

HOW TO MAKE A FELT BALL NECKLACE



Today I bring you a tutorial that is really easy to make, even for someone who has never wet felted before.

So, if you're just starting out and you'd like to make a gift for your child, this is the right project for you! It's easy to make, fun and colorful. And I bet it'll make your little one happy 😊

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GOING THE DODO WAY



This might be your first-time wet felting, so you have no specific equipment for it. That's absolutely no problem. We're going to use things you already have around the house.

So, start by gathering the following:

- A small piece of bubble wrap – you know, the kind you find inside envelopes or that's used to wrap electrical appliances – or another type of plastic. Bubble wrap is better, if you have some.
- A small basin with water.
- A bar of laundry soap. Don't have any? No worries. That's just the one I prefer, but you can use some liquid soap instead.
- A towel.
- A felting needle and a sponge, if you have them. This is optional.
- And thick sewing needles. It's important that you have several different sizes, like the ones used for sewing projects knitted with chunky wool.

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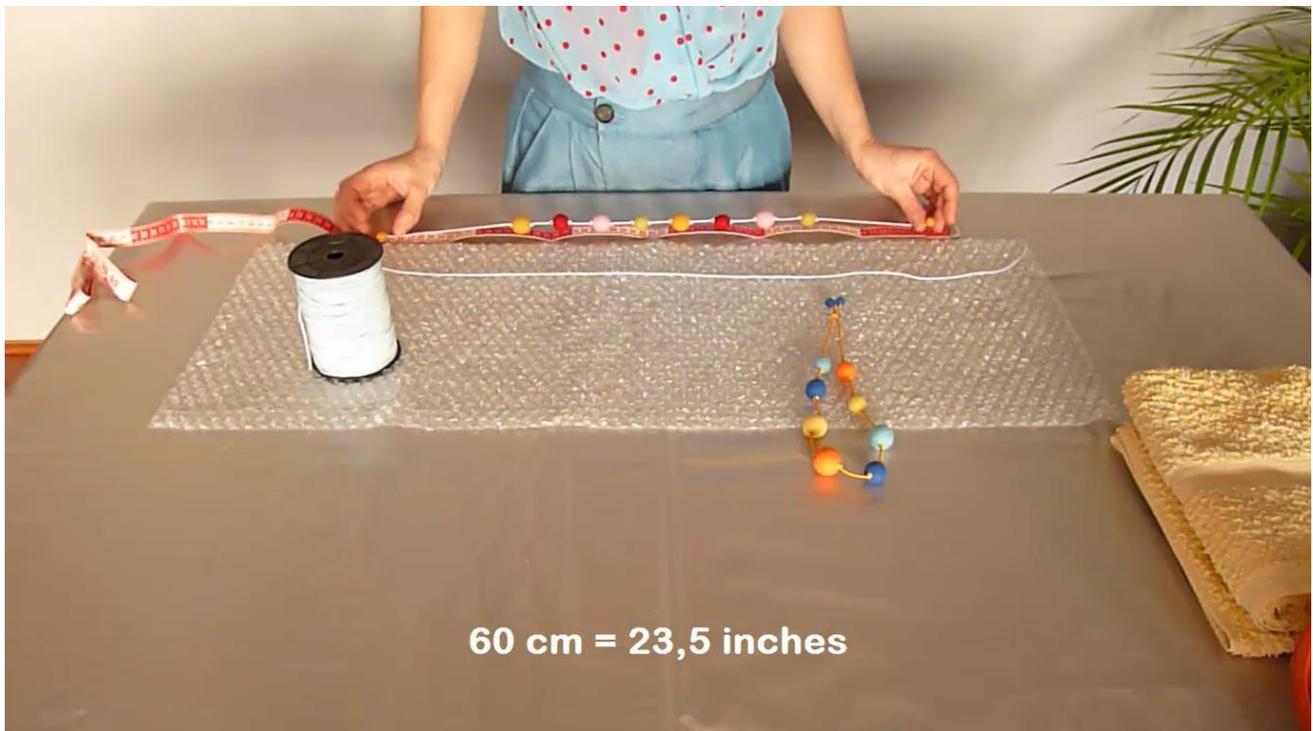
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Then you'll need:

- Scraps of wool. I chose candy colors.
- And a piece of elastic. You can also use cord, but I recommend elastic. Since it's a necklace for children, it's always good to use elastic, because they stretch, and pull 😊



This one measures about 60 cm or 23,5 inches. But we need to cut it bigger, since we still have to add a lot of knots.

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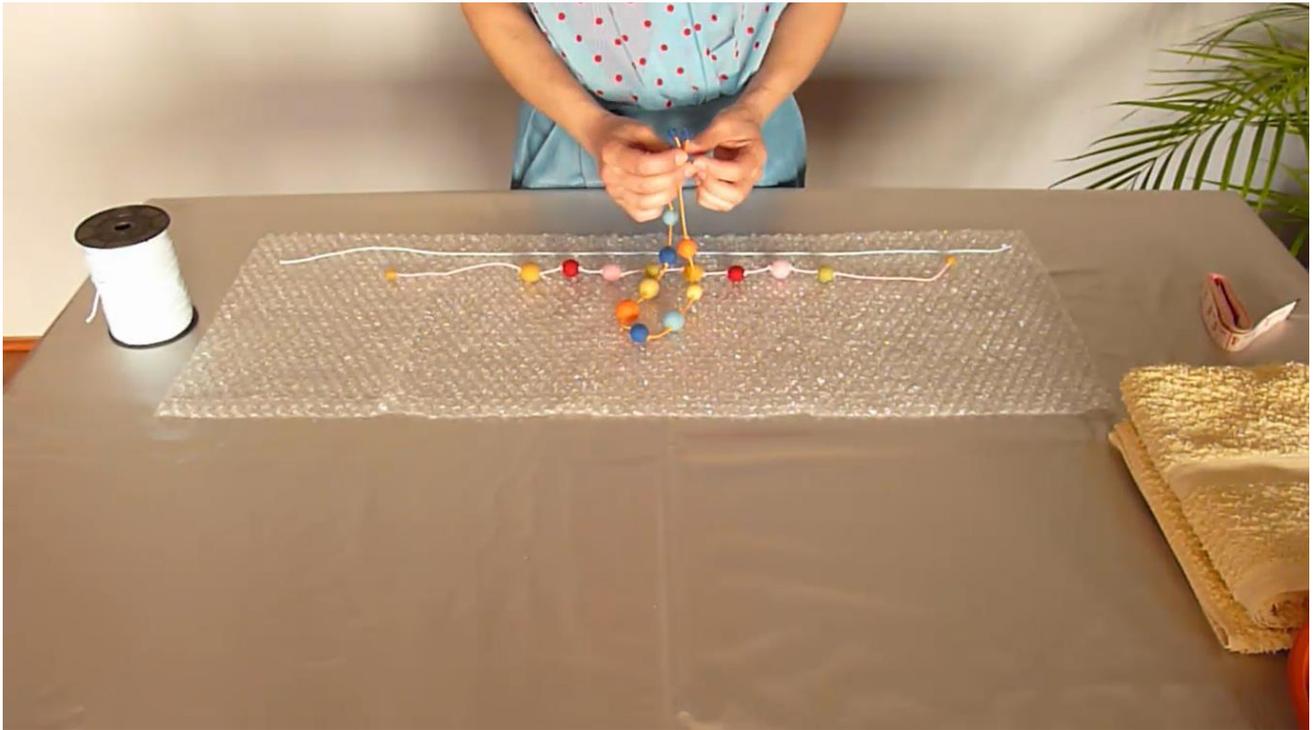
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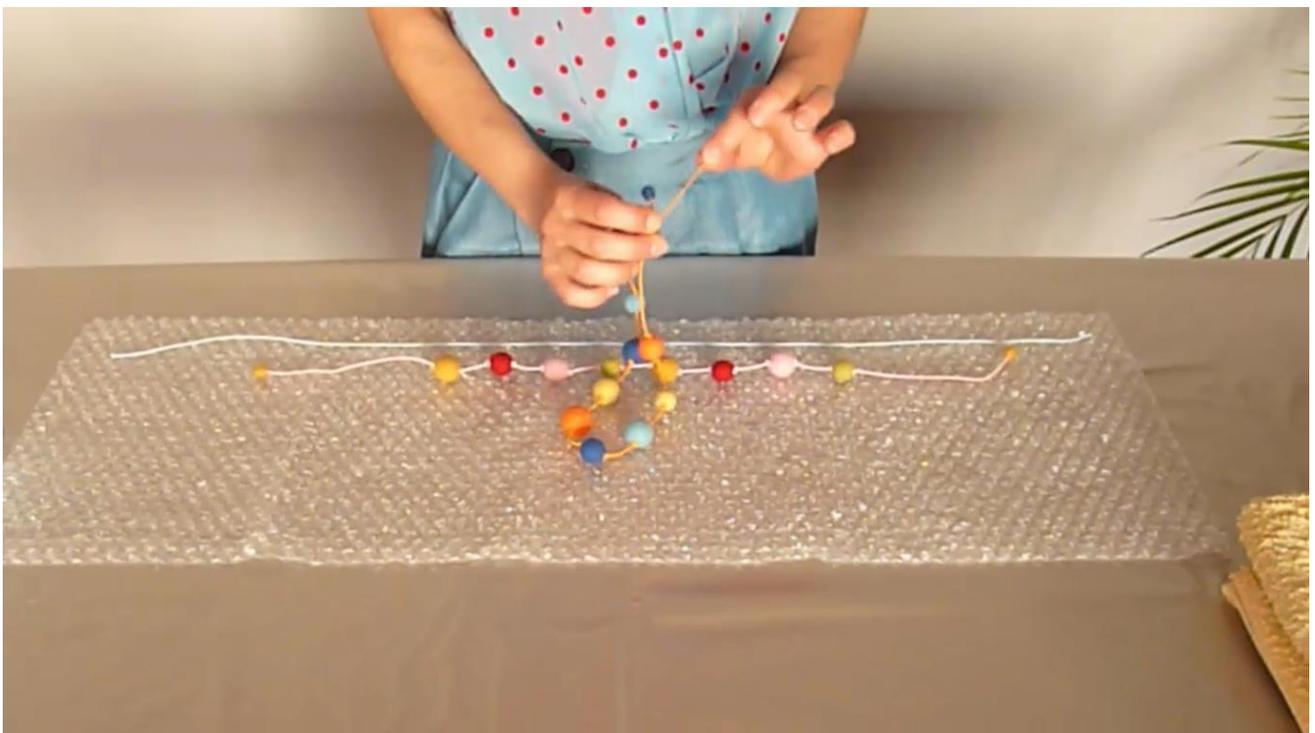
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These are made in a different way and I'm going to show you how they're done.



