Dill Pickle Gear Wedge-type Saddle Pack

by Emily O'Brien

www.DillPickleGear.com

This is a basic under-seat wedge, similar to what you can find just about anywhere. It will fit a multi-tool, spare tube or two, tire levers, CO2, wallet, etc. When finished it's about 7" long, 4" wide at the widest part of the wedge, and 3" deep, although it is easy to make it larger or smaller or change the proportions.

It's a great project for reclaimed materials, and it's a great handmade gift. If what that special someone in your life really needs is a fire-engine-red patent leather saddle pack to carry a multi-tool in, here's how you can get one!

The original post, and any errata or further discussion of this pattern will be at this link: http://www.dillpicklegear.com/?p=1186

Materials needed:

• Material for the main body of the bag: this can be canvas, nylon, tarp, vinyl, upholstery, denim, leather, etc. It should be something sturdy and some amount of water resistance isn't a bad thing, but it can really be anything. If purchasing fabric by the yard, you probably need way less than whatever the minimum cut is. You can also use an old backpack, tote bag, handbag, jacket, etc.

• A zipper 8" long, or the length of Panel 3 at whatever scale you choose to make the bag. If you make it out of some old luggage item that has a zipper, you may be able to use that one.

• Something to make the loops out of, about 9-14" needed. Can be webbing, leather

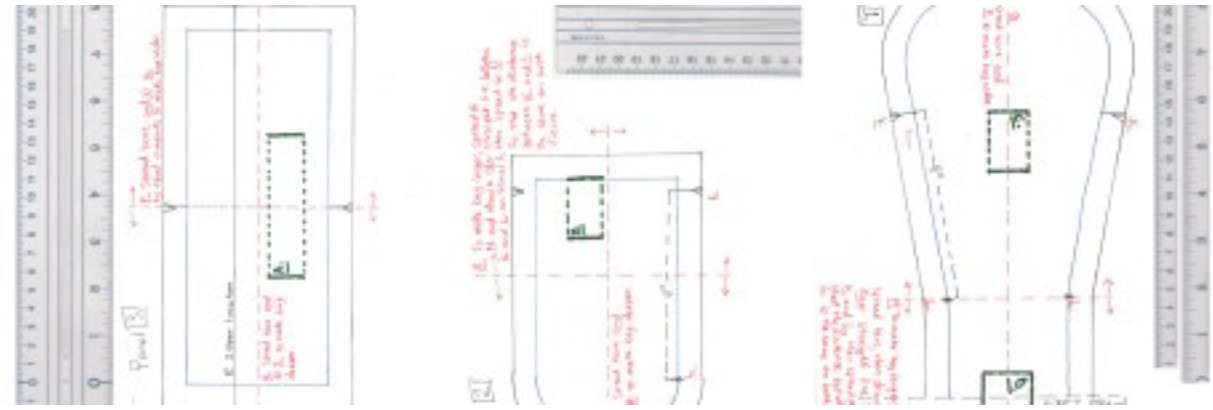
strap, strip of vinyl, old inner tube, belt, handbag handle, etc.
• Two straps to hold the bag on, one to go around the saddle rails and one to go around the seatpost.
• Optional: More old inner tube, bias tape, grosgrain ribbon, etc, to bind the raw edges with.

Pattern pieces:

• Panel 1: This is the top and bottom of the bag. Notice the dotted edge marked “fold line”; DO NOT cut your material along this line. You can either print two copies of Panel 1, tape them together at that fold line, and then cut that out; or you can fold your material in half and align that edge with the fold before cutting. If you don't have a big enough solid piece, you can cut two pieces and sew them together, but remember to add 1/2" seam allowance to the fold line before cutting. Then mark the locations of loops C (top and bottom) and D (loop or strap that goes around the seatpost - it looks confusing because it straddles the fold line)
• Panel 2: This piece abuts the part that has the zipper. Panel 1 curves around the curved edge of Panel 2 on the seatpost end of the pack. Cut 2, and mark loop B on both in mirror-image orientation.
• Panel 3: This panel includes the zipper. The line marked “E. Zipper location” shows where the zipper should go. After sewing in the zipper, check the dimensions against this panel and make sure they match. If you aren’t sure how much room your particular zipper is going to take up, cut the piece oversized, then cut it into two parts along the line marked with letter E. Install the zipper, and then cut panel 3 to size afterward. Then mark loop A (holds a blinky tail light).

