



Bendi Armature

©Sue Daniel

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Bendi Armature Dolls



Supplies

- 14-inch (35-36 cm)
Bendi doll*



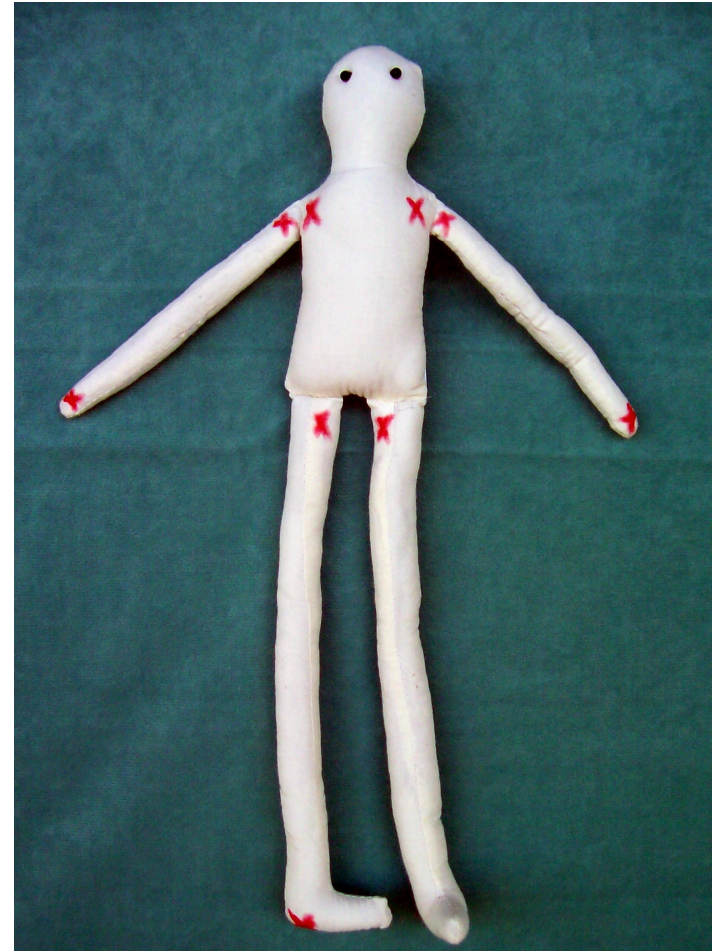
Supplies

- Armature wire*
- Pliers to cut and bend the wire
- Heavy duty thread*
- Low loft polyester quilt batting
- Felting needles*
- Pen Style Needle Felting Tool (optional)*
- Scissors, sewing needle, measuring tape, marker*

*Available at <http://dollmakersjourney.com/supplies.html>

Prepare Bendi for Rewiring

- To make a doll that can stand on its own, Bendi needs to be rewired. The existing wires will remain in place, but Bendi will be strengthened with armature wire.
- Cut slits in Bendi's skin at the points shown in the photograph. Be sure to make slits in both heels.

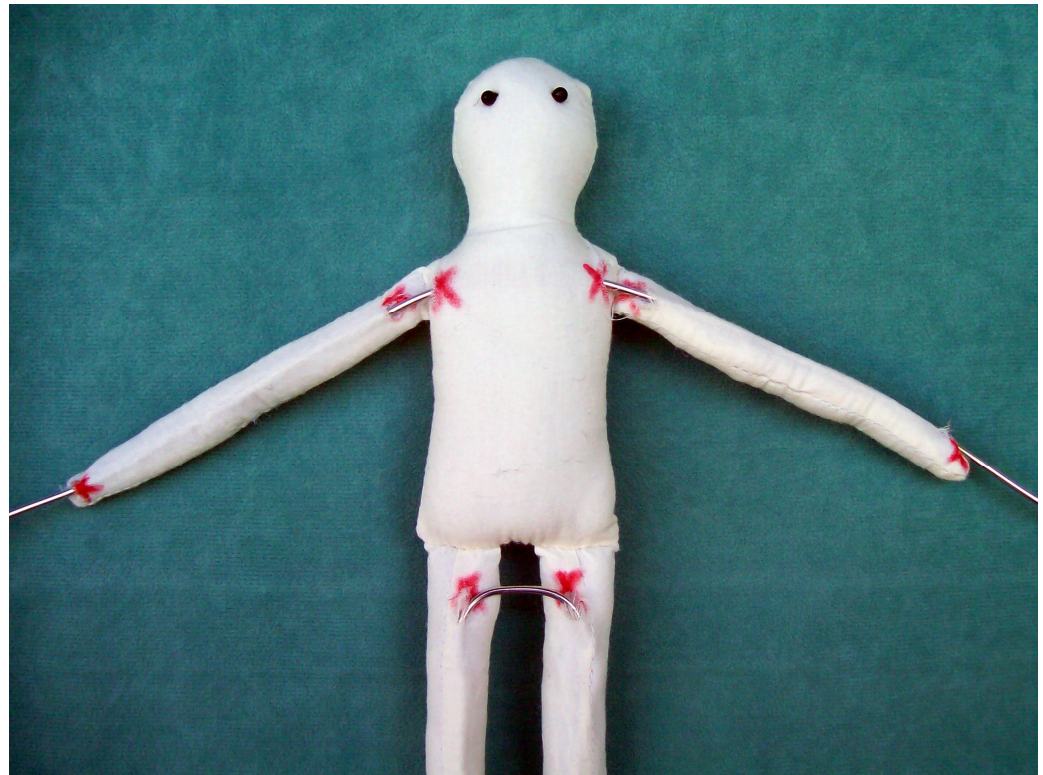


Rewire Bendi

- Cut two pieces of armature wire.
Arms: Approximately 17 inches (43 cm)
Legs: Approximately 28 inches (71 cm)

