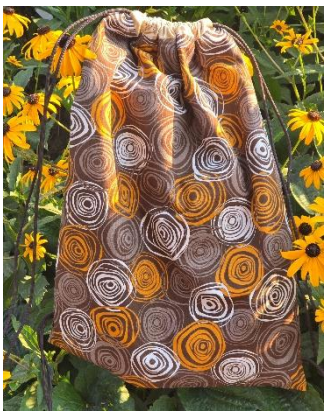
Drawstring Backpack - STM 2

Project Overview

Create a lined drawstring backpack with contrast casings and anchored cords, using quilting weight cotton and basic machine sewing techniques.



Materials & Cutting Measurements

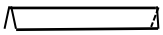
Exterior: Cut 2 pieces 18” long x 14” wide
Lining: Cut 2 pieces 18” long x 14” wide
Drawstring Casing: Cut 4 pieces of contrasting fabric 3” long (tall) x 13” wide
Nylon Cording: 4 yards, 1/8” diameter, cut into two equal lengths

Instructions

All seam allowances are 1/2" unless noted and should be backstitched at the beginning and end of each seam.

MAKE TWO CASINGS

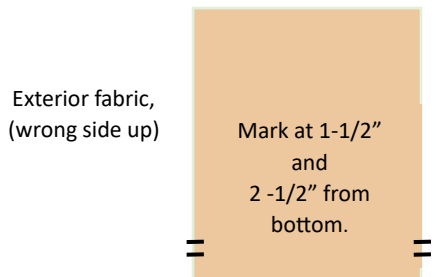
1. Place two 3” long (tall) x 13” wide casings right sides together.
2. Sew a ½” seam at each end.
3. Turn the casing wrong sides together, then press the finished ends.
4. Fold casing in half lengthwise and press again. This will leave an opening at each end for the cording to pass through.



5. Repeat for the remaining two casing pieces.
6. Fold each one in half to find the center, mark the raw edge with a pin. Set both casings aside.

FORM THE EXTERIOR & ATTACH CASINGS

1. Place one 18” long x 14” wide exterior piece wrong side up, with the 14” width at the top.
2. From the bottom mark both side edges at 1 ½” and 2 ½”.
3. If using directional fabric, make sure it is facing the correct direction before marking.



4. Place both exterior pieces right side up.
5. Fold both in half to find the center, then mark with a pin.
6. Place one casing along the top raw edge of one exterior piece, matching the center pins on the right side of the exterior fabric. Align the raw edges at the top. (The exterior fabric should extend slightly beyond both ends of the casing.)
7. Pin or clip, then baste each casing to its exterior piece with ¼” seam allowance.

8. Repeat for the second exterior piece.
9. Place the exterior pieces right sides together, matching side and bottom edges. Pin or clip together. NOTE: The casing should not be in the seam allowance.
10. Start with a backstitch at the upper right corner, sew down the side to the 2 ½” mark and backstitch.
11. Restart stitching at the 1 ½” mark, backstitch, continue to the bottom corner, pivot, and sew across the bottom.
12. Pivot at the lower left corner and sew up the left side to the 1 ½” mark, then backstitch.
13. Restart at the 2 ½” mark , backstitch, then sew to the top edge to the top, backstitch.

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14. Clip the bottom corners at a 45-degree angle, being careful not to cut through the stitching.
15. Turn the exterior right side out with the casings facing downward toward the bottom of the bag, push out the corners, then press.

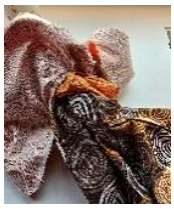
MAKE THE LINING

1. Place the lining pieces right sides together, matching raw edges. Pin or clip together.
2. Leave a 4" turning opening along the bottom edge.
3. Start stitching at the top right corner, backstitch and sew down the side, pivot at the bottom corner, and sew across the bottom to the beginning of the 4" opening. Backstitch.
4. Restart at the other side of the opening, backstitch, continue across the bottom, pivot at the corner and continue up the left side, ending at the top with a backstitch.

