

## Dying / Coloring

You can't dye a wig a completely different color unless you start with a white wig, and even then, you can only tint a wig from one color, and you can only go darker. There are multiple methods to dying a wig: hot water bath using synthetic (poly) dye; and sprayed on acrylic ink and rubbing alcohol are the main ones. For a less permanent solution, you can use hair chalk.

## **Maintaining**

### Detangling

While wearing your wig, try to keep from sitting on it, getting it caught on costume pieces, or running your hands through it repeatedly, as all of these will cause it to tangle.

To detangle a wig, use a wide-tooth comb or comb with rotating bristles. Work section by section. Separate the detangled sections from the tangled ones using clips. Try not to move the fibers too much while detangling. A simple solution of water with a little fabric softener can be used as a detangling solution, but try not to use too much. Oil sheen spray also works well, and makes your wigs smell nice! Always comb from the bottom up, and don't pull on the fibers as this can cause them to stretch.

For curly wigs, detangle each curl separately. Once brushed out, spritz the curl with water and twist it—the crimped fibers will want to curl. If the curl doesn't look right, try twisting it the other direction.

**BE PATIENT WHEN DETANGLING A WIG.** If you pull out the fibers they won't grow back.

### Washing

Wigs should be washed after each heavy usage, but note that washing will eventually degrade the wig.

Use a mild shampoo and lukewarm water. Wash the inside of the wig (the part touching your hair). Let the wig soak in lukewarm water with a mild conditioner for 10 to 15 minutes before rinsing. Try to move the wig as little as possible. If available, let the wig dry on a wig head or wig stand. Don't try to comb the wig until it's fully dry.

### Storing

The best is to store the wig on a wig head to keep its shape. Otherwise, flip the wig inside out and stuff the inside with tissue paper, then place in a bag.

To keep long wigs from getting tangled, braid them first. Before wearing, unbraid the wig and let it hang to straighten out after being braided.



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## All About Wigs

*By the Cosplay Repair Station*

### **Wig Basics**

#### Types of Fibers

Fibers can be broken into two categories: heat-resistant and not. Heat-resistant wigs can handle the higher temperatures used in most styling tools. Non-heat-resistant can usually go just below boiling water temperature before they melt.

Common fiber types include:

Spun plastic: not heat-resistant, what you'll find at cheap Halloween stores, can be good for spiking

Kanekalon: common fiber, not heat-resistant

Eleora: coated Kanekalon, looks very natural, semi-heat-resistant, doesn't dye as well

Hiperlon: heat-resistant fibers, tangle-resistant

#### Places to Buy

We recommend Arda Wigs (good for specific styles, especially spiking) and Epic Cosplay (nice range of standard wigs). Ebay can also have nice wigs but buyer beware!

#### Eyebrow Tip

To color your eyebrows to match your wig, first use a jumbo eye pencil in white to color the brow completely, then apply matte eye shadow with a sponge applicator or angle brush while the white is still slightly tacky.

## Putting on a Wig

### Preparing your hair

If your hair is short, you may be able to pin back a couple spots and then throw on a wig cap. For longer hair, the best methods are French braiding or pin curls.

Use French braids for long, straight hair. The best is to do 2 French braids. Flip the braids up and secure the ends with pins or very thin rubber bands to avoid extra bulk.

For curly hair, use pin curls to distribute the hair evenly. Grab a small strand and pin it into a curl against the head.

### Wig Caps

Wigs caps serve 3 super useful purposes:

- Helps keep your hair secured and hidden under the wig
- Keeps the oils from your hair from getting onto the wig
- Acts as a base to pin the wig to

Wig caps come in 2 types: mesh and nylon. Mesh caps look like fishnets and are typically open at the top. These work well for long hair. Nylon caps look like stockings and work well for short or frizzy hair.

Wig caps typically come in tan or black. You can match the wig cap to the wig color or to your skin color, whichever will be less visible.

### Putting on and Pinning the Wig

Once the wig cap is on, pin it into place—one pin right in front of each ear plus one to two pins in the front and back. Use the end of a rattail comb to push stray hairs back under the wig cap (your fingers will just pull the strands back out).

Typically we put wigs on from the front to the back, unless the wig is styled such that it's easier to put it on from back to front.

Once the wig is on, pin the wig in the same spots as the wig cap—one pin through the wig's "sideburns" and pins along the front and back. Make sure to go through the wig and cap. For heavy wigs, add pins along the crown of the head. Comb clips can also be added along the hair-line.

Bobby pins work well, but wig pins work even better for pinning a wig in place. Use the pins without rounded tips to stab through the wig cap. Apply the pin at an angle, then slide it into place—you'll feel when it's secured.

## Styling

### Trimming

Use sharp scissors. Cut with the scissors angled rather than straight across—the fibers will move and the cut will look ugly if straight across. Cut small sections first, then more. Unlike human hair, don't cut a wig while wet.

Note if you're trimming the wig on a wig head, most wig heads are 1 to 2 inches smaller than the typical human head, so pad the wig head (or put the wig on a friend) before trimming.

### Spiking

Start by cutting the section of hair into a spike shape. Apply a small amount of hair glue to the tip, then twist the fibers to form a point. Use a hair dryer to speed up the drying process. Finally, apply hair spray to the spike base and use a hair dryer.

To achieve a fuller spike, tease the fibers first, then build the spike around the teased area. Use a hair dryer or steamer to help shape the spike and curve the tip if desired. To make a S-shaped spike, wrap a piece of wire in tape and hot glue that into the wig, then shape the fibers around the wire and bend the wire to the desired shape. For soft, overall spikes, pin the wig onto a wig head, hold it upside down, and spritz the underside with hair spray.

Not all wigs can be spiked. Check that the fibers can be pulled up without exposing the wefting underneath before spiking. You may need to add fibers to the wig if doing a fully spiked wig. Spun plastic fibers are stiffer and can make for good spiking.

Avoid using hair gel on wigs—hair gel works by combining with the natural chemicals in your hair, so doesn't work as well for wigs. Stick with hair glue and hair spray. Got2b is a good brand.

### Curling and Straightening

For heat-resistant wigs, standard styling tools can be used. For non-heat-resistant wigs, styling can still be done but is a little trickier.

To curl a non-heat-resistant wig, start with a heat-resistant curling rod. Wrap a section of the hair around the rod, and dip into water between 158 and 175 F (not to exceed 185 F) for 15 seconds. Dry the curl with a towel before removing the rod. The curls will stay until the wig is straightened or washed.

To straighten a non-heat-resistant wig, use a steamer and work section by section. The wig will curl again once washed.