OTTER PLUSH
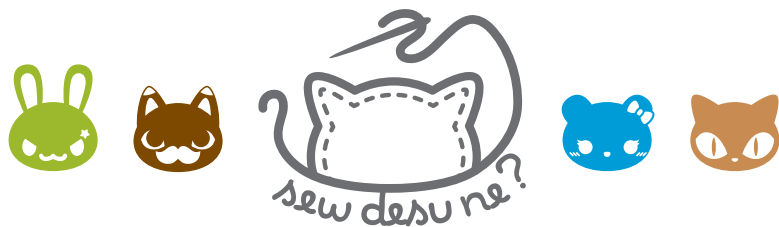
OTTER PLUSH

It doesn't get much sweeter than an adorable little otter holding his favorite shell! Make this cute ocean-loving companion for anyone you know who loves these furry critters -- maybe your significant 'otter'!

It has a fun lounging belly-up pose that makes it perfect for showing off his flipper feet and special shell.

DIFFICULTY:

Most of this plush is pretty straightforward, but attaching the head and shell is done by hand. So that takes some extra time.

MAKES:

One plush: about 12" tall and 5" wide

SKILLS USED:

- Fusible web applique
- Basting
- Darts
- Sewing small pieces
- Ladder stitch
- Sewing curves

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materials & tools:

- ¼ yd. or 16" x 8" of fabric for head
- 1/3 yd. or 22" x 12" of fabric for body
- ⅛ yd. or 8" x 4" of accent fabric for shell
- 3" x 3" piece of black applique fabric (such as felt, fleece, or flannel) for eyes and mouth
- 2" x 2" piece of accent applique fabric for eye accent
- 2" x 2" piece of white applique fabric for eye shines
- 5" x 5" piece of light or heavy duty fusible web
- sewing thread to match main fabric and applique fabrics
- poly-fil stuffing
- basic sewing tools (sewing machine, scissors, iron, needles, pins, fabric marker, seam ripper)

faux fur

minky

cuddle fleece

micro fleece

anti-pill fleece
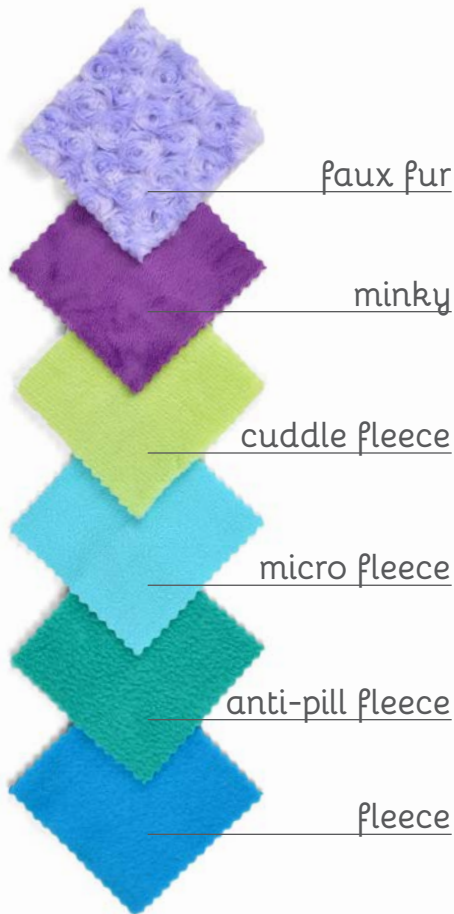
fleece

SUGGESTED FABRICS:

Plush, stretchy fabrics such as fleece or minky are suggested. The variations of fleece and minky mentioned to the left would work well, but really any plushy fabric with a bit of stretch on the cross-wise grain would be well-suited.

Stretch fabrics like **FLEECE** or **MINKY** will create a more squat, round shape when stuffed.

Non-stretchy fabrics, like **FELT** or **COTTON**, won't stretch when stuffed so the resulting plush will look elongated as shown.

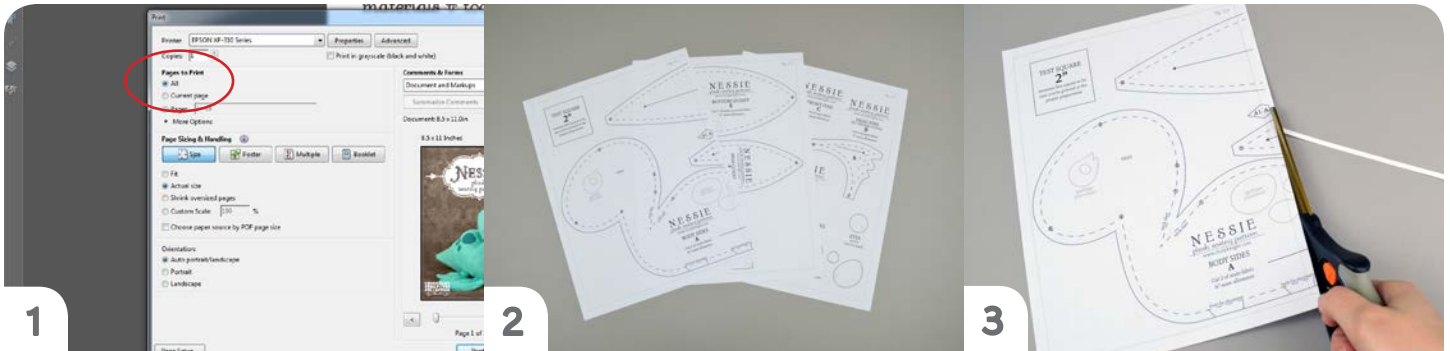**MINKY** **VS.** **FELT**

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printing the pattern:

To print the pattern, set your computer to print **PAGES 17-19.** If you're unfamiliar with printing and assembling a .pdf pattern, read the steps below.

