FINISHING

Running ermine: Break yarn leaving a 30cm / 12 in tail and use the yarn tail to sew through the two sts on the needle, gently pull closed and secure. Using the same yarn tail, sew down through the inside of the ermine, bring the needle out at the base of the upper side of a front leg. Sew three stitches between the upper edges of the leg, and then repeat on the lower leg edge, closing the leg loop into a tube. Repeat for the other three legs, secure, and lose the yarn end inside the ermine.

Sleepy ermine: Break yarn leaving a 15cm / 6 in tail and use the yarn tail to sew through the two sts on the needle, gently pull closed and secure, lose the tail inside the ermine

All ermine: Knot the black and white yarns together where you changed colour in the tail. Secure all yarn tails and lose inside the ermine. Using the i-cord stitch ladder on the underside of the ermine and something pointed, such as a pencil, stuff a 9 cm / 3.5 in length of yarn into the head, a 9 cm / 3.5 in length of yarn into the neck, a 15 cm / 6 in length of yarn into the middle of the body and a 15 cm / 6 in length of yarn into the back end of the body.

Soak the ermine in warm water for 15 minutes, then wet felt it by handwashing it very roughly, using a little hand soap or detergent, alternating very hot and very cold water, for about 6 minutes. Start the felting process relatively gently to prevent the yarn stuffing initially escaping (if it does, just push it back in with a pencil). As you felt, roll the legs of the running ermine between your fingers to help them form tubes. The ermine will shrink from about 8.8 cm / 3.5 in to 7.5 cm / 3 in.

Squeeze out as much water as you can, squashing the ermine in a towel. Push and pull the ermine into a good shape, inserting a wool needle into the ears to tug them up and, for the running ermine, rolling the legs between your finger and thumb. You can be quite rough but take care with the narrow connection between tail and body. If you ermine has become hairy through felting, trim over with scissors. Pin the ermine into shape on a blocking mat or other soft surface – straight for a running ermine or curled into a c. 25mm diameter circle for a sleepy ermine. Pull the ears up and pin down through them so that they dry sticking up. Leave to completely dry, preferably in a warm place for at least 24 hours.

Experiment with pins to find and then mark the best position for the eyes and nose – for a realistic ermine face, the eyes are wideset and quite close to the nose.

For eyes, use a one strand of black stranded embroidery thread to either sew on beads or embroider French knots.

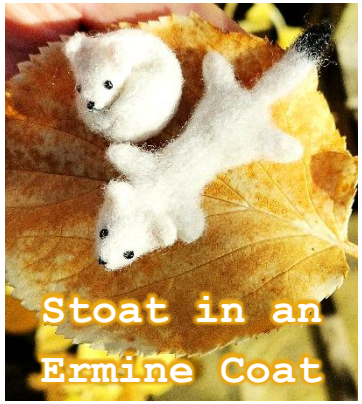
For the mouth, use the same black strand to sew a 3 mm horizontal stitch. Then bring the needle out 1.5mm above the centre of the top of the horizontal stitch and, catching the horizontal stitch, sew back in where the needle just came out, pulling the horizontal mouth stitch into a shallow upside-down V shape. Embroider the nose as a tiny triangle, about 1.5 mm wide, just above the mouth.

Optionally, embroider a few little stitches in one strand of pink embroidery thread on the inside of each ear

Running Ermine: Optionally, sew the brooch pin securely onto the underside of the ermine's body.

Sleepy Ermine: Use the white sewing thread to sew through the ermine and across its base to secure it in a neatly curled position. Optionally, stick the ermine onto a 25mm diameter bezel brooch or pin back (use a strong textile to metal glue such as E6000, you can clamp the ermine & back together a bulldog/binder clip while drying) or sew it onto a round brooch back of no more than 20mm diameter.

You are very welcome to use this pattern for personal, teaching or charity purposes; please credit Woollen Wave if you do



I know 'Stoat in an Ermine Coat' sounds like a children's story somewhere between *Fox in Socks* and *Pig in a Wig*. But this is a knitting pattern for a tiny stoat in its white winter ermine coat. Here in lowland Scotland, stoats rarely turn white in winter but in colder places, more stoats moult into a snowy ermine coat to help them to blend into wintery landscapes.

Tiny animals are some of the fiddliest things to knit but I've used some simple techniques to make this ermine easier than you might expect. The ermine is knit as a length of i-cord from tail tip to nose, with ears and legs knit as straightforward short row flaps as you go (the construction is very similar to my 'Red Squirrel Brooch', just different proportions). After knitting, wet felt it, dry it to shape and use simple embroidery to give it a face.

You use the slightly open i-cord ladder to stuff the ermine; the ladder completely disappears on wet felting. The ermine only uses tiny scraps of 4-ply yarn – be sure to use 100% wool that's not superwash treated so that it's felts well. You can turn the running ermine into a brooch, decoration or embellishment for another project. Alternatively, you can make it into a curled-up sleepy ermine by omitting the legs, drying it in a curled position and, optionally, attaching a round brooch back. The running ermine is 7.5 cm / 3 in long, the sleepy ermine is 2.5 cm / 1 in diameter.

