

Costume Makeup Tips

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I have played a dark elf in the past. As well, for a while, many wild elves I knew would come to me to get painted. These are tips I have found on my own and from talking to other players.

If you are going to be a painted PC (i.e. dark elf, sarr) all in all it is best to buy the good makeup. Spend the extra money. You'll be happier with the results. I have found in the past that although facial clean up did take a tad longer with the good dark elf makeup, I had to reapply less, with less staining of my clothes from sweat run off.

Go to Goodwill or find a good sized makeup case to carry your makeup in. The best cases are the hard ones with a mirror. The hard case protects your makeup itself, it ensures that the plastic cases your makeup comes in stays intact, and that your cream makeup in the tubes don't get squished all over. The cases with mirrors inside are invaluable. At most camp sites there is either no mirror, or one mirror that is the size of a sheet of paper that you will have to share with 5 other PCs who also need to apply their makeup. If a good sized hard makeup case is out of your budget, you can make your own at the dollar store. You can buy a hard plastic pencil case for school, a small box of generic brand ziploc bags (so if your makeup leaks it's not messing anything up), and a small locker mirror that's also used for school (just make sure it will fit inside the pencil case). This is a good alternative if you don't have a lot of makeup to carry like if you are an Elf, a Mystic Wood Elf, or a Wild Elf. That way you always know where your spirit gum and ears are.

Buy your makeup in amounts that you will use. If you are one person who will only be playing one event a month, the smaller tubes and bottles will be more useful to you. If you are buying for a whole team (for a group makeup case) then the larger bottles and tubes will work best. It is also good to check with the either the manufacturer or the reseller of the makeup how long the makeup is good for. If a medium sized bottle of makeup goes bad after about 1 year, then perhaps a smaller bottle would work better for you. Also take care to watch your spirit gum bottle, if left open or after a long time passes... the spirit gum inside will harden.

If you are playing a tiger sarr (or, as they are known in Alliance Ohio's world of Vandlar the "Harroo") or some other similar painted race that requires you to paint a pattern on your face (like stripes, spots, etc) it is a good idea to paint your face how you want, then take a Polaroid or photo of your face paint so that you can always have a guide to how it should be. This way you get the same results over and over- you don't want to be the leopard with the changing spots.

There are some people, like Wild Elves (Trianara), Barbarians and some Orc tribe-players or people with Ritual Marks, who need to paint a design or symbol on their face or body. While I applaud creativity, your design should not be "busy" or "confusing". If you are going to have a flash of lightning on your face, make it look like lightning. You never want to hear the phrase "So what is that supposed to be on your face?". Start off simple, and expound slowly... if at all. Some people find success by making a "stencil" out of a thin sheet of plastic (such as cut from the side of a milk jug or other plastic container with a flat surface). The design itself can be cut with an x-acto knife. At events you can use the stencil to place your design in the same spot each time and "mark out" the outline so you can easily fill it in with makeup and finalize it.

REMEMBER TO CHECK WITH THE LOCAL ALLIANCE LARP OHIO RACE PACKET FOR YOUR PARTICULAR RACE TO SEE WHICH KINDS OF DESIGNS AND/OR SYMBOLS WOULD BE APPROPRIATE. SOME RACES HAVE PARTICULAR SYMBOLS AND COLORS WHICH ARE TABOO, ENCOURAGED OR HAVE SPECIAL MEANINGS-

For makeup removal you have several options. There are PCs who use washcloth, soap, and lots of scrubbing. Some people use baby wipes. I know I personally used to buy the biggie sized containers of Stridex pads (after a quick washing with soap and water). There are still other people who use things like Pond's facial scrubs and other assorted products. Use whatever works for you, but do be prepared to have some makeup left in your pores after a weekend.

Always practice the Rule of Good Makeup

1) Do wash off your makeup every night. One, it keeps your pillow clean. Two, it keeps your pores clean. Three, it makes your face more normal appearing at the end of a weekend.\

2) Do practice the Rule of Good Makeup, which means... If you apply your makeup and some splatters on the sink, please wash the sink after you are done. At the end of the weekend, after you have washed off all of your makeup, please clean the sink- non makeup users hate cleaning dark elf rings in the sink. Keep your makeup in your case and not on the sink, this insures that your makeup stays nice and it's not in anyone's way. Throw whatever means you remove your makeup (save a washcloth) away in the trash... not near the trash, by the trash, or on the sink inches away from the trash. Again, non makeup wearers hate cleaning up after makeup wearers.

