

ELEPHANT PLUSH



A FREE SEWING PATTERN BY



ELEPHANT PLUSH

This handheld elephant is an adorable mini version of the enormous pachyderm! It features a tiny four-legged body and big head that manages to stand on its own thanks to a very large poly-pellet pouch in its hindquarters. It has a curled trunk and big floppy ears as well as a tiny swishing tail.

It looks wonderful in classic gray or lovely soft pastel colors for a sweet version that no elephant lover could resist!

MAKES:

One plush: about 6" tall, 9" long from trunk to back of body, and 5" wide from each side of the head

DIFFICULTY:



The hardest part of this plush is likely sewing the tiny legs into the body. They require a good bit of pivoting. So be sure to stop frequently with your needle in the fabric before turning in new directions.

SKILLS USED:

- Fusible web applique
- Curved sewing
- Basting
- Ladder stitch
- Sewing small pieces
- Matching notches and points



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materials & tools:

- ¼ yd. of fabric for main body
- ⅛ yd. (or 4" x 10") of white or light fabric for tusks
- ⅛ yd. (or 4" x 6") of dark accent fabric for tail tip
- 5" x 10" piece of scrap fabric for poly pellet pouch
- 3" x 3" piece of black applique fabric (flannel, felt, fleece, cotton, etc.) for eyes
- 2" x 2" piece of accent applique fabric for eye highlights
- 2" x 2" piece of white applique fabric for eye shines
- 3" x 3" piece of pink applique fabric for blush
- 6" x 6" piece of light or heavy duty fusible web
- sewing thread to match main fabric and applique fabrics
- poly-fil stuffing
- poly pellets
- spoon or funnel for filling poly pellets
- basic sewing tools (sewing machine, scissors, iron, needles, pins, fabric marker, seam ripper)



SUGGESTED FABRICS:

Plush, stretchy fabrics such as fleece or minky are suggested. The variations of fleece and minky mentioned to the left would work well, but really any plushy fabric with a bit of stretch on the crosswise grain would be well-suited.

Stretch fabrics like **FLEECE** or **MINKY** will create a more squat, round shape when stuffed.

Non-stretchy fabrics, like **FELT** or **COTTON**, won't stretch when stuffed so the resulting plush will look elongated as shown.

MINKY

VS.

FELT

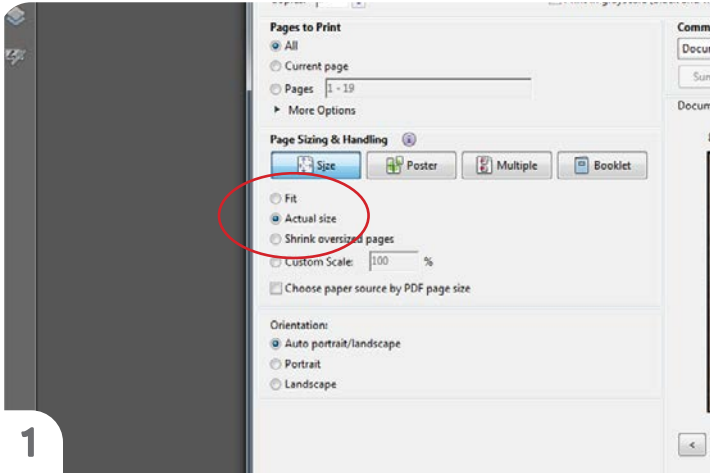


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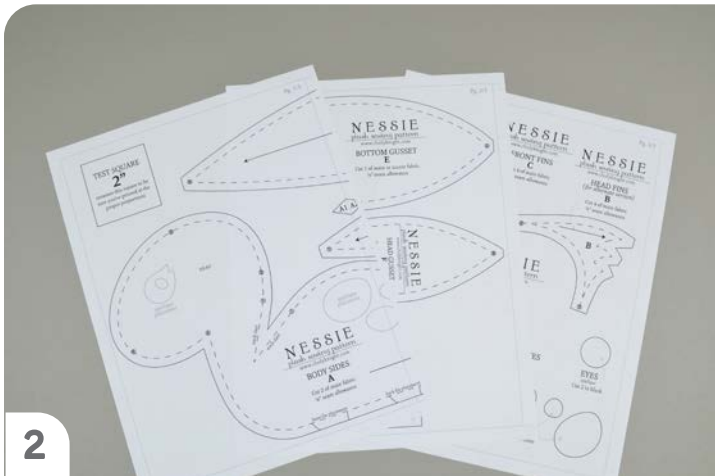
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printing the pattern:

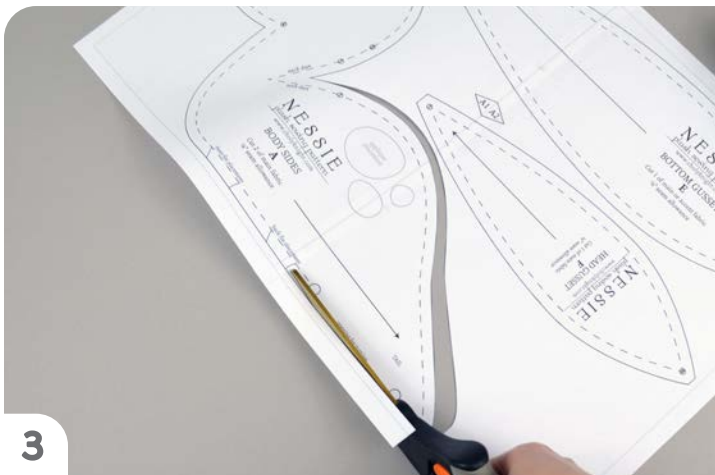
To print the pattern, set your computer to print **PAGES 22-24**. If you're unfamiliar with printing and assembling a .pdf pattern, read the steps below.