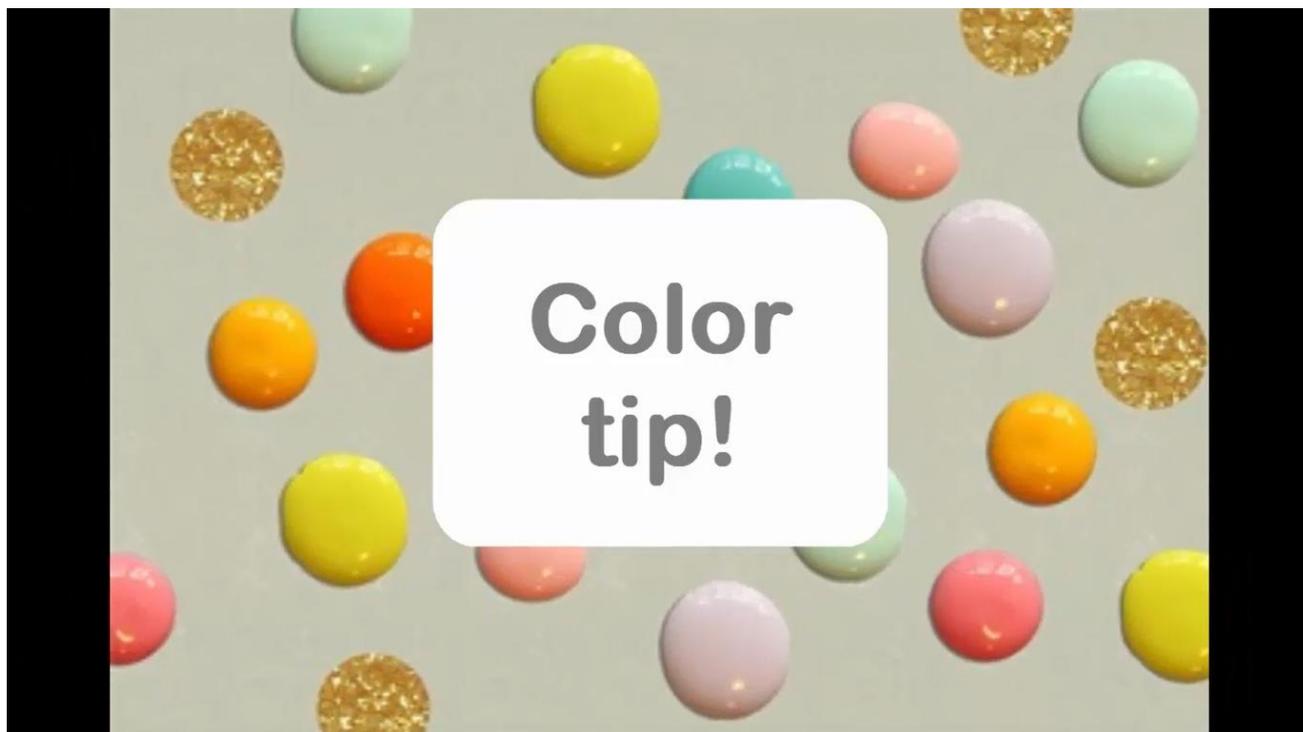
As you can see, you can pull on them, and they don't come off.

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Most of my necklaces have 8 balls, but since I've chosen 7 colors, I'll make this one with 7 balls. You can also play with the ball sizes.



If you don't have a lot of different wool colors, you can mix 2, like white and a second color. But if you have a big choice, you might want to use a wider color palette.

If you have any trouble combining colors, I suggest you google something like "color palette for kids". In fact, that's what I've done, and I found this beautiful polka dot combination. So, this is the palette that inspired my color choice.

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Tip #1: Keep your wool away from the water. If your wool gets wet, it'll be difficult to use it for felting afterwards.



Tip #2: How to cut the wool. These are huge.

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You'll probably have little pieces like this. If that's the case, your wool is already cut. But if you have bigger pieces, I'd like to show you how to cut it.



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Notice the ends. That means it hasn't been cut with scissors. In fact, you should never cut felting wool with scissors. This is how to do it.



Keep your hands apart, hold tight, and pull. The wool is cut in the middle.



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Tip #3: How to calculate the size of the ball.

Now, we want to know how big the felt balls will turn out. Because – as you probably know – wool shrinks around 30% when felted. So, how do you decide how much wool is enough?



Just gather the wool in a ball, like this, and then squeeze it. When you squeeze it, you get the approximate end size after felting.

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So, this would be too much. Let's just cut a bit off. Like this. So, this would be enough for 2 balls. But I'll only make 1 ball in each color, so I'll only need half.



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Tip #4: How to apply the wool thinly. It's easier to make wool felt when you don't have big chunks, and this is a big chunk. So, this is what I do to make it thinner, so that it felts well.



Notice what I'm doing: my left hand is holding the wool and I'm pulling it slowly with my right hand. See how it becomes thinner?

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See what happened? We had this big chunk of wool. Look what it looks like now.



Now, I'll start by making a knot in the middle. This gives us a core to work around. You can even make 2 knots if the first one is small. There you go. You have a core that you can work around.

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Now we're going to wind the wool around the core, as if we were winding a yarn ball. First one side, and then the other. Like this.

And again, with the other side. You want the wool fibers to intersect in a 90-degree angle.

What tends to happen is the wool tends to unwind. That's why I mentioned the felting needle.

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You could do this and start felting from here.



But, if you have a felting needle, you can needle felt the ball very lightly. You don't need to do much. This guarantees the wool doesn't move, so it's easier to wet felt the ball.

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Tip #5: Watch your fingers! Keep your fingers away from the needle at all times, because if you stab your finger with this needle, it really hurts.



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Tip #6: Keep the needle vertical. And remember to always keep your needle vertical while you're working and keep the same angle when the needle goes in and when it comes out. Otherwise you'll break the needle.

They're very easy to break. And it's a shame, because when you learn how to work with a felting needle, you can keep it for a long time.



See? The wool is now attached, so it's easier to wet felt.

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Now, try squeezing it again, and see how big it becomes. That's how big it'll be after wet felting.



So, let's do it. Put it in the water. And add the soap.

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Tip #7: How to apply the soap. This is how I do it.



I make my hands soapy and I start rolling the ball in my hands. First, very softly. Don't use too much pressure.

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Tip #8: Don't use too much soap. And don't make the ball too soapy either. You just want to see some foam. Too much soap will delay the felting process. That might not be very important when you're working with such a small piece, but when you're working with a big one it is.



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It's already too soapy. I can feel it, it's too slippery and it's making too much foam.



Just go on felting, and when you start feeling that it's becoming harder, you can start squeezing a bit more. Like this.

Now I'm squeezing really hard. But you also don't want it to be too compact, because then it'll be very difficult to make the hole.

