

A Slick Fix for Drag Slicks

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How many of us here have opened a new dragster or show rod kit with great excitement in building such a flashy machine to only be disappointed in the very soft vinyl material used in making the drag slicks? (Photo 1)

I think we all have.

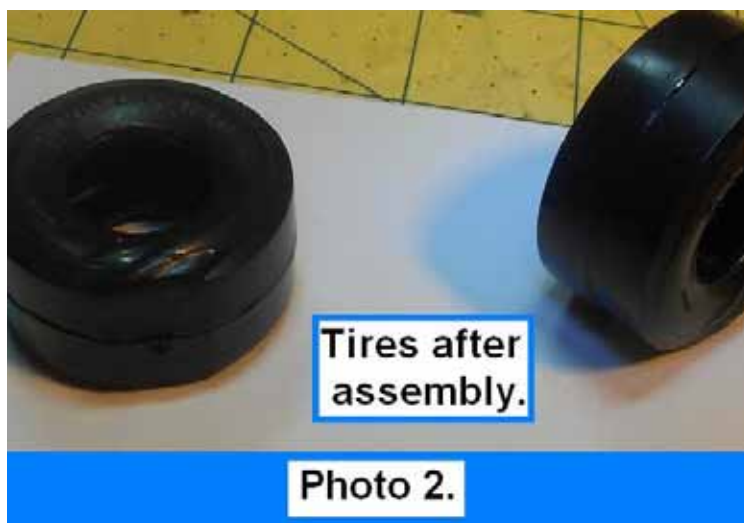
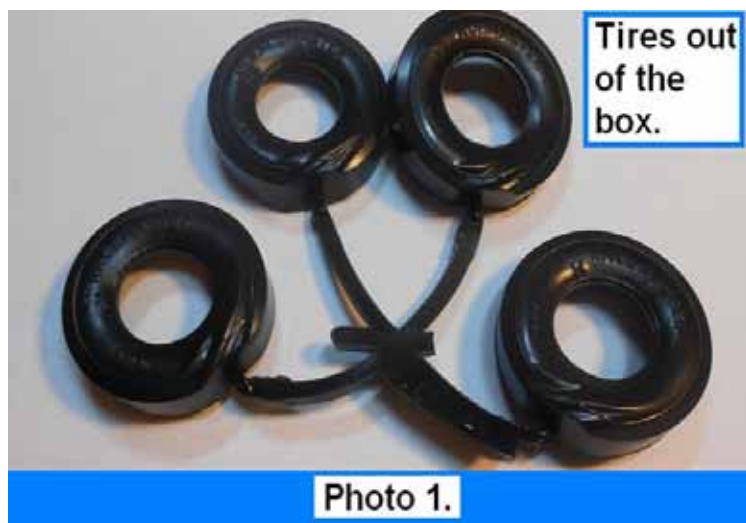
The tires are very soft and no solvent based cements work to glue the halves together. Super Glue won't hold due to the tires flex and break the bond. And never mind that the halves never line up and there is a very unsightly seam all the way

around the tire. I have come up with a solution that solves all the above problems.

First off you have to get the tires glued together. The best way I have found is to use two part epoxy. My personal favorite is Gorilla Glue Epoxy. It has a 5 minute set time which is both slow and fast enough for this application. When the epoxy sets it gives the tire rigidity so it won't flex. If more stiffness is desired, you could line the inside of the tire with foam rubber before gluing the halves together. After the tires are glued, I set them aside for at

least 24 hours to assure that the epoxy is fully cured. I will usually place the tire side down on my bench then use some weight to assure a good bond. I have a 1500 count BB container I use. I place it on the tire while the epoxy cures. (Photo 2)

Once this is done you will most likely have a seam all the way around the tire. Use a fairly aggressive grit sand paper and sand down the seam by rotating the tire as you drag it across the paper. (Photo 3)





Tire during the sanding process.

Photo 3.

Remember to keep the flat spot flat on the tire so it will have the right 'sit'. Don't worry about getting the seam perfectly sanded down. It just needs to be knocked down so the tire tread is relatively flat.



Measuring the tread.

Photo 4.

Here is where the magic starts! Measure the width of the tread of the slick using either a ruler or a digital caliper. (Photo 4)

Using standard index cards, cut a strip at your measured width, and long enough to go around the tire except for the flat spot. (Photo 5)



Card marked out.

Photo 5.

Working your way around the tire from one edge of the flat spot, glue the card stock down using super glue. (Photo 6)



Gluing card to tire.

Photo 6.



Card glued to the tire.

Photo 7.

I prefer to use the super glues that come with a brush applicator. It is much easier to control how much glue you put down. Use the thin type, not the gel. (Photo 7)



Tire after coating index card with super glue.

Photo 8.

Once you have the card stock glued down around the tire, except for the flat spot, soak all of the card down in super glue and let it set. (Photo 8)

When the super glue dries it gives the card a bit of a texture that is commonly found on drag slicks.

When the super glue is dry, it is time to paint the tire. I use Tamiya Flat Black paint. (Photo 9)



Painting with flat black.

Photo 9.



Finished tire before installation.

Photo 10.

I give not only the tread a coat of paint, but I apply paint to the whole tire so it has a uniform sheen and color. After the paint is dry, you can weather the tire in your normal manner. (Photo 10)

After all this has set and dried, it is time to mount the tire to the model. I use super glue or epoxy again since the solvent glues won't work. Once the tires are installed, you will have the proper looking drag slicks! No more ugly seams and a scale 'texture' on the tire. (Photo 11)

