

How to Add a Pocket to Anything:

Slit Pocket with Optional Zipper

How many time have I said, “That pattern would be perfect if it just had a pocket!” Now you can add a pocket, with or without a zipper to any sewing pattern and many purchased items. This pocket tutorial is great for adding pockets to purses, tote bags, shirts and skirts. The technique I’m teaching here is called a bound slit or a faced slit.

This type of pocket is great for jackets, pants, skirts, tote bags, pouches, and purses. If you are making a purse (or anything else), pockets can go on the inside or the outside. Just think of where you need them. I highly recommend a zipper for outside pockets.



Pockets can be small or big. Just make sure you can reach inside. Small pockets that you can’t fit your hand in, should not be very deep. Unless of course they are designed for something specific, like an epi pen, or a pencil. Then they would need to be deep and narrow... but I digress. Let’s make some pockets. Because pockets are amazing!

Prefer a video? Find it here: <https://youtu.be/Iyxp-Ib4yI4>

Sometime I find generic instructions to hard to follow. So, for these instructions I have use real number to make a nice size pocket in the “Infinity Tie Strap Tote Bag” available here: You can use these instructions to make a pocket any size, so here is a way to generalize it.



Design your Pocket

Figure out where you want the pocket on your project. Do you want it centered? (You can easily center a pocket by folding a pattern piece in half and then ironing the crease.) At a fun angle? Big or small? (Make sure your hand can fit inside)

Mark a line on the right side of the fabric. Measure this line to determine pocket size and zipper length. You can always shorten a zipper, so get a longer one than you need.



Supplies

- Main fabric: What ever your are adding the pocket to
- The Pocket Bag Fabric: I suggest light colored so that it is easy to see inside or fun surprise fabric. Cut Width - Pocket opening plus 3 to 4". Cut Length - Twice as long as you want to pocket depth to be, as it will be folded up (in half) to create the pocket, plus 3" to 4" because it has to go above the opening as well.
- Interfacing: A scrap of any mid to light weight interfacing. 2" or 3" tall by the width of your pocket plus a bit, 1" to 2".
- Optional Zipper – longer than the opening

Do I really need Interfacing? Yes and No. It is always, best to add some, but let's talk about why you might or might not need it. First, I should mention why we use interfacing. Interfacing changes the stiffness/hand of a fabric and reinforces it. Purses are a great example of the need to stiffen fabrics. Most people like their purse to hold its shape, and using the right interfacing makes it possible to use whatever fabric you want on the outside. Reinforcement is needed in places that will be pulled on a lot (pockets) or will have something heavy attached (buttons or zipper) need that extra strength.

- **Knit fabric:** MUST use interfacing no matter what. They make knit interfacing, make sure to watch the direction of the stretch when applying it. It should match the fabric stretch direction. Non-strech interfacing can be used instead.
- **Zipper pocket:** Ok without unless your fabric is light weight.
- **No zipper:** Need interfacing unless 1 or both fabrics are stiff. Like canvas or vinyl.
- **Thin fabric:** Must Use Interfacing
- **Thick fabric:** No interfacing needed. Such as Canvas or Vinyl.

But what if I don't have interfacing on hand?

You don't need anything special, interfacing can just be regular fabric. You can use scrap fabric. I like to just use the leftovers "cabbage" from my project. When directions say to fuse the interfacing in place, you can generally just sew it into place. This is not always true, so think about where that sewing line will be in the end. In this project though, just sew it down onto the pocket, or pin it in place.

Pocket Opening Guide - 6.5" x .5"



Sewing Basics: How to Pivot

To sew the slit, you need to know how to Pivot when sewing.

Sew to the corner and stop with the needle down at that corner point. It's ok to stop a few stitches before it and then turn the wheel on your machine to take the last few stitches. Now lift your presser foot and then carefully rotate your project. Put the presser foot back down and then continue sewing.

In order to make this tutorial as clear as possible, I've used real number. Make this pocket ANY size you want!

