

# Patching Holes

Jeremy Schwartz

I found an interesting discussion online that discusses a number of nifty ways to deal with holes in flattage. The discussion is at <http://www.controlbooth.com/postp943.html>. Here, I'll present a summary of their coolest ideas.

- No matter what you are using, ALWAYS USE A MASK AND EYE PROTECTION.  
A lot of this stuff will make you very sick if you come into contact with a lot of it, especially the dust. Also, make sure you always have proper ventilation!
- Soak muslin in a solution of 75% Elmer's white glue and 25% water, and simply smooth the strip over the ugly area. This works best for hiding seams.
- If you want a removable covering, use wheat paste.
- If you want to hide the seam of the muslin, give the flat a good, highly textured paint job. If this is no good, consider using masking tape and spackly instead of muslin.
- Uses of spackle and joint compound. Spackle Works well on holes of  $\frac{1}{4}$ " or less. Joint compound works on bigger holes, and can be used to smooth out dents and divots up to about the size of a quarter. The writer recommends buying powdered joint

compound, because ready-mixed compound has a limited shelf life, and if it dries out or get contaminated then it's pretty useless.

- A note about using joint compound: excessive vibration can cause the compound to crack. If this is an area which is going to be moved or tread on a lot, consider a muslin and glue solution.
- Tips when sanding spackle/joint compound. Protect the surrounding area, obviously. Not so obvious is that you should spritz the air with a water bottle. Water vapor in the air will help in keeping the dust from the compound from getting all over the place. Use a mask and avoid breathing in the dust.
- To strengthen the joint compound a little bit, consider adding some glue to the mix. This will both help the joint compound structurally, and help it to stick a little better. Elmer's glue is good, and this guy recommends Sobo for extra strength, since Sobo stays flexible. The problem with glues, though, is that they don't like paint as much as joint compound, so only use glue if you don't care about painting it (or you're willing to prime the surface for painting).
- Fiberglass tape (or 'chickenmesh' as I call it) can be used to cover larger holes. Span the hole with chickenmesh, and then spackle over it (with joint compound). This will also add some strength.
- Epoxy also works well to fill holes! This is one I've never heard of, but one guy says it works well with fiberglass joint tape.

- Bondo. This is like super-spackle. There are two types of bondo: standard, and fiberglass-reinforced. The latter stuff is strong enough to actually rebuild missing chunks of scenery. On the message board, there's a story of a piece of scenery that had a 4 inch chink taken out of the corner. they rebuilt it with some drywall screws (as anchors) and fiberglass-reinforced bondo.