

# hello dolly!

How much do you love this little dolly? Me, too! There are endless variations and possibilities for customizing your doll (especially if you want her to match a particular doll quilt, hint, hint!), but here are the basic steps.

handmade by **CATHY GAUBERT**



## get started

### making the doll

**1** Trace and cut out six head pieces from flannel. Pin two pieces, right sides together. Beginning at the point (top of the head), stitch along the right side, all the way to the bottom, leaving the bottom open. Finger-press open. Pin the next piece, right sides facing, to the right side of what is becoming the head. Stitch from point to bottom, just like before. Continue doing this with the remaining pieces. It is a good idea to stitch back and forth across the top (point) once you have completed the head, giving the top seams a bit of extra strength. Turn head right side out and set aside.

### fabric & such

For the doll

Fabric for head and lower arms

Fabric for body and upper arms

Striped fabric for legs

Wool fabric for hair (and thread to match) or other suitable, non-fraying fabric

Ribbon, fabric strips, or something else to tie back Dolly's pigtails

5-inch needle/doll needle

2 buttons to joint arms (Just grab a few from the button jar and see what works best!)

Heavy-duty thread

Brown and red embroidery floss

Wool stuffing

Stuffing pellets (for legs)

### for the dress

Fabric for dolly's dress (I chose two coordinating fabrics so that the dress is lined.)

15 inch strip of bias (1¼ inch wide) to bind the bottom of the dress

Two tiny buttons (or snaps, if you prefer)

### seam allowance

¼ inch (6 mm) unless otherwise noted

**2** Cut out two body pieces and stitch, right sides together, leaving the bottom open. Turn right side out and set aside. From this same fabric, trace and cut out 4 pieces for the upper arms (trace and cut 2 and 2 reversed)





Stitch together, leaving the top part open. Set aside. Trace and cut out 4 arms (2 and 2 reversed) from flannel. Stitch together, leaving the top open. Set aside. Trace and cut out 4 legs, (2 and 2 reversed) from the striped fabric. Stitch together, leaving the top open.

**3** Let's get to stuffing and the hand-stitching of the fiddly bits (the ability to "wing it" will come in handy).

Before we do, though, a quick word about my technique...I like to see hand stitching. I don't try and hide it, and it's often not perfect. And that is totally okay...embrace the charm of it, I say! Stuff the body as firmly as you can. Holding the body in your lap with the opening facing up, use your index fingers to push in the side seams while pushing down and pulling out toward the sides at the same time. It sounds weird, but if you do it just like that, you will quickly and easily tuck under the raw edges so that you can start stitching closed the doll's bottom. Keep the bottom pinched together with your fingers, and begin whipstitching about 1 inch in from the side seam. Whipstitch all the way across the bottom and stop about 1 inch from the other side seam. At this time, continue to push stuffing into the two openings to firm up the body (I like to make sure that I push stuffing up into the shoulders to make them extra firm.). To give the dolly a nice flat bottom for sitting, you are going to fold over each side (just like taping down the ends of a package!) and whipstitch in place. Knot and bury the thread in the body. Now, the bottom likely will not be perfect or symmetrical, but your dolly won't mind.

**4** Fill legs with stuffing pellets (you don't want these packed too tightly, so don't overfill); turn under the open edge and whipstitch to the bottom of dolly. I attach them close to where I whipstitched the bottom closed. I like to have the leg seam run down the front of the leg so that the toes point forward.

**5** Stuff upper arms, about halfway to the top; turn under the open edge and whipstitch to dolly's shoulder. Stuff lower arms; fold under the open edge and whipstitch closed. Grab a button and thread and joint the arm...Place the top part of the lower arm onto the bottom part of the upper arm (this will be the "elbow"). With the button atop the 'elbow' stitch back and forth through button and both arm pieces multiple times to secure.

**6** Stuff the head firmly, leaving the bottom open. Referring to the photo of the finished dolly, use a long needle to stitch on eyes and mouth (with brown and red embroidery floss, using 2 ply each). Since the head is not yet attached, use the opening to hide your knots. Tuck under the raw edges and place onto the neck of the dolly. You may need to pin it or, but I usually just hold it (sometimes, it would be really handy to have three hands, yes?!) while I stitch the head to the body. Be sure to not only stitch the head to the body but also to stitch back and forth through neck area, too.

### making the dress

**1** Trace and cut out 2 dress pieces in the outer fabric and 2 dress pieces in the inner/lining fabric. Working with the outer pieces first, pin with right sides together. Stitch down each side of the dress (from underarm to hem). Press seams open. Do the same for the inner/lining pieces.

