

# BASIC PIPE & TOBACCO CARE GUIDE

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## INTRODUCTION

When I bought and smoked my first tobacco pipe in 1989, as a non-traditional undergrad at New Mexico State University, I was in my mid-20s. I looked more like someone who should have been working on his doctoral thesis during those early days of my love affair with the pipe. Back in the day, the pipe indeed was a comfort now and then in fleeting moments between the 16-hour-per-week class-load I carried as well as working full-time as a reporter for the campus and community newspapers and graveyards waiting table at a greasy spoon. The fact is, in those insane days I hardly had time to light up much less get a good char going.

But even then, there were frequent friendly comments, from other students of all ages, such as, “You look good with that pipe,” or “I’ve always wondered what it tastes like! Could I try?” [Sharing a pipe with someone with whom you are not intimate, by the way, is a pipe faux pas.] And, specifically from some of the boys, “Dude, do you ever, like, fill ’er up with diesel [*not the truck fuel*] and, like, put the pedal down and like go on down the road?” Without fail, however, all ice-breakers aside, there would come the inevitable introspective look, followed by the accidental bright smile and moment when they would *all* blurt the honest truth: “The smell reminds me of my grandfather [*or father, interchangeable*].” They would then try to cover their perceived gaffs with unnatural laughter or just flushing in the face and starting to walk away, but I made a point of saying, “Same here.” After all, both my father and grandfather were pipe smokers, as no doubt were theirs, and they are all long-lived!

The point of this lengthy lead-in is to illustrate how some things never change, except to become more prevalent. I still carry a pipe and tobacco with me almost everywhere I go, whether I end up smoking or talking about it to folks of all ages who would have remained complete strangers – and their fathers and grandfathers still find their ways into the reminiscences, although these days it tends to be right off the bat. You see, I’m now old enough to have fathered or even – Heaven forbid! – grandfathered many of them! And the best part is that on occasion, I have the pleasure of selling some hardcore cigarette smokers a good tobacco pipe with a sample to start them out – and see them lose the coffin nails altogether. BTW, for the cynical out there, the pleasure isn’t in selling a \$40-\$50 pipe for \$10-\$20 and throwing in a baggie of good tobacco; it’s in the pleasure on their faces when they try it out the first time or tell me how they quit cigarettes.

*With the preceding thoughts in mind, the following list is aimed for complete or relative newcomers to pipe enjoying and experienced pipe men or women alike.* Although these guidelines may seem obvious when read in cold, hard type, we have witnessed people with years of experience committing many of the **Don’ts** without a thought, and by the same token first-timers who grasp the **Do’s** as if by second nature.

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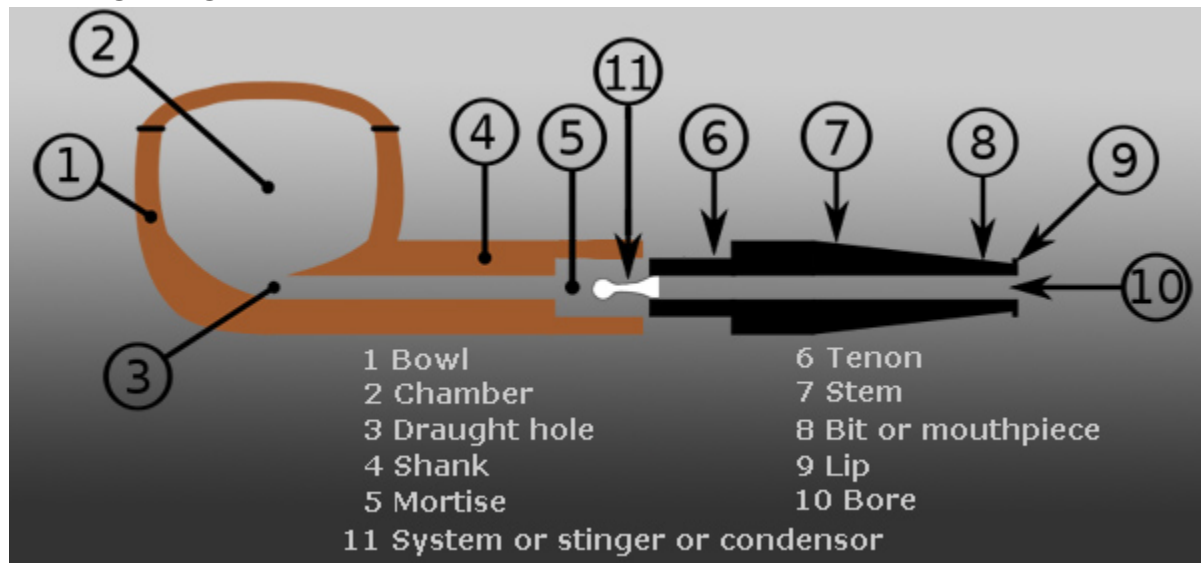
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## ANATOMY OF A PIPE



