

Woolly Dreadlocks - pt3 Fixing those dreads



This is part 3 in a 3 part series, showing you how to make your own woolly dreadlocks.

In the previous installments we talked about how to make the dreadlocks from undyed wool pencil roving and then how to dye them.

My step mother, a trained hairdresser, fitted my dreads for me, and this was the method she recommended. They were very tight initially, which is desired, as they loosen after a couple of days and you wouldn't them to loosen too much.

In terms of how long your hair should be for attaching extensions: I found many sites that said hair shorter than 4in/10cm was no good, as they'd fall out in no time. Yet my hair was 3in/7.5cm long when we attached mine, and as they were so well attached and so tight, they lasted 3 months before

the first dread worked it's way loose. Single lose dreads are easy to re-attach, especially as the weakest point is the front hairline, and you can re-attach them yourself in front of the mirror. My dreads were fitted early July, and it wasn't until late October that I finally took them all out, and in that time only 3 dreads had come lose. Not bad for such short hair!

Dread/Scalp cleaning:

You don't want to be washing these babies as they get seriously heavy and can quite easily damage your hair. Further more, they'll stay wet for an age and it's really not good for your head.

Some folks use dry shampoo, but again, that's tricky as you can't brush it out. The best method is to hold all of your dreads high up in a bunch, well out of the way, and run slightly soapy water through your scalp. The base of the dreads may get a little wet, but putting then up in a bunch and allowing the roots to dry soon solves that.

Materials:

Sharp scissors
Hairdresser clips/grips
Fine comb for creating sections
Sewing thread to match your woolly dreads.



1. My hair was divided into 1inch/2.5cm sections – this worked well for my hair as it's quite fine, and the dreads would be thicker than the section and give an overall thicker feel once done. To avoid obvious lines to the extensions, you could stagger them, however, sectioning them as shown above provided a very neat finish.



2. To section the hair, use the comb to run straight lines both vertically and horizontally. Use the hair clips to hold excess hair out of the way. You won't be able to section all of the hair at the same time but it's a good idea to do it first to give you an idea of how big the sections are, and how many you have, then re-section as needed.



3. To prepare the section for dreadlock attaching, divide the section in 2 with the comb. You could split it horizontally, yet vertically is probably easier to manage. At this point, prepare your sewing thread for attaching – we cut our thread to approx. 24in/61cm lengths, and we cut a few at a time to save time. To avoid them getting tangled, either lay them flat on the table or the dreadee could hold them for the person attaching.



4. With one length of matching sewing thread, fold it in half and lay it across the split section (which should also be spread apart at this point) so that one half lays across one half of the sectioned hair, and the other half across the other side. My stepmum then lightly twisted the halved hair section and thread together, to make the next step a little easier to manage.



5. Pass one half of the sectioned hair+sewing thread through the loop at the tip of the dreadlock. The woolly dread should then be sitting between the two halves of sectioned hair, ready for plaiting.

This next bit is fiddly to start, but it really is worth the effort to start it off tightly, as it will help ensure that your dreads are firmly fixed and last a good amount of time.



6. Push the dread as close to the scalp as possible, and then with the hair+sewing thread sections either side of the woolly dread, start to plait them tightly. Use the regular 3 plait method, and do make them as tight as possible, even if the dreadee complains a little! If they do feel a little pain, that's a sign that you're doing them tight enough!

When starting the plait, trying to keep it at right angles to the head – this will give your dreads more body. As they relax, they will naturally hang down.



7. Continue to plait until all the hair has been plaited in, and you're left with the sewing thread and woolly dread in your hands. With the remaining sewing thread, tie it in a knot snugly around the dread and then continue either plaiting or wrapping the thread around the dread towards the crown. This extra support helps keep the dread firmly in place, and is especially useful for shorter hair.



8. Once all the sewing thread has been used up, tie a knot with the remaining ends. It's a good idea to stop plaiting when there's about 4in/10cm of sewing thread left, to ensure plenty of room for knots. We knotted, wrapped, then knotted a few times. Once you're satisfied that it's all firmly secured, cut the ends. Or, if you're really keen, sew the loose ends into the woolly dread.



9. This photo shows how tight the dreadlocks are at the roots – I can't emphasize enough just how tight they need to be to ensure they last a good length of time as extensions!

Yes, you can see the sewing thread, which is why we want a matching colour. However, once the whole head is done, your dreads will take centre stage and the thread won't notice. Besides, once they've settled in after a week or two, the thread will have bedded into the dread nicely.

As a side note, I added some multi-coloured extensions to a friend's hair, and she asked me to use metallic and bright, shiny threads, to make a feature of them. If that's your intention, then mix and match your threads at will – it can look pretty wild!

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If you've followed this tutorial and made your own wool dreads, can you add a link to a photo in the comments on the link below?

<http://www.woollywormhead.com/blog/2010/8/22/make-your-own-wool-dreadlocks-pt1.html>

Contact:

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Email: mail@woollywormhead.com

Website: <http://woollywormhead.com>

Ravelry: <http://www.ravelry.com/groups/wormheads-hats>



10. Continue in this manner until all the hair sections are dreaded. It's a good idea to hold a couple of dreads back as spares, just in case one falls out or gets lost.

It can take a couple of days to do a whole head, depending on the stamina of the dreadee and the attacher. Give yourself some time – it will be worth it!

Then, once all down, let your dreads relax for a couple of days, sleep in a position that doesn't pull on them (and cause you pain) and then they'll be ready to show to the world.