Old Age With Stretch and Stipple (Subtle Aging)

Now let's use S&S to create REAL wrinkles. There are many commercially available stipple formulas, mostly using liquid latex plus other ingredients to enhance wrinkling properties and add resistance to sweat. The formula I used is from Dick Smith’s Advanced Professional Makeup Course and contains foam latex base, gelatin, acrylic matte medium, talc, and pigments. But, if your actor has a latex allergy you can also try PPI’s Green Marble SeLr Concentrate. You will see this technique featured later in Eryn Krueger Mekash’s gothic vampire make-up (p343).

Some of the materials I used to create this, and most stretch and stipple make-ups, are shown to the left. You’ll see some of the sponges are torn to leave the surface with liver spot shapes that I can basically use as a stamp to break up the skin.

In the next image you will see various sized triangle sponges that are the perfect little precision tools for applying the stipple to small areas like the upper and lower eyelids.

In this same photo you’ll also notice some make-up brushes, including a few chip brushes that have been cut down. The cut down chip brush has become a staple tool for make-up artists everywhere. When the bristles are cut short, they are much more springy and can be used to “fleck” or spatter colors onto the face. Get skilled with a chip brush and the make-up world is your oyster! With practice, this technique lets you do everything from a very fine, almost airbrushed look to a very heavily textured spatter pattern. It is truly the best 59 cents you’ll ever spend.

The bottom photo shows PPI’s Skin Illustrator Glazing Gels. I like to use these water based gels for my initial painting under the stipple. Their transparency under the latex truly makes the colors look like they are coming through the skin, not just sitting on top.
My preference is always to do as much under painting as I can before we start the stretch and stipple steps.

I started with character accents on the eyelids using the Red 3 Gel Make-up. Blotch it lightly and transparently on the lids, in the corners of the nose, and on the cheeks to add a little ruddiness and simulate broken capillaries.

For this I used a very well-used synthetic brush that has its bristles splayed in all directions.

Next, I used the Character 1 Gel Make-up with a super fine brush to enhance the eyelid veins. I also used this same color to accent the dark under-eye circles. Anything you can do to weaken the features or break up the skin makes your subject look less healthy.

Finally, I stippled Character 2 and Tan 2 Gel Make-ups on with the same splayed brush to create random age spots.

“Randomity” is essential to making freckles and age spots!!

Your main goal with these steps is to break up the skin so it’s no longer smooth and youthful looking.
Once the Gel Make-up is dry, they don’t move or smear on the skin at all. And since they are transparent, they don’t look at all like they are painted on top of the skin, but instead really do seem to be coming from underneath. There’s no need to powder them either!

The chart below shows the areas where we’ll do the stretch and stipple technique, the order in which the steps should be done, and the direction the model’s skin should be pulled. I always start with the upper inside corner and from there work my way around the orbit of the eye.

Before we start, I want to give you a few keys to success with stretch and stipple:

* Always start with a squeaky clean, oil free face.

* Work in thin layers. Don’t put it on too wet or too heavy.

* A hair dryer helps speed up the drying. Always dry thoroughly before adding another layer.

* Never release the skin until it’s powdered! The stipple will stick to itself.

* Always overlap sections, making sure all connecting areas have wrinkle texture.

* Throw away your sponge after every two sections. They get gummed up and can stick to already dried stipple, causing edges to peel up and destroy what you’ve already done.
Follow the chart on the previous page, starting with the inside half of the upper lid.

Use one of the smaller, sort of pointed sponges to apply your first coat of old age stipple while pulling the lid up and slightly towards the center of the forehead.

To do this, I usually put my thumb right on the eyebrow, stretch, then stipple on the latex.

Dry your first coat very thoroughly with a blow dryer. You’ll know it’s dry when it turns completely clear (keep your blow dryer on the low setting, and keep it moving so you don’t burn your model). Once it’s dry, DO NOT release it! Add another light coat, then dry that too. Before you release it, you MUST powder it. If you don’t, the latex will stick to itself, effectively gluing your model’s eye open. They do not like this.

