Nap in a Bag: Blanket and Pillow in a Matching Bag

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You never know when or where you'll be when a nap needs to happen. Our clever portable sleep set is a great way to always be ready. We've created a lightweight drawstring bag that holds a bound fleece blanket and a matching pillow. Toss the bag in the car for longer road trips. Send it off to pre-school for daily rest time. Keep one at Grandma's for napping emergencies. Better still... make one for yourself, because we all know naps are wasted on the young!
We used a rich green fleece plus two quilting weight cottons. The original cotton fabrics for our sample came from Moda’s Social Club collection; which is no longer readily available online. But no worries; as we always say, the choices in quilting cottons these days is amazing! You can have fun picking out your own combinations in a favorite color, sports or hobby theme, or a holiday design. You could even add an embroidered monogram or appliquéd name to further personal the trio as a gift.
The entire set is very lightweight and easy for even a little one to tote. In fact, it's so soft and squishy, it's actually fun to hug on-the-go. The pillow is a perfect size for a little sleepy head, and the blanket is big enough to wrap up for a toasty snooze. There's even a handy outside pocket on the bag to stow a small toy or naptime snack.
Folding to stow the blanket and pillow is better (and more compact) than rolling. We recommend: 1) folding the blanket in half lengthwise and then in half again to form an approximate square; 2) fold once more lengthwise into a rectangle; 3) place the pillow on the folded blanket at one end; 4) fold the blanket in half around the pillow, and 5) slip the bundle into the bag. There should be at least a couple inches of room at the top to allow the bag to easily gather closed.

Our Nap in a Bag is sized for a lightweight fleece. If you’d rather use a thicker fleece or Minky, make the blanket and pillow first, then fold them up as described above to double-check the size. If your set measures much more than about 14” in height or 30” in girth, consider enlarging the bag.
The three elements finish at the following approximate sizes: the blanket at 48" x 58", the pillow at 13" x 9", and the bag at 17½" high x 11" wide x 5" deep.

**Sewing Tools You Need**

- **Sewing Machine** and standard presser foot
- **Walking or Even Feed foot** (optional but helpful when working with fleece)
- **Overedge foot** (optional to finish seam allowances on the bag)

**Fabric and Other Supplies**
1½ yards of 60"+ wide lightweight, double-sided fleece or similar for the blanket

NOTE: It is important to use a fleece that is soft and nice on both sides since the blanket is meant to be reversible. Also, as mentioned above, the bag is sized for a lightweight fleece. If you choose a heavier weight fleece or a Minky, you may need to increase the size of the bag.

1⅓ yards of 44"+ wide quilting weight cotton fabric for the blanket binding, pillow front, and the bag’s upper panels and pocket

⅓ yard of 44"+wide cotton fabric for the bag’s lower panels

Scrap or ¼ yard of low loft batting for the pillow

One small bag of quality polyester filler for the pillow

Scrap of ¼ yard of lightweight fusible interfacing for the pocket; we used 950F ShirTailor® by Pellon

ONE snap for the pocket; we used a Babyville plastic snap - another option for closure would be a sew-in Velcro® dot

ONE grommet; we used a Dritz Extra-Large Eyelet

1¼ yards of ⅛" round cording; we used simple round, black cording, purchased locally

ONE double cord stop to fit the cording; we used a ⅛" Dritz Double Cord Stop

Optional: ONE small bead to use as a “pull” for the cord, which means it needs a large enough opening to thread the cording; we used a plain black pony bead, purchased locally

All purpose thread to match fabric

See-through ruler

Fabric pen or pencil

Seam gauge

Scissors or rotary cutter and mat

Iron and ironing board

Clover Hot Hemmer (optional for hemming)

Straight pins

Hand sewing needle

Large safety pin

Getting Started

1. Download and print out FOUR copies of our Nap Pillow Pattern.

IMPORTANT: The pattern is ONE 8½" x 11" sheet. You must print the PDF file at 100%. DO NOT SCALE to fit the page. There is a guide rule on the page so you can confirm your final printout is to scale.

2. Cut out each copy of the pattern along the solid line.

3. Using the arrows on the patterns as a guide, butt together the four pieces to form one complete “bone” shape. Tape together; do not overlap. As shown below, two of the pieces will need to be flipped to the wrong side in order to correctly complete the pattern.

BLANKET

1. From the blanket fleece, cut ONE 48" x 58" rectangle. Make sure your cuts are straight and true so your blanket will hang nicely and the binding will
2. From the binding fabric, cut FIVE - SIX 3" x width of fabric (WOF) strips; we cut six. You need approximately 220” to assemble and bind the entire blanket. We fussy cut our strips so the dots were centered to allow one row to show on each side when folded and stitched in place.

