
Sew On-Seam Pockets with Liesl Gibson

Chapter 1 - On-Seam Pockets

Cut out and attach pockets

(upbeat music) - I love a good pocket and it's so easy to add a pocket to anything that you're making or to something that you already own as well and I'll show you how to do that. (upbeat music) To get started, you'll want the pattern piece that is available for download and this is slightly larger than fits on a single sheet of paper so you'll have to print it out and then tape it together. It's sort of tiling it in order to make a full pattern piece. Once you've got your pattern piece, then we need to cut it out four times. You need four pockets if you want pockets on both sides of whatever you're making. And be sure when you cut it out that you have two pieces that are mirroring each other. So two pieces for one side, two pieces for the other side. You can flip the pattern piece if you want or you can cut the fabric on a fold in order to get two of each direction. Once you've done that then we just need to determine where we want that pocket to be positioned. I'm wearing a jacket today that has pockets at the side. So it's sort of nice to put the garment on or get some sense of where you want those pockets to be. Today I'm making a skirt. So I'm gonna hold the front of the skirt up. I've already done the waistband, so it's really easy for me to hold that up to myself and just sort of figure out sort of by feel where I think I want that pocket to be. It feels like right about there is where I would like it. I'll put a couple of pins in just to sort of give myself an indication. So maybe starting there and approximately there. Once I've got those pins this is just an approximation, I can put it back down on the table and I'm gonna look at my pattern piece. The pocket opening on my pattern piece is quite a bit larger than the pins that I've indicated. So I'm just going to sort of center it. I'm gonna move the pins a little bit. The opening itself for the pocket will be between those two dots on the pattern piece. So I'll put the pins about where those dots are and I'm going to flip the pattern piece over so that the straight edge on the pocket is matching up with the side edge on my skirt. And with a pin, I'm going to sink the pin in through that dot and just mark it with chalk or you know what? I think the fabric pen might show up a little bit better since it's blue. There. And then I'll do the same thing on the other dot. And this is really marking where the opening of the pocket is going to be. We're going to use these dots when we sew the pocket as well. So these are important. Be sure you transfer these. Okay. So I have a dot at the top and bottom of my pocket. Now I'm going to copy these dots to the opposite side of my skirt as well as to the back of my skirt so that I have exactly the same dots at the same position. I'll match the top edge. Think I'll put a couple of pins in there just to hold them. Making sure everything matches up. And then I'm also going to separate the two layers and transfer those dots to the wrong side of the fabric and you can see I can transfer the dot to both layers of the fabric by pulling them apart like that. Now I'm going to unpin it and copy the dots to the opposite side of my skirt as well since I want a pocket on the right side and the left side, I'll just copy it. Maybe fold it in half like this. Match up the side seams. I'll put those pins back in again. And when I turn it over I can copy the dot to the other side as well. This way I'm sure that all of the dots are matching. My pocket will match up on both sides, front and back and left and right. Then I'll do the same thing on the back of my skirt. I think the right sides together might be a little bit easier here. So again, right sides together here. I'll stick a pin in each of those dots and that way when I flip the fabric over, I can mark the dot on the other side. Once we marked the front and back of the skirt right and left side then we'll do the same thing with the pocket pieces. I'm going to line all of the pocket pieces up so I can mark them all in one fell swoop.

