Using Hide Glue: Mix, Heat, and Repair Joints Cleanly

Using hide glue gives cabinetmakers a reversible joint that releases with heat and water and cleans with hot water, with the pot held near 140°F as of October 2024, according to Popular Woodworking. Hide glue suits chairs, veneer, and bent laminations because dried glue stays brittle and resists creep, as of August 2026, according to Woodcraft. Our testing method favors it for repairs since fresh hot glue re-wets old glue. The tradeoff is short open time and no tolerance for damp joints. A 251 gram strength fits instruments while 192 fits general joints, as of October 2024, according to Popular Woodworking.

What mix does using hide glue need for 192 gram strength?

Hide glue at 192 gram strength uses about 2-2/3 cups of water per pound of dry granules as of February 2017, according to Popular Woodworking.

Gram strength | Shop use | Working note

192 | General furniture joints | Longer open time, plenty strong as of October 2024, according to Popular Woodworking
251 | Instruments and small parts | Sets faster and needs more water as of February 2017, according to Popular Woodworking

"Most hide glue is sold in granular or pearl form," wrote Bob Flexner on Popular Woodworking in February 2017. Soak the granules in cold water for 20 minutes to a few hours until mushy, then heat gently without boiling, as of February 2017, according to Popular Woodworking. A small starter batch uses 1/4 lb of glue with 2/3 cup of water, as of February 2017, according to Popular Woodworking.

What heat keeps hide glue liquid near 140°F?

Hide glue stays liquid above 130°F and gels near 95°F, with 140°F to 150°F ideal as of February 2017, according to Popular Woodworking. A jar in a hot-water bath works when the bath stays below 150°F, as of August 2026, according to Woodcraft. Overheated glue loses tack and protein threads, so test tack between finger and thumb before gluing, as of August 2026, according to Woodcraft. Add water through the day as evaporation thickens the pot, and cover the pot between brushes, as of February 2017, according to Popular Woodworking.

How does using hide glue help repairs and veneer work?

Hide glue lets fresh hot glue re-wet old glue, and rubbed joints tack fast with about five-minute open time as of August 2026, according to Woodcraft. Clamps came off a biscuit-joined shelf after one hour, about the same span as yellow glue, as of August 2026, according to Woodcraft. Dried hide glue sands clean and resists creep, which suits bent laminations, as of August 2026, according to Woodcraft. This repair logic differs from modern laminating glue, which does not re-wet with heat and water.

When should hide glue stay away from damp joints?

Hide glue weakens in damp or outdoor joints, so exterior or wet-location work needs another adhesive as of August 2026, according to Woodcraft. Mixed glue molds when

left warm, while refrigerated batches last a few weeks and frozen glue lasts a few months, as of August 2026, according to Woodcraft. Reheat only small batches because repeated heating of the full pot cuts strength, as of August 2026, according to Woodcraft. A similar soak-first routine appears in mixing shellac, where dry flakes also hydrate before use.

Hide Glue FAQ

How long does using hide glue stay open before it gels?

Using hide glue gives about five-minute open time on a biscuit-joined shelf before it tacks, as of August 2026, according to Woodcraft. Warm wood and a 140°F pot stretch the span, while cold wood shortens it. Clamps came off after one hour in that example. Reheat and brush fresh hot glue over gelled glue to re-wet it. Work small sections on wide glue-ups.

What gram strength of hide glue suits general furniture joints?

Hide glue at 192 gram strength suits general furniture joints, as of October 2024, according to Popular Woodworking. Higher strengths such as 251 set faster and fit instruments and small parts, as of February 2017, according to Popular Woodworking. Higher strength needs more water. Start with a small batch of 1/4 lb of glue and 2/3 cup of water. Adjust with water for a yellow-glue thickness.

How should mixed hide glue be stored between shop sessions?

Mixed hide glue keeps a few weeks refrigerated and a few months frozen, as of August 2026, according to Woodcraft. Pour leftover glue into a sealed container before chilling. Slice cold rubbery glue and melt only the slice needed. Repeated reheating of the full pot cuts strength. Discard moldy glue because mold lowers bond quality.

Can cured hide glue joints be repaired without full cleanup?

Cured hide glue joints repair with heat, moisture, and fresh hot glue, as of October 2024, according to Popular Woodworking. Chair stretchers come apart with a hot damp towel and mallet taps, as of August 2026, according to Woodcraft. Fresh glue re-wets the old layer. Yellow glue needs full sanding and scraping instead. Keep damp joints away from hide glue service.