

# How to Make Your Own Decorative Pillows

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Decorative pillows can transform the mood and aesthetic of a room instantly. Whether you want to add a touch of color, texture, or personalized flair, making your own decorative pillows is a rewarding project that allows for creativity and customization. This comprehensive guide will explore everything you need to know about crafting your own decorative pillows, from selecting materials to sewing techniques and decoration ideas.

## Understanding Decorative Pillows

### 1. The Role of Decorative Pillows

Decorative pillows serve multiple purposes in home decor:

- **Aesthetic Appeal:** They enhance the overall visual interest of a space, serving as accent pieces that can tie a room together.
- **Comfort:** Pillows provide added comfort to seating areas, making spaces more inviting.
- **Versatility:** They can be easily changed out with seasons or trends, allowing for quick updates without a complete redesign.

### 2. Types of Decorative Pillows

Understanding the different types of decorative pillows can help you choose which styles to make:

- **Throw Pillows:** Typically smaller and used for accenting sofas or chairs.
- **Floor Cushions:** Larger, more substantial pillows meant for sitting on the floor or creating casual seating arrangements.
- **Bolster Pillows:** Long, cylindrical pillows that add dimension to beds or sofas.
- **Lumbar Pillows:** Rectangular pillows that provide support for the lower back while adding style.

## Gathering Materials

Creating your own decorative pillows begins with gathering the right materials. Here's what you'll need:

### 1. Fabric

Choosing the right fabric is crucial, as it affects both the look and feel of your pillow:

- **Cotton:** Easily available and comes in various patterns and colors. It's durable and machine washable.
- **Linen:** Offers a natural texture and elegant appearance but may require more care.
- **Velvet:** Adds luxury and depth but requires special handling during cleaning.
- **Outdoor Fabrics:** For pillows used outdoors, select weather-resistant fabrics to withstand the elements.

### 2. Pillow Inserts

Deciding on the type of insert you want is essential to achieving the desired firmness and comfort:

- **Polyester Fiberfill:** Affordable and widely available; it provides soft support.
- **Down or Feather Fill:** Offers a luxurious feel but can be pricier; great for plush, softer pillows.
- **Foam Inserts:** Best for structured, firm pillows.

### 3. Sewing Supplies

Gather the necessary sewing supplies:

- **Sewing Machine:** While hand-sewing is an option, a sewing machine makes the process quicker.
- **Thread:** Choose a thread that matches your fabric.
- **Pins:** Essential for holding fabric pieces together before sewing.
- **Scissors:** Sharp fabric scissors ensure clean cuts.
- **Measuring Tape:** For accurate measurements of fabric and pillow inserts.

### 4. Optional Decorations

Consider optional decorative elements to personalize your pillows:

- **Ribbons or Trims:** Add texture or a pop of color.
- **Appliqué or Embroidery:** Personalize with designs or initials.
- **Buttons or Zippers:** Use for closures or embellishments.

## Designing Your Pillow

### 1. Choosing Dimensions

The size of your pillow will depend on its intended use and the furniture it will accompany. Common dimensions include:

- **Throw Pillows:** Typically range from 16x16 inches to 20x20 inches.
- **Lumbar Pillows:** Often measure around 12x20 inches or larger.
- **Floor Cushions:** Can vary greatly, commonly at least 24x24 inches.

### 2. Selecting a Color Palette

Choose a color palette that complements your existing decor:

- **Neutral Tones:** Create a calming atmosphere and allow for versatility.
- **Bold Colors:** Add vibrancy and energy to a space.
- **Patterns:** Consider using patterned fabrics to introduce visual interest.

### 3. Sketching a Design

Before cutting any fabric, spend some time sketching your design:

- **Shape:** Decide if you want traditional squares/rectangles, or explore unique shapes like stars or hearts.
- **Decoration:** Plan any additional decorations or embellishments.

## Cutting Your Fabric

### 1. Measuring and Marking

Once you have your design, measure and mark the fabric accurately:

- **Cutting Dimensions:** Remember to account for seam allowances, typically about ½ inch to 1 inch

depending on your preference.

For example, if you want a finished 20x20-inch pillow, cut two squares of fabric measuring 21x21 inches (adding seam allowance).

## 2. Cutting Techniques

Use sharp fabric scissors for clean edges:

- **Straight Cuts:** Follow marked lines carefully for straight-edged pillows.
- **Curved Shapes:** If you're creating rounded or unique shapes, take your time cutting to maintain the integrity of the design.

