

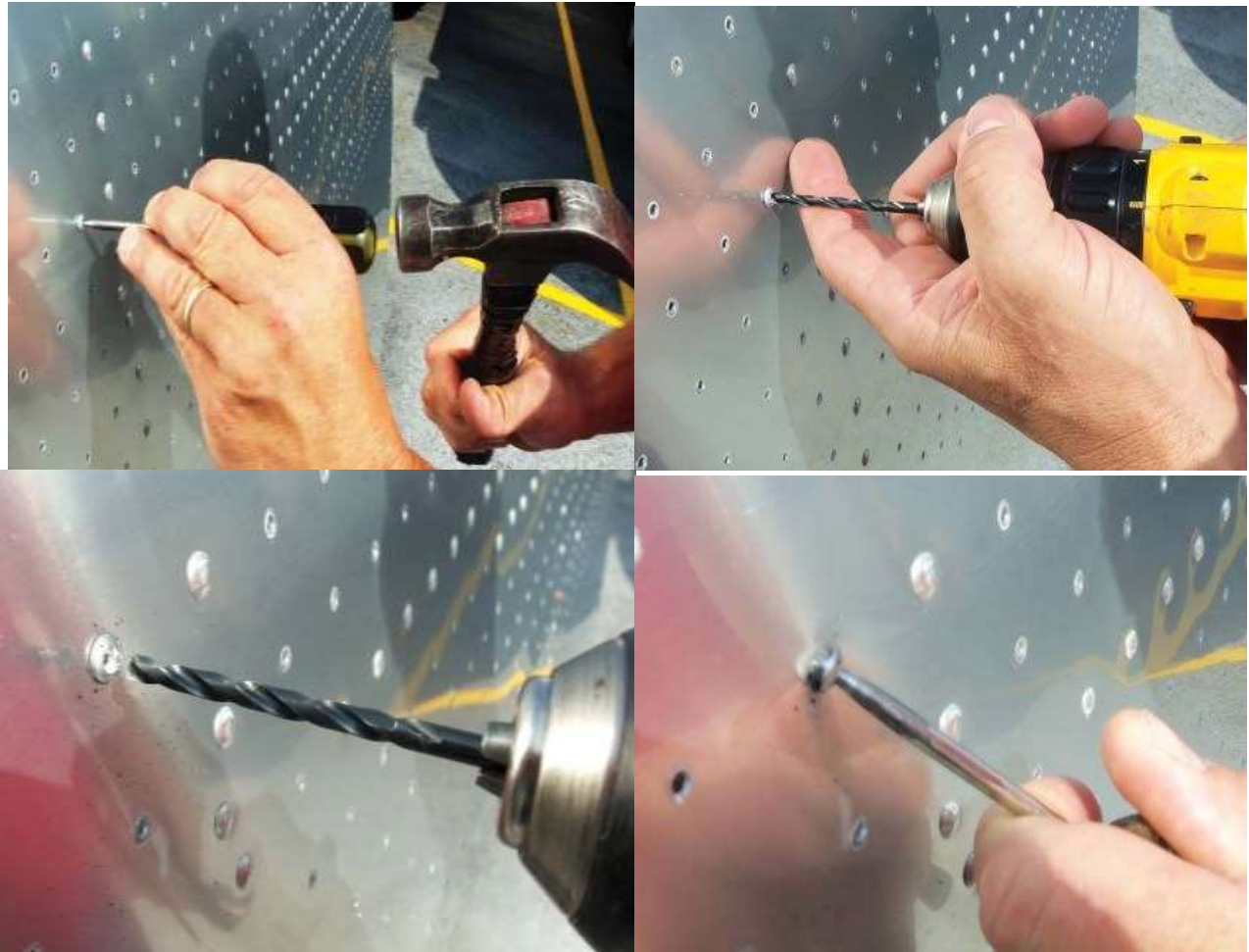
Question on Drilling out Rivets

I am doing some Aluminum repair on the outside of my Airstream and having trouble drilling out the Olympic rivets. The problem is keeping the bit centered on the head without slipping to one side. Is there a tool for keeping the drill bit centered?

Several Options

Use a center punch and a hammer to indent the head of the rivet or drive the rivet stem in; this will keep the drill bit centered on the rivet head. Use a variable speed drill and start off slowly until bit has begun to bite into the rivet.

Unless the panel has been repaired before the rivets will not be Olympic rivets just regular buck rivets. Drill into the rivet only far enough to go the depth of the rivet head; then use the center punch to snap off the head and push the shaft of the rivet into the trailer.



Another way to safely drill out and remove an Olympic rivet would be to use a drill guide.

If you will look on the Internet at the various aircraft supply houses, most will sell drill guides (rivet removal tools) for drilling out rivets.

Rivet Removal Tool



This tool allows quick and accurate removal of button head rivets and blind fasteners. Locking ring at back of tool permits depth adjustment so you only drill out rivet head. Guides and threaded drill bits are included to remove #40, #30, #21, #10 rivets. Replacement bits are available.

Use a drill with at least 3000 RPM (when possible) along with the proper drill bits.