

Fabric Envelope Pouch Tutorial

For

The Envelope Budgeting System



Pattern by
Elaine Colliar

www.mortgagefreeinthree.com

So I have toyed around with writing this tutorial for long enough and in the end I have decided that the best way to “show” you how to make these useful little pouches is to simply “show” you with lots and lots of photographs and me burbling on in the background.



MATERIALS NEEDED

- **Some patterned fabric – mine is an old M&S pillowcase**
- **Some plain fabric – pillowcases again**
- **A pretty button for the front**
- **A plain button for every pouch you intend making**
- **Medium weight iron-on interfacing**
- **2 sheets of A4 Paper**



Because I am “making do and mending” my first job was to unpick and then iron the pillowcases flat. You will definitely need to keep your iron by your side throughout the construction of these fabric envelopes you get a much better finish if you iron between each step.



So to make this pattern super simple take one sheet of A4 paper (that is a piece 210mm x 297mm if you are not in the UK) and cut one piece of your patterned fabric out with an additional 1.5cm seam allowance as you can see on the photograph.

You see you will be making one bigger envelope for the smaller ones to nest inside – and we are starting with the bigger one.



Then using the patterned piece of fabric as your template cut a piece of plain fabric out the same size. You now have the outside and the inside of your bigger envelope cut out.



TADA !!!!! Remove the pinned on piece of paper and give them a quick press to make sure they are flat.

You want the envelopes to have a bit of body to them – you don't want them to be floppy and lose their crisp look after all. To do this you need to iron on a piece of medium weight interfacing to the wrong side of the plain piece of fabric.

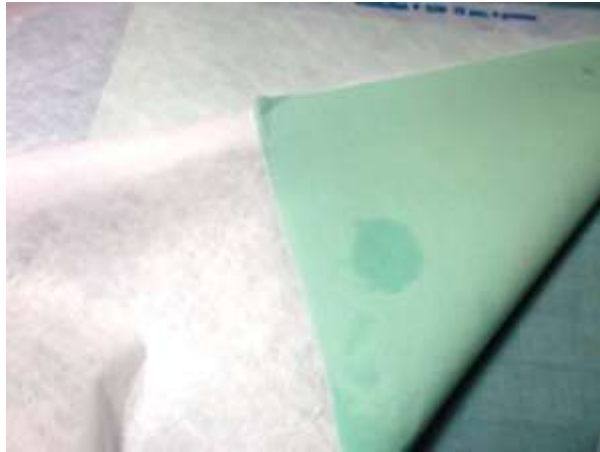


So lay the “shiny” side of the interfacing on the wrong side of the plain fabric – you can clearly see the shiny glue on the interfacing if you hold it up to the light.



So to melt the glue and fuse the interfacing to the fabric you need to use an iron on its hottest setting and a piece of wet cotton (one of Grandad's old hankies here). This means you can apply a lot of heat to the fabric and a good amount of steam without burning your fabric or melting nasty stuff on the sole plate of your iron.

Press your iron down firmly for about 12 seconds before moving the iron over and repeating all over the fabric – you can see where you have been because the cotton hankie will be dry where you have already pressed down.



And when you have finished the interfacing will be completely and smoothly fused to the plain fabric. Trim of the excess interfacing and set your front and back pieces aside for a moment.



The envelopes are closed by making cute little fabric loops that loop around the buttons – which not only looks nice and “designery “ but also saves me having to explain the black art of creating button holes when I don’t know which sewing machine you are using. If you are happy making buttonholes then “Rock and Roll” – but for the rest of us – fabric loops.



The threads in fabric go two ways – horizontally and vertically – which gives you a nice stable solid fabric without very much “give”

Fabric loops however need a little “give” so we need to cut them on what is called the bias. So take a piece of your fabric (mine is the piece that folds over the pillow in the inside of the pillowcase) and iron it flat with the long edge running the length of your ironing board.

Fold your top left hand corner down to meet the long straight edge as shown in the picture and press with a hot iron.



