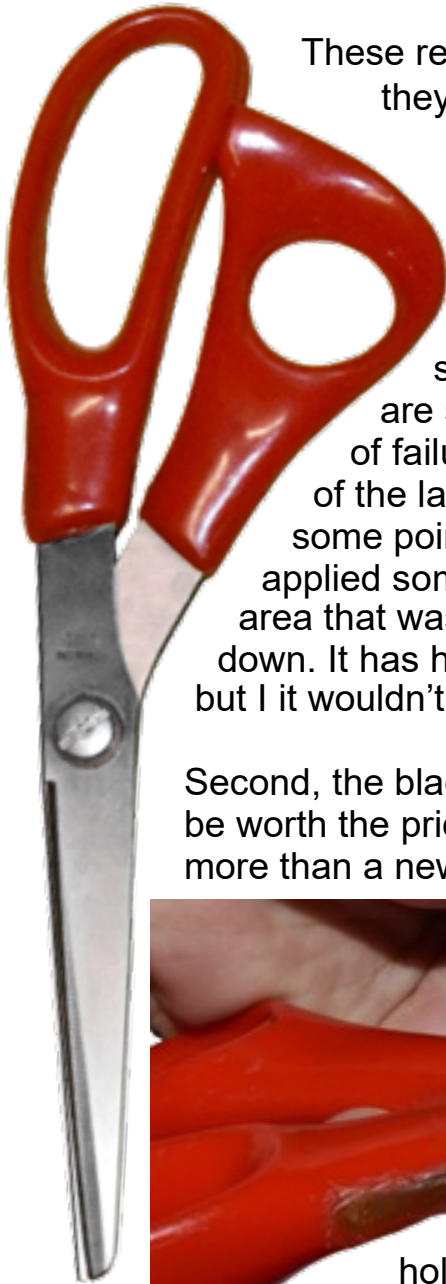


# Red Scissors Makeover

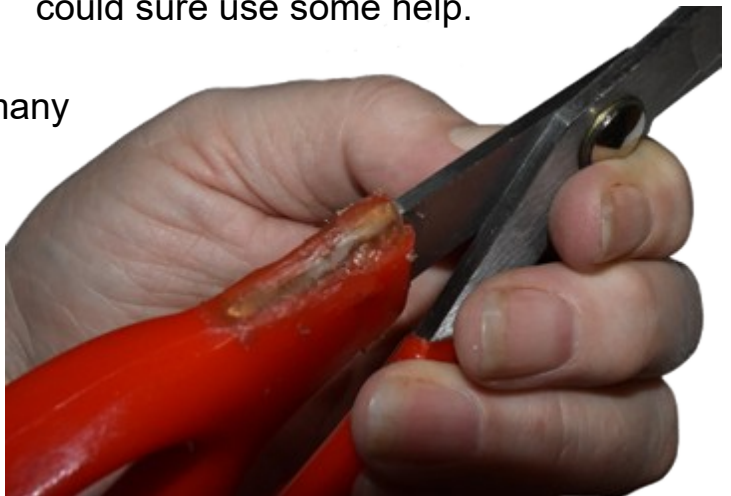
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These red scissors are striking, but they're more than a pretty face: they are comfortable to hold and cut with, and they have a nice balance in the hand. However, they have a few issues and could sure use some help.

First, like so many plastic handled scissors, they are showing signs of failure at the base of the larger handle. At some point in the past, I applied some Goop to the area that was breaking down. It has held up so far, but I it wouldn't hurt to add some additional reinforcement.

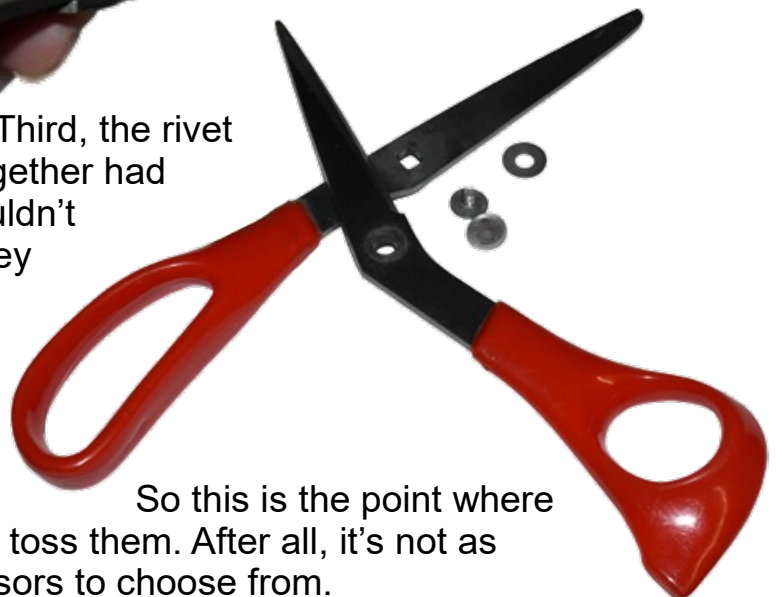


Second, the blades are pretty dull. An inexpensive pair like this wouldn't be worth the price of a professional sharpening, which would likely cost more than a new pair.