**2** With right sides together, slide the inner/lining dress into the outer dress. Match the side seams and pin. Starting at one side seam, stitch around the top until you end up at the starting point. Carefully clip curves and turn the dress right side out. Press.

**3** Once you press the dress, slip it up over your dolly's legs. I opted for fast and easy when it came to the dress closures: overlap the back shoulder pieces of the dress onto front ones and stitch the buttons directly on. While this is a quick fix, it makes the dress no longer removable. Of course, if you want the option of changing your dolly's dresses, you could make buttonholes, use snaps, or add ribbon ties at the shoulders.

*Tip* I find it makes life easier if match up the edges (as best I can) and stitch the inner and outer bottom edge of the dress. You may need to trim up the bottom edge of the dress at this point. Sewing on the binding is a breeze then.

### making the hair

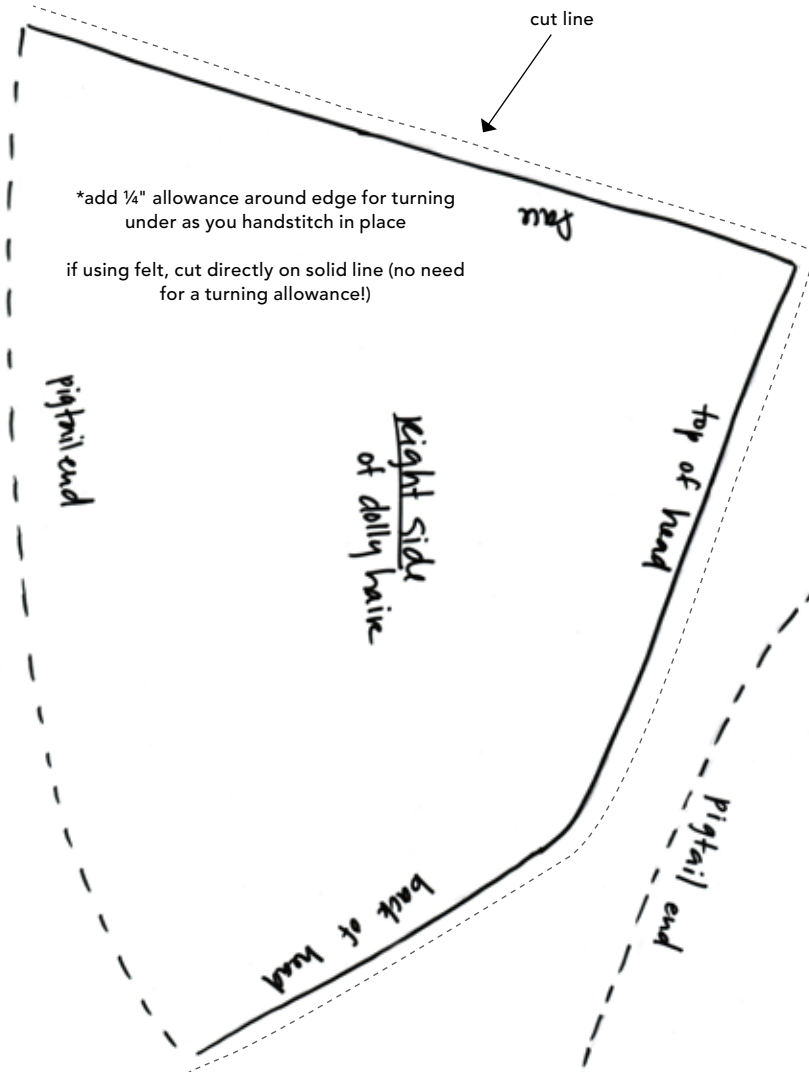
**1** Depending on what type of wool you are using, trace and cut out the right and left sides accordingly. Refer to the templates to orient yourself as to how the hair pieces will fit on to the head. Holding Dolly, facing towards you, place the right hair piece onto her head and pin in place (simply poke pins straight through her hair and into the head to hold in place). Now, place the left hair piece onto her head, overlapping the right side a bit. Pin in place. You may have to do some rearranging, but once you are satisfied, it is time to start stitching the hair in place.

**2** Remove the pins from the left side of the scalp, fold back that bit of hair, and pin in place out of the way. Begin attaching the right side of the hair to the head, removing pins as you go. I started in the middle of the head and worked forward, whipstitching the hair in place until I got to right above the shoulder. Knot off here. Now, go back up to the middle of the top of the head and continue whipstitching the hair in place, all the way around the back of the head until you get to right above the shoulder. The hair should meet up nicely here. Knot off your thread and bury it in the head/under the hair.