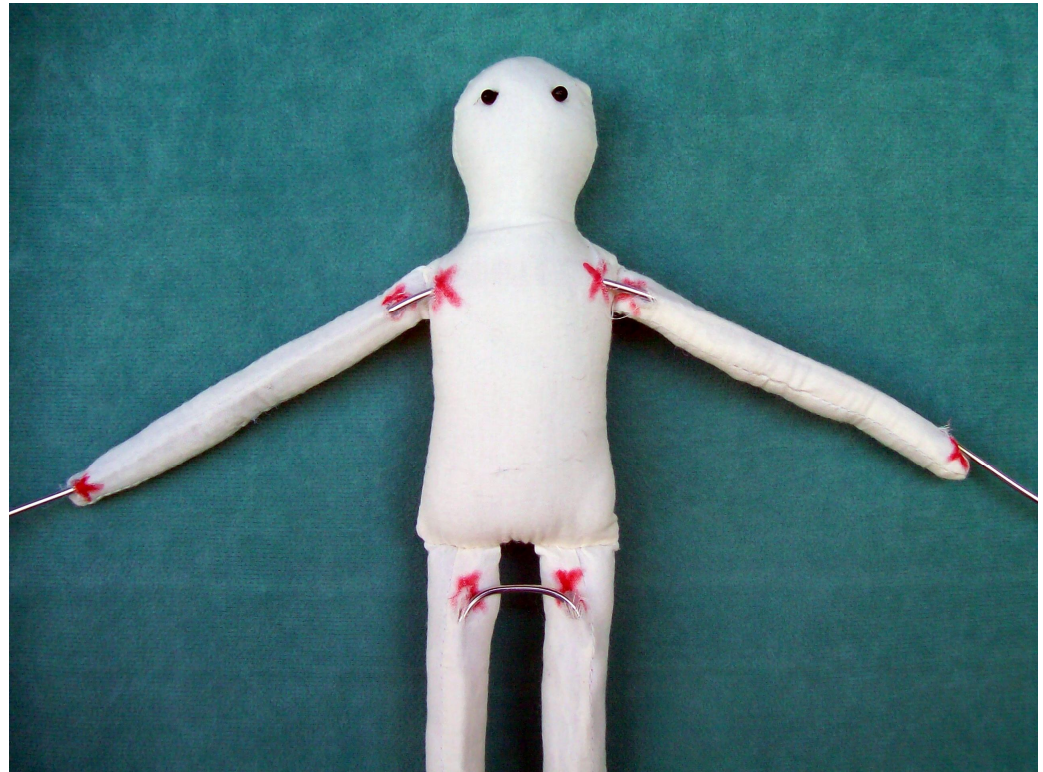
Rewire the Arms

- Push the arm wire through the slit at the end of one arm and up the arm to the slit at the top of the arm. Keep the wire just under Bendi's skin so that the tip does not get caught up in the stuffing. Exit through the slit at the top of the arm.



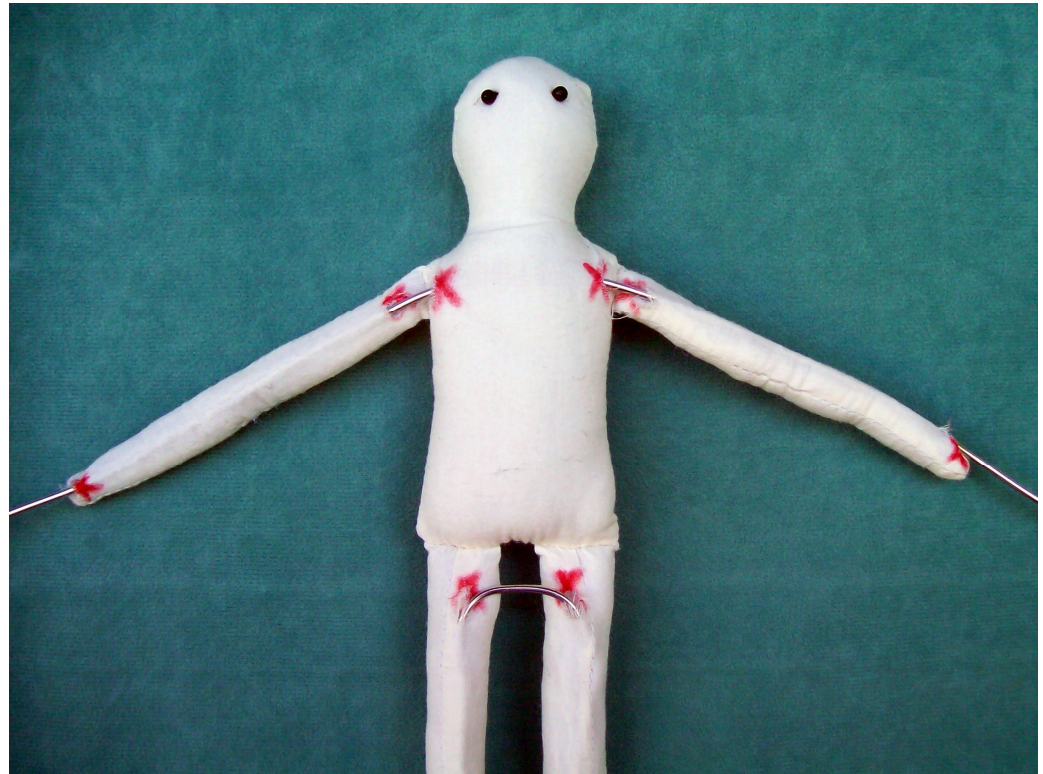
Rewire the Arms

- Enter the slit in the torso and push the wire across the torso to the slit on the other side. Exit.



