

COZY CLASSICS

D-I-Y NEEDLE-FELTED HEART

By Jack and Holman Wang



This D-I-Y guide gives you a step-by-step guide to creating a needle-felted heart! Learn some of the basic techniques used to make the felt figures and objects in the board book series Cozy Classics.

Needle-felting involves the use of very sharp, barbed needles, and this activity is not recommended for children under the age of 9. Children trying needle-felting for the first time should do so under the supervision of an adult. And even if you're 9 or older, be careful! It's easy to poke yourself!

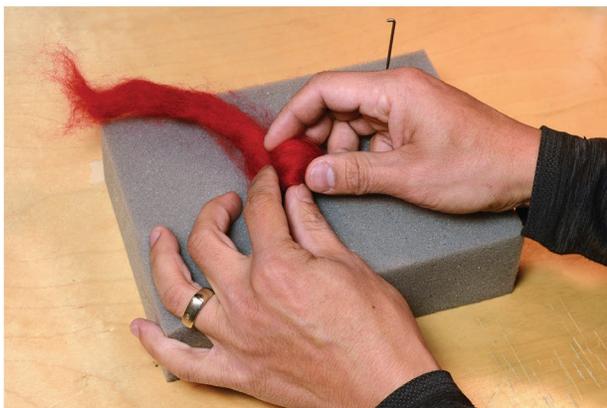


Here are the supplies you will need:

- + a piece of foam for felting on (6" x 8" x 2" or larger)
- + red wool roving (0.5 to 1.0 ounce, or 13 to 25 grams)
- + white wool roving (just a little bit) or any other color that contrasts well with red
- + a medium gauge felting needle
- + a fine gauge felting needle



Wool roving usually comes in widths that are larger than needed to needle felt effectively. Fortunately, wool roving separates very easily lengthwise, so simply pull apart some red roving to create a length of roving which is not too thick. The roving should be about a foot in length so it is easy to handle.



Roll the length of red roving into a tight ball. Hold the wool firmly as you roll it into a ball, as the wool will have a tendency to unfurl if held too loosely.

Rolling the wool tightly saves some time, as loosely rolled wool will require more needle felting to compress.



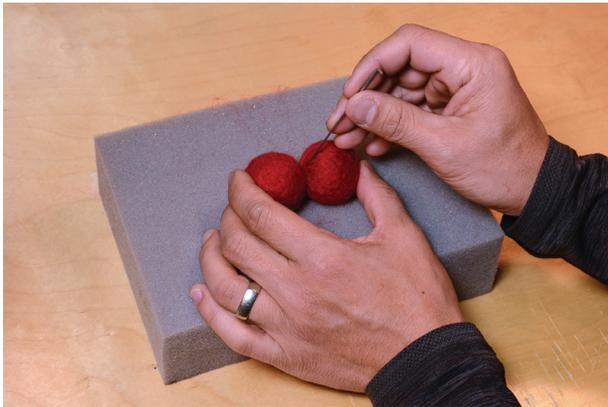
Once you have a fairly tight ball of wool, take a medium gauge felting needle and begin stabbing the wool repeatedly from all sides.

If you look closely at your felting needles, you will see that they have tiny barbs on them. The barbs catch wool fibers each time you stab. This pushes the wool fibers through, entangling the fibers and making the wool firmer and firmer.



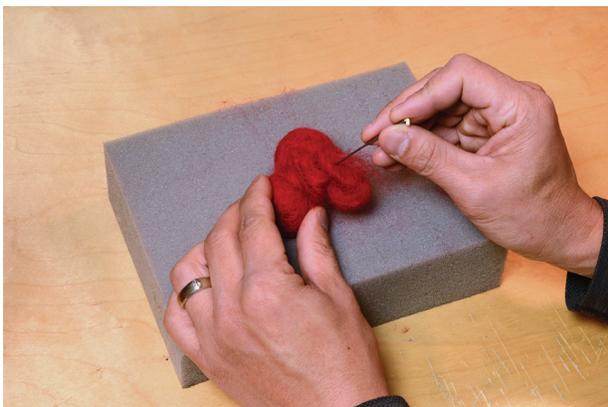
Don't be afraid to stab right through the wool ball, even pushing wool out the back side when the ball is small. If your needling is very shallow, you won't be entangling the wool fibers effectively.

Keep turning the ball around and around, stabbing from all sides. Add wool as necessary until the ball is about 1.5 inches in diameter.



