

Sew Easy Fashion Backpack

by [babair](#) on July 7, 2008

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Author: babair [author's website](#)

I'm trying to be all things to all people. :-)

Intro: Sew Easy Fashion Backpack

This one is for one of those little drawstring backpack bags that are so popular. But I've added a couple twists to bring it up a notch: 1) it's completely lined; and 2) there's a flap that you can embellish with buttons and stuff.

Also, (as a personal challenge) this pattern does not require any notions, or fancy stitches. You can do the whole thing by hand, with just two third yards of fabric, needle and thread.

+-----
| Like the idea, but lack the materials, time or motivation?
| You can buy this purse (and others like it) at my etsy
| store, ArtsiBitsi. <http://artsibitsi.etsy.com>
+-----



Step 1: Materials and Gear

The only material that is essential is the two quarter yards of fabric, needle and thread.

I found this red velvet and satin in the remnants bin at Joann's. I think that they were scraps from someone else's 'Fourth of July' project. Together they cost about \$2.

Scissors, straight edge and a marking tool are necessary tools.

Stuff that might make the job easier:

- Pins - straight and safety pins. I keep mine on a magnetized sheet.
- Seam Ripper - the most important tool a sewer can own.
- Steam Iron
- Sewing Machine - not essential, but makes the task easier. You really only need a straight (satin) stitch, but if you've got a zigzag stitch, I'll tell you when it's useful.

One more thing. If you want to skip the NINE+ FEET of sewing in step three, purchase about 9.5 feet of pretty ribbon or cord that is no more than 1/2 inch wide.

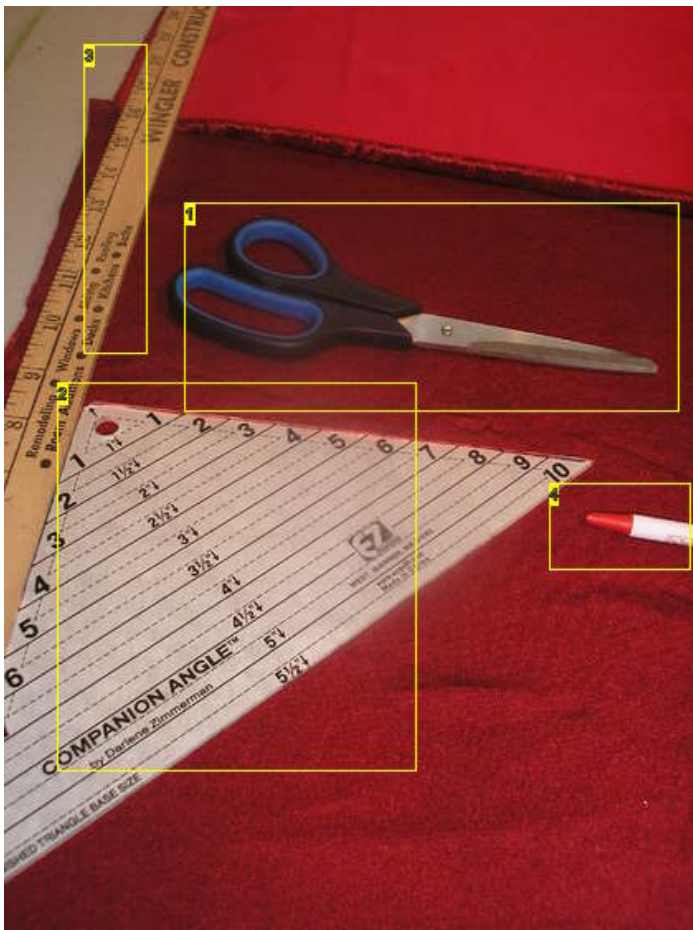


Image Notes

1. sharp scissors
2. for making square corners
3. yardstick, for making long straight cuts
4. for marking cuts -- only on the wrong side of fabric!

