

thick felt coasters sewing tutorial



I love keeping a stack of coasters within reach of all my wooden surfaces. After dyeing a big batch of wool felt with fresh (home-grown!) indigo this fall, I felt compelled to stitch up a fresh set of coasters with bright colors that would pop against the subtle hue of the indigo. I love how they turned out.

MATERIALS & TOOLS:

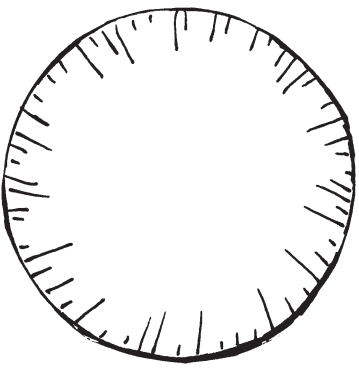
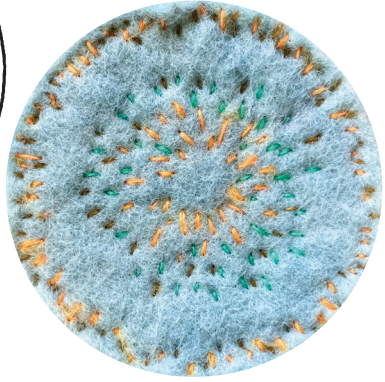
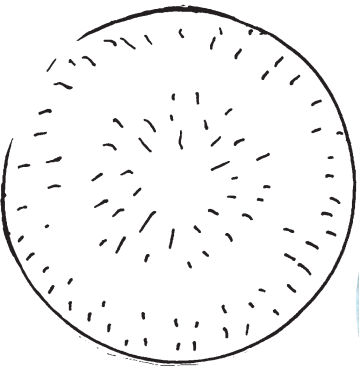
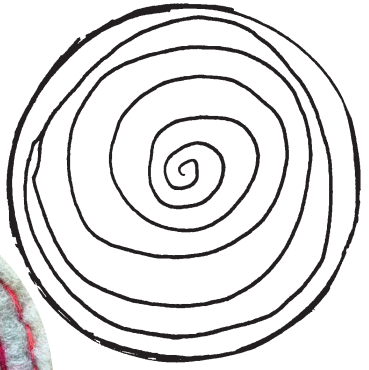
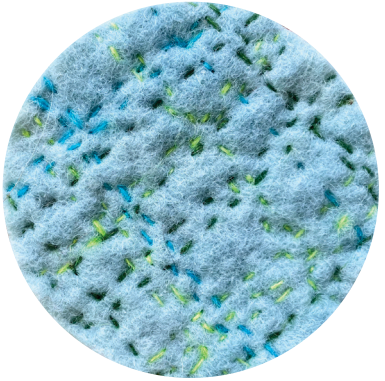
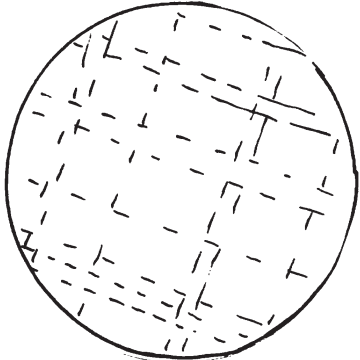
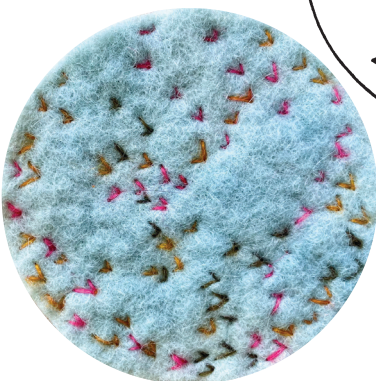
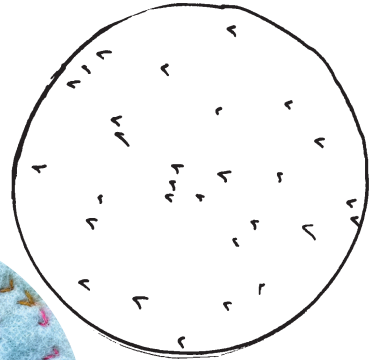
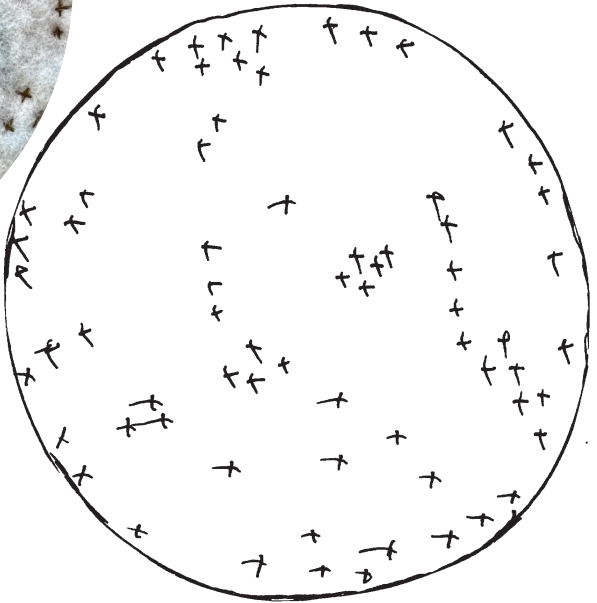
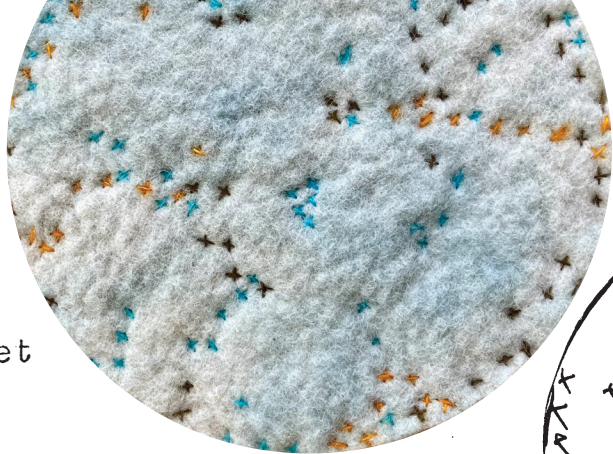
- Wool felt: enough so you have 3 layers for each coaster. I used indigo-dyed felt for my top layer and off-white felt for my middle and bottom layers.
- Scissors
- Sewing thread: I used a bright palette of thin mohair yarn, but you could also use embroidery floss or sashiko thread
- Hand sewing needle: I used a size 1 crewel needle to accommodate the thickness of the mohair

