

A Two Post Plate-Style Buckle and Belt

While designing a plate-style belt buckle, it occurred to me that adding a second post to the buckle would make it more readily interchangeable among belts.

Following this change, plate-style buckles and belts are independent of each other except when worn and working together. This makes their relationship more like that of cufflinks and shirts.

The Standard Plate-Style Buckle and Belt

A typical plate-style buckle comprises three elements: a "plate", a "chape" and a "post" (see Figure 1). The plate is the decorative front of the buckle. The chape is a C-shaped element on the back of the buckle. The belt wraps around the chape to attach the belt to the buckle. The post (also called the "prong" or "hook") affixes to the back of the plate. The post penetrates a hole in the belt to maintain tension when the belt is worn.



Figure 1. Plate, chape and post comprise a standard plate-style belt buckle

With the standard design, a belt attaches semi-permanently (or permanently) to a buckle. One end of the belt wraps around the chape and doubles back against itself to form a loop (see Figure 2). Snaps, Chicago screws or rivets in the belt keep the loop closed. Unsapping or unscrewing opens the loop to free the buckle from the belt.

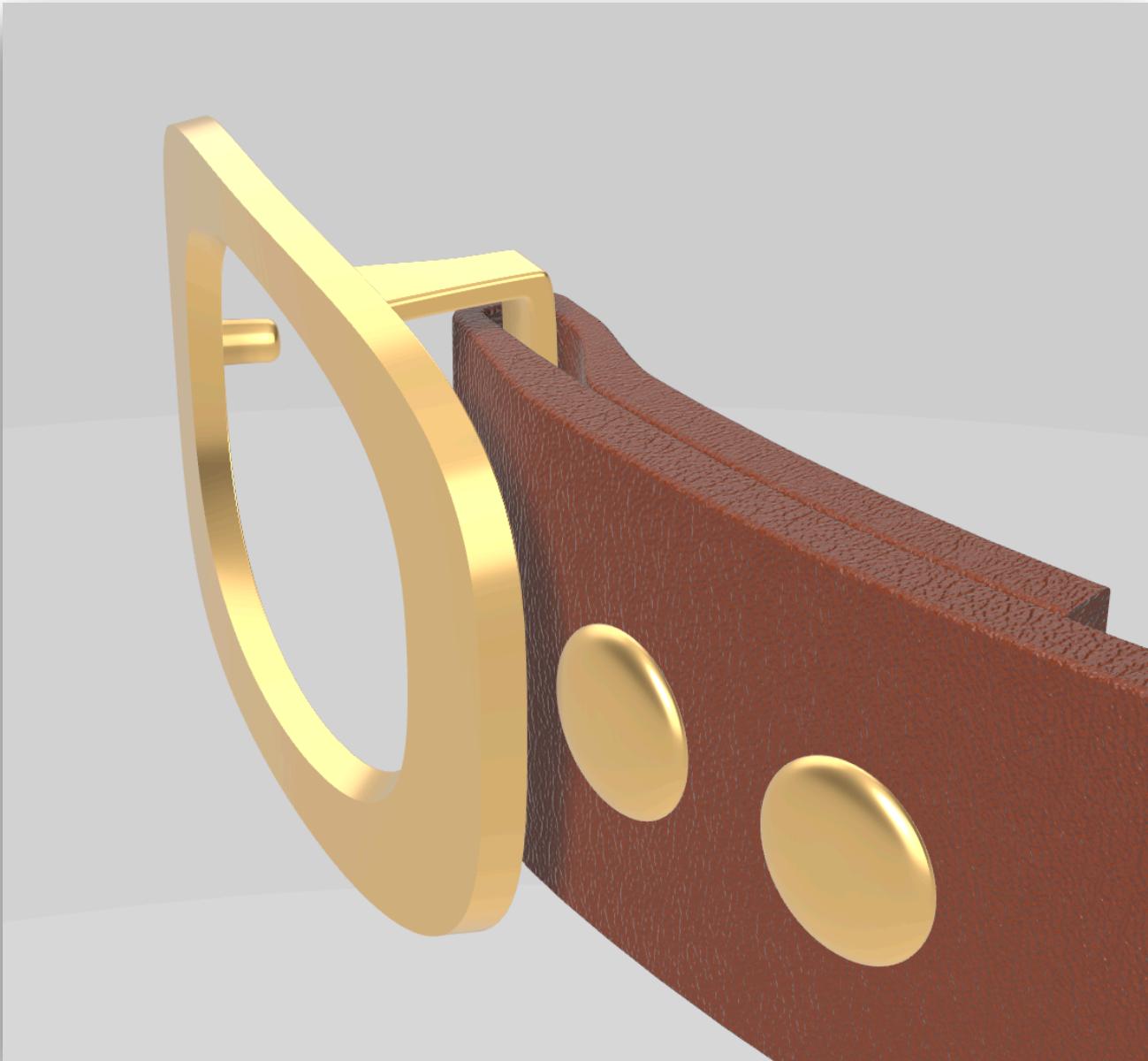


Figure 2. With a standard plate-style buckle, the belt wraps around the chape and is held in place with snaps, Chicago screws or rivets

A Two Post Alternative

In the modified design, the belt no longer wraps around the chape. Instead, the chape performs a different function: it supports a new (second) post that mirrors the standard one (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. In the modified plate-style buckle, the chape supports a second post that mirrors the standard post

The end of the belt that wraps the chape in the standard design simply passes through the space between the inside of the chape and the plate where it is penetrated by the second post (see Figure 4).

