

Star Babies Tutorial

These magical little star babies are very much loved by children. Depending on how much time you have available, you may like to make one of these for your birthday child, a friend's birthday child, or maybe even as little gifts for the birthday celebration. If you choose to gift one, they are so lovely packaged along with an evening verse, or maybe even "twinkle, twinkle, little star" written out on watercolour paper.

They would also make a gorgeous 'last star' for your birthday child if you decide to do the 'birthday star ritual' as discussed earlier. If you want to get even more creative, make a little moon bed pouch for your star baby to snuggle inside!

If you haven't worked with wool felt before you are in for a treat! It is such a forgiving and delicious natural material to work with. There is no need to hem it, which makes it perfect to pop in your handbag for whenever you find yourself with that moment to spare...

YOU WILL NEED

- Wool felt for the body
- Sheep's wool (to stuff the body)
- Cotton tricot 7cm x 7cm for head - in skin colour of choice
- Corriedale/ Merino Slivers or English Lester for hair
- Red beeswax crayon for cheeks
- Sewing supplies - Embroidery threads/ floss, quilting thread, needles + scissors
- Optional - star sequins + wool felt or an old wool jumper for hat

LET'S BEGIN

- 1.** Begin by gathering your materials.
- 2.** Trace the star body pattern on page 168 onto some paper, cut out to form your template.
- 3.** Place your star body template onto wool felt, and cut out - you will need 2 bodies per star baby.
- 4.** Before sewing up the bodies, you may like to sew a little star sequence or some other embroidery using some golden thread onto one side of the body.

5. Sewing up the body - place two bodies together, star sequin side facing outwards, and sew up the bodies using a whip or blanket stitch, leaving the opening for the head open/ unsewn.



MAKING THE HEAD

1. Cut out a square piece of tricot or another cotton interlock fabric 7cm x 7cm
2. Use your hand to gather the tricot/ fabric to create a little opening and then stuff inside a small bundle of sheeps wool. You may like to use a knitting needle or chop stick to help the process. Also using both hands to work the wool tightly into the head is helpful.
3. Once you have a created a head that is approx. 20mm circumference, take a few back stitches on the neckline and while continuing to hold the gathered tricot, wrap the thread around the neck a few times. Pull tight, backstitch and then cut off thread.

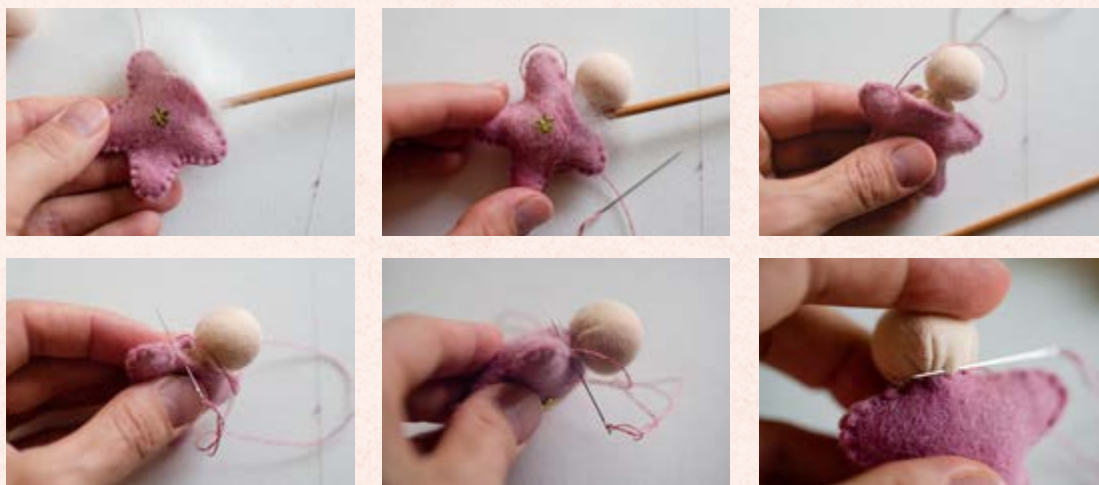


STUFFING THE BODY

1. Take the star baby bodies that you have stitched and stuff them with some carded sheep wool.
2. Knitting Needles or a chopstick works wonders when it comes to getting into all the points. Make sure you stuff it well so that it feels firm.

