

Fun with Fabric: Beginner's Sewing Adventure!

Materials Needed:

- Fabric scraps (cotton or felt work well, about 12x6 inches)
- Hand sewing needle
- Thread (all-purpose, contrasting color is helpful for learning)
- Scissors (fabric scissors preferred)
- Pins
- Ruler or measuring tape
- Safety pin or chopstick
- Ribbon or cord (about 24 inches)
- Iron and ironing board (optional, but helpful for pressing seams)

Introduction (10 minutes)

Welcome to the wonderful world of sewing! Sewing is a fantastic practical skill that lets you create, repair, and customize fabric items. It's like building with soft materials! Today, we'll start with the basics of hand sewing and make a cool little drawstring pouch to hold treasures.

First, let's look at our tools. Identify each tool from the materials list. What do you think each one is used for? (Discuss: Needle for stitching, thread is the 'line', scissors for cutting fabric, pins hold fabric together, ruler measures, iron presses). Safety first! Needles and scissors are sharp, so always handle them carefully.

Learning to Stitch (20 minutes)

Threading the Needle: Cut a piece of thread about 18 inches long (about the length from your fingertips to your elbow). Carefully poke one end of the thread through the eye (the little hole) of the needle. Pull about 4-6 inches of thread through. Now, bring the two ends of the thread together and tie a knot. A simple double knot usually works. Trim any long tail near the knot. You're ready!

Practicing Stitches: Take a scrap piece of fabric.

- **Running Stitch:** Push the needle down through the fabric and then back up a short distance away. Continue this 'in and out' motion, trying to keep the stitches small and even. It looks like a dashed line. This is great for gathering fabric or temporary seams.
- **Backstitch:** This is a stronger stitch. Push the needle up from the back of the fabric. Make one small stitch forward. Push the needle up again a stitch-length *ahead* of the first stitch. Now, push the needle *back down* into the same hole where the first stitch ended. Continue this: up ahead, back down into the end of the previous stitch. It creates a solid line.

Practice both stitches until you feel comfortable.

Project Time: Drawstring Pouch! (45-60 minutes)

1. **Cut Fabric:** Cut one rectangle of fabric, 10 inches long and 5 inches wide.
2. **Prepare Top Edge:** Fold the top short edge down towards the wrong side (the less pretty side) of the fabric by 1/4 inch. Press with an iron if available. Fold it down again by 1/2 inch. Pin in place. This creates a channel for the drawstring.
3. **Sew Channel:** Using a backstitch or running stitch, sew close to the lower folded edge, securing the channel. Leave the ends open! Repeat for the other short edge.
4. **Sew Side Seams:** Fold the fabric rectangle in half lengthwise, with the right sides (pretty sides) facing each other. The sewn channels should match up at the top. Pin along the two long sides.
5. **Mark Seam Allowance:** Using your ruler, measure and mark a line 1/2 inch in from each long

raw edge. This is your sewing line, called the 'seam allowance'.

6. **Sew Sides:** Using a backstitch (for strength!), sew along your marked lines on both sides. Start sewing just **below** the channel you created, and stop at the bottom fold. Don't sew the channel closed!
7. **Turn Right Side Out:** Carefully turn the pouch right side out. Poke out the corners gently.
8. **Insert Drawstring:** Attach a safety pin to one end of your ribbon or cord. Thread the safety pin through one channel opening, all the way around, and out the same opening. Tie the ends of the ribbon/cord together. Repeat for the other side, starting and ending at the **other** channel opening. (Alternatively: use one longer ribbon, thread it through one channel and back through the other).
9. **Finish:** Pull the drawstrings to close your pouch!

Conclusion (5 minutes)

Great job! You've learned basic sewing skills and created your very own drawstring pouch. What did you enjoy most? What was challenging? Sewing takes practice, but you've made a fantastic start. Think about what else you could make or mend now!