

KITSUNE plush



a free sewing pattern by



KITSUNE PLUSH

Kitsune is just the Japanese word for fox, but in Japanese folklore, they're magical creatures known for their clever shape-shifting powers. As the fox grows older and more powerful, their tail splits into 2 or more, with 9 being the most powerful.

In this version, the plush has a simple flat-bellied body shape with arms and legs attached into the seams. The face has ornate markings with large ears and a small muzzle attached. The neck has a cute neck fluff that can be made from smooth fabric or fluffy fabric for more texture. And then finally there are 9 individual tails attached to the back with cute accent tips.

DIFFICULTY:



The most difficult part of this plush is attaching the arms and legs since they're attached at an angle. But there are numbered points for help. Also you'll want to be patient when attaching all 9 tails, which can get cumbersome.

SKILLS USED:

- Fusible web applique
- Curved sewing
- Ladder stitch
- Matching notches and points
- Gathering, gathering stitch
- Basting
- Darts

MAKES:

About 11" long if you count the tails, but only 7" long if you only count the body. Around 6" wide from each side of head, and 5" tall from belly to top of head.



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MATERIALS & TOOLS:

- 1/2 yd. of fabric for main body
- 1/4 yd. of accent fabric for tail and paw tips
- **OPTIONAL** 1/4 yd. of accent fluffy fabric for neck fluff
- 4" x 4" of accent applique fabric for face markings (usually red)
- 5" x 5" of accent applique fabric for ear tips
- 3" x 3" of black applique fabric for eyes, nose, and mouth
- 3" x 3" of accent applique fabric for paws
- 7" x 7" of light or heavy duty fusible web
- sewing thread to match main fabric and applique fabrics
- poly-fil stuffing
- basic sewing tools (sewing machine, scissors, iron, needles, pins, fabric marker, seam ripper)

FUSIBLE WEB:

- Fusible web adhesive is a sheet of adhesive with a paper backing.
- Not to be confused with fusible interfacing**, which is adhesive attached to a fabric/fiber backing.
- Some common brands are **Pellon** & **HeatnBond**
- In countries outside the US, it may also be known as **bondaweb**
- It comes in **light** and **heavy duty** varieties. Lightweight strength is meant for applique you intend to sew later. Heavy duty versions are for a no-sew bond. If you try to sew them later your machine might have trouble penetrating the glue.



APPLIQUE FABRICS:

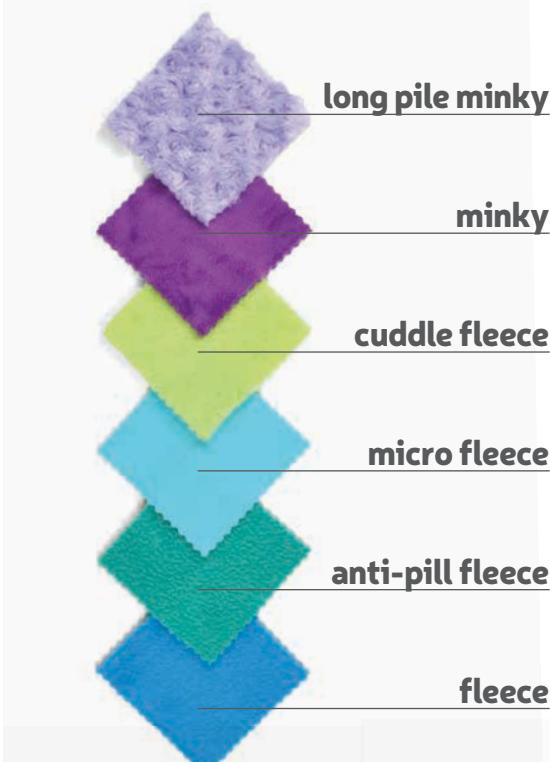
- Good applique fabrics include **flannel**, **cotton**, **felt**, **minky**, and **fleece**.
- Flannel and cotton are best for detailed applique with a lot of layers because they're thinner. Meanwhile felt, minky, and fleece are better for simpler applique like body markings.
- **Flannel** is used in the example instructions (page 7).



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fabric comparison:



MINKY VS. FELT



SUGGESTED FABRICS:

MINKY OR FLEECE

Medium weight, plush fabrics with about 20%-30% stretch along the crosswise grain work best for this project. The varieties shown to the left are some good options and names to look for. Try to avoid heavyweight versions of fleece that are intended for outdoor apparel or they may cause trouble for the detailed areas.

You can also use non-stretch fabrics (such as felt), but be aware that the curves will be more difficult to sew and the result will look different. The plush will become more elongated and the edges will look sharper.