Notes
• Except where noted, seam allowances are 1/2".
•Be sure to carefully mark or clip all notches!
• The outer black line is the cutting line; the inner blue line is the stitching line.
This pattern makes a pack that is about 7" long from front to back, 4.25" wide at its

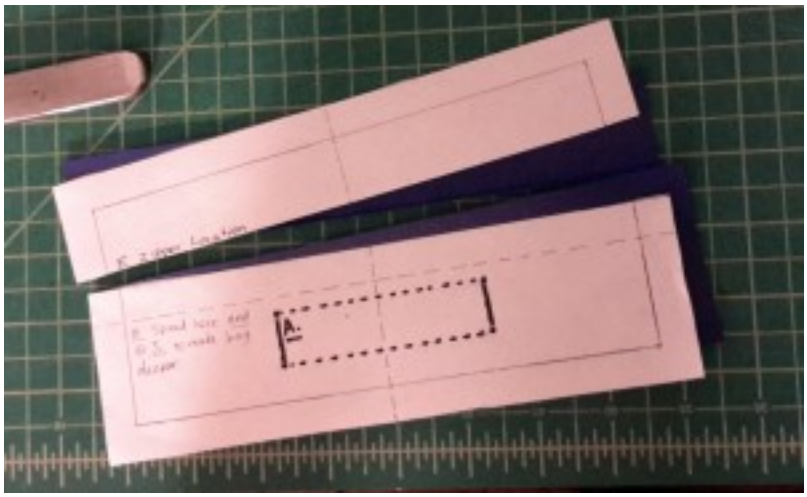
widest, and 3" deep. The easiest way to make it bigger or smaller but with the same proportions is to print the pieces at a larger or smaller scale. The rulers on the pages help you ensure that all three are printed at the same scale. (there are also instructions for enlarging it in one direction only). These are the thumbnails, but the full size images are appended at the end.



Procedure:

1. First prepare Panel 3. If you are cutting up a bag that already has a zipper, and you're using that zipper, this step is easy. Position the pattern piece so that the line marked E lines up with the center of the zipper, and cut the pattern piece out. Cut right through the zipper on both sizes. It's easiest to deal with the zipper slider if you slide it onto the part you're keeping BEFORE you cut, or before you've cut both ends.

If you are putting in your own zipper, cut Panel 3 into two pieces along line E, as shown here:



Cut the zipper tape to match the length, and sew it to each side. Check the width of the zipper tape before you sew it and use a seam allowance (probably around 1/4") that will center the zipper while maintaining the correct dimensions of the panel. If you're not sure, cut the whole thing over-sized and then trim it to size as above after sewing in the zipper. Once each side is sewn, fold it back and topstitch to keep it nice and flat. Then install the zipper slider(s) onto the tape. The easiest way is by un-zipping the tape a bit, and feeding the two ends into the "open" side of the slider so they meet and align correctly. Last, sew on Loop A. It should be attached only at the ends, leaving the rest open (along the dotted lines) to hang a blinky light from.

2. With right sides together, sew the straight side of Panel 2 to the ends of Panel 3, so that the loops B line up with the ends of the zipper. You can even insert one end of loop B in between the zipper and Panel 2, as shown:

Fold back, and topstitch along where you just sewed. Repeat for the other side. Then sew the ends of loops B down as marked (or sew Loops B. if you didn't do them with the zipper. Be sure that Loops B are sewn down only at the ends at the solid line, and left open at the dotted line.

3. Sew loops C (2x) and D onto Panel 1. Loops C hold the strap that wraps around the saddle rails and supports the whole bag. Loop D. goes around the seatpost. Depending on what kind of strap you are using, you could also just sew the strap down in the locations of C and D, instead of making loops to pass the straps through.

In the picture above, Panel 1 from the pink bag has a loop sewn at the middle. When the bag is finished, a strap will go through the loop and then around the seatpost. The blue one below has the seatpost strap sewn down.

4. Assemble the bag. Be sure to check the alignment of all notches! It's probably easiest to start at the back on the top, so that you can open the zipper to get your fingers inside when you're nearing the end. Start by aligning the notch at line G with the notch at line F. Sew all the way around - at this point, it's just one long seam that wraps all the way around to put the whole thing together. This final assembly can be fairly awkward to sew. If you have a free-arm sewing machine with a removable table platform, take the platform off to give yourself more room to work. It might help to clip the straight edges where they meet curved edges, to make it around the corner, especially if your material is very stiff or thick (vinyl, etc). Be sure to keep an eye on the notches!
Incidentally, this step would have been much easier with my cylinder arm machine, but I didn't do it that way because I assume that most people who will be using this pattern will not have one.

5. (optional) Bind the seams. You'll notice that in step 4 I did not specify whether right sides should be together or wrong sides. You can go either way, as you prefer. If you leave the seam allowance on the outside, you will certainly need to finish it in some way. Binding it is one option, but depending on your materials and the look you're going for, you could also do a decorative blanket stitch or something similar. If you assemble the

bag inside out and then turn it, you can get away with leaving the edges raw, but that depends on your materials. If the material frays, you need to bind the edges even if they're inside, or the bag will fall apart.

This one really needs binding, because the edges are fraying. The blue one isn't going to fray, but the edges need finishing because they're on the outside.