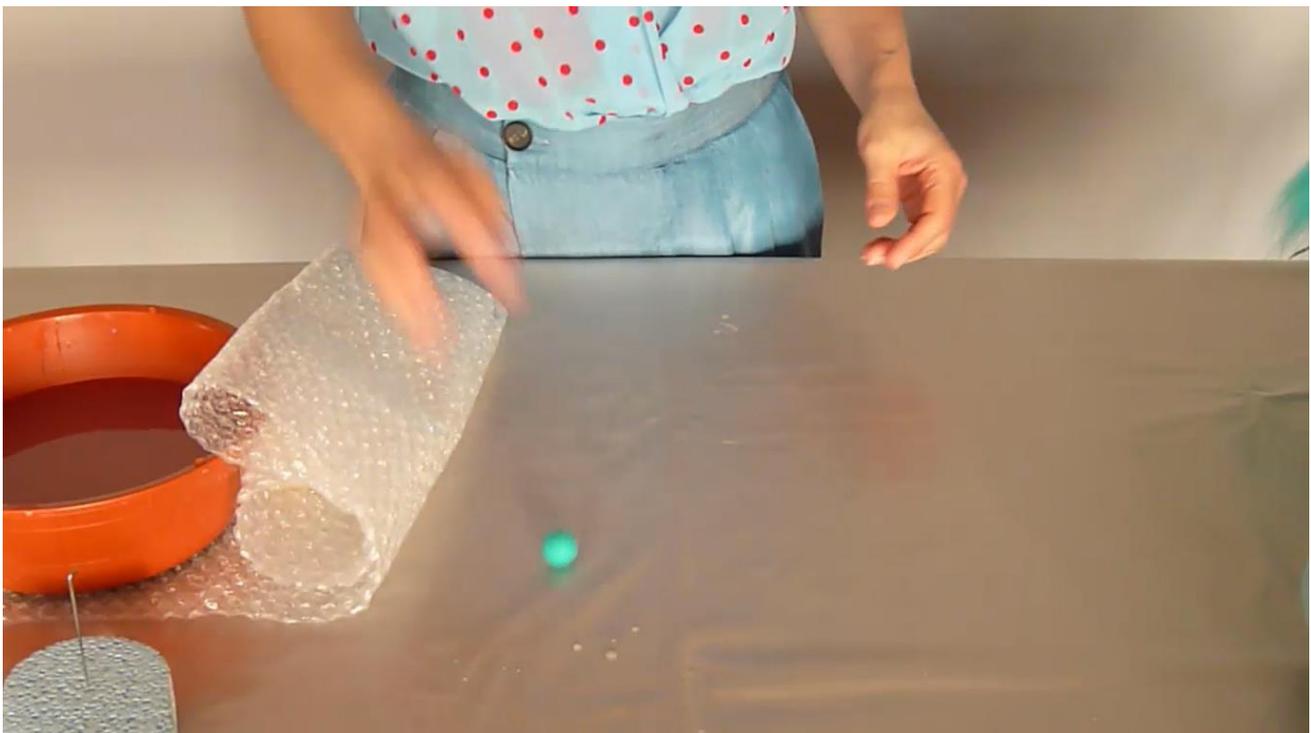
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Tip #9: The “bounce test”. So how do you know the ball is ready? You’ll be able to feel it’s ready.



But, if you’re not sure, you can do what I call the “bounce test”. If it bounces, it’s ready. If the wool is too soft, your ball will never bounce.

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It's ready.



Now, I'd like to call your attention to the size. Remember when we squeezed it? That's the size it has now.

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This is about a medium size. You can make some smaller and some bigger than this.



I felted the first ball on my hands. I didn't use the bubble wrap. So, I'd like to show you why it's here and how to use it.

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Start the same way and then roll directly on the bubble wrap. You can also add some soap on the bubble wrap.

And what this does is it creates friction. The bubbles create friction. So, that helps the felting process. This is more important for bigger pieces. In small pieces like this, it doesn't make a big difference. That's why I say the bubble wrap is not mandatory for this project.

You can also alternate between the bubble wrap and your hands.

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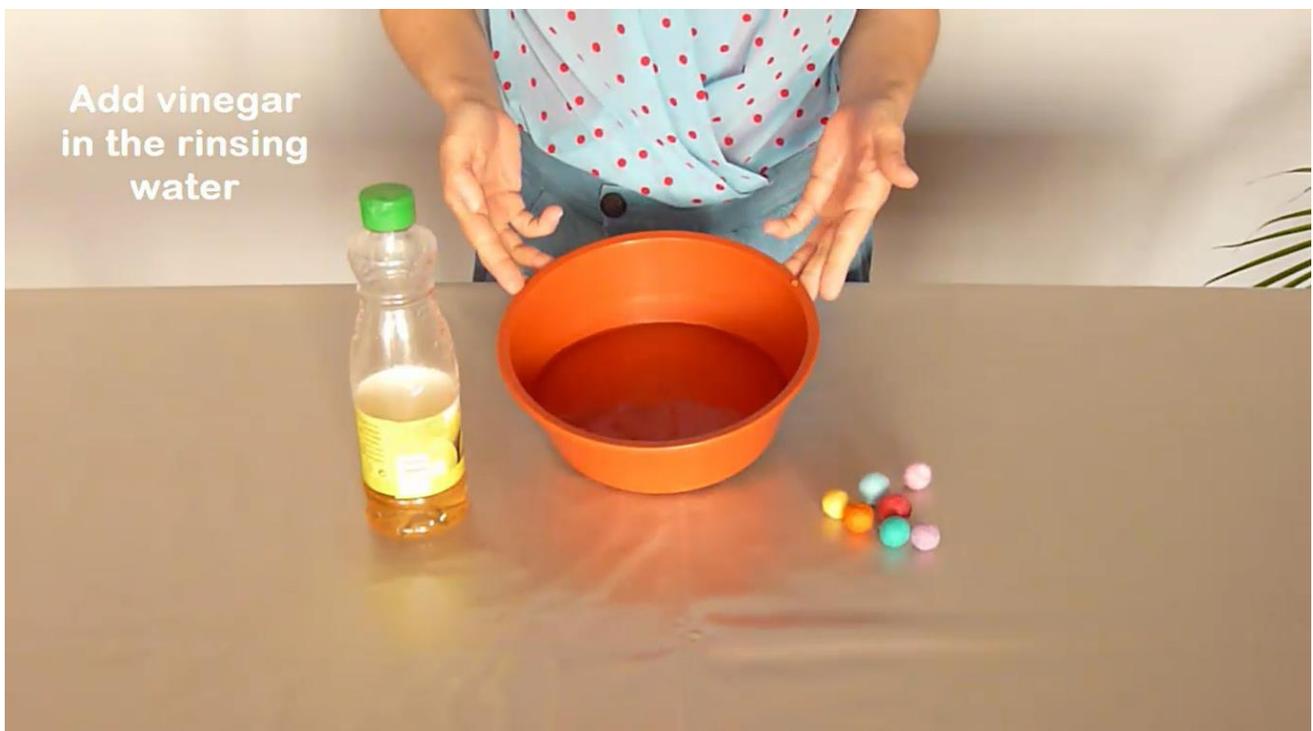
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So, our felt balls are ready. Now we'll rinse them. This water has too much soap, so I'll rinse them under running water in my kitchen sink.

Then I'll come back and show you a last tip.



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Tip #10: Add vinegar in the rinsing water. My balls are rinsed, and I have some clean water here. And this is vinegar.

I'll put some in the water... and I'll immerse the felt in this water.

What's this for?

You see, vinegar neutralizes any soap rests that might still be in the felt. If soap remains in the felt, it attacks the fibers. So, this protects the felt and it also makes the colors pop.



So, it's important to do this when you finish a piece.

And that's it. Let them dry at least 24 hours before you make the holes. (The drier they are, the easier it is to make the holes.)

