DIY Holster Instructions

Thank you for your purchase of this Exarchy Holster Co. DIY (Do-It-Yourself) holster kit. This kit comes with everything you need to make your own holster. This kit includes the same materials of which we make our top-of-line holsters. Whether you are an avid DIYer, like to save money, or just wanted a weekend project, we hope that you enjoy making your holster!

Depending on the holster model purchased, your kit includes the following:

1. **Leather backer in either horse hide or cow hide**
2. **Kydex sheet to form to your firearm (Gun Plus One model includes two Kydex sheets)**
3. **Hardware for attaching the Kydex to the leather backer**
    a. **QTY. 7: 8-32 Screw posts (.5")**
    b. **QTY. 7: 8-32 Screws (.5")**
    c. **QTY. 7 .5" Rubber Spacers for adjustable retention**
    d. **QTY. 9 Finish washers**
    e. **QTY. 3 .375" Screws (for mounting the belt belts)**
    f. **QTY. 3 .125" Rubber spacers (for mounting the belt clips)**
    g. **QTY. 3 .0625" Rubber Spacers for fine tuning retention (if needed)**
    h. **QTY. 3 .128" Screw Posts**
    i. **QTY. 1 VC-3 Threadlocker (to prevent hardware from loosening over time)**
4. **QTY. 2 Belt Clips (for IWB models only)**

    Note: Not all of the hardware is needed and you should end up with spare hardware in case you lose some hardware and need to replace it. If you need additional hardware, in the event you've lost your spare hardware, it can be purchased from Exarchy Holster Co.

Tools and other materials that may be needed:

1. #2 Phillips head screwdriver (for securing the hardware and clips)
2. Sandpaper (220, 320, 400, 600 grits) for finishing the Kydex edges
3. Drill with 1/4 inch drill bit for drilling holes in Kydex shell
4. ¼" Leather punch (economical punches can be purchased at Hobby Lobby or similar craft stores, Tandy Leather, or Amazon). If you do not have a leather punch you can use a drill bit, but the hole will not be clean)
5. Hammer
6. Pencil, pen, chalk, or awl for marking Kydex and leather
7. Heat Source for heating the Kydex sheet. You can use a heat gun (typically on a lower setting), or a toaster oven.
8. Safety equipment: Ear and eye protection as well as a mask (respirator) to keep from breathing Kydex or leather dust and fumes if you are dying your leather backer. Leather gloves to protect your hands.
9. Wooden dowel, scrap leather, or wood for blocking sight channel and controls, as necessary.
10. Wooden blocks (¼" to ½" thick, 6-8" in length)
11. Blue painters tape (Recommended: Scotch Blue #2090)
12. Chalk or pencil to draw shape on Kydex and mark holes to drill

13. Saw (hand saw or scroll saw) and a Dremel type rotary tool with sanding drums. If you do not have a saw, you can use a straight edge and utility knife to make rough cuts on the Kydex)
14. Optional: Infrared thermometer to check the temp of your Kydex sheet. This will help insure the proper temp is reached and even across the sheet. We typically recommend 375 degrees (F).
15. Optional: Closed cell foam for pressing the Kydex shell. Homemade presses can be built out of a variety of materials (wood/metal). You can also use wood working clamps. Closed cell foam can be purchased from Holstersmith.com or Amazon, if needed.

STEP 1: Safety

1. Remove all ammunition from the firearm and magazine before preparing the firearm for forming your holster.
2. Use your personal protection gear as appropriate for each step. (Eye and ear protection, gloves, mask, etc.)

   Note: For polymer frame firearms, you should complete the forming process with an empty magazine in the gun to prevent any damage to your firearm in the event you apply excessive force during the forming process.

