



*Fairy Dancers  
Toadstool Tuffet*

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**PATTERN**

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Natalie Jane Prior



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## PATTERN

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by Natalie Jane Prior



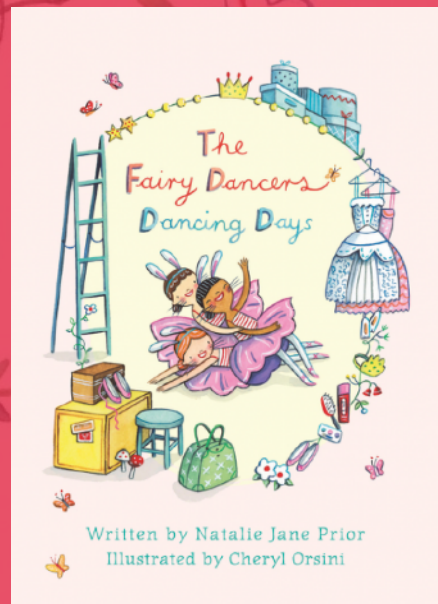
# *Fairy Dancers Toadstool Tuffet Cushion*

I've always had a thing about mushrooms and toadstools. It probably goes back to my childhood, when one of my favourite books was the copy of *Peg's Fairy Book* that had originally belonged to my mother. There was always something magical about the way mushrooms would pop up in our garden after rain, particularly if they formed a "fairy ring" in the grass; so when I was writing the stories for *The Fairy Dancers: Dancing Days*, it seemed quite logical to include a fairy ring in one of the stories, "The Fairy Sleepover"

Spotted toadstools have always occupied a special place in children's book illustration—Cheryl Orsini has included traditional red and white spotted toadstools in her illustrations for *The Fairy Dancers*, and some in even fancier colours for *The Fairy Dancers, Dancing Days*. I thought it would be fun to make a tuffet, a floor cushion big enough for a child to sit on, that pays homage to the old-fashioned favourite. So here are super-easy instructions to make a Fairy Dancers Tuffet for your own young Fairy Dancer to sit upon.







Every Saturday, with a hop, a skip and a magical twirl, Mia, Emma and Grace turn into

## FAIRY DANCERS

The Fairy Dancers by Natalie Jane Prior and Cheryl Orsini, published by ABC Books, 2015

The Fairy Dancers: Dancing Days by Natalie Jane Prior and Cheryl Orsini, published by ABC Books, 2017



# *Instructions*

The following instructions have been written for someone who has limited sewing experience. I've tried to explain everything as simply as possible, including instructions for basic appliqué. To save disappointment, please make sure you read through all the instructions before you start cutting or sewing.

The finished size of the tuffet is approximately 45cm diameter



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## YOU WILL NEED

70cm red fabric

70cm beige fabric

25cm white fabric

25cm fusible web, eg Vliesofix (for appliqué)

red sewing cotton

500 grams Hobby Fill (stuffing)

In addition to the materials above, you'll need the following equipment

a piece of string about 30cm long

a sheet of newspaper (tabloid size is fine)

a marker pen

a corkboard/drawing pin

school compasses, or a few round objects in different sizes to trace around

scissors, pins, a needle

an iron and ironing board

a basic sewing machine with zig-zag or blanket stitch

## Step 1: Make a pattern

Begin by making a pattern piece in the shape of a quadrant, or quarter circle. This will be used to cut the circles for the front and back of the cushion.



Take the 30cm piece of string and tie it to the marker. When you've done this, tie a knot in the string approximately 24cm from the marker, as shown in the photo. Push the corkboard pin through the knot.





Place your sheet of newspaper on a surface you can stick a pin into, and pin your string to the bottom right hand corner of the page.

Tauten the string and draw a curved line across the paper from the bottom edge to the side edge. You should have a perfect quadrant, which you can now cut out.



## Step 2: Cut the front and back pieces

Fold the red and beige pieces of fabric in half along the grain line, and cut both along the fold. You'll end up with 2 pieces of red and 2 pieces of beige fabric, each about 70cm x 60cm—there'll be enough to make two tuffets if you want to make a pair.

If you prefer, you can dispense with the beige fabric and make both the front and back of your tuffet red. I preferred the beige because I thought it looked more like the underside of a mushroom, but it is entirely up to you which way you go.



Fold a piece of red fabric in half, then in half again. Pin your quadrant pattern along the folds as shown in the photo (pattern corner is circle centre). Cut along the curved edge to yield a circle, approximately 48cm in diameter, and do the same with the second piece of fabric.

