

Puppet Making Instructions

1. Begin with a natural color wool roving piece @ 9" long. Take away one third of the wool length and save. Gently fluff the larger piece.



2. Tie it into a knot in the center. The knot will become the puppet head. The loose wool hanging down creates a front and back which will become the puppet body. The loose wool should be even lengths.



3. Gently pull the smaller piece of roving in two pieces. One should be @ 5". This is the piece we use for the arms and hands. Tie a small knot on each end of this piece. These knots become the puppet hands. Do not worry if they look scraggly; the needle felting will help form nice hands later.



4. Fold the body pieces together so the head is at the top. Put the arm and hand piece between the wool "body" pieces. The arm goes right under the "neck" and becomes the puppet's heart and rhythmic area.



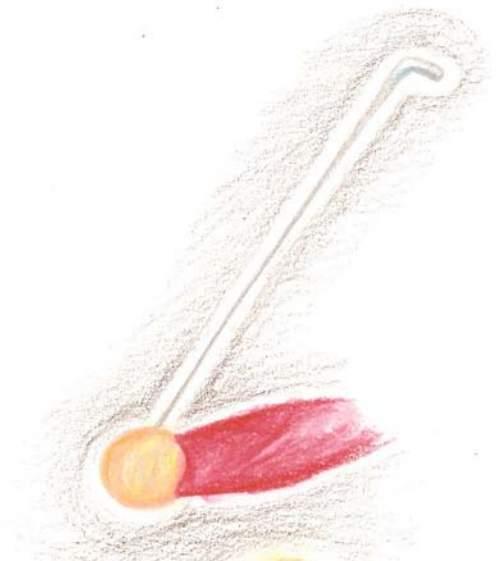
5. Wrap a few loose fibers of wool round and round the body just under the arms to form a waist and help hold the arms in place.



6. Divide the wool below the trunk of the body into two even sections. These will form the legs. Tie the ends into a little knot. These will be the feet we build the boots around.



7. Place this puppet beginning on your foam work base. With your felting needle, gently prick in and out all over the puppet to bind the fibers and give the puppet form and strength.



8. To give more sculpting form, use your needle with more concentration in certain areas. Define the neck more clearly by poking in and out around the neck line. Remember, go in and out gently and go in only $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ ". You can also strengthen and form the chest area by concentrating use of your needle there, front, back, and sides. The more you dry felt, the more solid the wool becomes in that area.



9. Now begin to layer wisps of colored wool around the body to clothe it. Start with small wisps around the bodice by criss-crossing the wool around the front and back of the chest area. The airy wisps will stay flat against the wool body. The secret to good wool puppet making is in the wrapping of the wool—firmly!



10. Pull more wisps of wool out the arms. Small wool bits that are lightly fluffed open work best. Avoid “strings” of wool wrapped around. They won’t felt in as well with the needle. We are aiming for a sturdy but pliable puppet with wool that is evenly wrapped throughout.



11. To build the boy’s pants, add layers of wisps around the lower body. Do not divide the legs up to the waist – leave an area in the midsection from waist to crotch area, then divide the legs. Wrap layers round and round in wool (light and open wool!) from waist down to the legs and to the ankles. The in-between areas where legs meet midsection will be smoothed over soon with the felting needle.



12. Now it is time to use the felting needle to bind the fibers of clothes to the body. Gently poke the needle in and out of the wool in a gentle movement all over the boy to secure the fibers. The more you use the needle, the more felted your puppet becomes. Firmly wrapped and evenly needled puppets are longer lasting, but please don't turn them to stone! Puppets need to bend and move.



13. The hands and feet can be formed and strengthened now with your needle. Tuck in any scraggly bits with your needle. You can accentuate the wrists and ankles, too. If you have very weak, too tiny hands and feet, you can add on little wisps and build them up with your needle. It is easy to fix problem areas!



14. To give the arms a nice gesture, needle felt the "elbow" in place (place on your work base) to round out the arm position.