This is more of an inspirational process than a step-by step tutorial. Work with the shape, color palette, and stitch design that suits your style.

1. Refer to "Notes & Stitches" on page 3 and gather your materials and tools.
2. Cut out three circles of felt to the desired size for each coaster you plan to make. I used a 4" circle coaster as my template. **(photo a)** Use your first cut-out as the template for your following circles. **(photo b)** I also made a matching 8" diameter trivet. **(photo c)**
3. Refer to my drawings for design ideas on page 2 or sketch out your own. I like to have a plan for each design and a color palette before I begin stitching. I used 3 very distinct colors per coaster, except on the coaster where I blanket stitched the perimeter where I used 2 colors.
4. Decide if you plan to stitch the perimeter of your coasters. I only stitched the perimeter of one coaster with a decorative 2-color blanket stitch. **(photo d)** I intentionally did not stitch the perimeter of my other designs and instead opted to have the stitch-work anchor the three layers together. If you choose to stitch the perimeter **and** have an embroidered design, you can decorate the top layer only before stitching the three layers of the perimeter together. Stitch the perimeter last as stitching one layer or through all three layers may alter the shape of the felt. **A few tips:**
 - I tied a knot at the end of my sewing thread and started each color between the top and second layer of the stack. **(photo e)** When I finished with each color, I wove in the ends between the layers instead of knotting.
 - The texture of the felt will cause your layers to "stick" together (no need to pin or glue). I was mindful to make sure the felt stayed in a clean stack as I stitched, and I did not hesitate to trim a little here and there if one of the layers became misaligned. **(photo f & g)**
 - I made sure that each stitch grabbed a little of the bottom layer of the felt stack. Also, since I did not stitch the edges of most of my coasters, I made sure that my designs came close to the edges. **(photos h & i)**



thick wool
coaster & trivet
stitch
inspiration



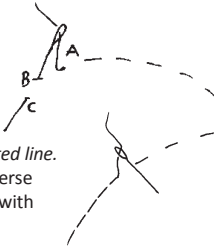
NOTES & BASIC STITCHES

- 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.

the running & double running stitch

Note that keeping stitches even is an aesthetic decision. Stitch size, distance between stitches, and uniformity of stitches is something to pay attention to, but it is a choice.

- Start with the threaded needle on the back side of your fabric and bring it up through the fabric (A) and back down into the front side (B). Pull it all the way through, then bring the threaded needle back up through the fabric from the back side (C).



A DOUBLE RUNNING STITCH is used to make a solid, connected line.