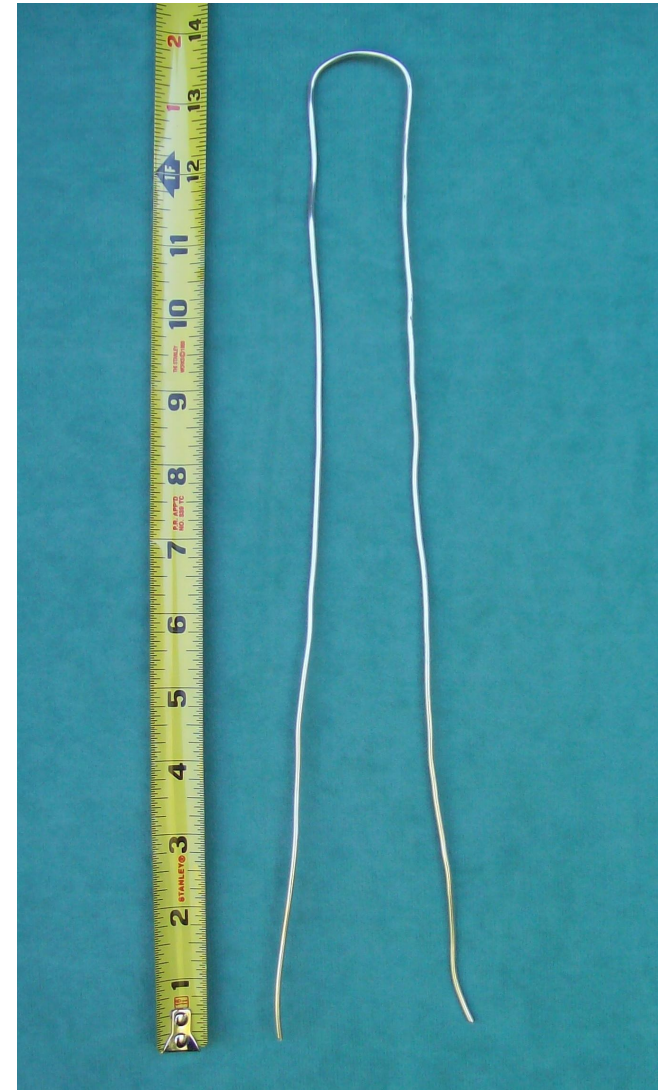
Rewire the Arms

- Enter the slit in the arm and push the wire under Bendi's skin down the arm and exit through the slit at the tip of the arm. Pull the wire so that there is an equal amount of wire extending beyond both ends.



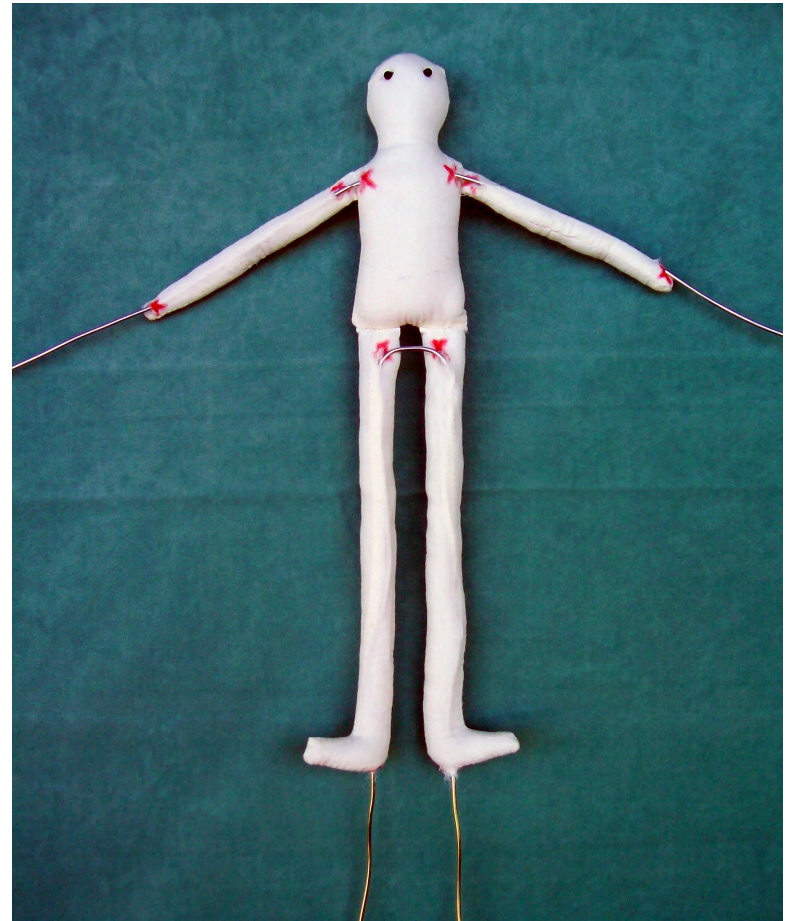
Rewire the Legs

- Bend the leg armature wire into a “U” shape. Measure up approximately $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches (34 cm). Make a 90° bend. Make another 90° bend about 1 inch (2.5 cm) along the wire.



Rewire the Legs

- Insert the two ends of the bent wire into the slits at the top of Bendi's legs. Push the wire down the legs just under the skin and exit through the slits in the doll's heels.