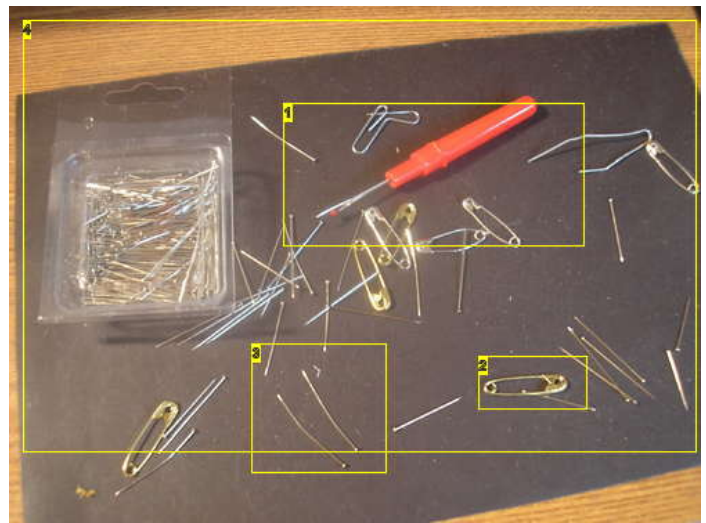


Image Notes

1. seamripper, the sewer's friend
2. safety pin, used in step 9
3. bent pins - victims of an earlier project
4. flexible magnetic sheet

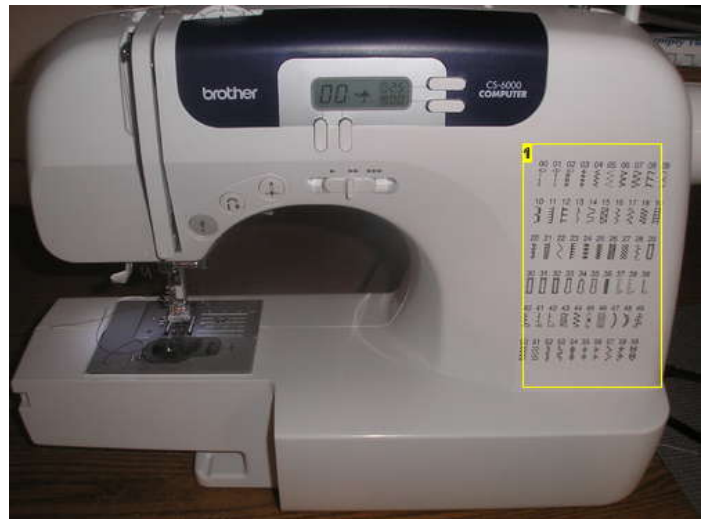


Image Notes

1. about 58 more stitches than I ever use.

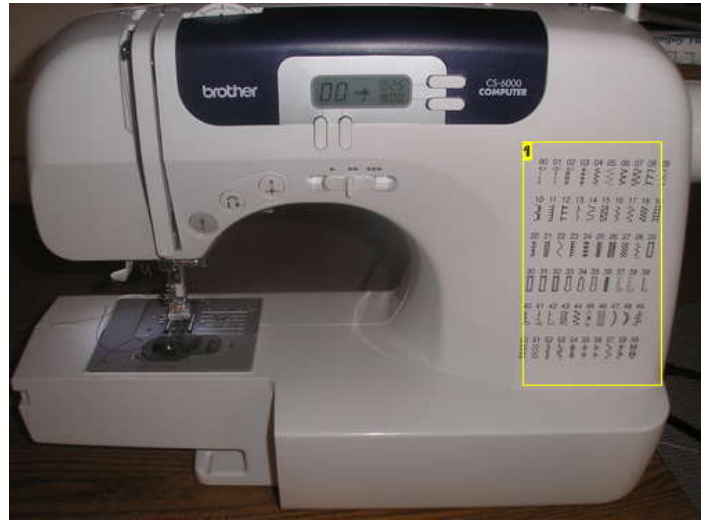


Image Notes

- 1. cheap steam iron - for projects only, not dress shirts.
- 2. pressing mat on table top

Step 2: Measure and cut

Can you cut a rectangle? Sure, I knew you could.

Here are the rectangles that you'll need to make a 7" wide x 10" tall bag. For a wider bag, add to the width of your rectangle, for taller, add to the length.

