

SOOT SPRITE

plush



a free sewing pattern by



SOOT SPRITE PLUSH

Fans of *My Neighbor Totoro* or *Spirited Away* should recognize these adorable black puff balls! Soot sprites are also known in their films as *susuwatari* or *makkuro-kurosuke*. In *My Neighbor Totoro* they're little soot balls that live in abandoned houses. And then in *Spirited Away* we discover these little creatures have skinny arms and legs and eat colorful star candies called *konpeito*.

This pattern will take you through making several versions that are perfect for beginners and upward. You can make a simple flat version without legs, or work up to a round 3D version with wired arms and legs so it can stand and pose. Use magnets in the arms and candy so it can hold tightly to its favorite little treat.

MAKES:

ONE PLUSH:

About 3½" tall, 3½" wide, and 3½" long for just the body. When posed with wire legs, it stands about 5½" tall.

DIFFICULTY:



The simple flat version would work best for absolute beginners. Then you can work your way up to one with darts, and eventually one with wired arms and legs.

The trickiest part of this plush is turning the tiny pieces right side out. So you may need to cut your opening a little bigger if you have trouble.

SKILLS USED:

- Fusible web applique
- Curved sewing
- Ladder stitch
- Sewing small pieces
- Basting
- Darts
- Working with wire
- Working with magnets



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DESIGN OPTIONS:

Need help choosing what style you want? This page shows all the options you can make as well as what pattern templates and supplies you'll need. Check off your preference in each section and make note of what's recommended for beginners if you're just starting out.

SHAPE & DIMENSION:



SPIKY & FLAT

Pattern piece A



best for beginners



ROUND & FLAT

Pattern piece B



SPIKY & 3D

Pattern piece C



ROUND & 3D

Pattern piece D

FABRIC:

SMOOTH FABRIC, SUCH AS

- fleece
- 3mm minky



best for beginners



FLUFFY FABRIC, SUCH AS

- 10mm luxe cuddle minky

ARMS & LEGS:



best for beginners



NONE



FLOPPY

- E (legs)
- F (arms)



WIRED

- E (legs)
- F (arms)
- 13" and 11" piece of 12 gauge jewelry wire



WIRED WITH MAGNETS

- E (legs)
- F (arms)
- 13" and 11" piece of 12 gauge jewelry wire
- Four 8mm-12mm rare earth magnets
- Scrap fabric to hold magnets

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MATERIALS & TOOLS:

- 12" x 7" of fabric for main body (either smooth or fluffy fabric)
 - 12" x 6" of fabric for arms and legs (smooth fabric is best here)
 - 5" x 3" of fabric for each star candy
 - 3" x 3" of white applique fabric for eyes
 - 2" x 2" of black applique fabric for pupils
 - 3" x 3" 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)
- **FOR WIRED ARMS & LEGS (SEE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE INFO):**
 - 11" piece and 13" piece of 12-18 gauge jewelry wire
 - Wire cutter
 - Scrap fabric for wrapping wire
 - Hot glue for securing scrap fabric
 - **FOR MAGNETIZED ARMS & CANDY (SEE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE INFO):**
 - Two or three rare earth magnets between 8mm-12mm wide
 - Scrap fabric for holding magnets

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.



lightweight fusible



heavyweight fusible

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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JEWELRY WIRE FOR ARMS & LEGS:

- Wire is optional for the **ARMS** and **LEGS**.
- For the best results, use 12 to 18 gauge jewelry wire.
- Jewelry wire is a good medium-strength wire that will give your arms and legs support and allow the sprite to stand on its own.
- To bend and cut the wire, you'll need a pair of pliers (jewelry pliers from your craft store will work fine). Many of these pliers come with a wire cutter built in, so there's no need to buy a separate wire cutter.
- Don't try to cut the wire with regular craft or fabric scissors or it could seriously damage the blades.
- To make the ends of wire safe, they're bent over and then the whole piece of wire is wrapped in scrap fabric (see page 17).
- Pipe cleaners can also work to make the arms and legs posable, but they're not strong enough to make the sprite stand.



MAGNETS FOR HOLDING CANDY:

- Magnets can be used to join the **STAR CANDY** to the **ARM** of your sprite so it looks like it's being held in your sprite's hand.
- Magnets can pose a safety risk if they're swallowed, so **PLEASE BE CAUTIOUS AND AVOID USING AROUND BABIES AND SMALL CHILDREN.**
- Rare earth magnets are recommended for this as well as most craft projects. They have a much stronger attraction than regular magnets.



one magnet in the candy, the other in the hand



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fabric comparison:



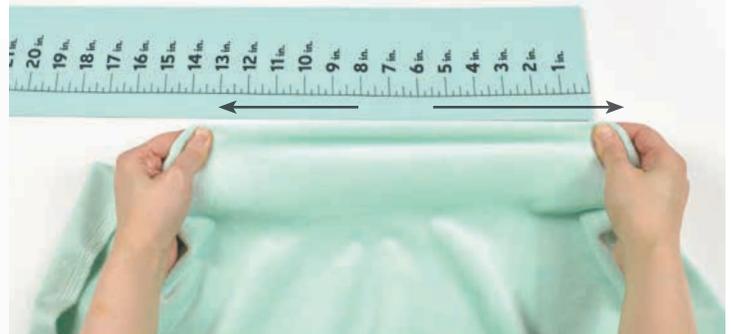
SUGGESTED BODY FABRICS:

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



MINKY

VS.

FELT



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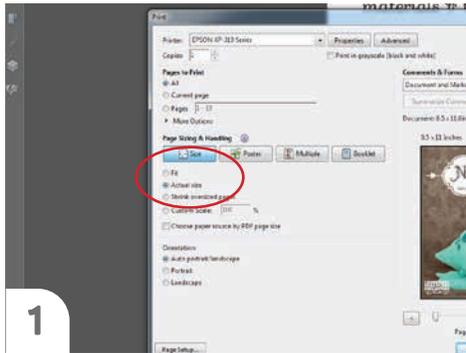
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PRINTING THE PATTERN:

Set your computer to print **PAGES 21-23.**

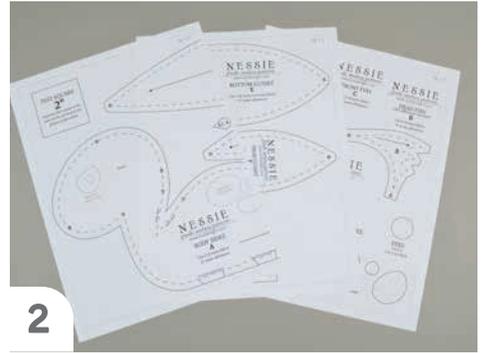
If you're unfamiliar with printing and assembling a .pdf pattern, read the steps to follow.

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.



