Let’s make a Lap Desk!

by Jessica of www.balancingeverything.com

Materials Needed:

• A half yard of cotton fabric (fat quarters work too) - I like sturdy twill or home decorator weight - cut to 17” x 21”. If you’d like a bigger, wider, longer fabric pillow you can change these measurements as needed.

• A half sheet of sturdy poster board.

• Masonite or hardboard panel. I used 14” x 18” size and got mine here: http://www.dickblick.com/products/hardboard-panels This size is very generous, but still works well for little children. I wanted it big enough to hold the laptop, you can size down if you wish.

• Styrofoam or plastic pellets - I got mine here: http://www.amazon.com/Extra-Bean-Bag-Filling-Cubic/dp/B000HCZNGC You could also use polyester fiberfill or wool roving. The pellets conform to your lap nicely though. I can’t give you an exact amount of pellets since they vary in size, sorry - just get a bag, usually contains 1 cubic foot. Get more if you plan on making more. I’ve also seen pellets at big box stores and craft stores.

• A cup or bowl to help you scoop the pellets into the lap desk.

• A glue gun & glue sticks that work with it - or some very strong glue such as rubber cement.

• Needle & thread or sewing machine.

• Decorative ribbon (optional)

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**Step 1:** If you haven’t already, cut your fabric into a 17” x 21” piece. Fold it into fourths, lining up the corners. Using a ruler and scissors or a rotary cutter and guide, cut out a 3.5” x 3.5” square from the corners. You’ll end up with a piece that looks like this:

![Fabric piece with corners cut](image1.png)

**Step 2:** Align your cut corner edges, right sides together and sew with a 1/4” seam allowance. Repeat for all four corners.

![Sewing a corner](image2.png)
Step 3: When you’re finished, you’ll have a box shape forming, like so:

![Box shape forming](image)

Step 4: Press the raw edges of your box in about a half an inch:

![Box edges pressed](image)
Step 5: Cut a piece of poster board to fit inside your box. The easiest way to do this is to lay your fabric box on top of the poster board and trace roughly around the sewn corners, straightening out the points. It does not have to be exact.

Position the poster board (sorry for the bright yellow, I’m repurposing some left over posters from our Cub Scout Blue & Gold Banquet!) inside the fabric box, under the hem you just pressed.

Using a hot glue gun or other strong glue, glue the fabric hem to the poster board, all around the board, leaving one long edge open in the middle (about 10 inches or so).

Step 6: Using another scrap of poster board, or paper, roll it into a cone and insert into the opening you’ve left.

Here you can also see how the fabric box is glued all around the poster board insert except for my filling hole I’ve left open.
Step 7: A cup or bowl helps a lot! Scoop up your styrofoam pellets (if you’re filling with polyester fiber fill or wool roving, you won’t need the cone or cup/bowl) and fill your fabric box.

You don’t want to fill it or stuff it tight... leave some room for the filling to move and give around your knees.

You can see how much room I left in the photo below. I hate to give you an exact amount since I’m not sure what size pellets you’ll find or if you’ll use stuffing instead.
**Step 8:** Use your hot glue or strong glue and glue your stuffing opening shut. Then, cover the poster board and fabric edge all over, don’t worry about the corners yet. If you’re using hot glue, work fast!

Position the stuffed/filled fabric box on the wrong side of your masonite or hardboard.

If you’re using a hot glue gun and the glue is drying before you can get it positioned, try working with half the poster board, glue that to the masonite or hardboard and then lift the other edge to apply more glue.

When you have it positioned, press down gently all over the fabric box / pillow to secure.

You can then lift each corner and apply more glue, check your edges too.

**That’s it! Your lap desk is now ready to use, have fun!**

**Optional:** Glue ribbon around a corner or across the top to personalize the desktop.

You could also paint/stencil your child’s name on the top, and cover the paint with a coat of urethane or sealer. One reader suggested coating the top with chalkboard paint!

If the edges of your hardboard or masonite are rough, give them a light sanding. If you want to go nuts, you could round the edges with a jig saw or even cut a handle.

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Lap desks aren’t just for kids, they fit my laptop nicely!

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