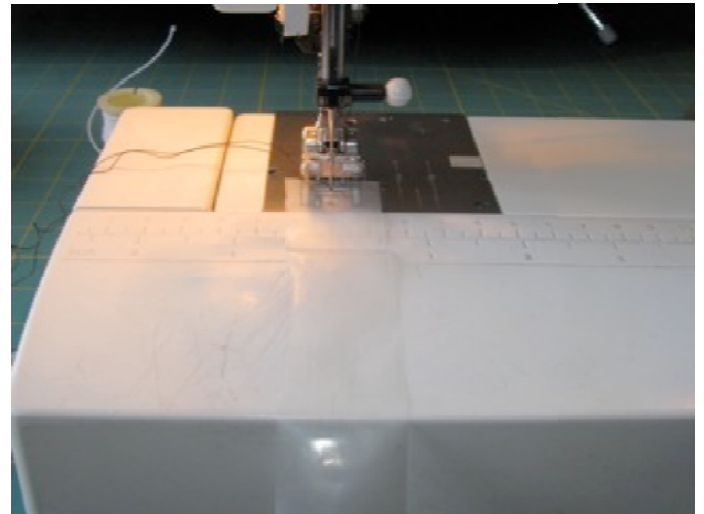




I find the switch the most useful hair addition. As this figure from Mallefont's book shows stitches can be pinned into a hairstyle and worked with the rest of the person's hair. Caption: Illustrations of a adding a hair switch from Mallefont's book "The Techniques of Ladies's Hairdressing of the 19th Century-a compilation of original 19th century sources" by Mark Campbell and Mons A. Mallefont" pub Lacis. Used with permission.



1) Using the matching thread pull out at least 12" of thread (bobbin and top) and tape them together.



2) Place an inch wide strip of colored tissue paper or melt-a-way interfacing under your foot.



3) With the needle down place the center of a hank of hair (1/3 to 1/2 of the pack) under the foot as well. Feather it out so that it is about 2 to 3" wide.



4) With a short stretch stitch sew across the hank.



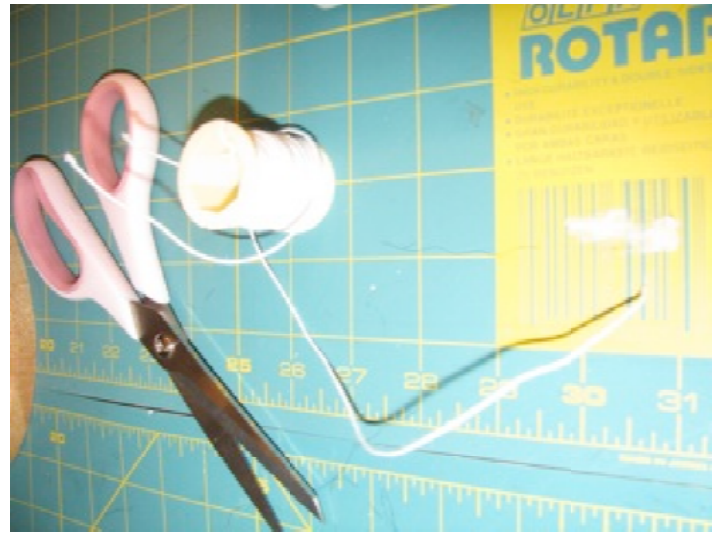
5) Reverse and sew back on top of the existing stitches.



6) Pull the threads until they are the same length as the taped threads. Add them to the bundle you should now have 4 strands.



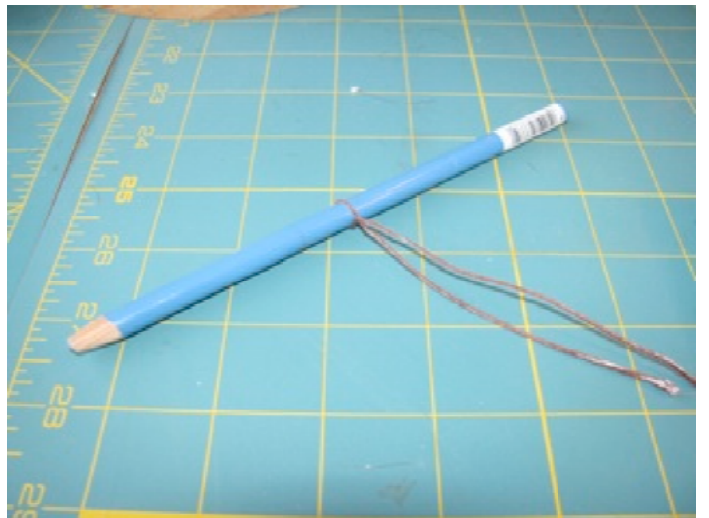
7) Trim the melt-a-way leaving as little as possible or tare the paper away.



8) Cut 10" of covered wire.



9) Use a permanent marker to color the wire the same color as your hair.



10) Fold the wire in half and wrap it around a pencil to form a loop. Twist it two times.



11) Over the stitches on one side, glue the wire over the stitching with a thin line of glue. This helps hold the wire in place but most of all helps secure the hair so that it stays in better with brushings. It will always be advisable to hold the top while combing the switch.



12) Pull out another 12" of thread and add it to the existing threads. When the glue is dry place the hair back on the machine with the loop just past the needle and the wire in the middle of the foot, side to side. Sew the wire down with a short but wide (as wide as possible) zig-zag stitch. When you reach the end of the hair stop and carefully raise the foot.



13) Trim the wire back to about 3/4" and fold it back on itself. Reposition the hair and reverse stitch back to the start



14) Stop and pull out another 12" of thread. You should have 8 strands. Below is how it looks laying down. You can see that all the hair comes only in just two directions.



15) To fix this, starting from the bottom and holding on to the loop, twist the wire so that the hair comes out of the center in a spiral manner. Finger comb the switch to smooth out the hair and un-twist the hairs at the top. It is always a good idea to hold tight at the top of the switch as you de-tangle lower down, just in case the glue is not holding every hair.



16) Thread all eight strands on a short darning needle. Make about a dozen buttonhole stitches to cover the wire loop. Then one or two below the loop and then sew the ends into the hair.



17) If you have the type of braiding hair that is not as smooth as you would like, it needs to be ironed on a synthetic heat setting.



18) The hair needs to be fanned out and ironed from the loop end to the loose end.



19) As it is ironed it has flipped often, as only the hair on top will be smoothed. It is important to understand something about this type of synthetic hair. Mild heat relaxes it. High heat will melt it and a cold shock will set it. That is why you can't use curling irons, even on low because it will only serve to relax it.

Un-ironed top, ironed bottom.

You do not need to iron your switches because leaving it in the kinky natural state would be just as period correct as the straight in fact, women began wearing so much extra hair that the weight was just too much. They took to setting permanent crimps in their switches to fluff them out there by get bigger chignons with less weight. I can't believe what they went thru to do this. They braided the switch steamed it for a couple of hours and then put it in the oven for another hour. It is easier with Kanekoln it only needs to be steamed for one to three minutes then sprayed with ice water and left to dry or tossed into the freezer for five minutes.



Steam set wave top,

Steam set braid, unbraided bottom.