Alliance LARP Racial Makeup Restrictions

The Alliance LARP Rule Book has very specific racial requirements for each Race. In addition each Campaign (such as Ohio) have individual Race Packets which may add to the Role Play and costuming requirements for the races as well. If you choose to play a non-Human Race please be aware:

YOU MUST AT ALL TIMES WEAR THE REQUIRED RACIAL MAKEUP AND PROSTHETICS FOR YOUR CHOSEN RACE.

What does this mean?

- 1) For Races which have extensive full-skin makeup requirements- Orcs (green skin), Ogres (yellow skin), Sarr (feline), Dark Elves (black skin), Stone Elves (white skin) and Wylderkin (animal makeup) **MUST** have **ALL EXPOSED SKIN** covered with makeup. For many players finding an appropriately colored Underarmor or Spandex shirt (such as Green for Orcs) and a pair of Evening Gloves (available for a few dollars at most Costume Shops) leaves only their face and necks to paint.
- 2) For Races with **LOW MAKEUP** Requirements, such as Dryads (leaves and vine-like patterns) your designs must be visible. For many players this means placing them on your face, neck and hands which are often not covered by Garb (costuming).
- 3) For Races with **PROSTHETIC** Requirements- Orcs/Ogres (tusks), Dwarves (fake beard), Dark Elves/Elves/Stone Elves (Elven Ear Tips), Wylderkin (animal prosthetics as appropriate), Biata (feathered eyebrows), Mystic Wood Elves (Ear Tips **AND** Small Horns on the temples) and Hobblings (sideburns) you **CANNOT** rely on makeup to create those elements. A lot of ideas can be found by looking at pictures of current players and the pictures chosen for the rule books.

Elven Ear Tips (Dark Elves, Stone Elves, Elves, Mystic Wood Elves) can be found easily at any costume shop. Many players use prosthetics from "Woochie" and small ear tips are standard- it only needs to be a small point. Large pointy ears are not normal but as long as the prosthetic meets the requirements of the Alliance LARP Rule Book you should be fine.

Tusks can be created from "Friendly Plastic" and there are many opinions on what style works best- if you plan on playing an Orc or Ogre posting on the Alliance Forums (www.alliancelarp.com/forum) will allow you to ask experienced players what they use, where they find it and how they make their tusks.

Mystic Wood Elf Horns can be sculpted from any clay – many people use lightweight “Foam Clay” available at Craft Stores or polymer clays they bake. Most are attached to the player by drilling a small hole through each horn and stringing them on a “headband” cord tied around the temples. If you choose to do this creating the hole while the clay is soft with a pencil will be easier than drilling after the Horns are dry and tying knots in the cord before and after the horn will keep them from sliding around on the headband you create. Extremely lightweight or professional silicone horns may be attached by gluing them on with Spirit Gum.

Dwarven Beards and Hobbling Sideburns are easily found in Costume Shops. Color and Length are a personal choice (check the Race Packet to see if particular styles have a meaning to the Races in Alliance Ohio’s campaign). Some players use the faux-fur sheets and cut strips to spirit-gum to their cheeks as sideburns- this approach works well for Hobblings but full beards of faux-fur are extremely fake looking and for only a few dollars more you can find a comfortable and realistic beard that will last several seasons with care.

Biata Feathered Eyebrows can be easily made by visiting your local Fly Fishing supply store- Gander Mountain, Cabelas and even some Wal Marts (in season) have a selection of sleek feathers dyed in rainbows of colors. The Alliance LARP Rule Book gives a list of the colors Biata can wear and what they mean- a Biata’s feathers are a reflection of their personality so spend some time deciding what Role Play you will want to pursue before choosing your 1-3 feather colors. Many of the sleekest feathers are made by cutting an eyebrow-shaped piece of cloth that will fit over each eye and using Hot Glue, Spirit Gum or Eyelash Adhesive (a thin latex found in makeup sections for a couple dollars) to attach the feathers to the fabric. By making the cloth 2-3 times thicker than your actual eyebrow you ensure that you have enough feathers to be visible and plenty of place to Spirit Gum the eyebrows on over your own eyebrows (avoiding getting it in your eyebrow hair which will be difficult to remove later...).

Finally Humans have NO makeup requirements EXCEPT they cannot replicate any other Race. Humans cannot wear fake beards or fake sideburns or have “elven-like ears” by attempting to make their ears pointed. If you play a Human you must look completely...Human.

Tribal Tattoos, Marks and other Symbols in Alliance Ohio’s Campaign: Vandlar

Any race can have a non-magical Tattoo or a Ritual Mark (a magic tattoo which is always visible even through clothes, hair, or armor).

A few Races are known for their markings- symbols which relate to their local societies.

Trianara (Wild Elves) in Vandlar are often seen with blue markings, often relying on extremely simple geometric patterns or elven runes (a simple line drawn in blue paint across the eyes or down the side of the face is common).

