



Pattern of the Month - December 2012 by Evelyn George  
**"Potholders 101"**

Everybody needs 'em, whether they're a fabulous cook or a microwave user —and of course potholders wear out, so what better gift to make for family and friends?

Here are the basics for a simple potholder—if you'd like to make fancier ones, replace the plain fabric with a pretty pieced block. These are made completely by machine, and have denim for their back, so they're tough enough even for BBQ use.



For *each* potholder, you'll need:

7 inch square of cotton fabric (front)

7 inch square of denim (back)

Two 7 inch squares of cotton batting (one of these could be the insulated type)

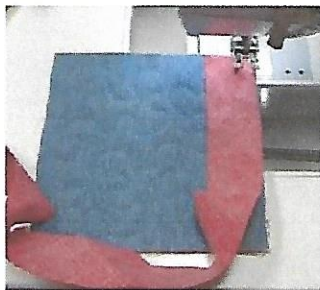
Bias binding strips, cut 1-7/8" wide (approx. 32" for one potholder; piece if necessary)

Matching or blending thread

(Walking foot and #90 jeans needle)



Layer the denim, batting (2 layers) and upper fabric same as for a quilt. (If using insulated batting, position its heat-reflective side so it faces the denim layer). Pin layers together and quilt as desired, using a walking foot for straight stitching, or you could do free-motion quilting instead. (If you want to add more batting, do a test to be sure your machine will handle the extra thickness; you might try a #100 jeans needle, instead of #90.)



Determine which will be the upper corner of the potholder when hanging; turn it over to the back, and start applying the binding at that corner (when you get all the way around, you'll make a hanging loop at that corner).

Use walking foot and needle-down position if you have them, and a **generous**  $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance; on my walking foot, this is just inside the slot in the right hand toe. Find the right place to line up your foot, and keep a consistent width seam allowance.

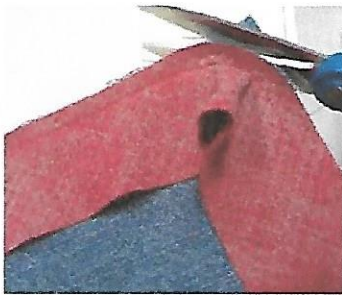


When you come to a corner, smooth the bias binding around the curve, stretching it **ever so slightly**. Stop with needle down and pivot as needed, to go around the curve. (If you'd like to mark the curve first, a spool has about the right curve. The markings won't show after you're done, so you can use any marker that can be seen on your denim.) Round off just three corners.



When you are on the last side, sew straight toward the corner, stop at the stitching line, and backstitch. (This corner is not rounded.)

Measure 4" of bias strip past the stitching line, and trim the end off square, leaving about 4" for making the loop.



Carefully trim excess fabric and batting at the curved corners. *Do this from the side where you can see the binding, so you can't accidentally cut it.*

Turn potholder over to right side and try folding the binding over so it covers the stitching. If there does not seem to be enough binding to do that, trim off a bit of the seam allowance, until you are able to easily cover stitching with folded edge of binding. Pin binding in place.



Starting at loose end of binding strip, fold raw edges toward middle of strip, then fold strip in half, concealing raw edges inside, as show at left. Stitch edges together, stitching toward potholder. Make sure raw edges at corner are tucked into the binding fold, and continue stitching onto potholder, folding binding over as you go, and covering the previous stitching line.

Go slowly around corners, easing in fullness as you sew. Stop with needle down and lift presser foot to pivot as needed, patting the folded bias in place; the walking foot helps to smooth out the wrinkles as you sew. Continue around first three sides, stitching binding in place.



When you are on the last side, pause a few inches from the end. Grab loose end of binding strip, bring it up and around into a loop, and tuck raw end under binding. Use a pin to poke end of strip securely under binding, pushing it as far as you can into the corner, then just flatten the loop, as shown below, right. Carefully hold it in place while you continue stitching to the corner, over folded end of loop. Backstitch to secure the loop.

