

Eliminating Scratches! Or Magic Scratch Eraser

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About fifteen years ago, when I first started restoring “boat anchors”, I remember being given a Hallicrafters SX-20R, which was sealed in a box. When I opened this box a beautiful “mint” classic receiver stared back at me. However, upon pulling it out of the box, I discovered an obvious disfiguring handicap that seemed to yell, “I’m defective!” Near the side was an ugly two-inch scratch; this lesion was so distracting that it stood out like a wart on a beautiful woman’s nose!

I tried touch up paint, but the result was like covering a wound with a band aide... still obvious and ugly. So, after sanding the entire side panel, spraying two coats of primer and then sanding again I took the entire case to an auto body paint shop where they matched the original color.



After carefully airbrushing the panel with this expensive paint, it became apparent that the entire radio would now have to be painted, since the new paint didn’t quite look right when compared to the 70 year old partially oxidized paint on the rest of the receiver! All of this, just to get rid of this two inch mar.

A few years later, when faced with another receiver with a similar scratch, a childhood memory awakened! I remembered watching my father (an amateur gunsmith) repair a 30-30 rifle that had a scratch along the barrel. He used some kind of magic clear liquid that seemed to make the scratch disappear right before my eyes! I wondered, how could something that looked like water make that bright scratch disappear. The next afternoon I found myself in a gun repair shop

looking for this magic stuff. After some discussion and raised eyebrows from the gun shop worker (try explaining that you want a clear liquid to be used while repairing an old radio). He then handed me a bottle of **Birchwood Aluminum Black**. Here it was... in a different bottle but it was the same stuff that my father used so many years ago.

After handing over about \$5.00, I quickly exited this store to avoid any further critical looks. The bottle modestly states, *“Touch-up Scratched and Marred Areas Quickly.”*

After some practice, I realized that my memory had not failed me and when used properly, this stuff really did work like magic.

I’ve now used this chemical for a number of years and have learned some valuable lessons.

1. First clean the area to be repaired with rubbing alcohol.
2. Soak the Q-Tip in the Aluminum Black for a couple of seconds only.
3. Using a back and forth motion, rub the liquid along the scratch. You should see the change within a few seconds!
4. You might need to repeat this process a few times but NEVER put the used Q-Tip back in the liquid. When contaminated, this liquid turns black and becomes useless.
5. Use a clean cloth to soak up any excess liquid.



After a few minutes, you can polish around and even on the now hidden scratch.

This repair technique works best with aluminum. However, I have used it with some success on other metals.

In addition to gun or sporting goods stores, I have also seen Birchwood Aluminum Black at Wal-Mart (sporting goods section) and also on EBAY (The same bottle usually sells between \$5. and \$10).

Give this a try and see if it works for you! If it fails, it is likely that the scratch has a coating of rust, is oxidized or the metal is an unusual alloy.

