

Our Guide To Stitchery

Embroidery, Woolfelt, Punch Needle & Needle Felting At Needles & Pins

Spring Into Handwork!

Longer days, a glint of green in the flowerbeds: spring must be around the corner! Now's the time to take a cue from Mother Nature and make something new!

Handwork is a popular hobby that allows us to feel creative, accomplished and productive all at the same time.

This spring, you'll want projects to take with you when you travel, or sit at a ball game or wait for someone in the doctor's

office. Handwork is a great way to start children on their own creative journeys, feeling a sense of accomplishment.

"I made this!" is right up there with "I can read that!" as the perfect words you want to hear.

You'll love working with beautiful spring colors in Woolfelt and wool roving. Woolfelt appliqué allows us to use em-



broidery stitches and embellishment without having to worry about turning edges

and the other issues of hand applique. So easy!

Embellishing clothing with Woolfelt and needle felting is very fashionable. It's another way to add flair to your personal style and show off your skills! Enjoy!

Take A Look At...

- **Crab-Apple Hill Patterns:** Beautiful embroidery! See our models of pillows and a very cute basket pincushion this spring.
 - **Fleece Dog:** Watch for models of needle-felted dogs from this book.
 - **Punch Needles patterns** from **Country Threads, Rachel's of Greenfield** and **Country Stitches.**
 - **Needle Felted Flower Pins** from Indygo Junction. Wear one on your jacket, coat, purse or Easter bonnet! A fun Mother's Day gift!
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What Is A Penny Rug?

Penny rugs date from the 18th century when women would use scraps of fabric, particularly wools, to create decorative mats and coverings for tables, mantles, etc. Coins were often used as templates for circles and a coin might be stitched between two pieces of wool to make it lie flat. The buttonhole (or blanket) stitch was

used to appliqué a smaller circle onto a larger one. Many original penny rugs were made up completely of circles on circles, much like a yo-yo quilt.

The revival of the penny rug as a



decorative item has seen a great expansion of design and format, but the original concept lives on.

Try Punch Needle Embroidery This Year!

In punch needle embroidery, threads running through a needle are punched through a background fabric to form loops on the underside. When the needle is withdrawn, the loops stay in place. Loops of a specific color fill a space and form the picture underneath — the actual “right side” of the picture. Various types of

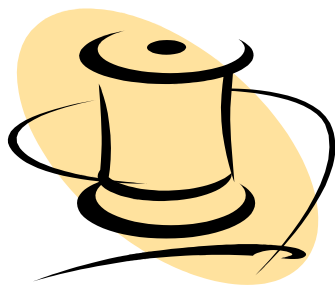
threads can be used with different sizes of needles. We often describe it as a miniature form of rug hooking!

We sell the Cameo needle for punching, as well as hoops, small frames, floss and pearl cotton, patterns and books. Many patterns come with the design already

printed on weaver’s cloth, but you can trace your own. Popular uses include Christmas ornaments, bookmarks, pictures for framing, pins and other wearables and pieces to sew onto purses and bags. Take a look at some of our books: **A Passion For Punchneedle and Punchneedle Fun** from That Patchwork Place.

Set The Color Before You Embellish

Before you use Woolfelt as an embellishment on clothing, or anything that will get wet or be laundered, be sure to set the color using Retayne, the chemical fixative.



You may also wish to doublecheck the colorfastness of wool roving and other yarns you choose to use for such projects. Better safe than

sorry!

Use Retayne in the prewashing process with Woolfelt, whether you are working by hand or using the washer.

Combine Woolfelt and Quilting

It's the best of both worlds! Piece the background, add Woolfelt applique and then quilt and bind your wall hanging. What a great way to combine your interests, and maybe learn a new skill.

We have several examples of this idea hanging in the shop. Two are from the book **Cotton & Ewe** and several others are from patterns by

Rachel's of Greenfield. We've also made several pieces from the book **A Fresh Look At Seasonal Quilts** from That Patchwork Place that include both fabric and Woolfelt.

