

Beginner-Friendly Drawstring Backpack Tutorial



Supplies:

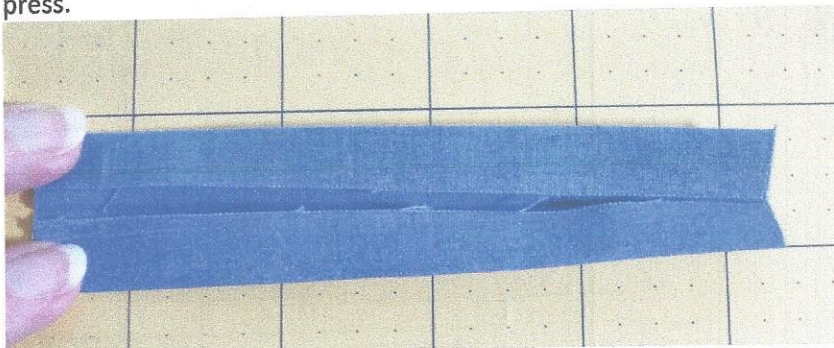
½ yard or 2 fat quarters for outside of bag
½ yard or 2 fat quarters for lining
2"x5" strip of coordinating fabric for loops

Coordinating thread

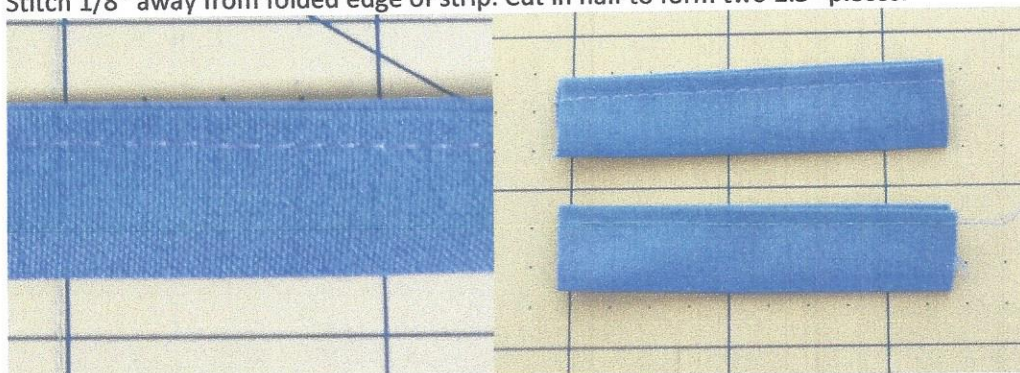
4 yards of paracord cut into two 2-yard pieces
Bodkin or Purple Thang for threading paracord

Instructions:

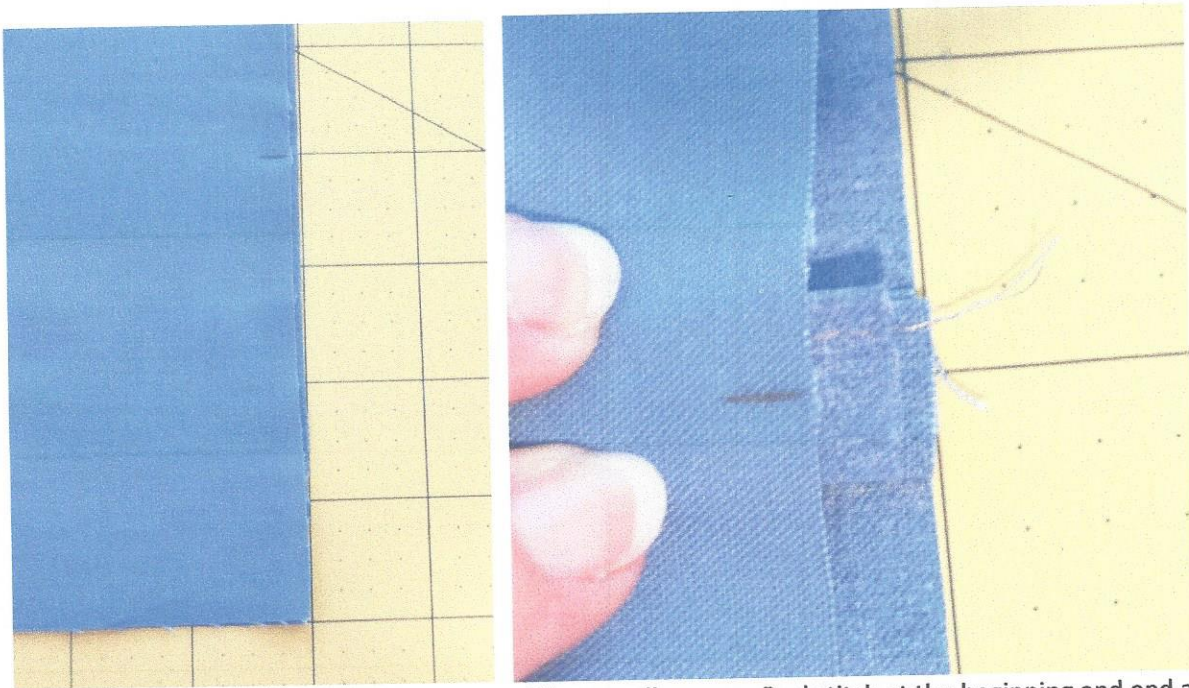
1. Cut 2 outside and 2 lining pieces each 17"x20".
2. Make side loops by folding the 2"x5" strip in half lengthwise. Press. Fold each edge to the middle crease and press.



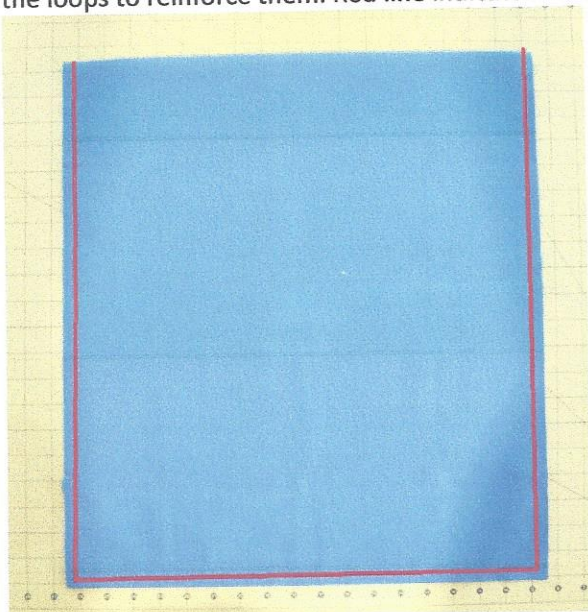
3. Stitch 1/8" away from folded edge of strip. Cut in half to form two 2.5" pieces.



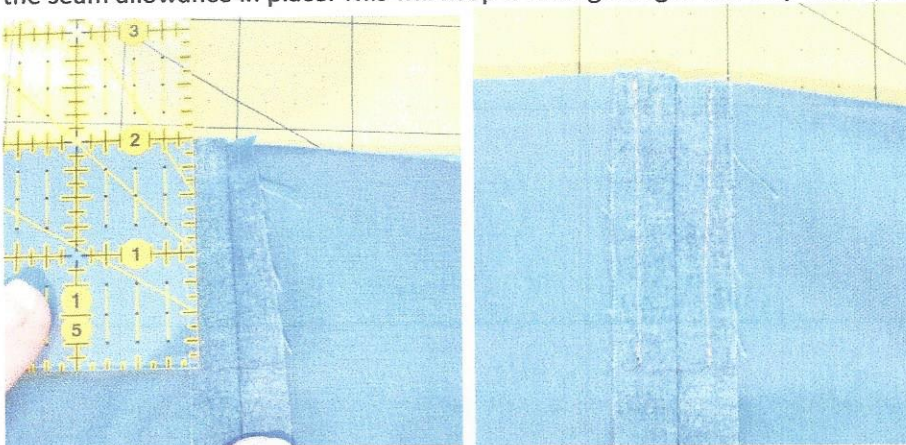
4. Place the two outside pieces of your backpack right sides together. Make a mark on the wrong side of the fabric 4" up from the bottom on each side. Fold the 2.5" loop piece you made in half. Align the raw edges of the loop with the raw edges of the fabric where you marked. Clip or pin in place.