At the print dialog box, check the box that says print at “Actual Size” or 100%. Any other selection (such as “Fit to page”) will distort the pattern so it's slightly larger or smaller and we don't want that.



Print the pages needed for the file. You might have one or more. Either way, be sure you have the full collection by noting the page numbers in the corner.



You can trace the patterns onto a different paper, or you can also just cut them straight from the printer paper. They might be a little hard to pin through, so you might want to use your longest pins. But you could also use pattern weights or trace the outlines onto the fabric with a washable marker and cut them out from there.

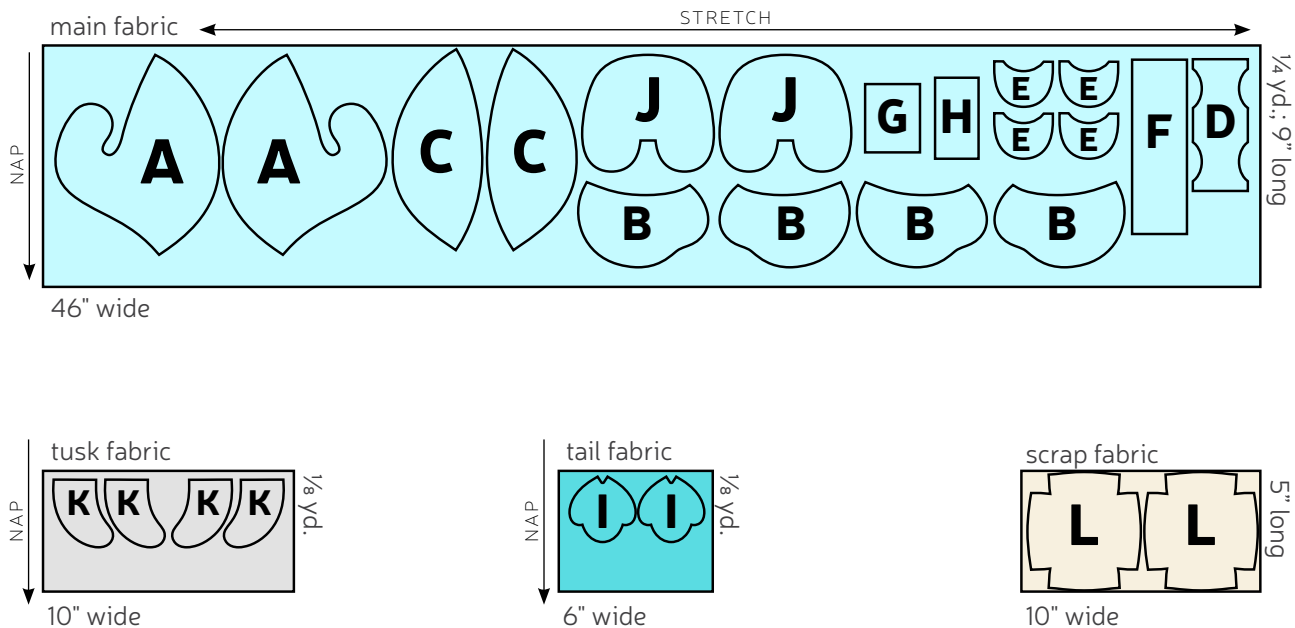
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cutting the fabric:



cutting layout:



BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- Briefly read the project instructions so you know what to expect.
- If desired, mark the cut fabric pieces with the markings and symbols from the pattern. Or wait until the applicable step before transferring.
- Note that a 1/4" seam allowance is used throughout the project.

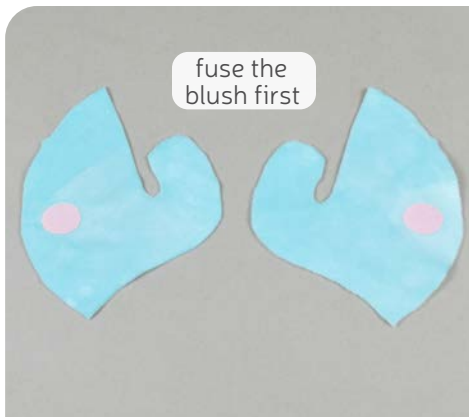
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1. PREPARE THE FACE APPLIQUE

- Grab your fusible web and trace all the applique pieces you want onto the smooth (paper) side. You should have at least two **eyes** and two **eye shines**. You can also add **eye highlights** and **blush**.
- Fuse the bumpy (adhesive) side onto the wrong side of your applique fabric. The **eyes** should go on black, the **eye shines** on white, the **eye highlights** on an accent color, and the **blush** on pink.
- Cut out the face pieces and grab your **HEAD FRONT (A)** piece. Set your paper pattern on top of the fabric piece (right sides up). Align the **blush** piece (or **eye**, if you're not using blush) on top where the placement markings are. Then carefully slide the paper pattern away while holding the applique piece in place.



