

# Tape Editing

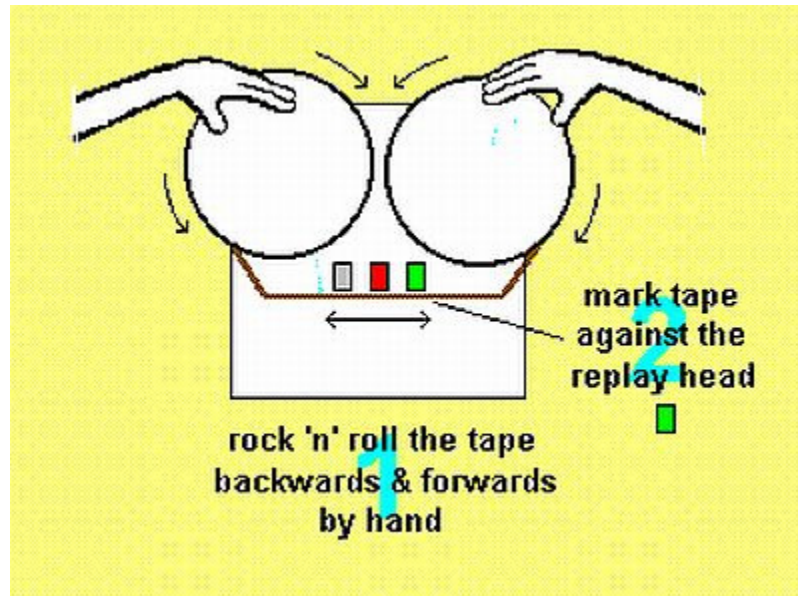
Cut editing (also known as destructive editing) consists of physically cutting magnetic recording tape, removing an unwanted portion and rejoining the recording tape with a special adhesive backed splicing tape.

Monophonic and stereophonic 1/4 inch tapes were traditionally edited in this way. Cassette tapes can be cut edited but it is difficult to locate the precise edit point. The technique is sometimes useful for retrieving damaged cassettes.

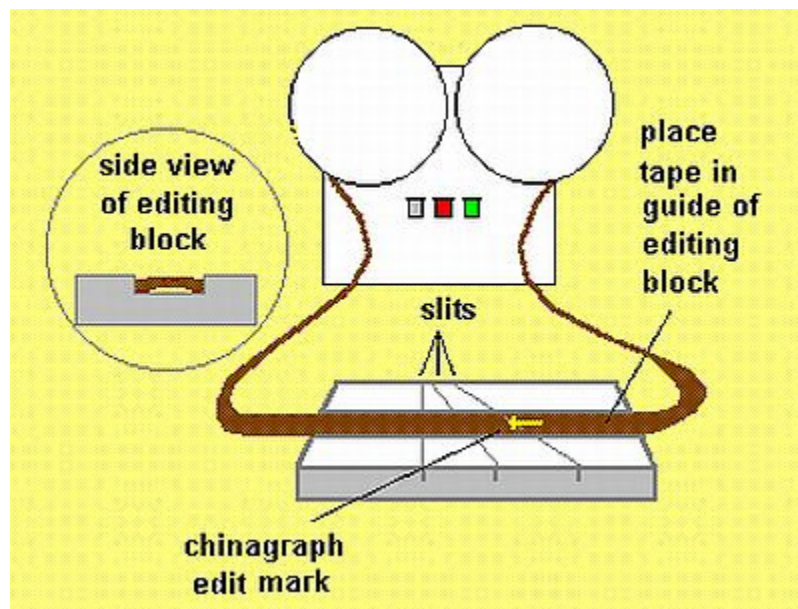
Multitrack tapes (4 or more tracks) are not cut edited.