Turn it over. And then if I position the pattern piece over all of the layers with one pin at the top dot and one pin at the bottom dot, again I can mark all those dots at the same time. So one layer. Two layers. Three and four. This is sometimes called a drill hole. Sometimes we just call it a matching dot. And these are really useful for sewing because it really helps you to know where to sew or where to pivot. We're gonna use them as a pivot point with our pocket. There we go. Here's the second layer. Third and there's the fourth. We've got two, four, six, eight, 10, 12, 14, 16 dots on our fabric that we transferred and that's really going to help us for actually sewing the pocket. One more thing we need to do before we can start attaching the pocket, I have some really lightweight, this is like a feather weight fusible interfacing. If you feel it on one side, there are these sort of bumps on it and those are little bits of dried glue that when I put this onto the fabric and iron it the glue actually melts onto the fabric and adheres the two pieces together. So this is an interfacing. It stabilizes and I like to interface the front pockets just to help to keep them in shape so that they don't get stretched out and the pocket really keeps a nice shape at the sides so you don't get sort of baggy side seams. I cut these one inch wide. I'm just going to take two pocket pieces and they should be pocket pieces that mirror each other. So, these two pocket pieces. I'm gonna bring these over to the iron and I'm going to fuse the interfacing to the wrong side of the fabric right along the edge. I will take one strip of interfacing. Again the bumpy side will go down right along that straight edge. Be sure your iron isn't too hot for this also. If your iron is really hot it can melt the interfacing which is super annoying. So, I've got it set at mm, maybe a wool setting it looks like. Warm enough but not hot enough to melt it. And I'm simply, you don't need to move the iron really. You're just setting it down and allowing that heat to melt the interfacing. Some interfaces also seem to work better if you give it a little steam. I don't know if you're actually supposed to do that but I often find it works best for me. And if you lift it up and it's not adhered well enough then just do it again. It's not a big deal. There. I think that's fused. Then I'm just gonna trim off the extra. And if the interfacing covers up the dots that you have drawn, that you have copied over, you can redraw those but in most instances the interfacing will be lightweight enough that you can see right through it. I can still see my dots there. Once we have interfacing on two of the pocket pieces, and two pocket pieces that don't have interfacing we're going to name these pocket pieces. The ones with the interfacing are going to be our front pocket and the ones without will be the back. So I'm going to set aside my back pocket pieces, and I'll put them over by my back skirt and let's focus on the front skirt initially. I'm going to lay the skirt down, right side up so the front of the skirt is facing me and then I'm going to take these two pocket pieces and I'm going to pin them to the sides of skirt, so that the right side of the pocket is facing the right side of the skirt. And the most important thing to do here is to match up those dots. Take a pin and put it through the dot at the pocket and then you can sort of with that same pin, find the dot on the skirt itself. And that is a really easy way to make sure that those dots match up. I'll leave the pin going right through there and then do the same thing with the bottom dot. So go through the dot at the pocket, find it on the skirt and then finish pinning and pin in a few places along the skirt. Sorry, pin in a few places along the pocket as well just to hold it in position. Do the same thing on the other pocket piece opposite side of the skirt. With a pin, go through the dot on the pocket, find the dot on the skirt as well and then pin it. Bottom dot. If anything isn't matching up here, just check it against your pattern piece to make sure that the dots are positioned where they should be and once you've got the dots pinned then again just pin a couple places along the pocket itself. Once that's done, we can take this to the sewing machine and we're going to sew that straight edge of the pocket to the outside edge of the skirt. Couple of things to keep in mind, one is my seam allowance for this skirt is a half inch and instead of sewing the pocket to the skirt

with a half inch, I'm actually going to sew it with a slightly smaller seam allowance. So I'm going to use a three eighths inch seam and the reason for that is that when the pocket is finished, it won't show so much. The seam for the pocket will roll ever so slightly to the inside of the pocket and it won't be as visible from the outside and you'll see that when we've finished it but I just wanna let you know, I'm using a half inch seam here. We'll actually use a three eighths inch seam for the pocket itself. So let's do that at the sewing machine. Stitch from the very top edge of the pocket fabric all the way down to the bottom edge. And again, this is a three eighths inch seam. I'll take a couple of stitches to back stitch, just to knot the thread. And then carry all the way down. (sewing machine whirring) And I should also point out to you that we're not actually stitching through the dots themselves here. So you can ignore those dots entirely. As long as you have them pinned so that they match the garment fabric itself, you'll probably be going ever so slightly to the outside edge of the dot itself. So don't worry about that if you don't go through it. And just take a few back stitches again at the other end. Now as long as we're at the machine, another thing we can do is finish those seam allowances together. We'll just finish the seam allowances of the pocket and the skirt together where we've stitched them. So only along the pocket. To finish the seam allowance I'm using the sewing machine instead of a serger. So I'm just changing out to a different foot and this is the foot that I like best for finishing a seam allowance. I'm going to use a zig zag stitch here. If you have another preferable stitch that you like to use that's perfectly fine. I just personally prefer a zig zag stitch in part because it's quick. And I'm going to change the machine to sew a zig zag stitch as well. (sewing machine whirring) Also, right over the edge of the fabric and that prevents it from rattling. (sewing machine whirring) And then do that same thing. We're stitching the pocket to the skirt and finishing just that seam allowance along the edge of the pocket. You'll do that with the other side of the skirt and then with both pieces of the back skirt as well. (sewing machine whirring) Once all the pockets have been sewn and you finished the seam allowances, then you can take it over to the iron and simply press that pocket away from the garment itself. I always like to press the seam flat first and that sort of sets the stitches and then I'll open it up and just press the pocket away from that side seam. And you can do this for all four pockets.

