

Stylish Baby Nursery: Collapsible Storage Baskets

Editor: Liz Johnson

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These clever storage baskets are not only cute and handy, they're also a secret recycling project. The sides and bottoms of each basket are stiffened with recycled cardboard! But wait ... they have another hidden talent: they collapse and fold flat to store.

In the nursery, use them for creams, diapers, wash cloths and other diaper changing accessories. You could fill a whole shelf set with bright and beautiful baskets. And yet, why let the nursery have all the fun? We bet you have a lot of cardboard just waiting to be recycled. I see bread baskets and mail baskets and gift baskets ... oh my!

Our sample was made for a baby girl's nursery, using the stunning [Patty Young Andalucia](#) collection. For information on where to buy, read [Stylish Baby Nursery: Designing with Bold Colors & Patterns](#). This article also includes suggestions for creating an alternate fabric palette that would work well for a boy's nursery.

Sewing Tools You Need

- Any Sewing Machine (we recommend the [Janome ThreadBanger TB-30](#))

Fabric and Other Supplies



- Fabric for outer box covering (Fabric A) - ½ yard of 45" wide fabric PER BOX: we used *Patty Young's Andalucia in Petal Flora (box 1) and Earth Mod Blooms (box 2)*
- Fabric for inside lining (Fabric B) - ¼ yard of 45" wide fabric PER BOX: we used *Patty Young's Andalucia in Petal Jester (box 1) and Kiwi Jester (box 2)*
- Scraps for binding – you will need two strips per box, each strip is 1¾" x WOF (width of fabric). You can use either a contrasting fabric or a matching fabric: we used *Patty Young's Andalucia in Petal Jester (box 1) and Petal Floral (box 2)*
- Chipboard, cardboard, or any heavy weight card stock (for box sides)
- All purpose thread in colors to match fabrics
- Leather machine needle (*in addition to your regular needle*)
- See-through ruler
- Chalk pencil
- Scissors or rotary cutter and cutting mat
- Iron and ironing board
- Straight pins

We're going to use a leather machine needle in this project - even though our supplies don't call for leather. A leather needle is a super sharp, heavy-duty needle for sewing through difficult materials. Leather is one example; we're using it for this project to sew through the cardboard that makes the sides of the boxes.

Getting Started

1. Using your see-through ruler and chalk pencil, cut a 7½" x 9½" piece of fabric from Fabric A. Then, cut a strip from Fabric A that measures 6½" x 33". These pieces will form the bottom and outside walls of the box.
2. Cut two strips from the binding scraps that each measure 1¾" x WOF (width of fabric). We'll use this for the binding of the box – the fabric around the top and bottom edges of the box.
3. From Fabric B, cut one 7½" x 9½" piece and one 6½" x 33" strip. These will cover bottom cardboard insert and the inside walls.
4. From the cardboard, cut pieces as follows:
 - Four pieces that measure 6" x 3¼"
 - Two pieces that measure 6" x 8¾"
 - One piece that measures, 6½" x 8½"

At Your Sewing Machine & Ironing Board

Creating the 'walls'

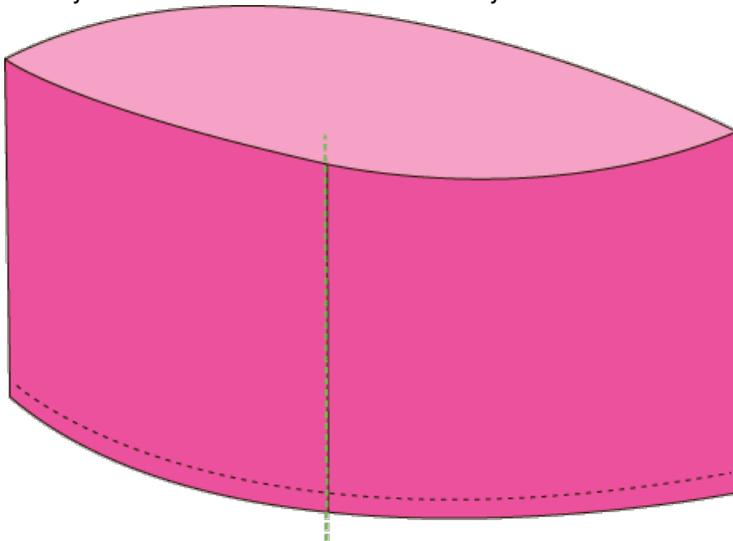
1. Fold the 6½" x 33" piece of Fabric A (outer fabric) in half, with right sides together, and stitch up the 6½" side, using a ½" seam allowance. Turn right side out and press seam open.
2. Using the 6½" x 33" piece of Fabric B (inner fabric), repeat step one.
3. Place the sewn Fabric B piece inside the sewn Fabric A piece, placing them **WRONG** sides together and matching up the seam lines.