1

At the print dialog box, check the box that says print at "Actual Size" or 100%. Any other selection (such as "Fit to page") will distort the pattern so it's slightly larger or smaller and we don't want that.

2

Print the pages needed for the file. You might have one or more. Either way, be sure you have the full collection by noting the page numbers in the corner.

3

It's likely your printer will have a margin that ensures your image doesn't print to the very edge. Assembly will be easier if you trim off this blank margin edge. This will give you pages that overlap slightly during assembly. If you trim across the gray outline boxes, this will give you pages that don't overlap but rather butt against each other.
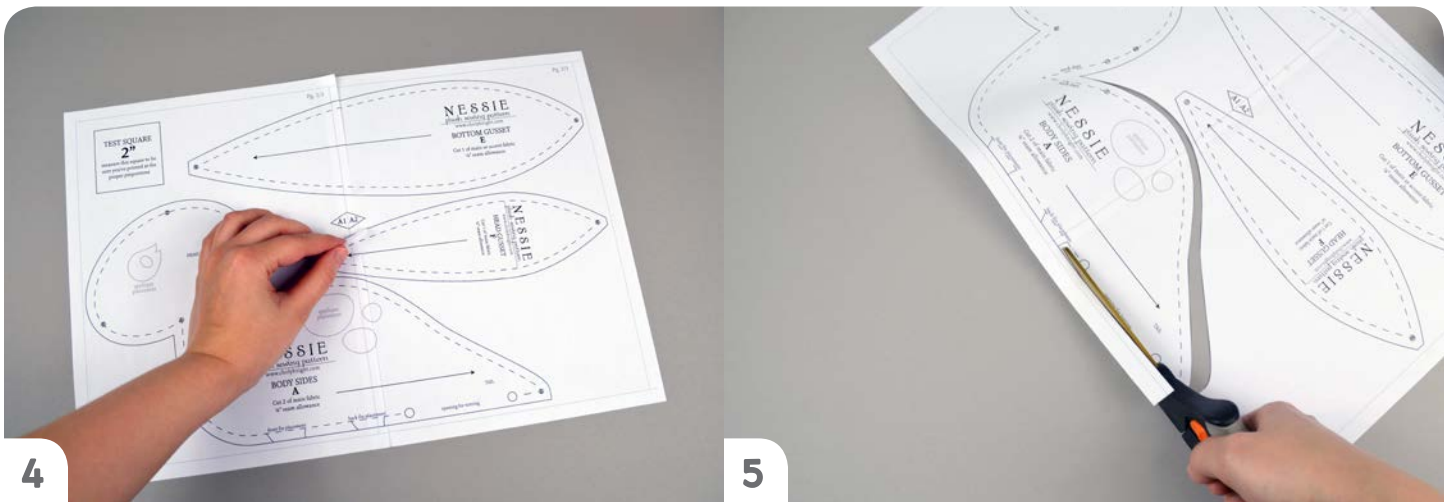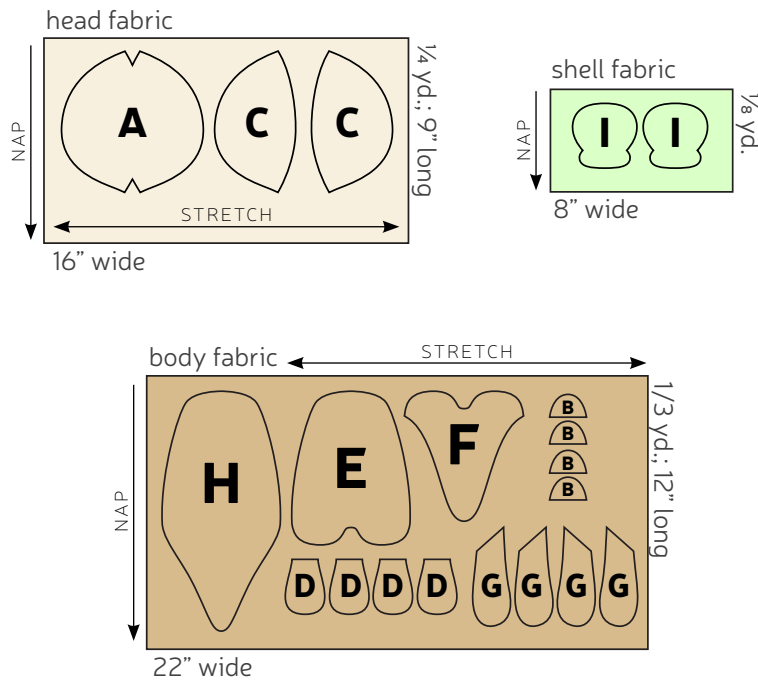
4

To line up the pattern pages, match up the corresponding diamond shapes. Each diamond will have a letter, so it's simply a matter of matching A1 to A2, B3 to B4 and so on. The faint gray lines indicate the border of every page, you should be able to line those up as well. When the diamond goes together, tape it in place.
If you have many pages, it's easier to tape up the pages into rows first. Then tape the rows together into a full block.

5

You can trace the patterns onto a different paper, or you can also just cut them straight from the printer paper -- be sure that each piece is fully taped together along the joins so they don't fall apart when you cut them.

