



Some Pointers/Tips for Head Casting:

1. Most of the time just the form and volume of the back half of the head is enough. Most times you don't need the details that alginate captures, so most of the time, we just use a bald cap over the hair and use a solid casing of plaster bandages for the back half.
2. We found that it worked really well to start the back half by outlining the area to be cast with plaster bandages- up over the top of the head, down the sides just behind the ears, down the neck and shoulders and along the top of the back. You can shorten or lengthen the casting to any point by designing your outline differently.
3. When putting the bandages behind the ear, build them up carefully so they don't distort the ear but support it completely.
4. Fill in the back half of the head with plaster bandages and make it at least 5 layers thick.
5. When the back half is done, draw a line along the front edge of the back shell about 1-inch behind the front edge. Cover the area in front of the line with Vaseline as this is the area where the front shell will overlap the rear one and we can't have them sticking together.
6. After designing our front perimeter outline with plaster bandages like we did on the rear, draw another line on the front perimeter outline about 1/2 inch back from the rear edge of the front perimeter.
7. Mix and apply the alginate- 590-IBG is ideal- no more than about 1/4 inch thick. We always use a catheter-tip syringe (available at vet supply or big pet food stores) to apply alginate into the folds of the ear.
8. When the alginate sets, cut it back around the front plaster bandage outline to the line that you've drawn on the front plaster bandage outline.
9. When you begin applying the front plaster bandage reinforcement shell, make sure that the front shell is attached to the front perimeter outline. This way the alginate is actually "pinched" around its edge between two layers of plaster bandage. The alginate is mechanically retained inside the plaster bandage shell.
10. After pulling the head mold off the model, coat all plaster bandage surfaces with Vaseline.
11. Re-assemble the head mold and secure it together with plaster bandages.
12. Prop up the head mold upside down in a bucket. Make sure it is well padded because you don't want to put too much pressure on any one spot. Too much concentrated pressure and you'll distort the mold.
13. Most of the time you'll pour a solid casting out of a strong gypsum cement. Wrap a piece of pipe with several rings of plaster bandage and insert the pipe into the neck of the gypsum cement to serve as a mounting.
14. It is possible to pour a hollow casting, but it's more work. First you need to pour a thinnish plaster coating (a slip coat) to thoroughly coat the inside of the mold- about 1/8 inch thick. Let this first coat set about an hour. Then mix up another batch of gypsum cement and soak some pieces of burlap. Reach in through the neck hole and put a couple of layers of this impregnated burlap inside your first slip-coat. The shell should be at least 1-inch thick all the way around before you quit. This will be very strong and much lighter than a solid casting, but it's harder to put in a mounting pipe.