- Finished Pocket: 6.5" wide by 4-5" deep
- Cut Pocket Bag: 8" wide x 13.5" tall
- Interfacing: 2" tall x 7.5" wide
- Zipper: 7" or longer

Instructions for Optional Slit Pocket (Zipper Optional)

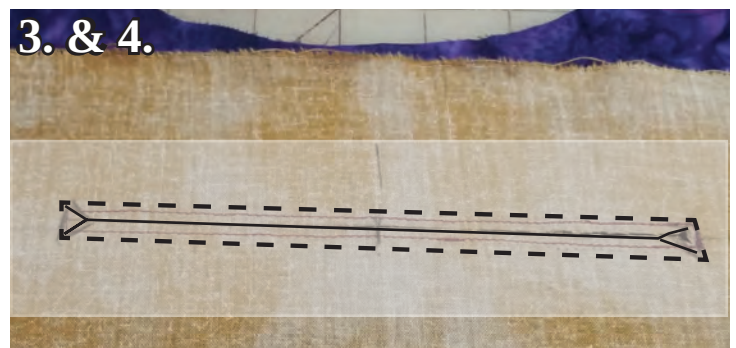
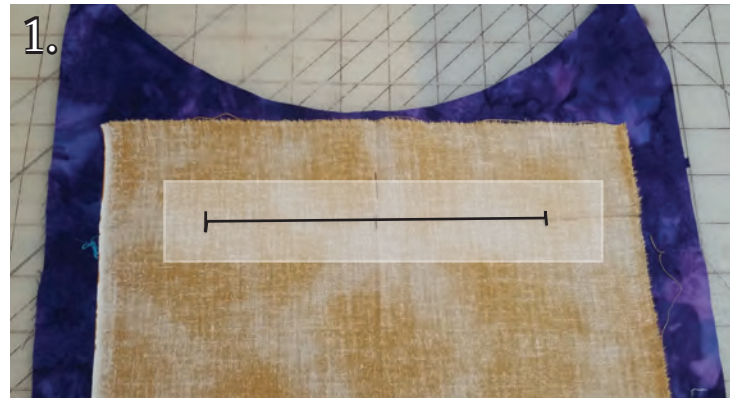
You can put the pocket anywhere you want. Inside or outside. I highly recommend a zipper for outside pockets.

Cut Pocket and Interfacing

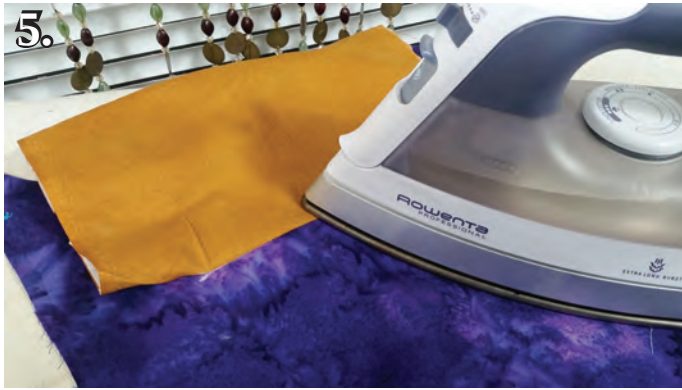
1. Cut pocket: 8" wide x 13.5" tall. I like to use contrasting or light colored fabric.
2. Optional Cut Interfacing: 2" tall x 7.5" wide.
3. On wrong-side of pocket, align interfacing about 2" down from the top and center it, then iron it on.

Mark, Sew, and Cut Slit

1. Mark the pocket slit on wrong side of pocket/ interfacing. Draw a rectangle 6.5"x5" or trace the provided guide. (top image)
2. Place pocket on top of a Body piece with right-sides together. Place where you want. Pin into place or use temporary spray adhesive.
 - It may help to fold down the top to the pocket line, so you can see to align it. Or placing pins through the ends.
3. Sew the rectangle on the line. (dashed here) When sewing each end, shorten stitch length to 1 or 1.5. When sewing the long edges, return stitch length to normal (2.5).
4. Cut a slit along the center line of the rectangle and then at angles into each corner. Cut very close to stitching, but NOT through it. (solid line)



