

## TIP SHEETS

Gifts for \$5 and/or in 2 hours or less

### I. General Tips and Info:

FABRIC & SUCH: Keep a stash of small cuts of unusual fabrics/accessories.

- Saves time and energy when you want to whip up a gift. Spend more time creating than running around to shop.
- Saves money because you can stock up on sale items. Never buy unless on sale or with coupons!!!! Typically, this results in a 40% savings.
- Look for "project" materials and accessories for your stash, i.e.:

Wedding: (white and cream lace, satin or taffeta for instance)

Often 40 to 50% off (*sometimes you can find the bolt with a dirty salvage, ask the manager to mark it down*). It's typically 54" wide (*if it's something I can see in a wide variety of projects, I get half a yard for around \$5. If not, 1/3 yard for approx \$3.50*). Because it's 54" wide, I can usually get 2 to 3 projects out of 1/3 yard. It's easy to hem and finishes beautifully if you use a matching rayon thread; also found in home dec department.

Silk: Same theory, width, and price. I buy home dec varieties (Dupioni). Remember to use a dry iron and lower setting. Test your iron on a small corner. Don't forget to turn those small leftovers into beautiful ribbons!

Velvet: Same theory, width, and price. Try shiny thread (rayon or embroidery), a longer stitch (3.5 or 4), and running a double strand through the needle... these threads, combined with a slighter lower tension, tend to spring to the top, rather than sink down into the nap. If it likes to scoot, spritz the back till it's really damp, pin it to drapery interlining (very thick flannel) or muslin. Pin it while it's damp and flat, then focus on keeping your seaming edges together.

Home Dec: Same theory, width, and price. Look for colors and textures that compliment your ribbon, button, lace, etc., stash. It's the pairing up (when selecting stash) and the element of surprise that produces High Impact.

Leather, Ultra Suede: Same theory, width, and price. Be sure to use a MicroTex needle if sewing by machine. A small sharp needle for hand sewing.

Burlap: Comes in all colors, approximately \$10 to \$12 a yard. You can make a dozen projects with half a yard (\$5; \$2.50 with coupon). Use fray check on corners or apply embellishments. Have fun with this!

EMBELLISHMENTS: Make it fun to fabricate and receive, go over the top.

Ribbon: Look down, the best buys are always on the lowest shelves. Stock up on the basics (narrow and medium widths) when on sale. Add to your stash each time they're on sale. Look for variegated and off color shades; the element of surprise! Load up from the sale bins at Christmas... dollar store too! Cut ends at an angle to prevent fraying.

Lace: Same principals for lace on the spools or by the yard. Buy when on sale/coupons. Hobby Lobby is usually 30% less.

- Look for lace, vintage linens, and doilies at yard sales, antique malls and consignment stores. Look in terms of how many projects you make out of a dollie, napkin, placemat, etc., (think Swiss Cheese). A \$3.50 doily can produce high impact for 4 or 5 projects! Don't be discouraged by stains; cotton can be treated/soaked to remove stains (tea, coffee, lipstick and wine). If you find a good buy but it's stained: boil 2 cups water, add a tab or two of Cascade dishwasher soap and baking soda. Let it soak several hours, even over night. I've had to retreat/re-boil a few pieces, however; this process has removed every single stain for me!

Accessories: Look for interesting buttons, \$1.00 strands of pearls, small scissors or "theme" trinkets when on sale/coupon, yard sales, etc. Also, sheet- music and vintage linens.

### Other Helpful Supplies:

- Keep half a yard of medium gauge clear vinyl (tablecloth) sew you can see the pattern on your fabric when you cut out a heart, oval, etc.
- Half a yard of Wonder Under and ¼ yard Pellon Peltex 70 (fuse to front and back pieces of fabric, then fuse together for more body on tags, bookmarks, banners, etc.). Be sure to steam the edges several times to form a tight bond and prevent fraying.
- Parchment Paper to protect iron and board when fusing. Freezer Paper to print on fabric.
- Poly Fill and Poly or Cotton Batting. To enhance the smooth finished look and feel, I like to encase filling between 2 layers of thin batting (i.e., vintage napkin pillows). For bolster pillows, I save by un-rolling (release volume, if needed, put in dryer for 5 minutes), then re-rolling high loft batting and use it as a pillow form. You can get half a doz plus from a queen batting, under \$4 if on sale or a coupon.

## 2. Application Tips for Class Samples:

### Pillows:

- I soften the corners by creating a slight curve at each point.
- To achieve a smoother look, consider making an inner case out of low loft batting before you stuff. I don't like to over-stuff pillows that are intended for décor.  
--When working with 3 layers of fabric (i.e., my burlap) stuff behind the burlap.
- Ties: Determine the desired length for both ties; cut strip at that length and approx 2.50" inches wide. Press the strip in half (1.25") to provide a halfway mark; unfold and press each raw edge to the halfway mark. Fold in half (now approx .60 and the desired length), press, fold the ends up and press, press the entire length. Stitch in place and tie!
- For bolsters, you can save at least an hour by running the tubes to each end, sew hems wide enough to encase elastic or ties; synch and knot.

