We’re comin’ clean! Or at least giving you the tools to make it easier to get those piles of dirty clothes off the floor, into a hamper, and eventually on their way to the laundry room. If you took out the garbage this week, you’ll immediately recognize the theory behind this cool two-part hamper: the exterior “box” provides the shell (and does it very handsomely if we do say so ourselves), and the interior bag is like a waste can liner, dropping in and folding over the top. Fill ‘er up, then cinch ‘er up and carry the dirties to the wash. We suggest sturdy canvas for the exterior and delightful cotton for the lining. Both of our fun under-the-sea appliqués are available as free downloads.
One of the most frequent questions we get is about the laundering options for our projects. Of course, not everything is meant to be tossed into the washer and dryer with abandon. Spot-cleaning is often the rule for our fancier bags and duffles, but for this project, we knew it was all about the “washability.”

Solution #1: an exterior with removable dowels so it can be laundered if there is a big stain emergency… although we doubt the exterior will suffer too much in the way of dirt and debris.
Solution #2: a removable lining bag, which contains the dirty clothes and helps insure the collected mess is easy to lift out and carry into the laundry room. This gathered lining bag has finished seams throughout, and since it’s quality quilting cotton, it’s ready to stand up to plenty of “washability.” In fact, you could even toss in the lining bag along with the load of laundry.
Our sample hampers were made with kids in mind, since they are usually the biggest laundry-generators. However, the design is a size and style that would work for anyone. Simply choose the canvas color and cotton lining print combination that best matches your décor.
Our hamper holds its shape thanks to four lightweight dowels hidden inside the corner casings. As mentioned above, these dowels are removable by simply lifting up the cuff and sliding them out, allowing you to wash the exterior or fold it flat for storage.

**Choosing your canvas**

There are usually several weights of solid canvas from which to choose. We shopped with Fabric Depot where we found 9.3 oz, 12 oz and even 14 oz. We used 9.3 oz for our brown Mermaid & Fish hamper and 12 oz for our natural Octopus & Seahorse hamper. Both samples turned out well, although the 12 oz had more ability to stand up on its own when empty. Our first recommendation would be the 12 oz or 14 oz to give you the best stability. That said, our 9.3 oz sample turned out very nicely, and as soon as there was even just a few inches of laundry in the bottom, the instability went away – once it was about a quarter full, it was just as stable as the 12 oz sample. The fun thing about the 9.3 oz is all the beautiful colors you can choose from. In the end, as always, the choice is yours.
Links are included below for the two adorable appliqué templates we created for our under-the-sea theme. You can download the Fish, the Seahorse or both absolutely free. We used, and recommend, raw edge appliqué with a straight stitch. It’s the easiest option to get a clean finish around more complex designs. When/If you launder the exterior, the raw edge will fray slightly, giving it a fun and rustic look. Our designs are formed with open curves to allow for this frayed look.
We used the *Mendocino* collection by Heather Ross for Windam Fabrics, which is still available in limited quantities at retail outlets. We found some at *Fabric Depot* as well as *Fat Quarter Shop*.

And, since we just did a wonderful set of projects in *Neptune and the Mermaid* by Margot Elena for Coats, we would also suggest it as a beautiful collection that would work well with the provided appliqués. This fabric has been so popular it’s becoming hard to find, so if you like it... get it now! Below are a few swatches, to see more, check out the selection at *Fabric.com*.

Although designed as a hamper for laundry, you could also use it to store off-season clothing, soft toys, even yarn or part of
your fabric stash. A handle on each side lets you drag or carry it from room to room.

Our hamper finishes at 21” tall and 14½” deep on all four sides (the base is a square). The lining bag is essentially the same with an extra 2”+ at the top to allow it to fold over the cuff of the exterior. Since it’s soft and flexible, the liner can hold a lot!

**Sewing Tools You Need**

- **Sewing Machine** and standard presser foot
- **Edge Guide foot**: optional but helpful for precise topstitching

**Fabric and Other Supplies**

![Fabric and Sewing Supplies]

**NOTE: The quantities shown below are for ONE hamper and liner.**

- 1½ yards of 60”+ wide heavy canvas fabric in a solid color for the exterior of the hamper
- ¾ yard of 44”+ wide canvas in a contrasting solid color for the optional appliqué (the weight is not as crucial for the appliqué)
- 2¼ yards of 44”+ quilting weight cotton for the lining
- 1 yard of 20”+ heavyweight fusible interfacing; *we used Pellon Peltex*
- ½ yard of 20”+ wide fusible web for the appliqué; *we used Pellon Wonder Under*
- 2 yards of ½” twill tape or similar for the drawcord
- 80” of ¼” doweling; *you need at least 20” for each of the corner channels*
- All purpose thread to match fabric
- See-through ruler
- Fabric pen or pencil
- Seam gauge
- Seam ripper
- Scissors or rotary cutter and mat
- Iron and ironing board
- Straight pins
- Hand sewing needle
Getting Started

