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Decked out Backpack

It's hard to believe it's almost time for the kids to go back to school. It's close enough that we're beginning to think a lot about buying clothes and supplies. While new clothes can be exciting and a reflection of each child's personality, the supplies are pretty standard and boring. Pencils, notebook paper, bottles of glue. Nothing special there. But that doesn't mean getting those supplies to school has to be standard and boring. Using a few Fiskars tools, a basic backpack can be transformed into something that reflects the unique personality of any child.

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Supplies:

01-004429 Limited Edition : All-A-Flutter – Large
01-003979 Scalloped Punch : Square-a-licious – Extra Large
12-74247097 Round 'n Round – Large
48007097 Ultra ShapeXpress
12-48107097 Shape Template – Butterflies 2
12-83717097 18 Inch x 24 Inch Mat
95447097 Softgrip® 65mm Rotary Cutter
12-87287097 3.5 x 18.5 Acrylic Ruler
99947097 No. 5 Non-Stick™ Scissors
Other: buttons, embroidery floss, 1/4 yard fabric for pencil bag, 1/4 yard fabric for lining of pencil bag, (6) 3" x 2" scraps of fabric, fusible interfacing, 10" zipper, thread

This is the backpack I started with. It has a colorful, bold pattern but using some of the squeeze punches and some fabric, it can be transformed into a special one with fun little details.



To create the large butterfly embellishment, I began by apply fusible webbing to the backside of the fabric I wanted to use. Using the fusible webbing allowed me to quickly and cleanly adhere the fabric to another layer of fabric to add a contrasting border. It also stabilized the fabric allowing me to use the Ultra Shape Express to cut out the butterfly shape.

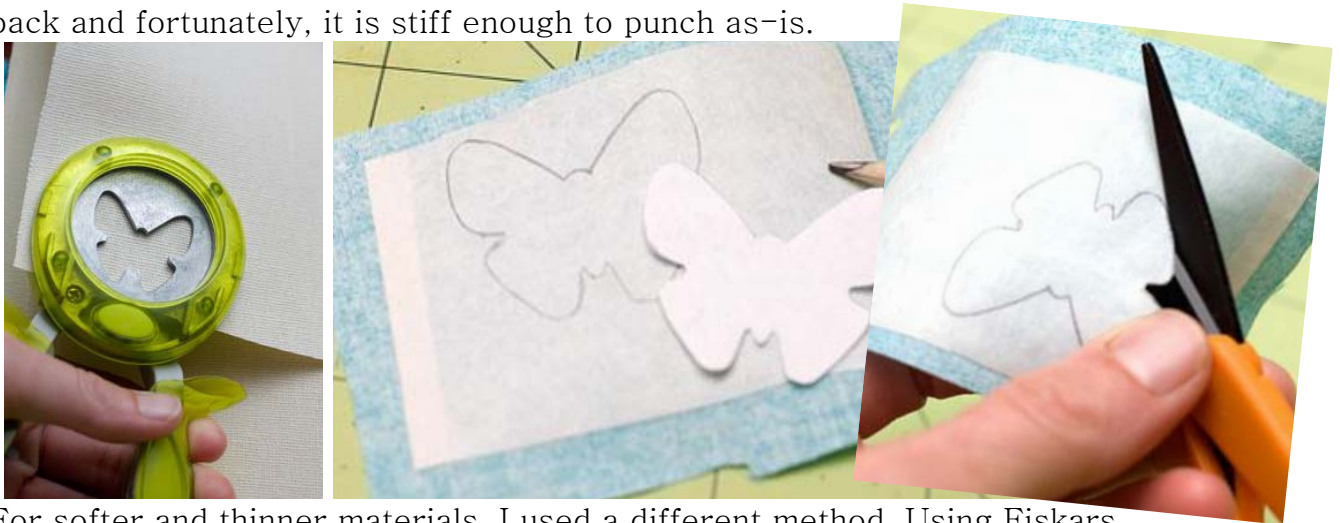


Begin by following the directions for the particular brand of fusible webbing you choose. I used a heavy weight webbing called Ultra Hold Heat N Bond by Therm-O-Web as the trim fabric I used is a heavy-weight canvas.