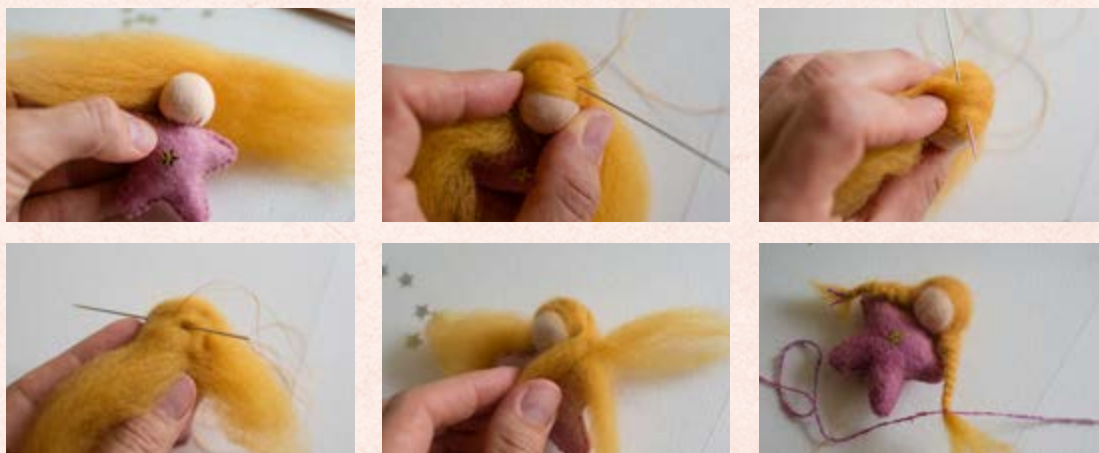
ATTACHING HEAD + BODY

1. Thread up a needle using the same coloured embroidery thread that you sewed the star baby body with.
2. Take the head and place it in position so that the excess gathered tricot is tightly tucked inside the body.
3. Stitch the body closed on either side of the head, and then secure the head in place by stitching around the neck, taking a little stitch of tricot and then a little stitch of the felt body. Stitch off on the neckline at the back of the head (as this will be covered with hair).



SEWING ON HAIR

1. Position a small amount of corriedale/ merino wool in place
2. Taking some quilting thread begin to stitch the hair in place. A long thin needle works best when stitching the hair on. Hold the hair in place with one hand and take small seed like stitches with your needle + thread to anchor the hair onto the head. Try taking one stitch and then pushing your needle through the head to somewhere on the other side (of the head) and take another small stitch.
3. For short hair or to make a little boy, use a smaller amount of corriedale/ merino wool and wrap the hair onto the head before stitching in place.



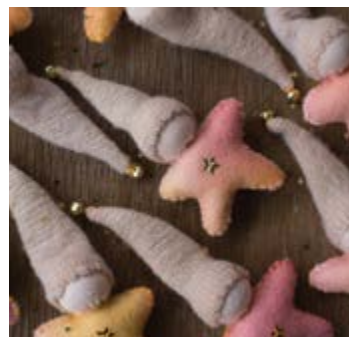
ROSY CHEEKS

1. Create some rosy cheeks for your star baby by taking an offcut of tricot and rubbing a Stockmar red beeswax crayon onto one side of the fabric. Then take the offcut, and with your index finger on the inside of the fabric, gently rub the cheeks of the star baby/ doll. Go gently, as you can always build up the colour and you want it to look like a natural blushing.



MAKING HATS - OPTIONAL

1. Prepare the hats using some upcycled material, ideally something thinner and a little flexible, which will allow you to be able to tie a little knot in the top of the hat. (We used a favourite old wool singlet that I accidentally shrunk in a warm wash.)
2. Cut out the hats and sew up the long side using a simple whipstitch or a running stitch. Start from the rim of the hat and work your way up to the point. When you arrive at the point, stitch off using a few backstitches. Turn the hats inside out and tie a knot towards the tip (if your material allows you).
3. Place the hat onto the head (which is now attached to the body). Thread your needle with some quilting or embroidery thread and begin stitching at the back of the head using your smallest stitches at the back of the head. Take a little bit of the tricot as you take each stitch to anchor the hat in place. Once you've stitched around the head, take a few backstitches and cut off the thread.



You are finished! Well done on creating such a magical little keepsake for your child.

»»» Creative notes «««

Tricot is a stretchy cotton interlock fabric often used in doll making. You can source it online see resources, or if you live near a Steiner/Waldorf school you are sure to find it in the school craft shop. Another option is to either buy some cotton interlock fabric from a fabric shop or use an old garment from around the house (many singlets and t-shirts are made using cotton interlock, so this is a great way to up-cycle them). Depending on the colour you wish you achieve you can experiment with some natural dying - teabags work well. Check out my website for more details on natural dying.

You may have noticed that these little star babies have no eyes. This is a common practice in making Steiner/ Waldorf dolls, which offers our children a simple archetypal image, inviting the child to form their own inner pictures.