# Sewing Your Decorative Pillow

## 1. Preparing the Fabric

Start by prepping your fabric for sewing:

- **Ironing:** Iron the fabric to eliminate wrinkles and achieve crisp edges.
- **Pinning:** Place the two pieces of fabric together, right sides facing each other, and pin them securely along the edges.

## 2. Sewing the Edges

Using the sewing machine, follow these steps to sew the pillow:

- **Starting Point:** Begin sewing at one corner, backstitching to secure the thread.
- **Sewing Technique:** Sew along the pinned edge, maintaining a consistent seam allowance.
- **Leaving an Opening:** Leave a gap of about 4-6 inches unsewn to allow for turning and stuffing later.

## 3. Turning the Pillow

Carefully turn the pillow inside out through the opening you left:

- **Pushing Corners:** Use a chopstick or similar tool to gently push out the corners for a crisp finish.

## 4. Stuffing the Pillow

Insert your chosen pillow insert:

- **Filling Technique:** If using fiberfill, stuff it evenly to avoid lumps. For foam or down inserts, ensure they fit snugly.

## 5. Closing the Opening

Once stuffed, it's time to close the pillow:

- **Hand Stitching:** Use a needle and thread to sew the opening closed with a slip stitch for an invisible finish.
- **Machine Closure (Optional):** Alternatively, if you prefer, you can use a zipper or buttons for closure, allowing for easy washing and refills.

# Decorating Your Pillows

## 1. Adding Embellishments

Consider incorporating decorative elements to enhance the look of your pillows:

- **Embroidery:** Hand-stitch or machine-embroider designs or initials onto the pillow surface.
- **Fabric Paint:** Use fabric paint to create custom designs or stencils.
- **Trims and Ribbons:** Sew or glue decorative trims, tassels, or ribbons along the edges for added flair.

## 2. Mixing and Matching

To create an eclectic look, mix different textures, patterns, and sizes:

- **Variety:** Combine solid colors, stripes, florals, and geometric prints for visual interest.
- **Layering:** Stack pillows of various sizes and shapes on sofas or beds for a cozy feel.

# Caring for Your Decorative Pillows

## 1. Routine Maintenance

Proper care keeps your pillows looking fresh:

- **Dusting:** Shake and fluff pillows regularly to maintain their shape.
- **Spot Cleaning:** Address stains immediately with a damp cloth and mild detergent.

## 2. Washing Your Pillows

If your pillows are machine washable, follow these guidelines:

- **Check Labels:** Always check fabric care labels first.
- **Gentle Cycle:** Wash on a gentle cycle with cold water; air dry or tumble low if safe.

## 3. Seasonal Storage

When not in use, store pillows properly to prolong their life:

- **Clean First:** Ensure pillows are clean before storing to prevent mildew.
- **Storage Bags:** Use breathable storage bags or boxes to protect them from dust.

# Creative Pillow Ideas

Here are some fun and creative pillow ideas to inspire your projects:

## 1. Patchwork Pillows

Utilize leftover fabric scraps to create delightful patchwork pillows:

- **Designing Patterns:** Arrange pieces to create interesting patterns or shapes.
- **Sewing Technique:** Use a sewing machine to piece together fabric swatches before constructing the pillow.

## 2. Personalized Pillows

Add personal touches to your pillows:

- **Family Names or Initials:** Embroider or paint family names or initials directly onto the fabric.

- **Travel Memories:** Use maps or travel-themed fabric to celebrate favorite destinations.

### 3. Seasonal Decor Pillows

Create pillows that reflect the changing seasons:

- **Spring Flowers:** Use floral patterns or pastel colors for spring.
- **Autumn Leaves:** Opt for warm hues and leaf designs for fall.
- **Winter Whimsy:** Choose holiday-themed fabrics for winter pillows.

### 4. Textured Pillows

Experiment with different textures to add depth:

- **Ruffled Edges:** Create ruffles from fabric strips and sew them onto the edge of the pillow for a feminine touch.
- **Pom-pom Trim:** Attach pom-poms or fringes around the edges for playful details.

## Conclusion

Making your own decorative pillows is a fulfilling and creative endeavor that can breathe new life into your home decor. By selecting the right materials, understanding basic sewing techniques, and infusing your personal style, you can create beautiful, custom pillows that reflect your taste and enhance any space. From simple throw pillows to intricate designs, the possibilities are endless. Embrace the process, enjoy the journey, and let your creativity flourish as you craft these delightful accents for your home. With a little effort and imagination, you can elevate your living space with personalized touches that bring joy and comfort to your everyday life.

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