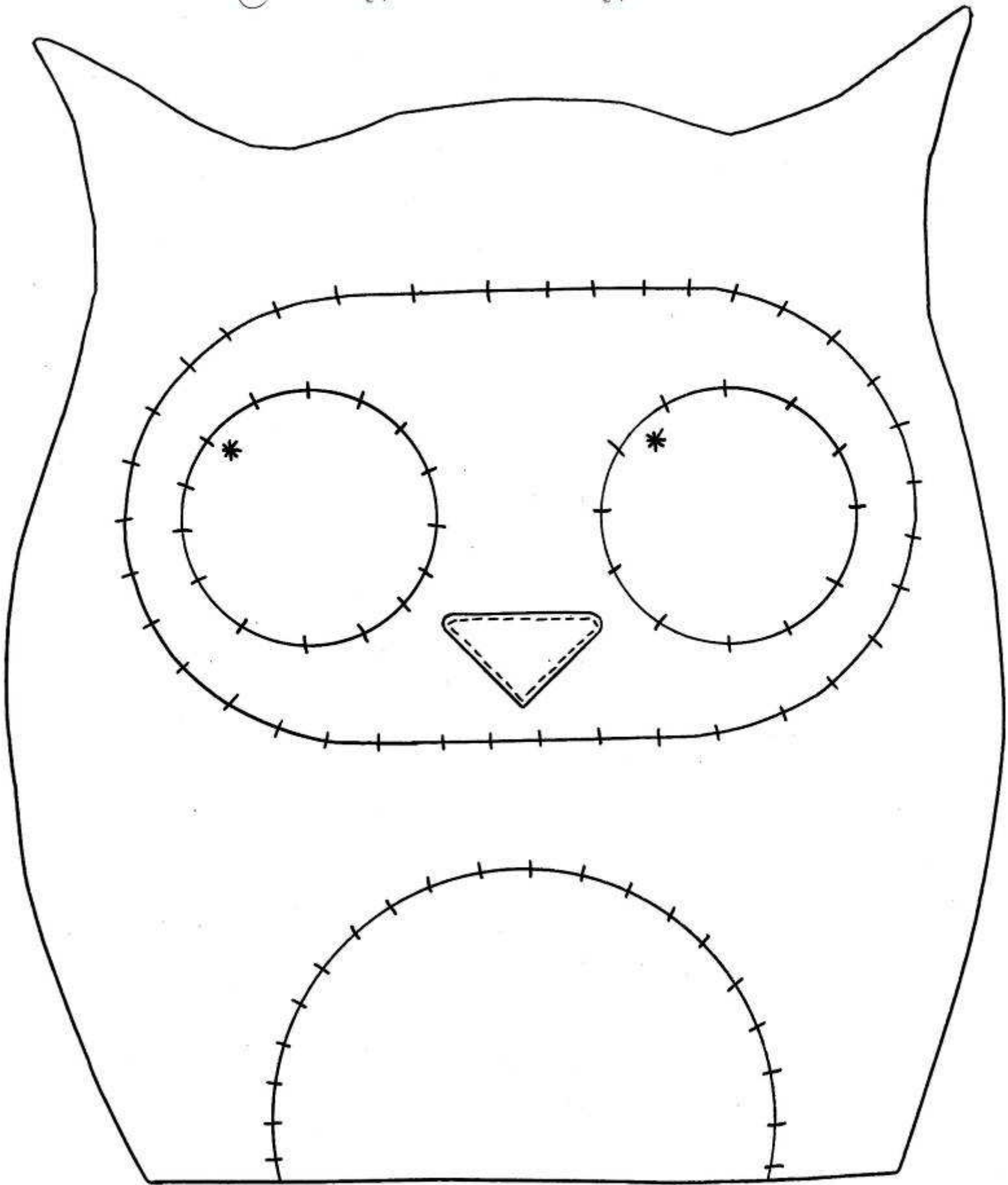
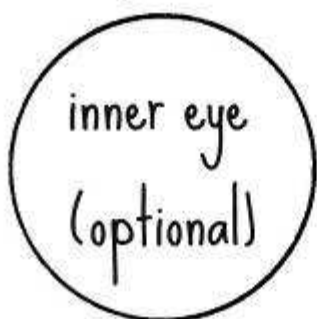
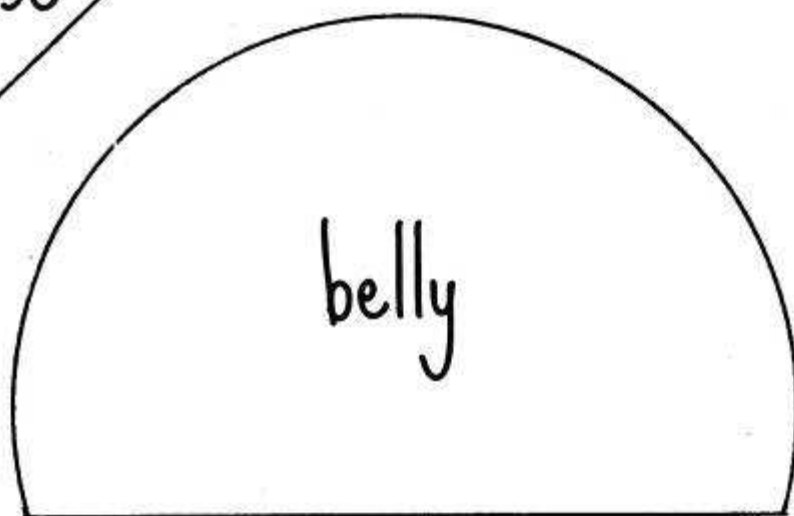
