

Little Helpers

I keep a mesh bag loaded with all my little helpers. These are the things I use when I need to do a quick fix or maintain what I have.

Optical Cleaners & Enhancers *SRI*

We sell a lot of eyewear in our online store. Keeping it at its highest optical visibility is critical to reducing fatigue and enjoying the ride. Dirty or scratched lenses distract a rider from paying attention to the road. And then you also need to consider your face shield and wind screen if you have one on your bike – imagine that, you could be looking through three different clear surfaces before you actually see the road, so the cleaner they are the better.



I've tested a lot of cleaning products, and the one I've found to be the best is called Novus 1 Plastic Clean and Shine. Under continual use, the product did not deteriorate the surface of eyewear, face shields and wind screens. Others, like Meguiars plastic cleaner and Windex do. In

fact Windex is one of the worst things you can apply to plastic, because it begins peeling off the surface and causes a haze. It's designed to be used on glass.

Another demon for plastic is the scrubber on the back side of the squeegee at the gas station. Use your common sense and never rub your face shield with a scrubber on a squeegee which was designed to be used on glass – not plastic. You'll scratch your face shield in no time.

I tend to change my face shield as often as necessary, because eventually we all wind up with scratches that are too big to remove with a mild abrasive that won't deteriorate the optical clarity of plastics. For me that's at least once a year and sometimes twice if I'm doing a lot of off-road travel.

What you use to rub and dry your eyewear with is critical too. Get yourself a nice micro-fiber cleaning cloth. Cotton fibers are too large and don't absorb dirt into the fabric as you rub, so a cotton towel can do more damage than good. Paper towels will do the most damage, and yet I've seen plenty of riders use them at the gas station.

I keep a small two ounce bottle of Novus 1 and a micro-fiber cleaning cloth in a freezer bag tucked into my tank bag. I wash the cloth each night I'm on the road.

I also carry a bottle of Nikwax Visor Proof which works well on the outside of face shields to bead water away for better visibility. How often you need to re-apply depends on how hard it's raining.

Fogging on the inside of the face shield is a problem especially when the humidity increases during rainfall. I've tried all the tricks like the Fog City, Pin Lock and other inserts. I don't care for them. When it's minimal I just lift my shield and let nature take its course. But – when it's really bad I use a shot of Scott Anti Fog cleaner which you can pick up at the ski shop.

Cable Ties

These little miracles have hundreds of uses; you just have to wait for the situation to arise. Carry at least ten eight-inch ties with you. You just never know when you'll use them. Here's a few times when riders have.



***Frankenstein?** After this bike hit the pavement, the owner used the auger tool like the one in a Leatherman to create holes and stitch the plastic back together with cable ties.*

Scotty Sport Rider went down breaking an exterior plastic panel on his bike. It was hanging there with some critical wires attached to the backside that would have been left vulnerable if he broke off the plastic and tossed the panel. Instead he used a Leatherman tool to make small holes along each side of the break, and then zip tied the panel back together. Nice one, Scotty.

Gloria Goldwing once discovered a wire rubbing on the frame of her bike. Using a zip tie she was able to secure it, eliminating the friction and an impending short circuit.

Snoring Bob was ready to turn in one night on the road. His riding partner reminded him to use a snoring strip before he went to bed so she could sleep too, but Bob didn't bring one – or did he? Bob took out a zip tie, trimmed it with the scissors on his Leatherman, backed it with a little duct tape, then placed it onto his nose and they both slept happily ever after.

You never know what you'll come up with for using a zip tie, but by having it on hand, it'll be there ready to serve no matter what the need is.

Duct Tape

There's always something you can put back together with duct tape. Most convenience stores sell small rolls of it, which are easier to pack than those big ones you see in the hardware store.

Flashlight SR!

My flashlight of choice is a Mag Lite with a Nite Ize LED Conversion like the one you see here. LED lights cost more, but the batteries last much longer and the bulb lasts far longer than other types too.



Even if you only plan to ride for the day, carry a small flashlight. You never know when you'll need to inspect an area of the bike that is not well lit, such as the inside of a motor part or the interior area of your frame.

Multi-purpose Tool SR!

I've already mentioned the Leatherman tool several times in the book, so you know it's my choice for a multi-purpose tool. Specifically the Leather Juice XE6, because it comes with a corkscrew and file, as well as all the other dozen blades, scissors and such.

Back in my youth the popular tools of choice to carry on road trips were Buck knives and Swiss Army knives. They were sort of useful, but the addition of pliers, a corkscrew, file, saw and four screwdriver bits in the Leatherman Juice makes it a handy all-in-one unit for my purposes.

Rubber Bands

A small assortment of both small and large are suggested here. For larger rubber bands, you can cut sections from an old inner tube.

Sewing Kit

A tear in your gear, tent or clothing can be patched up easily with a sewing kit. I like to have a needle in there where the eye opening is big enough I don't spend a lot of time futzing with threading it.

Sport Goop

Broken plastic can be a pain when you're riding. I've tried Super Glue and various dual epoxy systems, but the one I

found to work the best has been Sport Goop, made by the people who make Goop for shoe repair. It holds together a wide variety of plastics and metals.

Keep it in a freezer bag in the event it becomes punctured along your journey.

Tear-Aid SR!

This nifty product includes a few different-sized strips of an elastic composition that will fix leaks in rain gear or tents, hold together body work, or patch up just about anything you might use a strip of plastic or rubber for.

