

t-shirt latch hook rug tutorial

I really love flokati rugs. I have two that are safely tucked away in my parents basement awaiting our reunion. When I learned that I would be having a child and building a nursery for him, I wanted a flokati. A gray one. Being a flokati snob though, I knew that I couldn't afford the price tag (a whole months rent), and I knew that I would be too precious about the rug (and be leary of the body fluids that babies seem to leak all over the place). So I chose the only sensible alternative: I would make a rug.

I'm going to show you how it's done, but let me warn you- while this rug was super inexpensive to make with the resource of money- it was very costly in the resource of time. I have easily 60 hours invested into this rug, and many many more hours donated by family and friends. I love that I started it while I was pregnant and worked on it while Jack was a teeny tiny newborn. I love that my Mom and I sat with it on our lap, each hooking from one side to the other, meeting each other in the middle, while my overdue belly hindered my progress.

And now, this is how to make your very own latch hook rug.

Supplies:

Latch hook canvas

latch hook tool

old t-shirts

scissors or rotary cutting tool/mat

seam binding

masking tape

dye (optional)

All of these things should be available at your local craft store, with the exception of the old t-shirts. I found thrift stores that were doing bag sales and loaded my bags up with white t-shirts. I also asked my local [freecycle](#) if they had any white t-shirts to spare. I was able to purchase all of the supplies, including shirts, for under \$25.

On to the making! The first thing that you want to do is plan. Decide how large you would like your rug to be and what colors/designs you would like. I chose to just make it one all one color, battleship gray (much to the chagrin of my submariner husband!). Estimate how many shirts you'll need because if you're dyeing them, as I did, you'll want to dye them all in one batch to get consistent color. I found that I needed 70 strips to fill one square (latch hook canvas is pre-printed with a grid), and that I could get approximately 250 strips for the average men's t-shirt. Thus, I would need 2 shirts for every 7 squares. These numbers are a good starting point, but may need to be adjusted according to your design needs.

note: I chose to make this rug very thick. The 2 shirts for every 7 squares number is based on a very tight and very high piled rug. Super results can be achieved with less. I recommend using half of this number if you're making a larger rug, to save on time, and to reduce the bulk of the finished rug.

Once you've gathered all of your shirts, use a rotary cutting tool and mat (you can certainly use scissors but the results are less precise) to cut the shirts into 1 inch strips. It was easiest for me to fold the shirt in half, shoulder to shoulder and cut strips from the trunk of the shirt, up to the collar. It is important to make sure that the shirt is smooth and flat when cutting, or you'll end up with uneven or jagged strips. All of these strips should then be cut into 4 inch segments. This cutting phase easily took me 20 hours (I was cutting up 51 shirts!).

