

## **PAINT AND ADHESIVE REMOVAL**

**LATEX PAINT** : Isopropyl alcohol (rubbing alcohol) liquefies the oldest paint. Wet paint thoroughly and cover with plastic to prevent evaporation. Paint will wash off with water after a short time. Latex paint may be removed from clothing by soaking followed by machine washing. The results are gratifying. Remember that alcohol is quite flammable. Detergent and water will remove latex before it dries.

**OIL PAINT** : Various petroleum distillates are available with names like "Odorless Turpentine" and ordinary solvents like acetone (fingernail polish remover) will work. These chemicals can be quite harsh and gentler chemicals may be tried first. A light oil such as lamp oil or Kerosene will dissolve the paint (also good on grease and tar) allowing removal with ordinary detergent. Naphtha (lighter fluid) is gentle on most finishes and may prove useful as might various alcohols. Lacquer thinner is a combination of petroleum distillates, alcohol, toluene, methyl ethyl ketone, and butyl acetate which is enough to soften most finishes, waxes, or greases but damage to the underlying surface should be considered .

**ENAMEL** : Lacquer thinner, acetone, and various petroleum based products work well. Paint strippers are available which contain highly volatile and extremely effective solvents. The strippers typically contain additional chemicals which form a vapor barrier to slow the evaporation of the volatile solvents. Follow the directions quite closely for maximum effectiveness.

**OTHER FINISHES** : Try various alcohols and other solvents which do not hurt the underlying surface. Isopropyl alcohol was found to dissolve the paint on clear plastic boxes without hurting the plastic finish for example. Epoxy paints and other finishes may prove quite resistant to solvents or the underlying surface may not tolerate the harsh solvents and strippers. In such instances it may be necessary to consider mechanical removal with sandpaper, steel wool, wire brush, or scraper. Polishing compounds may be used to restore the surface finish with surprisingly good results. Start with a coarse grade of compound on a polishing wheel and switch to finer grades washing the wheel between steps. Even clear plastic may be restored to complete transparency although some experience may be necessary : most novices overheat the plastic. Try using water to cool the surface.

**TAPE AND ADHESIVE** : Naphtha is the best choice for most adhesives used on tapes since it will not harm most finishes. Even old masking tape may be removed with a little patience. Many tape adhesives are water based and will soften when soaked. Use warm water and perhaps a little detergent. Phil Ngai <pngai@adobe.com> recommends warming the tape with a lamp or hairdryer. The heat softens the adhesive but take care not to damage the item with excessive heat.

**EPOXY** : Epoxies resist almost everything but epoxy strippers are available from industrial suppliers. These organic acids are caustic and must be used with great care. Spot removal of epoxy may be accomplished by chipping or using the tip of a soldering iron. Be prepared for a bad smell.

**SILICONE RUBBER** : Most silicone rubbers may be removed by applying ethyl alcohol to the interface. After a few minutes the rubber may be pulled off. Make sure the alcohol has dried before applying new rubber.

**INSTANT GLUE** : Those crazy adhesives that bond instantly may be released with a special debonding agent usually available at hobby stores.

**DOUBLE-SIDED FOAM TAPE** : You will learn to hate the inventor of this tape when you endeavor to remove it. Since it is waterproof the trick is to get the naphtha to the adhesive. Not recommended for the short of temper.

**TECHNIQUE :** Much of your success in removing finishes, tapes, or labels will rest on your technique. Often the problem is getting the solvent to the job site. For example, when removing paper labels from flat surfaces it may prove difficult getting the naphtha to the glue. By holding the label vertically a bead of naphtha may be poured between the label and the surface. As the label is pulled away from the surface the bead of naphtha will drop down wetting the previously unexposed glue interface. Move slowly so that the glue does not delaminate from the paper. Experiment with different techniques for the job at hand.