# Intro to Rubber Crafting

Hosted By: Purple DragonMage

FurSquared 2024 – 18+

# Who Is This Silly Dragon?

**Been playing with rubber and latex since 2014 and creating since 2019**

# Some opening questions

- Who has rubber of any kind?
- Who has ever repaired or modified rubber gear?
- Who has ever made something out of rubber before?
- What sort of gear are you interested in making?

# What we'll cover… and not

- What's you need to get started
- The basics of cutting and gluing
- Techniques, tips and tricks
- Installing a zipper
- Basic patternmaking

We won't be covering:

- Cleaning and caring for rubber
- Inflatable/deflatable items
- Naughty things to do with your latex

# Special Thanks to Zaelgolin!

- An awesome rubber dragon from the land of hockey and maple syrup.
- An expert rubbercrafter
- Let me crib from his rubber crafting panel PowerPoint
- All around awesome derg!

# The Basic Tools – All You Need

- Cutting Mat ($20)
- Rotary Cutter ($20)
- Disposable Scalpels ($10)
- Seam Roller ($20)
- Rulers ($5)
- Measuring Tape ($5)
- Gel Pens ($5)
- Paper Towels ($5)
- Rubber Cement ($20)
- Solvent ($20)
- Nitrile Gloves ($20)
- OV Respirator ($60)
- Total: About $220

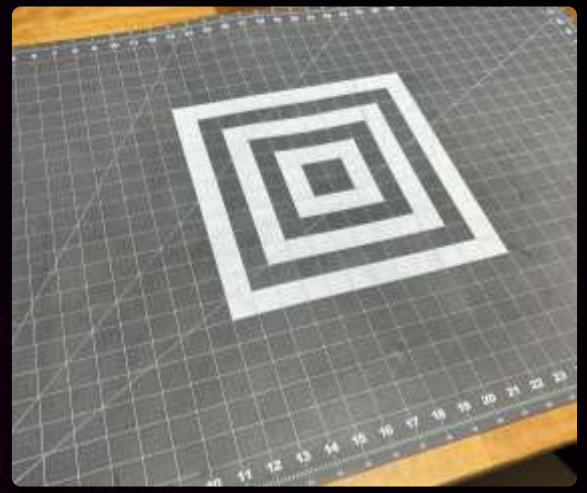
# The Tools

## Rotary Cutter

Large for straight cuts and shallow curves. Small for detailed work. Look for “FISKARS” brand.

## Seam Roller

Essential for strong seams. Get one with a plastic roller and avoid metal!



## Cutting Mats

Get the biggest one you have room for and a smaller one.

# The Tools


## Disposable Scalpels

Great for fine details and cleaning up the end of cuts and getting in difficult spaces.

## Sanding Block

Use 120 grit or green Scotchbrite pads

## Gel Pens

Clearly mark lines to cut and easily wipes off without staining

# The Tools


## Cleaning Solvent

Use to clean seams before gluing. Heptane/Bestine preferred, but you can also use mineral spirits.


## Rubber Cement

Permanently adheres rubber. Available at craft stores.

## Towels & Wax Paper

Get shop towels when possible (stronger)

Wax paper is useful for a trick!

# The Tools


## Rulers & Fabric Tape

Get a few sizes to make life easier. Metal can be used if you are careful.


## Nitrile Gloves

Safety! Keep those toxic chemicals off your paws!

Rubber cement will not stick to them.


## Respirator

Essential while working with solvents and glue.

Use Organic Vapor (OV) rates cartridges.

# Sheet Latex: Let's do this!

- Mainly available online
- Expect to pay $15-30/yard depending on color and thickness
- Special colors and metallics are more expensive
- Standard 'kink colors' are always available and cheaper
- Less selection for thick latex
- Minimum orders

# Sheet Latex Suppliers

MJTrends

My go-to supplier – Lowest price and reasonable quality.
Okay color selection, limited selection of thicker latex.

RADICAL RUBBER

Excellent quality & great color selection including thicker latex.
Okay prices but extra charge for orders under 5 meters.

