



DEMYS

TIFYING

RIVETS



This ebook is intended to shed more light on the subject of rivets.
This is part of an e-course and together with an instructional video you'll become friends with all rivets in your life.

WWW.SERIALBAGMAKERS.COM



You see rivets everywhere and they make any pattern super professional when used on your sewing projects. When you see ready made bags, you often see rivets attaching heavy straps or reinforcing the corner stress points of a pocket or pouch.



Rivets should be a staple in your sewing room. They come with a learning curve and a tool. For me, rivets are a domestic machine owners dream. They secure lots of thick layers at points where it would be impossible to stitch with a sewing machine.

And why stop there? Use rivets to fancy up your sewing project!



Even if you do not sew many bags and you don't want to invest in a rivet press, you can use rivets, without any problem. And no, you do not need to fear that you'll need to hammer them down. I will show you two other ways.



Rivets come in all shapes and sizes. The two I'm going to work with are single capped and double capped. The cap being the nice shiny dome side that you like to look at!



Single sided rivets only have one cap and are suitable to use where only one side is visible. For example, one side might be hidden behind the lining in your bag. For bag straps etc. where you see both sides of the rivet it looks nicer to use the double cap rivets as they look equally nice from either side.



I find it better to buy my rivets in bulk and to just invest in one type of rivet: the double capped variety. Even for the places where you don't see the other side of the rivet, I use double capped rivets. Since I most often use double capped rivets those are what I'll be talking about in the rest of this tutorial and using in the video tutorial.



ANATOMY OF A RIVET

To understand how rivets work it's important to know how they are built and what part of a rivet is what. It will clear up a lot of the smoke around this beautiful piece of hardware.

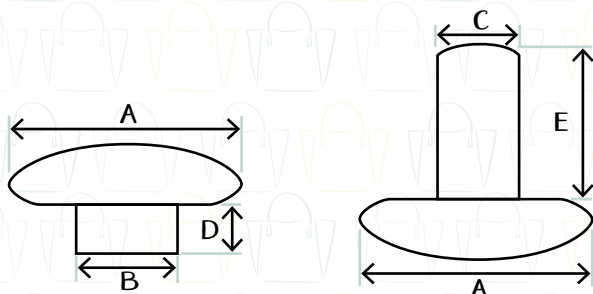
To make your rivets look professional and work like they should, you have to choose the correct stem and cap size. And that includes the proper length and finish of the rivet. You can set rivets by hand pretty easily, as long as you have the right tools and are careful.

In these pictures below you see the two measurements that are important, they are E (the length of your stem) and A (the width of your cap).

The size of the cap is mostly aesthetic, though it is good to use larger caps for more heavy duty projects. Normally the width follows the length of the stem but you can and should deviate from that.

Decide for yourself what cap width you like the most and then stick with that as much as possible. You will be able to use different sized stems in your work and on the outside, they all look the same.

HOW ARE RIVETS SIZED?



When buying rivets, you'll see they are usually advertised with 2 numbers. Like 8x8 or 7x9. What do those numbers mean? Are they just random? No they are not. The first number is the size (in millimeter) of the cap. The second number is the length in millimeter of the stem. When you see 'small' or 'normal' in a store, then please run away. Just like you should never accept the answer 'the usual'.

CORRECT LENGTH

Rivets range in size and it is the size of the stem (the long rod bit that goes through your fabric) you need to worry about.



There is not really a 'go to' size in bag making. It all depends on what material you usually use. If you mostly use leather or mostly use cotton, then the rivet size (the stem length) will differ.

That is the reason I have 5 different sizes for every finish. Match the length of your rivet to the thickness of your material. The rivet should be long enough to get through the material you're using with about $\frac{1}{8}$ " (1,5 mm) to spare. Hold up the rivet next to ALL the actual layers (material, interfacing, foam, etc.) and press the fabric between your fingers. The stem should just barely ($\frac{1}{8}$ ") stick out of the fabric.



And what does $\frac{1}{8}$ " looks like in layman's terms? Good question and a very simple answer. You will learn this quickly with practice.

When you push your rivet stem in the hole and the result looks like the picture above, then place the cap of the rivet on top. Did you here a clipping sound and when you push the material together you hardly see any room between the material and the rivet cap? then that is the correct length.

