

HOW TO MAKE A PIECE OF FELT.

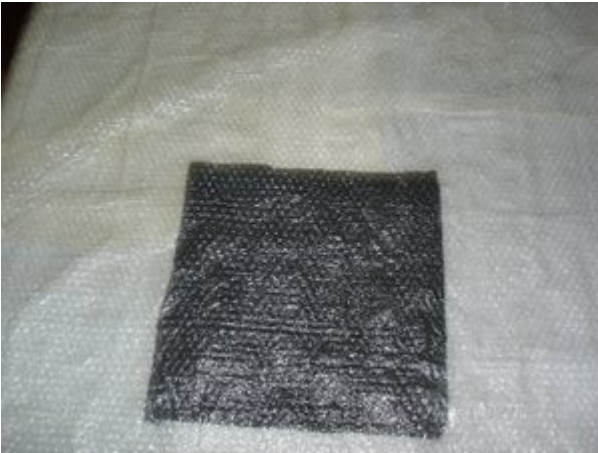
Are you familiar with how to make felt? If not, this is a very basic felt making tutorial for beginners, suitable for adults and children, who are excited about learning a new technique.

Feltmaking requires a few tools, already available in most households:

- a table
- plastic to protect your table
- an old towel
- a piece of bubble wrap, at least 40cm x 50cm or a beach mat or bamboo stick window blind
- 50g wool slivers merino wool or other good felting wool
- a piece of fly screen at least 40cm x 40cm
- a spray bottle with hot soapy water
- tape measure
- some rags

Starting the project.

Put the plastic down onto the table top for protection, with the towel on top of the plastic. Roll out the bamboo window blind or the bubble wrap with the nobs facing upwards.



Mark off an area of 30cm x 30cm.



Take the wool sliver and divide into 4 equal parts.
Do not cut it with scissors, it will cut the fibers.
We are now ready to start.

Take the wool sliver into your left hand (note: everything is the opposite way for left handed people).

With your right hand, gently pull a piece of wool and put it in a corner of your square. The side that you hold in your hand goes on the edge, except if you want very irregular edges.



Repeat the same action with a second piece of wool and put it next to the first one, just overlapping a bit. Repeat until the row is finished.



We are now ready to start a new row. This time we let the loose bits overlap the first row. Every piece we lay down is now overlapping the wool of the first row and the previous piece next to it.



When we have covered the total surface with wool, we spray it with the hot water from our spray bottle. Do not soak it, it is enough that the wool is a bit wet. You will learn to add the right amount over time.



We repeat this whole process in the second layer, except that it is placed at an angle of 90 degrees on top of the first. We keep going with 2 other layers, each time changing the direction of the wool fibers and wetting with the spray bottle after each layer.

The felting process.

When wetting the fourth layer, we put the fly screen on top of the wool. Push down the fly screen while making circular movements over the fly screen until the piece is flat.



If you didn't add liquid soap to your spray bottle already, you can use a soap bar now, while doing the circular movements. I prefer to add the liquid soap to the water instead, it all depends on your preference though, it doesn't really matter which one you use.

Not wet enough

If you can't get the air out completely, means that the wool isn't wet enough. Spray some more water on top of the screen until the wool is wet enough.

Too wet

If there is water coming through the screen, when you push down the wool, it means that it is too wet. Now the rags will come in handy, use them to soak up the water.

Again, it takes a bit of time to learn how wet is wet enough.



When the wool piece is totally flat and the soap spread out evenly, carefully take off the fly screen

If you'd like to have straight edges, it is important now to carefully fold over the edges and push them under the border. Be careful not to move the wool too much, it is still delicate now as it has not been felted yet.



When you are ready with that, roll the piece of wool into the bubble wrap that is under it. You can just roll it like shown on the picture or you can put a round stick in the middle. Sorry, I have no picture of that, but it is really simple. Whether you use a stick or not is up to your own preference. Sometimes it keeps it all better together. Or another option is to roll it in a bamboo window blind (the one with the round sticks).



Roll for approx. 5 minutes for a start.



Now it is time for testing. Gently lift up the fibres. As you see in the picture, it is still possible to lift them very easily, which means that it is not felted enough yet.



After rolling another 5 minutes, you can see how the whole piece lifts up when I try to lift the fibres.

If the wool would not be felted enough yet, Turn the piece on an angle of 90 degrees and roll again for another 5 minutes.

The reason why we turn it, is to get it felted evenly in both directions, so that we will end up with a square instead of a rectangle.

The fulling process.

When the wool has felted enough, this means the whole piece holds well together, we can go over to the next stage, called the fulling.

If we would use the felt like this, it wouldn't last very long. That's why we need to harden it.

This can be done as long or as short as you want. The longer you do it the harder and stronger the felt becomes. How hard we want the felt to be depends on what we are going to use it for. For a scarf we would like to have a softer piece than if we would be making shoes for example.

There are many different ways of fulling. I will show you a few here.



The fulling can be done by more rolling in the bubble wrap or the bamboo roll.



Another method is by rubbing it over the sink.

You can throw the piece on a table over and over again. As long as there is friction, it will work.



Whatever technique you are using, it is important to decide which form you want to achieve. Check regularly if you want a square and turn over the felt piece to full it in the other direction.

When you are satisfied with the felt piece, rinse it and dry it flat on a towel.
Once you plan to make bigger pieces, it is always advisable to test first and make a little piece like this, so that you can calculate the shrinkage of the wool.



Happy felting!

If you like this tutorial, feel free to sign up for my newsletter to learn more about feltmaking. Or you might know someone who would like it.

I am starting to make tutorials, about feltmaking and other textile crafts that I will sell as a PDF file online. I have learned and practised many different textile techniques over the years, starting with knitting at the age of five and I love to help other people to express their creativity.

My tutorials/patterns will be for sale on the following sites:

<http://lizetfrijters.com>

<http://lizetfrijters.etsy.com>

<http://lizetfrijters.dawanda.com>

If you like to buy wool for this or other projects, check out the many sellers on <http://etsy.com> selling pre-dyed wool slivers.

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