
Sew a Sleeping Bag with Annabel Wrigley

Chapter 1 - Sleeping Bag

Overview

(upbeat music) - I'm Annabel, I'm an author, designer, and owner of Little Pincushion Studio in Virginia. And I teach lots of kids how to sew every single day. Now, if you're like me, you might have a daughter who loves sleepovers. My daughter is at a sleepover pretty much every weekend. I'm gonna show you how to take a duvet cover that you just find at the store, we're gonna cut it into two pieces, we're gonna be sewing it together, making ties, and then we're gonna put everything all together to make your own custom sleeping bag. (upbeat music)

Materials

- I designed this project using a twin size duvet cover because it's actually a lot more economical than using big pieces of fabric that you buy from the store. So the other materials that we'll need, apart from that duvet cover, are three quarters of a yard of a coordinating quilting cotton. You'll need some pins, a marking pen or a pencil, some sewing thread in a coordinating color that works, a pair of sharp scissors, a tape measure, a ruler. We're also gonna need twin size quilt bedding, I'm using just a nice, thinner cotton bedding. You'll also need an iron and an ironing surface and a sewing machine.

Cut Strips

- The very first step for making our sleeping bag is to make the ties that we need to tie it together on the sides. So, I have taken three quarters of a yard of a coordinating quilting cotton and I've cut it into five inch strips. Each strip is gonna be five inches wide times the entire length of the fabric. So, salvage to salvage long. So, I've gone ahead and cut out five stripes just like that. I'm gonna show you how to take this strip and make it into a tie for the sleeping bag and the first step we wanna do is to iron it into position. So, I have my strip, just like this, and I have the right side facing down, and I'm going to fold the entire strip in half along its length, and then press it with the iron. Then I'm gonna open the entire strip out again and you'll see that we have this crease down the middle, so I wanna fold the edges in to meet that crease. I'm gonna fold it in and then iron. The crease creates a really visible center point on the strip and it really helps with lining everything up. So, now that we've done that side, I'm gonna go ahead and fold this side in, just like this. So, now the last thing we wanna do to prepare it for sewing is to fold the entire strip in half and you'll see that this is enclosing this raw edge. Before I take it over to the sewing machine, there's a couple of things that I wanna take care of and one is cutting off the salvage from the end here, just like this. And I'll just cut a little bit of that edge off here. We're not gonna over-pin it, but we are gonna put a few pins in there. This crease is gonna hold everything together anyway, but, just to be sure, I just put a few pins along that open side. We're gonna be stitching along this edge, that's the open edge, and we're going to be sewing quite close to the edge of the fabric and not the usual edge of the presser foot on the edge of the fabric. But I like to set up kind of a line to follow, so, in this case, we're gonna sew with the inner edge of the presser foot running along the edge of the fabric. So, I'm just going to put it into position and we're just doing a regular straight stitch. As always, I always like to start an end with a backstitch. I'm gonna do that. Then we're just gonna sew down the entire length, keeping that edge of the fabric on the inner edge of the presser foot. Now, when we get to

the end, I'm going to lift the presser foot and just turn to sew across the end. Then we're gonna go up the other side. Then just across the bottom again and backstitching. Make five strips just the way I showed you and then those strips are going to be folded in half, just like this, and then cut it right along that fold. This is gonna give us 10 strips and we're gonna be using two per tie. And don't worry too much about this raw edge that's left here unsewn, because those will be sewn into your sleeping bag.

Attach Ties

- When you're working with a duvet cover or a big piece of fabric like this, I always find it very overwhelming trying to cut it when it's all laid out on a surface. So, what I do is I usually fold it in half, and, in this case, I've folded it in half lengthwise and then I folded it in half widthwise, and I've created this rectangle. I just went ahead and ironed it on this table, just to make sure that my edges are all lined up, and this is what I'm gonna be working with. A good thing to remember is, when you're cutting it from this folded state, that you don't cut the folded ends, and, you'll see, right here are the folded ends. You don't have to worry too much about finished measurements, although it is going to end up being around 75 by 60-ish, but it's different with every duvet cover. But what I do, just to get it ready, is I'm gonna take off a couple of inches from each side, and I'm gonna be cutting off this seamed edge right here. You wanna keep the edge of the ruler on the edge of the fold and that's gonna help us keep our lines straight. So, I'm gonna start by just drawing a line here and whenever I'm doing a straight line I never take the ruler all the way up here. I usually pick it up from about halfway and follow the line, 'cause I wanna make sure my line is really straight. At the end here, this is where there are little snaps, so I'm gonna take this in a little bit further than two inches. I'm lining this edge up with the pencil line that I just drew. Now, just remember, when you're cutting, that you're only gonna be cutting the seamed edges. You're not gonna be cutting on any of the folded edges. So, these are off-limits. You can just go ahead and cut on the line. Go nice and slowly, 'cause you're cutting through a few layers of fabric. When you're finished cutting, you're gonna be left with two pieces of fabric that are both the exact same size. You're gonna set one of your duvet cover pieces aside and work with the ties on just one of the pieces. And you'll see, I have in front of me with the long side up and down, because we're going to be attaching the ties to both of the long edges of the duvet cover. We're gonna start pinning our ties from the bottom up. We're gonna be measuring from the bottom of my print and my print is an all over print, so make sure, if you're working with a directional print, that you start at the bottom. I've measured up 24 inches, 'cause that's how long my ruler is. You might wanna mark it or you could put a little pin there so that you know exactly the spot, but I'm going to pin with my unsewn end of the tie facing inwards. Then I'm gonna measure nine inches from the top of this tie and that's gonna be the position for the bottom of the next tie. You're gonna continue adding ties until you have five ties on one side and then you're gonna go over and do the exact same thing on the other side, making sure that you're measuring up from the bottom.

