
Glue 102: Working With Fibers with Twinkie Chan

Chapter 1 - Glue 102: Working With Fibers

Overview

(upbeat music) - Hi, I'm Twinkie Chan. I'm a crochet designer and author, and welcome to Glue 102: Working With Fibers. When we're talking about fibers, we're talking about yarn and thread, whether you're a crocheting, knitting, weaving, or even embroidering. Of course, you should always try to sew together your items as much as possible, but sometimes glue is the way to go with certain embellishments and finishings. As a crochet designer, I'm surprised by how often I'm asked, "What kind of glue are you using?" Whether I'm adhering tiny pompom sprinkles, to a crocheted ice cream scarf, or turning a super cute pretzel into a piece of wearable art. In this class, we're going to cover gluing fiber to fiber, fiber to small porous items like pompoms and felt lettering, fiber to small non-porous items, like tiny sprinkles, fiber to plastic, and fiber to metal. There are a bajillion types of glue out there, and if that's overwhelming, I'm super excited to show you my top favorites and all the tricks that go with them.

Materials

- The glues in my personal arsenal are Aleene's OK To Wash-IT, Beacon Fabri-Tac, Glue Dots. These are super strength, but even just the temporary hold Glue Dots work fine. A hot glue gun and glue sticks. This is Surebonder brand, which is my favorite, but anything you have at home will work as well. Beacon Gem-Tac, Crafter's Pick The Ultimate, which is basically a super, super tacky tacky glue. (laughs) So any tacky glue or strong white glue will work also. This is Gutermann HT2 Textile Glue. Loctite Super Glue Gel Control. Some optional tools you can use are tweezers for picking up very small objects, a syringe for applying glue for tiny glue dots, and finally a wire cutter.

Fiber-to-fiber and small embellishments

- For adhering fiber to fiber I definitely encourage you to sew as much as possible. However, there are certain projects where glue can come to the rescue. For instance, if I'm putting together a really cute crochet painting, I would have already adhered my background to my canvas, so it's really hard to sew on any of my appliques. My favorite glue for this is actually hot glue. I know hot glue sometimes gets a bad rap, but I find it has a quick, strong hold when it comes to fiber. My hot glue gun is warmed up. I usually squirt out a little bit in case there are any bubbles. Hot glue is really cool, 'cause it's also really easy to apply. I have half of this barn already hot glued. You can also go in sections, since hot glue cools and dries so quickly. The background is also hot glued, as well as this sun. So you wanna hot glue slightly away from the edge, so you can avoid seeping in the edges. And just put a steady line around the border of your applique. I need to stick another hot glue stick in here. And I kind of go in crisscross Xs to get coverage. You don't need full coverage, since the glue has such a good grip. And then you wanna push this down. And I like to hold it down until it cools off a bit, because if you let go and it peels away and the glue dries, you'll see all these weird like glue stalactites and stalagmites. So you want to make sure you have good contact and it only takes maybe one or two minutes for this to set. Super easy. This is not washable, so you can't use hot glue for your wearable items, but it's really great for pieces of home decor or toys. If you have a 3D toy, like this, this is a partially finished cupcake. We'll add the cherry later, we'll talk about that later. You can do the same thing. You kind of go around the edge, maybe 1/2 an inch to an inch