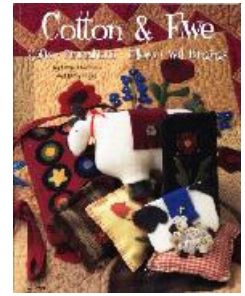
A few hints when appliquéing Woolfelt on a fabric background:

-If you will be appliquéing on the outer borders, cut them wider and

then trim when completed.

-Consider quilting patterns carefully. Don't overquilt or leave large areas unquilted.

-If machine stitching your applique pieces, use a stabilizer underneath the fabric.



Tips For Punch Needle

- Hold your needle perpendicular to the fabric—not like a pencil.
- If you are right handed, work right to left; if you are left handed, work left to right.
- Keep the bevel side of the needle facing the direction you are punching.
- Push needle down as far as it will go each and every time. Barely lift the needle off the fabric as you finish a loop—scrape the fabric with the needle.
- As you punch curves, turn the hoop, not the needle.
- Make rows a needle width apart. Make individual stitches as close as possible.
- Try to rest your hand that is holding the needle on the edge of the hoop. Don't place hoop on table.

Spring Stitchery Coupon

15% off Stitchery Books & Patterns
(Woolfelt, Punch Needle, Needle Felting)

One Coupon Per Customer
Valid 2/24/08 through 5/31/08 In Store Sales Only

Tips For Preparing National Nonwovens' Woolfelt

Different colors of Woolfelt are composed of varying amounts of wool; therefore, each color may react somewhat differently in preparation. Woolfelt is usually washed before using it, making it soft and giving it a textured appearance. *You do not have to pre-wash Woolfelt. You may prefer the flat and firmer appearance for some projects.*

Woolfelt will shrink up to 3 to 4 inches in each direction when washed and dried. Most patterns will allow for this shrinkage in stating the amount of Woolfelt to buy, but be sure to check! If you are using a pattern that calls for wool fabric and you are substituting Woolfelt, be sure to increase the amounts you purchase.

Woolfelt will bleed, so be sure to wash and dry colors separately. If you want to stop future bleeding,

use the color fixative **Retayne** in the hot water when you pre-wash.

Preparing Woolfelt:

1. Saturate each piece of Woolfelt in hot water in a basin in the sink. Wring out thoroughly. Add Retayne to the water if you wish to set the color.
2. Dry Woolfelt in either the dryer, with an old towel to keep the piece of felt tossing; or lay flat to air dry.
3. Wipe the dryer out before using for another piece of felt or another load of laundry.
4. You can tea dye the felt. Brew a tea solution; saturate the felt; wring out and dry either in the dryer or oven at 250 degrees. You can also dab with a hot teabag.

Tips For Tracing and Cutting:

1. Trace pattern pieces onto the paper side of freezer paper and cut out **around** the shapes, NOT on the traced lines.
2. Lightly and carefully press freezer paper shapes to felt.
3. Cut out on traced lines and remove freezer paper template.
4. Ironing will smooth out the Woolfelt and eliminate the texture that comes with pre-washing, so be careful where you press.

A little dab of glue stick will help hold small pieces of Woolfelt in place as you are stitching around them on your project.

Patterns To See...

Easter Egg Hunt



Cat Tails



Sheep

Punch Needle

Snow Folks

Ornaments



Needle Felting Opens The Creative Door

Needle felting, as we speak of it, is really “dry” needle felting: pushing wool fibers and fabrics together with the use of barbed needles—either by hand or by machine. The fibers become attached with the use of thread. Wool fibers will attach this way because they have scales that lock together when the barbed needle is used.