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cutting the fabric:

1 Place pattern on the fabric, and make sure the stretch line matches the stretch of the fabric. The nap line should go in the direction of the fur.

2 Pin the pattern in place, use pattern weights, or trace the outline of the pattern with a washable marker.

3 Using the paper as a template, cut out the fabric. Cut the required amount according to the pattern.

4 For all fur fabrics, shake the excess fuzz away.

cutting layout:

head fabric

A C C

NAP

STRETCH

16" wide

¼ yd.; 9" long

shell fabric

I I

NAP

8" wide

⅛ yd.

body fabric

STRETCH

H E F

B
B
B
B

D D D D G G G G

NAP

22" wide

⅓ yd.; 12" long

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- Briefly read the project instructions so you know what to expect.
- If desired, mark the cut fabric pieces with the markings and symbols from the pattern. Or wait until the applicable step before transferring.
- Note that the seam allowance used is ¼" throughout the project.

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trace onto paper side

fuse onto applique fabric

hold applique while pulling paper away

1. PREPARE THE FACE APPLIQUE

a. Take your fusible web and trace all of your applique pieces onto the smooth (paper) side. You should have two eyes, one nose/mouth, two eye accents, and two eye shines.

b. Fuse the bumpy (adhesive) side onto the wrong side of your applique fabric. The eyes and nose/mouth go on black, the eye accents go onto your accent color, and the eye shines go on white.

c. Cut out the eyes and arrange them on the **HEAD FRONT** (A) piece. Set your paper pattern on top of the fabric piece (right sides up). Align the eye piece on top where the placement markings are. Then carefully pull the paper pattern away while holding the applique piece in place.


fuse eyes first

add smaller pieces next

right side of zigzag lands just outside applique

2. FUSE THE APPLIQUE

a. Fuse the eyes in place with your iron (use a press cloth -- such as a scrap piece of cotton -- if you're using a polyester or fur fabric like minky).

b. Next, move onto the nose/mouth, accent, and eye shine pieces. Fuse them much the same way as you did the eyes, using the paper pattern and photos as a guide.

c. If you used heavy duty fusible web, you can keep the pieces fused without sewing, or you can sew them in place a number of ways. I've used a zigzag stitch here.

➔ *Refer to the next step for some other applique options.*

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straight stitch; great for felt

applique whipstitch
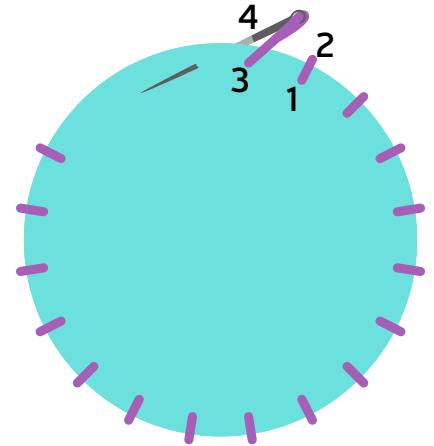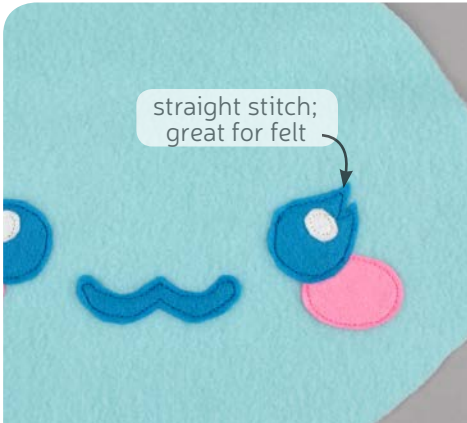
2a. OTHER APPLIQUE OPTIONS

Other good options for applique include a straight stitch, which involves sewing around the edge of the applique pieces with a straight stitch using matching thread -- about 1/8" in from the edge.

You can also applique by hand; I prefer a whipstitch. Thread a hand-sewing needle with some matching thread and knot it. Bring the thread up from the back of the project; about 1/8" in from the edge of the applique shape. Bring it down perpendicular from the curve, just outside of the applique shape. This completes one stitch.

For the next stitch, bring the needle back up about 1/8" away from the previous stitch and 1/8" in from the edge just as in the first stitch. Once again, bring it down just outside the applique shape. Continue this way until you've sewn around the shape.

blend seam into fold

3. SEW THE DARTS

a. Locate the open wedges found on the top and bottom of the **HEAD FRONT** (A) piece -- these are the darts. To sew them, start by folding the front piece in half along the point of the dart and match up the slanted lines that make the wedge shape.

b. Sew the darts by starting at the opening and moving down to the point.

c. When sewing the point, try to blend the seam in with the fold so it makes a smooth transition and a rounder finished plush.

darts:
A wedge-shaped gap found in a pattern. When sewn in fabric, it creates a tuck in the fabric and develops a 3D shape. The diagonal sides of the wedge are the **LEGS**; these are matched up and sewn to the **POINT** of the dart.

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leave open
for turning

4. SEW THE EARS

a. Grab your **EAR** pieces (B). Take two of them and align them with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.

b. Sew them together along the long curved edge. Leave the straight edge free for turning right side out.

