

Zippers

I was asked to show how I use zippers in purses. I started out making purses with zippers 30 yrs ago. Back then Velcro hadn't been heard of yet. I prefer zippers sometimes because they can be sturdier and longer lasting than Velcro.

I also prefer metal zippers to plastic but I do use both depending on what I have on hand and what I am going to use it for.

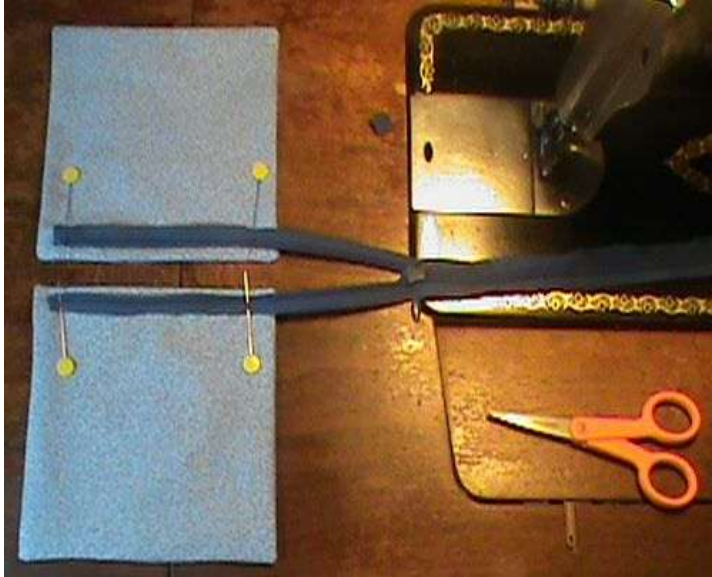
I also rarely buy new zippers. I find them at second hand stores such as Salvation Army or Good will or other what we call junk shops. I also buy them at yard sales when I find them. I do recycle older zippers too if the zipper is in good shape. You can rejuvenate a sticky zipper with a bit of soap rubbed over the teeth if they are tight and /or are not running smoothly.

Here you see a coin purse in progress. This is two pillow like sides. I sewed each one face to face with it's liner and turned them right side out.

To finish the coin purse I will sew along 3 sides and leave the top for the opening. Before I do that tho I will either add Velcro or a zipper. In this case a zipper is the chosen closure of choice. You need to add the zipper before you sew the sides together for ease of working with the zipper. It is harder to do it the other way around.



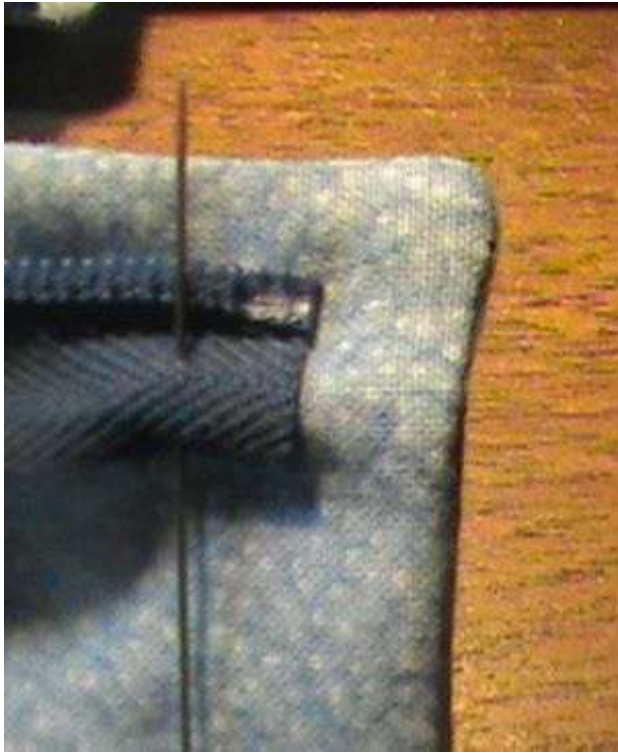
First rule of thumb is to use a zipper longer than you need. It doesn't matter how much longer just as long as you can unzip it and have room to work with the zipper.



Next decide how far from the edge do you want the teeth of the zipper to be. For this purse I decided on a half inch from the top edge. So pin it in so the zipper halves are straight with the edge of the purse top.



You will most likely need to trim off the top of the zipper. Between the end of the zipper and the side of your purse -Make sure you leave the width of your pressure foot and a bit more. Here I think it is about $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the side. This is so you can sew through here without sewing over the zipper when you sew the purse together.



With the zipper open sew it in place on both sides.
Notice that the zipper is upside down at this point



Make sure you choose a zipper that has enough material to accommodate the width of your foot. Or use a foot with the smaller toe like this one.



Here you see the zipper sewn into the purse.



