

Finishing Techniques

How you finish your felted bag is probably the most important part of the process. After all of your hard work knitting and actually felting in the washer, the shape, texture and overall appearance will be determined by tools and techniques that you employ to get your bag ready for whatever embellishment you choose.

Once your bag is out of the washer, form it into the finished shape you want it to be once it is dry. Stand it up on its bottom and pull the sides apart so that the inside is as round, oval or square as you want it. Holding the side or bottom of the bag, tug at the top rim until straight to your satisfaction. If the bottom seems a little uneven, tug or gently pull the bag into the shape that you want. Once you are satisfied with the shape of the bag, loosely stuff it with plastic bags. Put it on a towel and let it air dry. It may take 2-3 days for it to completely dry.

Now you can complete the finishing process. This process should take 5 - 15 minutes, depending upon how fuzzy your bag turns out. The following are the tools I have on hand to create a consistent and attractive finished bag that is ready to embellish and decorate:

- small pair of sharp scissors
- disposable shavers, lint brush, any sort of tool that takes pilling off of sweaters
- electric horse or dog clippers
- Sweater Stone (www.sweaterstone.com, also available at discount department stores and some yarns stores)

Start by actually "shaving" the bag with a disposable razor. Don't be afraid to use a little pressure. You will start to see a textured surface getting uncovered. If you need to get more aggressive with fuzz or fluff removal, use the sweater stone until you get the finish you like. I use horse clippers for a fast and consistent surface.

You may alternate between the tools to get what you are looking for - just experiment until you are happy with the outcome. Continue shaving until you like the surface. Use your small scissors to trim around the top edge of the bag so that you have a very crisp finished top. Then finish with a lint brush to remove any little pieces of wool that have gotten stuck to the surface. At this point, lightly steam your bag with a very hot steam iron with a damp towel over the surface. Light pressure and a lot of steam should give you a lovely surface to decorate. This is a great way to ensure a nice consistent surface on your bag.