## Removing a section of 1/4 inch tape

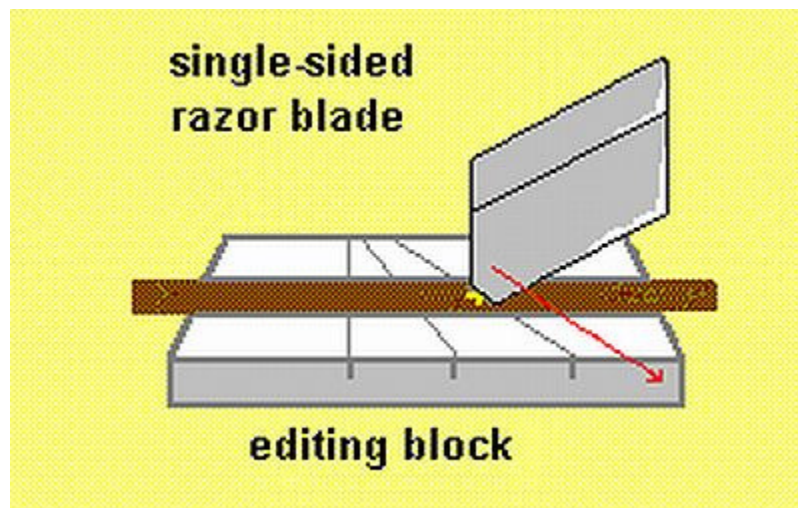
1. Play the tape until you hear the first cue, that is, the sound at the beginning of the section you intend to remove.
2. Put the tape recorder into edit mode. (See the operator's manual.)
3. Rotate the tape spools by hand with the tape against the replay head, (usually the one on the right).



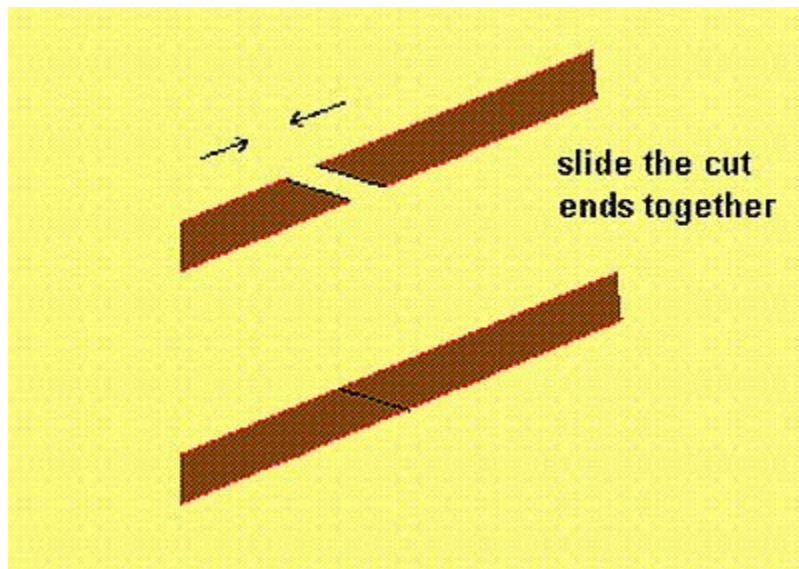
4. Using a **chinagraph** pencil, mark the tape at the beginning of the section to be removed.
5. Mark the tape at the second cue, e.g. at the end of the section to be removed.
6. Pull the tape away from the replay head and lay it in the guide of the **editing block**, oxide side down.



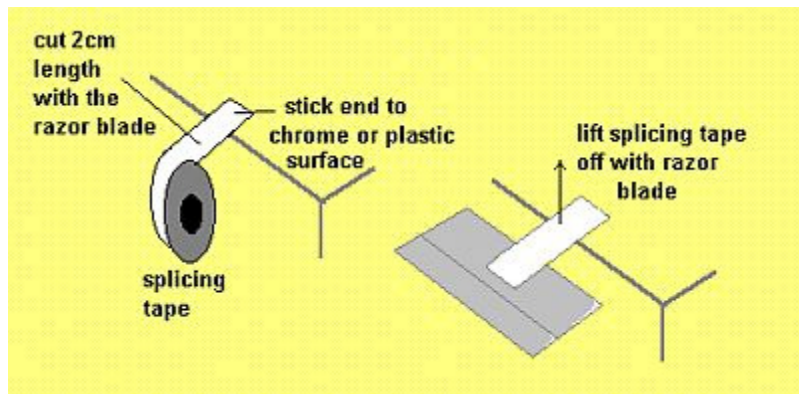
7. Line up your chinagraph mark with one of the diagonal slits in the editing block.  
Choose the  $45^{\circ}$  (45 degree) slit for a stereo recording, the  $60^{\circ}$  slit for a mono recording or the  $90^{\circ}$  slit if you are removing clicks.
8. Cut the tape by running the corner of a single-sided **razor blade** along the slot.  
The corner of the blade should run along the bottom of the slot in the editing block.  
It does not matter that the corner of the blade becomes blunt because that is not the part of the blade that slices the tape.



