

The purpose of this session is to briefly convey a variety of techniques for modifying an existing wig to better suit the needs of a production. Techniques will be discussed, and where relevant, examples will be shown or demonstrated. Due to the shortness of this session, techniques such as ventilating and hand sewing will not be covered – information is available in a variety of places for both techniques, and this packet will include sources for said information.

Technique #1 – How to attach a ventilated front to an existing wig. (copyright Heather Fleming, 2009)

When it is necessary to put a hand-tied, or ventilated, front on an existing wig, one must first remove the front edge of the wig. If the front edge is not removed, the lace piece on which the hairline is ventilated will not lie flat and smooth, and the ventilated hairline will not look natural.

Most machine made wigs have a finished front edge that consists of binding and a row of hair “plugged” into the edge. It is best to use a seam ripper to pick out the stitching on the binding and remove the binding, leaving a raw edge. Many wigs have a metal boning piece inserted at the temples – this can either be removed by ripping the seams of the binding that encases it or by cutting it with wire cutters if there prove to be too many seams to remove. If the boning is cut, then a small piece of twill or bias tape should be used to neatly cover the cut edge and keep it from poking out.

Once the entire front edge of the wig is removed, and a raw front is exposed, you are ready to attach the lace front. To do this, take a canvas or wooden headblock of the correct size and shape (if you have a plastic headwrap of the wearer’s head and hairline, it should be on the headblock – if not, use your best estimate and draw on the desired new hairline). Place the raw-edged wig onto the head block, and pin it down at the place where it rests most smoothly on the block – leave at least an inch between the raw edge and the hairline you drew onto the block. Use a marker or pen to draw a line along the raw edge of the wig onto the block. Remove wig from block.

Take a piece of twill or seam tape, or silk Galloon, and lay it over the line you drew. Pin it tautly to the headblock. Make sure to use 3/8" or 1/2". Take a large piece of wig lace (I prefer De Meo brothers Super Lace for fronts) and lay it over the headblock, covering the hairline (and one or two inches beyond) all the way behind the twill tape. Note, this will make much more sense during the course of the demonstration. The goal is to have a piece of lace that covers the portion of the headblock where you want the ventilated hairline to be. At this point, secure the lace piece, with the straight grain along the center line of the headblock, at two points. Then, working from the center out, smoothly pin the lace along the hairline. You will need to take darts to fit the lace piece over the curved shape of the headblock – be sure the darts are BEHIND the

hairline, and are small and evenly distributed. Use pins to secure them, and to secure the lace piece to the block. Once the lace piece is laid smoothly over the block and secured with pins, sew the wig to the piece of lace, sandwiching the delicate lace between the twill/bias tape and wig to help support it. Then use invisible thread to sew the darts down, and begin tying the hair into the lace.

#### Putting a Bald Spot into a Wig (copyright Heather Fleming, 2009)

There are a variety of methods to accomplish this technique. The one I am demonstrating today is what I feel to be the simplest, and should be used for creating a balding spot on the top or back of the wig. To begin, you will need a canvas or wooden headblock (if you have a plastic tracing of the wear's hairline and head, it should be on the block – if you do not have a plastic tracing, choose a block of the appropriate size and draw the bald spot onto the block where desired. You will want to err slightly to the side of a larger spot, since you will be covering part of it with hair.

Once your “bald shape” is drawn onto your headblock, take a piece of silk organza (preferably dyed to some type of appropriate scalp color) and lay it over the spot with the straight of grain running along the center line on the headblock. Pin the silk in place at the top and bottom edge of the spot, keeping the grain straight. Then stretch the silk out in a circle from the center of the bald spot, keeping the silk taut, but not puckered or strained. You should end up with an evenly disbursed, flat circle of silk.

Lay a piece of wig lace over the silk, again keeping the straight of grain parallel to the center line of the headblock. At this point, you will need to lay the wig you are “balding” on the head block so you can line up the area you are “balding”. For the purposes of this demonstration, we will deal with a wefted wig. Place the wig onto the block, making sure it sits correctly on the block (again, easier to see in the demonstration). You will be able to peek through the wefting to see the bald patch. Pin the wig to the head block, and pin the wig down around the bald spot. You will take a seam ripper and begin loosening the wefting that is over the bald spot, eventually picking out the stitches to reveal the bald spot. At this point, you will have a good deal of loose wefting ends sticking out – begin carefully securing them down to the outer edges of the bald spot, allowing the excess ends of wefting to stick up (again, this is difficult to explain on paper, and will be apparent in the demonstration). Once all loose wefting is secured, you will cut and reattach the elastic ribs that run through the wig in the same manner.

At this point, you can clip off the excess wefting because the pieces are all secured on the bald pate. For the next step, simply ventilate a shallow row of hairs around the edges of the bald pate to cover the wefting.

#### Putting in a part

Like the bald spot, you want to start with a headblock of the correct size and shape, preferably with the plastic headwrap of the wearer on the block. You should draw in the place you want the new part to go, and the direction the hair on either side of the part should go. Pin down a piece of silk organza, and then a

Easy things you can do to existing wigs to make them more suitable

Methods for coloring wigs

1 – Acetate nylon dye for human hair

2 – Sharpie

3- Makeup (short term)

Removing and reinserting wefting

To change the direction a part is going, or to make a wig less poufy

To add length to the wig, or new texture, or highlights/low lights