In both of these cases, I used a cut-up inner tube to bind the edges. This is a typical road tube, for 700cx20-28 tires. I cut it in half lengthwise like this:

If you're using a wider tube, cut closer to one side than the other. You won't need both sides anyway unless you're making more than one. The width of your binding strip folded over in half should be a close match for the width of the seam allowance you want to cover.

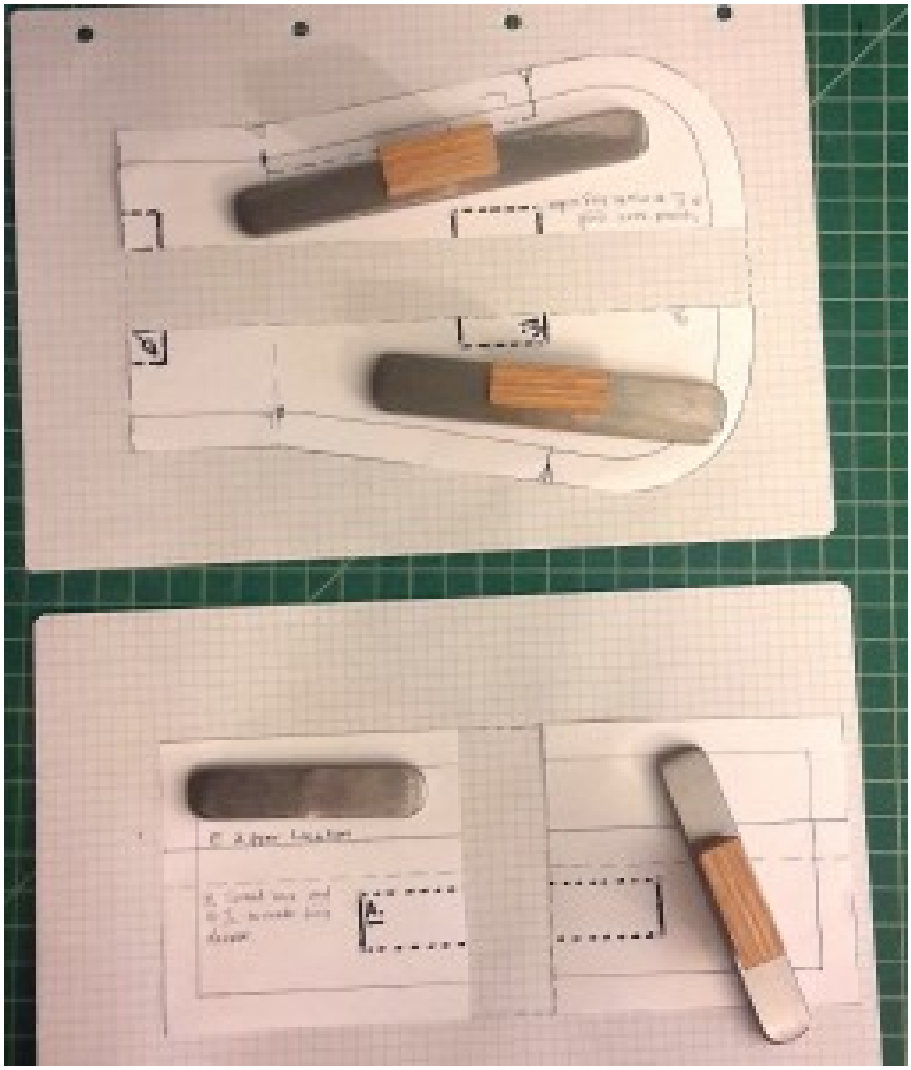
Trim off the excess seam allowance, or anything that's sticking out. You want to just trim the seam allowance down to closer to 1/4" if it's going to be on the outside. Then fold the binding over the edge and start sewing. There are sewing machine attachments for this, but it's not too hard to just do it by hand, particularly with an old inner tube since it's already in a folded-over shape and it stretches, so it's fairly forgiving to work with.

Go all the way around, cut off the end, turn the bag right side out (if applicable) and you're done!

