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EQUIPMENT NOTES

Detailed instructions for making the Butterfly Bean Bag version II



*The Butterfly Bean Bag
version II*

This is essentially a simple project, however, explaining how to go about it is a bit more complex than the actual project. In truth, the writing of this set of instructions took far longer than it took to cut and sew the bean bag. Mostly the hard part is explaining how to sew the back-to-back technique. This back-to-back design is based on a design from an [article by Scott Fairbairn](#). The

instructions in that article were very skimpy, leaving much to the imagination as to how to put it together. It took some head scratching to figure out how to do it the first time I tried it. Without a good sense of three-dimensional space, it can almost seem like a magic trick when you see it done. However, I will attempt to take the mystery out of it and make it seem nearly as simple as it actually is.

For this project you will need a sturdy fabric of your choice. One yard of fabric 58-60 inches wide is more than enough. I am using leftovers from my [kayak cover project](#), a light green 500 denier coated Cordura fabric. It is sturdy, waterproof, and has a good body to it without being stiff, and resists fraying on the edges, which makes it easy to work with. It's the same sort of fabric used to make backpacks and camera bags. If you're like me and can't find a suitable fabric locally, you can order some from [Rockywoods.com](#) as I did. You will also need two zippers, 6 or 7 inches long, but they are optional. You could choose to leave a seam opening to fill the bean bags and stitch up the opening later. Also optional is a 3/4-inch adjustable snap buckle and 32 inches of 3/4-inch nylon web strapping.



*Optional materials - buckle,
nylon web strap and zippers*

While this page of instructions is long and detailed, and the pattern may look complicated, **this is in fact a simple project**. It is essentially 4 pieces of material sewn back to back to make two little "pillows". That's really all there is to it. But because they are joined to make a double set of "pillows", the "how to" part of it is hard to envision, and may seem almost like magic. Do not fear, for I will walk you through this in baby steps, with lots of photos and explanation to make it as clear and easy as possible at each step. If you can sew two pieces of fabric together to make a pillow, you can do this project.

Step #1- Print and assemble the pattern so you can transfer it to the fabric.

For this you will need the .jpg pattern files and a printer. The pattern is in two resolutions. Use this [file at 72 dpi](#) to view on your monitor for reference. The pattern at 150 dpi for printing on your printer comes in four sections because the pattern is slightly larger than 11x17. It has to be printed on four pieces of 8-1/2 x 11 paper, then trimmed, overlapped to match up each section and taped together to make the full-sized pattern. Do not print the 72 dpi file meant for viewing. It will NOT print to actual size, and you will end up with a rather tiny and useless bean bag.

[Pattern section one](#)
[Pattern section two](#)
[Pattern section three](#)
[Pattern section four](#)

Begin by saving each of the four files above to your computer and [print each on an 8-1/2 x 11 sheet](#). Alternately, you

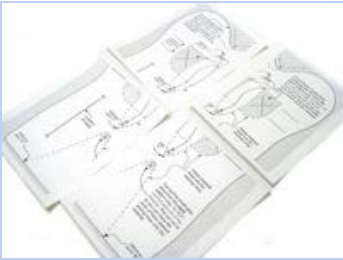


Pattern reference image - click for larger view

could print them right from your browser. Just be sure your print settings do not resize the image (do not use "stretch to fit" or "shrink to fit" settings). Each of these four section printouts will have two edges that overlap the adjacent sections when assembled. [Trim the excess white area](#) from the two edges that will overlap the adjacent sections. This will make it easier to align the printed information with the adjoining sheet. Once trimmed, [assemble the four printouts](#) and tape them together into one large pattern. The outer gray edges of the pattern should measure approximately 11-1/2 x 16-1/4 inches if they were printed correctly. If this is not the case when you've assembled them, then the software program you are printing from is resizing them somehow and the pattern will not be the correct size. This is not to say you can't alter the size to suit your needs, but generally this would be as large as you should need.

As noted, the assembled pattern has some instructions printed right on it with arrows pointing to dashed lines, shaded areas with "Xs", etc., which explains what the lines and markings mean. Pay attention to those instructions. This [pattern reference image](#) shows how the assembled pattern should appear.

