artist’s pencil roll pattern

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I created this pattern especially for kids learning how to sew, but adults will love making it too! It’s a wonderful project for beginning sewists, doesn’t require an iron, and only takes an afternoon to make. Terms that are bolded and highlighted are defined in my Sewing Glossary post.

https://extradisciplinary.com/posts/artists-pencil-roll-pattern

Pattern Overview

Sewing Level	total beginner
Age Level	kids and adults
Sewing Time	an afternoon
Skills Practiced	sewing double-fold hems and enclosed seams, pivoting around corners, topstitching, edgestitching, and finger pressing
Finished Dimensions	12″ wide x 11″ tall when opened; 4″ wide x 8″ tall when folded in thirds

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Feel free to reach out with any questions. If you’d like in-person support and instruction, please sign up for my classes at Modern Domestic or contact me to schedule a private lesson.

Pattern Use Guidelines

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This means you can distribute the pattern, adapt it to fit your needs, and sell products made using this pattern as long as you **provide proper credit!** You can copy and paste the sentence above, or write something like: I used the Artist’s

Pencil Roll pattern by Aliya Hoff-Vanoni of extradisciplinary. Depending on how you are sharing your work, you might provide a link to this webpage, a link to the Threadloop Pattern Page and my Threadloop Profile, and/or tag @extradisciplinary and use the hashtag #ArtistPencilRoll on Instagram.

Feel free to contact me with any questions about these guidelines or if you'd like me to teach a workshop using this pattern.



I sewed four 2" wide pockets for pencils and one 4" wide pocket to fit a small notebook (shown here is a Traveler's Notebook Passport insert)



The top flap keeps pencils from falling out.



Roll it up or fold in thirds (shown here) and tie closed to secure.

Gather Your Supplies

- 1/2 yard (or 13″ x 17.5″ rectangle) of midweight (~5–10 oz) cotton canvas, twill, or similar **woven fabric** for the exterior
  - I used Robert Kaufman Big Sur Canvas in Woodland (green and floral sample above) and Blue Grey (blue and aquatic sample below)
  - If you'd like to use a lighter **weight** fabric for the exterior, I recommend applying a **fusible interfacing** like Pellon SF 101 before cutting out your pieces to give your tool roll more structure.
- 1 **fat quarter** (or 12″ x 13″ rectangle) quilting cotton, Essex (cotton linen blend), lightweight (~3–5 oz) canvas, or similar woven fabric for the interior

    - For the green and floral sample, I used a Robert Kaufman Essex cotton/linen blend from Anna Graham's Riverbend collection (Dry Florals in Oyster)
    - For the blue and aquatic sample, I used a quilting cotton from the Aquatic Paradise collection by Louise Cunningham for Dashwood Studio (Coral Reef)
- 1 yard of 1/4" flat cording or cotton twill tape for the ties
- 1 spool of thread that matches your exterior fabric (you will have visible **topstitching**)

Helpful Tools and Notions

- A fresh sewing machine needle (my favorite all-purpose needles are Schmetz Microtex 80/12; universal needles also work great)
- Regular presser foot
- **Edgestitch** presser foot
- Fabric marker, chalk pen, or other temporary fabric marking tool that shows up on your fabric (you can also make marks and creases with a butter knife or Hera marker)
- Ruler
- Scissors or rotary cutter and cutting mat
- Sewing pins or clips (e.g., Clover Wonder clips or small binder clips) to hold fabric together
- Point turner to turn corners inside out (you can also use a chopstick or the eraser end of a pencil)
- Seam ripper
- Iron (optional): This pattern was made with kids in mind, so the instructions call for finger pressing seams. If you're comfortable using an iron, feel free to **press** your seams and topstitching with an iron instead.



I made this pencil roll for my kid sister when she started second grade this fall 🥹 Note the cute moon label from Sarah Hearts.



A quick, thoughtful gift—all filled up with highlighters and a Field Notes notebook.