10" of minky
stretches to 13"
= 30% stretch



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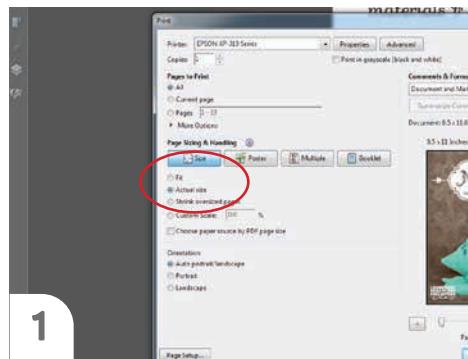
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PRINTING THE PATTERN:

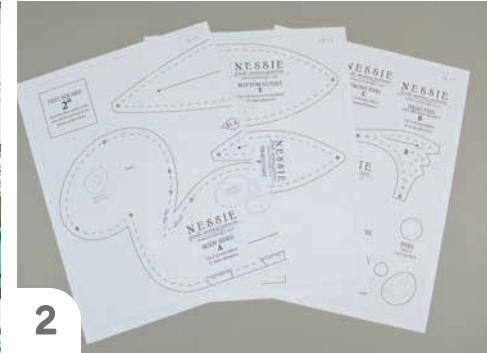
Set your computer to print **PAGES 25-29**.

If you're unfamiliar with printing and assembling a .pdf pattern, read the steps to follow.

For the best results, use a .pdf reader like **ADOBE READER**. That's what is shown here and will give you the most control over the settings.

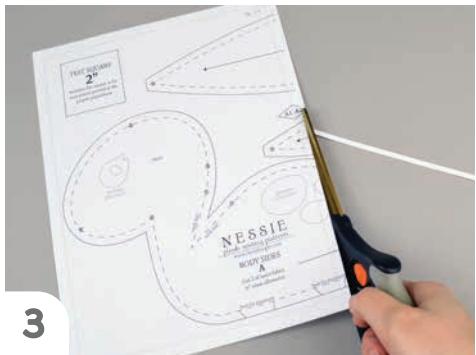


1



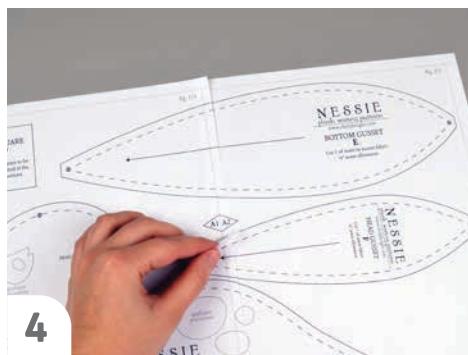
2

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.



3

It's likely your printer will have a margin that ensures your image doesn't print to the very edge. Assembly will be easier if you trim off this blank margin edge. This will give you pages that overlap slightly during assembly. If you trim across the gray outline boxes, this will give you pages that don't overlap but rather butt against each other.



4

To line up the pattern pages, match up the corresponding diamond shapes. Each diamond will have a letter, so it's simply a matter of matching A1 to A2, B3 to B4 and so on. The faint gray lines indicate the border of every page, you should be able to line those up as well. When the diamond goes together, tape it in place.

If you have many pages, it's easier to tape up the pages into rows first. Then tape the rows together into a full block.



5

You can trace the patterns onto a different paper, or you can also just cut them straight from the printer paper -- be sure that each piece is fully taped together along the joins so they don't fall apart when you cut them.

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CUTTING THE FABRIC:



1

Place pattern on the fabric, and make sure the stretch line matches the stretch of the fabric. The nap line should go in the direction of the fur.

2

Pin the pattern in place, use pattern weights, or trace the outline of the pattern with a washable marker.

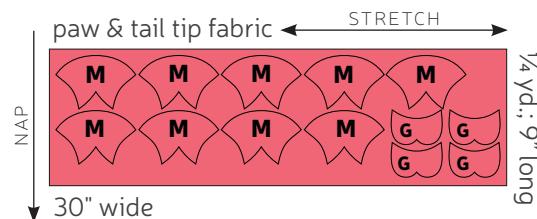
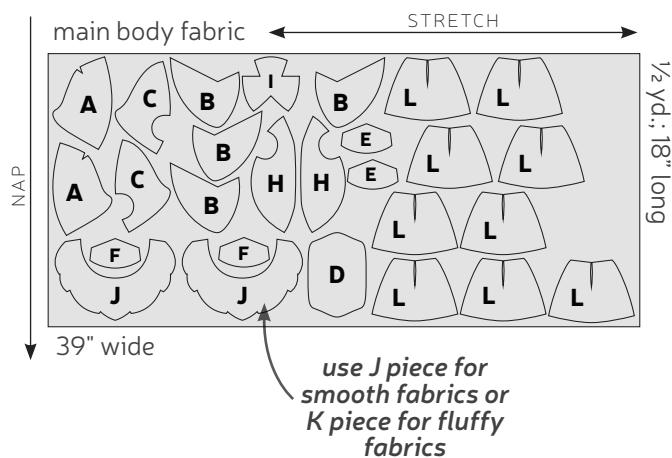
3

Using the paper as a template, cut out the fabric. Cut the required amount according to the pattern.

