

Making a Temari



Hello, I'm Satan, and I'd like to talk to you about temari. Temari are little Japanese toys, meant for tossing around and rolling on the floor. In ancient times, they were made out of kimono remnants and wrapped so tightly they bounced. These days, they're made from styrofoam balls and produced mainly for display purposes. Today, *yatsu* has asked me to teach everybody how to make the temari you see above, and since I'm under contractual obligation with her to do so, I decided to agree. Besides, she agreed to take all the pictures and mess with that whole "Photoshop" thing. I may be the unquestioned ruler of the damned, but Photoshop gives me gyp the same as everyone else. The other thing I've decided is to call this particular pattern Himawari because ~~I'm a meglemaniacal domination-obsessed~~ uh, I mean, because it's a sunflower pattern, and himawari is the Japanese word for sunflower. Yeah, that's it. The original pattern, along with many others, can be found at <http://www.temarikai.com/> .

Today's class can be divided up into several chapters, thusly:

1. Materials. Obviously, these are the things you'll need in order to fabricate the ball. They're not too expensive, and a trip to your local craft store should supply you with everything you need.
2. Wrapping the ball. This is the most time-consuming and ultimately dull section of making a temari, and thus it is the one I prefer inflict upon you first. The fact that you *have* to start with this step has nothing to do with it, I swear.
3. Sectioning. This part involves laying down some threads in a set pattern as a sort of scaffolding upon which the rest of your stitching will lie. Also dull and boring. Bwahahah!
4. Stitching. Here's where you actually stitch the design. Usually goes quite quickly and is instantly rewarding, as you get to see the pattern forming right before your eyes. (;_;
5. There is no five, I just like the number.

So, without further ado, let's get started, shall we?



Chapter One: Materials

You will need:

light cotton sewing thread, and a lot of it. This will be used as the base color, serving as a backdrop for your design. In today's example, this will be dark brown.

a 3 inch styrofoam ball.

cotton pearle. Size #5 is recommended, but *yatsu* used a slightly smaller size. You will need four colors for the design, Yellow, Orange, White, and Green. You will also need a brown to match the base color for use as marking thread. (not shown)

a tapestry needle.

pins, also a lot of those.

a long, thin strip of paper, about 1/8" wide and longer than your ball is around. We'll be using this to measure ratios and things. (also not shown)

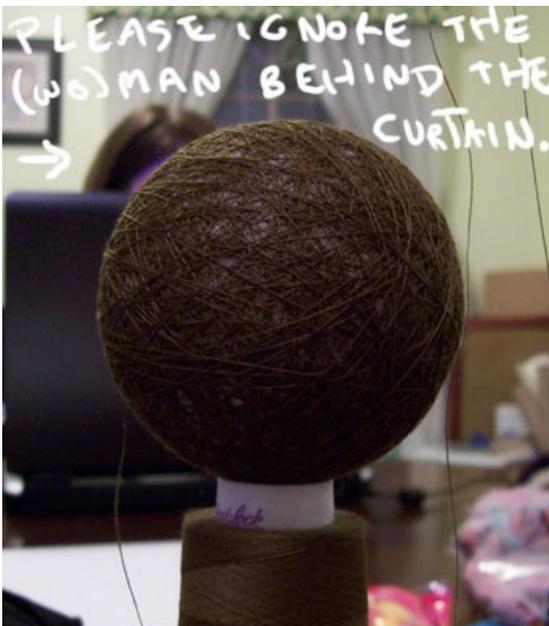
caffine (optional) (in nearly every shot)



Chapter Two: The Wrapping

The first step, as mentioned above, is to wrap that ball up like a mummy. One recommendation says to use at least 400 yards. If you're doing a white wrap, you might want to use more, as any darker threads in your design will show through the wrap otherwise.

The other thing you could do at this stage is insert a bell into the middle of your ball. Before you start wrapping, you slice the thing open with a serrated blade, carve out a small cavity, and stick the bell in there. Glue the ball shut again, and then wrap. If you have small/frisky kitties, you may not want to do this, as they will play. Then again, maybe you do want to do this...



Chapter Three: Keep Wrapping

You will be wrapping for some time. Please do not be alarmed.

