

SEND IN THE CLONES, Making a Ductape Body Clone

First you get a strand of your DNA, then some ductape—no wait! Not everyone has a genetics lab in their basement. Let's make this simpler. First, why do this, and why ductape? Costumers in other areas of fandom use ductape for many uses: SCA members pad weapons and secure the padding with ductape. Rennies use a similar method to the one described here to get a close fitting bodice pattern—I've done it myself and it works! There are fabric stores who offer classes in how to make ductape clones. The clone assures us that the outfits we make for ourselves will fit correctly without having to have someone else do the fitting. I haven't paid the \$75 to attend a cloning class, and for those of you who'd like to learn the best way to do this, and have the money, go for it! For the rest of us, here's q'IDar's wacky sideways way of doing the same thing:

Here's what you'll need:

- A friend to do the wrapping
- A camera to record your wrapped shape, so that when it is stuffed it looks the same as you (a Polaroid or digital camera allows you to finish the clone the same day)
- Three big rolls of ductape—you will be making 3 layers, so too much is better than not enough
- Sharpie™ permanent markers
- Sturdy scissors
- Utility knife and strip of wood or plastic to cut against (like a wood ruler)
- A tall stool to perch on or lean against
- Two straight back chairs for hand rests
- Several large plastic garbage bags or lawn leaf bags
- Styrofoam insulation board (I like the closed cell stuff rather than the beaded. It is stronger and makes less of a mess.)
- White glue
- Stuffing material—newspaper batting, old pillows, shredded foam, packing peanuts.
- Staples or thumb tacks
- Materials for a stand (lumber, plumbing, you pick) (optional)

The idea is to make a shell around your body which can be removed and stuffed to make a mannequin or dress form. Recruit a friend to help wrap you up. Have a couple hours free to do this. You may want to wear a tight fitting t-shirt (it's less sweaty that way), but choose one you won't mind wrecking, in case your scissors slip. Cut slits in one of the garbage bags to use as arm and neck holes, and cut another bag in half to use as sleeves.

Put on the big bag, stuff the "sleeves" into the armhole slits and tack them into place with a few pieces of tape. Tape the neck opening shut. The large bag should hang well below the bottom of the finished clone. (i.e.: below your crotch) If it doesn't, add another bag at the waist, or get larger bags. Nothing will fit yet, but the taping process will take care of that.