4

For all fur fabrics, shake the excess fuzz away.

CUTTING LAYOUT:



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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 $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance is used throughout the project, which is included in the pattern templates.



1. PREPARE THE FACE APPLIQUE

- Grab your fusible web and applique templates. Trace the pieces for the eyes and face markings. You should have:
 - **eyes** (2, black)
 - **face markings** (10, red or other accent color)
- Fuse the bumpy (adhesive) side of the fusible web onto the applique fabrics.
- Cut out your applique pieces and grab your **HEAD FRONT** piece (A). Grab the **eye marking** piece from the collection of **face markings**. Set your paper pattern on top of the head front piece. Align the applique piece on top where the placement markings are. Next, carefully pull the paper pattern away while holding the applique piece in place.

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2. FINISH THE FACE APPLIQUE

- a. Fuse the applique pieces with your iron. Use a press cloth, such as a scrap piece of cotton. This will help protect any polyester or fuzzy fabrics from melting or scorching.
- b. Add the **eye** pieces on top of the **eye markings**. Use the paper pattern and photos as a guide.
- c. Finish by adding the smallest pieces, the **face markings** for the **forehead** and **whiskers**.



3. APPLIQUE THE PAWS, MUZZLE, AND EARS

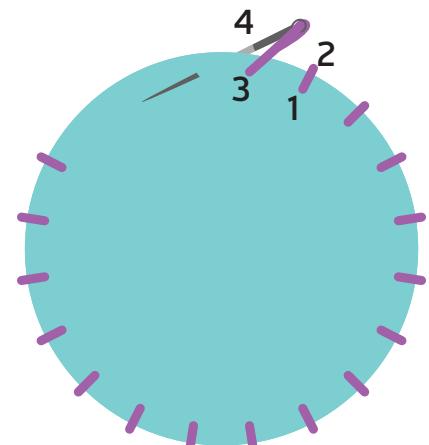
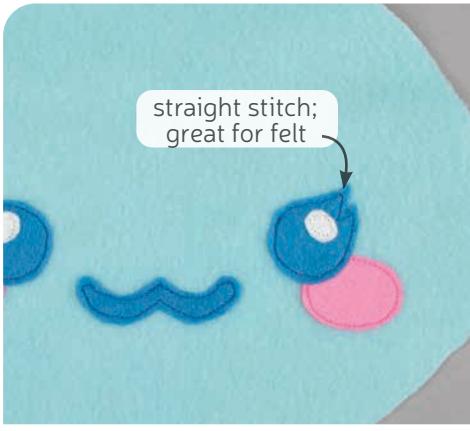
- a. Take this time to also applique your **paw pads** to the **PAW** pieces (G). You'll want to be sure that you have two paws on the right side and two more on the left. Use the same fusing method as the eyes.
- b. Meanwhile the **MUZZLE** piece (I) needs a **nose** and **mouth**.
- c. And lastly two of the **EAR** pieces (B) get accent **ear tips**.

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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4. 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.



DARTS:
A wedge-shaped gap found in a pattern. When sewn in fabric, it creates a tuck in the fabric and develops a 3D shape. The diagonal sides of the wedge are the **LEGS**; these are matched up and sewn to the **POINT** of the dart.

5. SEW THE HEAD FRONT DART

- Grab your **HEAD FRONT** pieces (A). In the upper corner you'll find a small wedge shape cut out of the fabric. This is a **dart**. It's also labeled on the paper pattern. To sew it, start by folding the fabric along the point of the **dart** to match up the slanted edges.
- Sew the **dart** starting at the opening and work your way into the fold of the fabric. Try to blend your stitching into the fold for a smooth transition and a rounder finish to the plush.



6. SEW THE CENTER HEAD FRONT

- Grab your two **HEAD FRONT** pieces (A). Align them with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.
- Sew the pieces together along the center front. This is the curved edge opposite the **darts** from before.
- Open up the pieces when complete.