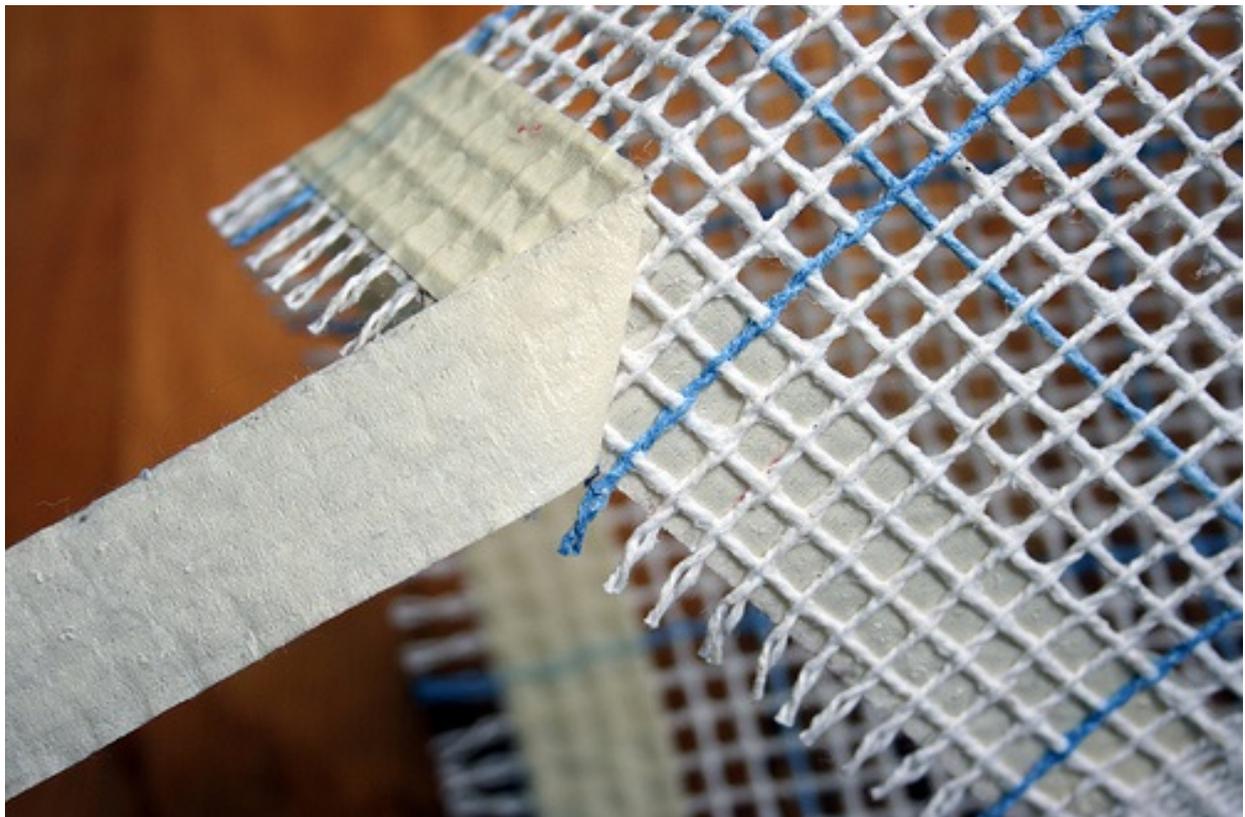


Once you have all of the strips cut, it's time to dye them if you'd like. I used Rit dye and just dumped them all into the washing machine.

