DENIM APPLIQUÉ / QUILTED WALL PANEL

# Patchwork Denim Highland Cow

Turn the faded knees, hems and pockets of old jeans into a shaggy Highland cow. A linen-colored ground lets each shade of denim read clearly.



## Plan your panel

This version starts with a 24 × 24 in background and finishes as a 22 × 22 in quilted panel. The body template alone measures 15 × 10¼ in. The head overlaps the left shoulder, so the finished animal's outline depends on where you set the horns, feet and tail.

### What gives the coat its depth?

Use dark indigo as the shadow, medium blue for the body and a few pale strips where the light would catch the fringe. The fabric layers make the coat look dimensional while the back stays flat enough to quilt.

# Prepare the cloth and templates

All measurements are in inches. The last page is a dimensioned pattern sheet. Make a paper master of each shape before cutting your denim.

## 1 Gather the materials

Cut one 24 × 24 background square, one 26 × 26 square of low-loft batting and one 26 × 26 backing. Gather about ½ yd of lightweight denim in mixed washes, a 10 × 12 piece of tan cotton, black and white scraps, and three 2½ in binding strips cut across a 42 in fabric width. Have paper-backed sewable fusible web, tracing paper, an iron, pressing cloth, thread, and a jeans needle suited to your denim.

## 2 Wash and test the layers

Prewash the denim and background, then press flat. Avoid bulky factory seams. Stack scraps of background, denim and a patch, fuse as directed, then stitch through the sample. Check that the thread lies flat on both sides and the fabric feeds without puckering.

## 3 Enlarge each piece separately

Print the final sheet in landscape. Its pieces are drawn at different scales. For each piece, draw a snug rectangle around its outer outline and divide it into four columns and four rows. On fresh paper draw a rectangle of the labeled width and height, divide it the same way, and copy the outline one cell at a time. Tape sheets together for the 15 in body. Follow the outer contour, treating dashed lines as stitch guides.

## 4 Prepare the cutting masters

Mark the top and front of each master. Cut one paper shape per design, then flip it for a mirrored partner. For the crescent horns use a 5■ × 2 bounding box per horn. Cut the eyes as circles sized to fit the eye patches, leaving a rim visible. Pin the paper pieces together on the background to check the silhouette before fusing.



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# Build a cutting tray

Dimensions describe the full width and height of each cut shape. This flat appliqué uses raw edges throughout. Cut on the outline without adding a seam allowance.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Body** | 1 denim<br>One foundation for this flat panel. | **15 × 10¼** |
| **Face / beard** | 1 dark denim<br>Supports the eyes and muzzle. | **7■ × 7■** |
| **Back hair** | 1 medium denim<br>Trace the outer silhouette. | **9½ × 7■** |
| **Front hair** | 1 set, mixed blues<br>Cut the drawn locks apart as guides. | **10¼ × 7■** |
| **Horns** | 2 tan, mirrored<br>Keep both tips pointing upward. | **5■ × 2** |
| **Outer / inner ears** | 2 of each<br>Mirror left and right. | **3½ × 2 / 2■ × 1¼** |
| **Eye patches** | 2 light or dark<br>Add two ¾ in black circles. | **1■ × 1■** |
| **Muzzle** | 1 cream or tan<br>Embroider two curved nostrils. | **3■ × 2■** |
| **Tail** | 1 dark denim<br>Overlay the tuft with small scraps. | **1■ × 4** |
| **Leg patches** | 4 denim<br>Cut two mirrored pairs. | **3■ × 4¾** |
| **Hooves** | 4 dark denim<br>One for each visible leg. | **2¾ × 1■** |

## Patches, pockets and highlights

Start with the eight rectangle sizes on the final sheet. Repeat them as needed to cover the body, trimming excess at the silhouette. Select two or three of the pocket shapes. Cut two tiny white eye highlights. Four ■ in buttons are optional. A small embroidered circle makes a flat substitute.

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# Layer the denim body

Place the cow slightly below center. Leave room above the shoulder for the horns and space to the right for the tail.



AT THE WORKTABLE

Lift a patch to check its overlap. Keep the body foundation continuous underneath so a small gap shows a blue shadow.

## 1 Place the legs and tail

Lay the body on the background. Slide two far legs behind it and stagger their feet slightly inward. Position the tail root behind the right rump. Mark the body position, lift it, then fuse and edge-stitch the exposed far legs and tail first.

## 2 Cover the foundation

Lay the body on an appliqué pressing sheet. Arrange alternating rectangles from belly to back, overlapping edges about ¼ in. Slide two near-leg patches over the body legs. Keep their lower ends offset from the far legs. Trim patches to the planned outline.

## 3 Anchor the patchwork

Apply small pieces of fusible web to patch backs as needed, following its pressing directions. Remove the cooled assembly from the sheet and position it on the marked background. Stitch inside each visible patch edge about ■ in, then around the body and all four hooves. Keep the shoulder smooth for the head.



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# Give the cow its expression

Work on the actual background with the paper head nearby. A final check from arm’s length makes it easier to judge the gaze.



AT THE WORKTABLE

The separated layers show where each feature belongs. The horns and ears tuck behind the head. The eyes sit under the fringe with room for a highlight.

### 4 Set the head silhouette

Overlap the face base onto the left shoulder. Slip the horns and outer ears behind its upper sides. Nest each tan inner ear inside its denim ear. Lift the face away, secure the horns and ears, then replace the face and stitch its outline.