Be aware that THIS PATTERN SERVES DOUBLE DUTY. You will use it to cut four pieces of fabric. However, some pattern markings apply to only two of these fabric pieces, and some markings apply to the other two fabric pieces. As you continue, **pay attention to which markings apply to which set of cut fabric pieces.**



Four pattern sections, each on an 8-1/2x11 sheet



Trim the white edge of each sheet that will overlap adjacent sections



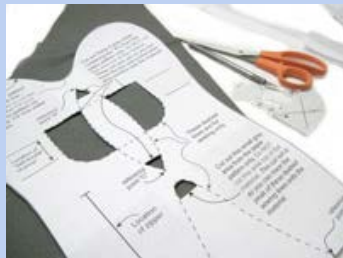
Align the four sections and tape together to make full-sized pattern



Trim off the gray edge around the pattern



Trimmed pattern



Gray "X" areas are cut out

Step #2- Trim outer edge and cut out the gray shaded areas marked with "Xs", following the directions printed on the pattern.

Cut out the paper pattern on the outer solid outline, which will [remove the outer gray shaded edges](#).

[Cut out the gray areas with the "X's"](#) using an Exacto knife, single-edged razor blade, or scissors. DO NOT cut these holes in the fabric, only cut them on the paper pattern. They are there to help you transfer the pattern to the fabric.

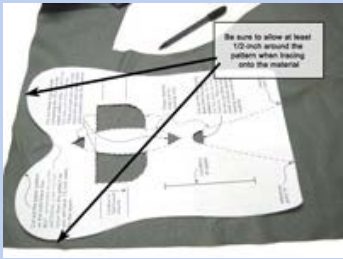
Step #3- Transfer the pattern to the fabric and cut fabric pieces.

Assuming your fabric has a printed pattern (such as camo), one side of the fabric will have the full color design, and the other side will either be blank or will show only a faded bleed-through of the design. In this case the material has a distinct front and back side. If it is a solid color fabric like I'm using for this project, you will need to determine or assign one side to be the "back", and then actually write "back" on it with a pen or marker so you can keep it straight (which is what I have done). You will need to be careful and diligent about which side (front or back) you are working on.

(a) In this step you first will cut four identical **rectangular** pieces of fabric about two inches larger than the length and width of the paper pattern, which should give you four rectangles about 13x18 inches each. This extra room will allow plenty of excess for the seams.

(b) Choose one of these pieces, lay it out with the **BACK SIDE UP**, and center the paper pattern on it. Pin the pattern to the fabric with 4 or 6 pins so it won't shift, being sure to [leave at least 1/2-inch extra around the pattern edge](#). You need this extra 1/2-inch to ensure your stitches don't come too close to the edge, pull loose and leak your beans. Now, with a ball point pen or suitable marking pencil, **trace around the outer edge of the pattern**. This outline you're tracing will be **the line you later sew directly onto**.

(c) Next, [draw freehanded another outline around the pattern](#) spaced about a half inch outside the paper pattern edge. This doesn't have to be perfect since it will be inside the finished bean bag and will



Allow 1/2-inch extra when laying out pattern



Freehand draw a second outline 1/2-inch out for cutting

not be seen, but this **second outline will be the one you actually cut the fabric on.**

(d) There is one more tracing operation to do before any cutting can be done. Remember the two larger gray areas with "Xs" you cut out of the paper pattern? Now you are ready to take advantage of that. With the pattern still pinned in place, trace inside the edge of the rectangle. Imagine the elongated "football" shape in the middle of the rectangle does not exist. That is for something else. You can now unpin and remove the paper pattern. Lay it aside for later as you will need it again. You will note there is a gap at the top and bottom of the rectangle you just traced where the "football" shape area was in the way. Just for good measure, take your ballpoint and fill in this part of the line to **complete marking in the whole rectangle.**

(e) Next, stack and align the edges of the four 13x18 fabric rectangles you've cut out. Stack them so that you have two front sides facing up and two back sides facing up. The order in the stack doesn't matter right now as long as the piece with the outlines traced onto it is on top with the outline facing up.

(f) Now pin together these four stacked and aligned pieces using four to six pins (or more) so they will not shift. The idea here will be to cut out 4 identical pieces at the same time from one traced pattern.

