Pelikan Fountain Pen Care

Pelikan pens are some of the best fountain pens on the market. Right out of the box, Pelikan pen perform excellent. To ensure the best success with your Pelikan fountain pen we have outlined some basic use and care instructions.

Daily Pelikan Fountain Pen Use Instructions

Pelikan Edelstein Ink Adventurine Green

First, always cap or close your fountain pen when not in use. An un-capped fountain pen will dry out and clog the feed of the pen restricting the ink flow. Improper ink flow will create inconsistent writing.

Pelikan suggests using Pelikan brand ink for the best results but it is not necessary to only use Pelikan brand fountain pen inks. Other brands of fountain pen ink may contain particles that accumulate in the ink feed and block ink flow. Regardless of the brand colored ink contains pigmentation and therefore you will need to clean your fountain pen periodically to flush any excess particles from the pen.

How To Clean a Pelikan Fountain Pen

When cleaning your Pelikan fountain pen never use any dish washing soap or alcohol as these substances may damage your pen.

To clean your fountain pen, drain the ink and flush the pen with warm water. Run water through the feed section until it runs clear. The nib on most Pelikan fountain pens will unscrew from the barrel. This allows easier access to clean the nib and feed section as well as the ink chamber.

How to Fill a Fountain Pen with InkIf you are not going to use your pen for an extended period, store it clean without ink.

How to Fill a Pelikan Fountain Pen

Before filling the fountain pen turn the knob to the left to advance the piston to the front of the pen.

Dip the nib so it is fully submerged into the fountain pen ink and slowly fill the pen by turning the knob back in the opposite direction.

When the piston stops, twist the knob back to return a few drops back into the ink bottle.

Hold the fountain pen upright with the nib up and turn the knob until the piston stops.

Clean the grip and nib of the pen with a soft cloth to remove any excess ink.

How to fill your Pelikan Fountain Pen

To help ensure your Pelikan fountian pen give you years of faithful service and to assist you care for your pen, we have put together a few tips on how to fill, use and care for your fountain pen.

Below is an image of the internal mechanism a Pelikan piston filler fountain pen to help you see how it works:

Filling with ink

To move the plunger towards the nib and thus be able to fill the barrel chamber with ink, you turn the filler knob anti-clockwise. Do this without any ink the pen and with the cap removed.

Now place the nib in your bottle of ink, being sure to fully submerge it so that no air is drawn in along with the ink, which would result in a partial fill. Use the red dotted line above as a guide for how deep to submerge it.

Turn the filler knob clockwise to move the plunger back away from the nib and draw ink into the barrel chamber. Once it will turn no more, the chamber should be full. It is now worth expelling a few drops back into the bottle and turning the nib upwards before tightening the filler knob clockwise. This will remove the excess ink from the nib and stop it from dripping onto your hand, paper or into the cap.

Cleaning & Maintenance

We would recommend cleaning your pen out after every 3-5 ink fills. Cleaning is simple - Use the same method as when filling but use cool, clean water and then expel the water back out. This ‘flushing’ will prevent dried ink clogging the nib.

Be sure to NOT use any detergents as they will break down the lubrication on the piston and make it difficult to operate. We suggest using a slow running tap, over a sink which won’t become ink stained. A container of water will soon become ink coloured. A few water fills will be enough to flush the nib sufficiently.

The nib will unscrew from the barrel of your pen, but will become difficult to remove as time passes. It MAY be worth loosening the nib when cleaning. Hold it as close to the pen end as possible and turn anti-clockwise ½ a turn and then re-tighten. This will assist nib removable in the future if needed, (e.g. if it becomes damaged) If it isn’t easy to unscrew, leave it be

The piston is designed to require no maintenance, but if it does become stiffer to turn, the lubrication may need to be re-applied. Please get in touch and we arrange this for you. It will ensure the effective working of the mechanism and prevent any damage

Email us at info@pelikanpens.co.uk if you have any queries or issues.