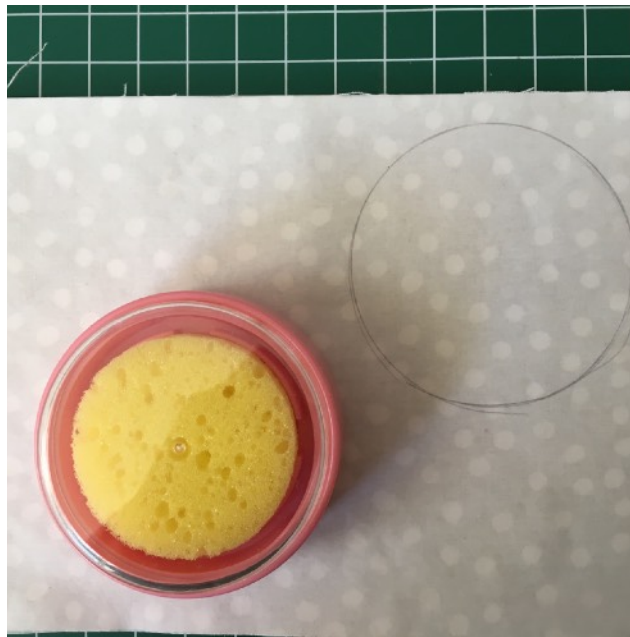


### Step 3: Cut out your spots

The white spots are attached to the toadstool tuftet using a simple machine appliqué technique. If you haven't done this before, don't be afraid, as it is really very easy.

Press your 25cm length of white fabric and spread it out on your ironing board **RIGHT SIDE DOWN**. Now place the 25cm strip of fusible web on the back of the white fabric, **WEB SIDE DOWN, PAPER SIDE UP**. Using a dry iron, press the web onto the fabric. Don't peel the paper off yet.

When the fabric has cooled, lay it down on a table with the paper side up. Using a set of compasses, draw circles on the paper in an assortment of random sizes. If you don't have a set of compasses, just get some cups, jar lids or other round objects, and trace around them.



The spots on my tuffet range in size from about 4 to 10cm, but it is entirely up to you what size you make yours—you might even like to experiment with irregularly shaped splotches rather than circles. Just be aware that very tiny circles will be fiddly to sew around because of the tighter curves. If you've never done appliqué before, err on the side of cutting larger circles.

Cut your circles out, and peel off the paper to reveal the fusible web backing.



#### 4. Appliqué the Spots

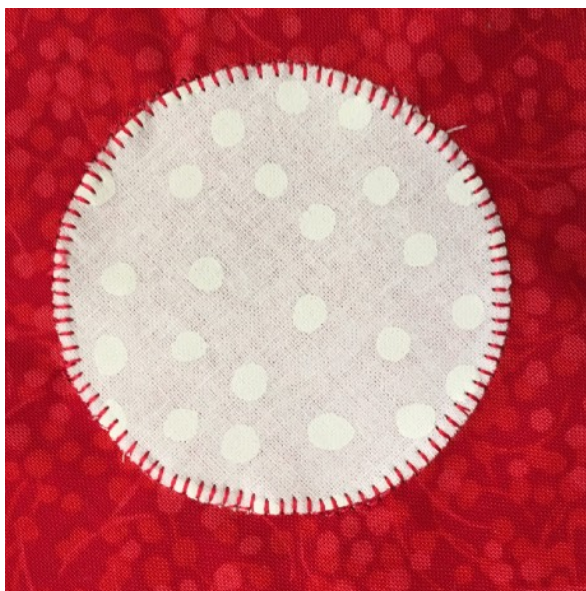
Now comes the fun part. Spread out your red cushion top and arrange your white spots in a pleasing pattern, with the WEB SIDE DOWN. When you're happy with the arrangement, secure the toadstool spots in place by pressing each one with a hot dry iron.



Thread your machine with the red cotton, and select either a blanket or zigzag stitch (I used a basic blanket stitch).



Carefully sew around the edges of each of the circles, positioning the right hand edge of your stitch against the outside edge of the fabric circle. If you've never done machine appliqué before, start with the biggest circles as they'll be easier to sew. Take your time.



## 5. Making Up the Tuffet





Take the two tuffet pieces and pin them, right sides together. LEAVE A GAP BIG ENOUGH TO GET YOUR HAND THROUGH for stuffing it in the next step.

Using a straight stitch and a 1.5cm seam, sew around the outside edge of the tuffet with your sewing machine (taking care not to sew across the gap you left for stuffing).

Trim your seam allowance back by about a third, and then, using a small pair of sharp scissors, clip a series of small “nicks” in the fabric of the seam allowance, at 2-3cm intervals, right around the outside of the circle. Cut close to, but not through the stitching when clipping. (There are plenty of YouTube videos showing you how to do this if you feel nervous—just search under “clip a curved seam’.) Clipping the curved seams in this way will help your seam lie nice and flat when you turn the tuffet right side out...which of course, is the next step!

Turn the tuffet right side out. Poke your hand through the opening and push out the seams with your fingers, stretching and pulling it into shape, then give it a good press with your iron.



## 6. Finishing the Tuffet

Stuff the tuffet with the Hobby Fill, making sure you push it right to the seams. You'll need the whole 500g bag of Hobby Fill—it never ceases to amaze me how this stuff disappears when you put it inside something!



Thread your sewing needle and slip stitch the opening closed. Give the toadstool tuffet a good shake and a pummel to make sure the stuffing is evenly distributed.





Add a dachshund and your Fairy Dancers Toadstool Tuffet is finished!



*Don't forget to check out the Fairy Dancers books, **The Fairy Dancers** and **The Fairy Dancers: Dancing Days**, by Natalie Jane Prior and Cheryl Orsini, published by ABC Books.*

*For more patterns, children's downloadable activities, and information about **The Fairy Dancers**, visit [www.nataliejaneprior.com](http://www.nataliejaneprior.com)*