

How to Fix a Cassette Tape

Old audio cassette tapes can run into a number of problems that call for some cassette tape surgery. For example, the tape might tear and break, requiring you to splice it back together. Another common issue is for the tape to come...

Method 1 of 4:

Disassembling a Cassette Tape

1. **Set the cassette tape on a flat work surface.** Sit down at a clear desk or table where you can easily work on the cassette tape. Place the cassette that you want to fix flatly in front of you.^[1]
 1. Issues that you will need to take a cassette tape apart to fix include a ripped or broken tape and a tape that has come off one of the wheel hubs.
2. **Unscrew the cassette case, if it has screws, using a small Phillips screwdriver.** Use a tiny Phillips-head screwdriver to remove the screws in the two top corners of the cassette tape. Set the screws aside somewhere where you won't lose them, such as in a small dish or cup.^[2]
 1. If you don't see any screws, your cassette is the type that is glued together.
3. **Pry the cassette apart using a tiny flathead screwdriver, if it is glued together.** Insert the edge of the flathead screwdriver into the crack where the front and back pieces of the case are glued together on one side of the cassette. Work it back and forth in a lever motion along the crack to gently break the two halves apart. Use your hands to pull the cassette completely apart once you separate them along one edge.^[3]
 1. If you can't pry the cassette case apart with your hands after separating the halves on one side, repeat the process with the screwdriver for the other sides of the cassette until you can pull them apart.

Tip: If you are having trouble separating the pieces with just a flathead screwdriver, try carefully running the blade of a boxcutter or utility knife along the cracks to slice through some of the glue.

Method 2 of 4:

Splicing a Broken Tape

1. **Place a disassembled cassette tape on a cutting board.** Take apart the cassette tape that has the broken tape and put the two halves of the cassette tape flat on the cutting board with the insides facing up at you. Be careful not to uncoil the tape from the wheel hubs.^[4]
 1. See the above method for instructions on how to take apart a cassette tape.
2. **Use small, sharp scissors to cut off the damaged ends of the broken tape.** Carefully trim off as little as possible, so you are only removing the damaged parts of the tape where it ripped and broke. This will allow you to tape the two pieces neatly back together.^[5]
 1. If you don't have a pair of small, sharp scissors, you can carefully cut the damaged ends off using a boxcutter or utility knife and your cutting board.

3. **Tape one end of the broken tape down on the cutting board.** Straighten out one of the sides of the broken tape flat against the cutting board and carefully tape it down. Leave the end you trimmed exposed.^[6]
 1. Make sure that the broken end of the tape is completely flat and not curling at all, so that it is easy to work with when you're splicing the other broken end to it.
4. **Use Scotch tape to splice the two sides of the tape together.** Carefully line up the end of the other side of the broken tape with the end of the side you taped down. Press a piece of scotch tape down over them to splice them together.^[7]
 1. The spliced pieces will be held down on the cutting board by the Scotch tape at this point.
5. **Peel up the Scotch tape and flip the cassette's tape over on the cutting board.** Use your fingernails to gently peel the Scotch tape up from the cutting board, being careful not to unsplice the two halves of the cassette's tape that you just stuck together. Flip over the tape so you can splice together the other side.^[8]
 1. The sticky side of the Scotch tape and the side of the cassette's tape that has no Scotch tape on it should now be facing upwards towards you.
6. **Put a piece of Scotch tape on the other side of spliced tape.** Double-check to make sure the ends of the broken tape are still lined up and stuck together. Carefully stick a new piece of Scotch tape over the exposed sides of the cassette's tape to finish splicing the broken ends together.^[9]
 1. This should hold the broken tape securely together and limit the chances of it coming undone in the future.
7. **Trim the excess Scotch tape off using a boxcutter or utility knife.** Hold the tape flat against the cutting board. Carefully trim the excess Scotch tape that is hanging off the sides of the spliced tape.^[10]
 1. You can now reassemble the cassette. See the last method below for instructions on how to do so.

Method 3 of 4:

Putting a Tape Back on the Wheel Hub

1. **Buy a new blank cassette tape to use for parts and open it up.** Purchase a blank cassette that is held together by screws. Unscrew it using a Phillips screwdriver and take it apart, just like you did for the cassette tape you want to fix.^[11]
 1. See the first method above for instructions on how to disassemble a cassette tape.
2. **Cut the new cassette's tape 1–2 in (2.5–5.1 cm) from the end of the tape.** The leader tape is the plastic, non-magnetic tape that secures the tape magnetic tape to the wheel hubs at each end. Remove the spool that has the leader tape exposed from the cassette and cut the tape 1–2 in (2.5–5.1 cm) from the end of the leader tape using small, sharp scissors.^[12]
 1. This will give you a new wheel hub and a clean-cut piece of tape to splice the tape from your old cassette to.
3. **Remove the wheel hubs from your old cassette.** Lift out the empty wheel hub and throw it away. Take out the wheel hub that has the tape wrapped around it and set it down in front of you.^[13]
 1. It's best to do this on a cutting board on a flat work surface in front of you.
4. **Splice the tape from the new wheel hub to the tape on the old hub.** Line up the cut end of the new blank tape with the end of the tape from your old cassette. Tape them carefully together using Scotch tape.^[14]
 1. See the above method for complete instructions on how to splice cassette tape together.
5. **Place the wheel hubs back in the cassette case.** Carefully put each wheel hub back in the old cassette. Use a pencil to wind the wheel hubs so the tape is not loose and all over the place.^[15]
 1. You can now reassemble the cassette tape. See the method immediately below for instructions on how to do this.

Tip: You could use the new cassette body instead of the old one if it's easier. For example, if the old cassette was glued together, it might be better to use the new screw-together cassette case. However, you might want to use the old cassette if it has labels and other information on it.

Method 4 of 4:

Reassembling a Cassette Tape

1. **Line up the tape with the notches at the top of the cassette case.** Make sure the tape is spooled tightly so it is straight and flat at the top. Gently push it into the notches using a small flathead screwdriver.^[16]
 1. The tape should be between the pieces of plastic at the top of the cassette and separated from the section of the case that contains the spools by another row of plastic.
2. **Screw the cassette case together if it has screws.** Snap the two halves of the cassette case back together and place the tiny screws back in the holes in the corners of the case. Use a small Phillips screwdriver to tighten them all the way.^[17]
3. **Glue the cassette case together if it doesn't have screws.** Put a small dot of Super glue in each corner on the edge of one half of the cassette case. Snap the two halves of the case together and hold them together for 30 seconds.^[18]
 1. It's best not to glue all the way around the cassette tape, just in case you have to take it apart again in the future.

Tip: You could also tape the case back together with Scotch tape if you don't want to glue it.

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