How-To: Clean a Pelikan Fountain Pen

May 23, 2015

By Joshua

in How-To's

Tags: Ammonia, Cleaning, Fountain Pen, How-To's, Maintenance, Pelikan

32 Comments

CleaningI have been asked on a few occasions over the past several weeks about what is the best way to clean a Pelikan fountain pen. While I’m not sure whether or not my way is the best way, it does work, is easy and relatively quick to accomplish, and does not result in any damage to the pen. One of the reasons that I enjoy Pelikan’s piston fillers is because of the ease with which they can be cleaned when compared with cartridge/converter models. Pelikans are also forgiving and can be left to go a bit longer between routine maintenance sessions than some other brands pens. While cleaning is easy, there are some pitfalls and special considerations to keep in mind, particularly when working with vintage pens. As such, I have two cleaning methods; one that I reserve for modern pens (1970-present) and one that I use for either modern or vintage pens (pre-1970). I will do my best to describe both procedures below as well as provide you with some of my views on the intricacies of Pelikan pen maintenance. As a bonus, I will also review a technique for the cleaning of a cartridge/converter pen.

What You’ll Need:

Room temperature tap water or distilled water (optional)

2-3 Small (6-8 ounce) cups

Paper towels, cloth, or similar

A dilute (~1:10) ammonia solution (optional)

Cotton swabs (preferably safety swabs)

Bulb syringe (optional for cleaning cartridge/converter pens)

Procedure:

METHOD #1 – Modern Pens (1970-Present)

Empty the pen of any remaining ink by turning the piston knob counter-clockwise to advance the piston forward.

Turn on a sink and adjust the faucet to approximately room temperature. Fill a cup 1/4 full and set aside.

Run the nib under the faucet until the water appears to clear. Once clear, unscrew the nib and place it in the cup of water prepared in step 2.

Now place the section under the faucet to remove the remaining ink from the barrel. Work the piston 2-3 times for good measure.

Dry the outside of the pen with a towel and then replace the nib that has been soaking. Empty the cup of water and refill until 1/2 full. Distilled water can be used at this point if there are concerns about the hardness of the tap water.

Place the nib in the water and cycle the piston 2-3 times to ensure that the water remains clear. If ink persist, continue to flush until it clears.

Using a towel, dry the nib by drawing out any excess moisture and allow to air dry.

If significant staining remains or if there is a particularly stubborn ink, consider using a dilute ammonia solution as outlined below. Also consider cleaning the cap as described below.

METHOD #2 – Vintage Pens (Pre-1970) and/or Modern Pens (1970-Present)

Empty the pen of any remaining ink by turning the piston knob counter-clockwise to advance the piston forward.

Turn on a sink and adjust the faucet to approximately room temperature. Fill two cups 1/2 full. If you are concerned about the hardness of the water in your tap, consider using distilled water.

Submerge the nib into the first cup and repeatedly cycle the piston. Once the water is heavily colored, switch to the second cup.

Continue cycling the piston until the water flushes clear from the pen. You may have to empty and refill a cup once or twice.

Using a towel, dry the nib by drawing out any excess moisture and allow to air dry.

If significant staining remains or if there is a particularly stubborn ink, consider using a dilute ammonia solution as outlined below. Also consider cleaning the cap as described below.

METHOD #3 – Cartridge/Converter Pens

If a converter is attached, empty the pen of any remaining ink by turning the knob on the converter counter-clockwise to advance the piston forward. If a cartridge was used, discard the cartridge.

Turn on a sink and adjust the faucet to approximately room temperature. Fill two cups 1/2 full. If you are concerned about the hardness of the water in your tap, consider using distilled water.

If using a cartridge, skip to step 4. If using a converter, submerge the mouth in a cup of water and cycle the piston 2-3 times. The converter should clear fairly quickly. Fill the converter and invert it a few times to free any ink trapped at the level of the piston seal and empty. The converter should be clean by this point.

Take a bulb syringe and fill it with water from the first cup. Place the mouth of the syringe at the back of the section and depress, allowing water to flow through the nib and feed (this can get a little messy). Repeat 2-3 times and then switch to the fresh cup. Using the syringe once more to flush the feed/nib, the water should be fairly clean by this point. Alternatively you can just use a steady stream of water from a sink in place of the bulb syringe to achieve the same effect if that is more convenient for you.

Using a towel, dry the nib by drawing out any excess moisture and allow to air dry.

