

Revamped & Recovered Fabric Shoes



I love slip-on shoes. When soft canvas shoes became in style, I wore mine non-stop. Eventually, they became worn out, and I was sad. Crafty skills and machine embroidery to the rescue! I did some trial and error, and came up with a great and easy way to recover and revamp my old worn-out shoes, using some sweet [Folklorico](#) embroidery designs. It's simple and can be adapted to lots of flat shoe types.

To reinvent your old shoes, you'll need:

- Pair of soft canvas shoes. I had Toms -- the shape of these works great for covering with fabric.
- Lightweight fabric. I used a quilters cotton, but a light canvas or twill should work too.
- Embroidery designs to decorate your shoes -- I used the [border](#) and [swoop](#) from the [Folklorico](#) collection
- Medium weight cutaway stabilizer
- Hot glue gun (or other fabric glues your feel comfortable with)
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Pencils for marking fabric
- Paperclips, or pins
- Optional muslin/scrap fabric to do mockup





It's best to begin with a rough mockup of how the new fabric will be covering the shoe. Cut 3 strips of scrap fabric, and place them around the back, side, and top of the shoe with paper clips. This helped me get an idea of where to place my embroidery on the final pieces of fabric.

Because everyone has different size feet, and different shaped shoes, I encourage you to try this step and get a feel for how the fabric will cover your shoe style.

Once you're comfortable with your mock up requirements, measure 3 strips of fabric. Mine ended up about 12" long and 4 1/2" tall. This includes a 1/4" seam allowance for one side of each strip.

This amount of fabric works for my size 10 Toms shoe. If your shoe is larger or smaller, adjust the size accordingly. You should be able to use your mockup pieces to get an idea of how big your strips need to be.



Choose the placement of the embroidery, and then hoop up your fabric with some medium weight cutaway stabilizer, and stitch out the designs.

Repeat this process again for your other shoe. Remember to mirror your embroidery designs when sewing the second shoe!

Iron a rough hem on one side of each strip. These will match up with the top edge of the shoe. The heel and side strip should have the hem at the top, above your embroidery design. Once it's ironed, sew a 1/4" hem on all three strips.





Now it's time to prep the shoe for its new fabric covering. Make sure your shoes are as clean as possible and dry. You don't want any extra dirt or moisture to prevent your glue from sticking.

If you want, you can remove the logo to get rid extra bulk. You can always reattach it later if you still want your shoes to look official.

We'll start with the back of the shoe. Arrange the back piece of fabric onto your shoe, around the heel and sides. Fold the hemmed edge into the inside of the shoe, and leave the raw edge hanging over the bottom edge of the shoe. Hold in place with paper clips or pins.

Along the sides, where the fabric edge meets the first seam along your shoe, trim the strip of fabric. Follow the lines of your shoe patterned underneath. I tucked the edge of my fabric underneath the Toms tag to give it a more finished look.



Start securing your fabric with your hot glue gun, gluing the top heel and side edge fabric strip to the shoe. You'll start at the center of the inner hem, and move out to the sides.

Once you've got the top secure, you need to secure the fabric to the bottom edge. Fold the raw edge under, and glue that down to the edge of the bottom of the shoe, as close to the heel as possible.

You can see here how the bottom edge has been folded under and glued.

As far as glue is concerned, make sure you're working with something you're comfortable with. With the first shoe I tried, I used a fabric glue that gave me some trouble. It didn't dry fast enough and it also became very stiff. My recommendation is to place the glue along the shoe edges, and not all over the whole shoe to keep some flexibility and softness in the fabric. If you don't have a fabric glue you like, I found hot glue worked very well.





Next we'll start covering the toe. Place your next strip of embroidered fabric along the edge of the shoe front, like shown. You'll want the raw side toward the toe and the finished seam along the shoe edge.

Cut a notch where the elastic will be underneath, like shown in the inset.

Fold the raw edges of that cut notch under. You can either sew the fold in place with another 1/4 inch seam, or do like I did and just go straight to gluing it in place over the elastic.

Hold the fabric in place with paperclips or pins.



While that's drying, glue the top piece to the shoe, following the hem of the shoe underneath.

To secure this piece along the bottom edge, first trim the excess fabric along the edges. Leave enough excess to fold a hem.

Fold the raw edge under, and glue the bottom edge all along the bottom of the shoe like you did with the back heel.

Repeat this on your other shoe, with a quick check to make sure your embroidery placement is roughly in the same place.





Place the final toe strip of fabric where you would like on your shoe. Before you glue anything on this last step, line your shoes up together and do a visual check of how the placement looks.

First glue your strap down under the sewn edge of the fabric. When you've got that top edge secure and dried, trim the fabric around the edge of the shoe, leaving enough excess to fold under like before.

To finish this last step of the shoe, fold the raw edge under, and glue to the bottom along the edge of the toe. I cut a small notch in the edge of the fabric right at the front to help reduce excess fabric when I folded it under. Glue starting from sides and work your way to the center of the toe.



Right at the front, there will be a little excess to fold in and tuck, like the original shoe has underneath. Tuck and secure it as neatly as you can.

If you want an extra finished look along the top edges of your shoe, especially around the opening for your foot, you could do some small hand stitching to keep it all in place.

Once you've done this to both shoes, be sure to give them time to dry properly before you decide to rock them out for a day of walking.





Once the glue is set, you can go back to wearing shoe flat shoes you love so much! A custom update with fabric and embroidery is a sure way to make them last and make them yours.

And if the shoe fits, you might as well keep wearing it!