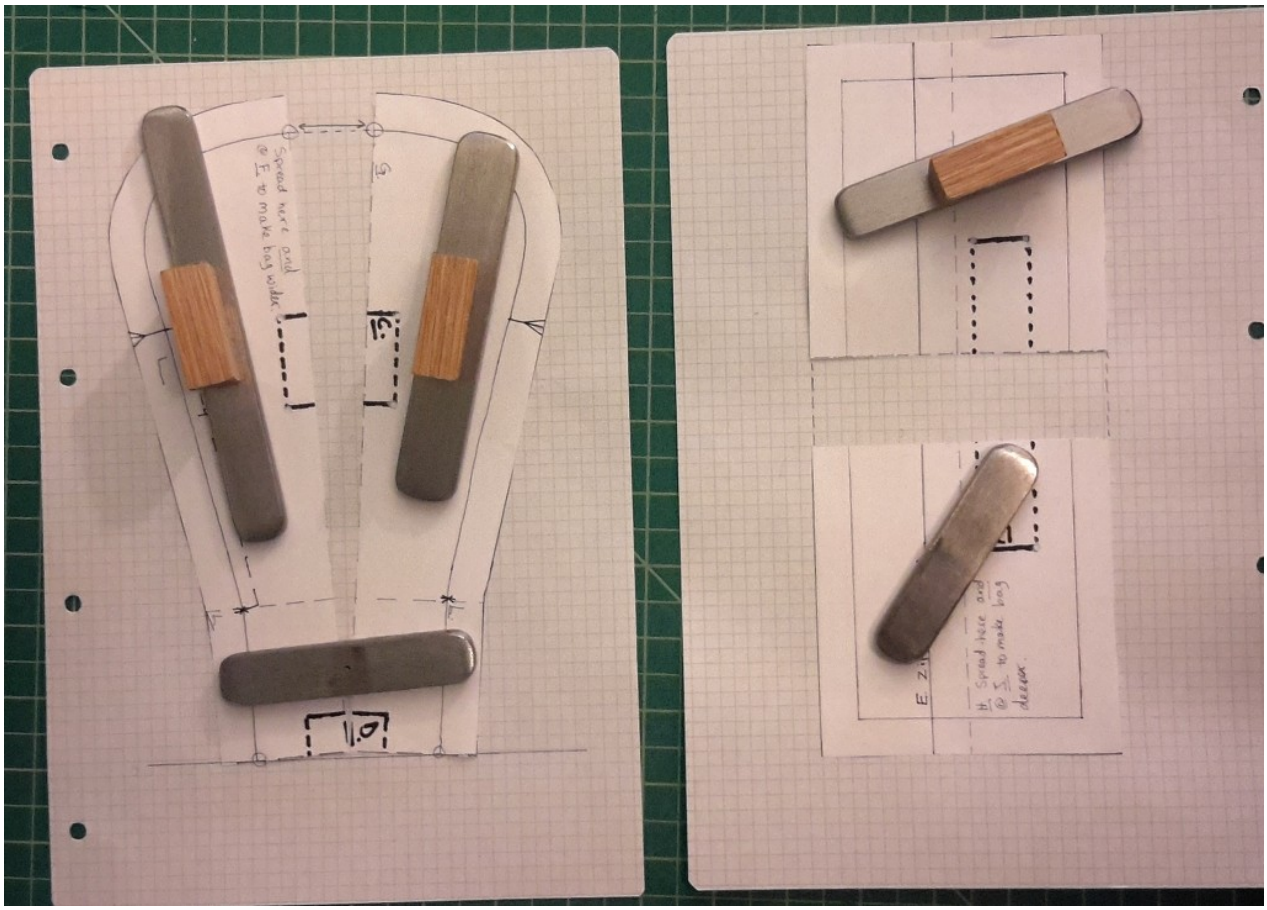
How to change the size or shape

The red dotted lines show where to enlarge the pattern. If you want to make the bag smaller in any direction, I suggest printing it at a smaller scale and then enlarging from there, because it's quicker than making pattern alterations that involve curved edges. Making your changes on graph paper and then tracing it is a good way to make sure everything lines up. For the sake of consistency, I've made each of these alterations in 3cm increments, just because I happened to have metric graph paper kicking around.

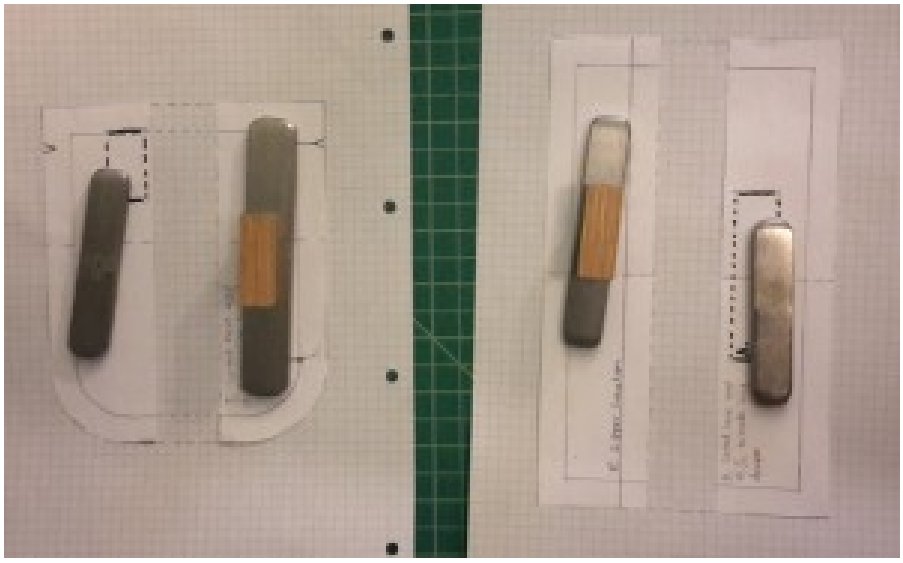
If you want to make the whole bag wider, cut on the dotted lines letter G on Panel 1 and F on Panel 3 and spread the pieces apart by **equal amounts** for both pieces. That will ensure that all the edges still line up. (Click on the image to see it bigger)



