

Pretty Poppet

Please read through the entire instruction sheet before making this doll. These instructions are written for a beginning level doll maker.

Tips for Beginners:

1. Set your sewing machine stitch length to about two. Tiny stitches are the key! Watch out when you put the ease of the ears in, ease is done in the long stitch length. Always change it back to two!
2. Always stop sewing with the needle in the down position. This helps immensely when turning tiny corners and going around curves. Always sew at a speed appropriate for you. You don't have to sew fast!
3. Don't clip off those hanging threads. Instead, lose them in the body of the work. Put those threads through the eye of a regular needle. Insert the needle where the thread begins and pull the thread through the stuffed portion. This looks better than clipping, and is stronger for when you do body sculpting.

Materials Needed for doll:

½ yard Alova Suede, Doesuede, or Robe velour in the skin color of your choice
A scrap of lighter fabric for ear insides
Freezer Paper (found at the grocery store)
Thread to match the skin
Stuffing – Poly fiber fill works best for me
A flathead screwdriver
2 Size 30 Dritz half ball cover buttons (The kind with teeth!)
2 Size 45 Dritz half ball cover buttons (Teeth!)
A doll jointing needle (These are about 8" long)
A doll sculpting needle (About 4" long)
Acrylic Paints or Iron on face
A small bit of Sculpty clay the color of your stuffing – usually white
Dental floss (non flavored works best)
Yarn or other doll hair

Pretty exhaustive list, huh? Well, it isn't so bad. Most stuff can be found in a fabric/craft store, other stuff you can raid the bathroom or the toolbox for!

Fabric choice is very important. Do NOT choose a woven fabric! You are looking for a knit with just a little stretch. If there are strings hanging off the cut end, it's the devil! Back away. See which way the stretch goes. If you want a slim doll, cut the pattern pieces so the stretch goes along the length of the leg. For a chubby doll, the pattern piece will be cut so the stretch is along the width.

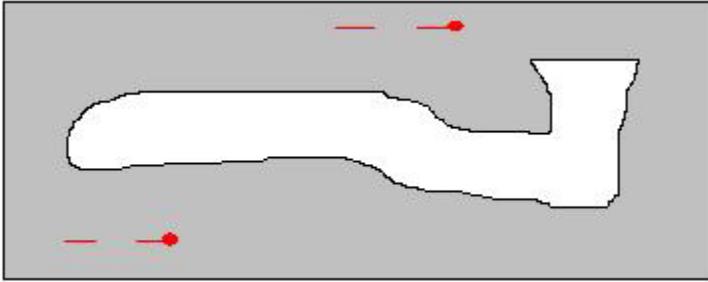
Preparing the pattern:

Print out the pdf files. Do NOT select fit to page! They will come out wonky! No Margins! Margins are BAD!

Trace the pattern pieces on the matte side of the freezer paper and cut them out. You will notice there are no seam allowances on some of them. This is because you will be sewing along the edge of the freezer paper and then cutting the piece out.

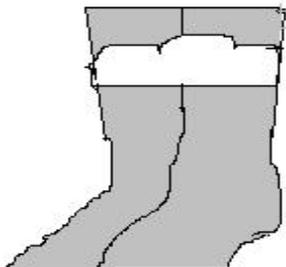
The Legs and Arms:

Cut out a couple of squares of fabric large enough for the leg. Make sure it is right sides together; if you want a fuzzy doll, the fuzzy sides should be on the inside. Take your freezer paper pattern piece and place the shiny side down on the fabric. Iron that sucker down. It will form a light bond, and it will keep it in place while you sew. Place a couple of pins in to keep it from slipping around. Kind of like so:



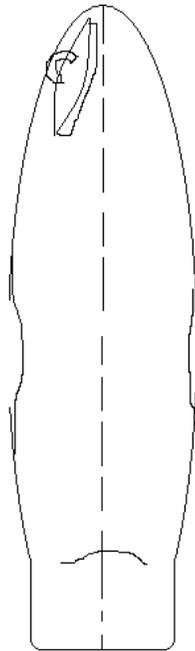
Using the freezer paper as a guide, sew around the leg, leaving open the front of the foot and the back of the thigh, between the marks. Once finished, remove the pins and cut it out, leaving about a ¼ inch allowance. See, easy seam allowances! Next the toes.

Pinch the foot end that you left open shut, matching seams. The seam should be in the middle of the foot. Cut out the toe guide and iron it to your foot. Refer to the picture below. It is easier to sew the toes if you leave a longer bit of seam allowance at the end of the foot.



