

BONDO EAR METHOD

ITEMS NEEDED:

One (1) ounce measuring container
Fiberglass resin
Bondo
Chopped fiberglass
Mixing bowl (Cool Whip container works well!)

Tongue depressors
Fish knife (or any serrated knife)
Lacquer thinner
Potters clay

PROCEDURE:

1. For this method, you will leave the tanned cartilage in the ears. Turn the ear skin side out and do any repairs necessary, using clear monofilament thread. Wash ears in a bowl of lacquer thinner by dipping them. **DO NOT DO THIS NEAR FIRE OR FLAME!** Towel ears dry to remove excess Lacquer thinner. This procedure removes any tanning oils and displaces moisture, ensuring good adhesion.
2. Using a fish skinning knife or similar tool, rough up the cartilage to ensure a good bond.
3. Turns ears hair side out and repeat the washing process using Lacquer thinner. This cleans the inner ear and dissipates moisture. Towel the inner ears dry. This step will also make the ears easier to paint when doing finish work after the mount is dry by removing any oily residues or sawdust from your tumbler.
4. Lay hide out flat, skin side up with head and ears hanging over the edge of a table. Arrange the hide so that ears are easily accessible once you have your bondo-resin mixture prepared.
5. Measure out one (1) ounce of fiberglass resin in a measuring cup. **ALWAYS** measure resin first as this liquid coats the measuring cup and acts like a release when you measure the bondo. Pour the resin into a mixing bowl. Next, measure out one (1) ounce of bondo and add it to the resin. Blend the two ingredients until a uniform mixture is obtained.
6. The next step is to add one and one-half inch (1 1/2") of the red cream hardener to the mixture and stir thoroughly until uniform color is obtained.
7. Add chopped fiberglass (approximately three (3) ounces) to the mixture and stir in completely.
8. This amount of mixture is enough for two Whitetail sized ears. However, if you are doing bondo ears for the first time, concentrate on one ear at a time. You will have 15-20 minutes to work this mixture into your ears. If you only get one ear done before your bondo hardens, simply cut the formula in half and do the other ear. If the bondo sets before you want it to, you can invert the ear and remove it with a little effort.
9. To apply mixture to ears, use a tongue depressor to insert about half of the contents in the ear, in the space between the skin and cartilage.
10. Using your fingers, knead the bondo from the outside, working it in to all parts of the ear. When you are sure all parts of the ear are covered, then begin to even the bondo out and work any excess back out. Use your reference to check accuracy. Ears, such as Whitetails, are thin at the edges and curve slightly outward at the tips. A common mistake in using this method is to leave too much bondo mixture in the ears, creating too thick of an ear, detracting from the beauty of the mount.
11. When you are satisfied with the shape of your ears, let them dangle over the end of the table to prevent distortion from laying flat on the table. Check them from time to time over the next few minutes. As the bondo begins to set, peel back the ears a bit up to where the ear opening begins. Do this as the bondo begins to set and it is much easier to accomplish. If you wait too long, and the bondo sets completely hard, you can still peel back the ears with some difficulty. By peeling the ears back, you allow room for potters clay, which you will use to create ear butts.
12. When bondo sets hard, lay a thin layer of potters clay in the area you peeled back. this will assure a smooth union in between ear and ear butt. Next, fill the void at the base of the ear where the muscle and meat were removed. Again, reference is important here. You are now ready to mount.
13. After you have the hide on the form and partially sewn up, stop and position your ears and make adjustments on your ear butts by taking out or adding potters clay through the incision on the back. If you feel the ears need support while drying, use a wire or 4" pin and push inside ear and into mannikin.

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