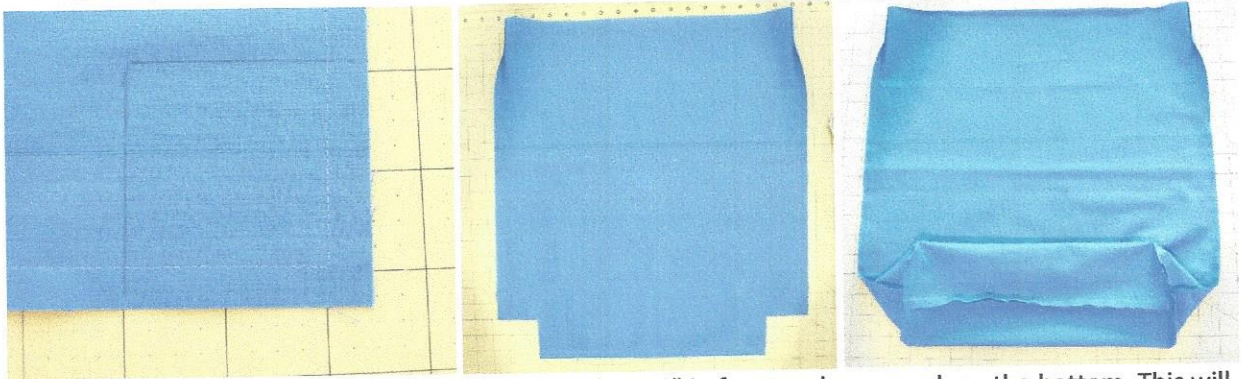
5. Sew along three sides of the outside using a $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance. Backstitch at the beginning and end and over the loops to reinforce them. Red line indicates seams in the photo below.



6. Open the side seams at the top of the bag. Mark 2" from top. Stitch $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the seamline to hold each side of the seam allowance in place. This will keep it from getting in the way when you thread the drawstring through.



7. At both bottom corners, mark lines 2" from the side and bottom seams. Cut along this line. Fold the bag so the cut edges align, nesting your seams. Stitch closed with a $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance. Set aside.



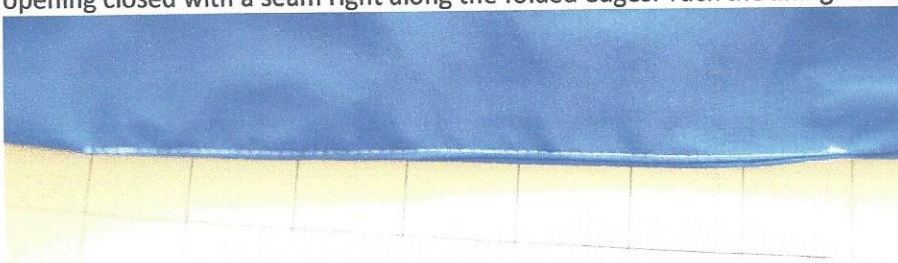
8. With your lining pieces right sides together, mark about 6" in from each corner along the bottom. This will become the opening used to turn your bag right side out. Stitch both sides and the bottom of the lining, leaving an opening between the lines you marked. Backstitch to prevent your seams from pulling open.



9. Box the corners of the lining just as you did for the outside in step 7.
10. Turn the lining right side out. Slide it into the outside of the bag and align the side seams together. Pin or clip in place and sew along the raw edges of the top using a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance.