So when you get to this point you need to sew across the end of the zipper where it will stop in your purse. About $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the end of your top edge. Just make sure you leave enough room for your foot to go through. This will anchor your zipper so it won't allow the teeth to separate when being used.



Then I cut off the extra length of zipper leaving about a half inch to an inch. I prefer not to cut too close to where I sewed across the zipper so if the end frays it won't be too close to where you use your zipper.



Next I bend the end into the purse so it is inside where the seam will go through the sides of the purse. You can pin it so it stays back out of the seam area.



I like to tack the ends of the cut off zipper to the purse to help keep it from fraying. You can sew along the whole end with a whip stitch to give it more support to prevent fraying if you like too. I didn't do that here but I sometimes do use the whip stitch. Just gives your zipper a little more longevity. It helps to keep the teeth from separating over time.



Purse with finished Zipper



Finished Coin Purse



Side Pockets

Okay. Now we are going to pretend the blue fabric is one side of a purse.

Before you sew the purse together you need to add your pockets. This way the edges of your pocket will be sewn into the seams of your purse.

This pocket is a square of fabric folded in half. Then I placed it so the sides and the bottom are cut to match the edges of the blue fabric.

Before you baste it down on the three sides we are going to add a zipper just the same way we did in the coin purse. You have two sides – one is the purse back and one is the pocket.



Make sure your zipper is upside down. Then pin your zipper in place just like we did in the coin purse.



Pin the bottom half of the zipper to the pocket. I show it pinned to the fabric here just for placement idea. Unzip the zipper so it is open several inches more than the length of your pocket.



Pin the zipper to the fabric and to the pocket.
Make sure the bottom half is turned so the underside of the zipper is showing where you will sew. The other zipper half also needs to be turned so the underside of the zipper is where you will sew. Check to be sure your zipper isn't twisted the wrong way so when you have it sewn on the zipper will close correctly.



So when you pin them make sure the zipper looks like this. The zip should be on the top side of the zipper after you have pinned the zipper halves to the fabric and pocket. This is how it should look. You sew on the underside of the zipper.



Notice the zipper is longer than your pocket.



Sew across the zipper to stop the zip from going to far and to keep the teeth from separating.



As we did in the coin purse fold the end of the zipper over inside the seam allowance. Pin it or tack it out of the way.



Here I tacked it down again just the way I did in the coin purse.



Replace the pocket so it matches the edge of the fabric again.

Make sure you have enough room between the zip and your edge for your foot to sew the seam along the edge for the purse.



Dual Zipper

You can use heavy duty zippers if you are going to use the purse a lot I would use one that will last. This one is a dual zipper with a zip pull on each end. These are used in coats and bags and are very handy in some cases.

I sewed down the center of the pocket to create two separate pockets. For ease of use I would add the dual zipper the same way we did the zippers above.

Except you would sew on one half of the zipper with the zipper open and then close the zipper and open the other end to sew it on the same way. You will trim the ends of the zipper on both ends instead of tacking one end down.



So here you see the zipper closed and the other end is open. Open the zipper as far as you can and finish sewing the zipper in as we did above.



This zipper I laid the zipper flat with the tab up and I sewed one half to the pocket and the other half to the other pocket.

This way you can put a zipper in the side so the whole side is the pocket. The zipper can be more hidden than this but I wanted you to see where the zipper is.



How much of the zipper shows depends on how you place the edges of the pockets with the teeth of the zipper. In other words if you don't want to let the zipper show make sure the space between the teeth and the edge is such that it comes to the center of the teeth of the zipper after the zipper is closed.



Here is the pocket with the divider in the middle. You can use a single zipper or you can use the dual zipper for this.

After you have the zipper in then pin your purse together and continue finishing sewing your purse.



Square Side Pocket

Okay I sometimes like to add a pocket that does not extend into the seam but is a square that I sewed and then added to the back of the purse.
You will sew the zipper the same way you did above.



Just make sure you sew the zipper on before you sew the pocket on.



Here again you can see how the zipper should look after you sew it on. Once you have it sewn on follow the same steps of trimming and tacking the end of the zipper. Then sew around the other three sides of the pocket to secure it in place. I like to sew along the bottom at least a couple of times so the seam will hold and things won't fall out of the pocket.



Inset Zipper

In one purse I made for my granddaughter I used an inset zipper. I made the purse a square and then I did these inset panels. I then sewed the zipper to the panels.



After you sew on the zipper do the same trim and sew over the teeth and fold under of the end of the zipper. Then sew the panels into the top of the purse.



The red panels are from a tote I did for one of my ebooks.

Here is the purse I made for my granddaughter Nicci. I made this 12 years ago. This is the top where the panels are sewn in. This one was patchwork squares but sewn in the same way. You can see the blue zipper pull. And I hid the zipper.