Courtesy Peterson of Dublin

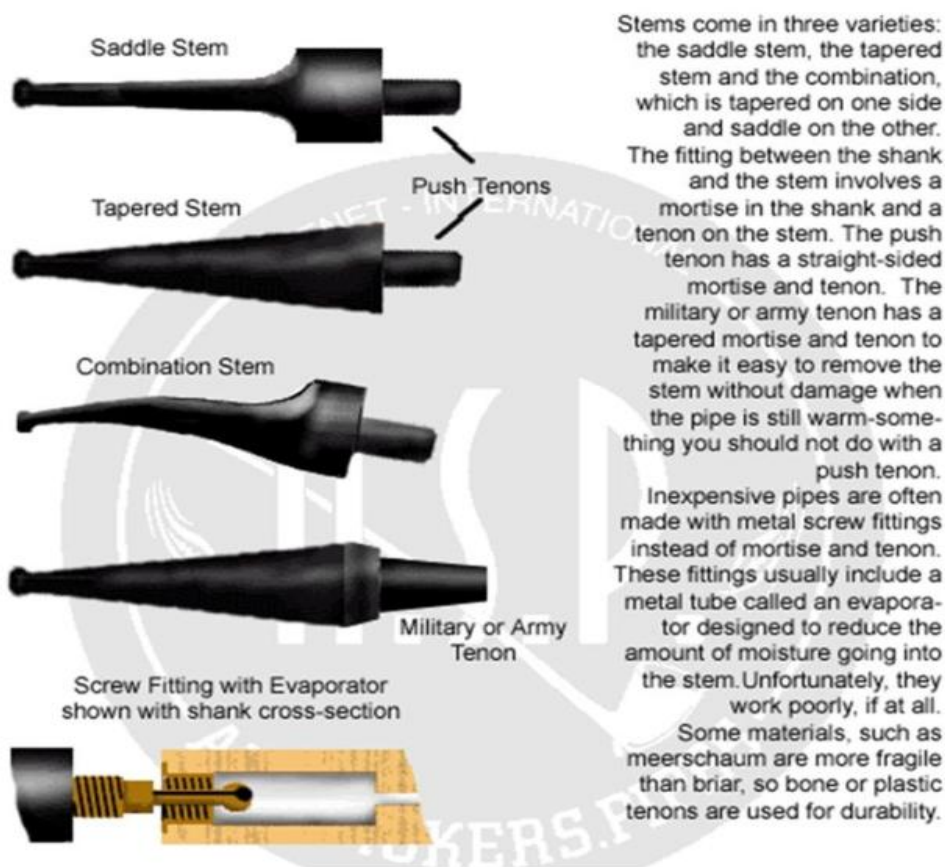
For a comprehensive list of pipe and tobacco related terminology, see the *Smokingpipes.com Glossary* (of words particular to pipe smoking).<sup>1</sup>