Gauge/Tension is not critical, though it may affect your yarn consumption and the ermine's finished size.

YOU WILL NEED

- 2.25mm double pointed needles (you only need 2)- because of the fast increases and decreases, the needles have to stand up to tension, so metal needles are best.
- 8m / 9 yrds wet-feltable white 4 ply / fingering yarn (100% wool, not superwash treated, I used Jamieson's of Shetland Spindrift 100% Shetland wool, shades Natural White (104) or White (304))
- 2m / 2 yrds wet-feltable black 4 ply / fingering yarn (100% wool, not superwash treated, I used Jamieson's of Shetland Spindrift 100% Shetland wool, shade Black (999))
- 40 cm / 16 in of black stranded embroidery thread
- 30 cm/ 12 in of pale pink stranded embroidery thread
- Wool needle
- Sewing needle
- Optional: two 11/0 (2.0mm diameter) black seed beads for eyes and a fine beading needle
- Optional for the **running ermine**: brooch back about 20mm long by 5mm wide, plus thread to sew the brooch back on
- Optional for the **sleepy ermine**: either a flat round sew-on back no more than 20mm diameter plus sewing thread or a 25mm diameter bezel brooch or pin back (the bezel backs have a low rim that the ermine sits securely inside), plus glue for securely attaching textile to metal (e.g. E6000)
- **For the sleepy ermine only**: 30 cm / 12 in of white thread

Stoat in an Ermine Coat pattern version 1, 4th November 2026, by Woollen Wave woollenwave@gmail.com
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PATTERN: Ermine are knit as a continuous length of i-cord from tail tip to nose.
Running and **sleepy ermine** are knitted the same, except for the body section

Tail: Running & sleepy ermine
Cast on 2 sts in black yarn and work all rounds as i-cord.
Round 1: Kfb x 2. *4 sts*
Round 2: K2, kfb, k1. *5 sts*
Round 3: Knit
Rounds 4 – 9 (switch to white yarn): K to end.
Round 10: K1, k2tog, k2. *4 sts*
Round 11: K2tog x 2. *2 sts*

Body: Running ermine
Round 12: Kfbf x 2. *6 sts*
Round 13: Kfb x 6. *12 sts*
Round 14: k2, kfb, k6, kfb, k2. *14 sts*
Round 15: K2, work back leg, k6, work back leg, k2. *14 sts*
Round 16-18: K to end.
Round 19: K1, k2tog x 6, k1. *8 sts*
Round 20-25: K to end.
Round 26: K1, work front leg, k2, work front leg, k1

Neck: Running & sleepy ermine
Round 27: K, k2tog, k2, k2tog, k to end. *6 sts*
Round 28-30: K to end.

Head: Running & sleepy ermine
Round 31: kfb x 6. *12 sts*
Round 32: K4, work ear, k2, work ear, k4.
Round 33: K2, k2tog, k4, k2tog, k2. *10 sts*
Round 34: K2, k2tog, k2, k2tog, k2. *8 sts*
Round 35: k2tog x 4. *4 sts*
Round 36: k2tog x 2. *2 sts*

EAR
Short row 1 (RS): K1, turn. *1 st*
Short row 2 (WS): P1, turn.
Work **short rows 1-2** a further 2 times, ending with a WS row.
Short row 7 (RS): K1.

ABBREVIATIONS
K: knit
P: purl
WS: wrong side
RS: right side
st: stitch
K2tog: knit 2 together - If you find it's easier in some places, you can use a different decrease- it won't make a difference to your finished ermine
Kfb: Knit twice into the same stitch- once through the front loop, once through the back loop
Kfbf: Knit three times into the same st- once through the front of the loop, once through the back loop of the same st and once more through the front loop.

Body: Sleepy ermine
Round 12: Kfbf x 2. *6 sts*
Round 13: Kfb x 6. *12 sts*
Round 14: k2, kfb, k6, kfb, k2. *14 sts*
Round 15-18: K to end.
Round 19: K1, k2tog x 6, k1. *8 sts*
Round 20-26: K to end.

The legs and ears are worked as simple short row flaps, with no wrapping.

BACK LEG
Short row 1 (RS): K2, turn. *2 sts*
Short row 2 (WS): P2, turn.
Work **short rows 1-2** a further 3 times, ending with a WS row.
Short row 9 (RS): K2.

FRONT LEG
Short row 1 (RS): K2, turn. *2 sts*
Short row 2 (WS): P2, turn.
Work **short rows 1-2** a further 2 times, ending with a WS row.
Short row 7 (RS): K2tog, turn. *1 st*
Short row 8 (WS): P1, turn.
Short row 9 (RS): K1, turn.
Short row 10 (WS): P1, turn.
Short row 11 (RS): Kfb, turn. *2 sts*
Short row 12 (WS): P2, turn.
Short row 13 (RS): K2, turn.
Short row 14 (WS): P2, turn.
Short row 15 (RS): K2.