

## TRENDING

## Up up and not away...

JUNE 8, 2015

Up – for up-cycling. As in, don't throw those old jeans that don't fit away... not without cutting the legs off first.

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It started out very simply... Allison had an adorable little bag she'd made using the new [Mon Ami](#) collection and some old jeans as part of her display in the [Basic Grey](#) booth at Quilt Market. I fell in love with it... coveted it... and was thrilled when Allison gave it to me. (No, whining was not involved.)



The one on the left with the yellow button... it's mine now.

The problem started before I even got home. I was obsessed with making one. Or at least two – most of my jeans come with two legs so using one leg for a bag meant I'd still have another to use.

I posted a picture on Instagram and Facebook, and well, the requests for a tutorial began immediately. Lissa and Chelair thought it was hilarious as they both said I should have seen it coming. (Rookie mistake.)

So here goes. Start with the leg of a worn pair of jeans – the softer the better. Decorative stitching on the seam like that on the two bags above is optional.

Materials Required:

- 1 pair of jeans – actually just 1 leg of a pair of jeans
- 1 fat quarter of pretty fabric – Moda, of course
- [Soft & Stable](#) – recommended – a piece measuring 12" x 20" should suffice

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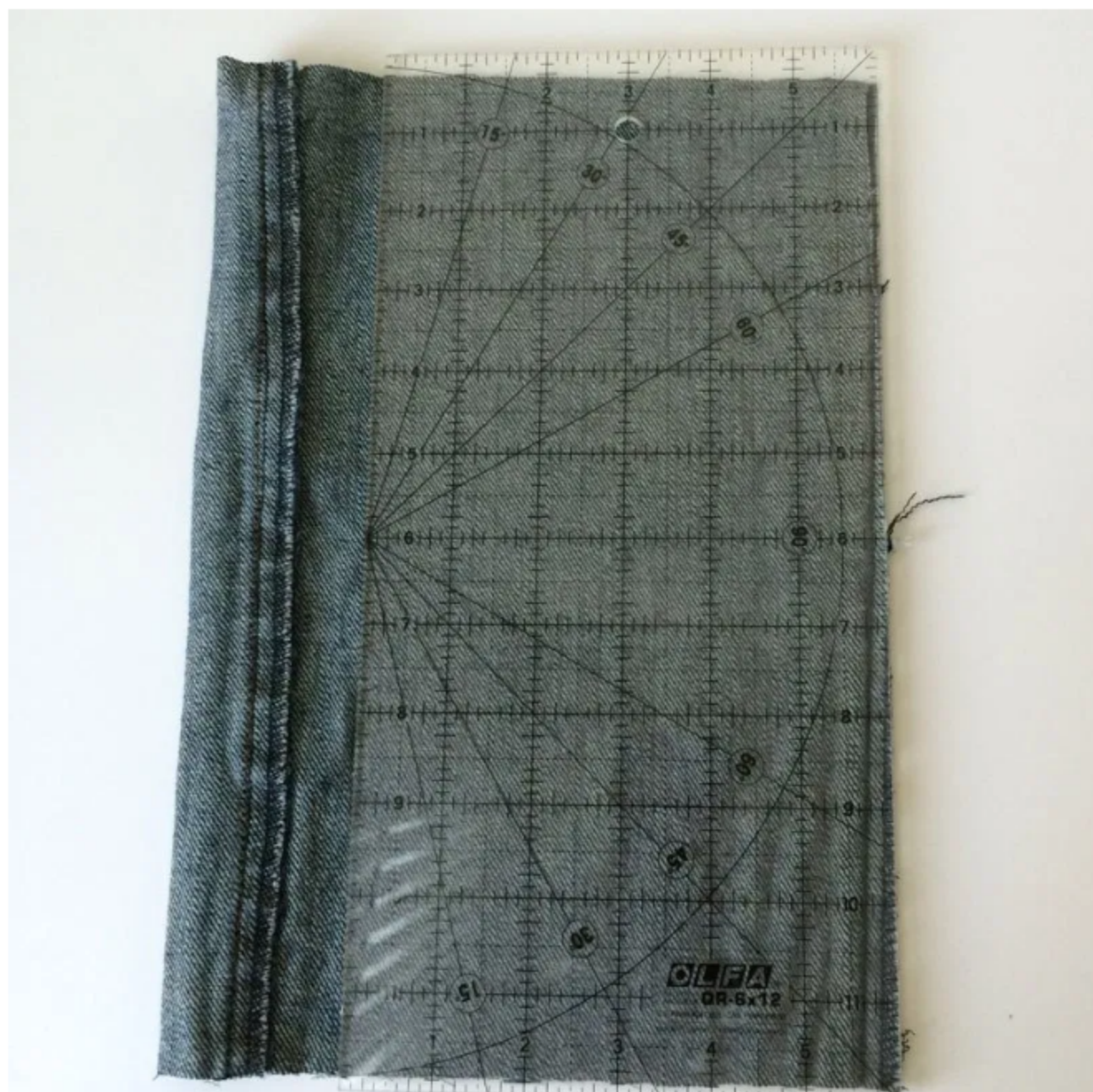
CLOSE AND ACCEPT