## Table Runner and Over-Sized Napkins:

- I started with a 22" square of fabric to allow for ½" double folded hems and a 20" finished napkin. Vintage style linen napkins often finish at 11 X 22" however, you can choose any size, just be consistent.
- ILO spending \$4 per napkin ring, consider using large buttons and ribbon\*. I start with 8" lengths of ribbon, feed both ends of the ribbon thru the holes to the back of the buttons, and then feed them back thru the holes to front. Run both ends of your ribbon thru the upper loop that was formed and pull to secure allowing for 2 to 3" tails for embellishment and easy removal and replacement.
- For a diamond grid quilted Table Runner, mark your grid corner to corner. Begin each line of stitching by locking in your stitches, then advance to a 3.5 stitch length (embellishes).
- To finish a runner or wall hanging using the backing as your borders and binding (all in one step): Cut your front/center to the desired finished size. Cut your backing approximately 5" wider and longer. Bring your backing around to the front and fold and press it to fit (leaves a 2.5" border). Don't forget to miter your corners!

*\*I found the large colorful buttons in a six pack for \$2.29 (.38 cents each) and a 9 foot spool of ribbon on bottom shelf for .50 cents; total cost approximately .45 cents as compared to \$4.00 minimum per napkin ring.*

## Back, Border and Bind in One Step:

- Cut your backing at least 5" longer and wider than your center (this allows for a 2.5" double folded border/binding). Bring the backing around to the front, double fold and press in place. Don't forget your mitered corners! Stitch in place using matching, or complimentary colored thread.

Tea Cozy: To save at least 1.5 hours, consider fabricating your tea cozy "sling style," rather than with a set-in fitted bottom.

- Cut outer and lining fabrics in rectangles approximately 2 times the vertical girth height, of your tea pot, plus 6 inches, by the width (widest part/girth) of your pot, plus 2". Cut 2 rectangles of batting 1" smaller in length and width. Press a single ½ inch hem down each side of your face and lining fabrics. Slip your batting under those ½ hems and pin in place (repeat this step for your lining). If quilting is desired, you will quilt your outer and it's batting, and your lining and it's batting separately, now. With right sides of outer and lining together, stitch the tops. Mark and stitch a casing line approx 2.5 inches from the top of the front and back. Mark and stitch a second casing line below the first on both ends, deep enough to encase your ribbons, plus approx 1/4 inch. Stitch the pinned sides down, being sure not to stitch over your casing lines. Fit your sling to your tea pot, marking an opening large enough for the spout and handle. Add your ribbons, draw them snugly over the top of your pot, and tie a beautiful bow on each side. This process took me less than 1.5 hours and less than \$5.00.

### Wall Hangings and Structured Pieces:

- Quilt the top and batting and then quilt the back and batting. Or, sandwich 2 layers of batting between your fabrics (quilt style). Pin or use the largest stitch possible to baste around all 4 sides to prevent shifting of layers. Proceed as usual to complete your piece. (Depending on your process, you can strategically place a strip of card stock at the top to prevent bowing once it is hung. This works especially well with the next process:

### Tags, Bookmarks,

To fabricate pieces that resemble Card-stock or paper:

- Tags and bookmarks: For a somewhat less rigid piece, cut your focus and backing fabrics 1" larger than the desired finished length and width. Cut 2 sheets of fusible web ½" smaller than your fabrics. Center one layer of the fusible web (my favorite is Wonder Under) on the wrong side of each fabric, press with a hot dry iron, cool and remove paper. Stack both fused pieces with the fused web sandwiched inside, then, starting in the center and working out in a sunburst direction, fuse together until smooth. Press again (with steam if your fabric will tolerate), being sure to completely seal the edges. Cut the fused piece to the desired size. If fused well, the edges will not fray.
- If you want a stiffer piece, you can place a piece of craft interfacing between the fusible web, or use Pellon Peltex 70 fuse-a-shade or Buckram between the Wonder Under pieces.

Hoop Art: When hooping sheer or lace fabrics, recommend you apply several short tabs of 2-faced tape between the hoop and fabric to prevent slippage.

### Rouching:

Stretch the elastic to achieve the same length as your finished piece. Remember, the wider the elastic (1/2" or more), the tighter your rouching. When stitching, once you advance onto the fabric and inch, use your right hand to tightly lead the elastic and create your beautiful rouching.

It was great seeing you Monday! If you have any questions, let me know! You can email me at [csharkyc@aol.com](mailto:csharkyc@aol.com) or text me at 804-687-4924. Be sure to use ASG or Sewing in your subject sew I know it's not spam. Happy Sewing Friends!

*Sharky*



- Attach to samples:
- Linen Envelope Pillows: Up-cycled from 1 of a set of 6 napkins for \$7.00 at a consignment store. About 30 minutes. Cost including ribbon and filling: \$1.35
- The Fancy Cat made from a panel of 16 Kitties for \$6.00 or .40 cents each. The burlap was \$6.00 and a coupon; 54" wide. Less than 1 hour and approx \$1.00
- The embroidered piece is a Loralie SophistiKitties design. Less than 30 minutes and approx \$1.00
  - For a smoother look, I like to stuff behind the burlap.
  - Don't forget to fray check your corners to prevent unraveling.
- Envelope Pillow (w/in a pillow with Ties): Determine the desired length for both ties; cut strip at that length and approx 2.50" inches wide. Press the strip in half (1.25") to provide a halfway mark. Unfold and press each raw edge to the halfway mark. Fold in half (now approx .60" wide and the desired length. Press, fold the ends up and press, press the entire length. Stitch in place and tie! Approx 2 hours and \$5.00
- For bolsters, you can save at least an hour by running the tubes to each end, sew hems wide enough to encase elastic or ties; synch and knot. I use high-loft batting to configure pillow forms. Less than 2 hours and \$5.00