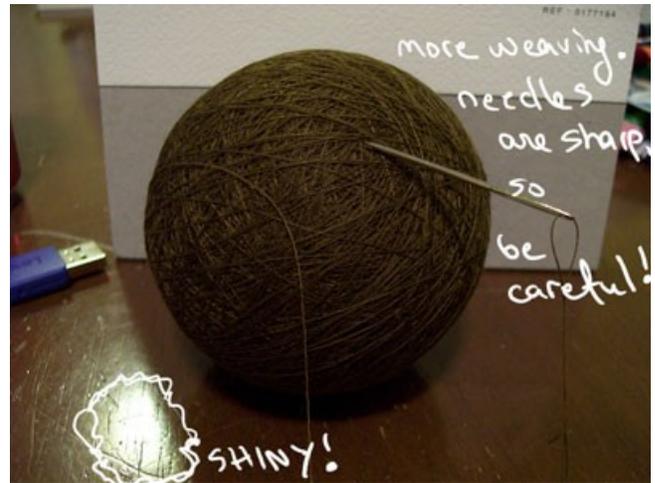
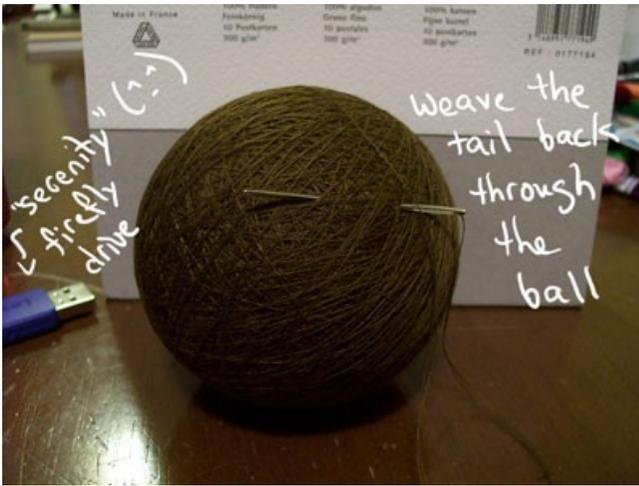


Chapter Four: Still More Wrapping

What's that, you say? That ball looks solid? You can't see any styrofoam through the brown anymore? Yes, I know. Please continue to wrap for a bit after the styrofoam disappears. Why? **BECAUSE I AM SATAN AND I COMMAND IT!** Uh, I mean, because this is the base layer that you'll be attaching your design to, so you want a firm foundation. Also, if you haven't got a thick enough wrap, your thread will show through when you start and end rounds. You'll see later. For now, **YOU WILL TRUST ME!** Uh, please?

Chapter Five: OMGs We're Done!

With the wrapping, that is. When you think you've got enough on there (are you *sure* you've got enough?) go ahead and cut your thread, leaving a tail of 12 ~ 16 inches. Thread that tail through your needle and weave it back into the ball. If you end up with a very short bit that you can't fit back through the ball, clip it off as close as you can to the ball without snipping any of the thread you've already laid down. That would be very bad, and I'd have to come after you, 'kay? (^_^)



Chapter Six: Sectioning

This is where the magic of temari begins. Although possibly, as evidenced by “shiny!” the magic may have begun much earlier for *yatsu*.

Most temari balls are divided up into 8, 10, 12, or 16 sections. Some even have as many as 22! This initial division has a huge impact on the end design, so don't mess it up, 'kay? (^_^) Our Himawari design actually has 16 divisions, so let's get started.

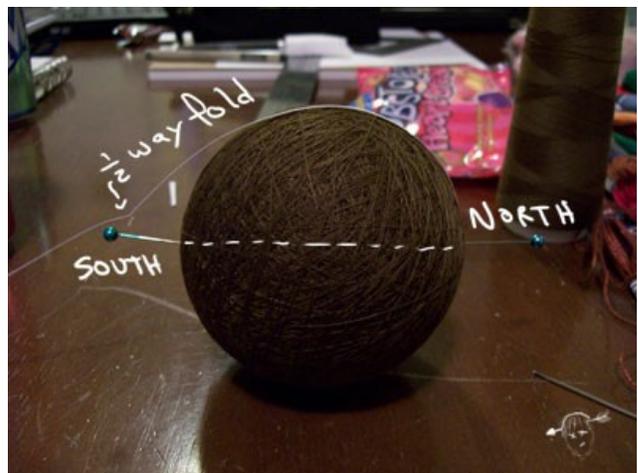
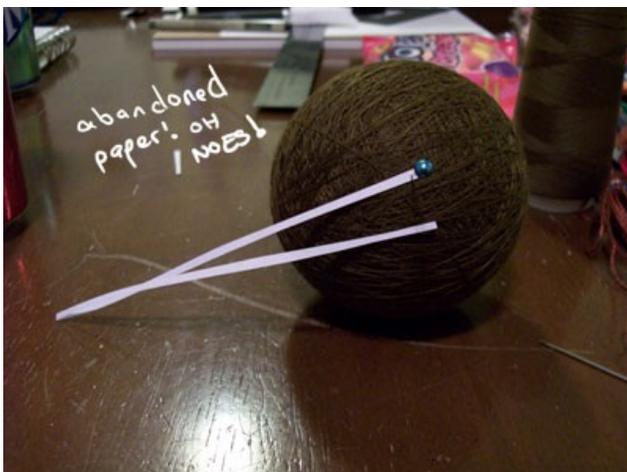
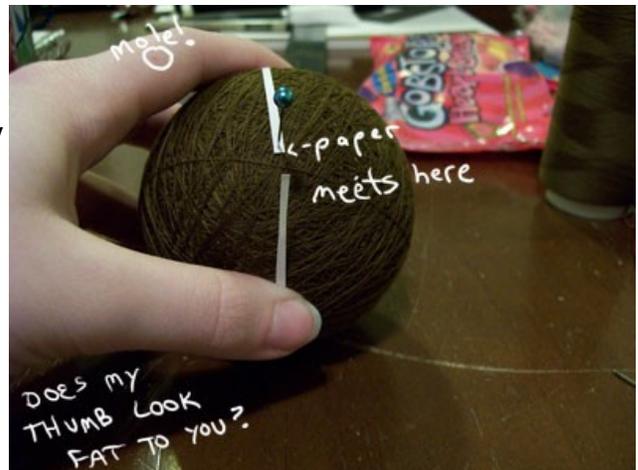
a) The Thin White Line

