

Attaching the Loose Tail

This tutorial explains and illustrates the steps to attach the loose tail option to Rio Rondo's "Valor-HP" resin sculpture.

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Tools You Will Need

- 320 grit sandpaper
- Rio Rondo's Carbide Scrapers or other seam-removing tool
- Rubbing Alcohol, Cotton Pads and Cotton Swabs, Paper Towels
- Small Shallow container to hold rubbing alcohol. (*An empty tuna can works well.*)
- Small Soft Flat paintbrush (filbert or bright) preferably used or worn (*no need to use a good brand-new brush for this*)
- Sculpting Tools/Modeling Stylus*
- Drill motor and 1/4" drill bit
- Capoxio or other sculpting-type 2-part epoxy (*do not use standard liquid 2-part epoxy, as it will be too runny for this procedure.*)

*A modeling stylus of almost any type will work fine . . . you can craft your own from a wooden craft stick and carve or sand it down to a tapered pointed shape. Or use a wooden dowel, a sharpened pencil tip, a small pointed stylus. Alternatively, try a piece of wire with one end sanded smooth. Just about anything will work for this that tapers down to a fine blunted/rounded point.

Prep The Seams and Tail

Prep the seams, paying particular attention to the hind end area since it's easier to work these seams now than after the tail has been attached. Use a scraper to remove any flash or raised material. Follow up with the 320 grit sandpaper to smooth things out nicely.

Remove the seams from the tail, and smooth the flat underside areas in particular.

Wipe the area around the tail hole with alcohol on a cotton pad, as well as the tail itself, to remove any residual mold release from the casting process.

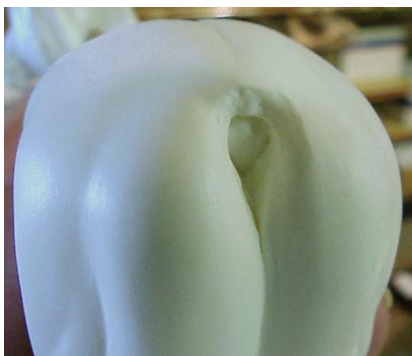
Wrap/pad the ears and head area with toilet paper, to protect the ears as you continue.



Drill Out The Tail Hole

Drill the hole where the tail should be. This area is clearly noted on the sculpture.

Hold the drill bit at an angle that is parallel with the top of the horse's croup area. Do not drill straight into the horse horizontally, or the tail will not "set" into position properly. Drill about 1" or so deep.



Take your tail and slip the "peg" end into the drilled hole. Check the tail for fit. If the hole isn't deep enough, you can either

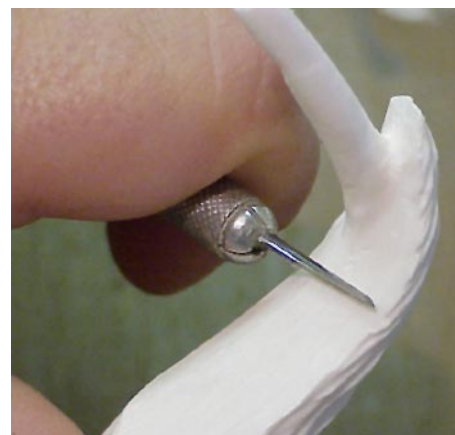
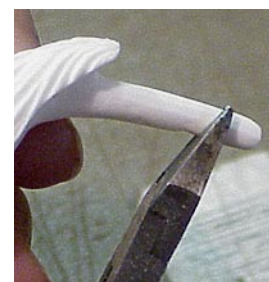
- A. Snip off the end of the peg with nippers/cutters
- B. Drill the hole a little deeper

Check to see that the angle of the tail rests where it should. The tail should fit into the hole loosely.

The upper portion of the tail should fit fairly close to the body of the horse and the underside should rest along the horse's dock (butt cheek) area. Using a scraper or similar tool, trim around the top of the tail, including under the small upper "lip", as well as the two "flat" areas underneath until the tail sets properly when inserted. The peg should fit loose, not tight.

The top portion of the tail should fit nearly "flush" around the tail hole area.

Wipe off any dust or resin shavings from the tail with alcohol on a cotton pad, and you are ready to attach the tail.



Mix Putty and Attach the Tail

Pour some alcohol into your container, and have your cotton pads/swabs handy. Make sure your sculpting tool(s) and paintbrush are ready. If you use latex or vinyl gloves to work with epoxy putty, put them on now.



Mix up your 2 part epoxy putty as per directions on the package. Form a small cylinder about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long and a little smaller than about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch diameter. Push this cylinder of putty most of the way into the tail hole. If needed, use one of your sculpting tools to push it farther in. The putty should not be packed in tight. If your cylinder of putty is too "fat", work with your fingers to make it a little skinnier. You want the putty to be wide enough to "catch" a bit as you push it into the tail hole. Too little putty will not result in the secure hold you want.



Smear the putty across the hole, and down in the dock area.

Smear a little putty on the area as shown around the peg, and the flat undersides of the tail. If the putty does not wish to stick immediately, dip your fingers in the alcohol and smooth it on and over the putty to help it adhere. Wipe your fingers with alcohol on a cotton pad to clean off any extra putty.