**c.** Turn the ear right side out. Repeat with the remaining two ear pieces for two complete ears total.

5. BASTE THE EARS

basting:
A form of temporary sewing meant to hold pieces in place. A long stitch length is often used for this reason. The finished result is not meant to be seen and sometimes is even removed later (depending on your project).

a. If you haven't already, locate the *ear placement lines* found on the **HEAD FRONT (A)** paper pattern.
Transfer them over to the right side of the fabric.
Place the open end of the ear within these placement lines.

b. Baste the ears to the front within the seam allowances to hold them in place for future steps.

leave open for turning
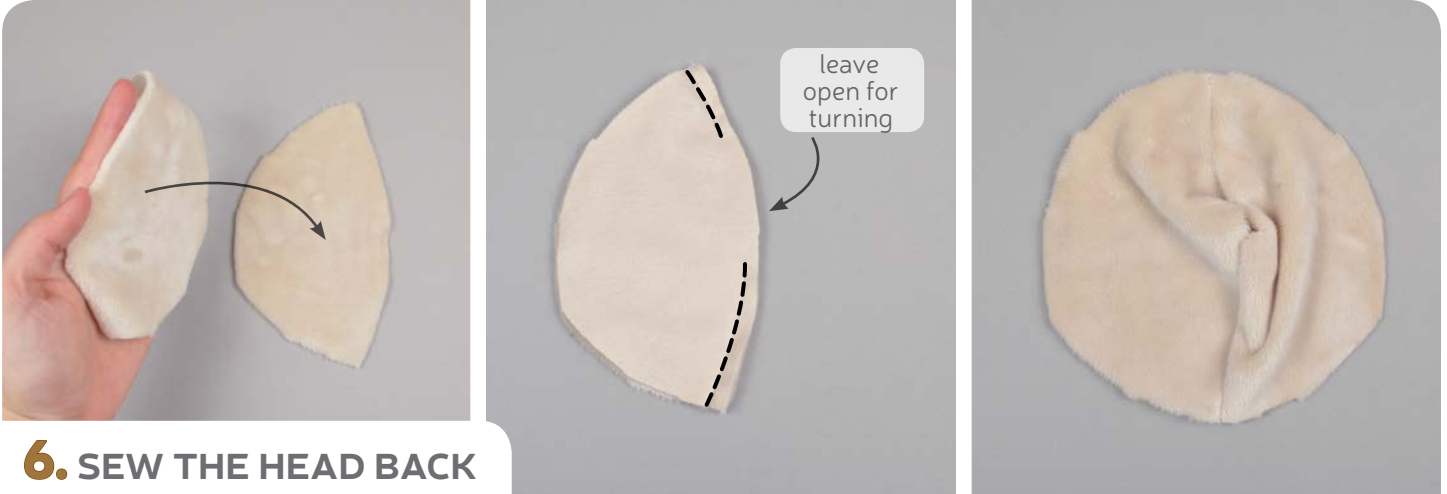
6. SEW THE HEAD BACK

a. Grab your two **HEAD BACK** pieces (C). Align them together with right sides facing and edges matching up.

b. If you haven't already, locate the **opening for turning** markings found on the paper pattern. Transfer them over to the wrong side of the fabric. Sew along this edge of the **HEAD BACK** pieces only, but be sure to leave the opening for turning that you marked.

c. Open up your **HEAD BACK** piece.

line up darts to back seam

sew around perimeter

turn right side out

7. SEW THE HEAD

a. Grab the **HEAD FRONT** piece you have so far. Align it with the **HEAD BACK** with right sides facing. Be sure the top of the back pieces (marked with a circle symbol) are aligned with the top of the front piece. The **back seam** should also match up with the **top and bottom dart** on the front.

b. Sew around the perimeter of the head completely.

c. Turn the head right side out through the opening you left in the back.

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stuff face first

fill rest of head firmly

insert needle from inside of opening

8. STUFF AND SEW THE HEAD CLOSED

a. Stuff the head firmly with stuffing. Focus most of it on the face area until it fills out and has no wrinkles in the fabric.

b. After the face looks full, fill the rest of the head.

c. Once the plush is stuffed, make sure the seam allowances in the opening are tucked inside and prepare to ladder stitch it closed. Thread a hand-sewing needle and knot it at the end. Insert the needle from the inside of the opening and out of the plush near one edge of the opening. This will leave the knot inside the plush.

ladder stitch closed

bring needle out 1-2" away

pull thread taut while clipping

9. CLIP THE THREADS

a. Continue from here doing a ladder stitch. Take a 1/8" stitch into the fold of one side of the opening, then go across and take another. Keep going down the opening until you reach the end.

b. When you're finished, stitch a knot into the end of the seam. Then insert the needle near the finished knot and out of the plush about 1-2" away.

c. Pull the thread through and hold it taut while snipping the thread. The excess thread should sink back inside the plush -- all hidden!

2 1

4 3

seam allowance (folded inside)

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leave open for turning
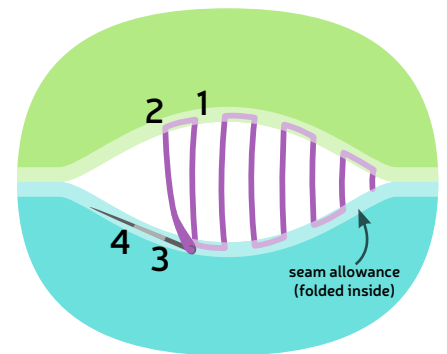
10. SEW THE FEET

a. Grab your **FEET** pieces (D). Take two of them and align them together with right sides facing and edges matching up.

b. Sew the feet together along the curved edge. Leave the straight edge free for turning right side out.

c. Turn the foot right side out and repeat with the remaining feet pieces for two complete feet total. If you want, stuff the feet very lightly with stuffing.

