

# Zipper Tips from Sailrite

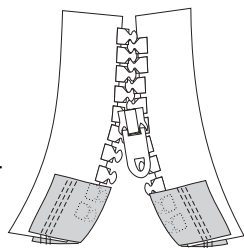
The most common zipper used in marine applications is a toothed #10 or, in smaller assemblies, a #5. The #10 zipper teeth measure roughly 1/4" when closed and the #5 roughly 1/8". Make sure the slider is sized appropriately for the size of the zipper you are using. If it is, the slider can easily be worked onto the teeth from either direction (it will go on in reverse if the zipper teeth are closed first).

This zipper is extremely tough. You can peel it apart easily from the closed end without damage. You can also interlock the teeth by hand (without a slider) if the need arises. If the zipper is placed under extreme stress it may separate, but that is not likely to damage it—simply push the slider back over the separation (in reverse if necessary) or restore the interlock by hand and you should find the original functionality restored.

Plastic zipper teeth do not require lubrication, but we have found that a periodic application of 303 Protectant or Zippy Cool helps keep them smooth and dependable. The 303 Protectant also provides the additional benefit of ultraviolet shielding—without this the teeth do tend to harden and eventually break if they are exposed to sunlight (this protectant also works with vinyl window material to keep it soft). The 303 will not hurt the fabric tape on which the teeth are mounted since it is not intended to be water resistant, but do not get any of the 303 on your canvas since it will remove the “proofing” that is used to make synthetic fabrics water resistant. Water Resistance can be restored by application of 303 Fabric Guard. But do not get any of the 303 Fabric Guard on the zipper teeth or vinyl window material since it tends to remove the “plasticizers” that keep plastics from getting brittle. I know this is very confusing due the similarity in the naming of these two products, but the benefit they provide is worth the care that must be exercised in their use.

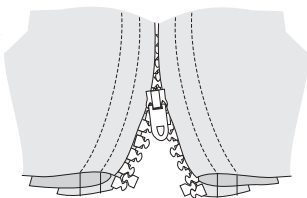
“Finished” zippers (ones which would be used in a sail cover, a jib luff sleeve or in clothing like a jacket) have a special moulded starting end to make quick connections possible. This end cannot be added so zippers must be purchased in an appropriate length or shortened.

It is quite easy to shorten a finished zipper. Simply cut from the end that is last to close. Then provide a stop at that end which will prevent the slider from coming off. This stop can be accomplished in several ways. A leather or fabric patch can be folded over the last few teeth and sewn in place. Or the last few teeth can be bent back at a 90 degree angle. Or, and this is my favorite technique, a tooth or two can be cut from scrap and inserted between the last two teeth on each side of the zipper. Then these teeth can be welded together with a hotknife or a soldering gun. Sailrite also makes available Zipper Stops for both finished and continuous zippers. Finished zippers require two YKK Zipper “Top” Stops. These are simply squeezed in place over the zipper tape between the final two teeth. Pull the next to last tooth with pliers so the #351 beaded edge of the tape remains intact.



Folded leather patches to keep slider from coming off

Creating a Zipper Slider Stop With Two Inserted Teeth



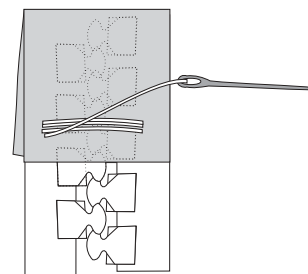
Top Stop #351



To remove an old slider and put on a new one, remove the end stop (if two teeth were melted together to stop the slider from sliding off, cut below the melted end / if webbing or leather was used to stop the slider cut it off). Work on the new slider and create a stop by once again melting two teeth together, using webbing, leather or two YKK Zipper “Top” Stops or two Metal Zipper Stops. The new Metal Zipper Stops are very easy to install. Simply use pliers to bend them over a zipper tooth on both sides of a cut zipper to create a slider stop.



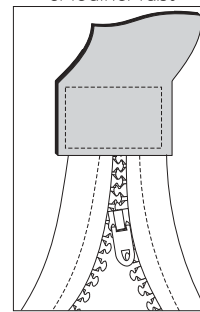
#100207 Metal Zipper Stop



Folded leather sewn in place with twine

“Continuous” zippers (ones which would be used in a bag, a sail foot shelf closure, for a cushion closure—where the zipper will never be completely separated) must be closed at both ends to prevent the slider from coming off. This closure can be provided by hand sewing round and round the final few teeth three or four times. Or the machine can be used to sew over the end of the zipper (perhaps with a leather or fabric pull tab in place to assist with zipper closure). Do be careful when sewing over the plastic teeth. They can bend your needle and cause it to break. You may want to just sew up to the teeth and then lift the presser foot and skip over the teeth to the other side of the zipper where the machine can continue without danger of needle breakage. Or use a YKK Zipper “Bottom” Stop which is bent in place over the last two teeth on each side of the zipper tape. The new Metal Zipper Stops can also be used.

Dress up the ends of the opening with fabric or leather tabs



Bottom Stop #354



To replace a damaged slider on a continuous zipper, remove the old slider from either end by cutting away the stitches which hold the zipper in place. Now work on the new slider and sew the zipper back into the project just as described above.

## NEW RIRI ZIPPERS

RIRI Zippers are similar in size to No. 10 zippers and come as finished “Jacket Style” zippers and as continuous roll zippers. **Metal Zipper Stops work on RIRI zippers;** but, YKK stops do not. And, remember that when shortening a finished zipper (RIRI or YKK) cut from the end that is last to close.



Self-Reliance Under Sail

Sailrite Enterprises, Inc.  
Phone (260) 693-2242  
Fax (260) 693-2246  
800-348-2769  
email: sailrite@sailrite.com  
www.sailrite.com  
All rights reserved  
©2000 Sailrite