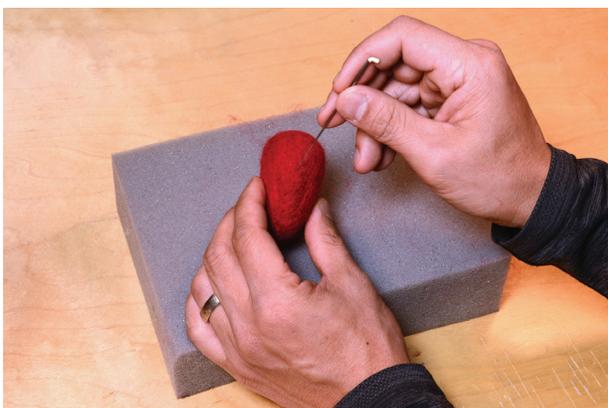
Once the first wool ball is complete, repeat the process. The two wool spheres will form the top of the heart.

Once you have two identically-sized spheres, join them together loosely by needling wool from one sphere right into the other along the seam where the two spheres touch.



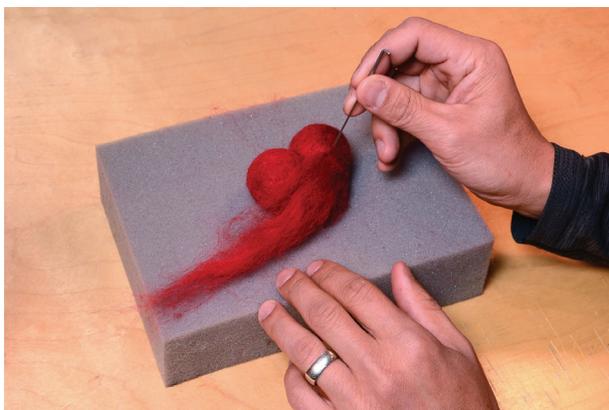
Once the two spheres are loosely joined, they can be more firmly connected by adding more wool on one side which is stabbed into each sphere. This additional wool will begin to form the bottom, tapered part of the heart.

Continue to needle on additional wool to create your desired heart shape: squat, long, etc. It's entirely up to you!



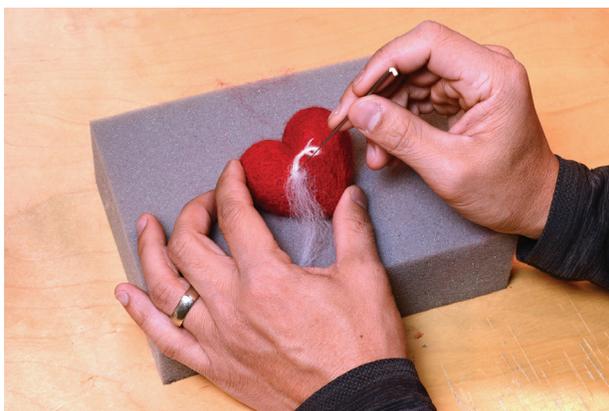
You not only want the heart to taper to a point when viewed from the front and back, you also want the heart to taper inwards when viewed from the side. This will give your heart the most attractive shape.

As the wool gets firmer, you will probably want to switch to your fine felting needle. It has smaller barbs, and is better for finishing the surface of your heart.



Continue adding wool-filling in gaps, dents and divots as necessary—until the heart has a consistent firmness throughout.

You know you are getting close to the end when your heart will maintain its shape with a moderately firm pinch. If it is deforming, then springing back, your wool is probably still too loose, and should be needled more.



It is also important for your heart to be fairly firm because you don't want it to deform when you add embellishments. In this example, we are taking a very small amount of white roving and needling it onto the front surface of the heart. You should use your fine felting needle for this, making sure to tuck in loose wool fibers on the edges of the design so that it looks clean and not too frayed.



Here we have created a “C” for Chris or Carla, or maybe even Chronicle Books or Cozy Classics! But lettering is just one idea. Feel free to add a bird, another heart shape, or any other design you can imagine!

While we've used white in this example, any high contrast color of wool will work.

And there you have it! Your very own felt heart!



BONUS IDEA:

Felt some red wool into a flat triangle on your foam pad, making sure to turn the triangle over a few times, felting on both sides. Then needle the bottom edges of the triangle to the back of the heart in order to create a little pocket where you can tuck in a sweet little note for that special someone!