7. SEW THE EARS

- Grab your **EAR** pieces (B). Take one with appliqued ear tips and one that's blank. Align them with right sides facing and the raw edges matching up.
- Sew the pieces together along the long curved edge. Leave the straight edges along the bottom open for turning the piece right side out.
- Turn the ears right side out. Repeat with your other ear pieces so you have two total.

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8. FOLD THE EARS

- Grab one of your **EARS** (B) and fold it in half with the blank side inside. The side with the ear tip applique will be on the outside. Fold it using the **fold line guideline** found printed on the paper pattern. The bottom raw edge of the fabric should line up.
- Baste the ears along the bottom raw edge to hold the fold in place. Repeat for both ears for two total.

9. BASTE THE EARS

- Grab your **HEAD FRONT** so far (A). Also grab your **EARS** (B). If you haven't already, note the **ear placement lines** found on the paper pattern for the head front. Transfer these markings over to the right side of your fabric. Align the ears within these **placement lines** so the folds point toward the center of the head. The inner ear fabric (the blank side) should be facing up.



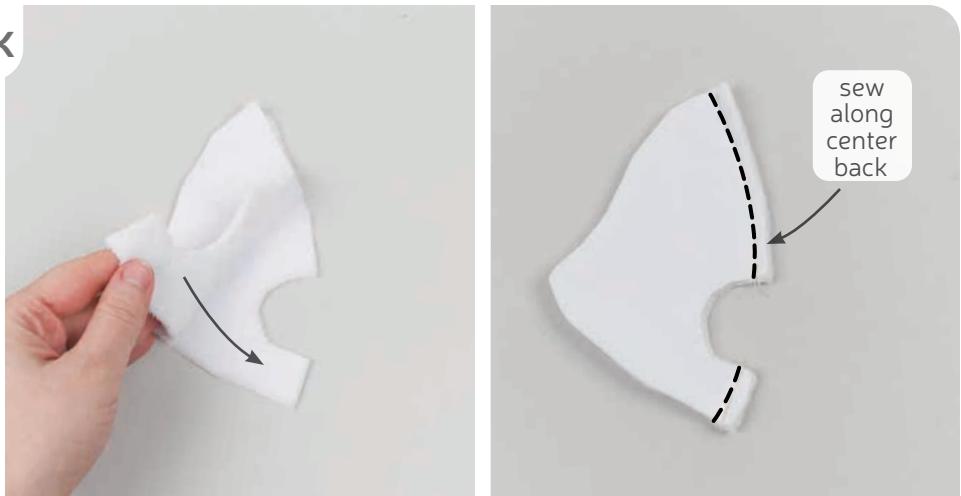
- Now flip the ears down so the blank side is facing down toward the head. The raw edges of both the ears and the head will now be flush. Baste the ears to the head front within the seam allowance to hold them securely for future steps.

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).

10. SEW THE HEAD BACK

- Grab your **HEAD BACK** pieces (C). Align them with right sides facing and the raw edges matching up.
- Sew the pieces together along the center back edge. This is the edge that has the big **neck opening** section cut out of it. Open up the pieces when complete.



11. SEW THE HEAD FRONT TO THE BACK

- Grab your **HEAD BACK** pieces (C) and align them over your head front so far. Make sure right sides are facing. Line up the seams at the top and bottom and match up the raw edges. Check that the **EARs** are tucked inside, then pin the layers together.
- Sew around the entire head. This should secure the ears in the seam.
- Trim any excess seam allowance around the corners on the side. This will help reduce bulk when the head is turned.
- Turn the head right side out through the opening in the back of the head.



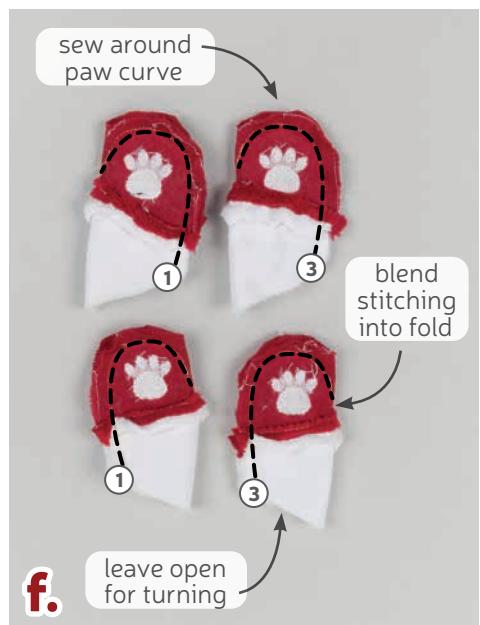
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12. SEW THE ARMS & LEGS



- a.** Grab your **PAW** pieces (G) as well as your **ARMS AND LEGS** (E & F). The paws will join to the arms and legs along the curved edge, but these edges are also marked with **notches** for help with alignment.
- b.** We'll start with an arm piece. Flip the paw toward the arm so the right sides match up and the **notches** align. Pin the fabrics together.
- c.** Sew the paw to the arm along the **notched edge**.



