

Balls and Pins

Different Types and Sizes

Two different types of balls can be used
in making 3" quilted ornaments.

Styrofoam and Smoothfoam



— Styrofoam (left) and Smoothfoam (right)



Styrofoam is a rough textured ball with air pockets. These balls are soft and will crumble easily, so when you purchase them in a packet of six, watch for any damage to the balls. Each 3" ornament that you see on my website takes about 250 flat-head straight pins. I find it easier to push each pin into Styrofoam balls. The brand I use is made by

FloraCraft and can be purchased in packets of six balls for around \$5.99 each at any craft store or online. Even though I refer to these balls as 3", they are actually 2.8" balls.

In your local craft store, you may have noticed green Styrofoam balls. I don't recommend using these because they are designed to be used in floral arrangements and are much too soft to use in making ornaments. Green Styrofoam is designed to hold water for moisture.

Smooth foam balls are made of solid foam and I have found two different companies that make them.



First, is a brand called, "Smoothfoam." These balls are a trademark of Plasteel Corporation and can be purchased online directly through their website at www.smoothfoam.com. They are true 3" balls and were once available through the Hobby Lobby stores, but

it appears they have discontinued these balls. They are very high quality and durable and won't crumble like Styrofoam. They are a very hard ball and that makes it difficult to push the pins into the ball.

These balls have a center seamline and a 1/4" hole at one end of the ball that is about 1/4" deep. I suggest placing this hole at the base of the ornament. Other shapes, like eggs, are also sold on the Smoothfoam website.

The second foam ball is called "Smooth Foam" made by FloraCraft. This ball is a little smaller (2.9") and more lightweight and softer than the Plasteel Smoothfoam balls. There is no hole in each ball, and it is easy to push pins through this ball.

I have found these at Hobby Lobby, and you can also purchase these 3" balls on Amazon under "Polystyrenes Foam Ball".



Pins



The many layers of triangles used to create these beautiful ornaments are attached to the Styrofoam ball using flat-head straight pins.

Depending on the method you choose to use, you will need 4 or 5 pins for each triangle. You will want to use good quality, ultra-thin, extra fine pins such as Dritz Silk or Satin pins, size 17, that are 1 1/16" long. These pins work well on all fabric ornaments and must be used in making ribbon ornaments. Poor quality, cheap pins can be purchased from China on websites such as Ebay or

Amazon, but you will find these pins to be more like small thin nails and hard to push into any Styrofoam. You can purchase pins in individual boxes at your local craft store or online websites.

Bulk Pins

If you are interested in making several ornaments, Dritz Pins are also available in 1/2 lb. boxes with approximately 2,500 pins. Your basic 4-layer ornament uses about 250 pins, so this box will make 9 to 10 ornaments. That makes it very cost-effective, and they are available for purchase on the Pattern Please website.



Dritz, size 12, sequin pins are made from nickel-plated steel and measure 3/4" long. These small lightweight pins work well on all fabric ornaments but should not be used for ribbon ornaments. The heads on these pins are too small and they will pull through most ribbons.

Because they are thin, if forced, they do bend easily. Some find these pins harder to pick up because they are so short, so when working with these pins, place them on a magnetic pin holder. You can bunch them up and they will almost stand up. This makes the short pins very easy to pick up with your fingers. These sequin pins work great on smooth foam eggs and balls, because they are easy to push into the ornament, but they are too short to be used with the airy Styrofoam balls. This 1/2 lb. box has approximately 6,000 pins and will make 23-24 ornaments that take 250 pins each. When you visit your local craft store, you may find sequin pins that are 1/2" long. These pins are too short and cannot be used to make an ornament. Dritz #12 Sequin pins are hard to find, so they are available for purchase on the Pattern Please website.

My Work Table

I want to share with you the table I use when I make an ornament. It's called a "Pillow Table" and it measures about 13" by 17" and has a hard surface on top and a soft pillow on the bottom. It originally came with a little light, but I removed it because it kept getting in the way!



I'm sure you have seen these before at retail stores, but what makes this table so unique is the cup holder to hold my ball. It keeps it from rolling off the table as I work. I like to be able to work for a little while and put it away with ease. I love this little table, and I purchased it on Amazon for around \$20.

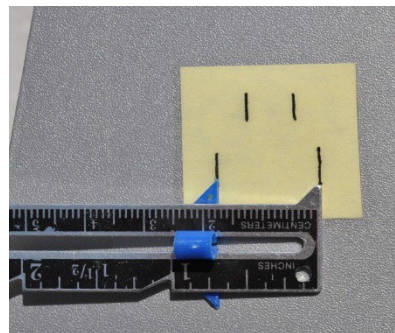
I was in Hobby Lobby recently and found this pink table that is slightly larger. It was under \$20, so if you are serious about making several ornaments, this table is a great investment.





On my pillow table, I use a washcloth on the surface to keep things from sliding off. I enjoy sitting on my couch and while watching TV, I make my ornaments. When I am ready to stop, my pillow table just slides under the coffee table or my bed. I love the way it's so portable!

I have taped a little piece of paper on the side of the table to remind me of the measurements between my layers. This little table is well worth the investment!



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