



<http://www.home.earthlink.net/~tekvov/id24.html>

Torso and Ribs



Looks good and is real easy to do.

Please see our snot rag mache and Corpsology 101 pages for the finishing touches. And our Head and shoulders page for instructions on making the neck and attaching the head.

These instructions are for an upper torso without any internal support. No chicken wire, PVC pipe or wood is needed. I haven't found a way to make a full size stand up corpse without internal support. If your interested in a full size stand up prop I will be adding a PVC armature page soon that this torso can be made around.

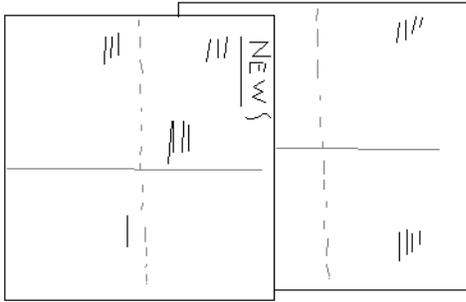
Needed things

- News paper.
- Duct tape.
- Mache glue of your choice.
- Large area to work.

For the outside or 'skin' of the armature you'll need 4 full size sheets of news paper.

(because of damage to one prop I've updated this how to. Updated material is in this color. See 'Damage' page for full details. Thanks.)

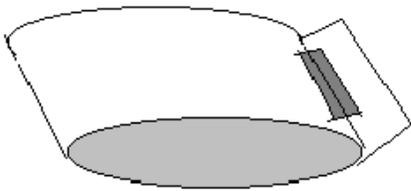
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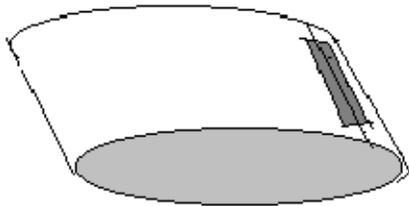
The Picture here represents the placement of the newspaper to form the outside of the body armature.

Each square of newspaper is 2 sheets. To make your armature stronger turn one of each of the two sheets so the print is running crossways.

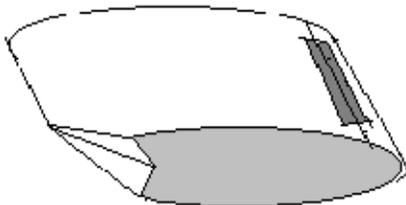
Your sheets should line up evenly. I did the gif this way to better show the placement. Place your two sheets three quarters of the way to the center fold of the second set of two sheets. Make them even on the top and bottom. Tape into place with duct tape. You will be making a shaped bag out of news paper.



Fold over to about 2 or 3 inches and tape as shown.

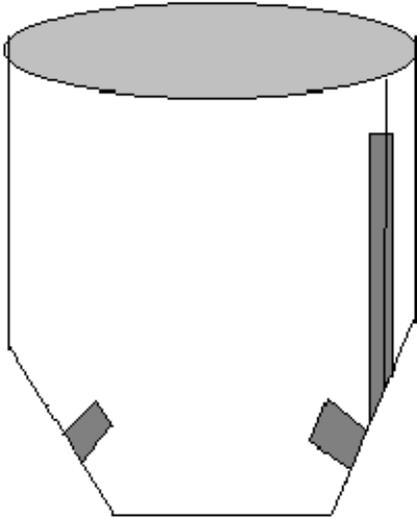


Fold this 2 to 3 inch flap over and tape into place as shown.



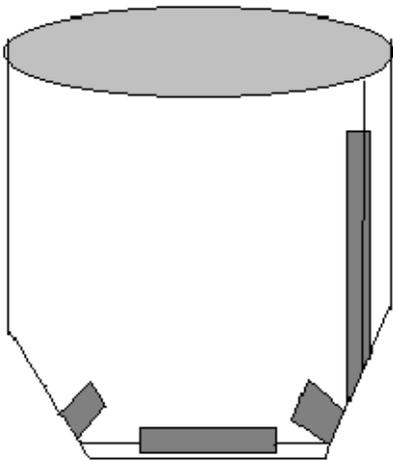
Shaping the shoulder and contoured area of the torso.

Make an inward V fold that is wider at the opening. (Don't over do this step. You just want to contoure the area.) Do this on both sides of the top of your news paper bag. and tape into place like in next gif



Fold over area between your two contours and tape into place. Leave the bottom open. You now have your news paper bag for stuffing.

The area you just taped up will be the neck and shoulder area of your torso (body).



Stuffing the body.

The idea is not to end up with a contoured round cylinder, Unless your purpose is a fat corpse.

You need something basically flat on the back and rounded up for the chest. Don't be concerned about the belly shape at this point. It's easier to work with if you contour the belly the same as the chest for now.

Best to start with a big pile of already crumpled up and wadded news paper. It takes a lot of paper so don't try to skimp on this part. Fill the complete body bag as tight as you can. If rips do accure use duct tape to piece back together. Try your best not to rip the bag by tilting the bag upright and gently force the newspaper into position by pressing

the bag against the work surface. Shape the bag as you fill by pressing on the outside and moving wadded paper around on the inside. If you do find a low spot or deformity you can't work with mistakes are easy to fix.