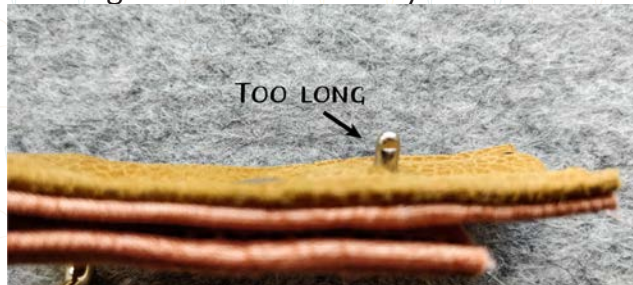
Two common sizes I use while making bags are 7x7 and 8x8. Again, this is the size I usually use, you will need to experiment and decide what size works for your project. When trying to find the correct size rivet I start with one of these sizes to see if either of those sizes will work then decide if my stem needs to be

longer or shorter.



For that reason, we added different size rivets in the starter set. This way you can try out what size stem and cap work for your project(s) and you can evaluate what size(s) rivets you want to order to keep on hand. Hopefully this sample set of rivets will give you a starting point on using rivets.

If the fabric/vinyl/leather you are using does not completely fill the space between the two caps, you run a good chance of messing up the rivet in the setting process. Instead of the stem closing around itself, it will slip and bend diagonally making it so your rivets don't actually close and the caps no longer line up. NOT a good look nor a sturdy rivet!



If the rivet stem is too short, it will not grasp the cap enough and it will pull out. Also not a feature you are looking for!

ATTACHING RIVETS.

To actually attach the rivets on your bag or wallet, you have different options.

You bought this starter course, so I will just assume you are not the proud owner of a rivet press. Once you start using rivets, I bet you will put *rivet press* on you wish list soon. This tutorial will teach you how to install rivets without a rivet press and die set. This way you don't have to buy an expensive press and die set until you can afford it.

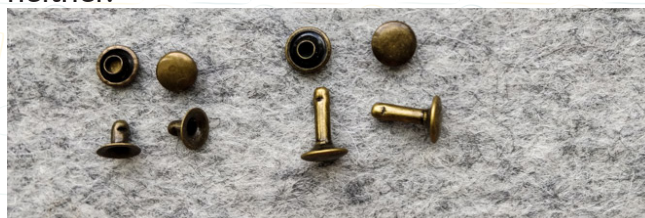


Why buy a tool that is solely meant to do one task and do that perfect if you have no idea yet you are going to make use of it more than once, right?

The first time I used rivets was because my domestic machine was not able to stitch through the many layers I had in that project. So I went to a shoe repair shop and paid US\$2 to place two rivets. I never repeated that adventure.

At that point I had no idea what and how, and that is what I want to teach you so you do not have to make all the mistakes I made.

My first rivets were size 12x6. I had no idea at that point what the size was. They ended up too small. On my second try I bought 10x12 (12 is longer than 6, right?) Not good neither.



A WARNING NOTE

Rivets that are set correctly will add an instant pro-look. Incorrectly set rivets or rivets that are horribly mangled will not. You do not want to ruin the project you worked hours on in less than two minutes. You will want to remove those rivets and just find out this does not work. Then you will start searching YouTube for tutorials to remove rivets and quickly understand that removing them is much harder than putting them on. In the end rivets are not supposed to come off.

PRACTICE

Please don't be afraid now. You have the starter pack and all in all rivets are inexpensive. Don't be afraid to waste a few on a scrap piece for the sake of saving a project. Do this

especially if you are either trying rivets for the first time or trying a brand of rivets you have never used before.

So don't try to set rivets for the first time on your new project you worked hours on to perfect. Read further in this ebook and watch the video for more tips and tricks and remember that the additional $\frac{1}{8}$ " stem length is the golden number.

CONTENT OF THIS COURSE

Together with a video lesson and this ebook, comes a sample pack of rivets. Because that is the whole clue of rivets: they come in different sizes.

The cap width is preference, the stem length is what is the most important. There is not such a thing as 'one size fits all'.

I am a girl with a 'can do' attitude. If it's not going the way it is supposed to go (because I lack the finance or tools) then I will find a way that will work. Like Pipi Longstocking, I'm sure you know her.



My first rivets were meant to work, to do the job my sewing machine was not able to do. Looks were a little less important at that moment.

Normally rivets are 'domed'. With the following technique the rivets will do the job 100% all the time without you having 1 broken rivet. The downside is that the 'dome' will become flat.

Use flat nose pliers to attach the rivets. The benefit of the flat nose is that you end up with flat rivet heads. Normal pliers will leave ripples.

