



Let's Make Pillowcases for Ryan's Case of Smiles

Madam Sew is sewing pillowcases for Ryan's Case of Smiles! We are Sewing For Smiles in 2024! Below, you will find a full tutorial and video on how to make a pillowcase for a hospital pillow. A project anyone with basic sewing skills can tackle!

We know a lot of people in our great sewing and quilting community are sewing for different charity organizations. After the great success of our charity sewing collaboration with the [Pachamama project](#) three years ago, where the Madam Sew community sewed 1000 sanitary pads for refugees and women in poverty, we are sure we will do the same or better for Ryan's Case for smiles.

Why did we choose Ryan's Case for Smiles? Because we think we can all make a difference by sewing something as easy as a colorful pillowcase. By giving a child in the hospital a whimsical pillowcase, Ryan's Case For Smiles helps the child with the stress and emotional impact of their illness. Receiving a beautiful and fun pillowcase gives the children an uplifting boost. If you want to learn more about the project, click through to [The MadamSew Sewing for Smiles project page](#) where you can also find a link to the organization and see how many pillowcases are being made by the Madam Sew community. This project will run through August 2024. How many pillowcases can we, as a warm sewing community, make in 6 months? For every pillowcase you send us, we will donate one dollar to Ryan's Case for Smiles up to \$1500! Of course, you can continue to make pillowcases without us and send them directly to a Ryan's Case for Smiles chapter, even after august 2024. They will be very grateful for your help!

Over the weekend, I started assembling some fabric leftovers to make my first pillowcase but then noticed that the organization is using a completely different method of making a pillowcase, which is called 'the hot dog way'. I have never heard of it, but it is amazingly easy to make a pillowcase with this method. So let's follow their lead!

A finished pillowcase with these measurements is about 30 by 20 inches which is a size that will fit most hospital pillows.



Let's brighten a child's day together!

What You Need to Make a Pillowcase

Making this pillowcase is very simple and straightforward. You just need some basic sewing tools like fabric shears or a rotary cutter (+ mat and ruler), a sewing machine, an iron, pins or clips, fabric and matching thread.

As the goal is to cheer up kids and pre-teens with medical conditions there are some requirements for the fabrics that are used.

Fabric Requirements

- Fabric needs to be 100% cotton
- Choose colorful and cheerful fabrics with kid-friendly designs or designs that would speak to pre-teens. The age group is 1-18 years old.
- Please avoid:
 - Red fabric

- Flannel fabric
- Fabric with glitter
- Any fabric with religious holiday themes
- Prewash all fabrics that are used, **please do not use scented detergents, dryer-sheets or fabric softeners**

The pattern we are using consists of two fabric pieces, both 100% cotton. The smallest fabric piece is used for the double sided band. You'll need about a $\frac{1}{3}$ yard of this fabric. The bigger fabric piece (in my pillowcase this is the one with a print) is for the main body. For this one you need $\frac{3}{4}$ of a yard of fabric. These are the actual sizes you will need to cut:

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Main Body | 40 ½ by 26 ½ inches |
| Double-Sided Band | 10 ½ by 40 ½ inches |

If you are using fabric with a directional design, make sure to cut the fabric the right way. The 40 inch edge is the side seam, the 26 inch edge is the top or bottom. This is a little tip, out of experience :-)... I cut the fabric with the little lions the wrong way. So, make sure your design is facing the 26 inch edge and not the 40 inches edge. You don't want to have the design facing sideways. The blue fabric with little robots is multidirectional so direction doesn't matter as much. I will go and get some new lion fabric next week.

Let's make a pillowcase!

To make this tutorial I made two pillowcases, one with blue fabric with little robots and one with soft pink fabric with lions. For the band I used the same fuschia cotton fabric. Some steps will be shown with the lion fabric, others with the robots.



1. Cut the Fabric to Size

Whether you are using one or two types of fabrics, you need a big piece for the main body and a smaller one for the double-sided band:

| | |
|-----------|---------------------|
| Main Body | 40 ½ by 26 ½ inches |
| Band | 10 ½ by 40 ½ inches |



