

Wren ★ Feathers

Shoe school 101: Medieval turnshoes

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Quarter inch seams allowed on all pieces unless otherwise specified.

I assume you have basic sewing knowledge and the explanation should suffice, but if you need help please email me!

Putting sandals and moccasins aside for the moment to focus on closed-style only, there are three basic ways a shoe gets made, and they fall into the categories of "innies" and "outies." The first kind of "innies" are some of the oldest European footwear we know about, recovered from Scandinavian bogs and Medieval excavations. They're called "turnshoes" and refer to the way they are constructed, by sewing all the seams and turning them right side out. I would say the majority of doll shoe patterns available commercially these days involve this kind of construction. It works great with materials like felt, fabric, and thin, flexible leather or leather substitutes.

This is a modern reproduction of a 10th C shoe

http://leatherhelms.com/mod/pga/files/img_0874_edited.jpg

It shows the unique triangular back found on many shoes from that period, and interesting (but not necessarily authentic) closure. Many shoes of this type were constructed with really ingenious leather buttons like this:

<http://media-cache-ec0.pinimg.com/736x/c8/02/27/c802278deb96dde8f4945daf278b1557.jpg>

From the barefoot cordwainer on etsy.

So, for our first shoe project, we're beginning at the beginning and making some medieval shoes, possibly to go with our medieval princess dresses? Hmm...

Fabric: use good-quality wool or wool-blend felt for these. Ultrasuede might work too, but most fake leathers you will find at the craft store are not supple enough for this project. In general I don't like to use actual leather for doll shoes because of the risk of staining and the fact that it's full of chemicals and not the most eco-friendly product out there. The other day I picked up a bag of leather scraps at the craft store and it actually had a warning that it contained "chemicals known to the state of CA to cause cancer, birth defects and other reproductive harm". You certainly won't find THAT on wool felt, and it can be easily dyed with food coloring and vinegar!

The pattern was based on the "Jorvik" and "Anglo-Scaninavian" shoes from the 10th century:

<http://www.personal.utulsa.edu/~marc-carlson/shoe/SHOES/SHOE4.HTM>

<http://www.vikingsonline.org.uk/resources/authenticity/basickit/basickit15.html>

(scroll to the bottom for more patterns)

http://www.angelfire.com/empire/egfroth/Coppergate_Boot.JPG

Note that some of the originals had pointier toes, but the pattern was modified to fit better on a doll foot. After several attempts with the pointy back, I realized it was not the easiest thing to do on a tiny scale, and thus not suited for a pattern intended to be easy.

Should you be interested in a pattern for human-size shoes like this, I made slightly higher, more boot-like version for myself that fits women's size 9, email me at jenniebagrowski at gmail dot com.

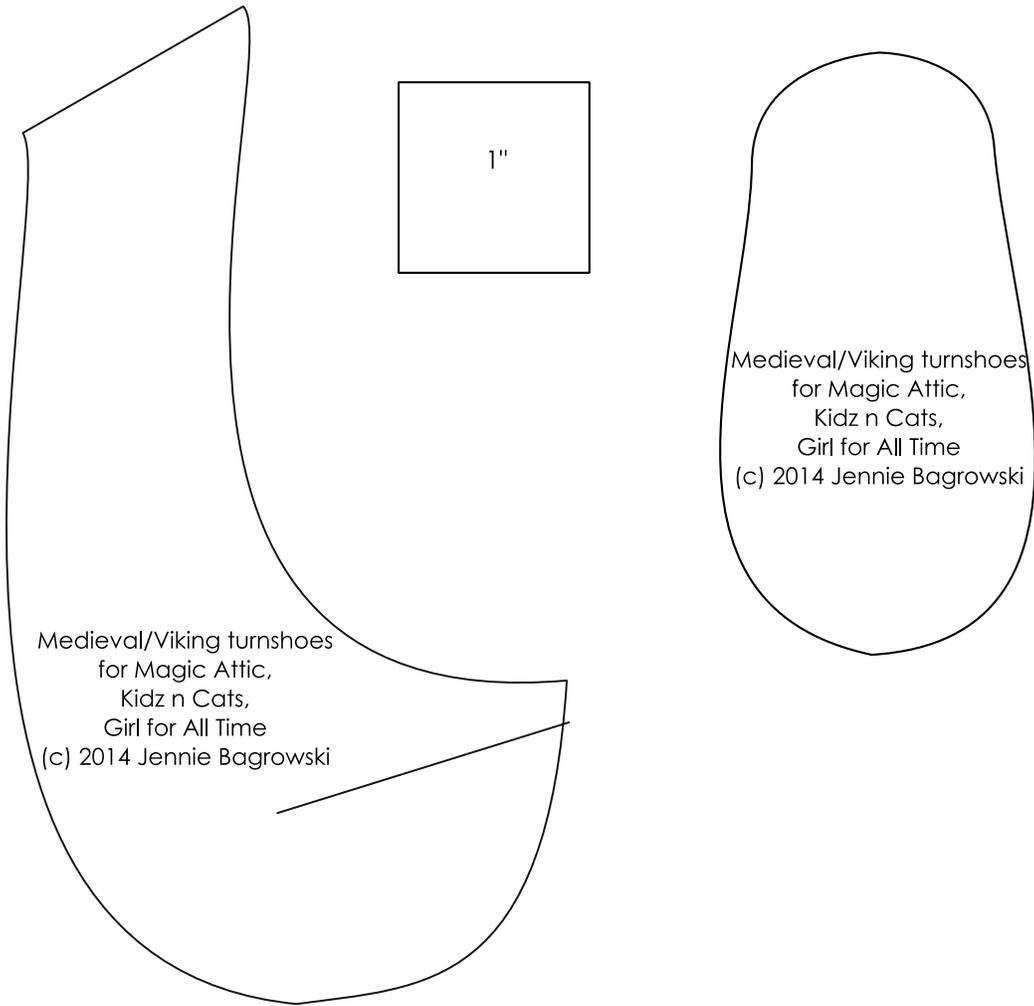


Staystitch around top edge and triangle (in white). Fold the triangular flap up, bring the back forward and overlap just a tiny bit; topstitch in place.



Sew upper to sole, trim with pinking shears, turn and put on doll. It should be very snug-fitting. Adjust the strap as desired and sew snaps to close. Cover with a "button" made of a rolled up piece of felt or very thin leather.





¼" seams allowed for joining sole and upper

This is not the easiest pattern to adapt to other sizes, but should you want to try, there's a foot size comparison chart [here](#)