

SEWING FOR BEGINNERS

TOTE BAG



Supplies:

- Non-stretch fabric (like cotton, linen or something thicker like canvas or fabric for furniture or curtains)
- Pattern paper
- Sewing machine, scissors, pins and iron.

Make:

Step 1 – Draw the pattern

The tote bag consists of two pattern pieces. The front/back piece and the strap piece.

Draw a rectangle on pattern paper of 42 by 47 centimeter. This will be the front/back piece, it includes 1 centimeter seam allowance all around. Write this information on the pattern piece, so that it's clearly marked and you can easily re-use it.

For the straps draw another rectangle that measures 77 by 10 centimeter, this also includes 1 cm seam allowance. Also note the information on this piece.

Step 2 – Cut your fabric

- Fold a piece of fabric in half and pin the big rectangle on the double layer of fabric. First pin the four corners and then add a couple of pins in between. Cut the fabric right along the edges of the paper (as you have included seam allowance in the paper pattern piece).
- Pin the strap-rectangle in the same way (also on a double layer of fabric) and cut along the edges. Make sure all four edges of the strap-rectangle are cut, so that you have two separate pieces, and you can make two straps.

Step 3 – Sew front and back side seams

- Remove the paper pattern piece from the fabric by taking the pins out. Put these two big fabric rectangles with right sides together (the right side or outside of the fabrics are facing each other). Pin the fabric together along the edges. Make sure you pin every corner and pin every 10 cm (estimate). Make sure all the pins are pointing the same way, that makes it easier to sew.
- Sew the two layers together, along three of the edges. Make sure to leave one of the shorter sides open. Use a regular straight stitch and stitch 1 centimeter from the edge of the fabric (that's the 1 cm seam allowance).
- Use a zigzag stitch (3 stitch width and 3 stitch length) to finish the side of the seams, where the fabric frays. You zig zag right on the edges to make sure the fabric won't unravel and fray further.

Step 4 - Sew the top edge of the bag

- Now we're finishing the opening of the bag, the one short side that is still open. Fold the open side of the fabric 1 centimeter down (all around) and iron the fold. Fold this same edge again, 3 centimeters this time and iron this again.

Side note: This is also the way to finish the seams of a pair of pants or sleeve seams.

- Stitch with a straight stitch close to the fold (3 centimeters from the edge of the fabric). Stitch all around and through all three layers of fabric.

(You can turn the bag around now to admire your work - it's starting to look like something. Then turn it back inside out.)

Step 5 – Sew the bottom corners

- Fold the bottom corners of the bag to create the shape of a bottom for the bag. Check the example bag, as this is impossible to explain in words.
- Pin and sew two triangles in the bottom corners. Measure the distance from the corner point to the seam. This makes it easier to make sure that the second triangle is the same size.

Step 6 - Sew the straps

- Take the long rectangles and take the pattern paper off. Fold both rectangles in half length-wise (right sides together) and sew all along the side seam at 1 cm from the edge. Make sure that it's only 1 centimeter and not more. You've created a long tunnel shape.
- Turn the tunnel inside out, to make sure the right side of the fabric goes outside.
- Iron the strap in such a way that the seam is in the middle on the back of the strap.
- Fold and iron the raw edges of the strap to one side. Find the place where you want to attach the straps and pin the strap ends to the top edge of the bag. Sew them on the bag by stitching a square with a cross in it. Repeat for all 4 strap ends.

Congrats! Your bag is finished!

Hacks

Sometimes it's fun to hack the basic pattern and add something or adjust to you own liking.

Tote bag with lining

If you want to add a lining to your bag, you can. You actually make the bag twice and then slide the lining inside the outer fabric (with all seams touching between the two layers). If the fabrics are not too thick, you can simply fold over a double layer when folding the top edge and stitch it. If the fabrics are thick, it is best to cut the lining a little shorter and only fold the outer fabric. You can make the handles in one fabric, alternate or cut the handle pattern piece in half lengthwise and also make the handle from two colors of fabric (lining and outer fabric).

