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Sandra Betzina Sews for Your Home

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Duvet Cover

Think of a duvet cover as a giant pillowcase for your down or polyester comforter. It helps keep the comforter clean, and each duvet cover you make gives your bedroom a new look. If you don't already own a comforter, we suggest buying one a size larger than the bed, especially if the mattress is thick. This way, the comforter will drop down the sides for fuller coverage. Regardless of the bed size, the construction is the same: Three panels of fabric are sewn together, to avoid a seam down the middle of the bed. A flat, folded strip of fabric enclosed in the seams adds the contrast but not the bulk of a welt.



Duvet covers can be made in a wide variety of fabrics, from dry-cleanable cotton velveteen to soft wash-

Before You Begin  see **Fabric Preparation** on p. 94.

FOR ONE DUVET COVER, YOU'LL NEED:

- Comforter
- Fabric, at least 44 inches wide
- Zipper
- Decorative buttons
- 2 yards twill tape
- Measuring and marking tools
- General craft/sewing supplies

PLANNING THE PROJECT

1 Use the worksheet on p. 63 to measure your comforter and figure out the fabric yardage needed. Be sure to measure the fabric width itself, since the information on the bolt may not be accurate. To make a duvet cover for an 89-inch by 95-inch queen-size comforter in a plain fabric, allowing extra for shrinkage, we used $5\frac{3}{4}$ yards of 54-inch-wide fabric for each side, or $10\frac{3}{4}$ yards total.

2 Purchase your fabric. You can use the same fabric for both sides of the cover or two contrasting fabrics, one on each side, for a different look when the comforter is flipped over. Also purchase a zipper 6 inches shorter than A on the worksheet. Also plan now for the decorative flap; if this piece cannot be cut from your leftover fabric, you will need to buy additional fabric for it.



DESIGN IDEA Flat sheets can be used for one or both sides of the duvet cover instead of fabric. Using sheets eliminates the need to sew fabric panels together. For a proper fit, the sheet must measure at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches larger than the comforter all around after preshrinking. Sheet sizes are listed on the package.

SCRAPS of Knowledge

FEATHER-AND-DOWN COMFORTERS

High-quality feather-and-down comforters use a baffle box construction for the maximum feather loft. Unlike quilting, which brings the top and bottom layers of fabric closer together, baffles are three-dimensional channels within the top and bottom fabrics that allow the feathers to move about and expand. The loft determines both the weight and the warmth of the comforter. A loft weight of 750 is warmer, puffier, and weighs more than a loft weight of 450. Any weight above 650 is considered luxury weight.

Another sign of comforter quality is in the fabric covering, or ticking. Ticking should be 100 percent cotton with a 200-count weave or higher to prevent small feathers from escaping. Seams should be double-sewn, not serged, for the same reason. This is true for the ticking on pillow forms as well. For more information on feathers and down, see p. 175.

Perhaps you are allergic to feathers? Silk gives the same luxurious feel and light hand of feathers and down but is softer and more flexible, allowing the comforter to conform to the body. Silk-filled comforters also come in different weights. See Resources on p. 198 for more information.

3 Prepare the fabric for sewing by preshrinking it, cutting off the selvages, and straightening the ends.

MAKING THE FRONT AND BACK

1 Cut the fabric for the duvet front cover from selvage to selvage, referring to E on the worksheet for the panel length and F for the number of panels to cut (either two or three). Mark the top of each panel on the wrong side with a piece of tape. Arrange the panels side by side, with one panel in the middle. If you have only two panels, cut one panel in half lengthwise to make two side panels, and place one on either side of the large panel to avoid a seam down the middle. Mark the inside cut edges for seaming to the center panel later.

2 For the seam trim, cut two contrasting strips of fabric, each $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches by the length of one panel, piecing as necessary. Press each strip in half lengthwise, right side in. Pin each strip to a long edge of the center panel, raw edges matching. Machine-baste $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the edge.



3 Pin the side panels to the center panel, right sides together, as planned in step 1. Observe your tape markings, to make sure napped panels all run in the same direction. Line up any patterns across the seam. With the center panel on top, machine-stitch on the basting line through all layers, trapping the trim in the seam. Press the seams in the opposite direction of the contrasting strip.

4 Spread the front cover on the floor. Measure across the joined panels, from edge to edge. Jot down your measurement, subtract A, and divide by 2. Trim each side panel by this amount so that the width across is now A, or 3 inches wider than the comforter. Measure to confirm that the length is B, or 3 inches longer than the comforter, and trim as needed.

WORKROOM TIP For a fuller, more puffy appearance on the bed, cut the pieces for the front and back cover to match the comforter dimensions instead of 3 inches larger.

5 Repeat steps 1–4 to make the back cover.

6 For a decorative accent, use leftover fabric or another fabric to make a flap. Cut a strip that measures 9 inches wide by A. Fold it in half lengthwise, wrong side in, and press to set the crease. Lay the front cover right side up on a flat surface. Lay the strip straight across the cover, side edges matching and the fold $15\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the top edge. Machine-stitch along the raw edge with a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch seam allowance. Trim the seam allowance to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. Fold the flap down onto the cover to hide the seam. Sew decorative buttons evenly spaced across the flap to hold it in place.



INSTALLING THE ZIPPER

1 Lay the front cover right side up on a flat surface. Center the zipper along the bottom edge of the cover, right sides together and edges matching. Machine-stitch $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the edge.



2 Repeat step 1 to sew the other edge of the zipper tape to the lower edge of the back cover.



3 To hide the zipper, fold the fabric back on itself, wrong side in, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch from the zipper tape, for a self-flap.



4 Topstitch through two layers, close to the zipper teeth, to hold the flap in place.



DESIGN IDEA A zipper is just one way to close the bottom edge. Create your own closure design using buttons, ties, snaps, or Velcro hook-and-loop fastener.

ASSEMBLING THE DUVET COVER

1 Open the zipper partway. Pin the front and back covers right sides together and edges matching. Machine-stitch $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the edge all around, right up to the zipper closure. Trim the corners diagonally to reduce bulk.

2 Cut eight 8-inch lengths of twill tape to use as ties. Sew one tie to the seam allowance by each corner of the duvet cover. Sew a corresponding tie to each corner of the comforter. Lay the cover, still wrong side out, on the bed. Open the zipper all the way. Arrange the comforter on top and tie together at the corners. Turn the cover right side out, enclosing the comforter inside. Adjust the fullness and zip closed.

DESIGN IDEA Enclose a contrasting welt in the outside seam of a comforter cover. You may want to omit the welt along the top edge to keep it soft and comfortable against your face while you are sleeping.

DUVET COVER WORKSHEET

Jot down measurements A, B, C, and D in inches. Then do the calculations.

Comforter width, plus 3"	(A) _____
Comforter length, plus 3"	(B) _____
Fabric width, minus 4"	(C) _____
Pattern repeat, if any	(D) _____
Add B plus D, for the cut-panel length.	(E) _____
Divide A by C, and round up to the nearest whole number. This is the number of fabric widths required.	(F) _____
Multiply E times F.	(G) _____

Divide G by 36"; this is the required fabric yardage for *one side of the duvet cover*. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ yard extra if you will be preshrinking the fabric. _____ yards fabric