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Duct Tape Removal

Soft sided suitcase (nylon or the like fabric) is damaged in transit. Airline tapes it closed with duct tape. Duct tape is allowed to stay on for an extended period of time. When tape is removed, lots of residue from tape remains. The orange based stuff might remove it, but then it will smell like orange oil forever. Any recommendations for a particular product to remove the tape residue would be appreciated.

Henry R. Reckler, Greenwood Village, Colorado

I've seen several other suggestions. Here's one that sometimes works. Rub a small area of the 'stuff' with an ice cube. Then gently scrape away the residue with a dull blade such as a kitchen table knife. When the stuff is cold, it often can be scraped off much easier --- and water doesn't leave a smell.

Bruce Dorner, Londonderry, New Hampshire

Try mineral spirits. WD 40 may leave a greasy residue. If mineral spirits don't work try lacquer thinner or nail polish remover (same thing).

David A. Silverstone, Hollywood, Florida

Thanks for all the suggestions. I tried this one first, since there is no smell. It didn't work. I'll try lighter fluid next, and then move on to more volatile chemicals.

Henry R. Reckler, Greenwood Village, Colorado

A person needs only three tools in life: WD-40, duct tape and a hammer. If it doesn't move and it should, use the WD-40. If it moves and it shouldn't, use the duct tape. If either doesn't work, use the hammer.

The problem here was removing the duct tape in the first place. To solve the problem, simply apply new duct tape. It will cover up the old duct tape gunk while giving your luggage that experienced traveler look.

Neal Kennedy, Marble Falls, Texas

Lighter fluid removes this glue, and assorted others. Fluid is quite volatile,



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so smell disappears after a short time. Test for whether it also removes fabric dyes first.

Rebecca K. Wiess

If the suitcase material would not be damaged or stained by mineral oil, try baby oil (which is just mineral oil and fragrance). Baby oil works wonders on surfaces such as stained and painted wood surfaces and appliances, getting sticky and crayon-related marks off. Plus your luggage would smell baby fresh. But do test to see whether it would stain first.

Susan Abert

Well, WD 40 takes off any kind of glue, if you prefer that smell to citrus. Personally, I'd rather my suitcase smell like oranges than petroleum, but maybe I'm just being a girl.

Meg Tebo, Chicago, Illinois

Before using anything that might stain or smell, try alcohol to remove any adhesive residue. It often does the trick, almost never stains, and loses its odor quickly.

Jo Fray, Massachusetts

Well, at least if you use white wine. Red pretty much always stains.

Oh -- you mean rubbing alcohol. Nevermind.

Lisa Runquist, California

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