If significant staining remains or if there is a particularly stubborn ink, consider using a dilute ammonia solution as outlined below. Also consider cleaning the cap as described below.

Cleaning with Ammonia

Only after first cleaning with tap or distilled water as described above and not achieving a satisfactory effect, consider using a dilute ammonia Cleaning2solution.

You can purchase one of the many pre-made solutions such as J.B.’s Perfect Pen Flush (no affiliation) or make your own dilute 1:10 solution (1 part household ammonia to 10 parts water).

Fill one cup 1/2 full with the dilute ammonia solution and the other cup 1/2 full with tap or distilled water. Cycle the piston several times in the ammonia solution as you had previously when using water to flush as described above.

When satisfied, expel all of the ammonia into the cup and switch to the cup with water, again cycling the piston several times to flush out any remaining ammonia (this is necessary for proper functioning as the flush has surfactants which will affect the ink’s properties).

You can save the used ammonia for re-use later (until it becomes nearly opaque after which it should be discarded).

\*NEVER mix ammonia with bleach, use ammonia on aluminum parts, or soak older pens in an ammonia solution. ALWAYS use in a well ventilated area.

Cleaning the Cap

While the pen is drying, use a cotton safety swab that has been moistened with water and swab the inside of the cap.

Repeat until the swab tip comes out clean.

Run a dry cotton swab or tissue along the inside of the cap to dry. Compressed air can also be used. Allow to air dry prior to reassembling.

Discussion:

The procedures described above will work for a great many of Pelikan’s piston fill and cartridge/converter fountain pens. This would include essentially all of the pens of both the modern Classic and Souverän lines as well as many vintage models. When working over a sink, care should be taken to avoid dropping the nib and/or barrel into the drain. Pelikan pen’s can handle a somewhat infrequent maintenance schedule so even if you only flush every few months, that should be adequate and still you should only require water when flushing. Pens that are bought used or have been neglected for some time might benefit from a flushing with an ammonia solution but that should be decided on a case by case basis. Normally, pens will need a reapplication of silicone grease every so often (roughly ~3 years in my experience) to keep the piston moving smoothly. If you use the faucet method of cleaning described above (Method #1), the frequency of re-lubing may increase.

Special Considerations:

I advocate not using the sink faucet cleaning method for vintage pens because the older ebonite feeds are fragile and I avoid removing the nib from those pens whenever possible as each attempt to do so can run the risk of damaging the feed. Also, hot water should be avoided as this can damage certain components and does not provide any benefit over room temperature water.

My own tap water provided by the city is very hard meaning that there is a high mineral content in the water. When the water evaporates, these mineral deposits are left behind and can clog feeds. For this reason, I favor the use of distilled water (specially prepared to remove chemicals and minerals) over tap. Distilled water is cheap and readily available at any grocery store in 1 gallon jugs. When I do use the faucet cleaning method, I will always finish with several flushes of distilled water to try to remove any of the remaining hard water left behind from my faucet.

Many people favor adding a drop of dish detergent (e.g. Dawn) to the water that they are using to flush the pen with. This has been cited to help with ink flow problems and can remove some of the releasing agents left on newly minted feeds. This is generally regarded as a safe practice though one that I do not personally employ as I feel ammonia achieves the same effect. If you do use a drop and only a drop of Dawn detergent in your flushing process, make sure you follow that with just water to remove all residue and prevent problems down the road.

It is often asked whether or not a new pen needs to be flushed before a first fill and there is debate on both sides of this issue. I do not flush first in my personal practice and have not had any trouble that I would attribute to this practice but many people report otherwise. Because oils, grit, and releasing agents invisible to the naked eye can be retained from the manufacturing process, ink flow can become impaired. To combat this, flushing with a drop of detergent or dilute ammonia can clear these left over agents should you find this to be an issue.

The number of people who do not clean their pen’s cap has always amazed me. When I get a used pen, especially vintage ones, this is one of the first things I do and I often feel like I’m pulling a decades’ worth of ink out. I like my caps clean and so that is part of my routine maintenance. When done regularly, it usually only takes one or two cotton swabs to get the job done. Why clean the barrel and nib so effectively only to leave the cap filthy? Just make sure to dry the cap prior to reassembling. I use cotton swabs for infants, also called safety swabs, because these have more cotton material and are perfect for the job of cleaning pen caps. “Be kind, clean your pen’s cap.”