Low spot

Take a 1/2 sheet of newspaper and fold this in half. Tape to one side of the low spot. Now tape along a side that is next to the already taped side. Fill low spot with wadded paper, press and tape remaining sides.

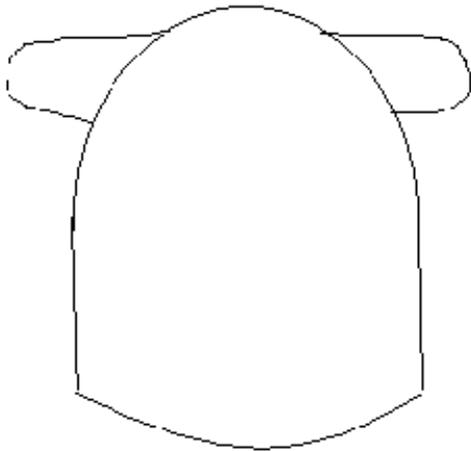
Deformity

If you have to rework the stuffing. You can also use duct tape on the out side of the body bag to pull and tighten areas

Please remember to use duct tape. Paper mache doesn't stick to masking, rubber or plastic tapes.

If you wish to use a PVC or other armature you'll need to have the body bag in position before you stuff it. Don't tape the body bag to the PVC armature till after stuffing. This will make shaping easier.

Forming the shoulders.



Fold a full sheet of newspaper in half. Take a few wadded pieces of newspaper and, using the folded sheet as the outer skin, make a elongated lump.

Tape this the contoured side of your body armature. Here is were some decisions have to be made as to what your corpse is going to be doing. Buy positioning the shoulders you can have the arms in a variety of natural looking positions. With a PVC armature

you will either have to heat and bend the pipe or leave your corpse with straight shoulders.

You can start this project to this point before needing to read any farther. One important thing to note. If your corpse is not going to have internal support (a PVC or wood frame) the shoulders have to be made sturdy.

When done right paper mache is very structurally sound. Remember to always alternate the print on the paper when layering the mache. The smaller the pieces of paper you use the sturdier the finished area. I prefer 1X1 1/2 torn strips. Never cut paper for paper mache. It's the frayed ends caused by tarring that makes mache strong.

RIBS

Ribs can be made of either folded newspaper or corrugated cardboard strips. Large quantities of cardboard boxes can be had from most stores. What they don't give away they have to crush and pay someone to haul off.

Newspaper ribs are as easy as continually folding a full sheet long ways till you end up with a long thin strip. Newspaper has the advantage over cardboard when making the 'floating rib' (the one on each side that curves down from the sternum and has a set of ribs connected to it). To hold the folded newspaper I use small strips of duct tape.

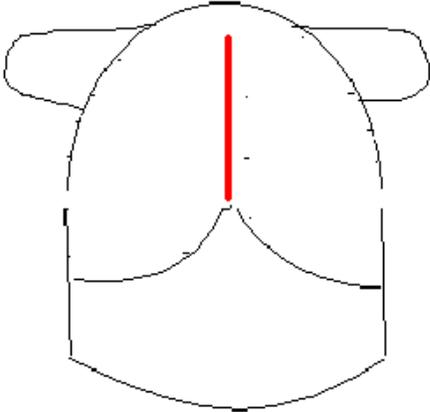
Cardboard ribs are quicker to make and take a few more tools. And common sense. You only have one set of hands. Keep them in one piece.

Needed things.

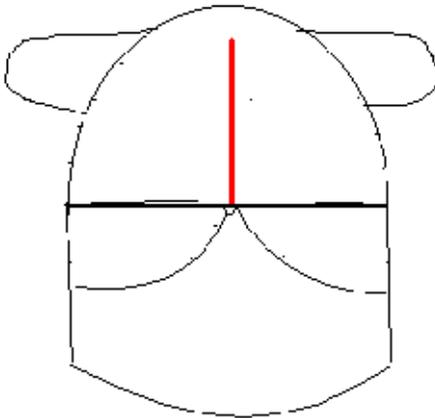
- Box cutter
- Long straight edge. I use a 4 ft level. You will need something at least 3 ft long to use as a straight edge.
- Something you can damage while cutting on. Extra cardboard, scrap wood or whatever you may have that's flat and can be secured down so it doesn't move on you.

The sternum or breast bone can be made of box cardboard. (Cracker boxes, cereal, snot rag box or what ever you have.) Or the corrugated cardboard. For a full size corpse it should be between 6 and 7 inches long and about an inch wide. Flat on the top and curved on the bottom.

Placement of the ribs.



shown with both floating ribs



First mark the location of the sternum with a marker or crayon. Don't tape into place just yet. *shown in red on gif*

The instructions will be for a corpse viewed from the front and sides only. If you need one that will be viewed from all sides just make the ribs go all the way around.

The back bone will have to be added after the torso has been mache'd and shaped and the neck added.

