

Hobby Horse Activity for Youth

This hobby horse can be made entirely by hand, however it takes an experienced adult about 4 hours to complete all of the sewing and assembly. These instructions adapt the activity to youth of any age, and have been tested with ages 7-12. Younger children need help with hand sewing, but most are eager (and proud) to sew their horses themselves.

Materials needed

- Scrap cloth (cotton, linen, wool) – the more decorative the better. Each half of the head needs 12”x12” of fabric.
- Thread
- Sewing needle
- Pattern (see back)
- Paint or push-on eyes
- Felt cut in 2” x 11” strips
- Yarn
- Hot glue
- Cardboard strip to wrap yarn around (12+” long, and the width of your desired mane)
- Safety pins
- Fiber-fill or old pillow stuffing
- Dowel cut to length for the “body”
- Leather straps, ribbon, or rope for reins (incorporate fiber arts into the project with a finger-loop braid, or tablet-woven rein)



Figure 1: The hobby horse displayed at Ice Dragon 2018, made of all period materials.

Preparation tasks for activity leaders:

The head

Cut out two head pieces and four ear pieces from your chosen fabric(s). Mark the ear and eye placements on the right side of the fabric.

With right sides together, sew the nose darts together on each half of the head. With right sides together, sew the individual head pieces together, leaving the neck open. Sew a rolled hem around the neck.

With right sides facing, sew two ear pieces together, leaving the bottom open. Turn and press flat. Slit the head pieces at the ear lines marked above.

The mane

Using the cardboard strip, wrap your yarn around the width in a single layer, 11” long. (You want enough loops to match your felt strip.) Lay a stream of hot glue down the center length of the yarn. Immediately place a felt strip on top of the glue – you are gluing the mane to the felt, which will be sewn on the horse head by the youth.

Turn over the cardboard strip and cut the yarn loops down the center. The should then give you a yarn mane, with a felt base.

Youth tasks

Youth choose any combination of horse head, two ears, and one mane.

Fold the ears in half lengthwise, slip the ear through the slit in the head about $\frac{1}{4}$ ", and sew the ear to the head piece. (*May require adult help.*)

Select an eye, and add it at the marked place on the head according to the manufacturer's directions. (Alternatively, you sew on button eyes, or paint eyes after stuffing the horse head.)

Lay the mane along the horse's head felt side down. Safety pin in place. Hand sew the felt strip to the head with a running stitch, along both long edges of the felt. (*May require adult help.*)

Place stuffing in the nose of the horse, and a small amount on the top of the horse's head. Now get a buddy. Turn the head upside down, and place the dowel inside the head. One person holds the head, while the other carefully packs stuffing around the dowel, keeping the dowel centered. Fill to 2" of the neck opening.

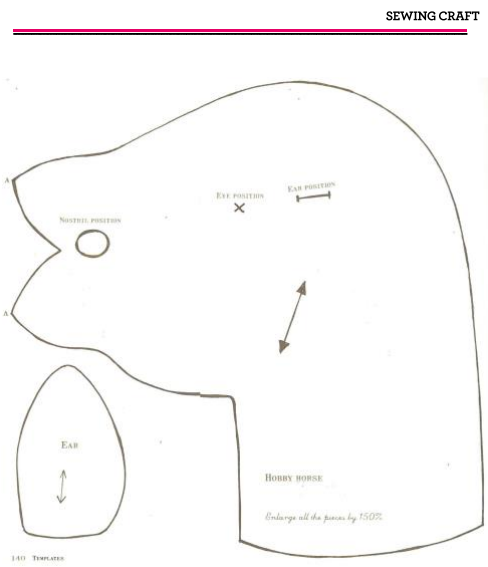
Gather the neck fabric around the dowel. Wrap the gather tightly to the dowel with several wraps of yarn (or twine) and tie off tightly.

Add your halter. The Ice Dragon example is a simple nose piece and rein; you can make it as bridle-shaped as you like.

Tally ho!



Figure 2: A color-coordinated hobby horse crafted by one of Myrkfaelinn's youth.



Hobby horse pattern. The original, and assembly instructions with images, come from <https://www.essentials.co.za/diy/how-to-make-a-hobby-horse>. For the Ice Dragon entry, I enlarged the pattern by 200%.

Find examples of medieval hobby horses in period imagery at <http://fairetymetoy.com/pmwiki.php?n=Main.HistoricGallery>