

# JEAN JEMS

## Simple Sewing Projects



*made by recycling old blue jeans*

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## General Information

All projects are progressive

These projects are designed to help teach basic sewing skills without requiring excessive costs for fabric or supplies

Easier projects are listed first

Projects become more difficult or involved as one progresses throughout the guide

Instructions given are only a guide, each project can be tailored to individual tastes

### Turn old "Jeans" into "Jems":

What you can make:

1. Bountiful Bag .....pages 4
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4. Cute Carry-all..... pages 7 - 9
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### Basic Sewing Equipment Needed:

- Sewing machine with basic straight stitch
- Thread (color of your choice)
- Extra Bobbins
- Sharp scissors, pinking shears
- Pins (if desired)
- Seam ripper
- Size 14-16 sewing machine needle and replacement needles as needles break when sewing thick layers

# Bountiful Bag



## Supplies Needed:

- Old pair of blue jean shorts.
- 2" wide cotton webbing for straps
- Sewing machine, thread
- Pins
- Decorations as desired

1



- Fold legs together. Match outside leg seam to inside leg seam.
- Pin.

2



- Sew ½" from edge. Sew another row of stitching ½" from first row.
- Backstitch at each end.

3



- Using a pinking shears, trim near stitching. This reduces bulk.
- Once trimmed, the seams should look like the photo below.

4



- Turn shorts right-side-out.
- The bag is ready for straps.

5



- Thread 1-1 ½ yards cotton webbing through belt loops.
- Make sure there are no twists in the strap.
- Place straps on top of one another.
- Sew together. (This will need to have 3-5 lines of stitching as it will get a lot of pressure.)
- Backstitch at each end.

6



- Add a bandana or other adornment as desired.
- Pack up, pull the strap to close, and go!

# Armchair Organizer



## Supplies Needed:

- One pair of jeans with pockets
- Pinking shears
- Thread

1



- Using pinking shears, cut leg of jeans.
- Cut out pockets
- Using pinking shears, cut approximately 1" around pocket

3



- Lay over arm of chair or couch and fill with remote control, books, phone, etc.

2



- Sew 5/8" from pinked edge of pocket

# "Hot" Pockets



## Supplies Needed:

- One old pair of jeans with back pockets
- Old washcloth or towel for insulation
- Thread
- Pinking shears
- Scissors
- Embellishments, if desired

1



- Cut pockets from jeans



- Trim around pocket, leaving at least one inch on all sides.



- Edge scraps can be discarded.

2



- Layer pocket on top of old washcloth. The washcloth provides extra insulation so your hand does not get burned when using the hot pad.



- Layer second pocket under the washcloth.
- Take time to match the top and bottom of the pockets by feeling through all layers. Pin all layers together so they do not shift as you begin sewing.

3



- Line up the presser foot along the edge of the pocket. Sew a straight seam all of the way around the pocket. Pivot at corners and back-stitch at the beginning and end of the seam.



- After the seam is complete, trim the washcloth (not the denim) close to the seam

4



- After trimming the washcloth, your hot pad should look like the photo above left.



- Sew a second seam, by placing the left side of the presser foot on the first line of stitching. Pivot at corners and back-stitch at the beginning and end of the seam.



- Trim outside of the second seam. Use a Pinking shears as it will keep the fabric from raveling.



- Take some time to embellish the hot pad with buttons, trim, or other notions. Remember that the embellishments should be able to resist heat and also be able to go into the washer and dryer when the hot pad becomes soiled.

## Cute Carryall



### Supplies Needed:

- One old pair of jeans with back pockets
- ¼ yard of cotton fabric
- 1 yard of cotton fabric
- 36"-45" of colored cording
- Thread to match
- Appliques, buttons, etc., if desired



- Cut the legs off of a pair of old jeans.
- Leave approximately 1"-2" of fabric around the pocket. Use a ruler and a pen to mark where you will be cutting.



- Check that pockets are the same size.



- Cut on pen line with a scissors.



- Print fabric should be at least 1" larger on all sides of jean pockets.



- Lay pocket on cotton fabric



- 6 ■ Fold under  $\frac{1}{2}$ " , then fold under another  $\frac{1}{2}$ " to cover raw edge of jean with print fabric. Pin.



- 7 ■ If desired, edges can be hand basted after they are pinned.



- 8 ■ Usually, the top of the carry-all is pinned last to give a neat appearance.



- 9 ■ Sew  $\frac{1}{2}$ " from edge of fabric, sew again on top of the first stitching. This will make it extra strong. Be sure all raw edges are folded under and sewn.



