

Bake Me A Tape As Fast As You Can!

We have many customers who are dealing with old reel to reel tape recordings that are in various levels of deterioration at this point. From time to time we revisit the subject of tape and offer our two cents worth. If you've been playing with old audio tapes, you may have noticed what audio pros call the Sticky Shed Syndrome. Back in the 70s, manufacturers changed the binding agent that attached the particles to the tape. The new recipe attracted moisture and thus you may have a surprise waiting for you when you try to play these old tapes. The tape has become "sticky" and clings to the heads of your tape deck...causing hesitations and other disturbances. So have the 70s disappeared for good? For those fans of disco, this is a worldwide crisis...perhaps the rest of us should just smile? </p>

<p>Fear not...the solution may already be in your house. Audio engineers have found that by baking the tapes at about 130 F, you can drive the moisture from the tapes and have normal playback for a matter of days. The time this buys can be crucial to transferring these treasured recordings to something a little more New Millenniumish.

Couple of things to remember though...

- No Microwaves
- No Gas ovens- Burning gas generates a good deal of water vapor...this is what we're trying to remove
- 130 to 140 degrees should be constant. 130 is probably the ultimate, so you want something that can generate that heat at a steady rate. Use a thermometer to verify this or you may find yourself crying. Modern Convection ovens hold the most steady heat, but make sure your reels will fit inside
- Pack the reels smoothly before baking. If you aren't happy with the pack, simply play the tape to a spare reel without running it over any heads. (many decks will allow you to remove the play heads)
- Normally bake the tapes from 4 to 8 hours. The wider the tape, the longer the time. Over baking isn't really a concern, but if you under bake, your sticky tape will remain. If this happens, simply rebake until the stickiness goes away.

Once you've pulled the tapes out of the oven, let them cool thoroughly and then you can decorate them with Chocolate chips, nuts and anything else you fancy. (just kidding)

Tracer provides a lengthy list of tape restoration supplies besides the software and hardware. Tape splicing kits for 1/8" (cassette) and 1/4" (reel to reel and 8-track) are available plus, if you don't see it, ask.

[Click Here For Our Tape Restoration Supplies](#)