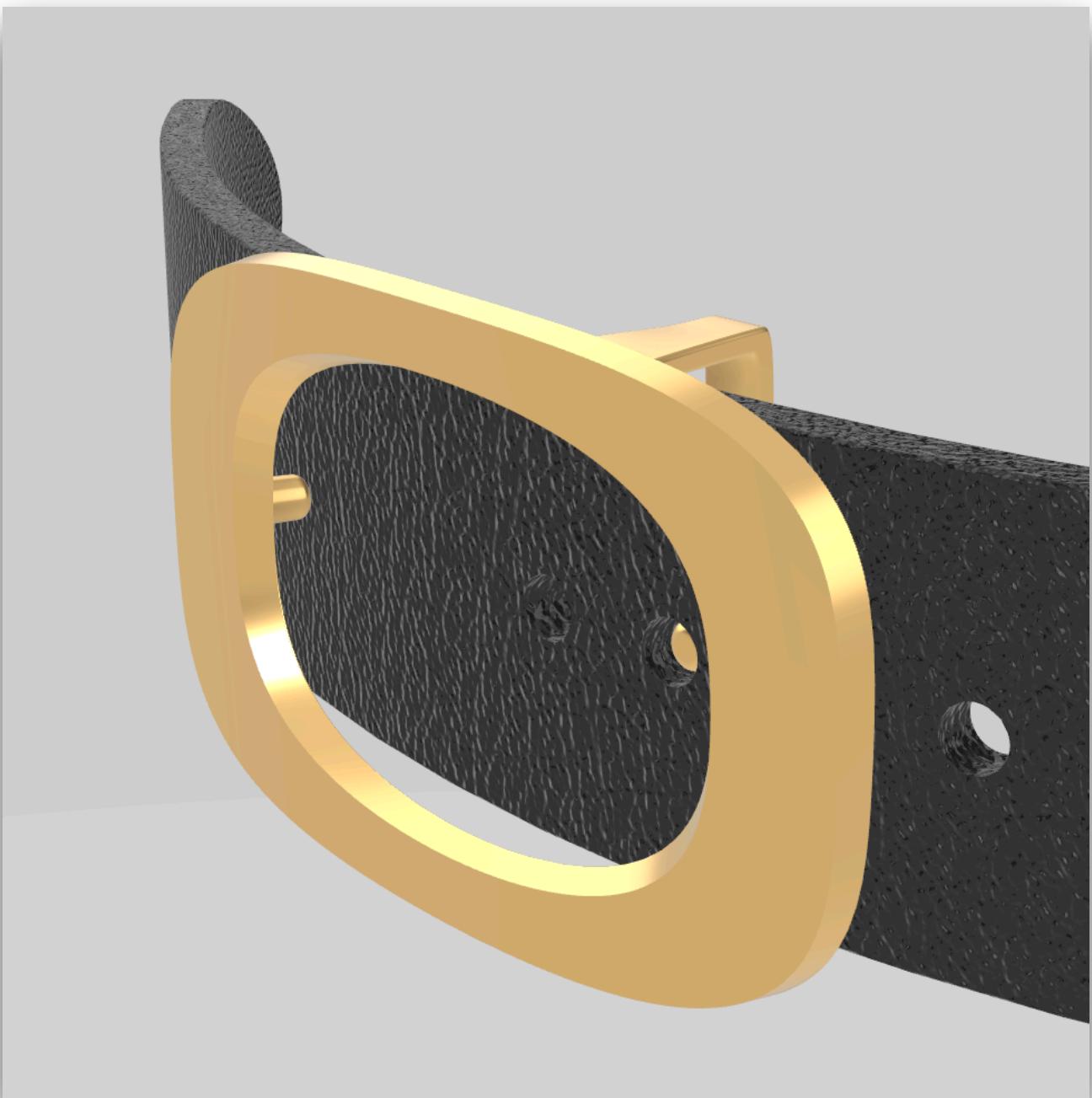


Figure 4. Instead of wrapping around the chape, one end of the belt passes through the chape and is penetrated by the second post

With a two-post buckle, the belt need only be a simple strap with at least one hole punched near each end. The two posts on the modified buckle, each penetrating a hole in opposite ends of the