

Sensory Busy Blanket



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Poly-Pellets® Busy Blanket

A project from Fairfield
Designed by Pattie Wilkinson
www.pattiewack.com

Sensory Stimulation lap blanket for those with Dementia, Autism, and ADHD

This combination sensory and calming weighted lap pad for seniors with Dementia and Alzheimer's, others with ADD and ADHD, and people who simply benefit from touching and fidgeting. Six busy squares on one side keep restless fingers occupied and elicit curiosity, memories, and awareness. The other side, has pockets lined with soothing satin for a calming experience.

Our Sensory Busy Blanket has a removable, washable cover to keep it fresh and fun to use.

Time to Complete:
A Weekend

Tools Needed:

Sewing Machine
Iron
Ruler
Pins
Cutting Mat & Rotary Cutter
Funnel
Measuring Cups



Supplies Needed*:

- [\(1\) 6 lbs. Bag of Poly-Pellets®](#)
- 1 Yard Fabric for the Outer Case
- 1/2 Yard - Fabric for the Weighted Insert
- (6) 1/4 Yards each - Coordinating Fabrics for the Busy Squares
- 1/4 Yard - Gold Satin for lining Calming Pockets
- (1) - 12" Zipper (Black)
- (2) - 5" Zippers (Purple and Orange)
- 2 Yards - Ribbon for the Handles (1-1/4" wide)
- 1/3 Yard - Green Pompom Trim
- 1/2 Yard - Fuchsia Ribbon (1" wide)
- 1/4 Yard - Pink Ribbon (5/8" wide)
- 1/4 Yard - Orange Ribbon (7/8" wide)
- 6" - White Ribbon (1" wide)

- (1) - 36" White Shoe Lace
- (6) - D-Rings (1-1/4" wide)
- 6" - Brown Ornate Fringe (2" wide)
- 6" - Brown Ruffled Trim (1-1/2" wide)
- 6" - Blue Hook-n-Loop Sew-able Tape
- 4 - Assorted Buttons
- 6" - Crochet Trim (1-1/2" wide)
- 1 - Silver Belt Buckle (2-1/2")
- 1 - Blue Duster with removable chenille fabric
- 3" x 5" Clear Vinyl
- 1/2 Yard - White Rick Rack
- 7 - Assorted Beads
- 6" - Pink Ribbon (1/16" wide)
- 6" - Ornate Ribbon (1-1/4" wide)
- Optional: 1 Blue Tassel, 1 Orange Pompom for the zipper pulls

* Substitute other trims, buckles, buttons and accessories as desired.



Let's Get Started...

Start your Poly-Pellet® Busy Blanket by cutting fabric for the top of the mat 17" x 22".

Next...

Cut 7 squares of coordinating fabric for the busy squares 6" x 6".

"Peek-A-Boo" Square



"Peek-A-Boo" - Busy Square #1

The pompoms keep their fingers busy and this square has an iron-on applique hidden behind the zipper to play peek-a-boo which is sure to surprise you every time!



Gather what you need for your "Peek-A-Boo" square

Pompom trim, 2 squares of fabric (orange and purple), 1 iron-on applique, and a zipper. (see supply list above for specifics)



Step #1

Iron the applique to one of the squares. This will be inside the square, so I used a bright orange to make it bright and playful to match the sun. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to iron the applique to the center of the square.



Steps #3

Sew pompom trim to both sides of the zipper.



Step #2

Cut second square in half and sew the zipper into the opening. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to sew the zipper.



Steps #4

Sew top square with zipper to the bottom square on all 4 sides. You're finished with your first square!

“Tie My Shoe” Square



“Tie My Shoe” - Busy Square #2

One of the basic cognitive skills we all learned was to tie our shoes, and this busy square brings back that memory and gives the fingers plenty to fidget with!



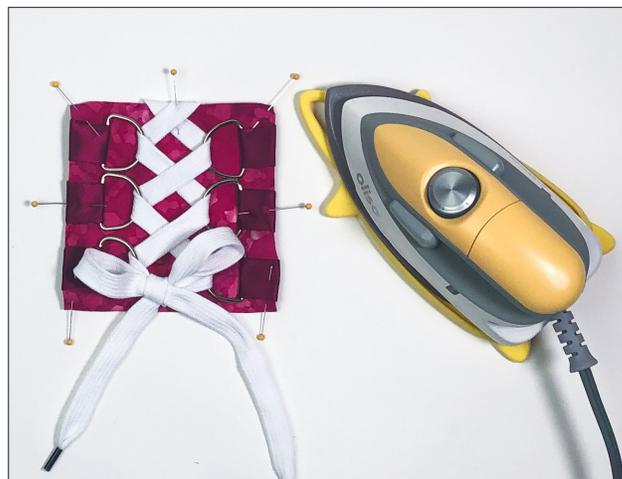
Gather what you need for your “Tie My Shoe” square

1 square of fabric (Pink), a shoe lace, ribbon and D-Rings. (see supply list above for specifics)



Step #1

Cut 6 pieces of fuchsia ribbon into 3” lengths. Loop D-Rings through ribbons and sew to each side of the fuchsia square of fabric.