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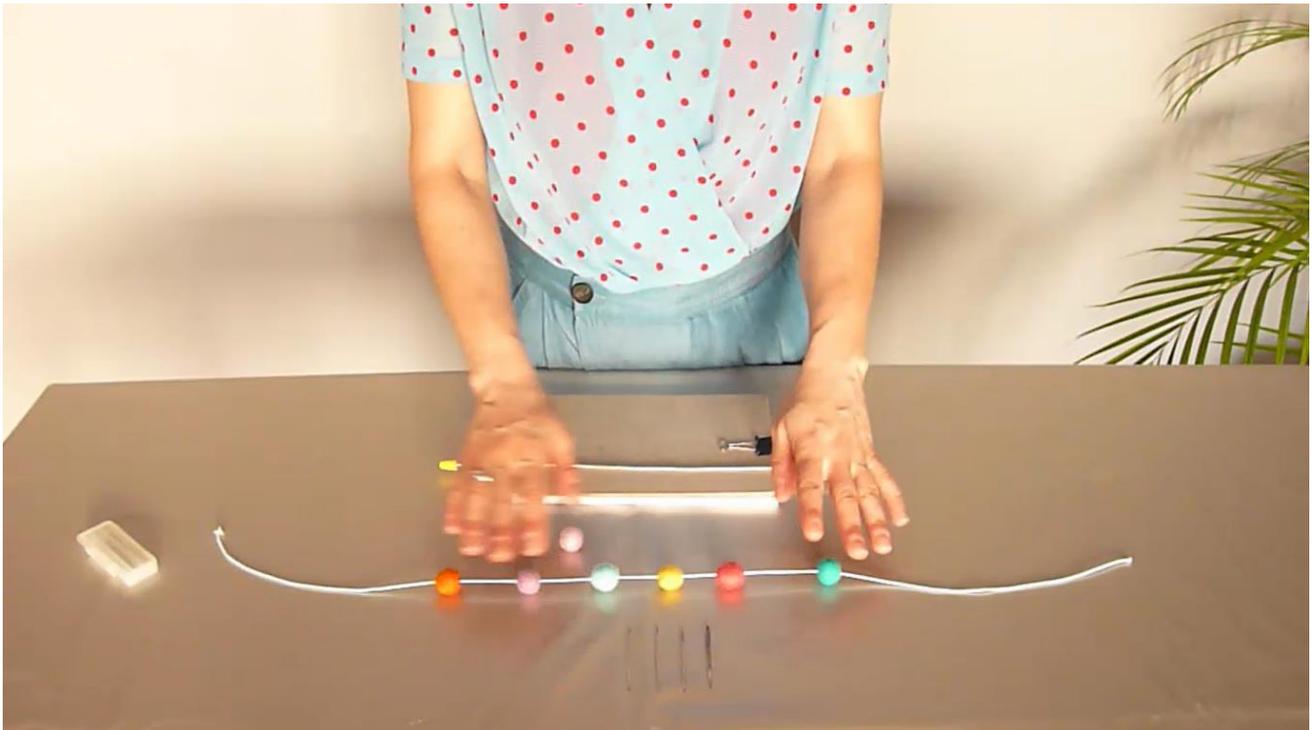
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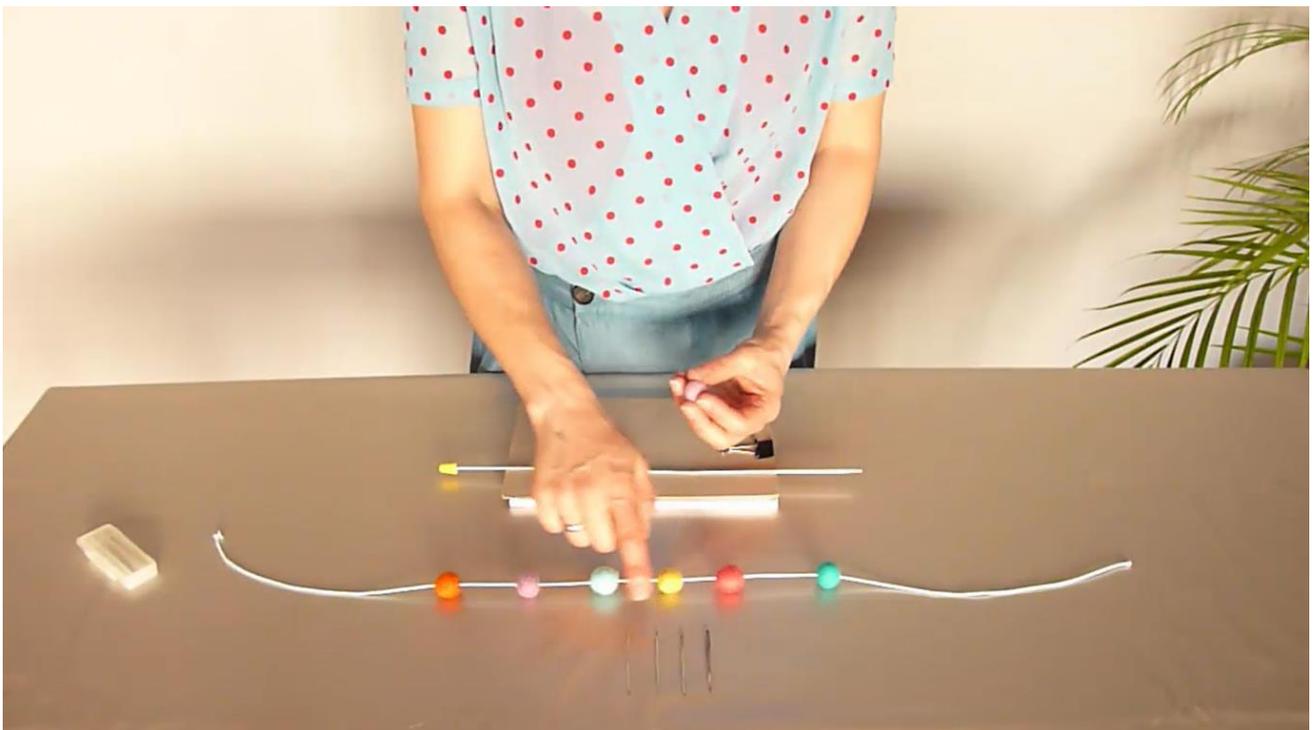
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I've already made the holes in all of these. There's 1 left and I'm going to show you how I make them.



As you can see, I have 4 different needles here, because it's difficult to start with the thicker one. If you start with that one, it's nearly impossible to get it through the felt.

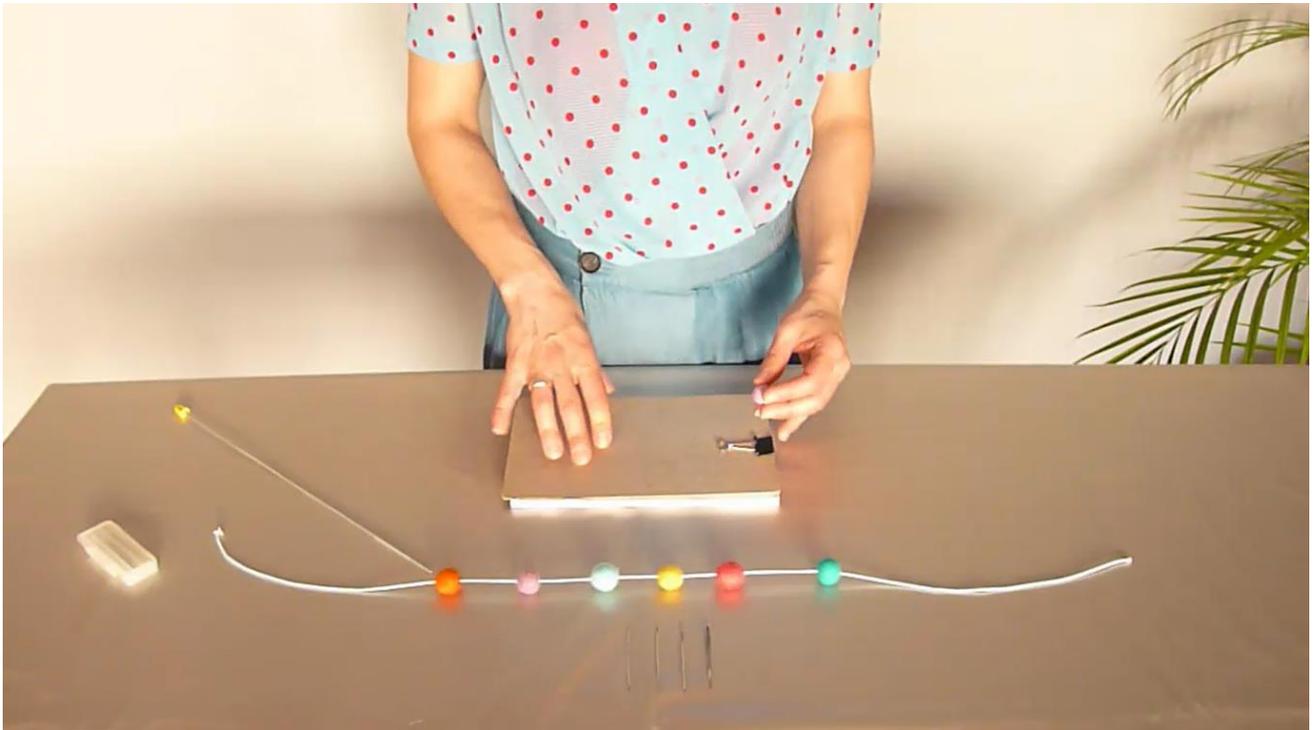
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So, I'll start with the thinner one, and then widen the hole, until it's big enough.

I also have a knitting needle to help me widen the hole, because the elastic is pretty thick.