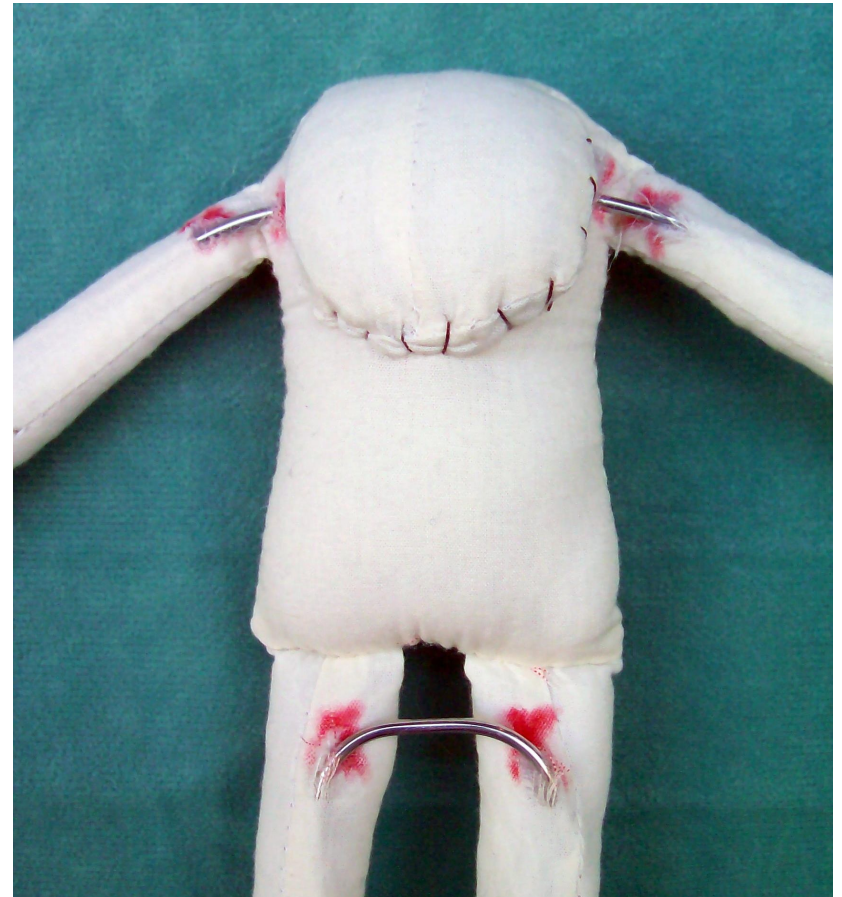
Make the Feet



- Bend the wire that exits through the heels to shape the bottom of the feet. Bendi's feet should be about 2 inches (5 cm) to be in correct proportion to her body. Cut off any excess wire.

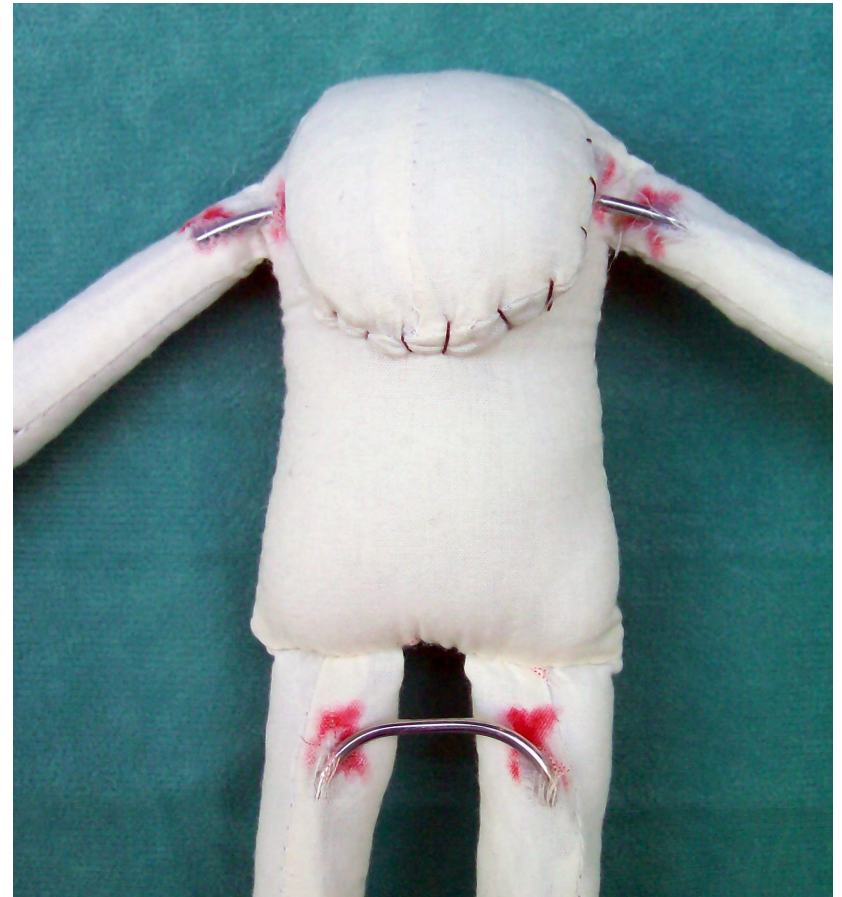
Fill out the Chest

- Bendi will be getting a replacement head and neck. Bendi's original head will be used to fill out her chest area.



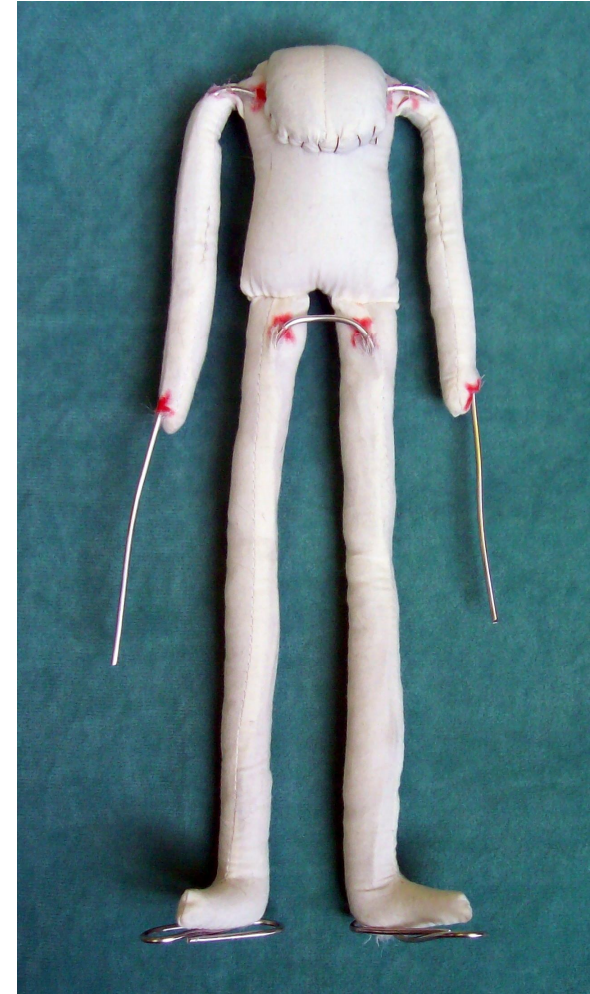
Fill out the Chest

- Push the head down onto the chest and sew it down to the torso using a strong thread. It does not need to be neat, but the head should be pulled down tightly.



