

Pattern – Rescue Basket Liner

These instructions are for a padded liner for the plastic picnic baskets commonly used by wildlife carers. Lining the basket prevents damage to beaks and wings of birds and ducklings and helps maintain warmth for orphaned joeys.

Please read the instructions fully before commencing, including the notes at the rear.

The instructions outline the way I sew this cover but if you are a confident sewer, you can easily adapt to suit yourself.

Items Needed

- Quilted bedspread (*see notes at rear*)
- Sewing machine capable of sewing thick fabrics (*see notes at rear*)
- Overlocker/serger
- Standard sewing thread – I use standard thread (e.g. Rasant 120) for the baste stitching
- Thicker sewing thread – I use a thicker thread to sew the rest (e.g. Rasant 75 or Gutermann Mara 80)
- 4 pieces of cord or ribbon about 45cm long (for ties)
- Plastic rescue basket – it is helpful to have a basket available for fitting



1 – Trace and cut out your fabric from the bedspread

- For each liner you need 3 pieces:
 - 1 piece 37cm x 82cm
 - 2 pieces 26cm x 30cm
- ***Make sure you read the notes carefully at the rear outlining the best way to cut the bedspread.***
- ***If you're going to make quite a few, I find it easier to create a template with cardboard or template plastic.***

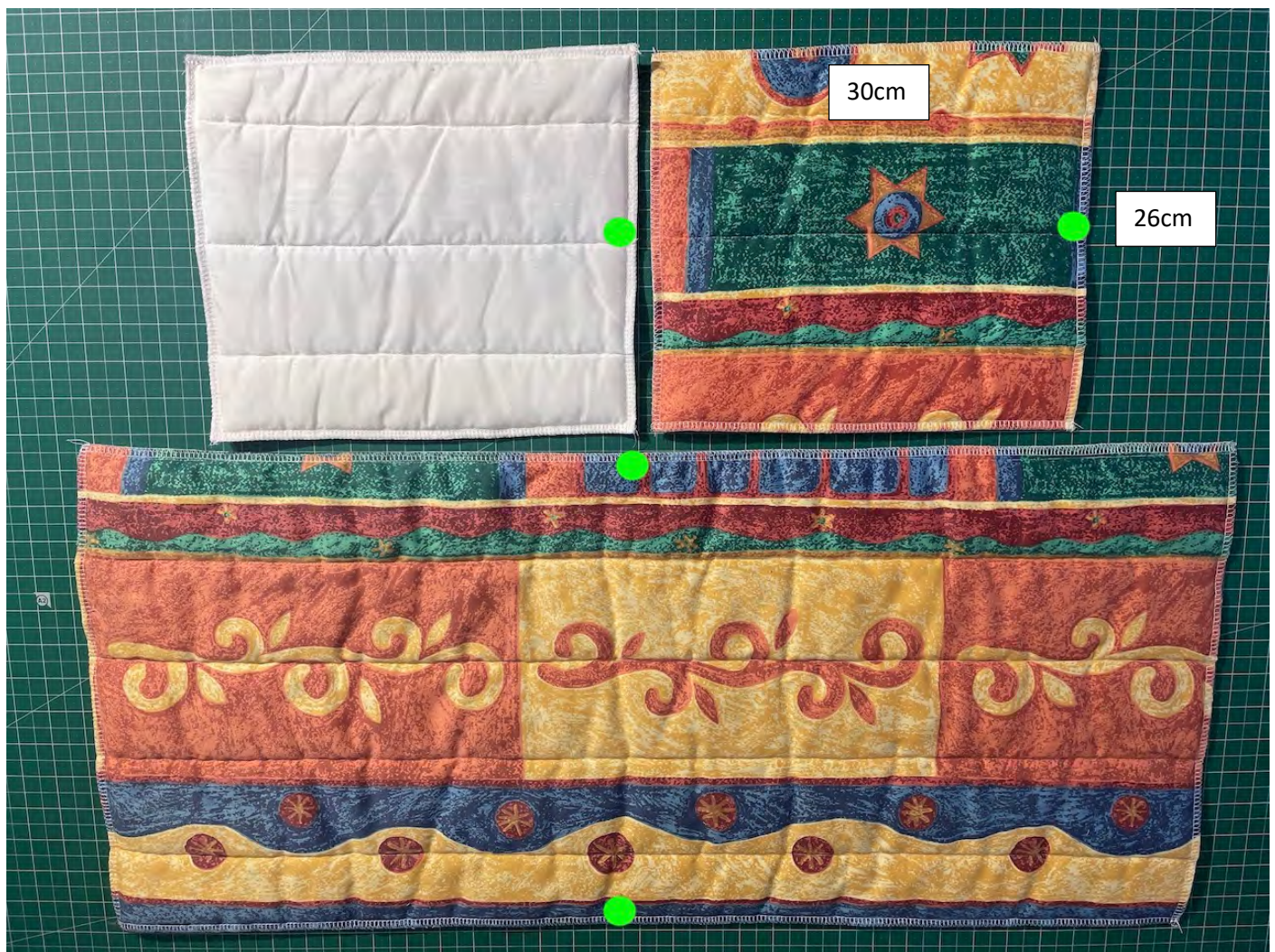


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2 – Baste and overlock

- Run a basting stitch along each edge of the 3 pieces. I run a ~4mm long basting stitch about 5mm in from the edge on all sides. This keeps the 3 layers of the bedspread together neatly whilst overlocking and results in a nicer finish.
- Overlock each edge. I position the blade to cut just on the inside of the basting stitch.



3 – Mark the middle of each piece

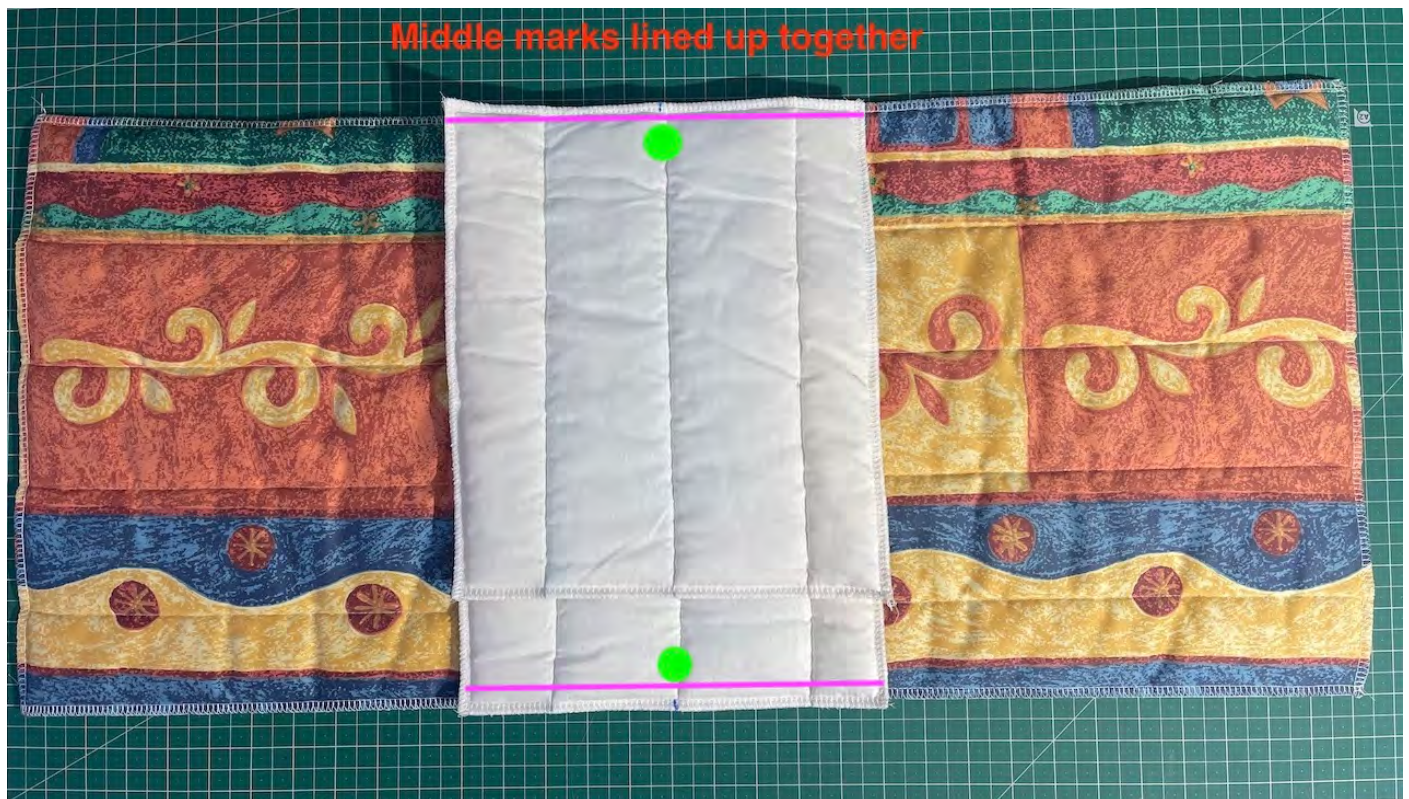
- Find the middle of each piece.
- Fold the large piece in half lengthways and mark the middle.
- Fold the two smaller pieces in half short ways (along the 26cm length) and mark the middle.
- ***Refer to the photo in Step 2 – the bright green dots indicate where to mark the middle of each piece. It's important to make sure that you're marking the middle of the two smaller pieces on the correct edge.***

