

Felted Bead Project



tools and materials needed:

- Wool fleece
- hot water
- dish washing liquid soap, ie: Dawn or Murphy's Oil Soap
- saucer for small amount of soap
- white vinegar and cool water
- towels



IMPORTANT NOTE: When handling the fleece, before you are ready to start felting, your hands must be completely dry. Use 100% wool fibre. You should expect to see about one third shrinkage.

PREPARE THE FIBRE

Divide the fleece into smaller strips off of the original slither or batt. Condition the fleece by gently teasing or fluffing the fibers apart.



To make beads all about the same size, prepare matching strips ahead of time.



SHAPING THE BEAD

Roll the strip, in a winding motion, into a ball to desired size. Try to keep the surface of the bead as smooth as possible. Deep folds will show in your finished bead.

Pat a bit of soap lightly on the surface of the ball and immerse it in the hot soapy water, roll very gently in a circular motion, to begin the bead. As you feel the bead getting firmer you can roll with firmer pressure and a more vigorous motion. You may also immerse the bead again, and pat a little more soap on it if required.

You may fix a crevasse by applying a piece of dry fleece around the bead and continue felting to attach the new fibers. Be sure to thoroughly dry your hands first, before touching dry fleece.



RINSING

Rinse in luke warm water to remove all soap

Rinse in vinegar solution. Ratio of 1/4 cup vinegar to a gallon of water is good.

This will restore ph of fibre and neutralize any remaining soap. Squeeze the bead to draw the solution into the middle of the bead.

Rinse well under clear running water.

Fine tune the shape after squeezing the water out of the bead.

Roll beads in towels (or I use my salad spinner) and place in a warm area to dry.



Suggestions for stringing, and uses for, your finished beads...

Beads may be be strung on just about any material. Silk beading cord, Flexon or Soft Flex wires, leather cord, stretch cord, head pins, or wire. You may need to ream a pilot hole with the needle if you wish to use a head pin or thinner wire to string your beads.

Large beading needles with big eyes are most useful. Pliers to pull the needle through the bead may be required if you have made very dense beads.

They may also be sewn onto hats, mittens, scarves, bags, zipper pulls, shoelaces, cell phones, the possibilities are infinite!

You may embellish your beads during the making, by combining colours, or by 'needle felting' with a special needle on the finished bead. Try making different shapes by moulding as you felt.