- d.** Open up the pieces when complete.
- e.** To sew the arm, fold the piece in half so the sides match up as well as the curve along the top. The paw seam from part C will also align. If you're watching the **numbered points** on the paper pattern, you'll also notice that **point 1** matches up at the arm corners. Pin the fabrics together.
- f.** Sew the arm starting at the corner at **point 1**, then sew around the tip of the paw. Continue sewing around the paw until you get to the fold in the fabric. Blend your stitching into the fold similar to a dart. Repeat all these parts so far so you have two arms and two legs.
- g.** Turn the arms and legs right side out.



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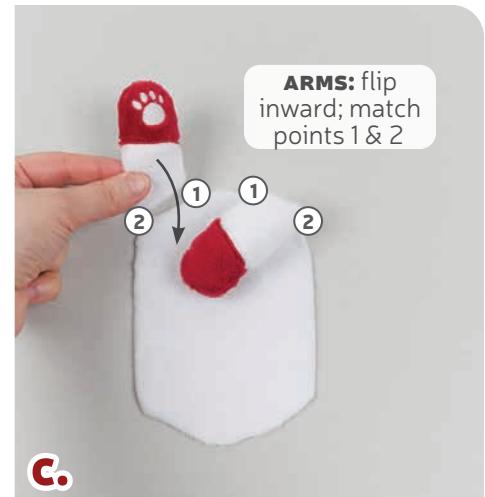
13. BASTE THE ARMS & LEGS



a.



b.

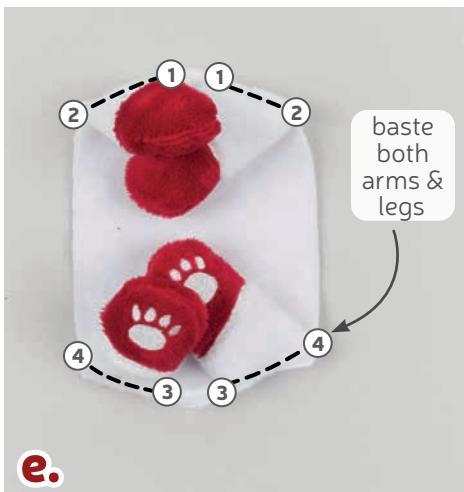


c.

- a. Stuff the **ARMS** and **LEGS** lightly with stuffing. Keep it especially light near the opening. This will make them easier to attach to the belly later.
- b. Grab your **BELLY** piece (D) as well as all of your arms and legs. If you haven't already, note the **arm and leg placement lines** found on the paper pattern for the belly. Transfer the lines to the right side of the fabric. Align the arms and legs within these lines. The arms and legs are attached at an angle, so there are **placement markings** for extra help. The arms align at **points 1 and 2** and the legs align at **points 3 and 4**. If you want your kitsune to have an accurate lying pose, the **ARMS** should be placed with **PAW PADS FACING UP** and the **LEGS** should be **PAW PADS FACING DOWN**.
- c. Now take one of the arms and flip it inward so it's facing down over the belly. The raw open edges of the arms should be flush with the belly.



d.



e.



f.

- d. Baste the arms to the belly by stitching within the seam allowance. This will hold them in place for future steps.
- e. Repeat with the legs on the bottom, basting them along the edge.
- f. When complete, the arms and legs should look something like photo F.

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14. SEW THE BODY BACK

- Grab your **BODY BACK** pieces (H). Align them with right sides facing and the raw edges matching up.
- Sew the pieces together along the center back edge. This is the edge that has the **neck opening** curve cut out of it. Leave the rest of the edges open.



15. ATTACH THE BODY BACK



- Grab your belly so far as well as your **BODY BACK** (H). The body back will be attached around the belly, all around the outer edge. For help with alignment, look for the **numbered points**. **Point 5** will match up with the center top of the belly between the **ARMS**. Meanwhile **point 6** will match up with the center bottom of the body between the **LEGS**. Pin the body back all around the belly, matching up the points. Make sure the arms and legs are tucked inside.
- Sew the body back to the belly all the way around the belly. Be sure that the arms and legs are secured within the seam.
- Trim away the excess seam allowance at the corners of the belly to reduce bulk.
- Turn the body right side out through the neck opening found in the body back piece.