- **Stem (7):** The various names for the part of the pipe that is placed in the mouth and includes the entire piece from button to tenon. Stems are most often made of Vulcanite or Ebonite, different forms of rubber, although Ebonite resists oxidizing with age. Other stem materials include acrylic (Lucite), higher quality plastic available in translucent or colored. Stems are most often made of Vulcanite (black) or Ebonite (the natural blackness of which can be altered with various colors and patterns). Both are hardened, more durable varieties that do not oxidize; nylon; regular, cheap plastic more prevalent in the most inexpensive of pipes; real amber, red, yellow or orange, brittle and formed from the fossilization of ancient pine trees, and rare in most pipes made after the early 20<sup>th</sup> century; Bakelite, a condensation of phenol or its variations combined with formaldehyde into a synthetic form of plastic, and even wood such as cherry or bamboo.
- **Bore (10):** Through this airhole in the stem, the smoke is drawn back to the taste-bud before being exhaled, unlike cigarettes.
- **Button (9):** Also called the lip, this is the part of the stem with top and bottom ridges to keep the entire pipe from slipping out of the mouth. And of course, there are different varieties of button types: standard, fishtail, p-lip (named for its inventor, Charles Peterson of the famous Dublin crafter), denture, wide comfort, regular (single bore), double bore and double comfort. The last two, with pairs of small holes for drawing the tobacco smoke, are designed to be bite-resistant.
- **Bit, or mouthpiece (8):** The area where the teeth should hold lightly.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.smokingpipes.com/smokingpipesblog/glossary.cfm>

- **Tenon (6):** The narrow end of the stem and made of Vulcanite/Ebonite, plastic, delrin, acrylic, metal and plastic – and even, in very old pipes, bone – that twists or screws into the shank and acts as a sort of filter. Note: some pipes have reverse tenons built into the shanks that twist or screw into the stem and may or may not be removable for cleaning.
- **Shank (4):** The extension from the bowl with an airway – in general round, triangular or almost flat – connecting the bit and bowl.
- **Mortise (5):** The wider opening of the shank where the bit is inserted.
- **Draught hole (3):** The narrow hole in the shank from the mortise entry to the bottom of the chamber.
- **Bowl (1):** The outer area of the wood or other material used to fashion this primary part of the pipe, inside of which is placed the tobacco
- **Chamber (2):** The formal name for the inside of the bowl, where the tobacco is loaded.

Below are some more useful charts dealing with basic stem varieties and pipe shapes. Keep in mind, no list is complete given the evolving world of pipe enjoying!



Stems come in three varieties: the saddle stem, the tapered stem and the combination, which is tapered on one side and saddle on the other. The fitting between the shank and the stem involves a mortise in the shank and a tenon on the stem. The push tenon has a straight-sided mortise and tenon. The military or army tenon has a tapered mortise and tenon to make it easy to remove the stem without damage when the pipe is still warm-something you should not do with a push tenon. Inexpensive pipes are often made with metal screw fittings instead of mortise and tenon. These fittings usually include a metal tube called an evaporator designed to reduce the amount of moisture going into the stem. Unfortunately, they work poorly, if at all. Some materials, such as meerschaum are more fragile than briar, so bone or plastic tenons are used for durability.

*Basic Stem Varieties, courtesy Steve Laug's Reborn Pipes*

### Kaywoodie Shapes (1968-69)



### Kaywoodie Pipe Shapes Chart

As you begin perusing these basic **Do's** and **Don'ts** of pipe and tobacco care, recline in a soft, cushioned chair or somewhere comforting but not too much (*see "Safety, 1"*), with a pipe filled with good tobacco, and don't worry how far you get the first sitting. *This is not a set of rules to be memorized at once; there will be no test when you finish, at your own speed.* The intent of making an ever-changing guide for connoisseurs of pipes and their plentiful varieties of tobaccos is to provides a handy source of information to consult as needed.

