

Parrot Pillows In Minutes

Brighten up your home with parrot-themed pillows.

By Anastasia Thrift

You don't have to be a HGTV devotee to craft your own home decor. Even if you dropped out of Home Ec., you can still bring a stylish, personal touch to your living room with make-your-own throw pillows. For bird people, this technique can help you feather your den with an avian theme by stitching together some parrot-patterned fabric into a fab throw pillow. Contributing editor Anastasia Thrift shows you how to make your own throw pillows for hip home accents.

1. Start with the materials. You'll need a pillow, fabric, scissors, pins and measuring tape.
2. Buy a yard of fabric for each 16- by 16-inch square pillow. You can purchase pillows or stuffing at craft stores, or simply refresh your existing pillows with some new "threads." (For whatever size pillow you want, just make sure you add an extra 2 inches to your material size.) Wash and iron the material before you start.
3. Trim and pin your yard in half. Fold the material in half (square-wise) and make chalk (or pencil) marks on each end of the crease. You can also iron the crease to give yourself a full, even guideline. Lay it on a flat surface and cut neatly. Pin the print sides of the fabric together. You're making your pillow inside out. Leave one side unpinned.
4. Sew the pinned edges. Line up the edge of your material with the inside edge of the sewing machine foot, making about a ½-inch seam. Sew forward about a ¼-inch, then backward, to ensure the stitch. I like to use the zig-zag pattern, to make a finished seam in a snap. Do this with the three pinned sides.
5. Stuff the case. Trim the excess fabric from the corner seams. Don't clip any stitching! Turn your pillowcase inside out, er, right-side out. Stuff the pillow or filling inside the case. To help with the final hand-sewing step, grab about six clothespins and clip the open end of the pillowcase together, making sure to fold in the material to give it that ½-inch seam.

6. Stitch the folded edges. Use a drawing stitch by taking a short stitch through one folded edge, then in the other folded edge at least every one-sixteenth of an inch. Start with a back-stitch and knot the thread at one side of the fold. After hand-sewing the closure, end with another back-stitch and knot.

You're done! Show off your handiwork to your friends — feathered and non. They'll both appreciate the new home accent.