Remember that thin strip of paper I had you get? This is where we use it. Use a pin to stick it somewhere on the ball. It literally does not matter where. This will be the future top of your ball, code named The North Pole.

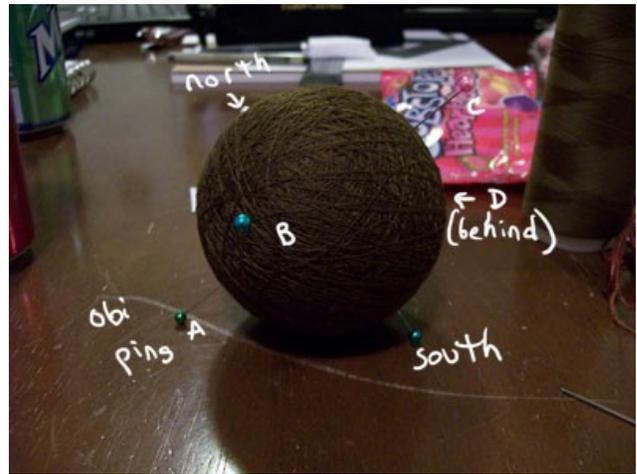


Wrap the paper around the ball to meet the pin again at the other side. Cut off any excess paper. Your paper now measures exactly the circumference of your ball. Yays.

Next, fold the paper in half, lay it flat around the ball again, and mark another pin at that fold. This is exactly half-way 'round from your other pin. Don't tell the feds, but this is The South Pole.



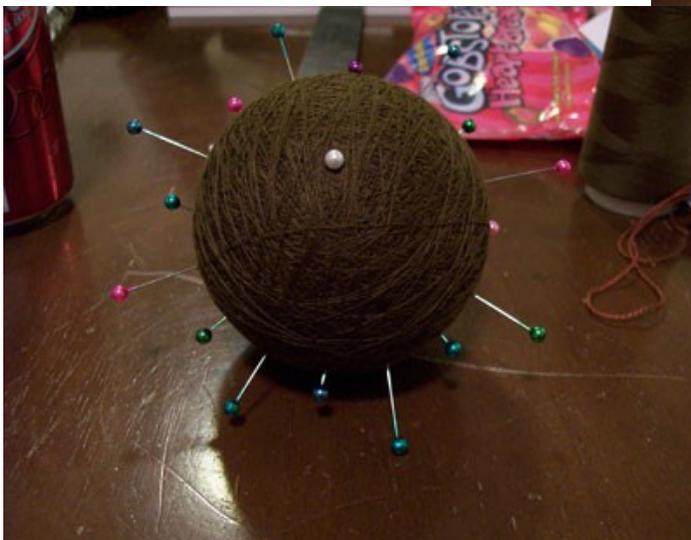
Fold the paper in half again, and mark this new fold at a couple of places. This is the Equator, also called an Obi in the Japanese tradition. Then remove the paper from the ball (careful not to lose The North Pole!) and fold it again. You now have a paper divided into eighths. If you'd like, you can clip little notches in it. *yatsu's* paper was too thin to do this, so she ended up marking all the folds with a pencil so her sorry excuses for eyeballs could get a fix on them.



Align this paper with one of the Obi points you've just made (*yatsu* chose that pink one, C, because she's inscrutable) and pin the paper in place, just as you were doing for The North Pole. Now grab some more pins, and place one at each fold.



That's the foundation for eight sections. On most beginner's balls, this is as far as you'll have to go with pins. The Himawari ball, however, requires sixteen sections, so we'll need to fold the paper in half one more time and mark those new fold lines with still more pins.



This is *yatsu's* ball with all its obi pins in place. The North Pole is that white pin, and the pins that have been pushed in around The Equator are the ones we put in on that first go round, the ones that divided the ball into eight sections. The little pink one to the right that's pushed in is The East. That's not necessary for the design, *yatsu's* just anal enough to require the ball to have a proper east and west in addition to The North Pole and The South Pole.