- 10 ■ Remove pins just before the machine sews over them. This reduces the chance of breaking the sewing machine needle.



- 11 ■ Trim threads.



- 12 ■ Repeat the sewing process on the other jean pocket.
- At this point, the two jean pockets should look like the photo.



- 13 ■ Turn over one of the jean pockets.



- 14 ■ Check that both pockets are approximately the same size by matching one to the other as shown in the photo.



- 15 ■ Trim is optional, but adds to the look of the carryall.



- 16 ■ To add trim, pin ribbon edge to edge of pocket back as shown.



- 17 ■ Carefully sew ribbon edge of beaded trim to back side of pocket. A basting stitch is appropriate.

18



- Once basted, pocket & trim should look like example.

20



- Stitch ½" from edge of fabric.

19



- Match pocket with trim to pocket without trim. Take care to keep beaded trim out of the seam. Pin.

21



- Attach cording to form a carrying strap.
- Add buttons or other decorations as desired.
- Done!

## "On the fringe" Quilt

### Supplies Needed:



For a quilt approximately 66" square (144 blocks)

- At least 12 pair of adult jeans
- Note: 6" squares are cut, so larger sized jeans will produce more squares than smaller jeans
- A minimum of 2 yards of 100% cotton are needed for each of the two background fabrics (45' wide) Calicos and flannels are recommended
- All jeans and background fabrics need to be washed, dried, and pressed. This prevents bright colors from "bleeding" when the quilt is washed at a later date.
- Rotary Cutter
  - Rotary Mat
  - Plastic Ruler (6" x 24")
  - 6" Square plastic ruler (optional)
  - Additional rotary cutter blades as jeans dull blades quickly

1



- Cut clean jeans along inside and outside leg seams
- Use mat, ruler, and rotary cutter to make 6" strips to be cut into 6" squares



- Cut 6" strips out of 100% cotton backing fabric, cut into 6" squares

2



- Match one jean square with a backing fabric square, "pretty" sides face outward
- Start creating the pattern in an open area, such as the floor
- Continue pattern "rows"





3

- Find 1/2" on the throat plate of the machine
- This will be your guide as to the width of the seam allowance
- It is the mark to which you line up the edges of the fabric



4

- Four layers are sewn at a time
- Bottom layer is jean fabric with the right side down
- Next is the backing fabric, right side up
- Followed by the 2nd backing fabric, right side down
- Topped with jean fabric right side up



5

- Place layers into sewing machine
- Line up the right side of the fabric layers with the 1/2" mark on the right of the presser foot
- Sew the entire length of the stack
- Continue the same process, sewing blocks two by two, until designated number of blocks for the first row are sewn in sets of two (this quilt has 12 blocks, six sets of double blocks)



6

- Place two sets of double blocks with backing fabric together and jean material to the outside
- Sew the entire length of the stack – now four blocks are sewn together.
- Continue sewing until three sets of four blocks are sewn together



7

- Attach double blocks until the desired row width is reached (this quilt has 12 blocks in each row)
- Notice that every other row begins in a red square
- These rows have been placed to create a pattern on the back of the quilt
- Once the pattern is established, the rows can be sewn together



8

- Iron each row
- All seams are pressed the same direction per row
- When pressing seam allowances, alternate press direction to match the seams

9



- The top row of the quilt is row one, the next lower is row two
- Match row one to two with the backing fabrics touching each other and the jean fabric at top and bottom of stack
- Sew at 1/2" the entire width of the row
- Iron entire seam flat

10



- Repeat the last set of steps
- Match row 3 to row 2 and sew at 1/2" the entire width of the row
- Make sure that the backing fabric is touching each other
- Match the vertical seams as closely as possible, iron.

11



- The front of quilt is shown
- Notice how the jeans vary in color to create a patchwork design
- All seam allowances are on the front of this quilt
- Sew at 1/2" all the way around the edge of the quilt

12



- Carefully snip the seam allowance every 1/2"-1". This allows the edges to make a "fringe".
- Make sure that when you snip that you do not get too close to the machine stitching as it will make a hole in your quilt

13



- Wash your quilt
- Dry your quilt

14



- Empty the lint trap in the dryer many times during the cycle as there are LOTS of threads.
- You may choose to take to a laundromat to avoid the mess in your own washer and dryer

### Lend a helping hand!

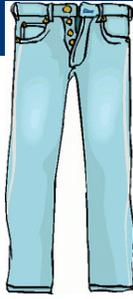


### Quilts make great community service projects

- Donate finished quilts to:
  - Homeless shelters
  - Orphanages
  - Red Cross
  - Elder Care Facilities
  - Hospitals
  - Any other organization deemed appropriate by your group