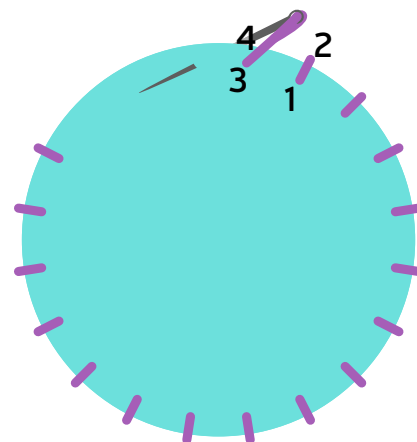
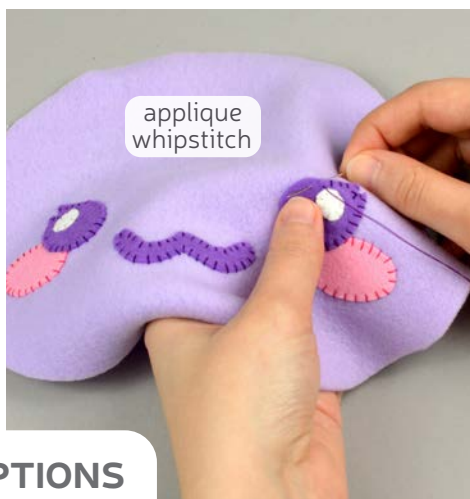
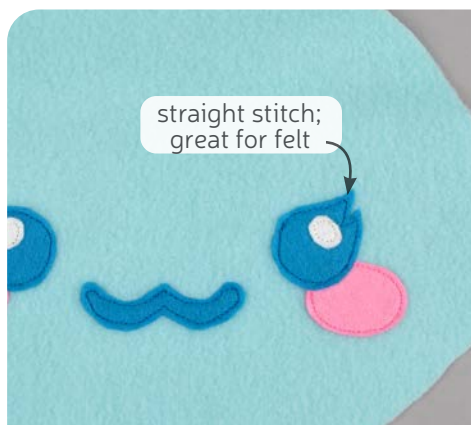
2. FUSE THE APPLIQUE

- Fuse the **blush** in place with your iron. Use a press cloth if you're using a polyester or fuzzy fabric like minky. A scrap piece of cotton works well as a press cloth, and will help prevent the fabric from melting or burning.
- Next, add on the **eye** pieces. Fuse them the same way as you did the **blush**, using the paper pattern and photos as a guide.
- Lastly, add the smaller pieces: the **highlight** and **eye shines**. If you used heavy duty fusible web, you can keep the pieces fused without sewing, or you can sew them in place a number of ways. I've used a zigzag stitch here.

→ Refer to the next step for some other applique options.

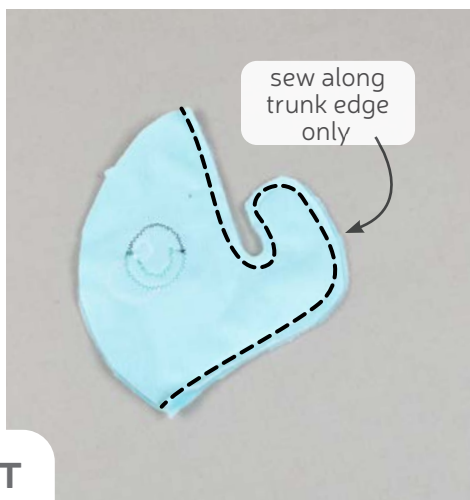
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2a. OTHER APPLIQUE OPTIONS

- Other good options for applique include a straight stitch, which involves sewing around the edge of the applique pieces with a straight stitch using matching thread -- about 1/8" in from the edge.
- You can also applique by hand; I prefer a whipstitch. Thread a hand-sewing needle with some matching thread and knot it. Bring the thread up from the back of the project; about 1/8" in from the edge of the applique shape. Bring it down perpendicular from the curve, just outside of the applique shape. This completes one stitch.
- For the next stitch, bring the needle back up about 1/8" away from the previous stitch and 1/8" in from the edge just as in the first stitch. Once again, bring it down just outside the applique shape. Continue this way until you've sewn around the shape.

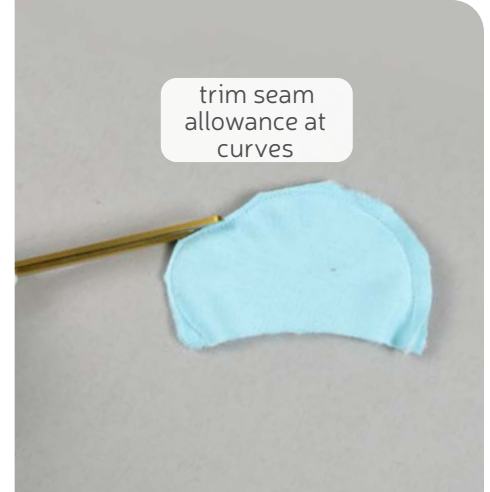
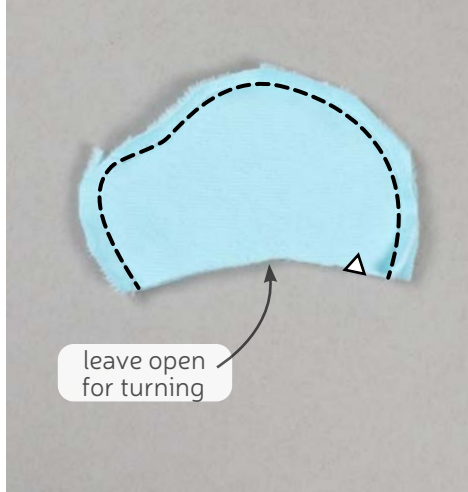
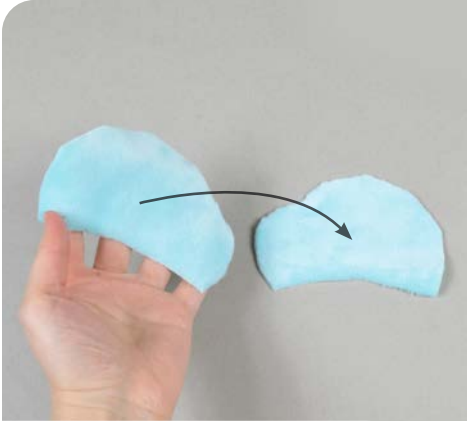


3. SEW THE HEAD FRONT

- Grab both of your **HEAD FRONT** pieces (A). Align them with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.
- Sew the head pieces together along the trunk edge only. This will be the center front of the finished head. Leave the sides free.
- Trim the excess seam allowance around the trunk and in the curve of the trunk to both reduce bulk and increase flexibility when the piece is turned later.