(g) It's time to **cut along the outer outline** (the last one you just drew freehand). Remember, the INNER OUTLINE is for sewing, the OUTER OUTLINE is for cutting.

With these four pieces now trimmed to finished size, unpin them and separate them, but keep whichever side was facing up still facing up on each piece.

From now on I will refer to the printed pattern side of the fabric as the "front", and the non-printed side as the "back". For solid color fabric, pay attention to which side is marked "back" as discussed earlier. If your fabric is a printed camo, you certainly don't want the pale/blank side out, you want the camo side out, so pay attention to which side is which.

Step #4 - Sewing the rectangle

You're almost ready to do a little sewing. This is the easiest part. Take the pattern piece you just marked the rectangle on and place it on top of another pattern piece so that the two "fronts" are facing each other. Align their edges and pin them together around the edges, and also near the rectangle outline. You should now have two cut pieces pinned together with the "backs" facing out both ways when flipped over. You are now ready to "join" the two bean bags front to front before you even sew the two bags themselves. It might seem illogical, but I assure you, this is the only way it can be done, and is part of the "magic".



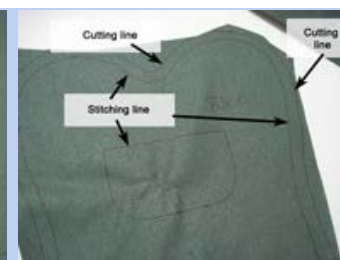
Stick pins through the corners of the rectangle on the marked side

On the back side, use the pins coming through to mark extended corner lines.

Pin the reinforcing rectangles onto both sides before sewing around the rectangle 3 times



Complete the missing segments of the rectangle outline



Do not confuse which lines are for stitching, and which are for cutting



Extend the corner lines of the rectangle outline



Use the extended corners to eyeball alignment of the reinforcing pieces

But before sewing around the rectangle you should first **reinforce this rectangular area** where the two bags join. To make reinforcements I used the paper pattern to trace the rectangle outline on a piece of fabric, then added 1/2-inch around that outline to make it larger. I cut this out and used it as a pattern to cut another reinforcing rectangle. Then with a ruler I **extended the rectangle outline's upper corners** so I could see them when the **reinforcing pieces were laid over the rectangle**. I pinned these reinforcements to both pieces of fabric before stitching around the rectangle. A trick to lining up the reinforcing rectangle on the back side is to **stick a pin through each corner** of the rectangle from one side and **mark where they come out on the other side**. This gives you the corner points to draw lines from to then use for alignment on the back piece. Remember, this will end up "inside" the bean bag and won't show.

Okay, fire up the sewing machine and **sew along the rectangle outline**, stitching directly over the line all around the rectangle reinforcing pieces. Then do it again, this time stitching inside the rectangle about 1/8 of an inch to create two seams side by side all the way around. Do this again about 1/8-inch outside the first stitch. Then stitch an "X" from corner to corner inside the rectangle. **DO NOT SEW THE OUTSIDE EDGES OF THE FABRIC at this point, sew ONLY in the rectangle.**

With the two initial pieces joined

front-to-front it's time to reinforce the "crotch". Measure the fabric width across the crotch to find the center. Then [mark a 3-inch wide position](#) to center a reinforcing patch. Now cut a piece of fabric about 3-1/2 to 4 inches square, fold over all four edges and hem them neatly into a 3x3-inch square. Center the square in the crotch and [sew one half at a time onto each piece](#) joined at the crotch. This will straddle the crotch of the bean bag and relieve strain on the stitching where the two bags join.



Stitch around the rectangle 3 times, then "X" across



Two pieces joined front to front



Find center of crotch width and mark location for hemmed 3x3-inch patch



3x3-inch crotch reinforcement patch sewn into position

At this point we have one half of each bag joined front to front. Next we'll prepare the other half of each bag before actually sewing the bag halves together. This includes installing zippers and "belt loops" to hold a carrying strap.

Step #5- Preparing the other halves of each bean bag

We have two more fabric pieces to prepare. They are the other halves of each bean bag. Both pieces will be prepared almost identically.

