

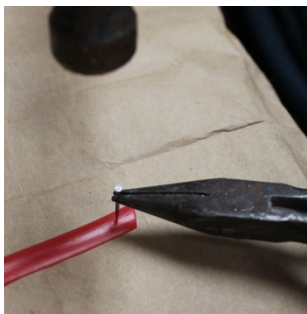
TIPS AND TRICKS FOR PLASTIC WICKER

BY MJ FRANK

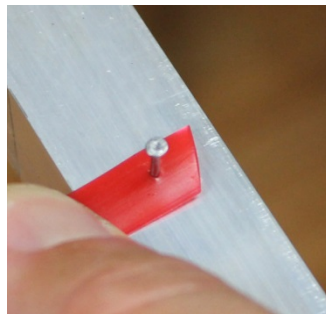
Why plastic wicker deteriorates: There are many reasons why the plastic wicker gets brittle and breaks. **First** and foremost is simply age, and depending on the quality of the vinyl that could be as little as 2 years to 10. **Secondly** is the sun's ultraviolet rays change the carbon molecules and basically break down the plastic. This damage can be reduced if the furniture is put away out of direct sunlight during the off season, or covered to keep the sun's rays off. **Thirdly**, Chemical damage from two sources; Pool water can have increased levels of Chlorine which, with repeated and prolonged exposure, breaks down the plastic. Also, many household cleaning agents have bleach and alcohol which harm the plastic. If you need to clean the plastic wicker, use only water first to see if that will clean it.

How much to order: To determine how much plastic wicker you need to redo your old furniture, remove all the old material and weigh it as it is sold by the pound. Generally speaking for repairs or binding of the tubes, one pound will be enough, as one pound is about 250-290 feet. When replacing backs or seats, two pound will reweave an area about 16" by 18" depending on the type of weave and waste factors.

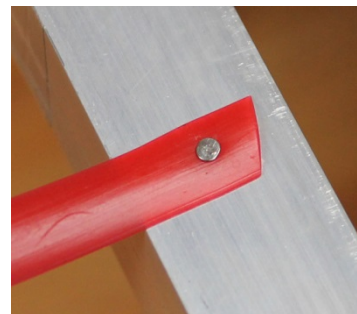
Attaching plastic wicker: Most modern plastic wicker furniture available today is made from sturdy aluminum tubing, either square or round. It is near impossible to nail to the tubing without predrilling the aluminum.



Attach the end to the Aluminum frame 1) Drill hole slightly smaller than the nail. 2) Pound in wire nail using tack hammer and needle nose pliers.



Finish pounding the nail in until flush. One nail is enough.



Do not pound in too hard because it may push through the plastic.



Wrap the plastic wicker around the frame and over the nail, hiding it from view.



Spring clamps make excellent holding devices. Putting felt furniture glide pads on the jaws keeps the clamp from marring the plastic.

Heating – Actually preheating the plastic wicker is not needed – however, it does help for tying and binding. Usually soaking it in warm water at 120 degrees helps, but it cools off rather fast, so short lengths are best.

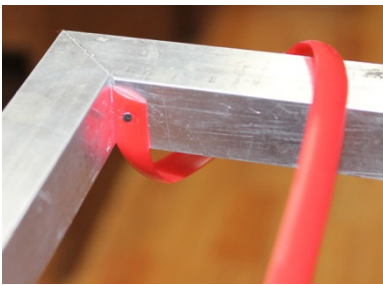
Weaving Styles –1) Single over the rail turn around - this method uses the least amount of material but is not as strong for the same reason. 2) Around the frame method.

Joining – It is best to avoid joining ends by starting and stopping at the rail, but you can tie on the underside or behind where it cannot be seen. Also, sometimes simply overlapping works because the weaving will hold the plastic wicker.

Tying – When securing to the rail, a simple half hitch will work.

Gluing – The best glue to use is Loctite Plastics Bonding System. Two other glues seem to work, but aren't as effective: the first is mastic, like rubber cement or contact cement, and the second is super glue.

Other ideas – Double stick tape helps when holding the plastic wicker to the rail.



Wrapping over the frame is easy, but plastic on metal is slippery. Have your spring clamps ready.



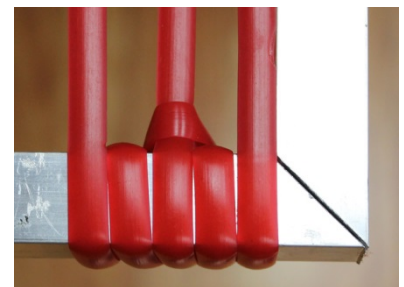
Single sided weaving requires that the direction of the wrap change so the weave stays on the top side. Wrapping the plastic around the cross strand changes its direction.



By using this method the rounded side remains up. This method also uses less material and is just as strong. Although it's not good where both sides will be seen.



Wrap from side to side until the frame area is filled in, and then weave the same way in the other direction, except weave the strands over and under the first weaving step.



This picture shows gaps between the wraps. Be sure to push the strands tightly together, closing the gaps for a neater look.