

STRAIGHT DANCE OUTFIT

- 1. HAIR ROACH HEADDRESS** - this is either a real "*porcupine*" hair roach which can be made or bought; otherwise an excellent imitation hair roach can be made from tampico fiber. A fiber roach kit is available through the Boy Scouts National Supply Service. The straight dancers roach should stand up straight in the front, rather than spreading out like the roaches of fancy dancers and traditional dancers.
- 2. ROACH SPREADER** - the spreader holds the roach open, and tie thongs from the spreader go through a hole in the roach base, so it will tie onto your head. A straight dancers spreader is usually made of "*German silver*", with stamped designs, and has a single socket to hold the roach feather. In olden times the spreader was made of bone, or elk antler. A good inexpensive imitation spreader can be made from white or bone colored plastic.
- 3. ROACH FEATHER** - one imitation eagle tail feather, which mounts on the spreader in the socket, and spins when the dancer dances.
- 4. SCALP FEATHERS** - scalp feathers used to denote family or clan affiliation, but today scalp feathers are just another decorative part of the outfit. Most dancers prefer to wear a pair of feathers, trimmed and decorated, and tied onto the roach string coming off the top of the head, just at the base of the roach, hanging either to the right or left.
- 5. HEADBAND** - the headband is usually a white handkerchief folded into a 1" wide band, and tied in the middle of the forehead with a small square knot. Occasionally, a colored handkerchief is used instead of white, and some dancers opt not to wear a headband at all.
- 6. RIBBON SHIRT** - a ribbon shirt is normally worn by most straight dancers. Material for your shirt can be a solid color, large or small floral print, paisley print, calico, stripes, polka dots, but not Hawaiian prints or plaids. The ribbon color should be in sharp contrast to the color of your shirt material. Remember, the sleeves blouse, the shirt hangs to the crotch, and it should fit loosely around the waist. Having several different shirts gives you the option of a different "*look*" each time you dance. Ribbon shirt patterns are available through Indiancraft catalogs.
- 7. SCARF SET** - scarf sets should be the same color as the ribbons on the shirt, and made from taffeta, or other silk like material. The neckerchief is a 30" square of material that has been hemmed, and the smaller scarves, sometimes called charms, are 12 to 14 inch squares folded into quarters and tied onto the beads/bandoliers, just off the top of the shoulder on the back. Occasionally, very small loose feather fans will replace the small scarves. The neckerchief is worn full, with only one or two rolls and bloused around the neck, not rolled up tight like a scout neckerchief. It is held in place with a tie slide.

8. **OTTER TRAILER** - this is a strip of otter fur, mounted on red or blue broadcloth, and edged with ribbonwork, that hangs down the back from the neck to the heels. This trailer is usually decorated with beaded strips, medallions, and feather ornaments. Mirrors, shell conchos, or metal conchos are also used. A good substitute can be made from a strip of fur off of an old mink coat, or a strip of commercial fake fur. Mount the fur on red felt, and decorate the edge with ric rac. Sometimes a series of metal conchos called hair plates are mounted directly to the red or blue cloth and are worn in place of the otter trailer.

9. **TIE SLIDE** - the tie slide is usually made of "*German Silver*", and stamped with designs. A good substitute might be a silver ring, a cheap imitation southwest concho from Tandy's Leathercraft or a hobby shop, or any "*Indian style*" type of tie slide.

10. **ARM BANDS** - "*German Silver*" arm bands are most common. They may be stamped with designs, or plain, and are normally from 3/4 to 2 inches wide. They are worn just above the elbow, not on the upper arm. A 1 1/2 x 36 " ribbon (*color to match shirt ribbons and scarves*), is doubled and pinned to the arm bands with the ribbons hanging down from the elbow. Imitation material for arm bands might be aluminum, or plastic that has a chrome like finish.