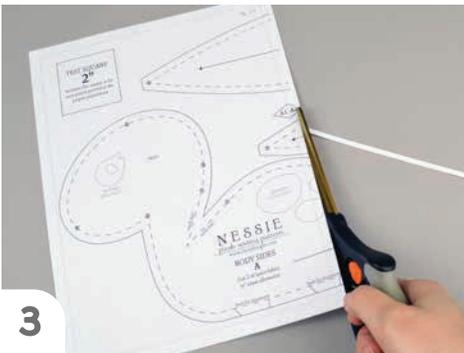
1

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.



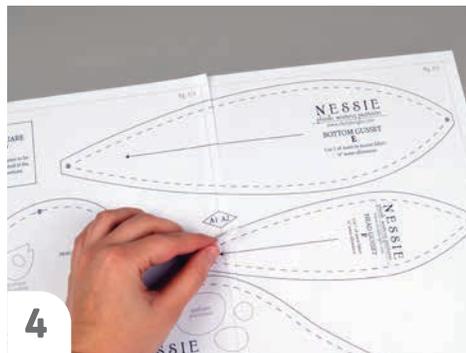
2

Print the pages needed for the file. You might have one or more. Either way, be sure you have the full collection by noting the page numbers in the corner.



3

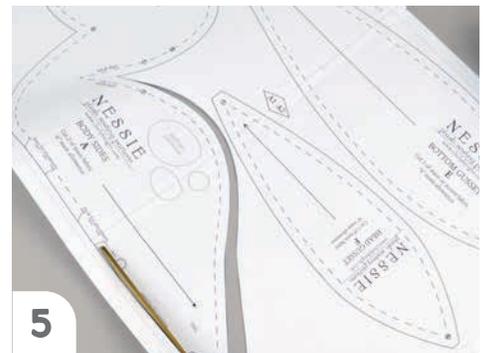
It's likely your printer will have a margin that ensures your image doesn't print to the very edge. Assembly will be easier if you trim off this blank margin edge. This will give you pages that overlap slightly during assembly. If you trim across the gray outline boxes, this will give you pages that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

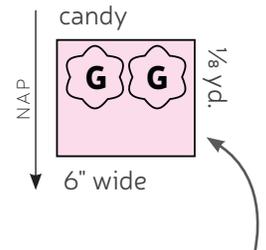
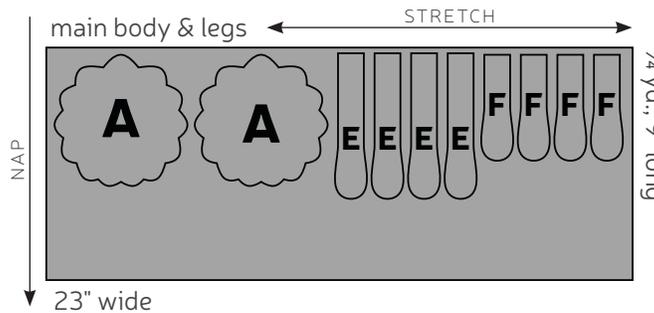
3 Using the paper as a template, cut out the fabric. Cut the required amount according to the pattern.

4 For all fur fabrics, shake the excess fuzz away.

CUTTING LAYOUT: SPIKY & FLAT SPRITE

Template checklist:

- A - Spiky & flat body
- E - Legs (optional)
- F - Arms (optional)
- G - Candy (optional)

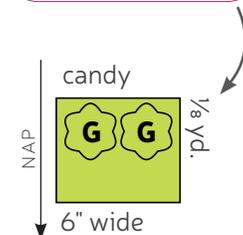
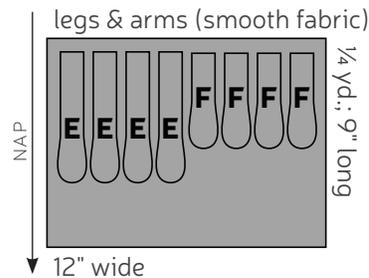
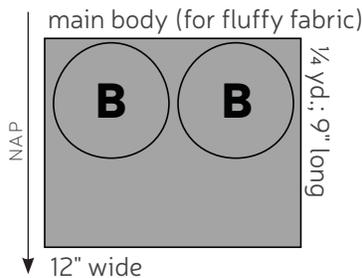


TIP:
You can also cut rough squares for the star candy and trace the seam line onto them. See step 18 on page 19.

CUTTING LAYOUT: ROUND & FLAT SPRITE

Template checklist:

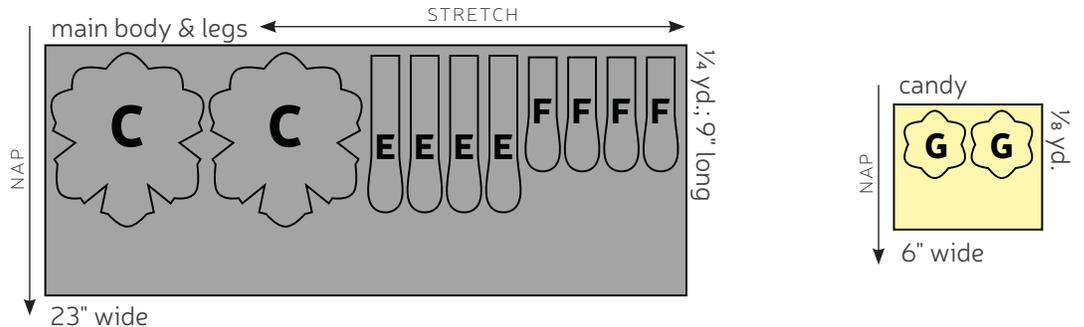
- B - Round & flat body
- E - Legs (optional)
- F - Arms (optional)
- G - Candy (optional)



CUTTING LAYOUT: SPIKY & 3D SPRITE

Template checklist:

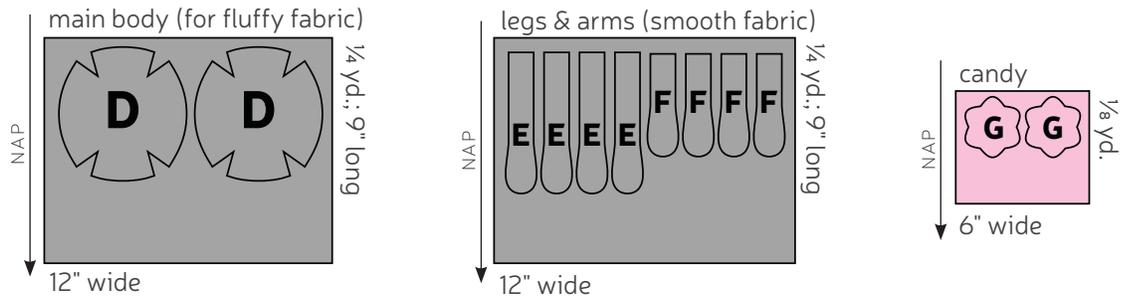
- C - Spiky & 3D body
- E - Legs (optional)
- F - Arms (optional)
- G - Candy (optional)



CUTTING LAYOUT: ROUND & 3D SPRITE

Template checklist:

- D - Round & 3D body
- E - Legs (optional)
- F - Arms (optional)
- G - Candy (optional)



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 1/4" seam allowance is used for the project unless otherwise mentioned. The seam allowance is included in the pattern templates.