Bag with pocket inside or outside

It can be fun and useful to add a simple pocket to the inside or outside of your bag. Something like a breast pocket you would normally see on a shirt. It's easiest if you add the pocket at the very first step, before you put the front and back of the bag together. Then you can easily reach it with the sewing machine and you won't accidentally sew something that shouldn't have been.

SEWING FOR BEGINNERS

SANDWICH WRAP

SANDWICH BAG



Supplies:

- Small piece of cotton or other non-stretch fabric (not too thick).
- Small piece of umbrella fabric or raincoat
- Pattern piece (circle diameter 37 cm)
- A piece of velcro
- Sewing machine, scissors, pins and iron.

Make:

Step 1 – Choose and cut fabrics

Choose a fabric for the outside, an umbrella/raincoat for the inside and a matching piece of Velcro.

Pin the pattern (circle) to both fabrics and cut out the fabric, leaving an extra centimeter all around. It does not have to be exactly 1 cm, but must be the same all around. This one centimeter is the seam allowance.

Step 2 - Sew Layers

Place the two fabrics (outside and inside) with the right sides facing together. So make sure that the water-repellent side of the umbrella/raincoat is on the inside. Pin the two fabrics together along the edge. Sew with a straight stitch (2,5 length) where you pinned around the entire circle, but leave a few centimeters (4 cm) open.

Step 3 - Turn and iron

Turn the right sides out again through the small 4 cm hole. Make sure that push all the edges outward, this might be a little fiddly.

Iron the edges neatly so that they sit nice and flat. Note: you can only iron the fabric on the cotton side, not on the umbrella/raincoat side. If you don't iron it too hot, you'll be fine. If necessary, place a piece of cotton on top of the project before ironing to protect it.

Make sure that the edges of the little hole (4cm) are folded neatly inside, as if it were part of the seam.

Step 3b - Topstitching Edges

Right next to the edge, topstitch around the entire circle, about 3mm away from the edge. You close the open piece, by topstitching.

Step 4 - Velcro

Think about where to place the piece of velcro. Velcro has a soft and hard side. The hard side is more difficult to sew.

For the sandwich wrap you need a small hard piece, which you'll place on the inside, horizontally close to the side. And a soft piece of about 15 - 20 centimeters, which will go on the outside, vertically towards the center.

Carefully stitch the velcro to the fabric close to the edge of the velcro. That is a bit difficult, especially on the hard piece. Go slowly and work carefully. It is better not to pin your Velcro to keep it in place, it is actually too thick for that.

Finished!

Hacks

Sometimes it's fun to hack the basic pattern and add something or adjust to your own liking.

You can also make the sandwich wrap as a sandwich bag. You work with the same materials but give it a different shape.

Sandwich bag

The pattern for the bag is not a circle but a rectangle of 21x42cm, which includes seam allowance. Follow the same steps as for the sandwich wrap (first the two layers on top of each other, turn inside out through a small opening on one of the short sides). Do not topstitch all around, just topstitch the top edge where you left the opening for turning. If you topstitch that side, you can stitch the two pieces of Velcro right along that edge. Attach all the pieces of velcro first and then stitch the bag together. You do this by folding the front upwards, so that you are left with a small flap and so that the Velcro straps on the flap end up on those of the front when you fold it. Pin the sides and stitch where you pinned, right next to the edge (3mm).

SEWING FOR BEGINNERS

FLAG GARLAND



Supplies:

- Cotton or other non-stretch fabric. Different colors are allowed, everything in one color or print is also okay.
- Bias tape
- Sewing machine, scissors, pins.

Make:

Step 1 – Cut the fabric

Place the pattern piece of a flag on a double layer of fabric (or design your own flag shape) and cut out along the edge. If you want, you can first trace the pattern piece on pattern paper and pin it to the fabric. This makes it easier to cut.

Step 2 - Sew the flag

Place the two cut flags with the right sides of the fabric (the outside) together. The outside is now inside. Sew with a regular straight stitch 1 cm away from the sides of the flag. Don't sew the top edge.