If you are making the bag wider, you may need more than a quarter yard of fabric.

NOTE: It's a really good idea to iron your fabric before cutting.

From the cover fabric, cut

- one 8.5"x29"
- two 1.5"x48"
- two 1.5"x8.5"

From the lining fabric, cut

- one 8.5"x29"



From 1/3 yard of fabric, cut four pieces, as shown. (This will make a 7x10 purse. Adjust accordingly)



From another 1/4 yard of fabric, cut one lining piece.

Image Notes

- 1. 8.5x29:

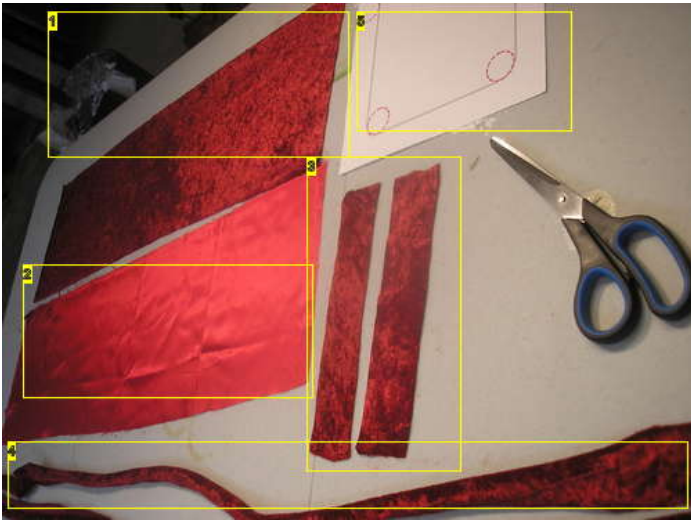


Image Notes

- 1. cover fabric
- 2. lining fabric
- 3. short strips from cover fabric
- 4. long strips from cover fabric
- 5. pattern for flap, used in step 4

Step 3: Over nine feet of sewing

Get the tedium out of the way early. The most time consuming part of this effort is making the drawstrings and the loops for the ties.

Oh, why didn't I just go out and buy some pretty ribbon or cord for this? Because I was making a point about using as few different materials as possible, that's why. Darn my integrity anyway.

If you don't mind compromising my principles, you can use purchased cord or ribbon. Go on. I'll wait.

...

What? You're still here?

Okay, then I'll tell you what to do with those long strips. First, make sure that your iron is hot and that you have plenty of thread.

- 1) Hem the ends by folding, pressing and sewing.
- 2) Fold each strip in half lengthwise, wrong sides together. Press them flat.
- 3) Open them up and fold the sides to the center. Press flat.
- 4) Fold in half lengthwise again. Press flat (again).
- 5) Sew up the center.

Each long strip is 48", or four feet long. There's two of them. So that's eight feet of sewing. The two smaller strips are about 17" total.

Total sewing distance for this step: nine feet, five inches. Use this time to meditate on how to become a better person.

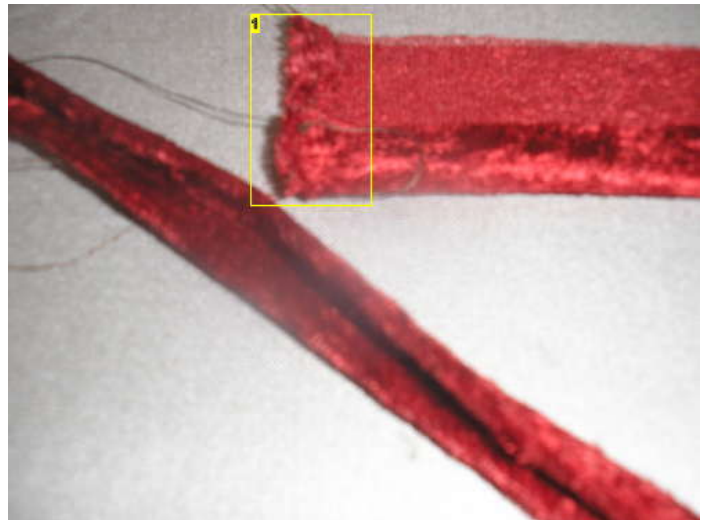
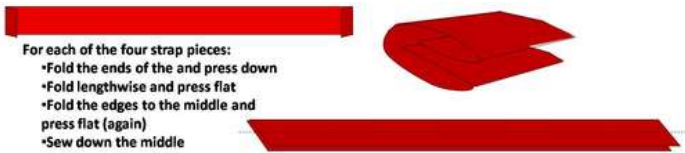