Other implements can be used in the cleaning process. These include syringes, ultrasonic cleaners, brass shims, polishes, etc. None of these are generally necessary for day-to-day pen maintenance and are usually for more advanced purposes. I will be addressing some of these separately in future postings so stay tuned.

<https://thepelikansperch.com/2015/05/23/pelikan-fountain-pen-cleaning/>

How-To: Clean The Section Of A Pelikan Demonstrator

April 29, 2018

By Joshua

in How-To's

Tags: Cleaning, Demonstrator, Fountain Pen, How-To's, Maintenance, Pelikan

17 Comments

Pelikan M200 Clear DemoWith a new Pelikan demonstrator due out in a few weeks, I thought now might be a good time to revisit how to best clean one. The endearing thing about demonstrators is that they put the inner workings of the pen on display, warts and all. Perhaps that is why the demonstrator is such a polarizing model amongst fountain pen enthusiast. No matter what side of the debate you come down on, it’s undeniable that cleaning this type of pen can be a real challenge. You can see every drop of residual ink and even more disturbing, every stain left behind. Thankfully, good pen upkeep can help to avoid this type of permanent staining. In addition to the usual pen maintenance issues that we all face, there is one exceedingly frustrating area on Pelikan demos that is particularly troublesome to clean. That area would be the section which, no matter how much you may rinse or swab, simply won’t come clean. With Pelikan’s demos, there is a little trick to be learned here which can make your cleaning woes a thing of the past. Due to the design, there is a little lip on the inside of the section where the threads are located. The area behind that lip will collect ink as you fill and use your pen. It is not readily noticeable until you try to flush the pen clean. Thankfully, it’s easy to remedy if you know what to do. Read on to learn how to get that residual ink flushed out of the section.

\*\*NOTE: The procedure outlined below will walk you through how to clean the section of a Pelikan demonstrator fountain pen. If you are looking for an overview of how to clean a Pelikan fountain pen in general, please check out my article, How-To: Clean a Pelikan Fountain Pen.

What You’ll Need:

Room temperature tap or distilled water

A 5 or 10cc syringe with a blunt needle

Paper towels, cloth, or similar

A dilute (~1:10) ammonia solution (optional)

Cotton swabs (preferably safety swabs)

Procedure:

USE FOR: All modern Pelikan demonstrator pens in both the Souverän and Classic lines

Empty the barrel of ink and clean as you normally would. Follow the link above for a tutorial on general Pelikan pen maintenance.

When you are satisfied that the pen is clean, carefully remove the nib if you have not already done so and set aside.

Unscrew and remove the cap from the pen thereby exposing the nib and feed.

Placed the feed in the crook of the index finger on your non-dominant hand with the tip of the nib pointing towards the ground.

Take the thumb of that same hand and apply pressure to the top of the nib, thereby preventing the nib from shifting on the feed.

Now, with your dominant hand, turn the BARREL counterclockwise to unscrew the nib from the section (the nib itself should never move in your hand).

Fill your syringe with water

Place the tip of your blunt needle just inside the section. Walk it down the inside of the wall of the section to where the nib threads start. You will feel a lip there which is where you will rest your needle.

Depress the plunger on the syringe such that water is being flushed along the wall of the section behind the lip. In 1-2 syringes, you should be able to flush all of the residual ink out of the section

If significant staining remains due to a particularly stubborn ink, consider using a dilute ammonia solution such as JB’s Pen Flush.

Once rinsed thoroughly, allow the pen to air dry. You can use a towel or cotton swab to wick excess moisture.

Replace the nib, employing the reverse of the above instructions.

Special Considerations:

If your tap water is very hard, meaning that there is a high mineral content in the water, mineral deposits can be left behind when the water evaporates. For this reason, I favor the use of distilled water (specially prepared to remove chemicals and minerals) over tap. Distilled water is cheap and readily available in 1 gallon jugs at any grocery store.