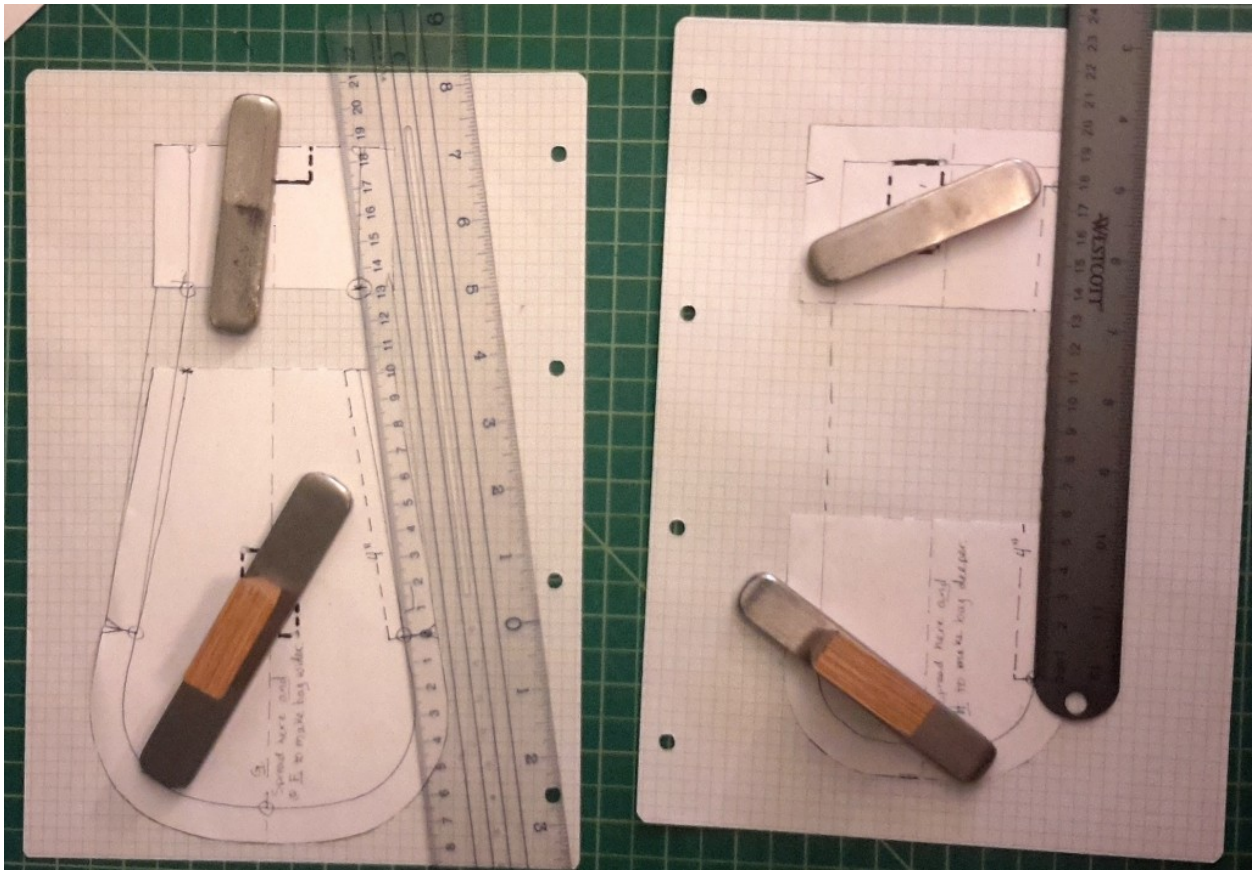
To make the bag wider in the back but not at the seatpost, i.e, more wedge-shaped, cut along those same lines and line up the corners at the fold line on Panel 1. Spread the curved end of Panel 1 so that the distance between the ends of the **stitching lines** (NOT the seam allowance - it's the stitching lines that have to match up!) matches how far you spread Panel 3. See the points that are circled with the dotted line connecting them. Then use a straightedge to connect the ends of the stitching lines on each side, as shown. This is the new fold line. This line should cut off a teeny corner of seam allowance on each side:



To make the bag deeper, Cut along line J. on Panel 2 and line H. on Panel 3. Spread the pieces by equal amounts.



