

# Pirate's Practically Perfect Pillowcase Construction

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directions and graphics by Shelley Rodgers (pirate\_sr@hotmail.com)  
<http://pir8.freesevers.com/> and click on the "sewing" link

This pillowcase is made up of a body, an accent strip and a bottom band.  
All seams are finished or enclosed, making the interior as beautifully finished as the exterior.

<p><u>Sizes:</u>            <u>width x length</u> Standard case: 20" x 27" Queen:            20" x 36" King:              20" x 40"</p>	<p>Width measurements are approximate. Just use width of fabric (WOF) so there isn't any waste. Make sure the fabric is at least 42" wide. If fabric is wider than 44", you'll have a <u>very</u> wide pillow case; you might consider cutting it down to 42" - 44".</p> <p>Length measurements are for the body only (the part that covers the pillow); the depth of the bottom band is in addition to listed measurements.</p>
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**A comment on fabric:** some fabrics have a directional print. Please make note of the direction of the print and whether it is printed the width or length of the fabric. If the print is widthwise (across the width of fabric), you will need to be sure that the print is "right side up" on the finished pillowcase and not "upside down". I will have additional reminders at specific steps in the directions to jog your memory on this point. Lengthwise directional prints don't have this concern.

<p><u>Fabric requirements:</u> assumes fabric is 42" - 44" wide.</p> <p><u>Main fabric for body:</u> 3/4 yd for standard 1 yd for queen 1-1/8 yd for king</p> <p><u>Accent strip:</u> 1/8 yd (if you purchase fabric, you'll have excess; use for another pillowcase) OR 1-5/8" x WOF strip from stash</p> <p><u>Bottom band:</u> 3/8 yd (if you purchase fabric) OR 10" x WOF from stash</p>	<p><u>Cutting Instructions:</u> use full WOF and cut crosswise. It's best to remove the selvages. They frequently are of a tighter weave and shrink differently when washed. Having said that, I must confess that if the selvage looks the same as the fabric, I get lazy and don't trim. Use your own discretion.</p> <p><u>Body:</u> clean cut both raw (non-selvage) edges of body fabric. The yardage requirements shown on the left will give you 27" for standard, 36" for queen and 40" for king.</p> <p><u>Accent strip:</u> I like my accent strips on the narrow side. If you like a wider strip, cut your accent fabric as wide as 3". Be aware that if the accent strip is too wide, it will be "floppy". If you bought yardage (as opposed to using your stash), you will have some leftover fabric.</p> <p><u>Bottom band:</u> if you bought yardage, cut down to 10" wide x WOF. This will give you approximately a finished 4" band. If you use the entire 3/8 yard piece, you'll have approximately a finished 6" band. It's your choice.</p>
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## Construction:

**A comment on seams:** Use French seams, serge or overcast plain seam edges. I like to use French seams because it's elegant, classy and I know how to do them. :-)

### Mini-tutorial for French seams

Place fabric WRONG sides together. Yes, the WRONG sides. Sew a 1/4" seam from the raw edge. Press flat (not open). Trim to 1/8". Be sure to trim! This gets rid of any potential "eyelashes" in the next seam. (I like to trim off the selvage edges because it gets rid of the tighter weave, which can be bulky inside the French seam. If the selvage is "feathery" or "fuzzy" you'll need to trim those off.) Press seam to one side (it doesn't matter which way) Now, put the fabric RIGHT sides together, encasing the seam. Press flat to get a crisp fold at the seam line. Sew 1/4" seam from the folded (newly seamed) edge. Viola! Doesn't that look wonderful? Pat yourself on the back. :-)

Be aware of directional prints! I'll give you tips will help you remember to place your directional prints so they are "right side up" on the finished pillowcase.

1. Press accent strip in half lengthwise, wrong sides together.
2. Pin the folded accent strip to the right side of body along one WOF side, raw edges together and baste thru all layers, 3/8" from edge. If you want, you can simply pin in place but I've found basting creates less problems for the later steps. See figure 1. Please note that in figure 1, the shaded area is the accent strip only. The bottom band has not been attached yet.

If your accent fabric is directional, make note of the direction of the print and whether it is printed the width or length of the fabric. If the print is directional the WOF, the top of the directional print should be towards the folded edge of the accent strip, so it will be facing "right side up" and not "upside down" on the finished pillowcase. If the fabric is printed directional the length-of-fabric, the top of the print should be towards either side seam (your choice).

If the accent strip extends past the body fabric, trim the accent fabric so it is even with the body fabric. The accent strip is now attached to the body and is treated as one piece of fabric.