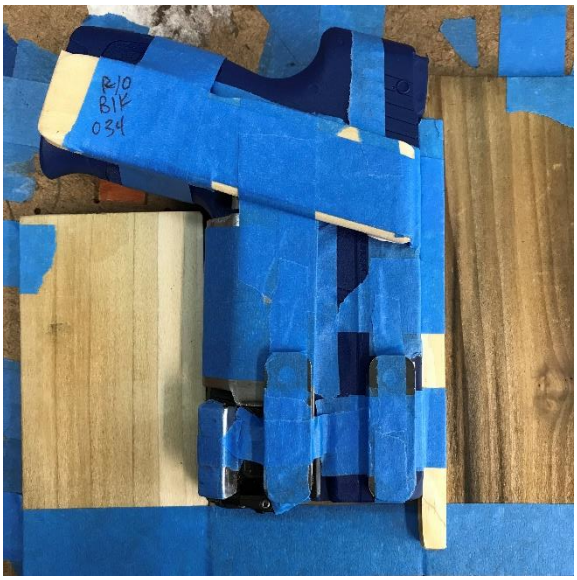
STEP 2: Firearm Preparation

1. You will need to prepare your firearm for forming your Kydex shell. This includes things like blocking out firearm controls, take down levers, magazine releases, sights, etc. You can do this using a variety of methods and materials.
2. Sight Channel: This is necessary to holster and draw the firearm without the sights hanging up on the Kydex shell. We've found that using a craft wood .25"x.25" stick works well for most sight channels and the wood will not scratch the firearm finish. You will need to adjust the size of the wooden stick or dowel to be slightly taller than your sights, if you have tall/suppressor height sights. Use blue painters tape to secure the dowel/wooden rod to the firearm.
3. Firearm controls: It is only necessary to block out the controls on the side that you will be forming a mold of with the Kydex. For example, for a right hand holster, you only need to block out controls (as necessary) on the right side of the gun. Controls that may need to be blocked out include the take down lever/pin, safety, magazine release, ejection port, etc. Any portion of the firearm that could create additional retention or a snag point when drawing from the holster. Most firearms it is only necessary to block out/fill the ejection port on right hand holsters. Left hand holsters will require more preparation because most firearms have takedown levers/pins on the left side of the gun that need to be dealt with prior to forming your Kydex shell. You will also need to decide how you will address the magazine release. You can either cover the mag release with the Kydex shell or expose the mag release during the finishing process. It is important to envision your finished Kydex shell when prepping the firearm so you can prepare the firearm correctly.
4. Trigger Guard: We recommend taping over the trigger guard area to prevent the Kydex from going too deep into the trigger guard. This is optional and can always be adjusted after the

Kydex shell is formed and the holster is assembled.

5. Magazine preparation: If you are forming a magazine carrier, you will need to make a few accommodations to insure that your magazine fits properly and draws smoothly from the holster. You will need to make sure that snag points are covered/blocked out. This is simple on most magazines and usually involves some blue painters tape over the magazine release notch.
6. Optional: We recommend using ½" thick wooden spacers around the gun on a flat surface to prevent the Kydex from being formed around the entire width of the firearm. You can purchase this wood at Home Depot or Lowes in the craft wood lumber section. You can trace (and then cut the wood around) the trigger guard and dust cover to form the wood around the firearm. You can also use this wood (1/4") to make a flared opening in the top of the holster. This will provide for easier holstering of the firearm.

Photo 1 shows prepped firearm with wood spacers around edges to form only half of firearm with Kydex.



STEP 3: Forming the Kydex Shell

1. Place the firearm on a secure level surface. We recommend forming only half the guns width using the Kydex shell (imagine a line down the center of the gun slide in line with the sights, and down the middle of the grip and trigger guard. Forming only half the guns width will allow you to use the included rubber spacers for retention adjustment after the shell is mounted to the leather backer.
2. Gather the necessary supplies, such as gloves, foam, etc., needed for pressing the heated Kydex against the firearm.
3. If you are using a foam press or other type of press, make sure it is prepped and ready for the firearm prior to heating the Kydex.

4. Heat the Kydex with heat gun, toaster oven, or other heat source. Temp range should be 365-375 degrees (F). Make sure not to heat one area of the Kydex more than others as the Kydex will develop a “burn” spot and become shinny. Try to heat the Kydex as evenly as possible. It should be very limp when placing it on the firearm from forming. Note: DO NOT expose your firearm to the heat source, such as a heat gun or toaster oven. Heat the Kydex and then place the heated Kydex on the firearm.
5. Place heated Kydex on firearm and apply pressure (using foam, gloved hands, etc.) This step should be done as quickly as possible because the Kydex cools quickly and will make it hard to form around the firearm.
6. You can use objects to help press against the gun in key areas, such as the outer edges and trigger guard (if not using a press of some type). Doing this will help make sure the Kydex is fitted more closely to the firearm.

Photo 2 shows Kydex shell formed and rough design with hole placement.

