

Paper Mache Head Puppet Directions

Step 1: Build the Shape

To build the head you will need: a styrofoam ball, modeling clay, a toilet paper roll, a hot glue gun and glue.

You will use your styrofoam ball as your base. Begin by gluing the toilet paper roll to the paper towel. Remember: Hot glue gun melt is HOT! The toilet paper roll will eventually serve as your puppet's neck, but it will help to provide a platform to work from as well.

Next build on features by pressing modeling clay onto the ball, making sure that the edges are well pressed into the styrofoam. Be creative! Just keep in mind that by the time the head is complete these features will be both bigger and less distinct, so exaggerate.



Step 2: Papier Mache It!

To paper mache you will need: Lots of newspapers and "Papier Mache Art Paste" (follow package directions if you use this)

Begin by covering all working surfaces with newspapers. The paste is goeey and sticky before drying and hard as a rock afterwards.

Now you are ready to Papier Mache! Rip your newspaper into many long strips and mix some paste in a small container (about 1 cm [1/2 inch] deep). I like to use a small disposable tupperware for this because you can put a lid on it in between layers. That way it doesn't dry up.

Rip short sections off of your newspaper strips as you go and dip them in the liquid. Get them thoroughly wet, but slide your fingers over each strip to wring off excess (you don't want it to drip everywhere). Completely cover your shape with the wet newspaper strips. You can use broader strips for less detailed areas, but to cover those pesky curves and corners thinner strips work better. When finished let it dry overnight.

Repeat at least twice.



Step 3: Time to Make the Body

While you are waiting for the head to dry, you can make the body. First, you will need a simple fabric form. Print out the pattern below at full-page size (8.5 x 11)(You can also alter this pattern to personalize your puppet's body by making the arms longer, body fatter, etc.) Use this pattern to cut out two pieces of fabric. Fleece or felt work best because they will not fray at the top and bottom.

Now that you have your pieces cut out, sew them together along both sides (leave the top and bottom open). If sewing is not a possibility for you, you can also glue them together along the edges with tacky glue or hot glue, but make sure that the glue is completely dry before you move on.

Using sharp scissors, cut short slits from the outside almost to the seam near the tightest curves (such as just under the arms). This is known as "clipping curves" and will keep these areas from bunching when you turn it. Next, turn your body right side out and you are done.

Step 4: Decorate the Head

When your head is dry, paint it with tempera or acrylic paint.

When the paint is dry, add other decorative elements. Google eyes, yarn, pieces of felt, etc. are all good choices. Attach them with tacky glue or hot glue (Hint: use half-circles of felt to make eye lids).

Step 5: Finish!

When the head is done, glue the neck of the puppet head to the inside of the neck of the body with tacky glue or hot glue. Let the puppet dry.

