

How to Make Your Own Decorative Pillows and Throws

- Writer: ysykzheng
- Email: ysykart@gmail.com
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Creating your own decorative pillows and throws is a rewarding endeavor that adds a personal touch to your home decor. Not only do these custom pieces showcase your style, but they also enhance the comfort and aesthetic of any room. This extensive guide will delve into the entire process of making decorative pillows and throws, from selecting materials to sewing techniques, and offer creative ideas for personalization.

Understanding the Basics of Decorative Pillows and Throws

1. The Role of Decorative Pillows in Home Decor

- **Aesthetic Appeal:** Decorative pillows serve as accents that can transform the look of a room. They introduce color, pattern, and texture, serving as focal points that draw the eye.
- **Comfort and Functionality:** Beyond their decorative function, pillows add comfort to seating areas, making spaces more inviting.
- **Versatility:** Decorative pillows can easily be changed or updated with the seasons, allowing for an easy refresh without costly renovations.

2. The Importance of Throws

- **Layering Textures:** Throws contribute to the layered look that is essential in interior design. They add warmth and coziness to spaces like living rooms and bedrooms.
- **Functional Use:** Throws are not just for decoration; they provide warmth on chilly nights and can be used practically for snuggling up with a book or while watching TV.

Selecting Materials

Choosing the appropriate materials is crucial when creating your pillows and throws. Here's what to consider:

1. Fabrics for Decorative Pillows

- **Cotton:** A versatile, breathable fabric available in a multitude of colors and patterns. It's easy to work with and suitable for casual pillow designs.
- **Linen:** Known for its natural elegance, linen provides a textured look and feels great against the skin. However, it wrinkles easily, which can add character or necessitate careful handling.
- **Velvet:** Ideal for luxurious pillows, velvet adds depth and sophistication. Its soft texture makes it a popular choice for more formal settings.
- **Canvas:** Durable and sturdy, canvas is perfect for outdoor pillows or high-traffic areas. It can be painted or dyed for customization.

2. Fabrics for Throws

- **Fleece:** Soft, warm, and lightweight, fleece is perfect for cozy throws. It comes in various colors

and patterns, making it easy to find a style that suits your decor.

- **Wool:** A classic choice for throws, wool provides warmth and durability. It can be more expensive but offers a timeless quality.
- **Knit Fabrics:** Knitted fabrics create a beautiful texture and warmth in throws. You can create your own knit or crochet throw if you have the skills.
- **Flannel:** Soft and warm, flannel is excellent for casual throws and is particularly popular during colder months.

3. Filling Options for Pillows

- **Polyester Fiberfill:** An affordable and widely used filling that maintains its shape well. It's hypoallergenic and machine-washable.
- **Down and Feather:** Provides a luxurious, plush feel. These materials form to the shape of your body and are ideal for comfort but may require more care.
- **Memory Foam:** Offers excellent support and is a great option for functional pillows used for sitting or lounging.
- **Natural Fillings:** Kapok, buckwheat hulls, and cotton are eco-friendly options that can appeal to those seeking sustainability.

Tools and Supplies

Before starting your project, gather the necessary tools and supplies. Here's a comprehensive list:

Essential Tools

- **Sewing Machine:** While hand-sewing is possible, a sewing machine speeds up the process and ensures cleaner seams.
- **Scissors:** Sharp fabric scissors are crucial for clean cuts.
- **Measuring Tape:** Accurate measurements ensure that your pillows and throws fit perfectly.
- **Pins or Clips:** These hold fabric pieces together while sewing.
- **Iron and Ironing Board:** Pressing fabric helps achieve crisp edges and professional-looking results.

Additional Supplies

- **Fabric:** Choose your desired fabric for the exterior of your pillows and throws.
- **Filling Material:** Select your preferred filling based on comfort and aesthetic.
- **Thread:** Choose a thread color that matches or complements your fabric.
- **Zippers or Buttons** (optional): For removable covers, zippers or buttons add functionality.
- **Decorative Trims** (optional): Ribbons, tassels, or piping can elevate the design of your pillows or throws.