stitch along traced lines

place feet at bottom of belly

baste feet to belly

11. BASTE THE FEET

a. Take this moment to locate the **FEET** (D) *top stitching lines* located on the paper pattern. Transfer them over to the right side of the fabric (or just freehand them if you're confident).
Stitch over the traced lines to complete the flipper look to the feet.

b. Grab your **BELLY** piece (E). If you haven't already, locate the *foot placement lines* located on the bottom curves of the paper pattern. Transfer them over to the right side of the fabric.
Align the open end of the feet within these placement lines so they're pointing toward the middle of the belly.

c. Baste the open edge of the feet to the belly within the seam allowance to hold them in place for future steps.

top stitching: one or several lines of stitching done on the right side of a project to serve a decorative purpose

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12. SEW THE TAIL

a. Grab your **TAIL** piece (F). Align the edge with the two curves over the basted **FEET**. Right sides should be facing and the two curves should match up.

b. Sew the tail to the belly along this curved edge. The feet should be trapped in between.

c. To increase flexibility, clip the seam allowance between the curves.

d. Turn the **BELLY** and **TAIL** right side out so the feet are exposed. Be sure they're sewn completely within the seam.

align bottom curves

a.

b.

clip area between bottom curves

c.

d.

leave open for turning

13. SEW THE ARMS

a. Grab your **ARM** pieces (G). Take two of them and align them with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.

b. Sew them together along the long curved edge. Leave the short straight edge free for turning them right side out.

c. Repeat this with the other arm pieces for two arms total. Turn them both right side out.

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stuff opening of arm lightly

align within placement lines

arms point downward

14. BASTE THE ARMS

a. Stuff the **ARMS** with stuffing. Keep the stuffing light near the opening, as we'll be sewing that edge next.

b. If you haven't already, locate the **_arm placement lines_** on the **BELLY** (E) paper pattern. Transfer them over to the right side of the fabric.
Align the open end of the arms within these placement lines. They should be pointing downward.

c. Baste the arms to the belly within the seam allowance to hold it in place for the next step.

line up back over belly

leave open for turning

15. SEW THE BACK

a. Grab your **BACK** piece (H). Make sure the arms and feet are tucked toward the middle of the belly.
Align the back over the belly with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.

b. If you haven't already, locate the **_opening for turning markings_** found on the paper pattern for the **BELLY** (E). Transfer them over to the wrong side of the stacked fabrics you have.
Sew the back to the belly all around the perimeter, but leave an opening near the neck where you marked. Be sure not to accidentally catch the feet or arms when sewing.

c. Turn the body right side out.

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stuff tail first

stuff 'legs' next

stuff rest of body

16. STUFF THE BODY

a. Stuff the body with stuffing. Start with lots of stuffing in the tail so it doesn't deflate later.

b. Put a bit more stuffing in each 'leg' area -- the part with the feet attached.

c. Finally work toward the opening so the rest of the body no longer has wrinkles in it.

ladder stitch closed

align head over body

ladder stitch head to body
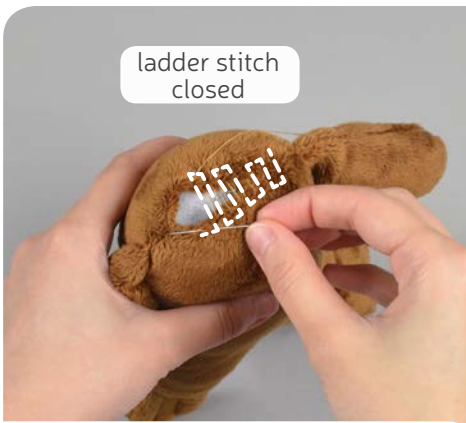
17. ATTACH THE HEAD

a. Stitch the opening of the body closed with a ladder stitch, similar to back in step 9.

b. Align the head over the body so they're both facing forward. The side seams should also match up.

c. Ladder stitch the head to the body, going around the opening in the neck. Stitch a wide circle to ensure the neck is secure and not wobbly.

➔ *TIP: take big basting stitches for the first pass to make sure the head placement is right. Then go around again with neater, tinier stitches for the second pass.*

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18. SEW THE SHELL

leave open for turning

clip seam allowance at inner corner
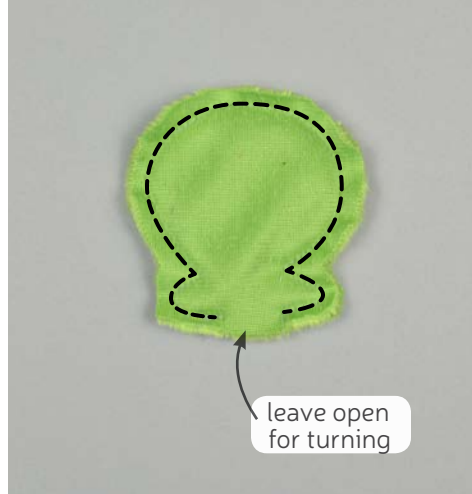
a. Grab your **SHELL** pieces (I). Align them with right sides facing and raw edges matching up.

b. If you haven't already, locate the *opening for turning markings* found on the paper pattern. Transfer them over to the wrong side of the fabric -- or just mark about a 1" area along the bottom edge. Sew the shell pieces together, but leave this opening that you've just marked.

c. Clip the seam allowance at the inner corners of the shell seam to increase flexibility for later.

