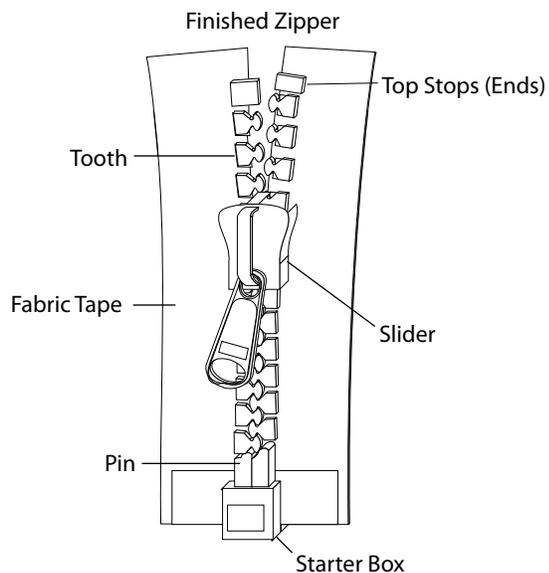


# Zippers

## Glossary, Tips, and Common Questions

The toothed Vislon #10 size is the most common zipper used in marine applications as is a #5 for smaller assemblies. The #10 zipper teeth measure roughly 5/16" when closed and the #5 roughly 7/32". Make sure the slider is sized appropriately for the size of the zipper so the slider can easily be worked onto the teeth from either direction (goes on in reverse if the zipper teeth are closed first).

Vislon zippers are extremely tough. Peel apart easily from closed end without damage and teeth can be interlocked by hand (without a slider) if needed. The zipper may separate under extreme stress, but it is not likely to damage it. Simply push the slider back over the separation (in reverse if necessary) or interlock by hand to restore original functionality.



**PROTECTION:** Plastic zipper teeth do not require lubrication, however we have found that a periodic application of 303 Protectant, Zippy Cool, or Iosso E-Z Snap Zipper & Snap Lubricant helps keep slide action smooth and dependable. 303 Protectant also provides UV shielding which prevents the teeth from hardening and eventually breaking when exposed in sunlight (also protects vinyl window material and keeps it soft). 303 Protectant will not hurt the fabric tape (where the teeth are mounted) since it is not intended to be water resistant, but do not get any on your canvas since it will remove the "proofing" that is used to make synthetic fabrics water resistant.

Water resistance can be restored with 303 Fabric Guard, but do not get any on the zipper teeth or vinyl window material since it tends to remove the "plasticizers" that keep plastics from getting brittle. Although this may be confusing due to the similarity in product names, the benefits incurred from their use far exceeds the time spent in application.

**SHORTEN A FINISHED ZIPPER:** Simply cut from the end that is last to close. Provide a stop at that end to prevent the slider from coming off. Create a stop with: a piece of leather or fabric folded over the

### ZIPPER GLOSSARY

**CONTINUOUS ZIPPER CHAIN:** Use for any application where at least one end of the zipper always stays closed (e.g. bags, cushions). Teeth must be closed with teeth interlocked on one or both ends. Does not include starter box or pin.

**FINISHED ZIPPER:** Use for any application where both zipper sides must separate completely (e.g. sail covers, removable side curtains, jackets). Can easily be shortened. Includes starter box and pin molded at one end and top stops molded at opposite end.

**VISLON ZIPPER:** Plastic (Delrin) zipper teeth molded to the zipper tape. Very strong and scientifically designed to resist damage from UV rays and corrosion. Most common marine zipper, however not very flexible and makes zipper curves for windows difficult. Sailrite carries both continuous and finished styles.

**COIL ZIPPER CHAIN:** Very strong, flexible fine-toothed coil zipper chain great for rounding corners or following difficult angles. Perfect for bags, tents, packs, or following a curve. Only available in continuous chain (YKK #10) and cannot be made into a separating or finished zipper. At least one end must be sewn closed. Unfortunately, the zipper coil is sewn to the zipper tape and can become weak over time when used outdoors.

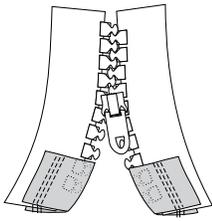
**LOCKING:** Slider has a lock which grips to the chain to keep the slider from moving. Pull must be grasped to unlock the slider.

**NON-LOCKING:** Slider does not lock so friction and gravity alone keep the zipper slider from moving. Very useful for applications where grabbing the sides of the zipper and pulling to force the slider down is best (i.e. headsail sleeve or sock).

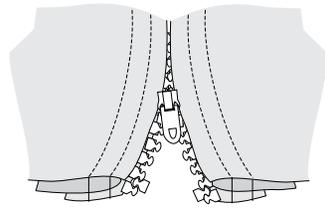
**RIRI ZIPPERS:** A practically indestructible zipper from the RIRI Decor UV™ line. Use in demanding conditions such as on boats, camping equipment, covers, bags, etc. Even comes with a 5 year limited warranty (unheard of for zippers)! More UV resistant than competitors and water repellent finish prevents tape deterioration, makes cleaning easy, and accelerates drying. Available in Continuous Chain (zipper never completely separates, e.g. tote bag) and Finished (jacket-style zippers). Zipper size is similar to a #10 (teeth 5/16" wide when closed). Not compatible with YKK.

**YKK ZIPPERS:** Very strong, practically weatherproof zippers with UV and corrosion resistance. Use in bags, cushion closures, jackets, and covers. Available in Continuous Chain (zipper never completely separates, e.g. tote bag) and Finished (jacket-style zippers which can be cut to shorten). #10 Zipper teeth are 5/16" wide when closed, and #5 Zipper teeth are 7/32" wide. Coil zippers available in a #10. Fine-tooth coil zipper chains are flexible and perfect for rounding corners or following difficult angles.

last few teeth and sewn in place, the last few teeth bent back at 90° angles, or, a personal favorite, a tooth or two cut from scrap can be inserted between the last two teeth on each side of the zipper and welded together with a hotknife or a soldering gun.



