

Making An Easy Mouth Tab

Out of Parachute Cord

by Ron Kumetz

IN A RECENT EMAIL EXCHANGE, COACH STEVE RUIS expressed to me a need for inexpensive and easy to make yet durable and effective mouth tabs and showed me design for one which was made from a piece of parachute cord folded in half and sewn

Archery DIY

together. That design looked like a step in the right direction but requires some sewing skills to make it reliable. My experience making falconry equipment with parachute cord yielded one simple improvement: weave the “para-cord” rather than sew it. My initial attempt seemed well received so I have documented here the basic steps to making a woven para-cord mouth tab with a commonly available tools.

Materials Needed

good quality parachute cord

This is commonly known as “550 Cord.” High quality parachute cord is characterized by a tight weave.

Tools Needed

sharp scissors or a razor blade

slim needle-nose pliers

butane lighter

1/4" (6.35mm) drill bit or similar sized round object (see text)

#6 (4.25mm) knitting needle

ruler

a wire of a diameter and stiffness similar to a coat hanger about 12 inches in length

The Process

I recommend reading through the whole process description before starting to prevent “gotchas.” You

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may even think of a better way to do some of the steps.

Step 1 Cut a piece of para-cord and pull out the center strands. I have found that 7 inches is a good starting point but you can experiment a bit to find a length which suits your preferences. Too short has obvious problems. However being cavalier with too much cord can cause the last step to be come more difficult. Note that some of the photos were taken with a shorter length model to make photography easier.



All photos courtesy of Cammie Kumetz.

Step 2 Fold the opening at each end in half and gently melt the cord with the lighter to allow molding the cord into a point with your fingers. If you create a molten mess by heating it too quickly you will burn your fingers. I do not suggest doing so as it is unnecessary.



Step 3 Assuming that you want the same 1/4" loop



that I use, push the knitting needle through the para-cord 1/2" from the middle.

Step 4 Pass the longer end through the hole in the cord created with the knitting needle.



At this point I insert a 1/4" drill bit into the loop just created to hold the loop size while I work.

Step 5 Push the knitting needle through the cord close to where it comes through the hole in the other end.



Step 6 Similar to Step 4 pass the other end of the para-cord back through this hole . . .



. . . and pull tight (see photo top of the next column).

(continued)



Step 7 Cut the melted tip off the end of the cord which just you pulled through the hole. Be careful to cut off the correct end!



Step 8 Push the knitting needle through the end hole you just opened and up the center in preparation to pass the other end inside that end.



Step 9 Insert the wire into the melted closed end of the para-cord to be used to push it into the open ended part. Carefully push the melted

end into the hole and slide it up the other end. *Note* Once you have inserted the inner part it is much easier to push the outer part over the inner part like you were putting on a sock than it is to jam the inner part into the outer which results in a bit of Chinese-hand-cuff tightening of the assembly rather than the loosening which results from compressing the braid.



If you cannot push it all the way through or if you accidentally pull the wire out you may be able to save the day with the thin needle nose pliers.



Step 10 Pull both the outer and inner ends tight and smooth them then cut to the same length (*see photos on next page*).

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Step 11 Melt the ends of the cord together. This bonds the inner and outer “layers” and by smoothing out the melted material creates an end which will not be unpleasant to hold in the mouth.



That this mouth tab can be taken off and cleaned/sterilized should also be appreciated by more advanced archers.



The manufacturing process is now complete. The tab is installed by wrapping it around the string and pushing the blunt end through the loop and pulling it tight. It may be customized for the archer’s preferences and comfort by altering the loop size and/or the length of the mouth tab.

The result is a mouth tab that can be used by elite archers and beginners. If given to a beginner to use on a program bow at a first or only lesson, it can be taken off easily to be given to the archer as a souvenir but with a suggestion that they wash it with soap and water and keep it for their next archery experience. It may help them continue in the sport.

Para-cord Sources

The key is to use good parachute cord. If you use the cheap stuff that you can buy at a local discount outlet, you will save a couple of bucks but that will turn out to be minimal when divided by the 200 mouth tabs you can make with a hank of paracord, and you will struggle with making them. If you do not have a local para-cord source, I have found this source to be good <https://paracordgalaxy.com>.