



# MAKE A STRAW HEADBAND

This is a guide to help you get the best out of your headband hat blocks.

[WWW.HATBLOCKS.CO.UK](http://WWW.HATBLOCKS.CO.UK)



## **SOPHIE COOKE**

OF IMOGEN'S IMAGINATION

Based in her Sheffield studio, milliner Sophie uses traditional techniques to create beautiful handmade hats, fascinators, and hair accessories for all occasions. Her signature style is vintage-inspired, with a contemporary twist, and we're thankful for her generosity in sharing her knowledge with you to help you get the most out of your headband block.

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## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

Parisal Straw (remnant of cone used here)

1.2mm cotton covered wire (hard)

Blocking Pins and Clips

Block Stand (optional)

Clingfilm (Saran Wrap)

*Optional for inserted base: Buckram, Fusible Interfacing (light/stretch) and Silk*

**Owen's Tip:** Use clips on the ends of the headband, to avoid damage over time, from repeated use of pins.

## 1 PREPARE BLOCK

Cover your block with your chosen barrier material. We suggest PVC-free cling film (saran wrap).



## 2 PREPARE MATERIAL

Check you have enough straw for both the top and bottom, or use alternative fabric for the bottom. Dampen and press the straw if using a remnant.

## 3 BLOCK MATERIAL

- Secure the centre points with pins.
- Use movement in the weave to smooth the material over the block ends.
- Secure the ends with clips



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## FOLD THE PARISISAL OVER THE END OF THE BLOCK.

Use small tight folds and secure with a clip.

**Tips:** *This doesn't need to be perfect at this point, just enough to get a tight and flat fit to the block. Use natural tension from the weave and clips, rather than pins, towards the more delicate ends of the block.*



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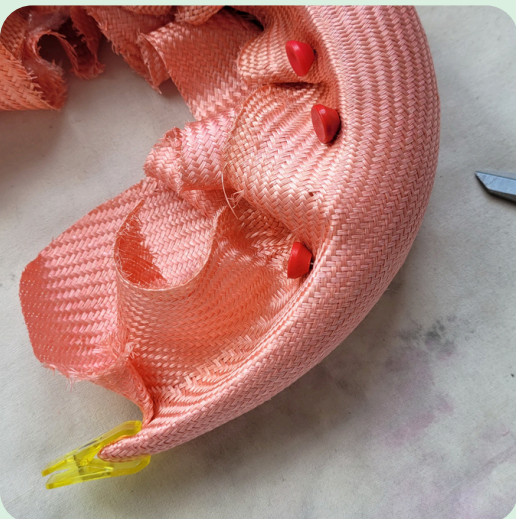
## FINESSE THE BLOCKING TO ENSURE SMOOTH FINISH

Do one side at a time and start at the end of the headband.

Work with the weave, easing it towards the centre.

Add extra pins as required to the central section – being careful not to stray to the more delicate areas of the block.

Wrap the excess around the ends and secure with elastic bands to hold in place. You may want to trim any excess fabric at this point.

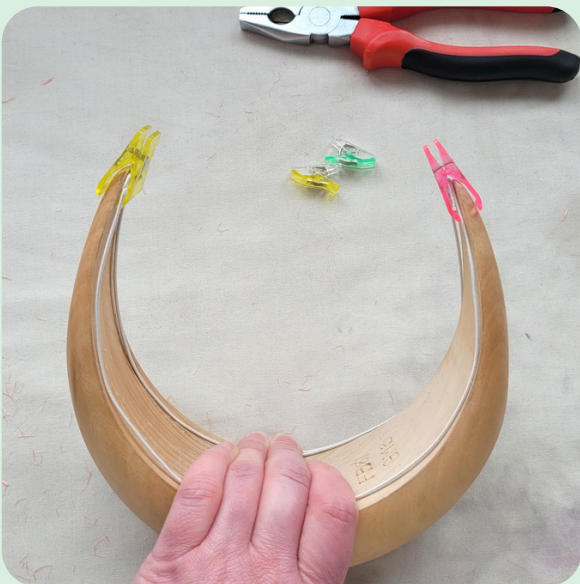


## 6 STIFFEN

When dry, stiffen with your preferred method. Remove the elastic bands and trim more excess fabric. Use the clips to keep the tension while stiffening.



*CARE NOTE: : Please be aware that safety precautions are required when working with chemical stiffeners; however, it offers a lovely sheen when dry*



## 7 WIRING

Shape, size and join the wire.  
Tip 1: Don't forget to take the spring out of the wire before shaping.  
Tip 2: Use clips to secure ends when checking the shape.

