

Wigging

April 2011

Wigging with Viscose

To better understand how to wig an art doll, it's good to know the terminology of the various products and steps involved. Knowing these things can save time when looking for materials and the frustration of not purchasing the right type of hair.

Roving is used to describe loosely intertwined fibers that form a long rope. The actual fibers may be only 3-5 inches in length, but together they can make a rope length yards long.

The image below looks like a long skein of yarn, but in reality, when you pull on it, you will get much shorter portions. Most doll hair suppliers will have roving



available in small packages. Below is a section of Viscose roving.



Viscose is a wonderful fiber for creating a variety of hair styles. Unlike the curly or wavy, natural animal fibers, Viscose can be used for straight or curly hair styles. This tutorial on Wigging will be about Viscose and how to work with it.

For a new doll artist, using Viscose or any "roving" fiber can be a challenge. When you get your package, you need to make what is called "wefts".

Start by taking your Viscose at both ends and pull it apart.



Repeat the pulling process until all the fibers are at the same uniform length. The fibers may end up at 4 inches in total length. Once all the fibers are the same length, section off small portions. These will become your "wefts".

Wefts are segments of fibers that are flattened and are either sewn or glued at one end. The wefts resemble hair extensions. Another example of wefts are in the wigs made for people. Wefts of hair are sewn on to elastic bands which form the cap that goes over the person's head.

The tools required for creating your own wefts are a water based white glue that will turn clear as it dries.

- Crafter's Pick Ultimate or Aleene's Super Thick Tacky glue.

- Wax paper
- Toothpick or bamboo skewer



I will be using various colors of Viscose for the purpose of these instructions. Some colors show the process better. Take your waxpaper and lay it over a clean, large area. Because the wefts are long, you need room.

Squeeze a line of glue just a bit wider than the width of the weft. Lay the weft over the glue and take your toothpick and press the fiber into the line of glue.

When you see some of the glue showing through some of the fibers, slowly push your toothpick to the short end of the fiber. This will give you a nice straight line of



Viscose

glue where you first laid your toothpick. As you move the toothpick, you will also be getting a messy bunch of fibers stuck to the tip. Pull those off and go over the glued area again making sure the glue has completely coated the top and end of the weft.



If you need to, you can squeeze more glue over the top, but don't do it as close to the starting point. You don't want a real thick glue line there.



When your glue is completely dry, gently pull the weft off of the wax paper, comb out any loose fibers, then cut off the excess glued hair at the end, You should have a nice straight cut.



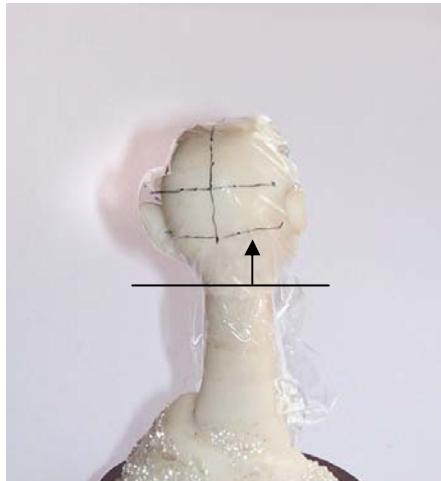
You want at least 1/8 to 3/8 inch of glue line remaining at the top edge.

There are two ways to attach the wefts to the head. **You need to plan the look you want.** The first method is to plot the weft layout in a typical horizontal pattern.

As you get more comfortable with wiggling, you will find you no longer need to draw out a pattern.

I strongly recommend getting a felt tip pen made for marking fabrics. This special pen is usually pink or purple and the color will disappear completely in a day or two.

Using a typical pen, pencil or other dark inked pen, you might see it after you attach your wefts. Inks will also bleed



Since I don't want to use a regular black pen on my head, I've covered it with saran wrap for demonstration purposes. You would draw out your pattern on directly on your sculpture's head using a disappearing ink pen

through when they get wet from the glue. You don't want the grid pattern to show through your wefts.

Many newer doll artists make the mistake of using too much hair on their dolls. I did this when I did my first wiggling and I see many others who still do it. This makes a bulky look and throws off the balanced of the doll. Use small thinner portions of fiber to make your wefts. The fiber should be evenly spread across. Once the glue is completely dry, thin out the weft with a wide tooth comb. This will improve the look of the wefts and remove any additional loose fibers. I use a metal comb which has wide spaced teeth. You can get one of these at any pet supply store. This comb works perfectly for me because it



has no sharp edges on the teeth that can catch on the hair and frizz it up. It's also easy to clean off.

