

*ImpaQt FX*

# **Foam Latex Masks and Prosthetic Appliances *A Make-up Application Guide***

---

All Rights Reserved.

Copyright © 2004-2018 by Tim Vittetoe

Written by Tim Vittetoe

Published by ImpaQt FX

2nd Printing 2017

**No part of this booklet may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the author.**

ImpaQt FX

Pasadena, CA 91101

Tel: 425.260.8949

<https://www.propsandmakeup.com>

## **Table of Contents**

Rubber Masks vs. Foam Latex	1
Before You Begin	2
List of Supplies	4
Choosing an Adhesive	5
How to Attach the Appliance	7
Blending the Edges of the Appliance	8
Applying a Base Color	9
Adding Shadows	10
Adding Highlights	10
Stippling	10
Setting the Make-up	11
Removing Your Appliance	12
Storing Your Appliance	13

**INTRODUCTION**

# Why Foam Latex?

*Learn about Foam Latex and what makes it unique.*

## Rubber Masks vs. Foam Latex

Rubber latex has been around for years. Most people are familiar with solid rubber latex – the kind of rubber used to make thin-walled masks. While rubber masks can have plenty of detail and are easy to put on, they have the disadvantage of not allowing the wearer’s facial expressions to be seen, and don’t allow the skin to breathe making them uncomfortable to wear for long periods. You also cannot eat or drink without removing the mask first. And most important, many aren’t convincing – they simply don’t look real, especially upon close inspection.

Masks or prosthetic appliances made of foam latex, on the other hand, can be totally convincing and undetectable, even at close range. They allow the wearer’s facial expressions to show through the make-up. A full range of emotions can be seen through foam latex, since the material acts very similar to real skin. And the wearer can eat, drink and wear the make-up for long periods, an absolute necessity in film making. Once you’ve experienced the quality of foam latex masks, you won’t settle for anything less.



Special Effects Make-up

## **Before You Begin**

We want you to have the best possible results with your prosthetic and make-up application. Please read these guidelines and the disclaimer before you begin applying your prosthetic appliance. There are a number of approaches and techniques possible when applying and removing a prosthetic appliance, so you'll need to decide which approach is best for you.

### **Safety Tips**

- Always perform a skin test on a small area to make sure you don't have an allergic reaction to any of the make-up products you are using.
- Always follow the manufacturer's directions that came with each product.
- Always make sure you have enough solvent to remove the particular adhesive being used.
- Never apply make-up when you are smoking or near an open flame source.
- Only use approved make-up for facial areas.
- If make-up must be used on more than one person, certain safety standards must be maintained. Use either disposable applicators or applicators that can be cleaned between uses. Mascara should never be shared.
- Disposable triangle applicator sponges are perfect for applying all base and rouge colors. For individual use, a natural sea sponge is great because it can be washed and reused. Foam sponges are great for body make-up; they have a large surface area and are easy to clean up (use a grease-cutting soap).
- Brushes must be cleaned after each use with a brush treatment cleaner. Small disposable detail work can also be accomplished with disposable cotton swabs.
- Use common sense, be careful and have fun!

As a make-up artist, professional or amateur, it is your responsibility to learn about the chemical safety; consult libraries, school chemistry departments. Request and read Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS). Before you work with a chemical, investigate its hazardous factors. Use precautions when handling any chemicals. Consult local authorities on proper material disposal.

**DISCLAIMER**

Most of the items we sell are considered non-toxic. However, the responsibility for the safe use of any product sold rests solely on the buyer or user. No warranty either expressed or implied is given and ImpaQt FX assumes no liability for the use or misuse of any item purchased. All products should be used as directed on the product container or packaging that came with the product. Always use proper ventilation, safety glasses, chemical resistant gloves and common sense when working with hazardous or suspected hazardous materials.