19. STUFF THE SHELL

stuff lightly

ladder stitch closed

a. Turn the **SHELL** right side out and define the points with a chopstick or similar turning tool.

b. Stuff the shell lightly with stuffing.

c. Ladder stitch the shell closed much the same way you did back in step 9.

align shell between arms

20. ATTACH THE SHELL

ladder stitch each side

a. Bring your finished **SHELL** to the otter, aligning the side against the end of the arm in a position that you like. Stick pins down into the shell and through the arm to hold it -- one side at a time is easiest.

b. Use a ladder stitch to attach the side of the shell to the end of the otter's arm, then repeat with the other side of the shell and the other arm.
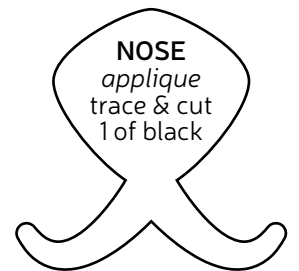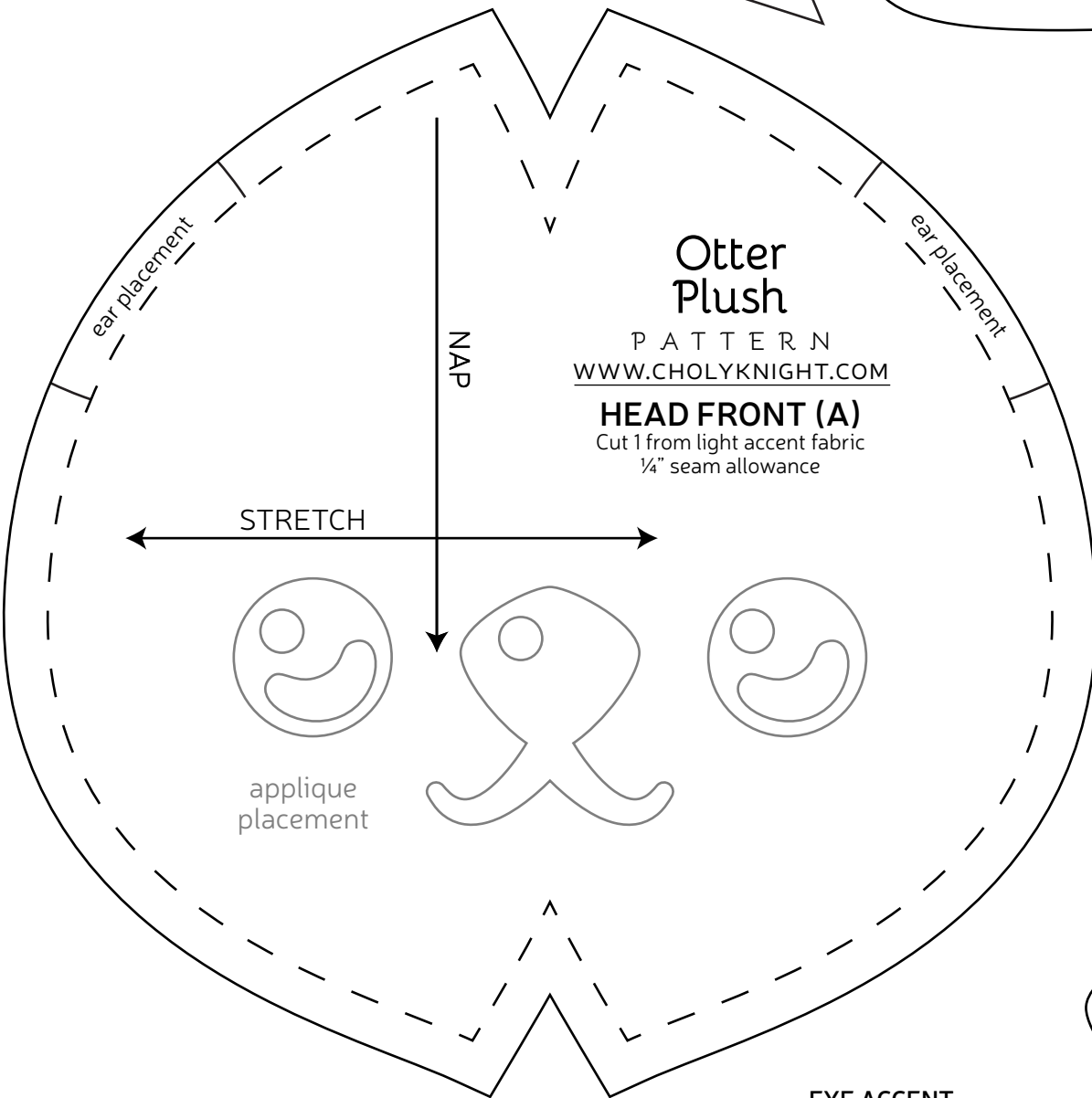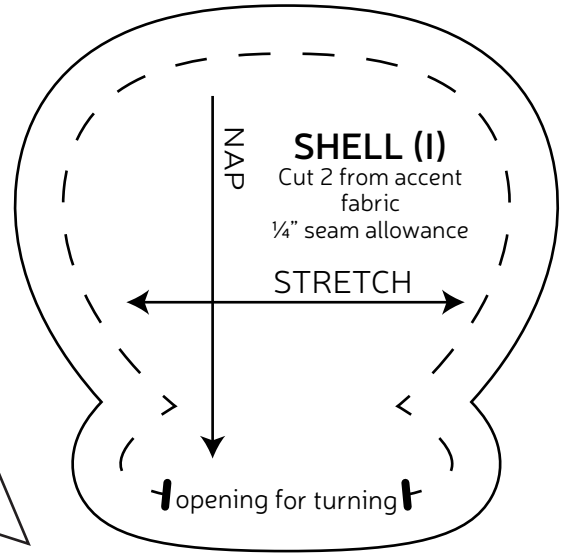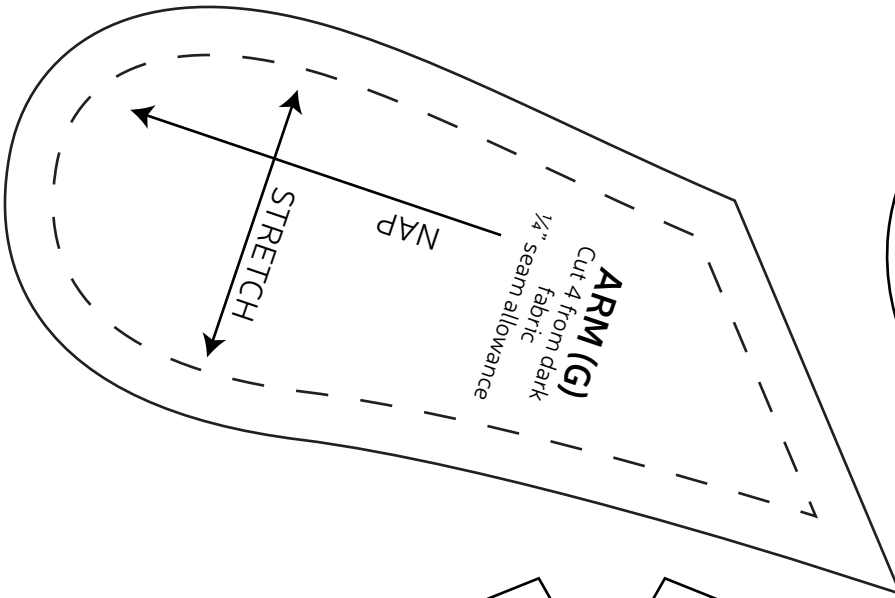

