

Doll Rerooting by Beth G.

--This information was given to me by Beth quite some time ago when I was trying to figure out how to do all this myself. A great big thanks to Beth for breaking it down!! - Doc

Supplies:

- New hair
- www.doctoredlocks.com products, Old wig, Yaki Ponytails-very expensive but beautiful results, hair extension material made of Kanekalon
- Beat up doll
- Scissors
- 5" long soft sculpture needle
- Single body (no wire) needle threader
- Shaver (optional)
- Steamer
- Needle nose pliers

Some preliminary notes:

1. If you are going to give her new eyes, remove all of her hair first. A doll that I worked on had wooly hair. Guess what? When I dunked her noggin in the boiling water to remove her old nasty broken eyes, the wooly hair matted and balled up. Nearly impossible to shave off! Contrary to some people's beliefs, shaving off the hair will not enlarge her hair follicles. Even if it did, who cares...it would make it easier to insert the needle into the hole. You can also use scissors to snip of the hair down to the scalp. I find children LOVE to do this!

I use needle nose pliers to remove the chain stitching from the inside of the head...took TWO WHOLE HOURS. I get cheap tools from the Dollar Store.

Whether or not you decide to customize her eyes, you need to proceed by shaving off the old hair, remove the remains from the inside, then clean the head.

2. The brown paint on her scalp is TOUGH to remove. I used nearly every solvent in the house. Nail polish remover worked best. I washed her bare noggin off very well when I was done. You will need to remove the paint if you are changing hair colors. It shows when you are done. This paint won't show if you are rooting her with auburn, brown or black hair in this case, skip this step.

3. The BEST needle is Dritz "2 Long Doll Needles" (so appropriate), as it states on the package. They are 5" long and are made for soft sculpture dolls. I have needles that are several years old and they are hard to break.

4. The BEST needle threaders are Dritz "2 Tapestry Needle Threaders." They are flat, of one-piece construction, no wire, and they don't break.

5. I use my steamer to lay down each row after I rooted it. It makes it very flat and form-fitting against her head. Keeps it from looking "poofy." Crissy doesn't care for poofy hair. She told me so. The steamer also removed the slight waviness from the type of cheapo hair that I use that is used for extensions and braids. A WARNING: A STRAND TEST IS IN ORDER (instructions in my book) SINCE SOME SYNTHETIC HAIR MELTS. Trust me on this one.

Starting the project:

6. Disassemble the doll by popping off her head and taking out her ponytail. Directions for this can be found in "Reinstalling a Ponytail." After the head is devoid of hair and clean, arrange your tools and materials. I like the floor. I put the new hair on the floor, and put my tools on the coffee table. This works for me very well. You will develop your own work style. I put the hair on a single color throw rug so I can fold the rug with the hair inside, tuck my tools inside, and hide my work under something.

7. Separate out 12-24 strands of hair. You will get a "feel" for how much this is. Look at an existing factory rooted doll...it's not much hair. Knot the end; this will help you get it into the needle threader. Clip the excess close to the knot.

8. Put the needle threader into the eye of the needle. Place the knotted end of the strand into the opening of the needle threader. Clip the knot off, and pull about 4 inches of hair through the eye of the needle. (You may not want to do the knotting step, but it is so much easier than licking the hair and trying over and over to get it through the opening in the needle threader. ugh)

9. From the outside of the head, starting at the nape of the neck, insert the needle, with its strand of hair, into an existing hair follicle. Bring the needle out through the neck opening or through the grow-hole. Pull about 4 or so inches of hair through the neck opening or the grow-hole. Remove needle. Knot. Cut off the excess.

10. Pull the strand from the outside of the head. The knot will stop it from coming out of the follicle. Clip to the desired length.

Tip: Keep the new foundation hair longish. Decide later how you would like to style it. After you cut it, and if you don't like it, you need to remove it and start over. Save yourself the hassle.

11. Proceed in this manner from the nape, working forward, steaming each row down to make it smooth. Do the part last.

12. The part line is tricky. I use the "cross-hatch" method. Starting from the crown of the head, working forward, place three good-sized strands in each RATHER LARGE part hole. Cross hatching means, the first strand goes right, the second goes left, and the third stand goes right. Repeat for the next large hole, but the first strand goes left, the second goes right, and the last strand goes left. You may need to "fill in" any blank spots with even more hair in a newly formed follicle that you will make by punching a new hole with your soft sculpture needle. Use the steamer as you go to force the part to lie down.

13. Put lots of hair in the front large hole. Looks better that way. Divide it by putting some hair on the right of the part and some on the left...steam it down.

PUT HER HEAD ON NOW- other directions for this. See "Eyes" document, near the end of the instructions, to see a quick and easy way to put the head back on.

14. Steam the whole head. Leave the 'grow hole' clearly exposed. You may wish at this point to give her bangs. Cut them now. You might like the classic "Crissy Combover" as she originally had. If so, style this in, and steam it down.

15. Make your ponytail and yes it will grow. Remove a leg from the body. Directions for this can be found in the "Installing a ponytail" document. You will also need to read this document to understand how to remove and reinstall ponytails. You may have already taken the doll apart as explained earlier.

Examine very closely how the mechanism works and watch carefully how you take it apart after you unknot the string holding the old 'tail in place. I use the needle nose pliers to unknot the knot working through the leg opening. Putting a new 'tail in takes PRACTICE.

16. Disassemble the old 'tail. I use the old string and rubber band on the newly formed 'tail. You may wish to use a new string and a rubber band. No matter how you decide to proceed, use the old 'tail as a guide.

Use a large thick chunk of 36" hair (for a hair to feet doll), fold it in half, with the string in place, and the old rubber band holding it together. Remember that you looked closely how the old one was made and you are copying that.

After you are done, braid the 'tail! It's easier to work with when braided.

17. Tie a thin piece of wire, or two, like a pipe cleaner, to the 'tail strings. Thread the wire(s), string, new 'tail, through the grow hole, through the neck cone, through the body, through the growing hair mechanism ('cause you studied it closely), all the while, looking through the leg opening. Remove the wire(s). You may have a little problem knotting the string in the mechanism...but I have someone hold the doll and use needle nose pliers and patience to re-knot it.

See the instructions for "reinstalling a ponytail" for added guidance.

18. Put her leg back on. Unbraid the 'tail.

19. Cut and style her hair if you haven't already.

20. Sign and date your art piece 'cause in about 50 years some lucky collector will have YOUR doll in his or her collection. And YOU will want credit for it. I use a Sharpie pen and I sign the neck and the body. These instructions are what works for ME. You will develop your own style.

But I will give you this...the results are very sturdy and hold up very well to restyling. Try everyone's methods to find what works for you. I've done Chatty Cathy heads, Barbie heads and Kiddle heads. Cathy dolls are easy, Barbie is easy but sort of hard to work with, Crissy falls somewhere in between.

I prefer the hair from Doctored Locks.

http://www.doctoredlocks.com/store/silky_braid.html

Comes in a lot of colors, including fantasy colors for fun.

Luv&Peace

Beth G