I use a brush to powder the stipple, rather than a puff, because it’s just easier to get into all the little wrinkled areas.

I cannot emphasize enough just how important the role powder plays is to the stretch and stipple process. There is no real way to repair stretch and stipple perfectly. If it gets damaged because it stuck to itself, you basically have to remove it all and start from scratch. Not fun!
Repeat the same steps again for your second coat. The photo to the right shows the results of the first area with two coats of stipple that I’ve powdered and released. Brush off all the excess powder. The model now has real wrinkles!

The next step is on the outer half of the upper eye, about as wide as the outer end of the brow. When you apply here, make sure you slightly overlap the previous section. This makes sure there are no unwrinkled areas in between the two sections.

The pull for this outer eyelid area goes up and slightly toward the temple. The procedure is the same: apply one coat, dry that completely, apply a second coat, dry that completely, and powder before releasing the stretch.

The upper crow’s feet area is sort of a strange pull direction. I grab the outer end of the eyebrow and pull that towards the center of the forehead. Stipple, dry, repeat, and powder.

For this make-up, I actually did apply a third coat of stipple in this area, as I wanted to make her crow’s feet slightly more prominent.
Next comes the lower crow’s feet area. This pull goes down and towards the corner of the mouth.

Like the upper crow’s feet, I did three coats here too, drying each coat thoroughly and of course powdering before letting go.

Note: when working around the eyes, try to keep away from the eyelashes. Latex loves to stick to hair, and it’s hard to remove.

Continue on to the next section, which is the outer half of the undereye area.

The pull for this is towards the center of the lips. Be careful - this is an area where it’s easy to get the latex stipple on to your own fingers. This could damage everything you’ve done so far if it sticks to the stipple on the face.

Two coats, dry, and powder.

Finally, the inner half of the undereye. This is another strange pull, in that it goes down and towards the the opposite corner of the mouth.

This stretch is best done by your model instead of you because only she knows how much pull is possible without applying too much pressure on the nose. Simply place their fingers for them, and coach them on the direction to pull.
The image to the right shows the results of the entire eye orbit area completed.

Follow the exact same procedures with the other eye. Two coats everywhere except the upper and lower crow’s feet areas, which get three for greater emphasis.

The area between the eyebrows, from the bridge of the nose to center forehead, is another area where your model can help you out. She has two hands free, so it’s easier for her to pull both sides at once. Just make sure she doesn’t touch any finished areas.

This next spot produces some amazing wrinkly effects, but it’s not without some trouble. It requires the model to put two fingers in her mouth and push the cheek out and forward (kinda like a fish hook). Stipple on the latex to cover almost to the chin, up to the sides of the nose, and halfway back on the cheek.
Two coats should be sufficient here. Dry and powder before your model takes her fingers out of her mouth. If someone is squeamish about the whole fingers in the mouth thing, you can do the same sort of effect using a soup or serving spoon to push the cheek out.

The images to the left show the results on the camera-right side of Elin’s face.

Repeat on the other side in the same manner. Powder and release.

Now the stretch and stipple part is done!

Next you’ll want to remove as much of the powder as possible, which can make the skin look gray and dead. It’s time to bring it back to life! Dampen a sponge with water and gently wipe all the powder off of your stippled areas. Wash the sponge out and repeat this a few times to ensure as much powder as possible is gone. Make sure the water is completely dry before proceeding to the next step. Use a clear plastic sealer to stroke over the stippled areas, or simply spray PPI’s Green Marble spray or Final Seal to remove any last bit of remaining powder and add a nice skin-like sheen all over.
Now we’re back to painting. This time we’ll go for your alcohol colors.

I spattered on a bit of a freckle tone to break up the neck color a little. I also did a very light spatter over the entire face, enhanced some of the ruddiness in the cheeks and corners of the nose with a rose color, and added a few more liver spots on the forehead.

The finishing touch on this make-up is to add gray hair.