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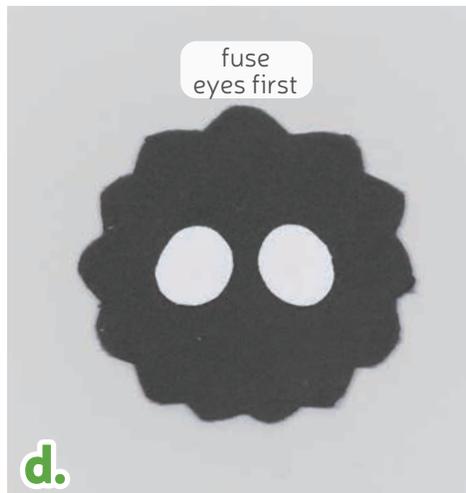
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1. FUSE THE EYE APPLIQUE



- Grab your fusible web and applique templates. Trace the pieces for the **eyes**. You should have:
 - **eyes** (2, white)
 - **pupils** (2, black)
- Fuse the bumpy (adhesive) side of the fusible web onto the applique fabrics.
- Cut out your applique pieces and grab one of your **SOOT SPRITE** pieces (A, B, C, or D). Grab the **eye** applique piece. Set your paper pattern on top of the sprite 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.

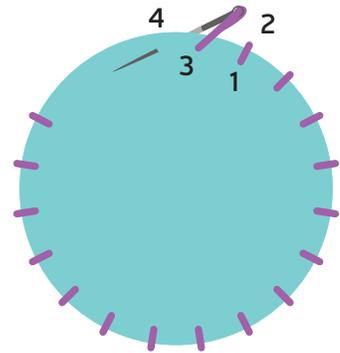
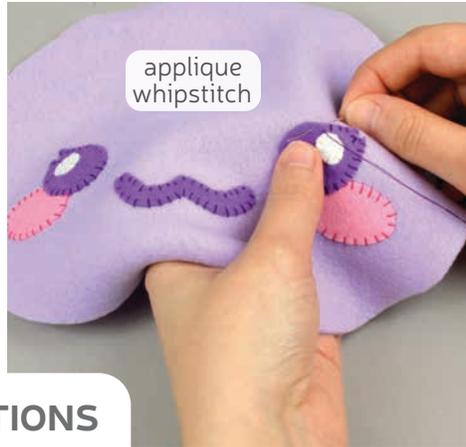
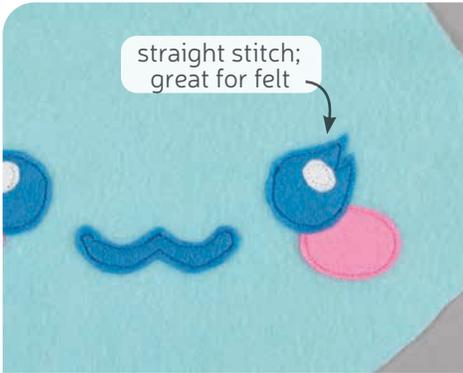
- Fuse the applique pieces with your iron. Use a press cloth, such as a scrap piece of cotton. This will help protect any polyester or fuzzy fabrics from melting or scorching.
- Continue with the smaller eye pieces, like the **pupils**. Fuse them the same way using the paper pattern and photos as a guide.



- This should complete the applique. If you used heavy duty fusible web, you can keep the pieces fused without sewing. If you used lighter fusible web, you'll want to stitch the pieces in place. A zigzag stitch with matching thread works nicely around the edges. For hand sewing options, see the next page.

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2. 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.

Up first is the **MOST BASIC VERSION** for beginners, the **FLAT VERSION WITH NO ARMS OR LEGS (A OR B)**. It only takes 4 steps total, starting below. If you have any of the other versions, skip ahead to step 5.

3. ALIGN THE FRONT & BACK

- Grab your two **SPIKY** or **ROUND SPRITE** pieces (A or B) and align them so right sides are facing and the raw edges match up. Pin the fabrics together all around the edge.
- If you haven't already, *note the opening for turning markings* found on the paper pattern for the sprite. Transfer these markings onto the edge of the fabrics you've pinned. Sew entirely around the sprite, but leave an **opening for turning** where you marked.



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4. CLIP & TURN THE SPRITE

a. IF YOU HAVE A SPIKY SPRITE

(A): trim the seam allowance around the tight corners and curves of each spike. This will reduce bulk in those outer corners and increase flexibility at the inner corners. Then the piece will turn more cleanly.

- b.** Turn the sprite right side out. If you find the **opening for turning** to be too small, you can use a seam ripper to make the opening a little larger. Define the spikes of the sprite with a chopstick or similar turning tool.

→ *Skip ahead to step 12 for stuffing and closing.*



DARTS:

A wedge-shaped gap found in a pattern. When sewn in the 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 FIRST DART

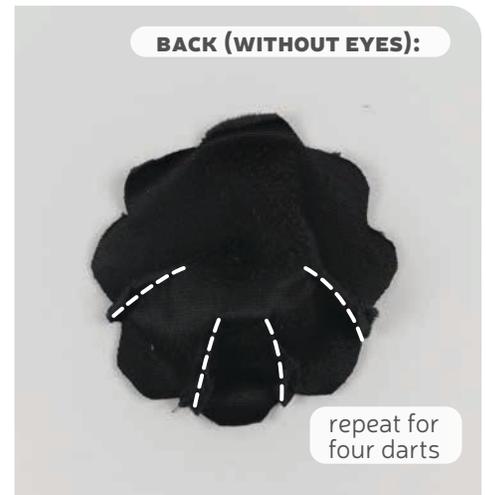
- a.** Grab your **3D SPRITE** pieces (C or D). These pieces have several wedge shapes found all around outside. These are **darts**. We're going to sew them by first lining up the slanted edges of each **dart**. Fold the fabric along the point of the **dart** so right sides are facing and the slanted edges match up. Pin the fabrics together.
- b.** Sew the **dart** starting at the opening and work your way toward the fold of the fabric. Try to blend your stitching into the fold for a smooth transition and a rounder finish to the plush.

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6. FINISH THE BODY DARTS

- Repeat step 5 with your other body **darts** all the way around the piece. There should be four **darts** total.
- Repeat this again with your other body piece so each piece has four sewn **darts**.



Up next are the **ARMS AND LEGS (E & F)**. If your sprite doesn't have arms or legs, skip ahead to step 11.