Pelikan M200 Clear Demo and Edelstein Topaz

\*I am not an expert in pen maintenance and make no claims to be one. I am an enthusiast and hobbyist. If you have any concerns or doubts, you should seek out further assistance elsewhere. Anyone following the above procedures do so at their own risk and I am not liable for any damage that may be incurred to the pen, nib, or cap.

How-To: Disassemble & Clean a Pelikan Cap

February 1, 2015

By Joshua

in How-To's

Tags: Cap, Fountain Pen, How-To's, Maintenance, Pelikan

8 Comments

Pelikan Demonstrator Caps

I recently had a question posed to me about condensation forming on the inside of the cap of a demonstrator and how to best address it. This got me to thinking about a related issue which is ink that can get trapped between the outer and inner caps. It is not uncommon for condensation to form inside a cap and the nature of the demonstrator is to make this phenomenon quite noticeable. The science behind the formation of condensation is fundamental and depends on warm air meeting a cool surface. Pens that are kept close to the body, i.e. a shirt pocket, are warmed to body temperature and condensation forms when the outside of the cap cools faster than the air surrounding the nib. This has no effect on the pen’s performance and usually can be easily wiped away with a cotton swab or towel. More troublesome can be ink that works its way between the outer and inner caps which cannot be easily flushed away with a simple soaking.

The remedy for trapped moisture/ink can be the disassembly of the cap which allows the inner cap to be separated and removed to facilitate cleaning. While I do not recommend that this procedure be considered part of routine maintenance, it certainly can be pulled off relatively easily and without any negative consequences. I will describe the procedure below as well as leave you with some thoughts afterwards.

What You’ll Need:

Rubber Grip (optional)

Pencil or similar item

Procedure:

To Disassemble

Unscrew and remove the cap from the pen. Set the pen safely aside (careful that it doesn’t roll onto the floor).

Note the orientation of the cap top logo and clip with regards to the rest of the cap to help facilitate assembly. The portion of the cap band engraving to which the clip tip points can serve as a visual reference.

Turn the ring around the cap top COUNTER CLOCKWISE to unscrew and remove. Use a rubber grip/rubber band to help get better traction if needed.

Remove the clip by sliding it off of the inner cap.

Push the cap top into the cap, towards the cap band and remove it from the outer cap.

Pelikan M200 Cap Disassembly

To Assemble

Place the inner cap on top of the eraser portion of a pencil or some other similar implement.

Insert the inner cap into the outer cap with your non-dominant hand, aligning the ridges and grooves, allowing the threads of the inner cap to come through the top of the cap.

Replace the clip, ensuring that the clip is perpendicular to the logo. Secure the clip with your thumb.

Thread the cap ring CLOCKWISE to tighten the whole assembly. Take care not to cross thread or over torque.

Once snugged tightly, the clip should not have any significant sideways play. If this is not the case, your alignment is off and you will need to reseat the clip. Some trial and error may be necessary.

Discussion:

The procedure described above will work for many of Pelikan’s fountain pens that incorporate a derby or crown cap top (note that not all do). This would include essentially all pens of both the modern Classic and Souverän lines. Care should be taken to place the pen body in a secure location while cleaning the cap to avoid accidental rolls and subsequent damage. The above procedure can be performed on many of the vintage offerings from Pelikan as well since the mechanism of cap assembly has been kept very similar over the years. I would be much more cautious with older pens though as the caps are prone to shrinkage especially around metal inner caps resulting in hairline cracks. While not overly fragile, a higher level of caution should be exercised. Decades of dried ink can also cement the inner cap in place, risking damage with removal. Again, routine disassembly of the cap is not something that I would endorse.

Special Considerations:

There are many good alternatives to getting ink out from between the inner and outer caps. I favor employing these methods before any attempt at disassembly.

Fill the cap 3/4 full of water and hold cap top against your index finger and your thumb against the bottom opening, effectively sealing the water in the cap. Next, shake vigorously several times and then drain the water. This will often remove any ink between the caps and will leave clean water which will dry.

Another alternative would be to use a waterpik, pipette, or syringe to force water between the two caps, effectively achieving the same result as above.

It is important to make sure that the clip is replaced properly or else the cap ring will not fully seat and there will be a lot of sideways play of the clip which impairs functionality. There is a bump that help aligns the clip but it is not always obvious. You will know that the alignment is correct when assembling because everything will secure nicely. If that is not the case, some trial and error may be required to find the proper alignment.

