
PART ONE

# MAKE YOUR OWN QUICK-RELEASE FIN-BOLTS

It's been a good while since we last ran a DIY article, and if memory serves it involved repairing a ding after a board inexplicably came into contact with the spout of an airborne teapot. No such nonsense here though as we proudly present the first of **Marjan Tkavc**'s series showing you how to save untold sums while satisfying the primal urge to wield potentially dangerous tools…

**"You can have fins with quick-release bolts ready to go or a screwdriver and a bolt. Your call…"**

My wife and I have used Mistral Flows for a long time, and while we've enjoyed many hours out on the water together, when it comes to essential shed-based activities I'll leave it to you to guess who fiddles with the equipment! Anyhow, the Flows had quick-release fin-bolts for their powerbox fins, which made for an easy, screwdriverless life when it came to fitting, removing and changing fins as the whim took you. (Especially useful when you find yourself at the water's edge with the nearest screwdriver back at home in the shed.)

But it wasn't until we bought new boards that we truly realised how useful and important the quick-release fin-bolts were to us. I tried to use the old bolts from the Flows, but it didn't work. Quick-release bolts generally have a lever of some kind or another on top, which slots neatly into a recess once the bolt has been fastened. But boards with normal fin-bolts don't have this recess; there is usually just a round hole for the bolt.

What's more, as with so many bits and pieces in windsurfing, there are different quick-release bolts for different board brands. They have to match, and this can be a real pain when you inevitably misplace the one that came with your board. But not anymore!

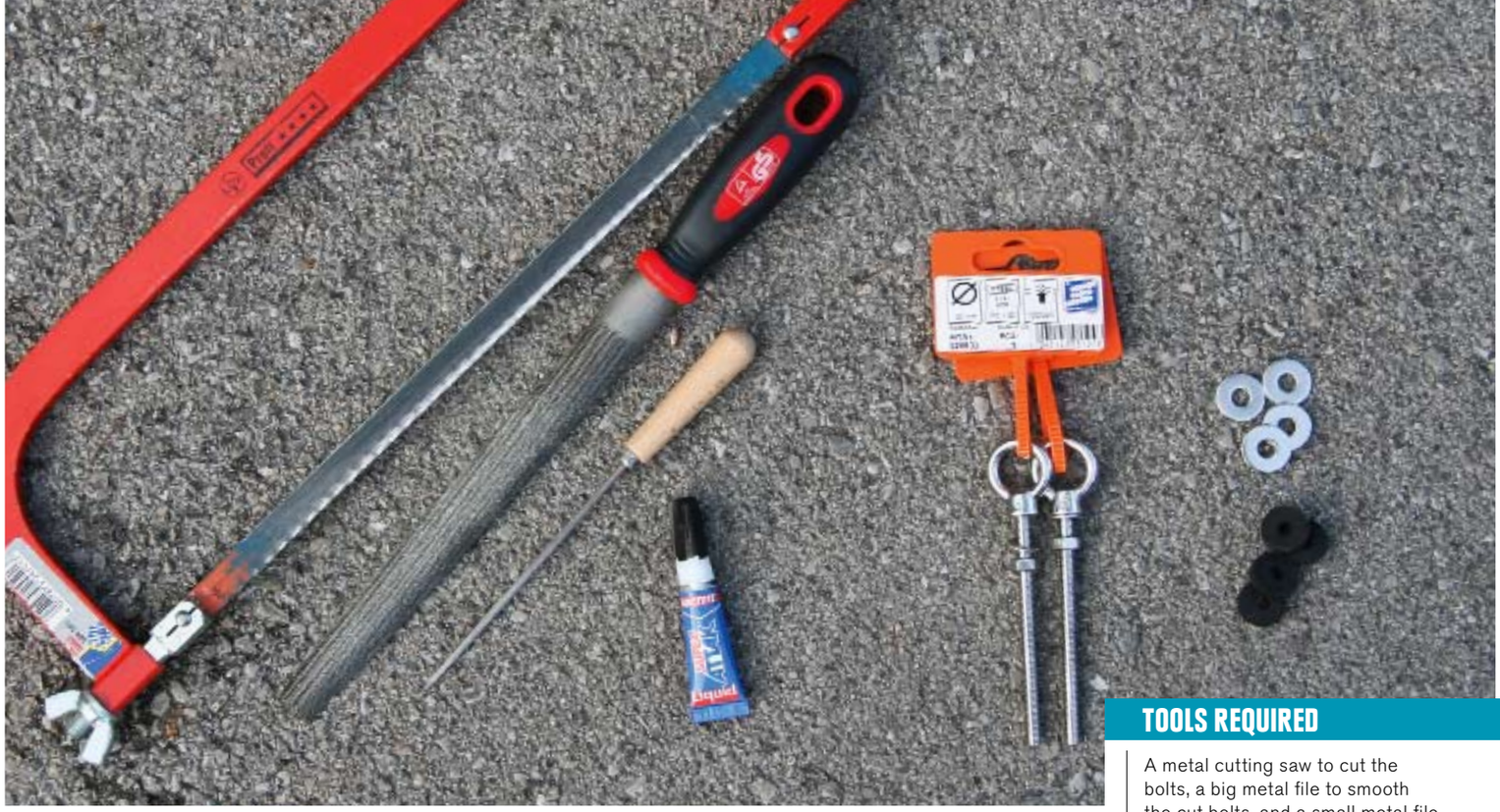
## ENTER THE UNIVERSAL QUICK-RELEASE FIN-BOLT!