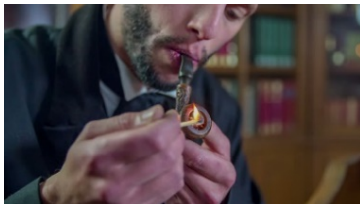
### LOADING THE CHAMBER

**DO:** Try to fill the chamber with tobacco using this three-step method. First, fill the bottom third of the bowl loosely (baby's touch), then the middle third using a firmer hand (mama's touch) and finally a still firmer hand (papa's touch) to top it off, tamping

the last until it springs back a little about an eighth of an inch below the rim, but not so firmly as to create a tight draw. This approach with a little practice should result in a good initial charring light and then, after tamping the first thin layer of ash, a more lasting one. The desired result is a thorough, even burning of the tobacco throughout the smoke. Still, re-lighting and occasional tamping are natural, similar to cigars, due to the greater moisture compared to other tobaccos, virtual lack of unnatural additives and general superior quality compared to cigarettes – and the contemplative nature of savoring a pipe.

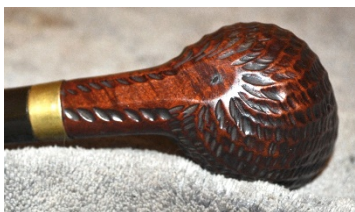
***DON'T:*** *Almost never* stuff or cram all of the tobacco into the chamber. Doing so is almost certain to prevent lighting at all or cause the tobacco to stop burning due to lack of oxygen, and, if forced to light, often results in a wet, harsh taste and a backwash of brackish spittle, also referred to as dottle. *The exceptions are certain relatively rare blends prepared to be sold dry and not be hydrated, two of which come to mind, although neither lends itself to the average beginner: Daughters & Ryan Rimboché S.J., a ribbon cut Virginia/Perique (VaPer) that is mild to medium after acquiring the taste for it, and Scandinavian Tobacco Group Five Brothers, a pure, unadulterated birds-eye shag cut burley mix that makes no apologies for its notorious, head-spinning, stomach churning, corporal punishment style wallop and nicotine hit that is arguably among the very strongest pipe tobaccos sold (not to mention the necessity of extreme patience to build a tolerance for its headiness and appreciation of the wonderful, nutty, 100% wicked burley taste). Super dry blends like these can be shoved into the chamber as hard and carelessly as you like, to a point of course.*

## **LIGHTING THE PIPE**



***The perfect match light courtesy Shutterstock.***

***DO:*** Always try to light the tobacco with matches or a special lighter, designed for pipes, that aims the flame directly into the chamber. If necessary, an average lighter such as a Bic can be used, with care to keep the flame in the chamber to avoid rim burning.



***The perfect hole in a Briarlee from overheating***

***DON'T:*** *Never, ever* use a cigar lighter, also known for good reason as a torch, to light pipe tobacco. The chamber will develop burnouts, or holes through the bowl, from the intense heat of the cigar torch. Even with a pipe lighter or Bic, careless use will burn the rim.

## **SAVORING THE PIPE**

***DO:*** *Remember the pipe is not a cigarette and should not be inhaled!* The tricky part is in drawing the smoke into your mouth, sometimes all the way to the taste buds which are most prominent on the back of the tongue and roof of the mouth, to discover the full mixture of flavors of a fine tobacco blend. This ability comes with practice and learning to close your throat. The ability to inhale and exhale through your nose with a pipe in your mouth will become habit, and it is clear you are doing so when the embers in the chamber don't glow red and a little plume of smoke doesn't rise from the still-lit tobacco. I have noticed a peculiar automatic physical reaction, like one of those

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annoying dexterity tricks only in this case good, caused when my teeth are clamped on the stem and I inhale through my nose: the back of my throat closes by reflex. I have no idea what this phenomenon is called but try it. Of course, just as there are folks who are double-jointed or otherwise able to perform atypical physical feats such as the party game variety to which I alluded, some may not be suited for this practice.

***DON'T:*** As inhaling pipe smoke will make all but the most devil-may-care old-timer cough violently and indeed become quite sick, it's simple: *just say no to inhaling!* Pipes are by far preferable to cigarettes for the reasons that they are not to be inhaled and the absence of the poisonous, addictive chemicals infused in cigarettes (a.k.a. coffin nails, cancer sticks).

