

# Swirly Tray

This fabric basket only looks complex

## Supplies

- Clothespins
- Cotton clothesline/cord,  $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch diameter, approximately 50 feet (available in hardware stores)
- Cotton quilting fabric,  $\frac{1}{4}$  yard
- Quilting ruler
- Rotary cutter and mat
- Scissors
- Sewing machine with a new quilting needle
- Sewing thread
- Tailor's chalk
- Optional:
  - > Binder clips
  - > Cording foot
  - > Cotton quilting in a coordinating color,  $\frac{1}{8}$  yard or less



If you're looking at this fabric tray and thinking it's too difficult to make, think again. It's easy to create, and you'll not only find endless uses for it but also have bragging rights to go with it.

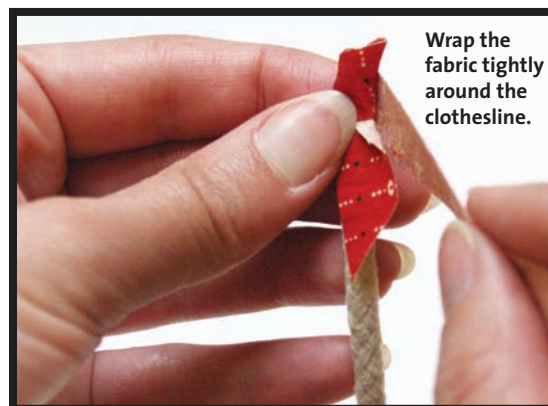
To make this tray, you wrap strips of fabric—of one kind or many—around a length of lightweight clothesline. As you wrap and sew, you'll master the coiling techniques necessary to craft the tray, including simple tricks for completing the sides. Once you know how to shape the sides, altering the look is a piece of cake.

—LINDA PERMANN

## First, cover the cord

The wrapping process is easy once you get going. Just wrap the fabric carefully and tightly to ensure that it doesn't bunch.

**{1} CUT AND WRAP THE FABRIC.** First, press the fabric, and fold it selvage to selvage. Then fold it in half again, and press. With a quilting ruler, cut 10 to 12, ½-inch-wide strips of the main fabric. Next, if you're using a coordinating fabric, cut ½-inch-wide strips of that; if not, continue to cut your strips from the main fabric. You need at least 28 strips total. Cut a 45-degree angle on the edge of one fabric strip. Fold the strip end down over the clothesline end, and wrap it tightly a few times, as shown at right.

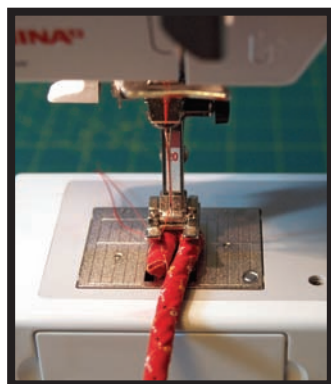


Wrap the fabric tightly around the clothesline.

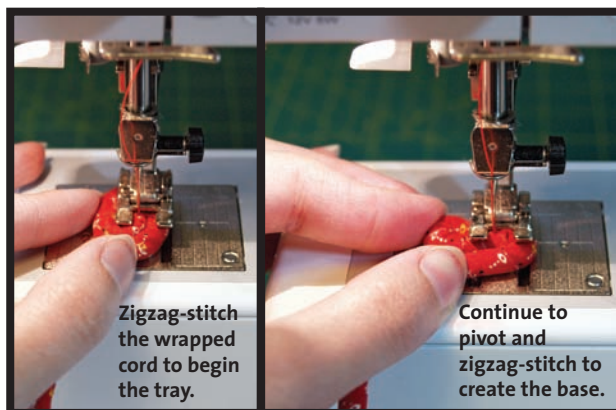
**{2} WRAP THE REST OF THE LINE.** Place the wrapped clothesline end under the presser foot of your machine; then put the needle down to secure it. Wrap the fabric around the line counterclockwise, angling the strip slightly so the fabric doesn't bunch as you wrap. Wrap 12 to 18 inches of line; then use a binder clip (or clothespin) to hold the fabric end in place.