Place a piece of fabric or fleece between your rivet head and the pliers.

If you are lucky to have the pliers that come with key-fob hardware, then your pliers will be protected with plastic already.

If you are able to claim the pliers for your sewing room, cover the nose of the pliers with a couple of layers of duct tape, and you have an instant protection.



Some stores will sell an anvil and a long metal setter that will help you in hammering down the rivet. The benefit is that the rivets will stay domed. So many accidents are waiting to happen though. To really 'press' the rivet head and stem together you do need force and precision. And that is a lot easier accomplished with pliers than with a hammer.



By now you know the reason I've included so many sizes in your starter pack.

The ideal size of a rivet stem is $\frac{1}{8}$ " longer than the thickness of all the layers of fabric. Unless you always use the same fabric and always have the same layers, you will need to invest in a couple of sizes.

Forget the go to size of 8x8 when you use the rivets at the end of your strap while trying to rivet down 8 layers of vinyl.

In the starter pack I added the most common sizes. Different width head and - far more important - different size stems.

REMEMBER THE $\frac{1}{8}$ " RULE!

Is your stem too short? Then it will not work. Perhaps you are able to attach the rivet visually, but please don't sell or gift that bag. The rivet will come loose.

Is your stem a little too long? Add a piece of peltex between the layers you try to rivet down.

Is your stem way too long (and you are not able to add that many layers of Peltex to compensate) then your stem will get crooked. Guaranteed!

PRE DRILLING A HOLE

You will need to make a hole to pass the stem of the rivets through your material. When using rivets solely for look, you probably are using smaller rivets with a shorter stem and smaller head. At that point it's very important you do not damage the fabric you are using it on. Making a hole with a hole cutter is a big no at that point. Using your awl is the best method.



The benefit of an awl is that you do not cut into your fabric. You do not damage the layers of thread. The only thing an awl does (already noticed it has a blunt point?) is moving the thread to the side and leaving a small gap. Ideal for passing the stem through. I use this method when fortifying slip pockets with little rivets. (I use rivets 6x5 for that particular task (you have a max of 4 layers -we rivet through the seam allowance- in your slip pocket and 1 layer (perhaps interfaced) in your lining.



This method will only work with fabric. When using rivets with pleather, cork or vinyl, then you'll need to make the holes with a hole cutter.

A revolving one is a good idea, although you'll only need the 'small' hole. It's important that the hole we make be as small as possible.



FASTENING THE RIVETS

Whatever method you use to attach the rivets, the next few steps have to be done before the actual fastening. And yes, this is true for a rivet press as well, Align your fabric/vinyl piece(s) and mark where you'll want the holes. You can eyeball it, but I would advice to not do that and use your ruler and measure out where your holes should be, and then mark the spot with a marker or pen. When placing 2 or more rivets right next to each other, make sure the distance between them and the distance between the rivet and the side of the strap (or whatever else you are trying to rivet down) is the same for all rivets. Don't make the mark too big - you want it small enough to disappear when you punch a hole at that spot.



Rivets themselves don't make the hole-- you need to punch it out first! Use a rotary hole punch to make your rivet holes through vinyl, cork and leather or whenever your cap is at least 7 wide. If your cap is only 6 or smaller, then use your awl. Unless you are punching through leather, vinyl or cork. The hole needs to be just big enough for you to get the stem of the rivet through. A 'swimming' rivet is not good. Align the hole punch over the mark we made. Double check to see if the center of spike is directly over your mark. Squeeze like heck and rotate the punch slightly, while closed, to insure a clean punch through all the layers. Release the punch and carefully remove the fabric in the hole. If you are not satisfied the hole is clean all the way through, you can use your awl to help clean the hole.



Push the rivet stem up through the under-side/ wrong side of your work. Your rivet stem should only extend about $\frac{1}{8}$ " (1,5 mm) above the surface of the material. Line up both male- and female-parts of the rivet with the punched hole. (you took biology in class right? so I'm not going to explain what side is male and what side is female) Since the stem is $\frac{1}{8}$ " longer then your fabric you will be able to put the rivet cap on top of the stem. Most rivet caps will make a clicking or snapping noise when you place it over the top of the stem. From that moment it will be more difficult to remove the cap. That is what we need.



METHOD 1: FLAT NOSE PLIERS

The first method I taught myself was attaching rivets with flat nose pliers. I know that my domed rivets will become flat. But they will do their job perfectly. It was my preferred method, before I found out about method four, because it is foolproof.

