

Bat Conservation Trust



Making your own needle felt bat

If you're a dab hand at arts and crafts why not make your own needle felt bats at your next fundraising event. These adorable fuzzy bats are ideal for use as decoration or to sell at any fundraising occasion.



These bats are very easy to make. Allow 2 hours of “spiking” time. The process is very therapeutic (you probably won’t notice the time going).

Most of these were made in a two part process, firstly using a biscuit cutter to shape a flat bat, secondly adding a “sausage” which was then shaped to give a body and head, making the bat three dimensional. The bat in the top left hand corner (with orange eyes) is a bit different and was made in a very similar way to that described in Young Bat worker magazine, winter 2013.

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You will need;

- Roving (in various colours)
- Sponge block (to stop your needle points hitting the surface below)
- Needlefelting needles
- A biscuit cutter in a bat shape



Method

To form the 'Flat bat';

- Put your biscuit cutter onto the sponge block.
- Take some roving and tease the fibres apart. Fill the cutter with roving, layering the fibres in different directions. Push the roving right to the edges of the cutter – especially at the ears (an important bat feature!) Fill the cutter quite full – the roving will “shrink down” as you spike it.



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Start “spiking” through the roving – pushing your needle up and down through it and just into the sponge. Start slowly and then speed up; try not to push your needle too far as it can hit the surface below and break.
After a while (once the bat takes shape) remove the cutter



Remove cutter. Gently peel your bat off the sponge. The back will be quite “fluffy”. Turn it over and put it back into the cutter, fluffy side up. If your bat seems thin in areas add more roving fibres.



Start spiking again. Remove cutter, turn bat over and repeat process. The wool/roving fibres will become denser and the bat will shrink in size. As the bat becomes firmer you will no longer need the cutter to keep the bat in shape.
NOTE – If you want to make your bats ears quite long, snip into the roving with scissors.



Do most of your spiking at the wings and ears, leaving the fibres in belly area a little looser so you can add a “sausage “body later. Don’t spike too deeply into the sponge or the back of your bat will constantly be fluffy.

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To form the body and head;

You might want to choose a contrasting colour at this point (it's entirely up to you). Take some roving, tease it apart and then roll it in your hands to form a sausage shape.



Carefully spike into the sausage, i.e. Not all the way through to your fingers, (*which is easier said than done*) so it starts to firm up and take shape.

Make the length of the sausage suitable to fit on your flat bat.



Lay the sausage onto the flat bat shape. Spike through both – starting at the edges to join the two pieces.

Spike through the back of the bat into the sausage too (i.e. spike from both front and back).



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Now the arty bit. Let your creative juices flow! Pinch the roving with your fingers to create the shapes you want (e.g. a pointed nose) and spike to shape.



You will need to do quite a lot of spiking to create a neck and create hollows/ eye sockets, nostrils and a smiley mouth.

To make the eyes roll tiny twists of dark roving into balls (getting them the same size can be a challenge) and spike these into the sockets (*oh that does sound cruel!!*). Then add a tiny twist of white to look like a “sparkle”. If you really want your eyes to be exact you could use beads or “goggly” eyes.



Finishing touches; a little more spiking to curl the ears around the head and the addition of twisted fibres creates a look of finger bones (although a piece of yarn would have worked here too).

Add;

- **A brooch back- and wear your bat with pride**
- **Magnet- to put on the fridge or filing cabinet**
- **Ribbon- to hang up**
- **Nothing! - simply perch your bat wherever you think s/he should roost**

Anne Youngman (Scottish Officer) Good Luck!

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