Step #2

Thread shoe lace through the D-Rings and tie in a bow. Sew the shoe lace to the top edge of the square to keep the shoe lace attached to the mat.

"Lift & Press" Square



"Lift & Press" - Busy Square #3

The action of lifting and pressing the hook-n-loop tape on this square will keep their fingers busy for a long time, and the fringe with buttons are fun to fiddle with!



Gather what you need for your "Lift & Press" square

1 square of fabric (blue) hook-n-loop tape, fringe, ruffled trim and some buttons. (see supply list above for specifics)



Step #1

Sew fringe to the left side of the square.



Steps #3

Press hook-n-loop tapes together and sew one end of the ruffled trim to the top of the square to keep it attached to the mat.



Step #2

Sew the hard side of the hook-n-loop tape to the right side of the square. Sew the soft side of the hook-n-loop tape to the wrong side of the ruffled trim.



Steps #4

Sew buttons on the fringe and to the end open end of the ruffled trim for lifting and pressing.

"Pretty Pocket" Square



"Pretty Pocket" - Busy Square #4

Keep some coins, a key, a photo or a memento in this pretty pocket and play with the buckle as it slides back and forth on a crocheted trim, just for fun!



Gather what you need for your "Pretty Pocket" square

Here's what you need to make the "Pretty Pocket" busy square; 1 square of fabric (orange), a zipper, crocheted trim, and a buckle with the prong removed. (see supply list above for specifics)



Step #1

Sew fringe to the left side of the square.



Step #2

Sew the hard side of the hook-n-loop tape to the right side of the square. Sew the soft side of the hook-n-loop tape to the wrong side of the ruffled trim.

"Pic Pocket" Square



"Pic Pocket" - Busy Square #5

Put a cute pic in the clear pocket of this square and play all day with the fuzzy chenille loops that are taken from a duster you can find at the dollar store!



Gather what you need for your "Pic Pocket" square

1 square of fabric (blue), clear vinyl, rick rack, and a dollar store duster. (see supply list above for specifics)



Step #1

Pull the chenille fabric cover off the plastic handle of the duster.



Step #2

Cut a piece of the chenille fabric 2" x 6".



Steps #3

Sew the chenille fabric piece to the top of the square.



Steps #4

Cut clear vinyl into 3" x 5" rectangle.



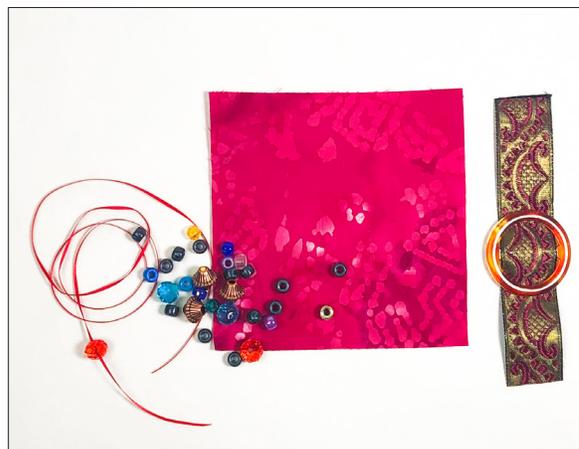
Steps #5

Sew rick rack on top of the vinyl to attach to the bottom of the square on 3 sides to create a clear pocket to place pics.

"Bead-It" Square



"Bead-It" - Busy Square #6



Gather what you need for your "Bead-It" square

1 square of fabric (pink), ribbon, a buckle, and some beads. (see supply list above for specifics)



Step #1

Thread wide ribbon through the buckle and sew at both ends to the bottom square.



Step #2

Thread beads onto skinny ribbon and knot both ends, then sew the knotted ends to the top of the square.