congrats! this completes your plush! Now give it a big hug!

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ARM (G)
Cut 4 from dark fabric
¼" seam allowance

NAP

STRETCH

SHELL (I)
Cut 2 from accent fabric
¼" seam allowance

NAP

STRETCH

opening for turning

ear placement

ear placement

NAP

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HEAD FRONT (A)
Cut 1 from light accent fabric
¼" seam allowance

STRETCH

applique placement

EYE
applique
trace & cut
2 of black

EYE SHINE
applique
trace & cut
2 of white

EYE ACCENT
applique
trace & cut
2 of accent color

NOSE
applique
trace & cut
1 of black

foot placement

foot placement

arm placement
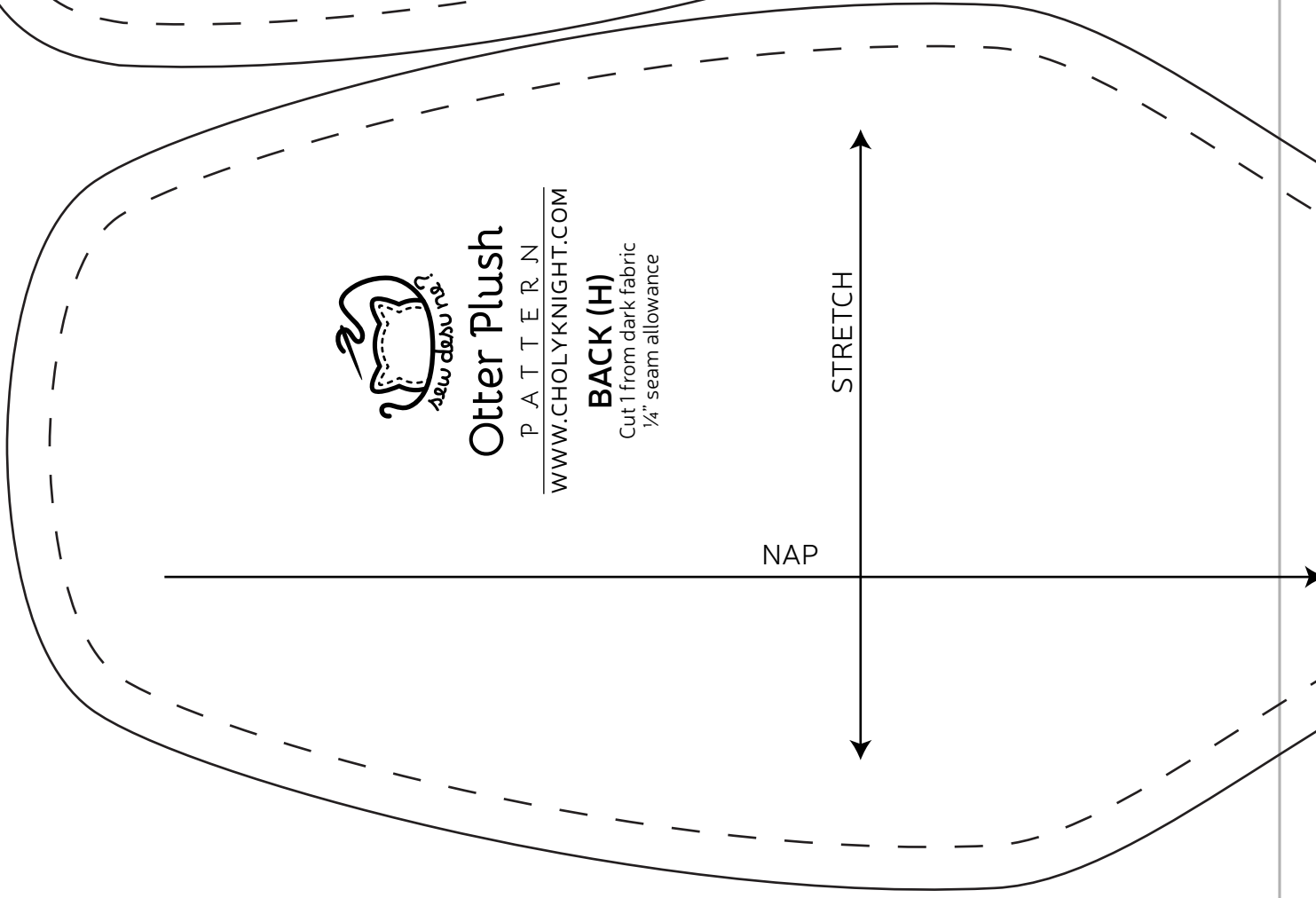
opening for turning

arm placement