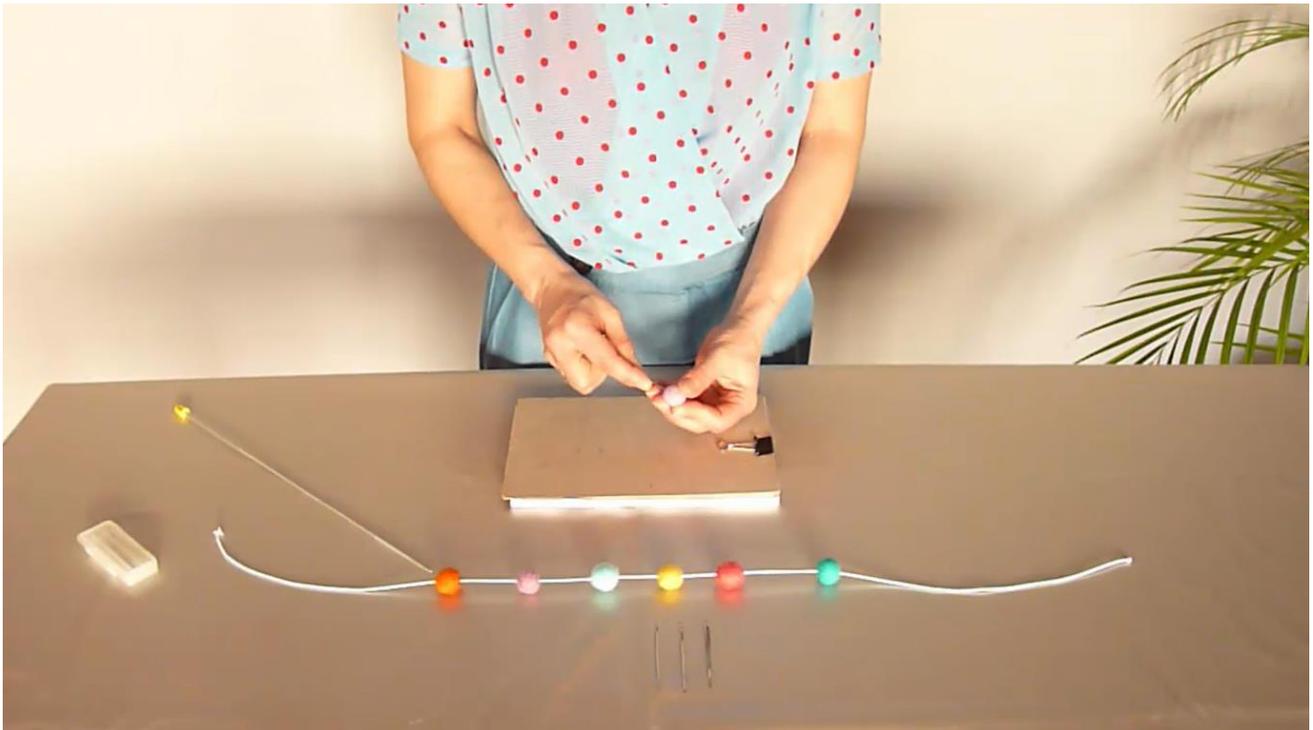


And I've got this notebook with the cardboard, which I'll be using to make pressure against.

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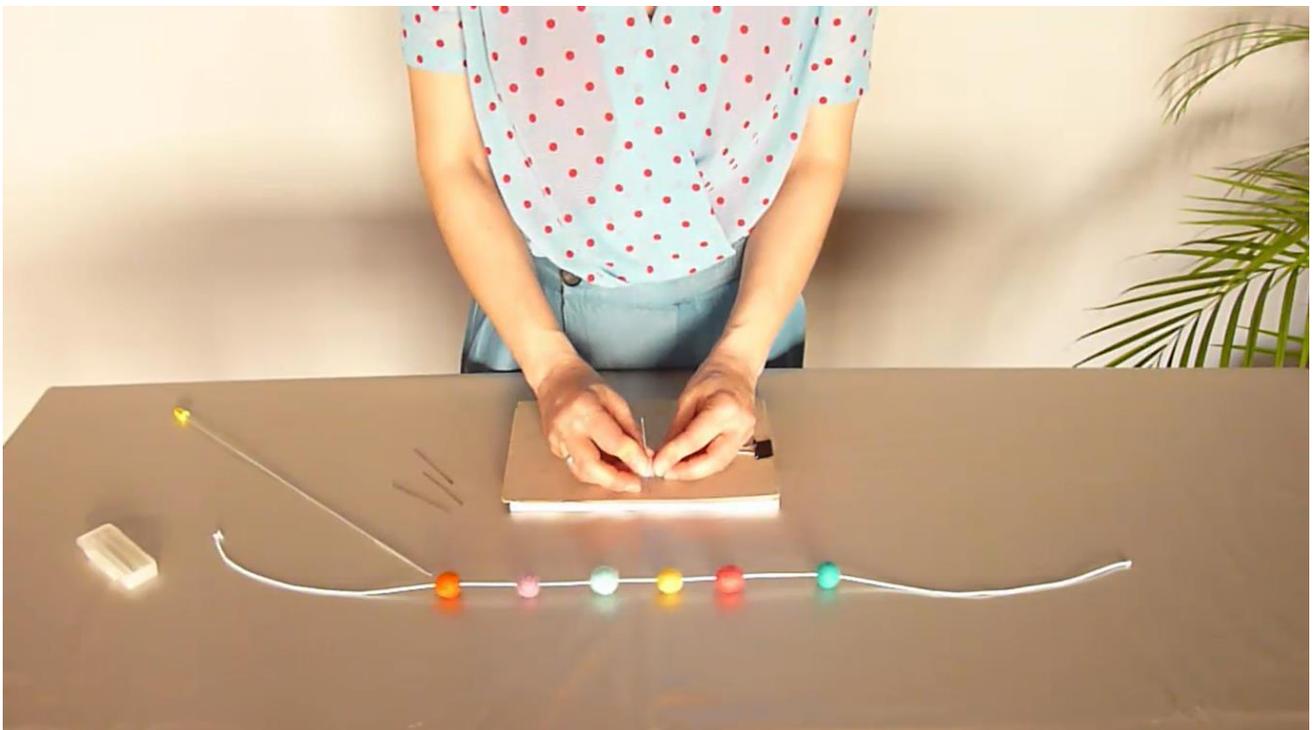
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So, start with the thinner one and make it go through the center of the ball. The more compact your felt is, the harder it'll be to pierce.

Now repeat with all the needles.