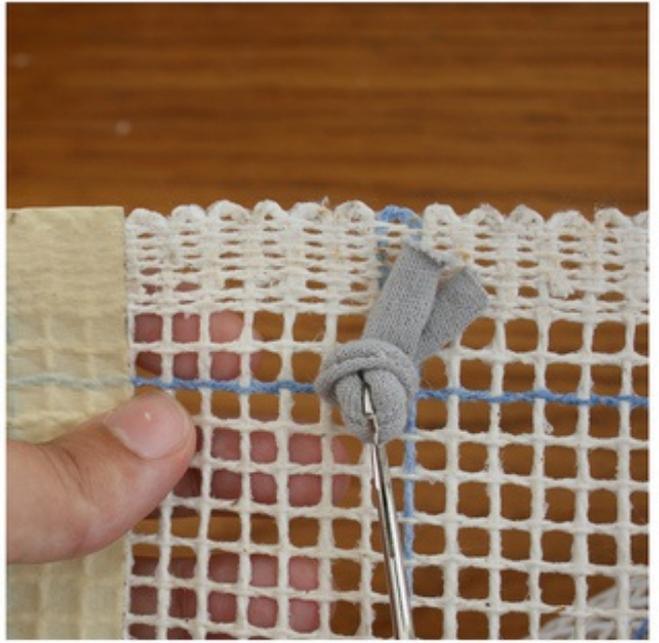
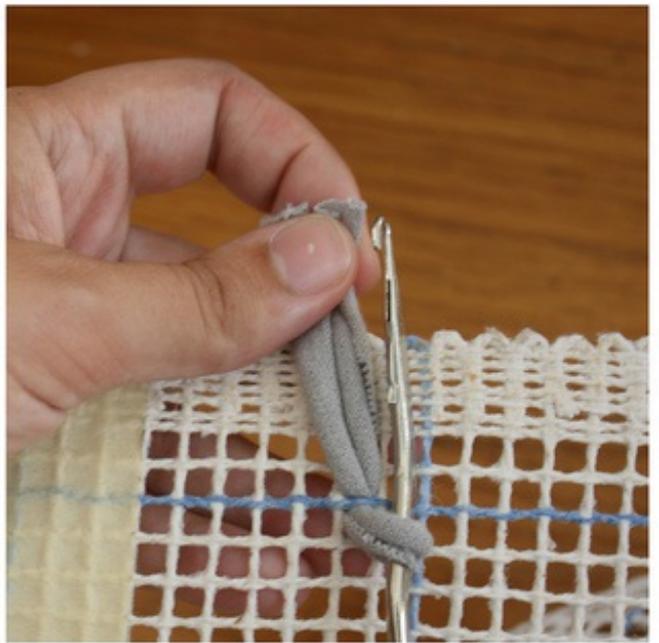
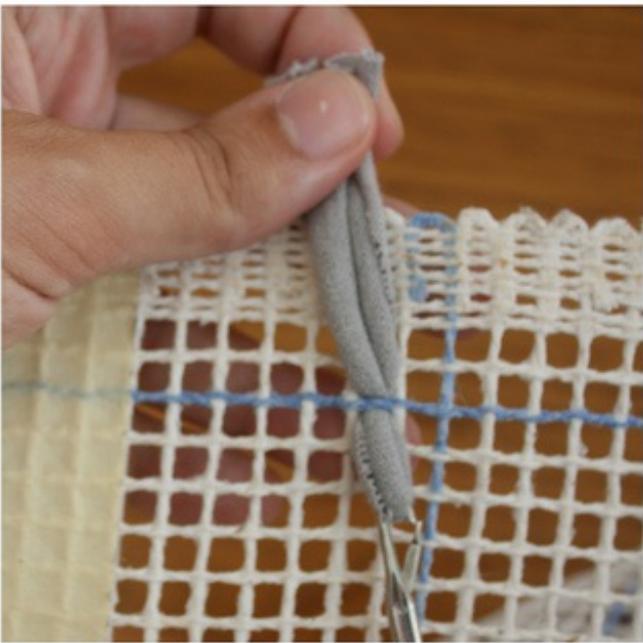
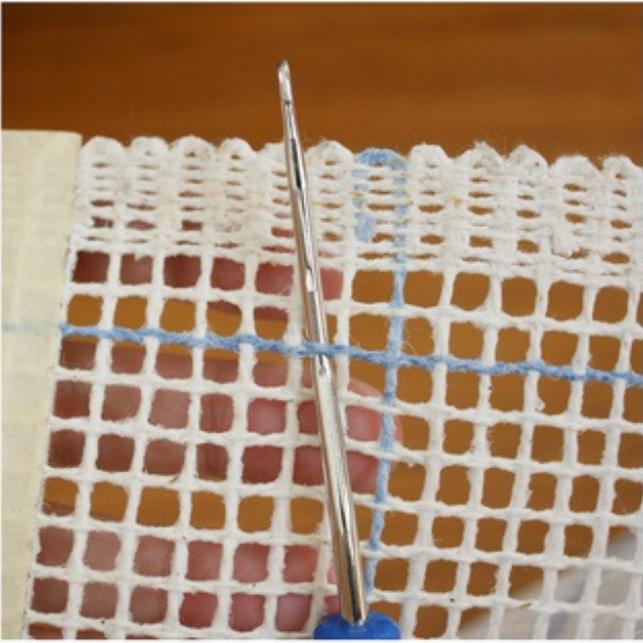