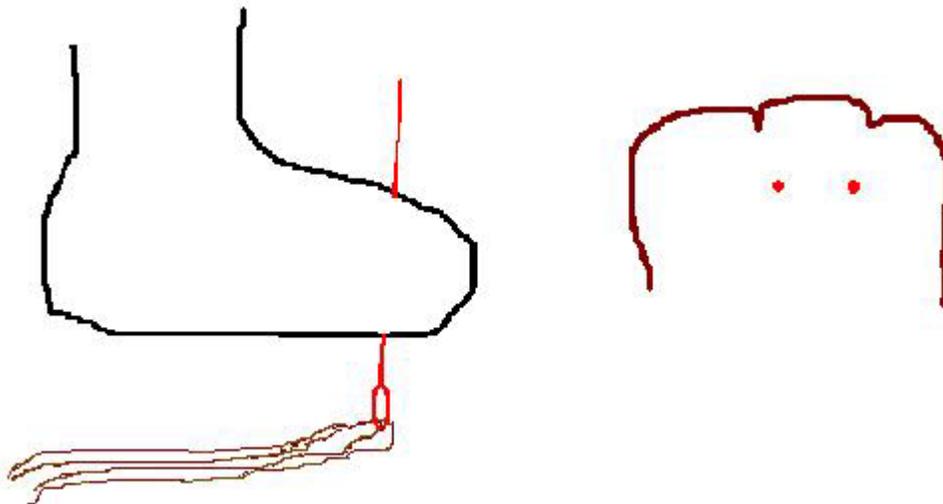
Sew around the toes. Trim the excess. Turn your leg right side out, through the hole you left in the back of the thigh.

Now, stuff that sucker. Stuff it tightly. This is why I suggest a screwdriver; I use it as a stuffing tool. You can really control the stuffing with the screwdriver, being able to pack it down. When you get to mid thigh, don't stuff so tightly because you want to slip a size 45 Dritz half ball cover button (assembled, but with no fabric covering it) into the side of the thigh. This part is important: **You must be able to feel the shank of the button through the fabric. The button must be sitting right there against the fabric. You can safety pin the button in place while you are stuffing the leg.** Continue stuffing. Once you have the button in, stuff the whole leg tightly. Close the hole with the ladder (also called hidden) stitch.



The button sits on the inside with the shank resting against the fabric. The leg is fully stuffed. You should be able to see the outline of the button shank thru the leg "skin"

To make the toes defined, take your doll sculpting needle and fill it with thread. I use quadruple thread instead of double, so it's less likely to break. Tie your knot (leave the thread after the knot at least 3 inches so you can insert them into your doll and lose the thread that way), and insert needle through the bottom of the foot, up to the top. Wrap the thread back around to the bottom, and insert it through the same hole and out the same place at the top. Pull tightly. Do this a couple times. For the other toe, insert into the bottom hole of the first toe and come out the top of the second toe. Wrap the thread around, and put the needle through the bottom of where you want the second toe, and come out where you came out before, on top. Do this a couple of times, tie off your thread, and insert your needle back into the doll so you can lose your thread. See the image:



I know that all sounds hard, but it's really much easier in practice. It just sounds convoluted when written. But now you have a leg! Marvel at its cuteness. Now do it again, with one change: Make sure you have a right and a left. This is determined by how the button shanks are pointing. The button shanks **must** point toward each other!

The arms are much the same, except easier! Iron down the piece onto the fabric, right sides together. Leave open the back of the arm. Remove the pattern piece and cut out. Stuff tightly! Put in the size 30 Dritz half ball cover button. You want the thumbs to point up, so make sure you have the button on the correct side. Close up with the ladder stitch and needle sculpt the paws. Lose the thread ends in the arm.

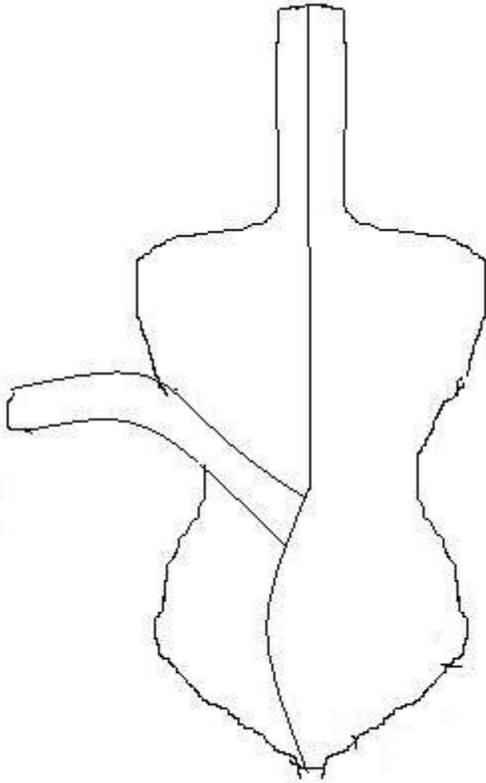
The Body and Tail:

First, a check – Did you put a seam allowance all the way around the body front? On the body back, did you put a seam allowance on the side only, not down center back seam? Did you put a seam allowance around the tail? Okay, let's go. There are two ways to do the tail attachment – this is the machine sewn way. Of course, you can forgo this step and just hand sew it on later. Another option is to make the tail out of fur (Of course, you may want to widen the tail pattern to make it easier to sew.

Fold the tail in half and sew along the seam allowance. Turn. Bend a pipe cleaner in half and insert it into the tail. You should have a couple of sharp ends sticking out of the tail. Bend the ends so the sharp ends aren't going to poke anyone. (Refer to picture.) Take a random piece of thread and wind it around the pipe cleaner ends a few times so that they stay together and make sure the pointy ends are inside. Your tail fabric should be about a half centimeter longer than the pipe cleaner. The picture doesn't show this so I could show you how the pipe cleaners are supposed to be.



Iron the body back pattern piece onto your fabric, with the fabric right sides together. Place the tail between the two pieces, like a little sandwich. The open end of the tail should be put where the tail placement notch is (Or not, it's really up to you where you want that tail!) You will not sew over the pipe cleaners! This is why your tail fabric is supposed to be longer than the pipe cleaners. Sew along the pattern piece you ironed onto your fabric, following the center back seam. Now cut your pattern piece out, following the unsewn edge, being careful not to catch the tail in your scissors. When you get every thing cut out, it should look like this:



Iron on the body front to your fabric and cut one single thickness around the pattern piece.

Match your body front to your body back, right sides together, pinning it in place. Sew around the piece, being careful not to catch the tail (your tail will be on the inside) and leaving a section at the hip open for turning and stuffing. Turn the body right side out and stuff it. Pack it tightly, especially the neck stump. Here's where your screwdriver really comes in handy. When you have finished stuffing, sew the hole up with a ladder stitch.

OPTIONAL: You can needle sculpt the torso to make a bellybutton, a bottom with two distinct cheeks and ladyparts. Load your needle with quadruple thread, tie a big knot about 3 inches from the end of the thread and insert it where you want your bellybutton. Your needle will exit below the tail. Loop your thread around to the front, where you will insert your needle where you want the ladyparts to begin. Pull tightly, being careful not to pull the knot through the belly button. Do that a couple times until you can let go of the needle and the cheeks stay distinct. Now go from the top of the butt crack to the belly button a couple of times, pulling tightly until you are satisfied with her little belly button. Tie off the thread at the belly button and clip so the thread tail is about 3 inches. Lose the thread ends in the body.

The Head and Ears:

If you are choosing to iron on or paint your facial features, you should make sure the Head Front is done with the fuzzy side on the inside. All other parts have the fuzzy side on the outside.

Iron the ears pattern piece to your fabric. You will have body fabric on one side and the ear fabric on the other side. Right sides together, of course. Leave the bottom open for turning. Cut out your ears and turn them. Baste the bottom and gather it just a little for ease.

Iron the Head Front and the Head Back piece onto your fabric, right sides together. Sew the center front seam on the Head Front and the center back seam on the Head Back, following the pattern pieces with your needle. Make sure you left a hole in the center back seam for turning. Cut out the pieces (Seam allowances are included on these pieces!).

Look at your Head Front and decide where you want your ears. Up high or down low? Place the ears equidistant from the center seam. You will place the ears face down on the right side of the head front, and baste them into place.

Put the head front to the head back, right sides together, making sure you match the tops. Sew all the way around the sides, starting at the top of the head, stitching through all thicknesses. Turn right side out.

The reason why I like the clay in the nose idea is because sometimes a small stuffed area won't stuff correctly. This isn't a requirement for the doll, just an idea for a nice pointy nose. Pinch off a bit of polymer clay (the same color as your stuffing, not the skin color) and put it in the nose. Stuff the head tightly (TIGHTLY), and mold the nose until you like the way it looks. Bake the head according to the polymer clay instructions. If you want to use plastic eyes, place a bit of clay in the nose (not a lot) and bake the head without stuffing it. Place the eyes, then stuff the head. (EDIT: I have found it's difficult to place the eyes when the head isn't stuffed. So when I use plastic eyes, I stuff the head, mark the eye placement, unstuff the head and then place the eyes.) A plastic eye doesn't do well in the oven! You can also use air drying clay for the nose and skip the whole oven thing.