Chapter 2 - Side Seams

Finish the side seam

- We are ready to sew the side seam. I've got the back skirt laid faceup and I'm gonna take the front skirt and lay it right on top of the back skirt facedown so the right sides are together, and then pin the side seam. I would suggest that you start at those dots. And again sinking a pin through the first one and then the other will help me get them lined up just right. There's the top dot. Here's the bottom dot. Go through the first one and then the other one. And then go ahead and pin the rest of the side seam. And you can pin the pockets together. The pockets should be at this point matching each other really nicely. So I'll just pin the two layers together. And I'll pin all the way down to the hem. I pre-folded my hem just to make my life a little bit easier but that was just a little matter of preference for me. Just a couple more pins to hold everything in place and then I'm going to be taking this to the sewing machine. And at the sewing machine with my 1/2-inch seam allowance, I'm going to start at the top, sew all the way down to the dot, and then I'll leave the needle in the machine and pivot to sew around the pocket until I get to that second dot up here, and then I'll pivot again to sew the rest of the side seam. And by doing that, I'm forming not only the side seam but making the pocket bag as well. As always, I'll backstitch a couple of stitches to get started. And you can see my side seam is not gonna match up with the pocket seam. It's gonna be a little bit to

the inside of the pocket seam and that's intentional because that way the pocket itself won't show on the finished garment. Here I come up to the dot and I think I'll just hand crank the wheel on the side of my machine here until I get the needle right at that dot. And then leaving the needle down, I'll pivot around, and still doing the 1/2-inch seam allowance, I'll stitch all the way around that pocket. Take your time with this, it's a curved edge. If you need to stop periodically to reposition the fabric, that's fine. And once you get around toward the bottom of the pocket, you'll be stitching in a bit. Don't be alarmed, just keep your eye on that dot. You'll know where you're going. And again, I'll just hand crank the machine until I get to that spot. A little bit past the seam for the pocket itself, and there we go. If you're slightly off, don't worry about it. Just sort of try to stay inside of that seam. I'll finish sewing the rest of the side seam. And again, backstitch just a few stitches at the bottom edge. And we have a pocket. Do the same thing to sew the side seam and make the pocket bag on the opposite side and then we'll move on to finishing the seam allowances and completing the pocket.

Chapter 3 - Finish Pocket

Finish seam allowances and complete pocket

- The only thing left to be done to finish our pocket now, is to finish the seam allowances, and then we'll press them, either open or to one side, depending on your pattern. On this side of my skirt, I've already gone ahead. I've pressed the seam allowances toward the front of the skirt and I finished them together. And one of the advantages of doing that is that I don't have to clip into the seam allowances at all. So I finished the seam allowances using that same zigzag I used at the edges of the pocket and you can see, by finishing those together, the pocket is really nicely finished everywhere. And then I pressed everything toward the front of the skirt. Now, if you can't do that, if you really do need to press your seam allowances open for any reason, maybe your fabric is a bit bulky or the pattern requires it, Then, the only difference is we need to clip in at an angle at the back seam allowances just to release those and allow the pocket to flip toward the front while the seam allowances themselves can open up. So let me just do that for you a minute. I'll start at the bottom here. And again, we only need to clip the back seam allowances since the pocket is going toward the front. I'll slip my scissors right in between those two layers and clip right up through. I'm clipping up through the pocket fabric as well as the skirt fabric, and I'm getting fairly close to the seam line there. And now you can see, those seam allowances can open below the pocket. Then I'll do the same thing at the top of the pocket. And again, just slip the scissors right in between the two layers and clip at an angle, really close to that point. That's the dot where you pivoted, by the way. And here again, the pocket can stay toward the front of the skirt, but then the seam allowances can open. And now I can go ahead and finish those seam allowances separately above the pocket. At the pocket bag itself, I'll finish them together using that same zigzag, and then below the pocket, I can also press the seam allowances open to finish them. So I'll finish them separately, and that will reduce bulk. Above the pocket, I'm first going to finish the back seam allowance. (machine stitching) And then I'm going to cut the thread and I'll finish the front seam allowance. (machine stitching) Now I'll finish both the seam allowances for the pocket at the same time, which does reduce bulk. You could technically finish these before you even sew your pocket. I really like to finish them together because that way I don't have two finished seam allowances next to each other, which creates bulk and can possibly also show. It can create sort of a crease on the garment when you're wearing it. Sometimes you can see the pocket bag if it's too bulky. (machine stitching) Get as close as you can. And then below the pocket again, I'll finish those two seam allowances

