

Suitcase Vanity

If you're like me, you're always up for an adventure. When I saw some examples of DIY reclaimed suitcases, paired with the exciting new [Wanderlust embroidery design collection](#), I was excited to start my next crafting journey. With a bit of hunting and gathering, I was able to pull together a unique home decor piece that expresses my love of travel, embroidery, and distinct projects. As you dive into this tutorial, you will see just how many opportunities you have to make this project special to you and your style!

Supplies

To begin your adventure you will need the following supplies and tools:

Your favorite embroidery designs from the [Wanderlust design pack](#)
Printed templates of your embroidery

Steps To Complete



Choosing the right type of suitcase is important. If you wish to hang your final project on the wall, the suitcase will have to have a flat surface and a hinged opening that won't get stuck or break. I chose my suitcase because of its size relative to where I wanted to place the finished piece in my home, how much embroidery I wanted to add to it, how lightweight it is, and its general vintage appearance. I found my 13" x 20.5" suitcase at a local thrift store, but Michaels sells similar lightweight suitcases you can use as well.



Start first by measuring the inside of your suitcase, length and width. You will need to stitch on fabric large enough to fill the entire inside front and back panels.

Remember, measure twice, cut once!



Plan where your embroidery designs are going to go. I printed several templates and figured out where I wanted to overlap and place designs, relative to where I wanted my mirror and jewelry pegs to sit inside of my suitcase.

[Click here](#) to learn how to print templates.

Make sure you think about hoop placement; you may need extra fabric to stitch designs closer to the edge.



This layout shows roughly where each design was placed and how I wanted the finished product to look. For my 13 x 20.5 inch suitcase, I used two 20 x 26 inch sheets of fabric. I mixed and match [design sizes](#) and ended up overlapping the [world map](#) several times.

The [Wanderlust designs](#) are available in multiple sizes -- no matter what size(s) of designs you're working with, they're simple to arrange into a big, bold collage!



For my embroidery I would recommend doing what I did: I stitched my designs on a tan canvas fabric with medium weight cutaway stabilizer adhered to the back of the fabric with temporary spray adhesive. My fabric and stabilizer were then hooped tightly together before stitching. Each design area should be stabilized and re-hooped separately each time, to prevent shifting and gapping.

After each stitchout, carefully cut around the embroidery to remove the stabilizer.

After each side is finished stitching you'll want to fit the fabric into your suitcase. Using a pencil and measuring tape, outline your cardboard sheets to the dimensions of your suitcase. (I used the outside shape of the suitcase as a rough template.)



Cut slightly inside your line and adjust as needed by testing the cardboard to see if it fits into the case -- you'll want it slightly smaller than the inner walls, so you can wrap your fabric around it and still have it fit.



Once this is finished, smooth your fabric onto the cardboard using your spray adhesive. When you are set, fold back the sides of excess fabric and use your hot glue gun to adhere it to the back of your cardboard.



I folded in the corners of my fabric to match the rounded corners of my suitcase as well.

Let your front and back pieces dry.



When you flip over your cardboard, it should look roughly like this.

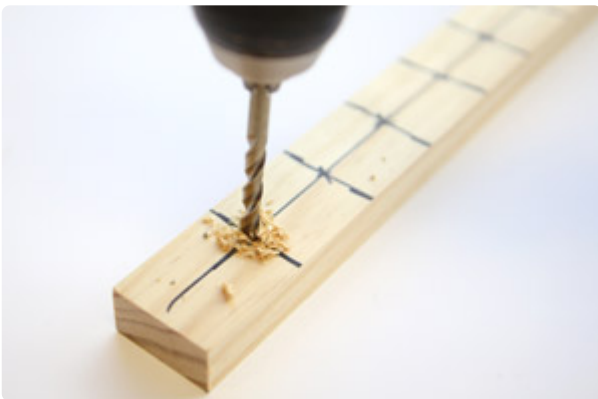
The next step is to make your jewelry pegs and holders. For my case I used two pieces of wood trim, 1.5" wide x 0.5" deep x 13" long. Finding 1.5 x 0.5 inch wood trim is common at the hardware store, and most places have the ability to cut your wood to your desired length then and there.



