

COSTUMES BEYOND THE BASICS

Advanced Sewing and Simple Props

Who Are These People?

- Samaru has been cosplaying since 2010
 - Has won multiple awards over the years

What's This About?

- Sewing Techniques You Can Use to Improve Your Costume
- Basic Pattern Alterations
- Basic overview of prop materials and finishes

What is this NOT about?

- Fabric Selection and Preparation
- Pattern Selection and Preparation
- Advanced Prop Construction

You can always try to catch us later, or check YouTube for
Instructional Videos.

Pattern Alterations

- Useful when the pattern will not fit you exactly.
- You will usually need to use different waist/hip/bust measurements than the ones given for your selected pattern size.
- Use a curve to draw a smooth line between the size lines at each reference point to smooth out the pattern

Seam Finishes

- Seam finishes keep the edges of the fabric from fraying during use.
- Can be as simple as a zig-zag stitch next to the edge, a folded over and stitched edge, or as complicated as a serged edge

Lining/Interlining

- Lining is used to finish the inside of a garment.
- Lining uses lightweight slippery fabrics that will slide over the inner garments.
- Lining is basically a second copy of the outer garment that is sewn at the neck, turned inside out, then finished at the arm and bottom hems
- Interlining is when you double up your fashion fabric to create two layers and provide more weight to a garment.
- Can also interline with canvas or flannel to provide extra weight or warmth

Bias Tape

- Bias Tape is used to encase edges of fabric.
- Bias tape is often used for trim on school and military uniforms.
- Bias tape is applied by sewing the short edge to the garment and then folding over and stitching in the ditch or hand sewing to hide the stitching
- Ironing is important during all stages of bias tape application
- Mitered corners help to improve the appearance of corners on your garment.

Interfacing and You

- What is Interfacing
 - A “fabric” used to stiffen and provide body for fabrics
- Interface has many different weights, match the weight of interfacing to your fabric weight to provide the desired amount of stiffness.
- It can be useful to create test samples using your commonly used/interfacings fabrics to see how interfacing will affect each fabric
- Sew in interfacing is also available for fabrics that cannot be ironed.
- Interfacing is usually applied to the facing (or hidden) layer of a collar or coat front

BASIC PROPS

Materials and Construction

Prop Materials

- There are a variety of materials you can use to create your props and accessories.
- The main considerations are durability, weight, and ease in working
- There is no one perfect material for use in all props
- Your mileage may vary! What one person loves to work with is another person's nightmare material

Wood

- Found in boards at the hardware store. Different species and grades with various price points
- PRO: Easy to work with and finish, durable in the right uses, cheap
- CON: Hard to create fine detail, will break, can be heavy in large quantities
- Best uses for swords and staves

Plastic

- Many different types. Some are heat shapable (Wonderflex, Sintra).
- PROS: Harder to break, easy to work and glue, simple finishing, lightweight
- CONS: Adhesives and fumes can be toxic, can be wobbly, expensive in small amounts
- Best for swords and large armor pieces with simple bends. Complex curves can be a problem

Craft Foam

- Foamies at JoAnns, EVA Foam from suppliers
- PROS: Lightweight, easy to cut, flexible
- CONS: Cannot directly apply paint, bending foam can crack paint, durability can be an issue
- Best used for armor and details

Resin

- Two part resin that hardens after mixing two parts.
- PRO: Easy to finish, somewhat easy to sand, durable, can be molded to make complex parts
- CON: Heavy, requires a mold, some resins are toxic
- Best used for small details. Avoid using too much resin on a costume as it will quickly get heavy

Paperclay

- Air drying clay that is shaped by hand
- PROS: Lightweight, easy to finish
- CONS: Not durable, thicker pieces can take a while to dry, expensive, hard to do fine shapes
- Best used for details that need to be lightweight where durability is not an issue

Sculpey

- Oven bake clay that can be sculpted and then baked to harden
- PROS: Can be sculpted to take fine details, easy to finish
- CONS: Shrinks slightly when baked, can shatter if dropped

Foam

- Extruded Polystyrene Foam (XPS) found in pink/green sheets at hardware stores
- PROS: Easy to cut and rough shape, very lightweight
- CONS: Not very strong, will not take fine detail, must prepare surface prior to painting

Metal

- Available in sheet and bar form
- Can be useful for very small details or in stiffening under other materials.
- Usually not con legal if exposed
- VERY HEAVY

Things to Consider When Planning

- Durability-Will pieces break off or dent in crowded hallways
- Ease of Use-Do you have the needed tools and materials to work with it?
- Finishing-Can you paint it?
- Con Legality

More Information

- Sanddiverstudios.com – our website, working on How To's detailing construction of our costumes as well as con photos
- [American Cosplay Paradise/Experience-Costume](#) listing and discussion forums
- Cosplay.com – Cosplay discussion forums, anything you need to know!