Condensation forming in a cap is normal and nothing to be concerned about. It will not affect function nor will it harm the pen. It is usually easily wiped away and should not be a cause for concern.

How-To: Lubricate a Pelikan Piston

August 30, 2014

By Joshua

in How-To's

Tags: Fountain Pen, How-To's, Lube, Maintenance, Pelikan, Silicone

36 Comments

Richard Binder's Pure Silicone Grease Offering

Richard Binder’s Pure Silicone Grease Offering

I find that lubricating a Pelikan piston results in confusion for a lot of neophytes to the brand and is frequently a topic of discussion on the forums. Today I will try to dispel any questions by discussing the theory behind this procedure as well as the technique. Once you know, it is really quite a simple procedure that anyone can do in just a few minutes time. While this operation is tried and true and incredibly simple, I must stress that any issues that arise during this operation fall squarely on the operator’s shoulders and I’ll assume no liability for any mishaps.

What You’ll Need:

100% Silicone Grease

Cotton Swab or Toothpick

Procedure:

Empty the pen of ink and dry out the reservoir as best as possible before application.

Unscrew the nib from the section. Be careful if there is dried ink or the nib does not unscrew easily. See my FAQ for tips on removing a nib.

Apply a very small amount of silicone (roughly equal in size to 1/2 of a grain of rice) to the cotton swab.

With the piston retracted, run the swab along the inside of the barrel as close to the piston seal as possible.

Work the piston up and down a few times.

If the mechanism is now working smoothly, replace the nib and resume regular use.

Discussion:

Over time, a Pelikan’s piston can become stiff and tight, even to the point that one might fear damaging the mechanism. Depending on the ink used (heavily saturated inks have been implicated) or the frequency of flushing (especially with either dish soap or ammonia), some pens will need re-lubing more frequently than others. In my experience, a rule of thumb with standard pen care is that many Pelikan’s will need a re-lubing on an average of once every 3 years give or take (your mileage may vary of course). It should be noted that the above procedure is directed towards synthetic seals and not the older cork seals. It cannot be stressed enough that 100% silicone grease should be used. This is not the area to cut corners. My preferred grease is that which is packaged with the TWSBI pens but good grease is available from many online specialty pen retailers as well as good dive shops. It’s a $5 investment that will likely last you your lifetime. If there is any concern about the purity of the silicone, don’t use it. Silicone comes in many formulations, some of which can harm a pen’s components. I also stress using a small amount of grease as too much grease can gum up the works and cause flow issues. Finally, there is absolutely no need to remove a piston from the pen to re-lube it. Doing so can damage a pen and is strongly discouraged unless carried out by a trained professional. Feel free to leave a comment or contact me directly if you have any further questions, comments, or suggestions.

How-To: Safely Remove & Replace a Pelikan Nib

November 22, 2014

By Joshua

in How-To's

Tags: Fountain Pen, How-To's, Maintenance, Nibs, Pelikan

22 Comments

M400There are many reasons, some subjective and others objective, as to why Pelikan pens are as popular and lasting as they are. Undoubtedly, one feature that clearly endears them to novices and enthusiasts alike is the fact that the nibs are interchangeable and, by and large, have been so since the inception of the model 100. The nib is the business end of the pen and if it is not performing as expected or becomes damaged, even the most beautiful fountain pen in the world is rendered useless. I previously discussed these nibs and their ability to be easily exchanged (amongst other attributes) in my post, The Evolution of the Collar, Feed, & Nib. What’s more, not only are the nibs interchangeable but that this can be accomplished by the end-user and does not require a sometimes lengthy trip back to the manufacturer or a certified dealer, certainly a boon to the user. These facts combine to allow one pen to take on a significant amount of character as Pelikan’s catalogue of nibs over the years has contained a wide variety of expressive options, not to mention the variety of custom grinds available from third parties today. Even if you only own one nib, the ability to change nibs can come in quite handy in the event of accidental damage (why is it that all uncapped pens insist on landing nib side down?). I could continue to expound on the virtues of the interchangeable nib but that is not our purpose today. Today, I want to review for you exactly how to safely remove and replace a nib because this can be an area of confusion for many and some forethought should be employed prior to attempting. Rest assured, however, that this is a safe procedure which can be carried out without much difficulty or skill.