STEP 4: Finishing the Kydex Shell

1. Plan you shape prior to cutting and draw on the Kydex to give yourself a line to follow. You will also need to decide on the shape/look of the top and bottom of the holsters shell. You can leave the bottom open by cutting off the closed end. This may be necessary to accommodate a threaded barrel or compensator in the future. We typically make our holsters closed bottom to prevent dust and debris from contacting the firearm.
2. Cut the rough shape of your Kydex shell, using a hand saw, scroll saw or Dremel. We recommend drawing a line on either side of the Kydex mold roughly ¾” inches from the guns shape. See photos below.

3. Finish the shaping with a Dremel and sanding drum. Note: You can use the finishing washers supplied with the kit to determine where your mounting holes will be prior to finalizing the shell's shape.
4. Hand sand the edges suing the sandpaper. Start with 220, 320, 400, and finally 600 grit. Make sure to get all deep gouges out with the 220 grit before moving to the next grit.
5. Polish the edges by rubbing vigorously with a microfiber (or similar) cloth.

Photo 3 shows finished Kydex edges and rubber spacers for retention adjustment.

STEP 5: Mark and Drill Holes

1. Mark the Kydex shell mounting point holes. We recommend three mounting points on either side of the firearm (6 total). Use the finishing washers supplied with the kit to determine proper spacing away from the molded corners of the Kydex shell.
2. Use a straight edge to make sure all of the holes line up properly. This will help give your holster a nice finished look.
3. Drill the holes using a ¼" drill bit (Brad point bits work well for this step)
4. If you have a countersink bit you can use it to clean up the edges of the holes.

See photo next page for example.

Photo 4 shows example of where holes should be placed in Kydex shell. (white dots)

STEP 6: Mounting your Kydex shell to the Leather Backer

1. Place the unloaded firearm in the position you want it to be located in against the leather backer. 10-15 degrees forward cant is typical for IWB/OWB holsters.
2. Place the finished Kydex shell on the firearm.
3. Using a scribe, pen, or awl, transfer the hole locations from the Kydex to the leather backer.
4. Using a ¼" leather punch, punch the holes in the leather backer. (a drill with a ¼" drill bit can be used, if you don't have a punch)
5. Using the supplied hardware to mount the Kydex shell on the leather backer.
    a. Screw posts should be inserted from the back of the backer, then secure them using the rubber spacers (.5"). The spacers will prevent the posts from falling out of the back side.
    b. With the posts and spacers installed, place the Kydex shell on top (it will be sitting on top of the spacers)
    c. Attach the Kydex with the .5" screws and finish washers. Secure the screws only loosely to start with.
    d. Place the firearm in the holster and adjust (tighten or loosen the screws) the retention, as needed.
    e. It may be necessary to adjust the Kydex by pressing in or releasing some pressure in the trigger guard area. You will need a heat gun or hair dryer to slowly heat the Kydex in the trigger guard area and press in or let the Kydex release some of the pressure to make sure your gun moves in and out of the holster without any snags. Of course, use the proper eye, eye, hand protection during all of these steps.

See Photo 3 for how Kydex shell is mounted to leather backer using the supplied spacers.

STEP 7: Mount the Belt Clips for IWB Models

1. Locate the necessary hardware (2 of each: 1/8” spacers, 1/8” screw post, .375” screws, finish washers and belt clips)
2. Place the screw post (threaded) on the back side of the hole in the desired mounting location.
3. Place the 1/8” spacer on the front side of the leather, then the belt clip, finish washer, and lastly, the screw.
4. Tighten the screw to secure the belt clip.
5. Repeat for opposite side.
6. Cant and Ride Height Adjustment: You can adjust the ride height and weapon cant by moving the clip up or down on either side of the holster.

Photo 5 Shows Belt Clip Installed

Photos 6 and 7 show front and back of finished holster. For example only. Your holster may look different depending on your personal preferences.

Additonal Resources (These links are not Exarchy Holster Co. produced content)

Youtube Videos are provided for demostration purposes only. These videos may contain information that is not recommended by Exarchy Holster Co, and we do not control the content of these video providers. You are responsible for maintaining a safe work environment when handling firearms and you are responsible for your safety and that of your firearm during this process.

Video 1
https://youtu.be/wntntfsrfEQ

Video 2
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g128KcnKSdw

Video 3
https://youtu.be/CaCWdiKTeQ4