

Stuck on Super Glue!

by Jim McCann

Our cruising life is not always what we'd dreamed it would be. Drifting along on a calm sea at sunset while sipping cold rum drinks to the soft sounds of Jimmy Buffet or kicking back on a tiny, coral island just big enough for two coconut trees and a hammock. Sure those things happen, but in reality we spend a lot more time attempting to keep all systems on the Spanish Stroll functioning and everything ship shape. When you throw in peripherals like a dingy that's sinking while it's motor won't run and fishing tackle that's taken on a lovely green patina, it's like juggling bowling balls, chain saws and cane knives all at the same time! How can we possibly hold it all together? Simple! Super Glue!

This amazing invention has practically moved duct tape into the dustbin of history. I can't imagine how sailors managed to discover the new world or how Noah kept his ark afloat without Super Glue. Available worldwide it's endless repertoire of uses is limited only by our imaginations *and* it's cheap! Although all cyanoacrylate glues are not created equal, whether in bottles or tubes, thick or thin, sold as super, krazy or by any other name they're all good and each has it's own special strengths. Here are a few ways we've put it to work.

Top of the list and far from a secret has to be inflatable boat repairs. Nothing is better for fixing the dingy and getting you back on the water fast. Although perfect for PVC we've used it for all but the very largest wounds on our hypalon boat with great success. Some of our patches are over ten years old and still holding. The cost was a tiny fraction of what we'd have paid for two part adhesive, no clamping was required and the normal twenty four hour curing time was reduced to seconds. Very important when you're heading in for happy hour!



Next would be shoe repairs. Cruising is brutal on footwear and breakdowns can happen anywhere, anytime. When a sneaker sole decided it needed to be free on the streets of Malaysia we limped into a nearby shop, bought a tube and were back on the road in minutes. That didn't work for a blown flipper strap deep in the Marquesan jungle. A tube of Krazy Glue, in it's very safe, crush proof container, stashed in our camera case would have saved the day. When Barb's shoes were stolen from our dingy in Venezuela we were bummed, of course, but mostly because we'd used so much Super Glue on them the night before.

For putting the handle back on your favorite coffee cup, bubble eyes on your homemade fishing lures or a favorite tooth back in your dentures, Super Glue works instant miracles. Sure, so far these have been widely known uses but it never hurts to review essential survival skills. Now here's a few of our more original ideas.

How about filling holes? When sanding wood before varnishing just push some of the sanding dust into any old, unwanted screw holes. Add a drop of Super Glue then sand again a few minutes later and Voila! The holes are gone! The thin glue is best for this so if, as though by magic, it runs out and glues my fingers together we know it's a good tube.

Once the holes are filled, we're ready to varnish. Take a cheap throw away brush, the kind that sheds bristles, hold it handle down and apply super glue to the base of the bristles just above the ferrule. The same thin glue is perfect for this but one mishap and you might have to be thrown out with the brush! We've done some of our finest bright work with the cheapest brushes.

The Spanish Stroll has a molded fiberglass headliner which in most ways is wonderful but one of it's drawbacks is that we can't hide electrical wiring behind it. When installing a fan or light overhead the wire remains exposed. With just the tiniest spot of Super Glue we can, at least, keep it neatly in place.

Here's two ideas I am definitely *not* recommending. We've been told that Super Glue works well for closing cuts in the absence of stitches. I won't be trying that one but must admit I've successfully used it to reattach a loose finger nail until the new one grew in. You're on your own with these types of experiments.

Our most recent success came just a few weeks ago when, after “barely” touching bottom, our eight horsepower dingy motor wouldn't go. A common problem, the molded in rubber that attaches the hub to the propeller had sheered. The shaft and hub were spinning inside the propeller. Although replacements were available we are, by nature, cheap. After rinsing and drying the propeller we dripped Super Glue into the opening where the rubber is exposed. It kept us going for several days until we were able to do a proper repair, with epoxy.

Anything this versatile is gonna have *dos* and *don'ts* to follow. Here's a few we've learned to live by-

DO plan your drips. Since gluing my foot to the cockpit floor while repairing a fishing lure I usually do the small stuff over my work bench, an old cafeteria tray.

DO check out the “what to do when you're glued together” advice at www.supergluecorp.com Acetone will clean up most spills but you might want to read their advanced advice *before* your eyes are glued shut.

DO store your Super Glue in the refrigerator. In some countries hawkers sell it in the streets at four tubes for a dollar so stock up! Refrigerated, it'll last forever.

And finally **DON'T** carry Super Glue in your back pocket! After patching the dingy in New Zealand I took it for a test spin. Stopping by some friends boat to say hello I discovered, much to their delight, that my butt was securely attached! Super Glue! I'm stuck on it!

Jim and Barbara McConn sailed their 31' Southern Cross , the Spanish Stroll, out of Redondo Beach, California on April 9, 2004. They have since logged over 30,000 miles while crossing four oceans and visiting over 20 countries. Their recent 5,400 mile passage around the Cape of Good Hope and up to the Caribbean lasted 65 days and took them across the equator for the fourth time. They plan to transit the Panama Canal, and complete their first circumnavigation early next year. Visit their website at www.spanishstroll.com

