

# Leaf needle felting

## A simple starter project & introduction to needle felting - create an autumnal felt leaf.

### What you'll need

Wool tops

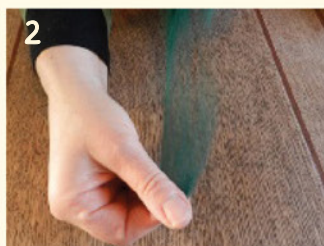
Felting needle (size 36/38 gauge is a good starter needle)/needle felting tool

Needle felting mat (or piece of upholstery foam/pile of green scourers)



### STEP 1

Find some leaves for inspiration and select wool tops in a range of colours. Wool tops are long combed parallel fibres that come in thick lengths.



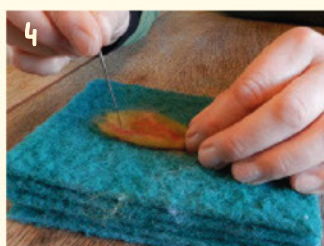
### STEP 2

Ease out small fibres of wool by spreading them out then gently pulling off small bits (without ripping). If the fibres don't pull off easily spread them out more finely.



### STEP 3

Arrange the fibres onto your pad/mat in a rough leaf shape, taking inspiration from the leaves you gathered. It doesn't need to be perfect at this stage.



### STEP 4

Holding the needle near the top, in a way that feels secure and comfortable, stab in and out of your wool shape, building up your speed and then working as quickly as you feel you can. As you stab you will begin to observe the fibres meshing together. When they look like they are felting together, carefully pull the piece off the mat and turn it over. This prevents the fibres sticking into your block/mat. Keep turning your piece throughout the following steps.

**Tip:** the fibres stick into the bristles of the manufactured needle mat and make it difficult to remove them. A foam pad or pile of scourers works well.

**Tip:** always be aware where your opposite hand/fingers are to avoid stabbing yourself!



### STEP 5

Add more fibres if you want to build up/change the shape/add different colours to your piece. The beauty of needle felting is that it is an organic process and you can work with it as you go.

### STEP 6

To add a stalk to the leaf, twist and shape some fibres first, then overlap them slightly over your main piece. Use the felting needle to begin stabbing the felt stalk onto the main piece.

### STEP 7

If you are not happy with the shape you can use the tip of your needle to lift the edges and fold them in to change the shape. Once folded over, stab gently to hold in place. Once it is secure you can felt it into the main piece.

**Tip:** a multi-needle tool is better for working on larger pieces (it is noticeable how much quicker the fibres felt!).

### Take it further

- **Appliqué** (felting onto another piece of material) Use the same technique as the free-standing leaf but with a base layer of fabric (or card) underneath. A manufactured needle felting mat works well with this method of felting.
- Appliqué felt directly onto an item of clothing.
- Try using a playdough/cookie cutter as a guide/template for a shape.