To make the bag longer from front to back, cut along line N on Panel 2 and line M on Panel 1 (which connects points L). Keeping the center line lined up, spread Panel 1 by the desired amount. Then draw a new line between points K and L along the stitching line, as circled below, and measure it. Add 1/2" seam allowance to that new stitching line. Then spread Panel 2 so that the distance between points K and L is equal to the distance between K and L on the stitching line on Panel 1, as shown below. On the original pattern, the distance between K and L is 4" and is marked as such; with this alteration is is now 13.3cm as shown by the two rulers. Note that because the sides are at an angle, the distance between the two halves of each piece is not the same for Panel 2 as for Panel 1.



You could also make the bag shorter from front to back by overlapping the pieces at these locations instead of spreading them.

A few notes about the pink bag, and re-claimed materials

The pink bag was made out of a cheapo backpack. I didn't use the buckles it came with for the attachment straps because I thought they were too awkward to buckle, but I did use the webbing on its straps for the loops. In many cases though, you can use reclaimed buckles. If you do, make sure to measure how long the loops need to be so that the buckles will fit through them, rather than just sewing them as marked on the pattern. In fact, that's a good idea regardless.

I made Panel 1 out of the back of the backpack, which had foam in it to keep its shape. I decided to keep the foam, which was sandwiched between the outer material and a thin layer of nylon. So I cut out panel 1 in two halves, (ignoring the quilting from the back of the backpack). Then I cut the foam away from the seam allowance to get it out of the way, and assembled the two pieces of the back.

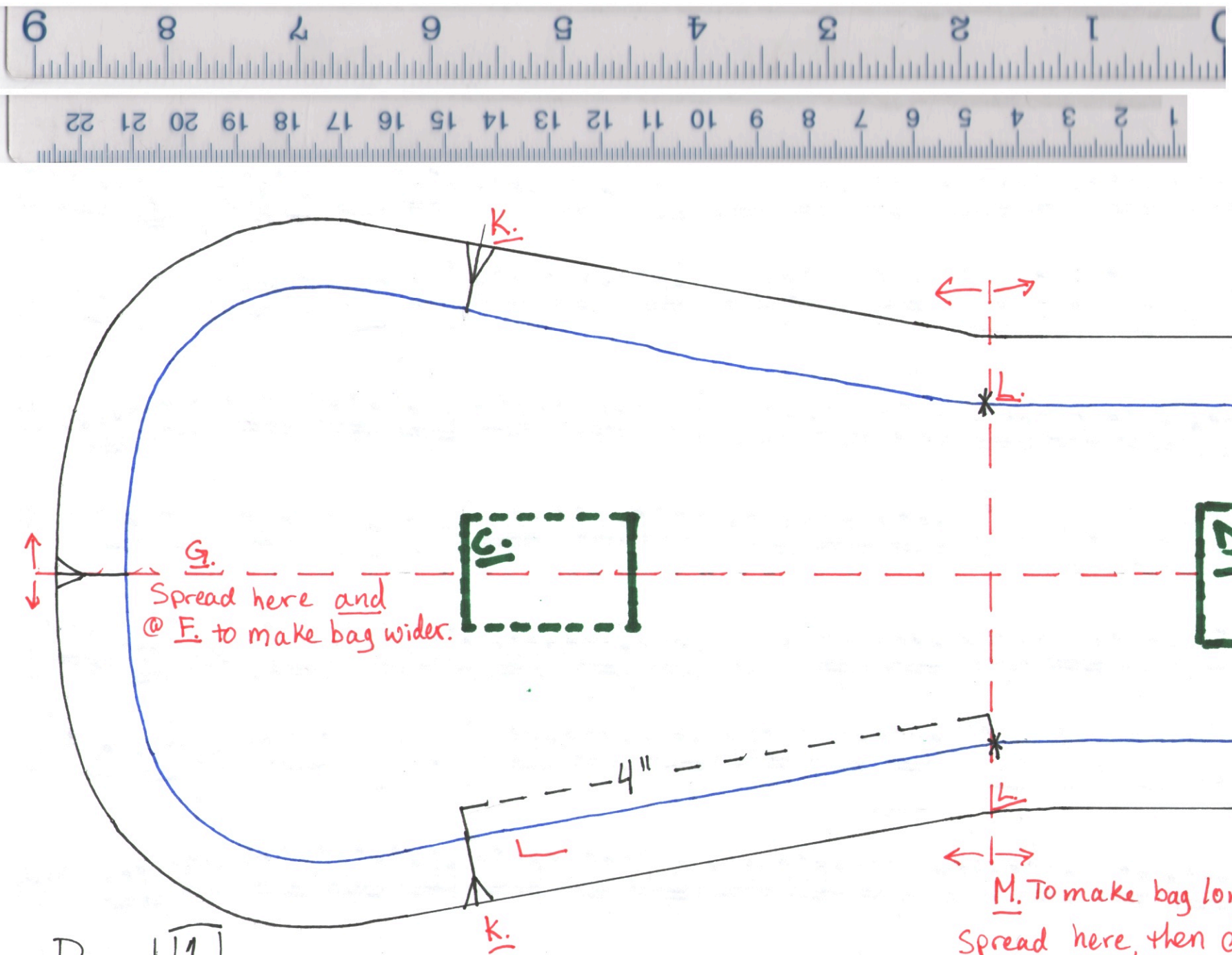
I sewed the webbing loops on right through all layers. The foam doesn't hurt the sewing machine. There's a chance that some home machines might skip stitches where the foam is too thick. If that happens, you can try cranking up the presser foot pressure as high as it will go, or even try sewing the layers tightly together by hand first to compress the foam.

