

Electronic Tool Tip #18 – Strain Relief Bushing Pliers

Sometimes, a specialized tool is called for not only to make the job easier, to also to preclude the infliction of damage to the assembled parts. This is the case with the strain relief bushings that are so often used at power cord entry points into equipment enclosures. These bushings are basically two-piece devices with the two sections tethered to each other. They have to be squeezed together around the power cord in order to insert the assembled bushing into the opening in the enclosure panel. It is possible to install a strain relief bushing using standard slip-joint pliers, but not without leaving ugly tool marks in the bushing. The proper tool to use is a pair of *strain relief bushing pliers*.



Figure 1 - Strain relief bushing pliers

The leading manufacturer of these strain relief bushings is a company known as Heyco, although other companies certainly offer these bushings. Recently, I had occasion to install a bushing into a newly-refurbished piece of test equipment, and I did not want to leave the tell-tale tooth marks in the bushing to mar an otherwise pristine tube tester. I decided to investigate the cost of the correct tool for this job. I was floored when I saw the prices for the Heyco tools. There are two different tools offered, the Heyco 0021 and the Heyco 0022 pliers. The 0021 sells for about \$170.00, and the 0022 for about \$70.00, both available at Mouser Electronics (www.mouser.com). I felt that this was too costly for a single-purpose tool, so I decided to investigate other alternatives. Naturally, I tried Amazon, and I am glad that I did.

I found a tool called the “*Philmore Nylon Strain Relief Bushing Pliers*” that would do the job perfectly, as they are designed for just this purpose. What’s more, one single tool actually replaces both of the Heyco tools. This tool will grip the bushing properly right behind the flange, squeezing the halves together nicely while still permitting the bushing to be inserted in place, and the job is done without damage to the bushing or the equipment. Whether the bushing is going into a round hole or a so-called “double-D” hole, it will go in easily every time.

The same tool is used for removal of an installed bushing, as well. This permits easy disassembly of equipment without doing any harm to either the bushing or the equipment, and also permits re-use of the removed bushing.

This tool is available online from Amazon, at a price of \$16.39 (USD) plus shipping if you are not an Amazon Prime member. Of course, the government has to get its share, so tax will also be applied. Point your browser to <https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B07B6843WT> if you want to investigate this item for yourself.