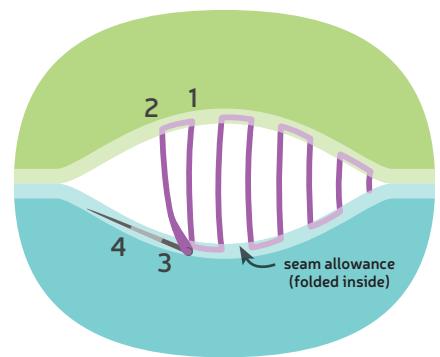
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16. STUFF THE HEAD & BODY

- Grab your head and begin stuffing it with stuffing. Be sure to get small bits in the side corners of the head. Stuff it firmly enough that there are no wrinkles near any of the darts or other seams.
- Continue stuffing the head until you've worked your way toward the neck opening. You might not be able to stuff the neck very firmly because of the opening, but that's okay since we'll stuff it more later.
- Now take your body piece and also fill it with stuffing. Make sure there's enough that there are no wrinkles near the seams.



17. ALIGN THE HEAD & BODY

- Next we're going to attach the head to the body. To start, align the head with the body so the **neck openings** match up. Make sure both the body and head are facing forward. You can also check that the seams on the head back match up with the seams on the body.
- Grab a hand sewing needle and knot the end. Begin attaching the head to the body by taking one stitch into the back of the head along the center back seam. Take the stitch about $\frac{1}{4}$ " away from the edge. Then take another stitch into the body also along the center back seam. We're going to continue in this manner and it will ladder stitch the head to the body. It helps to use longer stitches (about $\frac{1}{2}$ " long) for the first time around the neck. Pause before you go all the way around the neck, then see the next step for how to finish.

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18. ATTACH THE HEAD & BODY

- Continue as before in step 17 taking a long stitch from the head and then from the body. Continue all the way around until you're close to where you started.
- Here is where you can stuff the neck more firmly if you need it. Sneak a little more stuffing into the opening of the neck. This will help prevent the head from looking too floppy.
- Finish the seam from part A, then check your plush to be sure to that you're happy with the head placement. If it's not twisted or tilted, you can now stitch around the neck again. This time, use tinier, neater stitches right beside the previous set of stitching you did before. This will secure the neck in place. Knot your thread and trim it.



19. SEW THE MUZZLE DARTS

- Grab your **MUZZLE** piece (I). This piece also has several **darts** all around the shape. Sew it similarly to previous darts. Start by folding the fabric along the point of one of the **darts**. This will match up the slanted edges.
- Sew from the opening of the **dart** into the fold of the fabric. Try to blend your stitching into the fold for a smooth transition and a rounder finish to the plush.
- Repeat this for all three **darts** along the muzzle. There are two beside the nose and one at the center bottom.

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20. CINCH THE MUZZLE CLOSED



a.



b.



c.

- Turn the **MUZZLE** (I) right side out.
- Stuff the muzzle semi-firmly with stuffing. You'll want to make sure there's at least enough so there are no wrinkles near all the **darts** you've sewn.
- Grab a hand sewing needle and thread it. Sew a gathering stitch around the outer edge of the muzzle, about $\frac{1}{4}$ " away from the raw 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 $\frac{1}{4}$ "- $\frac{1}{2}$ " long) gather the fabric when pulled later.

- Pull at the thread to cinch the opening of the muzzle closed.
- The muzzle is a little wide, so it can help with placement if you mark a **stitching guide** on your muzzle. Draw a line around the outer edge of the muzzle where it starts to curve. There's also a **stitching guide** on the paper pattern for extra help.



d.



e.

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21. ATTACH THE MUZZLE

- The **HEAD FRONT** piece (A) also has a **stitching guide** for help with placing the **MUZZLE** (I). If you'd like to use it, take the time to draw it onto your head now.
- Take your cinched muzzle and align it onto the face of your kitsune. Align the **stitching guides** that you drew before. Make sure the bottom **dart** on the muzzle lines up with the center seam on the head front.
- Attach the muzzle to the head using a ladder stitch. Take one stitch into the muzzle, then go across and take another stitch into the head. Go back and forth until you've sewn all the way around the base of the muzzle.



22. SEW THE NECK FLUFF

- Grab your **NECK FLUFF** pieces (J or K). Take both of them and align them with right sides facing and the raw edges matching up.
- Sew the pieces together along the bottom outer curve. The one intended for smooth fabrics will have several small points. Meanwhile the one intended for fluffy fabrics will just have one big point in the center. Also sew along the inner curve along the top edge, but only sew between the **circle markings**. Leave the short straight ends free as well as the areas past the circle markings.

