

Singleton Buttons Tutorial



These beautiful handmade buttons are a lovely way of making matching buttons for your sewing projects, at little cost! Related to woven Dorset buttons, they are a traditional British 'thrift craft' worked on rings, using small amounts of fabrics, so great for your scrap pieces and leftovers! You can even use them in jewelry, to embellish bags or change boring buttons on coats and jackets.

Their name comes from the Dorset Singleton family, who first made them in the 1600's.

Once you get used to making these, one can be completed in less than an hour, so don't let the lengthy instructions put you off, they are fun to make and extremely pretty!

To make one button, you will need:



Materials

1 25mm plastic curtain ring (see note below) - you can use any size you like, but this will make an average sized button

Scrap of woven cotton fabric - plain or small prints work well, the size will need to be enough for a circle 2.5 times the diameter of your ring

Card to make a template

Extra-strong thread and needle - colour not important

small piece of felt in co-ordinating or matching colour to fabric

Co-ordinating or matching embroidery thread - a mercerised cotton works well

Equipment

Fabric marking pencil

General sharp sewing needles

Fabric scissors

Small needlework scissors

Approximately 4mm crochet hook, knitting needle or cable pin

Note - plastic rings can be quite hard to track down in shops and you can use metal ones quite easily. However, they are readily available on-line, ebay is recommended, and very cheap to purchase!

1. If you are planning on making several buttons the same size, it's worth making a card template, so measure your ring and use a compass to create a card template 2.5 times larger than the ring. If you want to use particular sections of a design in the fabrics, say a flower, cut a hole the same size as the ring in the middle of the card template. This will help you to position the template on the fabric so you get it exactly where you want it.



2. Place the template on the right side of the fabric, get it exactly where you want it, then draw around the template with the fabric marking pencil, and cut out with a pair of fabric scissors. Turn the fabric over and use the fabric marker to draw a circle half way between the ring and the edge on the wrong side of the fabric.
3. Thread up a needle with a longish length of extra-strong thread, about 50cm, make a strong knot, bring the thread up from the right side of the fabric (i.e. the knot is underneath you when you begin to sew) then sew a row of running stitches along your marked line, ending with the long length of thread on the right side of the fabric - don't fasten off as you will be using this length of thread to continue making the button. With the wrong side uppermost, draw up the threads and make a little nest in which to place the plastic ring.

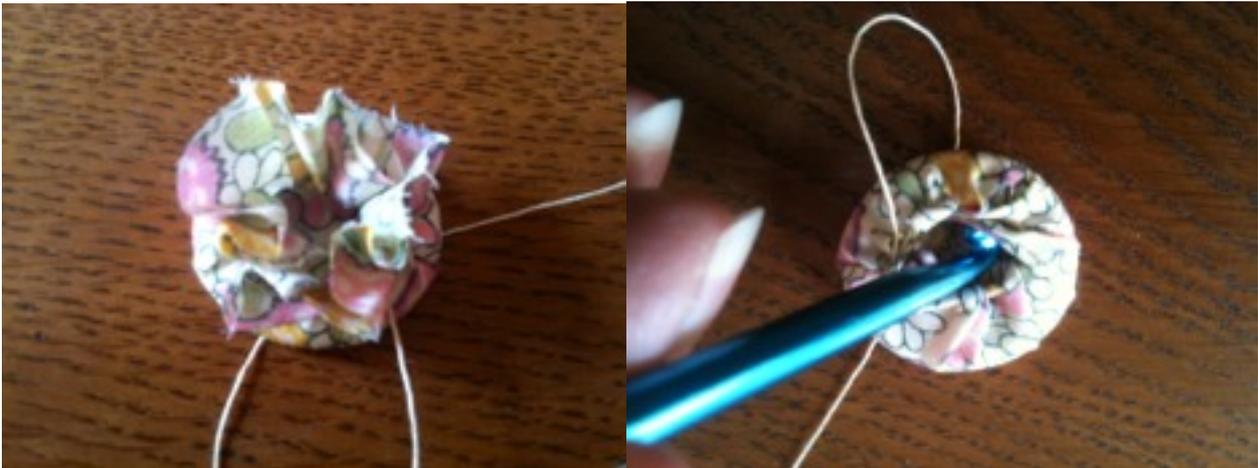


4. Fit the ring snugly in the fabric nest and draw up tightly, turn the button over and make any adjustments you want to the position of the fabric, then make a couple of stitches to secure the gathers in place.



5. Open the gathers out onto the outside and make sure they are all even, then use a cable pin, crochet hook, a knitting needle or something similar to neatly tuck all the

gathers under the stitching line. This acts a filling to give a slightly domed look to the front of the button.



6. Now make stitches diagonally across the back of the button, this will neaten the finish and allow you to even out any puckers on the outside edge of the button, so draw them up nice and tight, continue to do this until you are happy with the finish then fasten off securely.



7. Thread up a needle with a long length your embroidery cotton and work a row of neat, even back stitches as close as you can to the inner edge of the plastic ring - use the ring to guide the placement. If you like, you can blanket stitch it instead, which gives a lovely effect, with stitches radiating around the ring. Bring the needle and thread to the back of the button to finish. Don't fasten off, you will need this thread for the next stage.



8. Neatly cut a circle of felt the same size as your plastic ring - you can use the hole in the middle of your template for this! Place the felt ring on the back of the button and oversew the felt neatly onto the back of the ring - the one in the example is a bit smaller than the ring, it's not that important, as long as it covers the diagonal stitches you made earlier. Again, don't fasten off as you will need the thread for the last stage.



9. Now for the handmade shank! Take the needle and thread under the back of the felt and bring it back out in the centre of the button. Take your knitting needle, crochet hook or cable pin and place it across the back centre of the button. Using it as a 'former', work about 4 or 5 stitches around it, making sure that stitches pass underneath it and into the back of the button - without going through the front! Then wrap these stitches by oversewing them, covering the whole shank and fastening off the stitches securely by passing the needle and thread under the felt, bring it back out at the side and cut off.



10. Your button is now ready to use though I tend to leave mine on the former for while to help the shank find a good shape.



Here's the new button with some I made earlier! One is made without being back stitched, which gives a plainer button.



I will be teaching this method at a Denman Dayschool, alongside other handmade button techniques such as Dorset Crosswheels, a woven button technique which is from the same heritage and equally beautiful! For more ideas please visit my blog at www.sugarloops.wordpress.com or my Facebook page at sugarloops

I hope that you enjoy this tutorial!

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