## Next, coil and sew the base

To make the base, you'll simply coil and sew the wrapped clothesline together. You may find it helpful to use your fingers to pinch the line together as you sew.



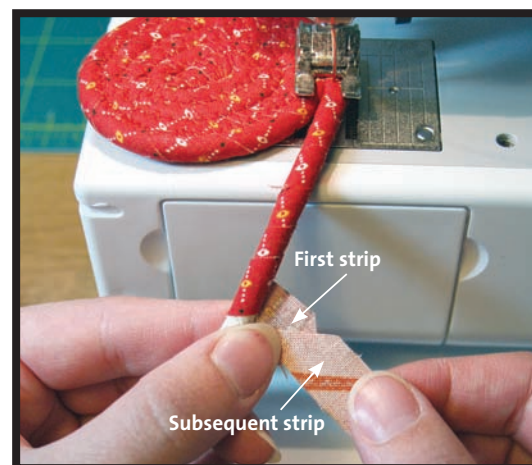
**{1} MAKE THE BASE.** Raise the needle, and fold about 1 inch of the wrapped line end down to the left of the length of the cord. Place the fold under the foot of your sewing machine, as shown above.



Zigzag-stitch the wrapped cord to begin the tray.

Continue to pivot and zigzag-stitch to create the base.

**{2} SEW DOWN THE MIDDLE.** Zigzag-stitch between the two lengths of clothesline. To continue coiling and sewing the cord, put the needle down, raise the foot, and pivot your work, turning the folded end to the left. Put the foot down again, hold the wrapped clothesline close to your work, and sew.



**{3} ADD SUBSEQUENT STRIPS.** About 3 inches before the wrapped clothesline ends, stop with your needle down. Cut the fabric end at a 45-degree angle, and then cut a second fabric strip in a reverse 45-degree angle. Overlap the strip ends with the second strip on top of the first, hold it in place, and begin wrapping the cord. Continue to sew, wrap, and add new strips of fabric as necessary until the tray base measures 9 inches in diameter.

## Then, create the sides

Add height to the sides of the tray by coiling and sewing at an angle. For the finishing touch, add a quick-to-make scalloped edge.



**{1} COIL AND SEW AT AN ANGLE.** To begin the sides, lift the base's far left edge to create as much of an angle as your sewing machine can accommodate. Continue coiling and sewing around the base while holding the tray at this angle. When the sides reach about  $1\frac{3}{4}$  inch high, wrap the remaining fabric around the coil. Backstitch and remove the tray from the machine, leaving any excess wrapped coil intact.

**{3} MARK TO SEW THE LOOPS.** Use tailor's chalk to mark, just to the left of the clothespin, each loop and the edge of the tray below it.



**{4} SEW ON THE LOOPS.** Remove the first clothespin, and place the first loop mark under the sewing machine's foot. Use your finger to align the mark on the loop with the mark on the tray. Zigzag along the tray edge for about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch, catching the loop base. As you sew, glide the work from a loop to the tray until you reach the next clothespin. Remove the clothespin, and repeat the process, working your needle closer to the edge as you reach the marked area of the outer loop.



**{2} MAKE THE LOOPS.** Measure  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches up the clothesline from the point you stopped sewing, and clip that segment to the tray's top with a clothespin about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches away, as shown above. Repeat this process, forming  $3\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-long cord sections spaced  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches apart, securing them with clothespins. If you run out of wrapped clothesline, continue to step 3 and 4 to sew the loops you've formed. Then return to this step. Use the sewing-machine needle to hold the line in place. Wrap more fabric; then continue with steps 3 and 4.



**{5} CUT THE CLOTHESLINE.** When you secure the last loop, cut the clothesline  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch past the loop end. Be sure to leave an inch or two of fabric extending past the end of the line.

**{6} FINISH THE TRAY.** Wrap the end of the clothesline with the remaining fabric, and with a zigzag stitch, sew the end under the outside edge of the tray. Backstitch to secure, and then clip the end of the fabric close to the stitching.