1. From the fabric for the exterior, cut the following:
   - ONE 60” (width of fabric-WOF) x 25¼” rectangle for the main exterior panel
   - TWO 15¾” x 15¾” squares for the base panel
   - FOUR 2” x 21” strips for the corner casings
   - TWO 3” x 8” strips for the handles

2. From the fabric for the lining bag, cut the following:
   - TWO 31” wide x 26¼” high rectangles for the main panels
   - ONE 15¾” x 15¾” square for the base panel

3. From the heavyweight interfacing, cut the following:
   - ONE 14¾” x 14¾” square for the base panel
   - FOUR 2¾” x 14¾” rectangles for the upper cuff reinforcement

At Your Sewing Machine & Ironing Board

Create, mark and place the exterior casings

1. Find the four 2” x 21” casing strips. On each strip, press back each 21” side ½”. We are using our [Clover Hot Hemmer](https://www.clover-usa.com).

2. Press down one end ½”. The opposite end remains unfolded and raw.
3. Place the 60” x 25¼” main exterior panel right side up and flat on your work surface.

4. Find your ruler and marking tool. You’ll be working on the right side of your project, so make sure your marking tool is one that will easily wipe away or vanish with exposure to the air or the heat from an iron.

5. Use the diagram above as a guide. The light gray lines show you where each corner will be when the hamper is finished. The casings will be centered over each corner.

6. First find the exact center of the panel. You can fold the panel in half to find the center or measure 30” in from the raw side edge. Draw a vertical line at this center point (this line is shown in red in the diagram above).

7. Measure 7⅞” to the right of center and draw a parallel vertical line. From this second line, measure 14¾” to the right and draw another parallel vertical line.

8. Repeat to draw matching guidelines to the left of center. You should now have four parallel lines. You will use these guide lines to align the outer folded edge of each casing strip.

9. Find the four folded casing strips.

10. Align the outer folded edge of a casing strip with each drawn guideline. For the two casing strips to the right of center that will be the right folded edge. For the two casing strips to the left of center, it will be the left folded edge. The bottom raw edge of the casing strip should be flush with the bottom raw edge of the exterior panel.
11. Pin all four strips in place.

12. Make sure the machine is threaded with thread to best match the exterior fabric in the top and bobbin. Lengthen the stitch.

13. Edgestitch along both sides of each strip. The top and bottom of each strip are unstitched. We used our Janome Edge Guide to keep a super precise and straight seam.
Choose, cut, place, and stitch the optional appliqué

1. Download and print the TWO pattern pieces that make up each of the two appliqué options: the Fish Appliqué or the Seahorse Appliqué. Both options have been bundled into one PDF to make the download easier.

   **IMPORTANT:** Each page of each pattern download is ONE 8½” x 11” sheet. You must print the PDF files at 100%. DO NOT SCALE to fit the page. There is a guide line on each page so you can confirm your final printout is to scale.

2. Cut out each pattern piece along the solid line. Following the arrows printed on the pattern pieces, assemble the two pieces that make up each appliqué template. To assemble, butt the pieces together and tape; do not overlap. Cut out the interior circles and half moons as required per template.

3. Cut a square of fusible web larger than the appliqué template.

4. Following manufacturer’s instructions, fuse the square to the wrong side of the contrasting canvas fabric.
5. Flip the canvas so it is right side up and position the appliqué template over the fused area. We are showing the Fish Template. Pin in place. Cut out the appliqué template.

6. Using small, sharp scissors, cut out the interior openings for the eye and scales.
7. Find the exterior panel, which should have the casings stitched in place. Place the panel right side up and flat on your work surface. The appliqué design goes on the center front of the hamper, centered between the two casing strips. The top of the Fish Template should be 14” up from the bottom raw edge of the exterior panel. The top of the Seahorse Template should be 15” up from the bottom raw edge of the exterior panel.

8. Peel away the paper backing from the appliqué and position it as described on the exterior panel. Following manufacturer’s instructions, fuse the appliqué in place.

9. Re-thread the machine with thread to best match the appliqué in the top and bobbin. Re-set the stitch length to normal or even shorten it a bit. It is easier to go around curves and circles with a shorter stitch length.

10. We recommend stitching the outer perimeter first, then moving to all the interior openings.

11. Go slowly and carefully around each opening, stopping, with your needle in the down position, to adjust and pivot as necessary.
12. When complete, press again to set all the seams and give the fusing an extra bit of heat to confirm it’s been fully adhered.

Create and place the handles

1. Find the two 3” x 8” strips. Fold each strip in half lengthwise so it is now 1½” x 8”. Pin all around, leaving an approximate 2” opening for turning at the middle of the 8” side.
2. Re-thread the machine with thread to best match the exterior canvas in the top and bobbin. Re-set the stitch length to normal.