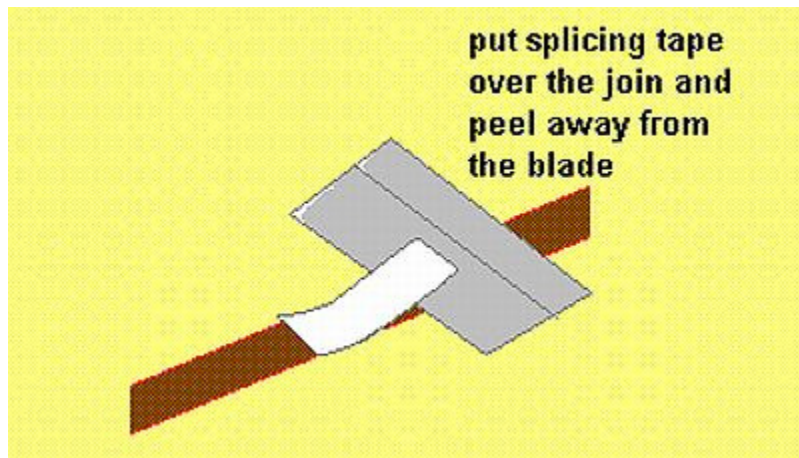
9. Now cut the tape at the other chinagraph mark
10. Remove the unwanted section of tape but keep it safe in case you need to replace some or all of it
11. Slide the two ends of the tape together in the editing block.  
The two cut ends should just butt together. There should be no overlap and no gap between the ends.



12. Cut about 2cm of adhesive **splicing tape**. Touch one end of the splicing tape on to the side of the razor blade, so that it lightly sticks there.

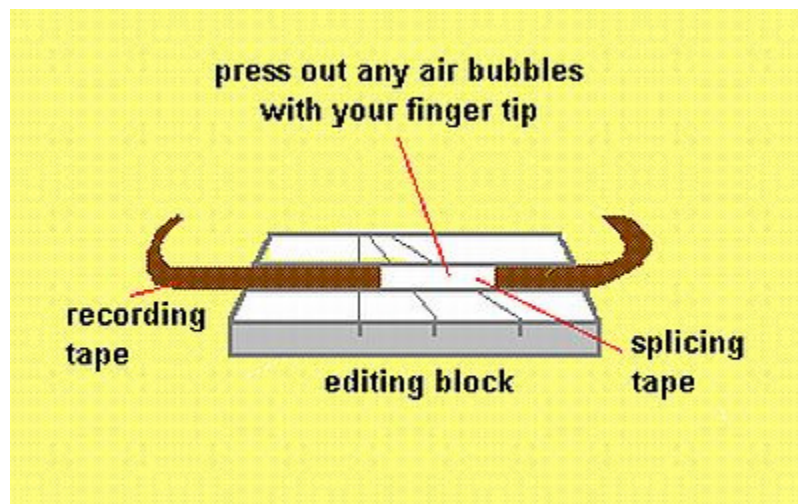


13. Use the blade to transport the cut length of splicing tape to the editing block.



14. Stick the length of splicing tape over the butt joint and press out any air bubbles with your finger nail.





15. Remove the magnetic tape from the splicing block.
16. Play the tape at a good listening level and listen to the edit point.
  - As the edit passes the replay head there should be
    - no change in the level (loudness) or quality of the foreground speech, music , e.t.c.
    - no change in the level or quality of the background noise
    - no change in the rhythm of the speech or music

## Sticky tape, razor blades and leaders

- Take care to stick the splicing tape on the non-oxide side of the tape.  
Modern recording tape usually has a matte finish on the outer, non-oxide side.
- Touch the sticky side of the splicing tape as little as possible with your fingers.
- The razor blade should be sharp.
- Razor blades can become magnetized if they are dropped or encounter magnets.  
A magnetized blade will cause audible "plops" as edits go pass the tape recorder's replay head.
- Keep razor blades in a labelled container, such as a shallow screw topped jar.
- Never *hand* a razor blade to anyone.  
It's safer to place the blade on a flat surface and let the borrower pick it up from there.
- A **leader** is a length of coloured tape, (the same width as the recording tape) which is spliced onto the recording tape to indicate beginnings and endings.

### Use

- white or yellow before the beginning of a programme
- yellow for intermediate spacers
- red at the end of a programme

Professional studios may have their own 'in house' colour codes.

Editing is a skill that only comes with practice. Ear training is as important as manual dexterity.

[Return to top of this page](#)  
[Return to MIDI Homestudio](#)  
[Return to Contents Page](#)

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