So now Panel 1 consisted of three layers, which I essentially treated as all one layer for assembly. The only change was that in order to stay out of the way of the foam, I had to use a zipper foot for the final assembly. It was that thin nylon that was fraying so much

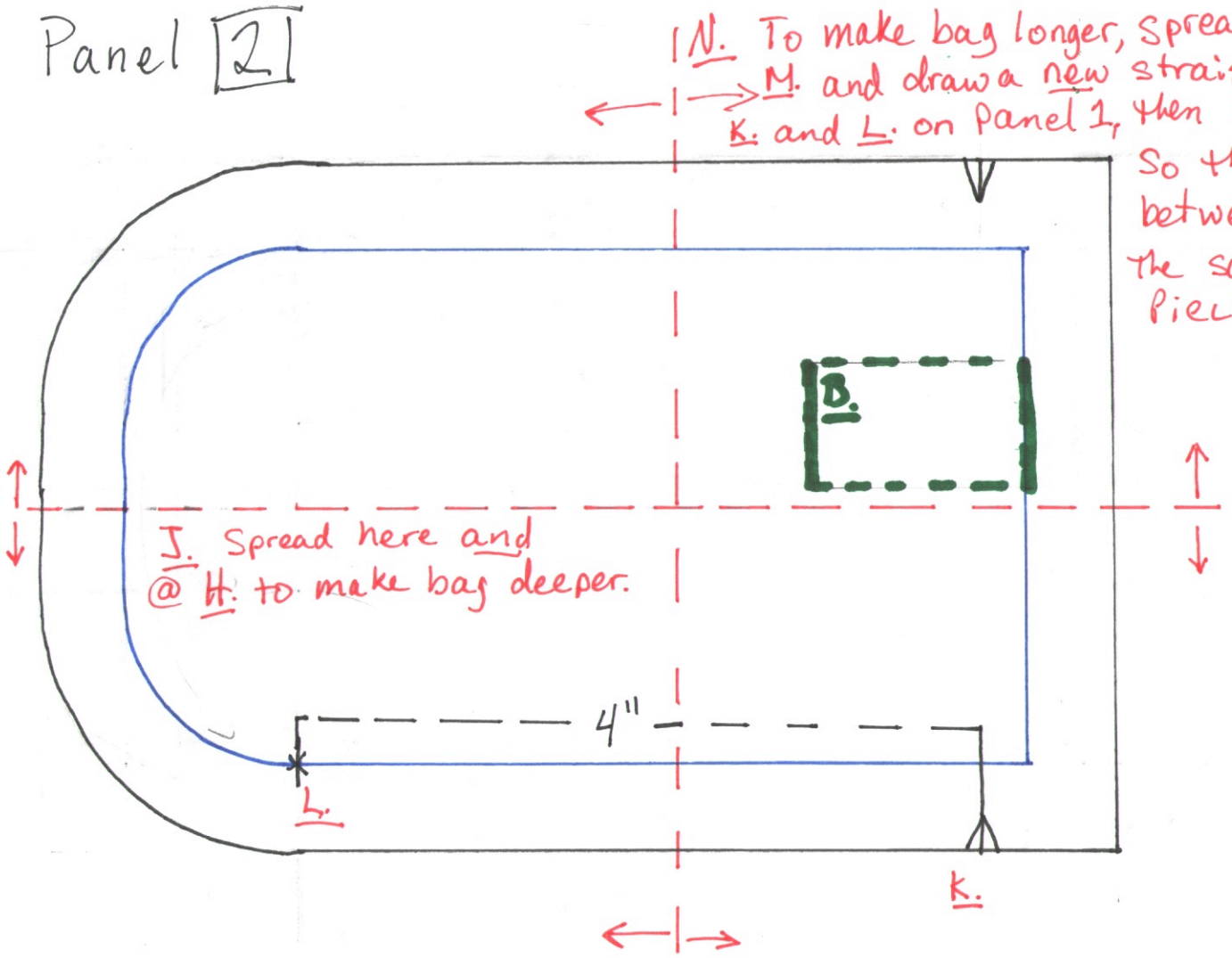
in the photo demonstrating the need to bind the seams, incidentally.
Another kind of neat thing about using a backpack was the bonus bits. In this case, it had a little snap hook for keys hanging in the bag. So I snipped that off and sewed it into the inside, so the pink bag has an attached keyring.

