# **Sew a Yoga Mat Bag** with Ashley Nickels

**Chapter 1 - Introduction**
Overview
Hi, I'm Ashley Nickels. I'm a sewer and a quilter. And one of my favorite things to do is design bags. And I designed this yoga mat bag basically so I could use my own fabrics. It's very stylish and it is very functional. To make this bag, I'm going to show you how to cut out all of the pieces. I'm going to show you how to install the handles and how to install the zipper. So if you're intimidated by zippers, don't worry. This is going to be a great project for you. And there are a lot of opportunities to play with your own color choices with this project.

**Chapter 2 - Materials**
Materials
- To make this bag, you're going to need a few basic sewing supplies. First of all, you're gonna need a heavier weight fabric. I've chosen canvas but upholstery weight fabric works well also. Two different colors, one for the lining, and one for the exterior. A half a yard of each fabric. You're also gonna need some cotton belting material, a 32 inch strip for the inside strap, and two 25 inch handle straps. You're gonna need some pins, a rotary cutter and a mat, a marking pencil or chalk works fine as well, fabric scissors, two one inch D rings, some thread, I like to use cotton thread, 100 percent cotton thread but any thread will do, and a seven inch zipper. And I've chosen a zipper that is pink to match my exterior fabric. And for the template, which you'll find on the pdf, you'll need a pair of paper scissors, to cut that out. You're also gonna need an iron and an ironing surface. And a sewing machine with a zipper foot.

**Chapter 3 - Make Yoga Mat Bag**
Cut out fabric
- I'm gonna show you how to cut out the fabric for the bag starting with the exterior fabric. Take your pattern piece and your half-yard cut of fabric. Now this half-yard is gonna be exactly perfect for the exterior, and for the pocket on the inside. So you're gonna wanna be very careful how you allocate this material. And I'm gonna show you how I do that. If you were to take your fabric and your template and bring the pattern piece right down to the fold. You're gonna be just a little short to cut out the pocket as well. So what I'm gonna do, I'm just gonna adjust the fold slightly. I'm just gonna bring it down a little bit more. Kinda like this. And then that's where you make sure it's flat. That's where you're gonna stick your pattern piece. Which will leave us plenty on this bottom side to cut out the pocket with. The next thing you're gonna do is your gonna pin it down. Be careful, sometimes it's a little awkward when you're pinning paper to fabric. So you just kinda wanna make sure that everything stays pretty flat. And you're gonna have to kinda get underneath there. That's why the make pattern material usually out of that really light weight stuff. And that should be pretty well pinned down. Then you're gonna go ahead and cut out your fabric making sure you're cutting through both pieces of fabric. And I'm gonna cut right along the edge of my pattern piece. Now your exterior fabric is all cut out. You're gonna do the exact same thing and cut out your interior fabric making sure that you cut on the fold. I have my pieces already cut out. This is the interior fabric. This is the exterior fabric that I just cut out. And using the extra from that exterior fabric, we cut out a 9x16 inch rectangle for the pocket. And these are all of the pattern pieces that you'll need

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to make this yoga mat bag.

