

Repairing a Plastic Dustpan

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Posted 2026 January 30

As you know if you follow my posts, I really dislike throwing things out if they are still functional, or if they can be repaired.

For instance, the plastic dustpan that I use in the basement developed a stress fracture across the back of the pan, just below the handle, rendering it useless.



Of course, I could always toss out the pan and just buy another one: plastic dustpans aren't expensive.

But I had a couple of reasons for keeping this one. First, although I could pick up a new one for cheap at the dollar store, the plastic they are made of is inferior and will shortly splinter and crumble as the plasticizers leach out. By contrast, this one is made of a sturdier, more flexible plastic that – except for the stress fracture – has held up for several years now. It's worth fixing. And you know me. I hate adding to the landfill unnecessarily. Plus, I like the challenge of making things last just a bit longer.

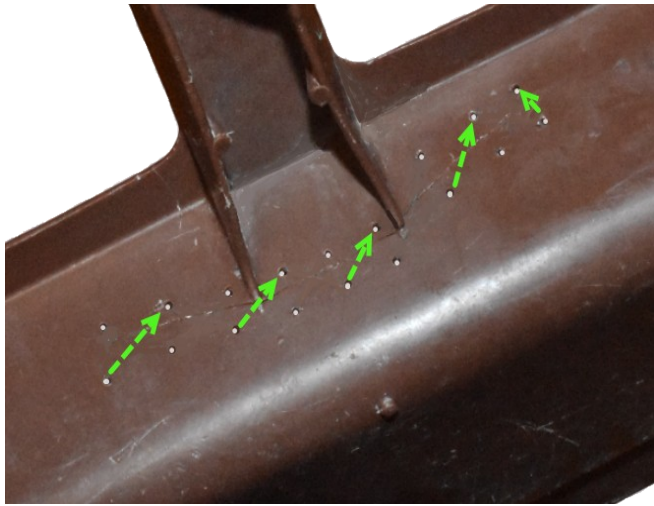
It's difficult to repair plastic. I have yet to find a glue that really holds, and if a break is along a stress line, as this one is, even the best glue will fail once you put the item back into use.



For a repair to hold, it needs to be reinforced somehow. I'm going to use wire to lace the split together and provide some additional support along the area of greatest stress.

To start with, I drilled a series of holes on either side of the fracture along its entire length, using a fine bit in my drill (if you look closely at the photo, you can see the pairs of tiny holes all along the length of the fracture).

I used a length of 20-gauge galvanized wire to lace the split together, passing the wire through the holes exactly as you would a shoelace, skipping every second hole and pulling the wire taut after each insertion.



When I reached the end, I doubled back, criss-crossing the wire to form a series of Xes to pull the fracture closed.



Back at the starting point, I twisted the wire ends together and snipped them close, pressing them flat against the back of the pan.

I completed the repair by slathering the wire sutures with a generous amount of GOOP, on both inside and outside of the dustpan.



The GOOP covers the rough surface of the wire, and also helps to strengthen and reinforce the repair.

GOOP holds as well to the plastic as any glue does, but on its own, it would not be sufficient to hold the stress fracture together. However, the combination of GOOP and the wire sutures makes a repair strong enough to keep my dustpan going for a few more years. Success!