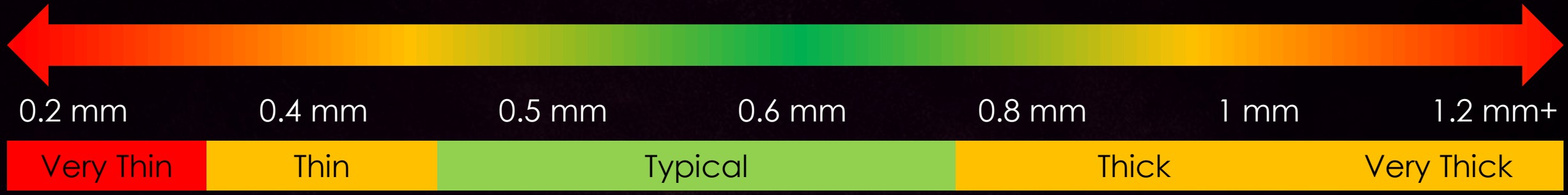
SUPATEX

Best quality you can buy (4D Latex reseller)
Amazing color  and thickness selection.
Pricey; Expect to pay 25% more. 5 Meter minimum order.

Twist My Rubber Arm

Not a sheet latex supplier, but they sell all sorts of rubber gear. Great supplier for add-on like socks, hood, gloves, sheaths… things you don't want to try and make yet.

# Latex Thickness




## Considerations:

- Extremely flexible
- Very delicate
- Tricky to work with
- Not for frequent use

- Flexible
- Great selection
- Easy to work with
- General purpose

- Not very flexible
- Durable
- Curves are tricky
- Inflates well

- Extremely restrictive
- Very durable
- Limited selections
- High pressure

## Best Suited For:

- Body condoms
- Gloves & socks
- Hoods

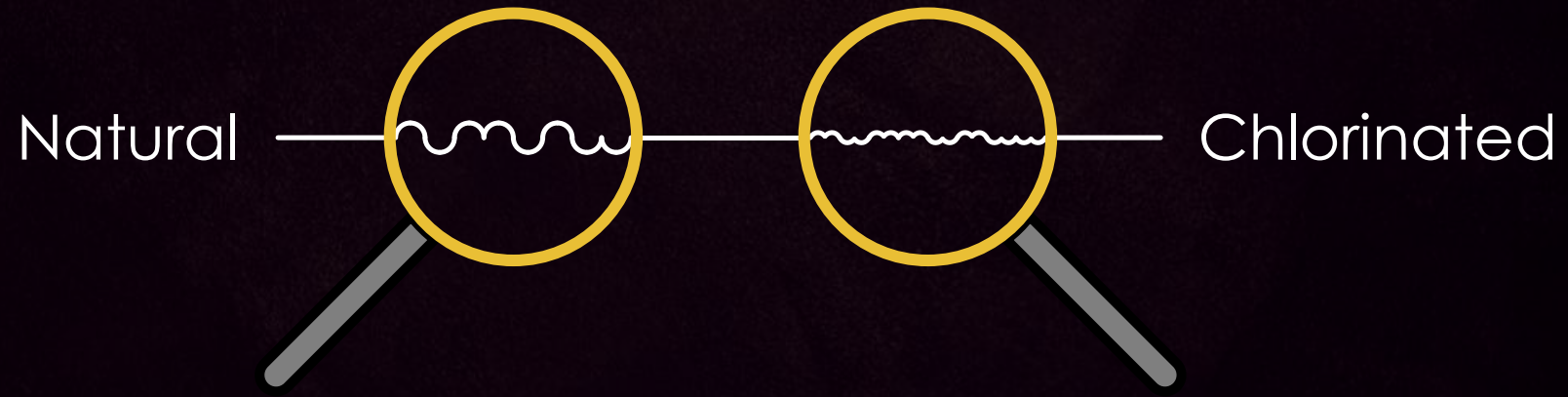
- Most clothing
- Catsuits
- Vac beds / towers

- Baggy clothing
- Tails and accessories
- Inflatables

- Sleep sacks
- Bondage items
- Pressure suits

# Chlorination

- Micro-smooths the latex surface making it feel silky smooth
- Much easier to don and remove – no dressing aid required!
- May reduce shine and diminish latex odor
- Repairs are more difficult, but still very doable
- Send items out for chlorination - DO NOT try it yourself! 💀