What You’ll Need:

No special tools required

Procedure:

To Remove

Unscrew and remove the cap from the pen thereby exposing the nib and feed.

Placed the feed of the pen in the crook of the index finger of your non-dominant hand with the tip of the nib pointing towards the ground.

Take the thumb of that same hand and apply pressure to the top of the nib, thereby preventing the nib from shifting on the feed.

Now, with your dominant hand, turn the BARREL counterclockwise to unscrew the nib from the section (the nib itself should never move in your hand).

To Replace

To replace the nib or install a new nib, repeat the above steps, only this time turning the barrel clockwise.

Seat the nib firmly and securely in the section but there is no need to apply excessive torque. You want the feed snug but not over-tightened.

Pelikan nib removal

Discussion:

The procedure described above will work for any of Pelikan’s fountain pens that incorporate a removable nib with a threaded collar (note that not all do). This would include but not be limited to the 100, 100N, 101N, 120, 140, Ibis, 400, 400N, 400NN, all Souverän, and all Tradition series pens. Care should be taken to remove the nib in a safe environment and precautions put in place to minimize potential damage from dropping the nib. The above procedure can be performed in a pen filled with ink, what I term a “hot-swap” of the nib. The procedure is the same as described above except that the nib tip should be pointing up towards the sky or else you are liable to spill the ink from the reservoir. Once the new nib is installed, I gently advance the piston until a drop of ink comes out of the feed in order to prime the feed and nib for writing before retracting the piston back to its resting position. While it is true that no special tools are required for the removal of the nib, I will demonstrate in one of the videos below how to remove a nib should you have one of Pelikan’s nib removal tools on hand (sold with the MC110 and MC120 sets). While convenient, this is certainly not necessary nor is it worth searching out one for this sole purpose.

Pelikan Nib Removal Tool

Pelikan’s nib removal tool sold with MC110 and MC120 calligraphy sets

Special Considerations:

All nibs, both modern and vintage, can become stuck in the section. This is usually the result of an accumulation of dried ink which acts like cement or glue. The cure for this is repeated soaking of the nib, feed, and section as well as flushing the pen in order to dissolve any ink and free the feed. If there is any significant resistance to removal during step 4, I soak the nib. If necessary, I also employ a dilute ammonia solution to help with dissolution of any old ink. Failure to do so can result in damage. With nib removal, it never pays to be hasty. I also do not favor the application of heat routinely as this too often can be done incorrectly resulting in warping of the barrel. Ultrasonic cleaners have been employed with success but I would be very cautious as damage can occur, especially to vintage pens with prolonged exposure.

Vintage nibs from the 1950’s and 1960’s may have a polystyrene collar (clear plastic). Pens at risk for this would be the 400NN, 120, and 140. This collar becomes very brittle and is often found cracked. A nib/feed might twist and twist in place before pulling out leaving the collar stuck in the section. This is not uncommon on those models and needs to be handled with care. You can either attempt replacing the nib and feed into the collar but you may be prone to leaks in that scenario. In this situation, the collar most likely will need replacement. See my post on polystyrene collars for further information regarding this unique situation.

Vintage feeds with the longitudinal fins are made of ebonite, a type of plastic that can become brittle over time. These are very reliable feeds but are easily prone to cracking/chipping. If any significant torque is applied during removal of the nib, especially if the feed is stuck in the section, damage can occur. The fact that Pelikan had a special tool just for the removal of these nibs (now nearly impossible to find) should be very telling about their delicate nature. It is very important to soak these nibs thoroughly and exercise extra caution when removing. Rather than just the crook of my finger, I favor using a soft cloth or paper towel for added cushioning/protection but the procedure for removal is otherwise the same as described above. Due to the inherent risk of damage to the vintage ebonite, I try to refrain from removing vintage nibs unless absolutely necessary.

