

Novelty Purses You Can Make

by Pamela Fay

Purses are expensive to buy but easy to create using items that you already have. These homemade purses don't require any fancy hardware, either. However, you can customize these ideas and add finishes such as handles purchased from a craft store. It's your design – you can make your purse as fancy or as Bohemian as you like.

Handmade Box Purse

Hinged tin or wooden boxes can be made into one-of-a-kind purses. Find a small cigar box in a thrift or smoke shop. If the box is not hinged, make one. Drill a row of four 1/16 inch holes in both the lid and the box. Place the holes 3/16 inch from the edge and about 3/8 inch apart. Thread waxed linen cord or carpet thread through the holes to create a hinge. Keep in mind that if the box already has a hinge, any design on the box will appear upside down. If you create your own hinge, you can place the hinge wherever you want. You can carry the box as a handbag or attach a strap. Salvage a metal strap from an old evening bag or use a chain. Solder two jump rings on the unhinged end of the box near the edges. Attach the strap.

Homemade Pants Purse

Don't give away a favorite pair of zip-front dress pants that no longer fit. Repurpose them into a pocket purse. Cut off the pants legs above the crotch seam. Turn the pants inside out and pin the cut edge closed along the bottom. Stitch the seam. Sew Velcro closures along the inside waistband as fasteners. Make a shoulder strap from the pants leg fabric. Attach the strap to the side seams.

Child's Handmade Handbag

Make a novelty purse from an oven mitt. Use a new oven mitt in a primary color like red. Cut open the seam on the thumb of the mitt from the bottom hem to the tip of the thumb. Pin matching or contrasting bias tape along the cut edge. Topstitch in place. Sew on a strap made from decorative cord. Decorate the bag with large buttons and puff painted designs.

Handmade Knotted Bag

Take two 30-inch squares of cotton or cotton blend fabric. The material should be soft enough to knot but heavy enough to hold the contents of a handbag. Use contrasting fabrics to add whimsy. Be environmentally friendly and use old sheets, if you like. Place the right sides of the squares together and sew all around the edges leaving a 4 inch opening. Trim the seams at the corners and turn the square right side out. Slipstitch the opening closed. Press the fabric square with an iron. Tie a knot in each of the four corners leaving a tail of 4 to 6 inches on each knot. Knot the tails from opposite corners together to form two handles.

References

“Carry Me: 20 Boutique Bags to Sew”; Yuka Koshizen; 2005

“Making Handbags and Purses”; Carol Parks; 1998