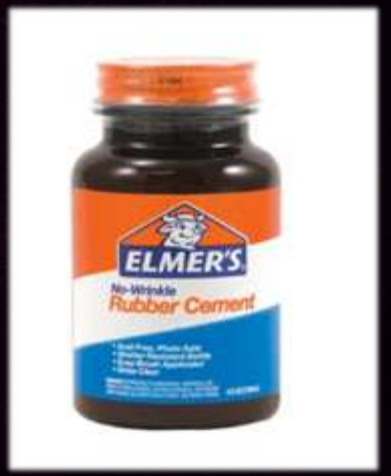
# Cleaning Solvent

- Removes oxidation, dirt, oils and debris that can reduce seam strength
- Opens pores in the latex surface to accept rubber cement
- Professionals use heptane solvents:
  - Bestine / Latexine
  - Can thin rubber cement
- Ordinary mineral spirits work fine also
  - Easy to find at hardware stores
  - Less hazardous than heptane
  - Do not use to thin rubber cement


# Rubber Cement

- Natural rubber suspended in a solvent
- Permanently bonds latex surface
- Not like glue – applied to both surfaces, allowed to dry, then pressed together
- Many brands available; performance is similar
  - Bostik 1222/3851 - Used by professional builders
  - Elmer's - Widely available and cheap, but requires thinning before use
  - Best-Test - Similar to Elmer's
  - MJ Trends - Pre-thinned version of Best-Test

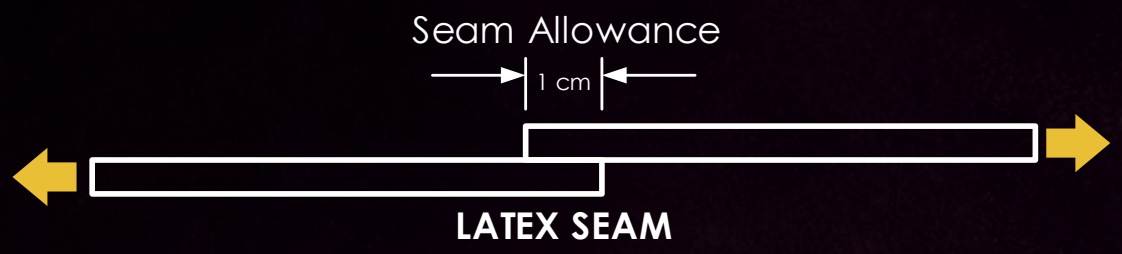




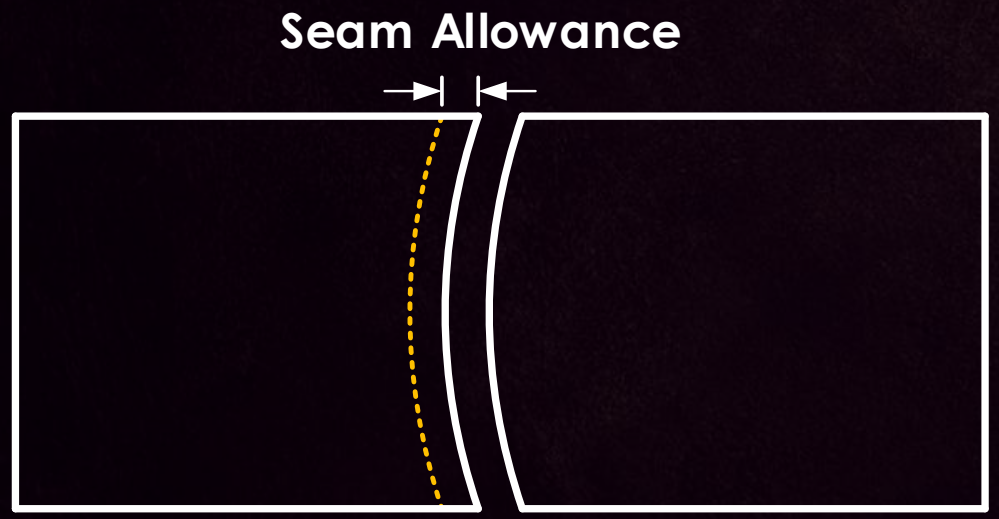

# A Word Or Three On Safety…

- Rotary cutters and scalpels are very sharp, and will easily slice skin
  - Keep your cutting tools sharp, latex will rapidly dull blades
- Working with Rubber Cement and Solvents is dangerous!
  - Both are EXTREMELY FLAMMABLE
  - Heptane and Mineral Spirits are TOXIC
  - Rubber Cement is a CARCINOGEN
- Ensure you have good ventilation or work outside
- Always wear an organic vapor respirator while working!
- Wear nitrile gloves to protect your skin (and seams)
- Dispose of excess glue and contaminated rags properly.
  Do not throw them in the garbage!