PILLOW

1. Using the pattern, cut ONE piece from the fleece, ONE piece from the feature fabric, and ONE piece from the batting.

![Pillow Pattern](image)

BAG

1. From the fabric for the upper panels and pocket, fussy cut the following:
   - TWO 17" wide x 14½" high rectangles for the upper panels
   - TWO 6" wide x 16" high rectangles for the pocket
2. From the fabric for the lower panels, cut TWO 17" wide x 9" high rectangles.
3. From the interfacing, cut ONE 6" x 16" rectangle.

At Your Sewing Machine & Ironing Board

BLANKET

Create the binding

1. Stitch together the strips of binding end-to-end to make one continuous length. As with all binding (bias or straight cut), criss-cross the angled ends of the strips. Then, draw a diagonal line across the intersection. Pin together.
2. Stitch along the drawn line.

3. Trim back the excess fabric to approximately ¼" from the seamline and press open the seam allowance.

4. Repeat at all the remaining intersections of the strips.
5. Fold the binding in half, wrong sides together, making a verrrrrrry long strip of double fold binding that is now 1½".

NOTE: As mentioned above, we fussy cut our fabric for a perfect reveal of one row of dots front and back. When folding, we made sure this fussy cut remained true.

6. Open the binding wrong side up so the crease line is visible. Press in each long side ½". Then re-fold again, wrong sides together along the center crease line, aligning the folded edges. Press flat.

Attach binding - option A

1. Slip the binding into place along the perimeter of the fleece rectangle. The cut edge of the fleece should sit up against the crease line of the binding.

2. Pin in place all around, folding in each corner to create a pretty diagonal point.

NOTE: If you are new to this "faux mitering" technique, we have a full tutorial you can review.
3. Attach a **Walking foot** if possible.

4. Thread the machine with thread to match the binding in the top and bobbin.

5. Edgestitch in place all around close to the inner folded edge, going slowly and being careful to catch both sides of the binding. Remember to pivot at each corner.

   **NOTE:** Stitching cotton to fleece can be a bit tricky due to the stretchiness of the fleece. If you are worried about keeping all the layers even, and/or if you do not have access to a **Walking foot**, try the alternate binding steps below.

**Attach Binding - option B**

1. Unfold along the center crease only.

2. Lay the open binding right side up on the fleece. The cut edge of the fleece should sit up against the crease line of the binding.

3. Pin in place all around along the one folded edge. As above, fold in each corner to create a pretty diagonal point.

4. Attach a **Walking foot** if possible, although this option can be done with a standard presser foot.

5. Thread the machine with thread to match the binding in the top and bobbin.

6. Edgestitch in place all around, going slowly and pivoting at each corner.
7. Flip over the blanket and fold the back side of the binding down into position along the original crease line. The folded edge should just cover the front seam line.

8. Pin in place all around, again making a pretty diagonal fold at each corner. **Hand stitch** the backside of the binding in place – as you might a traditional quilt binding.

**PILLOW**

1. Find all three pieces cut from the pattern: fabric, fleece and batting.

2. Place the batting flat on your work surface. Place the fabric right side up on top of the batting. Finally, place the fleece right down down (if your fleece has a definite right side) on top of the fabric. Make sure all three layers are flush along the raw edges all around. Pin in place, leaving a 5" - 6" opening along the center bottom. edge.
3. Still using a Walking foot if possible, stitch all around, using a ½” seam allowance. Shorten your stitch length, which will allow a smoother line around all the curves. For more on this technique, see our tutorial on Sewing Successful Curves.

4. Remember to lock your seam at either side of the 5” - 6” opening.

5. Generously clip all the curves and trim back both the batting and the fleece to further reduce bulk.
6. Turn right side out through the opening in the seam. Using a long, blunt-end tool, such as a knitting needle or chopstick, gently round out all the curves. Press flat, pressing in the raw edges of the opening so they are flush with the sewn seam. Remember, when pressing fleece, it's best to not directly apply heat directly. Press against the cotton or use a pressing cloth.

7. Stuff the pillow with polyester fiberfill so it full yet still soft and comfy. For a super smooth finish, we have a tutorial that covers pillow stuffing tips and techniques.

8. Pin closed. Using your hand sewing needle and thread, slip stitch the pillow opening closed. Keep your stitches small so the fiberfill won't poke out.
BAG

Create the main panels

1. Place each upper panel right sides together with a bottom panel along the inner 17” raw edges. If you are using a directional fabric, make sure you are aligning the bottom of the upper panel with the top of the lower panel. Pin in place.

2. Using a ½” seam allowance, stitch together.

3. Since the bag is not lined, we created an inside flat felled seam for a neat finish both inside...

4. ... and out.
NOTE: If you are new to this technique, check out our full tutorial on How To Make Flat Felled Seams.