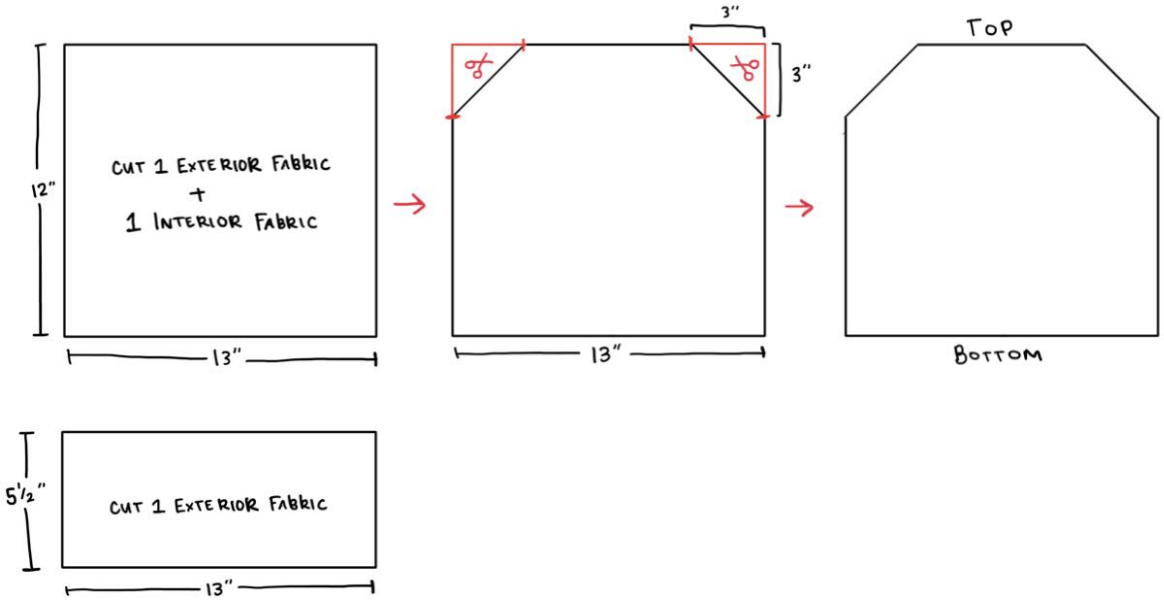
Cut Your Fabric

Interior Fabric

- Cut out **one** 12″ x 13″ rectangle from your interior fabric. If the fabric has a directional design, make sure it’s oriented with the design facing in direction you’d like according to the diagram below.
- Use your ruler and fabric marker to mark 3″ away from both top corners on the top and side edges of the rectangle. You should have four marks in total.
- Connect the two marks near each corner with a line to make two triangles. Cut along the lines you drew to remove the corners.

Exterior Fabric

- Repeat the steps above to cut out **one** 12″ x 13″ rectangle with the top corners cut off. Set aside.
- Now cut out a second, smaller rectangle that measures 5.5″ x 13″ from your exterior fabric.



📌 **You should now have three pieces of fabric cut out:** two 12″ x 13″ rectangles with the top corners cut off (one in each fabric) and one smaller 5.5″ x 13″ rectangle in your exterior fabric.

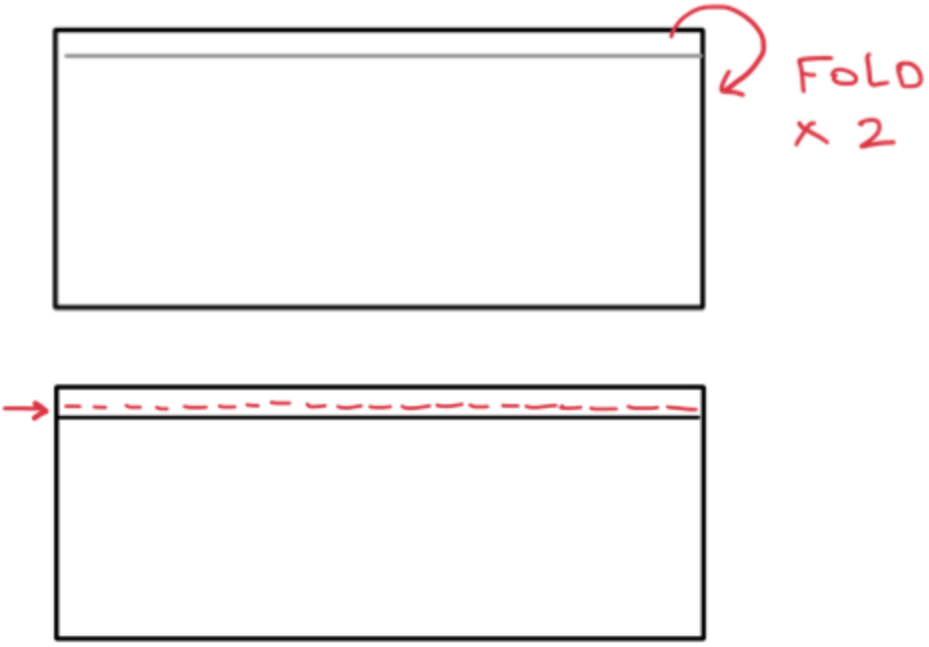
Prepare the Pockets

📌 **Unless otherwise noted, sew all seams using a 2.5 mm long straight stitch and a 1/2″ seam allowance.**