## **SAFETY**

### **1. SMOKING WHEN YOU'RE DROWSY**

What can be said on that subject we haven't all heard? Okay, then, at the risk of sounding preachy, let's try this. The National Fire Protection Association<sup>2</sup> summed up smoking-related "damages" with these concise, impartial words: ***"Smoking materials, including cigarettes, pipes, and cigars, started an estimated 17,200 home structure fires reported to U.S. fire departments in 2014. These fires caused 570 deaths, 1,140 injuries and \$426 million in direct property damage."***

***DO:*** If you are tired or relaxed enough to the point where you yawn as that voice in the back of your head whispers, "I'd sure like a nap," by all means, take one! It's cool to listen to that voice; it's not a sign of dementia or schizophrenia. Put your pipe aside and push that recliner all the way back, lie down on the sofa or bed, close your eyes and give in to what your body is telling you. It's not rocket science, yet we all choose to ignore the voice at times, even though the consequence can be as explosive as the engineering, physics and mathematics career just mentioned.

***DON'T:*** Never, never, never (there's that darned preaching again) tune the voice out and light up, in particular given the greatest appeal of pipe enjoyment, that being its relaxing, meditative inducements. If your eyes are drooping already, it's hardly time to relax more with a beautiful, shapely specimen of wood or meerschaum or clay or what-have-you loaded to the rim with smoldering embers of tobacco leaf. And BTW, if the numbers of various "damages" cited above seem small enough to risk it, think again. They represent only the U.S., and only the *estimated home structure* fires caused by smoking, and only those that resulted in conclusive determinations. Don't kid yourself that "it will never happen to me." Everyone thinks that until the unimaginable strikes.

### **2. EMPTYING ASH AND TOBACCO**

***DO:*** Holding the pipe upside-down by the bit with one hand, gently tap the shank against the other hand to release the ash and unsmoked tobacco into an appropriate receptacle, such as an ashtray. A small, spoon-like scoop on one end with a tamper on the other, for purposes of loosening remaining contents of the chamber and tamping the tobacco in the chamber, is often needed to complete the task and is very inexpensive,

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li <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/By-topic/Top-causes-of-fire/Smoking>

even in the more elaborate three-piece variety.



***DON'T:*** As hard as it may be to overcome the common habit, never bang or even tap the rim against a hard object. This will, sooner or later, leave chips and dings on the rim and upper bowl and can lead to cracks in the bowl and/or shank and even more serious damage such as bending the tenon or even breaking the shank.



Special ashtrays for pipes have large pieces of cork that are safe to tamp the pipe. Also, never empty the spent ash and tobacco into an unsafe receptacle, including trash cans and paper bags, because of the risk of resulting fire.

### **CLEANING THE PIPE**

***DO:*** Always wait until the pipe is cool before removing the bit and cleaning the pipe to avoid breaking the tenon, bit or shank. Gently remove the bit, holding the stummel (the bowl and shank) firmly in one hand, and steadily turning the bit until the tenon is clear. In some cases, the bit may be so tight it will not turn. If that happens, try the same disassembly method above, but instead rotate the stummel.

**Standard (soft), bristled, extra fluffy and churchwarden pipe cleaners are among the few absolute necessities for pipe care. They are vital for regular removal of moisture and other accretions from the pipe stem as well as the inner shank and start at about \$2 for a pack of 35. Walgreen's sells three-packs at a great savings but might only have the bristled kind. As always, tobacconists are the best bet.** Use regular cleaners on most pipes, which have large enough airways in the bits to fit the soft cleaner, in particular when soaked with alcohol for periodic deeper cleaning. Also, moisture and detritus in the shank all the way to the draught hole at the bottom of the chamber are absorbed better by the regular or extra fluffy cleaners, and the wire from the bristled variety can wear grooves in the bottoms of meerschaum and clay chambers in particular. That said, there are exceptions to almost every rule and times when a fluffy cleaner just won't fit through the bit or shank. And so, keep some bristly cleaners on hand for those situations!

