

Making a Simple Boot

A tutorial by Oddfae



Making boots is easy — gather your materials...

- a paper towel
- leather
- glue (I use Grrrip)
- scissors and/or XActo knife

...and a barefoot doll...!! =-)

I intended this doll to wear boots, so I sculpted the foot accordingly, rather than sculpting toes. This method does work with toed feet; it's just there's little "toe bumps" visible under the leather...

You'll make a pattern with the paper towel; this is known as "draping" and can be used for any part of the doll's clothing, not just boots or shoes...



Put the paper towel over the doll's foot, hold the towel to your work surface, and trace around it with a pen or pencil. Leave extra room at the front if you're not sure what kind of toe you want to put on the boot.

Add about 1/2" all the way around your pattern before you cut it out — this will give you room to fold the leather around the foot....

Use the same method for the measurement around the calf of the leg, adding about 1/8" on each side to allow for turning the edges under.





Use the pattern to cut out the leather for the throat of the boot (the part that goes around the calf).

Put a thin line of glue along the top edge of the leather, let it dry a minute or so, and fold it over to create a finished edge.



Glue and fold both edges down the length of the throat.

You may need to trim the corners at the top of the throat where the folded edges meet, depending how much of an edge you've turned.



Spread glue on the inside of the throat and wrap it around the doll's leg. If you want wrinkles or sags in the boot, now is the time to do so, scrunching the leather downward until it's shaped the way you like.

TIP: When working with Grrrip, let the glue set up for about a minute after spreading, then put the item you're gluing in place.



Hold the leather in place 'til the edges stay together, and the throat holds its shape.



Let the throat dry for a few minutes.



Now we'll move on and work with the leather you've cut from the pattern for the upper — the piece that goes over the foot.



Cut two slits in the leather, so the middle can be folded over, and the sides will wrap around the back of the foot.



Apply glue to the top of the doll's foot.



Fit the upper over the foot, making sure to fold the middle under to make a finished edge.

If you want wrinkles in the boot, this is the time to do it. I usually make wrinkles across the toe where the foot bends. If you're not sure about where to place the wrinkles, bend your own foot and see where your shoe folds.



Stretch the flaps around to the back of the foot, one on each side.



Fold the edges under where the flaps meet at the back seam on the heel.



Apply glue and hold 'til the leather stays in place.



Looking good!!

Let the glue sit a few minutes — it needs to be dry enough to not slip around while you work.



Spread glue on the bottom of the foot, and pull the edges of the leather around and hold in place.

If your leather is stretchy enough, it will ease into place with no problem. If the leather is a little more stiff, you may need to cut small slits in the edge of the leather and make tabs so it will lay flat on the bottom of the foot.



Work your way all around the bottom of the foot 'til you get to the toe.

For long pointed toes on your boots, put a little glue on the leather extending past the front of the foot and press together, rolling the edges under to make a finished seam.



For making a shorter toe, trim the excess leather and fold it around the toe to the bottom of the foot.



At this point, the bottom of the feet should look like this. When you've got both boots done let the glue set up.

Don't worry if you have more leather that folds under; it's actually better if the edges meet in the middle...



Once the glue is dry, place the foot on a piece of leather...



...and trace around the foot. Use the knife or scissors to cut out on the traced line, no extra allowance is necessary.



This will be the sole of the boot. I traced on the finished side of the leather so the rough side of the leather will show; when complete, the sole and the boot will not be all the same texture, adding more interest to the finished doll.



Apply glue all around the edges of the bottom of the foot, and let it set up for a minute or so.



Take the leather you cut out for the sole, and position it over the glue.



Smooth the glued edges together with a finger or toothpick. You can leave the doll on its back 'til the boots have dried, or stand it up on its feet.

If you stand it up, make sure there's no excess glue anywhere that could glue the feet to the work surface!!



If necessary, when the glue has dried completely, use an XActo knife to trim the excess leather of the sole close to the foot.

That finishes up the basic boot; it can be fancied up in any number of ways. Add a cuff at the top, put a buckle on the ankle or top of the foot, buttons down the side... just go nuts!!

I hope this helps with your costuming — email me at dmschiller@oddfae.com with questions!