4. Pin the bottoms of the two pieces together, and stitch around the bottom, using a $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam.

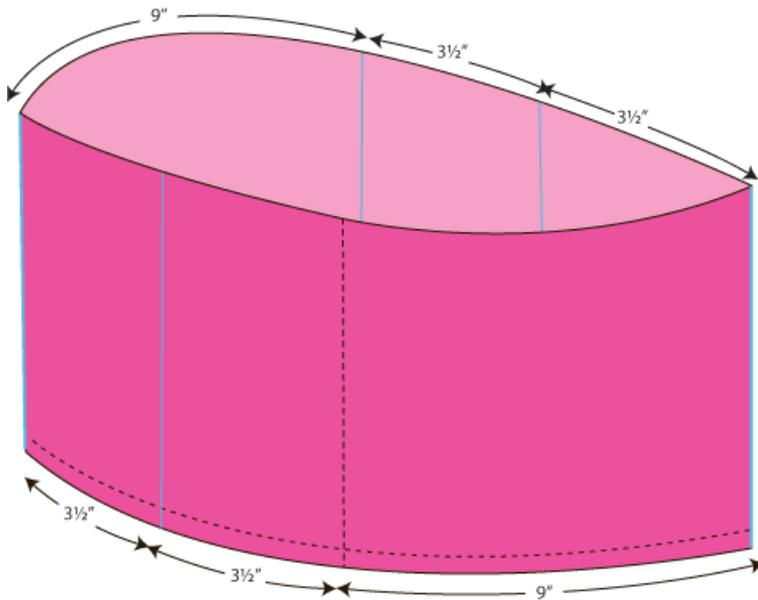


5. Stitch down the existing vertical seam line created by the inner and outer fabrics. (This is the seam that was created when you sewed the fabrics into the 'box' - you should have lined these seam lines up in step 3.)



First vertical stitch at seam

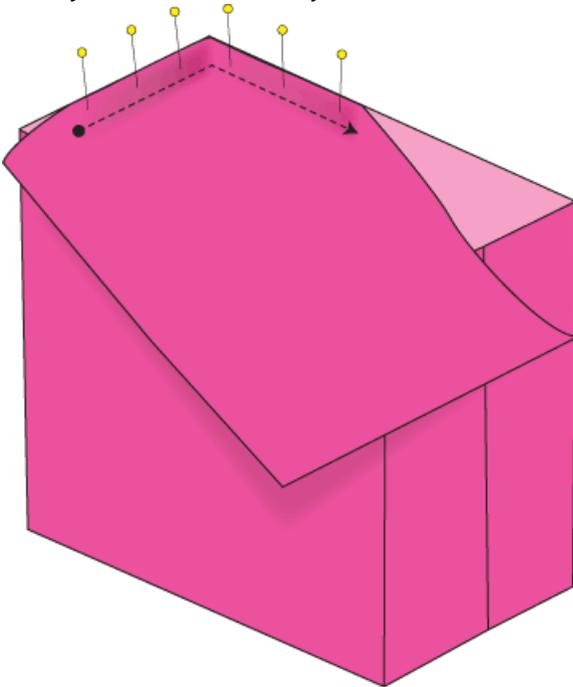
6. This vertical seam will create a starting point to measure the other vertical seams around the box. With your chalk pencil, mark additional seam lines at the following intervals: 9", $3\frac{1}{2}$ ", $3\frac{1}{2}$ ", 9", and $3\frac{1}{2}$ ". (In other words, you mark 9" from the first seam line, then $3\frac{1}{2}$ " from that newly drawn mark, then $3\frac{1}{2}$ " from that new one, etc, until you end up back at the starting line.)