Bag Construction

- Because we're working with really large pieces of fabric, I just wanna show you what I have laid out in front of me, so that you can prepare to work on your sleeping bag. I have the front piece of the sleeping bag that I already went ahead and pinned the ties onto and then I have that with right sides facing with the back piece of the sleeping bag that we cut in the beginning, and then I also cut a piece of quilt batting, and this is just a cotton quilt batting, to the exact same size as those

other two pieces. Now, I'm using one piece of quilt batting for my sleeping bag, because I don't want it to be too thick, but, if you want to, you could double that up if you want a slightly thicker sleeping bag. So, this is called right sides together. When you're working with really big pieces of fabric like this, it can be a little bit daunting wondering how you're gonna pin this whole thing, so sometimes I like to work on the floor, or if you have a large dining table, you could work on there. I'm placing pins about every two or three inches around all four sides of this big rectangle. Once all your pinning is done and you've finished all four sides of the sleeping bag, we wanna mark an area at the bottom where we're gonna pull the whole thing right way out after we have sewn it. You can just pick somewhere fairly central centered on the bottom of the sleeping bag panel, and just use a marking pen or a pencil to just mark a hole, it's got to be big enough for you to pull the whole thing through, so maybe eight inches would do it. But you can just eyeball it. So, we're gonna remember that this is the no-sew area. I'm going to be starting at one side of that area that I'm at. So, I'm gonna be working with the edge of the presser foot on the edge of the fabric. Then we're just going to sew all the way around all four sides. You don't really need to backstitch at the start if you don't want to. If you're used to doing that, you can, but we're just gonna be pulling it right side out, so you don't really need to. When you're sewing big fabrics like this, you wanna make sure that the bulk of the fabric is coming off to the open side and not all bunched up under the arm of the sewing machine. That makes things really difficult. So, I'm coming to the corner and, when I get close, I wanna stop, and I'm stopping with my needle down, and if your sewing machine doesn't do that, it's a good idea to stop and put your needle down, and then you're gonna lift the presser foot and turn to go around the corner. You'll see I have a bit of overhang of my batting. We can trim that off later. I just want you to follow the edge of the fabric. I always like to remove the pins as I go. There's nothing worse than a broken needle. So, I'm coming up to the spot with the tie and you'll see the pin is on the inside of the fabric, holding that tie in place, so we're gonna go super slow over there, so that we don't break the needle. Then we can just continue. Just make sure that you go really slow over each tie position. We're coming up to the beginning of where we marked for the hole for the no-sew area. And that's where we're gonna stop. Remember, if you wanna backstitch, you can. I'm not going to. I've a few little bits that are still overhanging now that I've finished sewing it, so I'm just gonna trim them off, and that's generally just a little bit of the batting. So, as you go around trimming, you can also be cutting those corners as you go. I'm gonna reach in and pull out these pins that are still inside holding the ties in place. Use this hole to reach in and pull the entire sleeping bag panel right way out. Be kind of gentle. Don't try and pull the whole thing out at the same time. Then you're gonna put your hands in and we just push out all those corners. Now that it's turned right way out, we need to close this opening that we have, so I'm just folding in the edges, and I'm just gonna put a few pins in there. Go really close to the edge.

Finish

- After I finished sewing up the no sew zone, it's time to fold the entire panel in half so that the ties from each side meet up because that's where we're gonna be tying it when we're done. Now, I've gone ahead and I've pinned the bottom and the side just to create, sort of, a bottom for the sleeping bag. So I've pinned it right across the bottom, and then I've pinned up to about one inch below the first tie. And we're gonna be sewing here with a one inch seam allowance. And you'll see that on this plate here, on the sewing machine, that that one inch is really well marked. So we're running the edge of our fabric along that line. Remember, we're gonna start with a back stitch and end with a back stitch. (sewing machine running) Go nice and slow here because we're going through quite a

lot of layers of fabric. (sewing machine running) We're at the corner so needle down, lift and turn. Let's get that out of the way. (sewing machine running) I went ahead and trimmed all of my threads, and now I can turn this right way out. But if you like it with this one inch seam allowance, you can keep it that way because, you'll see, there's no raw edges but I'm gonna go ahead and turn mine right way out. And then all that's left to do it tie the ties. And we're all done. This simple, sweet, and super easy sleeping bag is perfect for hot summer nights, or you can add a little bit more bedding and make it perfect for the winter nights as well. I love that we've made it out of the same fabric as Ruby's duvet at home so she's never gonna get homesick at those sleepovers.