(a) Locate the line on the paper pattern marking the location of the zipper. With an Exacto or other sharp edge, [slit this line on the pattern](#).

(b) Next, place the pattern onto the **back side** of both remaining fabric pieces and [mark the line for the zipper](#) location through the slit with a pen. Also [trace the outline of the elongated football](#) shape onto the fabric as well.

(c) Remove the pattern and [freehand draw the missing segments](#) for the elongated football shape onto each piece. Then with a ruler, [draw a center line](#) through the football shape long dimension. This will become a fold line later for some stitching.



On the pattern, slit the location line for the zipper



*Mark the zipper location line onto the **back** of both fabric pieces*



*Trace the outline for the elongated football shape on the **back** side also*



Freehand draw the missing segments for the elongated football shape



With a ruler, add a center line to the elongated football shape



Completed pieces at this point in the project

At this point we have two fabric pieces joined front-to-front, and two more pieces marked with zipper location and the "football" shape, as shown in the [photo at left](#). Soon these will be ready to sew together, and your bean bags will magically appear, like pulling a rabbit out of a hat. Let's move on to the next steps.



Cut zipper opening, fold over edges and hem to the back side



Hemmed zipper opening and zipper opened one inch



Pin zipper into place

(d) It's time to install the zippers. You will do this operation to both pieces now. My two zippers don't match. One was bought and one was salvaged from an old worn out jacket, but it will do nicely for a project like this.

Cut along the zipper location line with an Exacto or scissors, then snip across the ends of the line about 3/8-inch. This gives two "flaps" about 3/16 inch wide. [Fold these two flaps over](#) toward the back side of the fabric and [hem the edge](#). This will be the zipper opening. It is only 5 inches long, but the zippers are 7 inches long. That is intentional. It provides a [pocket for the zipper pull tab](#) to tuck into so it's always out of the way. Also, the opening only needs to be 5 inches, but I can never find zippers shorter than 7 inches in the store.

(e) [Unzip the zipper about one inch](#), then place the zipper into the slot so the pull tab just shows on one end of the slot. [Pin the zipper into place](#). Then [stitch the zipper three times around](#) for strength. Remember, it will have a good bit of pressure on it from the beans stuffed inside, and you don't want any stitches pulling loose. When finished, note that the pull tab can easily hide back in the "pocket" on the end so it's out of the way, and stays zipped shut.



Stitch zipper 3 times around as shown here



Finished zipper - Note how the pull tab can hide in the pocket



Pinch and fold the football shape outline along the center line

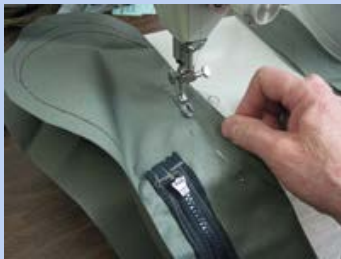


Pin this pleat along the curved line

[the pucker pleat will look on the outside](#) (front side) when done.

(f) This next step is also done to both pieces of fabric. Create a pucker pleat by [pinching and folding the "football" shaped outline](#) along the center line you drew through it. Then [pin this together as shown in the photo](#). Next you will [stitch along the curved line](#), tapering out the ends, then stitching back in the opposite direction **directly over** the first set of stitches. Now [make three equally spaced snips](#) in this flap you just created, being careful to NOT snip into the stitching. Keep the snips about 1/4 to 3/8-inch away from the stitches [as shown in the photo](#). This will allow the pleat to lay flatter for stitching it down.

Next, fold over the snipped pucker pleat, laying it flat against the fabric. Now [stitch down the pleat while firmly spreading the material](#), keeping tension against the original stitches. Sew around the edge of the snipped flap and again down the middle [as shown in this photo](#). The purpose of this is to help remove tension from the original stitches, because this pucker pleat will help keep the side of the bean bag top from spreading like a chubby tummy when filled. It helps make the bean bag stand taller. This is [how](#)



Stitch along the curved line



Make 3 snips 1/4-inch from stitches



Fold snips flat and stitch around edge while spreading the material underneath



stitch the pucker pleat through the middle



Finished pucker pleat as seen from front side

(g) Adding inside zipper flaps in this step is optional, but it should help make zipping/unzipping a full bag a little easier. [Make two flaps 1-1/2 x 8 inches with hemmed edges](#) from some fabric scraps. I made mine from slim strips of scrap fabric that I had to piece together to make them wide enough. They won't be seen, as they are inside. Sew the flaps to the back side along ONE edge of the zippers so they will lay over the zipper. This photo shows [two finished flaps](#), one flipped up, and one laying down, as examples.

