

THE PRIMARY LESBIAN TOOL

RELATIONS

as a rather stereotypical lesbian who has always been at home in hardware stores, I am a long-time fan of duct tape. I use it for temporary fixes of all description, like spot welding a leaky bathroom fixture or securing a flapping piece of upholstery to the car roof. I have even used it for one of its earliest intended applications — to seal the seams of my ducts.

And now it's going to save Americans.

In the interests of expanding on the Homeland Security Department's understanding of this essential component in the average American's anti-terrorism preparedness kit (one could call this the "duct and cover" approach) I will expound upon the virtue of duct tape from the perspective of those who have long appreciated its value — dykes.



KATE BARKER

A BRIEF HISTORY. A true duct tape aficionado should be acquainted with the origins of this marvellous invention. The versatile polyethylene resin coated cloth tape has contentious beginnings. Some argue it was the brainchild of Richard Drew of the 3M company in the 1920s (those clever people who brought us Post-it notes). Others claim it was devised by Permacell, a division of Johnson And Johnson, during World War II. Its first army application was to secure ammunition boxes, hence its US nickname gun tape. I imagine some of the first to appreciate the wonders of duct tape may well have been our sisters in uniform.

DUCT OR DUCK? Most of us think Americans have simply bastardized the English language yet again when we see Duck brand duct tape. Not so. The water repellent properties of the invention prompted some to describe it as duck-like. Originally produced in hues of army khaki and green, manufacturers switched to the more civilian-friendly silver after 1945. It is now available in cheerful primary colours. Chances are, you can even find a roll to patch the bathroom sink that matches the towels.

DUCT TAPE IS DUCT TAPE IS DUCT TAPE. Not quite. The tape is manufactured according to grade. Military grade has a 40-pound rip strength, while household variety duct-tape can take about 20-pounds of pressure before breaking. There is even a nuclear grade, used in reactors. Manco Inc, maker of Duck brand tape sold 393,240km of the sticky stuff per year before Homeland Security called on all Americans to stock up. I wish to hell I had some Manco stock today.

LESBIAN USES. We share our love of duct tape with heterosexual males when it comes to its automotive function. Here are a few handy applications: fix a broken headlight, attach a severed side mirror, cover cigarette burns in the seat, or use it as a temporary patch on a leaky radiator.

Lesbians uncomfortable in traditional fashion outlets can count on duct tape to accessorize. At Ducttapefashion.com you can order a fetching backpack made from three rolls of the stuff for \$40US. Duct tape belts are also available for \$6US.

It is however, in the bedroom, where lesbians have taken a roll or two of duct tape to new and exciting applications. In a pinch, duct tape can be used in all manner of light bondage scenarios. The satisfying rip of the tape coming off the roll just adds to the experience. For those who prefer more serious SM play, duct tape is an invaluable and cheap solution to harness repair. And every dyke who owns an ailing vibrator with a loose base can appreciate the value of duct tape to hold that pesky seam firmly together at critical moments.

THE FUTURE OF DUCT TAPE. As hapless Americans patriotically purchase duct tape in bulk, lesbians can think of one more use for this cheap and precious commodity: Use it to construct an anti-war placard. Better yet, slap a piece of duct tape over George Dubya's mouth.

Relations is dedicated to exploring our many kinds of relationships.