Finish the Top Pocket Edge

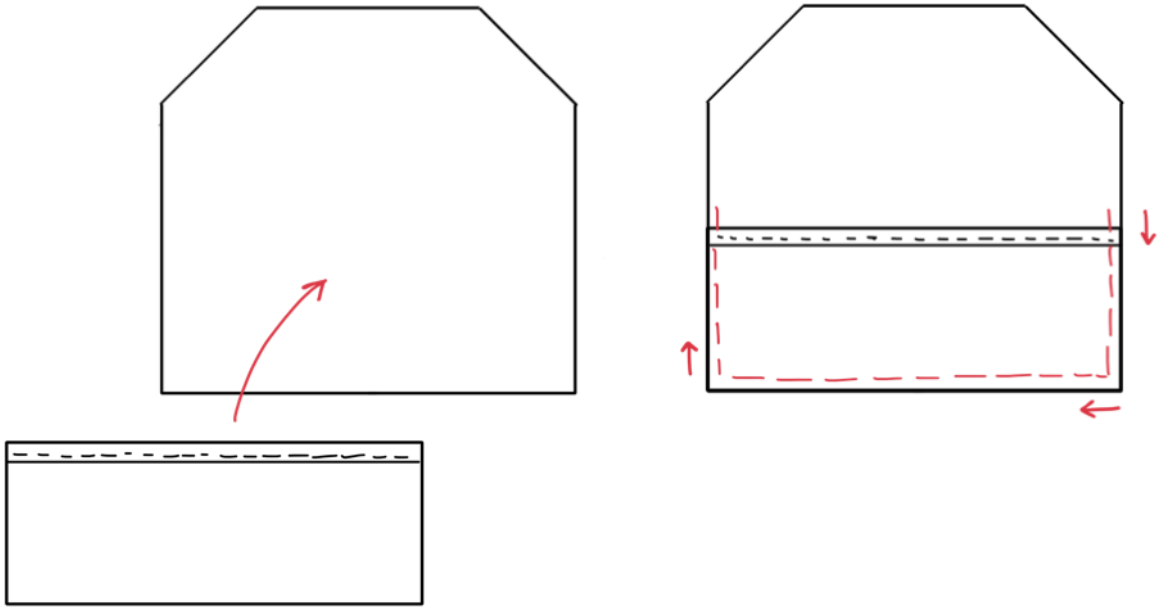
- Take your small canvas rectangle (5.5″ x 13″) and place it **right side** up, with the long edges horizontal and any designs facing in the direction you'd like.
- Fold the top long edge down 1/4″ and **press** with your finger or an iron, then fold the edge down one more time to create a **double-fold hem**. Press again, and pin or clip to hold the folds in place.

    - The exact width of these folds doesn't matter too much; what's more important is that you try to make the fold even all the way across so the top of your pocket doesn't slant.
    - I like to fold the edge to the right side of my fabric so the inside of the pockets are smooth and my tools won't get caught when I'm taking them out.
- If desired, slide a cute label/tag under the fold. Be sure that the edge of your tag is at least 1/2" away from the side edges (I placed mine 3/4" away) so it doesn't get caught in the side seams we will sew later (see blue and aquatic sample above).
- **Edgestitch** the fold in place using a regular (2.5mm) **stitch length** or a slightly longer topstitching length (3.0 mm). Remember to **backstitch** at the beginning and end of the stitch line.



Attach the Pocket

- Place your interior fabric right side up, with the long edge horizontal, and the side with the triangles cut out on top. Lay the pocket on top, also right side up. Align the bottom and sides and pin or clip to hold in place.
- Increase your stitch length to 4–5 mm. **Baste** the pocket in place along the sides and bottom edge of the pocket **within** the 1/2″ **seam allowance**.
    - Sewing **within** the seam allowance means the distance between your needle and the edge of your fabric is **smaller** than what the pattern normally calls for so your temporary stitches won't be visible once you sew the final seams.
    - Basting stitches are temporary, so no need to backstitch.

