

# SOFT FILLER INSTRUCTIONS FOR REPAIRING LEATHER & VINYL

## IS A SUBPATCH NECESSARY?

If your leather or vinyl is torn, such that you can poke your finger through to the interior stuffing, a subpatch is needed. This restores structural integrity to the upholstery and allows your repair to move freely over the substrate. If any hole is larger than 2 inches in diameter, glueing a top patch of similar-grained material to the subpatch is recommended. This is more cost effective and results in a more flexible and better-looking repair.

## PATCH SUPPLIES

- ◆ flexible glue (3M® Emblem Adhesive, E6000® or LocTite® Vinyl, Fabric Adhesive)
- ◆ iron-on patch or strong, thin mending fabric for subpatching
- ◆ optional top-patch in similar-grained leather or vinyl
- ◆ scissors
- ◆ tweezers
- ◆ large needle or toothpicks
- ◆ piece of cardboard
- ◆ rags
- ◆ denatured or rubbing alcohol
- ◆ small board, book, or other flat weight



***The hole in this vinyl must be subpatched before applying filler.***

## SUBPATCH INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Trim** any material that is stiff (often caused by a burn or other glue). The perimeter of the hole should be as pliable and soft as the original material.
2. **Level the substrate**, if necessary, by glueing or gently whip-stitching a similar piece of foam or strips of rags until the substrate is fairly smooth.
3. **Cut a patch** so it is a little larger than the hole. Use a thin, strong patch that won't show a silhouette. Round the corners for easier insertion. If patching a hole on a corner or curved surface, you may need to cut out little triangles where the patch curves, so it won't overlap and create bulk.
4. **Insert the patch** under the tear(s) with tweezers. If you're using an iron-on patch, insert it adhesive-side up, so it will contact the back of the leather or vinyl. Ensure the patch completely covers the hole and sits smoothly between the substrate and the leather / vinyl. Any wrinkles or folds will result in a bulge that looks and feels uneven.
5. **Apply a thin layer of flexible fabric glue between the patch and the leather.** Contact the surfaces for a few seconds. If you can pull the patch and leather / vinyl apart again, blow a little air on the glue to help it tack (or apply more glue if necessary), and then contact again and use the flat weight for firm, even pressure.
6. **For larger holes: glue a top patch to the subpatch.** Take care not to overlap the existing material. It's better to cut the patch too small than too big. Round any corners. Apply firm, even pressure.
7. **Remove any excess glue with alcohol** before it dries. Ensure the glue is totally dry before proceeding with filler.

## ABOUT SOFT FILLER

This water-based compound slowly air-cures, so *keep the container closed and refrigerated when not in use*. Soft Filler adheres best to suede, a subpatch or fabric substrate. *Minimize the amount of filler on smooth, undamaged surfaces*. Soft Filler is cured when it is mostly clear and firm at room temperature. *It can be lightly sanded, though rubbing alcohol is better for correcting inconsistencies in the cured compound.*

## SUPPLIES NEEDED

- ◆ rubbing alcohol
- ◆ rags or old T-shirts
- ◆ paper towels
- ◆ Soft Filler
- ◆ palette knife or needle tool
- ◆ plastic spreader or glossy business cards
- ◆ direct sunshine or lamp with incandescent or heat bulb
- ◆ assortment of 220, 320, 500 grit wet-or-dry sandpaper
- ◆ food handlers' gloves or saran wrap
- ◆ Rub 'n Restore® Color of your choice
- ◆ Clear Prep+Finish™ (optional if luster is needed)
- ◆ cellulose sponge or spray gun for applying color

## SOFT FILLER INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Clean the surface** with denatured or rubbing alcohol. Allow to dry. Painters tape should strongly adhere to the area. If not, try lacquer thinner. Sticky surfaces or those that repel tape may also resist Soft Filler.
2. **Trim** any fibers or flaps. You can glue flaps back into place so long as they are totally flush. This is especially the case for cat claw damage or sharp, cracked or curling edges on vinyl. A hair dryer can help relax stiff cracks in synthetics like vinyl.
3. **Apply Soft Filler.** *Many thin layers will dry faster and stronger than one thick layer.*
4. **Smooth the compound with a card,** *drawing in a direction parallel to the tear.* Gently feather and blend the perimeter of the Soft Filler with a fingertip. Clean your tools with alcohol.
5. **Allow to cure until no longer tacky.** A sunny window, heat lamp, or incandescent bulb are needed to elevate the surface temperature above 120° F (49° C) and speed dry time, particularly in humid climates. *Do not use a hair dryer.* If using a bulb, allow it to heat up. Position it over the repair so that it warms the surface but does not burn the back of your hand after prolonged exposure. If the filler gets too hot, it may bubble up and then shrink down and may require smoothing and re-repair. Soft Filler is cured when it appears translucent and no longer feels tacky at room temperature. Allow the repair to return to room temperature before proceeding.
6. **Optional: gently sand or use rubbing alcohol** and an old T-shirt to smooth uneven areas. *Sanding the perimeter of the repair where Soft Filler is thinly feathered may cause it to peel up. If peeling occurs, use rubbing alcohol, which will reactivate cured filler and blend inconsistencies.* Use a rag dampened with water to remove any dust and allow to dry.
7. **Repeat steps 3-6** until a level surface is achieved.
8. **Texturize** the surface by applying a thin layer of Soft Filler. Spread with your card, and emboss with a gloved hand or saran wrap. Allow to cure. Polish with 500 grit wet-or-dry sandpaper if necessary.
9. **Apply a thin coat of Rub 'n Restore® Color** on the repaired area using a damp sponge or spray gun. Allow to dry, and repeat as needed, blending outward. Follow with the desired clear finish. Please refer to our application instructions for these products. *Do not use alcohol-based dyes on your repair.*

## REPAIRS NEAR SEAMS

Avoid getting Soft Filler into seams, as it will obscure the stitching and create an obvious patched appearance. If necessary, use your needle to trace the stitching, and remove excess Soft Filler.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

Filler still tacky or peeling when sanded? On our website, click on 'How To' or 'FAQ' or search "filler troubleshooting".

## RE-WORKING REPAIRS

Remove the color and clear finish with rubbing alcohol. You don't need to strip all the color; just remove what comes off easily. Remember, rubbing alcohol will gradually thin the cured compound. Allow to dry, and repeat steps 3-8 until you are pleased with the result.

## SHELF-LIFE

Soft Filler will keep for six months to a year. Minimize air exposure, and keep refrigerated to maximize shelf-life.

