



Smart Storage

by Tina Givens, courtesy of Lark Books

Cover a recycled cardboard box with fun fabrics from your stash for a budget-minded and eco-friendly alternative to spendy storage bins.

SUPPLIES

15" x 10" x 10" cardboard box

Packing tape

$\frac{3}{4}$ yard each of exterior & lining fabric (A & B)

1" square of hook-and-loop tape

PREP IT

Secure the cardboard box bottom

using packing tape. Tape generously to create a strong base. Push each top flap into the box, and tuck them tightly inside (1).

CUT IT

From fabric A, cut two 11" x 16" rectangles and two 11" squares for the sides, one 5½" x 11" strip for the handle, one 5" x 12" strip for the strap and three 3" strips that measure the fabric width for the ruffle.

From fabric B, cut two 11" x 16" rectangles and two 11" squares for the

sides and one 11" x 16" rectangle for the bottom.

SEW IT

Use ½" seam allowances unless otherwise noted.

With wrong sides together, fold the handle in half lengthwise; press, and then unfold. Fold each long edge ½" toward the center foldline. Fold the strap in half lengthwise along the previous foldline. Topstitch ¼" from each long edge; press.

With wrong sides together, fold the strap in half lengthwise; press, and then unfold. Fold one end ½" toward the wrong side; press. Fold each long edge ½" toward the center foldline. Fold the strap in half lengthwise, concealing the long raw edges. Topstitch the strap perimeter; press. Center the hook tape square ¼" from the finished strap end; stitch the hook square perimeter (this is the strip wrong side).

Fold each handle end 1" to the wrong side; press. Center the handle



Photos by Lynne Hartz

4" from one exterior square upper edge; pin. Stitch a 1" square at each handle end, and then stitch an X inside each square.

With right sides together, align one exterior square edge with one exterior rectangle short edge; stitch. Press the seam to one side and topstitch $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the seam on each side. Repeat to stitch the remaining exterior square to the opposite stitched exterior rectangle short edge.

With right sides together, align the remaining exterior rectangle short edges with the stitched exterior square edges; stitch. Press the seams to one side and topstitch $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the seams on each side.

Stitch two ruffle strip ends with right sides together. Stitch the remaining strip end to one stitched strip end, creating one long strip. Fold the strip in half lengthwise with wrong sides together; press. Fold the short ends $\frac{1}{2}$ " toward the wrong side; press. Fold and press the strip every 3" to 4", creating freeform pleats.

Designate one ruffle long edge as the upper edge. Position the ruffle upper edge along the exterior-box lower edge with right sides together; pin generously. Adjust the pleats, if needed, to fit the ruffle around the exterior box. Overlap the folded ruffle ends. Stitch the ruffle in place.

With right sides together, center the strap raw end along one exterior-box rectangle lower edge over the ruffle stitching line; pin. Stitch the strap end to secure (2). Press the ruffle seam toward the box.

Stitch the lining rectangles and sides as per the exterior box instructions. With right sides together, pin the lining bottom to the lining box. Stitch the bottom



to the box, beginning and ending the stitching $\frac{3}{8}$ " from each corner. Hand stitch each corner in place to ensure accuracy (3).

FINISH IT

With right sides together, place the exterior box inside the lining box. Pin the upper edge, and then stitch. Turn the box right side out; press the upper edge, and then topstitch $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the seam on both sides through one fabric layer only.

Place the cardboard box on a flat work surface. Push the lining box into the cardboard box with the right side facing out. Pull the exterior box around the cardboard box, aligning the corners. The ruffle should sit on the surface and splay outward, concealing the cardboard box bottom.

Pull the bottom strap around the cardboard box bottom to the opposite lining rectangle lower-edge center until the strap is comfortably snug. Center the hook-tape square along the lining right side. Mark the loop square placement along the lining rectangle right side; stitch the loop square perimeter. Attach the hook-and-loop tape pieces to secure the box. ✂