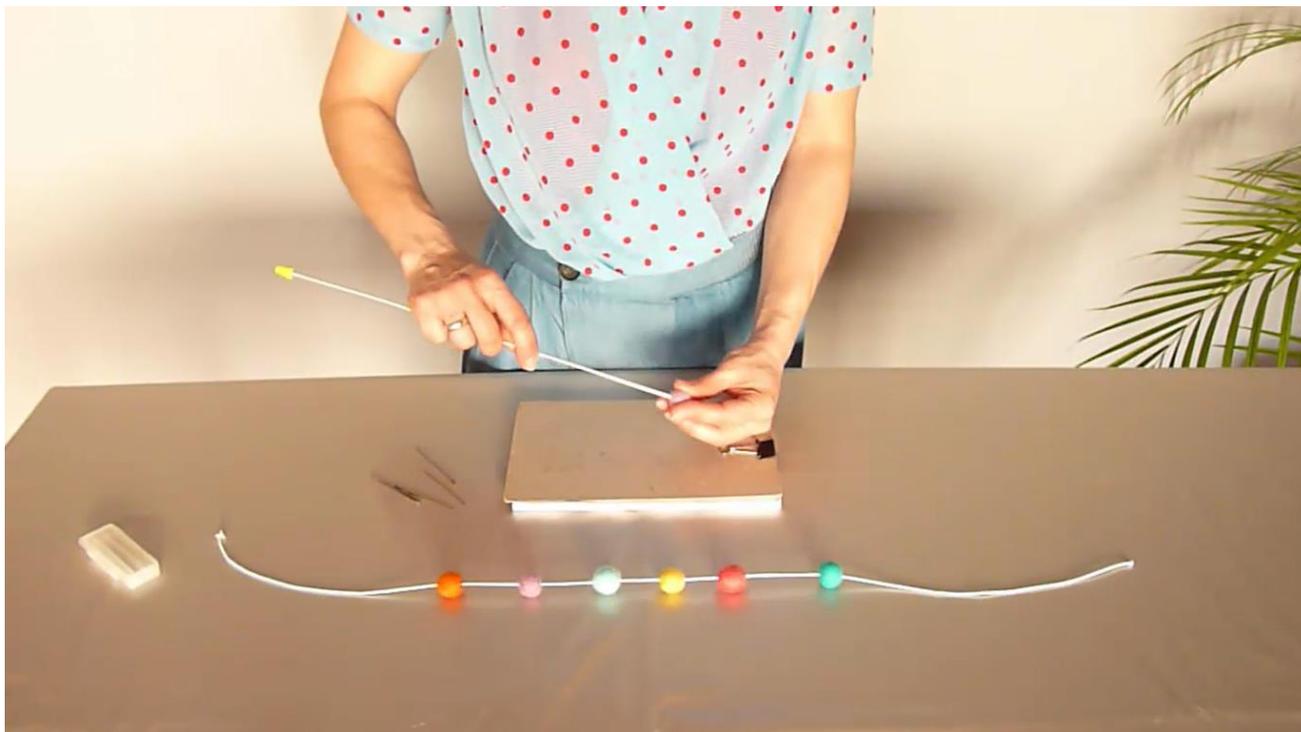


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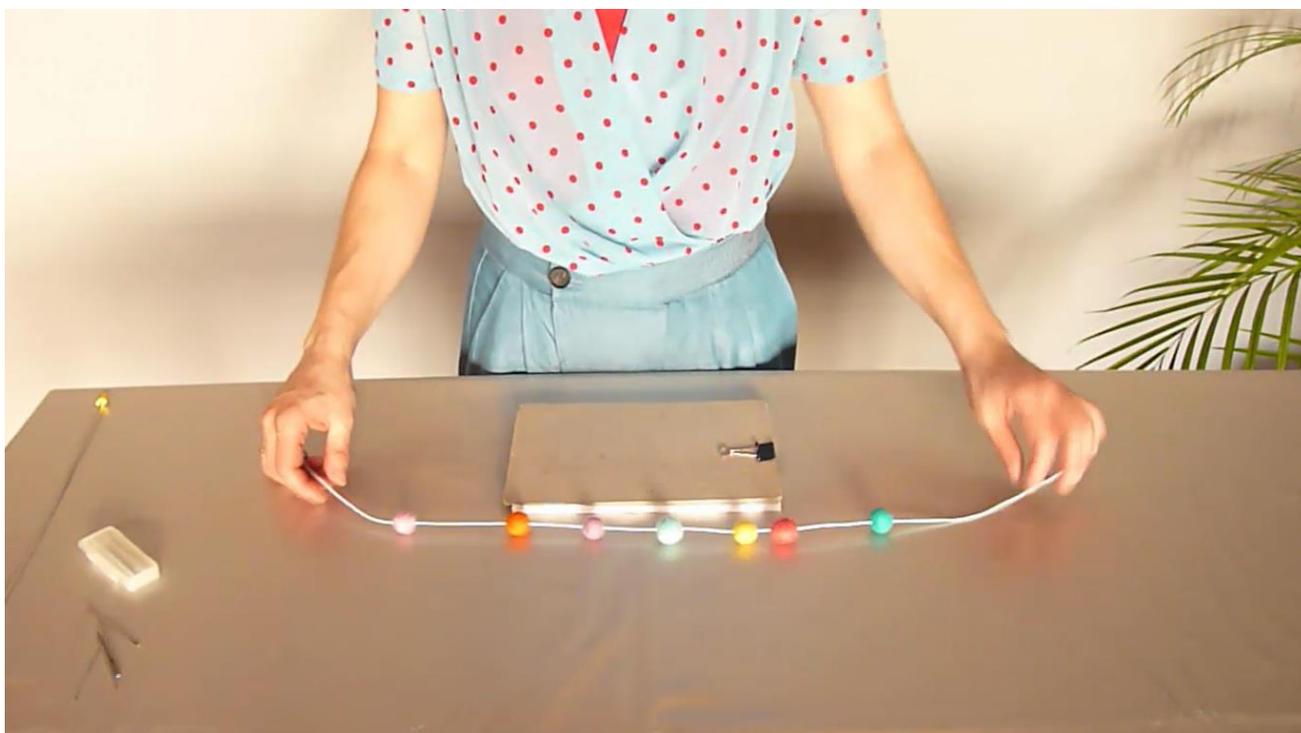
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Use the cardboard to press.



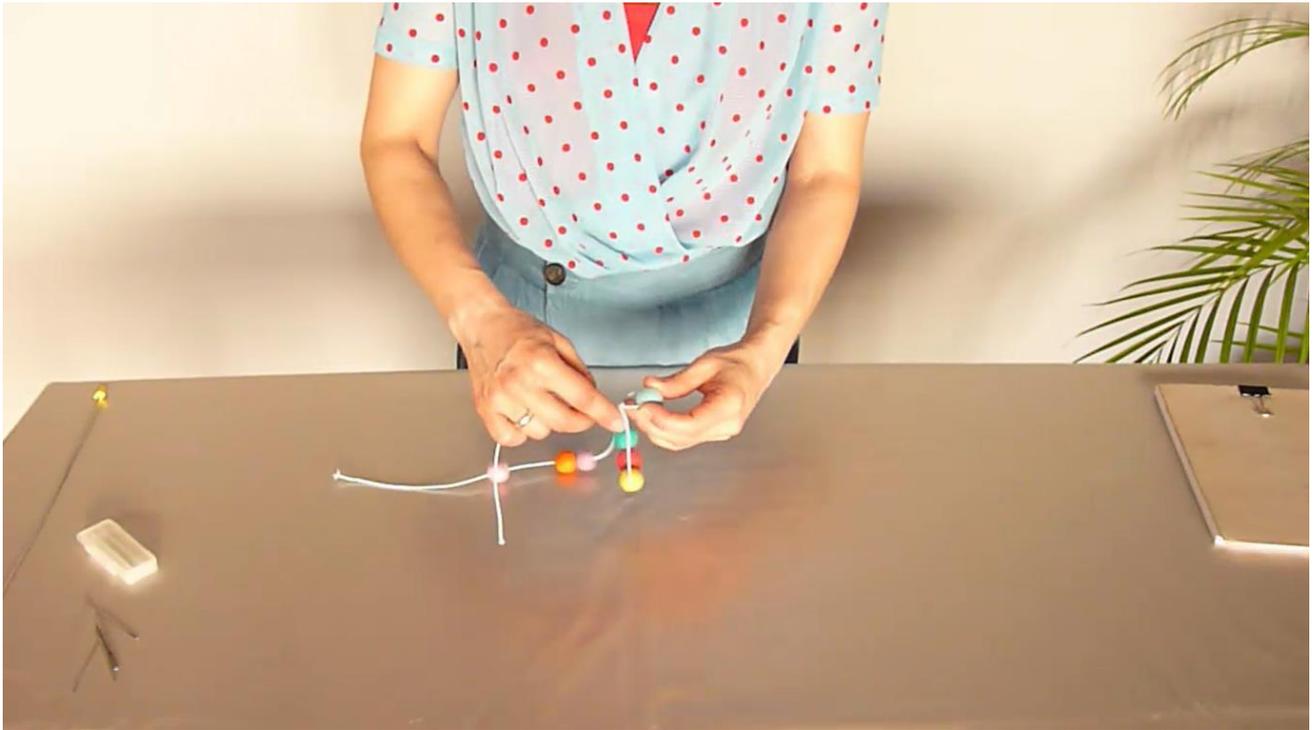
And if the hole is not wide enough, use a knitting needle.



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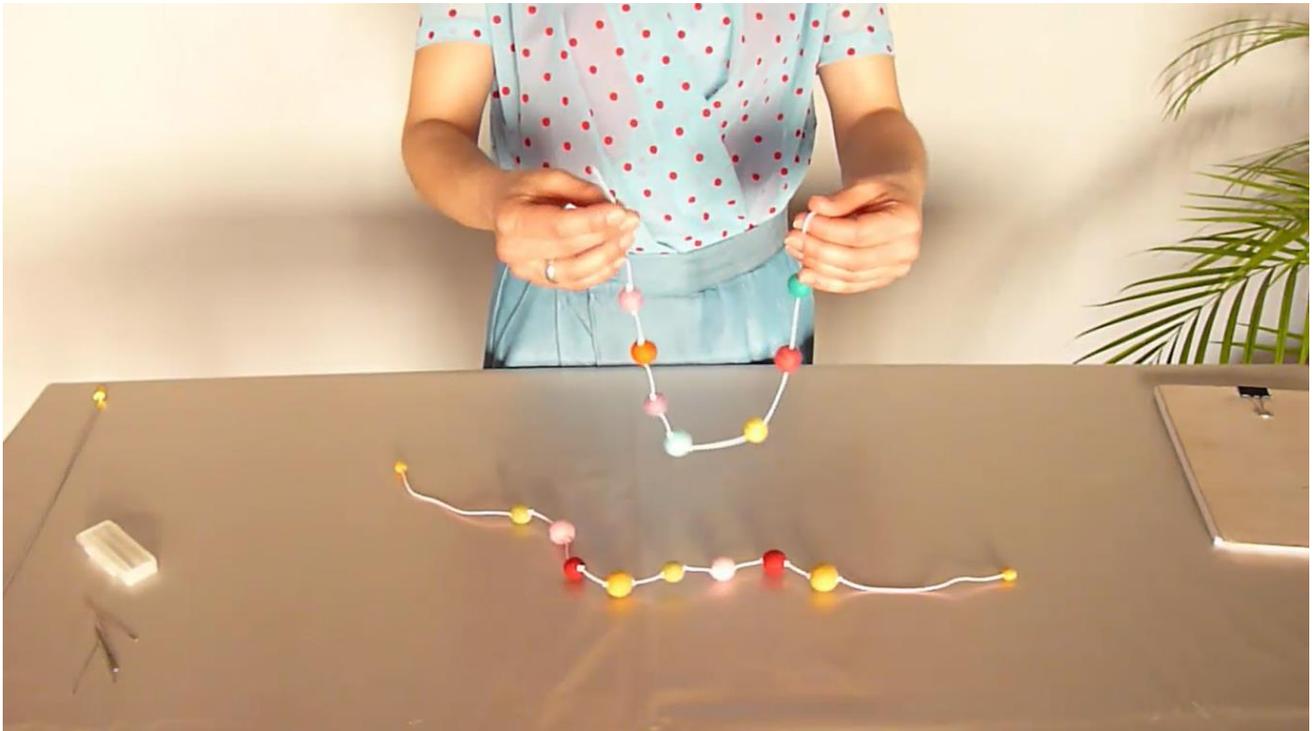
Now that all the wool balls are in place, find the middle, and make the first 2 knots.
You can also do this one-by-one: so, thread 1 ball and make the knots straight away. That would be easier.