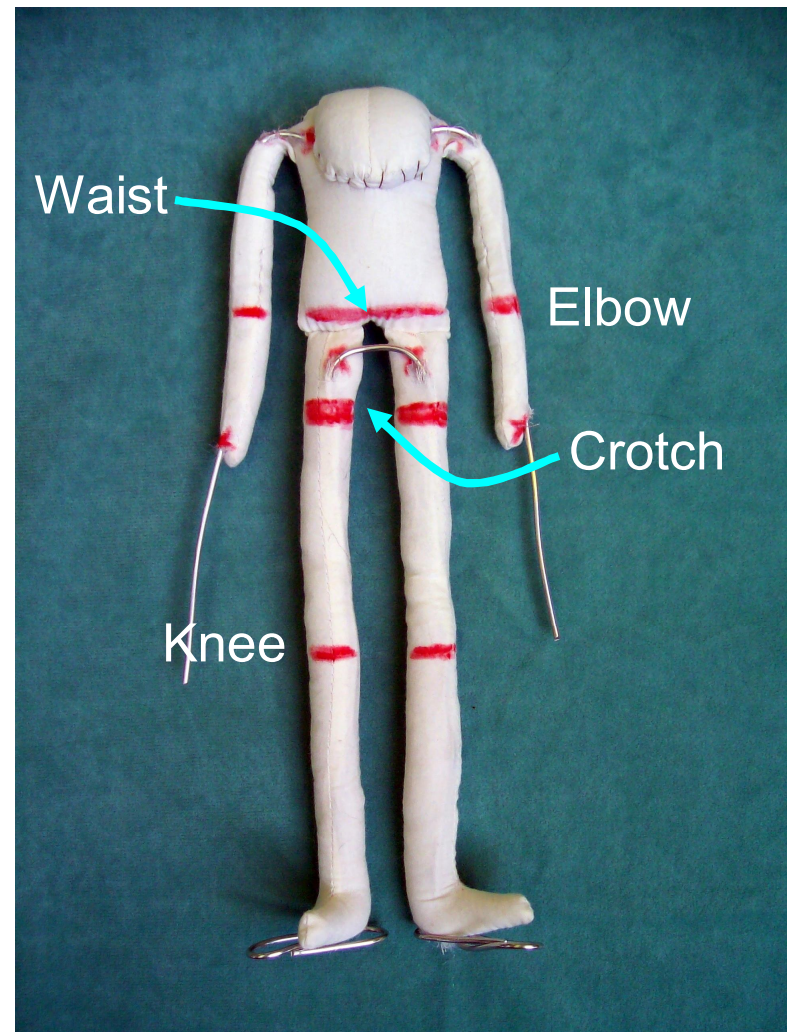
Bendi's Anatomy

- Form Bendi's shoulders by bending the tops of her arms down about a finger's width out from her body.



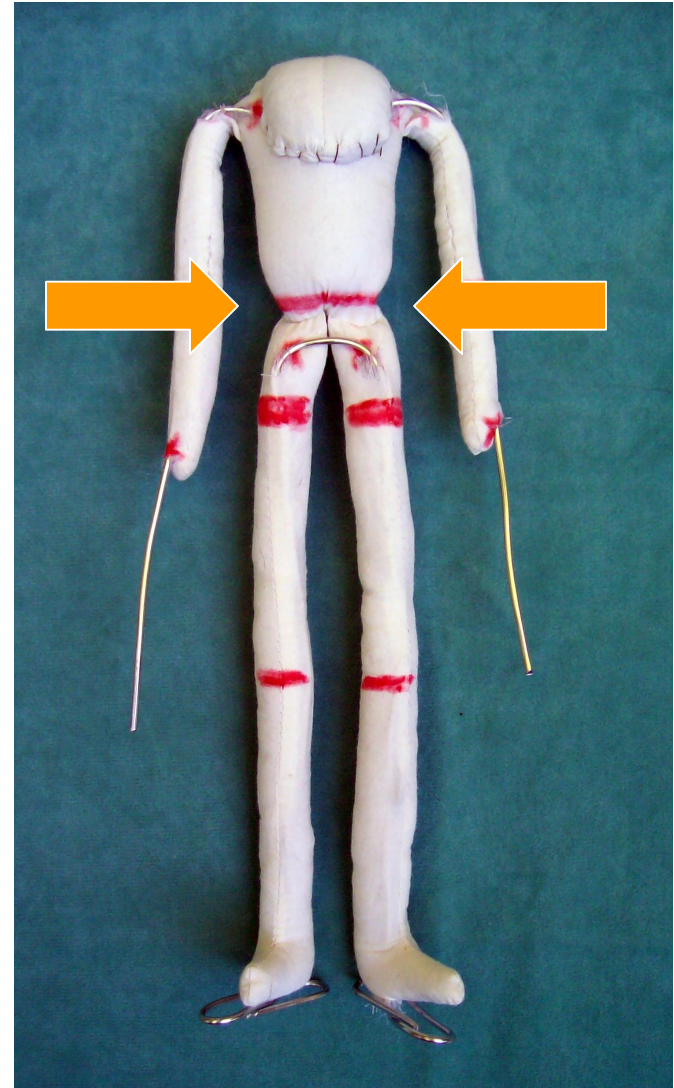
Bendi's Anatomy

- Waist: 8¼ inches (21 cm) up from bottom of feet
- Elbows: At waist
- Crotch: 1¼ to 1½ inches (3.5 cm) below waist
- Knees: 4 inches (10 cm) up from bottom of feet



Bendi's Anatomy

- To cinch in Bendi's waist, anchor a strong thread on one side of her body. Pass the needle through the body across to the other side and back again. Pull and knot off.