## 8 FIT THE WIRE

Use your preferred stitching method ensuring the wire sits snugly into the edges of the shape. Consider whether you want to insert the base AFTER you have trimmed the headband, and added your label to the insert.



*NOTE: : Depending on your chosen trimming, it may be easier to attach this whilst you can still get your fingers / needle inside the headband.*

## 9 MAKING A BUCKRAM BASE TEMPLATE

First, make a card template, using the underside of the block, and use it to cut your chosen material to the approximate size required.

Tip: Pin your pattern card to the block and draw around the block.

Tip: Cut the buckram on the straight to reduce the risk of warping



### **Important:**

For this insert, the buckram was trimmed approximately 0.5cm smaller than the template to get a neat fit.

If you use parisial or any material with a folded edge, you may want to cut your piece a little bigger than the template. It should make it easier to fold the edge back for a neat finish to the final insert.

**\*\*Your end insert should still be slightly smaller than the template.\*\***

## 10 COVERING THE BUCKRAM BASE INSERT

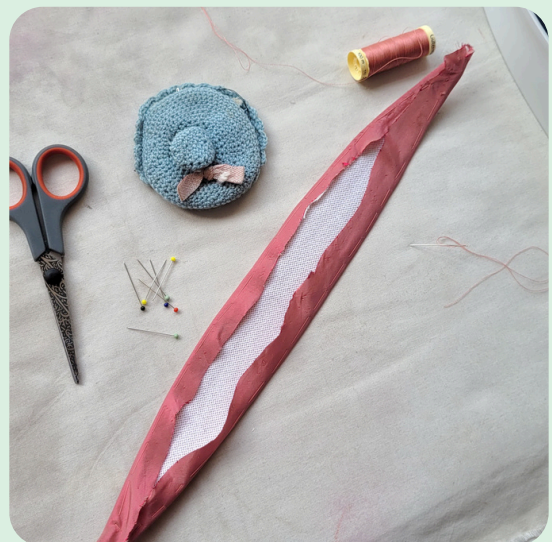
Use fusible interfacing to further prevent the buckram from warping.

Using an overlapped edge also provides something to tack the silk to (to reduce as much movement as possible).

The silk was cut on the bias as standard.

Tip: Use grease-proof paper to protect your work surface when using heat-activated glues.

**Important:** Consider if you wish to add your label to the insert at this point.



## 11 FITTING THE INSERT

Pin the insert in place so that it sits just below the edge of the headband.

*Tip: Start in the middle of the headband.*

Ease the ends in place once the central section is sewn in place. By starting in the centre, the tapered ends will be easier to fit if the insert's width matches the headband's corresponding section.



## 12

Sew the central section of the insert in place, using your preferred stitch.

*Tip: Don't cut any remaining threads when you finish this section. You can continue with these threads once the rest of the insert is fitted.*

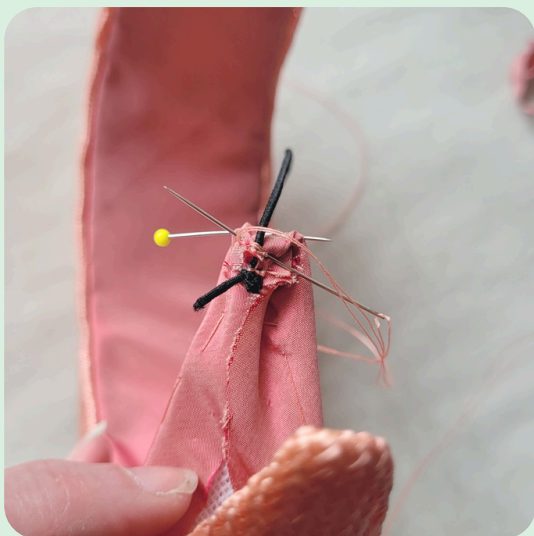
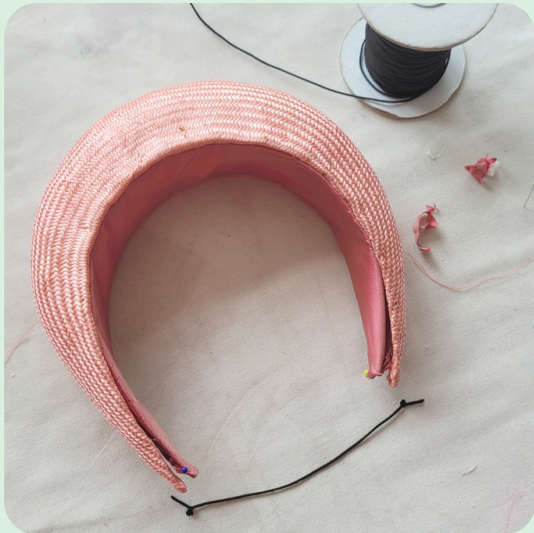




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Fit the ends of the insert.