belt from opposite directions, maintain tension when the belt is worn.

One end of the modified belt should have a single hole, and the other end should have several sizing holes (see Figure 5).

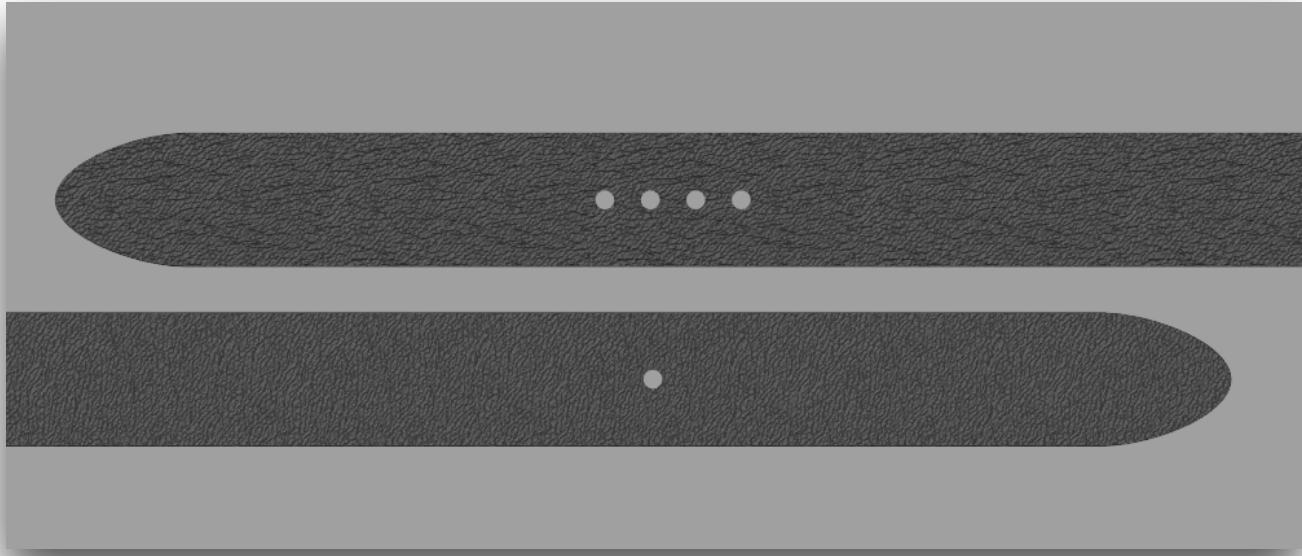


Figure 5. A belt for a two-post plate-style buckle has one hole at one end of the belt and several sizing holes at the other end