Designing Your Decorative Pillows

Now that you have all your materials and tools, it's time to start designing your pillows. Here are some steps and techniques to follow:

1. Choosing Shapes and Sizes

- **Standard Pillow Sizes:** Common sizes for decorative pillows include 16x16 inches, 18x18 inches, and 20x20 inches. Consider the size of your furniture when choosing dimensions.
- **Unique Shapes:** Experiment with different shapes like rectangles, rounds, or even heart-shaped pillows for a playful touch.

2. Creating Patterns

- **Simple Patterns:** Stripes, polka dots, or floral prints are classic choices that suit a variety of styles.
- **Mixed Patterns:** Combine various prints and textures to create a more eclectic look. Consider using a neutral base fabric and layering patterned accents.
- **Customized Designs:** If you have artistic skills, consider painting or printing your fabric designs. Fabric paints and stencils allow for unique creations.

3. Drafting Your Design

- **Sketch Your Ideas:** Draw out your pillow designs to visualize how they'll look. Consider the fabric layout, colors, and any additional embellishments.
- **Plan for Seams:** Remember to account for seam allowances (usually about 1/4 inch to 1/2 inch) when cutting your fabric.

Step-by-Step Guide to Making Decorative Pillows

Follow these steps to create your decorative pillows:

1. Measure and Cut Fabric

- **Determine Dimensions:** Decide on the finished size of your pillow. Add seam allowance to each side. For example, if you want a 16x16-inch pillow, cut two pieces of fabric measuring 17x17 inches.
- **Cut the Fabric:** Using your fabric scissors, carefully cut out your fabric pieces according to your measurements.

2. Prepare for Sewing

- **Pin the Pieces Together:** Place the fabric pieces right sides together (the sides that will be visible). Pin or clip them along the edges to hold them in place.
- **Mark Openings:** If you're adding a zipper or leaving an opening for stuffing, mark where you'll leave the gap.

3. Sew the Edges

- **Sew Along the Edges:** Use your sewing machine to sew around the edges of the fabric, leaving the marked opening unsewn. Use a straight stitch and backstitch at the beginning and end for security.
- **Trim Excess Fabric:** Trim the corners of the fabric to reduce bulk and help achieve sharper corners when turned inside out.

4. Turn and Stuff

- **Turn the Pillow Inside Out:** Carefully pull the fabric through the opening so the right side of the fabric is now outward.
- **Fill the Pillow:** Insert your chosen filling until the pillow reaches your desired firmness. For polyester fiberfill, use small clumps to avoid lumps.

5. Close the Opening

- **Hand Sew or Machine Sew:** Depending on the opening's size, either hand-stitch it closed with a slip stitch or use your sewing machine to finish the edge.

6. Final Touches

- **Fluff and Adjust:** Once the pillow cover is filled and closed, fluff it to distribute the filling evenly. Adjust the corners for a polished look.

Creating Throws: A Step-by-Step Approach

Making a throw blanket can be straightforward, especially if you opt for a no-sew method. Here's how to create a simple throw:

1. Choose Your Fabric

- **Fabric Selection:** Opt for a soft fabric that suits your decor and desired texture, such as fleece, flannel, or knit.
- **Measure Your Throw Size:** Common throw sizes range from 50x60 inches to 60x80 inches. Adjust the measurement based on your preference.

2. Cutting the Fabric

- **Cut the Desired Length:** Using sharp fabric scissors, cut your fabric to the measured size.
- **Fringe Option:** If you'd like to add a fringe, cut strips about 4-5 inches deep along the edges of the throw before finishing it.

3. No-Sew Method (Optional)

For a quick and easy no-sew throw:

- **Tying Method:** Instead of sewing, you can tie the fringe pieces together in knots to secure the layers. This creates a fun, textured edge.