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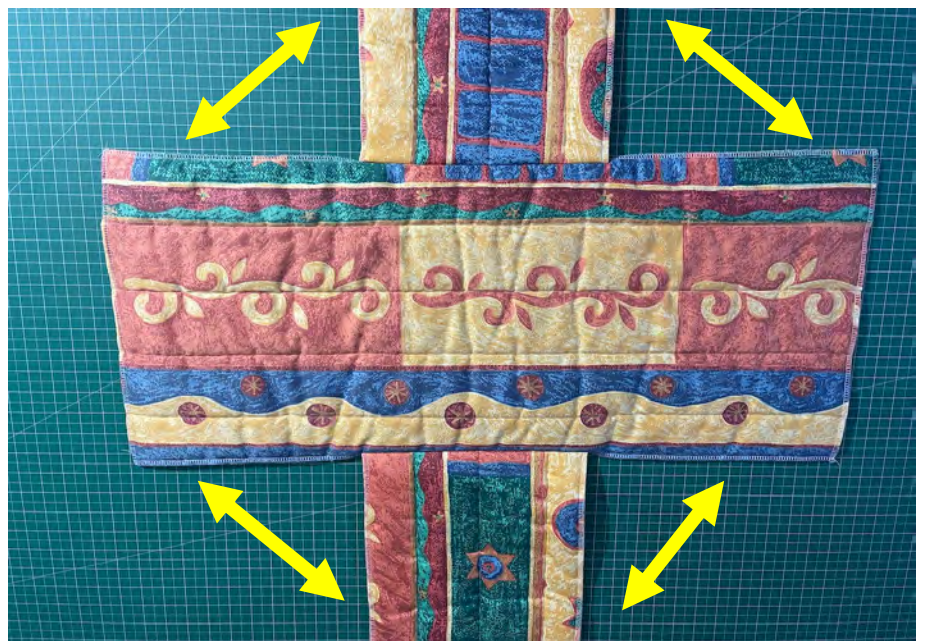
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4 – Sew the side pieces to the body

- Position the large piece right side up.
- Position each smaller piece on top, right side facing down, and match up the middle of each top piece with the middle of large piece. The pieces should line up neatly together.
- The bright green dots indicate the middle marks on each side.
- Once positioned, sew the smaller pieces to the large piece with a 1cm seam allowance (indicated by the pink line). I switch over to the thicker sewing thread from this point.



Your piece should now look like this!