2. Sew The Double Sided Band on the Main Piece

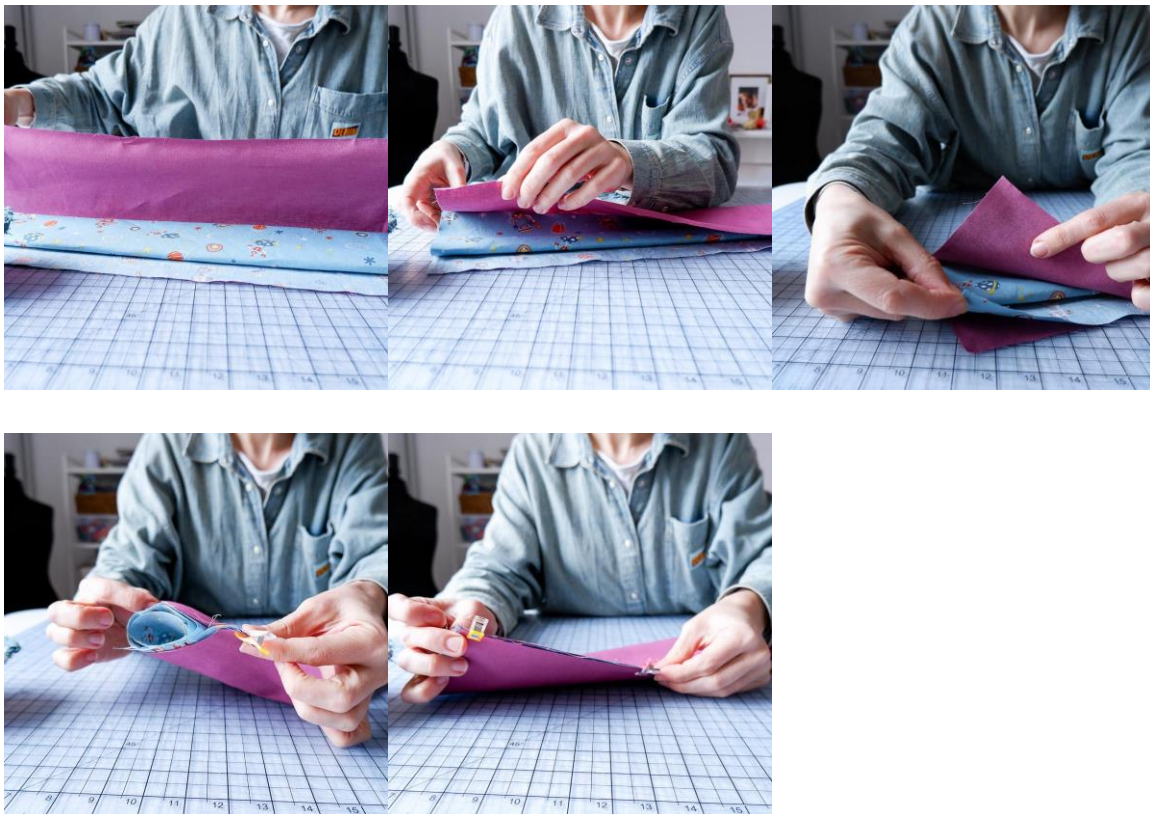
Position the long side of the main body on top of the long side of the band piece (40 ½ inch), right sides facing each other, making sure that the edges line up. These two edges have the same length.



Grab the main body piece that is furthest from these two matched long edges and roll it up towards them. Stop rolling a couple of inches away from the edge.



Fold the fabric of the band that still lies on your table over the rolled fabric and position the edge of this band on top of the two layers of fabric and line up all of the edges. Now pin or clip these 3 layers together. If you are not sure about this, check out the video, where you can see these steps much better.



This is your “hot dog”. The band is the bun and the rolled up main piece is the hot dog. Now sew the three layers together on the long edge (40 ½ inches) with ½ inch seam allowance. Remove pins or clips as you sew. Be careful to catch the hot dog roll in this seam.



You can finish this seam with your favorite method for managing raw edges if you want, but this seam will be totally enclosed, so you can skip serging or zigzagging for now.

3. Turn Right Side Out

Now pull the “hot dog” out of its “bun”. Pull the band piece over the main body piece that is rolled up. You are pulling the main fabric in one direction and the band fabric in the other direction.



As a result you will have the band fabric sewn onto the main fabric with a completely hidden seam. Iron this seam flat.



4. Sew the Pillowcase Closed

Fold the 40 ½ inches edge in half, both the band and main body piece, right sides facing. Pin or clip together and sew the two remaining seams: one seam is opposite the band and the other one is the one across from the fold.



5. Finish the Edges

Finish the edge of these two seams with your preferred method. You can use [pinking shears](#), a zigzag stitch, [an overcast stitch](#) with your regular sewing machine, a serger, or [a french seam](#). The french seam is definitely the cleanest finish, but it will also take the most time. If you want to use this technique, you need to sew your first seam wrong sides facing instead of right sides.

I finished the seams with my serger. Don't just cut off the thread ends of a serged edge but hide them in the serged stitching with a hand needle. If you used another way of finishing the edges, cut off all little thread ends now.



Make sure you remove all pins!

Turn your pillowcase inside out, give it another press and it is ready for donation!

Last step: take a picture of the pillowcases you made and share it in the Madam Sew Facebook Group, on your Instagram ([#sewingforsmiles](#)) or email it to us at(hello@madamsew.com) to inspire others!



Send all pillowcases to the Madam Sew address before September 1, 2024.

Madam Sew
PO Box 1907
Iowa City, IA 52240

And remember, we will donate \$1 for every pillowcase we receive (maximum of \$1500 US dollars) to Ryan's Case for Smiles in September 2024.

Let's use our favorite craft and skills to put some smiles on children's faces!

An
Blogging for Madam Sew

If you want to check out other pillowcase tutorials, click on the links below, but know that these are not advised by Ryan's Case For Smiles and are more for decorative purposes.

- [How to make an accent pillow cover](#)
- [How to make quilted pillow with a french seam](#)
- Learn how to make a quilted pillow cover,
 - [Quilted Pillow Cover Part 1](#)

- [Quilted Pillow Cover Part 2](#)
- [Quilted Pillow Cover Part 3](#)