15. This is also the time to shape and sculpt any area that you want to give more form. Join the fibers with your needle at shoulder to bodice and crotch to thigh.
16. Choose a hair color and place it around the hairline of the face. Needle it in place, then go on and needle hair onto the whole scalp as you shape the hairdo.
17. The hat! Gather wool and form it in a soft round shape, like a beret. Attach it to the head a bit back from his hair with your needle. Then gently form and shape the hat with your needle on the foam work base. Your needle makes the shaping and felting easy.
18. Boots! Gather wool wisps and wrap and shape boots around your puppet's feet knots. Use your needle to shape and secure them on your work base. At first, the boots will hang like an extension of the leg. To make the foot stick out, make a crease with your needle at the ankle, as you did with the elbow. The foot will extend forward. Needle up from the bottom of the boot as well.
19. If you want to add a very simple face, softly indent two eyeholes with the needle. Go in and out several times in the same hole to bring out the eyes. I like the plainest, simplest faces possible.

Easter Egg

Materials

A big bowl of hot water

A bar of Ivory soap

An old towel

White roving and colored wool of your choice

Only use small open wisps of wool and layer many of these wisps one over the other.

Do not put thick long chunks of wool around the egg. It will not felt well and will be lumpy with holes in it. We want lovely eggs for our children! The wisp method will help you achieve this.

1. Begin by placing small layers of white wool around one of the plastic egg forms. Pull the wool gently, and it will separate easily. Take 1-1/2" lengths of wool, open them gently, and lay them one over the other around the egg until you have a smooth even white egg. You should not be able to see the plastic egg form. Hold it in the palms of your hands. Doesn't it feel wonderful?
2. Now start layering the small wisps of colored wool over the white wooly egg. You can try one color or layer different spring colors over each other. Remember, we will be needle felting designs on the egg later. You can choose to leave the felted egg just with its beautiful colors as well. Continue to evenly layer the colored wool wisps until you do not see any white through the color. Your egg will still be egg shaped. It should not be a big airy balloon. Watch that you layer on the wisps with enough pressure to keep the egg shape.



3. Now it is time to start wet felting your egg! The wet felting process happens when wool is put into hot soapy water and is pressed and rubbed. The felting process binds the fibers together to make a strong (or soft) thick wool felt cloth. Here it will form to the plastic egg shape and become a strong, wool three-dimensional egg with a hollow middle. Put one towel on a counter/table, and put your large bowl over it. This will keep the messiness to a minimum. Have your hot (not too hot to your hand) bowl of water ready. Put the Ivory bar in the water and move it around for a minute or so. Take the soap out and keep the soap handy on the towel.



4. Now hold the egg in the palms of your hands, holding the wool against the egg form. Submerge the egg – holding onto it – into the water and gently squeeze the wool. We are saturating the wool with water. Keep holding the wool close to the plastic form.
5. Pull the egg out of the water and squeeze gently. Put the soft wet egg on the towel, and soap up your wet hands with the Ivory bar. Pick up your egg and gently press the wool to the egg form again and again. This is the “butterfly hand” stage.

6. We start the binding of the fibers slowly. Press and press, adding more wet soapy water to your hands if the egg wool pulls.
7. Press around the egg for 3-4 minutes. Gently massage the wool around the egg. Use both hands, gently firming the wool against the egg form as you massage the soapy wool. Do this for another 3 minutes.
8. Dip the egg in the hot water now and then, but keep holding the wool to the egg form with 2 hands when you dip it in the water. The wool will expand from the water. Squeeze out the excess water by pressing against the egg. Add more soap to your hands and massage the egg with more pressure. (If the fibers are still loose, make your pressure gentle again for another few minutes.) Keep mindful that you are molding it against the egg form. Do this more pressured massage for another 3 minutes.
9. Test how felted the wool is by moving it with your finger. The wool should not be loose and moving much now. It should be binding together well. If it is still loose, dip it in hot water, squeeze, soap up your hands, and massage/rub more vigorously now.
10. Massage/rub with energy for another 3 minutes. Your egg should now be done. If it is still too soft, you are not using enough rubbing pressure. Be brave! Rub harder! Get wet soapy hands now and then.
11. Turn on the hot water tap fairly gently. Hold the egg under the hot water to rinse the soap out. Squeeze well – always against the egg form. Alternate hot and cold water 3 times, squeezing well each time. End with a hot water rinse. Squeeze.
12. The egg should be well felted and fairly firm against the plastic form. Wrap it in the other dry towel and squeeze out the extra water.
13. With small sharp scissors, nail scissors are perfect, cut open a slit big enough to pop out the plastic egg. The “garden” will grow from this open slit later. Cut a lengthwise slit along the longer length of the egg.
14. When the plastic egg is out, check that the inside is also well felted (it should be). What a nice hollow for hiding a treasure! With wet soapy fingertips, rub the slit to felt those cut fibers, about 3 minutes.

