

DIFFERENT VIEWS FROM VARIOUS GLUE GURUS

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There are probably as many different views on attaching tissue to balsa stick frameworks as there are modelers who do it. The good old time religion method of sticking tissue to balsa is espoused by such as Gene Wallock. You put several coats of thinned nitrate dope on the framework, sanding off the fuzz raised by the initial coats. When you've got a shiny smooth surface on the balsa, you polish it with 400 grit sandpaper. You then apply the tissue over the framework, flooding dope thinner through the tissue to activate the glue. Al Heinrich follows the same procedure, but likes to use acetone through the tissue because it dries [sic] quicker.

Other modelers have other thoughts. Al Lidberg apparently likes to use Sig Stixit which is heat activated contact cement. Jean Andrews in Tucson keeps looking for Balsa Loc — a water based heat activated contact cement — that he likes to use for fixing tissue. David Baker in England likes white glue, which he puts on wet. Of course, one could also use thinned white glue, put it on the framework, and let it dry. At that point, it can be used as a heat activated cement. There are the people who like to use the rub on paper adhesives or "glue sticks". The solvent for the glue used in most of the glue sticks you'll find in graphics supply stores is alcohol. (Ed. Note: Not said here is that you must not use any dope on the frame under UHU (probably the best glue stick brand), if you expect it to really hold — put it directly on the bare balsa.)

Karl Gies in Montana likes contact cement thinned with MEK. I'm not certain whether Karl activates it with heat, uses it wet, i.e. puts the tissue down while the framework is still damp, or flows MEK or thinner through the tissue once the glue is dry. Still others speak of using Velcro cement thinned with nitrate dope thinner. Al Heinrich at Aerodyne sells a "covering adhesive", which I've used with success on both silk and tissue covering jobs. I'm not certain what it is, but it looks and acts a lot like the Super Seam Fabric adhesive that Aircraft Spruce and Specialty sells. Sal Taibi has been touting Super Seam for years as an all purpose adhesive. He even uses it as an adhesive for balsa construction.

I know that all of these ideas will work. The question is which one will work for you? If you've been having problems with your current method, why not branch out and try a different one?

(Ed. Note: MEK isn't exactly health enhancing, so I wouldn't spend a lot of time with my hands in it.)