

How I did a Tux - a ' field ' report

Preface

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Because free-penguin.org is designed to address more supporter of the open source community instead of professionals or experienced sewers, my explanations are partly quite detailed.

Specification

- 60% of original's size
- Other type of eyes
- Normal fabrics instead of plush
- Feet below the bottom instead in front of the stomach

Preparations

I bought

- Half a meter white, black, red fabrics (together 6 pounds sterling)
- 2 big packs foam rubber normally used for kitchen purposes (Lidl: together one pound sterling)
- A set of needles and threads in different colours (Woolworth: 4 pounds sterling)
- Wrapping tape
- Glue

I needed

- A pair of scissors
- Motivation, time (overall 7 hours, without sewing-machine!) and patience

Even if you have sewing-machine you should know that not all work steps can be done by that sewing-machine. Furthermore, you need needle that are appropriate for your fabrics and your hand, what means they must robust enough so that they don' bend or break during the sewing, and big enough to be comfortably handled by you.

Actually you need much less fabrics but it's simply unusual to buy less than half a meter fabrics. I bought elastic fabrics, without any special surface effects. It was easier to obtain than plush fabrics and it's easier to work with. Without any question (elastic) terry cloth is the best material. American scientists tested it with young monkeys that had to decide what a type of fabrics they prefer to cuddle with. They chose terry cloth (toweling). Unfortunately, it's still harder to obtain than plush and it' not so durable.

All your fabrics should be washable of course.

What the problem with the self-made foam rubber is that in the beginning this foam rubber has a synthetic kitchen smell, which is not so pleasant. I hope it will disappear within the next weeks.

Perhaps you have noticed that in the list above material for the eyes is missing. I don' like plain eyes very much, rather buttons as eyes. Therefore, I decided to use a temporary solution unless I find appropriate buttons. I will describe more details about the eyes in one of the last paragraphs.

It took me half an hour to cube the foam rubber. In the first step you have to remove the green raw part of the rubber. Then, during the cubing, you should care that the granulation of the foam rubber is fine enough for your chosen fabrics. The thinner the fabrics is the more you would notice the edges of the cubes through the fabrics and then the penguin would be not so smooth as desired. Therefore, make smaller cubes when you use thin fabrics. Attention! The cubing is an enormous stress for your scissors. Hope that your pair of scissors is still sharp afterwards.

The sewing pattern and clipping

The first problem is to print the sewing pattern. I chose to make a penguin with only 60% of the original size. The sewing pattern covers then four A4 sheets but, unfortunately, three parts (the wing, the body and the stomach/bib) are spread over to sheets of paper. Thus, you need the tape to combine the single parts.

I had preferred when all the information would be directly on the parts in order not to lose information after clipping the sewing-pattern, including the colour of all the parts. What the hell are a derrier and a bib? Well, 'derrier' shall be a 'derriere' obviously, but 'but' or 'bottom' is easier to understand for foreigners. And 'bib' could be supplemented by 'stomach'. More annoying is that the yellow markings for the feet disappear when you have a black white printer.

During the clipping it's important NOT to cut on the marked border but half a centimeter off. Otherwise you couldn't sew up the parts (you need a seam). At some borders (top of the head, lower part of the body, toes) it's not possible to cut that way. Nevertheless, don't cut near the borderline.

Sewing

Gain your first experience with the arms, the feet and the beak. Sew up the arm parts (the outer sides facing) but let the arms on the shoulder side open. Reverse the arm, fill it with foam rubber and afterwards bend the fabrics on the open end to the arm's inner side and stitch it up. You can use the same technique for the feet and the body. Alternatively, you could make a cut in the body and put the open arm in such a cut. But I haven't done this. I guess the arms won't be so movable then. It's a question of taste I think.

Each part of the body should be combined first with the according part of the bib and after that you should combine both halves. At least now you will notice that the bib seems to be too long. The explanation is simple. After you added the beak you can use the long end of the bib to fill out the beak or you use it close the backside of the foam rubber-filled beak. Otherwise the foam rubber wouldn't stay in the beak.

Use always thread of the fabrics colour. To combine the bib and the body you can use black or white thread but here it is important to tighten the thread during sewing. Otherwise you would see the thread on the seams of the final Tux. That problem doesn't appear if use a sewing-machine.

Compound legs and feet with the body in the last step.

An easy way to add the eyes is the usage of glue but I don't like glue. I decided to use a left tape of fabrics that looks the penguin like a ninja (photographs). Later I will stick large red buttons.

Miscellaneous remarks

I would prefer that the penguin had a light smile. Perhaps the pattern could be adjusted in that way. But I don't know how to do that. Moreover, on the photographs Tux seems to have a black line between the upper and lower part of his beak. That is missing in the pattern.

The shape of the penguin is ideal in order to add a cap or vest or jacket.

Are there any open questions?

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