Barbarian tribes often use paint on their faces, especially in times of war and strife. What symbols they use varies by the Tribe they are in (see the race packet) though in general representation of the Tribes Totem Animal (such as the Tribe of the Ox drawing a stylized ox-head on their foreheads) predominate.

Some Orc Tribes have specific symbols their kinsmen are required to wear given as rites of passage or membership. An example of this is the Bloody Tear Tribe of Orcs who, at a certain age, are tattooed by their elders with a red tear falling from their eye. See the Race Packet for information about each individual Tribe. Some Orc Tribes do NOT use any symbolism.

There are 4 “Ogre Populations” in Vandlar which maintain distinct social systems and have very different approaches to body art and decorations. A particular Ogre Tribe may only wear black and red geometric patterns while another relies on ancient designs handed down by Shaman designed to protect

against dangerous magic. Again, see the Race Packet for more information about the Ogre symbols.

Taking it to the Next Level

Each race has a basic requirement for appearance but you can always go above and beyond the basics. Adding a few individual touches to your prosthetics and makeup can make your character really stand out and memorable both to powerful NPCs (Non Player Characters- the majority of the world).

Some ideas:

Adding stains to your tusks or intricate carvings on your Mystic Wood Elf Horns (spirals and patterns).

Piercing your fake ear tips or adding jewelry to hide where the prosthetic is glued to your own ear.

Being conscious of the rest of your costume- choose colors of clothing, jewelry or accessories which go well with your character and your character concept.

Braiding and adding cuffs to your fake beard and sideburns. Dwarven beards elaborately braided and perhaps dyed and accented with tasteful gems and precious metals give a distinctly different impression than a frayed and wild beard.

... and being wary of Going Too Far

At the same time, however, you have to ensure that what you do with your Makeup and Prosthetics adheres to both the Alliance LARP Rule Book and the Alliance LARP local Race Packet you are using (whether it is Ohio's or another Chapters). Be creative, but be wary of stepping on another Race's "toes". If you insist on playing a Dwarf with Blue paint markings on your face be aware Wild Elf Players in Ohio may not look favorably upon that. Some Races consider their markings intensely personal or symbolic. When in doubt if what you're planning is going to be well received never hesitate to ask players of that Race or the members of Alliance LARP Ohio's Staff who will gladly help you with your ideas.

Your character **MUST** be recognizable as the Race you are playing. Period.

Remember also that the amount of Makeup work you set for yourself will have to be done EVERY DAY of the Event you are playing- a procedure which can take a lot of time away from actually playing the game.

Finally...

Playing a race which has Makeup or Prosthetic Requirements can be wearying for some- over time it becomes tedious to some players to attend events and spend a long time putting on makeup each day. Some players find playing full-makeup races difficult in the summer or have a hard time wearing the Dwarf Beard when it is hot out. Orcs and Ogres wearing their tusks may have a hard time speaking and many heavy-makeup races have a difficult time eating in game as well. Think about the different situations you're going to find yourself in when you decide which makeup to purchase and how you are designing your look.

Remember a few things:

- 1) **BARRIER SPRAY IS YOUR FRIEND-** Sealers for Makeup can be invaluable for preventing the makeup from “running” while you sweat or if it rains. This not only keeps you properly representing your race but it prevents the ruination of your clothing as well. While shopping for makeup look to see what barrier or sealer solutions are suggested for the makeup you use.
- 2) Don't dismiss the idea of a Secondary Character- for some, the option of another Character that is a Human or other low-makeup Race (such as Biata, Hobling, Elf or Dryad) provides an occasional but much-needed break from a heavy makeup regime. This isn't something you have to plan for at first but if you find yourself getting vexed by a particular makeup requirement remember that you have the option to take a break and play something else (or even NPC, though sometimes you're required to wear makeup there too!)
- 3) Stuck for ideas? Ask around! Visit the Forums on www.alliancelarp.com where many players have discussed the racial requirements for every race and given their ideas, solutions and problems for others to consider. Ask other players at a game or email a Staff Member for ideas as well- not only do players of the different Races know HOW to do the makeup they will have suggestions for what makeups work well, what applicators they have, shortcuts you can take, etc. If you're new to the Alliance don't be afraid to jump in and start asking questions- we're here to help!

**A brief Race-overview is available at our website:
www.alliancelarpohio.net under the “Race Pages” link**

For a detailed description of the Racial Prosthetic/Makeup Requirements see the Alliance LARP Rule Book (a link for purchase of a hardcover or PDF version is on our website above or can be found at www.alliancelarp.com)

Alliance OHIO Race Packets are available to those who have a character in our Databases of that particular Race. Race Packets can be requested by contacting Staff (via the Forms on our website) and picked up at the Events.