



Wool Crafts



It's June on Tractor Ted's farm, and the sheep are being sheared. Woollen yarn makes a great resource for art and craft – and if you can source raw wool, it offers a whole new range of colours and textures to play with.

THESE ACTIVITIES...

- help children to explore the techniques of weaving, printing and sticking
- introduce the concepts of 'in-and-out' and 'up-and-down'
- encourage the creative exploration of colour, texture and pattern
- offer lots of opportunity for listening to and following instructions

Winding And Weaving

WHAT TO DO

Cut out sheep shapes from stiff card, make small notches round the edge of the sheep's body and paint the shapes black. Once the paint has dried, show the children how to wind wool around the notches to make the sheep a woolly coat.

Gather a variety of wool and woollen yarns in different colours, weights and textures. Include raw wool, knitted and crocheted strips, French knitting and plaited yarns. Make large outdoor looms by attaching plastic netting to a fence, and show children how to weave the wool in and out of the holes in the netting.

With both activities, encourage the children to be creative in their choice of colour. Do they want to weave with lots of colours or just one? Does their sheep have to be white - or could they give it a rainbow coat?

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- Give the children a 'whole body' experience of in-and-out and up-and-down. Set up obstacles courses with cones to weave in and out of, and items to jump over and crawl under.
- Explore length and texture. Compare the length of the wool strands, and look out for the longest and the shortest. Decide whether a knitted strip is soft or scratchy, smooth or bobbly.
- Raw wool (pre-spun) is available to buy from craft shops and online, where it's often referred to as wool tops, rovings or batts. It can be expensive, so you may wish to ration its use – and emphasise to the children that it's a very special resource!



Sticky Wool

WHAT TO DO

Cut lengths of woollen yarn into short pieces, choosing a range of different colours. Tape clear sticky-backed plastic to a low window pane, with the sticky side facing upwards. Show the children how to attach the wool to the sticky surface to create a colourful collage. Once the collage is finished, leave the woolly plastic taped to the window to make a panel.

Painty Wool

WHAT TO DO

Provide lengths of woollen yarn, small balls of wool, clothes pegs and separate shallow containers of paint. Let the children explore different ways of using yarn to apply paint to paper; some possibilities include dabbing on paint with a small ball of wool, soaking a strand of wool in paint and dragging it across the paper, and making a woolly paint brush by clipping wool into a clothes peg. Create an interesting print by putting a strand of painty wool inside a fold of paper, pressing down on the fold and then dragging out the wool. Wind wool around a cardboard tube, brush with paint and roll across a large sheet of paper. Wrap wool around a wood chunk, secure the wool and use as a printing block.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- Apply the wool to the sticky surface one strand at a time, and in handfuls. Which approach is easier, and which creates the best effect?
- Help the children to explore how well the wool attaches to the sticky surface. Is it easy to remove a strand of wool and stick it elsewhere? If a piece of wool falls off, can the children see why?
- Compare the clear parts of the plastic with the woolly parts. Remove the finished collage from the window and compare the smooth shiny side with the sticky, woolly side.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- Make one printing block with the yarn strands wound closely together and one with the strands far apart. Compare the two different results.
- Give children identical squares of paper to work on, and attach the pieces to the wall to make a colourful patchwork.
- Use the painty wool patterns in different ways. Make backgrounds for other artwork; cut them into collage pieces; turn them into decorative folders, book covers or greetings cards; create gift wrap by working on tissue paper.

FROM FLEECE TO JUMPER

Help children to make the link between the wool on a sheep's back and the end product of a knitted jumper. Share online videos of sheep shearing and spinning. If possible, invite a hand spinner to bring fleece and a spinning wheel into the setting, to demonstrate the process of turning fleece into yarn. Ask a knitter to show children how the yarn can then be knitted into a garment.

