

Belle deLautrec



Optional Faces from Toulouse Lautrec's art

(Circles indicate approximate placement and are not part of the face design. And, if you're going to use these as iron-ons, be sure to reverse them first. And, these are only suggestions photocopied from Lautrec's original art... create and color your own face design, if you like!)

How to Make This Doll

1. Read the "options" section on the pattern page, and decide if you want to modify the doll. Adjust directions accordingly.
2. Cut out the pattern pieces. You'll need two of the torso, each cut on the fold. Be SURE that the finished circumference of the waist will be about six inches; adjust pattern if necessary. You'll also need four leg pieces: a front and a back (identical) for each of two legs. (We'll make her clothing separately.)
3. If you're going to draw, paint, sew, or iron-on the face, this may be the best time to do that. Be sure to allow room for the seam allowance and for the hair. (See hair notes, below.)
4. Sew the torso pieces together, right sides facing, along the side seams and around the top of the head. All pieces have approximately a 1/4" seam allowance.
5. Leave the bottom edge of the torso open. Then, turn the torso inside-out so that the seams are hidden inside. (If you're applying optional sewn-in hair, you may want to sew it to the head as part of the seams around her head. See hair suggestions, in later section of instructions.)
6. Sew each leg front to a leg back, so that you have two separate legs. Leave the top of each thigh open. Turn each leg inside-out, so that the seams are hidden inside.
7. Stuff torso and legs. If you're going to give your doll bendable knees and/or shoulders, stuff loosely to the stitching line, then stitch it, and finally resume stuffing. Hands, feet, neck, and head should be stuffed especially tightly.
8. Fold the torso along the bottom edge (indicated by the stitching line) so that the raw edge is inside.
9. Insert the legs so they're tucked inside the torso with at least a quarter-inch overlap. Pin in place, from the outside.
10. Add more stuffing to the torso, if you like. Then, hand or machine stitch the legs in place, and close the seam at the base of the torso.
11. Apply embellishments, such as an indication of where her dancing shoes might be (see pattern pieces), her face, "rouge" her knees to be naughty, and so on.

To make Belle's hair

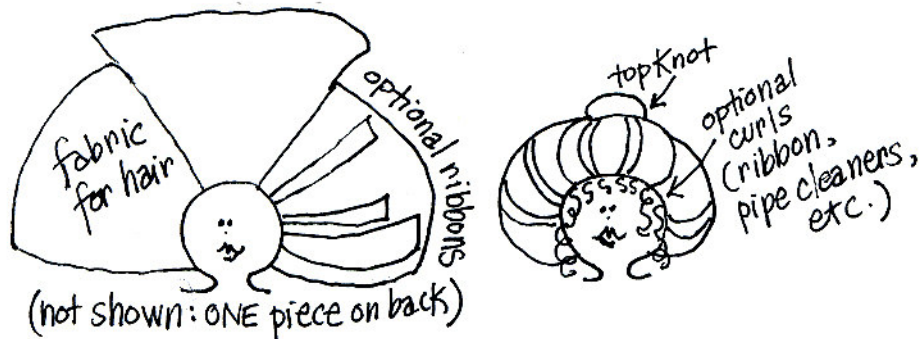
Belle can have ANY kind of hair. You can even use a ready-made wig for her, if you like.

Here are some hair suggestions:

1. Satin, in a natural—or entirely UNnatural—hair color. Apply four individual pieces to the doll's head, at the hairline. Each piece should generously overlap the others. You'll gather all four pieces together at the top, over a "rat" of fiberfill, and add a bow or other embellishment to cap it.

This may end up looking like a turban, which could be a plus. In fact, you might deliberately design it as a turban. (See the Fat Chance Bellydance site for examples:

http://www.fcbd.com/costume/c_headwrap.html)



Be sure to sew the hair inside the head, when you're assembling the doll, right sides facing.



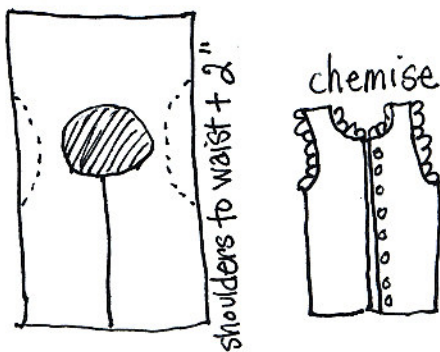
2. Use a variety of ribbons instead of the satin, and be sure to VERY generously overlap them. If you use some skinny ribbons that have wire in them, you can create curls around her face, too.
3. Use strips of various fabrics—perhaps including some mesh or tulle—the same as ribbons.
4. Yarn, woolen or synthetic doll hair are simple ways to apply hair. You may even be able to hot glue them to her head. (Test this on fabric and 'hair' samples, first.)
5. You could cut the top off a sock, fold the edges under, sew it along her hairline (add stuffing at the last minute), and then loop thread around the very top for a topknot effect.
6. Look for something unusual for her hair: Ribbons or a brillo (or scrubbee) pad, with teensy, battery-operated holiday lights? Fake flower petal, or ivy? Colored saran wrap (cling film) with odds and ends tucked into it? Strips of handmade paper or colored tissue paper, glued in place and gathered, similar to the instructions for ribbons, above?
7. Remember: To "pouf" her hair in the style of Toulouse Lautrec's era, you'll probably want to place the hair over a wad of fiberfill.