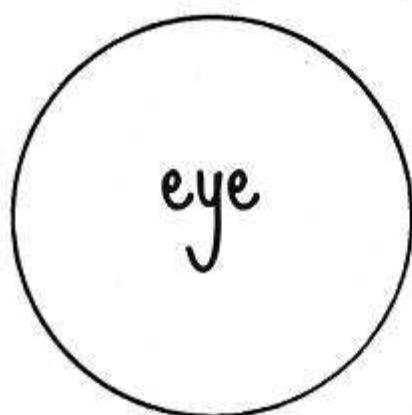
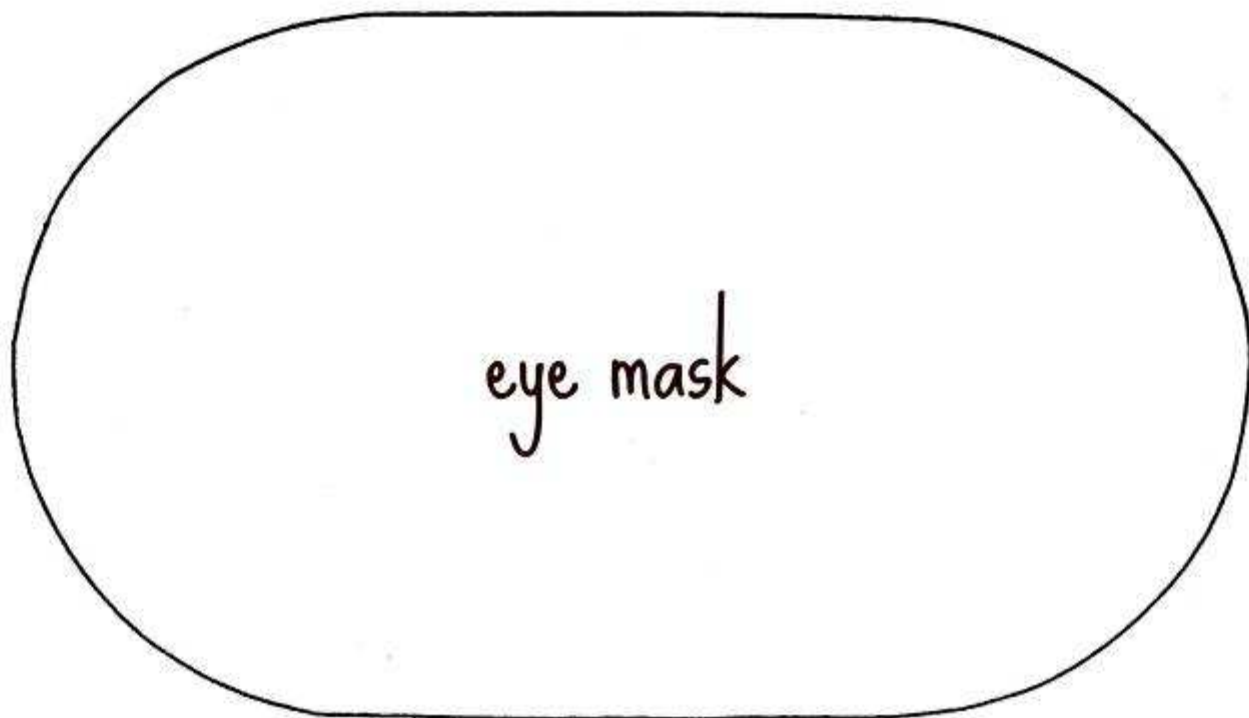


