

FREE BEGINNER SEWING PATTERN

# The Easy Drawstring Bag Pattern

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A calm, start-to-finish guide for your very first bag. One skill, two pieces of fabric, a pull cord, and a casing fix that stops the cord from ever jamming.

## ONE SKILL NEEDED

A straight stitch

## REALISTIC TIME

30 min (confident) / 45-60 min (first-timer)

## WHAT YOU GET

Sizing chart, 9 steps, troubleshooting

*Easy does not mean instant. If it takes you longer, you are learning, not failing.*

# Before You Start

## The one prerequisite

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You need exactly one skill to make this bag: a straight stitch you can keep roughly parallel to the fabric edge. If you can do that on a scrap, you are ready. After this project you will own two new skills: sewing a fold-over casing and threading a drawstring.

## Supplies checklist

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- . Fabric: quilting cotton or light canvas is the most forgiving. Scraps and fat quarters work.
- . Cord or drawstring: 1/4-inch cotton cord, ribbon, twill tape, or a folded fabric strip.
- . Thread to match, scissors or a rotary cutter, ruler, pins or clips.
- . A safety pin or bodkin for threading the cord (the single most useful tool here).
- . Iron and a sewing machine, or a needle and sturdy thread for hand-sewing.

## Fabric sizing chart

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Cut TWO rectangles at the size below. Dimensions already include a 1/4-inch seam allowance and a 2-inch casing allowance at the top.

Bag size	Cut each piece	Finished (approx.)	Good for
Small	9" x 13"	8" x 8.5"	gifts, jewelry, soap
Medium	12" x 16"	11" x 11.5"	knit projects, toys
Large	15" x 19"	14" x 14.5"	shoes, gym kit, travel

## The casing rule that prevents 90% of problems

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Make your casing as wide as your cord plus a quarter inch. The most common beginner failure is a cord that jams or will not pass through, and it is almost always a casing that is too narrow, not a seam sewn wrong. Measure your cord before you fold the top.

# Step-by-Step: Build the Bag

## 1 Cut your two pieces

Using the sizing chart, cut two matching rectangles. Press them flat so your edges line up cleanly. Straight, even pieces here make every later step easier.

## 2 Finish the raw edges

Run a zigzag stitch or use pinking shears along all four edges of both pieces to stop fraying. On cotton you can skip this, but it makes the inside look tidy.

## 3 Mark the casing stop point

On both side edges, measure down from the top and make a mark about 2 inches down. You will stop your side seams at these marks to leave the casing open.

## 4 Pin and sew the sides and bottom

Place the two pieces right sides together. Pin or clip. Sew down one side from the mark, across the bottom, and up the other side to the mark, using a 1/4-inch seam. Backstitch at the marks to lock them.

## 5 Press the seams open

Press the side and bottom seams flat. Pressing as you go is real construction, not a finishing extra. It is the difference between a homemade and a handmade look.

## Step-by-Step: The Casing and Cord

### 6 Make the casing opening

Fold the open top edge down by about 1/4 inch and press, then fold down again by roughly 1.25 inches (or your cord width plus a little room) and press. This double fold hides the raw edge inside the casing.

### 7 Stitch the casing

Sew all the way around the folded top, close to the lower folded edge, to form the tunnel your cord will run through. Keep the side openings (above your stop marks) free and unsewn.

### 8 Thread the drawstring

Attach a safety pin or bodkin to one end of your cord. Feed it in through one side opening, all the way around the casing, and back out the same side. For a two-pull bag, thread a second cord from the opposite side.

### 9 Knot and finish

Pull both cord ends even, then knot them so they cannot slip back into the casing. If your cord frays, melt synthetic ends with a quick pass near a flame, or dab cotton ends with a little fabric glue. Turn right side out. Done.

### You made a bag.

Snap a photo of it, flaws and all. A finished bag in your hands beats a perfect one in your head, and it is the proof you can do the next project.

# Fixes, Upgrades and Supplies

## Troubleshooting

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- . Cord jams or will not pass through: the casing is too narrow. Unpick and re-sew it wider, then use a safety pin to feed the cord.
- . Cord ends fray and unravel: melt synthetic ends near a flame, or wrap cotton ends with a dab of glue or a small whipstitch.
- . Wobbly or uneven seams: slow down and pin more. Test-stitch on a scrap of the same fabric before sewing the real piece.
- . Bulky corners: clip and trim the seam allowance at each corner so it turns out flat and sharp.

## Easy upgrades for your next bag

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- . Add a lining for a polished, no-raw-edges inside.
- . Box the bottom corners so the bag stands up on its own.
- . Use two cords for a satisfying both-sides pull close.
- . Applique a name or shape to turn it into a personalized gift.

## Supplies that make it easier (optional)

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Everything in this pattern works with basic stash supplies. If you want to upgrade, a bodkin, a quality cotton cord, and a clear ruler are the three tools beginners say help most. Budget roughly 10 to 25 dollars.

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