

Stretching Saddle Covers

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Over the years I've read and heard about how we'll need a bathtub full of hot soapy water and an extra pair of hands to install a solo rubber saddle top on a wire frame. Somewhere in there, we're supposed to let the saddle top lay out in the hot sun for several hours.

I've tried to imagine how all of these procedures would work, and sprained my brain. Hrmmph!

It works much easier when using something to hold two ends of a pair of nylon straps. Rope would work.

I lather up the inside of the rubber top with dish liquid detergent. Liquid fabric softener will work just fine.

First, I cut slots where the rear part of the assembled top will fasten to the saddle yoke. Then, I install the rear curved tube with the two 8 mm threaded studs welded on it. The detergent makes it go into place much easier.

Second, I slip the front wire frame part inside the rubber top.

Third, fasten the frame if you have an Earles bike or the saddle yoke on backwards as shown in the photo. Connect a section of nylon strap onto the front wire frame.

Fourth, fasten two ratchet straps to each end of the assembly in front of you. The outer ends of the ratchet straps fasten to the ends of your workbench, or if you don't have a workbench, to each end of a wooden plank. Like I said, rope will do. If you have no ratchets, you will have to do the "twist the stick" trick to tighten up the rope and stretch out the rubber top. It will work.

When you have the top stretched out, you will need to force the wire frame toward the rear of the saddle top while you do this, push one end of the wire frame into its corresponding rear tube. Next, work on the other side and work that end into the tube. When you get it in, release the tension on the straps.

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