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“Customized Boot Covers or Spats”

Description: This document shows full color pictures with several techniques showing reversible boot covers or spats tailored and sewn for the wearer.



Finished Boot covers

Materials needed:

Plain fabric to use as your starting pattern. Light enough to pin easily

Fabric for the outer side and for the inner side. Example is ultra suede (outer) and suiting (inner)

Stabilizing fabric or interfacing. Example used canvas

Heavy Duty Machine Needle, Boning, Leather punch, mallet, laces or polycord, eyelets and eyelet tool

Hand sewing needle, Matching thread, Various notions like scissors, pins, marking pen, measuring tape

Elastic, Steam a seam, adhesive spray

Shoes that the wearer will be covering

Estimated amount of fabric used is 1 yard each of outer, inner and lining.



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There are several ways to sew a pair of boot covers or spats. You will need to decide what your final look is when you start. They can either be laced up the front or back. For our purposes we wanted a peasant look with a flap on top and laces up the front. The basic pattern for either can be started in the same way by taking a piece of light fabric and pinning it to the person that will be wearing it. Once pinned you can cut it directly on the person, remove the pins and fold in half. See from the view to the right our original cuts were not straight or even. We just wanted to make sure we got the height about where we wanted it as well as the width of the calf. We also made sure the wearer had the shoes on that he planned to wear for the toe. All of these things will be adjustable because we will have laces on the front of the calf, a toe box on the front edge and elastic on the bottom. We cleaned up the pattern edges on a new piece of fabric so we would have future pattern to use for our wearer and re-pinned on them to double check the fit. Then we placed the folded pattern on our folded outer fabric and cut. If your model had their legs twisted or not straight when you initially pinned and cut the pattern, this method will allow you to make adjustments before you cut especially if you are using expensive fabric.



This view shows the pattern piece edges cleaned up and the final outer fabric cut.



Outer cover cut 2



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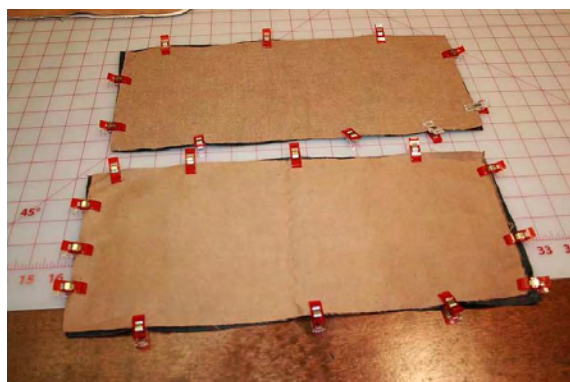
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We cut the inner piece and also a lining piece that is canvas for some stability. You could use a medium interfacing if wanted instead. Cut these in duplicate so you can make two outer covers.



Next we cut pieces that would become the flap. We placed them over the top using the width to make sure they would fit. We did not use the canvas on the flaps because the end product will be reversible and easier to turn without the stiffness. Also their only purpose is decoration. There is no need for them to hold anything up so stability is not a concern.

An outer and inner piece is cut for each boot cover flap



Right sides together, we sewed around the perimeter leaving a space open to turn both. We clipped the corners before we turned to reduce bulk. Then we did a topstitch around the entire outside which closed up the opening and they were ready to attach.



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We took Steam a Seam and applied it across the canvas stabilizer evenly so that we could then attach it to the inner piece. This will allow the fabrics to be considered one lessening the movement when sewing.



Steam a seam areas have been adhered to the wrong side of the canvas fabric with an iron.



KK 2000 adhesive spray was used to adhere the canvas material to the ultra suede. We did this because we did not want to iron the suede. Spray the adhesive on the canvas and carefully lay the suede on top right side up. Now you have three layers of fabric together. These layers will be sewn to become your outer fabric of the boot covers. It is a fabric sandwich that will actually feel and have a similar weight as leather. When you finish this you will be amazed at how it simulates leather and your covers will look more expensive.