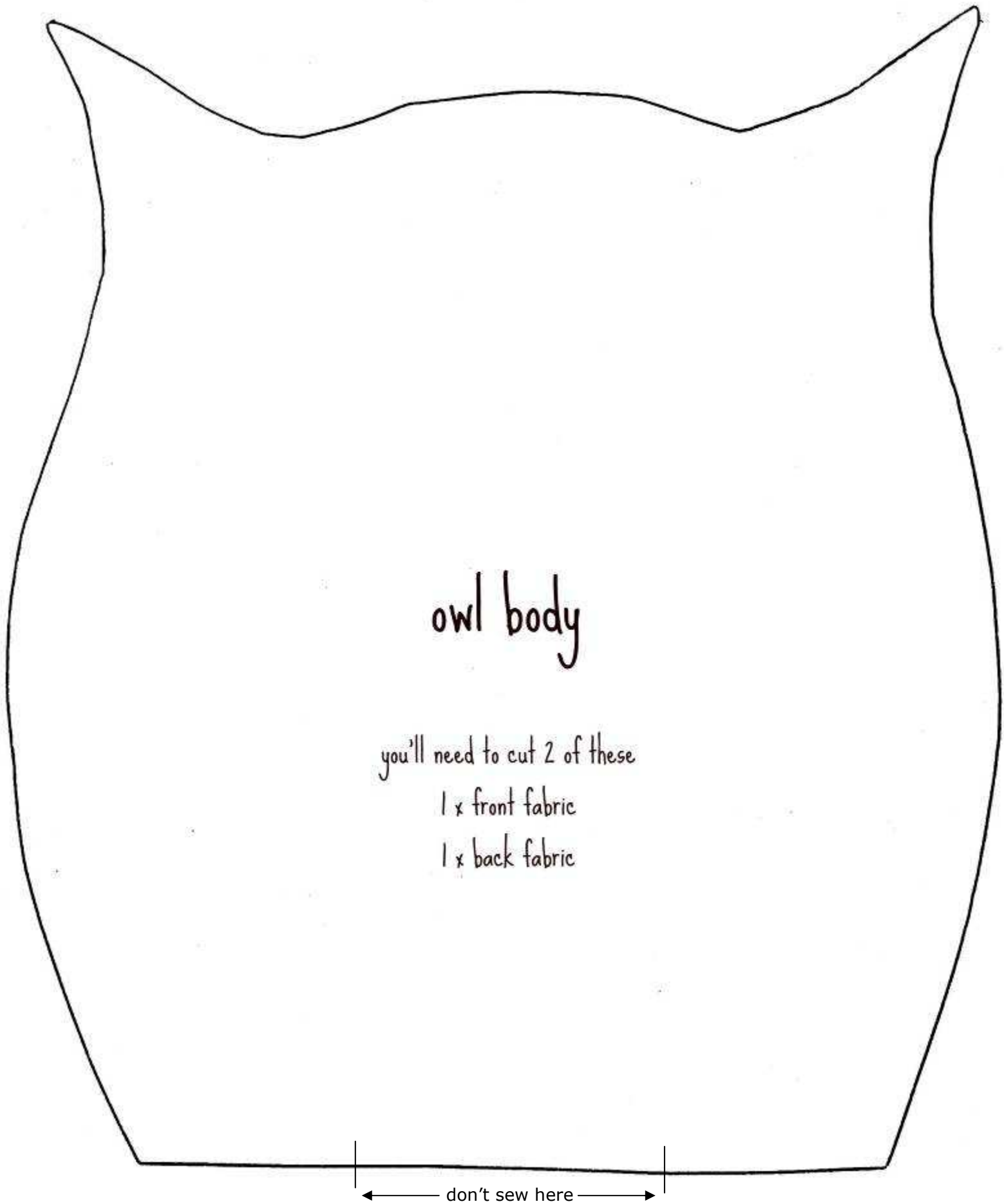
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OWL CUSHION TUTORIAL