Folded leather patches to keep slider from coming off



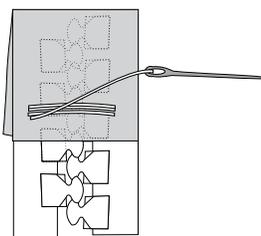
Creating a zipper slider stop with two inserted teeth

Sailrite also has Zipper Stops available for both finished and continuous zippers. Finished zippers require two YKK Zipper “Top” Stops that are squeezed in place over the zipper tape between the final two teeth. Pull the next to last tooth with pliers so the beaded edge of the tape remains intact. Then crimp the YKK Top Stop over the exposed beaded edge.

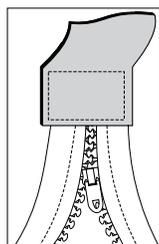
Alternatively, stainless steel top stops are available which do not require the removal of a zipper tooth. The stop is simply crimped over the top of an existing zipper tooth (see photo). Remember to install one on each side of the zipper.



**INSTALL A CONTINUOUS ZIPPER:** Without a starting end, the slider must be pre-installed on the zipper chain and retained from coming off. This is done by interlocking the teeth at one or both ends and hand sewing 3-4 times around the final few teeth or sewing over the end of the zipper with a sewing machine. A leather or fabric pull tab can be made to assist with zipper closure.



Folded leather sewn in place with twine



Dress up the ends with fabric or leather tabs

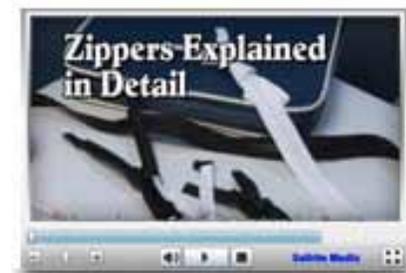
Be careful when sewing over the plastic teeth as they can bend or break the needle. To avoid getting too close, sew up to the teeth and then lift the presser foot and skip over the teeth to the other side of the zipper where the machine can continue without danger of needle breakage, or bend a YKK Zipper Bottom Stop over the interlocked teeth and crimp the legs over to lock the zipper end together.



If only one end of the zipper is to be interlocked (e.g., a camping tent opening), the other end will require Top Stops to keep the slider from coming off when the zipper is pulled closed. See above for Top Stop installation.

**INSTALL OR REPLACE A SLIDER:** For a finished zipper, remove the end stop (cut below the melted teeth end or cut off the webbing or leather stopper). Do not remove the starter box end. Remove the old slider. Work the new slider on backwards on the zipper side with the starting box. Recreate a stop by melting two teeth together, using webbing, leather, or two zipper Top Stops.

For a continuous zipper, remove the old slider from either end by cutting away the stitches that hold the zipper in place. Remove the old slider. Work on the new slider capturing both sides of the zipper teeth and re-stitch the zipper tape.



Check out [www.sailrite.com](http://www.sailrite.com) for streaming video demonstrations and helpful installation tips on everything zippers!

- Answers to All Your Zipper Questions
- Zipper Stops
- Zipper Pulls (Tabs)
- Replacing a Finished Zipper
- Zipper Plaque Installation
- Installing a Zipper along a Curve
- Installing Hidden Vertical Zippers

## FREQUENTLY ASKED ZIPPER QUESTIONS

### **Q: Should metal or Delrin zippers be used outdoors?**

A: Sailrite recommends Delrin or plastic zipper teeth. Enameled metal teeth have been used, but once corrosion starts the zippers can seize. The slider material selection is more debatable. Delrin sliders can become brittle with sun exposure and will break sooner than their metal counterparts, but metal sliders can corrode and no longer slide freely. We have found middle ground by offering RiRi brand zippers which have sliders that are mostly Delrin but have stainless steel pull tab connections. The pull is generally the most exposed portion of the slider and using metal for strength here makes good sense. YKK brand zippers have delrin pulls, but Sailrite has had excellent service life with YKK for over forty years.

### **Q: Several teeth of my zipper have broken free from the zipper tape. Can this be repaired?**

A: It can not be repaired. The only solution is to install or sew on a new zipper.

### **Q: I am looking at YKK #5 continuous Vislon zippers. I only see #10 stops (bottom and top). Do the stops work on both #10 and #5?**

A: The #10 stops are for the #10 chain. There are separate types for the two different brands – RIRI and YKK. Sailrite does not stock stops for the #5 size. Generally #5 is used for cushion covers and the zipper ends can simply be sewn over to keep the slider from coming off. There are also other ways to create a stop such as using leather or fabric.

### **Q: What is the difference between Vislon and Coil?**

A: Vislon zippers have teeth that are molded to the zipper tape. When the slider is pulled along the tape, the teeth lock together closing the zipper. This zipper configuration is similar to the zipper on a pair of blue jeans, except the teeth are much larger. Overall, Vislon zippers hold up well in sunlight and in outdoor applications because the teeth are molded to the zipper tape.

Coil zippers have continuous loops of Delrin, almost like a long Slinky, sewn along each side of the zipper tape. When the slider is pulled along the tape the coils lock into one another closing the zipper. This closure method is very strong and ideal for curved applications. However, the thread that holds the loops to the zipper tape can deteriorate with exposure to sunlight.

Sailrite would recommend a Vislon zipper over a Coil zipper for outdoor applications, unless the zipper is needed on a curve.

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