

How to Use Recycled Soles on Your Soft-Sole Shoes

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Introduction

One of the biggest ongoing searches for home sewers who enjoy making soft-sole shoes is how to attach or what to use for a sturdier shoe sole. There are many options to cut your soles out of for smaller children - leather, skid-free fabric, Tough Tek, etc. But as your child approaches school age or when making adult shoes you may really prefer a sturdier sole. The following directions lead you through removing soles from water shoes and attaching them permanently to the bottom of a pair of completed soft-sole shoes. This process is time consuming and requires more work than the actual assembly of the shoe; so it's not for everyone. But if your child is in love with soft-sole shoes the odds are they are not going to allow them to wear them to school when they start and this is a way around that.

Instructions

Difficulty: Moderately Challenging

Things You'll Need

- A pair of cheap water shoes about 1 to 2 sizes larger than the shoe size you are making
- A large bag of uncooked rice
- Large pan
- Two pair of tongs or pliers
- Two socks
- Two ace bandages (or length of cut stretchy fabric and safety pin)
- A tube of Shoe Goo
- A small stiff bristled paint brush
- Rubbing alcohol
- Hair dryer

Steps

1 Step One



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Take insoles out of shoes and cut fabric until it is about ½ an inch from rubber sole.

2 Step Two

Place in pan that is large enough to fit entire shoe without bending. For large adult shoes I actually use a metal cake pan and set on the top of the stove. Remove shoes and add enough water to cover and bring to a boil. Slip shoes into boiling water. Depending on the quality of the shoe and rubber used it can take 5-30 minutes for the boiling to loosen the glue. After 5 minutes pull one shoe out with a pair of tongs or pliers and attempt to pull fabric from shoe sole. Once it starts pulling and has cooled enough to touch you can pull it the rest of the way off pretty easily. If it doesn't come up easily put back in water and try again in 5-10 minute intervals.

3 Step Three



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When you've removed the sole from all fabric and lining dry it off. While the rubber is still warm lay the actual shoe over it and attempt to mold the rubber to more comfortably form the shoe. You do need to be aware that the entire sole area of the shoe will not be covered as the soft-sole shoe has a larger sole than the standard water shoe. Due to this fact it is a good idea to make the leather soles of your shoes the same color as the sole you will be attaching.

4 Step Four



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Once cool sand the entire inside of the rubber sole. I find it much easier to use a Dremel drill with a sanding disk and quickly scruff up the inside. This step will increase the hold of the adhesive.

5 Step Five



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Squeeze out a large loop of Shoe Goo around edge of sole and using your paint brush cover inside of sole. You need to do this as quickly as possible so the glue doesn't begin to sit, so just do one shoe at a time.

6 Step Six



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One side of the top part of the sole will not fit correctly. It is best to allow this piece to go toward the inside of the shoe/foot; it will be less visible. So press your soft-sole shoe into the glue prepared sole from the outside of the foot towards the inside. The inside where the shoe sole is larger than the rubber sole will look like the photo supplied.

7 Step Seven



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When finished pressing the shoe securely to the sole fill the shoe with dry rice, popcorn, or beans to help hold its shape.

8 Step Eight



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Take a sock slightly smaller than the shoe and force the shoe into the sock. This will help form the rubber sole to the shape of the filled shoe. Then take an ace bandage and tightly wrap around the entire shoe in both directions and secure. Let set overnight.

9 Step Nine



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Remove ace bandage and sock the next day and pour out the rice. You may have small places around the edge of the sole where the leather is not securely glued down. Using your paint brush you can dab small area with glue. Then use clothes pins or small clamps to hold the rubber sole tightly against the leather shoe. Anywhere the clamp or clothespin will be touching the leather you should put an extra piece of scrap leather there to prevent damage to the shoe. Let set overnight.

10 Step Ten

Remove pins the next day. You can remove any glue from leather or sole by repeatedly applying alcohol until the glue hardens and starts to peel up; then simply pull off.

Overall Tips & Warnings

If you end up with any odd places where your rubber sole had a pinch or hump you can heat the area up with a hair dryer set on high and then press into shape, or flat, as needed.

Clean your paint brush with alcohol. It will harden the glue and allow you to pull it off.

Check out my website at <http://www.makethemyself.com> for more tips when working with soft-sole shoes and great patterns!

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