

PILLOW POINTERS

by Lisa Shepard Stewart

Pillows are a favorite project among DIY decorators! Follow some of Lisa's best tips for sewing pillows to accent any room in the house. A basic 14" square pillow will be used to illustrate the steps, but they can be applied to pillows of any size & shape.

YOU'LL NEED:

- (2) 16" squares of fabric
(African batik, bogolan / mudcloth or lightweight upholstery fabric)
- (2) 16" squares of fusible batting
- (1) 14" pillow form or loose fiberfill
- Optional: Sew-on embellishments, decorative threads

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. With the batting side up, fuse the two squares of batting to the wrong sides of the pillow front and back, lining up all raw edges. Press lightly on the right sides of both fabrics to smooth them.
2. Before sewing front to back, this is the time to add any decorative touches if desired (quilt stitches, embroidery, appliqué, sewn trims). Keep all embellishments about 2" away from the raw edges.
3. Line up front to back with right sides together. Sew front to back using **curved seaming** (see box at right) and leaving an opening at the bottom as shown. Trim corners to 3/8" seam allowance.
4. Turn the pillow right side out. Press the surface of the pillow, up to the ridge all around the edge of the pillow, gently rolling the seam outward.
5. Using a zipper foot, and with the zipper foot positioned to the **left** of the pillow edge, stitch through all thicknesses around the edge of the pillow, creating a faux cording effect. Leave stitching open where the seam is open.
6. Insert pillow form or fiberfill, distributing the fullness evenly to your desired firmness.
7. Pin the opening closed, placing the pins where the faux cord stitching would be. Slipstitch the opening along the seam allowance. Squeeze the pillow stuffing in toward the center enough to complete the faux cording stitching, connecting it with the previous stitching.



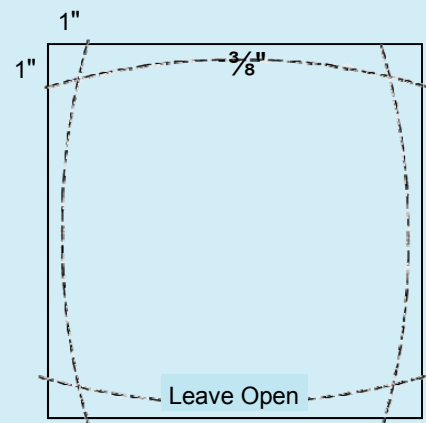
Why Use Fusible Batting in Pillows?

- Fusible batting gives the pillow fabric a smooth, stable foundation overall, so the pillow will look and feel great longer!
- It provides substance to support decorative touches like quilting and sewn embellishments like beads, buttons and metal accents.
- It allows you to create a "faux cording" effect along the edge of the pillow.

The Cure for Concave Pillow Edges

Pillows with excessively pointy corners and dips along what should be the straight edges are caused by the displacement of the straight seams when the pillow is stuffed. This can be remedied with **curved seaming**:

Curve seams so that they taper from about 1" down from the corner at either side of the pillow to a 3/8" seam allowance at the center point at each of the four sides of the pillow — remember to leave the opening along the bottom edge to turn the pillow right side out.



◀ Extra! Bogolan Bolster Pillow!

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Repurposed Pillow Form...(and Free!)

Have old towels you're not using, but don't want to throw out? Put one to use as a bolster filler! Just fold the towel so the width equals the center measurement of the bolster, then roll it up and secure with 2-3 rubber bands. Wrap the pillow around the towel, then slipstitch the seam (Step 4). The towel gives a nice weight and density to the pillow.


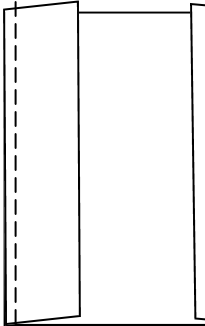
Extra! Bogolan Bolster Pillow

Lisa's easy "faux cording" technique makes quick work of this plush bolster style pillow. Use it to show off your favorite piece of bogolan...and maybe even recycle an old towel in the process!

YOU'LL NEED (for bolster approx 16" long x 8" wide):

- (1) piece of bogolan
(sample measured 6 strips across x 24" long)
- (1) piece of fusible batting, (approx. 22" square)
- Loose fiberfill or towel
- Optional: Sew-on embellishments, decorative threads

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. With the batting side centered over the wrong side of the bogolan, fuse the two together, Press lightly from the right side to smooth the bogolan. Turn the raw edge of the fabric over the batting about 1" on the upper edge. 
2. This is the time to add any decorative touches if desired (quilt stitches, embroidery, appliqué, sewn trims). Keep all embellishment about 5" away from side edges.
3. Fold in 4" on the left & right sides, with right side of fabric facing out. Stitch about 3/8" from each fold, as shown. This forms the faux cording. 
4. Open out each fold and press the stitched folds lightly toward the sides. Roll the fabric into a tube, overlapping the pressed edge over the raw edge slightly; pin. Slipstitch the entire overlapped seam.
5. Gather one end of the pillow using long running stitches about 1/2" from the edge of the fabric. Pull the stitches to gather in the ends of the pillow. Continue the stitching across opposite ends of the gathers to secure them.
6. Stuff the pillow with fiberfill to desired firmness, then close the second side in the same manner.
7. Add embellishments to the pillow ends to cover the stitches, if desired.

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