

Hand & Feet Armature Tutorial

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This tutorial will guide you through the process of creating armatures for your hands and feet.

Tiny little hands and weak ankles are very easy to break, so this tutorial is created to help protect those fragile areas and give strength and durability to your sculpture.

These hands were designed for a doll around 6.2 inches tall, if your doll is bigger then just enlarge the measurements to suit.

I hope you enjoy this tutorial and if you have any questions you can contact Julie at admin@dollworld.co.nz

Introduction

Hands can be sculptured without armatures, and many people still do sculpt them directly onto the doll without the aid of one. But tiny little hands and weak ankles are very easy to break. For this reason I believe it better to create the hands and feet over their own armature and then attach them to the body when the body is being sculpted.

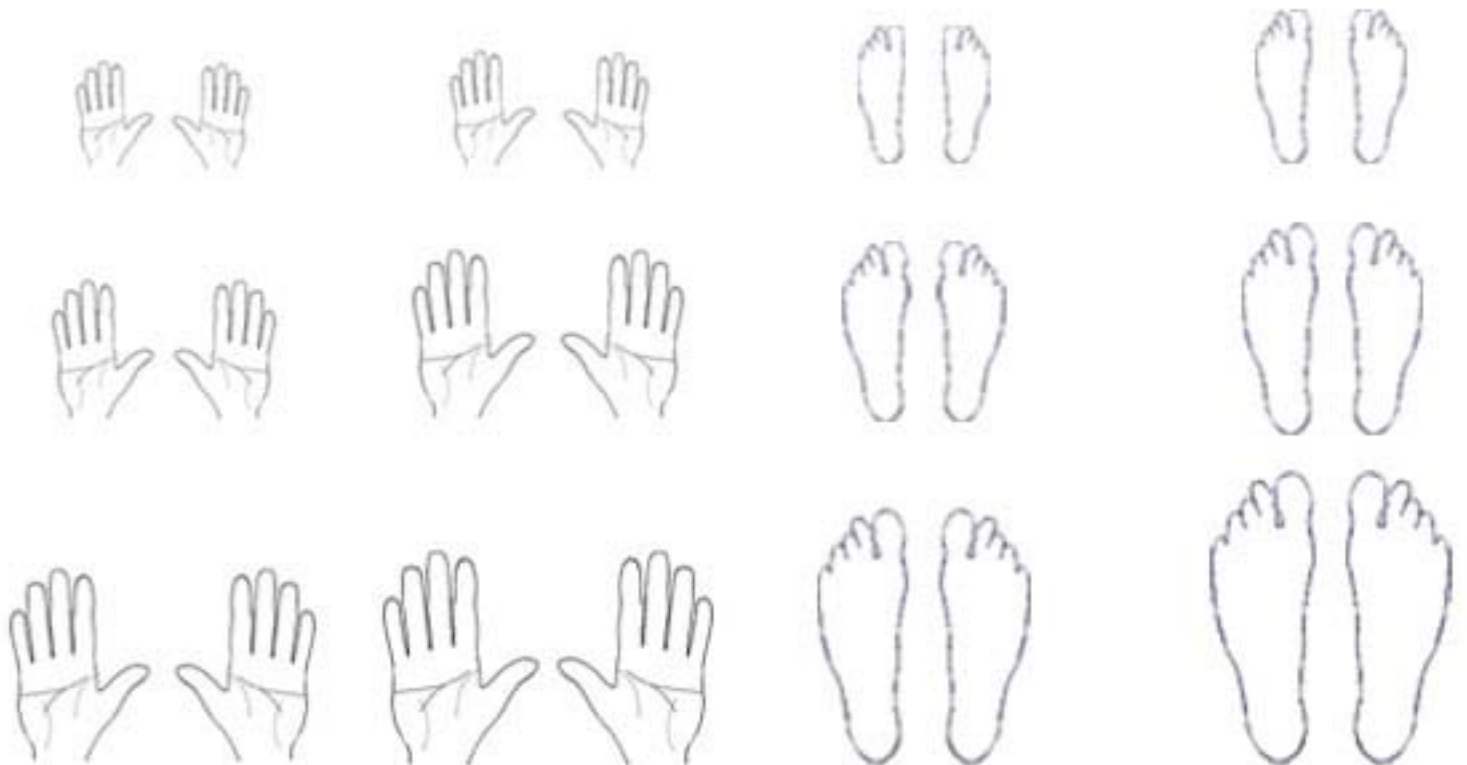
On completion of this tutorial you will have made a set of armatures ready for adding the clay to make a pair of hands and feet. These armatures will provide you lots of strength, but will still allow you to bend the fingers and feet into place for posing.

