

How to make a Hanging Sleeve

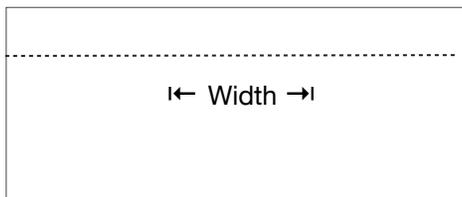
also known as a

Rod Pocket

By Sarah Ann Smith ©2019

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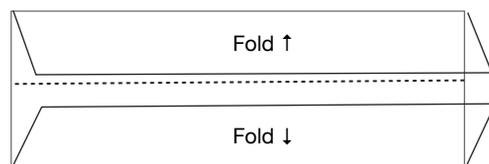
Textile art that is not mounted to a frame needs a way to hang on the wall. A **D-shaped sleeve** or pocket is the usual answer. Most art and quilt shows require either a 4 or 5-inch sleeve. These instructions are for one that finishes at 4 inches, the required size for SAQA (Studio Art Quilt Associates) exhibitions, but larger sizes are allowed.



2. **Cut** a piece of fabric the same width as your finished work by **8 1/2 inches**. **Fold** the cloth in half lengthwise, **WRONG** sides together and iron a fold.



3. Open up the fabric. **Fold** the long edges to the center (ironed line) and press.



4. Finish the short ends of the sleeve with a “**turn-turn**” hem. For most exhibits, your sleeve should stop about 1 inch (2.5 cm) away from the side edge so that a gallery hanging device is hidden behind the artwork. Check the call for entry or with the venue for specific instructions that might require something different.

The end hems can be on the inside of the sleeve for a clean finish on the outside of the sleeve **or** the fabric can be folded to the outside so the hanging rod doesn't get caught on the hem.

Turn a half inch hem in the direction you choose and iron. Then turn another half inch so that the raw edge of the hem is enclosed. Sew the hem.

Optional: add a second row of stitching to strengthen the edge.



↑ Fold 1/2” hem and press.



↑ *Second folded edge is 1/2” from end, raw*

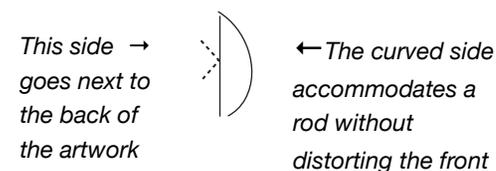
Turn under hem again so that raw edge is trapped inside the fold for a strong edge and clean finish. Stitch through all layers.

Hem the other end of the sleeve in the same way. Your sleeve will now be two inches shorter than the width of your quilt—perfect!

Option: Sew the end hems after sewing the long seam. Make certain the long seam is centered on the back of the sleeve.

5. With the **WRONG** sides together, **sew** a 1/4” seam. Press the seam as stitched (flat); this will make it easier to press the seam open. Roll the sleeve so the seam is in the center of one side and press the seam open. Do **not** iron out/remove the creases made in step 3.

From the end, your sleeve will look like a “**D**” with the seam on the straight side of the D. The seam allowances will be hidden once the sleeve is sewn to the artwork.



6. **Sew the sleeve to the back** of the artwork. Place the sleeve with the seam next to the back side of the artwork.

Using the folds pressed in step 3, position the sleeve 1/2 to 1 inch below the top edge. Pin along the top fold line.

With the back of the sleeve flat against the art quilt, pin the lower fold line. Smooth the sleeve upwards with your hands to **make sure** it does not extend above the top edge.

REMEMBER to allow the curved side of the D to curve out! Do not flatten the sleeve and then sew—you want to keep that bulge so round hanging rods will not distort the front!

Sew **all four** sides using a ladder or slip stitch. Stitches should be fairly close together and most of them should catch the batting, not just the backing fabric.

The case of the very wide (or very heavy) artwork or quilt

and a consideration for gallery shows.....

Many art galleries and art purchasers are most familiar with work that is hung from a single nail/hanger in the center, as with framed art.

Hanging rods can flex if they are longer than 40 inches (or thereabouts), which means your artwork will not display attractively, but will ripple and sag. Ick. The same goes for heavily embellished or dense work.

The solution is to sew TWO (or more) hanging sleeves on the back with an opening in the center to accommodate hanging from both ends of the hanging rod and/or from a single point in the center.

Follow the instructions on page 1, but allow another inch or so (depending on how long a space you want to leave open in the center and how many openings) to the cut length (step 1) of the fabric for your hanging sleeve.

Tip: I sometimes write my contact information on the back of the artwork UNDER the sleeve in case the label goes missing.



Standard Single Hanging Sleeve:

Sleeve is centered.

Side and top edges are about 1" from artwork edges.

Optional bottom rod pocket:

a lightweight slat can help the artwork hang better



The case of Quilt Show rods — big round rods

Quilt shows often use much larger rods than galleries or most folks at home. These rods can be as large in diameter as a closet rod!

Make the hanging sleeve as above. Pin the top edge of the sleeve a generous inch below the top edge of your artwork / quilt. Ease the round side of the D up to the fold, then continue to pull/roll the sleeve up so that the ironed fold is about 3/8 to 1/2 inch above your new bottom edge. Pin and check that the sleeve does not extend above the top, then stitch. From the side, your sleeve will look like a fat "D" instead of a slender "D."



Double Hanging Sleeve:

For artwork wider than about 40 inches (1 metre) you may wish to sew a double sleeve.

There is an opening in the center at least one inch wide, often up to 3 or 4 inches wide.

Top and outside edges are about 1" from artwork edges.

Bottom Pocket

Some artists like to add a second, narrower pocket on the bottom of the artwork. A lightweight rod on the bottom can add weight and rigidity that improve how the piece hangs. Use the standard instructions, but make the pocket 2-3 inches finished size. Make certain when empty and flattened the pocket doesn't show below the bottom edge.

I hope these instructions have helped you. Additional free tutorials are on my website on the Resources page.

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