

Since many of you will buy this tool set, here's the trick on an otherwise trial-and-error thing: screw goes through the thin side to use the comparator with a caliper alone; screw through the thick side to use the comparator with the OAL Gauge. It has to do with the offset needed to center the bullet over the caliper lower jaw.



Here's a really good example of how this gage is valuable even if you're not going to experiment with scooting bullets out toward the lands. Some bullets are already scooted... Here's a Hornady 52gr Hollowpoint Match. This will destroy an x-ring on a short-range target. But! **This bullet cannot be seated using only magazine-box-length maximums as a guide.** The ogive is well forward (higher) than many similar bullets. Usually (usually) most .224 caliber bullets can simply be seated to an overall cartridge length that fits the magazine and they're holding shy of the lands. I made that mistake... I loaded some up after choosing a "sure-fire" propellant dose and headed out. Primers blew out of my first few rounds, and I, of course, quit. Back-at-home investigation showed that, seated to magazine length, they were +0.020 into the lands on that AR15. That spikes pressure radically. I was lucky that it didn't brick-wall bolt closing. I made this mistake, and hopefully you won't. The mistake was assumption. The loading manual I later checked indicated a correct seating depth, well short of the magazine box limits. One reason this little bullet shoots so well in AR15s is because it can be seated to touch the lands, or just hold shy, from the magazine. There are others also in this weight range that allow for this. **WATCH SEATING DEPTHS. Get the gage!**

You need to check. Use the gage!

As a bonus, the gage tells how much throat there is in a new rifle chamber. Important! With a little experience you can quickly tell if a new rifle has a shorter or longer throat, and that can matter a whopping lot to the ammo you can run in it. I also use it to keep up with throat erosion. It's daggone useful.



BACK TO IT

Now that we've gotten through a few precursory bullet measurements, only one of which was really necessary (finding the longest bullet in the box) we can move on to getting it fitted into a case neck. We'll finish setting up the seating die.

Run the die seating stem **well** up, so there's no chance of it making contact with the bullet.

Get that long bullet back out and place it into the case neck, keeping hold of the neck and the bullet. Since this is a boat-tail it will sit nicely enough.

Still holding the bullet and case neck, install the case into the shellholder and run it up into the die. **Turn the seating stem downward until you feel it**

stop; the bullet has contacted the seating stem. Then just a tad more. That sets the bullet into the neck so it will stay put for a measurement.

NO PROPELLANT YET!
(We're just setting up for later...)