Wrap it Up

- How much wrapping Bendi gets depends on the type of clothing she will be wearing. If her clothes will be baggy, then she may not need much at all. However, if her clothes will be formfitting, then she will need to have some nice body shaping underneath.

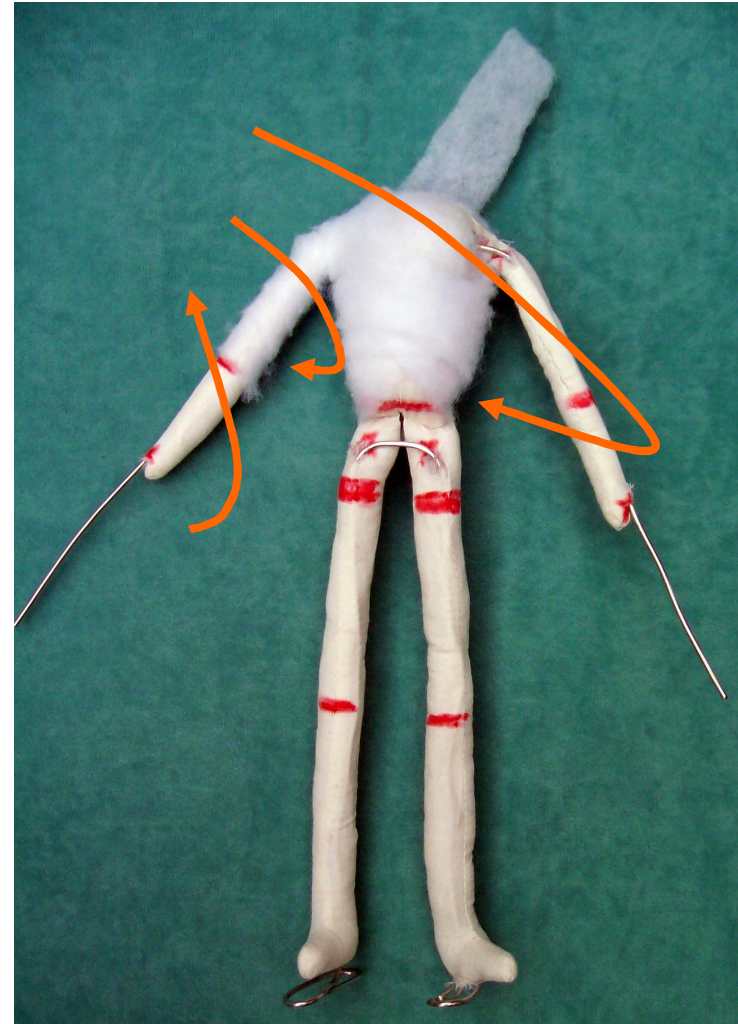
Wrap It Up

- Cut batting into strips approximately 1 inch (2.5 cm) wide.



Wrap It Up

- Starting at the elbow on one side, wrap the batting up the arm and around the torso.



Wrap It Up

- Secure the batting to the Bendi body using a felting needle. Two or three needles can be used at one time in a Pen Style Needle Felting Tool. Just a few jabs are needed to keep the batting in place.



Wrap It Up

- Continue wrapping the batting around the Bendi torso. Pull the batting tight around the waist and build up the hips.
- Secure any loose ends with a felting needle.
- Wrap the legs and feet.



Wrap It Up



Body Front



Foot



Body Back

Wrap It Up

- Add more batting around the hips and the tops of the legs to give the doll a more feminine shape.



Wrap It Up

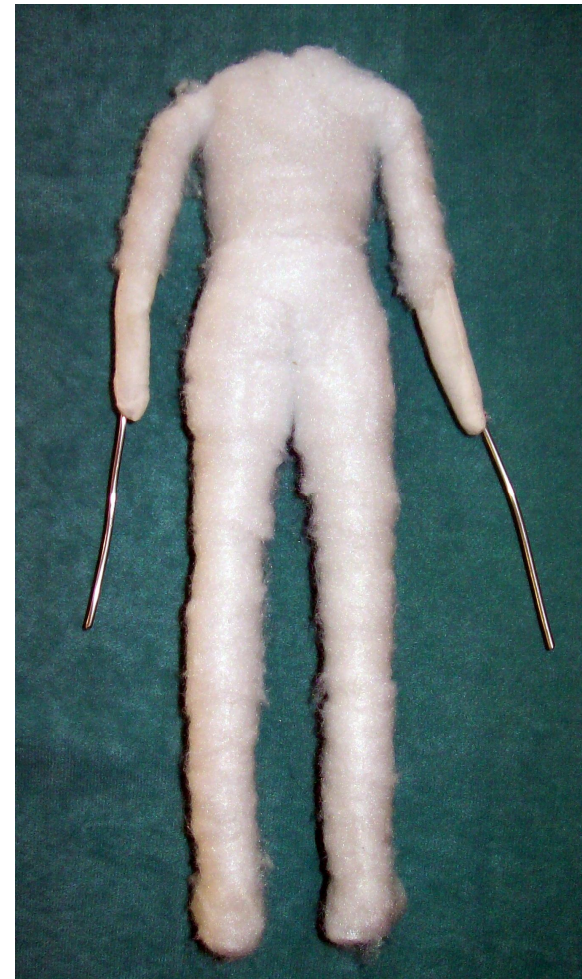
- Secure the batting with a few jabs with a felting needle.



