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Original Recipe



Padded Steering Wheel Cover

I'm Sarah from Sweet Dreams by Sarah, and I am incredibly excited to be sharing my first Moda Bake Shop tutorial with you for this fun steering wheel cover! I live in the insanely hot Arizona desert, and there are frequently times in the summer when it's impossible to grab the steering wheel.

This cover serves to help keep that problem at bay, as well as making it much easier for those winter months when clutching a freezing cold steering wheel can make your hands ache. It's also completely customizable, since it's perfect for any set of charms you might have lying around! It makes a lovely gift, too.

Please also stop by my blog for other tutorials and adventures in quilting!

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Ingredients:



- 10 Charms of your choosing (I used Flirt by Sandy Gervais for Moda)
- 1 piece of backing fabric measuring approx. 48" by 5"
- 1 piece of Insul Bright Heat Resistant Batting measuring approx. 46" by 3.5" (Side note: if you aren't worried about your steering wheel being too hot, and you just want it to be padded, you could use regular cotton batting in place of the Insul Bright)
- 2 lengths of elastic, measuring approx. 32"
- 4 safety pins, no bigger than about 1" long.
- Optional, but helpful: Basting spray

Instructions:

The first step is to measure your steering wheel! The measurements that I will be working with are for my 14.5" steering wheel, which is a pretty standard size. If your wheel is a different size, your first step is going to be to measure around the circumference of the outside of the wheel. For me, this measurement is 46", and it will be come the length that you will need both the piece of backing fabric to be as well as the piece of batting. Also, take this measurement and subtract 14" - this is the length that you will need your lengths of elastic to be. If your wheel measures more than 46" around, you may also need to add one more charm to the first step below - see the note in that step for help with the modification.

Now that we know what we're working with, it's time to dive into the fabric. Pull out your charms, and line them up. Arrange them in the order in which you want to see them going around your wheel, and remember that this is going to be a circle - the first and last ones are going to connect to each other.

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Sew the charms end to end with a scant quarter inch seam, and press the seams to one side until you have one long strip:



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*Side note for larger sizes: You'll want to sew extra charms end to end here, so that you have a longer strip of fabric to work with. For instance, upping it to 11 charms yields a strip about 50" long. You can then trim it down if, say, your circumference is only 48". Just be careful not to trim it too short - the elastic makes having a slightly bigger wheel cover very forgiving.

Prepare your backing fabric next! There are lots of options as to how to do this. You could actually use another 10 charms, if you want it to be reversible (see side note above if you have a larger steering wheel). Just follow the steps above to connect them all together. You could also cut two 5" strips from yardage, sew them together end to end, and then cut down to length. The first time I made this, I actually used a scrap piece of quilt backing that I had trimmed off of a quilt I'd made just the week before, so feel free to be creative! This is just the backing, so if you aren't worried about making it reversible, you can use just about any piece of fabric that meets the measurements. For this particular cover, I used one 5" strip of backing fabric, and sewed one extra charm to the end to get the right length. Note that the length of the backing is a couple of inches longer than the strip of charms - this gives you a little wiggle room to cover up the final seam.



The strip of charms for the outside is on the left, and the backing is on the right.

Putting it all together:

Position your backing fabric and the strip of charms right sides together, and making sure that the edges are aligned. Pin these pieces, and then sew them together lengthwise:



Now we need to turn the long tube we just created inside out, and get the batting in the middle. There are a couple of ways that you can do this. One option is to turn it inside out, press it flat, and then try to wiggle the batting up the middle. You would then just pin the batting in place before moving on to the next step.

The other way to do it, and how I did it when making this particular cover, is to use some basting spray as a helping hand. Once you've sewn the cover and backing together, and before you turn it inside out, spray baste the batting to the charm side of the strip, like this:

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Spray the batting, and lay it down the center (you can just eyeball it). Make sure you press the batting on well, and then go ahead and turn it inside out. Be gentle so that you don't separate the batting from the fabric.

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I found it easiest to hang on to the batting and fabric together on one end with my left hand:



... while pinching the fabric and batting together and pulling it out with my right.

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Ta da!

Once it's inside out, go ahead and press the tube and batting combo so that it's all nice and flat.

Now, whichever way you've gotten your tube inside out and batting inside, it's time to make the casings for the elastic. Sew down the length of the tube again, this time about 1/2 inch from the already sewn edge.

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You can go ahead and remove all of those pins now (if you were using them), and grab your lengths of elastic. Use one safety pin to attach one end of the elastic to one end of the tube. Take the other safety pin and attach to the other end of the elastic, since we're going to use that as a bit of a shuttle to take it through the casing.



Work that safety pin up the casing, bringing the elastic along. This will get a little tougher as you get to the end. Once you've got it through the other side, it's time to stitch it in place. Be careful here, because that elastic already has some tension on it, and you don't want to send it careening back into the casing! Remove the safety pin, and holding the elastic and casing together, ease the elastic back to where it just lines up with the edge of the casing. Use the safety pin to secure this:

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Note: Definitely use a safety pin for this part - a straight pin has a way of popping itself out when under the pressure of the elastic!
Then sew down the elastic, using a few passes on your machine:



Sew down the elastic on the other end of the tube in the same manner, and then repeat the steps above to take care of the elastic in the casing on the other side of the strip.

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The final step is to get this into an actual circular shape! Just position the strip right sides together, so that you can sew the ends together. That elastic will make this a bit squirrely, so pin it to keep it all together as you sew.



See that extra couple of inches of backing fabric sticking out there? If you aren't worried about this final seam being finished off, you could just snip it off, and be done. For a cleaner finish, carefully fold up that extra bit of fabric to cover up the seam you just made.

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Pin it in place...

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And sew!



Pop it inside out, and voila! Your cover is done! It doesn't look like much now...

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... But pop it onto your wheel, and behold!



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Yield:



One awesome steering wheel cover, and two fewer burnt hands! These are so fun and easy to sew up, that you could easily make a couple different ones to "decorate" your car depending on your mood or the season. I see myself making a holiday themed one, to get me in a cooler frame of mind very soon!

Sarah Connolly
{Sweet Dreams by Sarah}

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