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23. SEW THE NECK FLUFF ENDS



a. FOR THE SMOOTH FABRIC VERSION (J): trim the excess seam allowance at the inner and outer corners of the points. This will reduce bulk and increase flexibility when the piece is turned later.

b. Turn the neck fluff right side out through the openings in the sides. Define the points with a chopstick or similar turning tool.

c. Take one end of the neck fluff and open it up so the straight edges make one even line.



d. Take the other end of your neck fluff and repeat spreading it out. Then align the two ends so right sides are facing and the seam at the center matches up.

e. Sew the ends of the neck fluff together along this edge.

f. When you open up the pieces, the neck fluff should now make a ring with an opening in the back.

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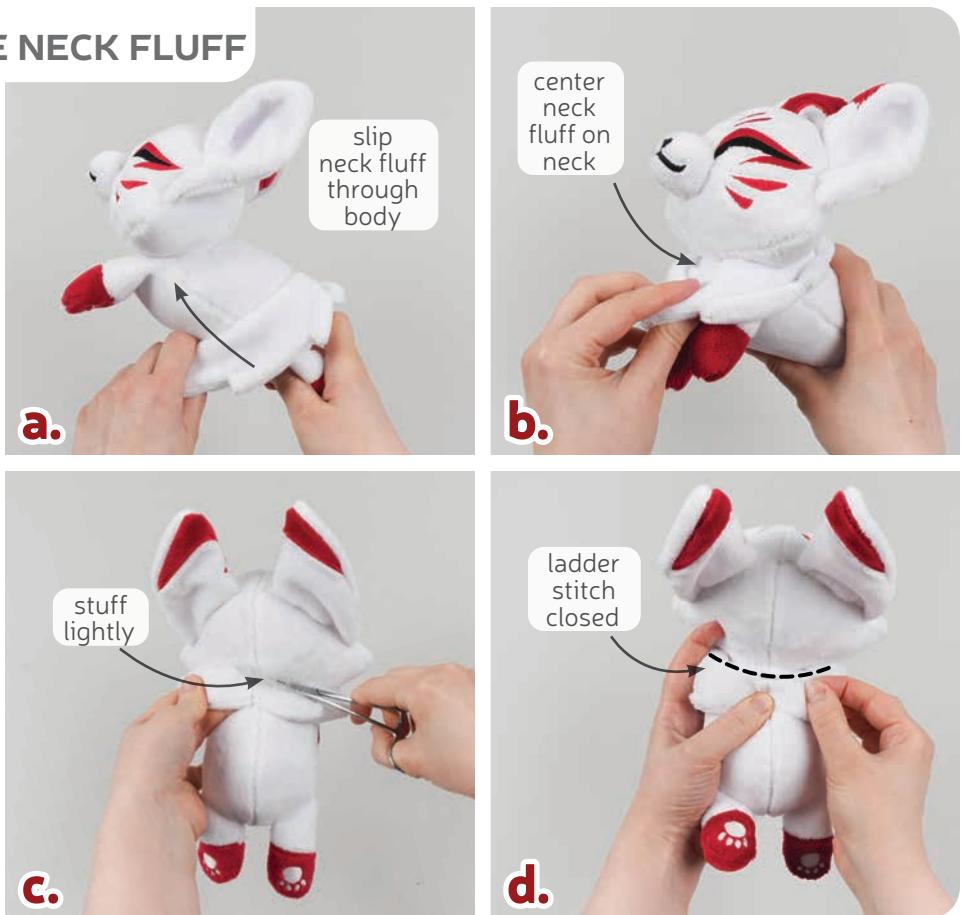
24. DRESS & STUFF THE NECK FLUFF

a. Grab your **NECK FLUFF** piece so far (J or K) and dress it onto the neck of your plush. It works best to slip it on over the body from the bottom up.

b. Rest the fluff piece around the neck of your kitsune.

c. Use the opening in the back of the neck fluff piece to stuff it lightly with stuffing. Hemostats make this process much easier.

d. Tuck in the seam allowances in the back of the neck fluff and ladder stitch it closed.



25. SEW THE TAIL TIPS

- Grab your **TAIL BASE** (L) and **TAIL TIP** pieces (M). We're going to join these pieces along the outer curved edge, but there are also **notches** for help with alignment.
- Take your tail base fabric and align it with the tail tip so right sides are facing and the **notched edges** match up. Pin the fabrics together.
- Sew the tail base to the tip along the **notched edge**.

