

Mass Produce Microwavable Bowl Pot Holders - Materials

Microwavable Bowl Potholders. Photo Credit: Debbie Colgrove, Licensed to About.com

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After giving away a few of these wonderful microwavable bowl potholders and them being a smashing hit, I found out that I really was going to need a way to speed up the production of these fabric safety equipment! These potholders need to be made from **100% cotton** to avoid any risk of fire or melting. Always preshrink your fabric so that it won't shrink after being washed.

The design of these potholders allow you to safely warm food in the microwave with the potholder holding the dish and remove a hot bowl from the microwave without a clumsy potholder.

You can also serve things like a hot bowl of chili with these potholders. They are great for having hot dishes while watching television... and washable for spills!

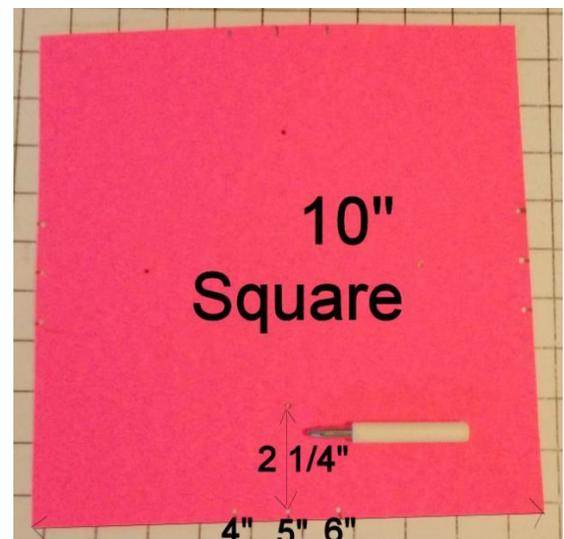
To mass produce these you will need:

- Poster board or Card Stock - large enough to make the same size square you choose. (Measurements provided in the next step.)
- Cotton batting
- Cotton Fabric
- Cotton thread
- Measuring Tools
- Marking Tools
- Sewing Machine
- Iron and pressing equipment

Mass Produce Microwave Bowl Pot Holders - Make a Template

10" Square Template. Photo Credit: Debbie Colgrove, Licensed to About.com

If you are only going to make one or two Microwavable Bowl Pot Holders you can easily skip this step but if you are making them as gifts, I strongly suggest you take the time to make this template. The time you save re-measuring and marking each piece will easily be made up and saved by using this template instead.



You will need poster board or card stock for this step. Cut out a square for the size microwave bowl potholder you will be making.

I have made 10", 12" and 14" squares to give a set as gifts. (Note: One of the favorite ways to use this type of pot holder is for microwaving oatmeal but I found that a "packet" boiled over in a regular cereal bowl so I use a serving bowl to keep it all in the bowl, which requires a larger size microwaveable potholder. This also is great for family members that don't pay attention and tend to having things boil over in the microwave.)

One each side of the square make the following markings:

For a 10" square

- Mark 4", 5" and 6" from the ends on each side and 2 1/4" in toward the center of the square at the center 5" mark.

For a 12" square

- Mark 5", 6" and 7" from the ends on each side and 2 1/2" in toward the center at the 6" mark.

For a 14" square

- Mark 6", 7" and 8" from the ends on each side and 2 3/4" in toward the center at the 7" mark.

Now use an eyelet tool to mark the marks you have made on the square but make your edge marking holes about a 1/4" in from the edge.

What is an eyelet tool? Odds are you have one that came with a sewing machine and you have never used it. It usually has a handle similar to a seam ripper, a hole in the shaft and a round sharp end that will allow you to cut fabric out of embroidered eyelet designs and for setting metal eyelets. The eyelet tool makes a small hole in the poster board which will keep your markings accurate.

Cutting and Marking

Marking and Cutting. Photo Credit: Debbie Colgrove, Licensed to About.com

For each bowl potholder you will need two fabric squares and two batting squares.

Cut out the fabric rectangles and the batting rectangles using rotary cutting tools for accuracy.

Stack like colors together so you can change machine thread color as infrequently as possible.

For production methods, you will finish one color before changing the sewing machine color to use another thread color.

On each square of batting you will be transferring the markings from your template. Place the template on top of a batting square, aligning all the edges. Place the tip of whatever fabric marking tool you are using through each hole on the template, marking the batting in the process. Continue through the pile of batting squares until they are all marked.