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There you go. Now do the same for the rest of the necklace. Just make sure you check where you want to have them first.

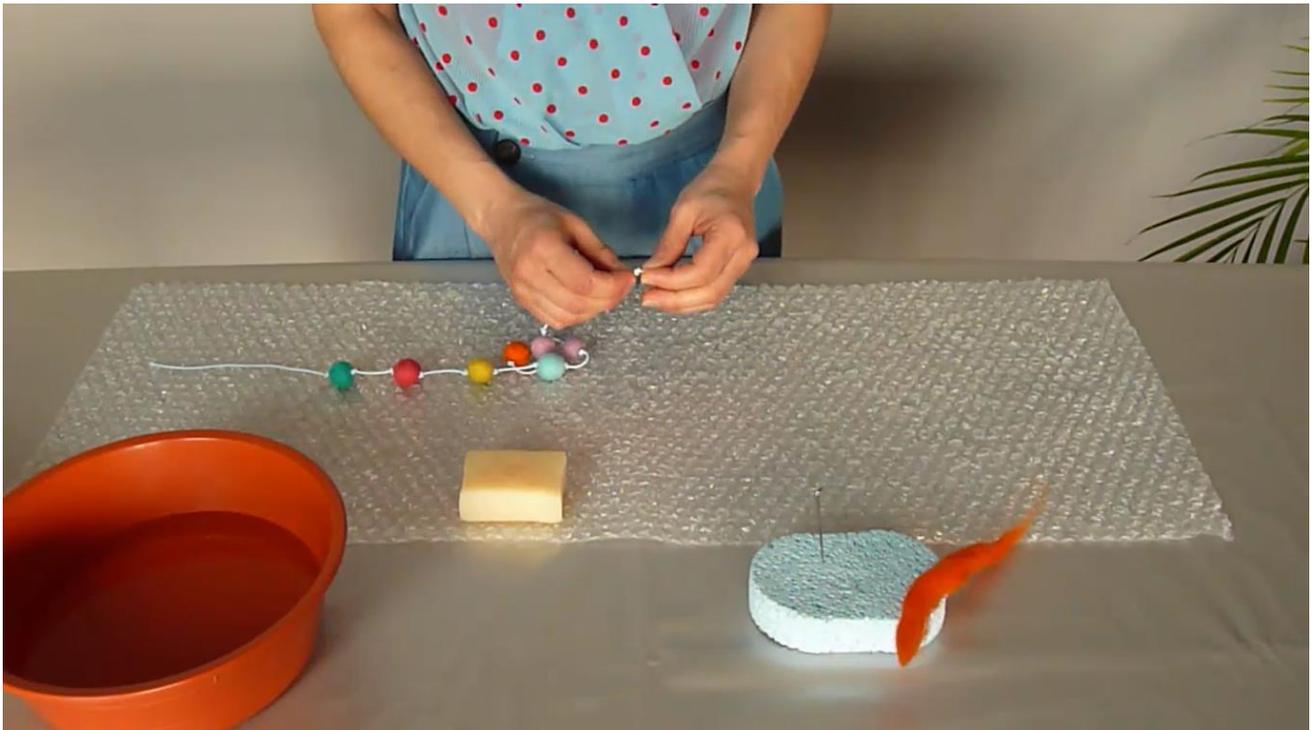


Remember you'll need a longer piece of elastic on the ends.

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The balls are all in place. Now I'm going to show you how to finish the necklace.

The first thing you do is you make a knot on both ends of the elastic.

Make sure they're tight because we'll anchor the wool on these knots.

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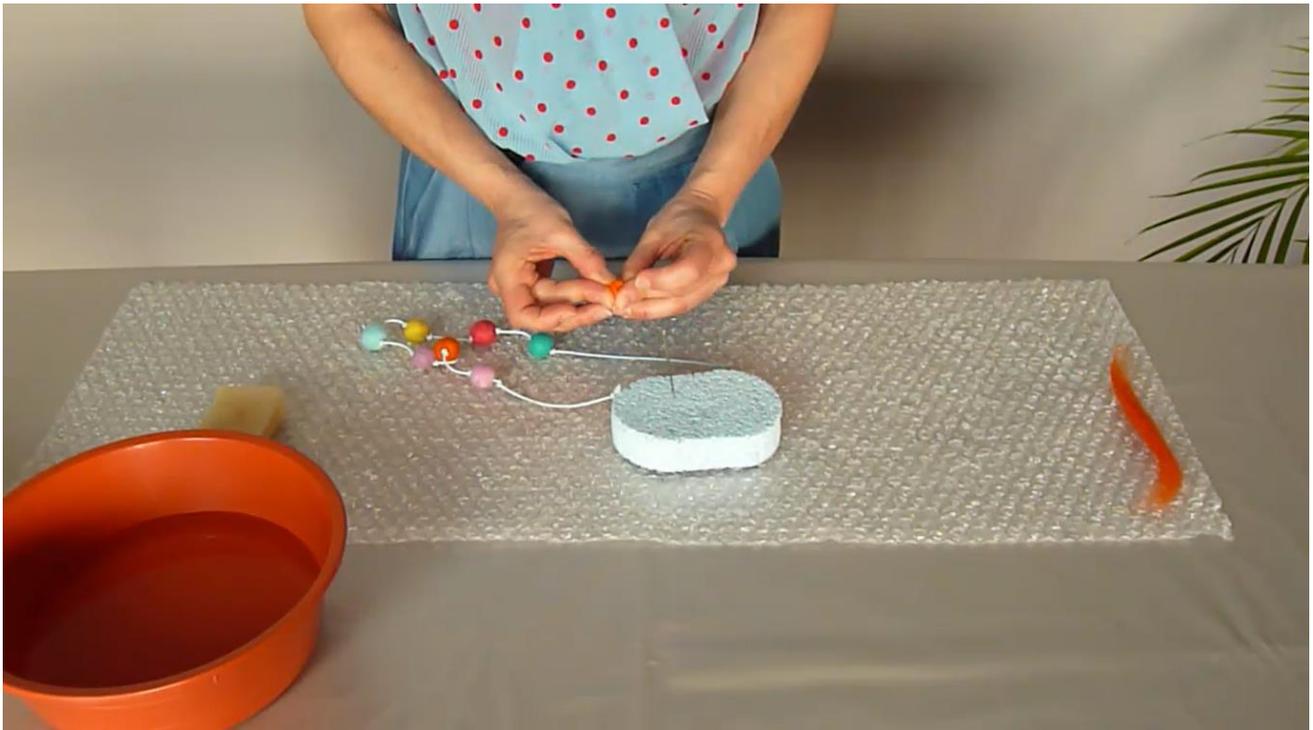
I've got this piece of orange that I'll use to make the small balls.



I'll cut it in half.

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And I'll squeeze it to check how big the balls will be. And I think they're exactly the right size.



Here it's particularly important to work with thin wool. If you do this with wool chunks this won't work. We need really thin, light wisps of wool.

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There you go. See?



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Now, this has to attach firmly on the knot. So, keep the wool tight around the elastic. Keep winding the wool on the elastic and try to get a round shape.



When it's finished, work a bit with the felting needle. This prevents the wool from unwinding while you're wet felting.

Watch your fingers. And pay attention because there's the knot inside. Avoid stabbing it with the needle or you'll break it.

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Ok, it's attached. Now do the same on the other side.



Felt both balls the same way you've done before. But put the elastic like this, between your fingers, to hold the elastic in place.

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And felt in your hand. Start slowly.



The elastic keeps turning. Don't let that bother you.

Now you can use more pressure.