Discontinue using any product that causes irritation (redness, itching, burning, scaling, soreness, or other symptoms). If symptoms persist, please see your doctor. If you are dissatisfied with any product purchased from ImpaQt FX, you may return it for a refund or exchange within 15 days of the purchase date. Our liability for a defective item will not exceed its replacement cost to us.

## Make-up Supplies

*Here's a list of additional items you'll need to apply, remove and store your prosthetic appliance.*

### List of Supplies

#### Adhesive

- Choose **one** of the following:
  - ½ oz [Spirit Gum](#)
  - [1 oz Pro Adhesive](#)
  - [1 oz Liquid Latex](#)
  - 1 oz Castor Oil (available from most drug stores)
  - Toupee Tape (available from most drug stores)

#### Remover

- 1 oz [Spirit Gum Remover](#) if using Spirit Gum
- [Pro Adhesive Remover](#) if using Pro Adhesive
- Small bottle of rubbing alcohol (91%, available from most drug stores or 99%, available from make-up stores)

#### Make-up

- Crème Make-up or [RMG make-up](#)
- ½ oz Translucent Face Powder (local drug store)
- [Make-up Setting Spray \(2 oz\)](#)
- Liquid Latex or Bondo Stipple

#### Tools

- Disposable Triangle Sponge Applicators (3)
- 4" double-sided Powder Puff (1)
- Stipple Sponge (1)
- Small Make-up Brush (1)
- Disposable Cotton Swabs (5 or 6)

#### Optional

- Cab-O-Sil (fumed silica) for thickening Pro Adhesive
- 2 oz Mehron Barrier Spray if you have sensitive skin
- [Bald head cap](#)
- Isopropyl Myristate (make-up remover)

## Applying Your Prosthetic

*Learn how to attach a foam latex appliance.*

Prosthetic appliances can be attached using a variety of techniques. After reading the possible approaches, you'll need to decide which one you want to use.

**IMPORTANT:** Before selecting any approach, always perform a make-up test on a small area 24 hours before applying the prosthetic to be sure you have no allergic reactions to the adhesive you choose. The test should be conducted by applying a small amount of the adhesive on an inconspicuous area such as the inside of your elbow. If there is going to be an allergic reaction, it will generally take place within the first hour or so. If a rash develops, discontinue use and clean the area. If the rash does not fade in a day or two, consult a physician.

## Choosing an Adhesive

A number of adhesives are available for attaching prosthetic appliances: Spirit Gum, Prosthetic Adhesive (called *Pro Adhesive* or *Pros-aide*), Liquid Latex, and Toupee Tape. Each is discussed in the section that follows. We recommend that you use spirit gum or Pros-aide for attaching your prosthetic.

### Spirit Gum

[Spirit gum](#) is an adhesive solution made of gum and ether and is the most common adhesive on the market. The benefit of spirit gum over other adhesives is that it is forgiving if you make a mistake. Spirit gum remover is needed to remove this adhesive.



Spirit Gum

## FOAM LATEX PROSTHETICS: MAKE-UP APPLICATION GUIDE

### Pro Adhesive

[Pro Adhesive](#), aka Pros-aide, is one of the standards in the special effects industry for adhering appliances and other make-up components to the skin. It is safe to use on all skin, including sensitive areas. It has a strong bond with high water resistance and is preferred by make-up artists because it will hold make-up in place for long periods.

Pros-aide is also the base for PAX Paint which is a combination of water-based acrylic colors with Pros-aide. PAX Paint is a flexible color with high bond strengths to skin and many surfaces.

Pros-aide was originally developed by physicians for long term adhesion of maxillofacial prosthetics. Pros-aide is also the most difficult adhesive to remove and requires a special remover. Pros-aide can be reactivated with 99% alcohol which loosens the prosthetic so it can be removed.