(g) Adding my new idea for a strap/handle around the bean bags in this step is optional. Alternately, you could sew in [side handles as on version 1 of the Butterfly Bean Bag](#), or choose to have no handles at all. Be aware that side handles sewn into the side seams put a great deal of stress on the seams and stitching. My new design wraps around the bean bags like a belt, avoiding any seam or stitching stresses.



1-1/2 x 8-inch zipper flap from scrap fabric ready to sew on



Finished zipper flaps sewn inside each zipper

To utilized my new "belt strap" style of handle, first locate the four marks on the pattern - two of which are labeled "Location of belt buckle channel". This is the approximate location of where the strap will wrap around the bean bags (but not necessarily the correct width spacing apart). As with any belt, it will need "belt loops", which is the first



3 finished belt loop pieces ready to sew on



Belt loop alignment marks in orange colored pencil

thing to make. My snap buckle is a 3/4-inch buckle that fits 3/4-inch nylon web strap. I determined that it will require belt loop pieces 2-1/4 inches wide to easily slide through. Depending upon your snap buckle size you may need to adjust this width.

Cut a piece of fabric 2-3/4 x 16 inches. Fold over 1/4-inch all around and hem for a neat edge. From this piece, cut off 7-3/4 inches. Fold over the cut end 3/8-inch and hem it neatly. This is one finished loop piece 2-1/4 x 7-1/4 inches. Next fold over 3/8-inch on the cut edge of the left over section and hem. Then cut a piece from that 2-3/4 inches long, fold over the cut end 3/8 inch and hem it. Now Trim the remaining piece to 2-3/4 inches in length and hem the cut end 3/8 inch. You should now have one long and two short **finished "loop" pieces**.

(h) Now the belt loops need to be attached to the front side. Get out the two bag pieces with the zippers and pucker pleats. These pieces are likely quite rippled because of the pleat, which will make this part a little tricky. Center the paper pattern on the **front** side (outside) of each piece, working from the bottom edge up, and **hold down one side as in the photo** so the fabric is held flat. Transfer the lower alignment mark to one edge of the fabric with your marker. Then do the same with the other edge. Now with a ruler, extend a line between these two marks across the piece. This will locate your lower loop edge. From this line I measured up 2 inches on each end and in the middle (your measurement may be different). Because the fabric is "warped", I extended the upper line across one half at a time (middle to one edge, then middle to the other edge). My **orange lines look all crooked** in the photo, but things will line up when properly sewn. This is now ready to sew on the long 7-1/4 inch belt loop piece.

Center the long loop piece horizontally and align the bottom edge with the bottom line you just marked. **BE SURE the loop piece is at least one inch from the fabric edge.** You do not want to accidentally sew this loop into the seam of the bean bag when the two halves are assembled later. Now **Pin the flap's bottom edge into place and stitch it** across the bottom edge. Next, align the upper edge of the loop piece on one end with your guide mark, pressing the fabric flat to get it aligned correctly, and pin it securely. Then pin the other end of the loop piece the same way. Next, stitch along this newly pinned edge and the **long belt loop piece** is done. Check to see that your belt buckle slides through easily. If it is too loose, you can stitch one edge again, but farther in by 1/4 inch or so to snug it up. Then test the buckle again, repeating until the loop is the right width. When that is done, **sew the two short loops** onto the other bag piece. This is much easier because they do not extend across the pucker area. Leave about 3 inches gap between the two loops so it is easy to clip, unclip and adjust the buckle when necessary.