You can also decorate the eye before placing it. You can trim false eyelashes for humans to the size of your eye and stick them on there with glue. Then cut a piece of felt, suede, -whatever- into a half circle for the eyelid. Glue that sucker down with glue that you trust (some people use super glue, some use E-6000) remembering to glue the excess down on the back of the eye. Poke a hole in your fabric and put the eye on. Some people have a difficult time placing the backs of a safety eye on the eye shaft. Use a knitting needle to widen the hole or hold a lighter to the back for a couple of seconds to soften the plastic. (Thanks to MalibuKasey for these eye tips)

Let the head cool (or not), then apply iron-on eyes or use acrylic paints to make eyes. You can embroider eyes or use buttons for eyes (not recommended for small children as that is a choking hazard.) Be as creative as you want! You can even do a freezer paper stencil for the eyes if you want; you can still iron a stuffed head.

When you are done, skewer the neck stump into the hole you left in the back of the head for stuffing and turning. Attach the head to the neck stump with a ladder stitch. If you stick a large needle through the top of the head down into the neck stump, it will hold it in place while you sew.

Jointing:

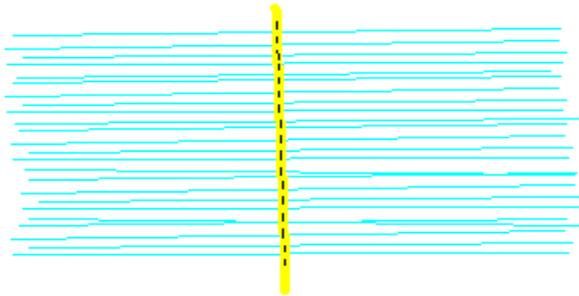
This isn't hard, but let's go step by step. Got your eight inch doll jointing needle and some non minty dental floss? Great!

1. Dry fit your parts. Make a mark with pen or pencil where the shank of the button touches the body. Legs should be down pretty low on the body or your doll turns out spraddle legged and hippy. But maybe that's what you are going for!
2. Pull out about four yards of floss. Double it up, and insert the doubled end through your needle. Draw through so that you have 4 strands hanging off.
3. Push the needle through the button shank of one of your limbs. Pull the floss halfway through, and then make a granny knot with your floss. The needle is still attached!
4. Thread all floss ends through the eye of the needle. There should be eight strands through there!
5. Insert the needle at one of the marks you made on the doll and exit at the other mark. The needle goes through the body ONCE!
6. Separate the strands again, there should only be 4 left on the needle now.
7. Pull the needle through the button shank of the other limb. Tie a **half** knot.
8. Cut off the needle and pull tight! TIGHT! The limbs should tighten to the body.
9. Don't let go! Tie a knot in the dental floss in order to keep it tight. The knot is up to you; just make sure it doesn't come out!
10. If possible, lose the ends of the floss in the body with a regular needle. Done! Whew!

Now do it again!

Hair:

Most hair pieces are wefted. Basically, a weft of hair is hair that is sewn into strips. Cut many pieces of hair the same length, and place them on a tissue strip. This stabilizes the hair so you can sew it up the middle of all the hair. (See picture) Once you have the wefts, you can sew it or glue it. You can even use human hair they sell at beauty shops for extensions. Blythe wigs work too, but you might have an issue with the ears. Your Poppet will tell you what kind of hair it wants. Listen to her!



Dress:

Cut two of the bodice pattern on a fold of fabric. One is the bodice and one is the lining.

*Optional: Add trim to the bodice.

With right sides together, sew the side and top seams.

Turn right side out and press.

Baste the bottom of the bodice.

Cut a rectangle of fabric about 6" by 18". This will be the skirt.

Fold the sides of the skirt about ½ inch, as if you were doing a hem. Do not sew down.

Gather the top of the skirt to fit the bodice. The folded edge should line up with the bodice edge.

Attach the skirt to the bodice.

Fold your dress in half, right sides together. Open up the folded edges of the skirt, and sew about half way up the skirt back. Iron the seam flat.

Hem the bottom of the skirt.

Add some snaps or buttons to the bodice.

You can use two pieces of trim to make shoulder straps.