Hiding The Holes

The end of the belt with sizing holes should be penetrated by the new post on the chape. With this arrangement, in contrast to the standard buckle and belt (see Figures 6), no holes will be visible when the belt is worn (see Figure 7). This, in turn, permits having more sizing holes spaced closer together to enable finer length adjustments when the belt is worn.

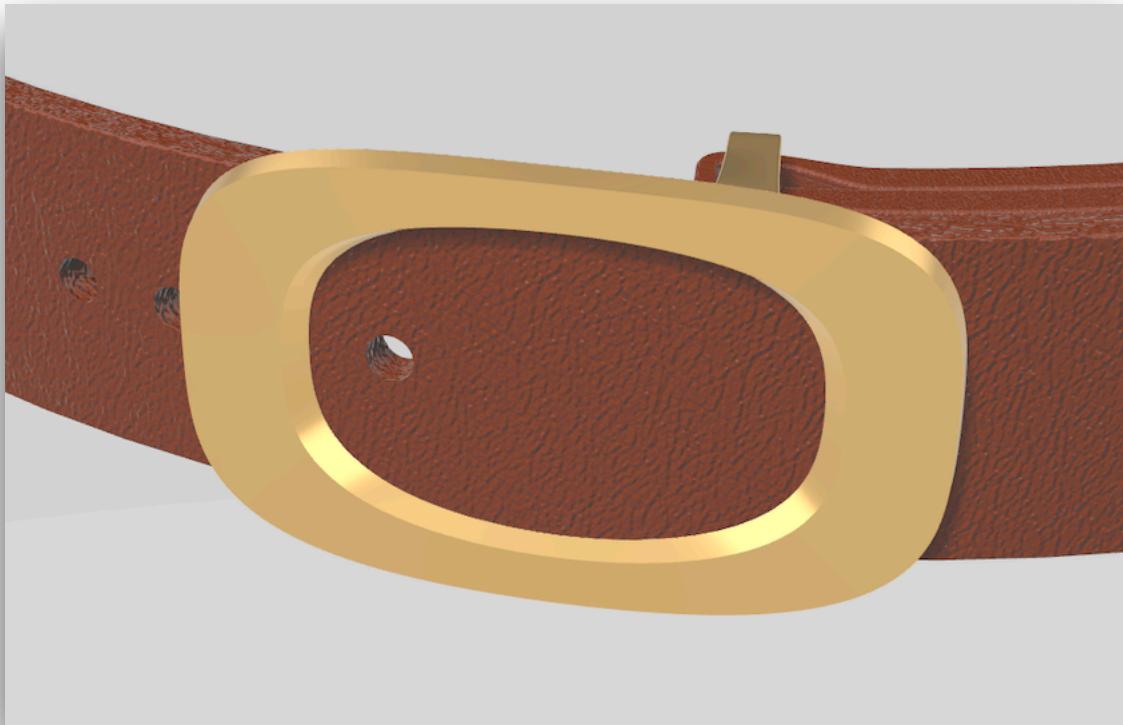


Figure 6. Sizing holes in a belt are visible from the front with a standard plate-style belt buckle