- Start with a running stitch. When you reach the end, reverse your direction and fill in the space between the stitches with another running stitch so you have a solid line.

the back stitch

The back stitch is often preferred to a running stitch when sewing through multiple layers or thick fabric. You can use this technique to create a running stitch or a continuous line, like the double running stitch. It is perfect for outlining or filling in space. Note that keeping stitches even is an aesthetic decision. Stitch size, distance between stitches, and uniformity of stitches is something to pay attention to, but it is a choice.

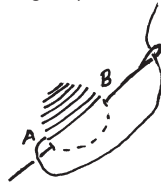
- Pull the thread up through your fabric (A) and back down (B). This is your first stitch.
- Pull your thread up through your fabric one stitch length away (C) and pull it back down through your second stitch (B), creating a stitch by taking the thread backward. Repeat.



the satin stitch

This stitch is used to fill in a space. If you like, you can begin by stitching the perimeter of the space you plan to fill.

- Start with the threaded needle on the back side of your fabric and bring it up through the fabric (A) and back down into the front side (B).
- Place the stitches close together so that they create a solid shape.



ABOUT KATA GOLDA:

My studio, the home of Kata Golda, is nestled snugly in the small, mossy seaside town of Port Townsend, WA. I work with organic, sustainable, and plant-dyed fabrics. Much of the inspiration for my designs comes from the subtle details in the woods, farmlands, and beaches near my home, where nothing is straight and nothing is perfect. I create slowly and with intention, with a commitment to reusing supplies as much as possible and using up every little scrap of fabric. Find more at www.katagolda.com



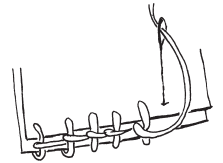
the blanket stitch

This stitch is used to connect two pieces of fabric along the outer edge or two layers along one edge. These instructions are much easier to follow with your needle and thread in hand. The stitch is simple; the instructions sound complicated. Note that keeping stitches even is an aesthetic decision. Stitch size, distance between stitches, and uniformity of stitches is something to pay attention to, but it is a choice.

- Thread your needle and tie a knot at the tail.
- Starting between the sandwiched pieces, poke the needle through your top layer of fabric about 1/8" from the edge. The knot will be between the two layers of fabric where it will not be seen.
- Bring the thread around the edge of the two stacked pieces of the fabric 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.

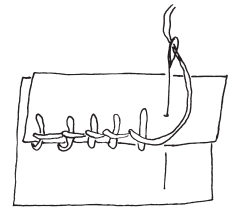
TO CONNECT TWO PIECES ALONG THE OUTER EDGES:

Start a new stitch through the back side, 1/8" from your first stitch, and 1/8" in from the edge of the fabric. 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 fabric. 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 fabric. 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.



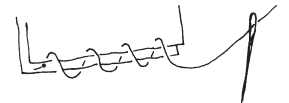
*unless you are intentionally choosing to make unevenly spaced stitches.

the whip stitch

This stitch is used to connect two pieces of fabric along the outer edge, or to connect two overlapping pieces. Note that keeping stitches even is an aesthetic decision. Stitch size, distance between stitches, and uniformity of stitches is something to pay attention to, but it is a choice.

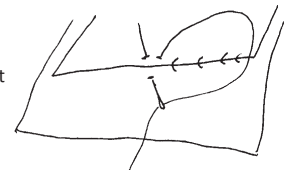
TO CONNECT TWO PIECES ALONG THE OUTER EDGE:

Thread your needle and tie a knot at the tail. Start your first stitch between the two layers of fabric to hide the knot. Wrap your thread around the two lined up edges and push your needle up through the two layers of fabric. Repeat.



CONNECTING TWO OVERLAPPING PIECES:

Thread your needle and tie a knot at the tail. Starting at the back side, poke your needle up through both layers of fabric, 1/8" in from the edge and then push your needle through the single layer of fabric, directly across from your first stitch and close to the overlapping edge. Continue your next stitch up through both layers, and then straight down through the single layer again. Make sure you are not pulling the stitches so tight that you cause the fabric to bunch.



the french knot

- Work with 2 or 3 plies of thread that you have doubled and tied at the base (4 or 6 plies total).
- Bring your needle up through the fabric where you want to place the knot.
- Wrap the thread around the needle very close to the fabric. Wrap once for a small knot, twice for a larger knot.
- Push the needle back through your fabric, close to the place where the needle came out, keeping the wrap snug. Slowly pull the needle and working thread down through the wraps to complete the French knot. Hold the working thread taut as you pull the needle and thread through; this tension helps create nice, even French knots.

