

Making Fake Banana Peels

By Jim Scott - March 2016

CAT (Chamberlayne Actors) Theatre's production of *Don't Cry For Me Margaret Mitchell*, in the spring of 2016, called for many bananas, both real and fake, as well as many fake banana peels. Here I address only the fake banana peels.

The basic materials are a roll of yellow duct tape and a supply of cotton-backed vinyl fabric. (When I say "vinyl", I'm guessing, based on appearance. I got it at a fabric store.)



In addition, I used some limp black nylon cord, 1/4" thick, of a type used as handles on some fancy clothing-store shopping bags. (Again, "nylon" is a guess.) You may want to substitute something else for this specific cord, after reading how it's used.



Let's start by looking at some real banana peels.



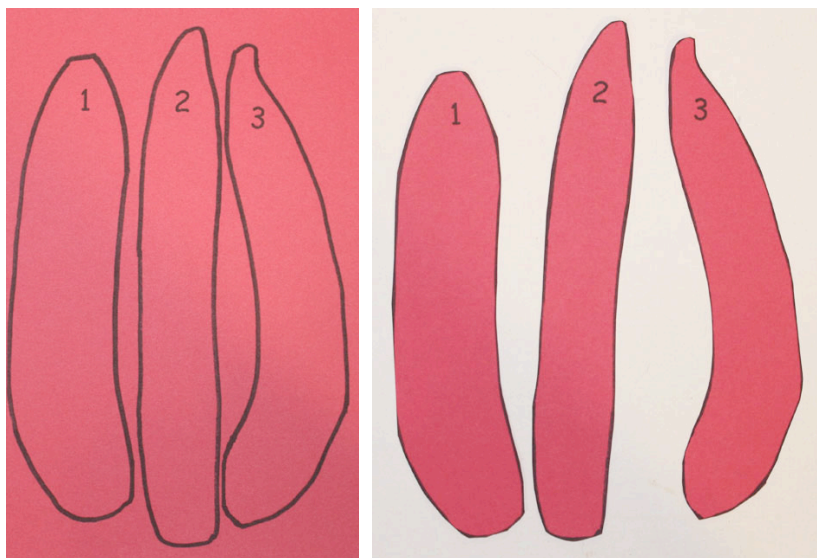
The one on the left is a fresh peel, and the one on the right is about half an hour old. In each case, we have the peel of a banana that has been pulled into three pieces, joined at the little round black butt end of the banana (the top end as shown here).

In each photo, one of the three pieces is still joined to what you might call the stem of the banana, where it was broken off from the bunch, and where the peeling action began. We will *not* replicate this stem in our fake banana peel.

The process of making a fake banana peel starts by creating the three yellow pieces of peel. Later, we will join these three pieces to the black thing, the banana butt.

Start by printing the template drawing image at the end of this document, as instructed on that page. The three banana peel pieces depicted here were from a real banana, in the order shown. I.e., piece 2 was between pieces 1 and 3, and the outer edges of 1 and 3 met on the other side. The ends shown at the top (the numbered ends) are the ends that met at the butt of the banana.

Once you've printed the template drawing on card stock (shown here as red card stock, for no particular reason), use scissors to cut out the three pieces. These will be your templates.

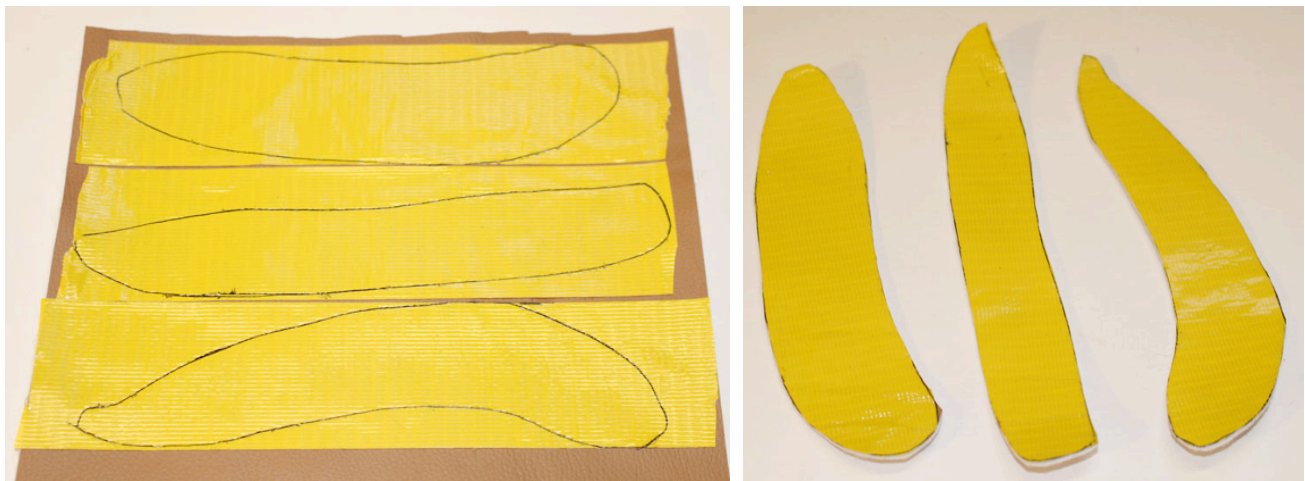


Now let's start making banana peel parts!