Modern and vintage Pelikan nib comparison

Left: Modern feed with horizontal fins. Right: Vintage feed with longitudinal fins

If I do have the nib out of a pen for any reason, I favor applying the smallest amount of pure silicone paste to the threads of the collar to prevent the nib assembly from ever seizing in the section should removal again become necessary in the future. I see no downside to this practice provided PURE silicone paste is used. Other products may contain petroleum which can damage plastics over time. This is completely optional and only a matter of preference.

How-To: Tighten a Loose Piston Knob

November 9, 2014

By Joshua

in How-To's

Tags: Fountain Pen, How-To's, Maintenance, Pelikan

1 Comment

Pelikan M200 Cognac and Amber Demonstrators

Left: Pelikan M200 Cognac Demonstrator, Right: Pelikan M200 Amber Demonstrator

From time to time, I plan to focus on simple ‘How-To’ pieces that address fixes and/or maintenance that can be undertaken by the pen enthusiast at home. Since I am not a pen repair professional, the advice that I convey should not be construed as coming from such and professional help should be sought for more advanced issues. I will focus on issues that arise from regular use which can be repaired with a certain degree of ease resulting in a high likelihood of success. My first such post was about lubricating the piston, perhaps the single most important maintenance a Pelikan piston filler would ever require. While thinking about this post, I recalled one question that I see asked fairly often and it has to do with a loose piston knob. While not necessarily affecting the function of the pen, it can be very disconcerting to an enthusiast who wants their pen to function according to factory specifications. This is a problem that can develop on some models, especially lower tier ones, owing to the fact that they more commonly have a friction fitted or snap fitted piston assembly. The normal behavior of the piston knob should be for it to sit securely against the barrel and not have any travel or play when the piston is in it’s fully retracted position. Please note that I am not discussing the normal 1/8th of a turn delay in piston engagement which is actually quite normal. What can happen though is that travel or play develops in the piston knob, even when the piston assembly is in the retracted position, keeping the knob from seating itself securely against the barrel.

Pelikan piston with friction fitting

Pelikan friction fitted piston assembly

Pens like the M101N’s, M800’s, M1000’s, as well as the Merz & Krell 400NN’s would not be subject to this phenomenon because they have threaded piston assemblies that aren’t likely to back out of the barrel. Pens that have friction fitted assemblies have ridges in the barrel which the piston assembly locks into. Examples would include but not be limited to the 400, 120, and 140. Pens of the M100 through M600 series have the more modern snap fit assembly. When the piston is actuated, as in the act of filling the pen, the piston can be over-extended which serves to push the piston assembly out of the back of the barrel. To avoid this problem, you should stop turning the piston knob immediately after the piston has reached the end of its downstroke. A very stiff piston secondary to a lack of lubrication or a frozen piston due to poor maintenance and dried ink can also cause this issue.

Pelikan M101N Piston Assembly

Threaded Pelikan M101N piston assembly

The ridges that facilitate the securing of the piston assembly inside the barrel can be damaged/sheared, sometimes irreparably. Also, a pen that has had the piston assembly removed for repair or service a few times can also become damaged. That is why I stress that it is rarely ever indicated to remove the piston assembly of a Pelikan (If doing so, however, be aware that I have seen differing opinions arguing the proper technique. Some say that piston assemblies have to be pushed out from the front and others recommend pulling an assembly out from the rear). There is a technique that can help fix the issue of a loose piston knob but I stress again that I am not a pen repair professional and that any damage that your pen may incur following the advice below, however unlikely, is your sole responsibility. If you have any concerns or doubts, you should seek out the services of an independent pen repair professional or the repair services of Pelikan themselves.

Pelikan Red M205

Red Pelikan M205. Arrow indicates direction of force to be applied to the piston knob

The Cure: With the piston knob in the retracted position (piston up), hold the barrel firmly in one hand (a non-slip material that helps provide sufficient grip comes in handy here) and push in on the back-end of the knob, pushing it towards the section. I recommend removing the nib if feasible in order to prevent any accidents. Hopefully this seats the assembly back into the barrel and solves the problem. If this does not re-seat the piston assembly, it may be that there is another problem at work or that the locking ridges may be sheared and thereby not providing sufficient grip of the assembly. In general, I would avoid any applications of heat by a novice as it can easily warp a barrel and render a pen damaged beyond repair.