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4. SEW THE EARS

- Grab your **EAR** pieces (B). Take two of them and align them with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.
- Sew the ears together around the longer curved edge. Leave the **notched edge** free for turning the ear right side out later.
- Trim the excess seam allowance at the curves of the ear to reduce bulk and increase flexibility. Repeat this step once more so you have two ears total, then turn both ears right side out.



5. BASTE THE EARS

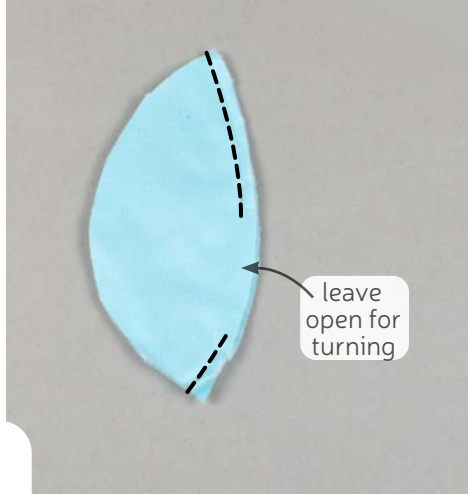
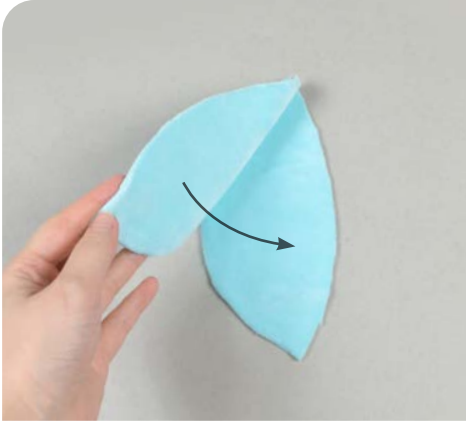
- Grab your **HEAD FRONT** pieces from before (A). Turn the trunk right side out and open up the pieces.
- If you haven't already, locate the **ear placement notches** found on the paper pattern for the head front. Transfer them over to the fabric.
Align the notches on the **EARS** (B) with the ones on the head front so right sides are facing and the raw edges match up. This will ensure the ears aren't upside down.
- Flip the ears toward the inside of the head front and baste them to the head fabric.

BASTING:

A form of temporary sewing meant to hold pieces in place. A long stitch length is often used for this reason. The finished result is not meant to be seen and sometimes is even removed later (depending on your project).

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6. SEW THE HEAD BACK

- Grab your **HEAD BACK** pieces (C). Align them with right sides facing and raw edges matching.
- If you haven't already, locate the **opening for turning marking** found on the paper pattern for the **HEAD BACK** (C). Transfer the markings over to the wrong side of the fabrics you just aligned. Sew this edge of the head back pieces, starting at the top corner and sewing down to the bottom corner, but leaving an opening in the middle for turning the head later.
- Open up the pieces when complete.

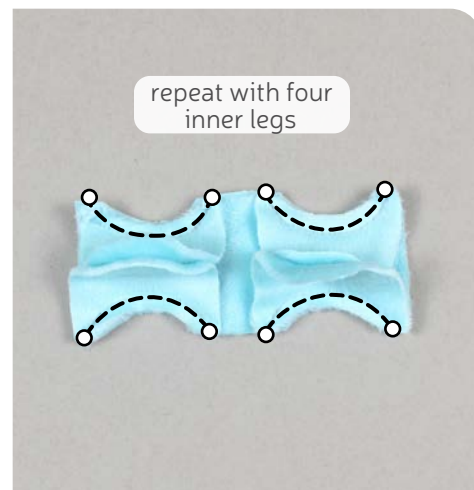
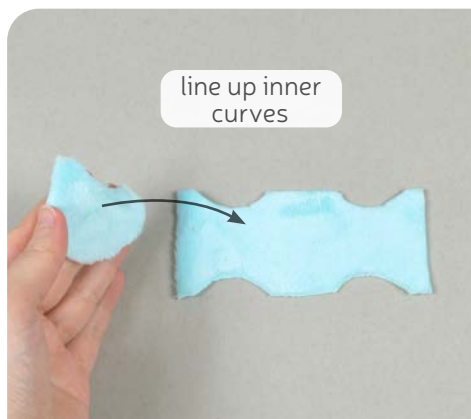


7. SEW THE HEAD

- Grab your **HEAD FRONT** (A) from before and grab your **HEAD BACK** pieces (C). Align the head front over the back, matching up the seams at the top and bottom so right sides are facing and raw edges match up. There is a **circle marking** on the top of the head back pieces to help indicate the top.
- Sew the head front to the back all around the piece.
- Open up the head when complete. Set it aside for a moment while we work on the body.

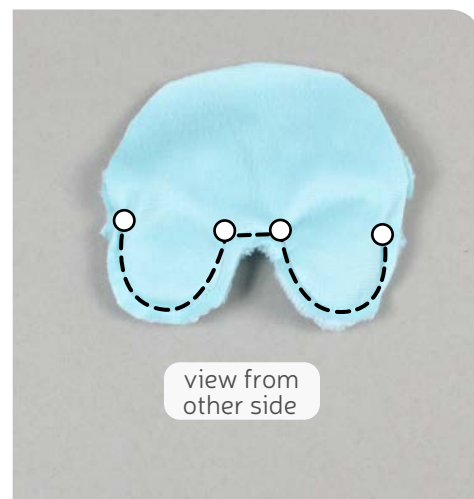
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8. SEW THE INNER LEGS

- Grab your **BELLY** (D) and **INNER LEG** pieces (E). Line up the short inner curves of both the inner leg and belly pieces so right sides are facing. The curves are identical, so they should line up very easily.
- Sew the inner leg to the belly along just the inner curve. There are also **open circle markings** to line up at those points for extra help.
- Repeat with all four inner leg pieces along both sides of the belly.



