

scrappy coasters

sewing tutorial



I am always looking for ways to use up fabric scraps. These little coasters use up even the smallest of fabric strips and they make a lovely gift. I find them sort of addictive to make... I love the challenge of making each coaster different while keeping the set visually connected.

MATERIALS & TOOLS (photo a)

- Pre-washed fabric of similar weights (see note): (4) 4x4" squares for the back side and enough torn strips to patch the front.
- Embroidery floss (see note)
- Hand sewing needle
- Glue stick
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Iron (optional)

A note on fabric and thread: I used 9 ounce plant-dyed organic cotton/hemp fabric for this project. Use what you have on hand, I just recommend that you don't mix fabric weights within a single side, though the front and back sides can be different weight fabrics. Using pre-washed fabrics that are made of the same materials will ensure that your coasters still look nice after they are washed (for example I would not recommend mixing cotton and wool). For a thicker coaster (or if you prefer to hide the back side of the patchwork stitching) you can add a third layer, just make sure that it is also the same material. For the tone-on-tone project, I used 4 different colors of embroidery floss. With colorful patchwork, I prefer a single high-contrast color (I used black) to make the stitching pop. For both projects, all the stitching is done with 2 plies. I stitched my coasters entirely by hand, but you could use a sewing machine.

1. Lay out the (4) 4x4" pieces of backing fabric. Tear your patchwork strips so they are 4" long and of varying widths (as a way to use up scraps and because the variation in width is visually interesting). You may need to iron your torn strips so they lay flat.

2. Fill the 4x4" backing fabric squares with overlapping strips. They should overlap by at least 1/4" to ensure that both layers will be caught in the stitching that will connect the strips to each other. Vary the way the strips overlap. **(photo b)**

NOTE: If you would like a thicker coaster, or if you do not want the stitching that connects the strips to show through to the back side **(photo f)**, you can add another 4x4" square to the back in step 5. Stitching the perimeter will connect all three layers. In this step you would be laying your fabric strips on the middle layer.

3. When you are happy with the collection you have created, carefully lift the strips and apply a bit of glue stick to hold them in place on to the backing fabric.

4. With 2-ply embroidery floss, stitch the strips on to the backing fabric using various decorative stitch marks. **(photo c)** See the photos on the next page for more inspiration.

5. Stitch a border around the perimeter of your coaster. **(photos d & e)** I used the running stitch, but you could use a more decorative stitch if you prefer. If your two layers do not align, you may need to trim a bit.



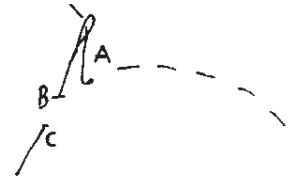


NOTES & BASIC STITCHES:

- Embroidery floss has 6 plies (threads) and the plies are easily separated. Most embroidery patterns use 1 to 3 plies. Long strands can get easily tangled, cutting them to 18-inch strands helps prevent this. It also helps to very gently separate the pieces from the center of the strand instead of starting at one end.
- If your thread becomes too short while you are sewing, attach a new piece of thread to the end with a knot. Tie it close to the felt and hide the knot.
- Keep stitches even and hide knots.

RUNNING & DOUBLE RUNNING STITCH

- Start with the threaded needle on the back side of your felt and bring it up through the felt (A) and back down into the front side (B).
- Pull it the whole way through, then bring the threaded needle back up through the felt from the back side (C).
- Try to keep the size of the stitches and the space between them consistent.
- A double running stitch is used to make a solid line.
- Start with a running stitch. When you reach the end, reverse your direction and fill in the space between the stitches with another running stitch so you have a solid line.



ABOUT KATA GOLDA:
 Alison Kaplan is the creative force behind Kata Golda, a craft studio in the mossy seaside town of Port Townsend, WA. Kata Golda is a flourishing business that explores crafts such as needlework, letterpress printing, bookbinding, block printing, hand-thrown pottery, hand-dyed textiles, and jewelry making. Alison finds inspiration in the woods, farmlands, and beaches of her Pacific Northwest wonderland. See her work at www.katagolda.com.