Image Notes

- 1. Hemmed end

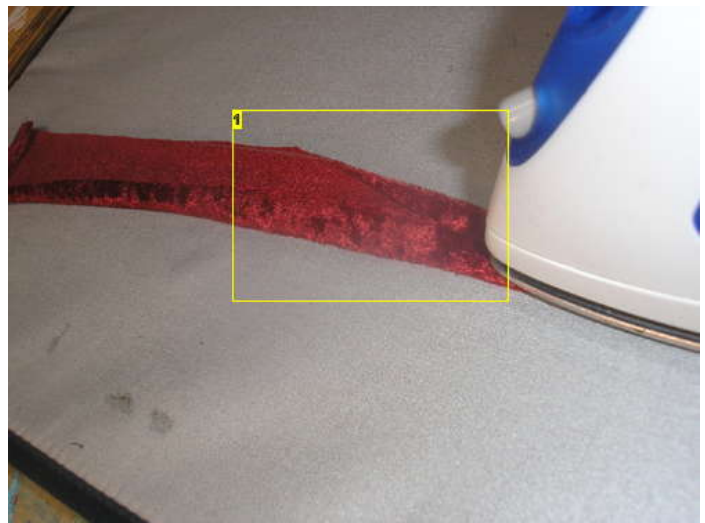
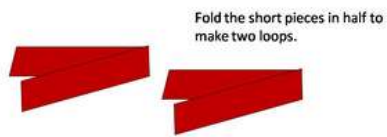


Image Notes
1. pressing the sides to the center



Image Notes
1. last fold and press (4)

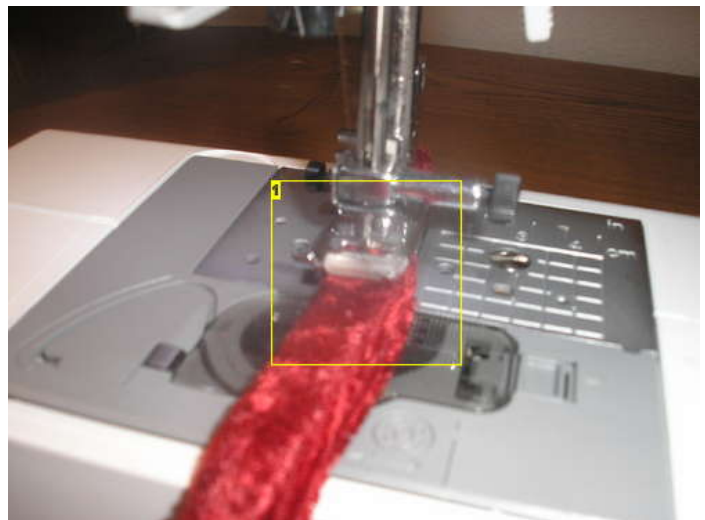


Image Notes
1. Only eight more feet to go!

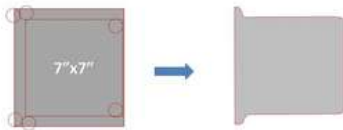
Step 4: Flappify the Rectangles

Make a pattern for the flap using a straight edge and something round, with a small diameter. Mine is about 7"x7".

You can make yours triangular or free form. I picked a simple rectangle.

Cut the flap out of both pieces.

Make a template out of paper. Use a straight edge and a cup (or other round object) with a small diameter.



