

Disclaimer:

Please read the entire document before starting on your Duct Tape Dummy Project.

Duct tape dummies are not for everyone. Some people may find it too constricting, uncomfortable, and the fumes that come off the tape can be unpleasant. It's okay to decline, your health and comfort is the most important thing. Always communicate with your model during every step of the process, to ensure their comfort.

Terminology:

DTD: Duct Tape Dummy

The model: the person being wrapped in duct tape

The assistant: the person wrapping the model in duct tape (that's you!)

What you need:

- Painter's coveralls
- 2-3 rolls of duct tape (45yd each)
- Multiple coloured permanent markers
- Medical bandage scissors (also called First Aid scissors)



(The model pictured is 6 feet tall, approximately 175lbs, we used 2 rolls of 45yd duct tape)



The model will put on snug-fitting clothing that covers the full length of their body. This is to make it easier to cut the DTD off, and to reduce bulk.



The model puts on painters' coveralls and makes sure they come below the wrist and past their ankles. Bigger is better. It does not need to be snug.



Taking one long continuous piece of duct tape, wrap from the crotch up and around one shoulder, back through the crotch and up over the opposite shoulder.



Locate the model's waist (narrowest part of their torso), wrap duct tape all the way around once at the waist.

IMPORTANT: the above steps are the only time you will use a full continuous piece of tape. This is to anchor the coveralls and stop them from sliding down, which will lower the crotch of your DTD unintentionally making the dummy unusable.

Using full continuous pieces of tape in other areas of your body is dangerous, it can cause constriction and reduce circulation to parts of your body, DO NOT ATTEMPT.

Feet:



Pull the coveralls under the model's heel. If the coveralls are too short, you can add some pieces of paper towel around the ankle to lengthen the DTD.

Using short pieces of tape, wrap the entire heel, under the foot, and the top of the foot. This should be snug but not too tight - you should be able to barely fit a finger between the duct tape and the model's body. Do this on both feet.



Using similar short lengths of tape, wrap from the ankle up toward the knee. DO NOT use one long spiralling length of tape. It should be form fit and snug, not too loose and not cutting off circulation. Check in with your model to make sure everything feels OK.



Using longer pieces of tape that are almost the circumference of your model's upper legs/thighs, continue taping up toward the hip, ensuring you have reinforced the crotch and tapped around the buttock. Continue taping up to the waist. Once again, check in with your model.



IMPORTANT: We are now moving to the wrists and arms. We recommend leaving the upper chest to the very end, as this portion can be uncomfortable due to tension around the chest.

Arms:

Pull the coveralls over the wrist, as far as it will reach toward the model's fingers.



If it does not reach all the way, tuck some paper towel into the wrist of the coveralls so it covers all the way up to the model's palm.



Take short pieces of tape and wrap the smallest part of the wrist, then down towards the palm. Stopping at the base of the thumb, the widest part of the hand. Do this for both hands.



To finish up the arms, take short lengths of tape and tape from the wrists all the way up to the bicep. Check in with your model again to ensure they are OK.



Before moving on to the armpits and upper chest, you will want to offer your model a way to hold the weight of their arms to make the last wrapping steps more comfortable. We are looking for a 45-degree angle from your shoulder down to your wrist. You can do this with the back of a chair or holding onto a pole/broom handle (make sure you are not leaning to the side). The model cannot leave their arms relaxed at their sides, but should not be trying to hold a T-pose either.



If the coveralls are not touching the model's body near the armpit, you may need to cut a semicircle to relieve the tension and ensure a tight fit. If you need to do this, place paper towels inside the cut coveralls against the model and secure in place with strips of tape, making sure it's snug against the model as you go.

NOTE: this can be done anywhere on the body. The coveralls need to hug the model's body, do not leave any gaps anywhere between the DTD and the model - it must be form-fitted.



Chest:

Check in with your model before taping the chest. Use long strips of tape that reach halfway around the torso of your model, continue taping up toward the neck.