Pro Adhesive



Liquid Latex

### Liquid Latex

[Liquid latex](#) is a rubber that is commonly used to create skin textures such as scars, and wrinkles for old age. It also can be used as an adhesive, but it is not as strong as spirit gum or Pros-aide. Liquid latex comes in a bottle and is applied with a brush, foam or stipple sponge. It is also used to blend the edges of a prosthetic into the skin so that the make-up becomes seamless. Liquid latex is very difficult to get out of hair, so you should avoid getting it on your hair, eyebrows or eyelashes.

Liquid latex contains ammonia which can bother some individuals. The smell dissipates as the latex dries. Drying can be sped up by using a hair dryer on a low heat setting.

### Toupee Tape

Toupee tape is double-sided tape and can be used if you don't like the feel of spirit gum, Pros-aide or liquid latex on your skin. The tape tends to limit the movement of the prosthetic and is more likely to come loose with perspiration, so we do not recommend it for attaching prosthetics. Toupee tape (or medical tape) is stronger than the Scotch® brand double-sided tape. Scotch tape isn't strong or sticky enough to work with prosthetics.

## How to Attach the Appliance

The technique for attaching your foam appliance varies with the type of adhesive you have chosen. The approach for each is relatively simple, but there are a few procedures that are important to follow in order to have successful results.

### **Adjust the Position of the Prosthetic *Before* You Apply Adhesive**

Before you apply any adhesive, position the piece where it will be attached to be sure it will fit properly. Full face prosthetics have been sized to fit most faces whether you are a man or woman. Because of the rubber qualities, adjustments can be made by either gently stretching the piece if too small or pulling upwards on the sides to reduce the area that it covers.

 Some make-up artists will temporarily mark the edge of the foam piece by lightly powdering along the edge of it while it is held in place.

### **Using Spirit Gum**

If you are using spirit gum, using a small make-up brush, paint a liberal amount in the center of the area that will be covered by the appliance. In the case of a full face appliance, start with the bridge and sides of your nose. Next, using your finger, **gently pat the wet spirit gum until it becomes tacky**. If you pat too long, it will lose its tackiness. Too short, and the solvents won't have enough time to evaporate. When the spirit gum **starts** to get really sticky, position the foam over the painted area and press it down gently, making sure it is aligned where you want it to be. Continue this technique, working your way from the center to the edges of the appliance. Be sure you have applied adhesive to every part of your skin underneath the appliance. If you don't, the wearer's facial expression won't show through the foam latex as well and perspiration could pool in these areas.

 Work on small areas at a time, attaching the appliance little by little. Gently stretch the appliance as needed to paint the adhesive on areas that may be harder to reach.

**IMPORTANT:** Use caution when working around the eyes! Apply the spirit gum sparingly so it doesn't run into them.

### **Using Pros-aide**

Using a small make-up brush, paint a thin coat of [Pros-aide](#) on the inside of the appliance and let it almost completely dry (it will turn clear when dry). Be careful not to let the appliance fold over, since the Pros-aide will stick to itself. Also paint a thin coat onto your skin where the appliance will be positioned and let it *start* to dry. When both are almost dry, gently press the prosthetic into place, starting from the center and working towards the edges. After the appliance is in place, press down firmly to make sure it is securely attached.

### **Using Liquid Latex**

Make sure your skin is clean and free from oils before you apply the [liquid latex](#). Using a make-up sponge, pat on a thin coat of latex on the inside of the appliance and onto the area of your skin where the appliance will be attached. **AVOID GETTING THE LATEX INTO YOUR HAIR, INCLUDING YOUR EYEBROWS AND LASHES**, since it is very difficult to remove from hair when dry. When both are almost dry, gently press the prosthetic into place, starting from the center and working towards the edges.

## **Blending the Edges of the Appliance**

The beauty of a well-made foam latex appliance is its ability to blend seamlessly with the skin. When properly applied, the edges of the prosthetic are virtually undetectable, so you won't be able to tell where the appliance ends and the skin begins. This is an important step, so take your time and the results will be well worth the effort.

We describe how to hide the edge of an appliance in two ways.