After applying the Heat-n-Bond, I left the paper backing in place. Over this, I place the Butterflies 2 Shape Template and used the Ultra ShapeXpress tool to quickly cut a butterfly shape from the fabric. Once the shape is cut, the paper backing can be removed and the fabric shape adhered to another layer of fabric (a heavy canvas in this case) by following the directions on the packaging. This involves ironing the 2 layers together.

Using the No. 5 Non-Stick Microtip scissors, I cut the second layer of fabric into a contrasting border around the original fabric butterfly and added some beads to embellish it.

To create the punched shape details, I used a few different methods as the materials were of different weights and stiffnesses to begin with. I was lucky enough to find some very stiff canvas on a clearance shelf sometime back and fortunately, it is stiff enough to punch as-is.



For softer and thinner materials, I used a different method. Using Fiskars Squeeze Punches, I punched patterns from white paper, traced them on to the backside of fabric which had fusible web adhered to it. Next, I cut them out using the No.5 Non-Stick Scissors. The fusible webbing can be used to adhere the shapes to the backpack but my backpack is made of a vinyl material. In my case, the fusible web will serve as an edge-fraying preventative.

Note: Fray Check can be applied to edges using a thin paintbrush to prevent fraying on materials that don't have fusible webbing backing them.



The finished fabric embellishments can be adhered to fabric backpacks using fusible webbing. Since my backpack is a vinyl material, I stitched mine in place using embroidery floss and buttons.



Backpacks typically come with lots of pockets and compartments for smaller supplies. But having a separate pencil bag can be more convenient at times when a child doesn't need anything from the backpack other than a few supplies.

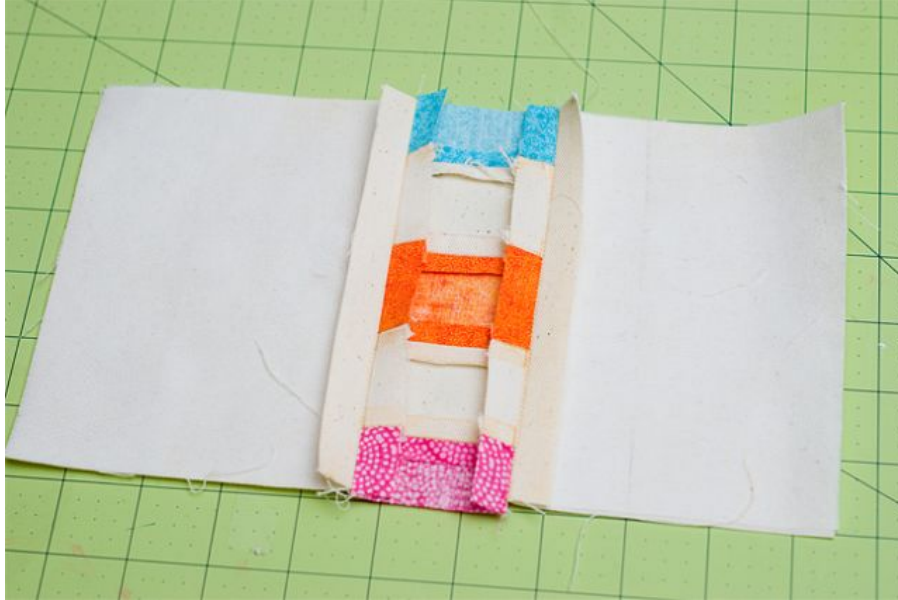
Instructions for making coin purses, make up bags, etc. can be found online. The instructions for mine came from the book *Pretty Little Purses & Pouches*.



