

SIMPLE NEEDLE SCULPTING

Needle sculpting can be used to good effect on cloth dolls , teds and other softies. It is used after stuffing and often needs a far longer than normal needle (depending upon the size of the character, of course :)

You can see some examples of sculpting that I've used in my patterns on the right. I keep the sculpting to a minimum if possible and recommend making up a quick practice head, or foot first. It's easy and I will give you confidence to dive in :)

These are two simple tutorials to get you moving - but you will find many more on line.

Full instructions below - good luck x



You can create really cute, chubby toes



Cloth doll can come alive with a little needle sculpting



Sculpted eye sockets



Before



After

What you need to start :

Firstly I should say that you will get a much better effect using a fabric with high thread count, especially if you are completely sculpting a doll's face for example.

Your needle should be long enough (and fine enough) for you to be able to work through the limb, or head easily. Personally, I would just use standard sewing cotton, rather than something stronger, like upholstery thread. I use the thread singly too.

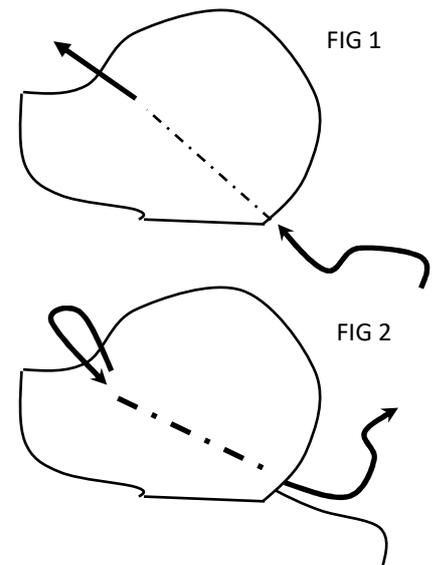
Goes without saying ('though I will :) that you should choose a thread colour matched to the fabric as closely as possible.

Basically, all we are doing is working under the fabric to get the stuffing to "bunch" up and create small mounds (for noses) Or pulled to form indents for nostrils and eyes :)

Creating Indents for eyes :

This is one of the simplest sculpting you can do. Especially good if you are fitting glass eyes, as the sculpting can take some of the strain away.

- 1 Thread your needle and use your sewing thread singly.
- 2 We'll assume you have already decided on the position of the eyes. Take your thread through the back of the head to one eye position (begin low down, as near as you can to the neck joint if you have one fitted,)
- 3 Leave the end of the thread hanging from the back of the head - do not attach it. Fig 1
- 4 Return back through the head, taking a small stitch (about 2 or 3mm) and exit close by the other end of the thread sitting there. Fig 2
- 5 Repeat two or three times (using the same needle points), gently pulling on the thread until you form a shallow indent . This does not need to be too deep but you should see an "eye socket" form. Fig 3



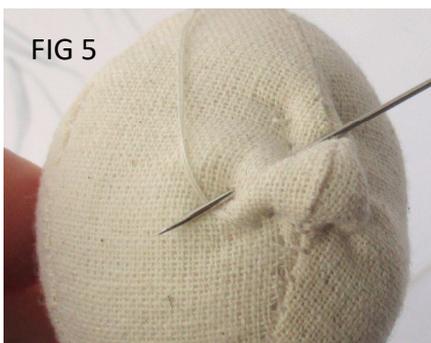
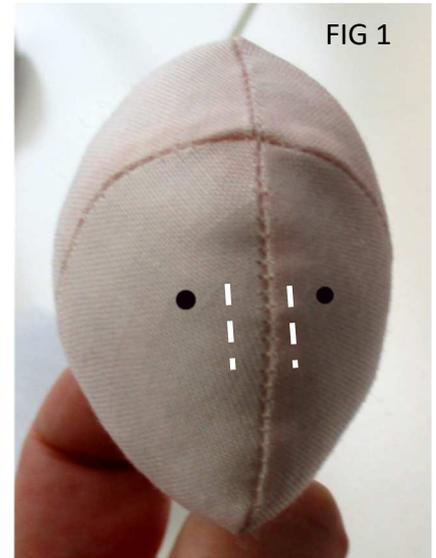
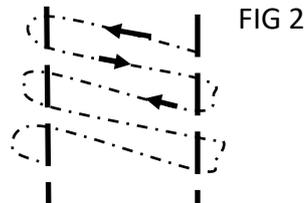
Now you can safely fit the eyes, and your sculpting will not only create the perfect setting for them, but help take the strain too :)



SCULPTING NOSES :

This works best on cloth dolls. Use a fine needle (one with a narrow hole) to avoid holes appearing in the fabric when you sculpt.

- 1 I like to mark the eyes first as a reference point.
- 2 Attach your thread somewhere that will be hidden (on my dolls, I often use the top of the head) Imagine two lines of stitching down each side of the nose See Fig 1



- 3 Work down the nose, taking alternative tiny stitches on each side of the nose and through the head. Fig 2
- 4 As you work across the nose, dip your needle into the stuffing and gently pull to “pinch” the fabric into forming a nose ridge - it is very important to get the stuffing between your internal stitches and the fabric. See Fig 3
- 5 Once you are happy with the first sculpt, it's time to form the nostrils. Take your needle down through the head from the last needle point at the side of the nose and out at the nostril on that side. See Fig 4. Please note that once you have indented the nostril, this will have moved up the head a little - so be fairly generous here :)
- 6 Take a small horizontal stitch and return back up through the head to the needle point above and pull the thread gently to form an indent (repeat this two or three times on the same spot). You should now have formed the first nostril.
- 7 Move across to the opposite side of the nose and form a nostril there.
- 8 To finish, make sure you have your thread hanging from the nostril. Take your needle down through the needle point above and out to the side of the nostril. See Fig 5. The thread should be tucked behind the needle (important :)
- 9 Do not pull too much on the stitch. Take a tiny stitch across the thread, to hold it in place at the side of the nostril. Now you gently pull a little and this will shape the nostril.

Do hope these two simple tutorials have wetted your appetite and given you more confidence to go ahead and sculpt some softies :)

These sculpts are the way I myself sculpt my bears - I hope they are helpful

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