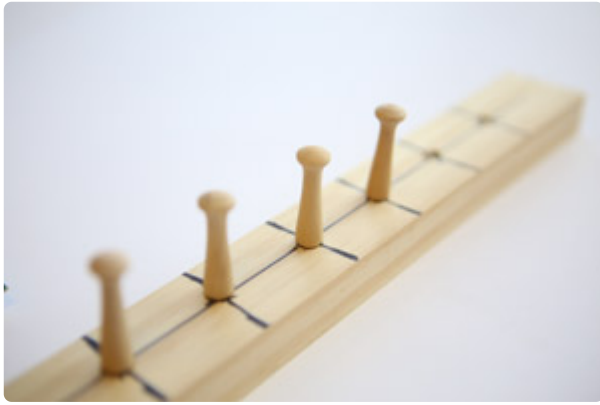
Measure the placement of your pegs, depending on how many you want to place, and mark the cross hairs for where each will go with your measuring tape.

I used 7 pegs on my top panel and started from the center at 6.5 inches, then measure out in 1.5 inch increments for my markings.

Next is the fun part! Choose a drill bit that is slightly smaller than the diameter of your pegs. My electric drill has two speeds - one for using it as a drill and the other for using it as a screwdriver. Make sure you are in the faster "drill" setting so you get clean holes.

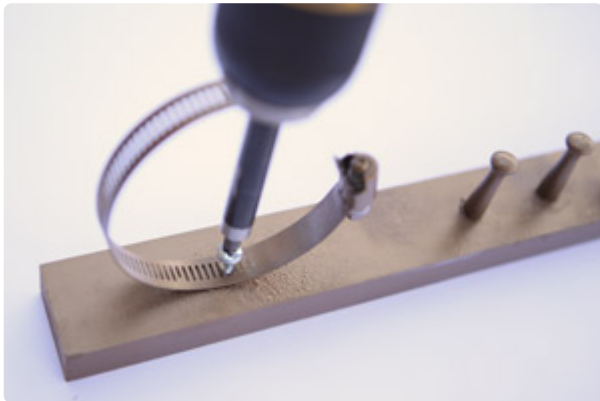


Also, pay attention to the depth of your pegs. Mine were less than half the depth of the wood block, so I drilled less than halfway in. Don't drill all the way through, or this can cause you trouble later on.



Use a small dab (less than pea-sized) of superglue in each hole and twist each peg into place. Let dry 1-2 hours for best results.

After everything is dry, you can paint your wood if you wish!



To install a mason jar, swap out your drill bit for a screw tip and screw the hose clamp to the wood. The metal sheet screws will easily go through the metal clamp.

Keep in mind that you will need to access the closure to secure your mason jar in later, so place it somewhere accessible to your fingers.



By this time your embroidery pieces should be finished drying. Using hot glue, you can adhere your cardboard pieces to the inside of your suitcase. Press firmly and evenly to ensure every part stays where it needs to.

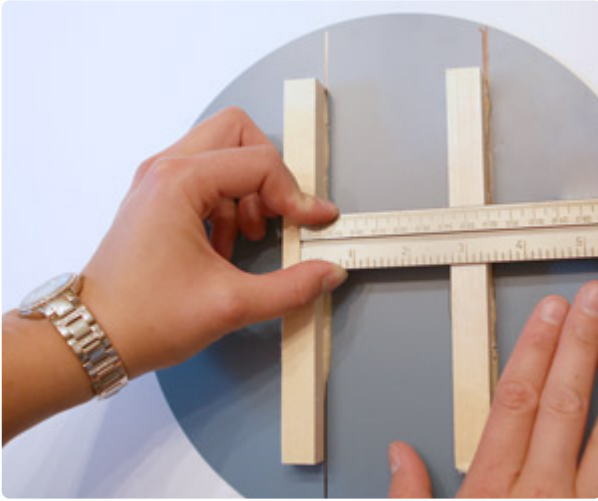
The next step is to install your mirror. I found a 10 inch round beveled mirror at my local craft store to fit in my suitcase, without hiding the pretty embroidery I just diligently placed.



For my mirror I used two thinner pieces of wood trim 0.5' width x 0.5" height x 6" long (enough to secure the mirror but not see the wood peeking out from behind it). These pieces were superglued evenly in place on the back of the mirror and left overnight to dry.