Step 3 - Turn the flag and repeat

Cut the edges close to the stitching (0.5 cm) and cut off the pointy tip at the bottom. Turn the flag right side out. You may have to push the point of the flag with the tip of a pair of scissors, to make sure it's turned all the way out.

Iron the flag so that the seams are nice and flat.

Now make more flags in the same way. As much as you like for your garland. Here you can also decide whether you want to make a pattern (alternate) or all kinds of flags mixed together.

Step 4 - Sew the flags to the garland

Grab a piece of bias tape. The length of the bias tape is the length of your garland, so cut the length you need. You can also sew it first and then cut it off if you are not sure how much you will need. Set the sewing machine on a large zigzag stitch that is almost as wide as half the bias tape.

Fold the tape in half and pin the top edge of the flags between the band. Then sew with the zigzag stitch over the bias tape, so that the flags are attached. Make sure you leave enough space without flags at the start, so that you can hang the garland. You can decide how much space you leave between the flags.

It's done. Party time!

SEWING FOR BEGINNERS

BUCKET HAT



Supplies:

- Thick fabric (e.g. jeans or corduroy), no stretch. Combining colors is also possible.
- Sewing machine, scissors, pins.

Make:

Step 1 – Draw the pattern

The pattern of the bucket hat has already been drawn. There is a small and a large version. Determine for yourself whether you have a small or large head and then choose the size. The pattern consists of three parts: the top, the sides and the brim.

Step 2 – Cut your fabric

Each of the pattern pieces states how often you need to cut them and whether you need to place them on the fabric fold. If you need to cut 2 on the fold, that means you place the pattern piece on the fabric folded in half and cut it, and repeat. 4 on the fold means you repeat it 4 times.

The fabric fold is the edge where you folded the fabric in half. If you place the pattern piece against it when cutting, you can unfold it before sewing and it will be exactly symmetrical. This is how patterns for clothes are drawn as well.

Pin your pattern pieces to the fabric. This is where you choose which part to make in which fabric. Cut out the fabric along the edges of the pattern paper. A 1 cm seam allowance is included.

Step 3 - Sew the side of the hat

Take the two pieces of fabric that are labeled 'side of the hat'. Place them with the right sides of the fabric together and stitch the short sides (at a distance of 1 cm from the edge of the fabric). You have now made a circle, which you will attach to the top of the hat.

Step 4 - Sew the top to the side

Grab the top piece. Pin the top and side of the hat right sides together by inserting the pins perpendicular to the edge of the fabric: the pins are pointing inwards to the circle. You're pinning a circle to another part so this is pretty tricky. Stitch the two parts together along the edge (1 cm away from the edge).

Step 5 - Sew the brim together and on top of each other

Now take the four parts of the brim. Sew them together (short sides) in the same way as the side of the hat. Now place the two circle you have made right sides together, make sure that the seams of the short sides are also on top of each other, and sew the outer circle edge together at a distance of 1 cm from the edge.

Cut the seam allowance short (0.5 cm) and turn right side out again. Iron the seam so that it lays neatly flat.

Step 6 - Topstitch the brim

Now you are going to topstitch the brim, right through the double layers of the brim. This provides strength and is decorative. You stitch the brim all the way around, you can decide for yourself whether you put the stitch lines close together and make more lines or just a few.

Step 7 - Sew the brim to the hat and topstitch

The brim still has to be attached to the hat. Do that in the same way as the 'side' to the 'top'. First pin the two pieces together, right sides facing, and again pin perpendicular to the edge of the fabric. First pin the four 'corners', so that you can distribute the fabric evenly. Turn the brim out and topstitch the seam allowance to the hat, close to the seam. This will keep the seam allowance from peeking out from under the hat.

Hacks

Sometimes it's fun to hack the basic pattern and add something or adjust to your own liking. You can also make the bucket hat with a lining. And this way you can wear it two ways.

If you want to add a lining to your hat, you are actually making two hats (top, side and brim). Then you sew the two hats together (with all the seams facing between the two layers). You do this by placing right side to right side (ie the lining hat over the outer hat) and then stitch the outer edge of the brim together, but leave 5 cm open. Then you turn the hat with the right sides out, through the opening of 5 cm. Then you topstitch the two layers on the brim, as the original pattern also indicates and you close the opening.