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5 – Sew the side seams

- Bring each side piece up to meet each other and secure.
- *I've marked the photo in step 4 with yellow arrows to indicate which seams will be secured together.*
- Secure the seams together with wonder clips (really cheap on eBay) as I find most bedspreads are too thick for pins.
- Sew down each side to meet up with the bottom seam which was sewn in step 4. Make sure you don't accidentally catch the section underneath.
- Repeat on the other side.
- If all goes well, your side pieces will match up nicely with the main body at the top.
- If your top edge doesn't match up, just trim it so it is even and run it through the overlocker again.



You should then have something that looks like this!



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6 – Fold over the top

- Place the liner into the basket. It will extend up past the edge of the basket (see photo below left).
- Fold over the liner to be just below the top of the basket (see photo below right).



- I use large wonder clips or stainless-steel hemming clips to secure the folded over section in place (see images below).



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7 – Sew the folded top edge

- Sew around the folded section to secure.
- If you are using a standard sewing machine, go slowly over the corner seams as there's a lot of bulk there and it's easy to break your needle.
- You should end up with an overlap of about 5cm – this helps to add a bit of bulk to the top, so it stands up a bit better.
- I usually run a second line of stitching between the top and the sewn edge as well (see bottom photo).

If you want to include some ties (see notes at rear), slip them in as you get to each corner, so they are secured in the stitching (see photo right).



And you are done!



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Fabric Choices

My preference for sewing these is to use a **quilted bedspread**. I find they are a good thickness, include a thin layer of wadding (for additional warmth) and are usually good quality fabric.

The best quilted bedspreads I have used are the hotel-style ones which are higher quality and generally thicker. Ideally, you want a bedspread that is thick enough that once sewn, it will 'stand up' on its own without having to be secured to the basket. Some of the hotel-style ones are quite 'stiff' and work well. If it's a lighter weight bedspread, you can easily affix some ties though.

Sourcing Bedspreads

I usually source these through Gumtree or Marketplace. Prices will vary but I usually find single size bedspreads for \$10-\$20 and Double/Queen size for \$15-\$25. I wouldn't usually pay more than \$25 unless it was a really good quality one. When searching online, use key words 'bedspread', 'comforter' or 'coverlet'. Note that typical coverlets are much thinner and generally aren't suitable.

With careful placement, I can usually get 8-9 basket liners out of a single bedspread with no wastage. There may end up being one or two larger pieces that I'll shorten from 82cm down to around 79-80cm (which still works well).

I've included some images sourced online to provide examples of the quilted bedspreads which I find are suitable.



Thread

If you don't have a heavier weight sewing thread, you can get away with using standard thread but I do prefer to use a thicker thread for these heavier fabrics.

Sewing Machines

If you are using a thick heavy-weight bedspread, you might find that a standard sewing machine will struggle with sewing the side seams and folded section. I've broken many needles over the past 2 years on my Janome 9400QCP from sewing quilted bedspread pouches and basket liners. ☹️ I've recently purchased a Janome HD9 (a semi-industrial machine) and it sews the thicker bedspreads with no issues.

Some quilted bedspreads though are a bit thinner, and these will sew up with a standard sewing machine just fine. Use a heavier gauge needle (I usually use a denim/#16 needle). Remember that in some sections you'll be sewing through 4 layers of bedspread.

If you are using a thinner bedspread, and it won't 'stand up' in the basket on its own, you'll need to include some ties to keep it in place. You can sew the ties at each corner when you sew Step 7. The ties can then be secured through the vents on the basket (see photos on next page).

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I found that 2mm venetian blind cord from Bunnings worked really well for the ties, but you can use ribbon or whatever you have on hand too.



Quilting Direction

Before you cut the bedspread, check the direction of the quilting. Some are quilted in a **multi-directional pattern** and it doesn't matter which way you cut the pieces out (see photo below left).

Some are quilted though in a **vertical pattern** (see photo below right). I find that these ones turn out much better if you cut these with the quilting running **vertically**. This helps a lot in enabling the liner to stand up on its own. If you cut them in the other direction, the liner will want to just 'fold over'.

Photo below left: Multi-directional quilting



Photo below right: Vertical quilting



Finally....

I hope these instructions help.

If you have any questions at all feel free to email me at karen@wildcare.org.au.