

# Down to Details

By Chuck Steffens

## My Favorite Products

So here we are again. Another month has come and gone and I am trying to think of another subject for the "Down to Details" segment...hmmmm. And I am trying to stay away from a Precision tractor, otherwise they are going to have to change the name of this article to the "Precision Corner"...Hahahaha. So I got to thinking...what are my favorite products I use? And why is it that I choose to use them? Doesn't sound too bad.

First off, I suppose I will highlight one of the most popular products used by custom builders—Epoxy. My first choice is a 5-minute clear epoxy produced by the Devcon company. It has a fast setup, dries semi clear, there will be a slight yellow tint and is priced equally to other brands. The main reason why I use this brand—the cap. I know this may seem silly but I have used/tested many other brands and have found very similar results in the performance of the product, so I can't take that away from any of them. But when you use a small amount at a time and with some tubes lasting 50-100 small batches, sooner or later you will put the



easily reversible cap that the other brands have on backwards and what will this lead to—a glued-on cap! Or worse, the tubes setting up. What I like is that the cap on the Devcon Home 5 Minute Epoxy will only go on one way. No matter how hard you try, you can't screw it up.

Next item on my "favorite item list" in the epoxy/glue area is good ole cheap silicone, the big tubes you buy at the hardware store for a couple of bucks in black, white, clear and so on. I have found that when mounting something like a seat, silicone will provide enough bonding strength to hold it there for years, but will provide enough flex that if someone touches it, it won't break free. This is probably its best-selling

factor as far as I am concerned, its flex. And with it being cheap you don't have to worry much about wasting it. I have used silicone in many many different ways from mounting battery boxes to platforms to seats and have yet to have a bad experience with it. The downfall of silicone is the cure time. Most silicones take roughly 2-3 hours for setup and 24 for a full setup which can be a downfall if there is a time crunch. What I like to do is plan ahead so that at the end of the day I will silicone the item I want then secure them in place to sit until the following day.

Now one item I try to avoid using at all cost, but everyone will use sooner or later—Super Glue. The super glue that I have had the best luck with is the Loctite brand Gel Control Super Glue. It comes in a nice sized container that allows a little better control of the flow of the glue coming out of the tip and has been a very stable gel for me. The setup time isn't as fast as a lot of other super glues I have used but the control of the glue has far been a much better sell for me than the setup time. The tube also comes with a



nice simple twist-on cap that is very forgiving in case there is glue between the cap and the tip and is large enough to give you grip in removing the cap in case it does become glued on. All in all I have to say the best super glue I have used and I have tried a lot of them.

This next item may not exactly be considered a glue/epoxy, but nonetheless has fit into this category for me many times. This product is called Metal 2 Metal and is produced by the Evercoat company. What it is is an aluminum-based body filler. I have used this product many times when building my pulling tractors. What is nice is being aluminum based it works great on toy castings. Just grid the surface good so you can create a good bond between the filler and the panel you are working with. I have used

this product to mount side panels on pulling tractors, fill in big voids in castings, reattach axle housings and yet you can still use it as a body filler on casting seams, dents or just reshaping. Another nice feature of this product is it drills and taps quite nicely. I have more than once bolted an item to a tractor using .080 bolts tapped into this filler with great success. Downfall of this product is it is not the cheapest product on the shelf costing \$35-\$45 for a quart and it isn't on every hardware store's shelf. It can be found though most any autobody repair store or on eBay and if you do get a quart I recommend having it put on a paint shaker. The solids like to settle to the bottom leaving half of the quart less than favorable to use but some time on the paint shaker should fix this.



That should cover most of the sticky items that will land on your fingers only to be removed by a week's worth of scrubbing and work. Now onto solder. Here again I have tried many different solders but what has worked best for me is a rosin core electrical solder produced by Kester. I have tried acid core and solid core solders before and have found no success with acid core and very little with solid core. If the parts were 100 percent clean or you used a separate flux while soldering I think it would work, but for all-around use the rosin core solder from Kester has been the best for me. I have even tried rosin-cored solder from other companies like K-T Industries, but have not had the same success I had with Kester and readily available though eBay for around \$10 a pound making it a good value as well. The size of the wire you choose to use can be completely up to you. The large .125 wire size that is available at most hardware stores has worked fine for me

many times. I have used the real fine .031 wire size and had good success with it but it takes many feet of .031 to do the same as the .125 wire.



The size I have been happiest with though is the .050 thick wire. Seems to be the happy medium between the .031 and the .125 wire.

So now how about some polishing paste. I know there are many companies out there selling metal polishes and I think I had to have tried well more than half of them. I have had good success with most of them and the good ole Mothers Polish has never let me down yet but if I had a choice I would use a product called Simichrome Polish. This used to be available through the Ace hardware store, but I have not been able to find it there lately but there are plenty of places on eBay that sell this toothpaste-sized tube of polish. Here again it may not be the cheapest product on the market, but if you figure in the elbow grease that is required in polishing some nice aluminum up from rough stock into a nice set of rims or oil pan then the Simichrome Polish I think becomes the best value on the market I have found so far.



Now understand these have been my favorites and may not be the brands or types you like best. I personally hate J-B Weld and have never had any success with the product although many others have. We all have to find what works or doesn't for ourselves. I have just tried and tried to find better ways to build a quality and clean toy. I have found tons of ways that don't and these products have led me down the best roads so far.

Until later, Chucky.

TF

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