



"Drying Mat" Seatbelt Cover

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Description: This pattern was designed for a Seatbelt cover that you can make using a dish drying mat purchased from a Dollar Store. DIY Bias tape instructions are included but not necessary if you would like to purchase pre-made tape. If embellishments are not wanted, these are very nice plain. There are also instructions for finishing the edges without bias tape. No printed pattern pieces are necessary as everything is done by measurements. Full color pictures and instructions are included



Materials needed:

1 dish drying mat— The example was purchased at Dollar Tree and measures roughly 12"x 18". (2 covers can be made with one mat)

1/4 yard Printed Material such as cotton to make bias tape or 40 inches purchased 1 inch tape

10 inches sew-in Velcro

Matching Threads for sewing and embroidery

Stabilizers (tear away and water soluble), Temporary spray adhesive if using an embroidery machine

Sewing machine, Embroidery machine, hoop, scissors, cutting wheel, straight edge, fabric pen

Bias Tape Tool "1 inch"

Iron and Pressing surface





Choose your favorite drying mat. The one in our example is 18" x 12". It has a towel exterior and soft foam center so all of the padding is inside already. If you would like to make your own bias tape, instructions are included. If not, use purchased materials.

Measure the mat and mark it exactly in half with a fabric pen. Use your straight edge and cutting wheel and you will have two pieces. Save the second piece for another cover!



If you fold the piece of mat three times it already looks like a seatbelt cover! If you are not going to embellish the cover with embroidery, you can skip to the bias tape instructions.





While our cover was folded we marked the center with a fabric pencil in preparation for our design.

The material is a little thicker than a towel so we put our tear away stabilizer in the hoop by itself instead of layering it with the mat. Then we sprayed it with our temporary adhesive so the mat could be pressed securely on top. We sprayed another layer of adhesive and placed the water soluble stabilizer on top of the mat.

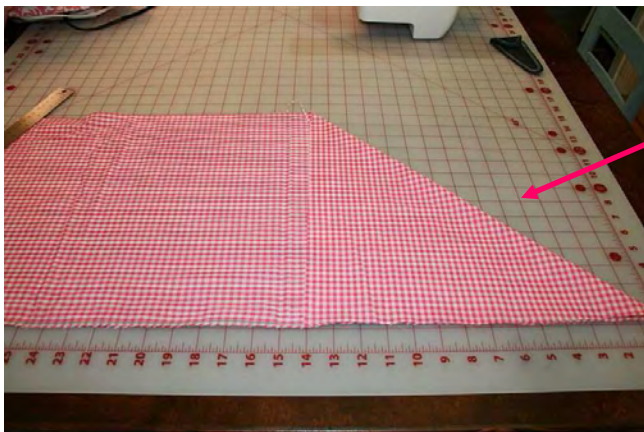


While our design stitched, we stayed close and monitored the top stabilizer smoothing it as needed because it is not inside the hoop.





Using the water soluble topper really makes a difference in the stitches on this type of material. If you don't use it, your letters may tend to "fall into" the pile. If embroidering, please don't skip this step. Take your work out of the hoop, remove all of the stabilizers and clean up the jump stitches.

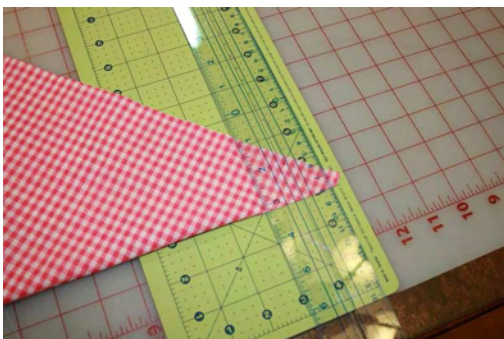


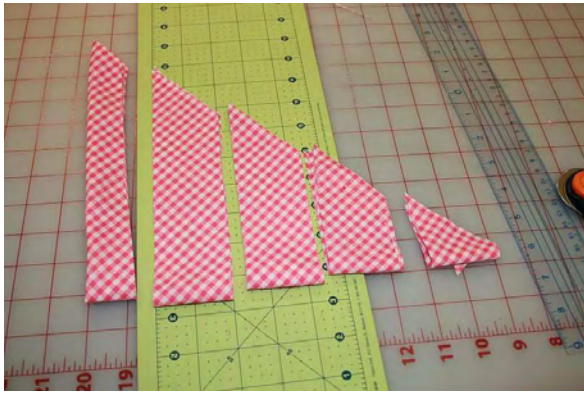
To begin your bias tape. Open your fabric and then fold one corner down. Cut off the extra fabric with your straight edge and cutting wheel.

