

## Upcycled Wool Tying Practice



Fall breezes bring covered toes and gym shoes and the art of tying for little fingers. My son has easily gotten flustered with shoe tying. As I watched him try with many “helpful” aids I could see why. Puzzles would unlatch mid-hold and even just practicing on his own shoes wouldn’t work because they would move too easily. I knew he needed something weighted down and simple.

Materials:

100% wool sweater to be felted and cut up (no wool blends, it must be 100% wool)

scrap fabric

sand

shoelace

needle and thread or sewing machine

small pointed tool such as a screwdriver

#### Instructions:

Felt your wool sweater by washing it in the hot water setting on your washing machine. Use 1-2 tbsp. dish soap instead of laundry detergent and let it go for the full cycle. Felt your sweater until you can no longer see the stitches. I usually go for two cycles.

After the sweater dries, cut one sleeve tube off, save your left-over felted wool for other projects.

Trim to desired length. This will vary per sweater, our section was 9 ½" long x 4 ½" wide. You need some length so the project can be heavy enough not to move around and can rest easily in your child's lap. Too short will wiggle around and defeat the purpose.

Flip inside out and center the sweater seam on the top. Stitch closed along the shorter open side of the felted wool tube (the part that would fit around the wrist), pull and stretch this a little bit to match as closely as you can the size of the other end of the tube while sewing, flip the seam inside, and set aside.



Use your scrap fabric to cut two rectangles that will fit inside your tube. Again, this measurement will vary per your sweater. Just measure your rectangle of your sewn sweater tube and cut it to match.



Stitch three sides closed of your fabric rectangle by hand or machine. Use a seam allowance you feel comfortable with.

Flip the seams inside and fill your scrap fabric with sand.



Stitch closed and set aside.

Grab your wool "pocket," a small pointed tool, and a shoelace with the plastic ends. I used the sweater seam side on top to faux that we are tying up the wool, but decide where you'd like the shoelace to be fed through.



Poke through the top of the wool "pocket" and immediately feed the shoelace through. I found I'd lose the hole very easily if I waited. Continue poking and feeding the shoelace through until you are satisfied with the lacing. If your shoelace is too long, here is the time to trim it. Make sure you knot off your lace on top so it doesn't slip through, as it will be very hard to feed it in again with the plastic tip missing.



Slide in your sewn sand weight.

Top stitch your wool pocket closed, or not and make it available for your child to use and practice with. When your child has learned to tie you can dismantle it easily and put the sand back in the sandbox. Or, I found you can also use it for (1) a door weight (2) non-tape alternative for holding tableclothes or banners and we're still inventing...