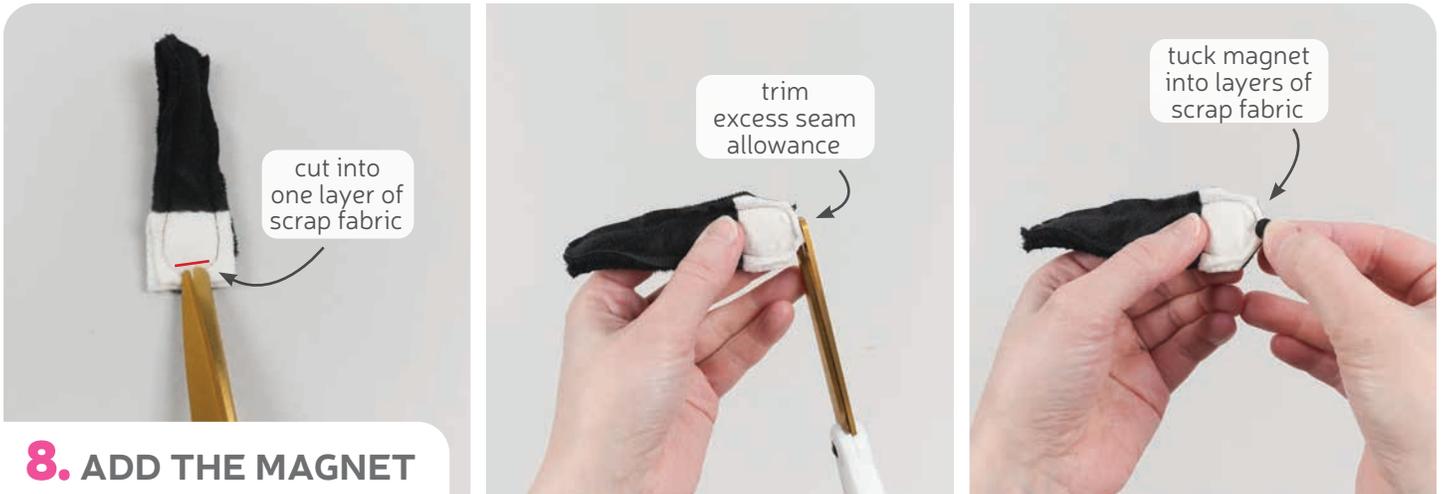
7. SEW THE ARMS AND LEGS



- Grab your **ARMS (F)**. Take two matching ones and align them with right sides facing and the raw edges matching up. Pin the fabrics together.
- FOR MAGNETIZED ARMS:** cut about a 1" x 2" piece of scrap fabric. This will be used to hold the arm magnet in place. Fold it in half so it makes a square shape.
- Take your scrap fabric and align it over the rounded end of the arm. It should be facing the wrong side of the arm fabric. Make sure the folded end is pointing toward the top of the arm. Layer it over the fabrics so they're all stacked together.
- Sew the arms by going around the long straight sides and curving around the end. The short straight edge should be left open for turning. If you have scrap fabric, be sure it gets secured into the seam. Grab your **LEG** pieces (E) and sew them together in the same way, but without the scrap fabric.
 - See the next step for inserting the arm magnets, or skip ahead to step 9 if your arms don't have magnets.

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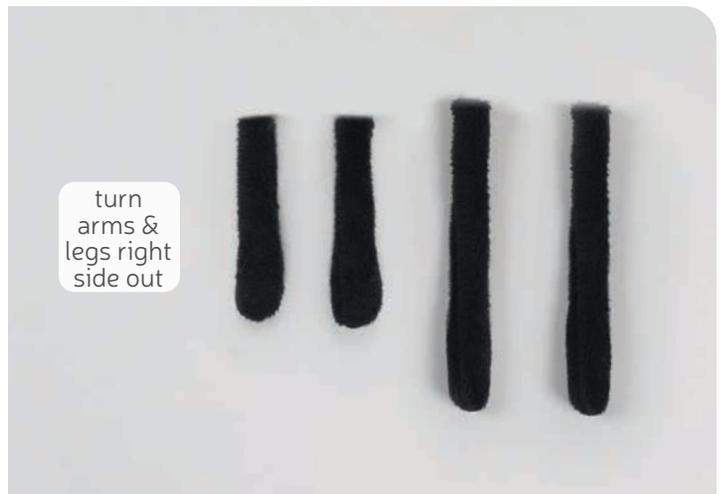


8. ADD THE MAGNET

- Take your sewn **ARMS** (F) and find the bit of **scrap fabric** sewn into the end. Cut gently into the fabric to make a small hole through one layer only. Make it just large enough to fit your magnet.
- Trim away the excess scrap fabric seam allowance to reduce bulk.
- Take your magnet and insert it into the scrap fabric using the small hole you've cut. If desired, you can whip stitch the fabric closed to secure the magnet inside.

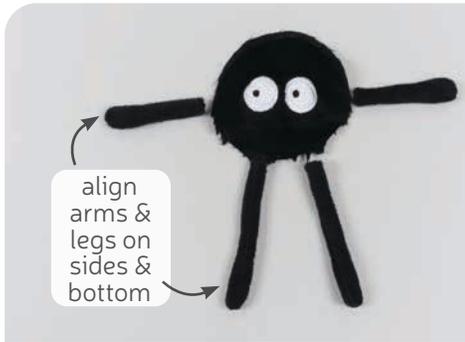
9. TURN THE ARMS & LEGS

- Take your **ARMS AND LEGS** (E & F) and flip them right side out. Use a chopstick or similar turning tool to poke out the ends.
- For **FLOPPY ARMS AND LEGS** that are sewn into the plush, see the next step.
- If you're making **WIRED ARMS AND LEGS**, those are added later in step 13. For now, set the arms and legs aside and move ahead to step 11.



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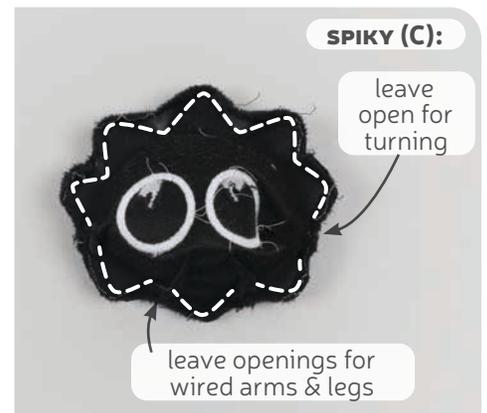


10. BASTE THE ARMS & LEGS

- Grab the front of your sprite's **BODY** (B, C, or D). If you haven't already, note the **arm and leg placement lines** found on the paper pattern for the sprite. Transfer these markings onto the edge of your fabric. Take your sewn arms and legs and align them along the sides and bottom so they're within the **placement lines**. They may be centered over your **darts** from before (for pieces C or D).
- Take your arms and legs and flip them so now they're facing down over the front. The raw edges of the arms and legs should now be flush with the edge of the fabric. Pin the arms and legs to the edge of the fabric.
- Baste your arms and legs within the seam allowance to hold them in place 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).



11. ADD THE BACK PIECE

- Grab your sprite's blank **BACK** piece (A, B, C, or D) and align it over the **FRONT** piece so right sides are facing and the raw edges match up. Pin the fabrics together all around the edge. If you have **ARMS** and **LEGS** basted to the edge, this should sandwich them in between.
- If you haven't already, note the **opening for turning markings** found on the paper pattern for the sprite. If you plan to add **WIRED ARMS AND LEGS**, also note the **arm and leg placement lines**. You can also leave these open for inserting the wire later. Sew completely around the sprite, but leave an **opening for turning**. Also leave any **openings for the wired arms and legs** if you're adding them.

