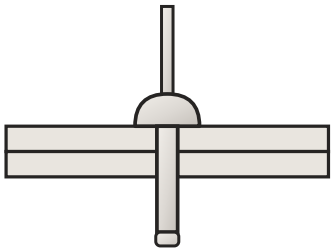
Choosing a Rivet

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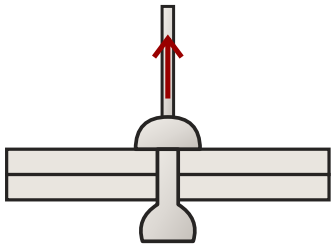
A rivet joins parts for good — no nut to back off. Pick the type for the job, then get three numbers right: **diameter, grip and hole size**.

Most rivets you'll buy are **blind rivets** (often called pop rivets): you only need to reach **one side** of the work. You push the rivet through the hole and squeeze the tool; the stem pulls the back of the rivet into a bulb and snaps off.



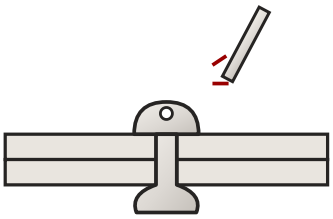
1. INSERT

through the drilled hole



2. SQUEEZE

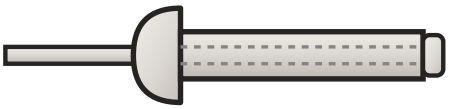
the stem pulls the tail into a bulb



3. SNAP

the stem breaks off — done

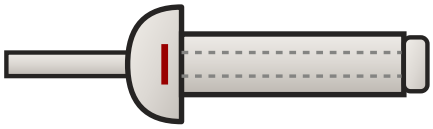
That's the everyday kind. Here's every type we carry and what each one is for:



hollow body, pull-through stem

Blind (pop) rivet

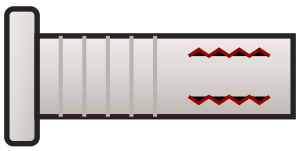
The everyday rivet. Sets from **one side** with a hand riveter. Comes in **open end** (the standard) and **closed end**, which seals the hole against water and air. Multi-grip and tri-fold versions cover a wider thickness range or spread the load on soft material.



stem locks inside the head

Structural blind rivet

A heavier blind rivet whose **stem locks in place** instead of falling out, so it carries much more load and holds up to vibration. For trailers, truck bodies and frames. Usually needs a heavier-duty tool.



threads inside, ribs outside

Rivet nut

Puts a **threaded hole in thin metal** or tubing, set from one side, so a bolt can go in and come out again. Ribbed and hex bodies **resist spinning**; a large flange spreads the load; a thin head sits nearly flush.



solid shank, tail is hammered over

Solid rivet

The original rivet: a solid pin with a head. You need **both sides** — the tail is hammered or pressed into a second head. The strongest rivet joint, used in structural steel, trailers and restoration work.

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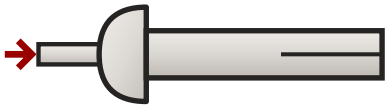
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hollow tip rolls over

Semi-tubular rivet

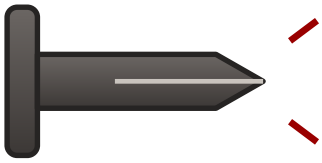
Like a solid rivet with a **shallow hole in the tail**, so it rolls over with far less force. Common in hinges, brake linings, straps and leather. Compression rivets (two pieces that press together) are in this family too.



tap the pin in, the split end spreads

Drive rivet

A quick blind rivet with **no tool but a hammer**: tap the pin flush and the split end spreads behind the work. Good for light-duty jobs, signs and panels where a riveter won't reach.

