

Coga- and bongo head renewal

Fitting flat conga & bongo heads takes a little bit of knowledge & care but it's not too difficult. The procedure for stretching conga & bongo heads are essentially the same.

Summary

Remove old head from drum. (Observe & examine how the parts fits together.)

Soak new skin in tub, sink or big bucket of warm water. Soak until the entire skin is flexible. (Untreated skins usually get fully flexible in 10 - 15 minuets. Treated skins take longer, sometimes up to 60 minuets or more.)

Remove skin from water & pat dry.

Lay moist skin on top of drum.

Place wire ring on top of skin.

Wrap skin around wire ring.

Put rim on top of skin, tuck skin through rim.

Attach and tighten lugs; don't make lugs not too tight.

Let dry (head will harden and tighten as it dries)

Cut away excess skin.

And after it dries adjust lugs to your desired tuning & have fun jammin'!

First, you have to keep the metal ring which your current heads are tucked around. Loosen the lugs on your drum so you can remove the rim. After you remove the rim take the old head of the drum shell. The remove the wire, which the head is wrapped around. Keep the wire - you will need it for your new head.

Tip

Soaking your old head in warm water will loosen it and allow you to easily remove the wire.

Take your new flat head and soak it in warm water for 10 - 15 minuets. (If you are using LP flat skins, it will take longer for the heads to absorb the water because LP skins are treated with a chemical, which prevents it from soaking up water as quickly as skins that are not treated.) Once the skin is wet and flexible take it out of the water & pat dry. The skin should be moist, but NOT dripping wet. Next, lay the moist, flexible skin on top of the drum.

Then place the wire ring over the drum shell and on top of skin. Wrap the flat skin around the wire while placing the drum rim on top of the skin & wire (the wire should fit in the rim) & tuck the skin under the rim.

Tucking the skin under the rim is the most challenging part of the job. Take your time and be careful to bring the skin through the rim evenly and smoothly.

Tip

Sometimes flat-headed pliers can be helpful to pull the skin through, but if there is a couple of inches or more of extra skin, then one's fingers are usually sufficient to pull and tuck the skin.

When the skin is even attach the nut to each lug. Turn each nut just enough so it's securely on the lug's threads. Do NOT fully tighten each lug nut.

The head will also tighten as it dries, so you should not make the lugs tight.

Tip

For bongo lugs (9" or smaller heads): tighten all the lugs moving in a circular, clockwise or counterclockwise, direction.

Tip

For conga lugs (9 1/4" or larger heads) tighten all the lugs in a star pattern.

As the head dries it will get tighter and harder.

It often takes 2 - 4 hours for a head to fully dry, but it could take more or less depending on the size and thickness of the skin as well as how moist or wet the skin was when first tucked. Once the head is fully

After the head dries you can tighten the lugs and tune it as you like. Once the lugs are tightened cut away any excess skin.

Tip

Do NOT cut the skin until you are satisfied. You can always redo the whole process if you don't cut your skin. But once it's cut it will be very to re-tuck the same size drum.

When you are ready to cut use care and a quality scissor. This is your last step so take your time and do it right - you don't want to accidentally cut your new drum head or yourself.

Once you cut the extra skin your drum will be fully ready and waiting for you to have fun!

The whole process can take 20 - 90 minutes, depending on how familiar and/or careful one is.

Tip

In the beginning of the process, before you loosen the lugs and take the rim off examine it; examine how the rim sits on top of the skin and how the lugs pull the rim down and so on. Likewise, when you take off the rim, examine how the skin lays on top of the drum shell; and when you take the old head off the shell, examine how the skin is wrapped around a wire and so on. As you dismantle your old head take a good look at how everything relates and fits together.