Hold down pattern and fabric to mark bottom loop alignment on each side



Pin long loop piece at least 1 inch from edge and stitch in place



Long belt loop sewn



2 short belt loops sewn

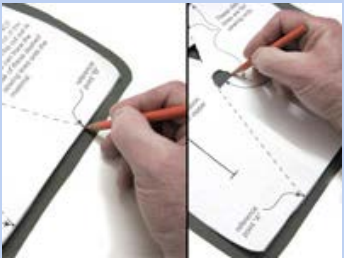
Step #6- Sewing the first bean bag

You're almost ready to make some magic happen, but first there is one detail to attend to.

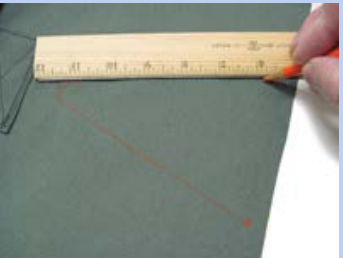
(a) It's time to trace the upside down "V" onto the material. This goes on the two pieces already joined front to front. Flip up one side of this joined piece to **expose the "crotch"**. Line up the lower end of the paper pattern and **make a mark at reference points A and B** where the dashed sewing guidelines meet the outer edge. Now **trace inside the curved peak cutout hole**. Remove the pattern and **use a ruler to finish connecting these ends** to complete the "V" guidelines. Be sure to **mark both pieces**. For the time being this will be covered and sewn inside the bag, but you will use this "V" guideline later. (By the way, I used the colored pencil to mark the fabric on the outside as it is mostly erasable. In this case the marks will be hidden under the crotch when finished.)



Ready to mark the "V" guidelines



Mark reference points A & B, and trace the curved peak



Complete the guidelines using a ruler



Guidelines go on both halves of the joined pieces

(b) Next, fold up the upper half of the joined pieces and **pin it into**

a small bundle. I recommend using safety pins for this. Be sure none of the bundle is too close to the fabric edges. *You do not want it accidentally sewn into the seams. If that happens, you cannot get the bag turned right side out when finished.* Now chose one of the single pieces with a zipper and **OPEN THE ZIPPER NOW.** Being sure the **ZIPPER IS UNZIPPED**, place it front down over the piece with the bundle. You should see the back of the zipper and the zipper flap facing up.

If you are not using the belt strap handle from "step 5h", and plan to use [side handles as in this photo](#), NOW is the time to insert your handles [following these instructions](#).



Fold top half into a small bundle and pin with safety pins



With zipper open and back side up, align and pin around edge



Flipped over view shows pinning - back side is out

Align these two pieces around the edges and **pin them together along the edges**, placing pins no farther than 2 inches apart. *It is critical you get these pieces correctly aligned and flat together around the edges.* Because the top piece is puckered and rippled, this will take some care and patience to get the edges flat against each other and evenly aligned. Use enough pins to hold it securely aligned. Be sure none of the bundle is caught next to pins. When finished pinning around the edge, flip the piece over and verify the **back side is facing out** on both sides. Also be sure the zipper flap is not caught in the seam.

(c) Now, double check that the **ZIPPER IS UNZIPPED**, then sew directly on top of the outer line around the edges. Then sew a second time all the way around about 1/8-inch outside the first stitching. Then do this a **third time around** another 1/8-inch outside the second stitching. This is a safety measure in the event any of the stitching pulls loose.

(d) When finished sewing 3 times around the edge, remove all the pins. Now reach inside the zipper opening and begin **pulling the pinned bundle out**. Do this slowly and patiently, tugging here and there, coaxing the bundle out so you can **remove the safety pins**. Once the safety pins are removed it will be easier to pull it out a bit at a time. When you have all of it pulled out and the bag is completely turned right side out



Stitch 3 times around



Pull out bundle via zipper



Remove safety pins and pull right side out



Abbra Cadabbra.... one bean bag completed

Abbra Cadabbra, you have **one finished bean bag attached to the other half** of the second bean bag.

Step #7- Sewing the second bean bag

Now you will essentially repeat steps 6b, 6c & 6d on the other half of the bean bag.

(a) Turn the first finished bean bag up on top and **fold it over into as small a bundle** as you can. This may be a little harder to accomplish than the first time because the bag is bulkier, and it has a zipper. You must be sure the bundle and zipper flap do not get caught in the seam when you sew this one.