### 5 Arrange the eyes and muzzle

Place the muzzle across the lower face. Position the eye patches above it, with a black circle on each patch. Lay the hair over them temporarily to check that both eyes show. Lift the hair, fuse and stitch the features, then add white glints and satin-stitch two curved nostrils.

### 6 Sweep the fringe across the brow

Lay the back hair over the crown. Trim its lower edge locally if it hides an eye. Layer narrow front locks from the outer edges toward the center, overlapping their roots. Tack or fuse just enough to hold. Sew a line down each lock and catch its tip. Repeat with two or three narrow scraps on the tail tuft.



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# Stitch the finishing details

A little pale thread around a pocket can carry the look of an old pair of jeans into the finished quilt.



AT THE WORKTABLE

A second line of stitching traces the pocket’s pointed bottom. Leave enough space between rows for both lines to remain visible against dark denim.

## 7 Add pockets and topstitching

Place the small pockets where they remain clear of the head and legs. For decorative flat pockets, stitch all edges. Add a second line ■ in inside the first around the sides and point. Work a short bar tack at each upper corner. Trim loose threads just beyond the edge stitching.

## 8 Quilt and square the panel

Place backing wrong side up, batting next, then the cow panel right side up. Smooth and baste from the center out. Quilt around the silhouette, then add spaced lines in the background within the batting maker’s limits. Center the cow within a 22 in square and trim all layers together.

## 9 Bind the edges

Join the three binding strips on diagonal seams, trim seams to ¼ in and press open. Fold the long strip in half lengthwise, wrong sides together. Sew to the front with a ¼ in seam, mitering the corners. Join the ends, fold over the edge and slipstitch to the back. Add optional buttons after quilting.



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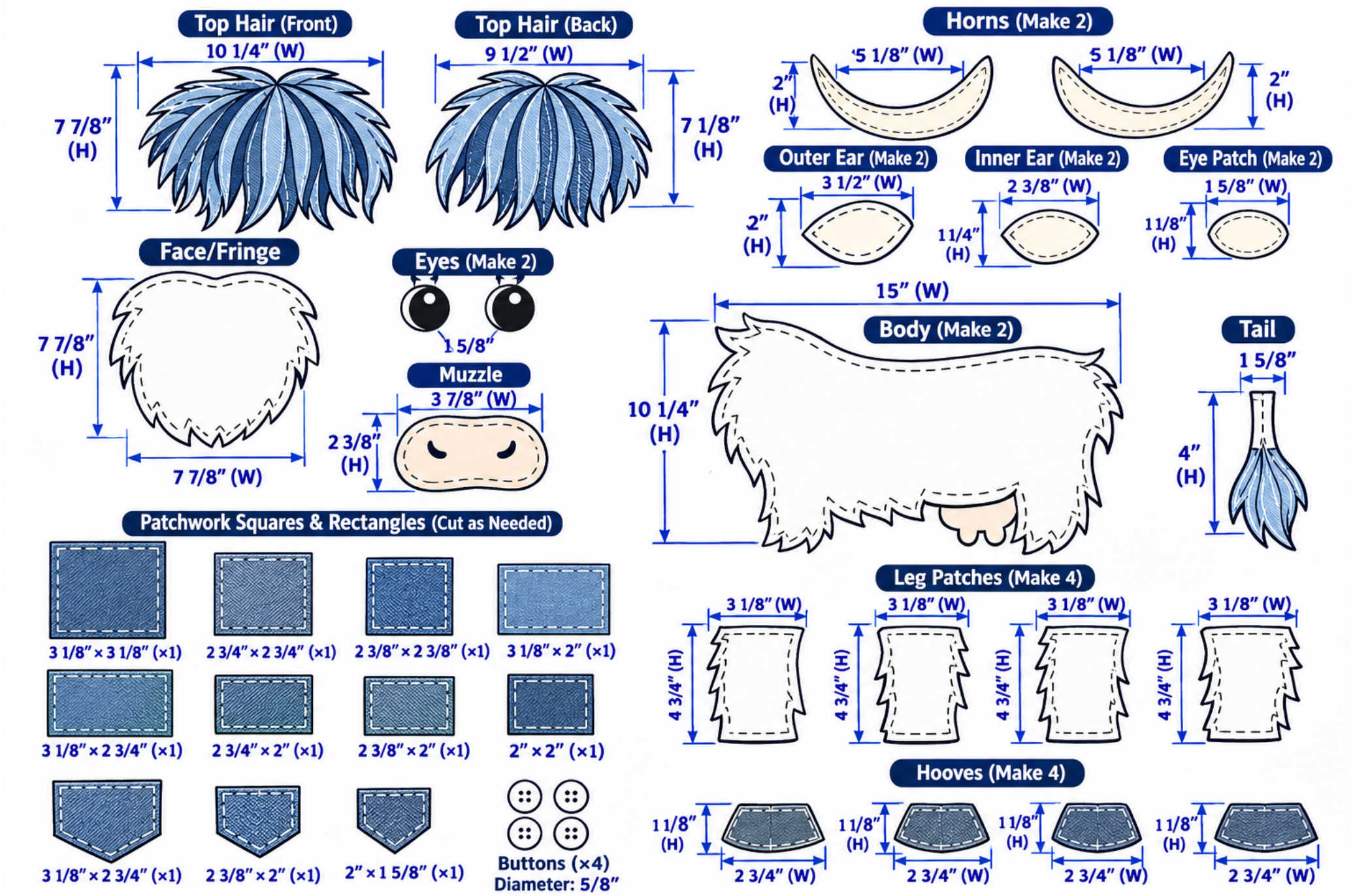


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