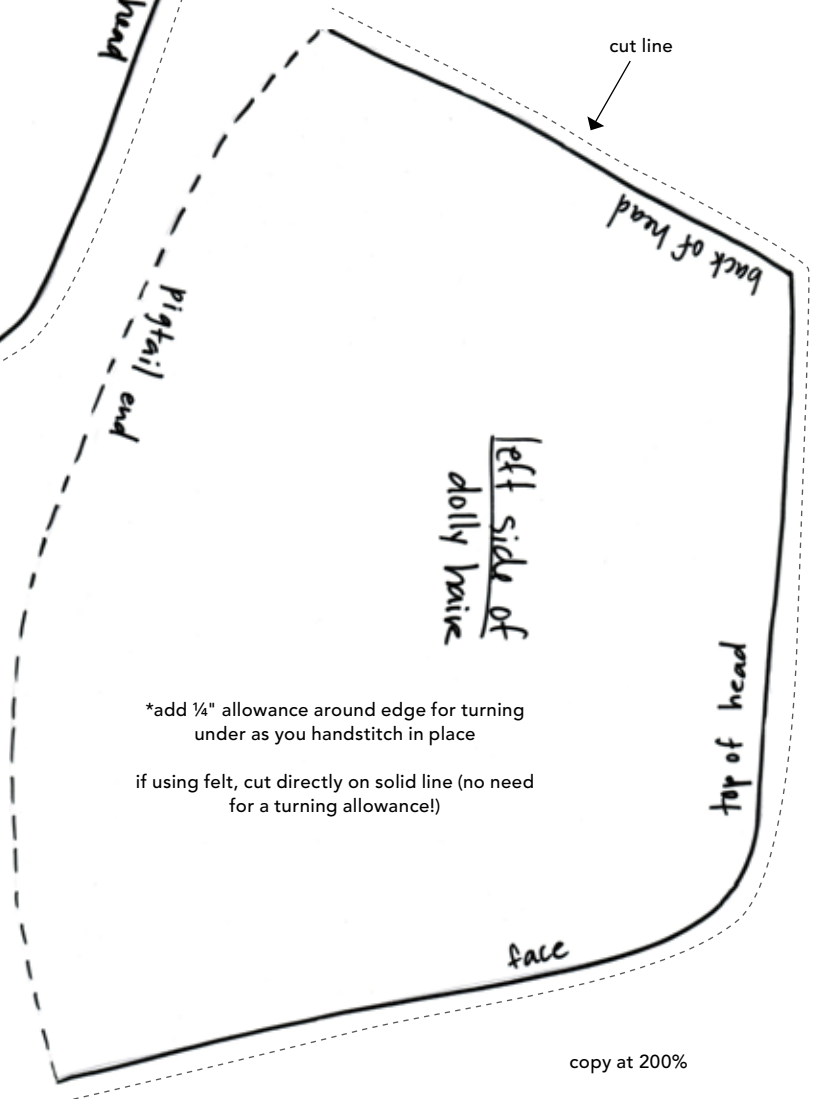
**3** Remove the pins that were holding the left side of the hair out of the way. Fold the hair back down, overlapping the right side of the scalp. Attach the hair on the left side in the same manner as you did the right.

**4** Make Dolly's pigtails by gathering the wool into your hand and wrapping it a few times with a length of thread. Knot to hold it in place. Tie a sweet ribbon, fabric scrap, or in this Dolly's case, a silky strip torn from the lining of the wool blazer that I cut into for her hair. Repeat for the other side.

