



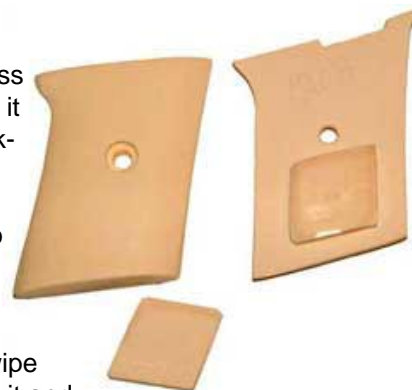
Assembling Multi-level Grip Backs

Tombstone grips are cast in open top molds with the back of the grip being the top surface. Since the back of the grip panel is the top surface of a liquid before it cures, it must be flat. Some grips use a raised area to align the grip within a cut-out on the gun frame and keep it from rotating, or a wrap-around raised area in the back to allow for a wider staggered-round magazine. These raised or multi-level components are supplied as separate pieces in the Tombstone kit. You add them to the grip back using 5-minute clear epoxy cement, which holds extremely well if the surfaces are properly prepared.



First, examine the “spacers” or add-on parts so you can determine where they fit into the gun frame. Some of the spacers will have a slight angle or difference between left and right panels, and must be oriented so they match the gun properly. So long as the panels contact the frame in at least three places, they will prevent the grip from rotating. They do not have to be an exact fit to the cut-out in the magazine well, for instance, so long as they are snug at three points. Wrap around spacers need to be attached and then sanded to blend smoothly into the curvature of the grip. Their thickness is adjusted after attaching so as to just match the step in the gun frame.

Fit the pieces into the gun frame and sand them lightly at the edges until they just press into position without the grip panel. Prepare the grip panel by sanding its edges so that it matches the frame of the gun. Sand the back of the grip panel to adjust the panel thickness as desired.



Lightly sand the back of the grip panel and the matching surfaces of the spacers to remove any bumps and provide a slightly scuffed surface to help bond the epoxy with the spacer and grip.

Clean the back of the grip with acetone to remove any grease, oil, or fingerprints. Just wipe it with a clean cloth with acetone on it. It isn't necessary to soak the grip, just to clean it and prime the back surface. Denatured alcohol may work, but some solvents leave a film that will prevent the epoxy glue from adhering properly. Acetone always works. (Acetone is flammable: do not smoke or use it around open flames or sparks)

When the grip panel is ready to mount on the gun, insert the screw to align the panel, rotate the grip into proper position, and either tape it or hold it securely while you mark the outline of the grip frame cut-out on the back of the grip panel using a sharp pencil. Do this with just one panel. Remove the panel. Wipe a thin film of Vasoline on the frame of the gun, so any surplus epoxy won't stick to the gun when you align the grip in the next step.

Mix two good-sized drops of epoxy together and spread them thinly on the back of the spacer for that grip panel. Press the spacer against the grip, moving it slightly to spread the epoxy and align the spacer within your pencil lines. Press it firmly and hold for a minute. Then mount the grip and spacer back on the gun, in order to make absolutely sure of the spacer alignment. It will still move under pressure for a few minutes, so you can align it. Any epoxy that oozes out and gets on the gun frame should not stick to the Vasoline film (which easily wipes off the gun later).

Let the epoxy cure for at least 15 minutes. Then remove this panel and prepare the other one in the same way. If there are additional spacers, apply them after the first one has cured in place. Adjust the thickness of the spacer so it will not rub on the magazine. This is more easily done after the spacer is mounted, as you can simply rub the back of the grip against a piece of sandpaper tacked on a flat board to adjust the thickness of the spacer. Make sure the magazine removes and inserts easily without rubbing on the spacers. If you accidentally made the spacer a little too small, you can build up an edge with a bit of epoxy, let it almost cure, and press it back onto the gun with Vasoline on the gun to prevent sticking.



Spacers can also be applied through the magazine well cut-out (with magazine removed) without first marking the outline and removing the panel. Be sure to put a release agent such as Vasoline on the gun frame, first. Check the function of the slide, safety, magazine latch, and slide catch. Use a rotary bur tool to make any necessary relief cuts for clearance.