- Embellishments – as desired

**Length required** – that depends. I found that 10" to 11" worked really well regardless of the width of the jeans' leg. If the jeans are really "big boy" jeans – a width of 18" to 20" – then an 1" or so more will work. It depends on what you want to do with the finished bag.

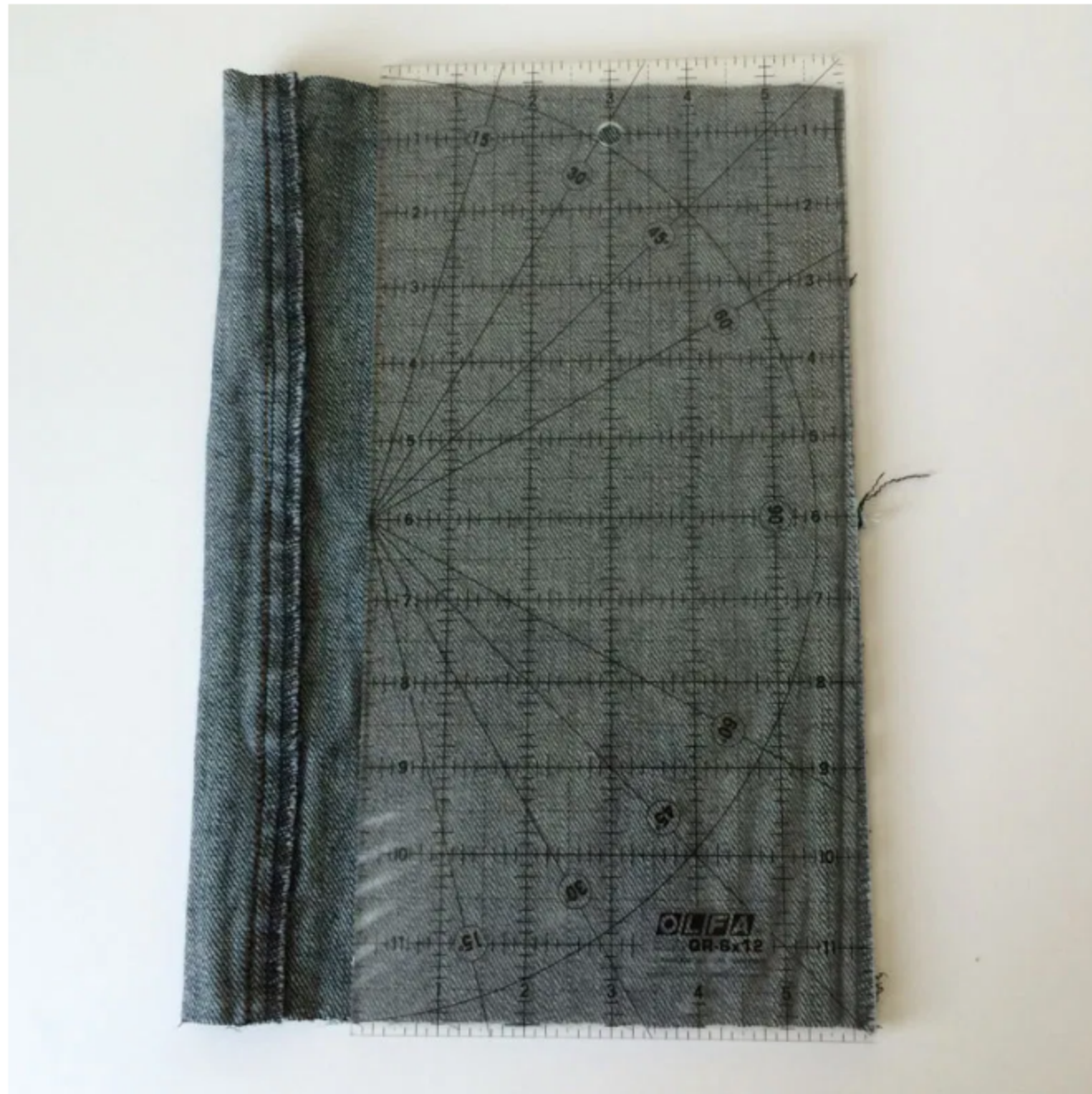


Use the straightest part of the leg that you can find – probably in the knee to calf-area. This was cut 11 1/2" – it was my experiment and it's why I prefer it a bit shorter. Measure the width in a couple of places – write down the narrowest width. This leg measured 14" in width – 7" from side to side when flat. (No, these were not my jeans.)