A paper towel is good to clean the chambers of all pipes so as not to remove the desired 1mm of uniform cake. These steps can be done every time the pipe is used, but should not be avoided, on average, more than every two or three times the pipe is enjoyed. And, whether or not you find yourself putting off cleaning your pipes, a great way to lessen moisture and crud blockage that can cause the pieces of the pipe to become stuck together is to invest in an older style of pipe stand that stores them upside-down – or better yet, make a simple shop-style one yourself.



*A note on filters:* dispose of any separate filter you might use in some tenons as needed and insert a fresh replacement when finished cleaning the pipe. The need for filters is disputed and depends on personal preference, and when they are saturated the user will be aware from the typical foul taste and gurgling of the draw. They come in several varieties: Dr. Grabow paper types that fit most U.S. made pipes designed for such use, including corn cobs; the Medico 66-baffle paper system that is interchangeable with the Grabows; Savinelli balsa strips; 9mm options for larger bores such as many European pipes, not made for export to the U.S. and still other, more elaborate models.<sup>3</sup>

The most common reason for a filter being useful in a pipe is with those made for use in Europe that include tenons designed expressly for 9mm filters. Note the two Peterson pipes in the following photo both have 9mm shank openings, but the 2017 St. Pat's Day B56 Chimney on the left with the narrowed tenon end to accommodate U.S. export and the Sherlock Holmes Professor with the matching tenon opening that keeps Peterson's friends across the Pond happier. I ordered the Professor (Moriarty) from an old shop in Bedford, England.



Most knowledgeable pipe enthusiasts, who tend to have collections, also recommend a “cooling-off” period after smoking a single pipe several times so that the flavor of the

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.tobaccopipes.com/pipe-filters/>



tobacco is at its best and without any brackishness. The length of time between smoking a given pipe is a matter of intense debate. Therefore, as a rule of thumb, get to know your pipe(s) to decide how long is needed for yours. Still other supplies for pipe cleaning, including liquid solutions and wire brushes, are inexpensive.<sup>4</sup> Screens of the kind used for pipes made for smoking alternative ingredients should be unnecessary if the tobacco pipe is well engineered and maintained.

***DON'T: Failing to clean the pipe regularly can cause the bit and shank to become filled with saliva, tobacco juice and other wet, sticky, harsh substances leading to an unpleasant pipe experience as well as gunky parts – not to mention greater cake buildup and, ultimately, the need for professional cleaning. Never use a makeshift object, such as a pencil, screwdriver, paper clip or anything else that can break the wood and other material of the pipe or become lodged in any part of it. This is a common way to disable or destroy a good pipe and cause great grief.***

Although small, specialized blades are available, they should be avoided by those not practiced in their use. Regular knives or other sharp objects are not at all appropriate to clear away excess cake buildup in the chamber. Gouges in the chamber can lead to burnouts if smoked before repairing, as one example of potential problems. Consult your local tobacconist, who will likely do it for you at no charge.

If you feel an overwhelming need to rid the chamber of unwanted cake yourself, use a reamer designed for the purpose, careful to leave the 1mm or so of cake. They are available online at reasonable prices and various types. Don't twist the bit in a back and forth manner as this creates friction and heat that over time damages the pipe. *Do not force the separation! Again, consult your local tobacconist for help or advice!* I know ways to deal with this situation but feel it advisable not to mention them here so as not to be blamed for any resulting damage to a wonderful pipe should the reader employ the wrong measure.

## **MAINTAINING PURITY OF TASTE**

***DO:*** If your standard briar pipe has not been cleaned on a regular basis long enough for the bit and shank to become congested or clogged with tobacco or a dark mixture of saliva, tar and other foul liquid combinations, you can dip as many pipe cleaners as are necessary in Everclear 190-proof alcohol (where available) and run them through the bit and shank until they come out relatively clean. Everclear, a brand of ethanol (rectified spirit, the type from which drinking alcohol is made) is the best type for this process, as it is very strong and dries faster. However, Everclear isn't available everywhere, so unflavored and colorless high-proof vodka is a good alternative. The only rectified spirit stronger than Everclear is Spirytus Vodka from Poland, at 192-proof (the absolute – no pun intended – highest purity) and can be found for \$15.99/375 ml compared to \$11.99

