

Cat Tree Ornament

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This Cat Ornament can be completed right in the 4" hoop in under 3 minutes, except for a line of stitching by hand or machine to close him after stuffing.

Make him striped or plain, and give him stitched whiskers or whiskers made of fishing line. (In the demo, I will be making the version with fishing line whiskers.)



When stitched, the Cat toy measures approximately 1.8" x 3.9" (47 x 99 mm).

You will need

- Two 3x4.5" pieces of felt in the color of your choice
- A tiny amount of polyester fiber stuffing
- Approximately 30" of 6 lb fishing line (if you are making the optional fishing line whiskers)

Cat Tree Ornament Instructions

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1. Hoop a single layer of plastic wrap (cling wrap or Press n Seal) in the 4x4" hoop.

If you prefer, you can substitute the plastic from a plastic bag. Make sure it's snug in the hoop.

Note: Plastic is the best choice for this project, but if you prefer not to use it, choose a lightweight wash-away stabilizer instead.

You really want the lightest stabilizer you can find so that the toy will be pliable enough that it can be stuffed when it's finished. Don't use tear-away or cut-away stabilizers, which tend to be too heavy and stiffen the toy too much. If you're not using plastic, featherweight interfacing of the type used in dressmaking is a good choice.

Although I am using Press N Seal in some of the photos, I now pretty much always use plastic bags for making small toys like this.



2. Use a glue stick to lay down a small patch of glue in the centre of the hooped plastic. Use just enough to hold the felt in position while you begin stitching. (If you've used Press n Seal, you can just press the felt into place without the glue stick).



3. Select a piece of colored felt approximately 3" x 4.5" in the colour of your choice. (I am using grey because I am making a grey striped cat, but you can of course use whatever colour you wish). Centre the felt on the sticky surface in the hoop and press in place.

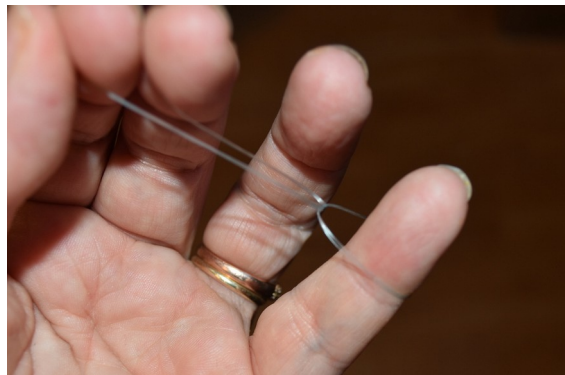


NOTE: If you are using the “W” version of the cat design (the one with the stitched whiskers), proceed directly to step #11 NOW. If you are making whiskers out of fishing line, continue with step 5 and following.

4. Place the hoop in the machine and stitch the first **six** colours. Pause the machine just before the nose stitches, and remove the hoop. (I'm making the striped cat, but the plain version is stitched in exactly the same way).



5. Cut three 10" lengths of fishing line; hold the three together and tie a knot in the centre.



6. Apply the tiniest dot of fabric glue (I'm using Beacon Fabri-tac) just to the knot in the centre of the fishing line. Don't put too much glue on the knot – a tiny dot is enough to hold it in position. Fabri-tac dries quickly so is perfect for this task.

7. Position the knot in the centre of the nose mark as shown and press in place. Pull the fishing line taut and tape it securely so the knot stays put. Place the tape on the plastic if possible.



8. Return the hoop to the machine and stitch the next colour (the nose). The stitching should cover the knot completely, as in the photo. If it doesn't, adjust the whiskers slightly and re-stitch the nose. Remove the hoop from the machine.



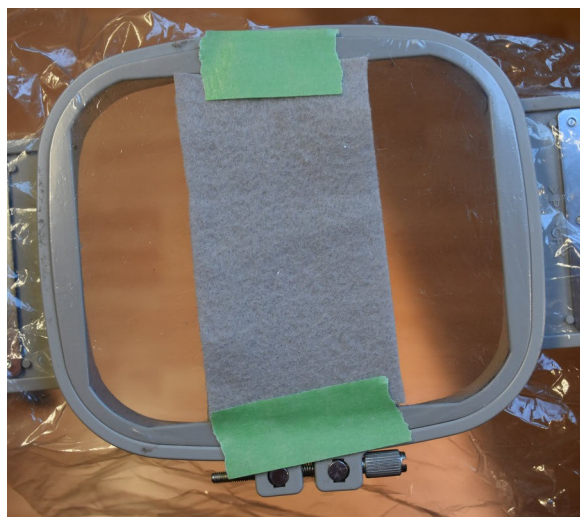
9. Once the nose is stitched over the knot, remove the tape holding the whiskers in place.