Spread out some of the vinyl fabric on your work table. You may find it convenient to cut the vinyl into strips about 8" wide, and however long you like.

Now cut off a strip of yellow duct tape at least as long as the templates. Again, 8" or a little less is plenty long for the duct tape. Carefully place this tape on top of the vinyl and smooth it down. If you like, go ahead and set up three strips of tape as shown below. Do *not* apply the tape to the template, or to the cotton side of the vinyl.

Choose one of the three templates, and place it face up (numbered side up) so that it fits within the strip of yellow duct tape. Draw the outline of the template with a pen or fine-point marker. Repeat for the other two templates. Then use scissors to cut out each of the three pieces.



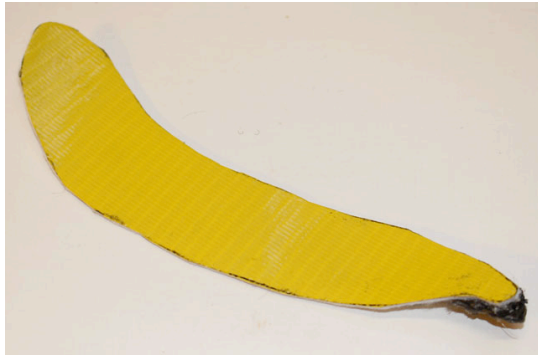
For the next step we need some sort of object to use as the banana butt. Using the cord described above, start by using a glue gun to apply a short line of glue (1/2" or less) at one end of the rope, parallel to the rope. Quickly, being careful not to burn yourself, fold the rope over on top of the glue to create a short double-thick section. Then apply another line of glue to one side of this double-thick section, and fold the rope back over it to make it a triple-thick section. Cut off the rest of the rope, leaving what might look like a very large black raisin. This is the banana butt.



You may want to substitute some entirely different material. Use your imagination. All you need is something black, about the right size and shape, and solid enough to have things glued to it.

Use a glue gun to glue one of the three pieces of banana peel to the banana butt. The rounded end of the banana butt should protrude just a little. The ends that correspond to the *numbered* ends of the templates are the ends that should be glued.

The illustrations below show piece #3 being glued to the butt first.



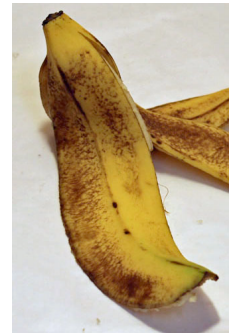
Glue the other two pieces, one at a time, to the butt. Ideally, remember the order defined earlier. In the pictures below, piece #2 is glued second, to the left of piece #3, and then piece #1 is glued last, between the first two. The edges of the three pieces should just meet, leaving no gaps, but not overlapping.



At this point, the underside of the banana peel leaves the bottom end of the butt still visible. To conceal the butt, and to help the banana peel pieces spread more naturally when dropped, cut a round piece about the size of a nickel from some scrap vinyl fabric. Using the glue gun, apply glue to the vinyl side of the round piece and press it into place against the bottom of the butt.



For a more natural appearance, the two curved pieces (#1 and #3) should have slight ridges down the middle, like the front piece of this real banana peel we saw before.



To replicate this in each of the two curved pieces, crease the piece along its midline, making a curved crease. Using a glue gun, put a *very thin* line of glue along this crease, on the cotton side. Re-crease the material, then pull it apart again. Because of the curve, you may want to do this a couple of inches at a time.



Now let's add some color to the plain yellow surfaces. Using a fine-tipped brush, apply *a little bit* of brownish paint (I used an acrylic burnt umber) here and there. If the piece is creased, draw a thin brown line along the crease. Then smudge everything with a rag or your finger.



Now we're almost done. The white cotton side of the vinyl fabric is too white. Take the banana peel outdoors, put it on a drop cloth with the cotton side up, and spray it with spray dye (not paint!). I used TintIt brand, and found the sepia color to be about right.



Finally, after the dye dries, turn the banana peel over and spray the yellow side with a clear matte spray to reduce the shine of the yellow duct tape.

Template Drawing

Print on card stock, so that the outline box is 5.25" wide and 8" high.

