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Tips on changing your tip

Changing the tip on your cue does not require expensive equipment and should not cause you undue anxiety. With a little patience and a few simple tools you can avoid lengthy turn around times from the pro shop and be your own cue mechanic.

Unless the tip of your cue has simply fallen off, the first step in any tip replacement procedure is the removal of the existing tip. The gross tip material can be removed with a sharp knife or even a pair of pliers. I use a pair of ceramic tile “nippers” because of the wide flat jaw surface.



Because tips are made from leather, initial removal of the tip will leave a certain amount of material still glued to the ferrule. This material must be removed very carefully so as not to damage either the flat surface of the ferrule or its edges.

The residual material may be removed using a very sharp knife and sand paper. An inexpensive utility razor knife works very well.



When using sand paper to remove the last of the leather from the ferrule always use a block of wood as backing for the sand paper and keep the surface of the ferrule flat against the sand paper. Be careful to maintain the sharp edges of the ferrule.



There are also a number of inexpensive commercially sold sanders that make sanding the ferrule effortless. These sanders are available for less than \$15. They clamp onto the shaft and provide a consistent and even result.



Once the ferrule is sanded, the tip must be prepared before it is glued on. Take a look at the bottom of the tip. Most, although not all, are made with a “skin” of shiny leather just like the top of the tip. This “skin” must be broken in order to insure an adequate bond for the glue, the tip and the ferrule. Place a piece of sand paper on a flat surface and rub the bottom of the tip on the sand paper until the rough leather is exposed. Be sure to keep the tip flat during the sanding process.

You are now ready to glue the tip onto the ferrule. There are a number of commercially sold glues and tip clamps that are available for this purpose and they generally work as advertised. However, I have found that most brands of “super” glues work very well. The use of “super” glue also eliminates the necessity of clamping and down time from waiting for the glue to dry. With the application of a little pressure, the glue will be dry in moments and a strong and permanent bond will be established.

Many, however, prefer the traditional gluing and clamping methods because of the slower drying times of the glue and the larger margins of error with the clamping process. Because the “super” glues dry so quickly, there is more opportunity to make a mistake, including gluing your fingers together. With a little practice you can become proficient in either method.

Regardless of the type of glue used you should adhere to the instructions on the label of the glue container. Working on a tip before

the glue has sufficiently cured may cause the tip to become separated from the ferrule.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that ferrules are made from a myriad of materials. Not all glues may work with all ferrules. You may have to experiment with several types of glue before finding one compatible with the ferrule of your cue.

An often overlooked consideration in the tip replacement process is the size of the tip. You may run into trouble if you try to match the size of the tip exactly with the size of the ferrule. Picking out a tip that is slightly larger than the size of your ferrule alleviates any concern or difficulty with centering the tip onto the ferrule, no matter what gluing method you decide on. For most cues a 14mm tip will work well and can be easily trimmed down to the smaller ferrule size.



Once the tip is glued on any excess material should be trimmed. Again, a number of commercially sold products work very well in accomplishing this task. However, trimming the material with a razor knife as shown in the photo above is an effective low tech alternative.

Finally, the sides of the tip should be sanded flush with the ferrule and the tip itself must be shaped to insure a proper hit with the cue ball.



The tip should have approximately the same curvature as a nickel. This can be accomplished with sand paper or any number of commercially sold shapers. It is this degree of curvature that creates a proper match for the curvature of the cue

ball.

With little more than practice, patience, sand paper, glue, a block of wood and a razor knife you can quickly and easily change the tip on your cue.

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