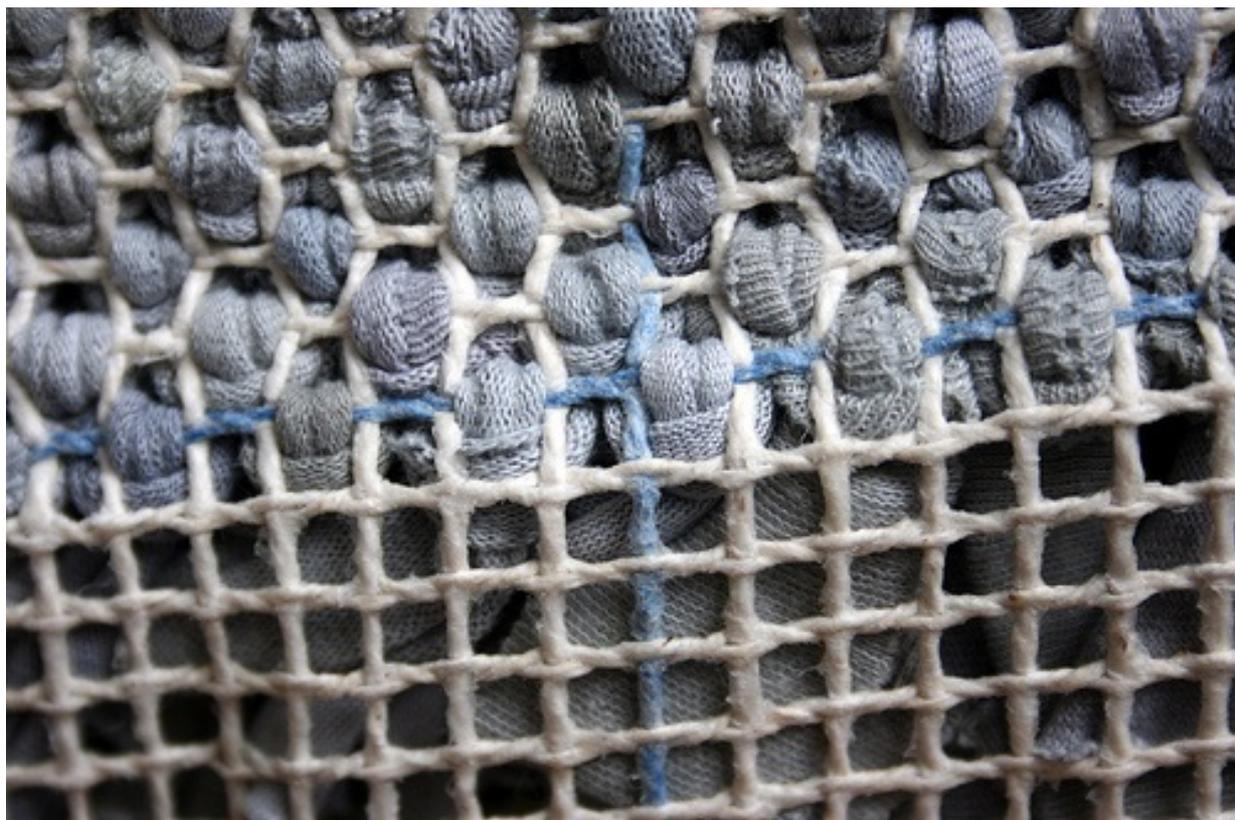
Once your strips are all ready to go, tape the edges of the latch hook canvas with the masking tape so that they won't pull apart while your latching.



Now you're ready to hook! From the front of your rug, isolate a strand of the canvas with the latch hook tool. Make a loop with the t-shirt strip and place it on the end of the tool. Pull the latch hook tool down, through the canvas, pulling the t-shirt strip with it, leaving the strip halfway through the canvas. Slide the tool up to the remaining ends of the t-shirt strip and catch them. Pull them through the loop made by the t-shirt strip below the canvas.



I chose to do this with every other available space on my latch hook canvas, and it made a very lush, very high pile rug. You may want to space it out differently for a larger rug, or for a rug with less bulk.



Continue until you run out of strips, or complete the size that you'd like!



When you're done, bind the edges by hand using seam binding.
Here's my completed rug, you can see that it gets Jack's approval!





good luck and happy hooking!

29 July 2010 edit: Thanks for all of your enthusiasm about this project! Please read the comments below as well as they contain some extra tips from people who have conquered this project! Carry on.

xo

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