Wrap It Up



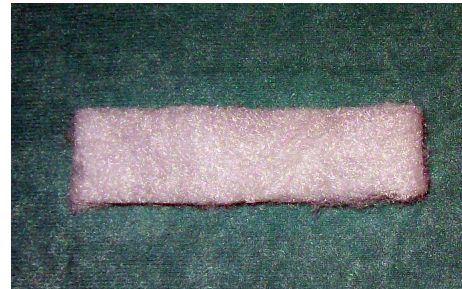
Body Front



Body Back

Wrap It Up - Breasts

- To form a breast, cut a strip of batting approximately 1 inch wide and 7 inches in length (2.5 and 18 cm).
- Fold the strip in half.



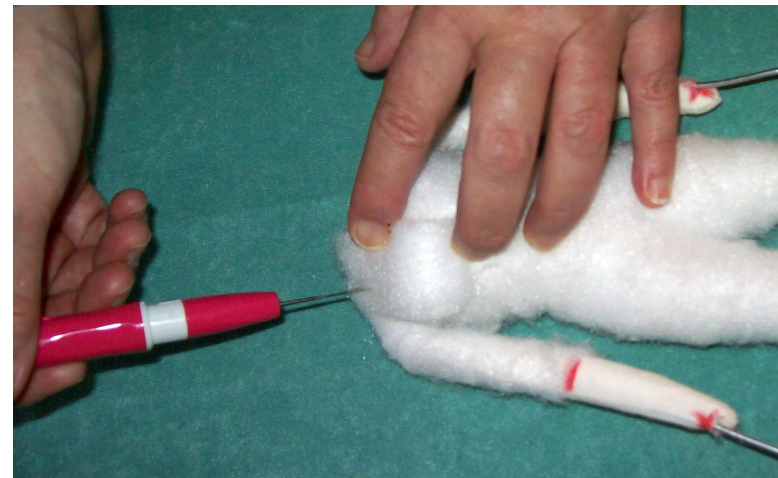
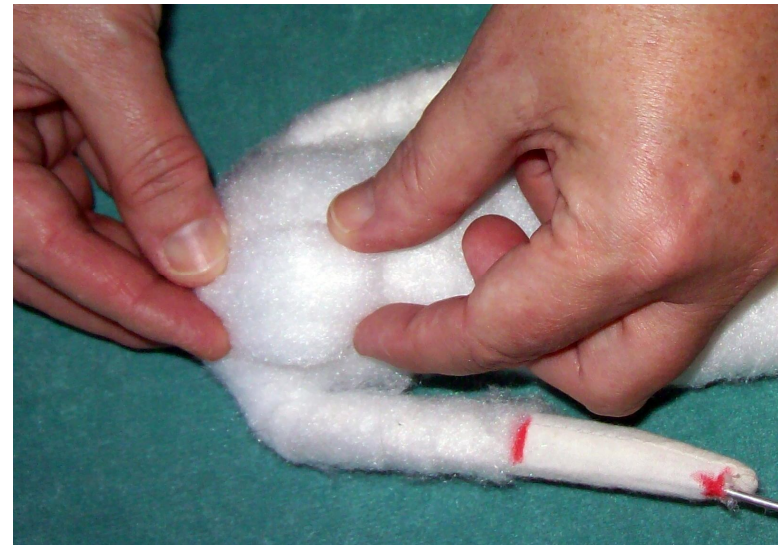
Wrap It Up - Breasts

- Fold the strip up about 1/3 its length.
- Fold again leaving a short tab of doubled batting.



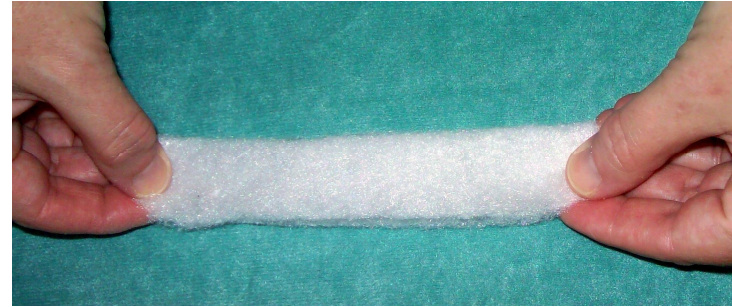
Wrap It Up - Breasts

- Place the breast on the torso with the thickest part of the folded batting towards the waist.
- Felt the breast in place.
- Repeat for the other side.



Wrap It Up - Buttocks

- The buttocks are formed using the same method used for the breasts.
- Cut a strip of batting approximately 1½ inches wide and 8 inches long (4 and 20 cm).
- Fold in half.
- Fold up 1/3 and 1/3 again leaving a tab of batting.



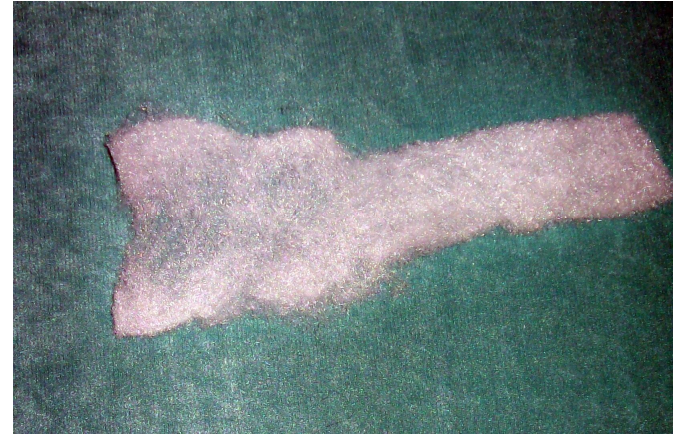
Wrap It Up - Buttocks

- Place the buttock on the doll with the thickest part towards the leg.
- Felt in place to secure.