Mass Produce Microwave Bowl Pot Holders - Setting Up

At the sewing machine set up stacks of batting and of like color fabric that the machine thread that you are ready to work with.

Pick up a fabric square and a batting square.

Place the batting on the wrong side of the fabric, aligning all the edges.

Sew across each square starting at the center marking, through the mark in from the edge, to the opposite side. Repeat so you have sewn across both sides of the fabric forming a cross that intersects in the center of the square.

Optional: If desired sew from each corner to the opposite corner for added quilting.

Without putting the batting and fabric square down, fold the fabric so the right sides of the fabric are together along one of the first quilting lines.

Align the sewing machine so that you sew from the marking that is one inch from the top center marking to the marking that is in from the edge creating a dart. Although you do not normally back-stitch at the end of a dart, in this incident the darts can be back stitched to secure the pointed end of the dart as the batting absorbs any bulk that the back-stitching may create. and it is much faster than tying off the thread ends.

Without un-folding the fabric, sew the dart on the opposite edge of the fabric.

Unfold the fabric and fold the other quilted line. Repeat to sew the darts in the ends of the remaining sides of the fabric.

Set the sewn fabric aside and repeat until the entire pile of like colored fabric is sewn to this point.

How to Mass Produce Microwave Bowl Pot Holders - Press

Pressing the Darts. Photo Credit: Debbie Colgrove, Licensed to About.com

With the fabric sides up, press all of the darts in one direction. You will speed up the process and save electricity by doing all of the pressing at one time. Working with the fabric up and the bowl indented allows you to flip the bowl so you work your way around the edge of each bowl.

Trim each dart to about a 1/4" seam allowance. after the darts are trimmed, nest each one with the chosen opposite side so that you will have them together for the next step.



How to Mass Produce Microwave Bowl Pot Holders - Joining the Pieces

Sewing the Layers Together. Photo Credit: Debbie Colgrove Licensed to About.com

Returning to your sewing area, place the fabric sides together of one set of sewn fabric squares. Using straight pins, match the darts as you would a seam intersection.

Align the remaining edges and pin if you are more comfortable sewing with the layers pinned in place. Eliminating the pins saves time and you can align the edges (with the needle and presser foot down) as you come to them as long as your darts are matched.

Start sewing on one edge of a bowl just before a dart, using the pressure foot as a seam guide for an approximately 1/4" seam allowance, sew around the edges, pivoting at the corners and stopping just past the last corner so that there is an opening to turn them right sides out.



Trim the corners of each bowl.

Continue sewing sets until they are all complete.

Mass Produce Microwave Bowl Pot Holders - Press and Stitch

Finished Microwavable Bowl Pot Holders. Photo Credit: Debbie Colgrove, Licensed to About.com

Turn each bowl right side out.

Using a tool such as a barely sharpened dowel or a letter opener that is not sharp, push out the corners on each bowl.

Return to the iron and press so that the seam is at the exact edge.

Where the opening is, press so that the seam allowance is tucked in and pressed under evenly as if it was sewn.

Return to the sewing machine. Top stitch the entire top edge of each bowl, close to the edge so that the opening is sewn closed and the entire top edge is held in place with the seam at the very edge.

Create a stack of the bowls as you finish them. Press again if desired. Most bowls will fall in to place with the placement of a bowl and one warming in the microwave.

Change the sewing machine thread color and start your next pile!



A Few Tips

A Collection of Various Size Microwavable Bowl Potholders. Photo Credit: Debbie Colgrove, Licensed to About.com

- When make larger bowl pot holders, a Corelle style serving bowl works well with a 12" square and dart that ends 2 1/2" from the edge but shorter serving bowls (mine have a lip on them) work best with a 12" square and a 2" dart.
- Before you turn the bowls right side out take a quick look at all the edges and be sure you have caught all the layers of fabric in a seam. Re-sew if necessary.
- To turn the bowls right side out, place your thumb and index finger into the part you left open and reach for the furthest corner. Pull that corner through the opening and the rest will follow.
- Use two different prints or fabrics, and when you are done stack them so a different side is up on each pile for a pretty visual effect.
- Keep your top stitching straight and an even distance from the edge of the potholder by using a guide on the presser foot or the machine bed rather than watching the needle.

