

Embellished Pocket Purse

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CUTTING AND PREPARING THE BASE FABRIC: Cut one 20"x36" piece of the base fabric. (See Figure 1.) Support this fabric either with iron-on stabilizer (or quilt a stabilizer/facing to strengthen the piece). Pre-quilted fabric, heavy canvas, or upholstery fabric may be used (thus eliminating the need to stabilize or quilt, in many cases). If you plan to add much embellishment, solid colors work nicely.

CUTTING AND PREPARING THE EMBELLISHED POCKET SECTIONS: Cut TWO 8" x 20" pieces of either a matching fabric or the same basic fabric as above. Cut two pieces of stabilizer/batting* and lining. This section will ultimately be the OUTSIDE POCKETS of your purse. Use spray adhesive (such as 505) to adhere the stabilizer to the WRONG side of the base fabric, then embellish this section as you wish—anything from appliqué, embroidery, rows of decorative stitching, free-motion stitching, etc. The tops and bottoms won't appear "smooth," so after you finish your embellishment, just TRIM them to make a perfect rectangle. [This will wind up being something close to 7" x 20"—with the extra inch being used up for the starting and stopping of the embellishment.] Add the pocket section lining, and use bias tape (either purchased or homemade) or piping to finish the top and bottom edges.

**If the fabric is thin, I use batting. For thicker fabrics, I use a thin stabilizer.*

ASSEMBLY FOR OUTER FABRIC:

- Place the embellished pocket sections onto the prepared outer fabric in the positions shown in Figure 1. Stitch at the horizontal lines at the BOTTOMS of each of the two pocket sections. [I stitch it TWICE, for extra support.] Now stitch the vertical seams to form pockets wherever *you* wish them to be. [I also stitch these twice with a triple-stitch and reinforce the top points with a tight zigzag to keep the pocket sections secure.] Note that if you choose NOT to stitch any internal pocket seams, you will have one loooooong pocket (which is ideal for some folks). I chose to stitch at the center on one side and twice (near the edges) on the other side.
- Turn under about a quarter-inch seam of the TOP EDGES of the complete purse piece to make a tiny hem OR serge (or zigzag) so the fabric won't fray at these edges.
- OPTIONAL: If you want to have a sturdier bottom, add a layer of batting to the bottom section where no side pockets will appear. I put this in the section between the two embellished pocket pieces.
- Fold this entire prepared piece in half (with right sides together, and align the two embellished pocket sections so that their joining side seams will match). Sew the two side seams with 1/2" or 5/8" seams. Take a peek inside (without turning it) to make sure the two pocket sections joined to your satisfaction. Now stitch the bottom corners (making triangles) to form a rectangular purse base. Trim the triangles.
- Turn inside out and shape it into a "box/bag."

CUTTING AND PREPARING THE LINING:

- Cut a 19 1/2" (width) x 22" (height) piece of lining. Sew on optional pockets, making sure they are positioned so they won't be at the bottom of the purse or too close to the tucked-in sides.
- Fold this cut piece in half (with right sides together—folded in a manner that results in an 11" x 20" shape). Sew the two side seams, then stitch the bottom corners to make a rectangular base. Trim the stitched triangles. Do *not* turn inside out.
- Drop this "unturned" lining inside the outer bag. "Poke and schooch" the fabric around until it makes a relatively snug "box" shape. (The lining will be shorter.)
- Now FOLD down the top section of the outer purse at the indicated fold line. Make sure the outer fabric covers the top raw edge of the lining.
- Topstitch about a quarter-inch away from the top purse edge AND a few inches down to secure the top edge of the lining that has been tucked under the purse fabric.

GROMMETS AND STRAP:

Prepare grommets (I used 1" size) according to the package directions in the positions that match the circles shown in the diagram/pattern. Cut a 66" strip of 3/4-inch stiff strap. Cover it with fabric, then decorate it with stitching for extra durability. (I used stitch 639.)

Thread the strap through the grommets and THEN stitch the ends of the strap together and turn.

HAVE FUN!!

One sample purse:



Figure 1