If the coveralls have a hood, pull it up to shield the back of the model's neck. Tuck a piece of paper towel in the front (by the zipper) and use small pieces of tape about 1" (2cm) to go as far up as a crew neck t-shirt. (please see images below). DO NOT tape the entire neck, we need the base of the neck, past the collarbone but no further.



Now it's time to look over the entire model and patch any holes that may have been missed. If you can see the colour of the coveralls peeking through, top up the area with tape.

Marking:

Pick one of your coloured permanent markers. Using this colour only, you will mark the elbows, wrist, waist, knees and ankles. Start with the elbows. Have the model slightly bend their elbow, helping you find the crease of the elbow. Put the marker in this crease and mark all the way around the joint. Write "ELBOW" near this mark. Do the same crease-and-mark process at the wrist. Write "WRIST" near this mark.



At the waist, locate the narrowest part of the model's torso. This may be higher or lower, depending on their body type. (Do NOT just draw in the middle, this must be the narrowest part of the torso). Use the same marker as you did for elbows and wrists and mark all the way around. Write "WAIST" near this mark.



At the knees, locate the kneecap and back of the knee. Have the model bend their knee slightly, mark in the crease and then all the way around. Write "KNEE" near this mark.
 At the ankle, have the model shift their weight forward, which creates a crease on the top of the foot. Mark in this crease and draw around the narrowest part above the foot. Write "ANKLE" near this mark.



You will now have a model with 9 rings marked around their joints and waist.





Pick a NEW colour of permanent marker. You are going to mark where you will be cutting the DTD off the model. Do this by drawing a straight line up the front of the arm, from the wrist to the elbow. Make smaller horizontal marks across this line; these are registration marks used to help line up the cut seams for re-taping. Do this on both arms.

On the chest, draw a vertical line from the chin to the crotch, then down one leg (if needed).



Draw a line from the ankles up to the knee along the front of the shin. Draw horizontal registration marks along this line just as you did on the arms.

Write your name on the chest of the dummy (character's name or your real name) to help identify it in our workshop.





You should now have a model that is ready to be cut out, with markings at all the joints and cut lines with registration marks.

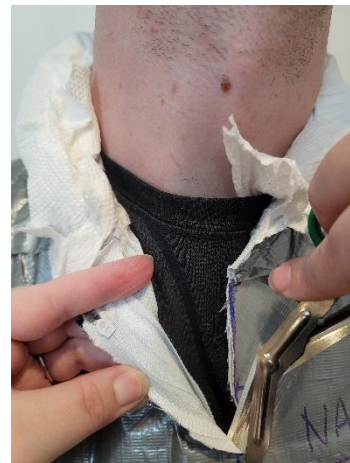
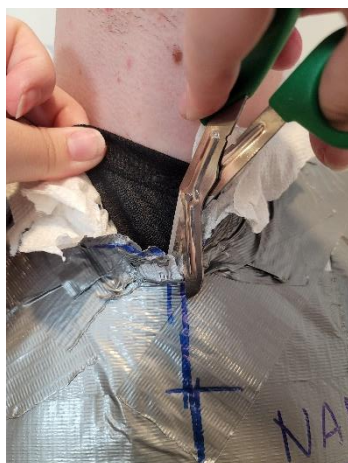
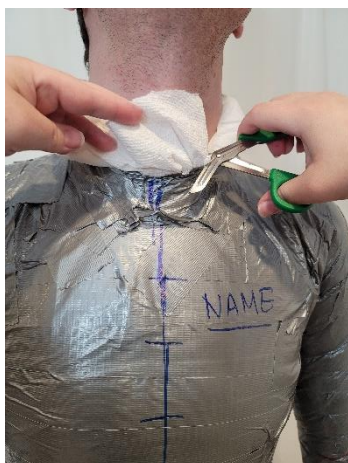
Cutting:

The goal is to put the base of the scissors between the garment and the coveralls on your model. You do not want to cut the garment, only the coveralls and duct tape.

Starting at the wrists, cut up the along the line that you drew up towards the elbow. **CUT SLOWLY.** Carefully pull the garments out from under the scissors, keeping tension on the garment will help prevent any accidental nicks on the garment.



