

Dyeing & Ageing Techniques

You may wish to dye your calico, cotton or cotton-muslin to give your doll a **different skin tone** or to make it look more **antiquated**.

Using Fabric Dyes

Procion dyes are powdered cold water dyes for natural fibres that are permanent, colourfast and washable. They can be thickened and painted on fabric or clothing. With direct-application-dyeing, colours can be applied using sponges, brushes, blocks and so on.

These fibre-reactive dyes are good for any kind of non-protein fibre that will take dye (linen, cotton, linen-cotton blends, rayon). These work well in cold water, are bright, vibrant and colour-fast. Soda ash (sodium carbonate) is used to raise the acidity of the dye bath and fix the dye onto the fibre. Soda ash is also caustic; whilst plant-based fibres can take the harshness, it can make protein-based fibres harsh and brittle.

Vegetable dyes are liquid vinegar based dyes and can be used in small amounts diluted with water, to create some vibrant colours. They are excellent for use with small batches of fabric or direct dyeing on the finished doll with a syringe/dropper and can also be applied with stamps, brushes and sponges.

Dyeing in Plastic Bags: The Procion and Vegetable dyes can be used for dyeing small batches of fabric using plastic bags. This is very useful to those needing lots of small dye baths or when creating graduations of a colour.

Acid dyes (Jacquard is one brand) are apparently the best dyes for protein-based fibres, such as wool and silk etc.



Tea Dying Fabrics

Tea dyeing is an easy way to mute fabrics or give them an older, antiqued look or even to give it a sun-bronzed Caucasian complexion. Tea will stain the fibres, giving them an irregular stain over the whole piece, rather than an even colour. Tea produces a **tan** colour to your fabric.

What you need:

cotton fabric or items made from cotton, linen, silk.
tea bags or loose black tea
hot /boiling water
containers to hold the tea bath

Approx 1 pint of boiling water to 6 tea bags or 8 ounces of loose black tea to half metre fabric

1. Bring water to the boil and add your tea bags. Allow to 'steep' for 5-10 minutes.
2. Remove/Squeeze out the teabags if you wish, as if you leave them in they could disintegrate and spot the fabric with tea leaves.

3. Soak the fabric in this tea-stew for about 30 to 45 minutes, depending on the shade required. Wet fabric always looks darker than dry.

4. Stir the fabric to reduce any blotchy effect as it rises above the surface of the tea mixture. (NB: the more fabric you use the more water you'll need to cover it and the lighter the final colour will appear, unless your dye solution is strong.)

5. Give the cloth a light rinse and allow to dry. You will lose a lot of the colour doing this, so if it isn't dark enough, soak it in the dye bath for longer. (If you prefer to tumble dry, always wipe out the drum of your machine afterwards with a damp cloth).

If you have dyed some fabric and then decide you don't like it, rinse it in the washing machine with a little bleach. Also if the colour is too dark when dry, wash with a very small amount of bleach (1 tablespoon bleach to 1 gallon of water). This will lighten your fabric slightly. Repeat this process if the colour is *still* too dark.

Do this on fabrics that are safe for bleach only. Most cotton deteriorates with time and bleach is very harsh on older fabrics, so make sure that the older items you treat can handle the bleaching process.

Coffee Dying/Ageing Fabrics

This gives a more yellowish finish to the material. However, experimenting with different types and quantities of coffee will produce different shades of **brownish yellow**. You can use the method above as for the tea mixture or alternatively:

1. Preheat your oven to the highest setting. You will also need a glass ovenproof dish.
2. Mix together ½ pint (0.3 litres) of boiling water, half a cup of instant coffee granules.
3. Add the fabric to the mix and allow to soak for 20 minutes.
4. Wearing your Marigolds, remove the fabric from the liquid and squeeze out the liquid.
5. Loosely crumple the material and place in the dish. Place this in the centre of the oven.
6. Every 10 minutes, re-crumple the fabric and return it to the centre of the oven.
7. Once it is dry remove from the oven and leave to cool.

Over-dying the fabric more than once will also achieve a different result.

Dying Fabrics with Onion Skins

You can create a vast range of colours using onion skins in combination with other dyes or on their own. The type of onion used, the amount of skins added, the length of dyeing time and the colour of the fibres to be dyed will naturally affect the colour result. Interestingly, red onion skins dye yellow.

Hedgerow Dyeing Fabrics

You may wish to dye your material with leaves or bark taken from your garden or hedgerow, to give your doll a different skin tone or to make it look more antiquated.

1. Pick a selection of leaves or bark. Beech leaves will produce a different result from other greener leaves and bark will produce a brownish colour. Blackberry leaves dye a reddish colour.
2. Boil up a handful of one type of leaf/bark. Then add your chosen fabric and leave to stand for 45 minutes, stirring periodically.
3. Rinse fabric in cold water.

Simulating wear and tear and insect damage

To create an antiqued or primitives appearance to your dolls:

spot-bathe your dolls in tea or coffee, snag, rip and tear the fabrics to give them the appearance of a family heirloom that has been loved and played with for generations.

Create darker patches on the fabric can be achieved by sprinkling a few coffee granules onto the surface of the fabric and pressing it down with the back of a metal spoon whilst the material is damp.

nothing ages fabric faster than washing it with a bunch of old bras, probably because the hooks and clasps snag and scratch at the fabric as it tumbles around in the machine.

Using sandpaper, washboards and graters can also scuff and rent the fabric. Rubbing newspaper print over the cloth makes it dirty and discoloured.

You can simulate insect damage by poking small holes in the fabric before it is dry, using a quick unpick/ seam ripper, especially if you then carefully sprinkle some instant coffee granules around the holes, so that it dries slightly darker than the rest of the fabric.

Wear and tear can also be simulated by pulling threads here and there on the fabric and then dabbing some fabric glue around these, on the wrong side of the material, to make sure the holes don't become too big.

Making Cinnamon Buttons:

Cinnamon buttons produce a gorgeous smell and give the dolls a real country look!

However, they are:

- unsuitable for dolls given to children
- unsuitable to wash
- only suitable for 'display' dolls

Ingredients:

2x 47g refill boxes or ½ cup ground Cinnamon (or All Spice mix)

150g jar or 1/3 cup apple puree baby food

1 tablespoon white craft glue

Method:

1. Mix well, working with hands for two minutes. Knead on a cinnamon sprinkled board until it holds together. (Dividing the mixture in two and working separately is easiest.)
2. Roll to ¼ inch thick with rolling pin.
3. Cut into shapes. (Small sugar-craft cake decorating cutters are suitable. The buttons definitely work better with some improvised shape cutter)
4. Place on a baking tray lined with foil.
5. Make two holes with Satay stick, or fine skewer & make sure the holes go through to other side!
6. Place in 'slow' oven (i.e. 100°C or less) for approximately 1 hour or in the airing.