Fold and trim as required to remove any excess from the insert.



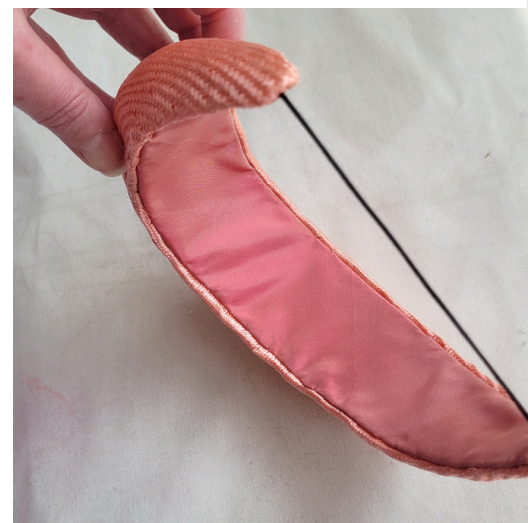
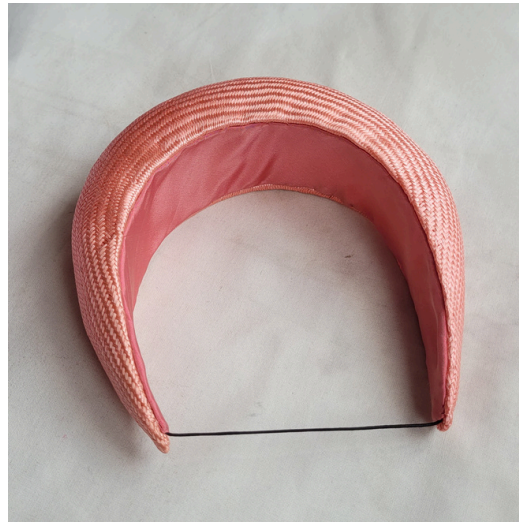
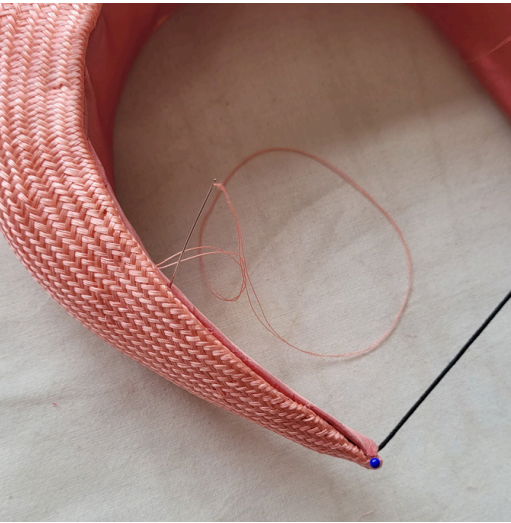
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### **SEW IN ELASTIC**

Prepare and fit the elastic. Cut and knot elastic to your required length.

Stitch the elastic in place.

## 1 5 SEW THE ENDS OF THE INSERT



Continue with your preferred stitch to finish fitting the insert.

## ALTERNATIVE MATERIALS & TIME SAVING TIPS

This technique could be used with other materials such as sinamay, felt, or buckram/thermoplastics.

This is a great way to use up leftover materials or to upcycle existing hats – just be mindful that you have enough to work with if you want the insert to match the rest of the headband!

This example uses a flat piece of parisial, if working with the crown of a cone, be mindful that you will need to work harder to get the central points of the weave wrinkle-free.

**Reminder:** Consider whether you want to sew the insert in place AFTER you have trimmed the headband. Depending on your chosen trimming, it may be easier to attach this whilst you can still get your fingers/needle inside the headband.

**Working to a tight deadline?  
Designing for a client with a limited budget?**

You may wish to simply finish the headband with an inner ribbon to cover the raw edges inside.

Alternatively, you could use a non-fraying material to add a simple insert.

Craft felt would provide a neat finish and without requiring additional stabilising materials.

**Why the template for the insert needs to be cut down!**

When you fold the blocked material fabric under the headband block, its own thickness creates a new surface.

This folded thickness means the blocked shape has a shorter inside width and length than the actual block.

Adding wire can also shorten the inside length, potentially tightening the curve.

This is worsened if your material isn't fully stiffened, or the wire is slightly short.