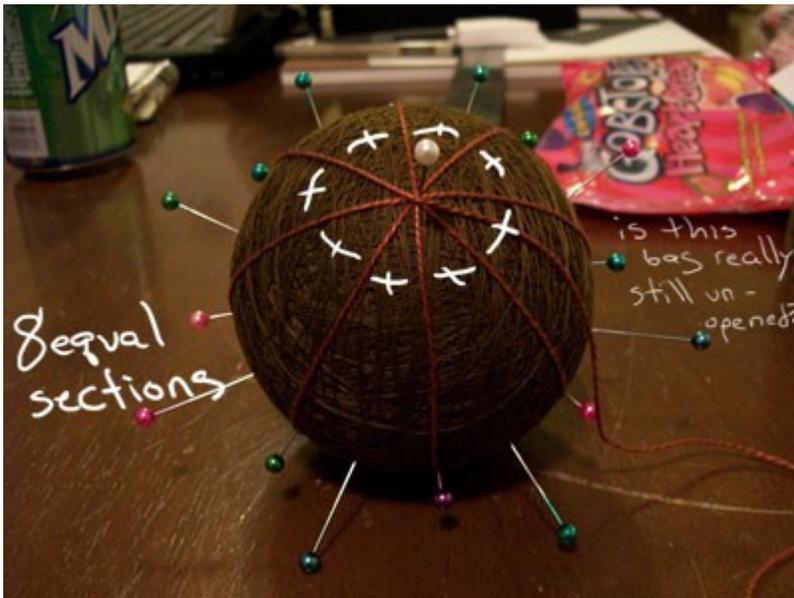
b) Enough with the Paper!

Enough with the paper, indeed. Take your marking thread (that's the brown pearl) and thread your needle. You'll need a length of thread long enough to go around your ball at least 10 times, but you'll probably want a little more for tacking and comfort factor. Tie a knot in one end.

Push your needle underneath the wrap (in this case, that's under the dark brown sewing thread) and come up at The North Pole. Pull it so the knot gets caught under the wrap. If you've wrapped it well, the marking thread won't show at all.

Wrap your thread around the circumference of the ball, taking care not to pull the thread out of alignment. Just lay the thread beside the pins. Don't wrap the string around the pins, don't bend the string. What you want is a straight line around the globe from The North Pole, through The Equator, past The South Pole, and back up the other side to The North Pole again.

When you reach The North Pole, take a 45 degree turn and wrap around the ball again. Keep doing this until you've gone around the ball four times. You should have eight equal sections when you're finished with this step.



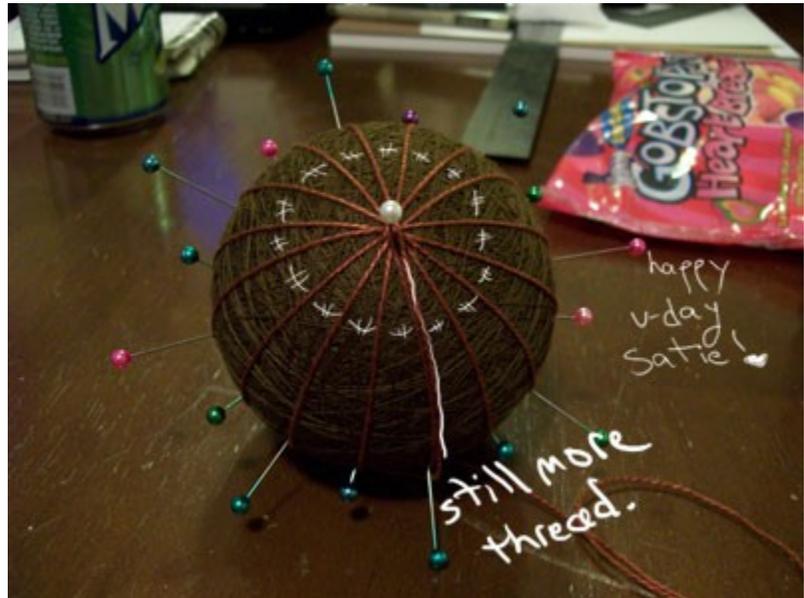
<--- Like this.

When you get to The North Pole for that fourth time, take a half turn (that's 22.5 degrees for those of you who insist on liking math) and continue wrapping. Wrap around the ball another four times. When you're done here, you should have 16 equal sections.