SEWING FOR BEGINNERS

SUNGLASSES CASE WITH QUILTED PATTERN



Supplies:

- A non-stretch fabric. Cotton works fine.
- Fiberfill
- Velcro
- Bias tape
- Sewing machine, scissors, pins.

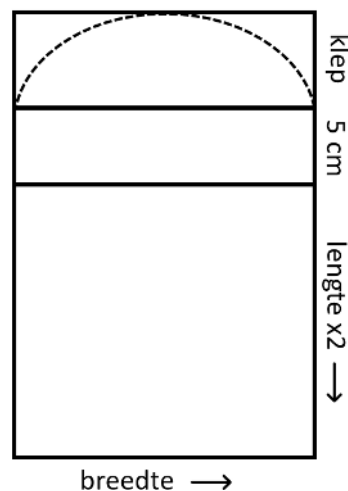
Make:

Step 1 – Draw the pattern

Measure your sunglasses (length and width). Add 5 centimeters to the length so that you have room for the seam and so that it fits your sunglasses easily. Draw the pattern as one long shape (see figure), with one of the short sides rounded.

Draw a seam allowance of 2 cm around the entire pattern. This a bigger seam allowance than you'd normally use.

You might make the pattern a little too big this way, but you can always cut it to size later.



Step 2 – Cut the fabric

You will need two layers of fabric and a fiberfill layer. You can cut all these layers at once. Pin the pattern to the fabric and the fiberfill and cut it out.

Step 3 - Quilt a Pattern

You are now going to quilt the three layers together, which means that you are going to topstitch through all layers at once. You can do this with a thread in a color you like and in a pattern you like. For example: stripes or checks or waves. Set the stitch length slightly larger than usual - 3 or 3.5. This will make it easier and it will look nicer. Test it on a scrap piece of fabric first.

Quilt tips:

When you're quilting something you always start in the middle of the fabric and work your way to the sides. Don't use too many pins, as the fabric layers will move a bit and you will have to adjust the pins. For every seam you're stitching, check the bottom fabric if it's still nice and flat (no pleating or puckering).

Step 4 - Finishing the top edges with bias tape

Don't forget to reset the stitch length to 2,5!

Grab your sunglasses and fold the quilted fabric in half like it's a sunglasses case. Does it fit? Is it way too big? Cut it to size.

We are going to finish the straight top edge first, with bias tape. Unfold the bias tape and stitch at the inside of the fabric first. Cut the seam short and fold the bias tape around it. Pin in place. Now topstitch the bias tape on top of the fabric. Check the example in the folder or ask Tinka how to work with bias tape.

Step 5 - Velcro 1

Near the straight edge you've just finished with bias tape, in the middle of the case, place a piece of velcro on the fabric with the velcro side facing out. And sew it to the fabric with a regular straight stitch.

You can choose to close the case without velcro, namely by attaching a ribbon that wraps around the case a couple of times. In that case, don't sew any velcro to the case.

Step 6 - Sew the sunglasses case together and finish with bias tape

Now we're sewing the case together and simultaneously finishing the edges with bias tape.

Fold the case together, once again: check if your sunglasses fit.

We are going to attach bias tape to the side seams and round edge and sew the sides closed, all in one go. If this sounds tricky to you, sew the side seams closed first. Make sure you sew close to the edge, so that the stitches will be hidden by the bias tape.

Attach the bias tape all around the case (side seams and round edge) the same way as you did before. Sew one side first, fold it over and sew it again. Make sure that you fold 1 cm to the inside at the start and the end of the bias tape.

Step 7 - Velcro 2 or ribbon

Place a piece of Velcro on the round edge, with the Velcro side inside, so that it lines up with the other piece of Velcro. Stitch it to the sunglasses case.

If you want to close the case with a ribbon, attach it to the middle of the round edge with a couple of stitches (you can use a piece of bias tape folded double as a ribbon).

It's finished!!

