

A New Seat for a Footstool

Contributed by Mochyn

Last summer I bought a footstool from a second-hand stall at a local show. I need something to put my feet on when I'm knitting or whatever, and this was just the thing: I even paid for it out of my prize money for cookery at the show.

{kl_thumbimage img="MochynFootstool/footstool1.jpg"}

The original woven string top was starting to wear in places so I wanted to replace it, but I wasn't sure what to use for the new surface: something free, for preference! So I put up a message on the Downsizer.net forum and someone suggested some sort of rag rug type thing. In a box upstairs I have various rug-making tools, so off I popped to see what was there. Eureka! An old brass hook with wooden handle. I knew I also had several worn-out pairs of the old chap's jeans and a small hessian sack from the Christmas chestnuts, so I was all set, and this is what I did.

- Strip off the old string and give the frame a wipe down.

- Center the hessian over the frame, leaving an overlap of several inches all the way round. Pin through the top, taking up the overlap and tightening it as you go, creating an even tension across the cloth.

- Cut in on the diagonal at each corner and tuck the raw edges under to leave a neat finish.

- Using a curved upholstery needle and raffia sew the hessian to itself to make a firm base for the rags. Keep adjusting the tension of the hessian to keep it firm.
- Draw your design on the hessian using a thick pen. Keep it simple!

- Cut the cloth into strips about 1.5cm wide. Using a large darning needle, bind the sides of the frame. Starting from a corner, loop the rags through from the back of the hessian thus:
 - Hold the rag strip at the back of the hessian.
 - Push the tip of the hook through from the front, catching a loop of rag.
 - Pull the rag through to the front so that there is a short end of rag at the front of the hessian.
 - Push the hook through the hessian again about 0.5 cm away from where you first went through and catch another loop of rag.
 - Pull this new loop through to the front so there are now an end and a loop showing with the long end of rag still at the back of the hessian.
 - At the end of each strip pull the rag through to the front and trim. This will prevent loops catching and pulling. Working in this way and keeping the loops all the same size (about 0.5 cm) follow all round the edge of the frame.

Work the design by outlining each shape and then filling it.

The finished article: and very comfy it is too!

This is a method for making hooky rugs which I have adapted for this footstool. Hooky rugs are usually made on a frame to prevent the hessian from changing shape as you work. The other sort of rag rug often seen in Britain is the proggy rug which is made from short pieces of rag pulled through to the front of the hessian giving a tufted effect. Both can be made from just about any kind of cloth and are wonderful!