7. Stitch a vertical seam along each drawn mark. You should now have a total of six sewn vertical seam lines that join the outer fabric and the inner fabric with the wrong sides together. These vertical seam lines have created 'capsules' where we will insert the cardboard to make the box stand up. Quite smart, no?

Creating and attaching the bottom of the box

1. With the wrong side facing up and the edges of the fabric inside the box, pin the 7 1/2" x 9 1/2" piece of Fabric A to the 'walls' you just made. This creates the box bottom.
2. Align the corners of this bottom piece with the vertical seams on the wall, line up your raw edges, and match long sides to long sides and short sides to short sides. *The raw edges of the fabric should extend to the outside of the box, and when you look into the box you should see the wrong side of the bottom fabric.*



3. Stitch all around, using a 1/2" seam. After attaching, carefully trim the seam allowance to 1/4" – we will be absorbing this raw edge into the binding in the steps below, so we want to reduce the bulk as much as possible.

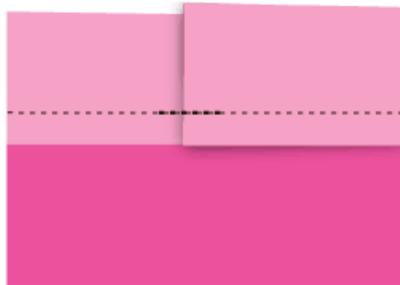
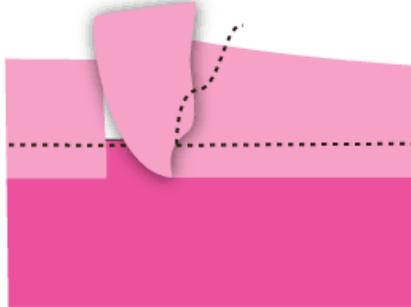
Creating binding and attaching to bottom

1. Next we will create the binding for the *bottom* of the box. Find on of your 1 3/4" x WOF strips and trim to 1 3/4" x 34" (this is the perimeter of the box plus 2" for a tail we'll use to finish our binding neatly). Fold the strip in half lengthwise and press.

Now fold the raw edges in toward the middle lengthwise seam line, and fold together. Press. (Your raw edges are now inside the binding strip.)