away from the edge. I'm kind of going in concentric circles here. You just place your two pieces together, wanna kind of smush it down, so there's a good contact, but it's that easy and it's a very fabulous hold. You'll be surprised. Keep in mind for the most part my art is for grownups and not for kids. All these sprinkles are glued on and not sewn, so any place where you're gluing stuff together, you probably want to keep out of small children's hands. Hot glue is also really great for adhering your fiber art to a card. That's always my favorite way to personalize a greeting card. And again, super easy. You just put a dollop of glue onto your embellishment, press it on, wait for it to cool off a little bit. And if you want a less permanent hold, for instance, I might be making a greeting card for a friend, but I want her to be able to reuse this super cute applique, maybe for a hair clip or a brooch, you can use glue dots. These are super strength hold, but you can also use a temporary hold. Both will work on your fiber. So you take your applique, stick it onto the glue dot. Glue dot should peel off onto your fiber piece. And you just stick it on your card and you have a really cool removable piece of art. If you're looking for a washable glue for fiber to fiber, my two favorites are Aleene's OK to Wash-It and Beacon's Fabri-Tac. I use them for different purposes, since Aleene's OK to Wash-It when dried feels good when it's close to the skin. So I'll use it for wearable items, like scarves. Fabri-Tac is awesome, because it dries so quickly. However, I find that on a wearable item, it's a little bit itchy. So I still stick with it for more home decor, hair clips, items that won't actually touch the skin. To use Aleene's OK to Wash-It, the instructions tell you to apply glue to a surface and then wait for three to five minutes for it to get tacky. But when you're dealing with really small items, putting it back down after there's glue on it can be difficult. So what I do is I apply the glue to the embellishment. This is acrylic yarn on acrylic yarn. You want to get enough on there for a good hold, but you don't want too much where it gets all seepy around the edges. And then I put it where I want it to go, but I don't push it down very hard. You don't want the glue to seep into the fibers of the yarn. You wanna give it a minute to get tacky. Similar process with the pompoms. You can use a tweezer if you want. I find it's just easier for me to use my finger. Let me get a little, oops, bead of glue. I just shake out the air bubble and get the glue closer to the tip of the dispenser. And you place it on your fiber piece. And again, don't smush it yet. I give my glued pieces about five to 10 minutes to get tacky, and then I come back and gently push everything closer to the surface of the fiber. This stuff is great, it lasts through several washes. When it comes to washing your handmade, I always advise a cold gentle hand wash and then drying flat. This is wool felt. So don't touch it for five to 10 minutes. If you have to set a timer and do that, because if you forget and it gets too dry this whole thing won't work. So set a timer. Fabri-Tac has a similar application, but it dries much more quickly so you don't have to give it that wait time to get tacky. And same process, I'm shaking all the glue to the tip of the dispenser. Not too close to the edge, I don't want to get that seeping. And you can push pretty firmly on Fabri-Tac pieces right away. Make sure there is good contact. Fabri-Tac also tends to get stringy. Some people suggest putting Vaseline around the tip to avoid stringiness. I don't normally have Vaseline laying around the house, so what I do is I just snap the dispenser away from my embellishment while I'm going and I think it helps to keep the stringies away. But I always have a paper towel handy. This might start getting really gloppy, so you can just wipe the tip. Don't use Kleenex, because it's too thin and you'll just have a Kleenexy, gluey mess on the tip of your Fabri-Tac. Kind of dab to pull the string of glue along your embellishment, and tap it in. So after about a minute you can just start smushing your pieces down, so there's good contact with the Fabri-Tac. And then I would suggest you do not touch this for like eight hours. Sometimes you're curious and you wanna peel up the corner and see if it's dry. Just leave it alone and trust that the glue is doing its job. After 10 minutes, you can go and then press your Aleene's OK to Wash-It

pieces down. And again, with the Aleene's, don't be tempted to pick at anything and just let this sit for, I would say eight hours. I have some already glued pieces to show you. This is the OK to Wash-It and this is the Fabri-Tac. I wanted to give you an idea of what happens when there's a good application versus a less good application. Sometimes I would have my crochet helpers glue things for me, but I found that for some reason there was something weird about their application and pompoms were falling off scarves. So for the left side, I did the sort of less good application where I just applied glue, pushed everything down, and then walked away. I didn't give it that tacky time, everything just went straight on, pushed it, and I left. For the portions on the right side, I gave the Aleene's OK to Wash-It some tacky time and I also gave the Fabri-Tac some tacky time. So I thought it'd be fun to sort of peel away some of these things, so you can see what kind of strength of adhesion you're getting. So again, this is the Aleene's OK to Wash-It and this is when it stuck on poorly. You can see that the edge never really stuck. You just have a really poor adhesion. You can pick at some pompoms. They're smaller, so they kind of had a better chance of sticking. These are actually OK, it's not bad. So even if you just smushed them on and walk away, your pompoms might survive, but your fiber would not. Let's see about the letter. The letter has pretty good grip, but like if I were embellishing something to sell and this peeling started happening, I would be really upset about that. Fabri-Tac and OK to Wash-It actually are not my favorite ways to stick together fiber to fiber, simply because it's hard to get a good adhesion. That's why I really love hot glue. But again, it's not great for a wearable item, but I wanted to just show you so you can get an idea of what you might expect. And I encourage you also to experiment when you're at home. So you can see this has a better adhesion, we have a little bit of the edges coming up, but it's definitely stuck on more than the other side. And the pompoms should be good, and this lettering is pretty good. Let's pick at some Fabri-Tac. This is the bad side. It comes up pretty easily. The pompoms will probably be good. You can kind of slap and dash with the Fabri-Tac and pompoms, since it's so quick to dry. And the lettering is actually pretty good too. Again, this is wool felt. And the good side is going to be pretty good. This is actually stuck on there pretty well. Pompoms, good. Wool felt lettering, perfect. I use a lot of curly cues and cursive lettering in my food crochet art and people are always asking me, how are you doing that? Is that sewn on? What's going on? And it's actually also glue. I start with a crocheted chain. Again, this is acrylic yarn on acrylic yarn. And I secure one end of the chain to the back of my work. And it's really easy, you just use Fabri-Tac carefully along the underside of the chain, snap it away. You have some working time here and you just carefully place and direct your chain wherever you want it to go. It does take maybe two minutes for it to really have a good grab, but when it's fully dry, the grab is really excellent. So just go an inch, inch and 1/2 at a time and guide the direction of the yarn with your fingers. And this works beautifully and it's still washable. It's that easy. And once you get to the very end of your curly cue or your letter, you just take a tapestry needle, pull the tail to the back of your piece, tie it off, and you're finished. Knowing which kind of glue to use for which project can be a little overwhelming. We went through a lot of different options, washable versus not washable, on the skin versus not on the skin, so you can always refer to the handy chart I created for you in your class PDF.