4. Finishing Touches

- **Iron if Necessary:** If your fabric has wrinkles, use an iron on the appropriate setting to achieve a smooth finish.
- **Personalized Embellishments:** Consider adding decorative elements like pom-poms or stitched designs to make your throw unique.

Personalizing Your Pillows and Throws

To truly make your pillows and throws stand out, consider adding personalized touches:

1. Monogramming

Add initials or names using embroidery techniques:

- **Hand Embroidery:** Use embroidery floss to hand-stitch initials onto your pillow or throw.
- **Machine Embroidery:** If you have access to an embroidery machine, you can easily personalize your textiles with names or meaningful phrases.

2. Printed Fabrics

Printing on fabric allows for custom designs that reflect your personality:

- **Fabric Paints:** Create your own designs using fabric paints. Stencils can help you achieve intricate patterns.
- **Iron-On Transfers:** Print your designs on transfer paper and apply them using an iron for a clean

finish.

3. Appliqué Techniques

Adding fabric appliqués can create dimension and interest:

- **Layered Fabrics:** Cut shapes from different fabrics and sew or iron them onto your pillows or throws for a playful look.
- **Themed Designs:** Consider seasonal themes (like flowers for spring or snowflakes for winter) to change with the seasons.

Care and Maintenance of Decorative Pillows and Throws

To keep your decorative pillows and throws looking their best over time, proper care is essential:

1. Cleaning Techniques

- **Washable Fabrics:** If you used machine-washable fabrics, follow care labels for washing instructions. Generally, cold water and gentle cycles are best.
- **Spot Cleaning:** For non-washable fabrics, spot cleaning with mild detergent and a damp cloth can remove stains effectively.

2. Storage Considerations

When changing decor seasonally, store pillows and throws properly:

- **Clean Before Storing:** Ensure all items are clean before packing them away to prevent odors and mildew.
- **Breathable Containers:** Store items in breathable bags or containers to protect them from dust while allowing air circulation.

3. Regular Fluffing

Regularly fluff your pillows and throws to maintain shape and comfort:

- **Pillow Fluffing:** Shake and squeeze pillows to redistribute the filling, keeping them plump.
- **Throw Maintenance:** Fold throws neatly or hang them to prevent creases and maintain their softness.

Creative Ideas for Using Pillows and Throws

Once you've created your decorative pillows and throws, think about how to use them effectively in your space:

1. Layering Textiles

- **Mixing Patterns and Textures:** Layer pillows of different patterns and textures on sofas or beds to create a visually exciting area.
- **Using Throws Creatively:** Drape throws over furniture, or fold them neatly at the foot of a bed for added visual interest.

2. Seasonal Decor

- **Changing with the Seasons:** Create a collection of pillows and throws that represent seasonal themes (light colors for summer, deeper hues for autumn).
- **Holiday Specific Designs:** Customize pillows and throws for holidays, such as festive patterns for

Christmas or themed designs for Halloween.

3. Functional Uses

- **Supportive Seating:** Use decorative pillows for additional back support on chairs or sofas, enhancing both comfort and design.
- **Cozy Corners:** Set up reading nooks with plenty of pillows and a soft throw for a welcoming atmosphere.

Conclusion

Making your own decorative pillows and throws is a fulfilling way to express creativity while enhancing the beauty and comfort of your home. From selecting the right materials and tools to personalizing your designs, the process is both enjoyable and rewarding. By following the techniques outlined in this guide, you can create stunning pieces that reflect your style and bring warmth to your living spaces.

As you gain experience and confidence in your sewing skills, feel free to experiment with new designs, fabrics, and techniques. The possibilities are endless, and the only limit is your imagination. Whether you choose to adorn your own home or create gifts for loved ones, handmade pillows and throws will undoubtedly make a lasting impression. Happy crafting!

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