- Fabric to be cut out:
- 2 x body (front and back)
 - 1 x eye mask
 - 2 x eye
 - 1 x nose
 - 1 x belly
- optional:
- 2 x inner eye



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What you'll need:

- A **sewing machine** – nothing fancy
- 3 x pieces of complimentary **fabrics** (fat quarters work best and are cheap)
 - 1 x front body
 - 1 x back body
 - 1 x belly
- 2 pieces of different coloured **felt**
 - 1 for eye mask
 - 1 for eyes
 - Optional – you can have a third colour if you choose to do the inner eye also
- Complimentary coloured sewing **thread** (for machine and hand stitching)
- At least one **embroidery floss** colour. You can use two different colours if you'd like a little more contrast
- **Embroidery needle**
- A piece of heavy-weight cut away **stabiliser** a little larger than the eye mask (cut-aways are permanent stabilisers that remain on the back of the fabric and keep it stable during and after embroidery. They prevent the designs from stretching out during embroidery)
- Clean **toy and hobby fill** – a 500gm bag will be plenty

Let's get started!



fabric pieces used to make owl

Firstly, print and cut out each template piece. Once you have them all cut out, pin them to the wrong side of each fabric piece and trace around them using a fabric pencil. For this tutorial I have used a fabric pen so that it's easier to see the outlines in the photos. You can use a fabric pen if you prefer as long as you can't see it through the right side of the fabric (it won't wash out).

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cut fabric pieces (wrong side)

When cutting out the body and belly pieces, leave a 2cm allowance around the lines you've traced. These lines are going to be the ones you follow when sewing your pieces together.

For the mask, eyes and nose cut along the lines.



stitches along felt mask

Take the front body fabric piece, stabiliser, felt mask piece and embroidery floss. Sandwich the body fabric between the felt (front) and stabiliser (back) making sure that they are in the right position (you don't want your eye mask to end up too far down the body).

Make a knot in the end of your embroidery floss and starting from the back (through the stabiliser) stitch the felt mask in place by making simple straight stitches ensuring you capture the stabiliser, body fabric and felt mask with each stitch.

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stitching the eyes on

Once your felt mask is attached, you need to follow the same process with each eye. Place both circle felt pieces over the mask to make sure you're happy with how they're going to look. The further apart the eyes are the better and cuter it will look in the finished product.

