



Fancy Feltwork

TRANSFORMING OLD WOOL SWEATERS INTO
NEW CREATIONS NEVER FELT SO GOOD.

BY TIFFANY THREADGOULD



Wash a wool sweater in the washing machine and you'll see it shrink to child-sized. This, my adult-sized friends, is called felting.

Agitating wool in water causes the fibers to bind onto each other and shrink. The great news is that this binding action creates a dense, soft material whose raw edges won't fray.

I'll show you how to convert old sweaters into a scarf and potholder, and you can use this same felted wool

for other crafty creations. (Felting works best with 100% wool sweaters.)

The next time your favorite wool sweater accidentally slips into the wash and shrinks to oblivion, take another look. See it as raw material for your next craft project. You might even start shrinking sweaters on purpose.

Tiffany Threadgould is a design junkie who gives scrap materials a second life. Her business, RePlayGround (replayground.com), sells recycled goods and features DIY projects.



A



B



C



D

» **MATERIALS**

- » Old wool sweaters (2)
- » Fabric scissors
- » Washing machine
- » Dryer
- » Detergent
- » Ruler
- » Embroidery floss
- » Sewing needle
- » Straight pin

Make a Scarf

1. FELT YOUR SWEATER.

Put your sweater in the washing machine on the hottest setting. Add a small amount of detergent, and wash. Then dry on the hottest setting.

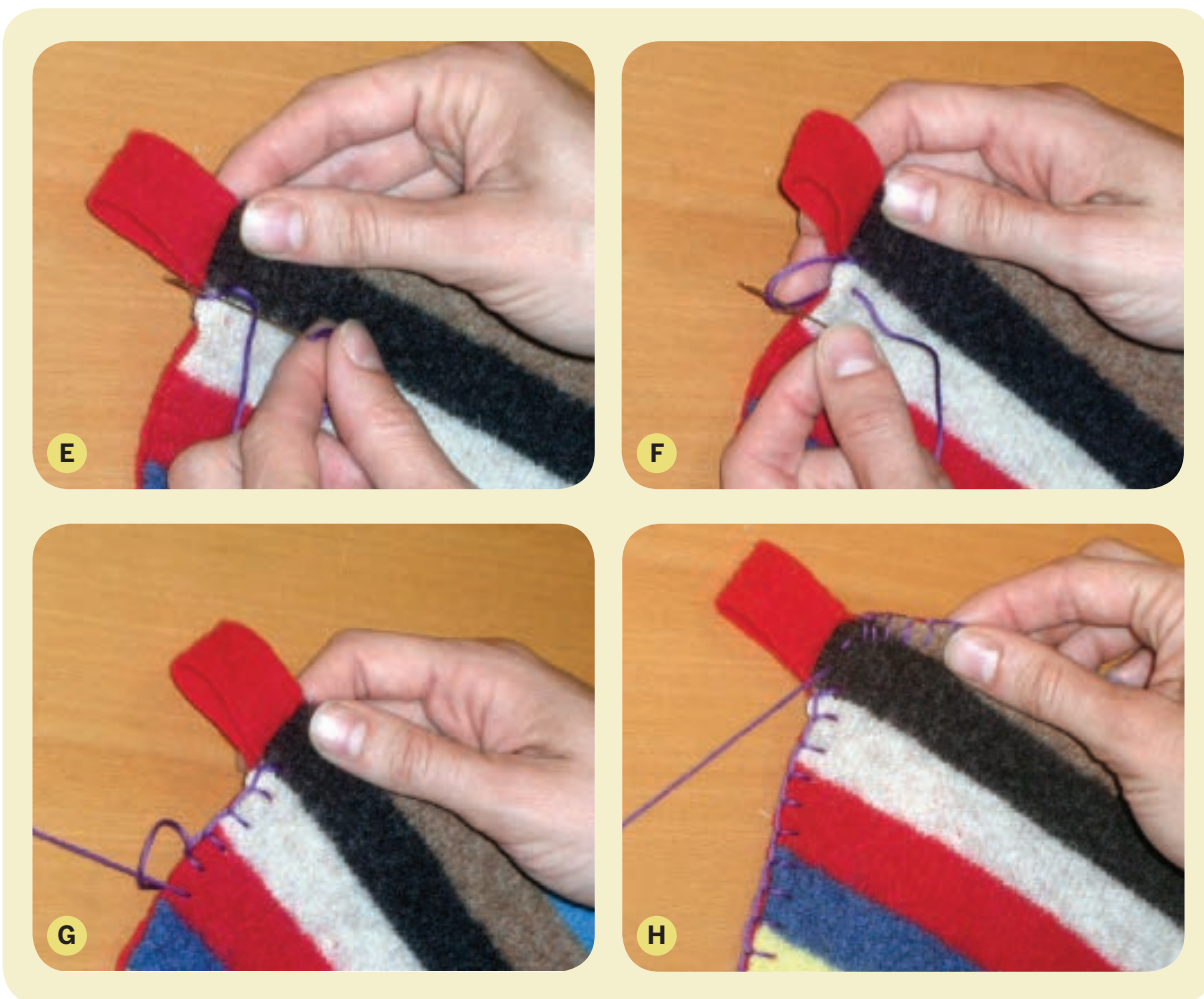
2. TRIM AND CUT.

Trim off any hem along the bottom. Cut a continuous spiral around your sweater about 6" wide (Figure A). You'll want your scarf to be about 50" long.

3. EMBELLISH YOUR SCARF.

Turn on your craftiness to personalize your scarf. Embellish it with yarn and other fabric scraps. Weave yarn through the scarf by cutting notches along the edges about 1" apart, then threading the yarn in and out of the holes (Figure B). Bundle up in your cozy new creation.

Photography by Tiffany Threadgould and Sam Murphy (Figure B)



Make a Potholder

Wool is a natural fire retardant, so it works well as a potholder. That doesn't mean you should put it directly on a flaming stove, but it will resist fire better than cotton or polyester.

1. FELT YOUR SWEATERS.

Follow Step 1 from the scarf project to felt 2 wool sweaters in contrasting colors.

2. CUT YOUR PIECES.

Cut a 7" square from each sweater. Round the corners (Figure C). Then cut a third piece 4" x 3/4". This will become the hang tab.

3. ASSEMBLE THE POTHOLDER.

Stack the 2 squares with their right sides facing out. Fold the hang tab piece in half. Insert its open ends between the 2 squares in a corner and pin in place (Figure D). Then pin around the perimeter of the potholder.

4. BLANKET-STITCH THE PERIMETER.

Thread your needle with embroidery floss and tie a double knot. Start a stitch to the left of the hang tab and about 1/4" from the edge. Then pull the floss up and around in a loop, coming out at the same starting point. Thread the floss through the top of the stitch (Figure E).

Stitch up and around, making a second stitch about 1/4" from the first. Before pulling the floss tight, bring the needle through the top of the stitch (Figure F).

Continue stitching 1/2" from the previous stitch and bring the needle back through the loop before you pull the stitch tight. Stitch around the entire perimeter of the potholder in this way (Figure G).

5. FINISH WITH A RUNNING STITCH.

When you come back around to the hang tab, simply sew a running stitch through it (Figure G). Secure the floss on the ends with a double knot and start using your new creation. ✂