

foam filled dressmaker's dummy

By: notoes

<http://www.burdastyle.com/techniques/foam-filled-dressmakers-du>



I had seen some of the things that others had used to stuff their duct tape dummies and I decided to do something similar. I chose to use the Large Gap type of Great Stuff the expanding foam insulation since I wanted something that would hold its shape for years without getting out of shape.

Step 1 — prep working area



First I made a duct tape dummy with a friend helping. There are several places to find the instructions for that so I won't be adding those, you can simply do a search for "how to make a duct tape dummy" to find them. All I'll be doing the directions for is how to fill it with expanding foam. First thing I did was make sure to do this outside for two reasons — proper ventilation and this stuff does make a bit of a mess and it's better to have the mess outside on the grass where you don't really need to clean up if you don't want to. The can advises you use gloves, this is a good idea. Plus make sure you wear old clothes that you don't mind messing up as this will get on you and you won't even realize it. It also likes to get on the oddest things so old clothes are a must and if you can also cover your hair. Once it's on your clothes you can't really get it off even if you wipe it off. The can says you can clean up using "acetone" but for clothes that's not a very good option. The best supply of acetone I have around is nail polish remover and I used it to get the sticky foam off my hands. I got some of it on me even though I used gloves and didn't touch anything else. Next make sure that the outside temperature is at least 60 degrees. I was impatient and did the first set in the cold at temperatures 50 or below. Don't do this as the foam will not expand right in cold weather. I went through two cans like this and most of it was probably wasted. I used a total of four cans and still need one or two more to completely finish. You may or may not need as many as that but get at least two cans to start.

Step 2 — adding the foam

The dummy needs to be up off the ground so that you can easily see inside it while you fill it. It doesn't matter what you use to lay it on just make sure it's something you don't care if you get messed up as it will not come off once it cures. Lay the dummy either chest side or back side down, whichever you prefer. Just make sure you have it laying so that the shape isn't pressed in as this will alter how the form comes out. The whole point of making a dummy of yourself is that it is your exact shape. Now the can says that it is a one time use can but this is not necessarily true. As long as you clear out the long tube you can

use it a second time if you shake it and there's still liquid in it. It tacks up in 15 minutes so if you still have some in the can this is when you clear out the tube. The tube comes apart in two pieces, the long straight one and the bent one. Once you do the first pass and leave the dummy alone so it can tack up then make sure to unscrew the tube and leave that alone for 15 minutes. Then you can pull the long part off the bent part and simply take a long thin piece of wire and run it through the long piece. Next use the same wire to push the foam in the bent part out. Check the nozzle area that the tube screws down on and see if it is clear. If not then use the wire to clear this out. Don't leave it past 15 minutes before trying to clear it out as the longer it sits the more it will harden and then you can't use the tube again. When you spray the foam in make sure to go in a single layer with a little space in between the lines. Remember this stuff expands so give it room to do so. Do only one side at a time - all of the front or all of the back. Spray side to side but don't go up the sides, as it expands it will go up the sides anyway. Once you have one side done then leave it alone for 15 minutes while it tacks up. It takes 8 hours to fully "cure" and up until that time you can still "shape" it after the first 15 minutes. Once it starts curing the foam will push the dummy out of shape a little so check it every hour and push it back into shape where needed. That's another great thing about the foam, you can still shape if it pushes out something that shouldn't be pushed out. If you can be patient, then let the one side fully cure before turning it over and doing the other side.

Step 3 — adding the base

Now I needed the dummy to have a bit of an arm as that's one of my trouble areas but since the dummy isn't a person that area needed to be flexible so I didn't put any foam there. And depending on the stand you choose for your dummy you need to make sure you can get it back inside the dummy after the foam stuffing is done. I had an old fan that I removed the fan blades on that I used as a stand. Since I left the motor on it I only did half of each side so that it had room to go back inside. Once both sides of the top was done I then turned it upside down so that it stood on the neck with supports on both sides. Then I tied the bottom part of the stand to tall supports so that it was centered then did the bottom half of my dummy. If you have just a plain pole on a base you won't have to do this, this is just what I did. For a simple pole and base you can do both sides then once they're cured, stand the dummy on its neck and fill up any space in between. Make sure that you be skimping doing this as it will expand to what space is there then start pushing out so go back and check it every hour to make sure it doesn't get out of shape. Once you've filled it from bottom to top you can drill or cut a hole just big enough for the pole to fit into and stick the dummy on the stand.

Step 4 — adding the neck



also wanted a neck on mine so I cut the bottom out of an old plastic bowl and cut up the side so I could adjust the width. I then measured my neck and added a piece to the bowl so that it was as big as my neck. I then

taped it to the dummy. Now if you want to, you could make the neck out of foam. Just make sure that the top area is cured and just spray it in layers until you get it as tall as you want. Each layer needs to cure before adding another one or they'll just fall down. Once the foam is cured you can sand or cut away the too large areas and shape it the way you want it to look. The can also says you can paint it but only do that if you really want to. I liked mine open so I only taped it.

Step 5 — finished



So now my entire dummy is as filled as I wanted it to be and the shape is exactly mine. Once the foam hardens it will never get out of shape and I simply taped the neck up to match the rest of it and I'm done.

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