

## THE ANTI-OUCH POUCH

by Deon Maas

This underarm hanging pillow is intended to add a little comfort to people's lives during a stressful, painful time. The pillow hangs from the shoulder, fitting snugly under the arm to cushion the underarm and breast area after breast surgery or during radiation treatment. Its wedge shape holds the arm slightly away from the body when the person is standing. The shoulder strap is adjustable. The fiberfill can be adjusted via an overlapped opening. The design is meant to look like a tote bag, and may be used on the right or left side of the body.



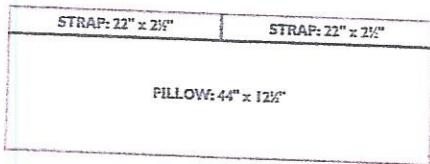
### Supplies

Note: Directions are for 44"-45" wide fabric. Seam allowances are  $\frac{3}{8}$ ".

- 15" of 44"-45" wide soft fabric, preferably cotton (18" for larger woman)
- Two large handfuls of fiberfill
- 6" of hook-and-loop tape, such as Velcro

### Cut

- Two  $2\frac{1}{2}$ " x 22" strips for straps
- One  $12\frac{1}{2}$ " x 44" section for pillow (for larger women, cut one  $15\frac{1}{2}$ " x 44" section)



### Straps

1. Fold each strap in half lengthwise, right sides together, creating a fold at one end.



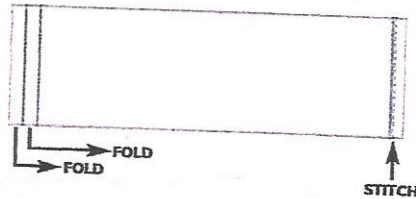
2. Sew or serge both long sides of each strap.
3. Turn straps right side out and press.
4. Place the loop side of the hook-and-loop tape on one of the straps and the hook side on the other strap, each  $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the folded end.



5. Stitch tape in place with either a straight or a zigzag stitch. If your machine skips stitches, try a larger needle.
6. Set straps aside.

### Pillow

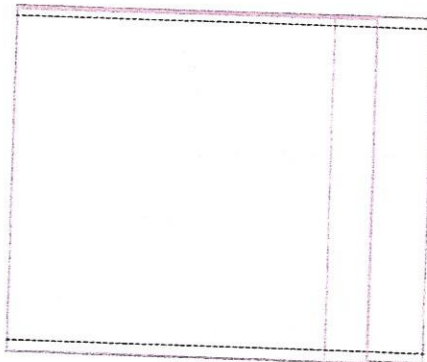
1. On the pillow section, make a double-fold hem at each end by pressing  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " of fabric to the wrong side. Press another  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " to the wrong side.



2. Stitch hem close to inside fold.
3. Place fabric *right side up*. Fold the hemmed ends inward, overlapping until each hemmed edge is approximately 2" from each folded edge.

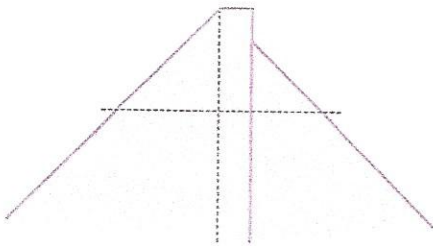


4. Sew or serge each side.



Note: Here comes the tricky part. You will now form the bottom edge of the pillow.

5. Working on the end that is shown on the left in the previous illustration (the edge with the hemmed end sandwiched between the fabric), maneuver the seam so that the corner forms a triangle, with the seam in the center.

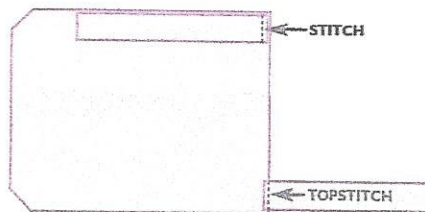


6. Stitch approximately  $1\frac{1}{4}$ " from point as shown. Make sure (by feel) that you do not "catch" the folded end that is sandwiched between the layers in this stitching.
7. Repeat for other corner of the same end.
8. Turn pillow right side out, gently poking out all four corners.

#### Attach the Straps

1. Place one strap on top of each long edge of the pillow with the raw edges  $\frac{1}{8}$ " from the top edge. Make sure one strap has the hook-and-loop tape facing up and the other strap has the tape facing down.
2. Stitch each strap approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$ "

from the top edge, through all the layers.



3. Flip straps forward and topstitch them near the top edge of pillow.

#### Stuff the Pillow

Please stuff the pillow *lightly* via the overlapped opening.

**Note to the sewer: If you have used pins during any part of the sewing, please check that all are removed!**

*Deon Maas is a high school art teacher and a member of the ASG Central Illinois Chapter. She welcomes any comments or suggestions for refinement. Contact her at [tommaas@winco.net](mailto:tommaas@winco.net).*

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Note: If you plan to make the Anti-Ouch Pouch as a community service project for a local hospital/breast care center, it's best to seek their approval before proceeding with the project.

To explain the Anti-Ouch Pouch to its recipient, photocopy and sign this paragraph, then cut it out and paste it to a 3" x 5" index card.

This "Anti-Ouch Pouch" was designed by Deon Maas and is dedicated to her mother, Doris Lock, who taught her to sew. Both women are breast cancer survivors and members of the American Sewing Guild. This soft pillow is designed to be worn snugly against the underarm area to cushion the area after breast surgery. The wedge shape gently holds the arm away from the body when the user is standing. The strap holds the pillow in place without having to use sore arm muscles to "clutch" it. The strap is adjustable and the fiberfill may be adjusted via the overlapped opening. This pillow was made by: