

Pocket Change

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- Suggested story concept
- Designed and produced models for photography
- Researched and wrote story and instructions



Faded to a fabulous range of indigos, well-worn blue jeans – with blasted-out knees or legs too short for your growing teens – provide the perfect patches to sew into back-to-school accessories. Add to your blues with inexpensive pairs from thrift stores, such as the Sally Ann, then customize these projects to suit your selection and sizes.

YOU NEED:

Old denim jeans or overalls

Scraps of chambray or ticking, for backing or lining

Matching or contrasting thread

Eyelets or grommets (optional)

Compass (optional), set square, ruler and dressmaker's chalk pencil

Pencil and large sheet of paper, tissue paper or newsprint



GENERAL DIRECTIONS AND DESIGNER'S TIPS

- To keep things interesting, choose jeans with fabric labels, decorative stitching and rivets on the pockets – and don't worry about the odd frayed edge or grass stain.
- Look for thread specially created for blue jeans (as shown, above), available in variegated denim blue (use for seams you want to hide) or the classic gold (use for topstitching).
- Prewash and press jeans and lining fabric before cutting and sewing.
- Cut all large plain pieces or large pocket patches so edges align, if possible, with straight and cross grain.
- You can cut an extra-long strip from the back leg of a pair of jeans

(so the top edge lies above the pocket), then patch one or two pockets on the strip, below the original.

- Cut smaller pocket patches from 1 to 3 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ to $1\frac{1}{8}$ in) outside pocket edge, then press under 6 mm to 1 cm ($\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ in) and edgestitch to larger piece. If topstitching very close to pocket edge, use zipper foot. You can also trim off side or bottom edge of pocket, then match raw edge to raw edge of patch you stitch it to.
- Assemble patchwork by sewing each seam as follows: On pair of adjoining pieces, determine overlapping and underlapping edges. Press under 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) along overlapping edge; with ruler and chalk pencil, mark line 1 cm in on right side of underlapping edge.

Match pressed edge to chalk line and pin; edgestitch along pressed edge, then, if desired, topstitch 3 to 6 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ in) from first seam. Turn over, trim off any excess seam allowance and press.

- Machine stitches may vary in size and straightness as you sew across thick, topstitched seams; try to keep seam lines tidy, but don't agonize over small glitches, which suit the tattered charm.
- Stitch line of narrow, closely spaced machine zigzag for each bar tack.
- Finish topstitched seams and bar tacks by pulling top thread to back; tie ends in overhand knot close to fabric and trim.
- Modify length of pouch strap and tote handles as desired to suit your height.

Watch that Pocket

What's with that tiny pocket inside the right-front pocket of your jeans? Levi-Strauss, the company that first riveted pockets onto denim workwear in the 1870s, added it to hold a pocket watch – the standard timepiece of the era. That's why it's properly called a watch pocket.

ABOVE-THE-DESK ORGANIZER

Refer to General Directions throughout.

- 1 Cut out plain denim pieces and pocket patches, then topstitch pockets onto larger pieces as desired.
- 2 Arranging in vertical rows of same-width pieces on work surface, lay out patched organizer front as desired.
- 3 Working from top to bottom, sew pieces together along top and bottom edges to patch left-hand row. Repeat to complete remaining row(s).
- 4 Sew right-hand row to adjoining row. Repeat to complete front. If necessary, trim outside edge even; with ruler and chalk pencil, mark line on right side, 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) in from edge.
- 5 Lay front, right side up, on wrong side of backing fabric; trim backing 2 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in) out from edge. Press 1 cm to wrong side of backing around edge; fold pressed

edge over front to match chalk line and pin. Edgestitch along pressed edge, pivoting and topstitching small square over each corner. Topstitching along seam lines where desired, sew front to backing.

- 6 Following manufacturer's directions, affix eyelet (for hanging) about 1 cm in from side edge at each top corner, then at desired intervals along top edge.

POUCH

Refer to General Directions throughout.

- 1 With pencil, ruler and, if necessary, compass, draw pouch front/back of desired shape and dimensions (top edge must be straight; side and bottom edges may be straight, angled or curved) on paper, allowing 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ -in) seam allowance around edge. Cut out for pattern. ▶

2 Cut 2 pattern pieces from lining fabric and set aside, then cut 2 from denim for pouch front and back.

3 Topstitch pocket(s) onto pouch front and back as desired, having pocket edge at least 2 cm (¾ in) in from bottom and side edges and 3 cm (1⅞ in) down from top edge.

4 With right sides together and leaving top edge open, stitch pouch front to back, then clip seam allowance; turn right side out and press under 1 cm around top edge. In same manner, stitch lining front to back; leaving *wrong side out*, press 1 cm to wrong side around top edge.

5 Slide lining into pouch so side seams align and top edges are even; pin and edgestitch pressed edges together, then topstitch 6 mm (¼ in) from first seam.

6 From chambray, cut 140 x 6 cm (55 x 2⅜ in) strip (piece, if necessary); press under 1.5 cm (⅝ in) along each long edge. Fold so pressed edges are even and press again; finishing each end with bar tack, edgestitch together along each long edge. About 14 cm (5½ in) up from 1 strap end, bar-tack to outside of pouch beside 1 side seam; if desired, bar-tack to pouch again, about 6 cm (2⅜ in) below, to form "belt loop."

THE TWO-SEATER SHOULDER TOTE

Refer to General Directions throughout.

1 Start with 2 same-size pairs of blue jeans; undo bar tack at bottom of each back belt loop, then cut off loop. Cut out each seat, cutting top edge straight across back just below waistband, then cutting down side seams and straight across each leg 5 to 7.5 cm (2 to 3 in) below crotch.

2 Lay 1 cut-out seat, right side up, on work surface; grasp bottom edge at crotch seam and pull straight up until seat lies flat, then, trimming even with work surface, cut out and discard crotch. From denim, cut appropriate-size triangular patch to span cut-out crotch area, aligning bottom edge of triangle with straight grain; press under 1 cm (⅜ in)

along each side/top edge. With triangle tip at centre seam of seat, pin then sew triangle in place. From denim, cut 7 cm (2¾-in) wide band same length as top edge of seat; press under 1 cm along bottom edge of band, then overlap 1 cm and sew along top edge of seat. Repeat with second seat.

3 Measure 1 patched seat to determine possible dimensions of tote front/back; follow Step 1 for pouch to make pattern for tote front/back.

4 Follow steps 2, 4 and 5 for pouch, to cut out and sew tote.

5 From denim, cut 2 strips, each 71 x 10 cm (28 x 4 in); press under 2.5 cm (1 in) along each long edge. Fold so pressed edges are even and press again; edgestitch together along each long edge. About 2.5 cm down from top edge and 15 cm (6 in) apart, bar-tack handle ends to outside of tote front. To reinforce, sew second bar tack on each end, 6 mm (¼ in) above first. Repeat with second handle and tote back.



ON THE NET

Teens will love *99 Ways to Cut, Sew and Deck Out Your Denim* (Potter Craft, 2007, hardcover, \$24.95) by Faith Blakeney, Justina Blakeney and Ellen Schultz. Visit www.canadianliving.com/september to find one of its fun projects.