9. SEW THE BELLY TO THE BODY

- Grab your **BELLY** piece so far and one of the **BODY** (J) pieces. Align the **INNER LEGS** with the body along the curved edges. When the pieces are aligned, the **open circle markings** should match up.
- Sew the inner legs to the body along the curved edges, as well as the short space between them along the belly. You'll need to pivot at the corners to go around each curve. There will also be some bulk here due to the previous seams, so take it slowly.
- From the other side, the body should look like the third photo.

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10. SEW THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BELLY

- Repeat with your remaining body piece on the other side of the **BELLY** (D).
- Your completed pieces should look something like *middle photo*.
- Clip the seam allowances at the corners between the legs and the body. This will help increase flexibility when the piece is turned later.



11. ATTACH THE BACK PIECE

- Open up your **BELLY** and **BODY** piece so far. Adjust it so the belly is in the center and the right side of the fabric is facing up.
- Grab your **BACK** piece (F). Take the short end (without the *notch*) and center it over one end of your belly. (This side will eventually become the front of your elephant).
 - *The belly will be a little narrower than the back along this edge because the belly has been sewn to the legs and it no longer has seam allowance.*
- Sew the back to the belly along this short edge, in between the seams from steps 9-10. This will leave about ¼" of fabric free on each side of the back piece. (This will be attached to the body shortly).

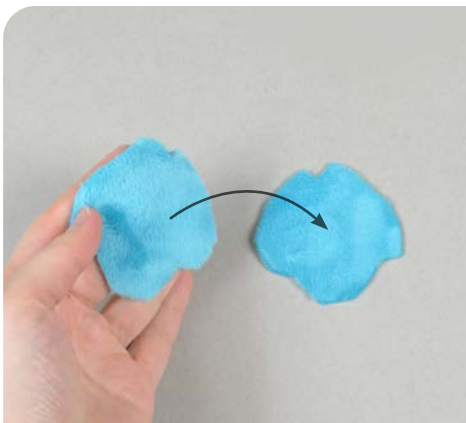
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12. ATTACH THE BEHIND PIECE

- Grab your **BEHIND** piece (G). Repeat the same process as for the **BACK** (F) but on the other side of the **BELLY**. Take the short end of the behind without the **notch** and align it over the opposite end of the belly.
- Sew the behind to the belly in between the seams, leaving 1/4" free on each side.
- Open up the pieces when complete.
 - *Set your body aside for a short moment while we make the tail.*



13. SEW THE TAIL TIP

- Grab your **TAIL TIP** pieces (I). Align them with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.
- Sew them together starting at the tight curve at the top, going along one edge on the side for about 1" (there's a guide on the paper pattern for help as well).
- Open up the tail pieces when complete, and the joined pieces should make a curve in the middle. This will be attached to the **TAIL** (H) next.

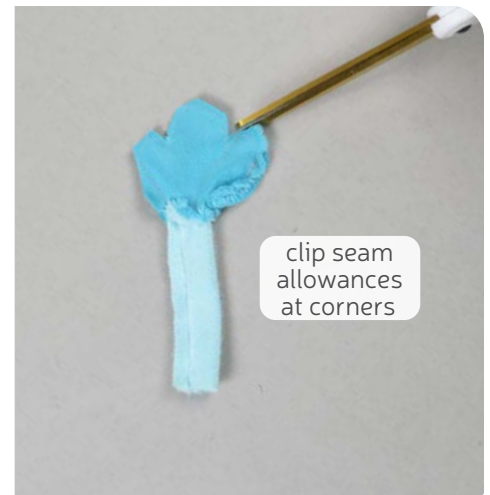
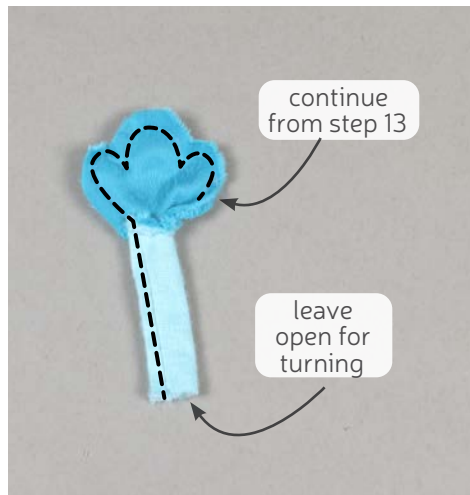
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14. ATTACH THE TAIL TIP

- Bend the curve of the **TAIL TIP** (I) to fit around one short end of the **TAIL** (H).
- Sew the tail tip to the tail along this curved edge.
- Open up the pieces when complete.



15. SEW THE TAIL

- Take your tail so far and fold it in half so the **TAIL TIP** edges match up again and the **TAIL BASE** makes an even skinnier rectangle.
- Finish sewing the tail by starting where you left off on the tail tip in step 13. Sew around the rest of the tail tip, then down the tail base. Leave the short straight edge at the end open for turning the tail.
- Clip the seam allowance at the corners of the tail tip to reduce bulk and increase flexibility when the tail is turned right side out.

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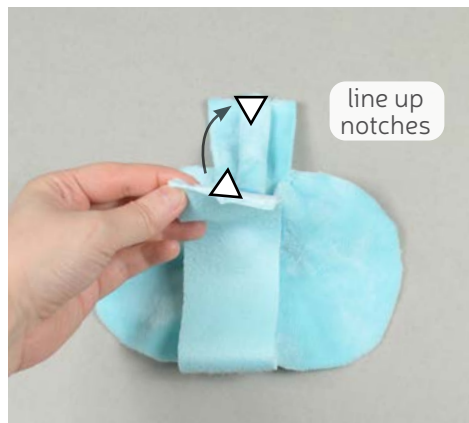
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16. BASTE THE TAIL

- Turn the **TAIL** right side out through the opening. Stuff the tail tip with stuffing so it puffs up. The base of the tail doesn't really need stuffing since the seam allowance fills it a bit.
- Take your finished tail and align the open edge along the **notched edge** of the **BEHIND** piece (G). Center it on the notch and pin it in place.
- Baste the tail to the behind along the **notch**.

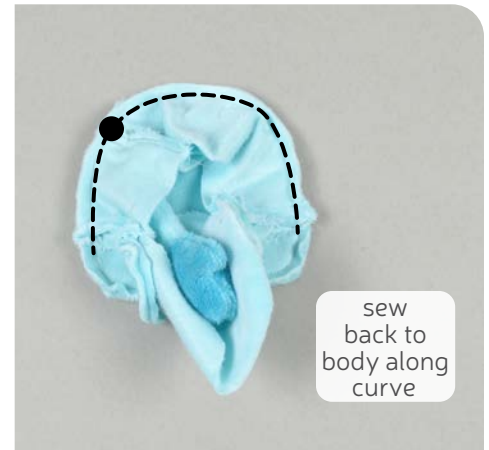
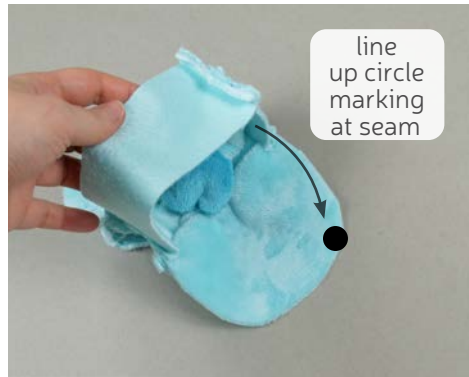
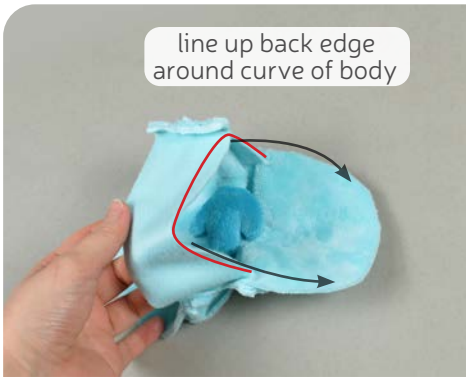
- Grab your **BACK** piece from before (F) and align it over the **BEHIND** piece (G). Line up the **notches** so the tail is sandwiched in between.
- Sew the back to the behind along this short edge to secure the tail inside.



17. SEW THE BACK TO THE BEHIND

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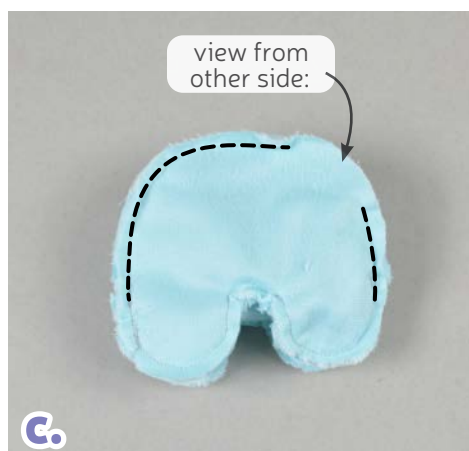
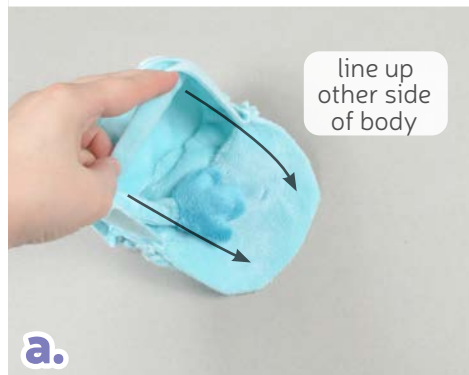


18. SEW THE BACK TO THE BODY

- Grab your newly joined **BACK/BEHIND** piece. One edge of this piece will be joined around the curved edge of the **BODY** (J). For help with alignment, the body has a **circle marking** that should match up with the **back seam** from step 17.
- Take your back/behind piece and align one edge around the curve of the body. Pin from corner to corner and match the circle marking to the back seam.
- Sew the back/behind to the body along this edge. Note that you can sew a little beyond the corner into the leg pieces to ensure there are no holes there later.

- Repeat step 18 with the other side of the **BACK** and the other **BODY** (J) piece. Line up the edges around the curve of the body.
- Sew the other side of the back to the body along this edge, but this time leave an **opening for turning** as indicated on the paper pattern.
- Photo C shows how it might look from the other side.
- Turn the body right side out through the opening in the side that you left previously. Check the corners at the legs to ensure there are no holes left in the shape.

19. SEW THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BODY

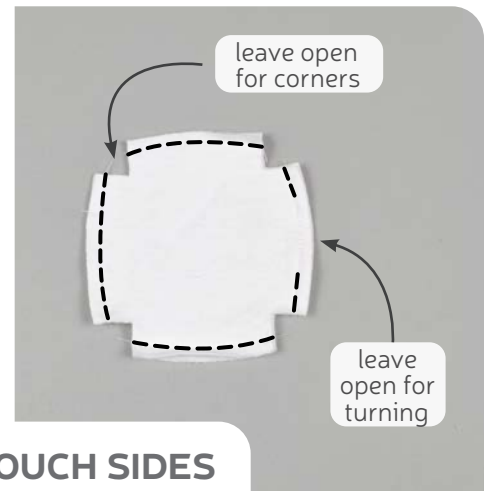
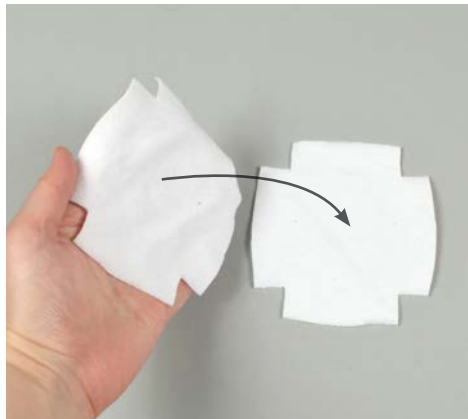


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→ *The elephant has a rather large head that offsets the tiny body, so this plush needs an extra large pellet pouch to outweigh it. This pouch has a few extra steps than the typical pouch to really get the maximum pellets in a small space.*

- a. Grab your **PELLET POUCH** pieces (L). Align them with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.



20. SEW THE PELLET POUCH SIDES

- b. Sew the pieces together along the longer, slightly curved edges. Leave an **opening for turning** in one side. Also leave the corners open for sewing the **darts** next.

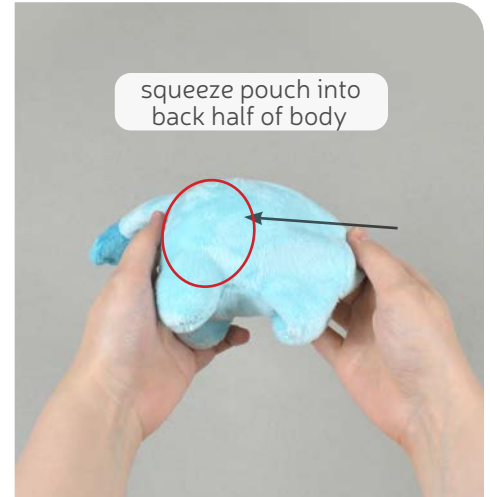
- a. Grab one of the open corners of the pellet pouch and pinch it so the side seams (from step 20) match up.
- b. Flatten and line up the raw edges and this will be the corner of the pouch.
- c. Sew along this edge as if it were a **double-ended dart**. It doesn't need to be pretty since the finished dart won't be seen.
- d. Repeat this step with the other three corners of the pouch so it has four sewn corners total.

21. SEW THE PELLET POUCH CORNERS



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22. STUFF THE PELLET POUCH

- Get your poly pellets and a funnel (I prefer a spoon, but both work). Fill the **POUCH** with poly pellets until it's just about full. Leaving a small amount of empty space will make closing it easier. Stitch the pouch closed using a hand-sewn backstitch (for extra safety), or take it to your machine. Stitch it closed very slowly, using only the hand wheel if necessary. Sewing over a pellet will very likely break a needle.
- Stuff the pouch into the body of your elephant through the opening left earlier.
- Push it into the back end of your elephant so it takes up the entire hindquarters. For the best results, squeeze it back very tightly so all of the weight of your elephant is in the back.

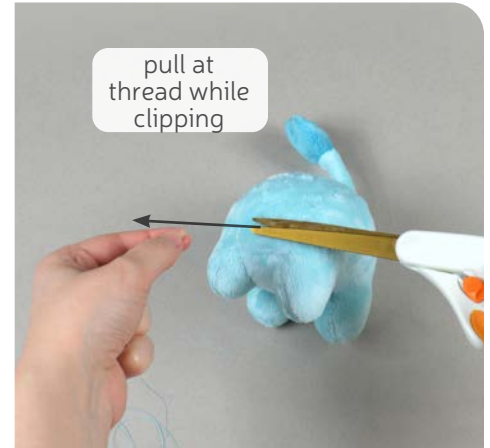
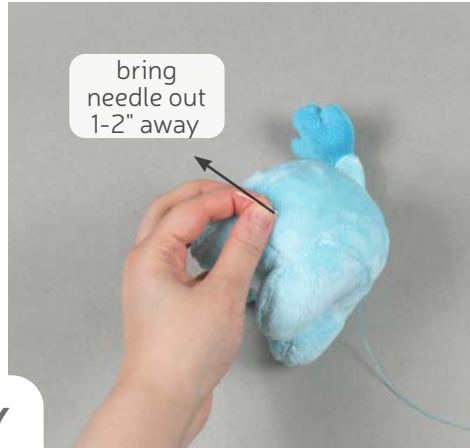
- Stuff the back legs from beneath the pellet pouch. Be sure to get lots of stuffing so they're very firm; they need to support the weight of both the body and the head.
- Fill up the rest of the body with stuffing so there are no longer wrinkles in the fabric. Be sure both back and front legs are very firm.