For this I used the Skin Illustrator Hair Aging palette. You can see from the photo below, this palette has several slightly different hair graying colors. Not all hair will require the same color to make it appear silver or white. This kit has several shades in it so you can counter the cast of any hair color.

What I also like about this Hair Aging palette is that the colors have metallics or opalescents in them, so they don’t make the hair look dull. Activate them just like you would any other alcohol palette by spraying some 99% alcohol in the color you want to use.

I used a clean, disposable mascara wand to apply the color, but you can also use a toothbrush or a dye brush - any of these will be fine.
Don’t try to cover the whole head in gray - I promise it will just look stupid and unrealistic. Instead, do select areas such the temples by weaving in a few grays hairs at a time throughout the section.

The best method is always to start at the root and work toward the end, painting just a few hairs at a time.

Whatever you do, always cover the entire shaft of hair from end to end.

The photo to the right shows the finished look. This make-up is subtle and realistic. Even though we advanced Elin’s age quite a bit, the make-up looks like it’s just a natural part of her own skin.

She could go anywhere wearing this make-up and no one would give her a second look. That is the way to tell a good age make-up, when you can’t tell they’re wearing anything at all.

Strive for this kind of realism in all your character make-ups and you will never be disappointed.
Stretch and Stipple (Advanced Age)

This next “out-of-the-kit” old age make-up will look far more advanced in years. The techniques will be similar to what you saw in the previous make-up, but we will expand on the paint, where the stipple is used, and how many layers we apply.

Using a generous amount of alcohol, I wet a good freckly/liver spot color and transferred it to a disposable paper palette. I personally like a larger palette for this, as I tend to mix and use a lot of the alcohol colors and the bigger palette paper gives me more space to work without making too much of a mess. For most of this make-up, I will be using a spattering method with a cut down, inexpensive chip brush. It is by far the easiest and most realistic method for freckling and breaking up the skin.

This spattering is done by loading the brush with a very thinned down alcohol color and simply running your finger over the bristles. The cut down bristles are very springy and, when you run your finger over them, actually propel the paint. Mastering this simple (and very cheap) tool will reward you many times over. When you get good at it, you’ll be able to do every texture from a fine airbrushed effect to a heavy splatter.

The photo on the right shows the neck detail.
I continued the spatter all over the face and neck, concentrating it on the forehead, temple, cheeks and sides of the neck. Don’t apply as much on the chin nose and mouth area. And don’t forget her ears. Ears get freckled too!! Once the spatter is complete, I went in with a raggedy brush and intensified a few of the age spots, making them more prominent. Don’t darken or enhance all of them, be selective, and random. Randomity is still key! They should not all be the same size, the same shape, the same intensity, and they definitely shouldn’t be equidistant from one another.

Next, with a grayish-purple alcohol color, I accented the dark circles under the eyes. This will help sink them in and make the skin look weaker. Be VERY careful when using alcohol paints around the eye area. The fumes alone are enough to be irritating.

Using a smaller chip brush, I lightly sprinkled in a rosy color into the tip and corners of the nose, onto the cheeks, and on the chin.

This color should go anywhere you might want to warm up the tone of the skin. I wanted this character to be a bit ruddier (more red), so extra red on the cheeks and nose help bring her to life.
Next, I used an ultra fine brush to actually draw in a few broken capillaries with the same red color.

I then also enhanced some little eyelid veins with the same purple previously used to create the dark circles under the eyes. Make sure these are very tiny and subtle looking.

The photo to the left shows the finished pre-painting. After this, we’ll be done with paint until the end after the stretch and stipple wrinkles are added.

This pre-painting is such a wonderful step in creating realism because, if it’s done lightly and with a subtle hand, it will show realistically through the stipple.

Think of all your make-ups as building layers of translucency. You’ll be much happier with the realistic results you’ll get that way than by adding heavy, thick make-up that doesn’t look real.
Here I skip ahead a little since the eye areas are done using the same steps as we did with the previous make-up on Elin (see pages 31-35). This time I actually did three coats of stipple everywhere instead of two, and four on the crow’s feet areas instead of just three. You can see that Michelle’s eyes look way more wrinkled than Elin’s in the last make-up. Even though I’m still shooting for realism, I’m trying to make her a more advanced age.

