

Suzan Lauder's Cushion Cover Reticule Designs:

Drawstrings, Trim, Linings, and Tassels for Reticules

DRAWSTRINGS



When purchasing, one fabric store meter is the minimum to make two drawstrings of a nice length for one reticule in most designs. If you like longer drawstrings, increase the length.

For a flat or four-sided reticule:

- Cut two 18"-24" lengths of cording, sturdy ribbon, or similar for the drawstrings.
- Attach a safety pin to one end of one cord. Tie second cord to it.
 - Run through top casing in one direction.
 - Go around twice.



- Tug the tied end out the opposite opening from the two loose ends.
- You should have a loop and tied end on one side, and a loop and two loose ends on the other side.
- If not adding trim, tie ends with a non-slip knot and tug on cord to pull into the casing halfway.
- If adding trim, untie the tied cord.

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For a three-sided reticule:

- Cut three 18"-24" lengths of cord.
- You want all three to go all the way around and end up at the same opening as started.
 - Tie a knot in one cord, two in the second, and three in the third.
 - Add one to the safety pin at each opening.
 - When you get to the start, take off the top two and leave the first cord behind.
 - If you get mixed up, tug both ends of cords to know which goes to which hole.
- Untie marking knots at end; trim and tie as above.

Trimming the drawstrings:

- To add tassels to the end of the drawstrings:
 - Run the tassel loop over the end of the drawstring
 - Tie the drawstring around the tassel loop close to the end of the drawstring. (See image on previous post, All the Pretty Little Purses).
 - You can also tie the two strings together near the end over one tassel.
- To add beads to the ends of the drawstrings:
 - Don't attempt to thread beads onto your cord if it's not easy to push through the bead.
 - Tape the end of the cord tightly so the centre doesn't separate when you thread the beads on.
 - A large needle can help push the cord through and tug it out the other end.
 - Once beads are threaded on, tie a tight knot near the end of the cord.
 - If the cord is too thick, the end should be tied first, the beads threaded together, then sewn to it.

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- For the above, ends can be left free, tied together at the base of tassels or beads, or tied together at the point where the reticule is fully open.
- Use the tied ends to tighten/loosen the drawstrings.



- To add beads to the looped end:
 - Don't attempt if your cord is not easy to push through the bead.
 - Tape the end of the cord tightly so the centre doesn't separate when you thread the beads on.
 - A large needle can help push the cord through and tug it out the other end.
 - Tie the two ends together with a non-slip knot.
 - Slide the knotted end into the sleeve about halfway down one side.
 - Use the looped end to tighten or loosen the reticule.
- If you don't feel the need to decorate the drawstrings (i.e., already enough decoration on the reticule itself):
 - Tie the ends together in a non-slip knot, such as a reef knot.
 - Slide knot halfway into the reticule sleeve.
 - Use looped end to tighten/loosen bag.

Eyelets and Slots for Drawstrings

Some Regency reticules used holes to thread the strings. These don't work as well as casings with two sets of drawstrings in opposite directions, but you may prefer the look. In the Regency, they would be hand-sewn all around the edges like a blanket stitch.

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Metal eyelet reinforcement rings are inexpensive at sewing stores, and are easy to install. Place them at about 1" apart and weave the drawstring through in one direction only. Tug on two ends at any point to tighten or loosen.

Buttonhole-type slots can similarly be used.

DECORATING THE RETICULE BODY

This is optional if the cushion has trim already. Take care to not overdo it. Selection is whatever you imagine! Look at examples of museum reticules for ideas.

- One or both of the flat panel sides of the purse can be embroidered. They don't have to match. It was common to have a motif on one side, and the owner's initials opposite.
- Fabric paint can be used for a design in a similar way to embroidery. Paintings on reticules, shoes, gloves, fans, and stockings were common in the Regency.
- Silver thread and other metallic trims were popular for reticules, so keep this in mind as you select trim products or cushions.
- Embroidery appliques, other types of appliques, or soutache can be attached to the side panels. This is best done prior to sewing the reticule together.
- Fringe, including tassel or ball fringe, can be attached across the bottom, or all around on a round reticule.
- Tassels can be attached to each corner with a few hand tack stitches while reticule is being made (see below for details).
- Similarly, a short string of beads can be made up for each lower corner and sewn in place to dangle like tassels. Beads should not look plastic.
- A string of beads can be sewn across the bottom. Sew every third bead to the purse.
- Braid, cord, or soutache can be added to any edge by carefully hand-sewing along the outside seam.
- You can sew pre-made piping into your seams where there is none on the cushion and it suits the reticule. This is not difficult if carefully pinned and a zipper foot used to get close to the piping. Piping will be placed between fabric pieces, right sides together, with the piping seam allowance aligned with the fabric edges. Trim back fabric in layers if too thick.

LINING RETICULES

If you're using ¼" seam allowances for reticule, use them for lining too.

Hidden lining for long reticules:

- For long reticules or those with their own trim, e.g.:
 - ruffle trim such as Reticule #1 or #3,
 - petal trim, or
 - rectangular reticules over 11" long.