Turn the leg wrong-side out – inside out. I recommend pressing it flat as it will make this step a little easier. One seam should be on the side, the other will not be – as shown above.

**Straightening the leg.** Using a ruler, draw a line on the seam-side of the leg that is an equal distance from the fold to the edge. Using a rotary cutter, cut off the excess so that what remains is the same width. (In this picture, the top of the leg was wider than the bottom of the leg so trimming the leg straight meant cutting off the seam at the top.)



Using the same seam allowance as is on the jeans leg –  $\frac{3}{8}$ " on this particular leg – or a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance, sew the side of the leg so that it is straight.



With wrong-sides still out, center one of the seams and press the leg flat – including both seams. This leg has a line of stitching along the outside seam that I wanted to center in the front of the bag like the Basic Grey bags have.

Sew a  $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance all the way across the bottom.

Using a ruler and some kind of marking tool – I used a Sharpie pen – mark the corners. The lines *should* be the *same* distance from the seam line as from the fold. Depending on the width of the jeans' leg, I recommend 1" to 1 1/4".

**Note:** I goofed on this bag and measured from the bottom edge instead of the seam line. It still worked but it did make matching up the seams after the corners are trimmed a little less neat. Just saying.



Cut off the corners.



Match up the edges – folding the denim at the corner cut – and stitch a 1/4" seam allowance across the opening. This will "box" the corners. Yes, the sewing will be a little easier if you keep the bottom seam open.





Embellish as desired. I found it a little bit easier to do this at this point since I would have a better idea – better, not perfect – of how the bag would sit after this step.

For this, I cut squares using a scalloped rotary cutter and fused a slightly smaller square of [Steam-A-Seam Lite](#) to the back. I wanted the edges to be a little loose so I didn't fuse first. The pieces were then fused to the jeans and machine-stitched around the edge. The rick-rack was stitched on to allow for a 1/2" seam allowance on the top. (It's a little high – an "it's been a long time since I used rick-rack" goof.)

Now for the lining. Please bear with me as the terms are going to switch – Using the measurements of the jeans' leg, this is how to determine the size of the piece to cut:

- **How wide is the strip?** This is the same measurement as the length of the jeans leg. E.g., If the leg is cut to measure 11 1/2" from top-to-bottom, the width of the strip will be 11 1/2".
- **How long is the strip?** Cut the length to measure the width of the jeans **plus 1" – 1/2"** seam allowance on both sides. E.g., If the jeans leg measured 14", cut the fabric to measure 15" long.

So from the fat quarter, I cut a strip that measured 11 1/2" x 15" wide for a jeans' leg that measured 14" wide (7" flat, double-thickness) x 11 1/2" long.

Whew. Still with me?

From the [Soft & Stable](#), cut a piece that is 1/2" less in width and 1" less in length – or 11" x 14".





This is not required but I found it easier **not** to have the bulk in a couple of the seams.

Quilt as desired. Or not. I liked the way it looked quilted, and with Soft & Stable, I could quilt it without a lining. The adorable bags by Allison of Basic Grey were not quilted.



Using a 1/2" seam allowance, join the sides to make a tube that measures the same as the jeans' leg. Center the seam and press it open.

**Note:** This picture has the bag upside down – the end with the 1/2" exposed fabric is the top edge. The end with the batting all the way to the edge is the bottom of the bag.



Stitch across the bottom – except don't stitch all the way! Leave an opening approximately 2" to 3" – or stitch a little more than your measurement from the side. E.g., if you're going to mark 1" away from the side, stitch at least 1 1/2". Sharpie – love them.

**Note:** Yeah yeah... as before, I wasn't paying attention and measured the distance from the bottom edge, not from the seam line. Do what I say, not what I do!



Cut off the corners.



Match up the edges – fold at the corner. Use a 1/4" seam allowance and stitch across – yes, keep the bottom seam pressed open.



With **right sides together**, put the jeans' leg inside the lining. The seam for the lining will be in the back - and it will not line up with a seam on the jeans' leg. The boxed-corners will help with the placement of everything.