With either the same colour embroidery floss or a different colour, start stitching one eye on following the same straight stitch method which was used to stitch the eye mask on. Or if you want to do something different, you can use a running stitch around the inside rim of the felt eyes.



alternative stitch for attaching eyes

Remember to start stitching from the back so that your embroidery floss knot is hidden! Once you've attached one eye, attach the other. It should look something like this once you've finished this step.

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eye mask and eyes stitched on

To finish off the eyes you can stitch an asterisk onto the felt using embroidery floss, or you can add another smaller circle to create an inner eye, stitching it on in the same manner that you did for the larger eye piece.



a little "glimmer" to finish off the eyes

Next, it's time to attach the nose. Again, you can use whichever stitch you prefer. I've included photos of both options so that you can pick which you'd like to use.



nose stitch option 1

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Once you've finished embroidering the felt pieces of the owls face, turn it over and the back should look something like this. Pretty! But don't worry, you won't see any of this when you're finished.



Now onto the belly. Take your belly piece and trim along the curved edge (every 1-2cm) towards the outline making sure not to cut through the line you traced.



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Once you've done the cutting you need to iron the pieces down (wrong side) following the line you marked so that you get a nice smooth hem-line when you turn it over to the right side. Otherwise you would have the ugly raw edges of the fabric exposed.



You then need to pin the belly piece into place onto what will become the front of the owls body.

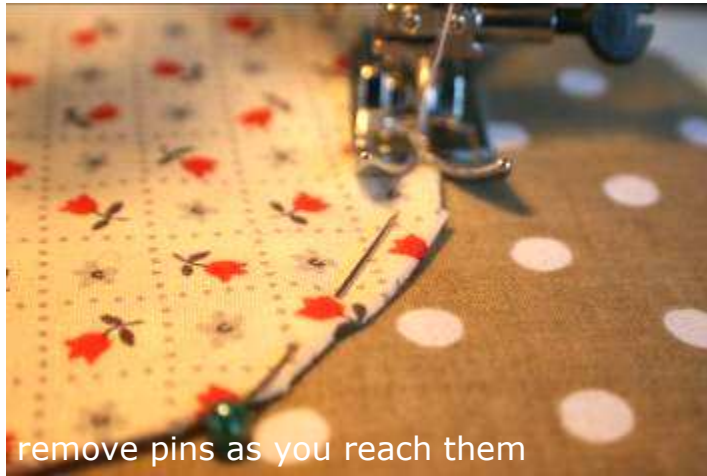


Then as close to the edge of the belly fabric as possible (without running off the fabric), sew it into place to give you a nice neat finish. Alternatively, if you feel

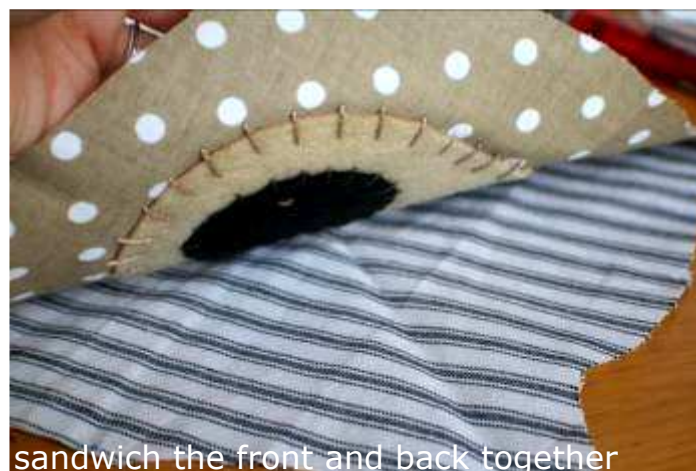
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more confident with a blanket stitch you could stitch the fabric into place using this method instead.



Now that you've embellished the front of your owl, it's time to start assembling it. Sandwich the front and back pieces of fabric which will make your owl body's front and back with the right sides facing in (you'll be looking at the wrong sides of fabric from both back and front).



