

# Welcome to Miss Bee's Free Fabric Yoyo Tutorial!

I learned to sew in 1967, at the knee of Mrs. Sophie Lahner, my Hungarian neighbor lady. In the 70's I branched off into making quilts. Yoyo quilts were the rage, many made in the hideous rusts and avocado greens that we were also using on our kitchen appliances and shag carpeting.

It seemed simple enough, but as hard as I tried I had terrible, ugly results. Not pleasant. Not easy. Not quick. So I threw in the towel and banished them forever.

But then I learned **THE TRICK**. That's right. There's a little trick. And here is my tutorial to teach you exactly how to make a fabric yoyo.



## 1. Gather Your Materials:

- Fabric: Now is a good time to use up all those scraps you've been hoarding. Medium and lightweight fabrics are ideal, as they are easier to pull down into tight yoyos.

- Quilting thread or embroidery floss: DMC floss is made up of six strands of thread. Snip off a piece of floss about 16"-18" long. Separate the threads, and then put 3 of them back together. This should be strong enough to stitch most fabrics.
- Something to trace around to make your circles. (Keep in mind that your finished yoyos will end up being a little less than half the diameter of the cut circles). Coffee and tea cups work great as well as drinking glasses and saucers. Anything that is round. As you can see - I just used a roll of painter's tape that was lying on the coffee table.
- Something to mark your fabric with: a pencil or fabric marking pen. Since this Christmas tree garland isn't going to be washed, you could use a regular ball point pen or a felt tipped marker. Whatever's handy.
- **OPTIONAL:** Round up some miscellaneous buttons, bells, silk flowers or other little trinkets to use as embellishments in the center of your yoyos. This is a perfect place to use up those random buttons left over from other projects or those really ugly buttons you hacked off your sweetie's favorite shirt just before you threw it away. Jars of buttons are always lurking in corners at thrift stores. Also, regular bags of craft buttons can be bought for cheap at the fabric stores. Shrinky-Dinks make cute centers as well.

**2. Trace Circles all Over Your Fabric:** Squeeze in as many circles as you can. I find it's easiest to alternate between tracing and cutting, so I don't get bored. It is the perfect, mindless task to do while you're watching a DVD or your favorite TV show.

### **3. The Yoyo Trick:**

- **The Trick** is this: the bigger the stitch - the tighter you will be able to pull the center of the yoyo. The smaller the stitch, the more little gathers you'll have to pull into the center, and there will be a gap about the size of a dime in the center of the yoyo (no matter how hard you try to pull it).
- It's okay to have a gap in the center of your yoyo, if that's what you want. I like it because it's the perfect place to nestle an antique button.
- If you want the gap in your yoyo, make your stitches about 1/8" inch long and 1/8" apart. If you want no gap and your yoyo closed up in the center, make your stitches at least 3/8" long and 3/8" apart.



**4. Sewing Around the Fabric Disks:** Making your first few yoyos may feel awkward, but here are three tips to make it easier:

1. Don't bother marking a fold line. The fabric is going to roll to the wrong side differently with each inch of the outside edge, because of the nature of a circle.
2. Don't bother to pin the folded/rolled edge in place to sew it. You'll just get a handful of pin pricks.
3. If you get a few little tucks when you're stitching your gathering stitches - who cares? Nobody will see those tucks once it's gathered into a yoyo.

**5. Start the Stitching:**

- Take your three strands of floss and tie a knot on the long end.
- With the wrong side of the fabric facing up, turn under the smallest amount of raw edge that you can handle. In the beginning, it might be as much as a quarter of an inch, but as your fingers get more adept, you'll work your way down to about an 1/8".
- Push the needle from the right side (underneath) to the wrong side (the side that is facing you) - through the turned down edge. The knot will be on the right side of the fabric.
- Pinching the rolled edge between your thumb and forefinger, take a few stitches. As you work your way around the edge, fold down just enough edge to do a few stitches at a time. If you are right handed, you'll probably find it easier to stitch counter clockwise. If you're left handed - clockwise.
- Once you get back around to your knot, push your needle to the right side of the fabric.



## 6. Time to Make the Yoyo!

- Grab the knot and start pulling the thread, gathering up the yoyo. Pull the knot end until you have about 2" of excess floss, then start to gather from the needle end.
- Keep pulling on both ends of the floss until your yoyo is gathered as tightly as you want it to be.



- If your yoyos are becoming part of a Christmas tree garland and not a quilt, just tie the ends of floss together in a tight knot, then trim off the excess floss.

## 7. Embellishing - An Option

- If you want to embellish your yoyos with buttons, bells or trinkets, now is the time. I take three strands of embroidery floss that I cut 36" long, and double it over. Starting on the flat side of the yoyo, I push the needle through back and through the center of the gap on the gathered side of the yoyo. String on the embellishment, and go back the way you came to the flat side of the yoyo. Tie in a secure knot. Trim off the excess thread.

## 8. Turning Your Yoyos into a Christmas Tree Garland

- Sew the yoyos together on the outside edge, using 3 or 4 stitches by hand and strong thread. You can also use the bar tack stitch on your sewing machine.



And that's all there is to it. After you make a few, it will be a quick and easy project.