Non-porous embellishments

- I want to put sprinkles on everything. The tiny nonporous items that I'm often gluing to my crochet work are sprinkles. They can range from glass beads to polymer clay pieces, plastic. I don't know what these little pink things are. They're kinda rubbery. But my number one favorite glue for these types of embellishments is Gem-Tac. It's washable, it dries clear, and it's awesome. You could put it

on your wearable items, but these things can be scratchy against the skin, so I mostly use these kinds of embellishments and the Gem-Tac with home decor or hair clips or pins. But since it is washable, you could definitely experiment on clothing as well. All these sprinkles on these cupcakes and ice creams were attached with Gem-Tac. You can actually also use your Crafter's Pick The Ultimate. That works pretty well. These three embellishments, I just experimented with The Ultimate, and the grab is really great. However, that is not washable. To apply either of these glues, I would squirt some out onto a little piece of cardboard. The tip is pretty fine, and you could apply it directly to a bead. But if you're doing multiple beads, it's just easier to squirt some out. I like to use a pair of tweezers. I think it makes the application much easier. Let's start with a glass bead. This is really easy. Just take the bead into your tweezer. Give it a dab into the glue. Place it on. Trust that the glue has great grab. You don't need to push it down or squish it or anything. And that's really it. Let's try one of these little pink rubbery things. If there is a little seepage, it's okay. It dries clear. And on these pieces, you can't really see the glue at all. This little pink polymer clay sprinkle, stick it on there just like that. In the past when I've bought Gem-Tac, it's been a little bit more liquidy, and I needed to pour it out and walk away for about 10 minutes for it to get tackier. This bottle happened to be pretty thick and tacky as soon as I opened it. So you can kind of gauge the viscosity of your glue and whether you feel like it's too runny to put onto your crocheted piece right away. For drying time, you can always refer to your label, but I always leave it overnight or for 24 hours.

Plastic

- A lot of my crochet work is amigurumi, which is the Japanese term for a crocheted or knitted toy, a stuffed toy. And many of these toys have eyes and have super cute faces. For the most part, you can use safety eyes, but for some really small items or flat items, the safety backing becomes a problem. So I had to think of a way to adhere eyes to my fiber work using glue. Here are some flat friends that I actually made for a storyboard while I was giving a keynote speech. And you can see there's no room back here to hold the backing of a safety eye. Also for these tiny little edamame soybeans, you have very small amounts of room in here for the backing, so I had to think of a good glue for these guys as well. And my favorite glue for attaching these eyes is super glue. This is the Loctite super glue, it's gel control, so it's not very runny. And since it's a gel control, it's easier for you to control your eyes as you're adhering them to your fiber. When you have a safety eye, it's going to come with this backing and you can use a wire cutter or a button shanker to snap that right off, we won't need it. I might wanna do this into a Ziploc bag or a box, because the backings will go flying into the air. We'll see where it goes. Oh. So you can see that comes off really easily and now you have a flat back to work with. I have a little edamame guy who has one eyeball and we're gonna give him his second eyeball. Just dab maybe two dots carefully. You don't wanna use too much with super glue. You don't wanna glue your fingers together, which is not the end of the world, but also not very handy if you're trying to do a lot of work. And superglue really needs to be smushed and hold it for like a minute. A minute doesn't seem like a long time, but when you're sitting here holding an eyeball, some time can pass, but be patient. If you don't hold it and you don't make good contact, the eyeball will not stick to your fiber. Another note of caution, I work a lot with acrylics and you cannot use super glue with natural fibers like cotton or wool. It will literally melt cotton or wool. But I have an alternative glue for you if you prefer to work in natural fibers. So give this a good hold. Let's pretend one or two minutes have passed and he's ready to go. For the most part they say that super glue is not washable. I actually tried to run this egg through the wash and he seemed to survive, but I don't know how many washes that would survive. So if you're using this

