

# Sights

Though most modifications mentioned in this article can be made by nearly any semi-mechanically inclined shooter. But installing new sights—especially front sights—properly takes a bit more skill.

The issue sights on a standard GM pistol are skimpy and difficult to target. You simply can't shoot to your full potential if you can't see them well enough to properly align them with the target.

Still, one needn't resort to a set of high-dollar competition sights to improve matters. A set of high-profile combat sights doesn't have to be expensive, but they will put you on target with greater speed and precision than the originals. Pick a style that suits your individual preference. There are lots from which to choose; plain black, three dot, dot and post, white outline and red ramp are among the more popular choices. We don't like red or other colored inserts on the front sight, because under some lighting conditions the front sight may disappear. A plain-black serrated ramp makes a good all-round front sight, but we like white dots best, either by themselves or in conjunction with a three-dot-style rear blade. The reason for this is that the white dot on the front sight virtually compels the eye to focus there. If you don't concentrate on the front sight, you can't make reliably consistent hits on target. Likewise, rear sights should be either plain black or with white dots on either side for a three-dot sight picture. We find white outlines and posts distracting to the eye.

Any pistol that will be carried on the person should have a rear sight with rounded edges to reduce the likelihood of hanging up on clothing. Only pistols used for formal bullseye work should have sights with squared edges. Hand-guns used for that purpose are normally kept in a pistol box and never carried on the hip.

Many brands of rear sight can be installed without opening the dovetail or drilling and tapping. Usually, they can be drifted out from right to left and replaced with a new one. If you expect to use several different types of ammo, an adjustable rear sight is probably the better option. These, too, are available without the need for gunsmithing. Those made by Millett are an excellent buy at \$55.60 for choices that include High Profile, Low Profile, and the Marksman style we prefer. Pachmayr's of very similar design go for \$67.50, but we don't see enough difference between the two to justify the additional cost. Those of either maker can be installed without resorting to professional help.

Novak's rear sights are, in our opinion, the best choice for a pistol that will be carried often. Both fully adjustable and fixed low-profile styles are available. Retailing for \$29.95, they provide an excellent sight picture. Their unique styling helps channel the shooter's line of sight directly to the front sight, where it belongs.

Installing a new front sight is a different matter. It requires removing the old one and staking the new one in place. Silver brazing may be required. This isn't a matter for the casual do-it-yourselfer. Leave this installation to the experts. Otherwise, the likelihood of having the front sight drop off at the most inopportune time is high.