Use the template to cut out the flap from both pieces

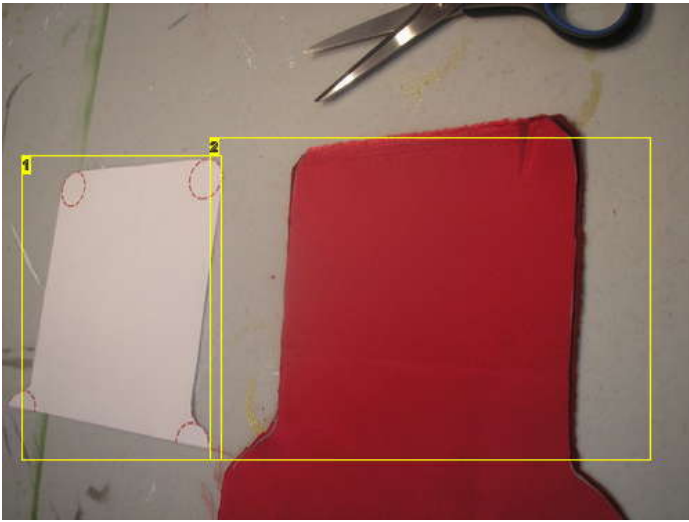


Image Notes

- 1. my pattern
- 2. cover and lining are cut out

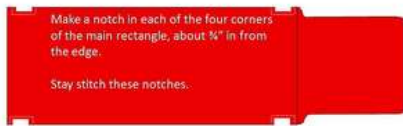
Step 5: Notch yer bag

When you're done (in about four more steps), there'll be a channel for the drawstring at the top of the bag. And there'll be a place where the drawstring exits the channel. In this step, we try to make that spot look a little nicer and more finished.

I measured in about a half inch from the top and bottom of the main rectangle and cut a one inch notch out of my cover fabric. Then I pressed back the edges and sewed a tiny little hem.

You can probably save yourself a lot of grief, if you skip the cutting and just press back and sew.

Another alternative would be to use that zigzag stitch to just keep the edge from unraveling. (I couldn't use the zigzag stitch because I was trying to avoid "fancy" stitches on principle, remember.)



You may wish to do this also for the lining piece.

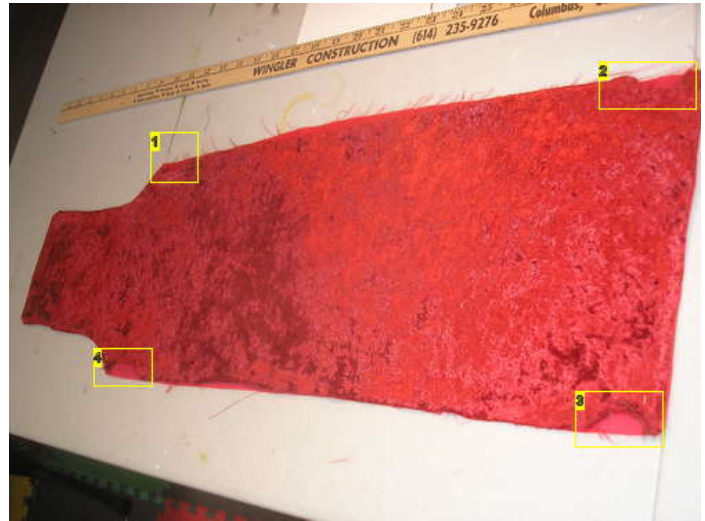


Image Notes

- 1. notched
- 2. notched
- 3. notched
- 4. notched

Step 6: Assembly - Part 1 : Flaps and Bottoms

Now you have all the prep work done, you can finally start to put the bag together.

First, put the two pieces right sides together.

Sew across the bottom, leaving a small space between the seam and your bottom notch.

Then, sew around the top - just the flap section. Leave the flap section open at the bottom.

Snip triangles into all the curves so that they'll lay flat.

Turn right-side out. Poke out the corners on the flap.

Press the flap and bottom seam flat.



Put the two pieces right side together,
Sew the top flap pieces together.
Sew the bottom seam.

Clip all the turns.
Turn right side out and press seams.

Image Notes

1. sew here
2. sew around three sides here.

