

# How to make a drawstring backpack

To make one bag, you'll need:

Two 16" x 18" pieces of fabric

Two pieces of nylon cord that are each 2 yards long (so that's 4 yards total).

Grommets and setting tool

## Sewing the bag

Place fabric right sides together, so that the top and bottom are 16" and sides are 18". Measure down three inches from the top right and top left corner and mark the spot with a pin. These pins will tell you where to start and stop your sewing. Start at one of the pins and sew along the two sides and bottom of the fabric, leaving the top (and the top three inches of each side) open.

## Making the casing

Turn the bag inside out and fold down the very top edge about 3/8" and iron. Fold the top down again so that the ironed edge comes down to where the stitches start on the side or about 2 1/4". Pin in place. See how this is making a nice pocket for the cord?



Fold the sides of the flap in so that the fabric edges aren't showing and pin them in place. Do this step for the front and back of the bag. As you do this, be sure that you don't pin the front of the bag to the back of the bag. The bag should still open with the pins in.

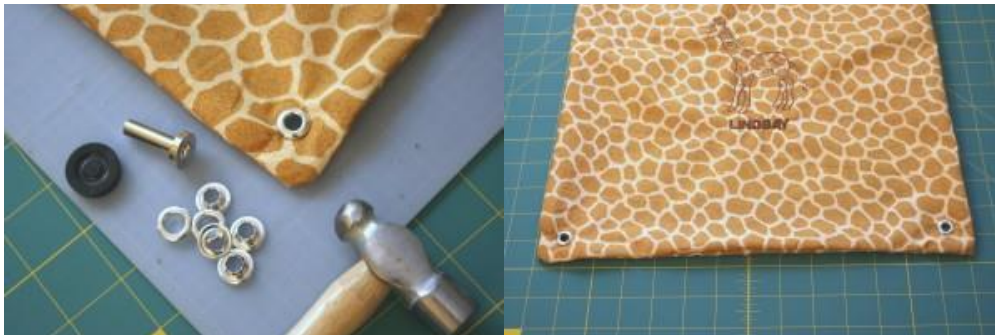


Sew along the edge of the flap, where the pins are. When you get to the opening on either side, keep sewing straight. Do not sew the openings closed. You need that gap on each side of the bag for the cords to go in and out of later.



### Attaching the strings

Turn the bag right side out and lay it flat on the table. Using your favorite grommets and setting tool, put a grommet into each of the two bottom corners of the bag.



Cut two 2-yd-long pieces of your cord. Take one of them and put a safety pin into the end of it. Insert the pin into the opening on the right side of the bag, into the pocket on the front of the bag. Use the safety pin as a guide to push the cord through the front pocket until it comes out the opening on the left. Then feed it through the left opening, this time into the pocket on the back of the bag, and push it through until it comes back out the opening on the right side of the bag. The cord should have made a loop around the whole top of the bag and **both ends should be hanging out the opening on the right**. Remove the safety pin from the end of the cord.

Now take the other cord and put the safety pin into the end. Mirror the technique you just did, this time starting on the opening on the left side of the bag. Push the cord through the pocket on the front of the bag, from left to right, until it comes out the opening on the right. Then feed it right back into the opening and this time go through the pocket on the back of the bag, ending up back at the opening on the left. **Both ends of the cord should come out the hole on the left now**. Here's a diagram showing how the two cords (indicated in red and yellow) are positioned in the pocket.



Take the two ends of the cord that are coming out of the right opening and line them up nice and straight, and push them through the grommet in the lower right corner from the front to the back. Tie them in a knot on the back.



Repeat with the cord on the left, pushing it through the grommet on the lower left corner, and tying a knot on the back.

### The result

Look, the bag is done! All you have to do to close the bag is pull on the two cords. Because we doubled them up in the pocket, a simple pull will automatically gather up the top of the bag and close it with minimal effort. So cool!





## Alternate Method with French Seams

Put your two pieces of fabric together, **wrong sides together**, so that the 16" sides are across the top and bottom and the 18" sides are on the left and right. Measure down three inches from the top right corner and mark the spot with a pin. Do the same on the top left corner. These pins will tell you where to start and stop your sewing, since we don't want to sew the very top three inches of either side.

Now start at one of the pins and sew along the two sides and bottom of the fabric, leaving the top (and the top three inches of each side) open. When you're done, trim the seam as close as you can (without risking cutting the stitches!) with a pair of scissors. Turn the bag inside out.

With the bag inside out, now sew again along the same three sides. Be sure that you sew in far enough to encase the edges from the first seam, which are now inside the bag. The reason for this double-sewing is to create a "french seam", which completely hides any frayed edges and gives you a pretty seam, inside and out. I love the clean look this gives. When you're done, turn your bag right side out again and you'll see what I mean.



## Alternate Method Without Grommets

Place the right sides of the fabric together and stitch along 3 sides of the fabric. For the right and left sides of the fabric start stitching 3" from the top and **end stitching 1" from the bottom**. Stich the bottom all the way across.

Knot the two ends of the cord on the right side and push the knot through the 1" hole on the bottom right side of the bag. Topstitch through all layers along the edge of the fabric's folds, backstitching to secure. Repeat on opposite side.