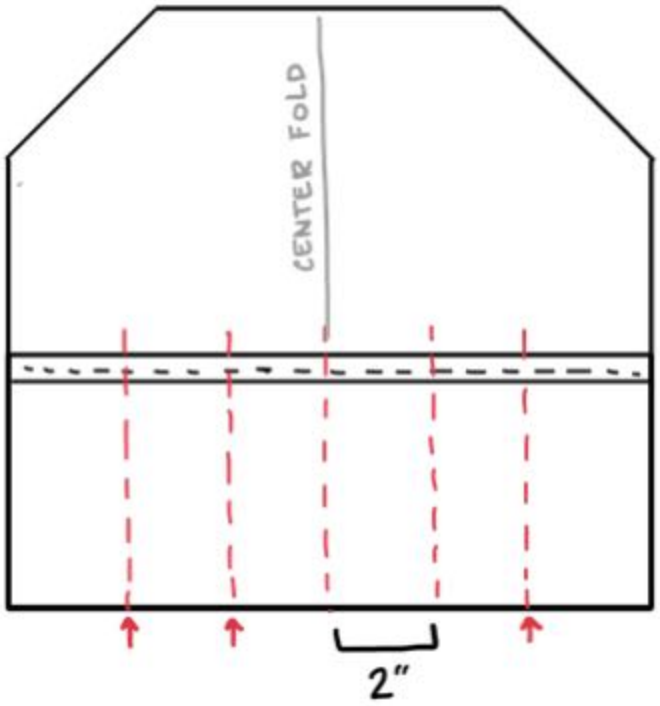


📌 Remember to return your stitch length to the regular length of 2.5 mm after basting.

Sew the Pocket Dividers

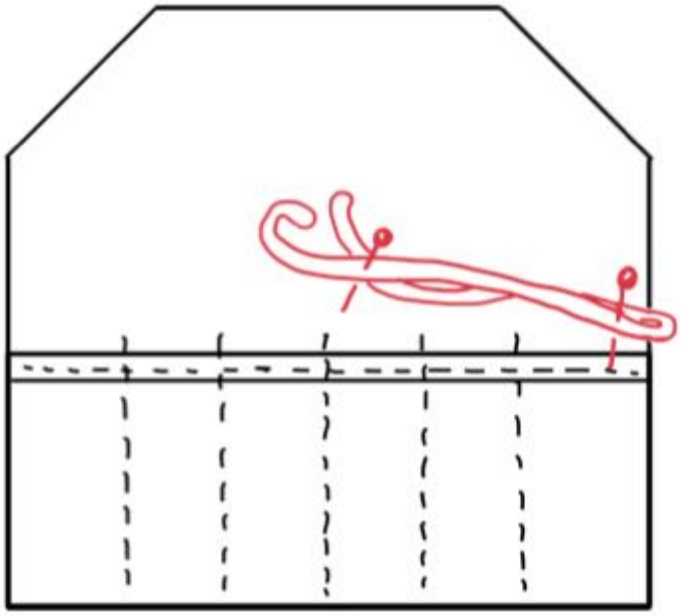
- Fold your piece in half like a hamburger and press it with your finger to make a crease down the middle.

- Use your ruler and fabric marker to draw vertical lines on your canvas pocket piece where you would like the pocket dividers to be. Remember to account for the 1/2″ seam allowance on the sides when planning the width of your outer pockets.
    - If you're not sure how many pockets you want, I recommend drawing lines 2″ apart, starting from the center and working out towards the sides.
    - If you would like to make custom pockets to fit specific items, remember to make the pockets a little bigger than you think you may need so that your 3D objects can actually fit into them!
        - If you want to be able to fold your pencil roll in half easily, be sure to add a line in the middle. You can subdivide the halves further if desired.
        - If you want to fold your pencil roll in thirds, draw a line 2″ away from the center line in both directions to make three 4″ sections. You can subdivide these sections further.
- Starting at the bottom edge, **topstitch** along each line you drew using a regular stitch length (2.5mm) or a slightly longer topstitching length (3.0 mm). Remember to backstitch at the beginning and end of the stitch line. You will want to sew over the top edge of the pocket onto the interior fabric and backstitch back over the pocket edge at least once to secure it down.
    - **You don't need to sew the outermost sides of the pocket in this step.** We'll sew the side seams when we attach the interior and exterior fabric pieces.