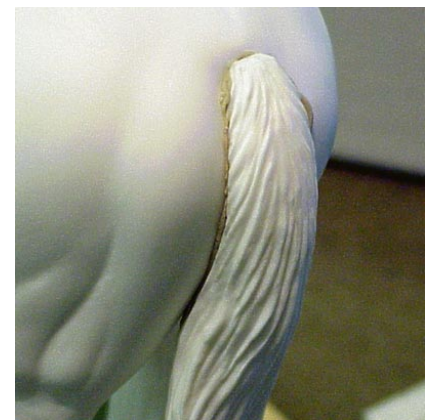


Insert The Tail

With one hand holding the horse and the other hand holding the tail, push tail into tail hole. (The horse can be standing on your work area for this, use one hand to stabilize it..)

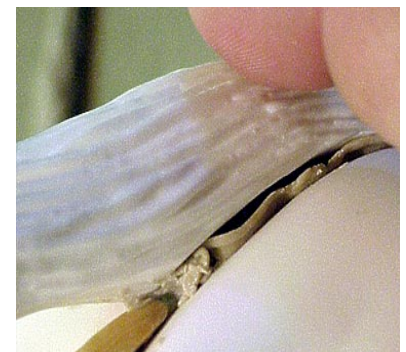
Gently, but firmly push the tail in until it is flush up against the body. If there is too much putty around the tail hole and you can't reasonably push the tail all the way in, pull the tail out and remove some of the extra putty, then try again.

Some of the putty should squish out and around the edge of the tail and tail hole. If not, you need to remove the tail and add a bit more putty into the hole.



Fill The Gaps Under The Tail

Chances are, there are gaps along the seam where the tail joins the body. Get a little bit of putty and lift up the bottom end of the tail. Use a tool to shove extra putty up under the areas that need more filler. When you've packed enough extra putty in to ensure the putty will "squish out" all the way around, press the tail back down firmly into place.



Remove the Excess Putty and Smooth the Seams

Using a tool, gently remove the extra putty from around the seams. Wet the tool in the alcohol to help it "glide" along the seams more smoothly. Use the alcohol and cotton pads/swabs to remove excess bits of putty from your fingers, tools and the horse as you go.

Shape out the underside of the tail using a tool, and remove the extra putty from this area. Use your tool to push the material into shape under the tail to create a smooth, unobtrusive "joint" where the tail touches the body.

Dip your brush in alcohol, and lightly blot it on a paper towel. Stroke the brush along the side seam areas and the area up under the tail to gently smooth the putty out. Rinse the brush in alcohol as needed. Remove any unwanted bits or smears of putty from your tools, fingers and the horse as you go with alcohol on a cotton pad.





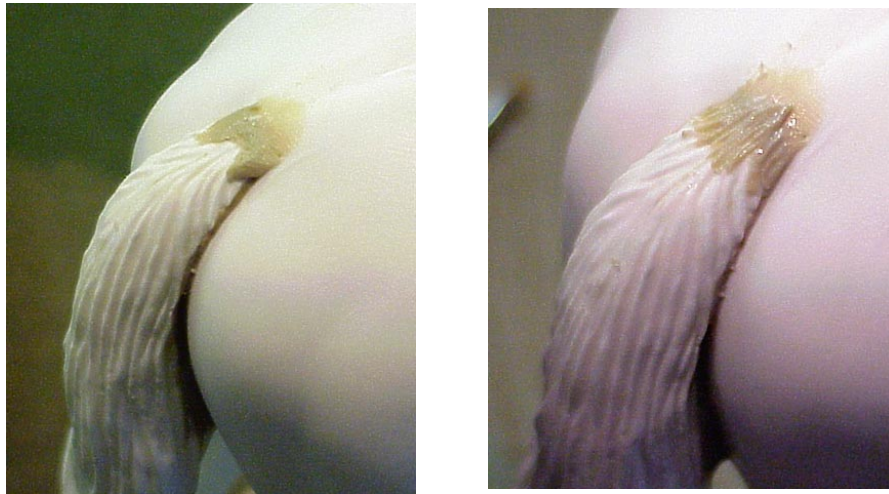
Filling and Detailing the Tailhead

When you are satisfied with how things look all around the seams, it's time to touch up the tail head. If you do not wish to "risk" undoing what you've done so far, set the sculpture aside to cure for an hour or so, then return to finish the last operation.

To fill in the tailhead, mix up a small bit of fresh putty to work with. Apply a small "bead" of putty over the "joint" where the body and tailhead meet.

Dampen your tool with alcohol and gently push the putty into the gap, then smooth it over the top. Use the tip or edge of your tool to blend in the hair texture at the tail head. Smooth the area over with brush dampened with alcohol.

Alternatively, you can just fill and smooth the tailhead and allow this area to cure, returning later with a little more fresh putty to add some hair texture over the top to blend it all in nicely.



When you are satisfied with how things look, set the model aside in a warm area and allow it to cure. Cure time is about 1 hour at 75 degrees F... add 1 hour of time for each 5 degrees cooler the temperature is.

Once all the putty is completely cured, you should proceed with any additional seam prepping and priming to prepare the horse for painting.

Don't forget to clean your tools with alcohol, and be sure to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water when you are done!

