

Rubber parts – How to soften and restore

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(Posted by Fredswat on AircooledRDClub.com, 01/14/19. Procedure documented by SoCal250 02/16/19.)

Old hardened and stiff rubber parts can be softened in Oil of Wintergreen (Methyl Salicylate) and Rubbing alcohol. If you buy Methyl Salicylate as "Oil of wintergreen" or "Wintergreen oil" it will usually be more costly so make sure you search by the chemical name.

I could not find Methyl Salicylate locally (in Cal, USA) so I ordered a 500ml bottle from Amazon for \$21.00. It's enough to probably last me a lifetime.

Required items:

- Methyl Salicylate 99% USP, BP Synthetic – approx. 500ml or 1 pint bottle
- Isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol, 70% or greater
- Small container with sealing lid to use as a cleaning solution tank. (A sealed container is ideal because otherwise the wintergreen will make your shop smell like muscle rub ointment.)

Directions:

1. Thoroughly clean and degrease the rubber parts to be treated.
2. Combine 1 part Methyl Salicylate + 3 parts rubbing alcohol. Make sure there is enough liquid to cover the parts to be restored.
3. Leave the parts in the solution for about a week for really hard pieces. The duration should be adjusted based on condition of the parts. Four to seven days is usually enough.
4. Rinse off with water, dry, and let stand for about a day.

Note: Rubber parts will swell up but become soft like original. After a day or so out of the chemicals they return to normal size but remain soft.

The solution can be used over and over again, so the initial cost can be offset by the number of parts that can be treated. In the long run it is much less costly than buying new reproduction rubber!

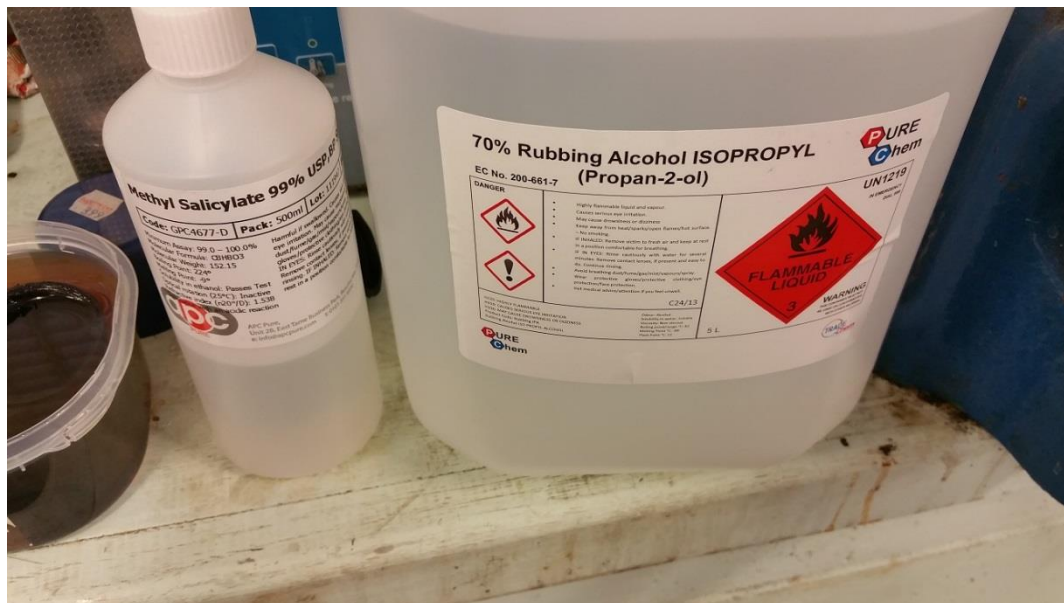
Rubber Part Restoration



Methyl Salicylate, 500ml from Amazon supplier, Consolidated Chemical & Solvents.

Also available in 120ml and 1000ml sizes.

Ingredients sourced in the UK by Fredswat



Rubber Part Restoration

Parts soak



Rubber after treatment. Before treatment this piece was so hard that it would not bend.