Gather the ends of the whiskers, twist them lightly together, and pull slightly taut. Tape the ends of the whiskers to the edge of the hoop as shown, so that they are out of the way of the final outline stitch.

NOTE: Skip step #11 and proceed directly to step #12.

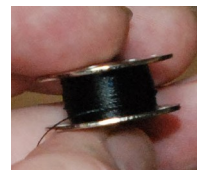


11. If you are using the “W” version with stitched whiskers, place the hoop in the machine and stitch the first **six** colours, pausing the machine before the final outline.

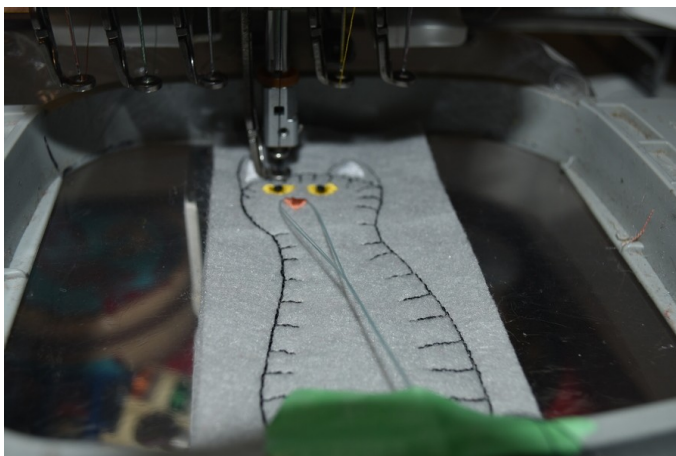


12. Turn the hoop face down and place the second 3x4.5” piece of felt over the back of the design, aligning it with the front piece and covering all of the stitching. Tape the felt in position using masking tape.

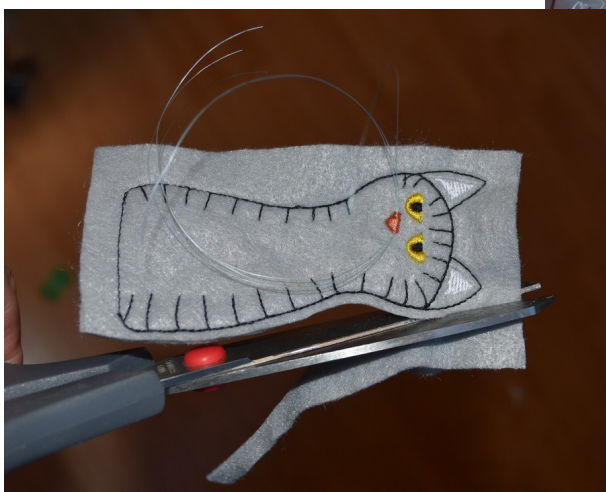
17. Change the bobbin to match the thread you are using for the outline. (I'm using black on my grey felt.)



18. Return the hoop to the machine, being careful not to dislodge the felt on the back of the hoop, and stitch the final outline. Remove the hoop from the machine.



19. Remove the tape and unhoop the design. Gently tear away the plastic from around the stitched design. It should come away readily. If needed, you can use a hemostat to gently tug out recalcitrant pieces.



20. Carefully trim around the edges of the design with scissors, taking care not to snip through the whiskers. You may find it easier to trim one layer at a time. Leave the bottom edge untrimmed for now.

21. With polyester stuffing, fill the cat's head, neck, and body cavities through the bottom opening. A chopstick or length of dowel is an ideal tool for this purpose. Use small amounts of stuffing at a time, filling the body smoothly.



22. When the cat has been stuffed, stitch the bottom opening closed by hand or machine, using nylon monofilament (invisible) thread or a colour to match your project. Trim away the excess felt along the bottom of the cat's body.

23. Keep the cat as a pocket pet, or turn it into an ornament for the tree by using a large hand sewing needle or a stylus to poke a hole just at the bend of his left ear.



The pattern shows the cat facing slightly to the right, but you can reverse the design in your machine to make a left-facing version (like the black and white ones at right).

I made a dozen or so 4" cats in different colours, some striped and some plain, to put on my two-foot "crazy cat lady" tree, and I may make a few more to tuck into stockings. They stitch up quickly and are simple to finish – an ideal stocking gift as well.