Assemble zipper pocket
- The first thing we're going to do is put our pocket together. So, you're going to take your piece of interior fabric, right side up, and you're going to place your 9 by 16 inch rectangle right side down and you're going to know it's in the center, because these corners here, are going to line up right at the edge. The next thing I'm going to do is, I'm going to draw a rectangle that is seven and three quarter inches long and about a half inch deep. I'm going to place my ruler down and I'm going to line up this edge about an inch and a half from the top of this pocket fabric. And I'm going to draw a horizontal line, just from edge to edge. And then I'm going to bring my ruler down like I said, it's about a half an inch, but I'm going to go a little shorter and I'm going to draw another line. And then I need my rectangle to be about seven and three quarter inches long. And this is not an exact science, but I'm going to draw my line here, and another line here. Now that you've got your rectangle on there, you're gonna pin. And I'm going to place a few pins up at the top, maybe along the side here, and then in this area. You don't need to worry about pinning the whole thing down. The first thing we're going to sew is the rectangle. You're going to use your standard presser foot and an average stitch length. And you're going to sew all the way around the rectangle. It doesn't really matter where you start on the rectangle, I'll just start somewhere like around here. (sewing machine hum) Pivoting with my needle down. Sometimes this little fabric will get bunched up, you just gotta clump it together. One more pivot, and now we're back to the first line. And when I get back to where I started, I'll do a back stitch. And you're done. So here's what we just did, The next thing you're going to do is cut through both layers of fabric on the inside of the rectangle. And if it makes you nervous, you can draw a line. I'm not going to do that, but if you would like to you can. So I'm going to cut, and you do that old trick where you snip through. K. And you're going to cut just right through the middle. When we get close to the edge, be careful cause we're going to stop and we're actually going to create what ends up being like a triangle. And you're going to get as close as you can to the corner, without snipping the thread. You're going to do the same thing here. And you get as close as you can to the corner, see how that creates kinda like a triangle. And you're going to do the same thing on the other side of the rectangle. Take out the pins, and the fun part is pulling this material all the way through, including this top. Our next step is to iron the rectangle flat. If you can see it kinda bunches here, so we're just going to flatten it out. First with our fingers, then we're going to take our iron and give it a good press. And that's good to go. And now we're ready to put our zipper in. And it just slides right in here, and look at that. Perfectly fits inside our little window. Careful to get that little tab there. And we're going to line it up, look how nicely it lines up right there, and we're going to pin it inside this little opening. Now I'm on my ironing board, so I'm going to make sure I don't pin the whole thing there. And I'm going to pin on this side on the right side, because I need to sew on this side when I attach this zipper. You wanna make sure your pins are on the side that you're sewing on. Let's do one more. And I think we're all set. We're ready to sew this zipper in. I'm going to bring my material over, and I've changed to a zipper foot on my machine. I've also changed my needle placement as you can see my zipper foot, I can't sew in the middle, so I had to move it over. You may or may not have to move your needle position on your machine. Just check your manual to be sure. I'm going to start again towards this side of my zipper, and again I'm going to backstitch at the end, so I'm just going to get started here. I've started sewing right up at the end of the blue fabric, and you're just going to use that as your guide the whole way around. (slow sewing machine humming) And go slow if your nervous, I am. And you're

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going to pivot at your corner with your needle down. Careful not to go to fast so you don't miss your corner. I'm going to pivot again. And again this extra fabric may bunch a little, so you just gotta roll it up a little. Make sure you move your pins, so you don't sew along a pin; that would not be good. And keep going here along this bottom edge. I'm using my fingers to hold the fabric in place, when I don't have a pin. Stopping occasionally to take a breathe. And then flatten the fabric with my finger, just to make sure it won't bunch. And see why I need to use a zipper foot? Because we're coming so close to the zipper pull that if you had your normal presser foot on, it would distort the whole thing. So close right there you can see. And again I'm going to pivot with my needle down at the corner. Make sure this stays flat. And then our last pivot here. And you can see some of that interior pocket fabric showing through, but I kinda like it, because my zipper is also pink. So it doesn't necessarily bother me that you can see that. And it might be kinda a cool contrast if your zipper is a different color from your fabric. I'm going to just make sure my fingers are helping the fabric stay flat. And as I get to the end here, I'm going to do another backstitch. And I'm done! I just wanted to point out that I used hot pink on this seam here. And if that's not your personal preference, feel free to use a thread that won't show up as much, so a thread that would match the interior fabric. There's one more thing you have to do to finish your pocket, and that's to sew the inside pocket together. What I'm going to do, is fold the fabric directly in half. And I'm going to put some pins in, because I just want to make sure it's secure while I'm sewing it together. And what's cool is that you only need to sew three of the four sides, because you've got a fold on one side. I'm going to start sewing at the bottom here and I've switched back to my standard presser foot. And I'm sewing along the presser foot edge. I'm going to start off with a backstitch. Removing pins as I go. And be very careful to not let your large piece of fabric get caught up underneath. And I'm just sewing all around the periphery of this pocket. Just a nice straight stick along the edge. And I'm gonna pivot with the needle down, and then this is also a time when you need to make sure that you tuck this fabric underneath. And I'm going to keep going. And I've got one more edge, pivot with my needle down. Tuck the fabric under, make sure everything's out of the way. (rapid sewing machine humming) and we're going to end with a backstitch. Now you're pocket is all done, and we're ready to construct the body of the bag.

