

Backpacks for Human Trafficking Victims

Materials

1 man's T-shirt (smallest T-shirt can be medium-sized woman's)
2 yards of clothesline cord or other similar size cord
Rotary cutter and mat (24-by-36 is recommended)
15-by-15 quilter's square
Sewing machine
Serge (optional)
Ball point needle—size 14
Dual duty thread (white, gray, or black)
Miscellaneous sewing equipment (iron, measuring tape, scissors, pins, marker, bodkin, etc.)

Preparation Directions

- Spread the T-shirt on the rotary cutter mat with the primary design* faceup. Use your hands or an iron to press out any wrinkles.
- If the design on the back of the shirt is directly behind the front design, place the quilter's square under the neckline and center it over the two designs. Cut around the square with the rotary cutter through both sides of the shirt. (This also applies to shirts with a design on only one side.)
- If the back design is not directly behind the front design, cut each side separately. Cut from the bottom to the armpit on each side, and open the shirt to gain access to each side.
- From the remainder of the shirt, cut a half inch above the hem. This will become the casing for the drawstring.
- Measure the cord. Place tape over the 2-yard mark to keep the cord from raveling after it is cut. Cut the cord in the middle of the tape.

Sewing Directions

- Pin the front and back of the shirt together along the sides, with the front design facedown on the back design. Mark the bottom with a marker or a special pin so you stitch the bottom, not the top.
- Reduce the pressure foot tension on the sewing machine, or use an even feed foot. Using a ball point needle, straight stitch the sides of the bag (half-inch seam allowance or equal to the width of the pressure foot, whichever is easier for you). Backstitch at the beginning and the end of the seams. Stitch the bottom. Backstitching is not necessary for this seam. Turn the bag right side out.
- Cut two pieces of shirt hem equal to the size of the bag's top front, less a half inch. Center and pin one hem to the top of the back side and the other to the top of the front side.
- Stitch the top of the hem to the top of the bag—front and back—backstitching at the beginning and the end. Stitch the bottom of the hem in a similar fashion.
- Attach a bodkin or a large safety pin to one end of the cord. Thread the cord through the back casing and the front casing and back through the back casing. A tail of the cord will be dangling out of each side of the bag.

- On each side, push the end of the cord at least a half inch into the bag's bottom corner. Pin in place. Turn the bag inside out.
- With a serger, stitch a 45-degree angle across each bottom corner, using a four-thread overlock stitch. Make sure to cut through the cord tail.
- If you don't have a serger, then use the sewing machine to stitch back and forth over the cord several times to secure it to the bottom of the bag and trim the excess cord from the inside of the bag.
- Pull the bag right side out using the cord to test the security of the stitching. Then pull the cord at the top of the bag to close it.

**If you have a plain T-shirt or a shirt with a front pocket, then use acrylic paints, stencils, stamps, fabric pens, or appliques to create a design or a message.*