



# How to make a heavy blanket

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coming to [www.verdantsuburbia.com](http://www.verdantsuburbia.com) in 2019

## **Materials**

- Muslin or base fabric of choice
- Cover fabric of choice
- (Optional: string or cord for ties)
- Measuring tool
- Scissors
- Pins
- Sewing machine
- Thread/bobbin
- Polyfil plastic beads
- Plastic cups
- Scale
- Tray
- Funnel

## **Before you begin:**

1. Do some research and planning to decide how heavy to make your blanket, how big, how many rows and columns you want.
  - a. Do you want it large enough to cover a bed?
  - b. Do you want it small enough to cover the torso only?
  - c. Do you want to make it easier to pack for travel?
2. Most sources recommend using 10% of the weight of the person, plus one pound. So a 90 lb person would have  $9 + 1 = 10$  lb blanket. If making it for the torso only or for travel, go to  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{2}{3}$  the normal weight or less if desired.
3. For lap blankets most sources recommend using 5% of the weight of the person, max 2 lbs.
4. Columns at least 6" wide are easy to fill. I usually do approximately 6" x 6" cells. A minimum of four columns by six rows usually provides a good distribution, even if the cells need to be smaller (as for lap blankets).
5. I like to put ties at the four corners of both the heavy blanket and the cover in order to minimize shifting.

## **How to assemble the blanket:**

1. Choose your measurements (remember to add a seam allowance), cut and press your fabric.
2. Draw your grid on the fabric.

3. Attach the ties to the corners of the fabric on the right side.
4. Wrong sides together, sew a "bag" in the shape of a pillowcase using  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seams.
5. Turn right sides together and press.
6. Making sure the ties are laid inside the bag and out of the way of seams, stitch  $\frac{1}{2}$ " seams. This will enclose the raw edges.
7. Turn right sides out again and press once more.
8. Stitch the vertical lines.
9. Figure out the weight of your beads. Divide by the number of rows to get your "working weight".
10. Gather as many (matching) cups as you have columns. Tare the scale for the weight of the cups (and a tray, if needed). Weigh out your beads for the working weight of the row and distribute them so they are more or less even in the cups. If you prefer you can weigh the individual cups.
11. Pour the beads in for the first row, using a funnel if desired. Use straight pins to do a pin-seam to hold the beads in the bottom of the cells.
12. Stitch at the drawn line. If beads are in the way then it can help to stitch with a zipper foot. A walking foot may help move the fabric along, if you have room for the width.
13. Repeat steps 10 to 12 to the top.
14. Roll the top twice and stitch to secure the raw edge.
15. To make the case.
  - a. Cut fabric a couple inches wider and 4-6 inches longer than the original measurements of the heavy blanket.
  - b. Hem the open end of the fabric, leaving a couple inches for overlap.
  - c. Attach the ties to the corners on the wrong side of the fabric.
  - d. Repeat the process of stitching a pillow case:
    - i. Wrong sides together, sew a "bag" in the shape of a pillowcase using  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seams.
    - ii. Turn right sides together and press.
    - iii. Making sure the ties are laid inside the bag and out of the way of seams, stitch  $\frac{1}{2}$ " seams. This will enclose the raw edges.
    - iv. Turn right sides out again and press once more.

Muslin is ideal for the blanket: it is inexpensive, holds its shape, is easy to cut or tear and to write upon. I like minkee for the case, but choose whatever texture feeds your child's sensory needs--flannel, corduroy, microsuede, etc.--or whatever is in your fabric stash. Old bed sheets can be a good cover fabric. Or this might be a fun little piecework project!

**Heavy blanket weight calculator:**

Weight of person in pounds \_\_\_\_\_ x .1 = \_\_\_\_\_ +1lb = \_\_\_\_\_

**Lap blanket weight calculator:**

Weight of person \_\_\_\_\_ x .05 = \_\_\_\_\_ (max 2 lbs)

- A 1 lb lap blanket will serve a 50 lb person best.
- A 1.5 lb lap blanket will serve a 75 lb person best.
- A 2 lb lap blanket will best serve a person 100 lbs or more.

**Fabric calculator**--cut two pieces of fabric:

Height of blanket in inches (A) \_\_\_\_\_ + 3" = \_\_\_\_\_

Width of blanket in inches (B) \_\_\_\_\_ + 2" = \_\_\_\_\_