

Super glue has a limitless list of uses



Tips
from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

In the past, I would read about some “outdoor tip” in a magazine, and take the matter to heart. For example, back in the 60s, I read about waterproofing your matches by dipping the tips in candle wax.

I spent the next day dipping the tips of “strike anywhere” kitchen matches in melted paraffin, and packing 25 matches or so in screw top prescription bottles. The bottles of newly “waterproofed” matches were then placed in all my packs, tackle boxes, and anywhere else I thought I may need matches.

My grandmother was not happy discovering her kitchen floor, dining table, and grandson completely covered with paraffin. I made a hasty retreat from the premises before she found out where I got all the prescription bottles for the project. The discovery in the bathroom would not have improved her mood.

Another such tip I read about was duct tape, and the million ways it can be used in outdoor situations, survival and first aid. In the case of duct tape, and not so much with the wax dipping of matches, it turned out to be a good idea.

Duct tape is something you should have around the house, vehicle, ATV and certainly in your pack. If duct tape is strong and sticky enough to hold a racecar together for the finish of a race, it will certainly fix my broken equipment for the duration of a camping trip. Hopefully.

Another such item would be super glue, also known as cyanoacrylate. Originally discovered in 1942 by a Dr. Harry Coover, who was trying to make a clear plastic gun sight. His accidental discovery proved too sticky and he went on to other materials.

Then, in 1951, now working at Eastman Kodak, Coover was working on the development of a heat resistant acrylate polymer to be used on jet canopies. He rediscovered super glue, and tested it by bonding a pair of refractometer prisms together.

This time, the product was developed and finally came to the market in 1958 under the catchy name of Eastman #910, later renaming the product super glue.

Super glue was actually used during the Vietnam War to help close up wounds on soldiers while they were being transported to hospitals to then receive stitches. For medical uses, super glue will work in a pinch, but better to use one of the medical grade glues like Derma bond or SurgiSeal that are made from 2-Octyl-cyanoacrylate. Another form of medical grade super glue is made from n-butyl-cyanoacrylate, which is a less flexible version.

The formula of super glue adheres instantly when it comes in contact



Super Glue has many uses in the outdoor world. (Mark Rackay/Special to the Montrose Daily Press)

with the hydroxyl ions in water. When this happens, the molecules form chains that make a very strong and durable plastic mesh that eventually hardens.

Most materials we want to bond have a trace amount of water at their surface, sometimes from water in the air. If you wish to create a stronger bond, add a few drops of water to the area to be glued, before adding the glue.

Super glue really is a super strength bonding material. A one square inch bonding of super glue can hold around one ton. In one experiment, super glue was used to bond a small surface area of metal attached to a crane, which was then glued to the top of a car. The crane then successfully lifted the car without the bond breaking.

For our uses in the outdoor world, super glue has an almost limitless list. Start with general patching repairs, such as a leaky tent or a tear in your backpack. A small patch of material can be cut out and glued onto the offending hole. In the case of a tear, the two sides can be glued together, thereby closing the hole.

I have used super glue to repair the sole on a boot that came loose on a hike. The flapping of the torn loose sole was immediately reattached with a couple drops of the glue. You can also protect the end of your laces from fraying with a couple drops of super glue. A few drops of glue can stop the fraying of ropes and paracord.

A couple drops of super glue can patch a leaking water bottle. While it may taste bad, the leak will stop. If you have fishing gear or hunting equipment on a trip, super glue is an essential item for field repairs.

Everything from a loose sight to a chipped stock or loose guide can be fixed in the field. We used to add a drop of super glue to our fishing knots, especially when we made our own leaders, or the knot that attaches the leader to the fly line.

Splinters can be incredibly annoying in the field, not to mention painful. Often, I have attacked a splinter with a hunting knife

in the field. I might have been successful in getting the splinter but may have lost a pint of blood in the process.

Here is another place super glue will shine. Just put a little glue at the site of the splinter and allow it to dry. Then when you peel off the glue, the splinter will usually pull out with it.

Household super glue really should not be used on cuts. Analysis of wounds treated with super glue showed that there was tissue damage surrounding the area that appeared to come from heat released by super glue. This heat disrupts the healing process of the wound.

As mentioned earlier, if cuts are your main reason for carrying super glue, consider the medical grades of the product. The prices of these products can be quite high, costing a couple hundred dollars for a 5ml vial.

There are glues available that are identical to the medical grades but licensed for animal use by veterinarians. These glues can be purchased from vet supply houses at a fraction of the cost. Be advised that the medical grade super glues do not have the bonding strength for wood, metal and plastics and are not recommended for those purposes.

There have been many occasions where I have cut myself in the woods. The biggest problem for me has always been bleeding all over my equipment because the cut is in a place that keeps “breaking open.” By the end of the day, my equipment and me look like a walking murder scene.

I have started carrying a couple waterproof Band-aids in a handy pocket of my pack for just such incidents. I choose waterproof because they stick better than regular ones. I also carry a bottle of liquid bandage in my kit for when the cut is on a place that will continue breaking open.

The brand Krazy Glue, with a paint brush applicator, works best for my outdoor needs. The little tubes seem to dry up very quick-

ly once opened. Change out the bottle of super glue at the start of each season so it will not be hardened when you need it.

A word of warning about super glue is in order here. This stuff will bond everything, especially skin. I have bonded fingers together and to my face in the past, so take care


when using it. Had I used super glue that day in my grandmother's kitchen, I would have been stuck to the dining table and unable to make a getaway when she got home.

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