3. Sew the side seam of the body. Remember to use French seams, serge or overcast a plain seam.
4. Sew the seam on the edge without the accent strip. This will be the closed end of the pillowcase. Remember to use French seams, serge or overcast a plain seam.
5. (This step will ensure that the bottom band is the same width as the body so it fits correctly in the next step.)

With right sides together, fold the band in half, crosswise. Place the band on top of the body/accent unit (no need to pin!) so that you align the fold of the band with the fold of the body/accent unit. The selvage edges of the band will extend beyond the seamed edge of body/accent unit. It doesn't matter if the body/accent unit is right side out or wrong side out at this point; you're just using it as a guideline for trimming.

Using a ruler and pencil to mark or ruler and rotary cutter, trim the band 1/2" BEYOND the seam line of the body/accent unit. This will be the 1/2" seam allowance used in the next step. See figure 2.

Remove the band from the body/accent unit and set the body/accent unit aside.

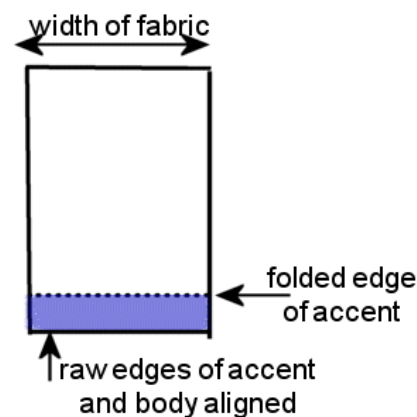


Figure 1

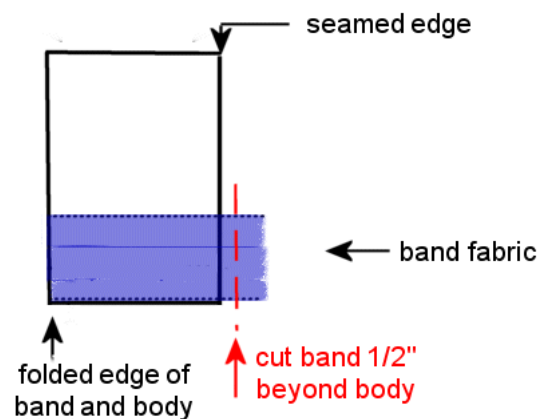


Figure 2

6. OPTIONAL: if you want to embellish the band, now is the time to do it, before it's attached to the body. It will be easier to manage the fabric if it's a single layer and not sewn to anything. This will also allow the back of any decorative stitching to be hidden by the inside of the band when the pillowcase is finished.

*Be careful in your embellishment placement!* You want to put any embellishment between the fold and the seam line! (I.e. do not put your embellishment on the fold)

7. With right sides together, sew the short sides of the band with a plain seam, forming a circle. Do NOT French seam, serge or overcast this seam. It is unnecessary, as this seam will be completely encased within the band.
8. OPTIONAL AT THIS POINT: one raw edge of the band will be sewn to the body/accent unit. The other raw edge will be folded under. You may fold under one raw edge 1/2" now if you want OR you can fold the edge under in step 10. If you fold the edge now, be aware of any directional print: the edge to fold under is the "top" of the directional print. This will ensure that the directional print will be "right side up" on the finished pillowcase.

9. Pin the right side of the band to the wrong side of the body. To do this, open up the band into a circle so the right side is on the inside. Make sure the body/accent unit is wrong side out. Put the body/accent unit inside the band. (See? the right side of the band is now next to the wrong side of the body) Align the raw edges. Align the seams and the fold lines. Pin in place. If the band has a directional print, align raw edge of the "bottom" of the print to the raw edge of the body/accent unit. Sew a ½" plain seam. Press the seam towards the band.
10. If you did not press under the raw edge in optional step 8, now is the time to do it. On the unsewn, raw edge of the band, turn under ½" and press. Flip to the right side of body. You'll see two lines of stitching (one basting and one regular). Align folded edge over the top of the regular stitching, covering both lines of stitching. Top stitch in place.

Voila! You're finished! Your pillowcase is now has a beautifully finished interior. Aren't you too, too clever! :-)

I'd like to offer my most heart-felt thanks to Pat Havens, Linda Hynick and Holice Turnbow for being guinea pigs. They had a difficult task of following my directions as though they had never sewn a pillowcase before. (This is actually quite difficult because your own sense of what should be done interferes with what you are reading.) They offered the most helpful and thoughtful comments and suggestions to make the final directions much more clear than they were originally.

Thank you, all, very, very much! I owe each of you a "Avoid one flogging" card. :-)