

# Pocket Potholders with Recycled Towels

Necessity is the mother of invention. My potholders were wearing out. I knew the easiest way to get what I wanted was to make my own, but I was dragging my feet. I really didn't want to invest in heat reflective fleece or insulated batting just to make the humble everyday potholder!

With curiosity and a seam ripper in hand, I took a peek inside one of my favorite rugged potholders. To my surprise it consisted of three layers of cotton batting with an extra layer of terry cloth. That got me to thinking about my shelf of "retired" kitchen towels in the basement. The towels were too icky to use any more, but still too nice to throw out.



Re-cycle and re-purpose! I loved the idea of using what I had on hand for a practical new purpose. Old towels + 100% cotton batting scraps + my large stash of cotton fabrics = the perfect potholder to match my kitchen and even one of my aprons (see photo at end).

I am so excited about these practical little cuties. Here's how you can make your own.



## Pocket Potholder



### Supplies:

- Towel (thin) - 6½" x 8"
- Pocket Front 100% cotton - 6½" x 6"
- 100% Cotton Batting - three 6½" x 8"
- Backing 100% cotton - 6½" x 8"
- Binding 100% cotton - one strip 2½" x 6½"  
- one strip 2½" x 36"

Sewing machine with walking foot (aka even feed foot).  
Thread to match fabrics

### Instructions:

#### Place the layers in this order:

1. Backing with the wrong side of the fabric facing up.
  2. Three layers of 100% cotton batting
  3. 6½" x 8" towel on top
- Carefully align all edges and pin the layers together



## Machine Quilt a Grid

*NOTE: Before sewing, make these adjustments on your sewing machine:*

1. Increase stitch length from regular of 2.5 up to 3 on my BERNINA
2. Reduce pressure on presser foot from 50lbs to approx. 13lbs
3. Attach walking foot  
(I used my 1D BERNINA foot ... "D" = dual feed/walking foot)

Since my towel fabric in this example was rather stretchy, I quilted the 1¼" grid with the towel side facing up to keep an eye on it! Start at one corner and sew to the other corner. Continue the grid in parallel lines 1¼" apart.



Layers may shift slightly during the quilting, if so, trim them even.

## Front Pocket

- ▶ Use an iron to press the 2½" x 6½" strip in half with the wrong sides together.
- ▶ Place the folded strip on the *wrong side* of the pocket fabric along the top 6½" edge. Raw edges aligned (**photo left**).
- ▶ Sew a ¼" seam with matching thread.
- ▶ Then flip the strip over to the front and stitch along the edge (**photo center**).



Position the quilted towel/batting/backing unit with the towel side facing up

Align the bottom edge and sides of the pocket fabric with the bottom edge and sides of the quilted towel/batting/backing unit. Pin the pocket in place with pin heads inside so they do not get in the way of the machine stitched binding (**photo above right**).

## Machine Stitched Binding

1. Press the 2½" x 36" strip in half with wrong sides facing. At one 2½" end press ¼" to the wrong side. This is your beginning **and** "end" where the tail of the binding gets trimmed and tucked in.

*NOTE: Normally for a machine stitched binding, the binding is placed on the back side of the fabric then flipped to the front to be machine stitched again. In this example I needed the higher contrast of the fabrics for the photos, so I started on the front. Both approaches work. The key is to use a thread that will look good on both sides and on the binding. The binding on the white pocket potholder (photo in beginning) was sewn with the binding on the back and flipped to the front, then stitched. It's hard to tell the difference.*



2. Start half way down the right side, align the raw edge of the binding with the raw edge of the pinned pocket/towel/batting/backing unit. Start stitching a ¼" seam about 2" from the beginning of the binding (**see photo**). Miter the corners as you come to them.  
(I moved my needle to the right 2 positions with my BERNINA 1D Foot to get the ¼" seam)

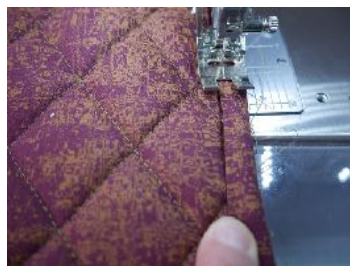


## How to miter the corners



- a) Before you reach a corner, flip the fabric strip over to the right at a 45 degree angle (**photo left**). Crease that diagonal line with your finger. We will call this our “corner fold.”
- b) Now flip the binding to the left over the corner fold, keeping the right edge of the corner fold aligned with the right edge of the potholder and the bottom edge of the binding with the bottom edge of potholder. *Before sewing you will need to flip the corner fold one more time, so the corner fold edge is now aligned with the bottom edge of the potholder* (**center photo**). Stitch within  $\frac{1}{4}$ ” from edge, stop, lift the needle and presser foot up.
- c) Flip the corner fold up and align the folded edge with the right edge of potholder, begin stitching from that edge (**photo right**). This will create the miter. Repeat for the remaining three corners.

3. At the end cut the binding to fit into the “beginning.” Tuck the end in and stitch to finish this side.



4. Flip the binding over to the other side. If you have moved the position of the sewing machine needle, move it back to the center position and stitch about  $\frac{1}{8}$ ” from the folded binding edge (**photo left**).
5. Miter the corners on this side by folding the binding to create a 45 degree angle. Secure with a pin (**photo above right**). When you come to the corner pivot with the *needle down* where the mitered folds meet, lift the presser foot, re-align, put the presser foot down and continue stitching.

**Time to put these new pocket potholders to good use!**

*P.S. I keep my potholders in a drawer, that is why these directions do not include a hanging loop.*

