

JackPack Sewing Instructions

Make a new backpack out of an old jacket? Sounds weird at first, but it turns out to be a really cool backpack.

youngCaritas Berlin came up with the idea. They're an organisation that regularly upcycles backpacks through their upcycling project [* Vergissmeinnicht *](#), supported by a group of dedicated 'upcyclists'. So if you come from Berlin and would like to join in, you should definitely stop by.

Firstly, you'll need to cut out templates the size of your backpack and cut two markers for the corners at the bottom (5cm from the corner) and mark the points where you want to attach the flap (2cm from the other markers). You'll need another template for the base of the bag, with the same width as your backpack. It will look a bit like the example template shown here:



Use the jacket fabric to cut out all of the pieces you'll need for the bag.

To do this, spread the garment out on a work surface and use a pair of scissors to make one side piece along the sleeve seam. Always check that the cut-out is big enough for the template.



If you have a piece of fabric with a ready-made pocket to hand, position the template carefully over it. Even if the pocket is sewn into the lining, you can use it by positioning the template accordingly.



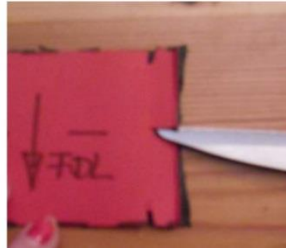
When the piece of fabric is cut out, place it flat on the work surface and draw the outline of the template with a piece of chalk. Please note that the outer fabric and the lining must overlap one another. Starting from the right-hand corner, make a couple of marks or snips 5 cm apart. Then, make another 2 cm above the marker on the right, where the flap will be positioned later.



You can use the back of the jacket for your second piece of fabric. Again, make the markings accordingly.



Next, you can cut out two pieces of fabric for the bit you will pull the string through. Mark a point right in the middle of the shorter side; this is where the piece will be folded later.



Iron about 0.5 cm of the shorter edges of the finished pieces of fabric, so that the open edges are not visible in the finished state. Then fold the pieces of fabric along the notch mark in the middle and iron this edge as well.



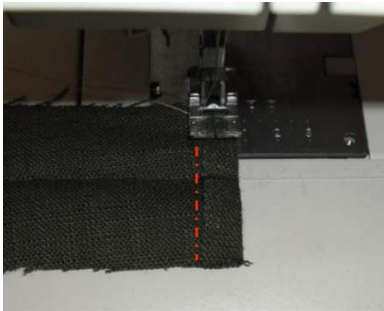
Finally, you now need two long pieces of fabric (loops), which you will later use to pull the bag's strings through. Belt buckles from old trousers are particularly well suited for this purpose. But you can also cut them from the rest of the jacket or use similar materials.



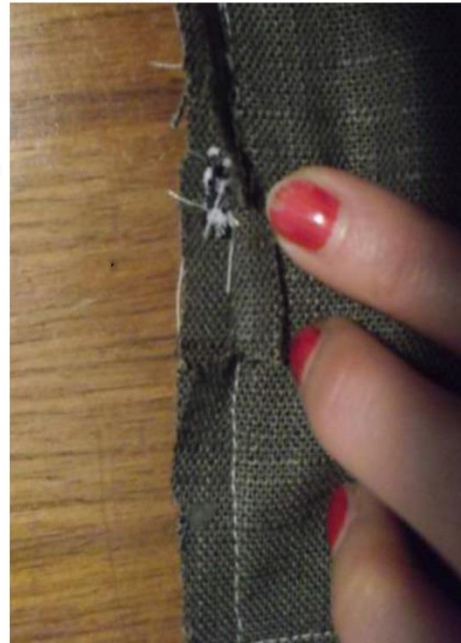
Now the sewing machine comes into play.

Take the pieces of fabric that you're going to use to thread the strings through and sew the pre-ironed side edges. Then fold the pieces of fabric along the centreline (open seams inward) and sew the open edges.

The two side openings stay open, allowing the straps to be threaded through them later.



Now take the two large pieces of fabric for the sides of the bag and sew the outer fabric and the lining, leaving a small gap on the three lower edges (where the opening of the bag lining and outer fabric will later be separated). The (belt) loop must also be attached at the same height as the upper marking.



Now the corners are sewn, creating a “base” for the bag. This is the trickiest part of making the backpack. If you are not yet well-versed in sewing machine know-how, you can always skip this step. You’ll still have a nice bag in the end, just a slightly simpler version.



If you’re already a dab hand at this, sew the corners as follows: Pin the seams of the side and base together to make pinch marks. Sew the whole thing at a right angle to the stitched seams. The excess fabric on the corners can be cut to 1 cm.



Die Ecken
werden mit
der Schere
gekürzt



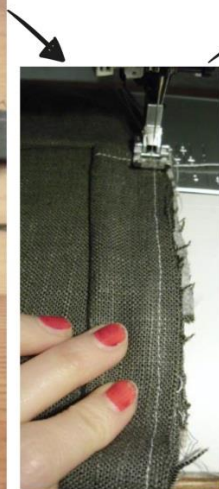
*The corners are truncated with scissors.

Now the bag can be put together. Place the two finished pieces of fabric together with the “nicer” sides facing each other (the lining is now on the outside) and sew all three edges, except the top.

Turn the bag inside out, so that the “nicer” sides are facing outwards, and sew the outer fabric to the lining at the opening. Take special care that the seams are sewn to exactly the same height as each other.



Now you'll attach the pieces of drawstring fabric you've already prepared, to the bag. Put them on the edges of the bag, as shown in the picture, and stitch them together. Finally, tidy any unsightly edges with an overlock, zig-zag, or other neat stitch. Afterwards, you can iron the edges down and the drawstring fabric upwards.





The bag is almost done now.

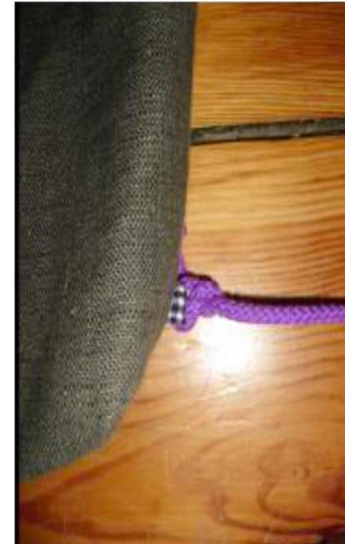
We just need the straps. Go get the string.

Attach the string to one of the loops and thread it through the rear opening of the drawstring fabric with the help of a safety pin, then through the front opening and out through the back.

Then knot the string on the other loop.



Depending on how tall you are, you may need to shorten the string again or use a longer one so that you can wear the backpack comfortably.



The backpack is just great – a very fashionable, hip, upcycled bag that is easy to make by yourself with very little effort.

This backpack was made by the youngCaritas Berlin project, [* Forget-me-not *](#). If you are interested in this product, but maybe don't have the time to make it yourself, then visit their shop in Prenzlauer Berg.

youngCaritas Berlin also offers an upcycling group there once a week. The current dates can be found on our blog under "Events".



Have fun getting crafty!