super glue method it's mostly for toys, hair clips, not for items for small children, obviously, because they can probably pick those off and eat them. But otherwise, if you're making toys for grownups and hair clips for grownups, it's a really great way to adhere your eyes and also plastic noses. If you're working with natural fibers a good alternative is Guetermann Textil Glue. It used to look like this. It used to come in a yellow tube and everyone loved it. It's a favorite among purse makers, because it adheres fabric to metal very well and is washable. However, they've updated to this red packaging and a lot of people don't like it as much, but I've tried a bunch of alternatives and even though it's not quite as fast drying as the original, I still think it's a really great glue. Let's use that on this. He looks a little weird right now. This is a ham sandwich that has a puppy dog face. You can see there's the ham and the cheese and the bread. He's all ready to go, he just needs his eyes. I'm gonna use my wire cutters again to break off the backs. You can arrange your pieces before you put your glue on them. Just to give you an idea of where they're gonna go. I would definitely have a paper towel handy. It tends to keep oozing out of the tube, so you need to watch out for that, especially if it's a new tube. It's already starting to come out a little bit. So I'd wipe it off, so you don't have an excess of glue, and then dab a little bit on the back like this, smush it onto your fiber. And this actually grabs more quickly than super glue, so you could actually move on to your second eye. Wipe that off on my paper towel, dab, dab, dab. Place it on. You can kind of smush those on with your fingers to make sure there's good contact, but it really dries in like 30 seconds. And that's washable. The only reason why I wouldn't defer to the Guetermann as much as super glue is because it can be harder to find, it's actually manufactured in Germany, and not many people sell it in the US, so I have to go and buy it either on Etsy or Amazon and the shipping can take awhile. So it feels like a very special glue. It's awesome, it has so many great uses, but super glue is also a cheap and more easily accessible option. To show you the different adhesions of various glues with plastic and fiber I made a fun little swatch for you that we can do a pick test with. I'm gonna save my favorites for the last on this bottom row. This is OK to Wash-It. You can see it just really didn't get a good grab at all. Here's Fabri-Tac, which is actually not bad. I have sort of mixed feels about Fabri-Tac and plastic. This had a pretty good adhesion this time, but I find it's not always reliable. You should certainly play with it if you get the chance. This is the Ultimate, which is our white tacky glue. It's not bad, it's a little peely. The Fabri-Tac did a little bit better with the pick test. So this is my work horse, the super glue. You can see that's on there pretty well. The downside also with superglue is I wouldn't cover a lot of territory with it. I find that with a larger piece of plastic, it just doesn't have good grab, but for these tiny eyeballs it works really well. This is the Guetermann glue and that's on there really well. I love this glue. And just for fun, I threw in hot glue, which is surprisingly not bad. I would never use hot glue with a plastic eyeball, but this Surebonder glue is maybe doing the trick. I also wanted to show you these plastic cherries. They're my new favorite embellishment. And it's a slightly different kind of plastic than these plastic eyeballs, because it's flexible, so glue tends to peel away from them and I had a really hard time finding a glue that would actually adhere fairly well. I'm still on this search, but I do have a favorite. So let's do a pick test on this little cake. I have four different glues. Let's start with Fabri-Tac, which is not bad, but you can see it peels pretty easily away and the cherry is clean, so the glue didn't stick to the cherry at all. Here's Gem-Tac. It's not bad, some fiber is stuck to the cherry, but it doesn't take much pressure to peel it off. Here's Ultimate or white glue. This is actually not bad, it's taking some effort for me to pick it away. It still peels up a little bit. And this is what I've been using for my art pieces, the Guetermann. It's pretty strong. Like if you tried really hard you could pick this off, but, oh, okay, I picked off the stem. This is on there pretty securely. Let's use the Guetermann to glue this cherry

onto this cupcake. It's a very similar technique to gluing on the eyeball. And this is to start oozing out basically uncontrollably, so I'm gonna dab that off on my paper towel and dab this directly onto the embellishment. It's kind of slimy, which is why I use a dabbing motion to help leave product on the embellishment. And then with a bigger decoration with this, I use a twisting motion to make sure it's really grabbing onto a lot of fiber. And again, this grab is very quick and you don't have to hold onto it for the whole time. You can see when it starts to grab. Leave it to dry for four to six hours and then you're good to go.