Just wad up small pieces of newspaper and mache them in place from the back of the neck all the way to the hips to make the back bone. If your using a PVC armature you can secure the upper torso to the pipe and cut the belly away. Use newspaper and duct tape to form each vertebrae. To make this as stable as possible you must tape and mache the rib cage on the inside to the pipe as well.

Starting at the bottom of the rib cage. With a long 'rib' bend and duct tape into place the floating rib. Just use enough tape to hold in in place. You'll need to slip ribs underneath it. Because most props are only viewed form the front I don't add ribs to the back of our corpses. So far to date, no one but us knows that. I stop at about an inch or two on the back with the ribs and tape them in place there

If your using folded newspaper for ribs remember to use small strips of duct tape to hold the cut ends into place after you cut the rib to size.

I found it easier to add the first straight rib for the bottom of the sternum next. This helps more evenly space the ribs connected to the floating rib.

Now add the ribs form the floating rib. With small pieces of duct tape attach them to the floating rib first and bend around to the back. Number of ribs? Doesn't matter. In reality Trick or Treaters will look at your prop for a few seconds at best. No one's going to count them. Add the remaining upper ribs.

Now your ready to start the paper mache.

To make it easier my first layer of mache on the ribs is done with 2 X 6 strips of torn newspaper. Going form top to bottom push each strip down between the ribs so you don't hinder the rib detail for later. Using this size or larger pieces of newspaper cover the shoulders, back and all of the belly as it is now. Using larger pieces of paper over duct tape will prevent it form pulling away. (We'll shape the belly in the next step.) Wait till this dries and add a layer of small pieces of newspaper mache over the ribs, shoulders and all the back. But not a second layer on the belly at this time. Let dry

The belly can be shaped in a few ways depending on what look you would like. Leaving it like it is will give a more fresh dead look. Finishing the torso with gray, red and browns to give it a fresh slaughtered look.

Pushing in and collapsing the belly will give a more rotted look.

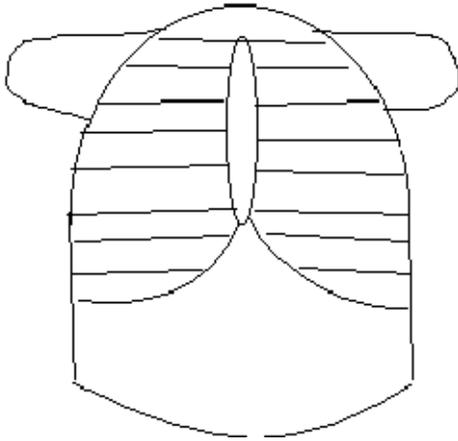
You can also separate the belly from the ribs, tape a folded sheet to the cut side and push that up under the ribs to expose them all the way. This can also be done (and a lot easier to do) by adding long strips of paper mache from the cut side to up under the ribs.

If your copse is one of these,

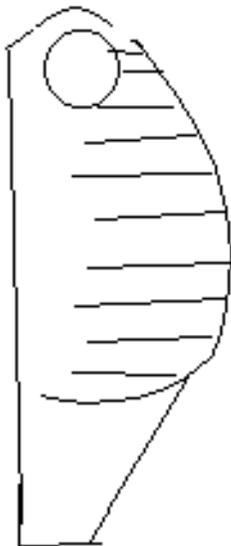
- using internal support such as a PVC or wood frame.
- will be laying in a casket or supported in a cage or sitting in a chair.
- will only be a 1/2 body without hips or ground breaker with or with out internal support.

You can cut away the sides of the belly and bring it all to a thin waste line above the hips. Without the extra support of an internal armature OR the lower back and belly a full size corpse will be easily stressed in the middle. If you still wish to have an almost exposed back bone make this area strong by using 5 or 6 complete layers of paper mache. I've never done this but I think fitting the waste line around a tube of corrugated cardboard would also help. Let the tube stick out the bottom and use that area to form the hips around.

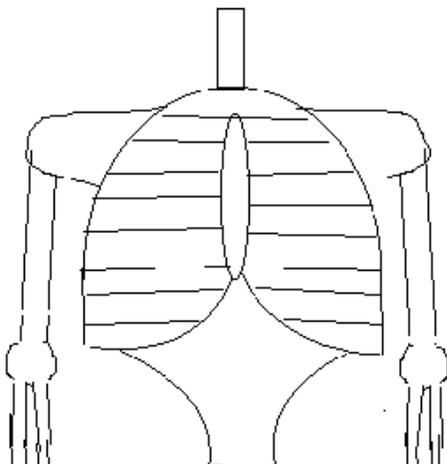
Tape the sternum in place by using very thin strips of duct tape going from the top of one rib, over the sternum to the rib on the other side. This will keep the tape from blocking the detail between the ribs and sternum.



Before shaping the belly make sure the ribcage is sturdy enough to support itself. Unstuff the body bag. Save these 'stuffings' for your next corpse prop.



side view of a collapsed belly with ribs.



Really cheesy view of a ground breaker or the top half of your stand up corpse with out a head. *did my best with microsoft paint.*

For making and attaching arms see Arms and Hands page.

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