

NEEDLE FELTING BASICS



Fairy Wings
& Mini Things

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Skill level: Beginning

Supplies:

Roving: NZ Corriedale or comparable roving

Needles: 36T, 38T, 38S, 40T

Foam Pad work surface



	<p>Needle felting, also known as dry felting, is the process of using repetitive motion and a barbed needle to entangle roving fibers into shapes.</p>
	<p>New Zealand Corriedale is a versatile wool roving as it is coarse so it felts easily and quickly. Merino has vibrant colors but is much finer and slower to felt. There are a variety of wools to experiment with.</p>
<p>www.wizpick.com</p>	<p>36T Good for early stages of felting and coarse wool. 38T All purpose needle. 38S Good for both rough shaping and fine work, it's especially good for joining pieces. 40T Good surface felting (finishing) needle for all fibers, particularly for medium and fine wool.</p>
<p>The closed cell foam rubber rectangle is the standard work mat for felting. Approximately 6" x 8" x 2"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always use a foam base made specifically for needle felting • Do not punch with excessive force • Punch needle straight in and withdraw straight out. • Do not pick out debris with the needle point • Do not blend roving with the needle point
<p>Fluff the roving by layering 4" pieces that you've pulled from the roving. Do not cut.</p>	<p>Prepare the wool: Position your work surface and layer the roving alternating the direction of the fibers on each layer to make a practice surface about 4" by 4". This technique is called layering:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>1st & 3rd layer</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>2nd & 4th layer</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>Ready to poke</p> </div> </div>
<p>Use a 36T needle to begin felting</p>	<p>Poke the needle through the roving into the mat and withdraw it. Now, begin to poke all over for a few minutes. Pull the piece away from the mat, turn it over, and continue poking. The wool will stick to the mat a little bit when you turn it. That's OK. Keep poking and turning until the piece is firm. If you do not turn the wool, you will embed your work into the foam, wrecking both foam and roving. It takes a lot of pokes to felt the roving.</p> <p>Keep you needle position straight going in and pulling out or it will snap. You can angle the needle but do not bend or dig with it.</p>



To make a ball:

1. Begin with the fluffed piece of wool. Poke in a circle around the edges and cross through the middle like you were cutting a cake into slices.
2. Turn the wool and do the same thing on the other side. Only turn the wool a few times as we're not making a flat felt, just sticking the fibers together enough to hold a shape.
3. Start working the edges of the circle into the middle - almost folding it. Keep turning the piece as you poke. Think of a potter throwing a clay pot - never work long on a given side.
4. Poke in the bits that are sticking outside the round shape that you are imagining. Keep going...the movement and the poking together are what forms the shape. Think of clay or bread dough.



To make a log:

Complete steps 1 and 2 for making a ball.

Now, concentrate on a long shape - don't turn the ends in upon themselves as you poke. Think about rolling out clay into a snake.

When you get the size log you want, start working on the ends. Poke them in, but not as much as you did with the ball - or you will have another ball!



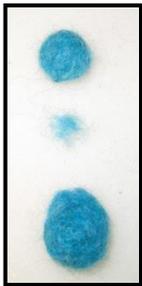
To make a flat piece of needle felting:

Begin with the fluffed piece of wool. Poke in a circle around the edges and cross through the middle like you were cutting a cake into slices. Now, poke all over the piece in a **random** pattern.

Turn the wool and do the same thing on the other side. Keep poking and turning the wool when it begins to stick to the mat.

Start forming it to the shape you want. Remember the direction you poke determines the shape. The edges can be poked in at a 45° angle.

Keep poking and turning until you reach the firmness you like.



Poke at 45 degree angle



To attach two pieces together:

1. Pieces must have a bit of fluff (unfelted roving) to join together. Take a small piece of fluff from your roving and stick it between the pieces
2. Pieces must have the same density. Don't try attaching a soft fluffy piece to a firmly felted one. Place the pieces as you want them to be when you are finished and begin poking the edges with the needle at a 45 angle. Remember, remove the needle on the same angle path as you inserted it. After it is tacked in place (similar to basting in sewing), continue to poke until the pieces cannot be pulled apart.



Rainbow Fish Pincushion
created by Sharon Light for Fairy Wings & Mini Things

To embellish: The trick is to use small wisps of roving and surface felt the details in place. Use a 40T needle for details and embellishment.

If you poke too deep, the color will come out the backside of the project and the embellishment will disappear into the piece.

Make sure the embellishment is securely attached. If you rub your hand over it, it should not move.

SAFETY TIPS



Make sure your foam mat is thick enough that the needle does not go all the way through it.

Do not pry fiber or debris from the roving with the needle. If you have to, use the crank end of the needle, or a needle that's already broken. Put the needle back in a holder or pincushion if you are not using it.

It's a good idea to get a tetanus shot.

