



# WAYS

to transform OLD  
T-SHIRTS



## 9 Ways to Transform Old T-Shirts eBook

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Published by Prime Publishing LLC, 3400 Dundee Road, Northbrook, IL 60062 – [www.primecp.com](http://www.primecp.com)



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## Letter from the Editors

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Hi Sewists,

It's time to start sewing with some fabric you've already got lying around: T-shirts! Sew your way to a new wardrobe while saving money, de-cluttering your home, and being environmentally friendly. All of the easy sewing projects featured in this eBook can be made with t-shirts, either ones that are collecting dust in the back of your dresser, or inexpensive, new t-shirts from the store. Embellish t-shirts to breathe new life into them, or deconstruct them completely to make pillows, aprons, accessories, and more!

You can find more upcycling ideas, free sewing patterns, sewing tips, and extensive decorating ideas at [www.AllFreeSewing.com](http://www.AllFreeSewing.com).

Our eBooks, like all of our sewing projects, are absolutely FREE to members of our sewing community. Please feel free to share with family and friends and ask them to sign up at our website for our [free e-mail newsletter](#).

Happy Sewing,

*The Editors of AllFreeSewing*

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## 9 Ways to Transform Old T-Shirts Table of Contents

<b>T-Shirt Pillows..... 5</b>	Easy T-Shirt Aprons..... 27
Ruffle Pillow Tutorial.....5	<b>Embellished Tees..... 31</b>
T-Shirt Pillow .....13	Dollar Shirts Never Looked So Good..... 31
<b>Accessories ..... 19</b>	Petal Tees..... 35
Groovy T-Shirt Tote .....19	Circle Flower Tee ..... 37
Scrunchy Scarf Tutorial .....23	
How to Make a Tee Shirt Fringe Scarf.....26	

# T-Shirt Pillows

## Ruffle Pillow Tutorial

By: [Jess for Floral Showers](#)

Reimagine all of your old t-shirts cluttering your closet and transform them into something beautiful. The ruffle pillow tutorial is a free, easy sewing pattern for making a pillow covered in ruffles, all made from an old T-shirt.



### **Materials:**

- An XL t-shirt (or larger)
- Rotary cutter, mat, and ruler
- Fiber fill or some sort of stuffing

### **Instructions:**

1. Lay t-shirt flat on cutting mat. Cut hem off bottom of t-shirt and straighten sides out (if needed).

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2.



3. Cut a 14×14 square through both layers of the t-shirt. These squares form the front and back of the pillow.



4. Trim off sleeves and use remaining t-shirt fabric to cut strips about 1 ¼ inch wide by 21 (or so) inches long.





5. Lay out strips on pillow top to determine how many ruffles you want. This pillow has ten.



6. Set your machine to a really long stitch (called a basting stitch). Sew down the center of each strip, leaving a tail of thread. Make sure not to reverse stitch on either end.







7. Lay strips back on pillow where you'd like them (with the bobbin thread side facing down). Pin ends in place (it makes the next step easier).



8. Ruffle time! Gently pull the bobbin thread (the thread on the bottom) to create the ruffle. Spread the ruffle across the entire strip and pin in place. Repeat for each strip.



9. Set your machine back to a regular (or slightly smaller than regular) stitch length. Sew down the center of each ruffle (right on top of the baste stitch).



10. Pin pillow front to pillow back, with ruffles inside. *Tip: to make sure you don't sew the ruffle in the side seam, pin bottom-most and top-most ruffles to the side.*





11. Sew front to back, leaving a 4-5 inch gap on one side. Trim corners. Flip right side out. Stuff.



12. Pin opening closed and hand sew shut.



## T-Shirt Pillow

By: [Jane Skoch for FaveCrafts](#)

Learn how to turn a sentimental t-shirt into a comfy pillow with this sewing tutorial. Designer Jane Skoch likes to make T-shirt quilts and use a few extra t-shirts for matching pillows. Follow this tutorial to make your own customized piece of home dec.