### **Hiding an Edge Using Liquid Latex**

Apply a small amount of [liquid latex](#) to a stipple sponge. A stipple sponge will generally produce the best results, since the texture of the sponge will produce a random and more natural looking surface. Lightly pat on the latex, overlapping the edge of the appliance and skin by approximately 1/4" on each side. Continue to apply a thin coating of latex along the edge of the entire appliance. When the latex is dry, the edge of the appliance should be blended into the skin. You may add more latex if needed, but be sure the latex has dried in between coats or it could stick to itself and pull up. After the latex has dried, apply a small amount of powder to remove the stickiness.

 In a hurry? Use a hair dryer to shorten the dry time of the latex. Be careful when drying someone else's skin so that you don't burn them! You can feel the heat of the dryer by keeping your free hand in close proximity to the area you are drying.

 Even if you are careful when applying the latex, hiding the edges can be challenging. If you can still see an edge, you might be able to hide it by adding more texture to edge. For example, if you are creating a zombie, you could press corn meal or coffee grounds along the edge before the latex has dried. You could also flow a small amount of stage blood along the edge to hide it. Once make-up is applied, the edge will be hidden.

### **Hiding an Edge Using Pros Aide Thickened with Cab-O-Sil**

[Pros aide](#) thickened with Cab-O-Sil called "Cabo-Patch", "Makeup Bondo®" or "Bondo Stipple" can be used to hide the edges of an appliance. It is preferred over using liquid latex since you can reactivate the Pros aide with 99% alcohol. Makeup Bondo can be easily created by mixing Pros-Aide with Cab-O-Sil (fumed silica) or translucent powder until a paste is achieved. Apply a small amount of the makeup bondo along the edge of the appliance, blending it with the skin. A soft-bristled brush loaded with 99% alcohol can be used to feather the makeup bondo. You can also use a stipple sponge lightly over the edge before the bondo dries to create texture. Once dry, you may need to add more makeup bondo since Pros-Aide shrinks a little as it dries. Since Pros-Aide is also very sticky, add a generous amount of translucent powder to any of the Pros-Aide to reduce the stickiness.

## Applying Make-up

*Learn how to apply make-up to your foam latex appliance.*

This is the part of the make-up application where your character really comes to life. Finishing your make-up application involves a few steps: applying a base color, adding shadows and highlights, stippling, and powdering.

### Applying a Base Color

Greasepaint or crème make-up can be used to finish your appliance. To ensure that the makeup isn't absorbed into the foam latex appliance and that it applies evenly, you'll need to first seal it with [Pros-Aide](#) or PAX paint. If you are using crème make-up, you'll need to apply castor oil (available from a drug store) to the appliance first.

PAX paint is easy to make – it's made of 50% Pros-Aide and 50% Liquitex (acrylic paint). Liquitex is readily available at your local art store.

RMG stands for Rubber Mask Grease. It is not greasy like the name implies. The [RMG wheels](#) were made for foam latex appliances but also work equally well when applied to the skin.



Six (6) Color Derma Derma or Natural Skin Tones Six (6) Color RMG Wheel

 We recommend that you use an RMG wheel from Graftobian. Graftobian offers convenient RMG wheels that give you a range of make-up colors that work well together for a given character. For example, their [Derma wheel \(aka natural skin tones\)](#) contains a full range of skin tones, from light to dark skin. The dark color can be used for shadows and the light color can be used for highlights. Graftobian's [FX Color RMG Wheel](#) provides you with the most common FX colors and was developed by award-winning makeup artist Brad Look.



Common FX Colors RMG Wheel

Select a base color from a palette or create your own by mixing different colors using a sponge or brush. Mix the colors in the lid of your make-up. If you are applying an old age, nose or other appliance that changes your natural appearance, you'll want to pick a base color that matches your own skin tone.

Apply the base color sparingly using a brush or sponge. You'll find that it doesn't take much to cover the entire appliance.