NAP

STRETCH
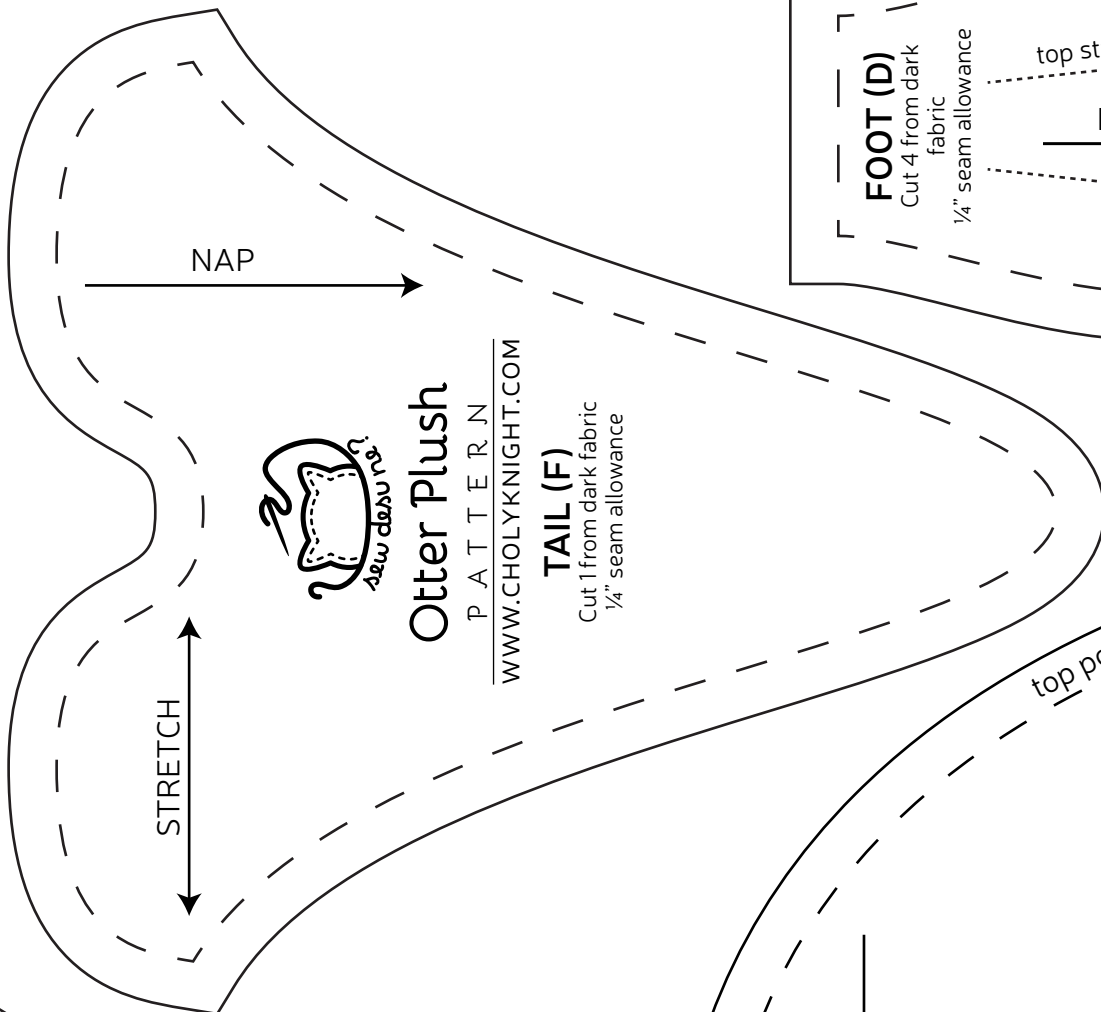
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BELLY (E)
Cut 1 from dark fabric
¼" seam allowance

STRETCH

NAP

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BACK (H)
Cut 1 from dark fabric
¼" seam allowance

FOOT (D)
Cut 4 from dark fabric
¼" seam allowance

top stitching lines

NAP

NAP

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TAIL (F)
Cut 1 from dark fabric
¼" seam allowance

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STRETCH

top point

opening for turning

NAP

STRETCH

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HEAD BACK (C)
Cut 2 from light accent fabric
¼" seam allowance

EAR (B)
Cut 4 from dark fabric
¼" seam allowance

NAP