11. **BEADS/BANDOLIERS** - strung beads, or bone hair pipe bandoliers are worn over one or both shoulders. They are usually sized to just below the waistline at about the bottom of the dance shirt. Single rows of beads might be brass, silver, or mesquite beans that have been drilled. Bandoliers are made from bone hair pipes, mixed with colored glass "*aurora borealis*" beads, strung up similar to a choker, two, three, or four rows wide, using leather spacers. Excellent substitutes can be made from plastic imitation bone hair pipes and plastic colored beads.

12. **BELT** - the straight dancer wears a beaded belt, or a concho belt, usually 3 to 4 inches wide, with the beadwork or the conchos mounted on heavy belt leather. With beadwork, **good color and design are important**. Don't be afraid to get help. To make a good beaded belt takes quite a bit of time. Other options include buying a ready made one, buying an imported piece of beadwork from an Indiancraft catalog. A good inexpensive substitute can be made by using the cross stitch technique with colored yarn. It's **quick and easy** to do. A belt can also be made from the inexpensive metal conchos available at most craft and hobby stores.

13. **SUIT** - the actual "**straight dance suit**" consists of a pair of leggings, a breechclout - or a pair of aprons, and a tail piece, all made from red or blue wool broadcloth, and decorated with matching ribbonwork, which is a type of craftwork. Depending on tribal style, sometimes leather leggings are substituted for the cloth ones.

An easy inexpensive substitute is to get some old -"*US Navy*" bell bottom blue wool pants, and cut them apart at the seams and use the material for your suit. It can be decorated with ribbonwork like strips, cut from some of the popular "*Indian design*", or southwest design materials available at many fabric shops. Try to shop around, and watch for good **designs** and proper **colors** that look like ribbonwork patterns.

14. SIDE DROPS AND GARTERS - these items are usually made from yarn and beads using a type of craftwork known as fingerweaving. A ready made set can be quite expensive, and to learn the fingerweaving technique takes a bit of time and skill. Two possible substitutes are to choose your colors of yarn, and then three braid - both long drops and short drops (*a dozen or so drops for each garter and side drop*) with #8 white sash beads woven in every inch or so.

Another idea is to buy a length of 1" wide, colored belt webbing, and paint arrowhead designs it with magic markers (*in a contrasting color*) and then "fake" the beads with white puff paint. These are items that you will have to see examples of in order to understand what they are.

15. BELLS - nickel silver or brass 1" to 1 1/2" bells, mounted on a strap that wraps two or three times around the leg just below the knee, covering the tie part of the garters. Cheap bells can sometimes be found around Christmas time in places that sell decorations. If you plan to dance very much your bells should be mounted with wire or rivets, If you string them up with shoe laces, the metal will wear through a cloth or leather lace quickly, and you don't want to loose any bells while dancing.

16. MOCCASINS - the preferred moccasin for the straight dancer is either a pair of fully beaded Cheyenne moccasins, or the Comanche/Kiowa "*dusters*", that are so popular. Both types are "plains" hardsole moccasins - with rawhide **hard soles**. The so called "*soft soled*" moccasins don't really work well for dancing. Hardsole moccasins **can be made** with a little effort. A satisfactory substitute, is a pair of white canvas deck shoes, with **proper** designs painted on them with acrylic paints or some of the popular fabric paints available in squeeze bottles.

17 ACCESSORIES - the straight dancer carries a tail feather flat fan in one hand, made from imitation eagle tail feathers. In the other hand he has either a beaded and decorated stick called a dance cane, or a mirror board. Other possible accessories might include a choker, Native American men's ear rings (*best to learn about this one first!*), and possibly a small beaded bag to carry your wallet and change in. Also most straight dancers sit on the bench on a Pendleton summer weight striped blanket. A good imitation might be a bright colored Mexican serape blanket.

TO BETTER UNDERSTAND WHAT A STRAIGHT DANCE OUTFIT IS, AND HOW TO PUT ONE TOGETHER, YOU SHOULD START ATTENDING SOME INDIAN DANCES AND POWWOWS TO SEE WHAT THIS OUTFIT REPRESENTS AND HOW IT IS WORN, THEN STRIVE TO MAKE YOUR OWN OUTFIT AS AUTHENTIC AS POSSIBLE.

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