

These instructions were written by Ann Kempen from Fish Hoek near Cape Town who helped me find a riempie supplier several years ago.

The paragraph at the end was as a response to my specifically asking about the soaking question.

Sue

Tools:

- Apart from buying the riempies and the tacks, you will find you probably already have all the tools you need in the house. If not, these items are useful to have, and can be used for a million other things.
- Upholstery tack remover (not absolutely necessary, but useful, however, you can use a screwdriver and small hammer to remove old tacks)
- Sharp Stanley/craft knife **A pair of strong scissors will do and it is easier to chamfer the ends AFTER they have soaked. If you get them thin enough, it is not difficult to 'persuade' them to go through the holes.**
- Prestik (*I think this is like Blutak*) **My hubby superglues the end of the riempie into a peice of plastic tube**
- Riempies – these come in strips about 2m in length each – you normally use 3 to 4 per chair (with 8 to 9 holes per side)
- Something to hold riempie in place once it is threaded and pulled taut – long thin nosed pliers are ideal as they are sprung, but a thick nail or thin dowel can also work.
- Upholstery tacks - +/- 13 mm tacks **Or other similar small nail.**
- Hammer
- Old towel or piece of cloth

Tips

- Cut one end of riempie using the cutter so that it tapers – easier to thread through holes. Cover tapered end generously with Prestik (Blutak), about 2.5 cm before soaking so that this part remains hard; it is very difficult to thread floppy riempie. (Image 1)
- Soak riempies to make them pliable (about 1 hour in lukewarm water).
- Wet riempies give off lots of "white water" after they have been squeezed, stretched and pulled through the holes. This is more difficult to remove from furniture once dry so wipe it off as soon as you notice it. (Image 2) **Very important that you do this as it well neigh impossible to remove when dry. S**

It is important to make sure when threading the riempie that the "right side" is uppermost all the time, particularly when pulling the riempie through, it can get twisted and the underside shows, so keep straightening the riempie as you work. There is a right side and a wrong side, but it's easy to see.

- One more tip – you're sailing along, having fun, nearly finished the chair and then you notice – whoops! – instead of threading under, you have threaded over, so make sure that as you start each threading, if you the previous thread started with threading under, the next one starts with threading over. (Image 3)

Method

- Remove old riempies and tacks using cutter and tack remover.
- Clean any grime that settled under the old riempies. (Image 4)
- Remove riempie that has been soaking. Wipe with cloth along its length to remove excess water.
- Remove Prestik (Blutak) from tapered end.
- Thread riempie through first hole (from underneath of chair) leaving about 1- 2 cm underneath. (Image 5)
- Turn chair over and secure end of riempie to the chair frame using an upholstery tack and the hammer. (Image 6)
- Thread riempie through hole opposite the first one (from top of frame down).
- Pull the riempie as taut as you can (but not over tight or the strain on the frame will be too great) and secure it in place by inserting nail (or whatever) in the hole together with the riempie. This prevents the riempie from becoming loose and sagging. (Image 7)
- Thread the riempie up through the next hole then across to the opposite side. Once it has been threaded down through the opposite hole, pull it taut, remove the nail from its first position and insert in the new position. (Image 8)
- Continue in this way until the riempie is used up. Leave enough that you are still able to pull the riempie taut. (Image 9)
- Turn the chair over, secure the end with a tack and cut off any excess riempie. (Image 10)

Notes:

When you get to the corners, you can either cut the riempie there and tack it, before starting with a new riempie, or you can pull it across the corner, however, just make sure it can't be seen when the chair is the right way up. It's not a train smash if you do it like that, but it is generally preferable to end a riempie at the corner and then start with a new one. (Image 11)







"I learnt how to do the riempies from Alan Lutge who has two antique galleries and does furniture restoration in Long Street, Cape Town. He exports around the world.

Alan is a friend of mine and he taught me how to do it the proper way. Soaking is the best option, otherwise they are just too dry to pull through and the "powder" from the leather riempies gets everywhere. I have done them this way forever - I also have a little riempie stool from Knysna that I got several years ago - it is my handy little footstool when I need to reach something and, honestly, the riempies are still as strong as ever and I did them "my" way. :) Don't tug them too hard when you pull them through, they must be nice and firm, and then make sure that once you pull it through a hole and you have pulled it taut, stick a pencil or a knitting needle or something in that hole together with the riempie to keep that tension, while you pull it through the next hole. That really is the secret. It will work, I promise you! "

I think this says it all!
Happy riempieing
Sue