

Stitching “in the hoop soft toys”

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When planning one of the “in the hoop soft toys” and using the “floating method” (fabric is not hooped but placed and tacked on top of hooped stabilizer) please consider using fleece with the nap on one side only. These projects are not suitable for double sided nap fleece.

Also take the following into consideration when adding layers such as ears, limbs, snouts and backings of the same fabric, or any other fabrics as appliques:

- Know your machine: adding layer upon layer you will have to *adjust the embroidery foot height* often to accommodate for this. Refer to your machine manual to set the foot at a different height.
- Before you start the motif, set your machine to stop closest to where the design will be finished. This must be in one of the corners except the center. Most new machine models do have this function. This prevents the foot returning to the design center and bumping into thicker parts. Study the design first to see where it will be ending. Refer to your machine manual.
- If your machine cannot do any of the above please take extra precautions and use thin plain fleece with the nap on one side and a smooth flat surface on the other side. Cover all steps with fleece with clear water-soluble topping. Stop the machine at the 2nd last stitch of the motif, cut thread and remove the hoop from the machine.
- Very important is to *bring down the speed* (slowest speed), especially when attaching the back covering all of the attached parts. Whenever you feel uncomfortable stitching over thicker parts, best advice is to stitch a few stitches, stop the machine lift the foot, flatten where it puckers or push into another layer, press the tape down again, lower the embroidery foot again and continue. You might have to do this a few times to get over thicker parts but this is the correct way of doing it. Be patient and it will be successful.
- Some types of fleece has rough, textured surfaces which is fine but you still need to use a clear water-soluble stabilizer as a topping. The embroidery foot will then run easily over the fleece preventing puckering the fabric. Without this topping the stitches will sink into the soft nap even while embroidering normally. So tape a layer on top of the fleece whenever you feel it is needed.
- Always ensure that the fleece is smooth and flat when placing onto the hooped stabilizer. Never pin, rather tape the edges and all of the separate loose parts in place.
- When adding the ears, don't tape both at once. Tape and attach one ear, then tape the second ear and stitch in place in the next step. Let the machine move to the first stitch of this step before taping the ear in place. Also tape a topping over this section.
- Trim or grade the open ends of the seams for the ears, tails or limbs before turning it inside out. This will prevent bulky seams and stitching over it will be so much easier when it is sandwiched between the layers. Do not stuff these parts! Also close the open ends by hand or on your sewing machine. The seams will be flatter and easier to tape down.
- Keep your hands out of the embroidery area.
- Please read through all of the instructions to familiarize yourself with the techniques and heed all the warnings.