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12. TURN & STUFF THE BODY

- a. If you have a **SPIKY SPRITE** (A or C) you'll want to trim the seam allowance around any tight corners and curves. Trim around the outer corners to reduce bulk and trim the inner corners to increase flexibility so the piece turns more cleanly.
- b. Turn the sprite right side out through the **opening for turning**. You may need to work slowly and gradually if the opening for turning is small. If you have arms and legs, start by pulling those out first, then work your way through turning the rest of the body.
- c. Begin stuffing the body. If you have a **SPIKY SPRITE** (A or C), use small bits of stuffing to fill up the tips so they keep their shape and don't deflate over time. Next work up to filling up the rest of the plush. If you have a **3D SPRITE** (C or D), you can use a lot more stuffing to really fill out the shape nice and round.



If you have **WIRED ARMS AND LEGS**, continue next with step 13.
 If you don't have this, skip ahead to step 16 for how to ladder stitch the plush closed.

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13. PREP THE WIRE



- If you're using wire for the arms and legs, take this time to prep it now. Grab your wire, your jewelry pliers, your hot glue gun, and the strip of scrap fabric. Begin by bending over the ends of the wire with the pliers to eliminate the sharp ends. Bend the wire onto itself by about $\frac{1}{2}$ " on both ends.
- Next, use the hot glue to wrap the fabric around the wire. Begin with a dollop of glue on the end of the fabric. Then press the wire into the glue so the strip is at an angle as shown. Fold the ends of the fabric over the end of the wire. **WARNING:** the fabric will get hot from the glue.
- From there, cover sections of the fabric in glue, then carefully wrap it around the wire. Keep the fabric strip at an angle so it wraps down the length of the wire.
- Continue wrapping the wire until it's entirely covered. Then fold over the ends of the fabric and secure them with more glue as necessary.

14. FIND THE ARM & LEG OPENINGS

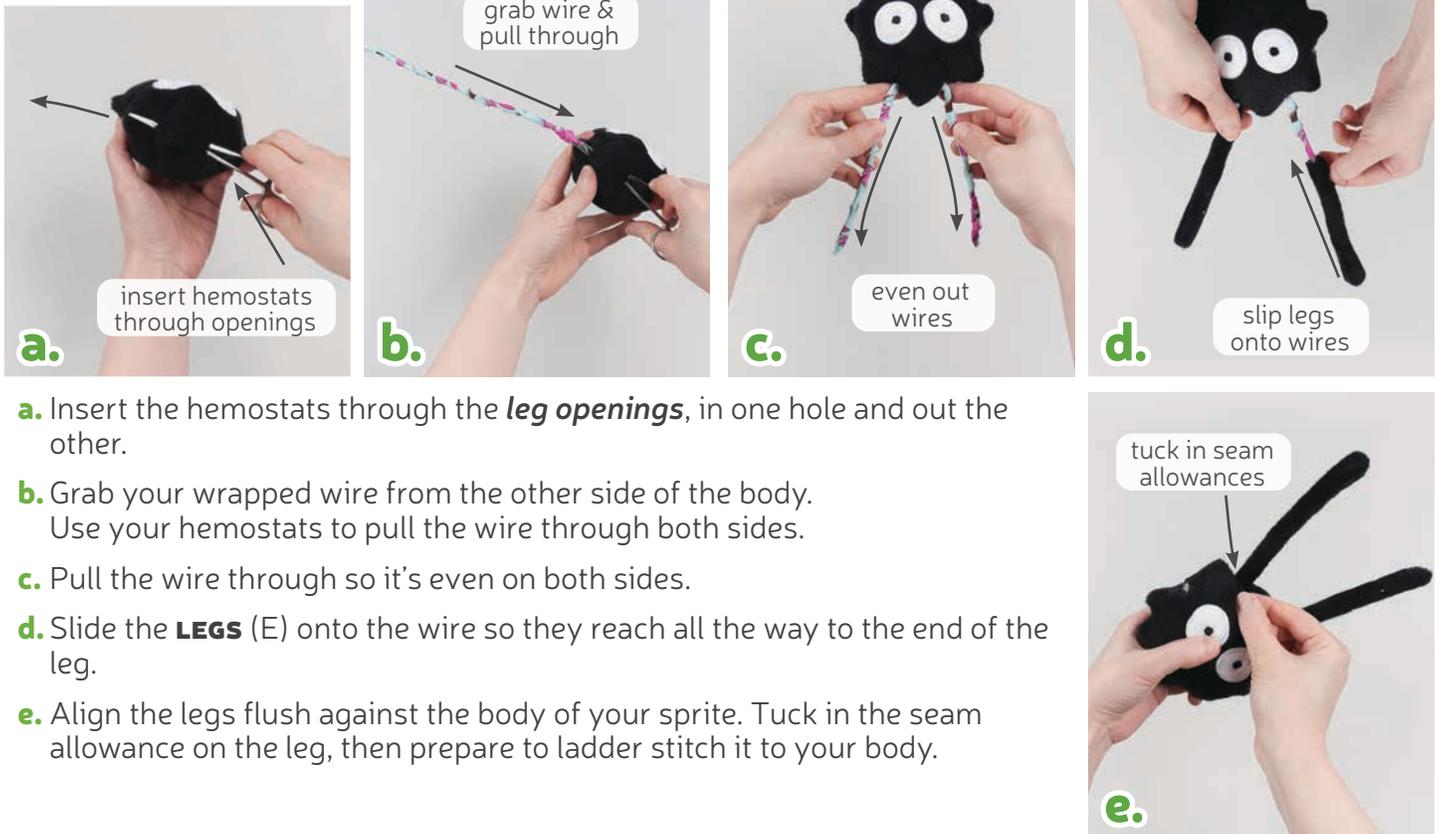
- Grab your stuffed **SPRITE**. We're going to use the holes left in the edges to insert the wire, starting with the legs. If you have hemostats it makes the process much easier.
- Note that you have a **SPIKY FLAT SPRITE (A)**, the **arm and leg openings** are the in the back of the plush. This allows the arms and legs to be attached without getting in the way of the spikes.



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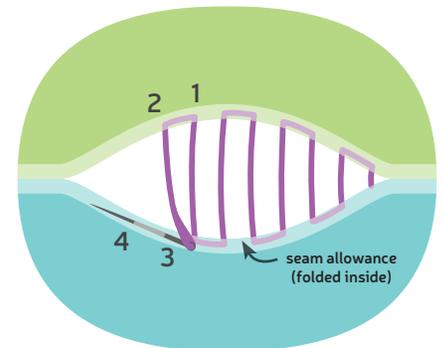
15. ADD THE LEGS



- Insert the hemostats through the **leg openings**, in one hole and out the other.
- Grab your wrapped wire from the other side of the body. Use your hemostats to pull the wire through both sides.
- Pull the wire through so it's even on both sides.
- Slide the **LEGS** (E) onto the wire so they reach all the way to the end of the leg.
- Align the legs flush against the body of your sprite. Tuck in the seam allowance on the leg, then prepare to ladder stitch it to your body.

