

Adhesives

NEED TO KNOW

Multipurpose glues are great for small repairs. But choose carefully – the best glue for a broken mug isn't best for a torn car cover.

EPOXY RESINS

With epoxy resins, such as Loctite's, you mix equal amounts of the contents of two tubes. It's tricky but, done properly, you can stick almost anything. The only thing they struggle with is flexible plastics, such as waterproof clothing.

They're water resistant, which makes them ideal for cups, vases or rigid plastics such as garden furniture. And, because they're gooey, they'll fill gaps around the crack.

SUPERGLUES

Superglues, such as Wilko's and Bostik's, are great for little emergencies because they set very quickly. Water weakens them, though, so they're no good for crockery or anything that will get wet.

Unfortunately, the stuff that makes glue super also makes it great at sticking fingers. If it happens, soak hands in warm, soapy water and gently peel away glue with a teaspoon handle.

UNIVERSALS

Universal glues, such as Copydex and UHU, don't have the sticking power of epoxy resins or superglues on jobs such as fixing a small piece of jewellery. Ideal for gluing paper and card, they work better than epoxies and superglues on stretchy plastics or fabrics, such as a ripped bike cover.



BEST BUYS

EPOXY RESINS

All the epoxies have great sticking power after about ten minutes. But not all are easy to prepare and clean up, and some leave unsightly residue.

The **Loctite**, £5.66 from independent retailers, is the strongest epoxy, and leaves a tidy join. It's easier to clean up than other epoxies, and it's less noticeable because it stays quite transparent when dry.

Two glues tied in second place: **Araldite** and **Everbuild**. Araldite, £3.99 from Focus, Homebase, B&Q, Halfords and Tesco, is better on wood; Everbuild, £1.95 from independents, is better on metals. However, both turn an unattractive yellow once set.

The Everbuild has a syringe to help you mix the two parts equally. However, we found that air bubbles made the contents come out unevenly.

Loctite Super Epoxy Power Bond 85%

Araldite Rapid 77%

Everbuild Stick 2 Rapid Epoxy 77%

UHU Epoxy Fast Setting 72%

B&Q Rapid Bond Epoxy Glue 70%

SUPERGLUES

With superglue, less is more. Too much weakens the bond because the two parts of the join are too far apart. They don't vary much in strength, so a good superglue is one that lets you control its application.

Most impressive is **Wilko**, 85p from Wilkinson. It's easy to squeeze out the right amount, and it's a strong all-rounder. It's really good for sticking wood to wood and resists water and heat better than the rest (though it's still unsuitable for anything that will regularly get wet).

Next is **B&Q's** gel, £2.48. It's less runny, which helps fill gaps in textured surfaces, such as wood, to make joins stronger. And it won't block nozzles. However, it doesn't bond metal and wood as well as Wilko.

Wilko Super Glue 83%

B&Q Multipurpose

Superglue Gel 75%

UHU Superglue Odour

Free Gel 74%

Loctite Super Glue Precision

Bottle 73%

Bostik Super Glue 68%

UNIVERSALS

To get the strongest bond, the makers of most universal glues recommend that you apply them to just one of the surfaces you're dealing with, and wait for about ten minutes before joining. This allows the glue to get more sticky before you hold the materials together. The join continues to grow stronger for a few weeks, while it dries completely. For the best results, you need to do this even with our Best Buy.

Loctite, £1.87 from independents, is the best of this bunch. Once it's had time to set fully, it's stronger than other universal glues on a variety of materials.

Way down at the bottom of the list is Copydex. It's not very strong but, on the other hand, it is good for children to use because it's solvent free and doesn't give off harmful fumes.

Loctite All Purpose

Clear Adhesive 49%

Bostik All Purpose 47%

B&Q All Purpose Glue 47%

UHU All Purpose Adhesive 40%

Copydex Adhesive 39%

OUR TESTS

We looked at 15 multipurpose glues which cost less than £6. We tested the glues on their ability to stick metal, wood, porcelain, plastic guttering and a bike cover. We also did two tests to see how well the glues aged. First, we checked the strength of porcelain joins after they'd been through a few dishwasher cycles. Then we simulated heating, cooling and outdoor exposure for between three and six months on metal, plastic and wood joins.

SCORE

This ignores price and is based on:

Adhesion	60%
Convenience	30%
Instructions	10%