

SINGER

Beautiful DIY bag

Welcome to the third of Singer's collaborations with Great British Sewing Bee champion, Matt Chapple. Just in time for Christmas gifting Matt has undertaken a pretty pleated make-up bag. This elegant, lined linen bag looks beautiful on a dressing table or on a bathroom shelf, if you are feeling generous then you could of course make it into a wonderful gift filled with a lovely selection of soaps, creams or cosmetics. Over to you, Matt...



During this project you will get to give your machine a light work out using a simple straight stitch, you'll also get to practice inserting a zip, don't panic I walk you through each and every step. By the end of the make you'll be a zip convert, I promise.

This DIY bag is relatively inexpensive to make as it only takes a few components, so here's what you'll need;

To make a finished bag that's 10" by 8"

- Fabric 20" by 24" - Linen is perfect for this project as it naturally has more structure than a light cotton.
- A matching 14" nylon zip, I used a concealed zip, this gives a slender finish to the top of the bag.
- Matching thread



DIY bag tutorial:

1. Cut the fabric into four equally sized pieces each one 12" across and 10" tall. If you have a directional pattern, like me, ensure that it is cut accordingly. The pieces will be used as two for the bag outers and two for the lining.



2. To make an optional pleat on the top, take the two outer sections and mark at the 6" halfway point, then a half-inch either side of this mark. Fold the outer marks inwards to meet the centre mark and press quite well. I like to run a little edge stitch at the top of the pleat to hold it in place.



3. You'll notice that the pleat has reduced the width of the top of the bag. To allow for this, take the two lining pieces and trim them down. They need to be reduced by an inch across the top, so take a line from the bottom corner up to a half-inch in from the top corner and carefully cut. Don't worry if you don't have one, but for a precise cut I like to use my rotary cutter for this task (see my rotary cutter top tips)



4. Now it's time for inserting the zip. This is a four stage process but please don't be daunted it's actually super easy. Begin with one of the outer parts; place this right side to right side on the zip

matching the top edges. Now straight stitch across, back stitching at both ends. The zip can be closed for now.



5. Next take the corresponding lining section and this time pin the right side of fabric to the wrong side of the zip, again matching the top edges...



...Now straight stitch across and secure thread ends with a backstitch.



6. Using a warm iron (because it's nylon) press back both of these pieces from the zip, you are now ready to repeat the same steps on the other side of the zip.



7. So taking the 2nd pleated outer piece, place it right side of the fabric to the right side of the other half of the zip, matching the top edges. Again straight stitch across, back stitching at the ends.



8. Now for the 2nd lining section. Pin this right side of the fabric to the wrong side of the zip, matching the top edges and yep you've got it, straight stitch across, back stitching at the ends.



9. You can now press these sections away from the zip, remember to use only a warm iron.

IMPORTANT BIT: Now is the time to open the zip at least half way....please do this, otherwise it makes turning the bag through impossible or at least very difficult.



10. Take the two pleated outer parts, place them right side to right side and pin together along the seams. Take the linings, also place right side to right side and pin around the seams. When you come to the zip, if you fold the zipper tape in half width ways, making sure you keep the teeth nearest to the pleated sides (See the picture below).

We need to leave an opening at the base of the lining to turn through; I make two marks each approximately a third of the way in from the corners.



11. Beginning at the first mark, straight stitching around the outer of the sections, joining them in the process. To turn the corners neatly, leave the needle down, raise the presser foot and turn, then presser foot down and away you go. When you come to the zip, slowly stitch straight over it. As we've folded the nylon zip the machine should go over it without any fuss. This is basically shortening your zip precisely to the bags width.

End the stitch at the other opening mark, therefore leaving a small amount unsewn. Tie off the thread ends and trim back the seam allowances.



12. Almost there I promise. Again this bit is optional, but to give the bag a bit more stability and structure I recommend boxing the corners. It's super simple but very effective.

All you need to do is pinch the bottom and side seams of each corner together, feeling for the seams to align and pin in place. This gives a little triangle on the corner (see picture below). Decide how much you'd like to box them by and straight stitch across. I chose to do mine by 2.5" across (the pink line below). Repeat this equally on all four corners and trim away the excess fabric.



13. Now turn the whole bag through the unsewn part of the lining section.



14. Press the seam allowance of the unsewn opening to the inside, and stitch closed. You can do this by hand or by machine with an edge stitch.



Now for the fun bit, stand back and marvel at your beautiful DIY bag. The toughest decision will be if you are willing to gift it or keep it for yourself. Maybe best to double up on your materials and make a second...



Happy stitching

Matt