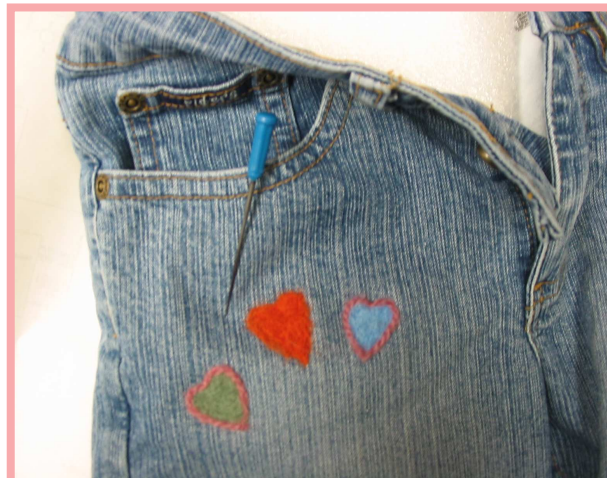




Fiber Tattoos™

Needle Felting Project Instructions from
Chris Hanner & Company
using Colonial® Felting Needles and
Wool Fiber

This project is suitable for ages 8 to 80



Needle Felting is an easy, exciting new craft that lets you “paint” with fiber. With this needlecraft there are no fancy stitches to learn! All you do is punch the felting needle through loose fiber or yarn! Felting needles have small barbs at the end of the shaft which catch tiny bits of fiber when you punch the needle repeatedly through the fiber into a background fabric making felt.

This project guides you in the steps to add needle-felted designs onto a pair of jeans. If you prefer, you could also needle felt the designs onto a sweater, sweatshirt, beefy T-shirt or other garment. Needle felting can be applied to woven or knitted fabrics. And yes, these jeans are washable. No special treatment needed.

Items Needed

- ❖ Denim Jeans
- ❖ Colonial Blue Grip Felting Needle (Colonial Original or Blue Point Felting Needles also work)
- ❖ My Favorite Thimble Needle Felting Foam pad (can be cut in two to fit inside the legs of the jeans)
- ❖ Paint Box Wools – multi-color pack from My Favorite Thimble (see the box on the next page for advice on the use of other types of fiber)
- ❖ Small stencils in various designs (purchased or hand-cut paper stencils). You can also apply your designs free-hand.

Step 1

Decide where you want to place the Fiber Tattoo. Insert the foam pad inside the jeans so that you don't felt the front and back together. Place a couple of straight pins straight down through the fabric into the foam to hold it in place. If felting in the front pocket area, place the pad between the pocket fabric and the jeans front. When felting on the legs, you might need to cut the foam smaller so it can be slipped inside.

Step 2

If using a stencil, (small painting stencils or hand-cut paper stencils both work well) position it as desired. Using straight pins, pin through it and the layers of fabric and foam in a few places, especially at the tips of the design.



Why and When to Use 100% Wool

Even though needle felting can be done with acrylic fibers or blends of wool and rayon or nylon, 100% wool fiber is the best type to use when Fiber Tattooing garments that will be washed. Wool fiber felts even more when washed while the other types of fibers do not. Garments that have been Fiber Tattooed with wool can be thrown in the wash with no special treatment. Save the acrylic fibers for projects that don't need to be washed.

Step 3

Pull off a bit of fiber in your choice of color and hold it in place in the design area. Fiber will stick out of the design area, but as you start felting, you will use the tip of the needle to coax it into place. Start punching through the fiber into the jeans fabric with quick short jabs. Careful – don't get too close to your fingers! Punch straight down and don't twist or bend the needle. Use a nice loose wrist action when punching. You don't need to be forceful. Colonial needles have their barbs concentrated at the tip so the needle only needs to penetrate about 1/4" to 1/2" to be fully effective. After a few punches the fiber will be anchored and you can move your fingers further away as you continue felting.



Step 4

Felt along the borders of the design to get a nice crisp edge. Then fill in the center of the design. Use the tip of the needle to drag the fiber where you want it and secure with a few quick punches. Keep adding small amounts of fiber to the design area. A little fiber goes a long way! It's always easy to add more fiber if needed. Use enough fiber to completely cover the backing fabric but not much more than that. **Tip** – If, at the early stages of felting the design, you decide you don't like the color or shape you started with, you can simply pull the fiber out with your fingers and start again.

Step 5

Continue needling until you see a pattern of needle marks over the entire piece and there are very few loose fibers that your fingers can grab. Remove the stencil and touch up any stray fibers by dragging and punching them into place with the needle.

Step 6

When the design is felted to your satisfaction, gently pull it away from the foam pad and look at the back. See how the needle has pushed fiber through the backing fabric? The fiber and fabric have been grafted together! To minimize the needle holes and further bond the fiber layers together I recommend that you steam press your needle felted project. Heat your iron to the wool setting. Spritz the back of the piece with water and iron it flat. Move the iron back and forth to help lock the fibers into place. Turn the piece over, spritz again and this time use your iron to Press only. Your project will be quite flat after this treatment but the wool will bounce back after a while and the needle holes will have disappeared.

Needle Felting Tip

Resist the urge to look at the back of your pieces as you needle felt – complete your design first. If you lift the piece when partly finished, it won't stay flat on your foam and will be more difficult to work on.

Now that you are familiar with the basics of needle felting, I'm sure you will want to go further and make other pieces. When you need needle-felting supplies, we encourage you to shop at your local yarn, craft or needlework shop or on line at either
www.myfavoritethimble.com
or
www.colonialneedle.com

Additional Fiber Sources

You can make fiber from left-over wool or other yarn. Cut several short (6") pieces of yarn and gently brush the ends of the cut pieces with a pet slicker brush. The yarn will turn back into fluffy fiber that needle felts easily.

Lengths of fuzzy yarn can also be needle felted to your projects. If using a non-fuzzy yarn such as eyelash or cotton spread a very thin layer of wool fiber over the decorative yarn and needle felt on each side to hold it in place.