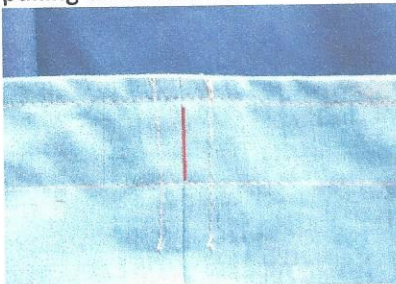
11. Pull the lining out of the bag. Reach inside the opening you left in step 8 and grab the outside of the bag. Pull it through and straighten the boxed corners of the outside fabric.
12. Locate the opening in the lining. Fold over the raw edges about $\frac{1}{2}$ " and pin or clip them together. Sew the opening closed with a seam right along the folded edges. Tuck the lining inside the bag.



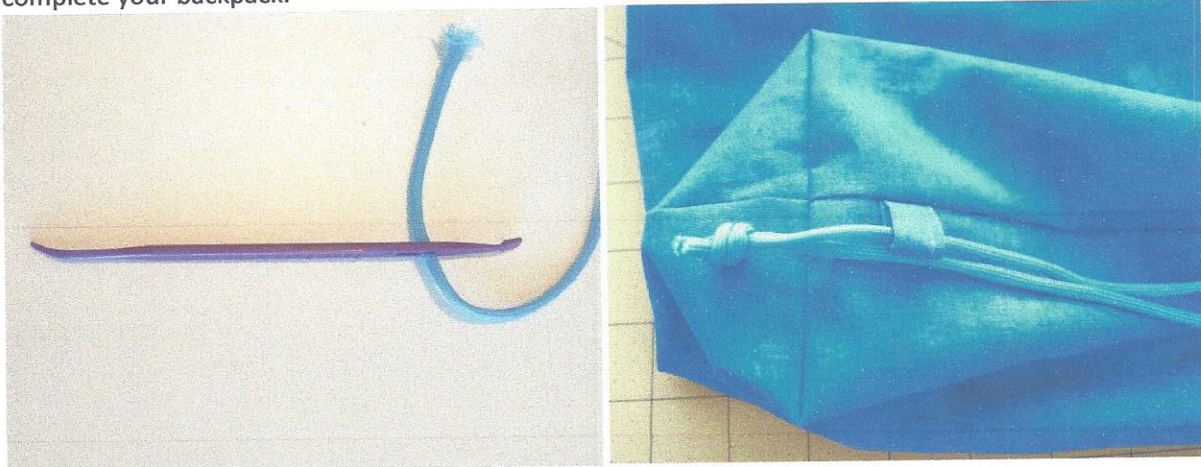
13. Adjust the top seam where the outside and lining meet until it is tidy and you can't see any lining fabric on the outside of the bag. Ironing it in place can help keep it straight. Sew $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the top of the bag and again at 1" from the top of the bag. This will form the casing for your paracord.



14. Using a seam ripper, cut a couple of stitches on the side seam between the lines of stitching you added in step 6. Be careful to cut through only the stitches in the outside of your bag, not the lining. Widen the opening by gently pulling on the fabric.



15. Thread the end of a 2-yard piece of paracord through the slit in a bodkin or Purple Thang. Use this to slide the paracord all the way through the casing to come out the side where you started. Go to the opening in the other side of the bag and repeat this step. Align the ends of the paracord, slide one end through the loop in the side seam, then use a simple overhand knot to secure the cord in place. Trim the ends. Repeat on the other side to complete your backpack.



Customizations:

- The sizes in this pattern are not exact. Feel free to shrink or enlarge your backpack as you like. Just make sure that all 4 pieces are the same size so they fit together properly.
- You can add pockets to the outside or lining by sewing them on before you stitch together the pieces. Make sure you avoid the area where the bottom corners will be boxed so your pocket won't get cut.
- You can piece together any portion of the backpack and even add batting and quilting if you like. Just treat the pieced/quilted section as if it were a single piece of fabric.
- Embellish with embroidery, lace, buttons, beads or ribbon to make it your own. Just keep hard objects away from the areas where you'll be sewing or add them after the backpack is done.
- Make your backpack out of light fabric and use markers to add graffiti or artwork. If you use black lining the marker bleed won't show through allowing you to decorate it after it's sewn.