

Repair Stuff Instead of Purchasing New (If you can)

“Stop letting junk pile up! Repair your things!”

I was at a Central Arkansas Goodwill store earlier this week and I came across several useful things that I ended up purchasing. If you're unfamiliar with Goodwill, it is a thrift store chain that storefronts second-hand items that people have donated. You often pay pennies on the dollar for goods that are more or less still functioning products. Occasionally there are some items that you'll come across that are complete duds but, generally, things that you find at Goodwill are well worth the \$3 - \$20 price tag that they bear. Sometimes you'll find products that were never unwrapped from their original packaging!

Anyway, the products that I ended up purchasing on that trip to Goodwill included:

- A VIVO double-monitor “arm” mount
- A Polaroid Bluetooth speaker (with a broken power jack)
- Two halogen lamp work lights (one with a missing bulb, one with a broken switch and a broken bulb)

The price tag for these items totaled to a little over \$38. I didn't know that I was going to write an article about this, otherwise I would have saved the receipt and included a picture of it here.

I am going to save the Bluetooth speaker repair for a future article (because it has to do with a soldering technique that I am going to try). Instead, I am going to talk about the halogen work lights.



Both lights also needed a bit of a cleanup with some paper towels and Windex 😊

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Depending upon where you purchase them from, these halogen work lights can be priced as much as \$35. With the materials that I had on-hand, bringing both of these lights “back to life” only required me to spend ~\$12 for 2-pack of halogen light bulbs.

Switch Replacement

I removed the old, broken switch, and replaced it with a 6A / 125V-rated switch, which (according to the manufacturer’s label) should handle the power drawn from the light just fine.

I used the existing hole that the old switch was housed in. I did have to use a small piece of aluminum as a custom washer (I didn’t have one of the right size on-hand).

I stripped and soldered the old leads onto the “new” switch, insulated them with electrical tape, and screwed it into place.



Bulb Replacement

This part is very easy. I just unscrewed the machine screw that holds the front face plate on the light, and removed the old bulb.



Yep- this old bulb was definitely burned out

One thing to keep in mind is that these halogen bulbs must be clean when they're installed, or their lifetime will be substantially reduced. This includes skin oil residue. To handle this, I wrapped it in a paper towel as I removed it from the package. That allowed me to hold it as I placed it into the holder contacts in the light housing.



And that's that! This light now functions for any kind of outdoor or shop work that needs extra light. My dad is a machinist (and always needs extra light) so I gave this to him.

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I also used a silver Sharpie to indicate the "On" position of the light ☺

—Eric C. Grasby—