

# How to...

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information

## Felting

### Introduction

Felting is one of the oldest textile forms and it is still popular today. It can be used to make hats, bags and other fashion accessories.

There are two felting methods.

The “wet” method consists of making felt from wool fibres.

The “dry” method is a way of punching natural wool fibres into a textile base to make designs.

### Wet Felting

#### Equipment needed:

Natural carded wool in various colours

Felting soap

Bubble-wrap to roll the wet wool fibres

Kettle with boiling water

### Method

Traditionally, people used to make a fabric from wool fibres without weaving. This consists of putting layers of carded wool fibres in criss-cross layers, applying an oil based soap solution to allow the fibres to slide and mix. The layered wool is then rubbed and rolled, so that the fibres mix randomly, forming a thick wool fabric. When the fibres are well mixed, boiling water is poured over the textile, causing the wool to felt, a little like what happens to a woollen that is accidentally washed in a washing machine at high temperature. The felted wool can be shaped into funny hats with dread locks, one piece handbags and all manner of sculpted shapes, or made flat to use as a sheet of felt.



## Dry Felting

### Equipment needed:

A base fabric or polystyrene shape to decorate

Felting needles

Foam pad for punching

Natural carded wool

### Method

The dry technique requires few but essential tools, allowing you to punch wool designs into felt, but also into denim, cotton or fleece. You can also punch wool into polystyrene shapes.

To do this, you need a foam punching pad, special barded felting needles, natural wool fibres and the item that you want to decorate.

Place the item to decorate on the foam pad and using the felting needles, repeatedly punch the wool fibres into the fabric. The foam pad is essential as it protects your needles from breaking on a hard surface. The small wool fibres will be forced into the textile. It is surprisingly easy to make your own design, and requires little artistic skill. You can also use a stencil or cookie cutter as a guide when punching the wool.

You can combine wet felting with dry felting, by making the basic shape in wet felting, then decorating it by punching accent into your felt shape.

You can also make felt designs using the ready made felt accents, such as flowers, bees etc. simply glued on to a base, or punching them in using wool fibres, or combining punched designs with applied ready made accents.

## Projects ideas:

Bags, jewellery, hats, glasses case, mobile phone case, purse, scarf, slippers, cushion covers, coasters.



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