Once you have your pattern on the head, add some white glue from the base of the head/skull to the first line. Let that dry down a bit until it's tacky, but still white.

Carefully attach your first weft making sure your cut end is just over the line. Your weft should go from the back of one ear to the other. Gently press the weft at the base of the head. Do not press so hard that glue comes to the surface.



This is to cover the back of the head, but still leave the surface hair free moving from the line down.



Viscose

Apply glue to the next section and again, allow it to dry down until it's tacky. Lay the next weft gently pressing to make the under surface stick to the head.

Follow the sections until you come to about 1/4 inch from the forehead. This is where you need to decide how you want to the front of the hairline to look.

I want a partial pull back from the side of the head with the fiber forming a swooping side of cascading hair.



To get a fairly natural looking hairline, I will snip the wefted glue line very close to where the glue ends. Using the white



tacky glue, I run a thin bead across the hairline on the head and place the weft into the bead. When I lay the weft down, I will put the weft glued edge facing the

back of the head. Then gently pull the very first fibers down into the glue on the forehead.

Let the glue dry completely before arranging the styling. The glue dries clear, but with a matte finish and it will blend those hairs to make the look of a natural hairline.

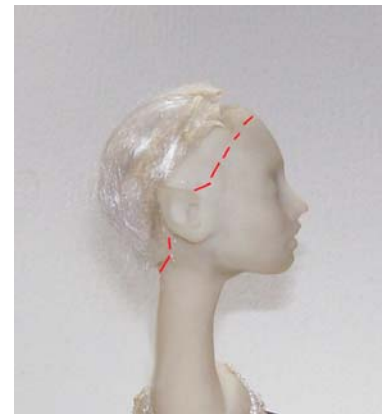
Another method for attaching the wefts is to construct a skull cap. This is very easy to do and guarantees a great fit.



Start by covering the head with saran plastic wrap. Get it as tight as possible and secure it with some tape that is easy to remove. Cover it with the same white glue you used for making your wefts.



Take a scrap piece of Viscose and lay it from the nape of the neck to the forehead. Pull it down on the sides to just above the ears. Press the Viscose firmly into the glue. It's ok if the glue comes through. Let the glue dry completely before removing off the head.

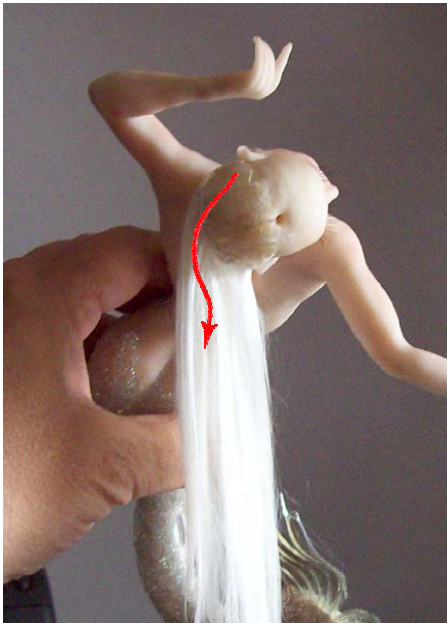


When the glue is completely dry, remove the cap from the head and peel off the saran. Trim off the ends and shape it to the head.

Cut enough from the front to be about 1/8 of an inch away from the forehead hairline. Your cap should look like this inside and out.

Use some FabriTac glue to attach the cap to the doll's head. This is a messier glue, but it will dry really fast and makes a great bond with polymer clay.

Viscose



One thing I like to do to create as natural a hairline as possible is to make a weft where I take the fiber and make a thicker weft that is more rounded. I cut the end to be a straight across blunt cut. Then I will dip the cut end into glue, but instead of flattening it, I let it sit straight up and dry that way. It gives the hair a "rooted" look.

When this weft has dried, I will place it just over the forehead hairline. This sculpture also gets a crown. The crown will be glued into the center hole I put into the head.

The finishing touch for this piece is the curling. I chose to curl the Viscose after it was applied. I wrapped the ends onto a wooden dowel rod and wiped the curl lightly with an alcohol pad. I let it sit until it was dry. Alcohol dries quickly. It gave me a very soft large curl which is what I wanted.

direction of the curl, about 8-12 inches away from the Viscose curl. Lacquer will dry almost on contact so if you try this and the hair gets a wet look, you sprayed too much, too close. Do not use people products to set your curls.