# Anatomy of a Seam







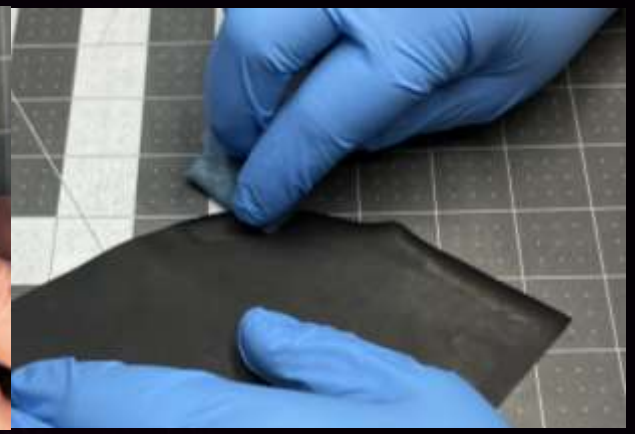

- Unlike fabric seams, latex seams overlap parallel to their surface
- Latex seams are strong in tension but weak when force "peels" them apart
- All seams require an allowance to allow for the overlap
  - < 0.8 mm thick, use 10 mm allowance
  - ≥ 0.8 mm thick, use 12 mm allowance
- Add the allowance to one piece only
- Use a sewing gauge to add seam allowances on curved seams

# Cutty-Pasty in 8 Easy Steps!

1. Mark Out

2. Ctrl+X

3. Sand!



4. Solvent Clean

5. Apply Cement


6. Wait!

7. Attach Seams

8. Roll!

# HALP! My Latex Is Curling!

- My #1 FAQ: "How do I prevent latex from curling after I glue it?!"
- Short answer: You can't*.
- Curling is caused by solvents dilating one side of the latex
- Curling *will* relax as the solvent evaporates and cement dries
- Thinner latex curls much more than thicker latex

*Ammonia-based glues won't cause curling, but are less waterproof than rubber cement

Only the surface exposed to solvent dilates

# The Tape Trick!

- Apply painter's tape to one side of the latex seam
- Stiffens the latex, preventing it from stretching and curling
- One trick: many advantages!
  - ✓ Easier sanding!
  - ✓ Reduces curling!
  - ✓ Prevents misalignments!
  - ✓ Essential for panels & patches!
  - ✓ Cannot be used when assembling sharply curved seam

# Zip It Up!

- Consider for your zipper needs:
  - Type of entry
  - Body size and flexibility
  - Intended use and play access
  - Separate openings and pulls
  - Compatibility with other toys
- Buy pre-assembled or as bulk tape
  - Available in almost any color
  - Recommend #5 coil or nylon zippers
  - Check in sewing stores or online
- Bulk tape will require stops and pulls
- Avoid metal zippers!!

# Zip It Up!

## Front Entry

- Easy to install
- Easy solo use
- Most visible
- May obstruct play

## Back Entry

- Easy to install
- Less visible
- Less play obstruction
- Tricky to use solo

## Shoulder Entry

- Low visibility
- No play obstruction
- Difficult to install
- Difficult to use solo

## Double Ended

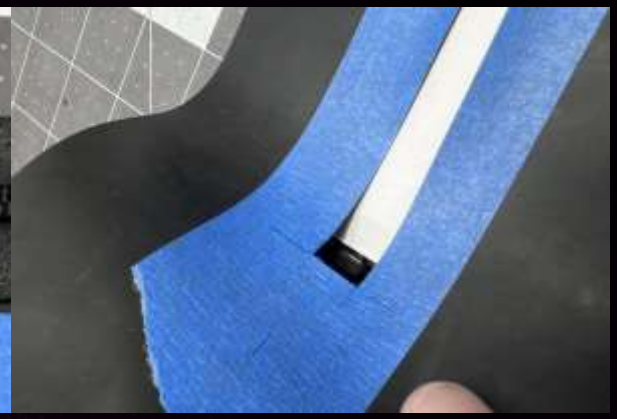
- Useful for many items
- Sleep sacks / vacbeds
- Minimal obstruction
- Tricky to install

