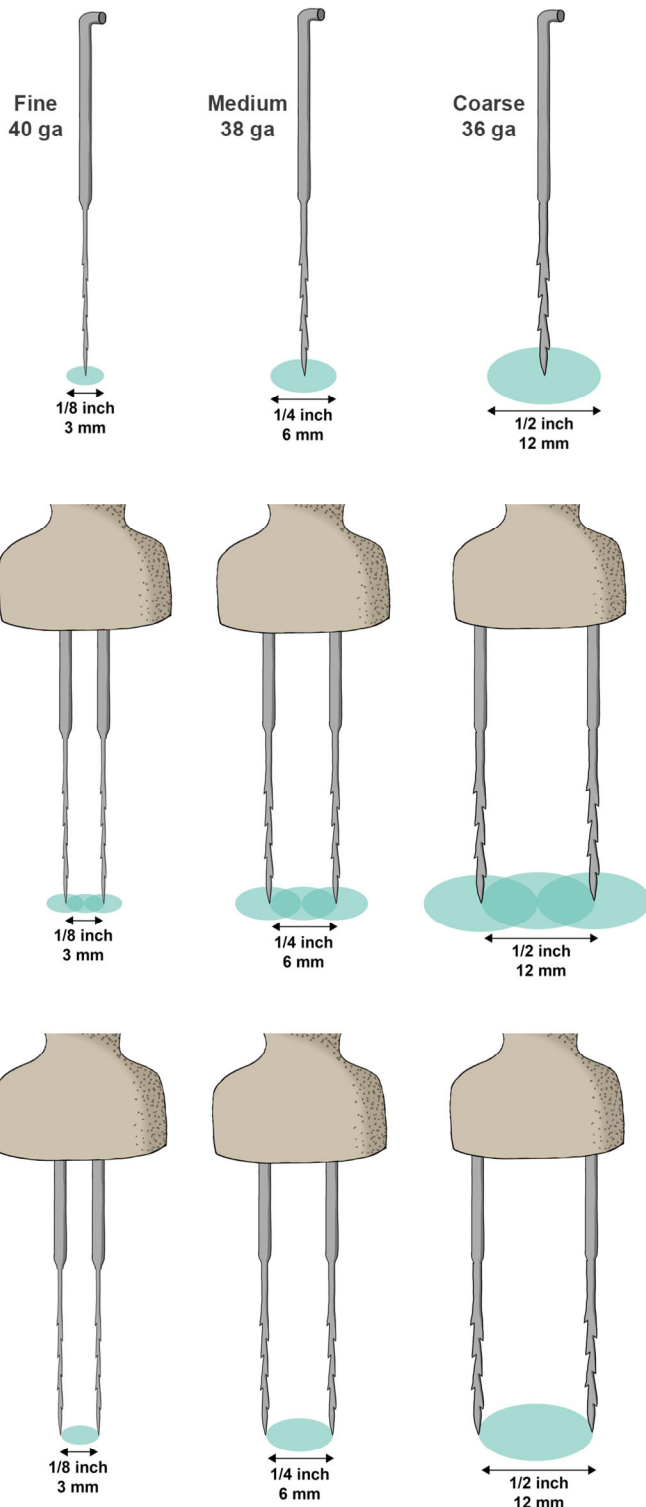


# The Circle of Tangling



The logic behind my 'Circle of Tangling' theory is based on my observation that the different gauges of felting needles seem to affect the fibers surrounding them in proportion to their size, as illustrated.

When used singly, felting needles tend to be able to penetrate felt deeply, tangling and compressing the fibers throughout the mass. In contrast, multiple needles positioned near to each other tend to penetrate only the shallow surface layer of felt because they are operating on different portions of the same fiber strands.

Both deep and shallow poking have their uses in sculptural needle felting, however I have found that spacing felting needles apart as pictured seems to preserve the 'single-needle' deep poking effect when introducing more than one needle for increased efficiency.

This concept applies the most when you are first roughing out a form or working on pieces larger than your fist, for example. That's because the addition of spaced-apart needles widens the 'footprint' of the tool, which may make it too wide to work on a particular sculptural object. Keep in mind that you want felting needles to enter the felt perpendicular to the surface you are working on. The 'Circle of Tangling' concept does not apply to flat, thin work-- needles quite close together can still be effective in that use.