

Nest

When decorating your home, the best thing you can do is surround yourself with items that have some kind of personal meaning—these little touches are exactly the thing that make a house a home. In this chapter, you'll learn how to make six such items, and you'll pick up some new skills in the process. Turn a pair of old curtains into a set of coasters stitched up with curlicues, or use simple appliqué techniques to give your kitchen window a whole new view. Perk up your dining room with a checkerboard table runner made from a salvaged tablecloth, or learn the basics of patchwork quilting while whipping up a comfy neck pillow. Finally, you'll dress your nest with a multi-layered fabric collage using those crafty odds and ends you aren't sure what to do with.



I have a bad habit of repainting my living room every few years. I can't resist—there are too many great colors available to settle on just one! I've tried pale blue, sunny orange, and chocolate brown, and each time, I swap out the couch pillows, curtains, and other fabric accessories to match. I've discovered that making a set of fabric coasters is one of the quickest and easiest ways to tie together a new color scheme and round out a room's look. The Recycled Coasters were made using some '50s-era barkcloth curtains I bought at a flea market, with dark denim as a backing fabric. They feature free-motion quilting on top, which gives them a whimsical, casual look.

Finished Measurements

Approximately 4¾" x 4¾"

Materials

10½" x 10½" piece of barkcloth or any cotton fabric for top

10½" x 10½" piece of dark denim or similar weight fabric for bottom

10½" x 10½" piece of Warm & Natural quilt batting

Contrasting thread

Basic sewing tools (see page 15)

Sew and Embellish

NOTE: All seam allowances are ¼" unless otherwise noted.

- 1 Place the barkcloth right side up on top of the quilt batting and put both layers inside an embroidery hoop or secure the edges with safety pins. Topstitch a swirly design all over the fabric using the free-motion technique (see *Embellishing Basics*, page 16). Use a contrasting thread so it stands out.
- 2 Remove fabric from the embroidery hoop or remove the safety pins and press. Using a rotary cutter, cut the fabric down the middle horizontally and vertically, to create four 5¼" squares.
- 3 Using a rotary cutter, cut the denim down the middle horizontally and vertically, to create four 5¼" squares. Place each denim square and barkcloth square right sides together and pin.
- 4 Sew around all edges of each square, starting on the edge of one side and leaving a 2" opening for turning right side out. Once all squares are sewn, turn right side out and press.
- 5 Topstitch around all edges of each square (barkcloth side up), sewing about ⅛" from the edge. If desired, use a darker bobbin thread so it blends in with the denim.



Themes and Variations

- **Be a Square** Instead of topstitching loop-de-loop patterns, embellish the fabric with straight lines and sharp corners for a modern, geometric look.
- **Dye Job** If you use dark denim for the underside of your coasters, make sure to pre-wash it! The last thing you want is for indigo dye to stain your tables if it gets wet.
- **Be My Guest** Before you visit friends for the weekend, whip up a set of these coasters (ideally color coordinated with *their* living room) to give as a gift. You'll earn instant brownie points and will henceforth be known as their favorite houseguest ever.