Fold the other side of your fabric down into a triangle.



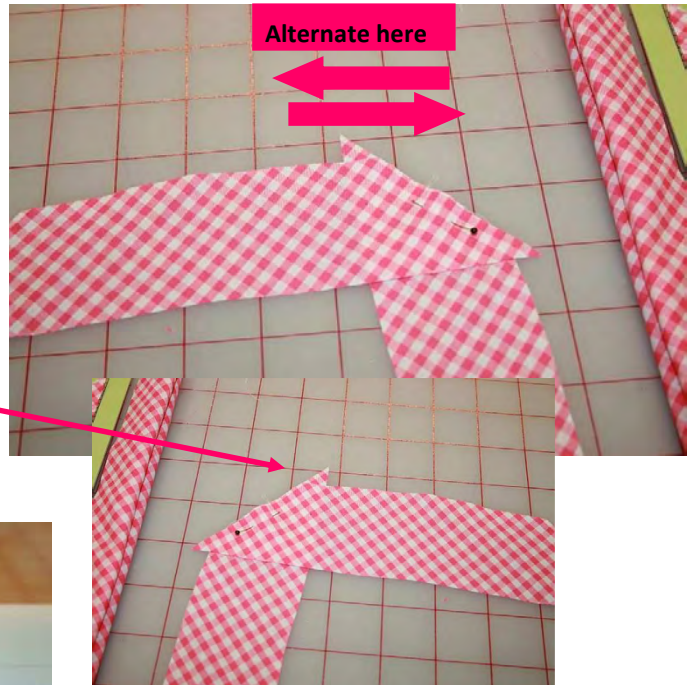
Rotate your fabric so that the side with **"two"** folds is on the left. Use your straight edge and wheel to cut 2 inch strips.





Your strips should look something like this.

Lay two strips right sides together like so and pin. When you lay the next piece down **alternate** which side the taller top is on. This way when you sew each piece all of your seams will be on the same side. See the picture at the right, shows the pieces flipped over.



Sew each piece with a 1/4 inch seam.

Trim off the extra fabric points with your straight edge and cutting wheel





Iron all your seams flat

Use your bias tape tool and push the end of the material through. As you pull the material iron the creases that it creates. There will be a slight size difference and that is ok. The larger side is meant to go on the back when you sew it on.



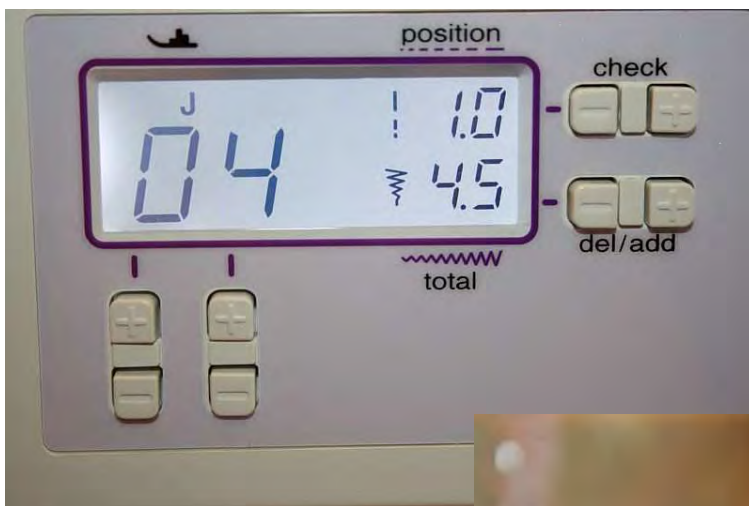
Once the entire length has been pulled through you will gradually fold it in half ironing as you go. You can then wrap your bias tape around a small piece of card stock and label it. How pretty and you just saved yourself several dollars!