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Sew close to the edge all around the fabric. A basting stitch can be used. You are just making sure they are attached well and will not shift when you sew them to the lining you are about to cut. After you sew them you can trim any areas that do not match closely

Trimmed closely around



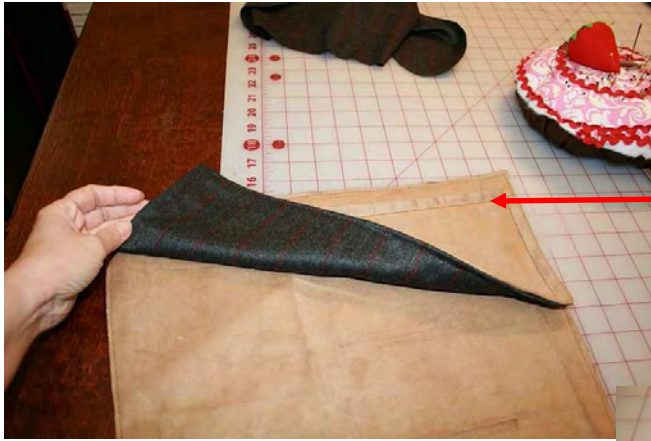
Now that you have your outer fabric sandwich ready, you can cut the actual Lining fabric. These Spats are reversible and choosing an attractive inner fabric is important. Our fabric is made for suits. It does not wrinkle, has a nice light breathable weight and does not easily fray. Lay the outer cover on your fabric and cut two linings.

Mark your placement of the flaps on the outer covers. We placed them about 1 inch from the unfinished top edge and pinned at the corners so we could sew them on.



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We used the original seam on the flaps to topstitch to the outer covers. Just sew along the top so they can be flipped up.

At this point you are ready to sew the lining to the outer cover but you need to make sure the flaps stay independent and don't get caught in the seams. Use a couple of straight pins to make sure they stay out of the way. The top corner will be tricky so pin it really well



Place the lining fabric and the outer fabric right sides together then sew a seam around the outside but leave a hole at the bottom for turning. Clip corners and curves then turn right side out.

Whip stitch the hole closed



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When you get to this point it is exciting because you have boot covers. You will note that once turned, if the end was simply sewn together the boot cover would not be long enough to cover the end of the toe for the wearer. Don't let this alarm you. When you initially cut out your pattern it fit the person pretty closely. When we sewed the outer fabrics to make faux leather and then the inner fabric, the seam allowances took up several inches. We will now create a toe box and adjust it to fit exactly over the end of the covers. We used a drawn footprint of the wearer's shoes to judge how big to make the toe box.

The toe box pattern can be created using a piece of paper. There will be a template at the end for your use. It may not be exactly the size you need but a great place to start when you customize your covers. We laid out our covers next to the drawn shoeprint and with our pattern we could estimate where it would need to be placed



A front view of the pattern shows that when strategic cuts are made and taped together, a 3-D rounded edge is made. You can tape everything together, fit it to the covers, then using scissors release the taped areas in preparation to cut your fabric. Every taped seam will eventually be sewn and this will make your toe box have a rounded edge that will completely encase or hide your shoes.



