

by Loren Woerpel

FUR FABRIC TURBAN

Various styles of fur turbans have always been common among all the Northern tribes. These instructions will give you technique ideas that can be used for many styles, but the style shown is one typically used here in the Great Lakes area at today's powwows. Usually they are made from Otter or Beaver furs, but this kit uses fur fabric that looks quite like Otter. See Photo A. These instructions are sized for adults head sizes using a 4 1/2 inch height. For youth sizes we suggest 4 inch height and 24" length, and child's at 3 1/2" height and 22" length.

Shopping List:

- 1 piece of fur fabric 6" x 30" and a 3" x 8" piece for tail
- 1 piece of Eskatuff stiffener 4 1/2" x 26"
- 2 squares of colored felt 9" x 12"
- 1 bottle of Contact Cement glue
- 3 yards single strand simulated sinew and a Size 3 Glovers needle
- Decorations - 1 Medicine wheel, 2 Beige Crow beads, 2 Brass Hawk bells.
- 2 Barrel beads and 5 Mini Crow beads.

You will need a scissors and pliers for this project.

First step is to trim the stiffener piece. If doing the youth or child sizes, cut them to size. As in Photo B, round out the front end. The rounded end is used as the "face" of the fur piece.

Extend the fur fabric on a work table with the fur down. Match the top edge of the fur fabric to the rounded head end of the stiffener as shown in Photo B. The hair should be laying towards the square tail end. Lay the stiffener on the fabric side of the fur. Using a thin marker pen, trace the edge of the stiffener for a cutting edge on the fur fabric. Carefully cut the fur fabric on the marks using very short cuts so you don't trim the hair ends.

The felt squares are used to cover the inside of the turban stiffener. Cut a 5 1/2" x 12" piece from each felt square. Lay the stiffener on a large piece of paper and coat one side with contact cement. While still wet, laminate the felt pieces to the length of the stiffener letting it hang over the rounded head front by 1/4" and the sides by 1/2" as shown in Photo C. For the adult there will be a 3" piece at the square end uncovered. Cut a piece from the left over scrap and cover the remaining stiffener, leaving an extra 1/2" of felt all the way around.

Turn over the stiffener piece and lightly brush contact cement on the overhanging felt along the sides and the square end, as well as 1/2" of the stiffener to match. Do not put any glue on the front curved part. Let dry to tacky. Now, except for on the rounded face edge, fold the 1/2" edging of felt over the stiffener and laminate it as in Photo D. Finish by cutting the felt at the curved edge so it extends 1/4" beyond the stiffener. This completes the inside of the turban.

Very lightly coat the fur's fabric side with contact cement glue and the underside of the stiffener. Let dry to tacky, then laminate them together in position.

Fit the turban around your head so it is snug and mark the overlap spot. Thread the Glovers needle with a 12" piece of sinew and double it. Roll the turban into the marked position. At a center point about 1/2" back from the curved end into the fur, using the strung needle and a pliers, sew from the inside through both layers of the turban into the fur side and then back through to the inside. Tie a double knot. See Photo E.

In the positions that would be the eyes of the Otter, use a 12" piece of sinew and sew the crow beads through the turban the same way as you did the first stitch and tie a knot. Do it again for the second eye stitch. See Photo F. It is most customary for the face to be positioned on the right side and facing forward. Place the turban that way on your head and then mark the center position in the back for the tail placement.



Photo A

Fur Fabric piece



Eskatuff stiffener



Photo B



Photo C



Photo D



Photo E



Photo F

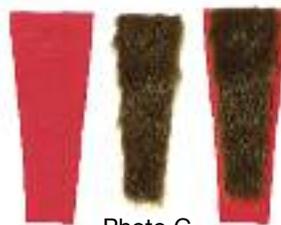


Photo G

Whip Stitch



Photo H

To prepare the tail, cut a triangled shaped piece of felt from a remaining piece as in Photo G. Place the felt cutout on the fabric side of the fur fabric tail piece. Draw the outline of the felt triangle. Remove the felt then re-mark the fur fabric 1/2" narrower on the sides and bottom and cut out the fur pattern on that line. Lightly brush the fabric side with contact cement, center on the felt piece flush with the top and laminate it to the felt. Let dry. Center this tail piece at the back of the turban mark, and sew it in place with a whip stitch as shown in the illustration.

Finish the decorating by sewing the hawk bells on the bottom of the tail and the decorated Medicine Wheel on the turban front. See Photo H.

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