

Making Your Own “Rock-Star Strength” Battery Snaps

The kind of 9v battery snaps one is often able to buy, are frequently intended for situations where the user won't change the battery very often, or change it in desperate circumstances. Changing the battery in a smoke detector is a good example of this. In contrast, musicians often need to change the battery in a stompbox several times a year, and often do so in a hurried manner, perhaps before a gig. When you factor in how much tension the connector leads are placed under when twisting around the battery to fit it snugly in what is often a tight spot, it is no wonder that battery snap leads frequently tear, whether at the solder joint, or at some other location.

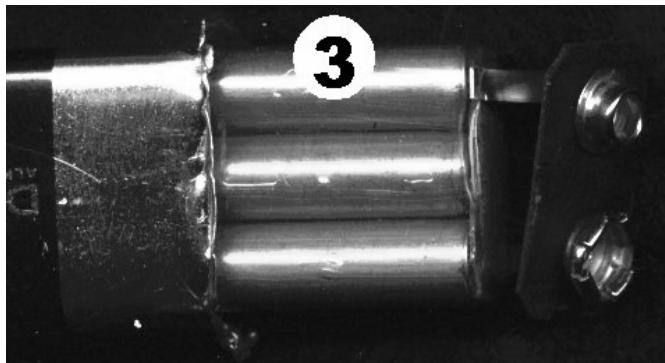
You can get around this by using an AC adaptor, but adaptors are not always feasible. For instance, many of the various Craig Anderton or Robert Penfold projects appearing in magazines or books need a bipolar supply, making use of a standard wall wart with a two conductor power jack difficult. Fortunately, you can make your own high strength battery snaps from dead 9v batteries very easily. This illustrates the steps. The pictures aren't the best but you can get the idea easily enough. Never had one fail on me.



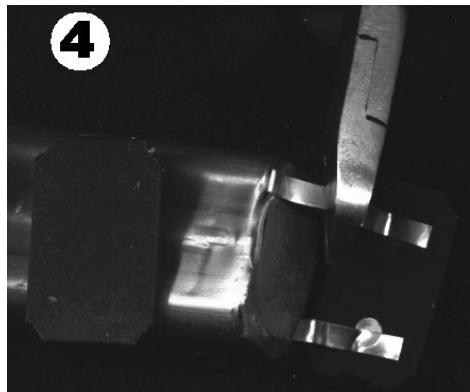
1. Once you know a battery has no life in it. Pry the metal casing off from around the top with your choice of pliers. This is a dead Duracell but the casing is generally identical in other batteries.



2. After you pry back the rim of the battery casing, the exposed connector plate can be removed.

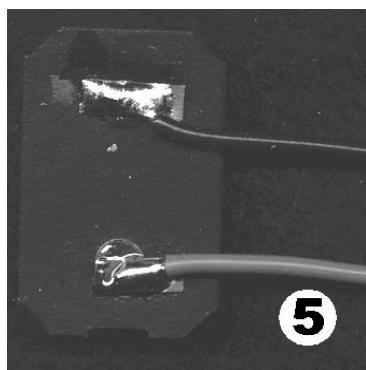


3. Pull or push the battery out of the case. Some batteries will have metal strips between the connector plate and the power cells themselves. Others will simply have little contact buttons on the underside of the connector plate and fall out.

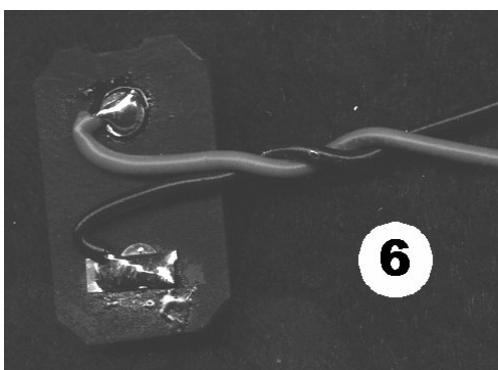


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4. If there are metal leads from the connector plate to the cells, clip them and prepare the back of the plate for soldering, with flux and/or scraping. I use 22AWG hookup wire, which is much stronger than what commercial battery snaps usually come with. If the plate is plastic, solder it while it sits on top of a damp sponge so that the plastic plate does not overheat and melt.

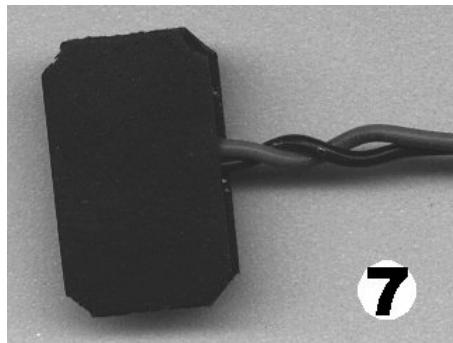


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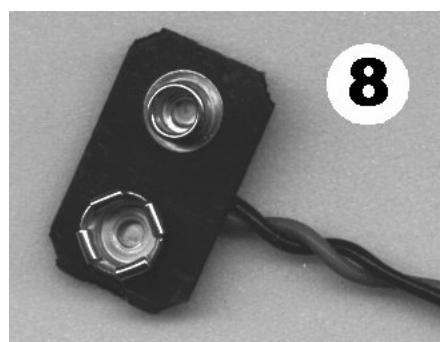


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- 5/6. Solder **RED** to **FEMALE**, and **BLACK** to **MALE** on the back of the plate, and then bend the leads back in the opposite direction for strain relief. I like to give the leads a few twists, but that's just my taste.



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- 7/8. With your hot glue gun (the hobbyist type that uses glue sticks), put a glob on the back of the connector plate over the solder joints, and press the bottom plate of the dead battery (which is an identically-sized slug without any contacts) On top of the hot glue. Since the glue will be very hot, you should *a*) not put on so much that the glue will squirt out the sides onto your fingers, *b*) be careful when handling the snap before it cools. If there is excess glue, simply trim it off with a utility knife. The result is an extremely strong battery snap, that can have leads cut to your preferred lead.