

naughty rat for a cat sewing tutorial



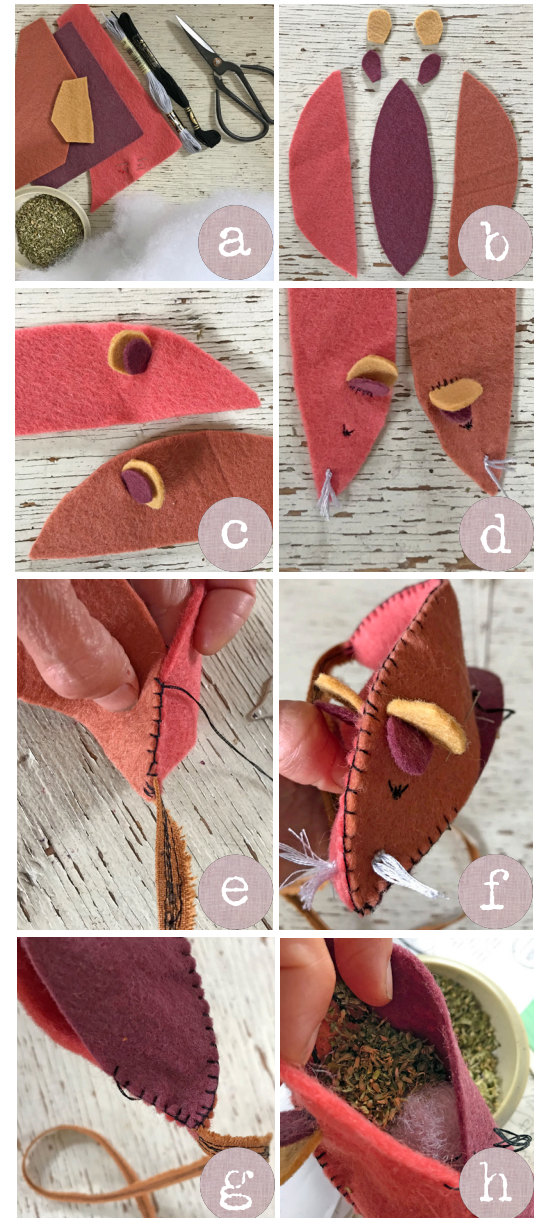
MATERIALS & TOOLS

- 8 x 7" piece of wool felt (I used 4 different colors to make up the 8 x 7" amount. This is a great project for using up scraps.)
- Embroidery floss for assembly and for whiskers (I used black for assembly and light grey for whiskers.)
- Cat nip (optional)
- Stuffing (I used recycled poly fiber fill, but cotton, bamboo and/or wool would work great.)
- 24" fabric strip or sturdy ribbon for the tail (My fabric strip was 3/4" wide, I folded it in half and ran it through the sewing machine 5 times)
- Hand sewing needle
- 2 straight pins
- Sharp scissors
- Sewing machine (optional: I used a sewing machine to make a thin and more robust tail.)

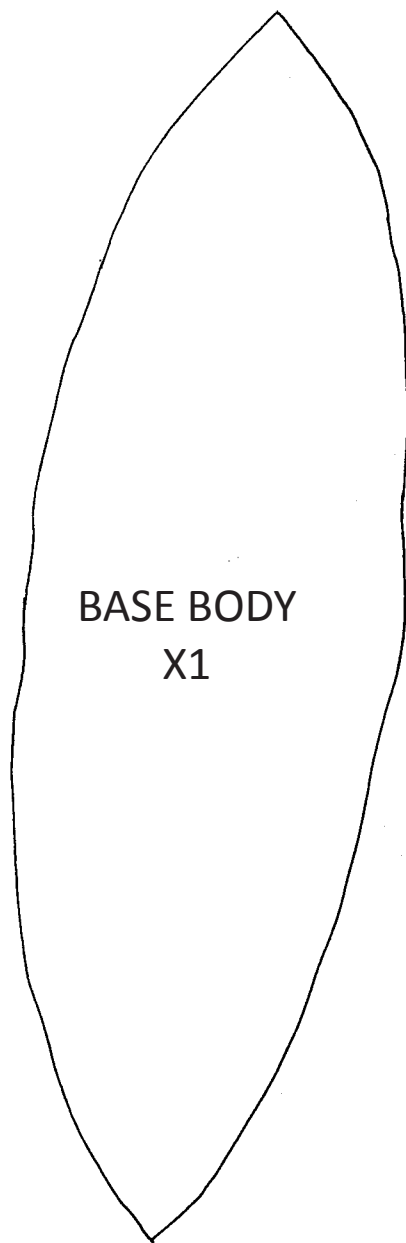
I made this sweet and simple little rat toy for my naughty cat, Myra. I have had it with her catching birds. Just the other afternoon she ran into the studio with a bird in her mouth. I grabbed her, made her release the bird, and put her in the house. A few long moments later, the bird (who I feared was dead) started flying around the studio. After a moment's rest in the window, it flew right back out my studio door. I was elated, but mad. It is simply not fair to the birds. So I made a rat for my cat in hopes of encouraging rat catching versus bird catching.