SEWING FOR BEGINNERS

POUCH WITH ZIPPER



Supplies:

- 2 pieces of non-stretch fabric (such as cotton, linen, or thicker fabric such as canvas).
- Pattern paper
- Zipper (length of zipper determines the size of the pouch)
- Sewing machine, scissors, pins and iron.

Make:

Step 1 – Draw the pattern

Draw a rectangle on pattern paper. The short side of the rectangle is based on the size of the zipper. The long side of the rectangle is about 1.5 times the short side. Make sure you also add 1 cm seam allowance all around.

For example: You have a zipper of 20 cm. The short side will then be 20 cm, the long side will be 30 cm. And with the seam allowance of 1 cm all around you draw a rectangle of 22x32 cm on the pattern paper.

Step 2 - Cut your fabric

Place the two fabrics you have chosen on top of each other. Pin the rectangle of pattern paper to both layers of fabric. I always pin all the corners first, so that the paper stays flat. And then add another pin in between all the corner pins, that's enough.

Step 3 - Insert zipper

- Remove the pattern paper from the two fabrics. We are going to sew one side of the zipper to the short side first and then the other side of the zipper to the other short side. Put a zipper foot on your sewing machine.

- Lay the outer fabric right side up in front of you, then the zipper right side down along the short side, and finally the lining fabric right side down (right sides together). Pin the three layers together (two fabrics and a zipper). Use the zipper foot and a straight stitch (2.5 length) to sew. The zipper is now attached to two layers of fabric on one side.

Step 3b - Topstitch Zipper and Sew Other Side Zipper

- Fold the fabrics right side out so the zipper is visible and gently iron away from the zipper. Topstitch right next to the zipper. This way you ensure that the fabrics stay neatly to the side and do not get caught in the zipper.

- Now fold the fabrics right sides together again but with the other side of the zipper in between the layers. Sew the other side of the zipper in the same way as the first one (zipper foot and straight stitch).

- Now turn the whole project with the right side out and iron the fabrics away from the zipper again. Topstitch the second side of the zipper just like the first. This is easier when the zipper is open.

Step 4 – Side seams

- You've created something that looks like a tube. Make sure the right sides (the outside) of the tube in on the inside and the zipper is closed. The lining is outside. It now looks like a flat rectangle.

- You still have two open sides, these are the side seams. Pin these and sew them with a regular straight stitch with a 1 cm seam allowance.

NOTE: Open the zipper a little bit before you sew the final side seam, otherwise you will not be able to reverse the pouch.

- Then use a zigzag stitch to neatly finish the seams. This prevents fraying on the inside of your pouch.

Continued on the back.

Step 3 - Corners

- We are going to give the pouch a bit more shape by sewing the four corner triangles, just like with the tote bag. We do this on the inside, but with both layers of fabric (outside and lining) at the same time. You make the triangles the same as with the tote bag. It's hard to explain, so ask Tinka or check the example. The seams you sew form vertical seams on the four corners of the pouch. Sew the seams, using a regular straight stitch, so that each corner has a triangle. You can leave the triangles on the inside of the case or cut them off and zigzag the edge.

Turn the pouch right side through the open zipper.

Step 4 – Finished!

The pencil case, make-up bag, zipper pouch is ready! You just made this yourself!

SEWING FOR BEGINNERS

BASKET (FOR PLANT POT)



Supplies:

- 2 pieces of non-stretch fabric (e.g. cotton, linen), not too thin.
- Pattern paper
- Sewing machine, scissors, pins and iron.

Make:

Step 1 – Draw your pattern

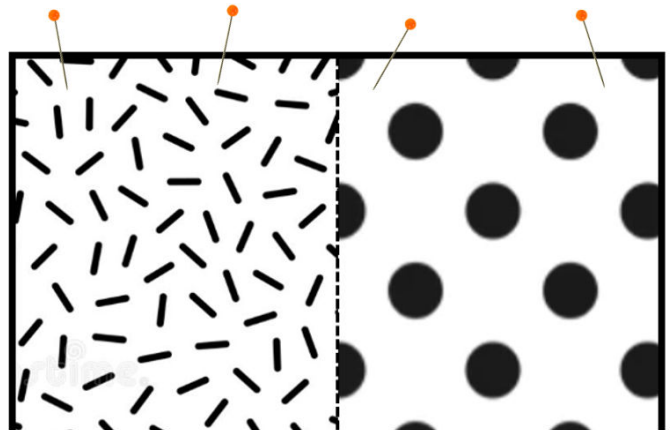
Determine how high and wide you want your basket and draw a rectangle on patterned paper. The example is 25 cm high and 45 cm wide (the width eventually becomes a circle). Also make sure you draw 1 cm seam allowance around your rectangle.

