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How to Reborn a Doll in a Day

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# How to Reborn a Doll In a Day



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Acetone is highly poisonous and does not typically come with a childproof cap. Please keep your materials locked away from children!

The author and publisher can't be held responsible for property damage or injury caused by the methods and materials recommended in this book. Please exercise caution when using these materials and tools.

# How to Reborn a Doll In a Day



**Angela Hoy**

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# INTRODUCTION

One evening last year, while shopping for antique dolls on Ebay.com, I stumbled upon a category of dolls that I'd never seen before. They were called reborns. I started clicking on photographs of these dolls and I was instantly enchanted! These "dolls" looked like real, live infants! They were so beautiful and lifelike that I couldn't stop clicking. In fact, I stayed awake for another three hours, looking at photos of every reborn doll for sale at that time on Ebay. The only downside of owning one of these sweeties was the cost. The really beautiful reborns cost several hundred dollars each.

I've always loved arts and crafts, but have never been very talented with art (I'm the author of six books, but I can't draw a straight line). However, my daughter is an outstanding artist and I thought perhaps, with her help, I could add one of these lifelike beauties to my doll collection.

The next day, I went back to Ebay and, while clicking on the reborns, started saving the photos of the most lifelike ones as PDF files in my computer. Later, I studied the photos and even opened some of them in my Photoshop program so I could evaluate the coloring, shading and features that, in my opinion, made the dolls look so lifelike.

I then started surfing to the reborn artists' websites. To my delight, I found hundreds of additional photos of reborn dolls. I was having so much fun and my daughter joined me. We had a great afternoon of bonding, looking at the gorgeous babies.

We started making notes of which qualities of each doll, along with the presentation techniques used by the artists, made them look so real. We studied the babies' positions, outfits, the props used (bottles, pacifiers, and stuffed animals), their surroundings (cradles, blankets, being indoors, outdoors, and more), and the coloring of the photos (shaded, outside in bright sunlight, crystal clear or slightly blurred to make the baby's skin look perfect, etc.).

We then decided which kind of doll we wanted to reborn and ordered the doll from a dealer. We made a list of the supplies we'd need and took a very expensive trip to the craft store.

Ali and I purchased acrylic paints, numerous sizes of paintbrushes, dye, aprons, plastic gloves, a sharp crafting knife, a pitcher, cotton squares, fingernail polish remover, a French fingernail kit, fake eyelashes, some lip pencils, plastic beads and batting, and much, much more. We spent over \$150 on supplies. Then, we went to the local department store and bought some preemie clothes, which were adorable, but cost more than we wanted to spend. We stopped by the hardware store and bought a large toolbox to keep our supplies in (and to keep them away from our toddler, Max), and then we waited for the doll to arrive.



**Our First Reborn: Baby Isabel**

The doll finally arrived and we set aside an entire Saturday to reborn our soon-to-be-lifelike doll!

We spent a great deal of time disassembling the doll, removing all the factory paint, and then dyeing the interior of the arms, legs and head. By the time we were finished, it was time for lunch. After lunch, we sat down to try to paint the doll like the reborn artists do.



## HOW TO REBORN A DOLL IN A DAY

We pulled out the different acrylic paints, mixed them according to tips we'd read online, and applied the mixtures, snickered, wiped it off, started over, and over, and over. Three hours and dozens of coats of paint later, we were still disappointed and the doll's vinyl was no longer shiny, but actually looking very coarse (due to all the times we'd wiped off the paint with Acetone).

The next day, we tackled it again, and, while the results weren't anything close to the true artist dolls, at least the doll no longer looked like Tammy Faye Baker.

My 11-year-old son wanted to get involved but wouldn't be caught dead playing with baby dolls. So, I gave him an old, vinyl doll and he painted a scary face on it. He had a ball (and we now have a Goth reborn baby doll in the collection).

The reborn process had been so frustrating and rife with errors that I was sorry we'd spent hundreds of dollars on the doll, supplies and baby clothes...because the process was just too difficult, and I was never going to attempt it again.

But, while trying to go to sleep that night, I wondered...could there be a cheaper and easier way? There just had to be! And we found it!

Let me say this before I proceed. I have a great deal of respect for the true reborn artists who meticulously "disassemble the doll and remove the factory paint" and use their "own mixture of paints and dyes" to achieve that "perfect newborn complexion" and the "hours spent turning this child's doll into a piece of art, to be treasured for generations."

In fact, if I'd started out by reading all the descriptions that the artists have written about what goes into reborn dolls (instead of just admiring the photos), I'd have never tried it on my own!

I'm sure many reborn artists will be a bit perturbed by the information I'm going to share with you in this book. I only ask that they understand that most of us can't afford to pay

hundreds of dollars for a professional reborn doll, but we'd love to have one in our collection (or give one to a loved one) if we can do it inexpensively on our own!

The most time-consuming tasks that reborn artists perform are dismantling the doll, dying the vinyl parts, and coloring the exterior with paints and dyes to make it look like real skin. Well, I've done the frustrating and time-consuming dying and painting...and I've also done it the easy way (as you'll read later in this book). And, honestly, I'm hard pressed to notice the difference between the two!

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