When your mirror is completely dry, decide exactly where you want it placed in your case. Use a pencil to mark where your glued wood sits in the case for reference, then measure the top of the suitcase down to each of your marks, and from the sides to the marks.

Next, measure the distance between the two wood pieces you've glued to your mirror. You will want to mark the front outside of your suitcase with all of the measurements you've taken - from the top and sides in to where the wood pieces will sit, and the distance between each piece. Mark four spots on the outside of your case where your screws will set.



Measure twice to check your markings before screwing your mirror in place! This will save you a lot of frustration.

If you want, you can pre-drill the holes through your suitcase to ensure you are placing your mirror in the right spots for the screws.



Place your mirror back onto the markings of the inside of the case. Pressing evenly and firmly on the mirror from the inside, screw in each of your four screws (using the washers in between).

Phew! It's a lot more measurements than I've ever taken, but it paid off!



Adhering your jewelry pegs follows a similar process. I found it useful to pre-drill the holes through the suitcase before screwing the wood panels in because of all the layers we need to go through. Place and measure where you want these wood peg panels to go.

If you choose to install the mason jar, make sure there is enough room for it to sit at the bottom of your case.

Mark the inside and outside of your case before drilling.

To pre-drill, press the inside of your case firmly, keeping your hands clear of the area you are drilling. I made two holes through the suitcase for each panel, then came back and screwed my panels in place, using a washer in between so the screw didn't sink through into the suitcase.

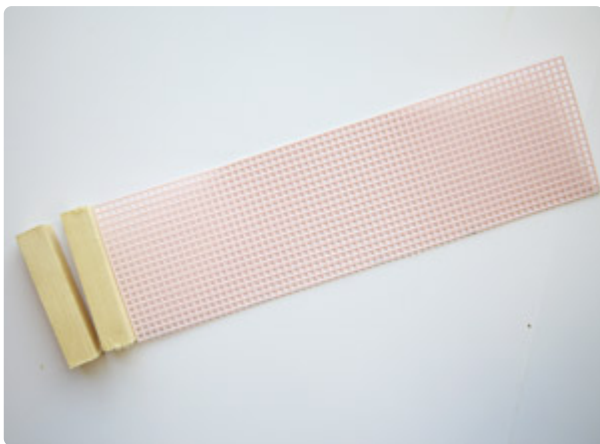


Again, press your panels evenly and firmly against the inside of the case as you are screwing.

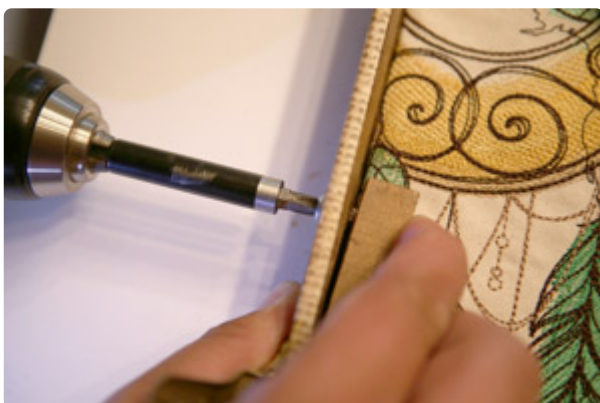


With your panels secured, you can now install wall hanging pieces if you wish. Sawtooth hangers will ensure your vanity stays flush with the wall, while still providing support.

Mark an even line close to where your screws are (but not over top of them). Nail the hangers in, making sure you are making contact through to the inside wood panel you have placed. This will ensure they are secured.



The last piece to install is the earring holder. I used a 20 x 8 inch long plastic mesh mat I found at a craft store, paired with two thinner pieces of wood trim 0.5' width x 0.5" height x 3" long. I then cut the width of the mat down to 20 x 3 inches to match.



I marked where each of these pieces would go, evenly spaced apart on the outer edges of my case below my mirror. I then screwed each of the two pieces in through the side of the suitcase.



The plastic mesh, which I've spray painted copper to match, is held in place against the wood blocks with some fun arrow-shaped push pins I found.



Believe it or not, you are finished! You can decorate the outside of your case to cover up the screws, or leave it industrial looking. Fill your case with your jewelry, cosmetic brushes, and accessories. You've created a unique home decor piece that represents your style!