

KEEPING A MORSE KEY IN POSITION

When operating from home 'the heavier the better' is a good rule of thumb for having a morse key/paddle that stays still while you use it. The option of physically screwing the key to the desk is used by some, but is not one that could be considered for many indoor shacks without incurring the wrath of the XYL. But what about when operating /A or /P? The last thing you need is something heavy to carry around and screw fixings are again unlikely to be a viable option. For my /A operation I use one of those 'Czech Morse keys' widely advertised. They are quite cheap, and quite light. Their advantage lies in the fact that (like my Junkers) they have a cover over the working parts. I tend to put my left hand on the cover of my Junkers at home. Even though it is quite heavy it can still move slightly. Using the lighter Czech key in a similar manner was not a problem for me but not all keys/paddles can be conveniently held like this and most operators would probably not choose to adopt my technique.

A moment of serendipity just before going on holiday this year may have provided an answer. Stuck in the 'long short queue' at our local Dunelm Mill store, my eyes chanced upon an item in a small tray immediately next to the till.



For £1.99 I reckoned the small gel pad designed to stop a mobile phone (or mp3 player) sliding around on the dash of your car was worth trying as a method of holding a key still.

If your local Dunelm does not have them try searching for “Rolson small silica” on Amazon and you’ll find what looks to be an identical item from several suppliers.

I’m told that Ebay users will be able to find similar looking items available direct from china and that Maplins occasionally have them for sale.

After using it for a week on holiday I can unreservedly recommend it. The Czech key was *absolutely* rock-solid but was easily removed & relocated when necessary without leaving any marks at all. The key will not move vertically or horizontally but does come away fairly easily by using a ‘rolling’ action to separate it from the gel pad. The gel pad then peels off like a sticking plaster but leaves no marks.



The above photo shows the gel pad in use at our holiday rental this year. They say a picture speaks a thousand words but that one cannot begin to demonstrate just *how* sticky that pad is.

The following picture does...



That is a genuine photograph. No trickery involved. The wall is a normal plasterboard wall with emulsion paint on it. I was absolutely amazed that it would stay there for as long as I wanted. When I peeled the pad off the wall it left no marks, but it had picked up a faint 'dusting' of emulsion....which washed off under a tap.

I'm told the pads are great for getting dog/cat hairs off car seat fabric. They wash off under a tap too.

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