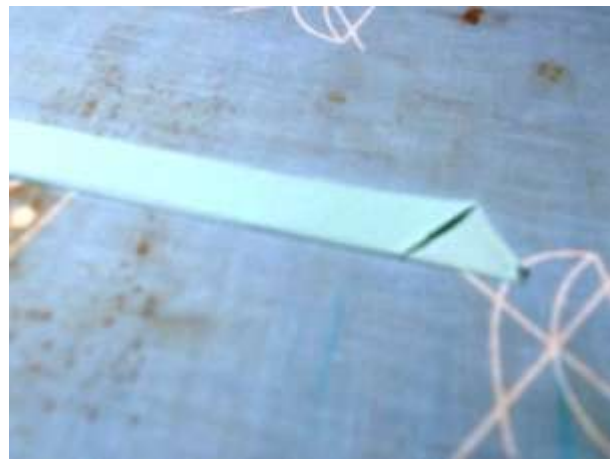
When you open it up you will have a diagonal pressed line – this is the line of bias for us to use. Cut off the triangular piece and you are ready to cut some loop pieces out.



I use my ruler to draw some 1” strips along the bias edge – but the width of a normal ruler would do if you don’t have a fancy dressmaking ruler.



Cut along the drawn line and then cut another couple of strips as you will need a small fabric loop for each of the envelopes that you want to make.



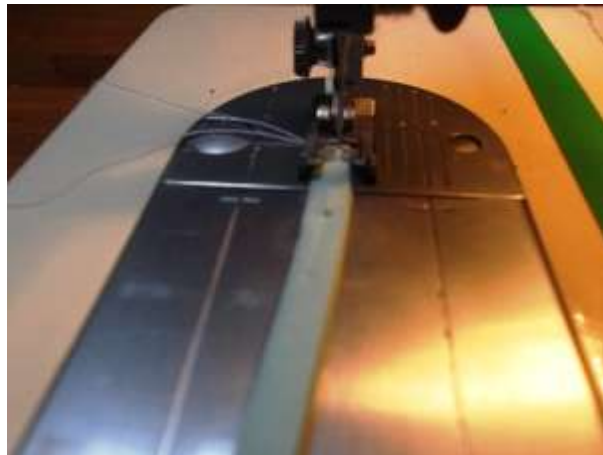
Lay each strip horizontally along your ironing board and fold the top long edge down to the bottom long edge and press firmly with hot iron I told you that you and your iron were going to become best friends didn't I??



Open out the bias strip and then fold the top edge down to the pressed middle line and the bottom edge up the pressed middle line it's quite fiddly so use the very tip of your iron.



Then fold the whole strip in half again enclosing all the raw edges and press Again!!! You should now have a very narrow fabric strip with no raw edges showing along the length.



In this picture the centre fold of the strip is on the left and the open edge is to the right. Using a slow and steady pace you need to sew the whole length of the strip as close to the open edge as you can get.



TADA!!!! A flexible fabric strip that you can use to form the fabric loops to close your envelopes.



Lay the plain piece of fabric interfacing side down on your ironing board. Mark the centre of one of the short edges with a pin before cutting a piece of the fabric loop long enough to go from the edge to the stitching line (1.5 cm down from the edge) easily around your chosen button and back up the edge again. Pin very securely as you can see.



Lay the patterned piece of fabric face down on top of the plain fabric sandwiching the fabric loop in between. Pin securely and using a 1.5 cm seam allowance sew along one long edge, along the short edge with the fabric loop in place and back down the other long edge.

