

French Desk Set: Pencil Cups

Editor: Liz Johnson

Thursday, 01 April 2010 9:00



I use my computer all day every day, but that doesn't mean I don't also have about two thousand pens and pencils. As a writer, I love to collect writing implements. I've stored them in everything from flower vases to tiny galvanized buckets, and of course, the requisite artwork-covered tin cans lovingly made by my children. For our French Desk Set series, we knew we needed a couple classier Pencil Cups. Ours are quilted and feature a leather accent tie and cute button. Classy? Yes. Easy to make? Double yes!

You can find a great selection of the beautiful [Moda French General](#) fabric we used online from our friends at [FatQuarterShop](#). Our thanks to them for supplying all the fabric for our French Desk Set tutorials.

Sewing Tools You Need

- Any Sewing Machine (we recommend the [Janome 3160QDC](#))

Fabric and Other Supplies



For ONE Cup... *increase as needed to make enough cups for YOUR 2000 pens and pencils.*

- $\frac{1}{3}$ yard of 44" - 54" wide fabric: *we used Moda's French General Rouenneries in Turkey Red Josephine and Moda's French General Oiseaux Bird Roche*
NOTE: *Josephine was recently discontinued by Moda but is still available at some outlets. It comes in a variety of colors besides the Turkey Red, and any number of other French General patterns would be gorgeous for this project.*
- $\frac{1}{4}$ yard fusible craft fleece
- $\frac{1}{2}$ yard of thin, soft leather or ribbon: *we use strips of moccasin leather*
- 1 button: *we used a faux stone, two-hole button*
- All purpose thread
- Contrasting thread for topstitching (optional)
- See-through ruler
- Fabric pen or pencil
- Iron and ironing board
- Scissors or rotary cutter and mat
- Straight pins
- Tape measure
- Size 14 sewing machine needle
- Curved hand sewing needle
- Tin can: *we reused a 15 oz soup can from our recycle bin*

Getting Started

Measuring time

Measure the circumference of your can by wrapping a tape measure around the middle of the can. Ours measured 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ ".



Measure the height of your can from the very top to the very bottom. Ours measured 4½".



Math time

Width of fabric:

1. To figure the width of your cut fabric, you need to add a seam allowance to the circumference measurement from above.
 $9\frac{1}{4}"$ (circumference) + 1" ($\frac{1}{2}"$ seam allowance on both sides) = $10\frac{1}{4}"$

Length of fabric:

1. To figure the length of your cut fabric, again, you need to add a bottom seam allowance to your height measurement from above. $4\frac{1}{2}"$ (can height) + $\frac{1}{2}"$ (seam allowance) = 5"
2. But, hold on, don't get the scissors, yet! You need to DOUBLE the length measurement because you will to fold the fabric in half during construction.
3. $5"$ (cut height) x 2 (fold fabric in half lengthwise) = 10"
4. The final cut size of your fabric is $10\frac{1}{4}"$ x 10".

Width and length of fusible craft fleece:

1. We only need one layer of fleece in our cover, so it should be cut the same width as the fabric cut ($10\frac{1}{4}"$ in our sample), but only half the length (5" in our sample). However, we also included an extra $\frac{1}{2}"$ to the overall height to add a bit of body at the top edge of the cover.

2. The final cut size of the fusible craft fleece is 10¼" x 5½".

At Your Sewing Machine & Ironing Board

1. Fuse the craft fleece to the wrong side of one half of the cut fabric piece.

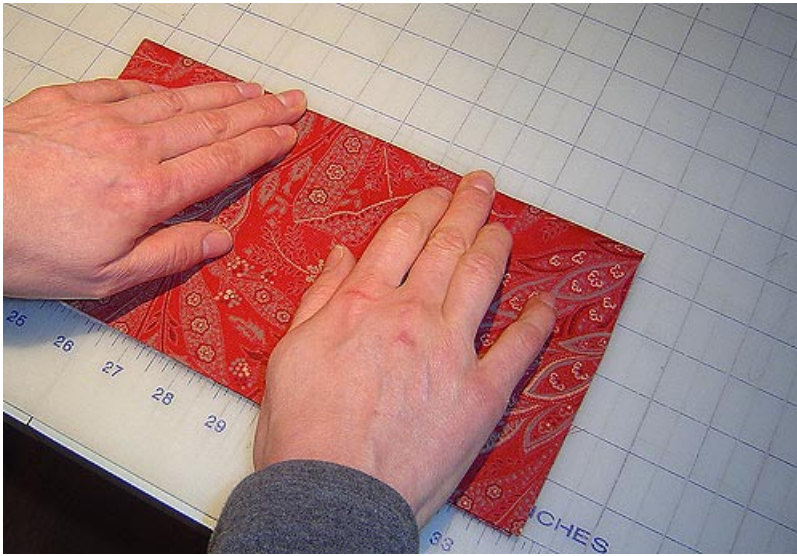
NOTE: If your fabric has a directional print, make sure you place the fusible fleece on what will be the BOTTOM half of your pencil cup cover.