Step 2 - Cut your fabric

Place the two fabrics you have chosen on top of each other. Pin the rectangle of pattern paper to both layers of fabric. Pin the corners first to keep the paper flat. If your fabric is thin and not thick enough to hold the shape of a basket, you can reinforce it with interfacing (you iron it on and make your fabric thicker/firmer).

Step 3 - Sew the tube

Place the fabrics with the long sides together, make sure that the good sides of the fabrics are facing each other and pin and stitch one of the long sides 1 cm from the edge. Press the seam open so that it lays flat. Now you've got a large piece of fabric. Now fold the fabric in half in a different way with right/good sides together. Fold the edge of the fabric where the seam is (see picture) right sides together. Pin and topstitch 1 cm from the edge. Iron the seam, you have now made a kind of tube.



The tube is inside out, with the right sides of the fabric inside. Lay the tube flat with the seam you just sewed across the middle. Now stitch the short sides together (pin and stitch 1 cm away from the edge), but leave a 5 cm opening on one side in the middle of your seam. So you first sew a bit and then you stop, 5 cm further you start again.

Step 4 – Corners

You will give the basket a bit more shape by stitching triangles in the four corners. You make the triangles the same as with the tote bag and zipper pouch. It's difficult to explain, so ask Tinka or try to figure it out yourself with the help of the examples.

The seams you stitch form vertical seams at the four corners. Sew these seams with a regular straight stitch. Repeat this three more times, so that each corner has a triangle (make sure the triangles are the same size). You can leave these triangles or cut them off and zigzag the edge.

Turn your tube right side out through the 5 cm opening.

Turn the edges of the opening inwards and pin and stitch as close to the edge as possible.

Now you fold one side of the basket into the other, so one fabric is the lining and the other fabric is the outer fabric. This makes the basket reversible!

Yay! Your (plant) basket is finished.

SEWING FOR BEGINNERS

BASIC REPAIRS AND ALTERATION ON PANTS



Supplies:

- Pants (in need of repair or too big)
- A piece of denim or other matching fabric for repairing holes.
- Pattern paper
- Zipper (length of zipper determines the size of the pouch)
- Sewing machine, scissors, pins and iron.

Make:

Shortening a pair of pants

Put on the pants and fold one leg in to the desired length. Pin the folded edge. One or two pins is enough.

Or have someone else fold it over and pin it! If you bend over to pin at the bottom of the trouser leg, your trousers will pull up slightly. Then you've pinned it at the wrong length. So frustrating! You only have to pin 1 trouser leg because you can copy the second one to the same length.

Take the pants off and turn them inside out.

Iron the fold.

Hems for trousers are usually about 3 cm wide, which means that you still need 4 cm of fabric to work with, counting from the fold. Cut the fabric to 4 cm from the fold. Fold and iron 1 cm inwards and pin that edge all around.

Now sew the hem at a distance of 3 mm from that second fold with a normal straight stitch.

Did you notice this is the same method as creating the band on the tote bag?

Tip: If the pants are flared, you will have a little extra fabric when you fold it up, which makes sense. See if you can fix that by pulling the fabric a little while you sew it. If that doesn't help enough, you can always make a pleat on the inside so you won't see it on the outside.

Taking in a pair of pants

You can do this in a few ways. 1) take in center back seam, 2) insert darts or 3) take in side seams. Or a combination of multiple of these. Which way is best for your pants depends on the design and how much you want to take them in.

Put the pants on first and determine how much smaller they should be. If you only need to take it in very little you can choose 1 way, if it's a lot, you better go for several ways so as not to completely ruin the design and shape of the pants.

