

5 Common Needle Felting Mistakes

by [Teresa Perleberg](#) | Dec 23, 2015 | [Blog](#), [Felting 101](#), [Needle Felting News](#),

Needle felting since 2006 and teaching needle felting classes has helped me to become aware of common needle felting mistakes that can easily be avoided when starting out on your needle felting adventure. I have narrowed it down to 5 things to hopefully give you an advantage and avoid frustration

- 1. Not Felting on a Cushion** I provide felting cushions for my classes, but I often see my students hold the project in their hand as they felt. The cushion provides the most safety. Lay the project on the [felting cushion](#) to avoid getting stabbed by the felting needle.
- 2. Stabbing the Felting needle deep into the Wool** Notice that the barbs on the felting needle are located mostly towards the tip. Short quick stabs with the felting needle will help you to felt faster. It is not necessary to stab the needle deep into the wool, this uses more time and energy than is required.
- 3. Using the Wrong Size Felting Needle** There are many different sizes of [felting needles](#). The barbs are also in different patterns on needles such as star, swirl, triangle etc. Tools holding more than one needle are also available. Different breeds of wool require different sizes of needles so it can be quite frustrating when just starting out. I have tried several sizes and types of needles over the years and the one I use the most is **Star 36**. I recommend starting with a single star 36 and experiment with others on the side until you find the perfect needles for the type of wool you are using. I use mostly Romney wool and star 36 works great. Finer wools such as Merino require smaller sizes such as 38 or smaller. I always use a single needle when felting. I have tried using felting tools that hold more than one needle and find them awkward to hold. A multi tool works well for flat felting but not on 3D in my opinion.
- 4. Felting with the Wrong Wool** I was lucky when starting out on my felting journey, I had a [flock of sheep](#) that grew the perfect wool for felting. I didn't know it at the time but have found that Romney wool is my favorite for it's feltability. There are 100's of choices when picking out wool for your first felting project. The most important thing to remember is to stay away from Superwash wool. It has been specially processed so that it won't felt. It was designed to be used for knit clothing that will not shrink when washed. There are many lovely types of wool you will want to try, but for starting out my favorites are; [Romney](#) and Icelandic. Stressed, unhealthy and old sheep grow wool that is course and not as fun to work with, so find someone who has a healthy, stress free flock.
- 5. Breaking Felting Needles.** We all break needles when we needle felt, but there are ways to prevent it from happening too often. Make sure you purchase more than one needle when starting because it is extremely frustrating to break your only needle and have to wait to finish your project.

If you see the tip of your felting needle bow or bend as you are poking into your piece, this is an indicator that you are applying sideways pressure to your felting needle & it will snap. You can poke in & out at any angle as long as the tip of your felting needle stays straight. Do not use your felting needle to pick at or pry the fibers of your project as, this too, will cause your felting needle to snap.

If you work on a cushion your needle will have a soft surface to protect it, if it goes through your felting project and comes out the other side. Wait until you have some experience in needle felting before attempting to work around wire. It took some time, but I don't break as many needles as I once did, so there is hope.

Also, keep in mind that felting needles wear out, and need to be replaced if you are felting often.

If you are just starting out needle felting or looking to improve your skills you will want to check out my [needle felting kits](#) and [Needle Felting Academy](#).