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26. SEW THE TAILS

- Open up your **TAIL BASE** and **TIP** pieces (L & M) when you've sewn them together.
- Now fold the entire tail in half lengthwise so it becomes even skinnier. This should match up the corners at the tip of the tail and the base as well as the tail tip seam from step 25. Make sure right sides are facing and the raw edges are aligned.
- Sew the raw edges together along the outside except for the straight edge along the bottom. This includes the side going from the base up to the tip of tail, then down the tip of the tail into the fold of the fabric. And lastly one more edge from the base going into the fold of the fabric. Try to blend your stitching into the fold for a smooth transition and a rounder finish.

Repeat steps 25-26 eight more times so you have all nine of your tails.

- Trim the excess seam allowance around the tip of the tail to reduce bulk.
- Stuff the tail lightly with stuffing. Just be sure to get a small bit in the tip so it stays pointy. Try not to stuff it too firmly. Since you'll be bunching 9 tails together, your plush may become too crowded if the tails are too large and puffy.
- Thread a hand sewing needle and knot the end. Sew a ladder stitch around the opening of the tail about 1/4" from the edge.
- Pull at the thread to cinch the tail closed.

27. CINCH THE TAILS



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stitch through
base of 5 tailsmark about 3/8"
away from basebaste along
marked line

28. JOIN THE FIRST 5 TAILS

- a. Take five of your tails and repeat step 27 until you have five tails cinched closed. Line them up so the tail tips are all pointing in the same direction and the ends of the tails are mostly lined up. Take your hand sewing needle and stitch the ends of the tail together one after the other. This should join them all in a chain as shown.
- b. To make the tails easier to handle, we're going to attach them a little more around the base. Hold all the tails together and mark a line about 3/8" away from the ends of the tail all the way around.
- c. Sew a basting stitch around this line that you marked. This will hold the tails a little closer as one unit and make them easier to attach to the body.

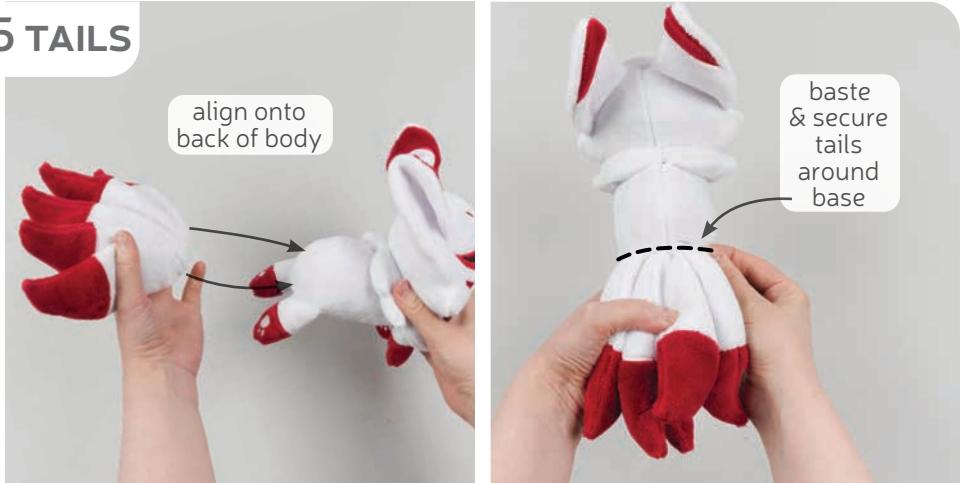
29. ATTACH THE FIRST 5 TAILS

- a. Grab your bundle of tails and align it over the back body of your plush. Take the end of the tails and center them over the back center seam on the body, right above the back legs.

- b. Baste the tails to the body using a long ladder stitch. The tails will be awkward to hold, so it's important to take your time and stitch slowly.

Your stitching doesn't have to be pretty, but try to get the placement right.

Once you've worked all the way around the base of the tails, check that you like the result. Make sure they aren't twisted or tilted, then sew around the base of the tails again with a tinier, neater ladder stitch right beside your previous stitching.

align onto
back of bodybaste
& secure
tails
around
base

sew desu ne?

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30. ATTACH THE LAST 4 TAILS



a. Grab your last four tails and repeat step 28. Bundle them together and stitch the ends together. Then mark and stitch around the base to hold them together as one unit.

b. Align the last four tails on top of the previous five so the base is centered right above the previous group. Make sure the tips of the tails are all pointing in the same direction.

c. Baste the group of tails to the back of the body, stitching around the basting stitches that hold them together.

d. When you reach the underside of the tails, you'll need to flip them upward and stitch right beside the first five tails. Check that you like the placement, then secure the tails with tinier, neater stitches for a second pass.



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

sew desu ne?

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TEST SQUARE 2"

measure this square to
be sure you've printed
at the proper
proportions