1) Take in center back seam.

First unpick the waistband above the center back seam, you can unpick quite a bit as you'll also have to take in the waistband and you need some room to sew. For jeans, unpick the center back seam, up to the crotch. For other trousers this might not be necessary to unpick fully.

Then take the two layers and mark at the top how much should be removed. Sew the two layers together (right sides together) again with a regular straight stitch. You sew a seam that subtly and smoothly merges back into the existing center back seam.

Try on the pants. If it fits correctly, cut the seam at 1 cm and zigzag the seam on the inside.

Cut the waistband right above the new center back seam and unfold it completely so that you can place right sides together. This is quite fiddly. Sew the waistband back together so that the band fits the smaller pants. Fold everything back in and sew the waistband back to the pants.

2) Insert darts.

To give shape to skirts and trousers, but also blouses and dresses, some garments have darts. They are often in the front and back of trousers or skirts. If your pants don't have it and you want to put darts in them to take in the pants, I would always put them in the back. There is generally more shape to your body in the back. A dart sort of looks like a triangle that you sew and fold away on the inside. At the top of the dart the triangle is at its widest and it ends in a point about 7-10 cm below.

First, unpick the waistband of the pants all along the back. If there are belt loops in the way, you can also unpick them. Now fold and pin two triangles exactly above the back pockets. Measure the triangles and make sure they take out as much fabric as you had to take in the pants. Sew the triangles, using a regular straight stitch. And iron them to the side. Try on the pants to make sure they fit properly now.

Cut the waistband at a strategic place and unfold it completely so that you can place right sides together. This is quite fiddly. Sew the waistband back together so that the band fits the smaller pants. Fold everything back in and sew the waistband back to the pants.

3) Take in side seams.

This is only possible if the trousers have no side pockets (these will become useless otherwise) and are not jeans (jeans always have those staples at the start of the pocket that you cannot remove or sew over). Take the same steps as above. You first unpick the waist band above the side seams. If the band is made of a thin material, you don't have to unpick it as you just take in the side seams in one go. Take in and sew the side seams so that you've got the same amount on both sides. Make sure your new seam subtle merges into the existing seam.

Try on the pants. Is it okay?

If there is little fabric on the inside, you can leave the side seam on. If you took the pants in by a lot, trim the side seam to 1 cm and zigzag the edges.

Cut the waistband on both sides, right about the new side seams and unfold it completely so that you can place right sides together. This is quite fiddly. Sew the waistband back together so that the band fits the smaller pants. Fold everything back in and sew the waistband back to the pants.

Repairing bicycle holes

The bicycle holes are on the inside of your thighs. These are often thin spots or an area that often has a hole or two because your thighs rub past your bike saddle. You can repair a hole on the knee in the same way. When repairing a knee, I would recommend first unpicking the side seam, so that you can reach the area better with the sewing machine.

Take a piece of denim (or a matching fabric) and place it on the inside of the pants, under the hole. Make sure it's big enough, you'll trim that later. Pin it with one or two pins to keep it in place.

Choose a matching color of thread and place the pants with the hole under the sewing machine. Feel the inside, is the piece of fabric lying flat or is it folded in half?

Then you sew back and forth over the hole with a regular straight stitch. It is easiest to use the reverse button for this instead of turning the fabric the other way all the time.

Change direction a little by inserting the needle into the fabric and raising the presser foot and turning the fabric. It should look like you scratched the fabric with a pencil, and the whole hole is covered with stitches.

By stitching so much you strengthen the spot and by choosing a matching color it is hardly visible anymore.

When you're done, you can just cut off the extra fabric on the inside. That will probably fray a bit from wearing and washing, but that doesn't matter, because the fabric itself is stitched very well.

Visible mending

If you want to fix a hole on the knee of your jeans (for example), you can go about it as described above. Or you can dive into the world of visible mending. This can be done in many different ways: with embroidery, with a small patch of weaving or with patches of fabric and sashiko embroidery technique. Google or Pinterest visible mending and you'll find a lot of inspiration. The idea of visible mending is not to repair your clothes in an invisible way, but to let the mending make your clothes more beautiful than they were before, to add something to them, to turn the bad (a hole or rip) into an opportunity to create something even better than what you started with.