separately, first the back, then the front. I'm using that same zigzag stitch that I used to finish the other seam allowances, but use whatever finish you prefer. (machine stitching) Now we just need to press the seam allowances open, press the pocket toward the front of the skirt, and we're done. I'll start out with the skirt inside out and that will allow pressing the seam allowances open, like that, above and below the pocket. (iron steaming) There we go. And then turn it right side out to press the pocket toward the front. The front part of this skirt is the part that's gathered. And I'll just slip my hand right into the pocket bag to make sure it's going the right direction, it's nice and flat. And then we can press that. And you can see, by sewing that pocket with a smaller seam allowance, we don't see that pocket on the outside of the garment at all. It's only when I open the pocket that you can really see the pocket bag itself. So it's a really nice way of making the pocket less visible. I'm actually gonna press that a little better there. It's a nice way of making the pocket less visible from the outside, but still having fully functioning pockets.

Chapter 4 - Finished Garments

Adding pockets to a finished garment

- Adding a pocket to a finished garment is almost exactly the same process. I have a dress here that belongs to a friend of mine. I had her try it on, and determine just where she wanted the pockets to be. She put her hands in and sort of determined what would feel comfortable, and how low they should be. And we put pins at the top and bottom of the pocket in order to determine, at the side seam, where we want to place that pocket. So you can see, with the pattern piece, if I position the top dot at this pin, and the bottom dot at the lower pin, and that will help me to position the pocket perfectly on the dress. And then I did the same thing, I copied the position of those pins on the other side of the dress. So I'm completely ready to place those pockets in the side seam of the dress. I also have cut out my four pocket pieces. And you can see, I have fused interfacing to two of them, so that I have my front-pocket pieces, and then the other two pieces are without the interfacing. And I've put the dots, I've transferred those dots from the pattern piece onto all four pockets. Now the next step will be to position the dots on the front and back dress-side seams. And then I'm also going to open up that side seam a little bit above, and below the pins, to give me a little space to work. So first of all, I'm going to take one of the pins, and poke it directly through to the wrong side of the fabric. And when I turn the dress inside-out, I can use a little bit of chalk. Use something that's really visible for you, and mark that position on the fabric. And then do the same thing on the other side of the seam. And that shows me exactly where the bottom of that pocket is going to be. Let me just mark that a little bit better on this side. I really want that to be visible when it comes time to sew the side seam back up. And then I'll do the same thing with the pin at the top of the pocket. I'll push it straight through to the wrong side of the fabric. Turn the dress wrong-side out. And again, draw the position of that dot really clearly. And on this side as well. I'll repeat that on the other side of the dress. And then, with a seam ripper, I can open up the dress, the side seam, above and below those dots. And I'd say probably, two inches above and below will be plenty. This is a straight seam with a serged edge. And because those seam allowances have been finished together, I will also need to take out that serging, starting about two inches above that dot that we made. You can go a little more, too, if you want to give yourself a little extra room. I'm just clipping every few stitches along the side seam. Be sure to only get the sewing thread. Don't catch the fabric in your hook, because you might end up with a hole in your fabric if you accidentally break any of those threads. And I just continue working down. Here's my lower dot. So I'll continue down about two inches below that lower dot as well. And then because this is a serged seam, I also need to take