REFER TO "NOTES AND BASIC STITCHES" ON PAGE 3.

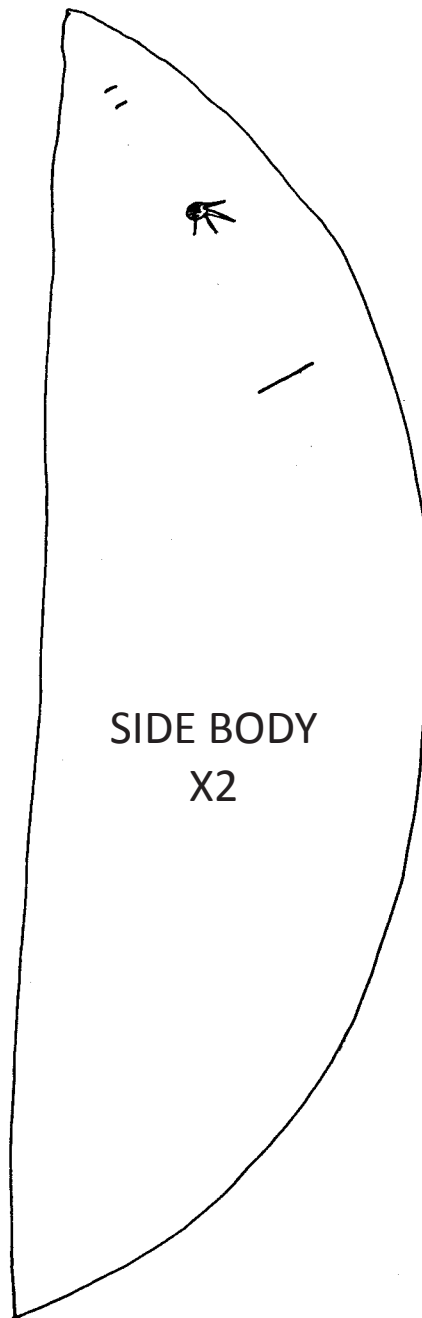
1. Gather your materials. **(photo a)** Print the templates on page 2 and cut out the paper pieces. You can play with the size by reducing or enlarging the templates when you print them. Pin the templates to your felt and cut the pattern pieces. **(photo b)**
2. With the tip of sharp scissors, make a small slit in the 2 side body pieces (refer to side body template for placement) for the ears. Make the slits small and stretch as needed to fit the ear pieces in.
3. Place each small ear piece on top of each bigger ear piece with the straight sides aligned. Slip the straight sides of the stacked ears into the slit with the small piece in front, facing the nose. **(photo c)** Using the whip stitch and 2 ply embroidery floss, attach the ear pieces. Starting from the back side just below the ear pieces, push your needle through the body just in front of the ear, then through both layers of the ear, and then into the body just behind the ear. Continue around and around until the base of the ear is securely attached, placing your stitches close together. Knot at the beginning and the end of your stitching.
4. Refer to the template for the placement of the eyes. With 2-ply embroidery floss and the satin stitch, make a small oval and four eyelashes on each side body piece.
5. Cut four 6" pieces of embroidery floss for the whiskers (two for each side). Sew a loop centered around one pair of threads near the tip of the nose (refer to template for placement) and tie a knot at the back side. Then tie the pair of threads in knot around the loop to create a tassel. Repeat on the other side and trim the whiskers to the desired length. Separate the 6 ply embroidery floss into individual threads so it looks like there are 12 whiskers on each side of your rat's face. **(photo d)**
6. Align the two rat side body pieces with right sides facing out. Sandwich the end of the tail between the bottom corners and whip stitch the three layers together using 2 ply embroidery floss. Then, beginning at the tail connection, use the blanket stitch to connect the side body pieces up the back from tail to nose. **(photo e)**
7. Place the base body piece, creating a triangle with the two side body pieces. Starting at the tip of the nose, begin stitching around the perimeter with the blanket stitch, attaching the base to the sides. **(photo f & g)** When you have stitched almost all the way around and are about two inches from the nose, stuff with fluff and catnip, alternating little handfuls. **(photo h)** When your rat is stuffed mightily, stitch to close the gap. Concentrate a few extra stitches at the nose tip and tie a knot. To hide your knot, pull the needle between the two layers of felt into the stuffing. Trim the strand as close to the felt as you can, it will sink between the stuffing and disappear.