Assemble bag

- To construct the body of the bag you're gonna take your two main pieces and put them right sides together and make sure they're lined up. At this point we're gonna attach the handles. In order to pin the handle in place, you're gonna take back your two main pieces and making sure that your belt is only folded once and not looped or twisted, just gonna double check that, we're gonna just line it up a little bit from the edge here and we're gonna make sure that the same amount of the belt is sticking out on both sides. If you'd like to use a ruler to measure at that point, that's up to you, I like to just use my eye judgment to see that they're both the same length. I'm gonna put a pin down here just to secure it on both sides making sure that your belt is straight. If you want, you can also pin it here, just so it doesn't move. I'll do that. And then, you're gonna put the top piece back, making sure it's all flat and here's where you're gonna want to put another pin through all three layers. Both layers of fabric and the belt. Same on the other side. Now you're going to pin the other handle on the other end just as I showed you, which I've already done here. At that point you're ready to start pinning all around the edge of the bag. Now I'm gonna sew all the way around the edge, but I'm gonna make sure that I leave a gap, I would say maybe about four or five inches. I'm going to start sewing here, I'm gonna go all the way around, and then I'm gonna stop, maybe

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around here, leaving a gap of about four to five inches. Again, using my standard presser foot. I'm using a quarter inch foot for this, but it really doesn't matter if you have a 3/8 inch foot the result will be the same. I'm gonna begin with a backstitch so it's nice and secure and now I'm just gonna go forward, pulling the pins out as I go following the edge of the presser foot for a guide pivoting with my needle down at this corner. now when I get here to this corner where you see my handle is sticking out I'm gonna do the same as I did before, which is pivot with my needle down, but when I cross over the handle, I'm gonna back stitch over the whole handle just to give it a little bit more security. So I'm gonna go over it, and now I'm gonna back stitch over the whole width of the belt and then go back again. And then keep going. Same thing here, I'm approaching my handle. I'm going to sew over it, and then I'm gonna backstitch over the whole thing. And then I'm gonna pivot with my needle down on the corner. You're gonna keep sewing along the edge until you get to about five inches from where you started. Then I'm gonna make sure to backstitch, just like I started with a backstitch. Alright, and now I'm done. So now, we get to turn the entire bag to the right side. I'm gonna stick my hand in here and I'm just gonna start pulling the bag out. And you still have a few pins, remember when we pinned the handle, so be careful they don't get caught. And I'm gonna take these pins out as I go. Wow, it's starting to come together. With your hands, you're gonna push the corners out. Same thing over here, until they're all done. Now we're going to press all of these seams. Where your opening was, you're gonna wanna make sure that you hide that seam before you press it. Pressing it will really help blend it but I sometimes like to use a pin, depending on how fussy the fabric is. Just one pin should help before you press it. I'm gonna start here with the opening part because that's kind of the fussiest. But you can see how pressing it down kind of makes the whole thing disappear. It looks exactly like there was nothing there. You're gonna continue pressing the entire edge of the bag. Now I'm gonna topstitch the entire edge, starting with this edge with the pin on it, which is to say, the edge where the opening is, so that we can secure that first. I like to start at the top here, and I'm gonna stitch right along the edge. So I'm not following the presser foot this time. And I'm not gonna backstitch, which I'll show you why at the end. I'm just following that edge, and you might want to double check as you get close to this opening, take the pin out, and just make sure that everything is in place. But it should be if we pressed it. Now I'm gonna pivot with my needle down, making sure that the bulk of the bag doesn't get caught. This topstitch helps everything lay down nicely. I'm almost to the end here, you see where I started there, and I'm gonna go all the way up to that point, and then I'm gonna stop and I'm gonna show you how to pull your threads from the top to the back. One of them already came through. Sometimes it's helpful to use a pin to pull that through, and now all four threads are in the back. And I'm just gonna knot them. Take two and two, and knot them together. Some people will snip them, and some people will use a hand sewing needle to thread them back through. But I'm just gonna snip them. Our bag is almost completely constructed. We just have one more step.

