

# The Magic of Rubber Cement

– Shobi Dobi

With a little rubber cement, baby powder, the classified section of the newspaper and a scissor, you can do a neat magic trick and one that can be taught to teenagers.

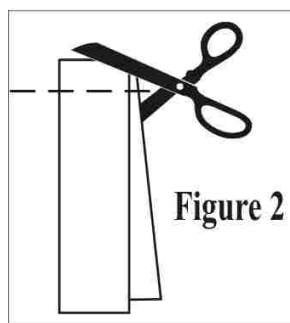
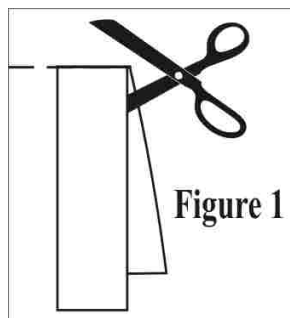
Normally I respect the magicians' code of not giving away magic secrets, but the magician that taught me this trick, thought that kids in the hospital need a little magic.

One time I walked into Brian's room, a 13-year-old with leukemia whom I had seen many, many times. He was too "mature" for my puppets, but loved magic. I had one of those red sponge ball sets where you change a square into two balls. That day Brian had a bad reaction to his chemo. His whole mouth was one big blood blister. He was miserable. I gave him the sponge magic trick right on the spot. We spent about a half an hour working with it so he could get the magic right. He spent the whole day working it - showing it to the nurses, so he could show his family and friends when they visited him. Now I go to the hospital with decks of cards. These kids love to learn tricks and often can show you a few. (I've learned all my card tricks from hospitalized children!)

This paper cut trick is impressive, but inexpensive, and needs no real sleight of hand ability. Cut strips of newspaper text or classified (not pictures) into 1¼ x 16 inch pieces. Paint rubber cement on about 5 inches of the center of the strip. When it is dry, dust the rubber cement with baby powder. Brush the powder off really good. You will not be able to see this except if you hold it up to the light and look at it from the side. The rubber cement part in the middle is slightly dull compared to the rest of the newspaper.

Here's the magic. The patter is yours. Fold the strip with the cement sides in, and cut along the fold. (See Figure 1) Show that there are two separate pieces. Now put the pieces back together with the cement sides together again. They will not stick because they are powdered. Then cut across the strip about ½ inch down from the first cut. (See Figure 2) Take one end of the strip and hold it up. Magically, the strip is back in one piece.

Here's the trick. The way rubber cement works, only the surface dries. Normally the two dry surfaces will stick together with a strong bond, so when you powder the two surfaces they don't stick together. However, when you cut the paper, it cuts through the surface and the cement adheres to itself. Try it! It's magic!



My favorite trick with rubber cement I've told you about in previous newsletters, but it is such a winner and so easy to do. After you have finished your make up, paint a strip of rubber cement on the bridge of your nose - **DO NOT POWDER THE RUBBER CEMENT**. Leave your nose shiny. Then put a little rubber cement on a ping pong ball (on the lettering, so you will know where it is). The surfaces will stick together when dry. You can usually do the trick twice with the glue, but be aware. I had an experience when I was in a lobby with a 50-person audience and the sticky was gone. I ended up balancing the ball in my eye and then dropping it with clown chaos and confusing. Reapplying a thin layer of glue is recommended.

The routine goes like this. "Want to see me balance this ball on my nose?" The clown tries (putting the non-lettered side or the side without the glue) without success. Depending on your character (new magic words, a prayer, a little music for inspiration) and the ball is balanced with great effort. (Do the same motion you would if you were really balancing the ball on your nose). With the clown's nose pointed to the ceiling, the ball appears to be balanced on the nose. Da Tah! You have success. But poor clown, her hat falls off. "Oh my hat" and she looks around only to expose the trick -- the ball is still stuck on her nose. Of course, the ensuing chaos that the clown gets into trying to get the hat back on and hiding the trick is up to your character. *Shobi* usually ends up "palming" the ball after she's (fakes) eaten it. Because that was not a good thing to do, her stomach is upset and "Oh, my" she pulls "mouth coil" out of her mouth. (A Mouth coil is a prepared trick available at magic stores where you pull yards of colorful papers streamers out of your mouth or any other small place - like your shoe or ear) Poor clown, can the doctors help? The nurses? The clown pleads with everyone as the streamers come out of her mouth. Finally you can decorate the room or a child with the streamers.

This is a "never fail" routine for me anywhere with any age group or condition; however, I've had some amusing experiences. In India, the people couldn't understand why the paper wasn't wet. They were not brought up with magic as we are in the west. So I had to "educate" them to my "trickster" ways, so they wouldn't think I was doing black magic!

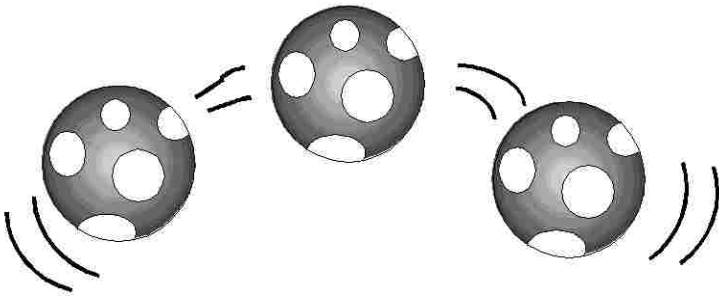
Another time Shobi did this in recovery for a child who just had his tonsils out - ouch! To add to this chaos when Shobi went to pick up her hat, which kept getting away, one of her stethoscope noise buttons went off (an ambulance siren!). She really panicked (in character) because this was recovery and she was not supposed to make so much noise. Trying to stop the noise, the ball got away and my hat went flying across the room.

Everyone was in stitches laughing including the little boy! I would not recommend doing this in recovery or you might break some important stitches.

Tips: Use baby powder without corn starch.

Rubber cement now comes in tubes (by Super Glue) so it will not dry out in the jar when stored and is easy to carry with you.

CAUTION: When using rubber cement on the nose, make sure to roll or peel the glue off your nose, just like you do off your fingers, **BEFORE YOU TAKE OFF YOUR MAKE-UP**. Rubber cement will not come off with make-up remover or soap and water. I have forgotten to do this and the glue is very difficult to get off without losing a little skin! Thicker coats are easier to peel.



### **Easy to Make Juggling Balls from Ringling**

For each ball you'll need: 3 helium quality 9 or 11" round balloons of different colors, 1/3 cup uncooked rice, scissors, funnel, bottle, and strapping tape.

Using a funnel pour 1/3 cup rice into a bottle. Inflate the balloon to about the size of a fist. While holding the neck of the balloon closed, stretch the lip of the balloon over the bottle opening. Pour the rice into the balloon and cut off the rolled tip of the balloon. Fold over the neck of the balloon and tape down with about 1½" of strapping tape. Roll the ball to shape it round.

Cut off the neck of the second and third balloons and cut periodic holes in them. Stretch the second balloon over the rice and then the third balloons over the rice. Make the holes cover the neck opening.