16. LADDER STITCHING THE OPENINGS

- To ladder stitch the **WIRED LEGS** or to close up the **opening for turning**: Take a $\frac{1}{8}$ " stitch into the fold of one side of the opening, then go across and take another. Continue until you have fully attached the pieces.



- When you're finished, stitch a knot into the end of the seam. Then insert the needle near the finished knot. Bring the needle out about 1-2" away and pull it through.
- Pull the thread taut while snipping the thread. The excess thread should sink back inside the plush -- all hidden!

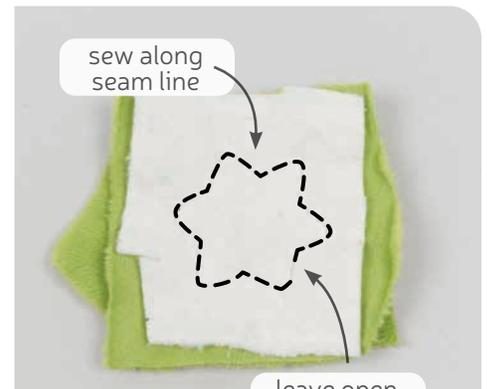
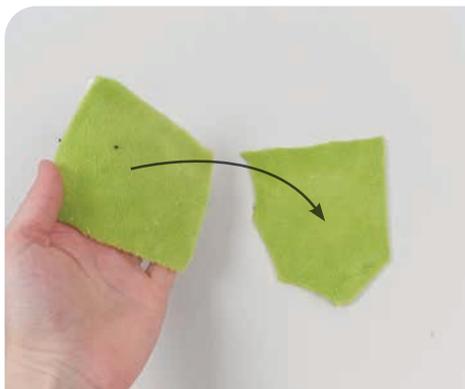
sew desu ne?

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17. ATTACH THE ARMS & POSE

a. Repeat steps 14-16 for the **ARMS** (F). For best results, make sure the wire is tucked behind the **MAGNET** so it doesn't get in the way of the magnet's attraction.

b. To make the sprite stand, it helps to bend the leg into a shape like a big '2'. Bend the leg to make about a 1½"-2" long foot, then bend the rest to make a big curve for the knee. It's not exactly movie accurate, but this big foot provides a stable base. From here you can make small adjustments to the wire so sprite can balance on both feet.



18. SEW THE STAR CANDY

- Grab your **STAR CANDY** fabric pieces (G). If you're using rough squares, align them with right sides facing.
- If you're adding a **MAGNET** to your star candy, layer a piece of **SCRAP FABRIC** on top of your stacked fabrics so far. Here I'm using some thin cotton quilt batting.
- Trace the seam line from the star candy onto your stacked fabrics. Make note of the **opening for turning** found on the paper pattern for the star. Mark this **opening for turning** onto your stacked fabrics. If you have a layer of scrap fabric, you may need to make the opening a little bigger. Sew entirely around the star, but leave the **opening for turning** that you marked.

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19. TRIM & TURN THE CANDY

- Trim around your stitching for the **STAR CANDY** (G). Cut about $\frac{1}{8}$ " outside of the stitching, but leave a little extra near the **opening for turning**.
- Turn the candy right side out through the **opening for turning**. Define the points with a chopstick or similar turning tool.



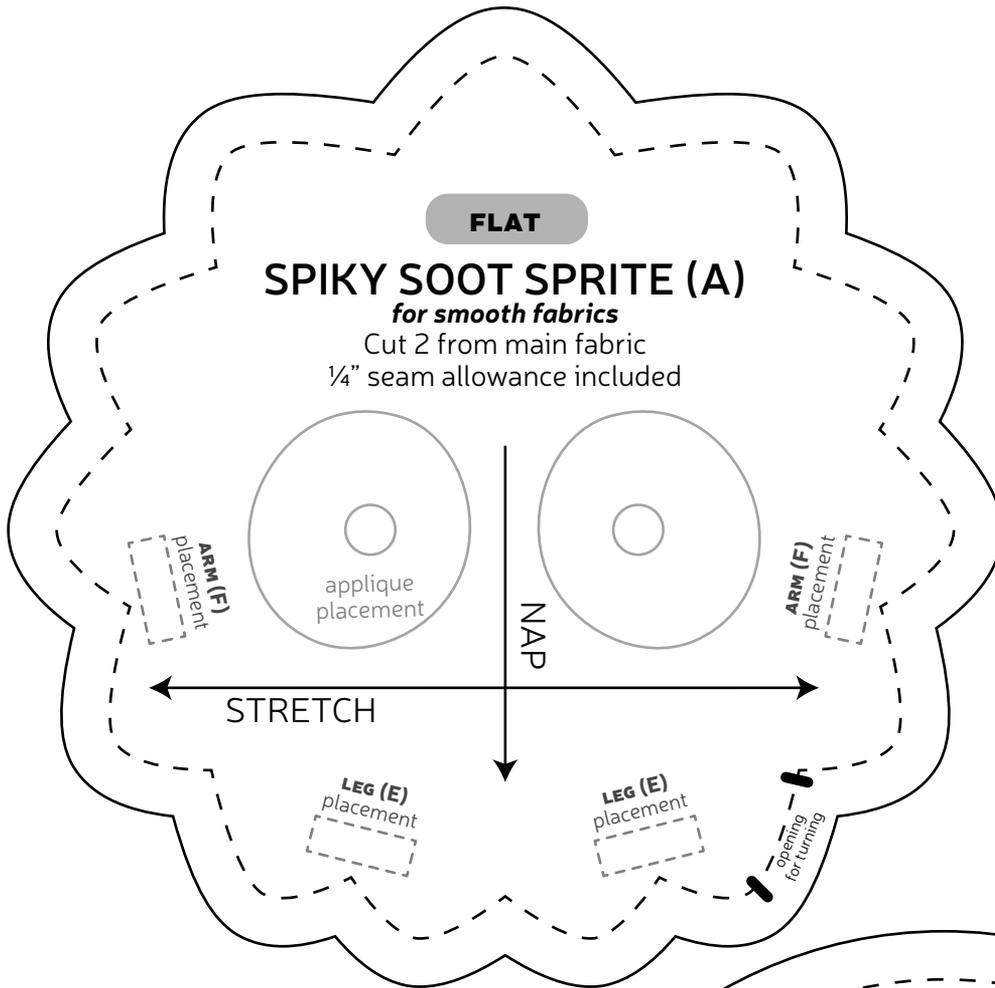
20. FILL & CLOSE THE CANDY

- If you're using magnets, take this time to insert your **MAGNET** into the star. Insert it into the **opening for turning** between the layers of scrap fabric and main fabric.
- Test to be sure that it attaches to the magnet on your sprite's **ARM**. If not, flip the magnet inside the star and they should attract.
- When your star is ready, stuff it lightly with stuffing. Tuck the stuffing into the star on the other side of the scrap fabric so it doesn't interfere with the magnet. Stuff each point of the star so they keep their shape.
- Tuck in the seam allowances at the **opening for turning** and ladder stitch the star closed.