Starting at the neck, CAREFULLY cut down the cut mark on the chest, pulling the garment up and away from your scissors to help prevent accidental cuts on the garment. NOTE: there is a zipper down the front of the coveralls - you may need to cut slightly to the side of your cut line to avoid cutting through zipper teeth.



NOTE: Cut ONLY as far as you think the model will need to get out of the dummy. The less you cut, the more durable the dummy will be, and the less re-taping you will need to do!

With the forearms and chest freed, you may now attempt to remove the DTD from the upper body. If you need to make additional cuts to help with this, you can. (Do NOT cut the shoulders. If you must, cut a small line down the middle of the back of the DTD just like you did on the front. If any additional cuts are needed, remember to include registration marks before cutting.

You will notice in this photo; we did not need to cut all the way down the front of the thigh.



Starting at the ankles, carefully cut the lower legs free. At this point, you can see if the model is able to free themselves entirely from the DTD. If you need to make any more cuts, remember the registration marks before you cut.



Once the model is free of the DTD, time for a bathroom break. You are almost finished!

Re-Taping:

Lay the DTD on a flat surface and line up the registration marks you drew on the cut lines.

Take medium-length pieces of tape (5 to 6 inches) and tape across the cut, keeping the registration marks aligned. Do this down the entire length of each cut.



To secure the cross-pieces of tape from above, take a long piece of tape and cover the entire length of the cut.

Repeat this for every cut which was made.



NOTE: if you tape over any of the joint marks, don't worry - you can re-mark them. If you tape over your name, please re-write it.

Now you have a fully re-taped dummy, ready to ship. Fold it into a compact shape (do not try to compress it as much as possible) and find a box or bubble mailer big enough to mail.



Duct Tape Dummy FAQ's

- Why do I need to mark my joints?
Mobility and dexterity are super important! By marking the joints, it helps show the areas to take into consideration when padding out a body suit.
- Why can't I cut the dummy all the way in half?
The more cuts made, the weaker the dummy will be when stuffed. If you cut it fully in half, lining up the registration marks takes much more time and you risk accidentally resizing your waist, torso, or lowering the crotch. **Please do not cut your dummy in half.**
- Why can't I squish the dummy to mail it?
Compressing duct tape in a small box or mailer can cause it to wrinkle beyond repair or stick to itself. Even duct tape laid down in strips can leave residue on the edges which may cause it to stick to itself. This is especially true if the dummy is exposed to heat in transit.
- How long does it usually take to make a dummy?
Depending on how many people you have, it can take anywhere from 2 hours (with one assistant) to 20 minutes if you have multiple! Many hands make light work!
- What brand of duct tape do you recommend?
While the brand is not important, the cheaper/lower end brands tend to rip better. Adhesion isn't a huge issue as we are not trying to repair a duct! So "Ultra sticky" is not needed, in fact the super sticky stuff ends up hurting your hands after a few minutes of tearing the tape.
- Where can I get first aid scissors?
They can be found at any pharmacy and online (Amazon etc) You may want to buy a designated pair just for cutting duct tape as it can leave a residue on the blades.
- Why do I need a coverall?
The tape needs something to stick to. Cheap lightweight coveralls work super well because of their texture. It's very paper-like, allowing the duct tape to stick and hold. Duct tape can easily be pulled off fabric like T-Shirts and pants, so we do not accept dummies made with clothing. Clothing also adds unnecessary bulk to your dummy.
- What kind of coverall do you recommend?
Any cotton head to toe coveralls with a hood is just fine. Do not use plastic coveralls.
- What if my coverall is WAY too big around my waist?
If this is the case, you can cut a straight line down the back at the baggiest area, fold one side over the other, and tape the new "sinched in" coveralls in place. This trick can be used in any area if you are concerned with bagginess.
- Should I draw my suit markings on the duct tape dummy?
There is no need to draw markings, these will make it harder to see the joint markings you've made. If you wish to add where you would like extra pockets or zippers, feel free to do so with a separate colour of marker!