(b) Be certain the piece you're pinning on top has the **back side up**, and that the **ZIPPER IS OPEN** just like before. Pin it carefully, being sure to align it correctly around the edges, that the zipper flap is not caught in the seam. Then sew the seam around the outside line 3 times as before.

(c) Remove the pins, reach into the zipper opening and pull out the bundle to access the safety pins. Take out the safety pins and patiently tug on the bundle until the piece is turned completely right side out. Now you have **two bean bags back to back**, almost ready to fill.



Fold 1st bag into a bundle & pin top piece like before



Stitch seam, unpin and pull out to complete 2nd bag

Step #8- Sewing the "V"

Now it's time to stitch those "V's" you traced onto the outside of both bags. This is the original weight-saving idea that sparked my creation of version 1 of the Butterfly Bean Bag shown in the **photo at the left**. It is one of the secrets that cuts down dramatically on the weight of this large bean bag.

(a) **Fold back the upper bag out of your way to access the crotch facing up.** Pin along the "V" guideline on the lower bag, pulling the fabric



The tubular bottom design improves rigidity and cuts weight by 4 pounds.

smooth on both sides so you don't pin folds and wrinkles into it. [Check the back side also for folds and wrinkles](#) where it's pinned before you stitch.

The point of the "V" is very close to the end of the pucker pleat so take care the wrinkles here don't get caught in the stitching when sewing along the "V" guideline. Also, be sure the zipper flap is not in the way and won't get caught in the stitching. Now [double stitch along the "V" guideline](#). This will seal off part of the bean bag so filler cannot get in there. Remove the pins when done.

(b) Flip the bag over and do the same thing to the other bag, being careful not to pin or stitch any folds or wrinkles, or the zipper flap, into the "V" guideline stitching. Remove the pins when done and you are finished with sewing the bean bags.



Fold up top bag and pin lower "V" guideline



Flip over and check opposite side of pins for folds or wrinkles



Double stitch along "V" guidelines



The Butterfly Bean Bag version II, ready to fill



The finished bag with nylon web strap handle

Finishing Touches:

All that's left to do is sew one side of your snap buckle to the nylon web strap, thread the other side of the snap buckle onto the strap and slip it into the belt loops. This serves as [the carrying handle](#), which unlike side handles, cannot create stress and pull out stitches. The Butterfly Bean Bag is ready to be filled, and put to use.

The scary truth is that other bean bags this size could require over 16 pounds of dried Pinto beans to fill them. With the sealed off "V" in the original Butterfly Bean Bag, it saved up to 4 pounds of beans. The original bag still weighed in at 13.5 pounds though, and even that much weight can be unwieldy. I decided to extend my experiment from my [Magic Bean Bag project](#), where I used foam cubes as alternate filler. I want to see if I can cut down the weight of this huge bean bag to just 8 or 9 pounds. That would be a major improvement.

I used small [1/2-inch cubes of stiff foam](#) to replace up to one third of the volume normally taken up by dried beans. I diced up foam cubes totalling the same volume as a 4 pound bag of dried Pinto beans. These cubes total just 1.2 ounces while taking up the same space as 4 pounds of beans. I put half the foam cubes (.6 oz) along with 4 pounds of dried beans into each side of the completed version II bean bag. That's a total of 8 pounds 1.2 oz (or 129.2 oz). Then I weighed the filled bags (including belt). It weighed in at 8 pounds 5 oz. If I deduct the bare weight of the empty bean bag with belt (5.5 oz) that leaves .5 oz less than 8 pounds (127.5 oz), so it's within 1.7 oz of the expected combined weight. While my scale isn't perfect, that's close enough for my purposes.

If I tried hard, I might be able to cram another 1/2 pound of beans into the new bean bag. That would still make it less than 9 pounds, maximum. So I have achieved no less than 4-1/2 pounds weight savings with the new design over the old design, which was already several pounds lighter than other bag designs of the same size.

At least 4 pounds of the weight savings is due to the use of the foam cubes. The remaining 1/2 pound weight savings came from a slightly slimmer pattern, and a larger pucker pleat, which added to the overall difference in girth. Overall, this new design is a major improvement.



nylon web strap as handle



Dried beans and 1/2-inch cubes of dense foam fill the bag

Try out the

[Magic Bean Bag](#)

project