Like this. --->

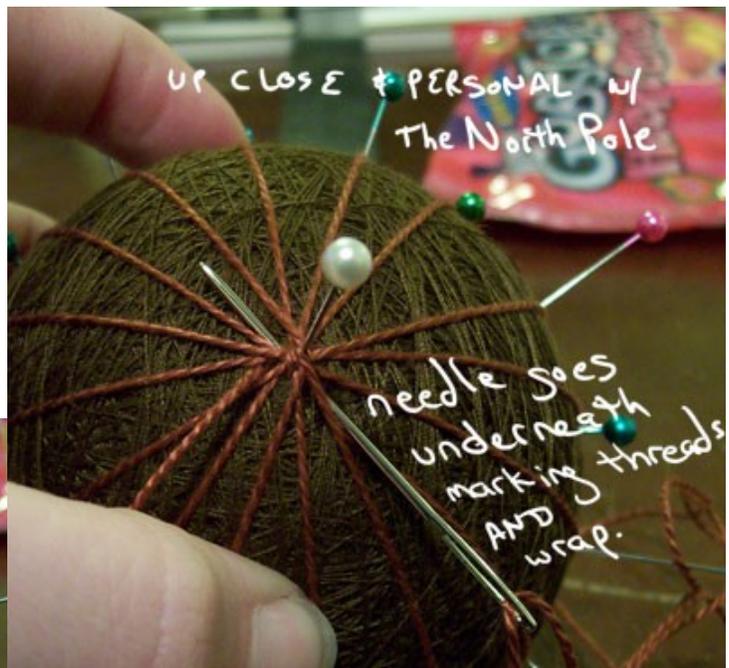
It's looking a little scary at this point, but don't worry, *yatsu* bids me tell you everything will be fine.

... ..happy v-day to you, too, dear... ..



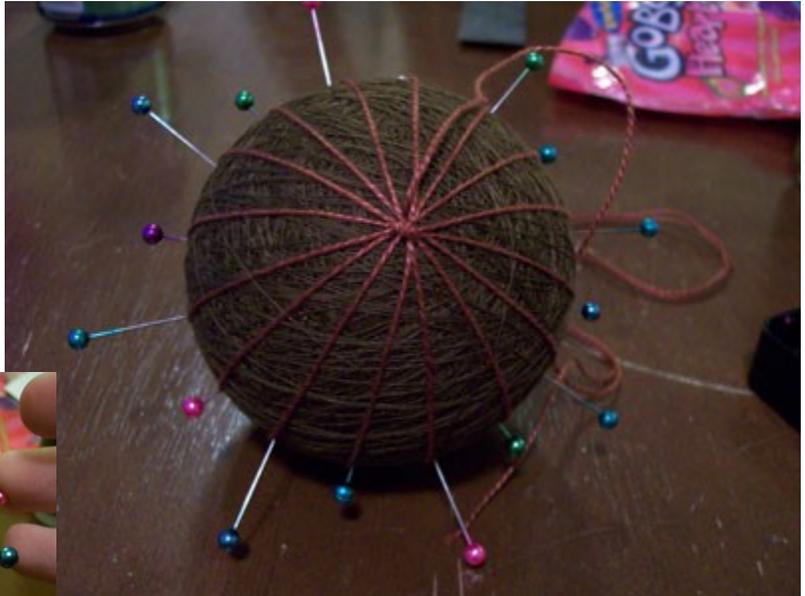
The next step is to tack down all your stitching. Some people prefer to tack at any place one thread crosses another, but *yatsu* likes to live dangerously, so she only tacks at The North Pole and The South Pole and maybe a couple points along the obi. If you've done some sewing, this process will be familiar, if not, watch and learn.

Insert your needle very close to The North Pole and dive under the wrap as well as the marking threads. Come back out just beyond The North Pole.



This creates a short stitch that wraps all the marking threads and anchors them to the wrapping. Make two or three of these stitches, until The North Pole is secure.

Here's The North Pole, tacking finished. --->



<--- Try not to do this. It's just obnoxious.

c) One More Marking Line!

What are you, some kind of puppy? Isn't the thing marked enough? No. (yatsu: please do not urinate on your ball.) Run your thread down underneath the wrap and come up at one of the Obi pins. It might take a couple of stitches to get there, just remember to come up and go down in the same spot, so you don't get any nasty stitches showing.



<--- like this.

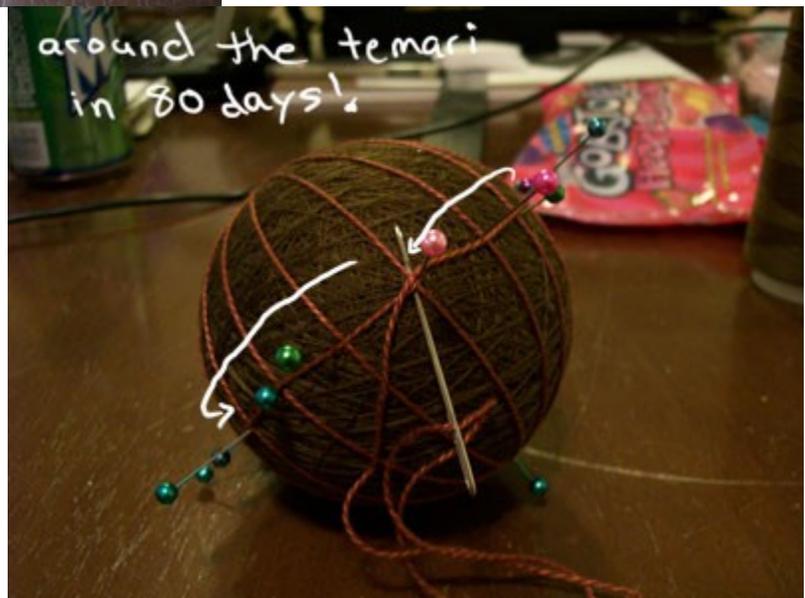


this? this is bad. --->
Don't do this.



yatsu chose to go
down to that pink East
pin, but really it doesn't
matter.

