Pillbox Hat
by katvanlew on January 1, 2012

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http://www.instructables.com/id/Pillbox-Hat/
**Intro: Pillbox Hat**
The Pillbox hat is making a comeback! You can make one (or 2) for next to nothing. I saw the movie "The Help" and it takes place in the early 60's, the dresses and hats are beautiful and I was inspired to make a hat from that era. This would be a wonderful gift for a Mother, Aunt, Sister, Daughter or friend. The supplies you will need are: cereal boxes, hot glue gun and glue sticks, needle and thread, a pair of old jeans. I did use a sewing machine but only on the lining, that could be sewn by hand if necessary. I found an old blue wool skirt at the thrift shop for a dollar. I wouldn't recommend purchasing expensive fabric for your first hat, cut up an old shirt or skirt and get the process figured out. You will need 1/4 yard netting, other fabric scraps for the lining and fabric roses. I bought a couple of feathers to add to the decorative trim. 1 yard of 1” wide blue ribbon was sewn on the edge of the netting, but that is optional. You will need 2 hair combs to glue between the hat and lining to keep the hat in place. Use your imagination for the decoration on the side of the hat, add as little or as much as your heart desires. When choosing garments to cut up for this project, keep in mind that you want the fabric to be medium weight, not too light and not too heavy. Any woman would be thrilled to receive a beautiful hat because we all enjoy dressing up once in awhile. Try choosing a print for the hat and a solid for the fabric rose. When you think of all the color combinations and different ways to decorate the side...maybe a bow instead of the netting? The possibilities are endless!
**Step 1: Making the pattern**
Cut a piece of paper 6” x 7”. The top of the hat is is an oval. Cut out a circle 6”. Place the circle at the top of the rectangle and trace around the top half. Move the circle to the bottom of rectangle and trace around the bottom. Now you have your oval. Open up the cereal boxes. Lay them flat. You can purchase poster board to use here instead of the cereal boxes, but why? When the hat is finished both the inside and outside will be covered with fabric and no one will be able to tell that you used a cereal box. Reuse items whenever you can. Cut out oval pattern and trace around onto the cereal box. Cut out the oval. Keep one of these ovals just for a pattern.
Step 2: Cutting pieces for the foundation
To make the tabs on the top section of the hat, trace around the oval and then measure 1/2" all the way around oval. Cut out oval on the outside line. Draw the cutting lines 1/2" apart for the tabs. Cut on these lines up to but not past the inside oval. Fold tabs up. For the side section of the hat, measure 2" strips across a cereal box. Cut out the strips.
Step 3: Construction of the hat

The side of the hat, the band that goes all the way around, is 2” tall but can easily be adjusted, 1-1/2” might be a good height also. Plug in your glue gun and allow it to warm up. Be extra careful around small children and pets. Glue 2 strips together, end to end so you have a strip 2” wide by 24” long. Hold this strip at each end and very gently, roll on the edge of counter or table to encourage the cardboard to curl. Lay the oval with the tabs on the table in front of you. Tabs sticking up. Place a dot of hot glue on one of the tabs and glue to the strip. Glue just one tab at a time, don’t get in a hurry here. Glue every other tab and attach to the 2” strip. When you get all the way around, go back and glue the tabs that you skipped. Glue the ends of the strip together. It should overlap about an inch or so. You can make several of these so that when you get ready to make some hats you already have the base made.

Step 4: Strengthening the cardboard

Get an old pair of jeans and cut strips 2” wide by 24” long. Make another cardboard strip 2” x 24”, glue the denim to the outside of this. Glue this denim covered strip to the outside of the hat.
Step 5: Covering with fabric