3. Using a ½" seam allowance, stitch both ends and the long side. Remember to pivot at each corner and to lock the seam at either side of the opening.

4. **Clip the corners.** Trim the seam allowances along each end to ¼". Trim the long seam allowance down to ⅜". Press open all the seam allowances.

5. Turn the handles right side out through their openings. Gently push out all the corners so they are nice and sharp. A long, blunt tool works well for this, such as a knitting needle, point turner or chopstick. Press flat, pressing in the raw edges along the opening so they are flush with the sewn seam.
6. Lengthen the stitch to match what you used to stitch the casings in place. Edgestitch around all four sides of each handle, pivoting at the corners. We used our Janome Edge Guide foot again.

7. Fold each handle in half to find its exact center point. Mark this center point with a pin.

8. Place the exterior panel right side up and flat on your work surface. Find the center point between each of the two outer pairs of casings (what will become the hamper’s side panels). At each center point, measure 15” up from the bottom raw edge of the exterior panel. Mark this point on each side.

9. Align the center point of the handle with your marked side panel point. The TOP edge of the handle is 15” up from the bottom raw edge.
NOTE: Because the two appliqué templates are different heights, this means the bottom of the handle will align with the top of the Fish template and the top of the handle will align with the top of the Seahorse template.

10. Pin each handle in place.

11. Stitch both ends of each handle, using an approximate 1” X Box stitch.
NOTE: If you are new to making an X Box, we have a full tutorial you can review.

Create the exterior tube and prepare the top fold-over edge

1. Along the top of the exterior panel, fold down the raw edge ½” and press to set a crease. You are folding toward the right side of the exterior panel.

2. Fold down an additional ¾” and press again. As above, press firmly enough to set a visible crease. Remember, you are folding toward the right side of the exterior panel.
3. Unfold both the ½” and ¾” folds.

4. With right sides together, align the 25½” ends of the panel. Pin together from bottom to top. In the photo below, you can see how we unfolded the top hem to allow for a complete seam.

5. The machine should still be threaded with thread to best match the exterior fabric. Re-set the stitch length to normal.

6. Using a ½” seam allowance, stitch the center back seam.

7. Press the seam allowance open and flat.
8. Re-set for a lengthened stitch.

9. Topstitch ¼” to either side of the seam to secure the seam allowance in place.

NOTE: If you used the 60” canvas we recommended from Fabric Depot, the selvedges are neatly finished, so no additional seam finishing is required. If you have a raw cut edge, we recommend finishing the seam allowance with your favorite method. We have a four-part tutorial on Machine Sewn Seam Finishes if you don’t have a favorite yet.

10. Find the four 2½” x 14¾” pieces of heavyweight fusible interfacing.

11. Slip the panels under the top folded hem so the edge of the interfacing sits right up against the second fold line.
12. The panels should be placed end to end across the top of the exterior panel - *on the right side of the panel*. The “joints” where the panels come together should be centered over each casing, i.e. at each corner. This slight break in the interfacing will allow the top of the hamper to more easily turn at each corner point.

13. Following manufacturer’s instructions, fuse the four panels in place.

14. The machine should still be threaded with thread to best match the exterior in the top and bobbin and the stitch should still be lengthened.

15. Edgestitch along the inner fold around the entire top.
16. To create the final fold-over "cuff", fold along the bottom of the fused panels, which should be 2½". As above, you are folding to the right side. This final fold conceals the interfacing and the underside of the hem. Press in place.

Inset the exterior base and the base lining

1. Find the two exterior base panel squares and the heavyweight interfacing base panel.
2. Center the interfacing on the wrong side of one base panel so there is ½" of fabric showing beyond the interfacing on all sides. Following manufacturer’s instructions, fuse the interfacing in place. Set aside the other base panel.
3. Find and mark the center point of each side of the base panel.
4. Turn the exterior tube wrong side out and find and mark its corresponding center points along each side.
5. Starting on one side, pin the base panel right sides together with the tube, aligning the centering pin points.
6. Re-set the stitch length to normal.
7. Starting ½" in from the corner, and using a ½" seam allowance, stitch along the first side. Stop the seam at the opposite corner, ½" from the corner. In other words, your seam is starting and stopping ½" in from the edge of the base panel. On this project, your starting and stopping points will align with the edges of the interfacing panel as well as the outer edge of the corner casings.

8. To help make the turn, you can clip the base of the tube at the corners. You are clipping into the corner at a diagonal at a depth of about ⅜". This frees up the seam allowance so you can stitch each side independently.
9. Continue in the same manner to stitch each side of the base to the exterior tube.
   NOTE: These steps are summarized, but if you are new to inserting a base panel, we have a handy step-by-step tutorial.
10. Along one side, fold back the base so just the seam allowance is showing.
11. Find the remaining base panel square. Press back each side ½" so the square has a finished, folded edge along each of its four sides.
12. Place one folded edge along the revealed seam allowance, aligning the fold on the seam line. Pin in place from corner to corner.

