

Shoulder Pad Mini-Purses

Designed by Diane Fitzgerald

INSPIRATION:

I seem to attract shoulder pads for some reason (just like dust) and on several occasions, people have given me bagfuls. These aren't just your run-of-the-mill foam shoulder pads. They are covered with colorful lively prints, lush silks, or cotton knits, and they beckon me to do something creative with them. I've made them into vests, slippers, pins, bags, hair ornaments, and even a hat. This time they wanted me to transform them into mini-purses just large enough for a credit card, a lipstick, a tissue, and a little money. So dig through your closet or purchase a pair of shoulder pads at your local fabric store, or check out a nearby thrift store.

TIPS:

- If you're using a print fabric, consider embellishing the existing pattern.
- If the fabric is plain, there are unlimited possibilities. With a few easy bead embroidery stitches you can create almost any effect you wish. You can paint them with acrylic paints or cover them with fabric. Think of your shoulder pad as a small canvas on which you can paint any design you like with beads, ribbons, laces, and trim.
- Two matching shoulder pads with a half-moon shape work better for a mini-purse than the horseshoe-shaped variety, but you could join several of either to make a larger purse.

General Instructions:

1. Many shoulder pads are made with patterned fabric. If you want a different fabric than the original shoulder pad for the purse base, cover a pair of shoulder pads with your fabric of choice. *Note:* The Materials lists include a piece of fabric for covering the shoulder pads. Disregard if you choose to use shoulder pads as they are. Fold a square of cloth on the diagonal (or bias) and place the wide edge of the shoulder pad along the inside of the fold (see Shoulder Pad Diagram). Trim the fabric to fit and overcast the edge by hand or by machine to secure in place.



Time to complete project: an evening per purse
Beginner project

2. *Basic bead embroidery stitches.* To make a fringe or stack of beads, anchor the thread on the inside and exit the right side of the fabric. Make a tiny backstitch. Add several beads, saving a size 11/0 seed or a small bead for last. Skip the last bead and pass back through the remaining beads into the fabric, bringing the needle up where you wish to place the next bead or bead stack (Fig. 1).

3. *Lines or filled spaces.* With the thread anchored and exiting the right side of the fabric, make a tiny backstitch. Add four to five seed beads and position them in place against the fabric. Insert the needle into the fabric at the end point where you want the beads and bring it up where you wish to begin the next line of beads (Fig. 2). With this basic stitch, you can make your line of beads wide or narrow depending on where you bring up the needle. Figure 3 shows a narrow line of beads which might represent a floral stem or outline. Add four to five beads and bring the needle up at the midpoint of the line to add the next line of beads. For a wider line or one that curves, position the end of each new line of beads radiating slightly away from the previous line (Fig. 4).

4. *Assembly.* All purses are finished by stitching the outer (round) edges of the shoulder pads together using a whipstitch to form the pouch (see Technique Guide, p. 110). Sew on a coordinating color cord for a purse strap and a snap closure on the inside top edges of the purse.

Victorian Golden Rosebud

Materials:

- **1 pair** Shoulder pads—solid color
- **6-in. piece** of Wire-edged ribbon—coordinating color
- **12-in. piece** of Tassel fringe—coordinating color
- **20** Sew-on nail heads—bronze
- **1 tube** each size 11/0 Seed beads—gold and olive green
- **24-in. piece** of Decorative cord
- **1** Large snap



Additional Supplies:

- Basic beading supplies; chalk, sliver of soap, or white pencil

For product information, see Sources of Supply on page 107.

Instructions:

1. Cut the wire-edge ribbon into two 3-in. pieces. Roll and fold each piece into flower buds. *Note:* Refer to a silk ribbon flower book for folding instructions.

2. Embellish one side of each shoulder pad with meandering lines of beads using the bronze sew-on nail heads and gold and olive green seed beads. Couch these lines in place as described in the Technique Guide, p. 110. *Note:* If desired, sketch guidelines with chalk, soap, or white pencil.

3. Stitch the flower buds in place.

4. After assembling the purse, stitch tassel fringe to the bottom of both sides to cover the raw edge.

Primary Modern Art

Materials:

- **1 pair** Shoulder pads
- **9-in.-square piece** of Fabric—geometric print with bold colors*
- **1 tube** each size 8/0 Seed beads—black and two additional coordinating colors
- **15-20** Accent bead—coordinating colors and sizes

*Refer to Shoulder Pad Diagram for sizing.

Instructions:

1. If desired, cover the pads with fabric as described in the General Instructions.

2. Accent the lines and shapes of the design on one side of each shoulder pad as desired by couching size 8/0 seeds. Sew on accent beads on the front and back as desired.

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3. After assembling the purse, cover the raw edges with couched black seed beads (see Technique Guide, p. 110).

Springtime

Materials:

- 1 pair Shoulder pads
- 9-in.-square piece of Fabric—floral print of choice*
- Several tubes of varying sizes of Seed beads—silver-lined in coordinating colors
- 12-in. piece of Rickrack—metallic color of choice

*Refer to Shoulder Pad Diagram for sizing.

Instructions:

1. If desired, cover the pads with fabric as described in the General Instructions.
2. Embellish the flowers and leaves of the design on one side of each shoulder pad with sparkling, silver-lined beads.
3. After assembling the purse, cover the unfinished edge with metallic rickrack.

For questions concerning this project, contact designer Diane Fitzgerald of Minneapolis, MN.
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Fig. 1

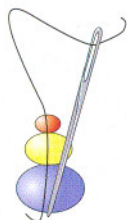


Fig. 2

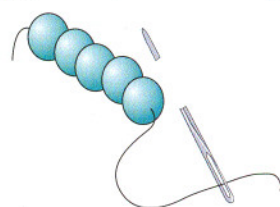


Fig. 3

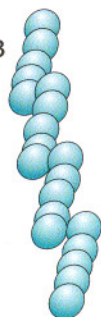
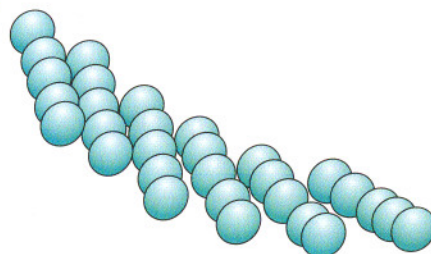


Fig. 4



Romance

Designed by Jane Langenback

An ordinary off-white shoulder pad is unrecognizable with creamy lace, beads, fringe, and tassel added.



Polka Dot Wild!

Designed by Bonnie Voelker

Two magenta shoulder pads with white polka dots were transformed by accenting the dots with matte green, silver-lined size 6/0 seed beads topped with three size 11/0 orange seed beads. A piece of ruffled lace was painted with orange fabric paint and added to the bottom edge of the purse.



Abstract Modern Art

Designed by Ann Gilbert

Subtle gray and teal fabric with an abstract design is accented with silver cube beads, Bali silver rondelles, and a beaded edge in this "go-anywhere" mini-purse.

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