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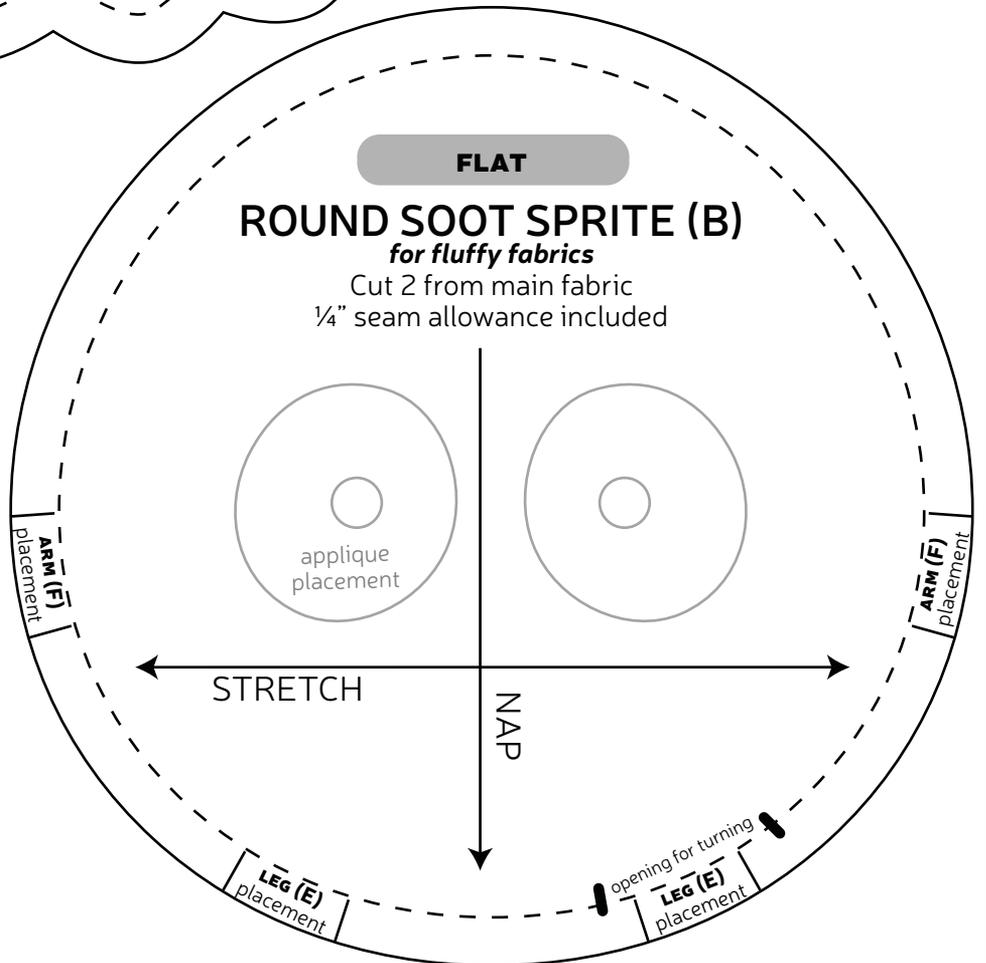
FLAT

SPIKY SOOT SPRITE (A)

for smooth fabrics

Cut 2 from main fabric
1/4" seam allowance included

TEST SQUARE
2"
measure this square to
be sure you've printed
at the proper
proportions



FLAT

ROUND SOOT SPRITE (B)

for fluffy fabrics

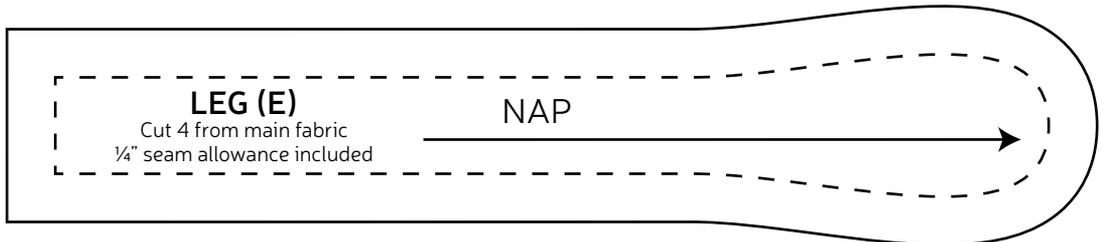
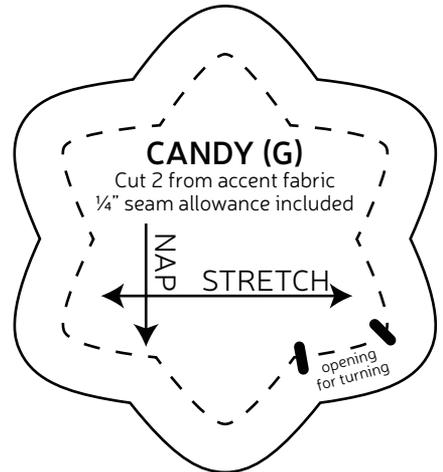
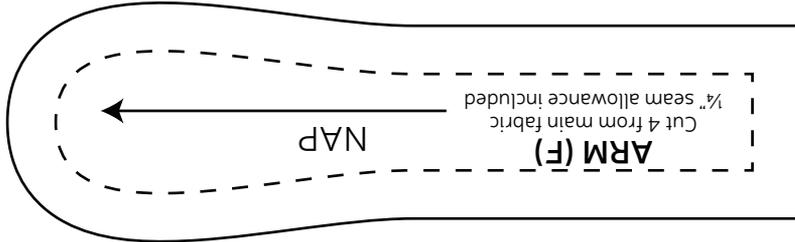
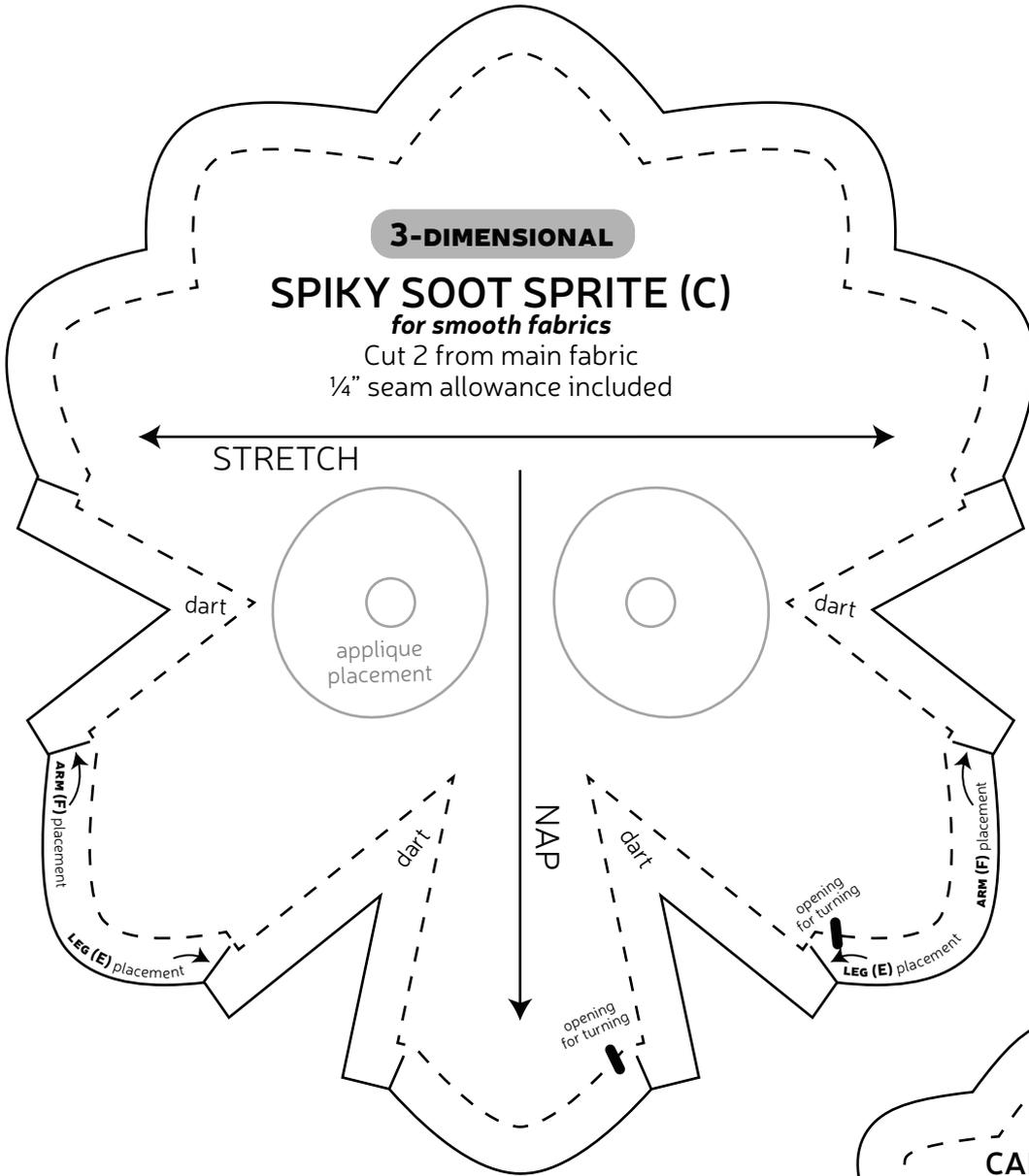
Cut 2 from main fabric
1/4" seam allowance included