I took the stitches out of the hem of the skirt so that I would have a long enough section to cover the hat band. You will need to allow an inch on each long side of the strip. Cut a piece of fabric 4” x 25”, glue this around the side of hat, beginning and ending on the side where you are going to put the decoration. The netting and/or flowers will hide the seam. Glue over the top edge and then down under the bottom of hat.
Step 6: Making the piping for top edge
This step is not absolutely necessary but it does add to a better finished look. Cut a piece of fabric 2" x 25". Cut a piece of cotton piping 25" long. Using a zipper foot, sew the fabric around the piping. With the hot glue gun, glue this to the top edge of the hat, beginning and ending on the side with the seam. The decoration (netting, bow or flowers) will cover and hide the raw edge. I glued 4 layers of denim to fit in the area in the middle so when I glued the top of the hat over the piping it wouldn't have a hollow space in the center. You could also use a piece of regular corrugated cardboard for this.
Step 7: Top of Hat
Cut a piece of fabric 1” bigger all the way around cardboard oval. Cut a piece of denim the same size as cardboard, glue to cardboard. Place this on wrong side of fabric, denim in the middle. Fold fabric over and glue to cardboard all the way around. Glue this to the top of the hat.
Step 8: Netting
This simple step adds a lot of flair, of course this is optional, netting does not need to be hemmed or finished in any way. I cut a piece of netting 4" x 36". I cut the ends to a point. Cut a length of 1" wide satin ribbon 36" long. Fold the ribbon in half lengthwise and place the long edge of the netting inside the ribbon. Using the sewing machine, stitch the ribbon around the netting. I used a straight stitch but a zig-zag stitch would work also. With a needle and thread, gather the unfinished edge of the netting. Gently pull tight and sew to secure. Since I wanted to add feathers on the hat also, I glued them on first and then added the netting over them, gathered edge down, over the side seam.

Step 9: Fabric Roses
Fabric roses add a really feminine touch and are easy to make. I wanted 3 flowers but didn't want them all the same size. I cut 3 strips of fabric out of the lining of the skirt, all 3" wide, they were approximately 18", 20" and 22" long. I pointed the ends and folded each in half lengthwise and with needle and thread, gathered the raw edge so that each strip ended up being about half of the original length. Begin with one end and turn, hand stitch turn again, stitch, continue securing with needle and thread. When the rose has been rolled up all the way, make sure it is secure by gently pulling on the center of the rose. Repeat with the other 2 roses. Hot glue over the center of the netting.
Step 10: Lining of hat

I used the lining of the skirt for the lining of the hat, but you can use any lightweight fabric. Using the cardboard oval as a guide, cut a piece of fabric 1/2" larger all the way around. For the side strip, cut a piece 4" x 25". Fold the oval in half lengthwise and pin at the top and bottom. Pin the side strip to the oval, right sides together. Using a 1/2" seam allowance sew the side panel to the top piece of the lining. Sew the ends of the side panel together. Before you glue the lining to the inside of hat, glue a comb to each side of the hat, on the inside. About 1/3 of the comb will be sandwiched in between the hat and lining, and 2/3 will be sticking out below the bottom of the hat. Locate the back of the hat on the inside. Place a dot of hot glue inside the back of the hat, place the seam allowance of the lining (where the side panel is sewn to the oval) to the dot of glue. Continue gluing the lining to the inside of the hat all the way around. Make sure that you pull off any of those pesky glue strands that linger. Be careful how you store these hats so that the netting, feathers and fabric roses don’t get smashed. I purchased a foam head form at a beauty supply store.
Step 11: Other versions

I found an old houndstooth print jacket at the thrift shop and thought it would make a nice hat. The flower is made out of another brown print and the netting was folded in half lengthwise before it was gathered. I have enough left of the jacket to make a matching purse. The black hat was made from an old dress that was a size 6. Needless to say, I am not a size 6. It's difficult to see from the picture but the fabric had a nice, almost waffle-like, texture. I cut the band twice as wide as I needed it so that I could add a few pleats. I just put one large rose on this one, also made from the lining of the dress. These lining fabrics tend to unravel while I'm gathering them so I found it helpful to cut them out with my pinking shears. A great place to find netting is at the thrift shop. Old prom dresses have yards of this stuff underneath and if you can find a dress that is faded or torn or stained, the netting can still be salvaged. The turquoise dress was found at a thrift shop also. It had this interesting scrunched texture with sequins scattered throughout. I thought there was enough going on with the fabric, it didn't really need any additional decoration on the side. I skipped the piping on this one because the fabric was not laying flat and it wasn't necessary.
http://www.instructables.com/id/Pillbox-Hat/
This is very well done, and a great way to make something spectacular from objects you have around the house, rather than investing in specialty materials. You've obviously put a lot of thought and time into this! Thank you so much for sharing.