5. Clip the bottom corners at a 45-degree angle, being careful not to cut through the stitching.

ASSEMBLE THE BACKPACK

1. Insert the exterior bag into the lining, right sides together.
2. Match the upper raw edges and the side seams. Pin or clip together.
3. Stitch completely around the top with a ½" seam. Use the free arm if you have one on your machine.
4. Reach through the lining opening and pull the exterior through the opening to turn the bag right side out.



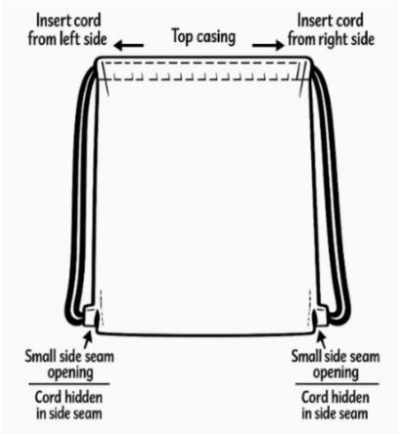
5. Straighten the bag and gently push out the lining corners.
6. To close the lining opening, fold the raw edges of the opening inward, press and stitch the opening close to the folded edge.
7. Push the lining inside the backpack and press the upper edge. Casing will extend above the bag.

8. Topstitch ¼" from the top edge below the casings.

INSERT THE CORDS

1. Cut the cording to make two equal lengths about 72" long.
2. Attach a large safety pin to one end of the first cord.
3. Start at one casing opening, thread the cord through the casing and then through the parallel casing so both cord ends return to the same side. Remove the safety pin and adjust the cord so both ends are even.
4. Repeat with the second cord, starting from the opposite casing opening.

ANCHOR THE CORDS



1. At one side of the backpack, make sure the cords are not twisted, then bring the cord ends down to the side opening.
2. Tuck the ends about 1" into the opening and pin in place.
3. Repeat on the opposite side with the second set of cords.
4. Try on the backpack and adjust the strap length for comfort. Trim excess cord if needed.

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5. Edge stitch each side opening closed to secure the cords.
6. Pull the drawstrings from opposite sides to gather the casing and complete the backpack.

Standard Sewing Terms, fabric quantities used, and at-home cutting diagrams, are shown below.

Standard Sewing Terms

RST: Right Sides Together
WST: Wrong Sides Together
WOF: Width of Fabric
Baste: Temporary stitching used to hold pieces in place before final sewing.
Backstitch: Reverse stitching at the beginning and end of a seam to secure it.
Clip: Use sewing clips instead of pins to hold fabrics together.
Nest: Fit two seams together snugly and reduce bulk by folding in opposite directions when matching seams.
Pivot: Turn a corner with the needle down.
Topstitch: Visible stitching sewn close to a finished edge.

At-Home Fabric Requirements and Cutting Guide

½ yard exterior fabric: cotton
½ yard lining fabric: use for the casings also
4 yards 1/8” nylon cording or paracord – cut in two 72” lengths

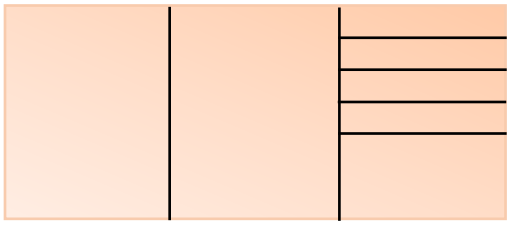
Drawings are not to scale.

Cut on solid lines

Exterior Fabric

Cut two pieces 18” long x 14” wide

Lining Fabric



Cut two pieces 18” long x 14” wide and four casing pieces 3” long x 13” wide

The idea for this pattern was based on Drawstring Backpack by Virginia Lindsay published in Make 1-Hour Gifts after the publication went out of print. More than 70% of it was modified for Sew Teach Me use.
(Sew Teach Me is a private non-profit that teaches children to sew.)

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