## Additional Information:

More Projects are available using old jeans:



- If you liked the projects in this guide there are more available online. Go to:  
[http://4h.wsu.edu/clothing/quick\\_projects/denim/denim.htm](http://4h.wsu.edu/clothing/quick_projects/denim/denim.htm)  
<http://familycrafts.about.com/od/bluejeancrafts/>  
<http://www.squidoo.com/recycledjeans/>  
[http://www.makingfriends.com/jean\\_crafts.htm](http://www.makingfriends.com/jean_crafts.htm)  
<http://www.savvyseams.com/clothing/jeanskirt2.php>  
<http://krylon.blogspot.com/2006/06/how-to-make-nintendo-ds-lite-case-from.html>

## About Jeans

- In 1873, denim work wear began being made with rivets to hold together high stress areas. The partnership of Levi Strauss and Jacob Davis garnered the only riveted clothing manufactured from 1873-1890.
- Denim fabric describes a rugged cotton fabric where the weft thread passes over two of the warp threads to create a twill effect.
- For more information visit:  
<http://www.levistrauss.com/Downloads/History-Denim.pdf>  
<http://www.levistrauss.com/Downloads/History-Invention%20of%20blue%20jeans.pdf>

## Quilting equipment guide

- Equipment Identification
- Basic Rotary Cutting Information
- Safe Rotary Cutting
- Tool Specifics
- To Wash or Not to Wash
- Fold appropriately and cut

## Quilting equipment identification

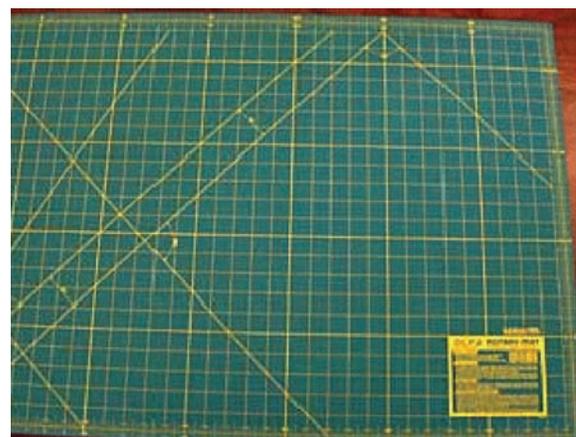


Rotary Cutter



Clear plastic ruler

- 6" x 24" is recommended, however these rulers come a wide variety of sizes



Rotary Cutting Mat

- 24" x 36" is a good size for many projects

## ■ Basic Sewing Machine

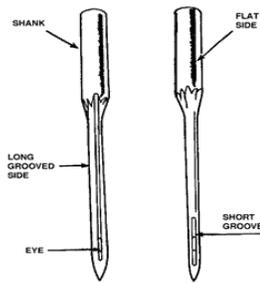
- For the projects in this guide, only straight stitching is needed.

## ■ Sewing Machine Needles

- For jean quilts a size "16" is recommended

## ■ Fabrics

100% Cotton is preferred.



## Basic rotary cutting information

Put those scissors aside and whip out a rotary cutter, plastic ruler and cutting mat. The rotary cutter consists of a round blade on a handle. There are two sizes, hold both to determine your preference. There are several brands and variations on handle shapes as well as safety blade features – comfort and safety are important when choosing a rotary cutter. Rotary cutting offers the ability to cut a large number of fabric pieces quickly and accurately. The basic equipment needed for rotary cutting include a rotary cutter, a special mat designed for use with rotary cutters, and a heavy plastic ruler. The mats for rotary cutting come in many sizes. The largest size mat offers the most flexibility for quilting. Recommended size for most quilting work is 18" x 24". Cutting mats are marked in a 1" grid on one side and are blank on the other. Check the grid with a ruler to be sure that the markings are true before relying on the grid for cutting. There are many rulers and templates available to the quilter for use with rotary cutters. The most useful ruler size for quilting is 6" by 24" and is used when cutting strips and extends all the way across the large cutting mat. Rulers should be marked in with a 1" grid with markings representing 1/8", 1/4", and 1/2" of an inch. Besides the basic plastic ruler, there are other measuring tools for rotary cutting such as squares, diamonds, and triangles in various degree measurements.