Finish bag

- Our last step is to finish the yoga mat strap on the inside. The first thing I'm gonna do I've taken a little scrap of my pink fabric and I've cut it into a triangle. And I'm gonna use this to finish this edge of that 32 inch piece of cotton belting that we already had cut out. The bottom of my triangle is about three inches wide. And how I'm gonna do this, I'm actually gonna fold the edges of this triangle over the belt. And same thing at the top. I'm gonna fold it down. And I'm gonna pin it. Just so it stays there. And then I'm gonna take it over to the machine and sew it down. I'm gonna start in one of the corners. Remember there's a lot of layers here so you might have to push it through a

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little bit. Take the pin out. And then when I get to this corner I'm gonna pivot. And I'm actually gonna make it a little bit decorative. You'll see how I'm gonna do this. I'm gonna go along this edge. I'm gonna turn it again. I'm gonna go along here. And I'm gonna actually spiral towards the center now. Just to secure it even more. (sewing machine humming) So I'm actually making a square spiral here. And you can create a pattern that you like too. I kind of like this way. And then I can just stop right there. See how that creates kind of a cool pattern. With the other side of the strap, you're gonna attach your D-rings. You're gonna take them. It's really simple. Super simple. You put them in there. And then you're gonna fold a little bit of the belt over. Not a whole lot, but enough so that you can actually sew it down. And I'm not even sure I'm gonna pin it here. I'm just gonna take it over to the machine and sew it down. I'm gonna actually backstitch a few times across the length, or excuse me, the width of the whole belt. Just to secure it down. And I like to end where I started just because it's easier to snip the threads. So now we're all done. I used the hot pink thread on this and if you don't like that contrasting color, you're more than welcome to use a thread that matches your belting color if you would like it to blend in. The last thing I'm gonna do is attach the strap to the bag. You're gonna find the middle of your bag. You wanna make sure it's on the absolute bottom of your bag and I'm just gonna mark that with a pin. Just so I know. And when I've pinned down the strap, you're gonna make sure to take special care that you're leaving less strap on this D-ring side and more strap on the side that you've finished with the piece of fabric. The D-ring side of that strap should be approximately 10 inches from the center where you pinned. This looks about good. And I'm gonna just pin it down, because then I'm gonna sew it at the machine. Right where I've placed the pin, I'm going to secure this handy dandy little strap. And I'm gonna use a similar spiral pattern that I used on the end of that strap. (sewing machine humming) I think that it secures it down and it also looks kinda cool. I'm just gonna approximate my square. And just keep spiraling it in to the center. It can make you kinda dizzy. Alright and then I'll stop right there. Our yoga mat bag is all finished. It looks so great. Let's check out our cool pocket, too. I mean, look at this. With our fancy lining. Isn't that cool? Fit all your keys and your wallet in there. Now we have a place to put our yoga mat. And how this works is you'll roll up your yoga mat and you'll place it right here. And then you'll take your long end of the strap, you'll loop it through both D-rings. And then you'll bring it back through over the first one and through the second one. And then you'll pull. You might need to warm it up. There it goes. And then you'll secure it around your yoga mat. This is a really easy way to use your own style to make a yoga bag. And it will look great.

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