

TO TRIM OR NOT TO TRIM

If you are not creating your bear from a short pile fabric you may find that his fur will be in need of a little trimming to reveal his eyes or even considerably more to show off his facial shape and features.

Many new bear makers are often reluctant to trim. My only suggestion is that, you trim slowly, you cannot replace the hair once it's gone. It's often a good idea to walk away at intervals and come back at a later time to appraise your work. You may even like to practice trimming on a piece of scrap fabric.

Face trimming is most often done with sharp pointed scissors and the stage at which you wish to trim is a matter of personal preference.

Some options with trimming are:

- a) With a medium to large synthetic bear I often find it sufficient to trim a concave area in front of each eye. If trimming all over the snout on a synthetic bear, I would not cut right back to the fabric backing. Leave a short, even tufted pile all over, it is much more attractive than the knitted backing of the synthetic being exposed.
- b) Sometimes thinning or feathering out the fur all over the snout is sufficient. This is best done by holding the small pointed scissors at a right angle to the back of the fabric and snipping randomly over the area.
- c) A light trim across the top of the snout can often enhance the shape of the face.
- d) To enhance and define the shape of the mouth with a longer or thicker fabric it is often interesting to trim along the mouth or eyebrows.
- e) Trimming right to the back of the fabric should only be considered if the front seam under the chin is centered. The full trim can be done with either pointed scissors or with a small electric moustache trimmer. The short tufts of remaining fur left on the surface of the fabric give texture to the snout. A trim on the fronts of the ears can also add interest.
- f) For an even smoother look you may wish to pluck the hair from either around the mouth area or over the whole snout. This does tend to leave the backing fabric looking very bland and I do personally prefer the trimmed finish.

OVER 450 FABRICS IN YOUR HOME



MAIL ORDER AT IT'S BEST

**Have samples of Australia's largest
range of Teddy Bear Making Fabrics in
your home, with a
Mail Order Sample Pack.**

A MUST FOR BEAR MAKERS

AUSTRALIA'S
LARGEST RANGE
DIRECT TO YOUR DOOR

At Gerry's Teddy & Craft Designs we are proud to offer the largest and most exciting range of Teddy Bear Making fabrics and supplies in Australia, all available direct to your door by our fast efficient mail order service.

EYES FOR YOUR BEAR TO TRIM OR NOT TO TRIM

Bear Talk Fact Sheet



P.O. BOX 3668
SOUTH BRISBANE. QLD. 4101

**Phone: 07 3846 5959
Fax: 07 3846 5960**

Email: mailorder@gerrys.com.au
Web: www.gerrys.com.au

EYES FOR YOUR BEAR

The eyes on your bear determine how he looks at the world and even more important – how the world sees him. Points to be considered with eyes are: -

- * Type of eyes
- * Colour of eyes
- * Size of eyes
- * Position of eyes
- * Technique for insertion of eyes

All of the above will have a bearing on the character and look of your finished bear.

TYPES AND COLOUR OF EYES

Safety eyes: If you are creating a bear for a toddler or small child, I would recommend that you use the plastic or plexi safety eyes with the little metal push on back.

Glass eyes: They are certainly the more popular choice of bear makers. They usually come with a small wire loop on the back of the eye. But if eye comes to you on a length of straight wire, don't take fright. Just cut the wire off about $\frac{3}{4}$ " or so from the back of the eye and with pointed pliers wind down the wire into a loop. Do be aware that it is necessary to pair your glass eyes before inserting, as the sizes may vary slightly. Glass eyes are not made in a mould as are the plastic safety eyes. Each glass eye is individually created by its maker heating a glass rod to melting point and taking just the right quantity of molten glass to create a particular eye. Pupil sizes may also vary in glass eyes.

Black glass eyes are by far the more popular choice with most bear makers, they usually look livelier and have a neutral look with any colour fabric. **Hint:** If you wish to take the high shine off your black glass eyes, sand the surface of the eyes with fine sandpaper.

Amber glass eyes with the black pupil, they are a traditional choice and are often used by beginners. The depth of colour in the amber may be affected by the colour of the fabric behind it and they can sometimes look a little starey and only you can decide what suits your bear. Please note that it is not imperative that the colour of the eyes match the colour of the nose. Many of the old/antique bears had a black nose with amber eyes and vice versa. Let your imagination take flight and you may be surprised at the outcome. **Hint:** To make an amber eye even darker, paint the back with black or brown paint.