Take your protected flat nose pliers (or protect the rivets with a layer of fleece) and press as hard as you can.

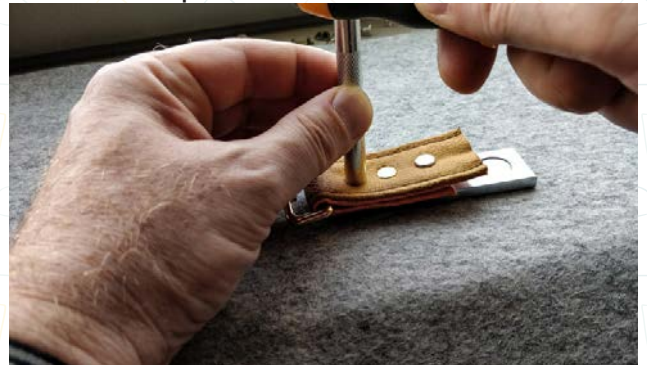
I still use this method for small rivets, even though I have a rivet press. for protecting corners from slip pockets, I want my rivets to have a flat cap.

Since I live in a condo, hammering at night is not an option.



METHOD 2: ANVIL AND SETTER

My understanding is that the surface you are working on is of the utter most importance. Placing the anvil on a wooden table or desk will make the anvil jump around when you hammer and by that leave dents in that side of the rivet. So move to a concrete floor. I know that is a strange sight. It will stop the jumping though because the surface is less bouncy and the anvil stays in place. Place the rivet on top of the anvil (concave-side up). Place your rivet setter over the cap so that the cap is flush against the setter. The rivet setter looks like a small metal cylinder, and it has a concave end that allows that cap to fit snugly against it. Tap the setter with a rubber mallet or small hammer. You don't want to hit the setter too hard, because that can dent the rivet. Instead, give the setter a few short taps with a soft mallet or hammer.



Check that the rivet is set. If the rivet has been set correctly you should be able to pick up the piece without the rivet stem or cap falling off. If they do fall off (or you feel you can move the rivet) reset them and give the setter a little bit of a harder bang.

METHOD 3: HAMMER AND HARD BASE

If you don't have the rivet setter or you would rather have flat-topped rivets, you can just set them on a hard, flat surface with a hammer. The back of the rivet setting base, or your quartz slab works well for this. Using a hammer does make it a bit easier to accidentally crush or mark-up the top of a rivet, but if you try to hit straight-on it will usually work fine.



METHOD 4: DRITZ OR PRYMM PLIERS

Chances are you already own Dritz or Prym pliers. When buying one of their snaps or rivets packages, they always come with the necessary tools to add it into your pliers so you can attach the snap or rivet.



Even if you don't own the pliers, their rivets packs come with all the tools needed. The Dritz® and Prym® Rivet Tool Kit does include a hole cutting tool as well. This is certainly an option, should you not have a separate hole cutter.

Their rivets are single cap rivets and we are usually using double caps.

I learned a very clever trick from Gena. When buying two packs of the rivets, you have two of the special caps to put in your pliers. And there you have them: pliers that will keep your rivets domed. The rivets that come in the package can be used as well. They only come in 1 cap size though, but since that cap size is rather 'normal' this can be a clever solution.

You can always use it for smaller caps as well. This is the result when using the Dritz/Prym pliers with the standard dies. It's personal taste if you find this round line a disaster or just plain interesting.



CHICAGO SCREW OR BARREL BOLT

By now you have become an expert into rivets. There is one more rivet like hardware piece I like to show you: Chicago Screws. At firsts, Chicago screws look a bit like rivets. The difference with rivets is that Chicago screws are screwed together. So you need a screwdriver instead of a hammer.



As you can see in the picture already, Chicago screws come in different sizes as well. The stem of a Chicago screw is normally $\frac{3}{16}$ " thick. So the hole you need to make with a hole cutter is bigger.

The plus side from Chicago screws is that they are more foolproof to install. If your screw is too big, it will still work. The result will not be that beautiful, but it will work and hold all your layers together. Especially if you use glue while screwing the cap and stem together.

The downside is the price. They are way more expensive and come in less different finishes and capsizes.

AND NOW?

This book is part of a bundle. You receive a starterpack with rivets (different sizes) and I'll show you in a few video's what I'm talking about.

After that, the sky is the limit. I hope you are no longer afraid of rivets and will start to use them in your future projects.