Attach the Ties

- Fold your flat cord or twill tape in half. Place the folded edge just above the top edge of the pocket (about 4.5″ up from the bottom edge) so that the fold extends about 1/4″ beyond the edge of your fabric. Pin or clip the folded edge to the fabric; alternatively, you can baste it in place.
- Gather the loose ends of the ties in the very center of your fabric and pin them in place so you don't accidentally sew through them in the next step.

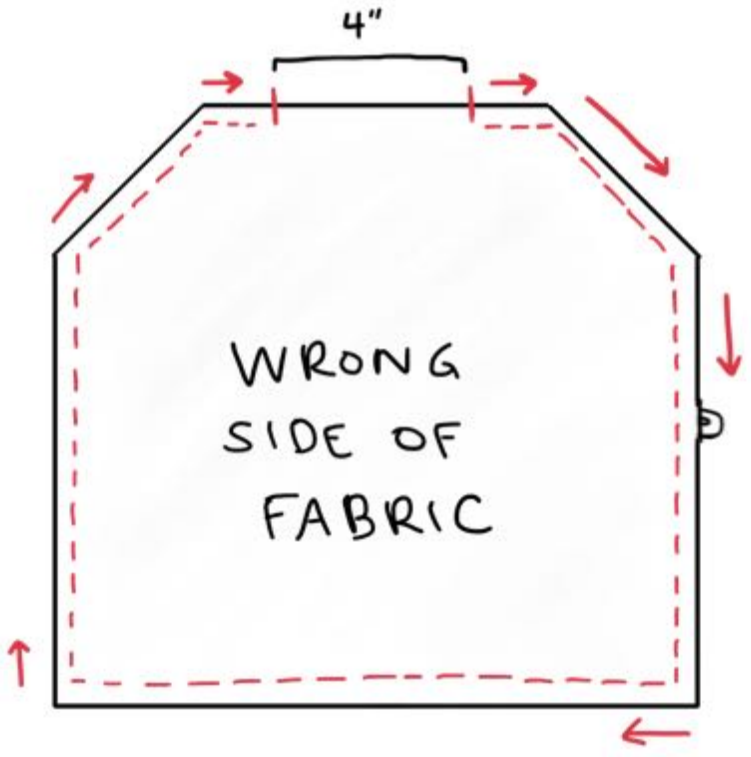


Sew the Interior and Exterior Fabrics Together

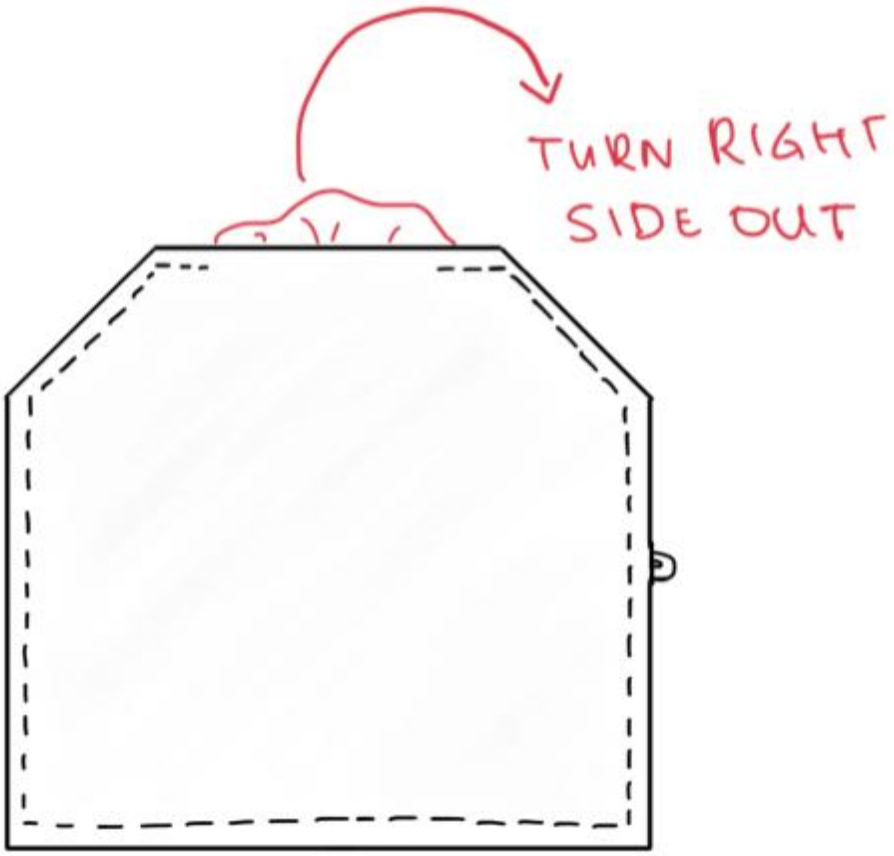
Align and Pin

- Place the interior fabric with the pocket you just sewed right side up on the table, then lay your exterior fabric on top of it, so the right sides of the fabric are together and the ties are sandwiched in between.
- Align the top, bottom, and side edges and then pin or clip to hold in place. If you used a pin or clip to secure the ties, make sure to move it to the outside of your fabric so you don’t accidentally sew over it.

