

## Miniature Felt Hats

We are using “needle-felted fabric” from Fibre Fusion (phone 03 9859 8081). In this fragile state the felt is called half-felt or pre-felt. When heat and manipulation are applied, the tiny barbs on the woollen fibres grab one another and pull closer together so the fabric shrinks and thickens, becoming strong.

When feltmakers create hats they use a hatblock to stretch the wool into the desired shape. For 1/12th scale hats we will use marbles. To make a hat you'll need a marble, needle and thread, hot water, a towel or paper towel and small sharp scissors. You'll probably want tiny trims and tacky white glue and a toothpick to apply it, too.

### Create a Basic Shape

1. Cut out a circle of felt fabric using the template below.
2. With needle and thread, stitch a running stitch around the edge of the circle just a few mm from the edge. Place a marble in the centre of the circle and pull the threads closed, then knot and trim your threads leaving a little tail.
3. Put some hot water in a container - as hot as you can stand to touch and drop in the stitched-up marble. Remove and roll between your palms in a circular motion. The felt will immediately start to tighten around the marble. Repeat wetting and rubbing the marble for about a minute. The felt should be quite firm around the marble. Squeeze it in a towel to remove most of the moisture.
4. Using sharp scissors, snip the felt near the thread tail and remove the marble and any dangling thread. You are left with a hollow ball shape.

### Beret

To create a beret, simply flatten the ball with the hole to the inside. For the little tag on top, cut a teeny line of matching felt fibre, wet it, and roll it into a rope. Trim off a portion for the tag and apply a tiny amount of Tacky glue to attach it to the centre top of the hat.

### Cap

Make two hollow felt balls. Create a beret shape with one. From the other, cut a little moon shape brim and rub the edges to shrink and tighten the cut fibres. Tuck the brim under the beret shape. Join with glue. If desired, roll some spare wool fibre into a tiny pom pom to glue on top.

### Rolled Brim Hat

Place the felt ball on your fingertip and rub around the cut edge with hot water to tighten the fibres. If the opening is too ragged, you might need to carefully trim the opening with scissors and rub with more hot water. Now invert the hat by pushing the top down through the opening while allowing the edges to curl up. It could be a symmetrical brim or one side of the brim could be unrolled more than the other for a jaunty look. Tidy the shape and allow it to dry on a miniature hat stand. From narrow trim cut a hatband to fit around the circumference, then attach using a tiny amount of glue applied to the trim back.

### Wide Brim Hat

Make two hollow felt balls, one for the crown and one for the brim. Cut a larger hole in one and tug the edges to flatten it into a brim shape, rubbing the edge with hot water. Place this on a miniature hatstand. The other ball can be trimmed to the desired size of the crown. Apply glue inside the crown, careful that it doesn't get on the outside of the hat then push it on top of the brim. Measure a piece of flat trim to make a hatband to cover the bottom edge of the crown. Cut to size, apply glue carefully and adhere in position. Allow to dry on the stand.

**TIPS:** Too much glue gets caught up in the wool fibres and will look messy even after it dries. Keep the glue hidden!

If the hat is fuzzy with lots of loose fibres popping out from the felt surface, carefully snip them away with small sharp scissors.

