

# Quick-Stitch Soft Toy Eyes

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Although I do use lock-in plastic eyes for many of my toy creations, for some designs I prefer felt eyes. These quick-stitch versions are a terrific substitute for the ones I used to cut from multiple layers of felt.



These are a great way to use up small scraps of felt and tear-away stabilizer left over from other in-the-hoop projects, and they stitch up very quickly – sew out a pair in 4 minutes or less, depending on the style.

In the spirit of recycling, I use a firm clear plastic bag instead of a large piece of stabilizer to carry the design in the hoop. (The design itself is still stitched on felt backed with tear-away stabilizer). This method allows me to use up smaller scraps of stabilizer and felt. If you fear your machine won't handle the plastic, you can hoop a larger piece of tear-away stabilizer instead.

You will need

- Small piece of felt in the color of your choice, large enough to accommodate the design you are stitching (see next page)
- Medium weight tear-way stabilizer
- A clear plastic bag

A cutting mat or ruler with grid lines or the grid insert that came with your embroidery hoop

# Quick-Stitch Soft Toy Eyes Instructions

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1. Start by determining the size of the felt scrap you need to sew the design you are making. To do this, check the dimensions of the design in your software or on your machine, and cut your felt piece approximately 1/2" larger in both length and width.

For example, I'm stitching a pair of Style #1 eyes in the small size. The design measures just under 2" x 1 1/4", so I have cut my felt piece to approximately 2 1/2" x 1 3/4". (This size will work for any of the eye designs in the collection.)

2. Select the smallest hoop that will accommodate the eyes you wish to stitch (the one shown is 2.4x1.6"). Hoop a single layer of plastic from any firm clear plastic bag, making sure it's snug.



3. Center the hoop, with hooped plastic, over your chosen grid (cutting mat, ruler, or grid insert) so that the registration marks on the hoop are even with lines of the gridded surface. The crossed lines will mark the exact center of the hoop.



4. Lightly spray your felt piece with temporary adhesive and press it in position in the exact center of the hoop. If you prefer, you can hold it in place with masking tape instead.



5. Turn the hoop face down. Through the plastic, you will be able to clearly see the felt adhered to the front of the hoop. (I have used spray adhesive to hold it in place).



6. Lightly spray a piece of tearaway stabilizer just large enough to cover the felt scrap, and stick it to the back of the hoop. If you prefer, you can tape it in place with masking tape. You should now have a “sandwich” of hooped plastic, with felt on top and tear-away stabilizer on the bottom.



9. If you like, change the bobbin to black. I have chosen to do this because I don't want any show-through of white thread in my satin stitching.



10. Carefully place the hoop in the machine and run the trace function to double check that the design will fit on the felt. Make sure the design is centered.



Stitch the entire design. When it has finished stitching, remove the hoop from the machine.

11. Unhoop the design and remove the tear-away stabilizer and the plastic – both should come away easily.



12. With sharp scissors, trim around the edge of the satin stitch on each eye, leaving a very narrow border of colored felt around the edge of the eye.

You're done, and can now use the eyes to finish off a stuffed toy. Hand-sew them in place, or attach them with fabric adhesive.



**NOTE:** If you have embroidery software, you can print a paper template of the design to assist you in positioning it in the center of the hoop. Line up the template with your grid so that the design is centered, then place the hooped plastic over the grid with the design in the middle.



Cut a felt piece large enough to completely cover the template, then proceed as described above.