Materials and Tools required

Below is a list of supplies and tools required for this tutorial:

- 26 Gauge Wire – Preferably in a colour closest to skin
- Scissors
- TLS – Translucent Sculpey
- Needle nose pliers
- Embossing Gun

Reference Pictures



Hand Armature

Step 1 – Cut the wire to size

When cutting the wire it doesn't have to be exact. The wire will be placed for the four fingers and thumb and then twisted together. Any excess wire can then be removed if need be. You can even trim back the fingers if you think they are too long. So let's go ahead and cut 2 pieces of wire about 6cm long each and 1 about 10cm long.

Step 2 – Bend Wire

Once you have your 3 pieces cut bend the two 6cm pieces in half. These will become the 4 fingers. Place the two bent wires together along with the straight piece. Use pliers to hold all the wires together and then twist the bottom portion to bind them all together and create the palm.

Step 3 – Cut and Shape

When you have the wire twisted together you can place it over the drawing as below, based on how big you want your hands to be. I recreate dolls that are approx 6.2 inches tall and I use the smallest of the diagrams.

Once you have the wire arranged over the hand you can cut the excess off the finger tips. To ensure the wire doesn't stick out the ends of the fingers cut the cut a little bit shorter than the finger should be. Try to observe the rules about which fingers are longer when you cut the wires – this will help you get a realistic looking hand when you start sculpting.

Step 4- Repeat

Repeat the process for the opposite hand

Step 5 – Coat in TLS

Once you have both hands done you can coat the hand in TLS (Translucent Liquid Sculpey). Adding clay to raw wire is very difficult as the clay moves around and creates a cavity between the clay and the wire. This is especially difficult to work with when you are working on such a tiny area. Adding the TLS will give the wire a coating that will allow you to more easily add the fresh clay too.

To coat the hands just brush on a thin layer of TLS and then heat with your embossing gun until the TLS is hardened and transparent, this only takes about 20-30 seconds.. Avoid allowing the TLS to clump in any area by using your finger to press down on any bumps that form.

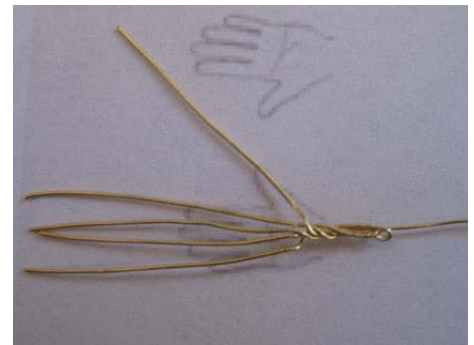
Repeat the process three times to build up the TLS layer. Make sure you don't pile on the TLS to thick as you want your fingers nice and skinny. Also avoid putting too much TLS on the palm/wrist area around the twisted wire, only two layers is needed on that area.

You now have completed your first hand armature and once cooled the clay can be applied. If you would like more information on the process of adding clay please have a read through one of my complete doll tutorials here

www.dollworld.co.nz/tutorials



Step 2 – Bend Wire



Step 3 – align to diagram



Step 3 – Cut finger tips



Step 4 – Apply TLS and heat set

Foot Armature

Step 1 – Cut the wire to size

Cut one piece of wire approximately 15cm long. This is again designed for a doll around 6.2cm tall. If your doll is bigger you may need to adjust the length accordingly.

Step 2 – Bend Wire

In the case of a foot armature we are not going to worry about the toes, since these are short and close together they do not tend to break like fingers can. So we are only creating a wire frame to support the foot and ankle areas.

Place the length of wire over your selected diagram of a foot. Starting from roughly the tip of the toe to the head bend the wire several lengths. Pinch the ends together and then twist all wires together.

Step 3 – Shape

Place your twisted wire onto of your diagram so that it starts below the toes (ensure there is a good distance between the toes and the tip of the wire to leave room for sculpting the toes). Bend the wire directly upwards at the center of the heel to create the ankle.

Step 4 – Repeat

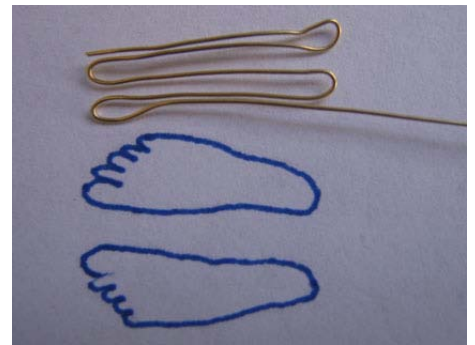
Repeat the process for the opposite foot.

Step 5 – Coat is TLS

When you have the two feet start coating in TLS. Like the hands this will give the fresh clay something to attach too but will still allow you to bend the armature for posing purposes.

Apply a thin layer of TLS to the entire twisted portion and then headset with your embossing gun until the TLS is hardened and transparent, this only takes about 20-30 seconds. Repeat for a second layer and set aside to cool.

You now have completed your foot armatures. If you would like more information on the process of adding clay please have a read through one of my complete doll tutorials here www.dollworld.co.nz/tutorials



Step 2 – Bend Wire



Step 3 – align to diagram



Step 3 – Bend at ankles



Step 4 – Apply TLS and heat set