

Trick of the Trade... Twist Locks Can Be A Snap!

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Recently we were hired to fix a pre-fab chimney whose inner flue pipe had come apart just above the firebox. It was a double wall air-cooled design, with two 45-degree elbows, and the pipe was disconnected directly above the firebox, below both of the elbows.

No, I was not excited about this one, and yes, I charged plenty. It's too

bad that the CHASE couldn't be air-cooled! Doing stuff like this in the summer will make you drop twenty pounds of water weight in a hurry!

Eager to not damage the inner and outer pipe, we were moving slowly trying to prevent bending the ends of the pipes using the traditional flat head screwdriver method. While in the middle of prying, crying and dying (it was hot in that chase!), I had a revelation! Why try to attack one twist lock at a time? Why not do all of them at once?

In a flash, I made a trip out to the van (anything to get out of that spider web infested sauna of a chimney chase) and was back with my Make-A-Clamp® band connection kit.

Using the small strips of sheet metal bands, we pried with the flat head screwdriver right next to the twist lock, slipped a piece of sheet metal between the two locked sections, and removed the flat head screwdriver while leaving the sheet metal in position.

We continued all the way around the pipe until all of the twist locks had sheet metal wedged between them. Then, with one firm tug, the pipe came apart with ease. No dents, ripples or damage to the pipe's joint! This is by far the easiest way I've found to take twist locked pipe apart – especially when trying to avoid damage to the pipe!

So the next time you find yourself prying, crying and dying, just remember that twist locks can be a snap. With a little sheet metal and a flat head screwdriver, you'll be in and out of that chase quicker than you thought!

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Using a flat head screwdriver to gently pry open twist lock pipe joints so steel shims can be inserted.

photos by Mike Minix

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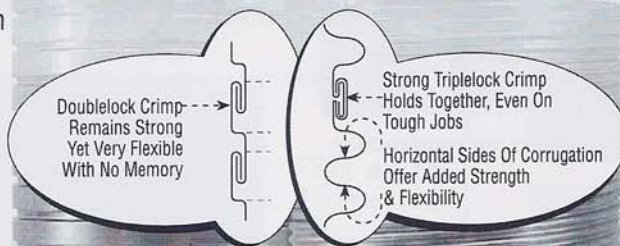
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