Although Michelle is about ten years older than Elin, that third coat of stipple made the eye wrinkles so much more pronounced. I also added one more small step - before doing the area between the brows, I added two light layers of stipple on the bridge of the nose while pulling straight down. This made some nice little horizontal wrinkles appear on the bridge of the nose.

The forehead comes next. You can do the whole thing at once, or half and half. Either way, the skin is pulled straight back as tight as you can before you stipple.

Generally, the forehead doesn’t give you too much wrinkling with this technique, but it’s still worth it to create a uniform texture.

Plus, the wrinkles will show up when the model changes expressions.
Here are the finished eyes and forehead - see what I mean about the forehead wrinkles? You don’t get tons of wrinkles, but what you do get is texture that really enhances the look of the make-up when she raises her brows, frowns, or makes other expressions.

The area surrounding the mouth is next. Have her pull her cheeks back, stretching the lips out nice and wide.

Apply the stipple to the chin and upper lip area, but avoid the lips themselves. Stipple doesn’t stay that well on the lips, what with talking and moisture and all.

Below: the result of the mouth stretch

Next is the jowl area - pull the skin up and back towards the ear/temple for the stretch in this area. This helps force the skin into pouches, helping with the resulting jowly effect.
After the jowls comes the fingers-in-the-mouth trick. Two fingers from the model’s opposite hand are placed inside the mouth to push the cheek out.

For added stretch, separate the fingers and push outward like a fish hook in the cheek. This little trick has the ability to take the make-up to a whole new level, as it really changes the shape of the model’s mouth and cheek area.

The photo to the right shows the results of this trick. Remember, for sanitary reasons (or germaphobes), a soup or serving spoon could be used in place of her fingers.

Remember to still always powder before releasing the pull on all the areas you’ve coated with the stipple.

The cheeks are next in line for wrinkling. Pull back towards the upper ear as shown in the picture directly below. For a little added wrinkling, you can have the model puff out her cheek from the inside while you stretch from the outside. The next trick is one of my favorites - the little section in front of the ear. It’s so easy too, just grab the ear lobe and pull it back (see top of next page for photos).
A few layers on the nose will add a little texture there too.

The last sections to do are on the neck. I start with the center. The model pulls the skin back while tipping her head back as far as it can comfortably go (pictured to the right).

Three to four coats here will produce some beautiful wrinkle texture.

Finally, finish it off by applying stipple to the sides of the neck one side at a time. Have your subject turn her head in the opposite direction and tip back a bit too.

As with the previous make-up, you’ll need to wipe off all the excess powder and seal the entire stippled area.
For a more complete character, I also aged her hands. This has to be the simplest feature to age with stretch and stipple. Just have her tighten her fist and bend the wrist forward, stipple three coats from just in front of the knuckles to just past the wrist, drying each coat.

Do only the back of each finger individually (if you wrap it all the way around it will rub and peel up anyway). Enhance the veins and age spots with your alcohol colors.

A little reddish color on the knuckles and around the cuticles will finish the look.

Now would also be a good time to further enhance the paint on the face. Darken a few of the age spots and ruddy up the cheeks a little more too.

Apply color to gray some of the hair as we did in the previous make-up.
This time, using a dye brush (looks like a black tooth brush) and the same PPI Hair Aging Palette I used on Elim, I whitened individual hairs woven through her temple area, then combed it through to help subtly distribute the color.

This character will be finished by adding some tooth stains. PPI’s Fleet Street Peg-works tooth stains come in both liquids and in palettes. Both work great, and the selection of colors is amazing.

The first step in staining the teeth is to dry them off completely with a tissue. The stains won’t stick well unless the teeth are 100% dry. Then use a clean brush or cotton swab to apply the stain colors.

Making sure to get it into all those cracks between the teeth too. If you apply too much, or you simply want to tone the color down, a clean cotton swab with a little 99% alcohol on it will take down excess color easily.