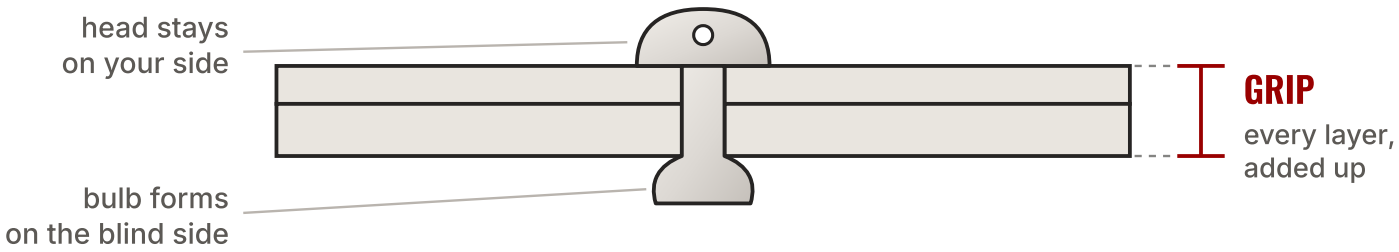


push in, the legs spread

Plastic rivet

Nylon rivets that **won't rust, scratch or conduct**. For panels, trim, circuit boards and plastic parts. Light holding power — they're for keeping things in place, not carrying load.

Grip: how thick is the stack?



Grip is the total thickness of everything the rivet holds together, from under the head to the back of the last layer. Measure the whole stack, then pick a rivet whose **grip range** takes in that number. Every rivet on our site lists its grip range, for example **.126–.250″**.

Too short and the tail can't form a proper bulb; too long and it bulbs loosely or folds over. If your thickness sits right at the edge of two ranges, or the layers don't sit tight, a **multi-grip** rivet covers both.

> **Reading the size on a box:** blind rivets are often sized with two numbers, like **4-4**. The first is the diameter in 32nds of an inch (4/32 = 1/8″). The second is the most it will grip, in 16ths (4/16 = 1/4″).

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Diameter and drill size

A bigger diameter holds more. For most sheet metal, **1/8″** and **3/16″** do the bulk of the work. Drill the size the chart calls for: a hole that's too big lets the rivet wobble and weakens the joint.

Drill sizes for blind rivets

RIVET DIAMETER	SIZE CODE	DRILL	DRILL (DECIMAL)
3/32″	3	#41	.096″
1/8″	4	#30	.1285″
5/32″	5	#20	.161″
3/16″	6	#11	.191″
1/4″	8	F	.257″

Keep each rivet at least **two diameters from the edge** of the sheet, and space rivets about **three diameters apart**. Closer to the edge and the metal can tear out.

Rivet nuts are different: their hole is much larger than the thread, and each style is made for a tight hole. Drill exactly what the package calls for. Too big a hole is the number one reason a rivet nut spins.

Material, head and end

Match the rivet to the metal. Aluminum rivets for aluminum, stainless for stainless. Mixing metals outdoors invites corrosion where they touch. Steel rivets are the strongest of the common ones; aluminum sets easiest and won't rust.

Watch the stem material too. On a blind rivet a bit of the stem stays inside the head. A steel stem in an aluminum or stainless rivet can leave a rust spot, so for outdoor or show work pick a rivet with a matching stem (the listing says "steel mandrel", "aluminum mandrel" and so on).

Head: a **dome** head is the standard. A **large flange** spreads the load on thin, soft or brittle material and covers an oversized hole. A **countersunk** head sits flush in a countersunk hole.

End: open end is the everyday choice. Use **closed end** where water, air or fumes must not get through the hole: gutters, tanks, boat and trailer skins.

Quick guidance

Can only reach one side?
Blind rivet. For a threaded hole, a rivet nut.

Heavy load or vibration?
Structural blind rivet, or solid rivets if you can reach both sides.

Needs to be watertight?
Closed-end blind rivet.

Thin, soft or plastic material?
Large flange or tri-fold blind rivet; plastic rivet for light trim.

Stack thickness in between sizes?
Multi-grip blind rivet.