

Making the ultimate Jack Sparrow boots
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This tutorial can actually be used to make any sort of tall boot. I myself have used the same tricks to create my Anakin Skywalker boots, Royal Guard boots, ect. I hope that this becomes as useful to you, and it has been to me.

Getting started:

For Jack, you need to start out with a simple pair of square toed shoes, or boots. Your best bet would be to use a pair of boots, but if you don't have any, or can't find them, shoes will do. Another helpful tip would be to use an old pair of shoes, as the soles will have already been beaten in. I recycle many of my old shoes, by converting them into costume shoes/boots.

If you are starting off with an existing pair of boots, you have an easier time creating your new shaft. Simply unstitch the shaft from the shoe, this will be your template for the new shaft. Simply trace it onto your suede, and make it about as long as your leg. The shaft should also be double thick, as the originals. Do this by simply cementing 2 pieces of suede together.

For glue, I strongly suggest that you use "**Barge**" rubber cement. This along will literally hold your boots together, once you are finished. If you have access to an industrial leather sewing machine, you can always opt to stitch all of the pieces together, once you are finished. Additionally, you can probably take them to your local shoe repairman, and ask them to stitch them for you.

After you've made your shaft template, create a template for both the heel, and the body of the boot. Again, simply just trace the shape of the shoe to suede. One of the easiest way of doing this, is to take some fabric, lay it onto the base of the shoe, and trace it from there. Cut that out, and fit it to the shoe. If that looks fine, then you are ready to cut that shape into the suede.

Step 1: Preparing the shoe

Begin by preparing your shoes. The best way that you'll get the suede to stick is by scraping up the surface of your shoes. This will allow the rubber cement to adhere to tiny grooves within the surface.



Step 2: Adding the heel

The first piece that you want to add, is the heel. By now, you should've already created your shoe patterns, and transferred them to the suede. It really does not matter how wide the sides of this piece is, as it will be later covered by the front piece. What does matter is the arched shape above the heel.

Simply add a layer of cement to both the inside of your suede heel, and the heel of the shoe. Remember, rubber cement is a contact glue. So let it dry a few minutes before sticking them together.



Step 3: Adding the front (or toe)

Now that your heels have been completed, now comes the fun part, adding the toe!

Again, remember to glue both sides, and dry. Once the pieces are ready, start from the top slope, and press it firmly to the toe of the shoe. Once that is down nice and tight, you can start stretching each side tightly down, one at a time. You shouldn't have to worry about any areas wrinkling up on you, as the suede has some stretch to it. The tighter you pull it across, the better it will look.



Step 4: Scoring the edges

Once you have firmly placed the suede across the toes of the shoe, it is time to work the edges. Find a blunt tool (like a flat screwdriver), and score the suede into the area between the shoe and the sole. The better you get it in there, the better it will look once you cut off the excess. Do this all the way around the shoe.



Step 5: Trimming the edges

Now that you have stuffed the suede into the cracks, you can now begin to trim off all of the extra suede.

Take your utility blade, and cut around the edges of your shoe. Do this as close to the shoe itself. Again, this will make the boot look as natural as possible, and not like a shoe with leather glued to it.



Step 6: Base shoe is now finished!

The base of the shoes are now finished! Do the same with your other shoe, and admire your work. But don't get too comfortable yet, cause now you have to take care of the shaft of the boot!



Step 7: Adding the shaft

By now you should have traced out the shape of the shaft onto your suede. Simply rubber cement the ends of the suede together. This will be the back of the shaft.

Once it is all dry, you can start by joining the bottom of the shaft to the heel of the boot. Join it to the inside of the heel (naturally).



Step 8: Adding the shaft (pt. 2)

Now you can glue the base of the shaft to the underside of the top slope, and the sides of the shoe. Same steps as before...glue both sides of each piece, and allow to dry before joining.



Step 9: Almost there...

By now, the shape of your boots should be complete. You may think you're finished, but unless you're trying to look like your average, run of the mill pirate, straight off the Halloween store shelf, you've still got some more work to do!



Step 10: Getting dirty!!

The boot on the left was just glued together. The boot on the right has gone through years of rigorous use over the high seas! Well, not exactly. But if you're going to pull off a costume that looks like it's been "lived in", then you've got to make it appear that way!

Let's face it, pirates never went to the dry cleaners. One of my biggest peeves is to find someone that has spent countless hours working on their costume, and they forget the most important thing- weathering!

Try different approaches. Use some black shoe polish, leave them out in the elements, take a rotary tool, and scrape up all the edges (including the sole itself!) And holes, add a few small holes in the shaft, here and there. I have handled a pair of the stunt shoes, and there are holes in there. Not in the bottom, in the heel or anything, but in the shaft, right where it folds over.



Now, if you can't find a way to have the ends stitched down, do not worry. Barge is one of the strongest cements around. My first pair of Jack boots were made for Halloween, and I never stitched anything together on those. They have yet to fall apart in any way. If you can get them stitched, then more power to 'ya! And they'll look all the more authentic.

Good luck!