TEMPLATES:

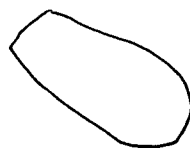


BASE BODY
X1



SIDE BODY
X2

INNER EAR X2



OUTER EAR
X2

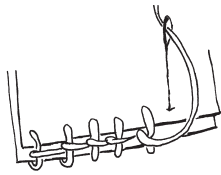


GUIDE TO BASIC STITCHES:

BLANKET STITCH

Note: these instructions are much easier to follow with your actual needle and thread in hand. The stitch is simple; the instructions sound complicated.

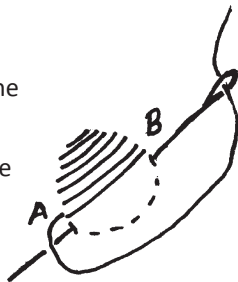
- Thread your needle and tie a knot at the tail.
- Starting between the sandwiched pieces, poke the needle through your top layer of felt about 1/8" from the edge. The knot will be between the two layers of felt where it will not be seen.
- Bring the thread around the edge of the two stacked pieces of the felt and poke it through the same spot as the first stitch.
- Pull your needle through the stitch you just made at the top edge. This anchors your thread but is not a true stitch.
- TO CONNECT TWO PIECES ALONG THE OUTER EDGES: Start a new stitch through the back side, 1/8" from your first stitch, and 1/8" in from the edge of the felt. Before you pull the stitch all the way, catch the loop through the top with your needle and pull tight. The thread should create a straight line that lies along the edges of your two pieces of felt. Continue your evenly spaced stitching (1/8" over, 1/8" in), pulling each stitch through from the back side and catching the loop as you go.
- TO CONNECT TWO LAYERS ALONG A SINGLE EDGE: push your needle from the top down through both layers. Dip through the back side making a small stitch and bring your needle up through the single layer, just outside where your first stitch went in. Before you pull the stitch all the way, catch the loop through the top with your needle and pull tight. The thread should create a straight line that lies along the edge of your top piece of felt. Continue your evenly spaced stitching (1/8" over, 1/8" in), pulling each stitch through from the back side and catching the loop as you go.
- To finish, connect your last stitch to your first stitch by sliding your needle underneath your first stitch and knotting it at the back. Push your needle between the layers and out through the front about 1 inch from the edge. The thread will be pulled inside, hiding the knot from view. Then cut off the excess thread very close to the top layer of the felt.



SATIN STITCH

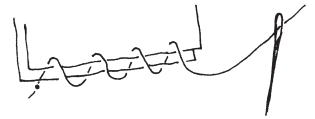
This stitch is used to fill in a space.

- Begin by stitching the perimeter of the space you plan to fill.
- Start with the threaded needle on the back side of your felt and bring it up through the felt (A) and back down into the front side (B).
- Place the stitches close together so that they create a solid shape.



WHIP STITCH:

- Thread your needle and tie a knot at the tail.
- Starting at the back side, poke your needle up through the single layer of felt, just above the piece you are attaching.
- Come down directly below your first stitch, straight through both layers of felt.
- Continue your next stitch up through the single back layer, and then straight down through both layers again with evenly spaced stitches.
- Make sure you are not pulling the stitches so tight that you cause the felt to bunch.



NOTES & TIPS:

- Embroidery floss has 6 plies (threads) and the plies are easily separated. Most embroidery patterns use 1 to 3 plies. Long strands can get easily tangled, cutting them to 18-inch strands helps prevent this. It also helps to very gently separate the pieces from the center of the strand instead of starting at one end.
- If your thread becomes too short while you are sewing, attach a new piece of thread to the end with a knot. Tie it close to the felt and hide the knot.
- Keep stitches even and hide knots.
- Felt is very flexible to work with; it can be pulled and stretched as needed, and because it doesn't fray you can trim as you work if your pieces are not lining up.

ABOUT KATA GOLDA:

Alison Kaplan is the creative force behind Kata Golda, a craft studio in the mossy seaside town of Port Townsend, WA. Kata Golda is a flourishing business that explores crafts such as needlework, letterpress printing, hand-thrown pottery, hand-dyed textiles, and jewelry making. Alison finds inspiration in the woods, farmlands, and beaches of her Pacific Northwest wonderland. See her work at www.katagolda.com.