Coloured glass eyes with a black pupil can be used for a special effect. The rich green and blue are the most popular.

Clear glass eyes with a black pupil, can be painted on the back to create any colour eye you desire. This can be done with folk art paint, enamel paint or I have achieved some wonderful colours using pearl nail polishes. **Hint:** Possibly you could create a special bear by colour coordinating his eye colour, nose thread, ribbon and other decorations.

Replica glass eyes are black and have a frosted finish to give an aged/worn appearance.

Shoe Button and Reproduction (Repro) Shoe Button eyes.

Many of the bears of the early 1900's had eyes which were black or dark brown dome shaped buttons from 'My Lady's Boots' ie. Shoe Button eyes. Many of the professional bear makers like to use this type of eye as it gives their bears a special quality. The old shoe buttons are now difficult to find and when available the size range is limited to about 7mm to 10mm. We are delighted to say that we have been asked to exclusively distribute an exciting new quality product 'Reproduction (Repro) Shoe Button Eyes' which come in sizes 9mm to 16mm. These eyes have been already embraced by professional bear makers both in Australia and Overseas and they are well worth a try if you like an aged and timeless look for your bears.

Side Glancing glass eyes have a large black / brown pupil set to the side and a white back-ground. These are great fun to use for bears or gollies. The eyes can be turned so that the pupil is either looking to the side (cheeky) and up or down (if he has been naughty).

Smokey Topaz. These amber eyes with a black pupil have dark smokey finish with an elongated / pre-crimped loop at the back for easy placement through your fabric.

SIZE OF EYES

So you have decided on the colour for your bears eyes you must now decide the best position and size for the look, which you require.

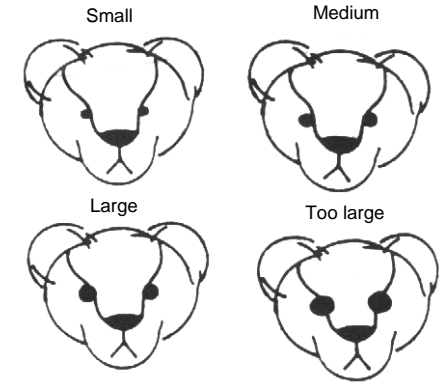
Hint: One of the best ever products to come on to the market are the New 'Test Eyes'. These are glass eyes in every size each fixed on to a long pin at the back so that you can test which size and position most suits your bear before finally attaching the eyes. They are presently available in black but we will soon also have them available in amber. The illustrations in this article I hope will help you to select and position your bears eyes but here also are a few suggestions which may be food for thought.

1. Real bears have relatively small eyes. A teddy looks more bear like and more grown up with smaller eyes.
2. Smaller eyes will make him look older.
3. Larger eyes will make him look younger and more childish.
4. Larger eyes will give him a more friendly look but don't go overboard and have them too big.

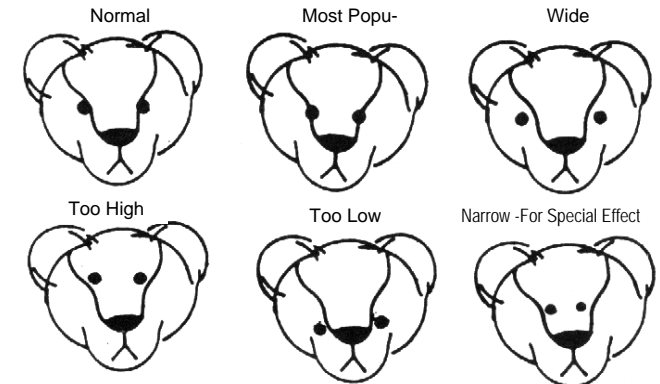
POSITION OF EYES

Many beginners have difficulty in deciding the placement of eyes and I often see their early bears with the eyes placed well up on the forehead. This does not look so nice. The eyes are best placed close to the indent where the back of the muzzle finishes and the forehead begins to angle up. The gusset on most patterns begins to widen in this area. Real, adult bears have rather narrow close set eyes where as on young bears the eyes are wider apart. Check illustrations to see eye positions. With test eyes you can trial the position best suited to your bear.

EYE SIZES



EYE POSTIONS



TRIMMING STYLES

