

Pentagon Baby Ball Tutorial

© Lori Hanson/laeroport 2009 – for personal use only



Finally, in celebration of my 500th post, I am sitting down to write the tutorial for these nifty toy balls. I hope you will enjoy a bit of time hand-stitching little bits of fabric to create something wonderful.

This project is an ideal way to preserve little swatches of favorite fabrics, a bit of worn out clothing, some treasured piece of embroidery from your grandmother's tea towel, anything....

I have used fake fur, terry cloth toweling, polar fleece, flannel, quilter's cotton, chenille, linen, velour, velvet and denim in making these. A bit of texture is a nice thing for a baby. Don't be afraid to mix it up. That said, the best fabrics are ones without too much stretch. If you do use a stretch fabric, say, from an old t-shirt, back it with some lightweight iron-on interfacing to help it hold its shape.

It is easy to size this pattern up or down. I have included two different sizes in these instructions.

You will notice that I have taken pictures of the process several different times, so the fabrics may not always be the same, but the process never varies.

What you'll need:

- ④ **Pattern pieces** – found on the last page. For a large ball, use the largest shape for fabric, the medium pattern for the paper. For the small ball, the medium-sized shape is cut from the fabric, and the smallest shape is cut from the paper.
- ④ 12 scraps of **fabric** approx. 3 ½ inches square for the larger ball or 3 inches square for the smaller ball. This can be 12 different fabrics for a very colorful ball, two squares each of six different fabrics, three each of four fabrics, four pentagons from three fabrics, six shapes from two fabrics (for a striped ball) or 12 pieces cut from one fabric for a ball in all one pattern.
- ④ **Paper** for cutting the shapes. I like to use old magazines and catalogues. You can also use regular copy paper, junk mail, craft paper or freezer paper.
- ④ **Needle.**
- ④ **Thread** in a matching color and a highly contrasting color.
- ④ **Stuffing material.** Wool, cotton, poly fiber. It all works.
- ④ **Noise maker (optional).** I find a jingle bell or two inside a small plastic easter egg that has been super-glued shut works well. As does a cat toy.
- ④ **Time.** A couple of hours to sit and sew. This is a great project for in the car on a long drive or in front of the television and a favorite movie.

What you'll do:

1. Assemble your materials. Your fabric scraps should be pre-washed and pressed.
2. Cut 12 paper pentagons. If you are making a large ball, cut the middle-sized pentagon. If you are making a small ball, use the smallest pattern. When I use an old catalogue, I pin the pages together and cut several at a time. It is important that the paper pieces are cut as exactly as possible.
3. Cut 12 pentagons from fabric. If you are making a large ball, use the largest pentagon for your pattern. If you are making a small ball, use the middle-sized pentagon. The fabric pentagons do not have to be cut perfectly, but don't make them too small or you'll lose your seam allowance. If you are using a high pile fabric (fleece, chenille, etc.) cut your pentagon a bit bigger than the pattern.
4. Match up each paper pentagon with a fabric pentagon. The paper piece will be smaller. Center the smaller paper piece on the **WRONG** side of the fabric piece. Pin to secure.



5. Fold extra fabric over the paper pentagon. This is your seam allowance. Use the CONTRAST color thread to sew this down using a large running stitch. This doesn't need to be pretty, as you'll be ripping it out soon enough. I find it easiest to make a big messy knot in the end of my thread before I start sewing the paper to fabric. When I have run around the pentagon, I tie my end knot through the beginning knot, instead of the fabric. This makes it easier to rip out later. Continue until you have a nice stack of pentagons that looks something like the picture on the right.



6. Hold two pentagons together along any side and whip stitch along the joined edge. One of these first two pentagons will be your center.

7. Add a third pentagon to the next side of the center. You should have something that looks like this:

If your sides are not **quite** the same length, stretch the fabric a bit. This may cause the paper underneath to tear. That's okay.