Cut materials to the following sizes:

- (1) 6" x 10" piece for purse back
- (1) 6" x 3" piece for purse front
- (1) 6" x 5" piece for purse front
- (6) 3" x 2" pieces for patchwork insert
- (2) 6" x 10" pieces for lining
- (4) 6" x 10" pieces of fusible interfacing

Place 2 of the 3" x 2" pieces right-sides together and stitch using 1/4" seam allowance. Continue with the remaining pieces until all 6 have been used. Press the seams open and trim the strip to 6" long.



Place the patchwork panel right-sides together with one of the front panels and stitch together using a 1/2" seam allowance. Do the same with the remaining panel and press the seams open.

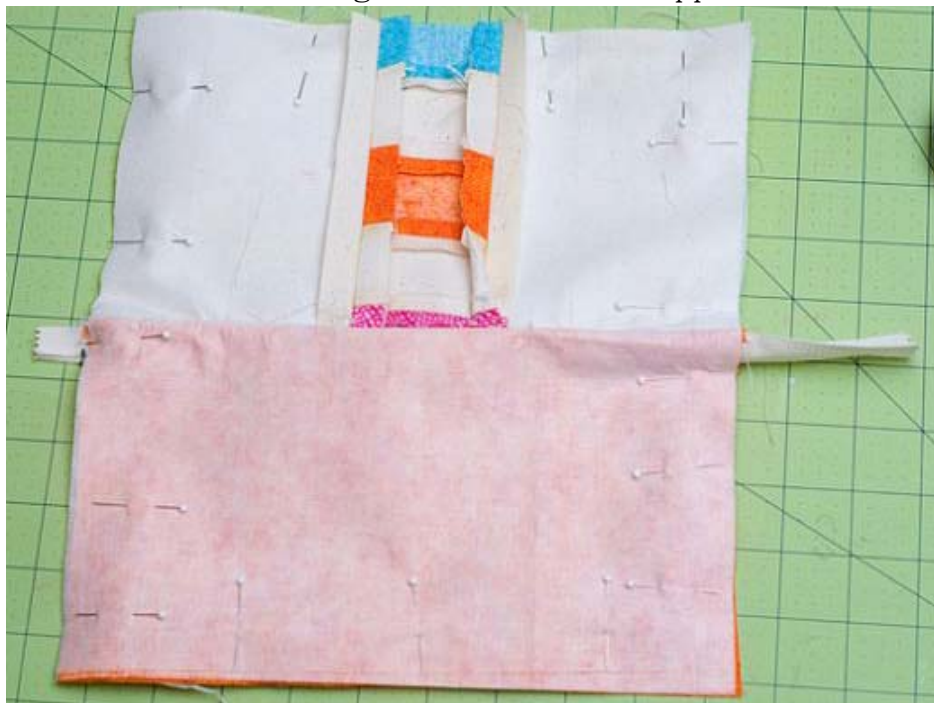
Iron the fusible interfacing to the backside of the front and back panels, as well as the 2 lining pieces.



Lay the zipper wrong side up along the top edge of the purse front (right side) and pin in place. Place the purse front lining fabric wrong side up over the zipper, aligning the top and sides with the purse front and pin in place.



Using a zipper foot, sew along the top edge of the layers. Fold these pieces back over the zipper and repeat on the other side of the zipper with the purse back and purse front lining. Flip the right sides out and top stitch along both sides of the zipper.



Open the zipper halfway. Separate the lining from the purse fabric, matching lining to lining and purse front to purse back with the right sides together. Fold the zipper in half, aligning the teeth and make sure the zipper teeth are pointing toward the lining. Pin all the sides in place.

Sew along all sides with a 1/2" seam allowance, leaving an opening along the bottom of the lining for turning. Clip the corners.



Turn the purse right side out through the opening in the lining. Push the corners out. Hand stitch the opening closed and push the lining into the pencil bag. Adhere a fabric butterfly to the patchwork strip with fusible webbing.



So while you're making that school supply list, be sure to add to it a few fun fabrics and other basic supplies listed above. And then have some fun with your kids personalizing those backpacks!

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