5. Iron the pocket toward the slit on all sides of the rectangle. I know this seems crazy, but it really helps.

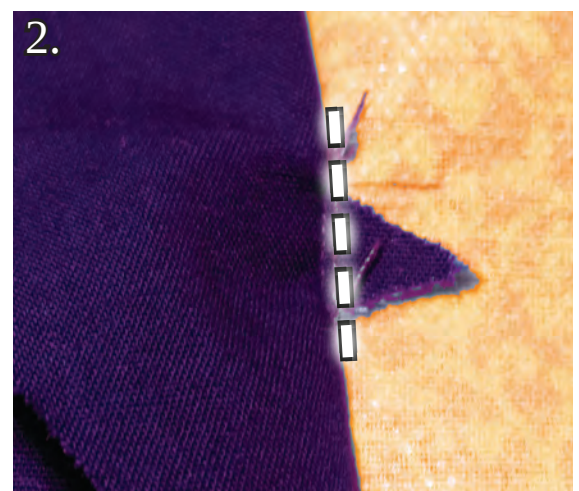


6. Flip pocket to the inside
7. Iron flat. None of the pocket fabric should show on the front.
 - If there is puckering at the corners, you may need to cut a little further into the corner.



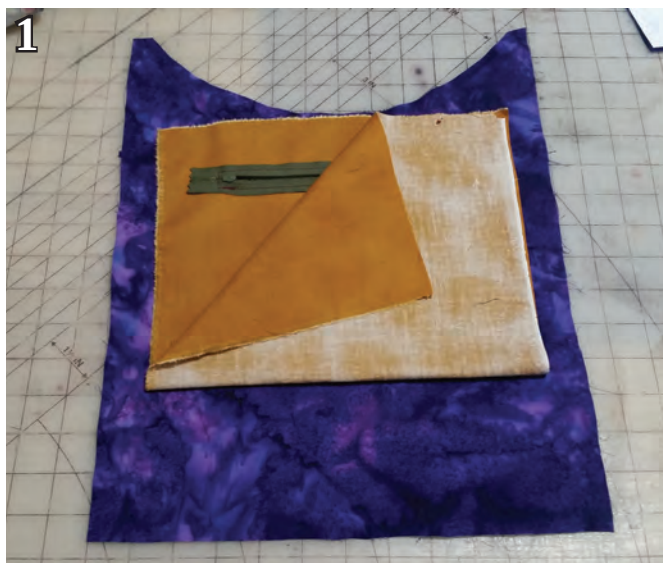
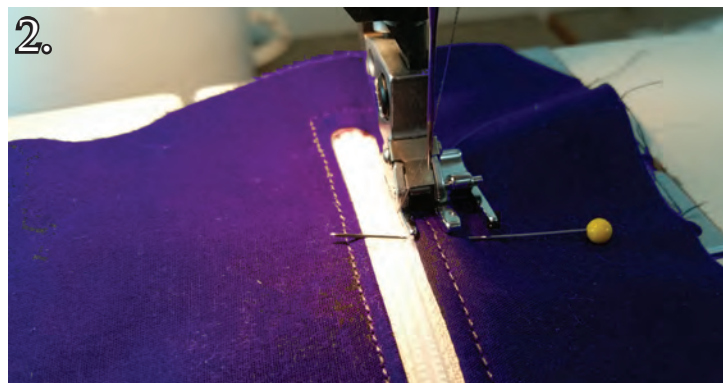
Secure the Facing Triangle Ends

1. With the Body Piece right-side up, turn back the Body fabric at the end of the slit. You will see a triangle of fabric at the end of the slit.
2. Sew as close as possible to the base of the triangle at the short end of the rectangular slit. You will be sewing the triangle to the pocket fabric.
3. Repeat: Sew down this triangle on the other end as well.



Add Optional Zipper & Top Stitch

1. If you are adding a zipper, place your zipper behind the slit. Place the center of the zipper in the center of the slit. Hold zipper in place with pins, temporary adhesive, or Wonder Tape.
 - Make sure that the metal zipper end stops are in a location that you will not hit when you sew.
 - Zippers that are too long can be cut to length after sewing across the teeth, making a new stop.
2. Top-stitch around the slit securing the zipper.



Create the Pocket

1. Fold bottom of pocket up to meet the top.
2. Sew along the sides and the top to close the pocket.

Your pocket is done!



The Fabric
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