2. Fold the fabric in half to sandwich the fleece between the fabric.



3. Finger press along the fold.



4. Unfold and lay flat on your work surface, right side up.
5. With the see-through ruler and a fabric pencil or pen, draw a horizontal line along the fold line.



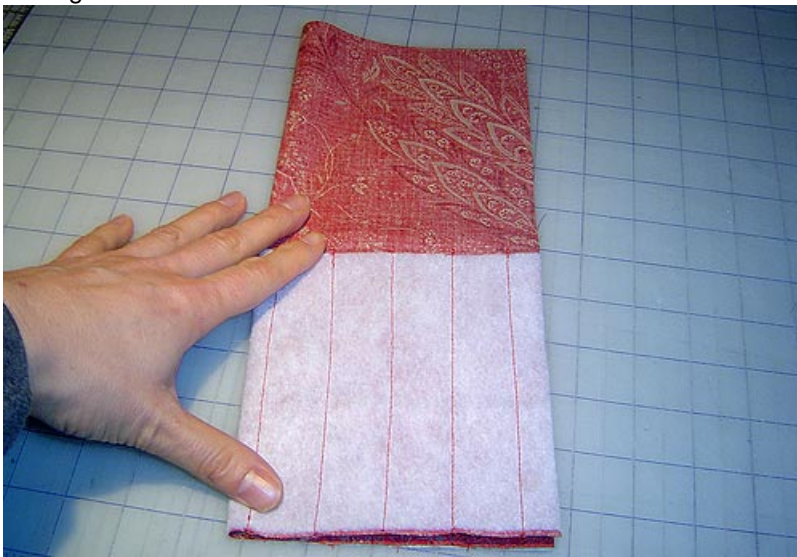
6. Draw vertical lines, perpendicular to the horizontal line you just drew, at 1" intervals. Start 1/2" (remember we added this for the seam allowance) in from the left raw edge, and measure across left to right.



7. Using a straight stitch, quilt along each vertical line.
NOTE: *The quilted section of the pencil cup will be the outside and the unquilted portion will be the lining.*



8. Fold the cover in half lengthwise, right sides together, with the quilted portion on the bottom. You are creating a tube. Pin together.



9. Using a straight stitch and $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance, sew the pencil cover seam. Press seam open.



10. These next couple steps are just a teeny bit tricky, so hang in there with me. First, turn in the raw edges $\frac{1}{2}$ " along the bottom and top of the tube. Press in place. (Sorry about the different fabric in the photo below... I forgot to take this shot when I did the first pencil cup and so took it while making the second.)



NOTE: *We found it was easiest to fold in and press the lining end first and then do the quilted end. These two folded edges will be sewn together in just a minute.*

11. Fold the tube in half, inside itself, with the quilted portion to the inside and the lining to the outside. Be sure to match your seam lines and pressed raw edges.



NOTE: *Why did we turn it to position the quilted front to the inside? Because we will be edge stitching 'in the round' and we want the stitching that shows on the front to be formed by the top thread rather than the bobbin thread. Our Signature Sponsor, Janome provides all the machines we sew on, and there is little difference in the precision of their top thread stitching and their bobbin thread stitching, however, this is NOT the case on all machines. So, whenever possible, it's best to insure your topstitching is formed with your top thread.*

12. If using a contrasting thread for the top and bottom accent edge stitching, re-thread your machine now. You can certainly use matching thread, that's totally up to your 'design eye.' We like the look of the contrast.
13. Using a straight stitch, edge stitch 'in the round', with the lining side against your machine's feed dogs, around both the top and bottom of the pencil cup cover.



14. Turn the pencil cup cover to the right side. Slide it over your can.



Tie and button

1. Cut a 15" length from the soft leather or ribbon. This is your tie.
2. Wrap the tie around the covered can and make a loose knot.



3. Using a curved hand needle, sew the button onto to the cover, catching the tie at the same time.

NOTE: You're using a curved hand needle, because you need to do these steps with the cover on the can to insure your wrap will be tight and secure. The curved needle makes it much easier to sew against the hard surface of the can.



Contributors

Project Design: Alicia Thommas

Sample Creation and Instructional Editing: Jodi Kelly

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