Needle felting allows for tremendous opportunities in creative embellishment of clothing, quilts and decorative items. Wool fibers of various types, including fancy yarns, can be applied to sweat-shirts, denim and wool; can be used to make pillows, shaped bowls, pins, purses, jewelry and much more. If you love natural

fibers, think of this as your opportunity to add either “glitz” to your fun, bright projects in Woolfelt and denim or accentuate the richness of wools with complementary yarns. If you enjoy embellishment, be sure to see **Needle-Felting Magic** from That Patchwork Place.

Needle Felting Tips

- The #36 needle is for rough work, deep penetration and coarse wools. The #38 gauge triangle needle is generally an all-purpose needle. The #40 gauge needle can be used for finer detail and as a finishing needle as it leaves smaller holes and makes a smoother finish.
- The coarser the roving, the easier it is to felt.
- Always lift your piece from the foam (if you are using foam behind your piece) to prevent it from bonding to the foam.
- Start with small wisps of fiber and add to it as needed.
- Santa beards can be easily needled to a doll face, eliminating the need for glue.
- The longer a piece is needled, the firmer it becomes.
- Wet felting makes a surface smooth and helps to make it permanent.

Embroidery News

We had a dramatic resurgence in embroidery a few years ago with redwork taking the lead. This has cooled off a bit as Woolfelt stitchery gained in popularity, but some new embroidery patterns continue to come out from time to time.

The majority of these patterns use

very basic embroidery stitches, especially the backstitch, feather stitch and French knots. **Crab Apple Hill** is one design company that has produced many lovely patterns for pillows, hanger covers, sachets, doilies and other items using embroidery. You’ll also find

stitchery patterns in many of the **Need’I Love** books and patterns.

Embroidery blocks are still used for baby quilts and wall hangings. **Brandywine Design** offers a number of books with designs shown in both fabric applique and stitchery.

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M,T,W,F,S: 10-5
Thurs: 10-8
Sun: Noon-5

**Closed at 3 pm on the
3rd Friday of the month**

Dear Friends,

A customer recently asked if handwork was “coming back.” I told her that it never left! Granted, sewing, embroidery and felting machines make many tasks faster, but hand stitching of every sort is alive and very well. There’s something for everyone in the world of stitching these days—which makes for lots of fun and personal expression.

Try your hand at some felting or embroidery this season—we think you’ll have a great time!

Wool Terms Defined

This list of definitions has been provided by National Nonwovens, our supplier of Woolfelt, 100% Woolfelt and Shaded Wisps for needlefelting.

Nonwoven material is an assembly of textile fibers held together by mechanical interlocking in a random web or mat. This repeated punching of loose fiber creates a nonwoven piece of fabric.

National Nonwovens’ Woolfelt is a unique felted wool, nonwoven material. The contents are a mixture of natural fibers containing wool and rayon. (* We also now carry National Nonwovens’ 100% wool Woolfelt, but it is still a nonwoven material.)

Felted Wool is produced by matting or felting to-

gether wool, hair, or fur, most which have a natural tendency to snarl or cling together due to their notched or scaly surfaces. True felt is made by placing the cleaned fibers in the shape or mass desired, then beating, steaming, pressing, fulling or otherwise compacting them to the required thickness.

Boiled Wool is felted wool material that has been wet by high temperature water or even boiled. This process chemically sets the material to a certain shape or form, which is normally tighter than typical felted wool.

Brushed Wool is when a woven or nonwoven wool fabric is passed over rapidly revolving cylinders covered with metal points or teasel burrs (wire brushes). By doing this, it raises the surface fibers creating a fleece like

effect.

Wet Felting is done by taking wet, soapy fibers and rubbing them repeatedly on a ridged surface until they have matted together to become a piece of felt fabric.

Dry Felting, or Needle felting, involves stabbing fibers with a barbed needle (having 3 or more barbs along the shaft) until the fibers begin to grab and mat to each other. As the fiber is punched through the nonwoven or woven fabric, it is interlocked to create a three dimensional look.

Punch Needle Embroidery is the art of working one basic stitch with a hollow needle to create a raised ornamental design on woven or nonwoven fabric.



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