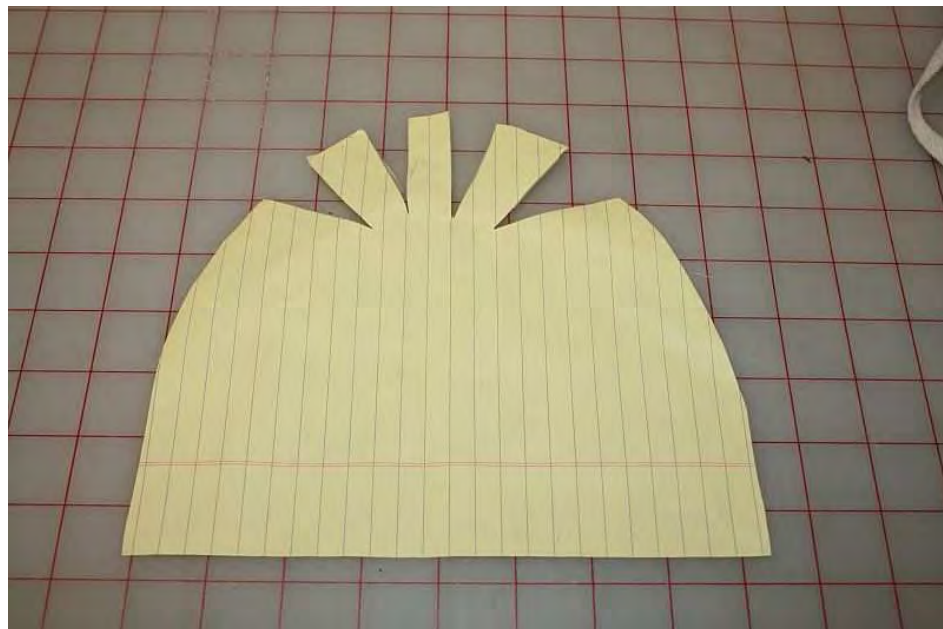
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If this is confusing you can compare the boot covers to a pair of shoes and see that the concept is very similar. There is a side panel and then a toe box. The box can either be on top or underneath the side panels depending on your design. Ours are reversible so we will put the toe box on top of the outer side.

Even though we will include our template, we'll show you how you can make your own pattern. Take a piece of paper and lay your shoes on top. Draw a semi circle around the perimeter. See that we gave ourselves plenty of length so we can adjust as needed. Doing all of this on paper before you cut your fabric will ensure you work out all of the kinks.



Once our piece was cut, we strategically cut several triangles around the edge.



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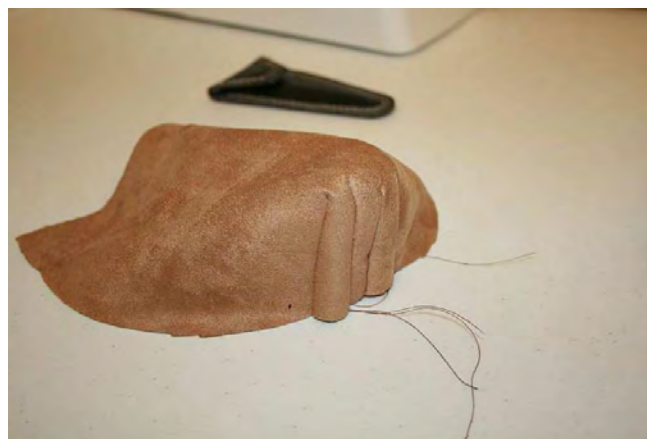
We cut out two outer pieces and two inner pieces. We also used an iron on stabilizer on the lining fabric. This will help the finished toe box keep it's rounded shape



Each one of those little triangles need to be pulled together and sewn. With outer fabric, place the first one right sides together and lay on your machine sewing a straight seam. Work your way across the fabric taking your time and sewing each triangle right sides together. When you turn it right side out it should look something like this.



Inside seams



View from outside



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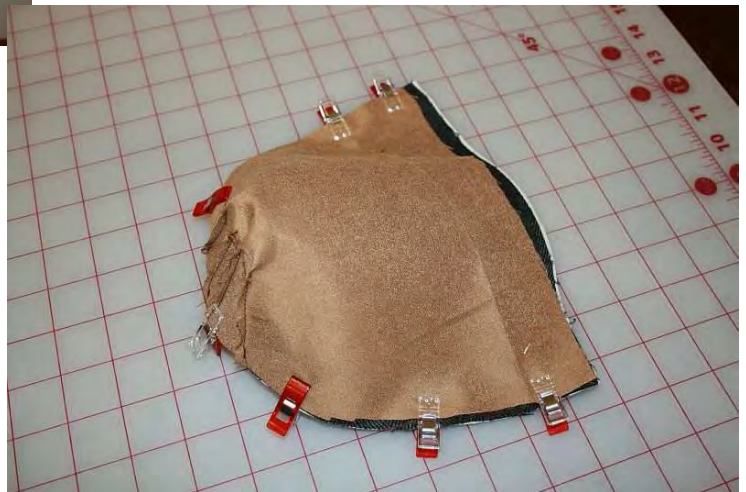
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Here we have the interfacing ironed onto the inner lining fabric. Sew the triangle seams just like you did the outer piece.