 Thin down your makeup by dipping your brush in 99% alcohol first. 91% alcohol is OK if you can't find 99% and should be available at your local drug store.

**FOAM LATEX PROSTHETICS: MAKE-UP APPLICATION GUIDE**

As you pat on the base color, make sure you apply make-up about 2 inches beyond the appliance and all the way to the hairline. If you don't, you're much more likely to see a line where the appliance ends and the skin begins.

If you're applying a bald cap, you might consider using a [Bald Cap RMG Wheel](#) from Graftobian.



Bald Cap Colors (RMG Wheel)

## Adding Shadows

With just a base color applied, you won't have any depth to your make-up application until you add shadows and highlights. By adding a variety of darker and lighter colors, you'll create layers that give your make-up depth.

To add shadows, mix up some make-up that is two shades darker than the base color. Alternately, you can choose a darker RMG color from the wheel if you have one. If you use a color that is too dark relative to the base color, the exaggerated difference will likely not be very convincing or realistic. Look to see where natural shadows will appear – in deeper skin folds and wrinkles, eye sockets, sides of the nose, underneath bones that protrude further out (such as cheek bones), underneath the chin and cheeks, along the temples, and along the sides of the neck..



To see where natural shadows appear, try changing the angle of light so that shadows appear. Apply the shadow color to not only the prosthetic, but the surrounding skin as well.

Apply the make-up with a small brush or sponge, feathering the shadow color into the base color from the center of where the primary shadow appears. Feathering or softening of an edge can be achieved by lightly patting an area with your finger or sponge.

## Adding Highlights

Highlight colors should be 2 to 3 shades lighter than the base color. You can choose a lighter RMG color from the wheel if you have one. Using a small brush or sponge, apply the highlight color to raised areas that would naturally have more light – for example, brows, cheek bones, the ridge of the nose, forehead and the chin. Feather (soften) any edges by lightly patting the highlighted areas with your finger or sponge. The next step is to further soften any hard edges of the make-up by stippling.

## Stippling

Stippling is a technique that adds another important layer which creates more depth and realism to your make-up application. Skin is naturally mottled (has spots), so we are trying to recreate this look using this technique. Mix a color that is darker than the base color (such as the color you used for adding shadows). Using a stipple sponge, *gently* pat on the make-up, creating another subtle texture layer.



Be careful not to overdo the stippling! Stop *before* you think you've stippled enough, since you can always add more later if needed.

## FOAM LATEX PROSTHETICS: MAKE-UP APPLICATION GUIDE

Now apply another stipple layer using a color that is lighter than the base color (such as the highlight color you used earlier). Stippling takes some practice, but the results are worth the time invested.

### Setting the Make-up

The last step is to set the make-up so that it won't smear. You can use make-up setting spray or a neutral set powder. If you use a [make-up setting spray](#), be sure to close your eyes before you spray! You want to use a powder or spray that won't affect the overall color of your make-up. Any powder will work with one exception – do not use pressed powder (typically women's make-up compacts). You can also use cornstarch or baby powder if desired, but consider the scent of baby powder if you choose to use it.

Powder can be applied using a powder brush or a puff. If you use a powder puff, load the powder into it by putting a generous amount of powder onto the puff, folding it in half and rubbing the two halves together. If you use a powder brush, roll the brush into the powder to load it. Press (don't wipe) the powder puff or brush onto the make-up to set it. Once set, the make-up will not smear.



Make-up Setting Spray

 You can't use too much setting powder, but if you use too little, the make-up can smear. Use a generous amount of powder and make sure all the make-up areas are covered. Any excess powder may be brushed off with a dry brush or even a damp paper towel or wash cloth. Don't wipe the make up – simply blot it gently.

# Removing and Storing Your Appliance

## Removing Your Appliance

Removing your foam latex appliance is easy, but should be done carefully and without rushing so that your appliance can be reused.

