



## SEW-lutions Guidelines

Your Guide  
to  
Successful  
Sewing

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Yo-yos are round gathered fabric disks originating in the early 1900's as a thrifty way to use up fabric scraps. Originally stitched into quilts and pillows, cotton yo-yos are popular in modern quilting as appliqués and are also used to create "fabric" for garments and accessories.

### Tools of the Trade

To make yo-yos, you'll need fabric, all-purpose sewing thread, iron, compass (or flat circular object and fabric-marking pen), scrap cardboard, scissors and a hand sewing needle.

### Making Yo-Yos

Wash and press the fabrics first so your finished yo-yo project won't shrink when laundered.

Determine the desired finished yo-yo diameter needed for the project.

Draw and cut a circle on the cardboard twice the desired finished yo-yo diameter plus 1/2".

*If you don't have a compass, look for circular objects around the house to trace—plates, plastic lids, tape rolls, etc. There are also circle rotary-cutting tools on the market to accurately cut one or more circles at a time.*

Place the fabric wrong side up on a flat surface. Trace around the cardboard circle onto the fabric with a pencil or fabric-marking pen, leaving 1/4" between circles. Cut out the fabric circles.

### Circle Cues

Not sure how large to cut your circle for a finished yo-yo size? Use the following diameters as a guide.

Cut Circle Size	Yo-yo Size
8"	3 3/4"
7"	3 1/4"
6"	2 3/4"
5"	2 1/4"
4"	1 3/4"
3"	1 1/4"
2"	3/4"
1"	1/4"

Thread the needle with a double thread and knot the ends together. Fold the circle edge 1/4" to the wrong side. Bring the needle up through the 1/4" fabric fold from the right side of the fabric to the wrong side. Make 1/4"- to 1/2"-long running stitches through both layers around the circle circumference and close to the folded edge (1).

Stitch completely around the circle, then gently pull the threads to gather the stitched edge toward the center (2).



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Distribute the gathers evenly, and take a few stitches to secure the threads. Bring the needle down through the gathers and up through the yo-yo opening. Make a knot close to the fabric. Clip the thread ends.

Make as many yo-yos as needed for the project.

To stitch yo-yos together, place two yo-yos with the gathered sides facing. Thread a needle with a double strand of all-purpose thread. Whipstitch the yo-yos together with approximately five stitches (3). Knot the thread end close to the fabric; clip the thread close to the knot.

Continue to stitch yo-yos together as needed for your project shape and size.



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### Putting It All Together

Yo-yos can also be joined by machine. Select a narrow zigzag stitch (3mm wide and 1.5mm long). Abut two yo-yos right sides up. Zigzag the yo-yos together making sure the left needle swing catches one yo-yo and the right needle swing catches the second yo-yo (4).

When stitching yo-yos to a base fabric, one option is to tack the yo-yo sides to the fabric with hand stitches. Another is to layer yo-yos, stitching only portions to the fabric and allowing the remainder to be free for dimension. Yo-yos can also be glued on as appliqués.



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*Yo-yos can be used with the smooth side or the gathered side up. Experiment to determine which look you prefer, or alternate between gathered and smooth.*

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### Yo-Yo Possibilities

Yo-yos were originally stitched into quilts. With a little imagination, you can find several uses for these little scrap treasures. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Stitch several small yo-yos together into a vest. Line the vest or leave it unlined so the shirt below shows through.
- Use yo-yos as appliqué flowers. Add appliquéd leaves and stitch a button to the "flower" center for added dimension. Layer a smaller yo-yo on top of a larger one to create dimensional petals and blooms.
- Stitch yo-yos together for a lightweight scarf.
- Place yo-yos around pant or shirt cuffs, collars, yokes and necklines.
- Create a yo-yo belt or headband.
- Use yo-yos to accent a purse or create a purse body.
- Make a lined eyeglass case or a journal cover.
- Join small or large yo-yos (or a combination of sizes) to make a decorative pillow front, trivet or potholder.
- Place yo-yos in a border on a placemat or tablecloth.
- Attach yo-yos to the rim of a lampshade or on a pillowcase edge.
- Make a multi- or single-color yo-yo shower curtain or a set of window curtains.
- Stitch up a traditional yo-yo quilt or start small with a doll bed coverlet.
- Make large yo-yos out of terry cloth and stitch them together for a retro bath rug.
- Use a satin, metallic or sheer fabrics for delicate scarves and clothing accents. ■