After both inner and outer pieces have been sewn to create the toe box shape, you can either pin or clip them together right sides facing and sew around the edges to attach.

Leave a hole to turn and it should look something like this.



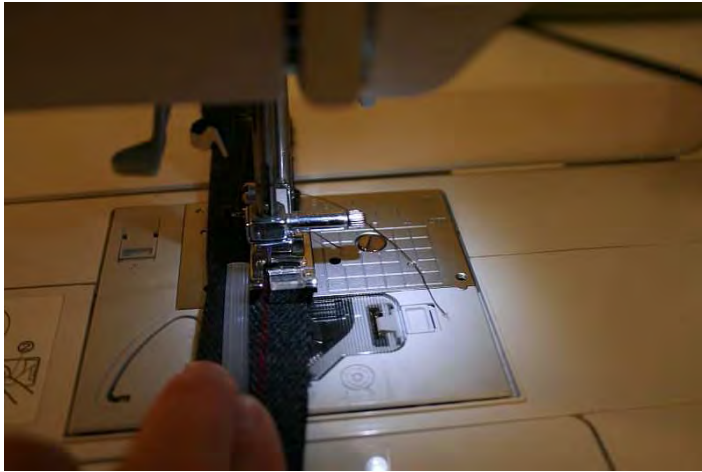
Outer Toe Box

Inner Toe Box



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Depending on your fabric and preference this next step is not a have to but a really good idea. Boning is a small narrow plastic material that is placed inside fabric to give it more structure. You see it in corsets and it helps the finished garment stand up by itself. Due to the nature of walking and moving, your boot covers will be more stable and the laces will be sturdier over a day's wear if you add boning. We placed our boning on the inner side of the boot covers. Here you see the boning placed on top of the tubing fabric to show the size and where to sew the seam. It needs to be snug but able to slide easily into the fabric.

We created a tube of fabric to slide the boning into. So the width of it was twice as wide as we needed. We folded it over top-stitched along the length and then because our fabric does not ravel, we used our pinking shears to trim close to the seam. Then to find the best placement, we put a couple of the eyelets along the edge. By placing the boning adjacent to them, when the lacing is pulled tight through the eyelets, the boning will help keep everything taut. We pinned the fabric tubing where we wanted it. ***Note the seam will show on the outer suede fabric so use a matching bobbin thread.*** Make sure you have enough room for the eyelets to be placed.



This view shows the boning fabric pinned to the inner fabric in preparation to sew. Note we went into the curve a bit. Placing the toe box onto the boot cover will help determine how far down you need to place the boning. We left a little room from where our toe box placement started to stop the boning. Also see we lifted our flap and didn't go all the way to the top



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Sew a seam around the two long sides and the bottom to make a tube and then carefully slide the boning in. You may want to file the end of it with an emory board because it can be sharp. Especially going into a curve it can puncture your fabric so take your time to feed the boning.



Now you can clip or pin your toe box to the boot cover. This is the time to let the wearer put their shoes on and make sure it will adequately cover the entire length before you sew. Move it forward or backward as needed. You can also see the seam from the boning shows up. If you used matching bobbin thread it should blend pretty well and will look like a detail once the lacing is installed.

Your heavy duty needle will come in handy here. Take your time on your machine and sew the toe box to each side and bottom of the boot cover. Our starting point is shown in the picture where the needle is and our ending point is the second clip close to the toe box. This is where the inner boot cover ends.