When you get where you're going,
wrap your thread around The
Equator, just as you were doing for
the vertical lines. It doesn't matter
which direction, just don't pull it
askew. Go all the way around and
then tack that side down. If you're
going to tack all around the obi,
now's the time to do it. Just slide
your needle under the wrap to each
new point, tack, and slide under to
the next point. Wash, rinse, repeat.





When you're done tacking, slide your needle under again, this time down to The South Pole. Remember, tiny stitches to anchor it to the wrapping. When you've got that secured, slide your needle under the wrap and clip it off.

The picture above is *yatsu's* completed The South Pole. To the right is *yatsu* attempting not to chop off her own thumb with a pair of scissors.



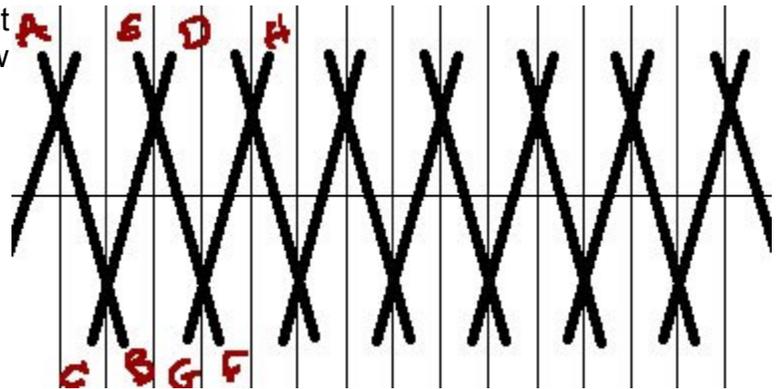
d) Oxygen!

Breathe. That's it for the marking steps. The next steps involve making the actual design on the thing. For now, set the thing aside and go draw yourself a bath. Hell, I'm Satan, and I'm exhausted from all that.

Chapter Seven: The Actual Design

OMGdesign. From here on out, it goes faster, I promise. Incidentally, how was the bath? Relaxing? Good. (^_^)

The stitch we'll be using for this first round is *the* basic temari stitch. Pretty much all other stitches are just variations of this one. here's a nifty diagram *yatsu* drew up for us. --->



... and here's how it looks on a ball. --->

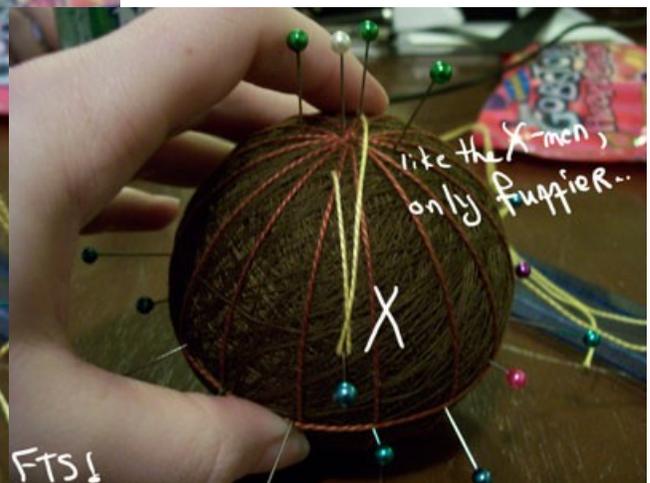
Basically what you're doing is a series of herringbone stitches. So let's dive in for a more in-depth explanation, shall we?



a) Load up your thread with the lighter yellow. How much thread? As much as you're comfortable with. We don't want to have to restart the thread every five seconds, but we don't want the thing tangling up and knotting all the time either. *yatsu* uses about a yard at a time. Tie a knot in one end and dive your needle into the wrap some point not too far from The North Pole. You'll be coming up again just to the left of one of your vertical marking threads about 1 cm from The North Pole. If you'd like, you can mark this 1 cm the same way we've been marking everything else. Just measure off 1 cm on the strip of paper and stick your pins in. As for *yatsu*, see above statement concerning risk.