Using a 1/2" seam allowance, sew all the way around the bag.







Reach into the opening in the bottom of the lining and **carefully** pull the jeans bag through the opening.



Continue pulling the bag through until it is the seam joining the pieces is fully open – press as desired.



Stitch the opening at the bottom of the lining closed – by hand or by machine. Guess which one I picked?

Push it down into the jeans' leg, pushing out the corners. Top-stitch if desired – it's optional. (I tried lots of different things with the different bags.)

Fold down the top.





Admire your handiwork.



### WARNING!

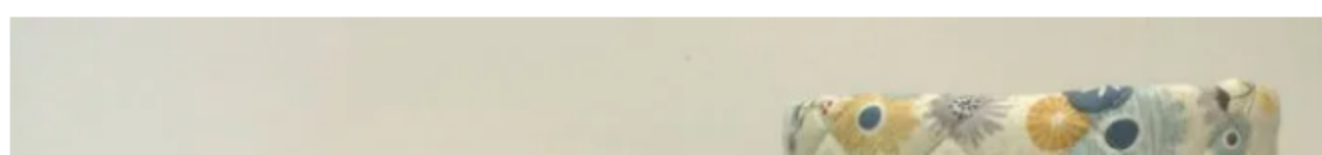
At this point, I feel it is necessary to tell you, in the interest of full disclosure to be completely honest with you. We're friends, right?

Making these bags is just a teeny, tiny bit... addictive.

They're relatively fast. They're cute. Okay, they're adorable.

And if you're at all into embroidery, the possibilities for embellishment are endless.

What happens now is on you...





Don't say I didn't warn you – or at least try.

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BY CARRIE NELSON | IN TRENDING | TAGGED BASIC GREY, PATCHWORK, QUILT, QUILTING, SEWING, TUTORIAL

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## 34 thoughts on "Up up and not away..."



**MUMBIRD3 SAYS:**

JUNE 8, 2015 AT 1:10 PM

Extremely cute little bags!



**MISS JEAN SAYS:**

JUNE 8, 2015 AT 1:22 PM

These would be great to make out of my jeans that somehow (ahem) got "shrunk" in that darn dryer! They are adorable.



**SHIRELLE SAYS:**  
JUNE 8, 2015 AT 1:25 PM

So going to make tons of these!



**MARY ANDRA SAYS:**  
JUNE 8, 2015 AT 1:26 PM

Talk about inspiration. You definitely accomplished that. Great posting.  
Thank you Carrie. Hugs



**QUILTING JEANNIE Z SAYS:**  
JUNE 8, 2015 AT 1:36 PM

Looks way easier than the way I tried. Have to give this a shot! Thanks.



**LINDA H SAYS:**  
JUNE 8, 2015 AT 1:57 PM

I love these, but I bet I can't use my grand-daughters raggy jeans! Not enough fabric in them for even a little bag! LOL!



**MALINDA SAYS:**  
JUNE 8, 2015 AT 2:12 PM

These are stinkin' cute! And perfect for little bits of fabric too small for quilts and all those small lengths of lace and ribbon we all have hanging around. I made so many of these in the fall, I ran out of people to give them to, they are that addictive! I didn't try any with jean's legs, though. Thanks for the tutorial, I'll try these for sure, but I'd better warn my family to guard all their good jeans!



**RENEE KUNKEL SAYS:**  
JUNE 8, 2015 AT 2:52 PM

Excellent plant pot covers and would make great teacher gifts....



**BRENDA SAYS:**  
JUNE 8, 2015 AT 2:54 PM

Great timing! I was just searching for a tutorial yesterday after admiring the ones you posted. Thanks!



**KATHLEEN D SAYS:**  
JUNE 8, 2015 AT 7:36 PM

Thanks for your tutorial. The baskets/bags are very cute!



**DIANA W. SAYS:**  
JUNE 8, 2015 AT 9:05 PM

Ok you have done it now, of course I will have to make a few of these!  
Lol. Thanks so much for the tutorial! It was great. Your the best Carrie!



**AMY L SAYS:**  
JUNE 8, 2015 AT 9:30 PM

These are adorable. And will be perfect for the jeans that I saved from high school. The ones that I embroidered up the legs... in 1974... now to go find where I put them.