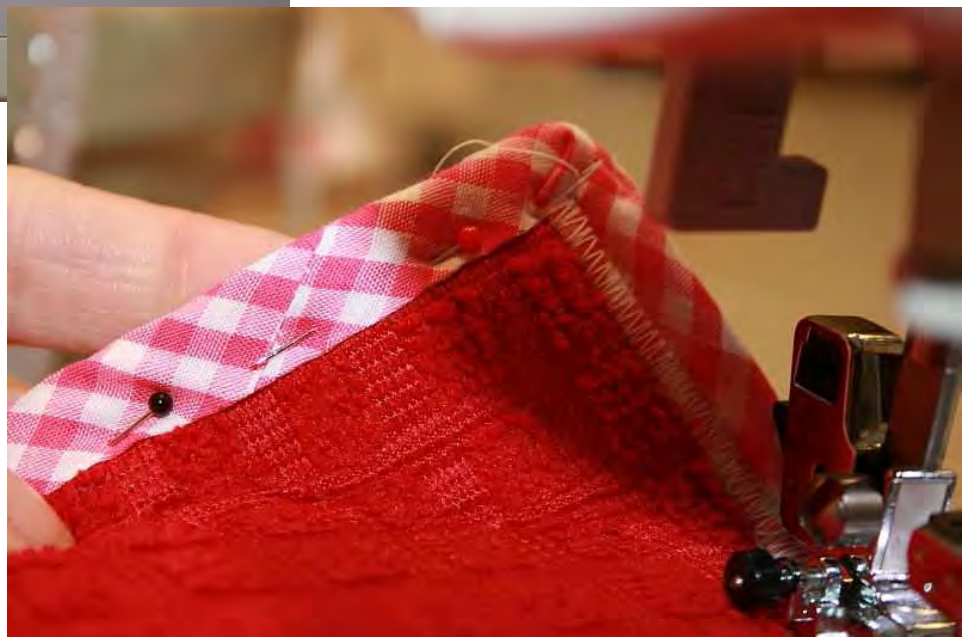
There are several ways to attach bias tape. For this pattern we did not baste it first. We carefully pinned the bias tape making sure we grabbed the top and the bottom. When we got to a corner, we pinned the straight side first and then folded a pleat at the bend as neatly as possible.

When we reached the end of the tape, we turned it under and pinned well



We used a short and wide zig zag stitch. This will help you catch both the top and the bottom and it looks very decorative. It takes a little longer to sew but be patient as it will pay off.

Your stitch should look something like this.



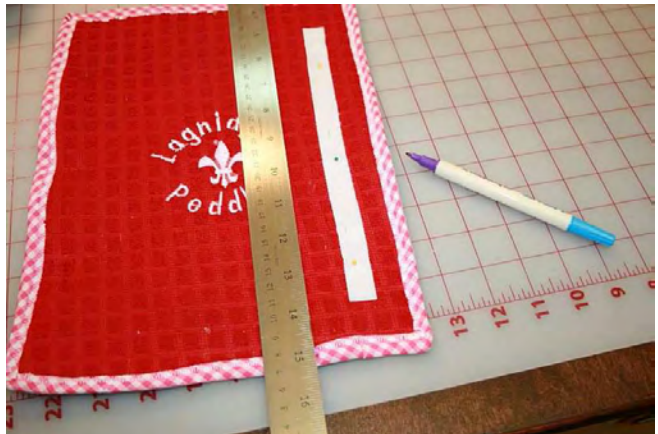


Carefully sew around the perimeter and your cover is almost finished.



You will sew in your Velcro now. You may need to fold your piece in three again to see how it fits once pinned in place. We sewed ours about 1 inch from the edge. The two pieces will be sewn on opposite sides and opposite ends

Two vertical seams will also be sewn in order to create panels where the cover will naturally want to bend. This step can be done before you embellish with embroidery if you are concerned about the design fitting. Measure one panel at 2.5 inches wide from the edge and the other panel at 3 inches wide. Use your fabric pen to mark the line and sew straight down. Note these lines run up and down the long sides.



Now it will be much easier to fold.





Here are two other examples of completed projects. You can see that by using different colored bias tape each one is unique. They also look very nice without any embellishments.



If you are uncomfortable with sewing bias tape, you can finish off the edges on a sewing machine or serger if you have one. In the picture to the left we have already cut the drying mat in half. Using our straight edge we want to make all four of our sides look the same since our sewing machine cannot duplicate the manufacturers seams. So you will carefully trim the edges off.





On your machine choose a zig zag stitch and adjust the stitch length to be very short but wide. We used a .2 on the length and 4.5 on the width. Also make sure you are using the proper foot for your type machine.

Now you will begin to finish the edges so they will not ravel. Placement of the material is crucial. You want the left side of the stitch to be on the material and the right side of the stitch to fall just off the side of the material.

