

## NAGANT REVOLVER GRIPS

The Nagant 1895 Revolver uses two grip panels and a spacer. It is unique in that the grips are held on by screws that go in from the inside of the frame, so you cannot turn them without taking the left-side frame plate off the gun to gain access.

The left grip is secured to the removable side plate, which in turn is held on by a screw just above and forward of the right grip. I like to pull the cylinder rod forward, rotate it to the right and remove the cylinder before working on the gun. This does a couple of things. It makes the chance of ever having a loaded round in the gun while working on it impossible, and it frees the pawls and ratchets that contact the cylinder so you can easily manipulate them if you need to. (It also gives me a chance to clean the cylinder!)

Unscrew that plate retaining screw nearly all the way, then make sure it is engaged by at least one full thread and tap the head with a plastic mallet to knock the tightly fitted side plate free of the frame. Then unscrew the retaining screw the rest of the way, and the side plate will come off easily.

The original grip is held to the side plate by a screw which is visible now from the inside. Unscrew it and the left grip panel is free. The right grip panel is usually more work to get off. It is held on the same way, but the hammer and trigger spring, which I will call the "mainspring", is right over the top of the screw head. To remove the spring, loosen but don't remove the screw that is found at the front of the trigger guard, holding the front of the guard to the frame.

When you have the screw loosened a bit, you will see that the trigger guard will now pivot downward. This gives a little wiggle room for the spring. Note that the hammer and trigger and hammer block can all be taken out by lifting the hammer and trigger parts off their pins. But you don't need to do that! Just grasp the V-shaped mainspring firmly with thumb and forefinger of both hands, squeeze it slightly to release pressure on the hammer and trigger, and lift the back end (the point of the V) up and away from the frame. There is a projection on the point of the V, facing the gun frame, which fits into a hole in the frame. This is what holds the spring so firmly in place even if it isn't visible until you lift the spring out.

Holding the spring pinched a little to relieve pressure, you can now pull it out from under the hammer and out of its position in the trigger. This seems difficult the first time, but after you have done it a few times, you will see that it isn't hard, just takes some firm finger muscle (wear safety glasses in case your fingers slip and parts go flying). The amount of compression required is slight, and the change in shape of the spring isn't much. Do NOT use pliers or metal tools to pinch the spring! Any scratch will act as a stress point and may cause the spring to break at that point.

Now it is easy to remove the right grip panel. The new grips may need to have a shallow relief made with a small bit in a Dremel tool, one on each panel, to clear certain screw tips and heads which will be obvious when you put the grip on the gun and a small gap appears due to the part holding the grip away from the frame. To mark the spots, put ink from a Magic Marker on the screw tip or head and press the grip against the gun to transfer a dot.

The spacer and grips may need to be sanded lightly to fit the frame. Oversized grips are available which increase the thickness and also give a little extra material for sanding to a contoured fit. The new grips come with modified truss head 4-40 screws and nuts, so you do not have to use the Russian ones except for the side-plate to spacer mounting screw (save that one, as it is an odd size and shape, which fits the threads in the removable side panel).

Medallions can be mounted over the screw holes, since there is no need to access the outside of the holes. If you choose this option, be sure not to install screws which would be so long that they push the medallions out! Russian Soviet-era coins make appropriate medallions.

When re-assembling the revolver, make sure that the mainspring fits into the recess for it, in the trigger, as well as under the hammer. The trigger and hammer block (which slid up and down vertically) do not need to be removed, but they might fall out if you handle the revolver very much while removing the grips. It's a good idea to study how they fit, just in case you ever need to put them back! The mechanism is a simple but clever puzzle and can be frustrating to assemble if you have not observed how it is supposed to work first.