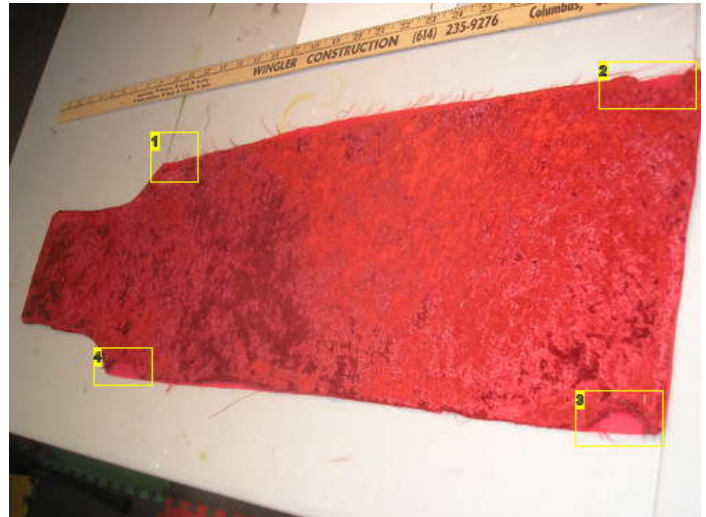


Image Notes

1. notched
2. notched
3. notched
4. notched

Step 7: Assembly Part 2: Drawstring channels

Make some pockets for the drawstrings.

Sew one straight seam along the bottom of the flap.

Sew another straight seam along the bottom of the first set of notches.

Sew one last straight seam along the top of the bottom set of notches.

HINT: I didn't want to mark up the inside of my bag, so I used my iron to press a crease into my fabric as a guide.



Sew straight across the tops and
bottoms of the notches to form a
channel for the drawstring.



Image Notes

1. pressed crease and sewn seam

Step 8: Assembly Part 3: Sew up the sides

Find those two short loops that you made back in step 3.

Pin them to the right-side of the cover fabric, as shown. The loops should be a little less than half way down the main rectangle. The loops should be pointed at each other, and the open ends should hang over the edge.

Carefully fold the bottom up over the top of the rectangle. The right-side of the COVER fabric should be inside the fold. The right-side of the LINING fabric should be outside the fold.

Make sure that the fabric is all smooth inside and out. Mine wanted to slide around and bunch up a lot. It probably would have made my life easier if I had used some fusible interfacing to hold the lining and the cover fabrics to each other. But what if you, dear reader, didn't have some? Would you think that you had to run out and buy a package because I did? I can't handle that kind of pressure. So I used pins.

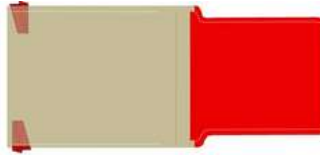
Sew up the sides of the bag, from the bottom up to the drawstring pocket.

Don't sew over holes for the drawstring.



Image Notes

1. pinned to cover



Flip up the bottom, with the outside in.
Pin the two loops inside the bottom,
facing the inside.
Sew up the sides.
(Don't sew over drawstring channel)
Top stitch the flap now, if desired.



Image Notes

1. after sewing and turning.

Step 9: Assembly Part 4: Thread the drawstrings

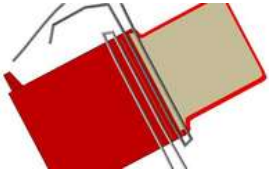
OOOoh. We're so close to being done... the suspense is killing me.

Turn the bag right-side out. Press the seams flat. (flat seams make everything look better -- this wisdom came to me when I was doing 9+ feet of sewing earlier)

Thread the straps into the pockets, as shown. You can put a safety pin on the end of the strap to make the threading job a little easier.

After threading, each channel will have two straps running through it. The straps will pull in opposite directions.

Tie the loose ends of the straps to your loops.



Turn the back right side out.
Press the seams.
Insert the long straps into the channels,
as shown.
Run the strap ends thru loops and tie.
DONE!



Step 10: Partay!

Your little backpacklet is ready to get down and boogie.