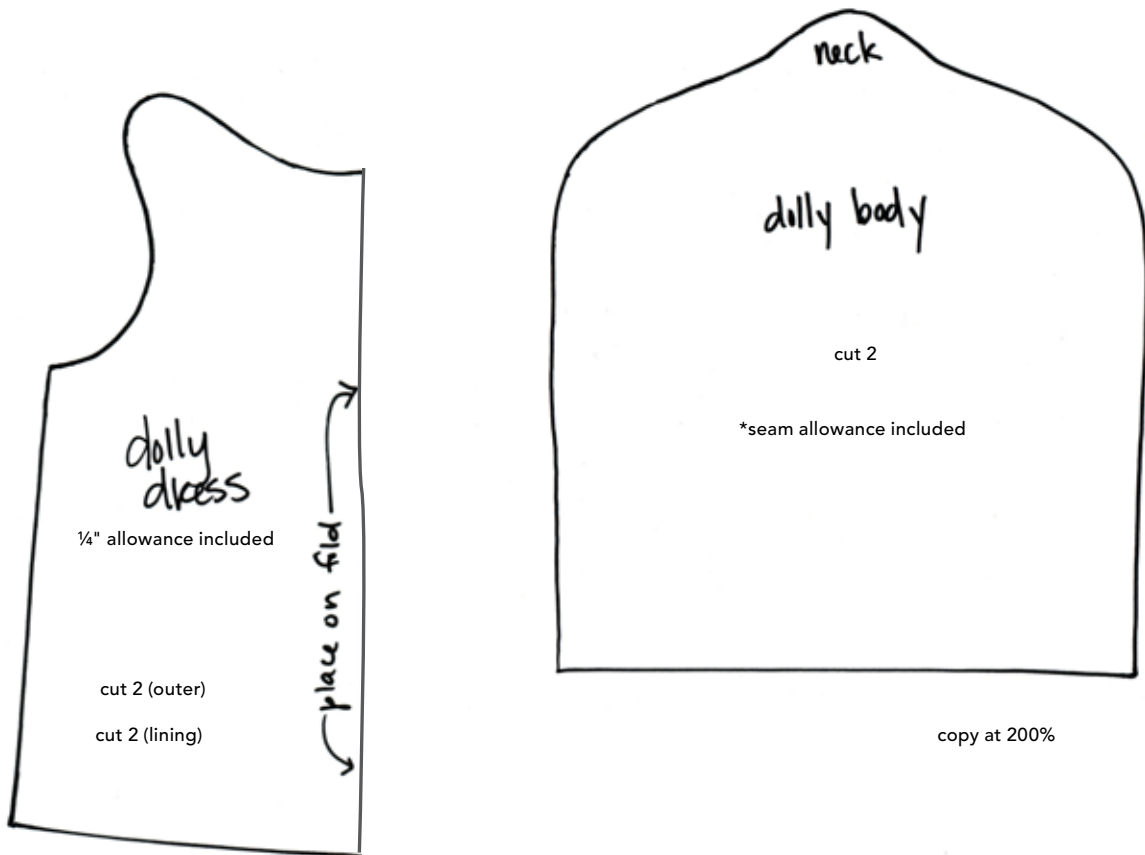
**5** There are many opportunities to embellish her body with a heart, a name, a secret pocket, etc... now hug her tightly and hand her off to someone you love!



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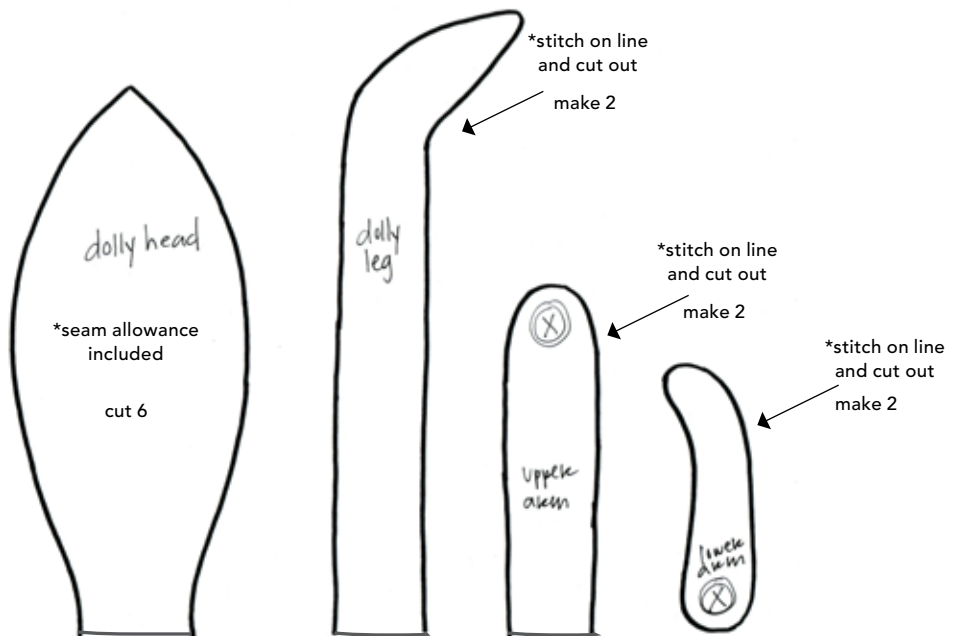


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