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.amazon.com/s/?ie=UTF8&keywords=smoking+pipe+cleaning+kit&tag=googhydr-20&index=aps&hvadid=174206362244&hvpos=1t1&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=7103581549203829085&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=e&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9030456&hvtargid=kwd-32571872453&ref=pd\\_sl\\_10ny7q1omm\\_e](https://www.amazon.com/s/?ie=UTF8&keywords=smoking+pipe+cleaning+kit&tag=googhydr-20&index=aps&hvadid=174206362244&hvpos=1t1&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=7103581549203829085&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=e&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9030456&hvtargid=kwd-32571872453&ref=pd_sl_10ny7q1omm_e)

for Everclear. Even 92% isopropyl alcohol is an acceptable alternative that can be obtained almost anywhere inexpensively.

***DON'T:*** Do not use methyl, propyl or butyl alcohol, which are for laboratory and industrial purposes, to clean any part of a pipe. ***These other types of alcohol are poisonous and often lead to blindness and death.*** Do not use anything with more than a very small alcohol content to clean Lucite, or acrylic, bits as well as softer woods such as cherry. Alcohol can and will cause warping of bit substances other than Vulcanite. In particular, never use regular strength alcohol to clean the shank or chamber of meerschaums (which, by the way, often come with acrylic bits). Instead, use pipe sweetener, or freshener. [See again endnote ii.] The Castleford brand has worked well for me but is blue and therefore should not be allowed to touch the outer bowl and shank, so as not to discolor the porous material.

### **CHOOSING YOUR PIPE**

***DO:*** Choose your pipe, in particular the first time, based on three easy factors: *aesthetic (personal appreciation of beauty), mechanical and financial*. The most important of these is the first, being your own, very personal attraction to the pipe. These marvelous instruments of relaxation and deep thought come in many different styles, shapes, sizes and materials. Styles include full-bent, bent, straight and sitters, to name some. Then there are natural (smooth), carved, rusticated and sandblasted finishes. The shapes are numerous including classics such as the apple, billiard, brandy, bulldog/Rhodesian, calabash, Cherrywood (both the wood and one style of sitter), churchwarden and Dublin. Then there is the Danish freehand with the plateau (rough top) rim, and all sorts of artisan pipes by independent makers, some of which defy description and can only be called freehand. Find one that *you* like, not something you believe is “cool” or will impress your friends and others – unless, of course, all these conditions are met! You will be the only person who smokes the pipe, and so yours is the only opinion that matters.

Mechanical considerations involve the over-all construction and engineering of the inner pipe. The entire, narrow passage for air and smoke should line up. The best test is to see if you can run a cleaner without trouble all the way through the pipe, from the opening in the button to the draught hole and into the chamber, while it is assembled. This is the sign of a well-engineered pipe, whether it be a no-name Italian or a brand name. Without getting into particular makers, there is a certain venerable company, on a European island country, with a well-deserved reputation for quality pipes that nevertheless sometimes tend to be buggers when put to this test, even disassembled. In other words, the name and price don't guarantee the level of engineering. Also, any pipe with a cheap plastic bit is a good sign of one to avoid. Lucite is a high-quality plastic found on many fine pipes, although Vulcanite and Ebonite are the standards. The bit should fit the pipe, neither too loose nor tight, and should be flush all around with the shank.

The key is the look and feel of the pipe in your hand and whether it passes the mechanical tests. This brings me to the ever-wider availability of “estate” pipes, which were once owned and enjoyed by previous, unknown pipers. Many of these provide the

opportunity to obtain an excellent, collectible pipe that might otherwise be out of your price range, at a very low price. The catch is that you need to trust that the person who restored a given estate pipe did so with skill and care to ensure the absence of flaws as well as thorough cleaning and sanitation, the methods of which I will forego explaining here.<sup>5</sup>

Of course, the right estate pipe bought online from an eBay or other seller can be worth the cost of cleaning if need be.

***One final note on this subject: always scrutinize a pipe, new or used, for any cracks, in the bowl, shank or bit!*** Enough said about that.