Why not decorate the flap for an even more individual look? You can pin on buttons or charms. Or a big old rhinestone broach. Or iron-on applique' (see <http://www.instructables.com/id/8-bit-Felt-Applique---Ms-PacMan-and-Ghost/>)

You have lots of options (color, size, fabric) and it is sew easy to make. Make one out of the leg of a too-small pair of pants, for example. You can have a different bag for every day of the week, or every month of the year.

:~)

+-----+
| Like the idea, but lack the materials, time or motivation?
| You can buy this purse (and others like it) at my etsy
| store, ArtsiBitsi. <http://artsibitsi.etsy.com>
+-----+



<http://www.instructables.com/id/Sew-Easy-Fashion-Backpack/>



Related Instructables



More Fashion with Sew Easy Backpack Instructible (Photos) by babair



Drawstring Backpack by mdhaworth



Super Versatile T-shirt Bag (T-shirt Hacks Contest) by Gunk on Floor



How to make a drawstring backpack out of a t-shirt by Danger is my middle name



Yoga Mat Bag from Old Pants by bekathwia



Pantspack: The new look from Flagrant Vagrant Fashion Studio by Mother Natures Son

Comments

15 comments

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rusellned says:
is googd rusellned.ru of is sait perfect

Dec 3, 2010. 2:26 PM [REPLY](#)



mypinkrainbow says:
very cool i wish i could download it but cant cuz i am not a pro or something

Nov 23, 2010. 6:38 PM [REPLY](#)



babair says:

If you email me ArtsiBitsi@gmail.com, I'll send you the PDF.

:~)
Bits

Nov 24, 2010. 5:25 AM [REPLY](#)



sharon0232 says:

hummm..... i have just finished my second bag and i want to decorate it.....what should i do?

Mar 13, 2010. 1:41 PM [REPLY](#)



babair says:

If you made your bags out of an upscale fabric, trying sewing on little glass beads. You can sew them into a couple starbursts.

If you made your bag out of a sturdier fabric, two embellishments that are really easy are appliques and buttons.

For appliques, try this technique: www.instructables.com/id/8-bit-Felt-Applique---Ms-PacMan-and-Ghost Or take a look at the Monster Backpacks in my store: www.etsy.com/shop/ArtsiBitsi?section_id=5559372

For buttons, try stacking them. Or make a "flower" out of some contrasting fabric and use a button for the center.

Post pictures!

Mar 24, 2010. 5:23 PM [REPLY](#)



sharon0232 says:

sorry the uploader isnt working for me. ill keep trying to post the picture though.

Apr 4, 2010. 10:29 AM [REPLY](#)



blunebe says:

Thanks for this nice instructable. I will try to make one for my daughter for Christmas...a mini version for a 1,5 year old toddler who likes to carry things around.

Dec 15, 2009. 5:20 AM [REPLY](#)



babair says:

If you don't want to sew one for your toddler, I have some for sale here: www.etsy.com/shop/ArtsiBitsi

:~)

Mar 24, 2010. 5:25 PM [REPLY](#)



sharon0232 says:

awesome instructable! i tried it and it came out fantastic! do us all a favor and make another instructable!

Mar 6, 2010. 5:04 AM [REPLY](#)



babair says:

Thanks so much. I'm glad that it worked out for you.

What else should I make?

:~)

Mar 6, 2010. 8:42 AM [REPLY](#)



sharon0232 says:

well, your the awesome sewer here and already had a great idea, so try something fun and challenging

Mar 12, 2010. 3:05 PM [REPLY](#)



jinonaspa says:

how much is a quarter yard?

Dec 23, 2008. 12:57 PM [REPLY](#)



babair says:

A yard of fabric from a bolt is 36 inches wide by about 50" inches long. So a quarter yard is about 9 "x 50". You end up using all of it.

Dec 23, 2008. 5:39 PM [REPLY](#)



jinonaspa says:

thanks! :)

Jan 31, 2009. 12:26 PM [REPLY](#)



Shippygirl says:

Thanks for making this instructable. I've downloaded the instructions and will attempt it.

Nov 7, 2008. 5:51 AM [REPLY](#)