

DRAWSTRING LINEN BAG

Step-by-Step Sewing Pattern

3 Size Options | 8 Construction Steps
Seam Finish Decision Guide | Casing Formula Included

What You Need

Step 1 before cutting: pre-wash your linen

Materials

ITEM	SPECIFICATION	NOTE
Linen fabric	0.5 yd (18" x 44")	Pre-washed, tight-weave preferred for first projects
Drawstring cord	2 lengths, each = (bag width x 2) + 10"	Cotton rope, ribbon, or bias tape; 3-5mm diameter
Thread	100% polyester or poly-cotton blend	Polyester outlasts all-cotton thread for bags
Needle	90/14 universal or denim needle	An 80/12 needle causes skipped stitches on linen
Iron and pressing mat	Required (not optional)	Linen construction depends on pressed seams at every step
Safety pin or bodkin	1 pin	For threading cord through the casing channel
Scissors or rotary cutter	Sharp edges only	Dull blades fray the cut edge before the first seam

Size Guide

USE CASE	FINISHED SIZE	CUT SIZE	BEST FOR
Small Gift Bag	6" x 6"	7.5" x 17"	Jewelry, tea, small gifts
Produce Bag	8" x 10"	9.5" x 25"	Farmers market, herbs
Everyday Tote	12" x 14"	13.5" x 33"	Books, groceries, gym items
Shoe / Laundry	14" x 18"	15.5" x 41"	Shoe storage, travel laundry

Size Formula (for any custom size)

Cut Width = Finished Width + 1.5" (seam allowances)

Cut Length = (Finished Height x 2) + 5" (casing + seam allowances)

Cord Length = (Finished Width x 2) + 10", cut two pieces this length

Step-by-Step Instructions

Steps 1 through 5 | Read all steps before cutting

1

Pre-wash and press the linen

Wash in warm water. Tumble dry on low.
Press while slightly damp. Linen shrinks 3-5% in its first wash.
Skipping this step means your finished bag will shrink after the first use.

2

Cut the fabric rectangle

Use the size table on page 2 to find your cut dimensions.
Cut one rectangle using a rotary cutter and mat for clean edges.
Dull scissors fray linen before the first seam is sewn.

3

Run a test seam on a linen scrap

Set stitch length: 2.5-3mm. Needle: 90/14 universal.
Stitch a 3-inch test seam. Inspect both sides for clean, even stitches.
If stitches skip or pucker: re-thread the machine completely from scratch.
Only proceed once the test seam is clean on both sides.

4

Finish the raw side edges

TIGHT-WEAVE LINEN (washed, linen-cotton blend):
Zigzag both long edges of the rectangle before sewing the seams.
LOOSE-WEAVE LINEN (gauze, slubby, antique linen):
Plan to use French seams in Step 5. Do not zigzag first.

5

Sew the two side seams

Fold the rectangle in half, right sides together (short ends meet).
Sew each side seam from the bottom fold to 2" below the top edge.
Stop 2" from the top on each side. Backstitch at start and end.
This 2" gap at the top forms the casing opening. Do not sew past it.

Seam Finish Decision Guide

LINEN TYPE	SEAM FINISH	TIME ESTIMATE
Tight-weave washed linen	Zigzag-finished open seam	Under 60 min total
Loose-weave / gauze linen	French seam	60-90 min total
Any linen (with serger)	Serged seam	Fastest; most durable
Gift-quality finish	Bound seam with bias tape	90+ min; professional

Step-by-Step Instructions (continued)

Steps 6 through 8 | Casing, pressing, and drawstring

6

Press all seams

Press the sewn side seams open using an iron.
Press the unsewn seam allowances back on themselves above the 2" stop point.
This creates a clean, flat opening for the casing without cutting.
Do not skip pressing. The casing will not lie flat without it.

7

Fold and stitch the casing

Fold the top raw edge down 0.5". Press.
Fold again 1.5" down toward the wrong side. Press.
Test: slide a safety pin through the folded channel before stitching.
The pin should move freely. If it catches, the fold is too narrow for your cord.
Topstitch along the lower edge of the casing. Backstitch at both ends.
Do not stitch over the side seam openings. Leave them open for cord threading.

8

Thread the drawstring cords

Cut two cords, each (finished bag width x 2) + 10".
Attach a safety pin to one end of cord 1.
Insert the pin into the left-side casing opening.
Thread the pin all the way around the casing and back out the same left opening.
Tie both ends of cord 1 together in an overhand knot.
Repeat with cord 2, entering from the right-side opening.
Pull both cords to close the bag. It should close evenly from both sides.

5 Things That Make This Project Work

- Pre-wash is construction, not prep. Linen shrinks up to 5% in its first wash cycle.
- Test seam before final fabric. Five minutes on a scrap prevents a ruined cut piece.
- Match seam finish to weave density. Tight-weave linen tolerates zigzag. Loose-weave needs a French seam.
- Press every seam before the next one. Linen holds a pressed crease better than almost any other fabric.
- Use two cords, not one. Two cords entered from opposite sides close the bag evenly every time.

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