

Repairing Nicked Extension Cords, Version 1.2

By R. G. Sparber

Protected by Creative Commons.¹



If just the outer sheath of a round cross-section extension cord has been nicked, people often wrap it in electrical tape. It looks good for a while but before long, the tape starts to lift. Bending of the cord loosens the wrap and dirt gets in. Before long, the entire mess falls off. Then you are back to having that exposed nick plus all of this sticky goo mixed with dirt around it. New tape won't stick to that. Gotta be a better way.

"Tonyg" from homemadetools.net suggested using Liquid Electrical Tape. I tried it and it work fine mechanically and electrically. It was a bit messy and is unlikely to be a color match if that matters to you.

My solution is to glue a patch over the nick using material similar to the existing sheath.

Just be sure none of the insulation around the wires has been damaged. Ignoring such damage can lead to wires shorting, sparks, smoke... you get the idea.

¹ This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.



Since I have “The Disease”, almost nothing gets thrown away. That includes short lengths of extension cord. I took a 2-inch long piece, pulled out the wires, and cut it axially to make a patch.

Next, I roughened all surface with coarse sandpaper. Then I cleaned both the area around the nick plus the inside of the patch with alcohol.

Once all surfaces were dry, I coated the inside of the patch with a thin layer of Locktite Vinyl Fabric and Plastic Flexible Adhesive.



Notice that this piece of sheath is smooth on the inside. Better quality extension cords have internal ribbing which won’t fit well on the outside diameter of the damaged cord.



I centered the patch over the nick and wrapped it around the cord. A layer of thin steel wire wrapped around the path applied the necessary pressure. Wait the full curing time.

The glue dries to a rubbery mass yet sticks very well. The repair will be as strong and water resistant as the original extension cord sheath and almost as flexible.

Acknowledgment

Thanks to "tonyg" of homemadetools.net for suggesting Liquid Electrical Tape.

Thanks to John Herrmann for pointing out that some extension cords have internal ribs. He also pointed me to Go2 Glue for which I will be eternally grateful.

I welcome your comments and questions.

If you wish to be contacted each time I publish an article, email me with just "Subscribe" in the subject line. If you are on this list and have had enough, email me "Unsubscribe" in the subject line.

Rick Sparber
Rgsparber.ha@gmail.com
Rick.Sparber.org