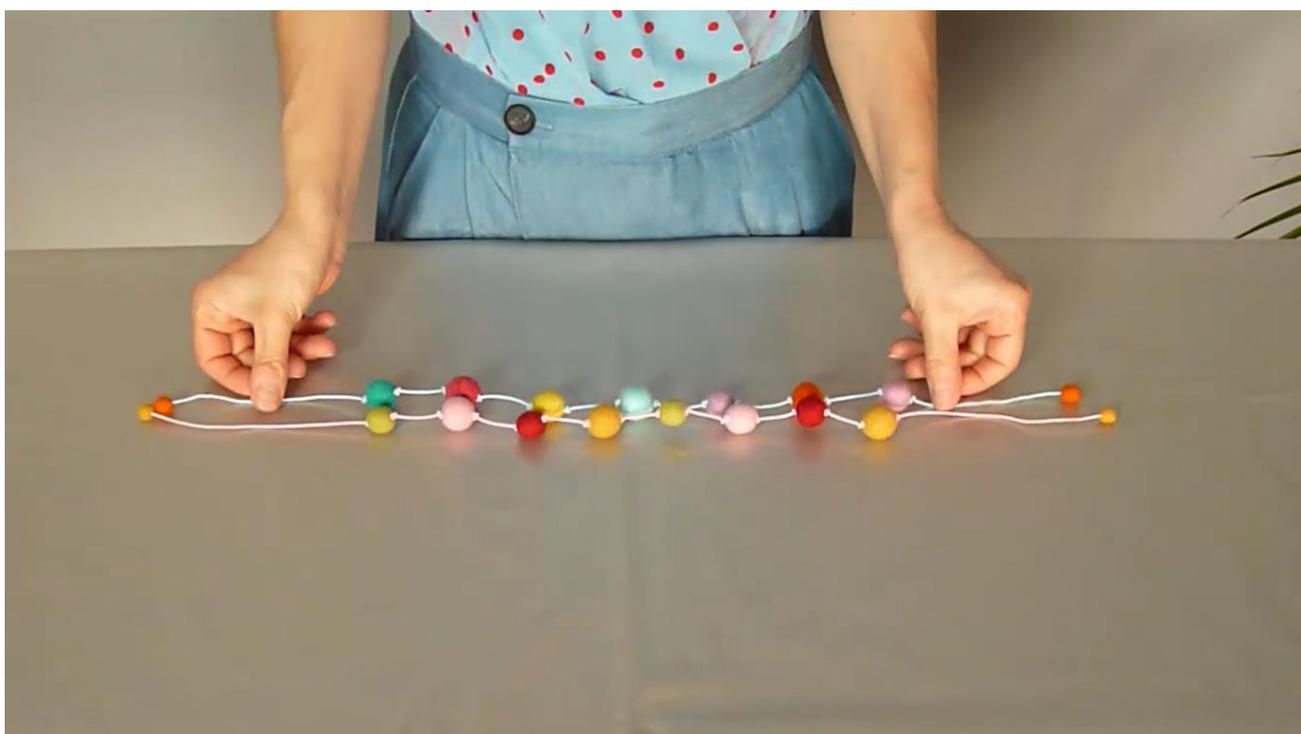
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Ok, it's done. Repeat on the other side. See the difference in size after felting?

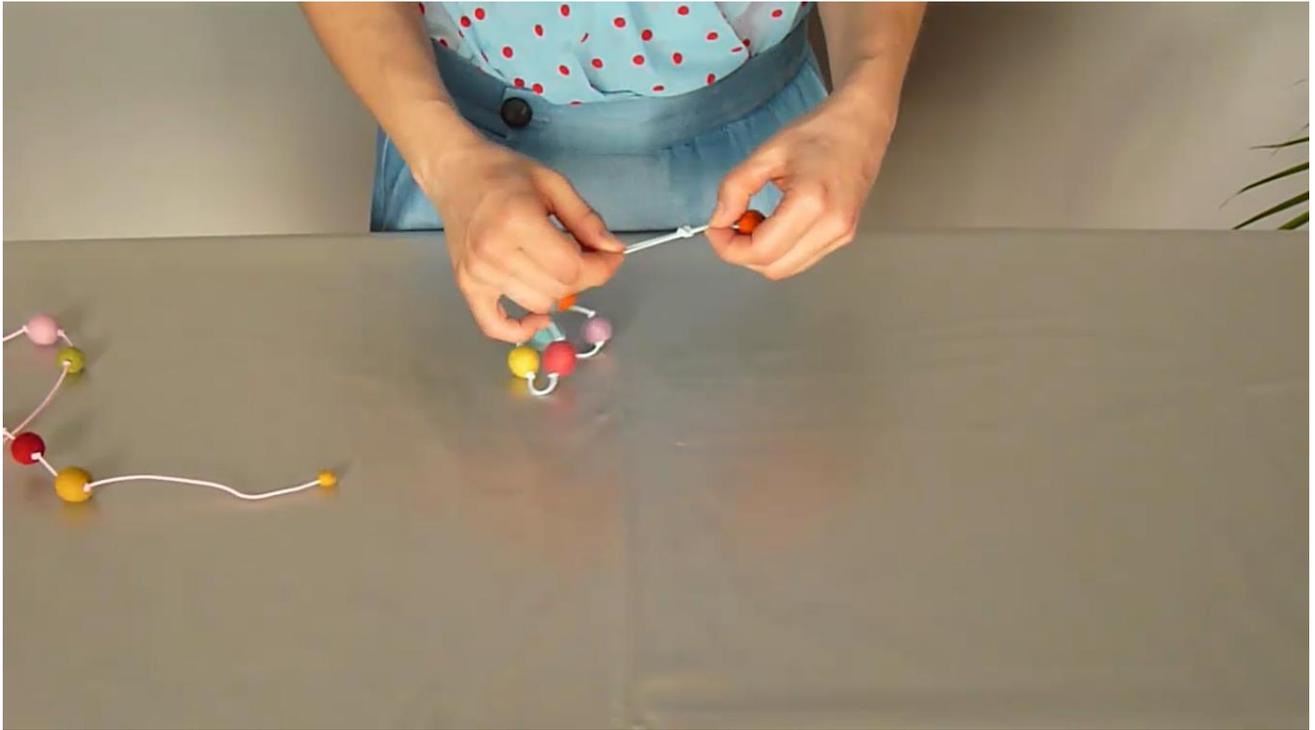


It's ready. Now we only need to make the knot.

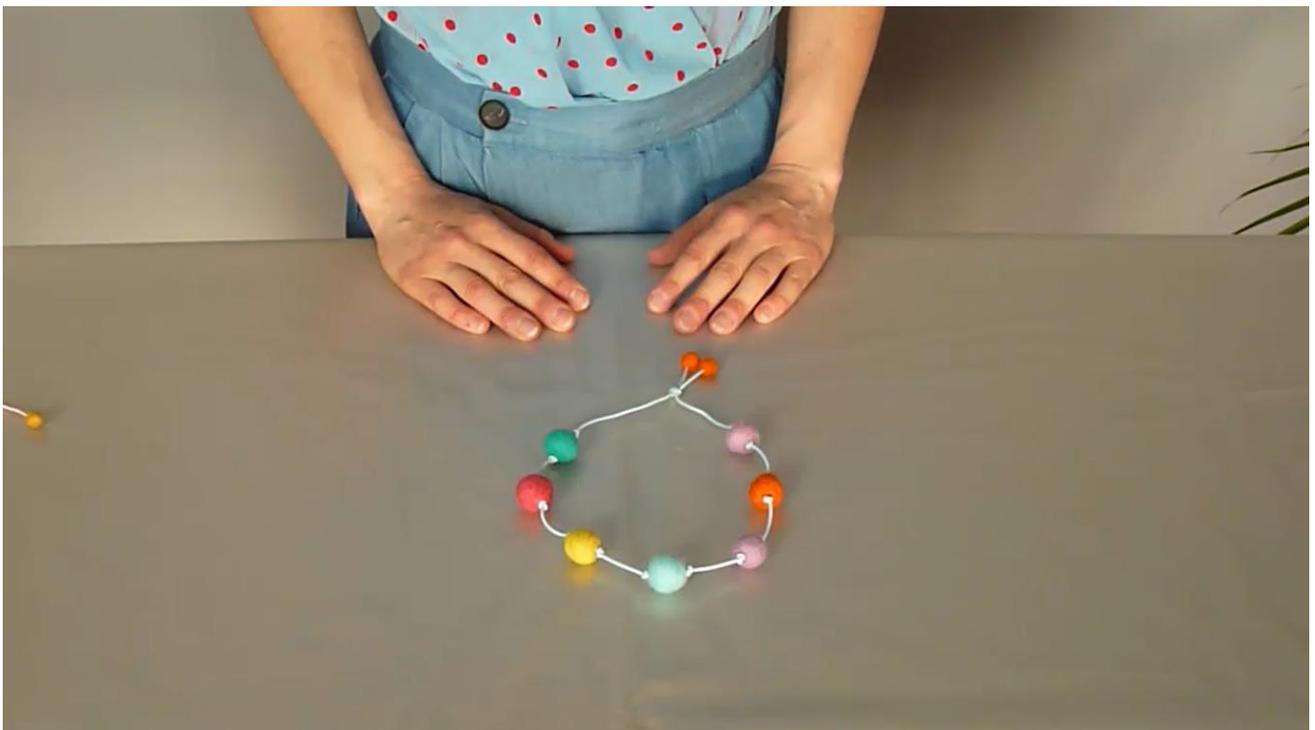
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So, do it like this.



And here we are. Our necklace is finished.

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I hope you've enjoyed the tutorial and that you have fun making necklaces for your kids 😊

It's actually a simple workshop. But notice how many tips are also valid for other wet felting projects you might want to make.

And if you want to dive deeper into wet felting, check the tutorials available [here](#).

Talk soon!

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