To make Belle's clothing

Remember that, in Toulouse Lautrec's era, "fast" women wore red, and fast *fashionable* women wore bright yellow.

You can do anything for her blouse or chemise. You can simply wrap some fabric around her like a tube top, hot glue it in place, and she's ready for her petticoat.

Or, you can cut a simple rectangle with a hole in the middle for her head, place it on her, and then sew or hot glue the side seams. The basic pattern, shown below, is the length of the doll from front waist to back waist, going over the shoulders, plus about two inches. (Or, measure from shoulders to waist, multiply that by two, and add two extra inches so the chemise will "tuck in.")



Then, you can add lace (with hot glue?) to cover the raw edges. Or, if you want to be fancy about it, you can sew a little chemise, hem it nicely, embellish it with lace and tiny buttons, and put that on her. (The easy version of buttons would be dollops of acrylic paint—perhaps iridescent—or "puffy" paint from the tee-shirt paint section of the crafts supply shop.)

Petticoat construction

The petticoat is the key part of this doll. This is what you'll be swapping with others. Here's how to make a basic petticoat. (You do NOT have to follow this exactly. Your petticoat should be uniquely *yours!*)

1. Generally, lavish and gathered petticoats are 1.5 to 2 times the width of the waist. This can be a trial-and-error process, so check how the finished petticoat will look and adjust accordingly. You can do this by gathering with your fingers, or by running the gathering stitches (See step 6, below), tightening it to see how it looks, and then un-gathering it while you work on it.
2. Here's how I'd do this, assuming that the doll is about 10 inches from waist to her toes, so the length of the petticoat (unsewn) should be about 11 inches: Cut a rectangle of petticoat fabric, approximately 11" x 9". (If you're using light fabric or want a very full petticoat, start with 11" x 13", and trim as necessary.)
3. Sew the petticoat—right sides together--along the shorter side (using a 1/4" seam allowance) forming a back seam, but leave it open about one inch at the top of this seam.



4. Leave the top edge of the petticoat unfinished, but hem or otherwise embellish the lower edge. (Suggestions: Lace, rickrack, trim, cutwork, etc.)
5. If you're going to be writing on the petticoat, now is the best time for that. After the petticoat is gathered and finished, you can still write on it, but it won't be as easy. Leave room at the top of the petticoat—gathering might make it difficult to read text there—and at bottom, to apply ruffles. (Hint: To write in straight lines, place your light-colored fabric over lined paper—preferably with good, dark lines—and use them as guidelines. You may need a lightbox to do this, or hold the fabric up to a window to see the lines through it.)



6. Embellish the petticoat to suit your tastes. Add ruffles, lace, beading, buttons, charms, mementos of her many fans, and so on.
7. Cut a piece of ribbon or a bias-cut strip of fabric, approximately 14" long. This will be the waistband on the petticoat. If you're using bias-cut fabric, fold and iron the edges so that it's like folded seam binding.
8. Gather the top edge of the petticoat so that it's about 6 1/4" inches in circumference. To do this, baste one or two lines of stitches at the top of the petticoat, leaving the ends long and unknotted. Then, pull the threads gently so that the fabric gathers evenly. You can sew this to keep it "just so," or allow the waistband to hold it in place. Then, remove the basting if it shows.



9. Center the waistband over it, and sew it (or use fabric glue) to attach the waistband to the petticoat. The ends of the waistband will extend past where the two edges of the back seam meet; you'll use these to tie the petticoat onto your doll.

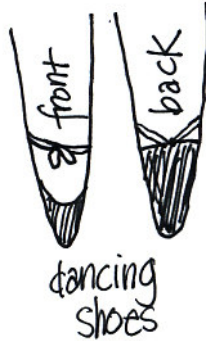


10. Be sure to sign and date your petticoats, before sending them to others.

ACCESSORIZE!

There are many ways to personalize your doll. Here are just a few suggestions:

1. Add dancing shoes! Draw them on, sew them, or otherwise add embellishments to suggest them.



Ankle straps or lacings are optional.

2. Give her a purse.
3. Give her panties or knickers. Since hardly anyone will see these, you can make them very simply. One way is to cut a diaper-style pattern piece (see left illustration below), sew it on the sides, turn the edges to hem them, and then tack them to the doll with a couple of stitches or some glue.

For knickers, cut two tubes of fabric, each wider than half the doll's body. Sew them together at tops to form crotch, and then sew down each leg. Turn the top edge to add a drawstring.



4. Instead of a discreet chemise, give her a racy top. Consider a breastplate, Valkyrie style, using metallic polymer clay. Use two soft-drink caps as the basis of a bra. Discreetly cover her with feathers or artificial flowers. Give her a vest. Make her a mermaid, dressed with overlapping iridescent "shells" cut from fabric or paper.

Be creative! This pattern offers guidelines, not rules!