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- Prior to sewing the drawstring casing (or making top flap for the drawstring and ruffle), but with the reticule turned *right side out*.
 - Cut the lining the same shape as the reticule panel, but about ¼" narrower, with length equal to that from the bottom of the reticule to the bottom seam for the drawstring casing.
 - Sew all sides of lining (except top) with ½" seam allowances. No finishing necessary if sewn, but recommended if no-sew tape. Trim corners to 45° and ¼".
 - Fold top edge ½" towards you (wrong side) and press.
 - Insert the lining with the *lining seams still on the outside* of the lining.
 - With the lining inside the reticule, if you look in, it's finished.
 - Pin the lining so it's ⅛" to ¼" above the lower seam line for the drawstring casing.
- Continue construction of the reticule drawstring sleeve (e.g., top flap for the drawstring and ruffle), and sew lining in place with drawstring casing lower seam line.

Hidden lining for short reticules:

Reticule

- Rather than leave a gap 2" from top, make it start and stop:
- Sew from bottom to 2" from top and stop.
- Start seam again at ¾" from the top and sew to the top, with a gap in between these points. No bias tape necessary. Trim corners to 45° and ¼" from seams.
- Press all seams open. Sew unfinished fabric at gap at ⅛" to leave finished opening.
- Turn right side out.

Lining

- Cut lining in the same shape as final reticule body, but about ¼" narrower in width and ¼" shorter in length.
- Sew all sides except top with ½" seam allowances. No finishing necessary if sewn, but recommended if no-sew tape.
- Leave lining inside out and slide reticule (right side out) inside it, so right sides are together.
- Align top edges and sew the two layers together at ½" all around.
- Pull lining through the 1" gap in the top seam until it's out of the reticule and you have a long tube with right sides out. Hand stitch the 1" gap in top seam closed.
- Push lining into the reticule, with ½" of reticule fabric folding to the inside. The gap at the side seam should be at the top. Pin in place.
- Run a seam at ⅛" from the top all around.
- Sew a seam all around at 1" from the top (starting from the other side of the gap in the side seam) to make drawstring casing.

Exposed lining for Reticules 2 and 4 and Square or Rectangular Reticules:

If your lining fabric is attractive and complements your reticule, you can have it peek out the top and act as a ruffle border, as well as form part of the drawstring sleeve.

The exposed lining will add at least 1½" to the length, so it's best for smaller (under 17" square cushion) reticules.

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Reticule

- Sew sides all the way to the top opening (for envelope, sew above fold-over). No bias tape necessary.
- Trim corners to 45° at ¼" from seams. Press all seams open.
- Turn right side out.



Lining

- Cut lining in the same shape as final reticule body, but about ¼" narrower in width and 4½" longer.
- Turn inside out. Using ½" seams, sew bottom and side seams up to 1½" from top, leaving open above that point. No finishing of those seams is necessary if sewn, but it's recommended if using no-sew tape. Press open sewn seams.
- Sew unsewn seam allowance at ends flat at ⅛" from edge so finished.
- Fold top edge ½" towards you (wrong side) and press. Fold again 2½" and press.

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- Insert the lining with the lining seams still on the outside of the lining.



- With the lining inside the reticule, if you look in, it's finished.
- Longer lining fabric will be above the top of the reticule by 1½".
- Stitch at ⅛" from the bottom edge of the overlapping lining, then at ¾" higher at top of gap to make drawstring casing.

TASSELS AND HANGING BAUBLES

Tassels were the most common bauble, and most reticules had them at each pointed corner on the body. Some had more than one at a location. 1" to 2" tassels suit the size of a reticule best. Beaded strands, or a cluster of beads on 1"-1½" long fine cords were also used on bottom corners in a few museum examples.

To install tassels on your reticule as you make seams:

- Wrap the long threads of a tassel or other hanging bauble(s) in paper and tape tightly in a way it can be cut or torn open without cutting or damaging bauble or threads.
- Lie it along the right side of fabric of your reticule as follows:
 - Its hanger thread will cross the ½" seams where they cross at a side or bottom corner, or at the pointy change in direction of the seam on a side scallop.
 - Only a short amount of hanger thread will be to the outside of the reticule; the rest is inside the seam allowance.
 - The taped tail will head to middle of the reticule or centre of the panel, as far from seam allowances as possible.
- Tack the tassel hanger by hand stitching in two places: at the seam, and just into the seam allowance.
- Tape or pin the rest of the tassel carefully along the center of the panel, on the right side of fabric, through one layer only.
- Remove paper from tassel as the last step in making the reticule, to keep it out of the way while you do other decorations or finishing.

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To install a tassel where there is already a finished corner, prior to lining the reticule:

- If you have a large-eye needle such as a darning needle, push it into the seam at the pointy corner of the reticule from the outside. Leave the eye out.
- Thread the hanger for the tassel or bauble through the needle eye and tug to inside of reticule. Leave a small amount of the hanger outside of the reticule so it dangles freely.
- Turn Reticule inside out and hand-stitch to seam allowance in two places.

Alternatives to large needle:

- A narrow, pointed object such as a skewer or orange stick point can be used to gently push the tassel loop through the seam in the corner from the outside, or
- Push a very small crochet hook through the seam at the corner, from the inside to the outside. Hook the hanger and tug gently through the seam to the inside.

Making Tassels by Lynn McMasters: <http://www.lynnmcmasters.com/Tasselspart1.html>

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