# Let's Make a Zipper!

1. Coat in Liquid Latex

2. Assemble Zip

3. Reinforce Ends



4. Cut a Hole


5. Clean, Glue and Install

7. Install Backing Reinforcement


8. Add Hair or Sweat Flaps

# Patterns

- Patterns exist for a wide variety of garments
  - Premade and ready to use
  - Great way to jumpstart projects
  - Find them online or buy in sewing stores
- Clothing patterns may require modification:
  - Adjust the seam allowances
  - Check for overlaps at color-changes
  - Remove darts, if present
- Select a tighter fit than for street clothes

# Old Clothes? New Patterns!

- Cutting up old clothes is a great starting point for patternmaking!
  1. Use shears to cut along all seams until you're left with component parts
  2. Trace the outlines onto large paper
  3. Confirm dimensions using fabric tape – adjust for the desired fit
  4. Add seams where color changes will be
  5. Apply seam allowances to each piece
- Select tight-fitting clothes and avoid stretchy fabric (like spandex)

# Your First Project

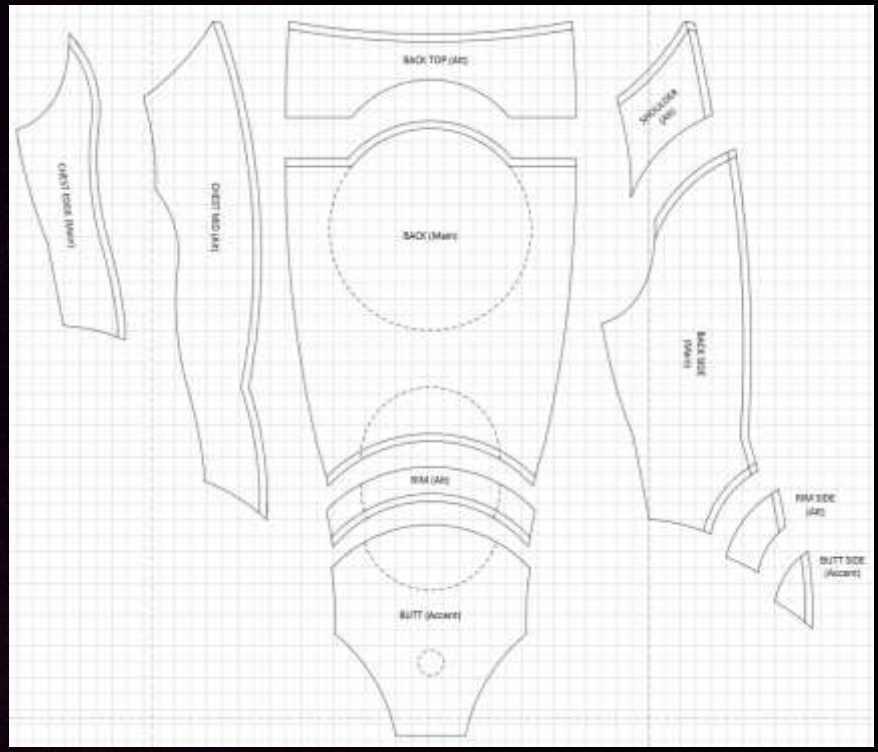
- **Start with Something Easy**
- **Start with Something Small**
- **Try, try again!**

# Designing Your Own Patterns

- Start with existing patterns and modify
- Examine your existing gear for hints
- Alter seam geometry to get the desired shape
- Geometry is achieved only at seams
- Consider the assembly technique you'll use
- Work toward "free ends" (wrists, ankles, neck, etc.)
- Include extra allowances and cut to fit
- Don't be intimidated – give it a try!

# Pattern Design Tips

- Duct Tape Dummies
  - Draw lines to find easy to follow curves
- Use a vector art or CAD program
  - Adobe Illustrator, Visio, AutoCAD, etc.
  - Easy measurement and revision
  - Easily apply overlaps and seam allowances
  - Print out full-scale patterns
- 3D modelling may be an option
  - Full visualization of final shape
  - Place slices at seam location
  - Unwrapping isn't perfect – use caution



# Where to Learn More

- MJ Trends Tutorials
- MakingLatexClothing.com
- DressPatternMaking.com
- MellySews.com
- HandMadePhD.com
- Pinterest / YouTube
- Fabricland / Michaels Stores
- Rubbercraft Telegram Group






# Thank you! Now Go Make Something!

## Links to Resources:

https://www.talonboundgear.com/rubbercraft/

## Questions or Feedback?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