### Materials:

- 2 t-shirt sides, washed
- 1 yard of fusible interfacing (Pellon 906F, 911FF)
- ½ yard of fabric for border, washed
- 18" pillow form



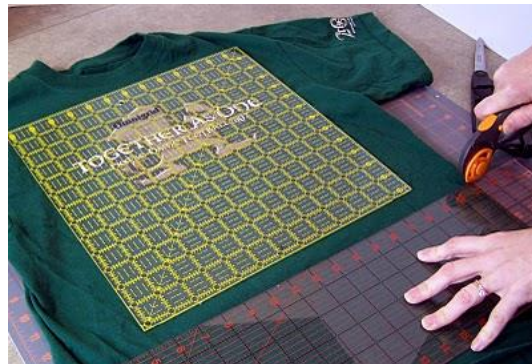
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## Notes on Materials:

- Use a t-shirt front and back or two separate t-shirts.
- The border fabric can be a contrast or coordinating fabric.
- Prewash the t-shirts and border fabric to preshrink them, especially if they are brand new.
- It isn't necessary to use an interfacing specifically designed for knits. The t-shirts will not need stretch for the pillow. The interfacing is added for stability and ease of sewing.
- Pillow forms are available in many sizes. If you decide to make another size, you will want your completed square to be one inch larger than the pillow form. So if you want to make a 16" pillow, then you will design the square to be 17" before sewing the two sides together.
- When cutting the t-shirt into a square, you can use a ready template or you can make a cardboard template, or simply measure and mark a square.

## Instructions:

1. Rough cut square: The application of interfacing can cause the shirt to shrink so you can cut a larger square than needed. Place template over the desired area of the t-shirt. Cut the t-shirt out with an extra inch around the edges.



2. Cut Border Fabric Strips: Cut 4 strips  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $13\frac{1}{4}$ " and Cut 4 strips  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " x  $19\frac{1}{4}$ ".





3. Apply interfacing: Apply the interfacing per the manufacturer's instructions to the back side of the t-shirt. If you have large areas to fuse, take an old plastic tub and fill it with water so that you can quickly dampen the hanky you use as your press cloth.



4. Place the t-shirt on your ironing board with the logo side down. Then place the interfacing on, covered by a damp hanky. Fuse using a dry iron. When the hanky stops steaming, the fusing is typically complete.



5. Cut the T-Shirts to 13 1/4" square: The Omnigrd can be used to center the t-shirt design and cut using a rotary cutter.



6. Assemble and Sew Pillow Top and Bottom: Pin the shorter border pieces to the top and bottom of the t-shirt.



7. Sew or serge using a ¼" seam. Press the stitching line and then press seams toward the border. When pressing, especially from the right side, avoid pressing the t-shirt logo. It can melt!



8. Now pin the longer border pieces to the sides of the t-shirt. Sew and press.



9. You now have a completed t-shirt block. Repeat for other t-shirt.



10. Prepare the Squares for Sewing: Modify the pillow squares to remove excess fabric in the corners. Fold the fabric into fourths. Mark a point halfway between the corner and the fold on each open side. At the corner, mark a point  $\frac{1}{2}$ " from each raw edge.



11. Trim from the corner to the center marks.



12. Sew the Top to the Bottom: Pin and sew the two squares together using a  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance. Leave an opening in the bottom to insert the pillow form.





13. Turn Inside Out, press seams and press under  $\frac{1}{4}$ " on open edge.



14. Insert Pillow Form and Hand Sew Opening: Pin the opening closed and sew closed using a slip stitch.



# Accessories

## Groovy T-Shirt Tote

By: [Barbara Matthiessen for Earth Safe Finishes](#)

Why go green and sacrifice style? With this Groovy T-Shirt Tote, there's no need to. This bag is made from recycled and earth-safe materials so feel free to strut your stuff and be groovy.



### Materials:

- T-shirt any size
- Thread to match shirt
- Earth Safe Finishes
- Fabric Magic
- Generation Green Acrylic paint in Glacier and Sunflower
- Black fabric marker
- Wine cork
- Sponge
- Palette
- Sewing machine with stretch knit stitch
- Scissors
- Sheet of scrap cardboard

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## Instructions:

1. Cut bottom of shirt off even with bottom of underarm seam. Cut off sleeves. Cut strip across width of shirt just under neckline. This will create 2 pieces for tote handles.



2. Slide a piece of cardboard into bottom section of shirt. The cardboard will keep any paint from seeping through to other side of shirt. Pour small puddles of both paints out onto palette. Mix 2 drops of Fabric Magic into each paint. Dip cork into Glacier paint for each flower center.





3. Dip side of sponge into Glacier paint. Press one end of sponge onto Glacier center then roll or press sponge outward forming a petal.



4. Repeat 5 or 6 times working around center to form flowers. Add flowers as desired, refer to project photograph.

5. Dip cork into Sunflower then onto flower centers. Allow paints to dry.

6. Outline flower petals, add dots around centers and in clusters of threes using black marker.



7. Turn painted shirt section inside out. Stitch across bottom using matching thread and a stretch stitch. Turn  $\frac{1}{2}$ " hem to inside along top edge, stitch down.

8. Fold sides of strips (Handles cut from shirt in Step 1.) into center.



9. Most knits will automatically roll inwards with gentle guidance. Stitch down length of strip.



10. Sew ends of handles next to side seams. Each handle will span one side of tote with ends on opposite side seams. Shown is one side turned up into position it will be used and other end as it is stitched.



# [Scrunchy Scarf Tutorial](#)

By: [Jennifer Juniper from Hope Studios](#)

This free sewing pattern for a scrunchy gathered scarf is a must-have accessory for you and your girlfriends. You get a lot of bang for your buck; it is a great accessory for yourself, and also a great gift to give.



## **Materials:**

- At least 2 yds. of thin jersey knit (this tutorial uses T-shirt weight)
- Thread
- Elastic Thread
- Scissors
- Sewing Machine
- And about 10 minutes of time

## **Instructions:**

1. Cut your 2 yards of fabric into 10 inch by (at least) 72 inch strips (your fabric will end up being half as long when you finish, so the longer the better). At this point, you can decide to taper your ends or to cut the ends apart, like fringe, at least 12 inches up from the bottom.

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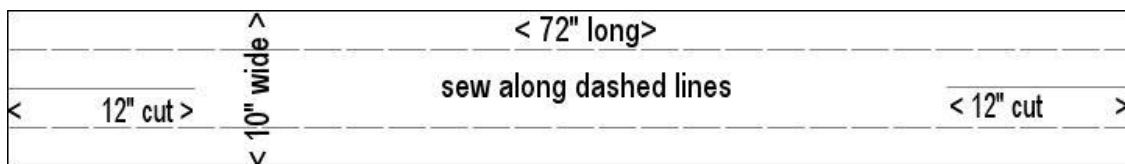


2. Hand wind the elastic thread onto your bobbin (use ordinary thread on top), and sew with a basting stitch from the center of one tail/fringe all the way to the end. Then again from the center of the other tail all the way to the other end. So, you have two long seams about 3 inches apart, down the center. (Make sure you back stitch at the beginning and the end, basting stitches will pull out easily if they aren't anchored like this.) Notice how it is bunching up as it passes through the machine.



*Tip: If you have a machine with self-adjusting tension, you will have to fiddle or turn that option off or your fabric will not bunch up.*

3. Here is how it looks all sewn - just two straight seams from end to end.



## How to Make a Tee Shirt Fringe Scarf

By: [Latrice Murphy for FaveCrafts.com](#)

Learn how to transform one of your old t-shirts to create this amazingly trendy scarf. A unique no-sew project, this tutorial shows you how to make a darling accessory from merely your worn out tee and a pair of scissors. Make several of these to vary your looks and create some easily as DIY gifts.



### Materials:

- Scissors
- Old or new t-shirt

### Instructions:

1. Fold your t-shirt in half and cut all the way across under the arms.
2. Unfold the t-shirt and begin cutting strips approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way up starting at the cut end.
3. Give each strand a tug to make it curl up.
4. Twist and fold the t-shirt in half to double it up and gather the fringes together.
5. Wear it with a solid shirt for interest and a pop of color.



## Easy T-Shirt Aprons

By: [Disney from Ruffle and Stuff](#)

Everyone has an excess of old T-shirts hanging around. Here's a good beginner sewing project that refashions your old rags into easy t-shirt aprons.



### Materials:

- T-shirt
- Sewing supplies

## Instructions:

1. Cut the front design out in a large rectangle from sleeve inseam to sleeve inseam, and from under the neck to the bottom of the shirt.



2. Fold the bottom of the shirt up until it's right under the design, then fold the hem down for a more finished look. Sew into four even sections, with the end section sewn into two for spoon slots.



3. Using the back of your shirt, cut 6 strips, 2.5" x 24".



4. Then sew three strips together into one, and repeat for the other three. You should have two long snakes like this.



5. Put them on top of each other with wrong sides facing and seams matched, pin, and stitch all the way around to make your apron waistband/ties.





6. Then pin your apron skirt to the back in the center, and sew on!

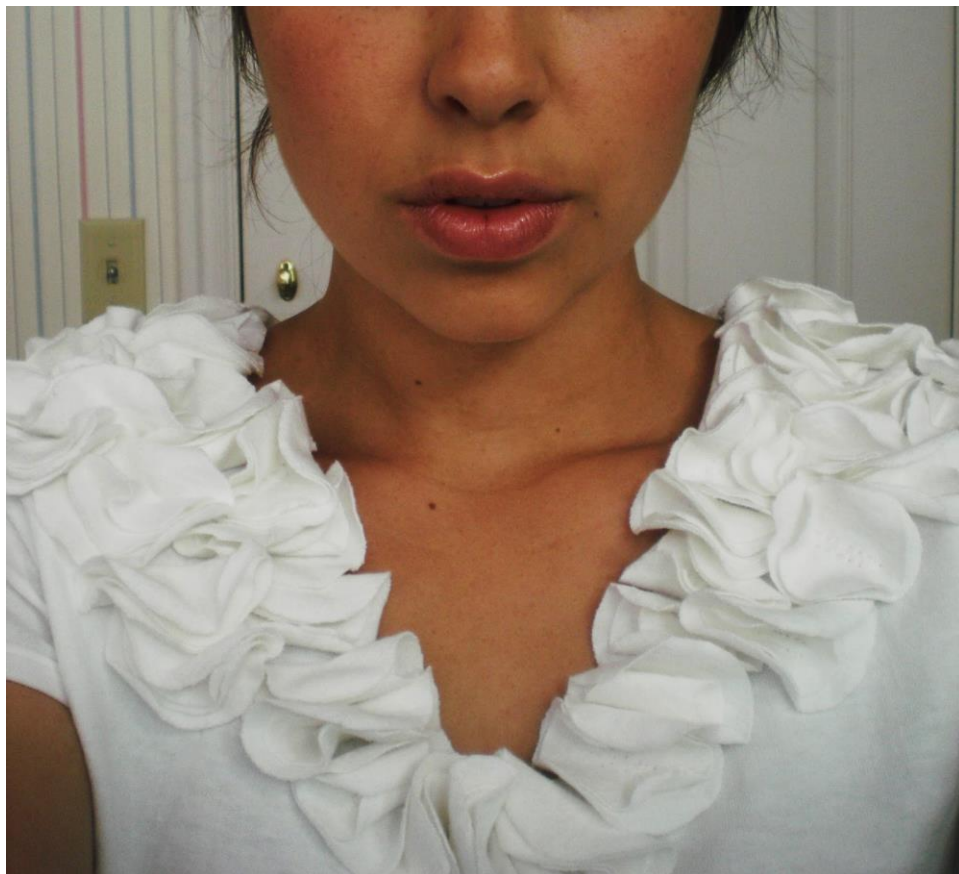


# Embellished Tees

## [Dollar Shirts Never Looked So Good](#)

By: [The Sisters 4 Say More is More](#)

With these free sewing patterns, dollar shirts never looked so good! Buy some cheap t-shirts and refashion them into trendy tops with this sewing tutorial.



### **Materials:**

- 2 T-shirts
- Sewing Supplies

Find thousands of free sewing patterns, tips, tutorials and more at [www.AllFreeSewing.com](http://www.AllFreeSewing.com).

## Instructions:

1. First, cut out around the V-neck of the shirt, chop the sleeves shorter, and take in the sides to make the shape more feminine.



2. This was a crew neck men's XL. Use it to cut 65 double layered 1-1.5 inch circles (Not perfect circles).





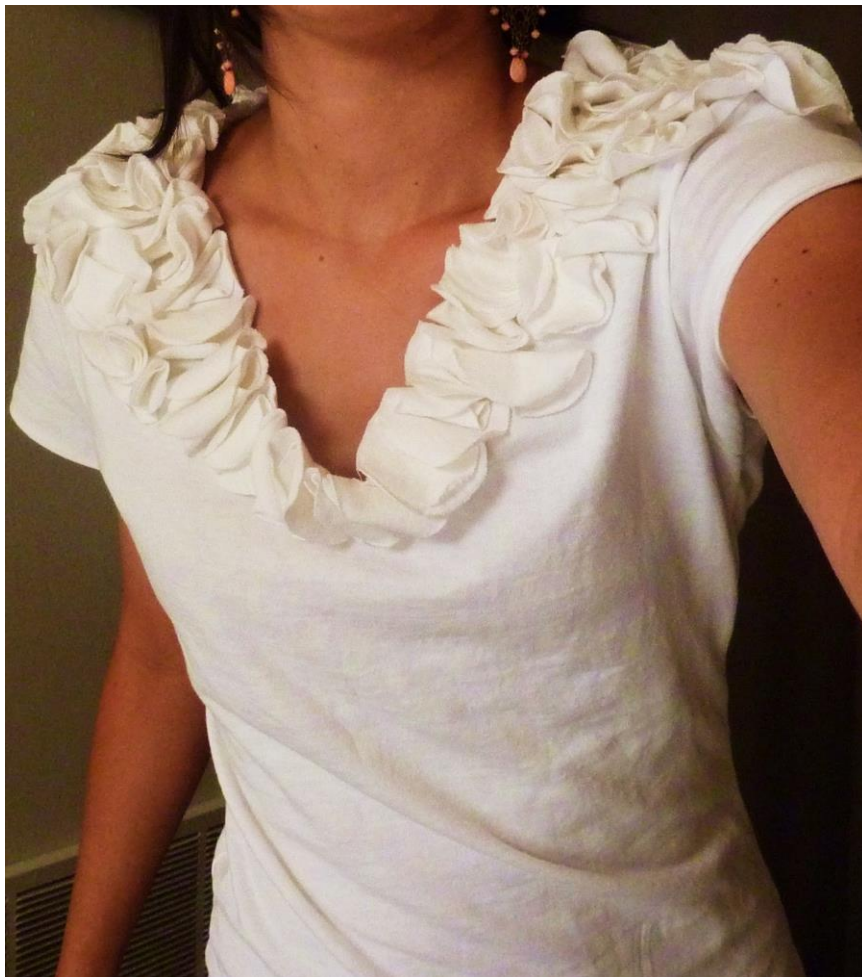


3. Then, double up the circles and pin them on the T-shirt #1 where you want them.



4. Last, sew them all on using a zig-zag stitch on your sewing machine. This part takes the longest.





## Petal Tees

By: [Disney from Ruffles and Stuff](#)

Embellish a boring T-shirt or tank top with fabric petals. The free petal tees sewing project is easy but it looks stylish and professional.



### **Materials:**

- Knit Scraps
- T-Shirt
- Sewing Supplies

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## Instructions:

1. First cut "petal" shapes out of knit scraps in two different sizes. Cut enough to go around your neckline overlapping half of each other. This tutorial uses 22 of each the large and medium size for the large scoop neck.
2. Lay the larger ones across your neckline, overlapping by half; don't skimp on the overlap, you don't want to see through when it stretches!
3. Lay one smaller petal where the larger petals overlap each other. Pin well.
4. Sew on with a narrow zigzag stitch. You're done!



## Circle Flower Tee

By: [Lindsey from The Pleated Poppy](#)

Embellish a T-shirt and turn it into a circle flower tee with this free sewing project. It's fast, easy, and very stylish! You'll love this designer style of your finished tee. Find your favorite color and follow along to create this blooming top.



### **Materials:**

- T-Shirt
- Extra T-shirt or knit fabric scraps
- Sewing supplies

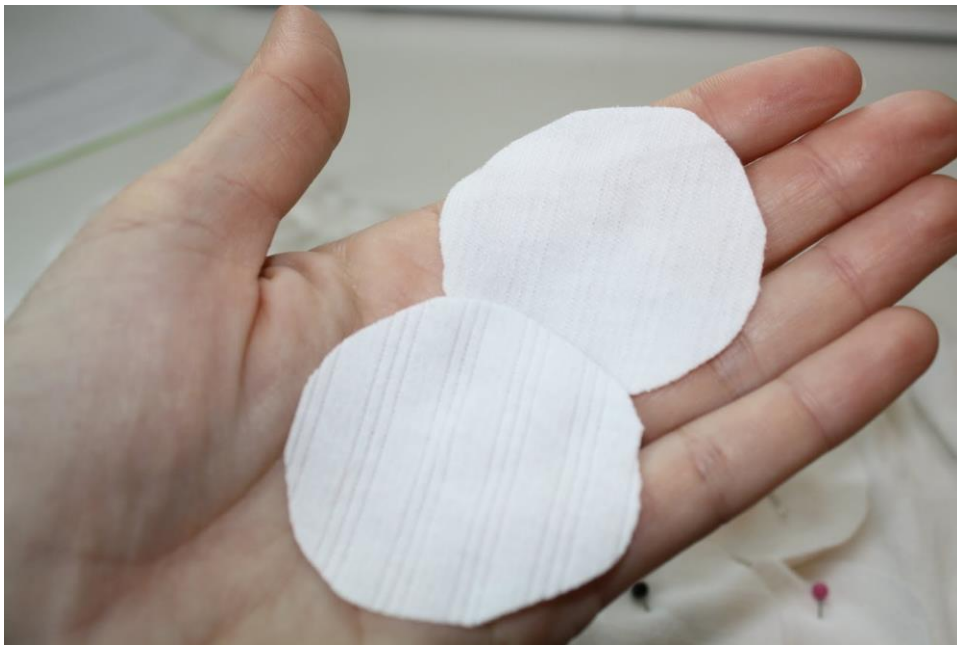
### **Instructions:**

1. Start with a cheap t-shirt that you love the fit of.





2. In this tutorial leftover white jersey is used. One side was ribbed but the backside worked for the petals.



3. You can freehand a bunch of random sized circles on 2 layers of fabric; they don't have to be uniform.



4. Lay out your finished circles in a pattern; in this tutorial they are purposefully asymmetrical.



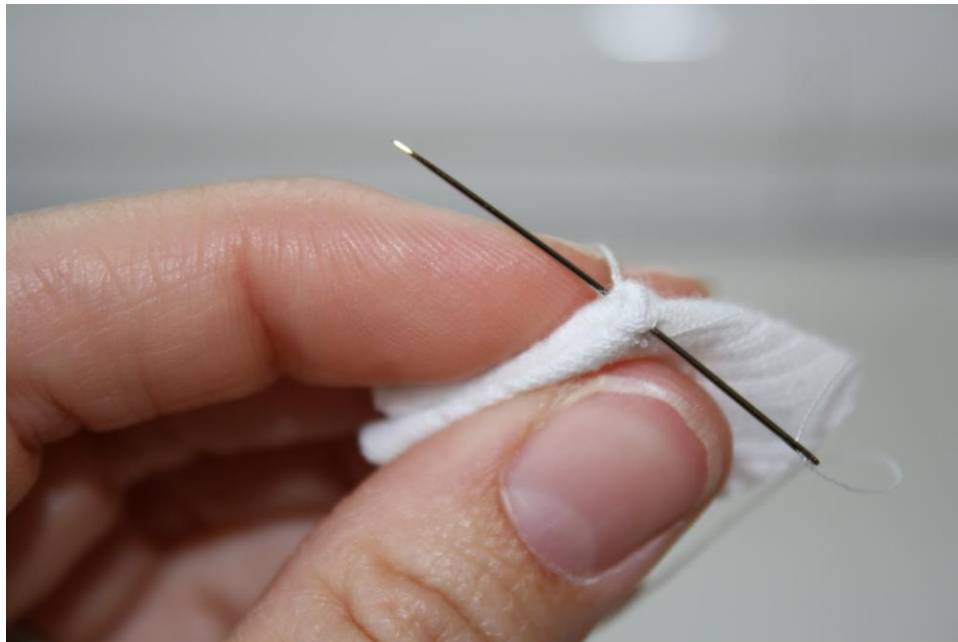
5. Pin them all in place.



6. Pinch each circle in the middle. Again, for this project you don't have to be entirely precise.

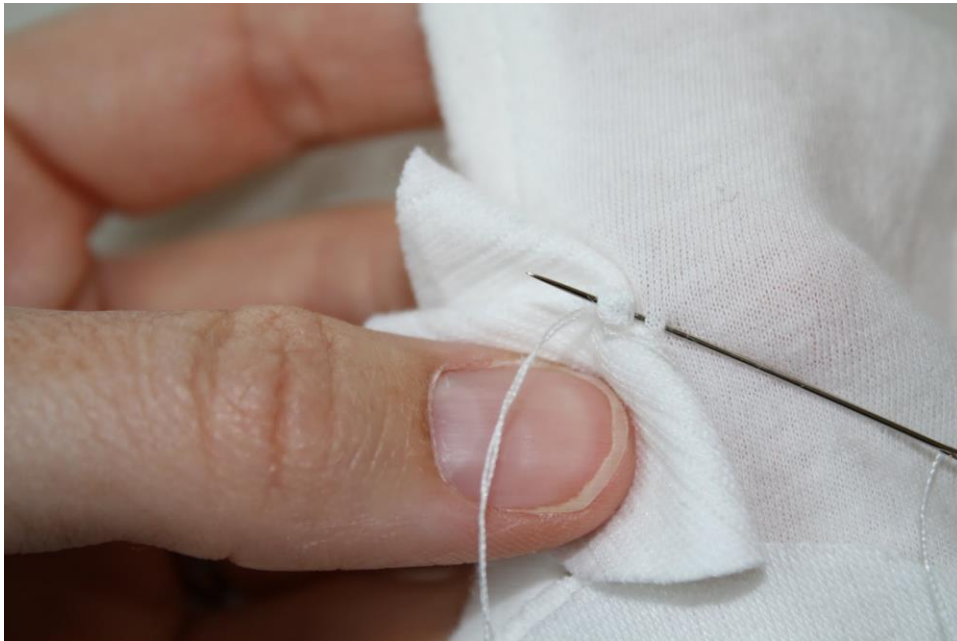


7. Take your threaded needle and do 2 or 3 tiny stitches through the point, just enough to pleat it a bit.





8. Next stitch it in place with a couple hand stitches. Knot it.





9. Machine stitch random lines and squiggles until you get all the edges down that you want to be tacked.

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**A special thanks to our contributors:**

Jess for [Floral Showers Crafts](#)

Jane Skoch from [Maiden Jane](#)

Barbara Matthiessen from [Earth Safe Finishes](#)

Jennifer Juniper from [Hope Studios](#)

Latrice Murphy for [FaveCrafts.com](#)

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