In terms of pure inspiration it may not rival the giants of invention, but my idea to use a bolt with a big enough head to enable tightening by hand was nevertheless one of those eureka moments. After browsing local DIY shops I came home with O-ring bolts, which were indeed easy to tighten, and the idea turned out to be feasible.

The 'how to' is pretty straightforward: simply shorten the O-ring bolts to match the length of the original bolt and adjust the bolt hole in the board if necessary.

At first I was afraid (albeit not petrified!) that fastening by hand would not be enough, but it is. We've been using this system for a season now and it works perfectly. Sometimes I need to use extra strength to tighten it, which depends mostly on the fin and board fit, and I may retighten it when in the water, but it has never come loose.

This solution may be applied to some other fin systems as well, but depending on the hole diameter it may not work for all boards.



## TOOLS REQUIRED

A metal cutting saw to cut the bolts, a big metal file to smooth the cut bolts, and a small metal file to enlarge the hole in the board (if necessary). You'll also need Loctite glue to protect the filed hole from water, stainless O-ring M6 bolts and extra, bigger washers (stainless and rubber).

## STEP ONE

Cut the bolts so that the effective length is the same as the original. Both washers (stainless and rubber) need to be roughly the same size. The bolts may already come with washers (as in picture 2), but bigger washers are needed to spread the load, and the rubber washers are for spreading it evenly.

## STEP TWO

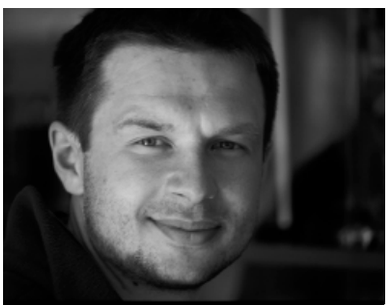
The bolt hole may be too small to fit the O-head bolt. Here I needed to file off just a little bit of the edge. Make sure that you put some Loctite glue over the exposed material to protect it from water.

## STEP THREE

The quick-release bolts were successfully tested extensively with long freeride fins as well.

## STEP FOUR

Each fin can have a bolt, so that you just grab it, install it and tighten it with your hand. No need for a screwdriver.



## THE AUTHOR

Marjan Tkavc hails from Slovenia, where people ski the Alps in the morning and windsurf the Adriatic in the afternoon. He started windsurfing 15 years ago after his wife (a former racer) thoughtfully taught him on a sinker. Marjan caught the DIY bug at just 14, and found himself taking on increasingly ambitious projects, but insists that there is no connection to his professional life as a nuclear expert. His DIY credo is: "Simple solutions can solve big problems and everyone can do it". In his spare time he runs **mtbslovenia.net**, just in case you find yourself in Slovenia on a no wind day…

## COMING SOON…

How to fix a broken carbon mast… How to make a nose protector that really works… How to workaround a tiny downhaul pulley that won't let you loop-loop-go… How to fix a quiverbag on a car painlessly…