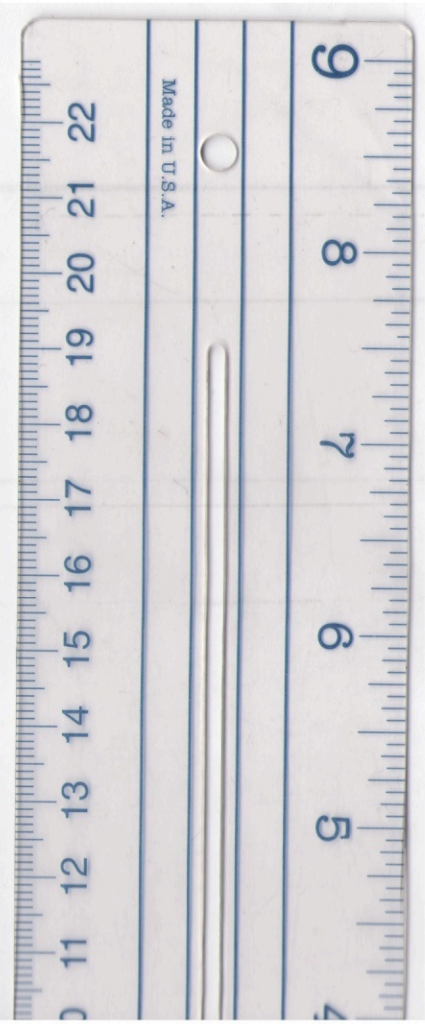


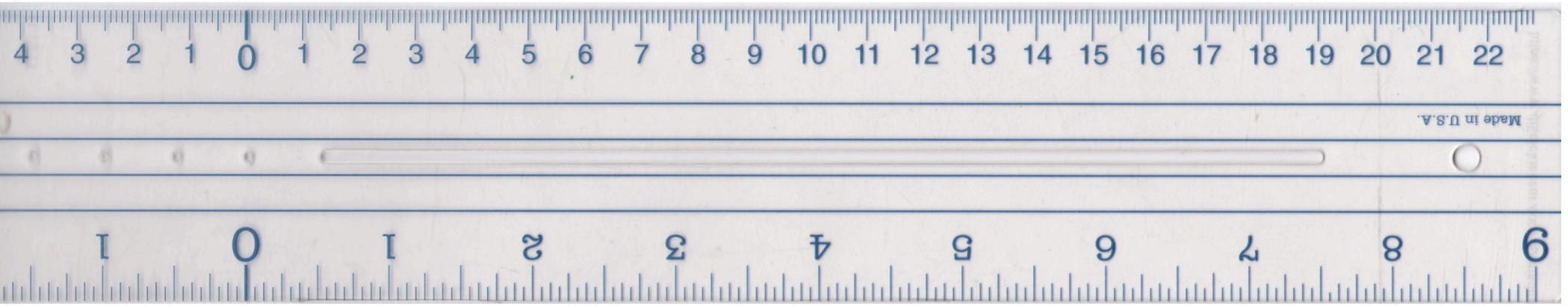
Final tips:
• If you use nylon or polypropylene webbing for the loops or straps, singe the ends with a lighter before sewing them down so they don't fray.
• Even if you are using materials that are waterproof or water-resistant, with no floating liner water can still seep in at the seams. If you really want it to be as waterproof as possible, there are various seam sealants that you can buy at outdoor stores or outdoor fabric retailers.
• Stiffer materials and bulkier, bound-off seam allowances help the bag keep its shape. But if you want a bag that is closer to rigid, there are many materials you can use. The cut-up cover of a flexibly poly binder would work well, as would various types of foam as in the pink bag described above. The best way is to just stiffen Panel 1. To do that, you'll need to cut out two layers of fabric to sandwich your stiffener between. Then cut the stiffener slightly SMALLER than the stitching line so that you have room to assemble the whole thing. Keep in mind that the stiffer it is, the harder it will be to wrangle the thing under the needle when going around the curves, unless you have a more specialized sewing machine.
• You can find a good selection of suitable materials, buckles, webbing, etc. at Seattle Fabrics, Rockywoods, Oudoor Wilderness Fabrics, My Tarp, Fairfield Textile, Rochford Supply, or any number of other places. Or your local thrift store or the deep recesses of your closet ;).


K.
Fold Line
L.
G.
Spread here and
@ F. to make bag wider.
4"
L
K.
M. To make bag longer,
Spread here, then draw a
New straight line between
K. and L, then spread @ N. so
that the distance between K. and
L. is the same on both pieces.
Panel 1

Panel 2


N. To make bag longer, spread @ M. and draw a new straight line between K. and L. on Panel 1, then spread @ N. So that the distance between K. and L. is the same on both pieces.
D.
J. Spread here and @ H. to make bag deeper.
4"
L.
K.


Made in U.S.A.



Panel 3

F. Spread here and @ G. by equal amounts to make bag wider.

E. Zipper Location

H. Spread here and @ I. to make bag deeper.

A.