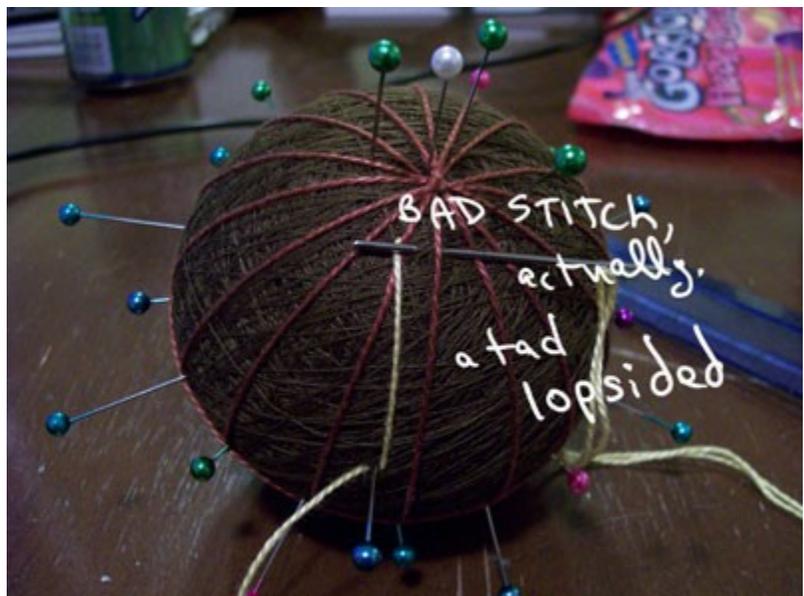
Pictures are really better than words at this point, but I'm loathe to admit that *yatsu* can do anything better than me, so I'm going to try some words anyway.

Cross your thread down to the right to a point about 2 cm from the obi wrap and half way between the two adjacent marking threads. Put your needle in, make the smallest stitch in the world, and make it from right to left. When you point the thread back up to the right towards the top of the ball, you should end up with an X.



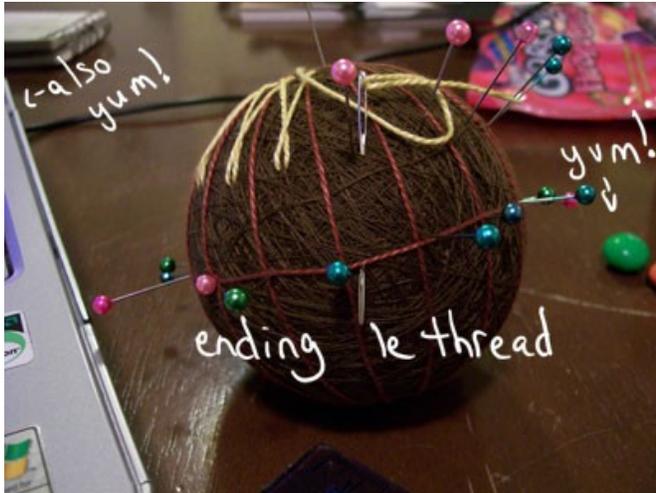
Now go back up towards The North Pole, and make another World's Tiniest Stitch, from right to left, 1 cm from The North Pole and directly on the marking line. As you can see, *yatsu*'s stitch is indeed a tad lopsided. Try not to do that, kay? (^_^) You want nice, even stitches.

You've got one V shape now, right? Good job! Now you just repeat that same V, all the way around the ball, with the tops right on the marking lines, and the bottoms half-way between them!



It turns out yatsu's guesstimation of required thread wasn't, how shall we say, accurate, so she took the opportunity to take some pictures of how to end and start a thread. It's super easy.

Bury your excess thread in the wrap and clip it close. Then get some more thread, tie your knot in one end and start up again, just like you did at the beginning, burying the knot in the wrap and making more Xs.

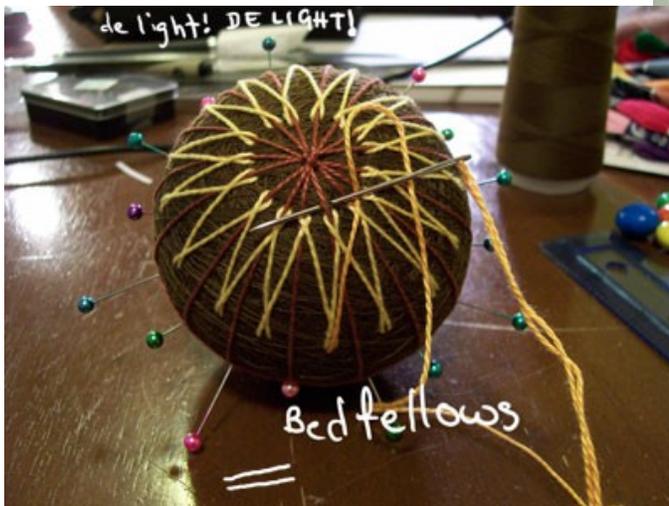


When you get back around to where you started from, complete the round by burying your thread underneath the wrapping as normal, and cutting close but not too close. Just be careful to try and make it look like an even stitch. You don't want anyone else to guess where you stopped or started.

b) Like yellow! Only darker!

For our next trick, load your needle up with the darker yellow. Or "orange," if you prefer. You'll be doing exactly the same thing with this color that you did with the first one, except that when you make your stitches at the top and bottom, you'll be doing it above and below the first round of stitches respectively.

Tie a knot in one end of the thread and start off as normal, coming up wherever you'd like. Surprise me. *yatsu* chose the bottom because that's what she likes (ZOMBIE satan, hush about that!). Hopefully, it won't matter where you come up at this stage, because when you finish the round, you'll be making a nice, tight little invisible ninja stitch.