## Safe rotary cutting

Rotary cutters are extremely sharp and caution should be used when rotary cutting. Always close the blade or make sure that the blade guard is covered EVERY time the rotary cutter is put down. Several brands of cutters are on the market—Dritz makes a pressure sensitive style with a cover that automatically engages when you let up on the handle. Use the rotary cutter only with a specially designed rotary cutter mat. Using any other surface can damage the cutter blade, the surface, and can cause the cutter to slip while cutting. Devote full

attention to the ruler and rotary cutter while cutting. Many a quilter has received a serious cut because of a distraction. Keep the rotary cutter clean. Lint and fluff can build up under the blade preventing it from rotating smoothly. Following the directions for cleaning that came with the rotary cutter. Change the blade in the rotary cutter as soon as it becomes dull. Finally, take EXTRA precautions when using a rotary cutter around children. The safest way to use a rotary blade is standing up to your cutting table. You need to be able to look straight down to ensure that your blade is firmly placed against the ruler. Always use the blade cutting away from your body. Leaning forward from a sitting position is not as steady and could lead to crooked cuts or a slice into the hand holding your ruler steady.

If you haven't cut through all the fabric layers, check the following:

- Is the blade dull?
- Is there a nick in the blade?
- Did you put enough pressure on the rotary cutter?

## Tool specifics

- **Acrylic ruler:** For making perfectly straight cuts with a rotary cutter, choose a ruler of thick, clear plastic. Many sizes are available. A 6 x 12" ruler marked in 1/4" increments with 30-, 45-, and 60-degree angles is a good first purchase.
- **Rotary cutter and mat:** These tools have revolutionized quilting because a rotary cutter's round blade cuts strips, squares, triangles, and diamonds more quickly, efficiently, and accurately than scissors. A rotary cutter should always be used with a mat designed specifically for it. In addition to protecting the table, the mat helps keep the fabric from shifting while you cut.
- **Scissors:** You'll need one pair for fabric pieces with curves and irregular shapes and another for paper and plastic.
- **Pencils and other marking tools:** Marks made with special quilt markers are easy to remove after sewing and quilting.
- **Template plastic:** This slightly frosted plastic comes in sheets about 1/16" thick.

### To wash or not to wash . . .

#### Preparing the Fabric for Rotary Cutting

- There are conflicting opinions about the need to prewash fabric. The debate is a modern one because most antique quilts were made with unwashed fabric. However, the dyes and sizing used today are unlike those used a century ago.

- Prewashing fabric offers quilters certainty as its main advantage. Today's fabrics resist bleeding and shrinking, but some of both can occur in some fabrics—an unpleasant prospect once you've assembled the quilt. Some quilters find prewashed fabric easier to quilt. If you choose to prewash your fabric, you'll need to press it well before cutting. Other quilters prefer the crispness of unwashed fabric for machine piecing. And, if you use fabrics with the same fiber content throughout the quilt, then any shrinkage that occurs in its first washing should be uniform. Other quilters find this small amount of shrinkage desirable, since it gives the quilt a slightly puckered, antique look.

### Fold appropriately and cut

All fabric should be pressed before cutting. Carefully fold the fabric in half so the selvedge edges are aligned. Smooth the fabric, making sure that the fold runs along the lengthwise grain of the fabric. Fold the fabric in half again bringing the folded edge into alignment with the selvedge edge. The crosswise fabric edge must now be evened. To do this, place the folded fabric on the cutting mat and place the straight edge of the plastic ruler perpendicular to the folded fabric edge and align

the plastic ruler about 1" away from the right hand crosswise fabric edge. There are several ways to be sure that the plastic ruler is perpendicular to the folded fabric edge. The quilter can use a T-square, placing the T portion of the square along the folded edge of the fabric and aligning the ruler with the T-square. Or the quilter who owns a plastic rotary cutting square can line one edge of the square up with the folded edge of the fabric and place the plastic ruler even with the square crosswise on the fabric and then remove the plastic square. If the quilter does not have either the T-square or a plastic cutting square, the ruler can be placed in such a way that the folded edge of the fabric aligns with one of the crosswise lines of the ruler. Once the ruler has been placed, the quilter should carefully place his/her left hand on the ruler to hold it in place being careful not to shift the position of the ruler. Holding the rotary cutter in the right hand, place the rotary cutter so it touches the right side of the ruler and, applying a slight amount of pressure, push the rotary cutter along the edge of the ruler away from the quilter's body. (Left handed quilters should reverse the right and the left.) The crosswise edge of the fabric should now be cut even with the crosswise grain of the fabric. Now, move the fabric so that the just cut edge is on the left hand side. The fabric is now ready to be cut into the desired shapes.

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