out this serging. This technique will work best on any garment that does have just a straight seam with a serged finish. If you have a top-stitched seam, or a French seam or something like that, it does get a little more complicated. So keep that in mind when you're selecting the type of garment that you want to add a pocket to. Sergers have multiple threads running through them. And depending on what threads you clip, you can sometimes pull out the entire serger stitch all in one go. I'm not usually that lucky, so I'm just clipping a lot of different threads here, and then I'll take them all out. So I'm clipping that sort of zigzag stitch there, as well as the straight stitch on the sides. And once all of those threads have been clipped, then I can sort of coax this side seam. You might have to go in and clip a little bit more. I think I'll try from the right side of the dress now. See if I can open it up a bit. And you can see that the side seam is starting to open up. And I need to clip a little more here and there. Keep an eye on those dots too, you don't want to go too far. I still have quite a ways to go. I'm sort of opening both of those seams at the same time: the straight stitch, and the serging. And, let's just check where we are. I'm gonna go just another half-inch or so, and then I think we'll be set. All right, now if I turn the dress wrong-side out again, let's get rid of some of those threads. Clean things up a bit before we continue. This, now, is the front of my dress, and this is the back of my dress. And I can start to follow the same process that I followed with the skirt. I'm going to pin a front pattern piece, the one with the interfacing. Gotta get the right one for the right side of the dress. I'll pin the front pocket piece to the front of the dress. And again, I'm going to match those dots. So I'll put a pin through the dot on the pocket, and then I'll find the same spot right in the side seam, on the dress, and pin them together. And then the same thing with the bottom dot. Find the matching dot. Pin through that dot right at the side seam. And then a couple of extra pins in the middle. Now I can sew the pocket to the front of the dress. And I measured the seam allowance here. I have a half-inch seam, just as I did with the pattern piece. If you have more or less seam allowance, keep that in mind. You might need to trim down the edge of the pocket a little bit, so that the dots are in the right position. But otherwise, I'm just going to go ahead and sew the pocket to the dress, all the way along. And then I'll also go in and I'll finish those seam allowances, just like we did with the skirt. I'll sort of push the back of the dress out of the way here. I can actually see the original side seam on this dress, and I'm going to use that little crease right there to help me line up the pocket. Now keep in mind, again, that's my side seam. So I want to be sewing inside of the side seam in order to prevent the pocket from showing when it's worn. So I line up with the side seam, and then I'm going to go about an eighth of an inch into the seam allowance with that. So it's more like three-eighths of an inch seam. And you can see that I'm actually lined up with that three-eighths inch guide on the sewing machine. So again, just like with the skirt, I'll start at the top edge of the pocket. Get the machine set up properly here. There we go. Take a couple of back stitches to lock it. And then I'll sew all the way down to the bottom edge of the pocket. And don't be afraid to shift the garment as well. I'm moving the dress out of the way so that I can access the side seam without the rest of the dress moving, or getting in position. And again, back stitching just a couple of stitches. And then we finished that seam. I'll do the same thing with the back-pocket piece. And remember, the back pocket is the one that doesn't have the interfacing on it. So again, I'll pin it right side of the fabric to the right side of the fabric. Matching those dots. And here again, I'm sewing an eighth of an inch less than my seam allowance. So, my seam allowance was a half inch. I'm sewing this at three-eighths of an inch. And back-stitch at the end. So if we take a look at this now, we have two pocket bags along the side seam that mirror each other. Just like with the skirt, now I will go in and I'll finish those seam allowances along the pocket. I'll finish them together, on the front and on the back. And then, just like with the skirt as well, I can pin up the side seam, pin

around the pocket bag, pin at the side seam at the top. I'll stitch that, pivoting at the dot, going all the way around the pocket bag, pivoting at the dot to finish sewing that side seam. And then, all that remains to be done is to finish the seam allowances above and below the pocket. And since we're finishing those together, we don't need to do any clipping. At that point, we'll press it, and the pocket is finished. The seam allowances are finished. And, when we look at the side seam now, we have two pocket bags that are facing each other. It's almost like a heart. And now I'm gonna take this over to the iron, and press those pocket bags towards the seam allowances before I sew up the side seam again. And then I'll do the same thing on the other side. And there we go. So here, I'm just continuing the original side seam, and I can follow, I can see exactly where it is so I can follow it. And again, this one is a half inch. I'll continue right down until I hit that dot. And then again, I'll pivot, leaving the needle down to sew around the pocket. And I'm pivoting again to sew the rest of the side seam. And here I'm, again, going to sew right along that crease where my side seam was, until I meet that original seam line. And then I'll back-stitch a couple. And we have a side seam. With a pocket. Now I can go in and finish the seam allowance, all the way around, meeting back up with my original finished seam allowances. And then I'll simply press this and I'll be finished. The only thing that remains left to be done is to press the seam allowance towards the front. And you can see, when we're all finished, we have a cute little pocket there. And it's even a little pop of color there on the inside, even though it's not visible from the outside. So you can see that this is a really easy way of adding pockets to pretty much anything that you own, or anything that you make.