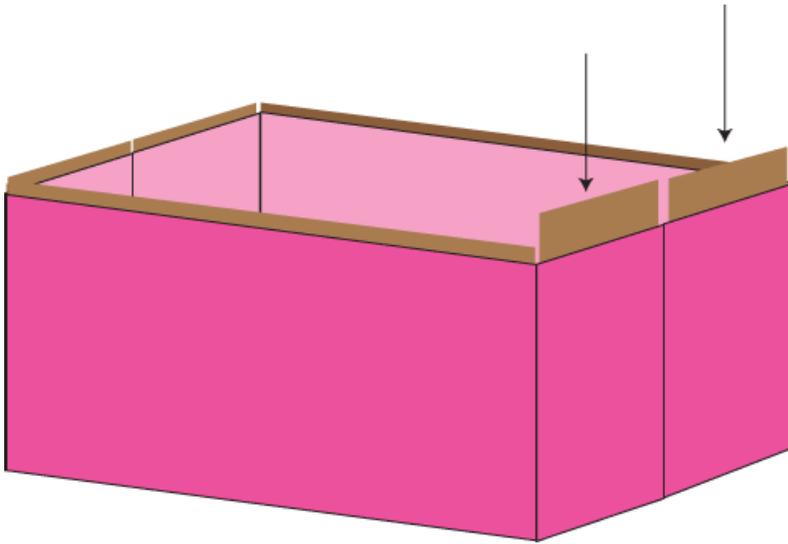


2. Repeat to create your second binding strip for the top. Set this top piece aside. *Remember, you can choose to use either matching or contrasting fabric for the binding; you could even make the top and bottom bindings out of different fabrics.*
3. Pin bottom binding strip to the bottom of the box, encasing the raw seam allowance inside the fold of your bias tape. Carefully pin.
4. Stitch binding in place, keeping your seam line a "scant" (very small) $\frac{1}{4}$ " in from the bottom folded edges, but still being sure to catch both sides of the bias tape in the seam. Stitch all the way around the perimeter of the bottom, but stop about 1" from the end for finishing.
5. We cut our original binding piece about 2" longer than the perimeter (step #1 above), so you should have a slight tail at the end of your binding. Trim this to about 1-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (enough to overlap the start of your binding by about $\frac{1}{2}$ "). Fold under the end of the tail to create a clean edge and wrap around the start of the binding. Overlap about $\frac{1}{2}$ " and stitch in place, matching your seam line. Be sure to backstitch at the end of the binding to secure it in place.



Stiffening the walls with cardboard and attaching top binding

1. Insert the cardboard pieces between the vertical seam lines to stiffen the walls of the box.



2. Switch the regular sewing needle currently in the machine to the leather needle.
3. Pin the other binding strip to the top of the box, encasing the raw edges and the top of the cardboard inside the binding.
4. Stitch a 'scant' (very small) $\frac{1}{4}$ " in from the edge of the binding. We are using the leather needle for this step because it is extra sharp and heavy duty for sewing through the cardboard. Attach the binding, following steps 4 and 5 above. Stitch slowly - your machine is working very hard to get through the thick cardboard - sort of like running uphill. You may find it helpful to lengthen your stitch length a bit at this point, so your machine can get the job done in less stitches.



Making the bottom insert

1. Lay the $6\frac{1}{2}$ " x $8\frac{1}{2}$ " cardboard piece on the wrong side of the $7\frac{1}{2}$ " x $9\frac{1}{2}$ " piece of fabric B. Fold the edges of the fabric over the cardboard, being careful to keep the fabric tight on the corners. Press in place and stitch (you're stitching through fabric and cardboard again so you should still be using the leather needle in your machine) around all sides to secure the fabric to the cardboard. Stitch close to the raw edge of the fabric so it will lay nice and flat. Press again after stitching.



2. Insert the fabric covered cardboard into the bottom of the box, with the fabric side facing up.
3. To collapse the box, simply remove this bottom insert; the short sides will fold in between the cardboard panels, and the

whole thing will fold flat for storage.



Hints and Tips

Alternate box sizes

You can adapt the instructions above to any size box.

1. First, determine the size you want the finished box to be, and cut the fabric to: the perimeter of the box plus 1/2" all around (for the seam allowances) x the height you want the finished 'walls' to be. Cut one piece of fabric for the outside and one piece of fabric for the inside.
2. Determine where you want the corners of your box, and stitch four vertical seam lines in those locations.
3. Divide the seams on the SHORT sides in half, and stitch another seam line in this location (this allows the box to 'collapse' when you take out the bottom insert).
4. Once you know where the corners of the box will be, you can cut your bottom fabrics to the appropriate size. You'll need two pieces: one for the box bottom (add 1/2" all around for the seam allowance) and one for the cardboard bottom insert (add 3/4" all around to give you enough fabric for folding over the cardboard).
5. Then cut two pieces of binding long enough to fit the perimeter of the box plus about 2" for finishing.
6. Cut cardboard for sides to size to fit in the 'capsules,' and sew everything together. Just remember, the bigger the box you hope to create, the stiffer the cardboard will need to be to support the sides and the contents.

Contributors

Project Design: Alicia Thommas

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Other machines suitable for this project include the White 2200 Multi-Tasker and the Singer 8673 Curvy.

Tags:

- [Basket](#)

[Storage Solutions](#)

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