

## Beginners sewing project: **Making an overlap backed cushion cover**



You will need:

1. Pattern in correct size for pad
2. 1m of fabric (non stretch)
3. Matching thread
4. Sharp scissors
5. Pins
6. A chalk pencil
7. A ruler (preferably a grader ruler)
8. An iron & board
9. A sewing machine
10. Masking tape
11. Cushion pad
12. Glasses if you need them

Glossary:

- *Notches* - half cm deep slits at right angle to edge of cloth/pattern. They help you match up different pieces of fabric ready to sew
- *Selvedge* – manufactured edge of cloth
- *Straight grain* – weave of fabric running parallel to selvedge – usually has less stretch than the cross grain, which runs at 90 degrees to selvedge
- *Wrong side of fabric* – the underside, not the side the world will see
- *Grader ruler* – handy ruler with measurement length and width wise – great for marking hems (we sell for £15 – ask tutor)
- *Seam Allowance* – the distance between the cut edge of fabric and the sewing line. On this pattern a seam allowance of 1.5cm is included round the outside edges so when you cut it out you don't need to allow any extra

**To make the pattern:** Measure your cushion pad and cut a square of paper the same size. e.g. If your cushion pad is 16" sq, pattern is 16"x16". Mark a fold line 25% of the way across, which is where you'll fold back the pattern to make the smaller BACK pattern as explained in the following instructions.

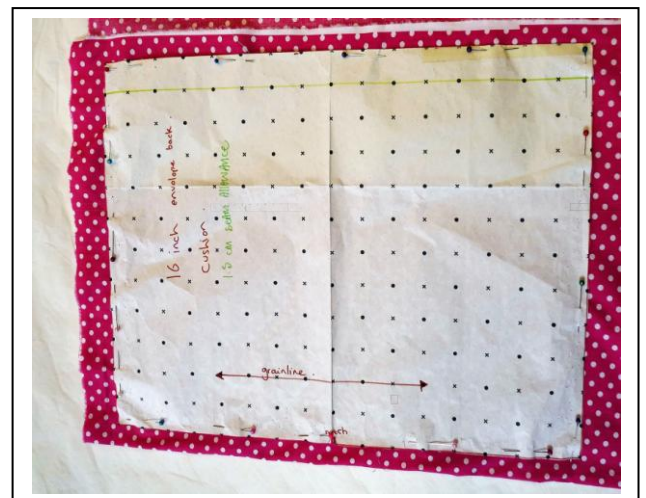
1. **To cut the front first:** Pin (pins half a cm from edge and running parallel to edges) the square pattern to a single layer your fabric ensuring the SG arrow is parallel to the selvedge (manufactured edge) and leaving approx 1.5cm gap all round for ease of cutting. ↓



2. Cut (x1) an exact replica of the pattern, cutting right next to the paper edge (ask teacher for left-handed scissors if you are left handed).
3. Snip the notches (half a cm deep single snip) and then remove pins. This is the front of your cushion cover.

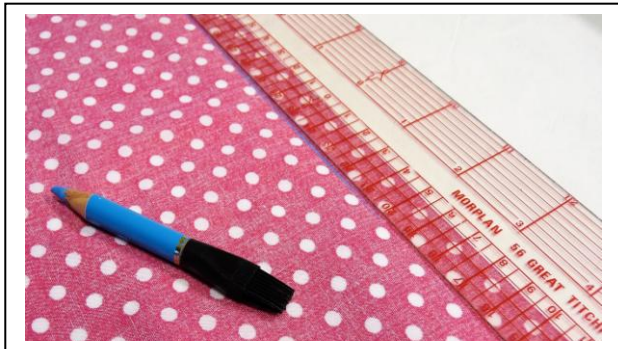
**Now to prepare the back pattern of the cushion:**

4. Fold part of the pattern under on the line drawn part way across it. The remaining pattern (approx 75% of width of the original) is your back pattern.
5. You need to cut 2 of these at once, so fold over enough of the remaining fabric into a double layer that is large enough to cut this back piece, with approx 1.5cm space all round for room when cutting. ↓



6. Pin the pattern to the fabric, through the paper and both layers of fabric, ensuring the SG arrow is parallel to the selvedge
7. Cut round the edge of the pattern taking care not to slice the folded paper.

8. Snip the notch (just one this time as the other was folded away) through paper and both layers of fabric
9. To neaten the edges that will overlap on the back pieces of the cushion cover: Using a grader ruler, draw a chalk pencil line 1.5cm in from un-notched edge all the way along on both back pieces. ↓



10. Take these to the iron and press the raw edge to the line, creating a 0.75cm fold.



11. Then draw another line 3cm from the folded edge on each piece, and return to the iron to press the folded edge to this line, creating a 1.5cm fold.

**If you are on an absolute beginner's workshop or course your tutor will now teach you to thread up and sew with a sewing machine if you didn't learn that at the start.**

#### To sew cushion cover:

12. **Prepare machine:** Thread up your machine/bobbin with the same thread. Have needle in central position (On Janome 525S: 5 on zig zag dial, often '3' on other models – check handbook). Use square plastic foot E.
13. **To sew the back turned edges:** Look at the sample cushion cover to see how it should look. With the wrong side of the fabric upwards, place it under the foot and lower the needle into the cloth about 2mm in from the inner folded edge – position it so that once sewn it won't flap up.



14. Lower the presser foot, straighten the fabric and place a piece of masking tape next to the outer fold, to use as a guide to stay straight. Or if the outer edge lines up with your foot edge, use that as a guide.
15. Stitch the folded edges all the way along (backstitch beginning and end of line). Press while stretching slightly if at all puckered or wavy.

#### HANDY TIP

Because you are back-stitching to secure seam ends, snip off your threads right close to your work as you go and put them in the in – saves time and mess!

16. **To pin front and backs together:** Place your front piece of the cushion on the table right side up. Lay the 2 backs on top of it, right sides down, with the edges you just sewed towards the centre, overlapping each other. The notches on the front and back pieces should match. Pin edges together.



17. Mark a chalk dot 1.5cm in from each corner, this is where you will pivot and turn with needle down in the cloth as you sew round the cushion cover:



18. Move the masking tape on machine base to the 1.5cm SA position and sew a 1.5cm seam allowance round the entire edge – pivoting at the corners with needle down. Backstitch back and forth once over the overlap back turned seams to strengthen. Overlap the start and finish stitches (so you don't need to backstitch):



19. **Finish the edges** by edge zig zagging all round: use 3-step zig zag on 1.5 stitch length and 5 stitch width, dropping the far right stitch off the edge on each zigzag, which will 'bind' it and stop fraying. On the Janome 525S machine, line the raw edge of the cloth with the slit in the clear foot, with ordinary foot raw edge should be 1.5mm in from right edge of kidney shaped hole in foot.



20. To turn corners through nicely: Fold seam allowance in at corners along sewing line, hold, then stick your forefinger inside, and have thumb on outside, finger and thumb nail meeting either

side of cloth. Push thumb up whilst turning fabric through to turn a great corner – ask tutor to show you or watch my YouTube video – look up Sew In Brighton Channel - if unsure

21. Insert cushion pad, massaging it into the corners, tugging the overlaps well across each other to smooth out any pull lines at the sides.  
**CONGRATULATIONS – ENJOY!**

