

How to Eliminate Joystick Drift from a Nintendo Switch Pro Controller

If you've stumbled upon this guide, odds are...

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INTRODUCTION

If you've stumbled upon this guide, odds are that your Nintendo Switch Pro controller is acting a bit strange. Maybe it's causing your character to move in a completely different direction from what you wanted. Maybe your character is moving on its own without you even touching the controller! If so, you are experiencing something video game enthusiasts refer to as "joystick drift," which is usually a result of dirt and debris that gets trapped within the joystick.

It's difficult to enjoy a video game when your controller is working against you. You may be tempted to throw away the controller and buy a new one, but a Nintendo Switch Pro Controller has an MSRP of nearly \$70.00!

Fortunately, there is a relatively easy fix for joystick drift. The solution involves taking apart the controller to clean the inside of the joysticks. This guide will show you how to do this safely and quickly.



TOOLS:

[Phillips #00 Screwdriver](#) (1)

[Compressed Air](#) (1)

Step 1 — Removing the hand grips



- Remove the two black screws at the bottom ends of the controller using a Phillips #00 screwdriver.
- ⓘ You may be able to carefully remove the screws with a different-sized screwdriver or flathead. However, this can easily "strip" or damage the screws and make them a lot more difficult (or even impossible) to remove next time.
- Pull the hand grips off the bottom edges of the controller.

Step 2 — Removing the backplate



- Remove the four silver screws from the back of the controller using a Phillips #00 screwdriver.
- Hold the controller as depicted in the third picture with your thumbs placed on the top of the controller. Use your thumbs to pry apart the backplate from the rest of the controller.
- ⓘ You may need to use a bit of pressure to remove the backplate.

Step 3 — Removing the battery



- Place a finger in the gap to the left of the battery.
- Use the small tab on the side of the battery to remove the battery from the controller.

Step 4 — Separating the controller

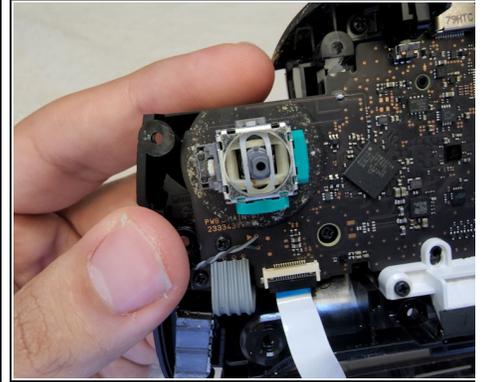
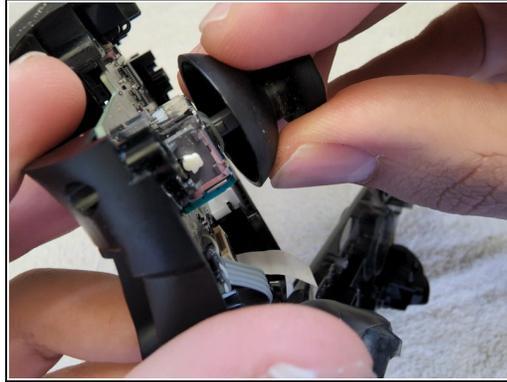
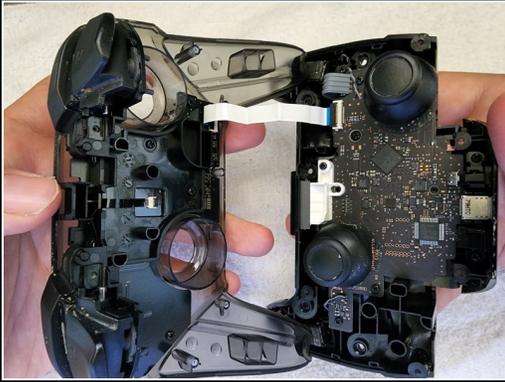


- Remove the five black screws from the back of the controller using a Phillips #00 screwdriver.
- Place a finger between the faceplate and the rest of the controller and pull each half of the controller apart to separate them.

⚠ Don't use too much pressure when prying open the controller as you may damage the white ribbon cable connecting both halves.