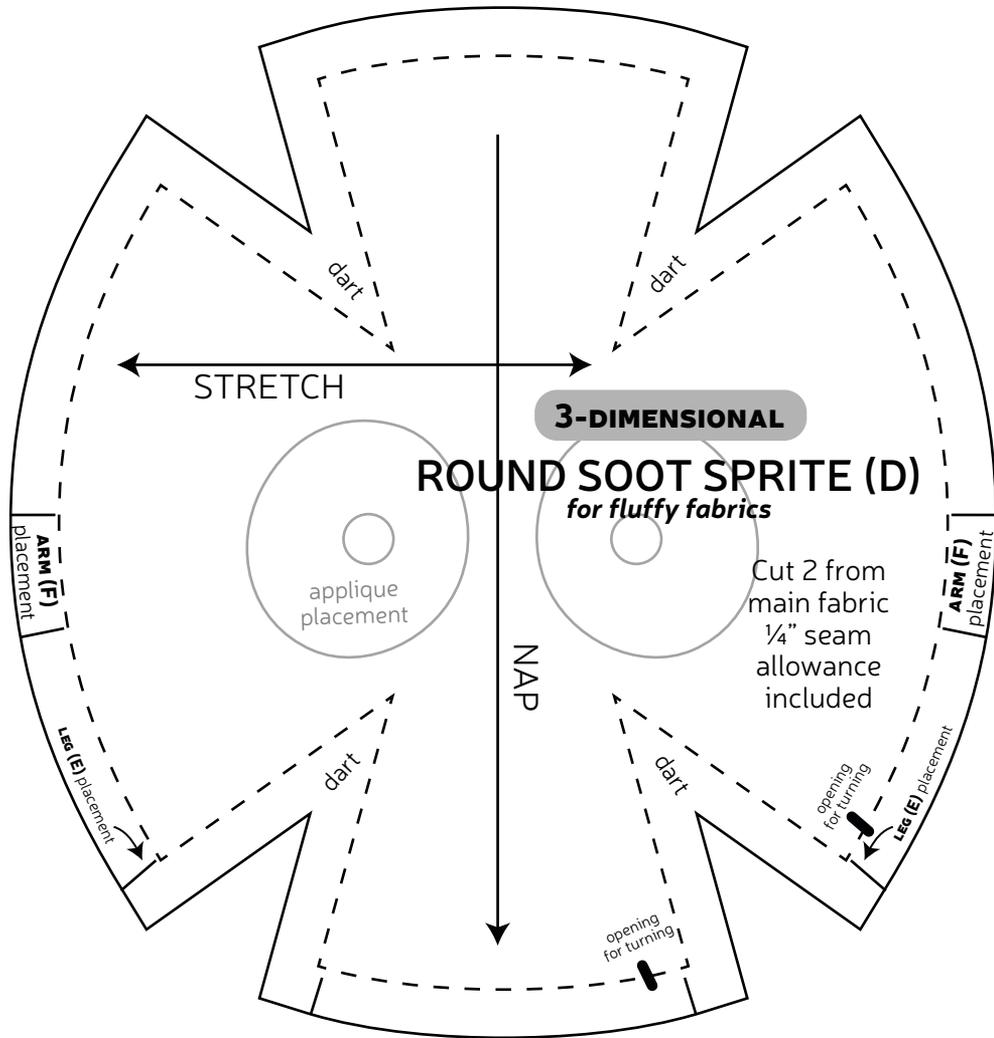
3-DIMENSIONAL

SPIKY SOOT SPRITE (C)

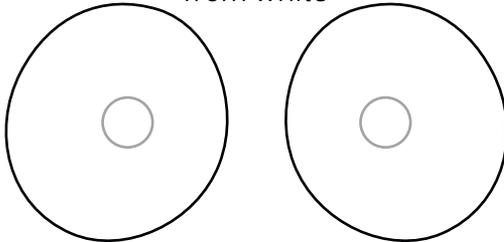
for smooth fabrics

Cut 2 from main fabric
1/4" seam allowance included





EYE WHITE
applique
trace & cut 1 each
from white



PUPIL
applique
trace & cut 2
from black

