

Shelving bad habits with your GMAW gun

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New welding gun holster encourages safe, efficient storage

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A welder tired of accidental triggering or incidental damage to his gun developed a holster that can be mounted to a worktable, welding cart or in any way necessary.



The MiG Buddy welding gun holster helps promote productivity and safety through efficient and accessible GMAW gun storage.

Have you ever seen a gadget on television, online, or in person and thought to yourself, “Why didn’t I think of that?”

The MiG Buddy™ from GeorgeB Design, San Ramon, Calif., might prompt that exact reaction.

Like many welders, George Bertolotti, the name behind GeorgeB Design, didn’t always have the best of habits when it came to his workstation. He’d weld, lay the gas metal arc welding (GMAW) gun on the table, and the next thing he’d know the wire was feeding through the gun or, in some cases, sparks were flying in what is known as triggering. It turns out he had laid the gun in a way that had accidentally activated the trigger.

It dawned on him that haphazardly laying the gun down on his worktable or floor was not only potentially wasteful in terms of shielding gas and welding wire, it also left the gun vulnerable to damage and increased the potential for trips, falls, and other workplace safety risks.



One day in 2007 he had enough and set off on a quest to figure out a way to prevent that from ever happening.

A Simple Solution for a Common Problem

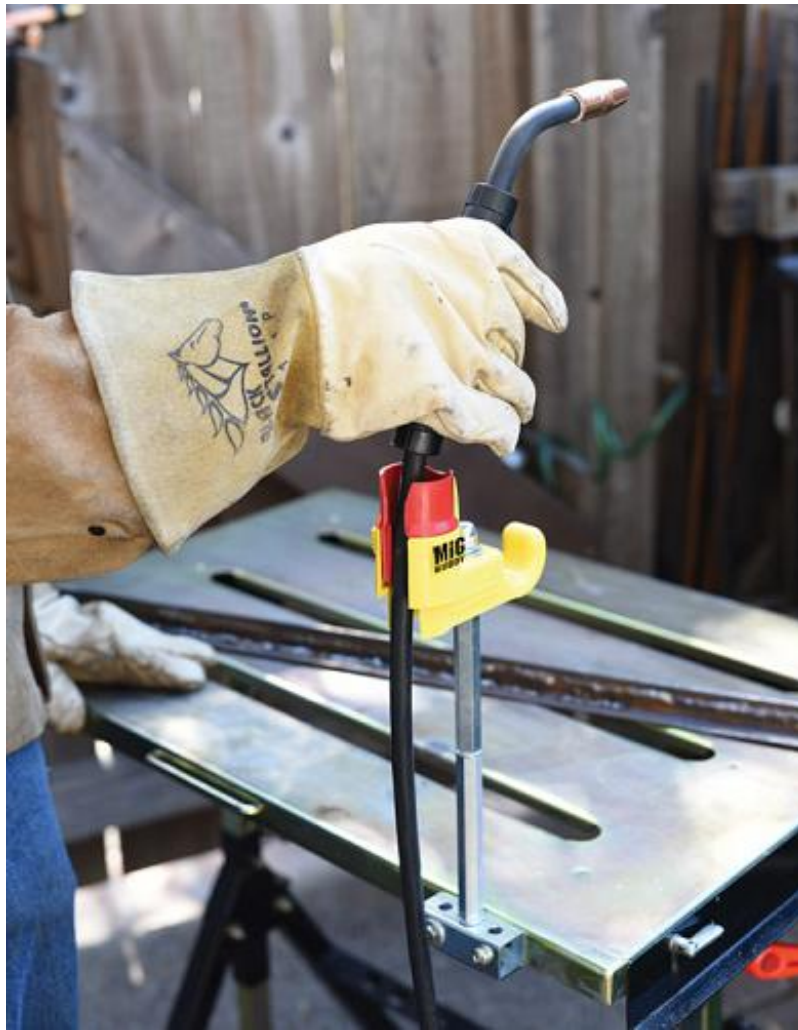
Bertolotti, a self-described lifelong innovator, has always loved problem solving, so this was right up his alley. After all, he could not have been the only one to experience mishaps with his gun due to improper storage. There had to be a better way to store a welding gun. One year later, in 2008, he developed the first prototype of the MiG Buddy welding gun holster, and in 2009 he sent it out to local weld shops and fabricators in the San Francisco area to test, including Contra Costa College in nearby San Pablo, Calif.

It’s a simple concept, really. Tooling mounts to the welding table, welding cart, or similar support structure, and a holster attached near the top holds the welding gun in place for safe storage between uses. It works with Miller, Hobart, Tweco®, Lincoln, MW, and Eastwood welding guns, to name a few.

“Everyone gave me guidance, and that’s how it started to evolve. I made little tweaks here and there on the fit and where to put the work cable, where to put the hook. Then from the metal prototypes we started getting more sophisticated,” Bertolotti explained.

The product officially launched at FABTECH® last year in Chicago, and to his surprise, he had an overwhelming number of attendees approach him with MIG mishaps, as he called them.

“One guy said they stopped welding, went out to lunch, came back, and the whole spool of wire had run out through the gun and onto the floor.



The holster can accommodate myriad mounting applications, including right on the worktable via the hardware or via a Magswitch

“Another guy told me he was welding in one area of the shop, stopped, went to another area to do something else, and heard something that to him sounded like a mouse. It turns out that his gun was triggering and sparking. He said he almost burned the place down.

“If you complete the circuit, let’s say, for example, you lay it on the workpiece and the grounding cable was there and the trigger gets triggered, an arc will take place. It’s going to happen.”

The MiG Buddy, in contrast, provides a dedicated holster for welders to store their GMAW gun. The vertical orientation of the mounting tooling means the gun takes up very little space on the worktable, and it’s in a position that is easy for the welder to reach it.

Bertolotti said users have continued to give him feedback regarding the unique ways they are mounting the holsters. One man, he said, mounted it underneath his worktable.

“Basically what he did is reversed the MiG Buddy head on the bottom instead of the top, and mounted it to the bottom of his bench so that when he puts his gun in, it sits below the bench. It was a better fit for his operation because he moves stuff across his bench and it has to be clear. Whatever works.”

However a welder decides to mount the holster, this is just another problem Bertolotti solved, and carelessly leaving his GMAW gun lying around is one less bad habit he needs to worry about in the future.

“Once people experience it, they don’t want to work without it. Once you put your gun in the holster, how could you ever want to put it back down on the floor?”

Photos courtesy of GeorgeB Design, 888-253-6703, www.migbuddy.com.



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