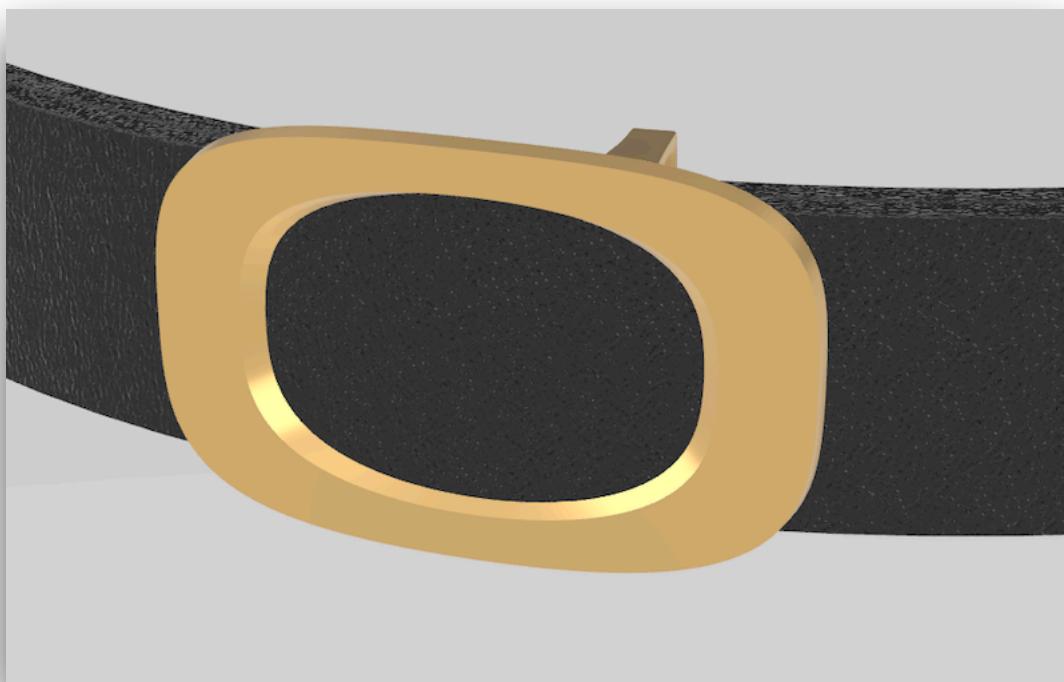


Figure 7. No holes are visible with a two-post plate-style belt buckle

As with the standard buckle design, the end of the belt with the single hole will be penetrated by the standard post attached to the plate. That hole should be positioned such that the end of the belt extends a desired distance beyond the left edge of the buckle. That length will always be constant for the modified two plate buckle; it is unaffected by which sizing hole is used (see Figure 8).



Figure 8. Belt end with single hole will always extend a constant distance beyond the left edge of the buckle

By insuring a constant visible overlap, hiding all holes in the belt, not having to wrap the belt around the chape and eliminating the need for screws, snaps or rivets, the modified design offers a cleaner overall appearance.

Putting the Modified Design On and Taking it Off

Because belts and buckles are independent of each other when they are not worn, a different, slightly longer, procedure is followed to put on the modified design. The belt (strap) is put on first and then the buckle is added.

First, slide the end of the belt with the single hole through all of the belt loops. Next, slide a buckle onto the opposite end of the belt (the one with the sizing holes) by passing that end through the chape in the space between the back of the plate and the second post. Insert the post on the chape into a sizing hole by snugging the belt against the chape.

With the buckle now in place on the belt, the rest of the procedure is the same as with a standard buckle. Slide the end of the belt with the single hole through the chape in the space between the opposite end and the back of the plate. Finally, cinch the belt by pulling the end tight while simultaneously guiding the standard post into the single hole.

Reverse this process to remove the buckle and belt.

Other Considerations

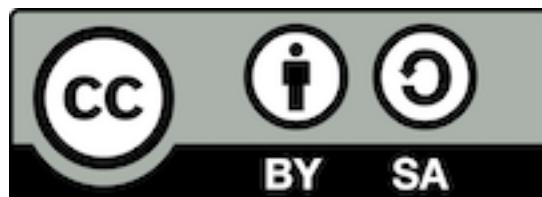
Ready interchangeability comes, of course, at the cost of keeping track of a buckle when it is not cinching the belt. In my experience wearing the modified design, this is more a change of habit than an inconvenience.

The two post design can also be worn with a standard belt that wraps around the chape, provided a slot is cut in the wrapped end of the belt to accommodate the second post.

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