

Extending Feather Quills for Bustles and Fans

It is often necessary to extend domestic bird feathers to simulate the larger eagle feathers. The modern Northern Traditional swing bustle also requires extensions being added to the feathers.

To extend the length of quills, purchase small diameter hardwood dowels, usually 3/16 inch or 1/4 inch diameter. Plan the length of extension you need, then cut your dowels at least 2 inches longer than the planned feather extension. Taper one end of the dowel. You can carefully shave them down with a knife, or use a sander, or work them down with a wood file. The amount of taper needs to be enough to slip that end of the dowel inside the shaft of the quill.

Cut the tip of the quill off to expose the hollow shaft where it is about uniform in diameter throughout the remaining quill.

Coat the tapered dowel with glue. We suggest using the Tacky Glue where non-toxic glue must be used. Another glue that works good for this is Contact Cement. Follow the safety instructions.

Insert the tapered glued end into the feather shaft and force it tightly into the shaft.

Let all of the extended feathers dry. Lay out the feathers in the order desired, then trim all of the dowels down to the proper length depending on their position in the bustle or fan.

For bustle work, finish the base of the feather dowel by attaching leather or plastic tabs to the bottom. Cut the tabs about 3/16 inch wide and 2 inches long. Put a layer of glue on one side of the tab, and also lightly coat the base of the dowel about an inch up. Let it dry to tacky. Contact the loop over the end of the dowel base and wrap tightly with heavy thread or simulated sinew.

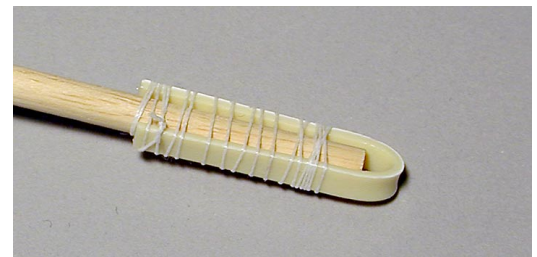
Plan to cover all of this work by wrapping a decorative layer of colored yarn, felt, colored electrical tape, or leather. The tape can be wrapped directly on the dowel and quill. For the fabrics and leather, lightly coat the area to be covered with glue and let dry to tacky before wrapping. When using leather or felt, also lightly coat the back side of that material and let dry to tacky. then contact the material to the dowel and quill.



Supplies needed.



Insert the dowel into the quill shaft.



Wrap glued tab with heavy thread or simulated sinew.