

AskTheExperts



Grip Stapler

Q: For more than 30 years, I owned a staple gun (Hansco Tacker) that used very small staples and was perfect for attaching a replacement grip to the racquet handle. After thousands of uses, it finally gave out, and the company that made it went out of business. Since then, I've purchased several staple guns, but none do the job like my old gun did. Do you know if there is a staple gun that would secure a grip to a racquet handle?

A: Yes, it's unfortunate that the Hansco Tacker is no longer available. I do not know of anyone making or selling a similar gun.

Most technicians seem to be using electric or air compressor-powered guns that shoot narrow crown staples. These are primarily used for carpet installation and are available wherever professional tools are sold. It's overkill compared to the manual device you are used to, but they are more powerful, and can also resecure butt caps on racquet handles.

Narrow crown staples, the smallest type of crown, are generally used for finish and trim applications because the smaller crowns are less noticeable.

Stringing Methods — Consistency

Q: I'm new to stringing tennis racquets and am enjoying it very much. Currently, I'm stringing for other residents in my community and hoping to branch out as I get better.

I was reading an article about the differences between constant-pull machines and lock-out machines; I have a lock-out machine. While stringing, I start pulling string just prior to the machine locking, hesitating for a couple of seconds to let the string stretch and then completing the pull. It seems to give better tension. What are your thoughts on this?

A: First, congratulations on your stringing—it sounds as though you are enjoying it and are off to a great start, looking to get better and keep learning.

If you've read through the "USRSA Racquet Professional Study Guide," you'll see the one thing that is emphasized the most is *consistency*. Often, stringers stress over this or that in the process of stringing, but consistency in what you do and how you do it will result in consistent outcomes for your customers, and that is most important. Your client will notice consistent—and

also inconsistent—results. Obviously, you need to do things correctly, and often there are many different ways or techniques to accomplishing a task, but being consistent is important.

I am not sure I fully understand your description of "hesitating for a couple of seconds" before completing the pull. Most professional lock-out machines are all designed the same way. Once the set reference tension is reached, the spring activates and stops the pull and holds the string until you clamp and release. Your slight hesitation will likely lead to inconsistencies, which you do not want. Different strings elongate, or stretch, at different rates. Pausing for two seconds on one may have different results than two seconds on another. Even if you feel it helps, is that pause consistent? Is it exactly two seconds? All these things end up affecting the final result. I see no benefit to the hesitation, and I see the possibility of several negative effects.

For the best and most consistent results, your pulls should also be consistent. That means getting the tension head as close to the frame as possible or a very consistent distance (some lock-out machines have a stop button on the rail to make a consistent starting point). Then you should secure the string in the pulling jaws and rotate the tension head crank in a smooth and consistent manner until it locks out, and then secure your clamps as quickly as possible and release the tension head.

Making sure your clamping is correct (placement and secureness) and timely will be a key factor in consistent results. The actual pull should also be consistent in length and speed, and it is crucial to clamp immediately. Hesitating or leaving the string in the tension head after your pull will result in inconsistencies. With practice, this method will become second nature. ■

We welcome your questions. Email them to bob@racquettech.com.