

# The Art of Glueing Puppy Ears

By Lori Kromash, Islander Wheatens (4/2007)

Our breed standard states:

“Ears small to medium in size, breaking level with the skull and dropping slightly forward, the inside edge of the ear lying next to the cheek and pointing to the ground rather than the eye. A hound ear or a high-breaking ear is not typical and should be severely penalized.”

It is important to understand the type of ear your puppy has prior to making the decision when and how to glue the ears. In addition to the small to medium size ear breaking level with the skull, hound or high-breaking ears mentioned above, we also have ears with minimal cartilage, no natural lift, and poor muscle behind the ear hindering a dog's natural ability to “use their ears.”

As the teething process in puppies begins most of the calcium in the body is being used to form teeth and bone rather than staying in the cartilage of the ear often resulting in *rosed* or *flying* ears. With some puppies both ears will *fly* (not necessarily at the same time) shortly after the arrival of their puppy teeth somewhere between 7 & 10 weeks of age. As puppy teeth are replaced with adult teeth around 4 months of age you may also notice your puppy's ears flying again. This is when the ears should be glued. The decision to begin glueing at 9 or 10 weeks versus 14 to 16 weeks is based on the type of ear and the flying factor. For those *less than perfect* more challenging ears you may want to begin the glueing process around 9 or 10 weeks. Remember you cannot turn ears into something they are not, you can only hope to make them the best they can be.



## What You Need:

### Tincture of Benzoin Compound.

This can be found in most pharmacies usually behind the counter, or the pharmacist may order it for you. This is used to protect the skin and also helps with adherence of the glue.

### Ear Glue.

Although there are many glues to choose from, **Jiffy Sew** or **Tear Mender** are preferred by most.

- Jiffy Sew is a fabric glue product made in Canada and can be ordered online at [www.jiffysew.com](http://www.jiffysew.com) or by calling 705.742.9901.
- Val-A Chicago Tear Mender is a fabric-leather cement available in most fabric/sewing stores as well as several hardware stores. Tear Mender is also available online at [www.cherrybrook.com](http://www.cherrybrook.com) or by calling 800.524.0820.



### Gauze Pads (2 x 2) or Cotton Balls and Q-Tips.

Used to apply the Tincture of Benzoin.

### Moist Hand Wipes and Paper Towels.

Used to wipe the excess glue from your fingers.

## Let's Glue Ears!

**Do not glue ears on a rainy/snowy day. Never glue skin to skin.**

### Preparing the Puppy.

Since glueing ears is done on a grooming table make sure the puppy is familiar and comfortable being in a noose and behaving on the grooming table. This is not the time for power struggles. It helps to have 2 people while setting ears, one to hold the puppy and one to glue the ears. The day before you plan to set the ears, bathe the puppy and clean the inside of the ears with a good cleaner or peroxide. Trim excessive hair inside the ear canal.



Pulling hair from the ear canal can set up an environment for infection. Instead trim this hair with a scissors. If wet

weather is in the forecast make sure you have a dry area set up where the puppy can potty once the ears have been set. **Do not let the ears get wet!**

Place the puppy on the grooming table and trim the head prior to glueing the ears. Remove the hair on the outside ear flap; **do not remove the hair on the inside of the ear flap.**



My experience is that most breeders have their own method of glueing ears. This is the method that works best for me. Factors to consider are; size of ear, placement of ears on the head and thickness of cartilage. Look at the natural ear set of your puppy. Prior to using glue place the ears where you think they should be. Do this with both ears to get an idea of what the placement will look like. Once you are satisfied begin the process.

Apply Tincture of Benzoin inside the entire ear flap, on the side and on top of the head where the glue is going to be applied. Turn the ear inside out and let dry completely. Use this time to trim and file the puppy's toenails. Scratching with sharp nails can easily lead to infection.

Using a Q-tip or your finger apply glue to the inside ear flap along the outside edge leaving some open space for air circulation. Be careful not to get glue in the ear canal. Lightly hold the head steady so the puppy does not shake or the glue will fly all over. While the glue sets up, quickly remove all traces of glue from your fingers to avoid getting glue on the outside ear flap. Carefully lift the ear leather off the head placing your thumb on the inside of the ear to provide direction while positioning. Once the correct position is found press and hold the ear down for about 45 seconds to a minute. Repeat the process to the other ear using the same positioning. Keep the puppy on the table for 10 to 15 minutes to allow the glue to set. This is a good time to trim the rest of the puppy. Do not let the puppy scratch at his/her ears during this time.

Pictured to the right is the same dog at 4 months and 1 year of age.



## Do's... Don'ts... And What Ifs...

Ears should remain glued for about 3 weeks. The hair growth will eventually loosen the ear set. If they begin to come loose in places early on, add a little glue with a Q-tip, let it get tacky and press again. Between 3 and 4 weeks there is generally enough hair growth to take the ears down. If you know that the ears will need to go back up quickly, try not to remove too much hair from the inside of the ear flap. The excess glue can easily be removed with a pair of scissors or clippers.

Some ears will only need to be set once or twice. Some may need several settings. The earlier you begin the process the more times you will most likely need to re-set the ears. If you notice one ear has come down or is loose you need to re-glue that ear or take down the other ear. Failure to do so could end up in a permanent uneven ear set.

During the ear setting process, smell your dog's ears on a daily basis. If you notice a foul odor or any oozing along the glued edges you need to take action. Most infections will occur during the first few days up to a week after the ears have been set. I use GentaVed Topical Spray (Gentamicin Sulfate with Betamethasone Valerate) several times a day on the infected area. Be sure and cover the puppy's eyes prior to spraying. **Do Not Spray In The Ear Canal.** This is a prescription item that I purchase from my vet. Be sure and discuss this with your vet prior to using. Once the infection has cleared, re-glue the ears if possible or take ears down and re-set as necessary.

Since the first few days after setting your puppy's ears are the most challenging give him/her brand new chew bones, stuffed toys with lots of squeaks, Kongs stuffed with peanut butter or anything else that will occupy his/her mind. Lots of extra play sessions will help tire your puppy and keep his/her mind off the ears.

- **Do not let other dogs chew on your puppy's ears.**
- **Do not let your puppy scratch or rub the ears.**
- **Do not let your puppy's ears get wet.**

