

How to do it: Blocking

by Mandy Powers



There are many methods for blocking your knitting or crochet projects. For most natural animal fibers, I strongly recommend you wet block the items. It's quick and easy, and makes your good projects look fabulous.

You'll need:

- A bowl or sink. If your project is big use the tub.
- Warm water
- Your favorite wool wash
- An absorbent, old towel
- The knitted or crocheted item

Step 1: Fill your sink or bowl with warm water.

Luke warm water is best.

Step 2: Drizzle in some wool wash.

There are many options for wool wash. Choose one with a scent you like. If you've never tried wool wash before, ask at your local yarn shop if they carry any. Don't use Woolite - it's too harsh on your handmade items.

Step 3: Drop your project in and let it soak for about 15 minutes.

Once your project is wet, do not agitate it. You want to treat your project very gently so as to not felt it. Make sure the item is completely submerged, and then let it be. Some wool washes need to be rinsed out. If you need to rinse, make sure you use water that is the same temperature as the current bath.

Step 4: Remove excess water.

Do not wring your item. Gently squeeze the water out, then use an old, absorbent towel to get out more moisture: roll up the project with the towel and step on it to get out a lot of the water. You can even use the spin cycle on your washing machine.

Step 5: Shape and lay flat to dry.

Lay your damp project out on a towel to dry, or use a headform for hats if you have one. When your item is wet, it has a lot of give, and it will do what you want it to do. Take the time to even out the stitches, using your fingers to poke things into place. You can flatten out a rolling hem or make a pointy tip at the end of the thumb. For shawls or sweater pieces you can use pins to hold the project in place.

Now for the hard part - waiting for your project to dry!

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