13. Edgestitch the base lining panel in place along just this one side, stitching corner to corner.

14. On the remaining three sides, you will hand stitch the lining panel to the base panel seam allowances.
   
   NOTE: “But WHY do I have to hand stitch?” (I heard you shout that from here inside the computer). Because you are working with a large, heavy, and rather awkward box at this point. One side was easy to access, and this gives the lining panel at least one machine-sewn edge for extra security. Jamming the remaining sides under the needle would be challenging at best. But, you still want a finished edge rather than an exposed seam allowance, so a neat hand stitch is a good option.

15. Tuck in the seam allowance so the seam line aligns with the folded edge of the lining panel. Pin the two layers together and whip stitch to secure.
16. Continue along this first side…

17. …then around the corners to secure the remaining two sides of the lining panel.

18. Turn the exterior right side out and push the base down into position. Re-fold the top cuff and re-press if necessary.
Create the drawcord lining bag

1. Find the main lining panels.
2. Similarly to how you handled the top of the exterior, make a hem along the top raw edge of each lining panel.
3. Fold back the raw edge ½” and press well to set a crease.
4. Fold an additional 1” and press again.
5. Unfold so the two crease lines are visible and so you can pin from bottom to top to create full side seams.
6. Place the two panels right sides together, aligning all the raw edges.
7. On one side, simply pin from bottom to top.
8. On the opposite side, you’ll measure to leave an opening at the top for inserting the drawcord. We recommend using different color pins to help cue you to the the opening. We used green.
9. Place the first marking pin ⅛” below the lower visible crease line.
10. From this first marking pin, measure an additional ¾” and place a second marking pin.
NOTE: If you don’t have different colors of pins, you can switch the direction of the marking pins. For example, place the marking pin heads out toward the raw edge while all the rest of the pins are placed heads-in.

11. Re-thread the machine with thread to best match the lining in the top and bobbin.
12. Stitch the first side from bottom to top, using a ½” seam allowance.
13. Stitch the second side from bottom up, stopping and locking the seam at the lower marking pin.

14. Jump up to the upper marking pin and drop the needle back into position for a ½” seam allowance. Lock the beginning of the seam, and continue up to the top of the panel. You have created a tube that is open at the top and bottom.
15. Because this liner bag is inserted wrong side out and is also meant to be able to be laundered frequently, you’ll want to securely finish both side seams.

16. We chose a modified turn-and-stitch seam finish, adding a topstitch to simulate the look of a flat felled seam but without the extra width.

17. Press the seam allowance open and flat.

18. Tuck under each raw edge and press again.
19. Turn the lining tube right side out. Topstitch \(\frac{3}{8}\)" to either side of the seam to secure those folded-under raw edges.

NOTE: Remember, for all kinds of great seam finishing ideas, take a look at our four part series on [Machine Sewn Seam Finishes](#).

20. Fold the top hem back down into position (\(\frac{1}{2}\)" and then 1") to create the drawcord channel. Pin in place all around.
21. Edgestitch close to the inner fold around the entire top opening.

22. Following the same steps as above, as well as our handy base-into-a-tube tutorial, inset the lining base into the lining. First find the center points along each side of the base panel and the bag. Pin the base to the bag, right sides together, aligning each center pin point for each side.

23. Stitch each side in place, using a ½” seam allowance and remember to start and stop the seams ½” in from each corner.
24. Clip into the corners of the bag just a bit to help it ease around the corners of the base panel.

25. Finish the seam allowance on all four sides with your favorite method. We used a standard zig zag.

26. Find the two yard length of twill tape. Attach the large safety pin to one end. Insert that end into the drawcord channel opening.
27. Work it all the way through the channel until it comes back out right where you started. Even up the ends of the tape. Take off the safety pin and tie each end of the twill tape into a small knot.

**Final assembly of the hamper and liner**

1. Find the four 20” dowels. Slip one dowel into each corner casing. The dowel should go all the way down to the base of the exterior and should extend at the top to just below the interfacing.

2. Fold the cuff down into position over all the casings.

3. Turn the lining bag wrong side out and slip it inside the exterior hamper. The opening of the drawcord channel should be centered at the front of the hamper, above the appliqué. Align the center back seam of the lining with the center back seam of the exterior and push the base of the lining all the way to the bottom.

4. As shown in the finished sample images above, pull the top of the lining out and over the cuff. This secures the lining in position and creates a pretty accent around the top of the hamper.

**Contributors**

Project Design: Alicia Thommas
Sample Creation and Instructional Outline: Debbie Guild

Storage Solutions

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