

## Needle Felted Holiday Ornaments

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Needle Felting is a *dry-felting* technique of producing wool felt by combining and compressing loose wool fibers using a barbed/notched felting needle. To make these adorable ornaments, we are using basic solid forms to create our desired shape. Try making a single ornament or create multiples and string them for a beautiful holiday garland! This is an incredibly simple, fun and creative way to beat the stress of the holidays and check off some items on your gift-giving list! So, put on your favorite audiobook or holiday album, get comfy and get your stab on!

Materials (included in your kit)

### Wool-

Though there are many types of wool out there, not all wool is created equally in terms of felting capabilities. For this specific project, we are looking for something that felts up and takes shape fairly quickly. For this reason, I recommend using sheep's wool. Alpaca, angora etc. *will* felt eventually, but it will take a lot of effort and *time*. We have included roving from our flock of Finnsheep, an *excellent* felting wool.

### Solid Form-

We are using a technique that creates a perimeter shape by using a solid form. Our forms are made locally by Anne Clark Cookie Cutters right here in Vermont and are made from certified metal from mills in the USA. As a bonus, these forms are certified food grade and also create beautiful cookies!

### Felting Needle-

Felting needles are specifically barbed or *notched* to help pull and compress wool fibers into various shapes. A few cautions when using this tool:

1. Felting needles are VERY sharp and it is important to keep fingers (especially little fingers) away from where you are working the wool.
2. When using the needles, work in a 90° angle to your project. Once bent, the needle is very easy to break.
3. Use a soft mat (ie. felting mat, folded dish towel, large sponge etc.) under your project to prevent breaking the tip of your needle and avoid any injury to yourself if working on your lap.
4. These needles are made from iron and using a dab of oil (such as olive oil) will help prevent rusting over time.

### Felting Pad/Mat-

Felting pads come in various forms. EPE foam (which is what your needle sheath is made out of that comes with this kit) is easily accessible, though it is prone to wear if felting

often. Sponge foam is a more specialized felting foam that retains its shape after extensive use. Felting pillows are beautiful and very comfortable to work with. All this said, to get the job done at the end of the day, a basic dish towel folded into quarters will work just fine as long as you aren't too aggressive with your work. This is what I recommend for simple projects such as these.

#### **Twine-**

To make an ornament, you will want to attach a piece of twine or string as a loop to hang your ornament. Included in this kit is enough twine for your project.

#### **Bling-**

I have included 2 bells that add a bit of pizzazz to your project! Some other ideas: small fabric scarves, ribbon, woody items such as small pine cones, acorns, pine needles, etc. The most important part, is to have fun and enjoy your work!

#### **Steps:**

1. Find a spot where you can comfortably work. Each ornament takes approximately 30-60 minutes to complete depending on your skill level.
2. Collect all materials. Your kit, preferred felting pad and anything extra you want to add to your ornament.
3. Place felting pad on a hard surface
4. Place your solid form on top of your pad.
5. Draft out (pull apart/fluff up) your wool and stuff it into your form, paying close attention to your edges. The trick here is to use less to start, and add more as you go.
6. Start pushing the wool down using your felting needle. Keep felting, focusing on going around your edges. Felting in small circles around the edge over and over until it starts to form a shape. You might notice the wool pulling away from the edges, this is where you add more wool a little at a time until you get your desired consistency.
7. Once you are comfortable with the work, (it should feel pretty solid), turn the entire thing over, (form and all), and continue felting the other side (Again, working the edges the most).
8. Keep felting! Check the ornament by taking it out of the form, noting how solid it is around the edges and continue working if the edges feel loose, or it needs more shape.
9. Once you are comfortable with the ornaments shape, remove it from the form. Note areas where more shaping would help bring out the character of the ornament. Using your felting needle, *gently* work all areas on the ornament that are indented (ie. the antlers of the deer or moose). To bring out the shape a bit more, work the *indented* aspects of the work a few times. This step can be skipped if you are comfortable with your finished work.
10. Attach twine/string and bling!

**11. Voila! You have a beautiful holiday ornament direct from your hands!**

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