Metal

- One of my favorite things to do with my fiber art is to make it wearable. And that means I'll often be turning my little crocheted pieces into hair clips or pins. My favorite glue for that is, once again, hot glue. It's a fast grab, it's a good grab, and I have very awkwardly shaped pieces for the most part, so I can't be clamping things, and hot glue is really my number one favorite for metal to fiber. This is a super cute hamburger bear that I actually made into a tree topper. So it has these hair clips in the back to clip onto a Christmas tree. And this is just hot glue. I made this years ago, I use it every year on my tabletop tree, and it's still hangin' on. I created some swatches so that we can do a fun pick test and you can see the performance of different glues with metal and fiber. This is OK to Wash-It. Very peely, it was really easy to peel that right off. Here's Fabri-Tac in the center. Oop! That came off much more quickly than I thought. You're not getting a lot of glue stuck to the metal. Here's our Ultimate White glue, which is actually pretty good, but the reason why it's not my favorite is the dry time is a little bit longer, so for awkwardly shaped pieces, I just can't be sitting there holding it with my hands forever. But if you have a flat piece like this pin and hair clip backing, you can certainly use the Ultimate, or your white Tacky Glue, and that should hold on quite well. Here is Super Glue. And I cheated. This was actually glued twice. The first time I got no grab, there were a lot of empty spaces, and then I went over it again with a second helping of glue, and it's actually pretty good, but I just don't feel like Super Glue is a super reliable metal glue. Here is my favorite, hot glue. You can see you can get really good coverage in the back. With the super glue, it's kind of spotty, but the hot glue just smooths right out. And is a pretty seamless adhesion. And here's the Gutermann glue, which I also really like. It's a good alternative, but again, it feels special, it's a little more expensive. So I'd always defer to hot glue for metal. We're gonna add a pin back to this little crocheted pretzel. This is acrylic yarn. And a good tip for when you're using pins like this is to open and close it first, because I have glued pins on only to find out that they didn't work later, and I completely ruined my crochet piece. So make sure that opens and closes. They do have holes in the back, they're meant to be sewn, but I feel like even with sewing, there's a little bit of wiggle, so I do prefer glue, and it's an excellent grab with hot glue. Squirt a little bit of your hot glue out first, it looks like I can also stick a new glue stick in here. I like to squirt out a little in case there are any sudden explosions and I don't want it to explode onto my fiber art. So go carefully, and just put a line of glue on the back of your metal piece. You have to move pretty quickly because this will cool off and harden soon. And press down, wanna make good contact, and don't let go. I'll show you what happens if you let go right after this, but I'm gonna keep holding onto my pretzel pin. You can let go and move on if you have to glue more pins onto more pretzels, but I would come back to this guy in like a minute and just keeps smushing 'em down, and make sure there's good contact until it's completely cool. For a curved hair clip like this, you definitely need to make sure you hold this down until it's cool, because otherwise you'll see the curvature of the metal will start pulling away from your crochet piece, and it'll harden, and you'll get these really ugly glue strings coming

up from the back of your work. With an awkwardly shaped piece like this, you can't use any sort of clamps, so that's why you have to use your hands to make sure the glue stays on. Just to show you, this is the Gutermann glue. It also has really great grab. I did have to hold onto this maybe for a good three to four minutes before I was confident enough to let go of it, so there's a little more hold time with the hot glue, but if you have a tube of Gutermann, it works just as well. I thought it would be fun to talk through some of my finished projects so that you can see how many different types of glue can go into one piece of fiber art. For this ice cream cone scarf, I used Aleene's OK To Wash-It for the little pompom sprinkles, and I used Fabri-Tac for the bigger cherry pompoms. For this pizza broach, instead of sewing the pepperoni on, I actually used hot glue. And here on the back, the felt is attached with Fabri-Tac, and the pin back is attached with hot glue as well. For this cream puff tower, the raspberry doodad on top is glued on with Gutermann, the frosting, or the icing, squiggles are attached with Fabri-Tac, and I actually glued this whole cream puff tower to this metal plate with Fabri-Tac. A lot of people really like using E6000 to glue metal pin backings and hair clips to their fiber art, however, I find that E6000 is messy, it's stinky, I never really get a great grab, it works best with clamping, and something like this can't be clamped, so that's why I really prefer Fabri-Tac and hot glue and other glues. Now you have all the glues, tips, and tricks to embellish and where your fiber art in new and exciting ways. Don't forget to refer to your chart that's in your PDF. I also encourage you to experiment with all kinds of glue, and make your own chart. There are certain elements such as temperature and humidity and the materials that you're using that can affect how your different glues work. So go ahead, have a glue adventure, and I can't wait to see what you make.