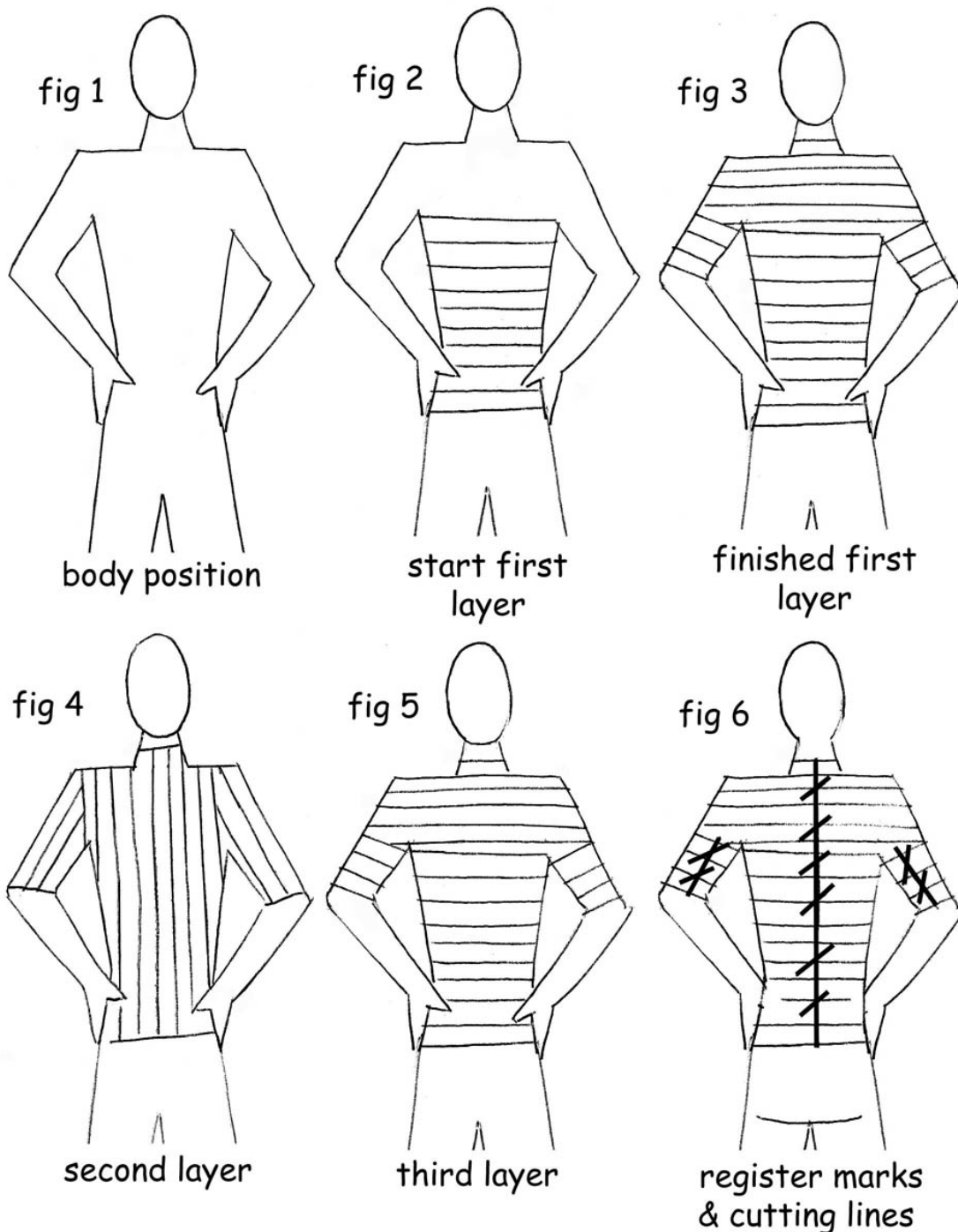
A note on posture: whatever stance you adopt will be captured by the cloning process, so **STAND UP STRAIGHT!** Most folks tend to keep their weight on one foot, and when they do so, it subtly raises one shoulder and lowers one hip. This messes up patterns and fitting. You may want to park a bit of your backside on the edge of a tall stool to prevent this from happening. I saw the set-up for making a full body plaster mold on a video tape. The make-up artist made a platform from a 4' X 4' piece of plywood. He bolted a pipe with a bicycle seat to the center and added additional pipes to each side for hand rests. That cloning process takes much longer than the ductape clone, but you get the idea. You may want to have a couple straight back chairs, one to either side for your hand rests. You need to have your elbows away from your body, enough to tape under your arms. Just make sure your cloning partner has room to move around you.

First make tucks in the big bag so it fits more closely to your body, then tape the tucks shut. Remember to stay still and take deep breaths when taping the chest so you leave enough room. About taping: try to make the shell as even in thickness and as equally snug around the body as possible. It is probably easier to use lengths of tape ripped or cut from the roll than to try to wrap you up in one very long piece of tape. Pulling the tape away from the roll requires some pressure and is best done first, then placed on the clone.

start around the chest just under the arms and work your way down, overlapping the tape at least $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. If you can stand it, take your time and get everything as even as you can. Tape all the way to crotch level. Once you've done from the chest down in one layer, work your way up the shoulders and down the arms. Make sure that all surfaces get covered and make the shape around the neck carefully. Go up the neck at least one inch, so you know where it is. Lay in spare plastic at the neck, if you need to, so the tape doesn't stick to the neck.

Now, change directions and do the next layer up and down, once again overlapping the strips. Finish with a third layer going in the original direction. Keep the layers as even as possible.

Tie a string around your waist. Using a marker, draw a line onto the clone that follows the string all the way around the clone. Next, tie the string around each arm at the elbow and mark again, all the way around each. Then draw a line down the center front and back. Also draw several horizontal lines across the center back line. These will be used as register marks when the cloned is taped shut for stuffing.

