

How to make a zipped lined purse

2 x rectangular pieces of outer fabric. Cotton is ideal . Cut your main purse fabric on the straight grain with the shortest side running parallel with the selvedge. For this workshop I am using a 23.5cm x 16cm rectangle but if you want to experiment with different sizes then you just need to make sure one side is the same length as the zip – the whole zip not just the moving parts of the zip.

2 x rectangular pieces of lightweight wadding (something that will give it some padding). This needs to be cut slightly smaller than your outer fabric so the seams are less bulky. ½ cm smaller on each side is sufficient as it will allow for less bulky seams but also ensure you sew through the wadding and the outer fabric when you join the purse together

2x rectangular pieces of lining fabric. The same size as your outer fabric. Avoid very lightweight fabrics as the purse gets a lot of wear in use. Cotton is ideal.

1x zip with plastic teeth (for this workshop I am using a 20cm zip)

Matching sewing thread

1) Attach the wadding to the wrong side of the outer fabric placing it centrally (the wadding fabric is smaller than the outer fabric). Baste on the wadding using large stitches in a contrasting thread (you will remove these stitches once the purse is complete).



2) If you want to embellish the outer fabric of your purse now is the time! You can add a strip of ribbon, add applique, sew on a feature button, add beads or sequins. Whatever you can think of.



3) Place the lining on the table right side face up with the long edge at the top. Place the outer fabric on top right side face down. Now take your zip and hold it face up and sandwich it between the two pieces of fabric along the longest edge so the zip's top edge is in line with the top edge of the fabric i.e. the zip is completely hidden. Pin the three layers together.



4) Take the other lining and outer fabric pieces and repeat i.e. place the lining on the table right side face up with the long edge at the top. Place the outer fabric on top right side face down. Now take the zip (try to ignore the fabric that is attached to it as it makes things more confusing!) and again hold it face up and sandwich it between the two pieces of fabric along the longest edge so the zip's top edge is in line with the top edge of the fabric i.e. the zip is completely hidden. Pin the three layers together. Some people prefer to baste the zip in place too – I'm happy with just the pins but it's up to you.



5) Using a zipper foot, stitch the zip in place securing the ends well. When you get close to the zip fastener (the bulky head!) with your machine leave the needle in the fabric, lift the foot up and move the zip fastener away from the line of stitches you are sewing before putting the foot back down and continuing your stitch. Repeat this for both sides of the zip.



One you have stitched the two sides of the zip it should look like this on one side.....



...and like this on the other side.



6) Place the front and back of the outer pieces of fabric right sides together and do the same with the lining.



7) Undo the zip slightly (2-3cm is fine). Pin the outer fabric together and the lining together. When you pin over the zip make sure that both pieces of the zip fall back towards the lining (I've tried to show this in the picture by propping the purse up against my sewing machine for a better view. The outer fabric is on the left, with the wadding attached and the lining is on the right and the parts of the brown zip fabric are all on the lining side). Make sure you leave a gap in the lower edge of the lining – about 7cm is fine.

NOTE: it really is worth making sure the zip is nicely pinned in place before you sew; that it lines up and that the zip pieces all fall back into the lining. The neat placement of the zip will set your purse apart from others! But don't worry if you don't get it perfectly right the first time.



8) Sew the fabric together starting on the lower edge of the lining (but leaving a 7cm ish gap) ie start on the lower edge of the lining, sew up one side of the lining, over the zip, around the outer fabric, back over the zip, down the other side of the lining and along part of the lower edge of the lining. Remember to leave that gap! Use a 1cm seam allowance and pivot the machine needle at the corners. Also make sure you are sewing through the wadding as well as the fabric to hold the wadding in place – this should work fine if you have cut your wadding 0.5cm smaller than the outer fabric on each edge and use a 1cm seam allowance for sewing.

9) Snip the fabric across the corners to reduce bulk and help ensure you get a nice sharp corner. Be careful not to cut too close to the stitching.

10) Pull the purse through the gap in the lining so that it is inside out. Now carefully pull the purse through the gap in the zip.



11) Push the corners of the purse and the lining out e.g. with a chopstick or the flat end of a pencil.

12) Stitch together the gap in the lining either with the machine or by hand and then push the lining back into the purse.

13) Remove the basting stitches holding the wadding in place.



14) You have finished. Well done!