Create and place the pocket

1. Find the two 6” x 16” pocket pieces and the matching interfacing.
2. Following manufacturer’s instructions, fuse the interfacing to the wrong side of one fabric piece.
3. Pin the two fabric pieces right sides together, leaving a 3” opening along the bottom for turning.
4. Using a ½” seam allowance, stitch around all four sides. Remember to pivot at all the corners and lock your seam at either side of the 3” opening.
5. Trim the corners and press open the seam allowances.
6. Turn the pocket right side out through the opening in the seam. As above with the pillow, use a long, blunt-end tool, such as a knitting needle or chopstick to gently push out the corners so they are nice and sharp.
7. Press flat, pressing in the raw edges of the opening so they are flush with the sewn seam. Pin the opening closed.
8. Edgestitch along the bottom only, this will close the opening.
9. Fold up the bottom edge 6” and pin in place along both sides.

10. Find one of the exterior panels. This will become the front panel, so if one of the two has a better look than the other, use it as the "front."

11. Place the pocket right side up on the panel. It should be centered side to side and the bottom folded edge of the pocket should sit 1” up from the upper/lower panel seam. Pin in place along both sides. You can simply re-pin with the existing pocket pins to catch the exterior panel. In the photo below the pocket is shown with the flap folded down into place. This is to better show its final position. When sewing, you will work with the flap up so you can best access the sides.
12. Edgestitch the pocket in place along both sides and across the bottom, pivoting at the corners.

13. Remove the panel from the machine and re-fold the pocket flap down into position. It should be approximately 3” in depth. Pin the flap closed.

14. Edgestitch just across the top folded edge of the flap, running the seam approximately ⅛” from the folded edge.
15. With this top edgestitching, the pocket flap will stay down on its own. However, we added the extra security of one snap at the center of the flap.

16. We chose an easy-to-install plastic snap by Babyville. Any snap would work.

17. Follow manufacturer's instructions or, our own handy tutorial on Babyville snaps, to install one half on the flap and then mark to place the opposite
If you'd rather not install a snap, you could also use a sew-on Velcro® dot to hold the pocket closed.

**Sew front to back and box the corners**

1. Place the front and back main panels right sides together, sandwiching the pocket between the layers. The edges of the panels should be flush on all four sides. Be extra careful to align the horizontal seams on both pieces. Pin in place along both sides and across the bottom.

2. Using a ½” seam allowance, stitch both sides and across the bottom, pivoting at the corners.

3. Because the bag is not lined, we finished this seam, using our Janome Overedge foot and an overcasting stitch.
NOTE: For more finishing alternatives, take a look at our four-part series on machine sewn finishes.

4. Our bag is designed to have 5" sides and base. To create this width, we figured our corners at 2½".
5. Measure and mark each corner.
6. Cut out the 2½" corner square along your drawn lines.
7. Flatten the corner.
8. Double stitch the corner, using a ½" seam allowance.
9. Repeat to create the opposite corner.
10. Press open the seam allowances.
11. Turn the bag right side out and push the corners out into place.

NOTE: If you are new to boxed corners, check out our tutorial for step-by-step instructions.

Top casing and drawcord

1. Fold down the top raw edge of the bag ¼" all around. Press well.
2. Fold an additional 1" and press again. We used our Clover Hot Hemmer for both folds.
3. Unfold so the crease lines are visible.
4. Find the center front along the top, directly above the pocket. Mark for a grommet at this center point. The center hole of the grommet should be ½" below the 1" crease line.
5. Insert the grommet, following manufacturer’s instructions or our own handy tutorial on inserting metal grommets.

6. Fold the top back down into position along the original crease lines.

7. Topstitch all around, running the seam close to the bottom fold of the channel. We stitched on the right side as used the handy 1” throat plate markings on our Janome as our seam measuring guide. We love that most of the Janome machines have guide lines that extra out onto the needle plate and even out onto the throat of the machine.
8. Find the length of cording, the cord stop and the bead.

9. Thread one end of the cording through one side of the cord stop, through the bead, and then back through the other side of the cord stop.

10. Attach a safety pin to the end you just threaded. Continue to pull the cording through the lock so you have most of the length with which to work.

11. Hold on to the shorter end of the cording (the one without the safety pin) with one hand. With the other hand, feed the safety pin end of the cording through the grommet and around the channel. Go all they way around the channel until you come back out again at the grommet.

12. Remove the safety pin and overlap the two ends.
13. Stitch the ends together. We stitched across two times for extra security.

14. Trim away the excess cording close to the seam.

15. Slip the seamed ends back through the grommet and adjust the cording until the seamed ends are sitting at the back of the bag. Adjust the loop to
16. As shown in the intro above, fold the blanket, then wrap it around the pillow to create a compact package to insert into the bag.

Contributors

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Bed Linens

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