

Bang - Click - Mush

Re-Functioning the Handgun

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Progressive FORCE Concepts (PFC) prides itself on breaking free of traditional paradigms by forging ahead with simpler, more effective proprietary material. PFC creates independent free thinkers who will never quit and never be caught unprepared. One of our main ethos is *Less is More*. You see it all over our course material, our swag, and you hear it, feel it in our instruction. PFC's firearm training methods are delivered with the intent to teach *gunfighting*, not shooting.

How to fix a malfunction on a handgun is probably one of the most contentious issues in the firearms training industry. I was formally taught how to shoot the Beretta 92F back in 1993 while attending Air Force basic training. I think there were 8 or more steps to clearing a failure to extract! It involved locking the slide to the rear, removing and ditching the magazine, racking the slide 3 times, accessing a new source of ammunition, reinserting the magazine, racking the slide one more time, and then coming back up on target to reassess. I'm in a gunfight!

Refuction

In some training circles they are called "malfunctions." Malfunction is what the gun does, "Re-function" is what we do as gunfighters. Whether you know it or not, you perform a re-function while running your gun, and that is called a reload. The gun quit running, it's an interruption in the cycle of operation and what do we do? Mag out, mag in, parts forward. **The solution began at the magazine;** Remember that! Where people get themselves in trouble with these processes is they start at the moving parts; the slide. All that does is potentially create a worse problem by pounding all that metal together. Insane!

Listen to What I'm Saying!

Your gun is going to talk to you. It will only say three things. It can say *BANG*, it can say *Click*, and it can say *Mush*. If the gun says "BANG", it's easy right, just keep hammering the problem until we get the desired change in behavior. But what do we do if it goes *click* or *mush*?

Let's first talk about a *failure to fire*. If you've attempted to insert a magazine, rack the slide, or released the slide stop lever, come up on gun, and press the trigger and it says *click*, you're experiencing a *failure to fire*. This could be caused by a few things. 1) It could be a bad primer, 2) it could be a dirty gun, or 3) it could be the leading cause of a *failure to fire* and that is an unseated magazine. Also, you could be the cause by not verifying you had a round in the chamber. So how do you re-function the gun? Remember, the solution starts at the magazine. We bring the gun back into our workspace, aggressively tap the magazine, then cycle the action (slide), then come back up and reassess. Tap, Rack, Reassess/Bang (if needed). Less is More!

The next malfunction is called a *failure to eject*, or *stove pipe*.



This malfunction usually manifests in a few different ways. The brass may align at the 12 o'clock position, 3 o'clock position, or the brass may also orient in a linear or lengthwise fashion. There are some agencies that teach to sweep the brass out. Our Chief Instructor Brian Hartman once worked with a man who swiped the brass on a linear failure to eject and took off a whole pad of his finger right down to the bone. Yeah, keep that picture in your mind.

The great thing about this malfunction is that we use the same technique we use for the failure to fire. Consider it a two-for-one. You get that click, bring the gun back into your workspace, tap the magazine, then cycle the action (slide), then come back up and reassess. The solution starts at the magazine! Tap, Rack, Reassess/Bang.

Next we have a *failure to extract*. This is not a double feed. We do not get double feeds on the pistol like we do the rifle. With this malfunction we get a *mushy trigger*.



Let's talk about what you DO NOT want to do. Remember me reflecting on my formal introduction to the Beretta 9mm? Lock the slide to the rear, remove and ditching the magazine, rack the slide 3 times, access a new source of ammunition, reinserting the magazine, racking the slide one more time, and then coming back up on target to reassess. I was taught this technique 23 years ago and it still exists in many popular firearms training camps today. In some cases, people pay good money to be taught this inefficient, antiquated method. So instead of doing it in nine steps, why not do it in three? So, when you press the trigger you get a mush, just rip the magazine **ALL THE WAY OUT**, reinsert the magazine, rack the slide, and reassess. Rip, Reinsert, Rack. Done!

Now there is another way we can clear a *failure to extract* using the same technique. It comes into play for magazines that are very flush with the bottom of the magazine well. Like the commonly used Beretta 92. No worries, we have fix for this.



So, when you press the trigger you get a **mush**, you will hold the magazine release, strike the flat surface of your forearm against the lower meaty portion of your thigh. Through inertia, this action will pop the magazine out. One of the downsides to this technique is that you'll for sure need to access a fresh source of ammunition, and then rack as the primary technique.



There is one last malfunction to discuss and that is a *failure to unlock*. This normally happens when you come up on target and you get a *click*, then go to tap, rack, and the slide will not budge! What you need to do is safely control your muzzle, find a hard flat surface and place the slide alone against it and push down. This malfunction can be caused by several things, like a lack of lube. Yep, you need to clean and lube your handgun. Another is debris. One of our instructors, Chris Fraser, tells a funny story about one of his old teammates they called Mr. Candyman; He was always sucking on some type of hard candy and shoving the wrappers in his pockets. Apparently he shoved a loaded magazine in one of the pockets that had candy wrappers in it, and when he loaded the gun the pesky candy wrappers came with it. Needless to say when he fired his weapon it produced a failure to unlock. Bad ammo can cause this malfunction, too.

Less is More

We realize depending on the exact model of your handgun, there will be a slight difference in audible and tactile feedback you get from the trigger upon a malfunction. Realize this and refunction the weapon in a diagnostic manner; quickly analyze the problem and determine the exact cause and proper fix. Give these a try, it could save your life one day.