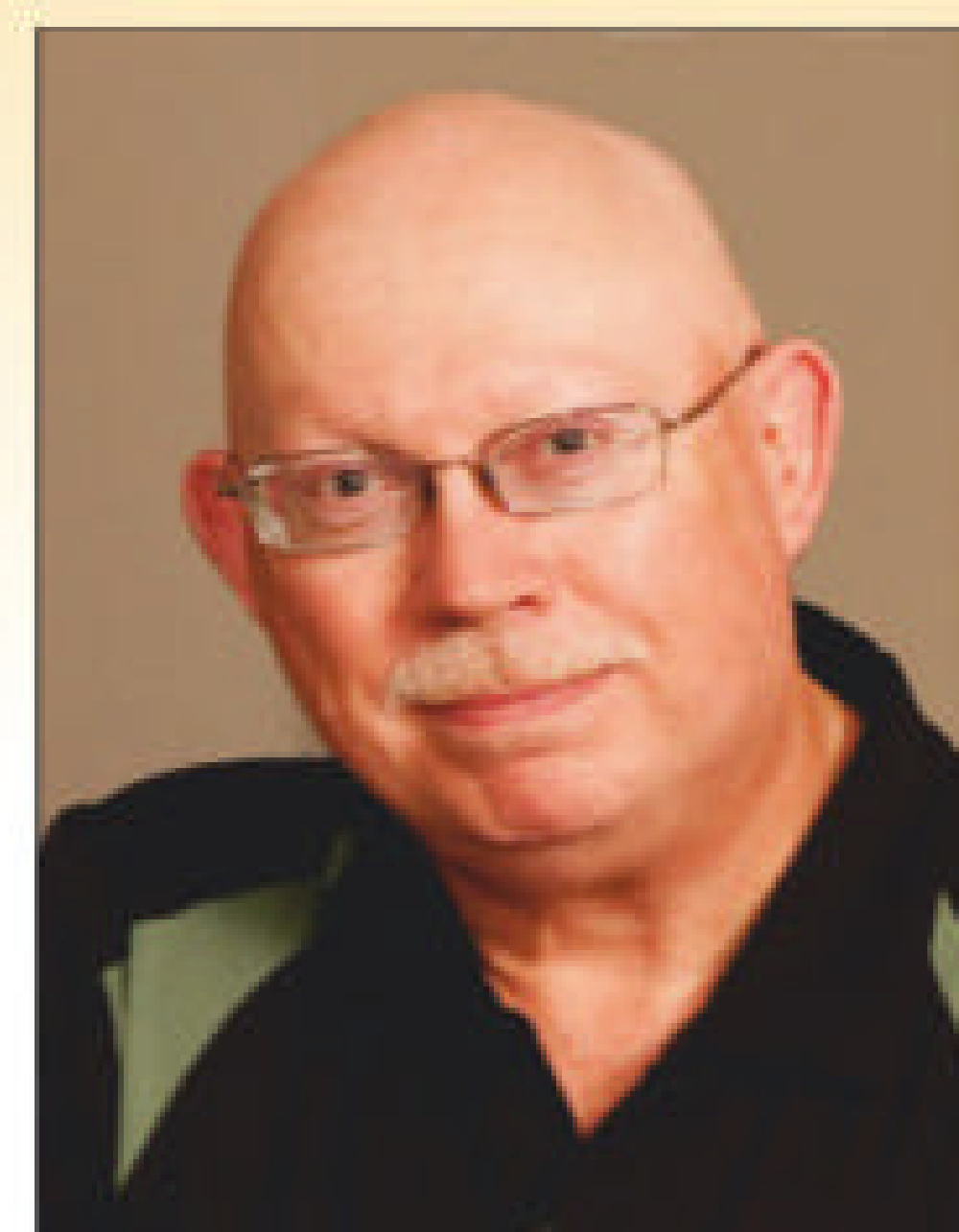


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Don't have a milled or MOS Glock? Send your slide off to be machined for an RMR.

ADD A PLUG

A plug that fills the void in the back of the grip, affectionately called a “buttplug,” does more than prevent dust and debris from making its way into the gun. If you select the right one, it will fill out the rear of the magwell and prevent the rim of a case from snagging during a reload.

Think of it like a magwell, just without the bulk. There are some low-profile

magwells out there that are worth a look if you can conceal them, but sometimes a magwell like the Raven Concealment Freya is a bit too hard to conceal in some clothing.

At less than \$10 online, this is a low-cost upgrade that has tangible benefits. Why not, right?

GET A BARREL

Last on the list is a barrel, and for a good reason. The only time a barrel upgrade makes sense is if you need a threaded barrel to add a compensator or suppressor, you're putting a slide together from parts bought separately or you've damaged your original barrel.

You probably aren't anywhere near shooting better than your OEM barrel can perform; why not spend the money on something that will improve your shooting like any of the other mods mentioned so far? Now, if you're one of

the few shooters capable of shooting under 3-inch groups offhand at 25 yards, replace the barrel with a high-quality one from KKM Precision or another company that produces barrels of similar quality—and try to tighten things up a bit more.

As for most shooters, the 5-yard target isn't going to look much better by swapping the barrel out.

DO WHAT MAKES SENSE FOR YOU

It shouldn't have to be said that you don't need any of these things (except the Mantis) to shoot better; they make the pistol work better for your physiology. Use your head and think critically about what mods you perform on your pistol, and you can't go wrong.

As long as you modify your pistol with high-quality parts that you can explain why you chose, the pistol will be better suited to your needs. **GDTM**

A TangoDown Vickers Tactical mag release is perfect for speeding up your reloads.