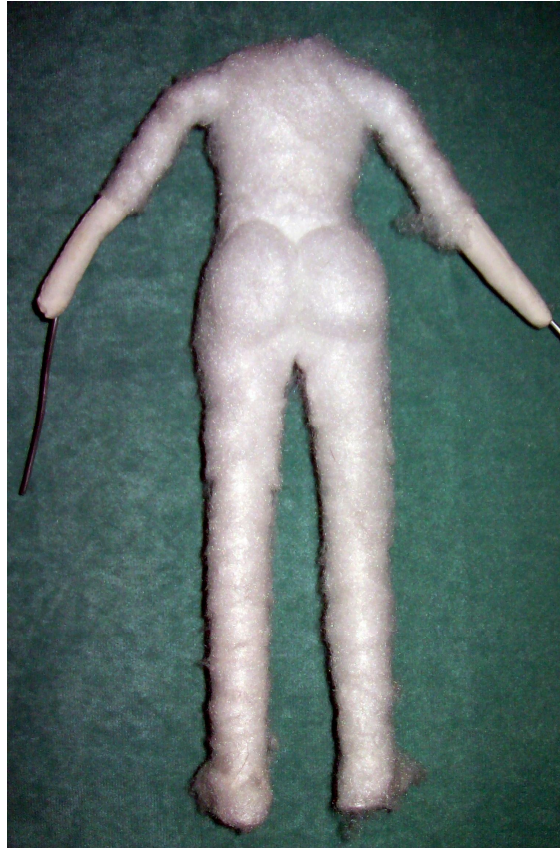
Wrap It Up - Buttocks

- To smooth over unsightly wrinkles and cellulite, pull the fibers of a piece of batting apart.
- Felt the batting over the lumps and bumps.



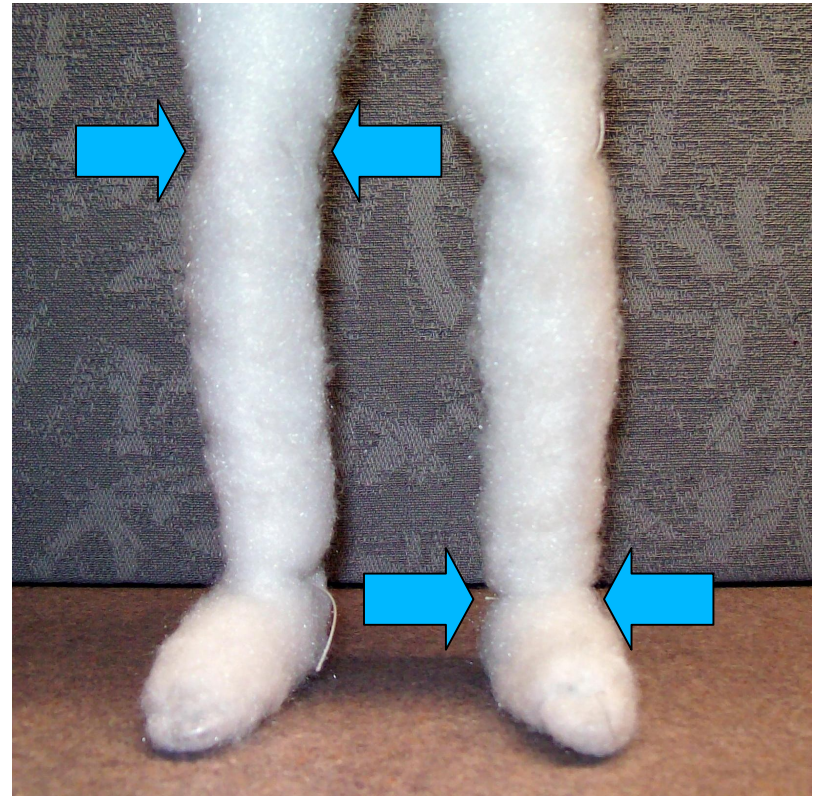
Wrap It Up – Finish Off

- Finish up the other side of the body and shape the buttocks.
- Give her a belly button with a few jabs of the felting needle.



Wrap It Up – Finish Off

- To define the knees and ankles, anchor a strong thread on one side of her leg. Pass the needle through the leg across to the other side and back again. Pull and knot off.



Wrap It Up – Finish Off

- All Bendi needs now is a neck, head, and two hands. I really like the head and neck from Colleen Babcock's *Gather Ye Rosebuds*. The head is just the right size for a Bendi.



Wrap It Up – Finish Off

- But, you can use any head that you like.
- To be in proper proportion to the doll, it will need to be about 2 inches (5 cm) long.



Wrap It Up – Finish Off

- For this doll, I drew a pattern for her hands by photocopying and reducing my own hand.
- You can do the same or use any pattern you like.
- The finished hands should be approximately 2 inches (5 cm) measured from the wrist to the tip of the middle finger.



Almost Done!

- Sew the neck to the Bendi body and sew the head to the neck.
- Sew the hands to her arms. Look at yourself in a mirror and make sure that the tips of the fingers are neither too low nor too high on the leg.
- Dress her up and she's ready to face the world.

Done!

- Now take a look at some Bendi dolls made by my friends Marguerite Bessicks, Lee Fertitta, and Judi Ward.

Marguerite Bessicks' Bendi



Lee Fertitta's Bendi



Judi Ward's Bendi



Acknowledgements

- *Marguerite's* apron and blouse are from Colleen Babcock's *Gather Ye Rosebuds*.
<http://dollmakersjourney.com/babcock.html>
- All my Bendi dolls have heads and necks made from Colleen's *Gather Ye Rosebuds*. I love her head. It has a wonderful shape and is a perfect fit for a Bendi.

Acknowledgements

- Many thanks to Marguerite Bessicks, Lee Fertitta, Celia Sullivan, Doris Talbott, and Judi Ward for their friendship and for making their own versions of Bendi armature dolls and giving me helpful suggestions. Celia very kindly helped with some of the photos for this presentation.
- Thanks also to Mary Ann Kaahanui and Bonnie Lewis for encouragement and the opportunity to share my Bendis.