8. Continue adding pentagons until you have five pentagons surrounding the center.

9. Now, stitch together each side to form a bowl shape.



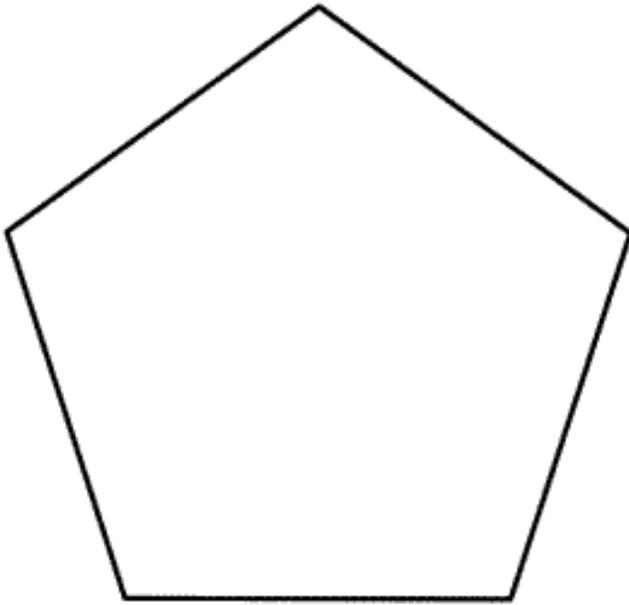
10. Repeat with the other six pieces. When you finish you will have two half-spheres.



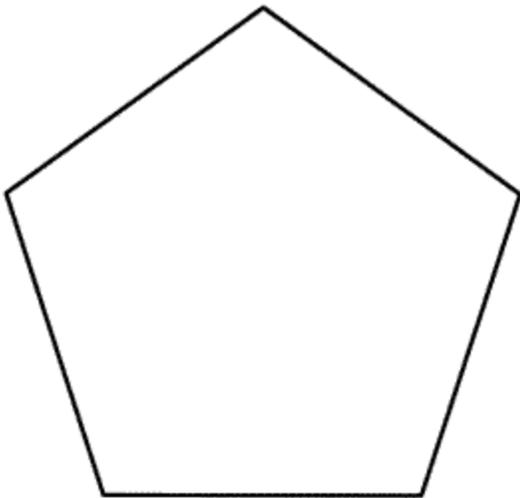
11. Fold the half-spheres with right sides together, matching up points and sew the two halves together, leaving a 1 ½ pentagon gap for turning and stuffing. If you have a high pile fabric (fleece, toweling, fake fur) leave the seam adjacent to this fabric open – it will be easier to hide your final stitches.



12. Okay, here is where I lose patience with taking pictures because you are almost finished. Stick with me.
13. Go back and remove all the paper pentagons from the fabric. For super-fast removal, cut the thread opposite the knot and pull the thread at the knot. Usually one yank on the thread will get it. Pull out the paper and recycle it. You may have stitched a bit of paper into the seam, so make sure you get it all out.
14. Stuff as full as you like. Insert a noisemaker if you choose. I like to encase a bell in a very small easter egg so that the stuffing doesn't muffle the jingle. Be sure to super glue the ball together. I don't ever use beans or rice as a noise maker – I worry if you wash something with beans or rice, you might end up with sprouts or mold. Ew.
15. Using a blind stitch, close up your opening.
16. Ta Da! You're done. Go play ball!

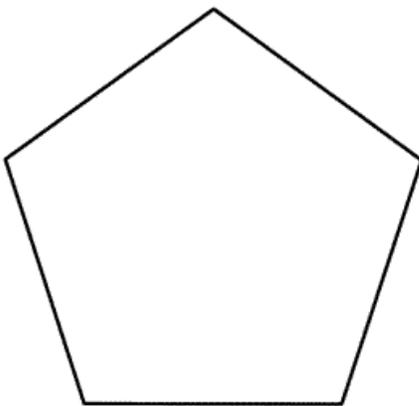


For large ball – cut 12 from fabric



For large ball – cut 12 from paper

For small ball – cut 12 from fabric



For small ball, cut 12 from paper