**HILDY SAYS:**  
JUNE 9, 2015 AT 1:05 AM

Great tutorial, thanks for sharing! I happen to have some old jeans laying around ... . But one question: what is this cute bike fabric? Please share I think I need a bit of it:-)



**CARRIE NELSON SAYS:**  
JUNE 9, 2015 AT 6:27 AM

Hi Hildy – It's from the new, upcoming Basic Grey collection, Mon Ami. And yes, it's adorable and I think I'm going to need a little bit of it too. It will ship to stores in October of this year. 😊



**ANNA SAYS:**  
JUNE 9, 2015 AT 2:07 AM

I have plenty of saved old jeans.... gotta get sewing



**DONNA SAYS:**  
JUNE 9, 2015 AT 5:38 AM

OMG they are so cute! Thanks so much for the tutorial – gotta go dig through the closets now!



**LEOTA KRANTZ SAYS:**  
JUNE 9, 2015 AT 5:42 AM

Simply love these bags. I have two legs on my old jeans too...so, got some bags coming as gifts in my future. Thanks for the tutorial.



**JUDY DAVIS SAYS:**  
JUNE 9, 2015 AT 6:13 AM

Love the bags and thanks for the tutorial



**MICHELE SAYS:**  
JUNE 9, 2015 AT 7:10 AM

Very cute! Thanks for the tutorial! I've got a tall pile of jeans that have been waiting for me to make a quilt out of them. I think I can spare a few for some of these.



**TARILYN HAIST SAYS:**  
JUNE 9, 2015 AT 7:44 AM

These would make great can cozzy's . If you use those little boy jean's . They would make great gifts as well.



**DONDIM SAYS:**



**DONDIM SAYS:**  
JUNE 9, 2015 AT 10:19 AM

I'm thinking how cute these would look with fresh flowers sticking out the top...hidden vase inside, of course. What a cute gift bag for really, really good friends. You could put a small quilt in the jean stump. I'm also thinking yard sales to buy cheap jeans if one doesn't have jeans ready to sacrifice for the greater good. These would be good to load up with goodies for gift bags for charity raffles because they are so very, very cute. I mean, who could resist?



**JOYCE DOEHLMAN SAYS:**  
JUNE 9, 2015 AT 7:38 PM

I think u could even set a box of tissue's in them, so cute



**ANNE SAYS:**  
JUNE 9, 2015 AT 11:27 PM

I love these but not necessarily as bags but as pouches for orphaned marsupials. Will be passing on the tutorial to some carers!



**SIERAK NICOLE SAYS:**  
JUNE 10, 2015 AT 9:50 AM

I like ,so cute to use old jean .(I make a big pillow with the top of one jean )



**SANDY SAYS:**  
JUNE 10, 2015 AT 12:01 PM

I have a question. Did Allison use the soft and stable? If the soft and stable isn't quilted, how is it attached to the fabric?



**CARRIE NELSON SAYS:**  
JUNE 10, 2015 AT 1:04 PM

Hi Sandy – Yes, when I asked what she'd used for the lining of her little bags, Allison said she'd used Soft & Stable. While I don't know how Allison assembled hers, I've done other projects like this where the "batting" wasn't quilted to the lining fabric and I simply used a little bit of spray-adhesive to keep the two layers together while I was assembling the bag. I hope that helps. 😊



**DELORES CHIODO SAYS:**  
JUNE 10, 2015 AT 12:20 PM

I need the pattern for pin wheel baby quilt



**CARRIE NELSON SAYS:**  
JUNE 10, 2015 AT 1:05 PM

Hi Delores – I'm sorry but I need a little more information. Which Pinwheel baby quilt?



**KAREN GREEN SAYS:**  
JUNE 10, 2015 AT 3:53 PM

Very cute bags, nice job. You make reading instructions fun.



**ADRIANA SAYS:**  
JUNE 11, 2015 AT 6:10 AM

Gostei muito, adoro ideias em jeans....



**KAHOLLY SAYS:**  
JUNE 12, 2015 AT 3:19 AM

Pretty darned cute and clever! Thanks for sharing!



**SARA REYES SAYS:**  
JUNE 13, 2015 AT 10:15 AM

Muy bonita, voy a hacerla felicitaciones. gracias por compartir.



**HELEN LEBRETT SAYS:**  
JUNE 16, 2015 AT 2:43 PM

So cute Carrie!! I'm going to have to make some for gifts to new mom's to store baby things in. I'm sure they'll be a hit!! Thanks for the great idea!! PS. Miss your schnibbles, but so glad we can find you somewhere else in blogland!! Hugs, H in Healdsburg



**NAY SAYS:**  
JUNE 21, 2015 AT 8:18 AM

Love this idea – tried my own but I sewed 2 legs together to make it bigger – the only adjustment I then needed was to bag out the corners wider

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