Third, the rivet holding them together had worked loose, and I couldn't get it tightened up, so they were really loosey-goosey.

I say *were*, because the rivet cap actually let go, and the scissors literally fell apart in my hand.

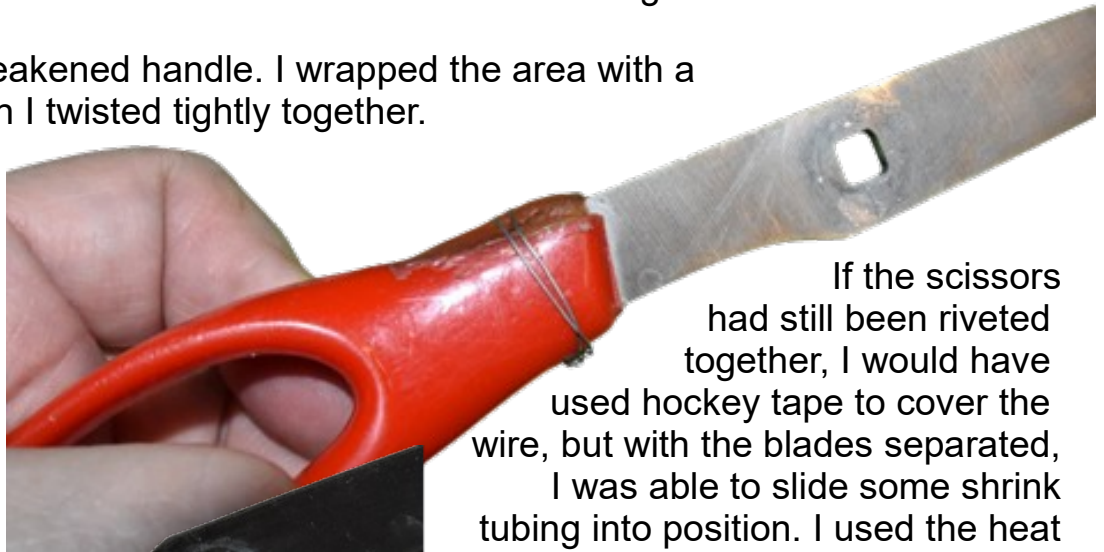


So this is the point where my sister would probably suggest that I toss them. After all, it's not as though I don't have plenty of other scissors to choose from.

But you know me: I can't resist a repair challenge, and I hate to throw out something that still has life in it. The blades themselves, though dull, are otherwise in good shape, and I was confident that the scissors could be brought back to life.

I started with the weakened handle. I wrapped the area with a length of wire, which I twisted tightly together.

I covered the wire with a bit more Goop, and when that dried, I decided to tape over the whole repair.



If the scissors had still been riveted together, I would have used hockey tape to cover the wire, but with the blades separated, I was able to slide some shrink tubing into position. I used the heat gun to snug it tight, taking care not to overheat the plastic handle. Although tape would have been fine in this application, the shrink tubing is neater and will better stand up to wear.



To put the scissors back together, I chose an ingenious fastener called a Chicago screw, which consists of a threaded bolt end that screws into an internally threaded capped tube. The whole thing can then be tightened with a screwdriver.

Chicago screws come in several lengths, so can be used to fasten items of various thicknesses. I've used a short one to secure my scissors.

Unlike a rivet, this fastener is removable, so the scissors can be taken apart if need be for sharpening or cleaning. And if it should work loose, it can also be tightened, to keep the proper tension on the blades.

So far, so good: I've addressed two of my three concerns. Now to sharpen the scissors.



To sharpen up my red scissors, I used a combination of tools: my new Sharpal 201H fixed-angle sharpening jig for scissors, and my standard dual-surface sharpening stone.

To use the Sharpal, you clamp the scissors in the angled jig, then stroke the abrasive surface across the blade. On the stone, you simply draw the blades at the correct angle across the wet stone.

Between the two, I was able to bring my red scissors back to a level of keenness where they easily cut most fabrics.

And while I had the scissors apart, I cleaned and shined the blades, so they look and work almost like new. *Almost*, because of the yellow shrink tubing on the handle. . . !



Although I didn't really mind the yellow, I decided to touch it up with a red Sharpie anyway. The repair is still visible, of course, but now it doesn't catch the eye quite so glaringly.

So: my "throw-away" scissors are once again fully functional. The Chicago screw is nicely snug, the handle is secured, and the blades are keen. And maybe best of all, I had lots of fun bringing them back!

My red scissors still fit nicely in my hand, and they are sharp enough now to easily cut most fabrics. Looks like they're keepers after all.

