“IT’S JUST A MATTER OF TIME AND DEDICATION. PEOPLE MOST OFTEN FAIL SOMETHING BECAUSE THEY DON’T TRY. SO STAY OPEN MINDED, CAUSE SOMETIMES YOU JUST NEED TO SIT DOWN AND HAVE SOME FUN. YOU MIGHT LEARN A THING OR TWO ALONG THE WAY.”

— MYKIE (GLAM & GORE) ON BODY PAINTING
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Heyooo!
Dinny Grayson here!
I’ll be walking you through the basics of body painting for cosplay.

Together, we’ll tackle the details, tips and tricks to help you on your first time with body paint! It may seem intimidating at first but trust me, give it a shot and you’ll surprise yourself with your own results!

So grab those body paints and....
LET'S GET COLORFUL

WITH PAINT THAT WILL BE ON THE BODY HENCE IT IS CALLED BODY PAINT

YASSSSSS
We all know that the fictional realm is filled with all sorts of characters hailing from different planets and dimensions; and as cosplayers, we bring these characters to life.

In terms of skin tone: trolls can be grey, mutants can be green, and aliens can be rainbow-colored.

Anything is possible.

Luckily, even for mere mortals like us — that’s true with a little help from cosmetics. Mostly, body paint.

(Sometimes, glitter)
BODY PAINT HAS BEEN USED IN COUNTLESS ART FORMS; FROM LIVE ART, TO OPTICAL ILLUSIONS, TO FILM AND PRODUCTIONS, AND FASHION.

FOR COSPLAY, IT'S MOST OFTEN USED TO ATTAIN AN "UNNATURAL" SKIN COLOR OR TEXTURE TO PORTRAY A CHARACTER AS ACCURATELY AS POSSIBLE.

IN THIS GUIDE, YOU WILL LEARN THE VERY BASIC TOOLS, TECHNIQUES AND TRICKS FOR COSPLAYS THAT REQUIRE A FORM OF BODY PAINTING – WHETHER IT BE FOR DETAILS, JUST THE FACE, OR THE ENTIRE BODY SO THAT YOU CAN BE THE FICTIONAL CHARACTER YOU’VE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE.
THE CORE OF BODY PAINTING IS WELL, BODY PAINT. YOU CAN GET BODY PAINT FROM COSMETIC, CRAFT OR ONLINE STORES. THERE ARE MANY TYPES OF BODY PAINT THAT WILL BE DISCUSSED NEXT!

**TOOLS**

**BODY PAINT**

The core of body painting is well, body paint. You can get body paint from cosmetic, craft or online stores. There are many types of body paint that will be discussed next!

**SPONGES**

This is the most common body paint applicator. It is cheap and easy to blend colours without brush strokes. It helps with an even, less patchy application.
**BRUSHES**

Brushes are also used to apply body paint. For large areas, foundation brushes are ideal, but smaller brushes are most often used for details.

**AIR BRUSH**

A small machine that applies the paint very evenly. This is usually used by professionals as this option is very expensive. However, this blends colors seamlessly.

**POWDER**

This is used to help seal the paint and avoid transfer. Baby powder, press powder, translucent powders, and even eyeshadows are used for this.
SEALERS

This is used to seal the paint after powder for more security. Cosmetic finishing sprays, professional body paint sealers are used for this. Aerosol hairspray is a great alternative for these.

BEAUTY COSMETICS

These are helpful for further detailing and contours. Most commonly: eyeshadows, blushes, bronzers, and eyeliners are used.
Body paint comes in various types that would suit different situations depending on the nature of the occasion, the location's climate, and for how long a person will need the body paint on. The following descriptions are base on experiences but don't be afraid to experiment and find out what works best for you!
WATER-ACTIVATED PAINTS

This is the most common type of paint for body painting. As the name suggests, these paints are activated by water. Meaning, without water they are dry to the touch in their containers or on your skin.

This is the cheapest option and can be found in many craft stores. Blending, opacity, detailing and removal is very easy since you’re only working with water.

However, since this is water activated, the paints will last only until the model gets wet or even sweaty (no matter how well you seal this).

This is not recommended if you know you’re going to be active, if your location is hot/humid, and if you sweat easily. This is best for everyone, photo shoots, and indoor events.
GREASE PAINTS

Grease paints are also very common, especially for special effects because these are oil based paints. It basically has a consistency of lipstick.

This can be a little more expensive but it won't budge throughout the day even when sweaty since oil generally is not affected by water. It also sticks onto other surfaces such as latex and gelatin.

On the downside, this is very difficult to remove and often stains skin if worn for too long or if not removed well with wipes or make up remover. It also feels sticky.

It tends to irritate skin afterwards with its ingredients and strips off natural oils during removal but is recommended for whole day/active events and special effects.
CREAM PAINTS

CREAM PAINTS ARE BASICALLY IN BETWEEN WATER-ACTIVATED PAINTS AND GREASE PAINTS. THEY AREN'T AS THICK AND DOESN'T SET AS STICKY AS GREASE PAINTS BUT WATER CAN BE USED TO BLEND AND MAKE THEM SMOOTHER LIKE WATER-ACTIVATED PAINTS.

