

**Packing Cases**  
**Rebecca Kemp Brent**  
**Creative Machine Needlearts**

These lightweight organizers really do keep your suitcase sorted and tidy, and they'll prevent those embarrassing moments of opening the overhead bin to find your undies falling out! Make them in an assortment of sizes for travel or local use, like carrying threads and pre-cut fabric to your next quilting class.



**Finished size:** 9" x 14" x 4"

**Materials**

1/2 yard of 45"-wide lightweight woven fabric

1/4 yard of 45"-wide mesh

9" of 1"-wide ribbon

[2 Coats® zippers](#), 18" long

**Cutting**

**From the body fabric, cut:**

2 rectangles, 3 1/2" x 5 1/2"

2 rectangles, 3 1/2" x 15 1/2"

1 rectangle, 10 1/2" x 15 1/2"

1 rectangle, 4" x 36 1/2"

1 rectangle, 4 1/2" x 9 1/2"

**From the mesh, cut:**

1 rectangle, 5 1/2" x 10 1/2"

## Seams

A *scant* 1/4" seam allowance is included in the dimensions of each piece. Some of the pieces include an extra allowance so that the raw edges can be finished as you assemble the case. Follow the instructions carefully so that the seamlines match correctly.

## Assemble the Top

1. With *wrong* sides together, sew a 3 1/2" x 5 1/2" fabric rectangle to one 5 1/2" edge of the mesh rectangle. Press the seam allowances toward the fabric. Fold the fabric back onto the mesh, folding along the raw edges with *right* sides together, and stitch in the ditch. You'll have a bound 1/4"-wide seam allowance with the raw edges enclosed. Repeat to stitch the second 3 1/2" x 5 1/2" rectangle to the other end of the mesh.
2. Use the seam technique from step 1 to sew the 3 1/2" x 15 1/2" rectangles to the long edges of the unit. The assembled top should measure 10 1/2" x 15 1/2" to match the bottom rectangle.

*Optional:* If you prefer, eliminate the mesh insert by cutting a fabric rectangle, 10 1/2" x 15 1/2" (the same size as the bottom rectangle), for the top.

3. Use the corner template to mark each corner of the top and trim the excess fabric to round the corners. Transfer the center mark to each curved corner. Repeat to round and mark the corners of the 10 1/2" x 15 1/2" bottom rectangle.

## Make the Zipper Panel

4. Fold the 4" x 36 1/2" strip in half widthwise and mark the center of each long edge with a pin, chalk mark, or short (1/8") clip into the seam allowance. Unfold the fabric and place the zippers along one long edge, right sides together, with the top zipper stops at the center mark. Fold the excess zipper tape at the tops of the zippers toward the raw edges, making an angled fold in the tape.
5. Sew the zippers to the fabric, stitching the folded ends in place as you go. Be sure the fabric raw edge doesn't extend beyond the edge of the zipper tape.
6. Press the zippers away from the fabric, folding the seam allowances to the wrong side. Topstitch close to the edge of the zipper tapes, enclosing the fabric raw edge.
7. Fold the 4 1/2" x 9 1/2" fabric rectangle in half widthwise and mark the center of each long edge as before. Find and mark the centers of the short edges as well.
8. Press 1/2" to the wrong side on each end of the ribbon. Center the ribbon on the fabric rectangle with the pressed ends 1" from the short edges. Topstitch a rectangle on each end of the

ribbon to secure it to the fabric; the ribbon will bow outward slightly because it is longer than the space available.

9. Follow the instructions in step 1 to sew the prepared handle unit to the ends of the zipper panel and finish the seam allowances, creating a circle of fabric for the sides of your packing case. Stitch carefully to avoid the zipper stops. As you work, press the seam allowances away from the zipper panel and trim the ends of the zipper tape to match the fabric raw edges.

### **Assemble the Packing Case**

10. Fold the side unit in half, matching the front and back centers marked in steps 4 and 7. Mark both long edges at the two new folds; these are the centers of the short edges. Measure and mark 4 1/4" to each side of the short-edge centers; these are the corners of the case.

11. Set your machine for a slightly lengthened straight stitch; I like to use 3.0 mm. Sew a line of gathering stitches a scant 1/4" from the corners of the top and bottom pieces, sewing for about 2" on each side of the corner marks and leaving long thread tails.

12. Pin the top unit to the zipper edge of the side unit, **wrong** sides together, matching the centers of the sides and corners. Draw up the gathering stitches to fit and add more pins along the corner curves. Stitch. Press the seam allowances toward the top unit and then wrap the top around the edges to position it on the side unit with **right** sides together. Stitch in the ditch to finish the seam.

13. Unzip one or both zippers. This is essential so that you can turn the bag right side out later. Repeat step 12 to sew the bottom to the free edge of the side unit.

14. Turn the bag right side out and you're ready to go.