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Pin around the edges ensuring you catch both pieces of fabric in the pin. Then stitch around the entire piece following the line as a guide. Make sure to leave an opening where you don't stitch (as marked on the template) so that you can turn your owl right side out.



close up of stitching around outside

Now it's time to trim off the corners on an angle so that when you turn it right side out, you will get nice clean corners. If you miss this step, you will get the fabric bunching on the inside and it won't look right.



snip all corners including tips of ears

Also trim around and into any curved areas such as the sides of the owls body around the head and ears. And make sure to take care and NOT cut through any stitches. If you do, you will have to sew over the area again. Just remember if you don't trim the curves, you will get the fabric puckering once you stuff your owl.

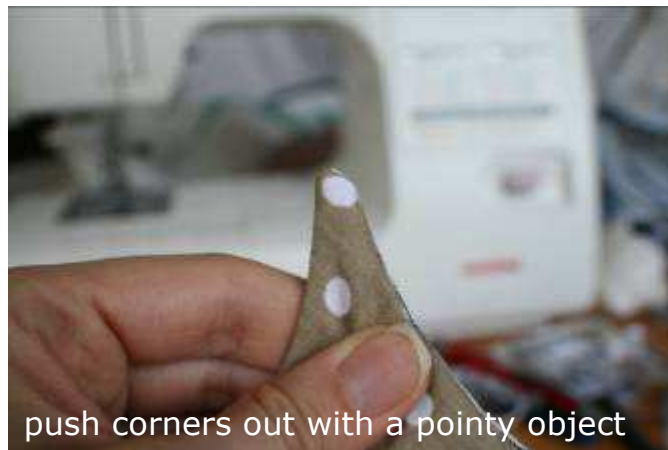
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snip around all curved lines

Now comes the fun part. Carefully turn your owl right side out. To help you can use a wooden skewer or a pen (with the lid on) to carefully push out the ears, corners and curves lines.



push corners out with a pointy object



wooden skewers are easy to use

Your new owly friend should look something like this now. A little flat, I know, but you're almost there.

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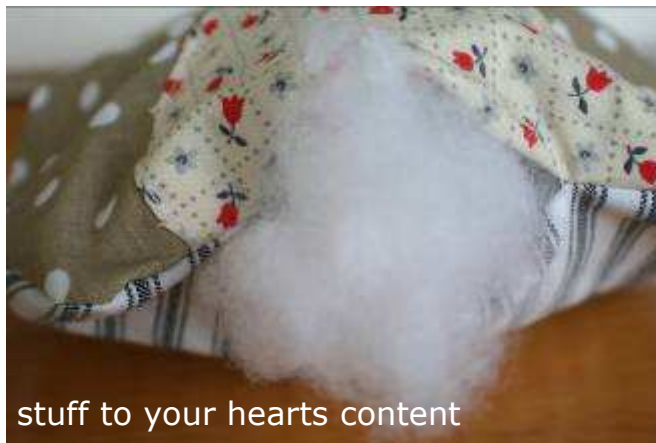
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your flat owl cushion

Now you are ready to stuff. Take handfuls of stuffing and using the small gap in the bottom seam, start with the ears, make sure you stuff them so they are firm and plump. You don't want saggy ears!

You won't believe how much stuffing this little guy will take. As you stuff, make sure you hold the seams of the area you are stuffing so that you don't over do it and stuff yourself a new hole. That would be a shame. Keep stuffing until you have a nice even plump owl body and you think you can stuff no more!



stuff to your hearts content

When you finish stuffing, you're ready for the very last step. You need to close the seam of the opening. Using a ladder stitch will ensure that you can't see where you have hand-stitched once you're done.



use a ladder stitch to close the opening

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If you've never used a ladder stitch before, there's a great tutorial on it at Melly and Me right here http://mellyandme.typepad.com/melly_me/2009/11/cicada-season-tt-tuesday.html



And then... you're done!