This will allow the top and bottom seams to “catch” the edge. The material on these drying mats may be difficult for your feed dogs to move on the edge so you might need to carefully assist your machine in pulling the fabric as it is being sewn. Go very slowly. Another trick will be to begin your stitching in the middle instead of the end. This way you have fabric to hold onto. You can start in the middle and sew to the edge then repeat for the other end. Do one side at a time. If you try to go around a corner, the fabric may fall into the machine causing a tangle of thread.



Placement of your sewing foot





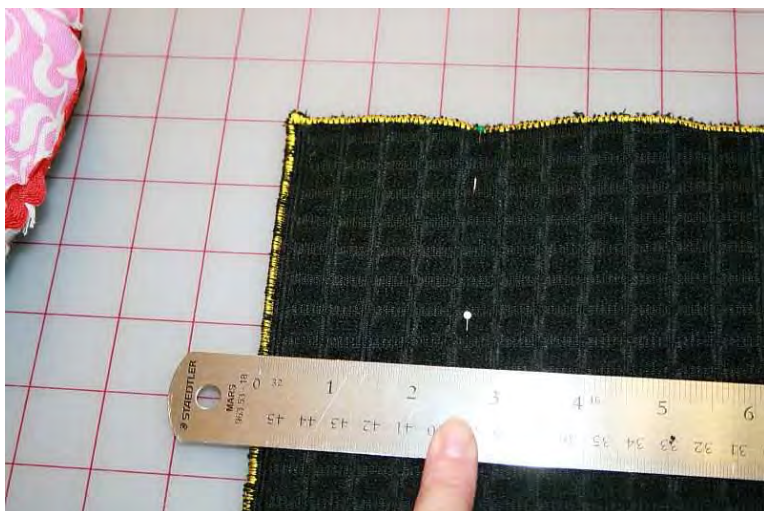
This picture shows what the stitch will look like. We have sewn one half of a side and will be doing the other end.

You can see that taking your time will make the edge look alot neater. Also sewing in a straight line off the edge makes for much prettier corners.



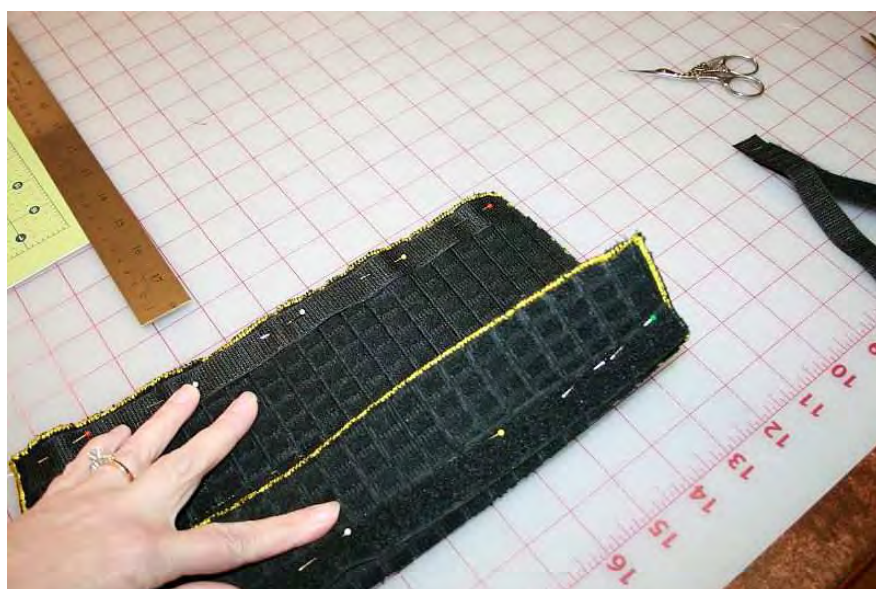
All four sides are almost finished here. The bright thread really pops on the dark background.





We sewed our vertical seams on this one next. Measure one at 2.5 inches and the other at 3 inches from the edges. Then your panels will allow the cover to fold easier. We decided to do a super hero themed embroidery design next.

Here is the front after the design has been stitched and before the stabilizer has been removed.



Velcro is sewn on next. Black was used so it looks much neater.





Your seatbelt covers are ready to use! Make extras with your leftover mat and then sew some more for friends and relatives. Plain or personalized, they will be appreciated. You created something so attractive and useful!



Enjoy!