### Spirit Gum

If you attached your appliance using spirit gum, you'll want to use rubbing alcohol to remove the prosthetic first. Spirit gum remover contains mineral oil which will bloat the edges of your appliance so if you do use it to remove the appliance, you won't be able to use it again.

Dip a cotton swab or small brush in rubbing alcohol. Beginning at the top edge of your appliance, gently rub the tip or cotton swab or brush along the edge of the foam latex until it begins to loosen. Gently lift off of the appliance a little at a time, working your way from one side of the appliance to the other. Apply more alcohol as needed, but be careful not to get any in your eyes. After the appliance has been removed, apply powder to the piece to remove any stickiness that may be left over. To remove any left spirit gum from the skin, apply spirit gum remover to a cotton ball and gently rub the area.



**CAUTION!** Never tear an appliance from the skin without soaking it first. It will hurt the wearer and may injure their skin.

### Pros-aide

Since Pros-aide is very sticky, it will take a little longer to remove. You can remove Pros-aide in several ways.

### Using Rubbing Alcohol

If you want to try to reuse your appliance, you'll need to use alcohol to **carefully** remove it. Ideally, it will be 99% Isopropyl Alcohol, also known as rubbing alcohol. Most of the rubbing alcohol from drug stores is 70% or 91%. While 99% is recommended if you can get it (probably from a makeup store), 91% will work, just not as well. You will likely only get 2 to 3 uses of the appliance depending on how thin the edges are, even if you are careful in removing it. Some customers have gotten over 10 reuses. While this is unusual, it's not impossible depending on the appliance.

To remove your appliance, dip a brush in alcohol. You'll want to use a brush that you don't mind getting frayed. Beginning at top edge of your appliance, use the brush to soak the edge of the appliance with the alcohol until the edge of the foam latex starts to loosen. Gently lift off the appliance a little at a time, working your way from one side of the appliance to the other. Since pros aide sticks to itself, powder the appliance as you go, making sure the appliance is dry before you powder it. If an edge folds over, use alcohol to release the edge. Do not pull on the edge without releasing it first or it will tear. Once unfolded, let the alcohol dry, and then powder the appliance.



**CAUTION!** If you are working above the wearer's eye, avoid letting the alcohol run into their eyes by catching any of the alcohol that runs down using a small cloth towel. Paper towels are not recommended since the glue will make them sticky and they'll tear.

**FOAM LATEX PROSTHETICS: MAKE-UP APPLICATION GUIDE**

**Using Pro Adhesive Remover or Isopropyl Myristate (ISM)**

You can use Pro Adhesive Remover or Isopropyl Myristate (ISM) to remove prosthetic appliances, but because both contain oil, the appliance edges will bloat and you will likely not be able to reuse the appliance. To use, dip a small brush into Pro Adhesive Remover or ISM. Beginning at the top edge of your appliance, gently rub the brush along the edge of the foam latex until it begins to loosen. Gently lift off the appliance a little at a time, working your way from one side of the appliance to the other.

 Whether you use Pro Adhesive Remover or ISM, we recommend that you first remove the appliance using 99% rubbing alcohol so the edges do not bloat, then use Pro Adhesive Remover or ISM to remove any remaining adhesive on the skin. **Be careful not to get any Pro Adhesive Remover or ISM into the eyes of the**

**wearer since both products contain rubbing alcohol.**



Pro Adhesive Remover

**Storing Your Appliance**

An important step to take before storing your appliance is to generously powder it first. If you don't, the edges will stick to themselves and you will have to use rubbing alcohol to separate them. Apply translucent powder to the appliance, making sure you cover all of the surfaces before you put your appliance in a plastic bag for storage.

 Before storing the prosthetic in a plastic bag, dust the inside of the bag with powder to prevent sticking. If some part of the appliance does stick to the bag, apply a little 99% alcohol to loosen the appliance from the bag and GENTLY detach it so you don't rip the appliance.