

HOW-TO: AIRPLANE MOBILE

By Michelle Kempner

HI recently moved 3,000 miles away from my sister while she was pregnant for the first time. She and I are best friends so it was difficult to be so far away from her. There was nothing I could do to help her out other than turn to crafting. Inspired by the laser-cut airplane mobile by Shadowy Owl Puppets (craftzine.com/go/laserpuppet), I pulled out fabric scraps from a quilting project and set about making a soft airplane mobile.

Pattern

Directions

Step 1: Print out the included airplane pattern templates and cut along the solid line. The larger pattern includes a $\frac{5}{8}$ " seam allowance and the smaller plane includes a $\frac{3}{8}$ " seam allowance.

Step 2: Lay out the fabric you are using selvedge to selvedge, with the wrong sides together. Pin the airplane pattern to the fabric lining, up the center of the airplane, with the grain of the fabric. If you are using scraps, make your best guess at lining up the pattern.

Step 3: Cut the airplane pattern from the fabric. Remove the pattern piece and pin the 2 pieces of fabric together. Starting at the left-hand corner of the tail, machine-sew towards the nose of the plane and stop when you get to the right-hand corner tail of the plane. To turn the corners when sewing, leave the needle down, lift the foot, turn the fabric, lower the foot, and continue sewing. Leave the tail section open (Figure A).

Step 4: Cut off the seam allowance with the pinking shears. The zigzag shape left by the pinking shears allows the airplane to stretch back to the appropriate shape when you turn it right side out. If you don't have pinking shears, trim the seam allowance and make notches along the span of the wing with scissors. Trim off excess fabric from the corners (Figure B).

Step 5: From the opening in the tail, gently turn the airplane right side out. You can use the closed pinking shears to help push the edges out. Be careful not to poke through the seam.

Step 6: Since the airplane tail is rather small, take very small tufts of fiberfill and beginning stuffing the plane starting with the nose. When the nose is filled, add fiberfill to each wing. Fill in the rest of the body and the tail. Don't overstuff the plane. Fold over

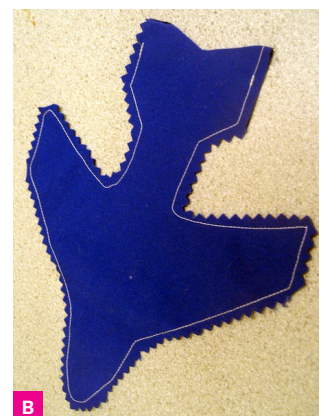
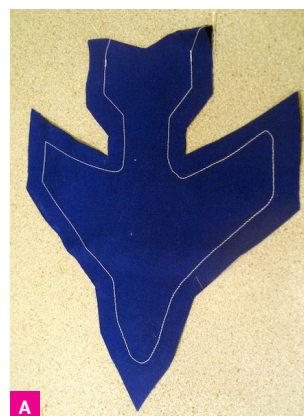


MATERIALS

- » $\frac{1}{2}$ yard each of several assorted fabrics (scraps work well)
- » Thread
- » Sewing machine
- » Seam guide
- » Clear sewing ruler
- » Pinking shears
- » Scissors
- » Pins
- » Hand-sewing needle
- » Fiberfill stuffing

- » Large embroidery hoop
- » Bead-stringing wire
- » Crimp beads or tubes
- » Crimping tool
- » Heavy-duty string or twine

Note: The mobile is for decorative purposes only and should not be placed directly above the baby in the crib.



the seam allowance on the tail and pin it shut. Using a hand-sewing needle, sew the opening shut with a whipstitch.

Repeat the steps above to make 3 large airplanes and 3 smaller airplanes with different fabrics.

Step 7: The airplanes will hang from the embroidery hoop. To attach them, thread a needle with bead-stringing wire a little longer than the length you want it to hang. Loop the beading wire through the seam on the wing of the plane (Figure C).

Step 8: Pull the beading wire through the airplane and bring a tail up to meet the longer strand. Place a crimp bead on the 2 strands and crimp it with a crimping tool to secure the wire. Place a second crimp bead 1" away and crimp it. Trim all the extra wire (Figure D).

Step 9: Use the same method to hang the plane from the embroidery hoop. Place 2 crimp beads on the wire and then loop the wire over the embroidery hoop. The loop should be tight enough to hold the plane in place, but loose enough that you can move the plane along the hoop to adjust the balance. Slide the tail into the crimp beads and crimp to secure. Repeat these steps for each plane.

Step 10: Do a preliminary balance check and try to distribute the planes evenly around the hoop. Use the same technique above to run wire across the top of the embroidery hoop in the same manner that you would slice a pizza. Check the balance again. Repeat 3 more times so that the embroidery hoop is sliced by 8 (Figure E).

Step 11: Cut a long piece of heavy-duty string to hang the mobile. Loop it around the center point of all the intersecting wires with the 2 ends together at one end, as shown. You can adjust the balance by gently sliding the center point of this web around and also by sliding the planes within their section. Tie a knot in the string and hang the mobile.



About the Author

Michelle Kempner's goal in life is to have as little free time as possible. She works in technology at an interactive agency in New York during the day while sewing, knitting, baking, blogging, running, swimming, and biking her weekends away.

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