

artist**tutorial**

# making a wig for your doll

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## what you will need:

- Doll's head for which you are making the wig for
- Doll Hair, mohair
- White glue (Aleene's or Ultimate), make sure it dries clear
- Brush, flat synthetic
- Cheesecloth
- Rubber bands (2-3)
- Plastic wrap
- Small sharp Scissors
- Toothpicks
- Pencil
- Parchment paper (used as a work surface - optional)

If you prefer to have your dolls with different outfits, why not change their hair as well. You can practice your doll wiggling skills!

You will need a doll's head or a doll with no hair. Don't worry, if you follow the instructions, the doll will not be destroyed! Just remember that the wig you will be making will fit only this particular doll, since the circumference of the head will be different for each doll. I work mostly with one of a kind art dolls and they all have different head sizes. This method will also work for any commercial doll.

- 1 Cover the doll's head with plastic wrap tightly and secure with rubber band on the neck.



- 2 Cover the doll's head with 2 layers of cheesecloth. Simply fold your cheesecloth in half and cover. Secure with rubber band on the doll's neck .



- 3 Apply the glue on the doll's head with a brush, following the hairline and at least ¼ inch below it. When applying the glue, make sure it practically soaks the fabric, but not dripping. Wait for glue to dry. This can take anywhere from a couple of hours to overnight. Once the glue is dry, you can add the 2nd layer of cheesecloth (use a 3rd rubber band to secure it). Cover the cheesecloth with glue again. Let fully dry.



# 4

Once the glue is dried you can gently remove the fabric from the doll's head, by carefully cutting the rubber bands, one by one. **DO NOT** attempt to untwist the rubber bands, just cut them with small scissors. Remove plastic wrap from the inside of the hardened cheesecloth. Now because the glue is dry and hard it should look like a half-ball shell. The glue is gone all clear at this point.



# 5

Place the cap back on the doll (after it is dry and hard) and with a pencil draw the hairline. Depending on the doll's forehead, do not raise it too high and do not make it "touch" the eyebrows. If you are not sure, look in the mirror (at yourself) and it will give you an idea where the hair starts on the head. Mark the hairline with a pencil around the doll's head. Cut with sharp scissors around the doll's head following the marked hairline. Now you will have a small cap with opening for the ears.



Prepare the doll's hair in the following way. You will need 20-25 medium to small strands of hair to cover the doll's head. Of course it will depend on the size of the doll. The tutorial is given here for a 10-inch doll with the head measuring around 1.5-2 inches in diameter. Please keep in mind that when you work on a one of a kind doll, you will have to estimate the amount of hair you might need. Make sure to have extra, because it is best to complete the wiggling in one session. I am using Tibetan lamb's mohair for this demonstration.



# 6

Lay the strands neatly on your work surface. Cover the tips of each strand with some glue, make sure the glue grabs well. Flatten with your fingers and lay down to dry for just a few minutes. Distribute the strands according to their length and size – smaller ones can go in the front, the larger and longer ones – to the back.





**NOTE:** Do not prepare your hair strands ahead of time, for e.g. overnight, because the glue on the ends of each strand will harden and it will be much more difficult to apply to the doll's head. You want the glue to be in a semi-dry state and to be flexible.

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When you have at least 10 strand of hair to start with, you can start applying them to the cap. If you are not sure how to start, mark the cap with a few rows of pencil lines  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch (5-6 mm) apart to use them as guides when applying hair.



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Start at the back of the cap, on the lower part. Apply some glue first (put enough for the hair to grab but not too much, so it drips). Put the glue in a row, then pick up a strand and press it into the line of glue you just made. Continue on the same row with the second strand, and then possibly third. I find I usually have 2-3 strands of hair on the first row.



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Apply glue on the head  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch (5-6 mm) above the previous row and press a few more strands into it. Depending on the size of the doll's head you are working on, you might need one more row of hair before you reach her ears.



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When you reach the doll's ears, place a strand of hair on each temple, right above her ear. From now on you can start applying glue in a circular pattern all around the doll's head, slowly moving towards the top.



# 11

Prepare one strand of hair by folding the glued end inside. Use the pin to make an even fold and then remove it. This will be the very last piece of hair we will apply to cover the glue and finish the top. For now, lay this strand aside. You might have to hold it for a bit before the glue grabs.

With a bit of practice you will get comfortable with manipulating the “top” part of the hair covering the hair line. By moving the “top” hair a bit to the side or towards the back of the head you can achieve a certain hair style. For now, keep the top as your main focus.



# 12

Moving slowly up to the top of the head, keep placing the hair strands in a circular pattern and close to each other. Keep 5-6 mm in between the rows of hair. When you are at the top of the head, place the last piece of hair that we prepared in advance on the very top and make sure it covers the glue underneath. Refer to the photos for reference.



Let the hair dry for about 4-8 hours before styling. Handling it at this point will result in pulling the hair out, since the glue is still wet. I usually leave my doll overnight and do the styling the next day.

You can gently spread the hair according to the style you are planning to make. For example, if you would like the forehead showing, you can gently spread the locks to the sides while the glue is still wet, so it dries in the desired position.





For trimming, use good quality sharp scissors. Hold them parallel to the head. See the photo on the right for reference.

If you prefer much shorter hair do, keep trimming all around the doll's head.



To get rid of cut ends use a little bit water. Dip the tips of your fingers in water and rub it on the hair ends. It pulls tiny hairs out and gives more finished look. When the water dries you can “fluff” it a bit more. I prefer to keep this style looking slightly “wet”, sort of artsy messy. Voila! Now you can make as many wigs as you like, choosing different colors and styles!

***Created by Elena Loukianova, ODACA Artist. You can find Elena's work and other tutorials at: [www.elenaoriginals.com](http://www.elenaoriginals.com). Visit Elena's store at: [www.elenaoriginals.com/shop](http://www.elenaoriginals.com/shop)***