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Now that you have an outer seam you will need to attach the inner lining toe box to the inner lining boot cover. The easiest way is to use your hand needle. If you do a small whip stitch you can sew an almost invisible seam catching only the lining fabric.



This view shows the boning tube being sewn up



Gather your tools to install the eyelets. They come in several sizes. We used 5/8 inch. A small piece of wood will help when you are setting the eyelets. We used 24 on each Spat. 12 on either side evenly spaced.

The eyelets have a male side and a female side. The male side has a longer throat and it will fold down over the female side when you use your hammer or mallet. The male side is also the "pretty side" so we made sure that it was facing the outer fabric on each spat.



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This view shows our holes marked with pencil and a few installed eyelets. It also shows the eyelet tool is just about the size hole needed but our leather punch was not large enough when we punched one hole.

We used a leather punch to create our holes. An awl or ice pick would work to. Any sharp object that will go through all layers neatly. Use something slightly smaller than needed as fabric stretches once cut.



We punched a second hole almost on top of the first one to open it up just a bit. Be careful when doing this. Once accomplished, we used the eyelet tool to open up the hole so the eyelet would fit.



The male side is being pushed from the top down into the hole.

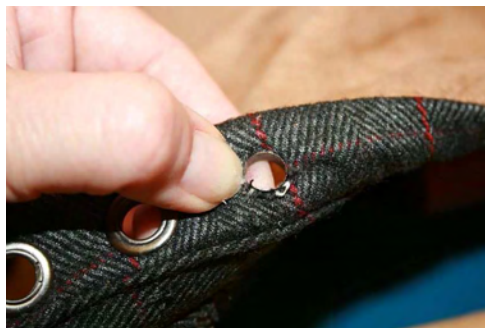


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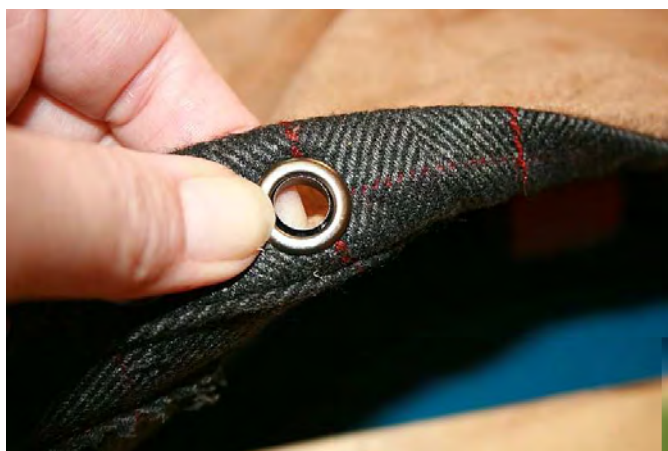
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Once the male end was put in, we used a large sewing needle to make sure all of the fabric was well below the throat of the eyelet before putting the female side on.



All clean and pushed down with the needle around the edges. Use an old needle because it may become bent when doing this.



Then you put the female side on.

Use your setting tools and hammer. Hit it firmly a few times and it is ready to go



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The final thing you will want to do is put some elastic on the bottoms of the spats. This will give a little resistance when tying the cords and also hold the toe box down so it does not flap when walking or running. You can use the footprint for placement width. We used two pieces of elastic. One in the foot arch area and the other just where the toe box widens. Both of these may be walked on if the shoe has no arch but if they are sewn on well the wearer will not realize they are there.

We folded the ends under and clipped to the covers.



This view shows both pieces of elastic sewn to the bottom. We also laced up the covers with Para cord to match. The wearer will have to keep the laces loose in order to slip their foot in. Then place the elastic under their shoe. We left enough cord so it could be wrapped around the top of the boot cover once ensuring a tight fit at the top. The ends of the Para cord were burned with a lighter so they don't ravel.



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Boot covers are completed and are fully reversible for more options when wearing.



Enjoy!



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Toe Box Template

