

Re-Root Instructions with Photos

Re-rooting a vintage doll head is a tedious, time consuming process, however, it is extremely rewarding to restore a vintage doll to better than new!

The method used in these illustrations & instructions is to actually sew doll hair with heavy thread and long doll needles. There are several methods used, but this is my preference.

The amount of hair needed will vary depending on the size of the doll head and how many holes are in the head. Uneda 2S heads are used in these illustrations. Some of these same model heads will have half as many holes as others.

The original hairstyle is usually indicative of how many holes are in the head. For example, the ponytail style heads had less holes (the hair was longer around the edges of the hairline and shorter and further apart toward the center and back). The dolls with bangs, short hair and/or side or center parts have many holes and they are often very close together. These dolls may require almost twice as much hair as the other heads.

These heads will need to have less strands inserted per hole or the head will be too heavy and the hair will be unmanageable. Some of the heads may have hairlines with holes that are very far apart and extra holes may be needed if the spaces are too far apart. A hot needle can be used to make additional holes if needed. If there are larger holes left in the doll head when the old hair is removed, additional strands of hair will be needed to fill in those holes.

The hair we use is vintage hair from Italian doll factories that was actually made in long "spools" and threaded into the machine for stitching. A section of this pre-curved hair is shown in the photos below.

Materials needed:

4" Doll Needle Dritz (Available from Hobby Lobby, Crafts, etc.)

Heavy thread (quilting or rug type)

Hair (synthetic from various sources)

Step 1:

Remove the doll's head from the body. Remove and discard cardboard circle and all old stuffing. If the head has an odor, clean the head to remove any surface dirt or mold. Be careful when cleaning around the sleep eyes and painted features of the face.

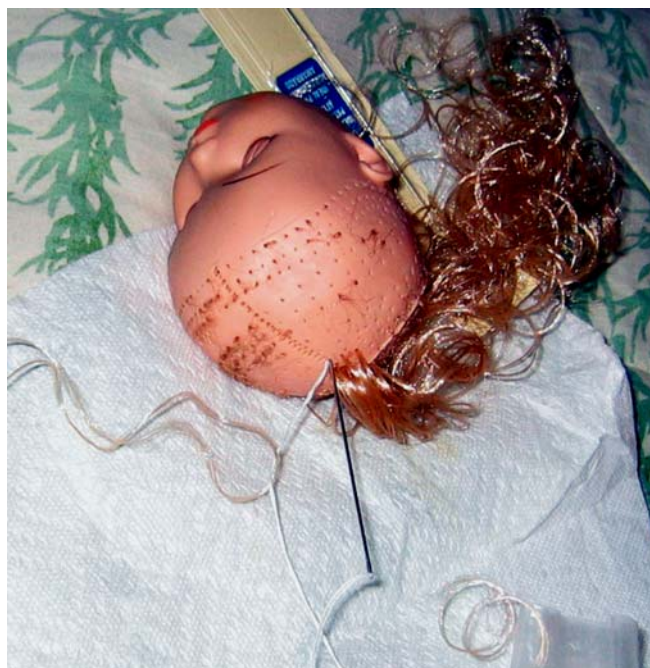


I personally prefer to clean dolls with Twin Pines 911 because it has a very clean, pleasant smell and is a safe product to use on vinyl. If water should get into the doll eyes, carefully wipe them dry. Place the doll head face down so that any water or moisture that could be in the eye pockets can drain out and dry.

Remove old doll hair by cutting hair as close as possible to scalp (use an old electric razor or scissors). Remove remaining hair plugs with needle nose pliers by pulling it out through the neck of the head.

Step 2:

Thread long (about 30" long) piece of heavy thread through needle and knot both ends together for double strength. Knot should be very large and sturdy. Decide where to begin rooting (center of head and work in a circle toward edges or either front or back of head...it is a matter of preference). It was easier for me to thread the needle through these holes when I held the head up to a lamp or light source so that I could actually see through the neck to the vinyl surface.



Step 3:

Decide how long you want the finished hair to be on the doll. You will need to cut hair twice that length (for example if you want doll's hair to be 8" long, you will need to cut each strand 16" long). Some people prefer to precut the lengths of hair and arrange them on a rack or table so that they are ready to use...if a breeze is not a problem.



Step 4:

Push the needle up through the neck and through a hole at your starting point (center, back or front).

Pull the needle through, until the knot is touching the inside of the scalp. Use a finger inside the head, and move the knot to the side so that it will not get entangled when you pull the first strand back through the same hole. It will not be as easily tangled on subsequent holes.

Loop the hair strand in half over your finger. Carefully slip the needle underneath the center while holding the strand securely. Push the needle back through the same hole (the hair will be looped over the thread). Push the needle through the hole and pull the needle through the neck opening until the hair and thread pop through the hole. If you pull the hair too far, you can gently pull the hair strand up until the hair stops at the inside of the scalp.

In order to keep the hair from becoming excessively tangled, I put the already rooted hair in a plastic bag and secure with a wide rubber band as I complete large sections. Or alternately, use a hair clip to twist and hold the new strands of hair up so the completed sections do not become tangled.

Step 5:

Once all the holes have been filled and all threads have been securely tied off and knotted, spread a thin layer of silicone type adhesive to seal the interior of the head. A wooden stick is handy to spread the glue.

Restuff the head with polyester fiberfill. Insert a small circle of cardboard to keep the polyfil in place.

Re-attach the head to the body and style hair as desired.