Buttons

Re-attaching a button is one of the most basic sewing skills there is. For pants there are (mostly) two kinds of buttons. Jeans buttons and regular buttons (that you could also find on a blouse or dress).

Jeans buttons exist of two sides that are screwed and/or hammered together, with the layer of fabric in between. You can not use the same button twice, because you can't take it apart. If a jeans button ripped from the fabric, first use some scrap denim or other sturdy fabric to reinforce the area and then attach a new jeans button.

Regular buttons are sewn on by hand. Take a small/thin hand sewing needle (this is easier to work with, esp in sturdy fabric) and some sewing machine thread. You can use a special thicker thread if you want extra strength, but it's not necessary. When using regular sewing machine thread double up the thread, string it through the eye of the needle, and make a double knot at the end.

Begin your sewing on the back or inside of the fabric, so that the knot is not in sight. Sew some stitches through the holes of the button and the fabric up and down, about 5 times.

(If you're working on a coat, make sure the buttons aren't too close/tight to the fabric, as you want to leave space to close the coat and therefore another fabric layer needs to go in-between.)

When you've stitched the button about five times go back to the back or inside of the fabric and make a few small stitches in the same place, on the third stitch take your thread through the loop of the stitch thereby creating a small knot. The final stitch goes in between the layers of fabric and out as far away from the button as you can get (prob the length of the needle). Then cut the end of the thread close to the fabric, now the end of the thread is inside the two layers of fabric.

Done!

SEWING FOR BEGINNERS

PILLOWCASE (ENVELOP)



Supplies:

- Non-stretch fabric (such as cotton, linen, not too thick).
- Pattern paper.
- Sewing machine, scissors, pins and iron.

Make:

Step 1 - Draw your pattern

A pillow has a standard size of 60 x 70 cm. The dimensions in this project are based on that. You can also make your own pattern for a cushion on the sofa with different dimensions. The pillowcase consists of 1 pattern piece. Draw a long rectangle of 161 cm x 62 cm on pattern paper. This includes a 1 cm seam allowance.

Step 2 - Cut your fabric

Grab your piece of fabric. If you don't have enough in one color, there's a description below (hacks) how to handle it.

Pin the pattern paper to the fabric. Pin the corners first and then add a few more pins along the edges. The point is that the paper is attached to the fabric so that you can cut neatly. Cut out the fabric along the edge of the paper.

Step 3 - Finish the short sides

We will first finish the short sides (those of 62 cm), by hemming them. This technique is the same when you hem trousers or the bottom edge of a blouse (good to know).

First fold the short side 1 cm towards the inside of the fabric and iron the fold. Then fold the fabric in again, 2 cm this time, and iron again. Pin the fabric with a few pins. Sew on the fold (3 mm from the fold) with a regular straight stitch. Do the same with the other short side.

Step 4 - Sew the side seams

Now we are going to assemble the pillowcase by stitching the side seams. You first fold in a piece of 15 cm on one of the short sides, which you fasten with two pins on the side. Then fold the fabric in half with right sides (the outside of the fabric) together. You can now see the flap that we just folded over.

Pin the side seams (including the flap) and sew with a regular straight stitch 1 cm from the edge of the fabric. Zigzag the seam allowance with a regular zigzag (3 length and 3 width), along the raw edge of the seam (outside the straight stitches). Turn the pillowcase inside out.

Finished! You're on a roll!

Hacks

Sometimes it's fun to hack the basic pattern and add something or adjust to your own liking. You can also make this pillowcase by using a different fabric for the front and back.

You work almost the same, but you start with a pattern in two parts. 1) 62x74cm 2) 62x98cm. Pin the pattern pieces onto two different fabrics and cut out. First sew the two fabrics together (right sides together) along two short sides (1 cm seam allowance is included). Use a regular straight stitch and then zigzag the seam to finish. Then proceed to step 3 as described above.