**DON'T:** As I have already indicated, price is not a necessary part of the pipe choice decision. Affordability, of course, is. Price ranges for new pipes, name brand or otherwise, are about \$45-\$100 low-end, as much as \$250 mid-level and anywhere into five digits high-end. If you can afford more, by all means invest in a brand pipe that really grabs you – but not with the thought that the price makes the pipe!

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**



***Double pipe and tobacco day pouch courtesy bixlife on eBay***

**DO:** Returning at last to the Introduction, where I discussed taking a pipe and tobacco almost everywhere I go, remember that even the biggest, sturdiest tobacco pipe, or the opposite, a corn cob, is an object of beauty and utility, regardless of the price. A tobacco pipe is at once easy to break but fashioned to last for generations with proper care. Always keep your pipes clean and secure at home. Should you decide to take one or two outside with you, a rule of thumb I've heard and practiced is not choosing the best for what could turn into a

misadventure for the pipe. Store and transport them with that care in mind. Padded travel pouches made of leather and less expensive materials are available for \$10 and up – and up and up and up – as well as boxes. If it came with a sleeve and/or box, keep it there and in a safe place when not in use.

**DON'T:** If the **DO's** of this part of the guide haven't yet drilled it in, do not store or carry a pipe anywhere without respectful protection. Chafing, scratching, dirtying, overheating or unintended falling to the ground are likely results. Like DVDs, pipes are easily damaged, in particular, for example, if they are left near a home heating device or in a motor vehicle.

**DO:** The same rule applies to the tobacco, which dries out faster the warmer its storage place may be. The pouches described above are good for day use but even then may need a hydrating stone soaked in distilled or purified water to keep the tobacco fresh. Various sized small jars available at stores like Walmart, individually or in flats, are great for preserving the moisture of tobaccos. Small printed mailing labels can be placed on the side of the jar to describe the tobacco in it, or the information can be written on the lid or label with an indelible marker. However, if your goal is to set aside

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.smokingpipes.com/information/howto/selecting.cfm>

tobacco to let it age (called cellaring, from the ideal storage location), transferring the contents of a tin or other package to a jar will not do the trick. *To age tobacco, either leave it in the original vacuum-packed container or put it in a durable special baggie and vacuum-pack it yourself.* You can write the brand and name of the tobacco and the date it was made if known, or the date packed, on the baggie with an indelible marker.<sup>1</sup> Whether you keep your tobacco in the original package or a jar, if it becomes dry, it can always be rehydrated by various methods, including my personal favorite, the Hydrostone or variations. Soak the stone in purified water for about ten minutes and then place it in the package. The dryer the tobacco, the longer the rehydration will require – from hours to days. In extreme cases, re-soaking the stone may be necessary as many times as it takes.

***DON'T:*** If you do not use a specific blend very quickly, once the seal is broken it tends to dry out in the original package even if it is stored in a place that is cool. And so, it's a good idea to invest in the glass jars and always store your tobacco in a cool location (but as with coffee, not a refrigerator).

***DO:*** Enjoy your pipe. Puff it as you would sip fine liquor or another special beverage.

***DON'T:*** Refrain from rapid, constant puffing like a locomotive. This will overheat the tobacco and hence the pipe. Not to kick a dead horse, but again, the higher the temperature of the tobacco and pipe, the more probable that damage such as burnouts, cracks, large pocks in the chamber and other irreversible harm will befall your pipe. No pipe, including the time-honored corn cob, need be considered disposable.

Love and protect your pipe by taking the above simple precautions. Any pipe, no matter how generic, will serve you long and well if you do the same for it, and the pleasure and satisfaction you will receive in return are priceless. But don't sweat it. In almost no time, all of this and more will become second nature.

Some of us are in the business of selling, cleaning, refurbishing and restoring neglected pipes and see more than anyone should of the abuses inflicted on these wonderful works of craftsmanship for quiet enjoyment. Therefore, we have nothing to gain by promoting the constant care of potential customers' pipes...except for the satisfaction of seeing well-maintained examples.

## ***THE BEGINNING***

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