

Cleaning sticky soda spills in a mechanical keyboard without disassembly

Follow these instructions at your own risk. This is an experimental approach that may or may not cause long-term damage to your keyboard.

This approach was only tested using Kailh Choc switches on a Glove80. It may not work with other switch designs.

A Glove80 is a pain to disassemble for cleaning, so I've figured out a way to deal with sticky spills without doing so. I am not certain that it is entirely safe, but so far (several weeks after the spill) I have not noticed any deterioration of functionality, despite having followed this process on multiple switches.

If you *can* disassemble your keyboard and clean it properly (with isopropyl alcohol and then relubricating switches), do that instead! This is a guide of last resort. It may damage your keyboard permanently. You have been warned.

Required tools:

- Alkalanet all-purpose cleaner (note: *not* substitutable by any other cleaning agent, it has specific desirable properties!)
- Paper towel
- Key puller

Process:

1. Turn off and disconnect your keyboard
2. Remove keycap carefully with key puller (if you have a Glove80, follow their *specific* instructions for removing caps without damage)
3. Spray some Alkalanet on the paper towel - *not* on the switch itself!
4. Press against the front of the switch, where there is a 'rail' indent that guides the stem, causing a droplet of Alkalanet to seep into the switch. It should only be a tiny amount, just enough to seep down!

5. Rapidly press and release the switch many times, you should start seeing the liquid slightly spread inside of the switch
6. Blow strongly into the switch for a while, using compressed air of some kind if possible, to accelerate the drying process
7. Verify that if you press the switch, you can no longer see liquid moving or air bubbles forming inside (ie. it is fully dry)
8. Done!

The reason this works: Alkalanet is good at dissolving organics, including sugary drinks, but quite bad (though not entirely ineffective) at degreasing. This means that it will primarily dissolve and remove the sticky spill, without affecting the lubrication much. Because alkalanet dissipates into the air quickly, it leaves very little, if any residue behind, limiting the risk of shorted contacts.

If your switch is not registering reliably after this process, it has not been fully cleaned - do it again. If your switch is registering double presses only, then it has not dried sufficiently; immediately unplug and power off, and let it dry for longer. If both happen, it is also not sufficiently cleaned.

If Alkalanet is not available where you are, you may try to acquire a different cleaning agent that quickly dissolves into the air, leaves behind no residue, and that affects organic substances but not grease. Commercial window cleaners are your best bet, but this is entirely at your own risk, and you should be *certain* that it has these properties - labels are often misleading.

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