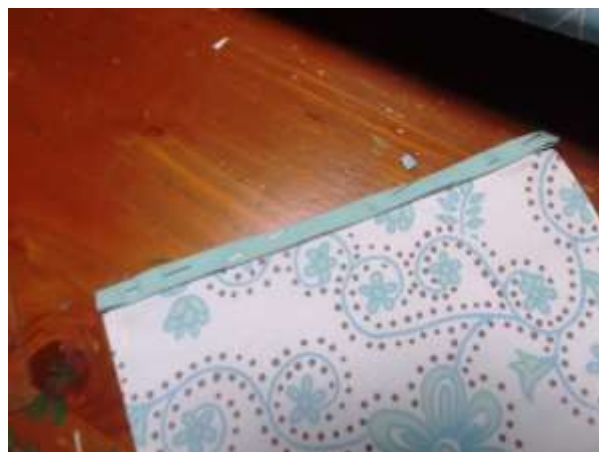


Take your scissors and snip the excess material from the corner of the envelope by cutting diagonally as shown. This will take the bulk of the fabric away and mean that you can get a much neater corner when you turn the envelope through.



Turn then envelope through so that the right sides of the fabric are showing and the fabric loop pops out as if by magic. Use the end of a pen or a knitting needle to persuade the corners to turn through nice and crisp.

Give everything a good iron with a belt of steam to make it all crisp and neat.

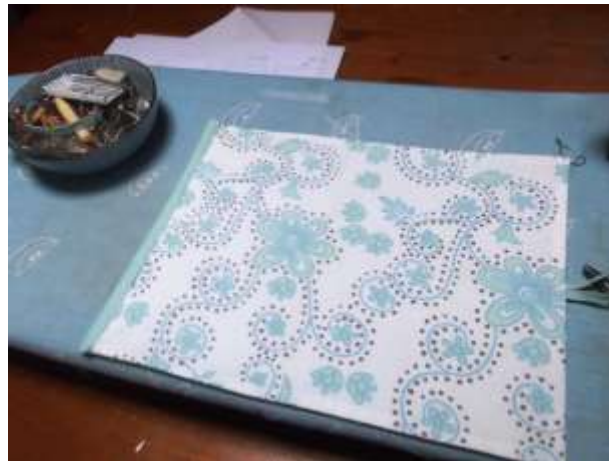


Now we need to deal with the raw edges opposite the side where the fabric loop is sitting. Fold the fabric over by 5 mm then over again by 10mm to create a contrast band with all the raw edges enclosed.

Pin securely.....



..... then sew along the open edge just as close as you did for your fabric loops. Take it slowly – you want to be very proud of your neat, close top-stitching. Its little bits like this that make the difference in hand-crafted items.



Trim all your lose threads and TADA!!!! You are really getting there so give it a quick press to smooth out everything.



Fold the bottom of the envelope up to the top as shown – I fold mine up to a point 5cm from the top edge. You know what I am going to say now don't you? Quick press LOL



Lining up all the edges pin the fabric securely along the sides of the envelope.



Before starting to sew 5mm or so in from the edge along the side of the envelope –around the flap and down the other side. Trim all your loose threads and fold down the flap again.



This will help you determine the best place to sew on your fancy button – so go ahead and pop it on.



Making a nice secure closure for your biggest envelope. Doesn't that look smart?



Now the smaller envelopes are made in exactly the same way with one exception.

For the largest envelope you used a sheet of A4 paper with an added 1.5 cm seam allowance. For the smaller envelopes cut the outside and inside pieces of the envelopes the EXACT SAME SIZE as your A4 paper. By the time you sew these up using a 1.5 cm seam allowance they will be smaller than your big envelope and sit snugly inside.



Here are my envelopes stacked inside the biggest one – I only made three as the only categories we use cash for are FOOD, CLOTHING and FUN. If you use cash for more than three categories – say FUEL or EATING OUT them simply make an envelope for each category.

The big envelope will comfortably take up to smaller ones.



Now i can heartily recommend the “envelope system” as a way of managing your budget – but frankly the motley assortment of paper envelopes rattling about my bag and shedding coins everywhere was getting to be more than annoying.

So now I can fill up my brand new envelopes and nestle them safely in my handbag all neat and contained..... even better, as they were made from some fabric scraps from my stash it hasn't burst this weeks budget buying something more expensive.

Besides these are PRETTY!!! And a girl needs some pretty things to help her along on her Debt Free Journey doesn't she???

Make these with my blessing – make them for gifts, give them to friends, pass them out as thank-you's when someone does you good turn.