23. STUFF THE BODY

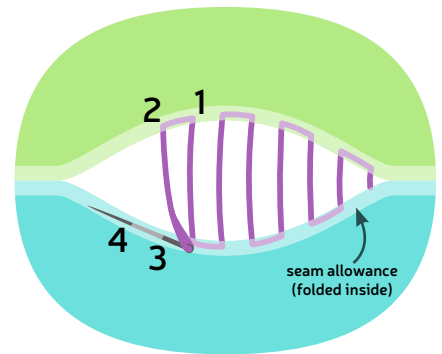
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24. CLOSE UP THE BODY

- Completely fill the body with stuffing. Next, thread a hand sewing needle and knot the end. Bring the needle through one edge of the opening from the inside out. This will leave the knot inside the plush. Tuck the seam allowances from the opening inside and sew the body closed with a ladder stitch. Take a $1/8$ " stitch into the fold of one side of the opening, then go across and take another. Keep going down the opening until you reach the end.
- When you're finished, stitch a knot into the end of the seam. Then insert the needle near the finished knot and out of the plush about 1-2" away.
- Pull the thread through and hold it taut while snipping the thread. The excess thread should sink back inside the plush -- all hidden!



25. STUFF AND CLOSE THE HEAD

- Grab your head from before and stuff it as well. Begin by filling up the trunk so it's very firm and full. You'll need a lot at the base of the trunk so the fabric doesn't force the stuffing back out.
- Next fill up the rest of the head with stuffing so there are no wrinkles in the fabric.
- Lastly, close up the opening of the head using a ladder stitch like with the body. If you have a lot of thread leftover, you can use it to attach the head to the body up next.

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→ *Joining the head of the elephant to the body can be a little awkward, so the paper pattern has some stitching guides for extra help. Transfer them over by cutting them out of the paper pattern and using them as a tracing guide onto the plush.*



26. TRANSFER THE STITCHING LINES

- For the **HEAD**, the **stitching guide** is transferred from the **HEAD BACK** piece (C). One half of the **stitching guide** can be drawn at a time on each half of the **HEAD BACK**.
- For the **BODY**, the **stitching guide** is transferred from the **BACK** piece (F) and traced onto the front half of the body (opposite the tail).

- Take your **HEAD** and align it over the **BODY**, matching up the **stitching guides**. Make sure the elephant's head is facing forward. The stitching guides have **top, bottom, left, and right markings** to help keep everything from twisting.



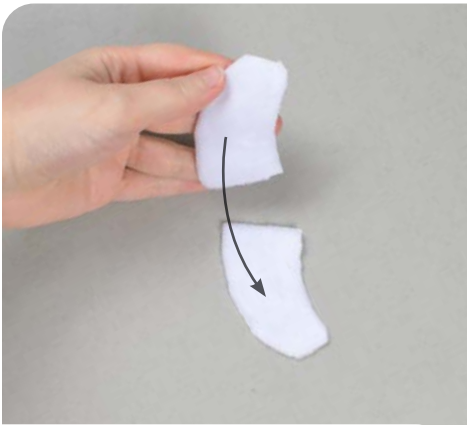
27. SEW THE HEAD TO THE BODY

- Attach the head to the body by taking big stitches into the guide on the head, then another into the guide on the body.

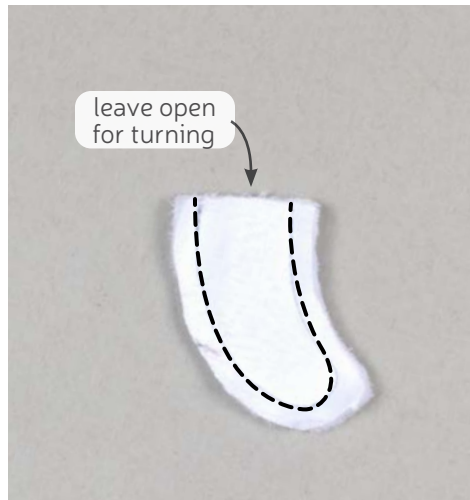
Keep going around taking big stitches and ensuring that the markings match up. Once you've gone around once, check that you like the placement and the head isn't tilted or twisted. Then go around the guide again with tinier, neater stitches to secure the head for sure.

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28. SEW THE TUSKS



- Grab your **TUSK** pieces (K). Take two of them and align them with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.
- Sew them together around the curved edge. Leave the straight edge free for turning the tusk right side out later.
- Trim the seam allowance at the inner curve of the tusk to make it turn more cleanly later. Repeat this step with your remaining tusk pieces for two tusks total.



29. STUFF THE TUSKS



- Turn the **TUSK** right side out through the opening and stuff it lightly with stuffing.
- Thread a hand sewing needle and knot the end. Sew a gathering stitch around the opening of the tusk, about ¼" in from the edge.

GATHERING:

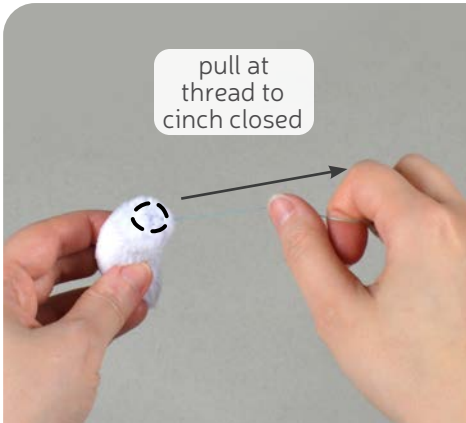
The process of shortening the length of a piece of fabric by sewing long stitches through it. When the thread is pulled, it forms small folds that ruffle the fabric.

GATHERING STITCH:

A long version of the running stitch, which is a stitch done by weaving the needle in and out of a length of fabric going along a line. The long stitches (about ¼"-½" long) gather the fabric when pulled later.

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30. ATTACH THE TUSKS

- Pull at the gathering thread to cinch the **TUSK** closed.
- Place the cinched end of the tusk onto the elephant's head, to the side of the trunk. There is also a stitching guide on the paper pattern for extra help. Ensure that the tusk tips are pointing up.
- Ladder stitch the tusk to the head around the base.

CONGRATS!
This completes your plush!
Now give it a big hug!



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