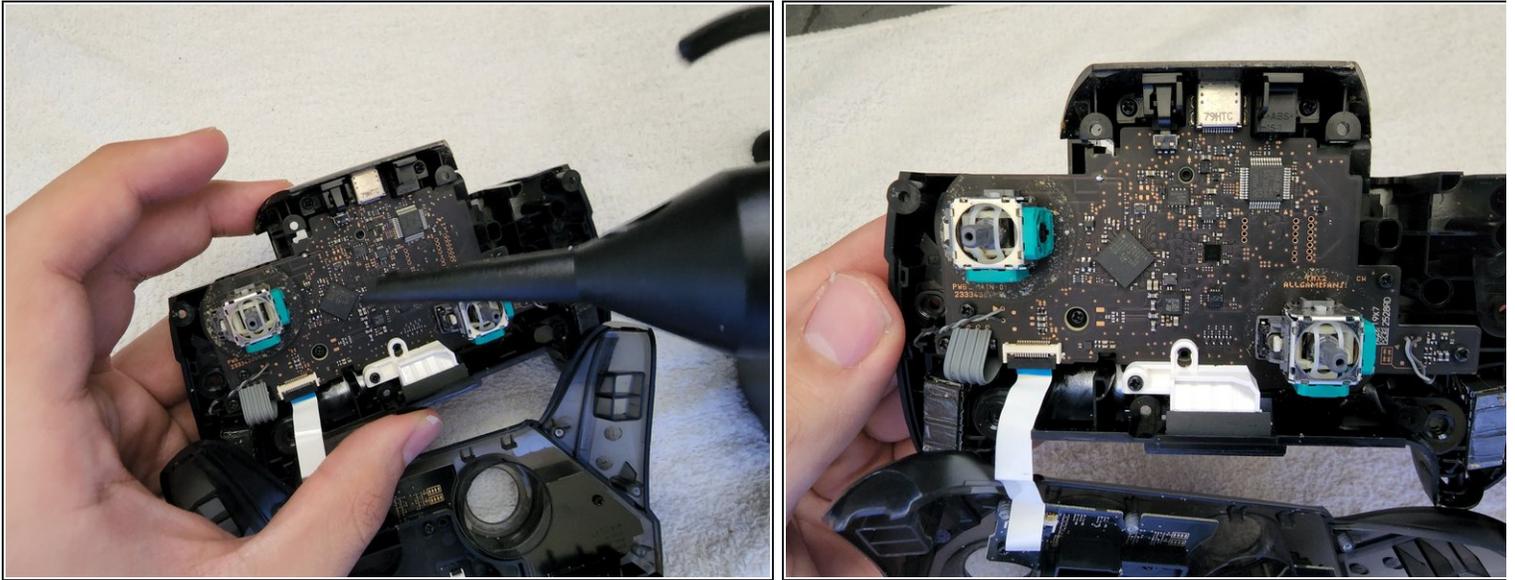
i The *iFixit Mako Driver* (screwdriver that also comes in the *Pro Tech Toolkits*) is too thick to properly reach the 2 top-middle screws. The middle top-left screw can only be reached at a slight angle, while the middle top-right is near-impossible to reach without the use of the Flex Extension, or deforming the plastic a little bit.

Step 5 — Removing the joystick caps



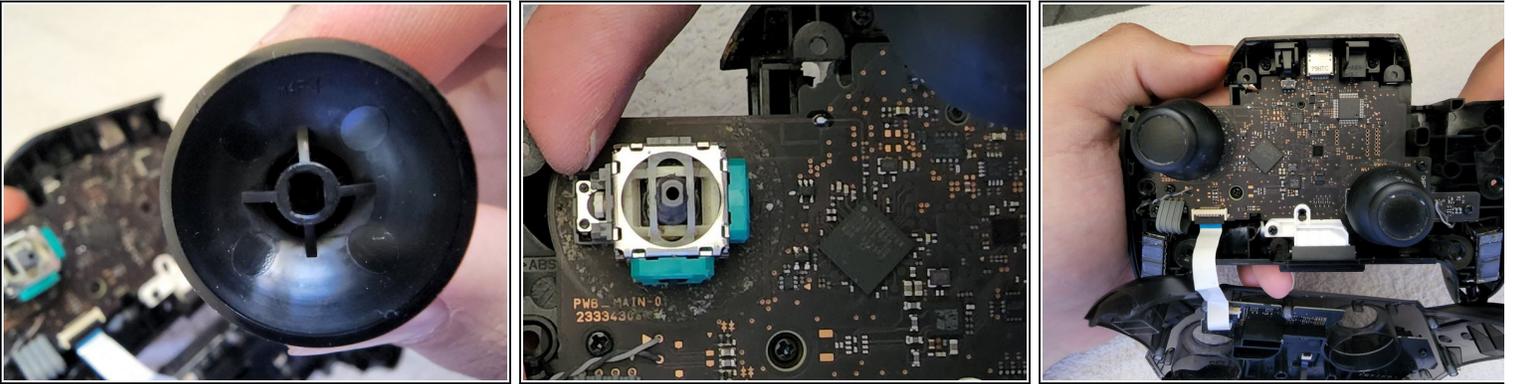
- Use one hand to grip the back of the controller piece with the joysticks. With the other hand, grip the rubber cap of the joystick and carefully pull it off of the joystick.
- ⓘ You may need to apply a bit of pressure to pull off the rubber cap.