SINCE WATER DOES SEMI-ACTIVATE THEM, SWEAT AND WATER WILL AFFECT THE PAINTS BY SMUDGING, SPREADING OR FLAKING TO SOME EXTENT. IT IS ALSO A BIT DIFFICULT TO REMOVE, BUT A GOOD MAKE UP REMOVER SHOULD DO THE TRICK. IT HAS THE CONSISTENCY OF CONCEALERS AND CREAM EYESHADOWS.

THIS IS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR ACTIVE EVENTS BUT CAN DEFINITELY LAST AN ENTIRE DAY IF THE PERSON IS CAREFUL. IT'S GREAT FOR PHOTO SHOOTS AND INDOOR EVENTS.
ALCOHOL-ACTIVATED PAINTS

Activated only by alcohol, this is best for details (especially making tattoos and bruises) and active events as water and sweat will not affect these at all.

These are not recommended near the eye since alcohol will definitely irritate the eyes. This is best for detailing since covering large areas with alcohol and these paints not only tend to dry up the skin but can be expensive.

LIQUID PAINTS

These are very runny formulas that are most often used with airbrushing. It can be applied with brushes or sponges but these applicators eat up too much of the product and it takes a very long time to dry. It is expensive and used mostly by professionals. This is not recommended for beginners.
HOW TO APPLY

Water-activated paints are best for beginners and for the purpose of this section, we will focus on that! Necessary side notes will be added in relation to the other types. We will use a solid, full body color with some detailing for the subject of this procedure like most cosplays that require body paint.

1. Start off with clean skin. Paints stick better to skin without any products on it, especially lotions. If your skin is extra oily and you are really worried that might affect your paints, apply some primer before applying paint. It isn’t necessary but can help calm your nerves if you’re going to be too worried about it.
Activate your paint with water! Using a spray bottle is a great way to do this. Just spray a bit of water at a time on your paint. Remember: more water, less opaque; less water, more opaque; no water, no paint.

2

Begin applying paint using your applicator. A sponge will apply the paint without brush strokes but it may take some time. A brush will have brush strokes but can be used to cover large areas very quickly.

3

A great way to counter imperfections from step 3 is to use a brush first to apply the paint all over the face and body, then go over everything with a second layer of paint using a sponge. This will make the paint more opaque and even out any of the brush strokes and patchiness.

4
Once you've got your solid colour down, it's time to paint on the necessary skin details with body paint. This includes facial/body marks/tattoos. Use a smaller brush, take your time and use references!

If you're happy with how everything looks, it's time to seal! Grab your powder and a fluffy brush and coat your paint with powder. This not only creates a barrier for your paint but makes it look more like your skin is stained with color rather than painted.

For the purposes of this tutorial, freckles were added to Peebles.
For extra security and to really lock in those paints and powders, get your finishing spray or aerosol hairspray and coat your paint with that. Make sure to spray about 5 – 8 inches away for finishing spray and 6 – 10 inches for hairspray so your paint doesn’t get ruined. Hold your breath!

Now that everything is sealed, you’ll notice that with just body paint you’ve lost the natural contours of your face and body. Start sculpting your face and body using eyeshadows, bronzers or blushes about two shades lighter (for highlighting) or darker (for contouring) than your new skin tone. Also apply necessary make up, if any, like eyeliner, lipsticks or false lashes. For safety, seal everything once more with a finishing spray.
HOW TO MAINTAIN

No matter what you do in your body paint, maintenance is always important. Here are a few tips on how to maintain your body paint!

Bring a small spray bottle of water, the paint you used, a small bottle of baby powder, small applicators and finishing spray in case of any mess ups.

Stay in cool areas and avoid running or going into big crowds that will cause you to sweat.
AVOID ANYTHING WET, MOIST OR DAMP! BRING AROUND STRAWS FOR YOUR DRINKS.

IF YOUR PAINT STARTS TO RUN, DON'T WIPE AWAY THE PAINT. GRAB A TISSUE AND DAB IT AWAY SO IT DOESN'T SPREAD AROUND. FIX AND REAPPLY FROM THERE.

FRIENDS!! HAVE A FRIEND THAT CAN HELP YOU OUT, TELL YOU WHEN SOMETHING DOESN'T LOOK RIGHT ANYMORE AND HAVE A LOT OF FUN WITH!
HOW TO REMOVE

IT'S VERY SIMPLE.
GET INTO THE SHOWER/BATH.
TURN ON THE WATER.
WATCH THE COLOR STRIP AWAY.
SCRUB WITH SOAP. BATHE NORMALLY, BASICALLY.

FOR TOUGHER PAINTS, MAKE USE OF A COMERCIAL MAKE UP REMOVER, BABY OIL OR BABY SHAMPOO WITH A BATHING GLOVE OR SPONGE. USE ALCOHOL FOR ALCOHOL ACTIVATED PAINTS.
Body painting is really as simple as that. It seems daunting at first, but these are all just little, basic steps that all add up to something that looks pretty darn impressive.

Body painting takes time and practice. It's a learning experience. Cosplay itself is a huge learning experience in the road of bringing these magical characters to life.

So, like I always say....
CHALLENGE YOURSELF CONSTANTLY
You will never know you can or cannot do something unless you try — and life is way too short to live it with regrets.