Sew Around the Perimeter

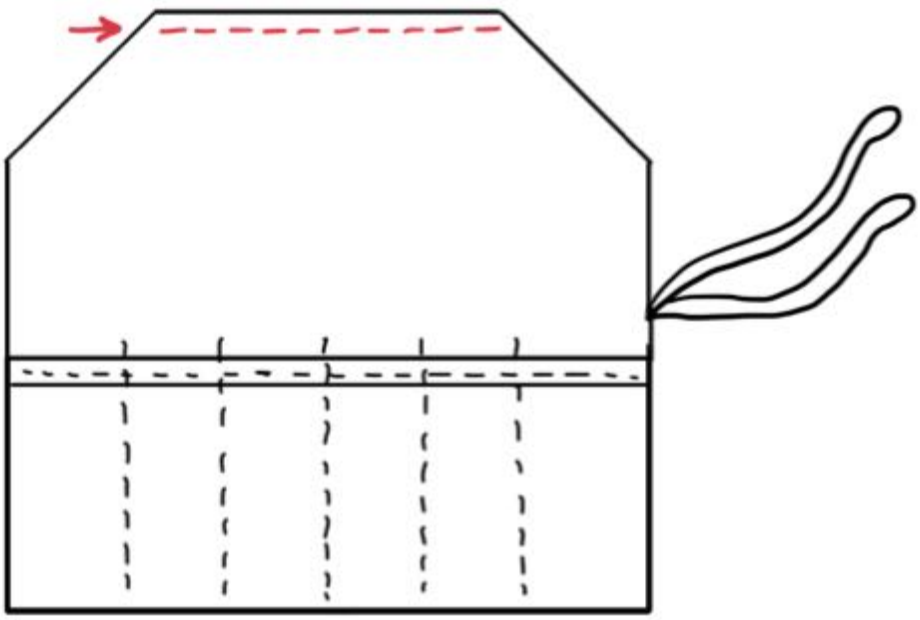


- Leave a 4″ gap on the top edge (the edge with the cut out triangles) so you can flip our piece right side out after sewing. Use your chalk pen and a ruler to make two marks, each about 2″ away from the center.
- Starting at one of the chalk marks on the top edge, sew around the perimeter of the fabric using a **1/2″ seam allowance**, **pivoting** at each corner. Remember to backstitch at the beginning and end of the stitch line.
- Clip your corners: cut off excess fabric at the corners to remove bulk and make the corners nice and neat when we turn it right side out. Leave a sliver of your seam allowance intact and be careful not to cut through any of your stitches!
- Turn your pencil roll right side out through the gap in the top. Use a point turner or similar tool to press the seams open and gently push the corners out. Finger press the side seams so everything looks nice and neat.



Finish the Top Edge

- At the top gap, fold the un-sewn edges of both fabric pieces down so the raw edges are hidden on the inside of the tool roll. Shift the folds around as needed until they line up nicely with the sections you already sewed. Finger press the folds well. Pin or clip to hold in place.
- Edgestitch the folded edges to sew the gap closed using a regular stitch length (2.5mm) or a slightly longer topstitching length (3.0 mm). Remember to backstitch at the beginning and end.



Final Touches

- Use small scissors to trim any thread tails.
- Remove any lingering marks from the fabric marker
- Use a seam ripper to remove any visible basting stitches.
- Fold down the top flap and use your finger to press a crease. You can fold the top flap down over your pencils before you roll it up so your tools don't fall out!
- Fill your pencil roll with art supplies and tie a bow. If the ties are longer than you'd like, trim them with scissors.
- Celebrate!!!

Keep In Touch

Thanks very much for reading! If you have any questions, feedback, or corrections regarding the pattern, please don't hesitate to contact me! I'd love to see what you make, so please tag me on Instagram and use the hashtag #ArtistPencilRoll. You can also find me and this pattern on Threadloop.