To get the feel for this method, make an extra weft and curl it. Then give it a light spray before you actually do it on your doll. It's always better to experiment first before doing it on your doll.

Once dry, the style is set and the shine is amazing! It still remains soft looking, but the curl won't drop or straighten out.

The next section is how to curl Viscose. See you there!



With this style, I wanted the Viscose to hang down so I did the first row just like the previous method, but then I added the wefts in a side pattern. The hairline is exposed from the ear and forehead.



Once completely dry, I gently removed the dowel rod and just fingered the curl into the position I wanted and then gave it a very light misting of clear spray lacquer. Yep...spray lacquer.

The trick with this is to cover the doll so none of the body gets hit with overspray and only spray a small amount in the

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Curling Viscose

There are many tutorials out there for wiggling with Viscose. Most of them are for hairstyles which are period styles such as Victorian updo's or Southern sausage curl locks. These are great tutorials with valuable information, but the styles do not go well with the fantasy genre of art dolls.

Because of this, most artists lean towards the wavy Tibetan lamb or Mohair fibers. These are excellent products to use, however, it's almost impossible to get a straight hairstyle. Viscose is a very flexible fiber for wiggling. You can create the same wavy look as mohair or you can go smooth. What is important is the quality of the fibers you purchase. A good product should not look like a ball of tangled yarn. Certain dye colors can change the texture of Viscose, but it should never arrive to you looking like something that has been tangled or matted.

Viscose can be curled after the wefting or after gluing on the doll. When deciding on what type of curls you want, you can figure out what size "curler" you will need. If you want sausage curls, you can wrap Viscose around a round toothpick or a bamboo skewer. Both of those are very small and will produce a very tight curl. The same holds true as with curling your own hair. The larger the curler, the softer the curl.

For this demonstration, I'm using a 3/8 inch wooden dowel rod. Take one of your pre-glued wefts and wrap it on the dowel. Have some alcohol pads close by or have cotton balls and a small bowl with rubbing alcohol in it.



It doesn't take much. Alcohol will evaporate quickly, so only pour when you are ready to use it.

Once the fiber is on the rod, dampen it with the alcohol. The curl should not be saturated wet. This is why it's better to use the alcohol pads. They do not soak the fibers.



Let the alcohol dry completely before removing the fiber from the rod. Once dry, remove the fiber. It should look like this.



You can give a gentle fingering of the curl to pull it downward.



You can also do a dry set which will give a much softer curl. Wrap the fiber the same way on the rod, but do not moisten it with anything. Let it set overnight.



Gently remove the curl from the rod.



You can see the comparison of the brown curl next to the blonde curl with alcohol. The dark brown curl is much softer looking.

I don't recommend using water to set your curls. Viscose will tend to pucker when it gets wet. It can be fixed, but it takes time.



Blending Colors - Viscose

It's always fun to experiment. Blending Viscose is a nice way to achieve a frosted hair color. Blending different colors can create a very natural looking wig application. You can create highlights or you can blend in some Angelina Fibers. Viscose can also be dyed. Dyeing involves the use of water, but the fibers can be straightened out again. It just takes a little patience and time.

To make a frosted blend, I'm using Pale Blonde and Honey Blonde Viscose. I want my frosted look to be more on the light side, so I'll be using 2/3 of the Pale Blonde to 1/3 Honey Blonde



Lay the darker over the lighter color to make one hank of fiber. Begin to pull the ends so that you end up with two hanks



of fiber. You should see some of each color in both pieces. Take the two pieces and lay them on each other again and repeat the pulling step.



The more times you pull the fibers and combine them, the better the blending will be.



Continue this process until the two colors are dispersed in a way that there isn't a large area of a single color. This pulling activity will also get your fibers ready for the wefting process.

By the time you are finished, the fibers should be blended and your fibers should all be approximately the same length.



For darker hair colors, blending in some Angelina Fiber can give a nice touch of sparkle. Darker fibers tend to appear more flat looking and you can't really see the shine. Adding Angelina can give the appearance of shine.

This example is Dark Brown Viscose with Copper Flash Angelina Fiber.



Viscose can also be dyed using Acid dyes. The acid is from using vinegar.