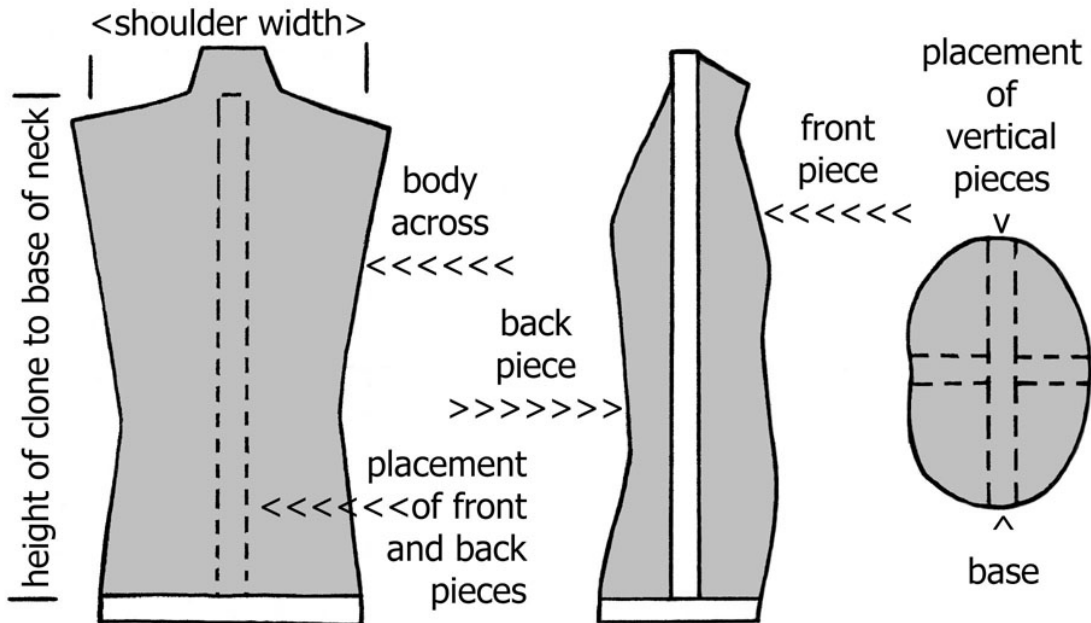


This is a good point to take photos. Be sure to get front, back, side and $\frac{3}{4}$ view shots.

Now to get you out! Gently, carefully, cut the clone apart up the center back line using sturdy scissors, if the shell is too thick for scissors, you could use a utility knife, as long as you can work a thin piece of wood or plastic between the tape, bag and you to use as a cutting board. You may be able to exit the clone at this point or you may have to open the arms some to get your arms out. Draw

register lines across where you plan to cut. Do not remove any excess plastic bay. You may need it when you stuff the clone.

When I stuffed my clone, I put it over an old dress form I had "outgrown". This provided support and lessened the amount I had to stuff. It also provided a built in stand. This is probably the easiest way to finish your clone, and cheap, too if you find an old dress form at a garage sale. Failing that, you will have to construct a support for your clone, otherwise it may end up looking like an overstuffed pillow. I tinkered with several ideas like making a T-frame using lumber or plumbing materials, but the Styrofoam method is more novice friendly. You'll still need lumber or plumbing stuff if you wish to make a base, but who knows, maybe you can put that old mike stand to use! Anyway, here's how to do the clone part, itself. Buy a sheet of closed cell foam insulation. If you can get the kind that goes between studs, you'll save time cutting, and you won't need a full 4'X8' sheet, unless you're hosting a cloning party.



Start by cutting a piece 2 inches wider than your shoulders, if possible, and 2 inches longer than the length of the clone. Using the front and back photo's as guides, draw an outline of your body on the Styrofoam. Ignore the arms for now. Use the extra inches at the neck. Cut it out, using a utility knife, serrated knife or saber saw. The two cross pieces which help define the front and back should be drawn on the foam so that the straight vertical edges are on the outer edges of the foam. That insures good straight lines to connect to the piece going side to side. Cut a piece larger than you will need for the base. The shape of this piece will be cut later. Assemble all the pieces, starting with the vertical ones. Use white glue on connecting surfaces and tape into place. Try the clone on the form to see if you need to do any trimming. The form may be a

bit smaller than the clone. Stuffing can make up for the rest. If the frame is too big, you'll get lumps where you don't want them.

Once the vertical pieces are attached to the base, it is time to add the ductape "skin". Tape the bottom of the cut opening shut and slide the clone onto the base. Temporarily fold the excess plastic on the bottom of the clone up against the outside so that a smooth, even bottom edge is created. You'll have to stuff the clone as you tape the back together. Start with the front, since that'll be hardest to reach. Whatever you use for stuffing should be somewhat compressible, and small enough not to make lumps. Keep referring to the photo's as you stuff to make sure you do not distort the shape. Compress the stuffing into shape as you tape the back together. Once the bottom half is stuffed, trace the outline of the hem of the clone and cut away the excess foam at the bottom. Peel down the excess plastic bag and staple or tack to the base foam. Trim off the plastic at the base and tape the edge to the foam base. Continue stuffing and taping until the body is complete and there are no soft spots. Once the neck opening is filled, tape that shut. Now complete the arms. Tape the arms shut if you had to cut them open to remove the clone. Trim the arms at the elbow line and stuff. Tape the ends. Your clone is ready for table top use.

I'll leave it to you to add a floor stand. Happy fitting!