

Emergency Thumbnail Repair Technique

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As it often happens with my fingernails, I break or damage a nail one or two days before a classical guitar engagement. And typically, the damage is done while working in my yard or on some household project. I'm pretty good at remembering to reach for things using my left hand even though I'm right handed, but every now and then, accidents happen despite trying to be consciously aware of the fingernails on the right hand.

Two days before an out-of-state engagement, I split my right-hand thumbnail halfway across the top of the nail while working in the yard. The first thing I did was apply several coats of superglue over the split, and then top off those dry coats with several more of nail hardener. That technique worked for a few hours but the slightest contact with any hard surface would break the bond. I was very concerned that I would lose the entire "picking" portion of my right-hand thumbnail before the engagement.

While at a gathering of friends from years past just prior to the classical guitar performance, I mentioned to a few folks that I always carry extra fake fingernails, superglue, and a set of emery boards whenever I have a classical guitar engagement. One woman laughed and said, "Yeah, superglue always helped hold together panty hose." That's when I got an idea for fixing my thumbnail. Here's what I did.

1. I went to a nearby drugstore and bought a box of **Oil of Olay Daily Cleansing Cloths (dry)** (see Photo 1) that are a cotton-based facial wipe manufactured in a micro web-like manner. **Pond's Clean Sweep Make-up Towelettes** (dry) work as well (see Photo 2).
2. I cut a small corner off one sheet (one sheet will last a lifetime) in a roughly triangular shape, as seen in the red outline area in Photo 3).
3. I first laid down a coat of superglue, placed the facial wipe piece onto the superglue, ensuring it covered both sides of the nail tear, and pushed this fabric into the superglue.
4. When that coat dried, I applied a coat of nail hardener, and then repeated with superglue and then nail hardener two more times over the fabric area and overlapped the application to other portions of the thumbnail. Alternating the superglue with nail hardener gives the repair job more structural integrity than just piling up 3 coats of superglue and 3 coats of nail hardener on top of that. It's not beautiful, but it's functional.

The result? A more solid and structurally supported thumbnail repair job just in time for the engagement, and that allows me to continue with my daily practice sessions. While this technique worked in a pinch, you must still be careful with how you use your right hand/thumb until the nail grows back.



Photo 1. Oil of Olay Daily Cleansing Cloths



Photo 2. Pond's "Clean Sweep" Facial Wipes

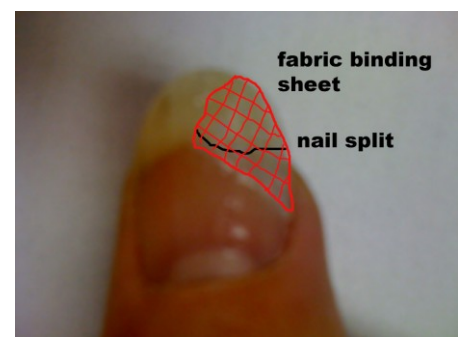


Photo 3. Repair of Thumbnail Tear