Step 6 — Cleaning out the debris



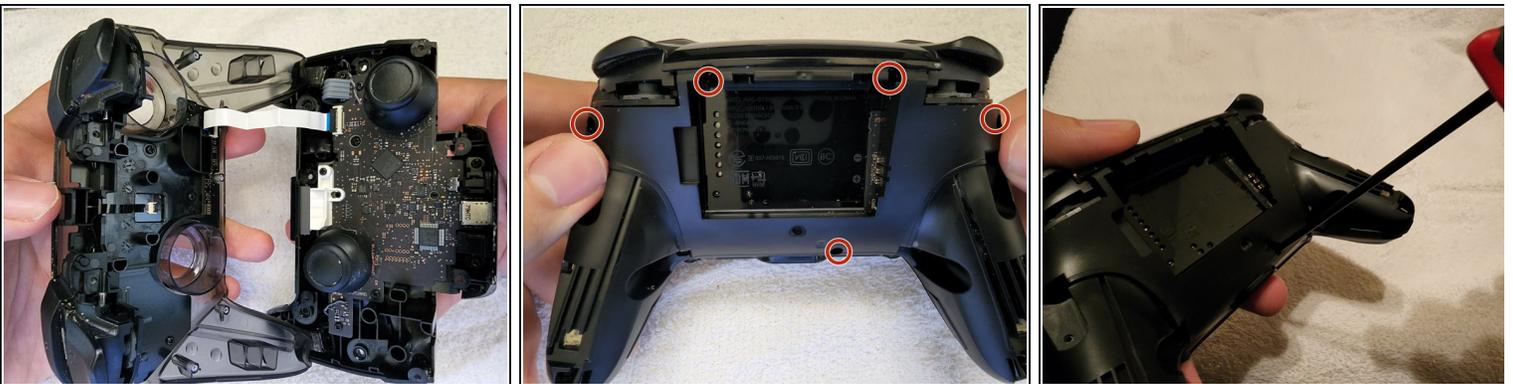
- Spray the can of compressed air inside and around the joysticks to remove any debris.
- ⓘ There may be some debris that doesn't come off after blowing with the compressed air. In this case, you can use a paper towel or cotton swab to lessen the build-up and follow up with the compressed air.
- ⚠ Be sure to follow the instructions when using the compressed air can. Shaking the can may result in liquid being expelled instead of air. This may damage the controller.

Step 7 — Reinserting the joystick caps



- Place the rubber caps back on the joysticks by applying a bit of pressure.
- ⓘ The inside of the rubber cap has an oval-shaped socket. Align this socket with the oval-shaped head of the joystick.

Step 8 — Reuniting the controller halves



- Align both halves of the controller and push them together. They should reattach easily.
- ⓘ You may need to position the cable so that it is not poking out from the controller after connecting both halves.
- Screw in the five black screws on the back of the controller using a Phillips #00 screwdriver.

Step 9 — Reinserting the battery



- Place the battery into the socket by aligning the connectors on the battery with the connectors on the right of the battery socket.

Step 10 — Reinstalling the backplate



- Align the backplate of the controller as shown in the picture and snap it on.
- Screw in the four silver screws in the back of the controller using a Phillips #00 screwdriver.

Step 11 — Reinstalling the handgrips



- Reattach the handgrips by sliding them onto the ends of the controller.
- Screw in the two black screws on the bottom of the handgrips using a Phillips #00 screwdriver.

After following these steps, your controller will be much cleaner now than it was before. Your controller should now be drift-free and function as well as any other \$70.00 controller!

If you are still experiencing drift, then there is a physical defect with the joystick. In this case, you can opt to replace the joystick itself. You can find replacement parts online, but you will probably need to learn how to solder in order to install the replacement joystick.