Cover Assembly



Attach squares to the top mat

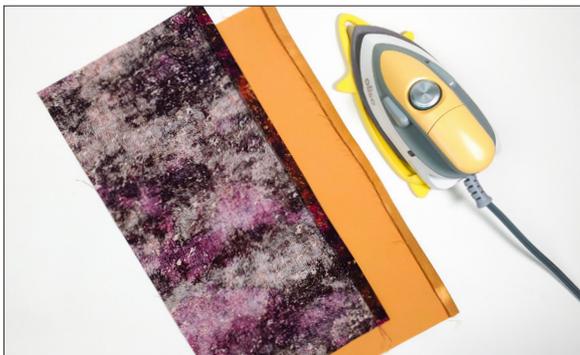
Iron the edges of all the squares under, 1/2" on all sides. Place all 6 busy squares evenly on the top of the mat and pin into place. Top-stitch a 1/8" from the edge to sew all 6 squares to the top of the mat fabric. Set aside to make the bottom of the mat.

Make the bottom mat -



step #1

Start the bottom of the mat by cutting fabric 17" x 21".
Cut gold satin fabric for the pocket lining 8" x 15".
Cut fabric for the top of



step #2 Hem one long edge of the pocket top, and one long edge of the satin lining.



step #3 Pin 65" length of ribbon around the pocket, leaving 18" loops on each end to create handles. Sew ribbon on both sides, to the mat fabric above and below the pockets.



step #4 Pin and sew pocket(s) to the center of the mat fabric with a double top-stitch. Sew down the center of the pocket to form 2 pockets. Pockets will have 2 layers; the top and a layer of satin for the user to run their finger onto for a calming effect.

Cover Assembly

Join the top mat to the bottom mat



step #1 Now it's time to join the top mat (with the squares), to the bottom mat (with the calming pockets) to form a case with a zipper.

Sew a 12" zipper to join the ends of the bottom mat and the top mat.

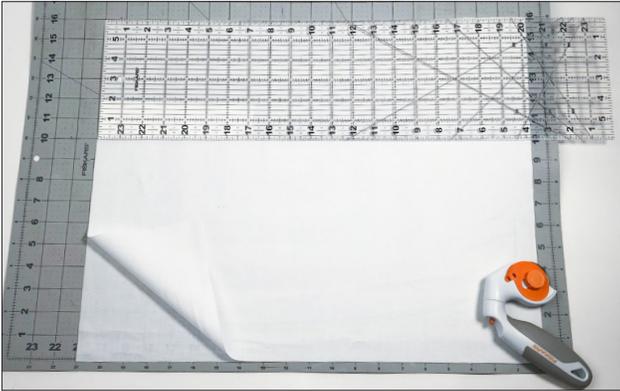


step #2 Open the zipper, with right sides facing, sew the other 3 edges together with a 1/2" seam.



step #3 Turn the case right side out to reveal the finished Busy Blanket.

Make the weighted insert



step #1 - We used muslin for mine, but you can use any non-stretchy fabric for your insert. Cut 2 pieces of fabric for the insert 16" x 26".



step #2 - Sew 2 short sides and 1 long side of the fabric pieces together. Mark rows 2-1/2" apart and sew from top to bottom to create pockets for the Poly-Pellets®.



step #3 Fill each pocket with 1-1/2 cups of Poly-Pellets® pinning each closed as you go. When filled, sew all the pockets closed to complete your weighted blanket insert.

Put it all together -



Place the weighted Poly-Pellets® insert into the Busy Blanket and zip the end closed to complete.

Option: Add a matching pompom and a tassel to the zippers to create cute little pulls to play with.



Roll up your Poly-Pellets® Busy Blanket, grab the handles and..... You're ready to GO!



Put it all together -



Place the weighted insert into the Busy Blanket cover and zip the end closed to complete.

Option: Add matching pompoms and tassels to the zippers for additional stimulation.



Roll up your Poly-Pellets® Busy Blanket, grab the handles and..... You're ready to GO!



Ready for hours of sensory stimulation

Designer Pattie Wilkinson is the ultimate designer, maker, stylist, crafter, and professed dumpster diver, she has tons of DIY ideas with a distinguished design.

Pattie created this project with her Dad in mind. "Never in a million years did I think I would be brainstorming ways to occupy my dad in his senior years. Dementia has taken his mind to a place that is at times lonely and confusing. When I came up with the idea to make something for his idle hands, I found three ideas that intrigued me. I found aprons and mats with items sewn to them to fidget with, weighted lap pads that drape across the knees to bring comfort, and mats with pockets to put your hands in to relieve anxiety. So, I decided to design all three ideas into one Sensory Busy Blanket using Poly-Pellets®!"



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