Your wet felted egg is done! Let it dry then needle felt an Easter egg design on it. I put tissue inside which holds the egg open but is soft enough for the needle to touch into.

Now it is time to make the hidden “garden” that will grow inside the egg – an Easter Egg Rod Puppet!

1. Take one pipe cleaner and shape it into a small oval, with three short “sprouts” of pipe cleaner sticking up that will become the flower stems. This all needs to be small enough to easily fit hidden inside the egg. Cover this wire “garden” with small wisps of green wool. The wool-wrapped oval needs to be sturdy enough for a small wooden “rod” made from a wooden cooking skewer to be glued in later and held securely.
2. Lightly and firmly, wrap the stems sticking up with green wool.
3. On your work base, needle very small indications of blue forget-me not flowers with light yellow centers. They will be needle felted on top of the stems but still need to be hidden inside the egg until the end of the story.

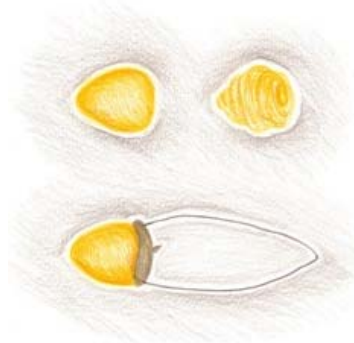


4. Poke the wooden skewer through the middle of the bottom of the egg. Now poke it into the green oval base of the “garden.” Take the skewer out of the “garden” and pour white glue into and around the hole. Now put the skewer back into the green garden base, with plenty of glue around it. Place it upside down and let it dry.
5. When it is totally dry, the wooden rod should feel very secure, and it will be easy to slide the forget-me-not garden in and out of the egg by holding the long end of the wooden skewer (dowel) below the egg. You will want to snip some of the length away, but leave enough to easily move the garden in and out of the egg.

Your egg garden rod puppet is ready!

Mini Acorn “Marionette”

1. Roll a small snug round of acorn colored wool @ 1” tall. Needle felt it to shape it like an acorn and to make it strong.
2. I used a gray wool to make the acorn cap, like a beret, needle felted to the acorn. Add a twist of stem, and you have a cute acorn.
3. Stitch a loop of buttonhole thread from one side of the top of the acorn to the other. Length can vary. For example, try a 14-16” loop. I tie them well at each end.

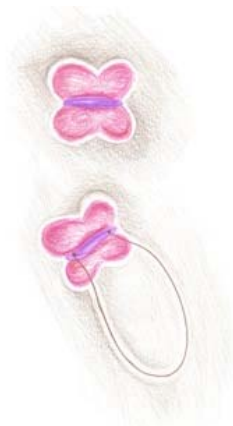


Mini Butterfly “Marionette”

1. So simple: fluff a bit of colorful wool about 1½” tall and 1½” wide. Then shape the wings on your work base with your needle.
2. Roll a tight butterfly body @ 1” with a bit of colored wool. I pre-felt it by rolling it in my palms. Needle felt it to strengthen it.



3. Stitch a loop of buttonhole thread @ 14”-16” long from one end of the body to the other. Tie it well at each end.



Mini Buzzy Bee “Marionette”

1. Roll a length of snug pale yellow wool @ 1” plus a bit into the shape of a little bee. Needle felt it for shape and strength.
2. Wrap stripes of dark brown or black wool around the body and needle felt it to the yellow bee body.
3. I needle felt on a bit of dark wool to the bee bottom and a tiny bit at the face.
4. Shape a wisp of natural roving @ 1” or less into bee wings. Needle it to the middle of the bee back.
5. Stitch on a 14”-16” loop length of buttonhole thread to the top of the head and bottom of the bee. Tie well at each end.