Lay the orange thread right next to the yellow and make another stitch above the one you made during round one.

Truth be told, *yatsu's* stitches are a little large, especially at The North Pole, where it should be über puny, but... meh.

Rumor has it that the single biggest mistake many people make on their first temari is that they put their stitches at the top and bottom too close together. The recommended distance is about 1/16", or 2 millimetres. Just remember, you need to leave just a bit of room so the stitches can lay down properly.





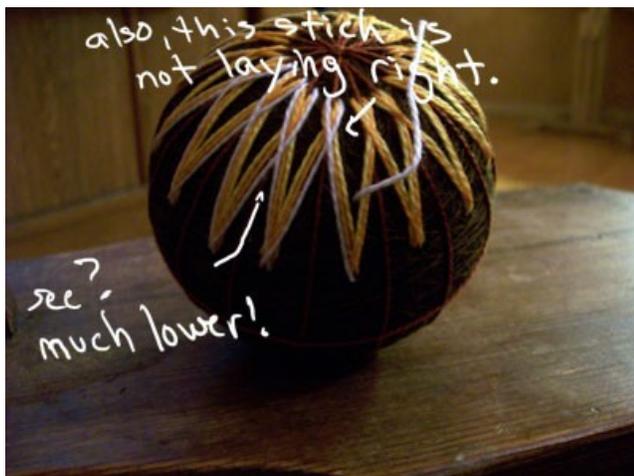
Continue making this round as you did the first one, laying the orange threads alongside the yellow ones and keeping your orange stitches ~ 2 mm outside the yellow ones.

<--- Try not to do this, kay? (^^)

When you get back around to where you began, end it off as usual, burying your thread under the wrap.

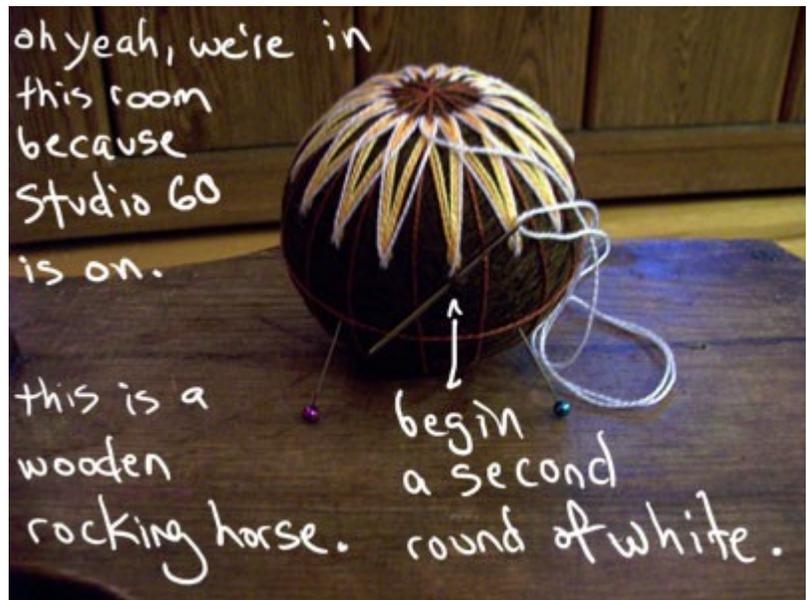
c) Like white! Only white.

Load up with some white thread and make another round. Lay the white on the outside of the other stitches and continue around as normal. As you work this round, you'll start to see that where the white thread makes its X is considerably lower than where the original yellow thread made its X. This is called "spindling," and has nothing to do Sleeping Beauty. It happens to be one of the main techniques of temari-making.



yatsu ran out of thread half-way round the first white round, so she decided to snap a picture. This is partly why she ended up with 81 pictures of temari-making...

When you get back around to the beginning this time, don't stop! Keep going around. We want two layers of white here. As you make this second round, you can use your needle or your fingernail to make sure that the threads are staying close up next to each other. *yatsu* explained this to me as "grooming," but I think that sounds creepy, so let's pass on that term, kay? (^ ^)



d) Like green! Only ... aarg, enough already. It's green.

Only one more round left! Get some of that spring green on that needle and do yourself a round, and that's it! You're done! See, that wasn't so hard, was it?

Chapter Eight: Finishing

It's all done at this point. You can put another sunflower at the other pole if you want, just flip the ball over and repeat the whole process. *yatsu* decided to leave it one sided. What she did do, though, was tack down the obi. It had shifted quite a ways south during the sewing process and so she had to put it back where it belonged.

The only thing left to do is take pictures of it and amaze your friends. *yatsu* and I would love to hear from you as to what you thought of ~~my wonderful tutorial and her mediocre pictures~~ uh, I mean, the wonderful job done by both myself and *yatsu*. although, of course, she is superior to me in every way. Yes.

... .. One day, Beckett, just you wait!