

Make a braided basket from plastic bags



Materials needed

- Sewing needles (sharps or heavy duty)
- White thread, polyester if possible
- 25 Plastic grocery bags; try for a mix of colours
- Thimble

Instructions

1. One at a time, lay out each bag flat with the sides tucked in.
2. Cut off the handles and bottom of each bag, then pull out the sides of the bag.
3. Cut one side of the bag, along the entire length of the seam.
4. Open the bag up and cut it into three roughly equal strips.
5. As you finish cutting up each bag, set the strips aside, taking care not to get them tangled with each other.
6. Once all the strips have been cut, take three strips and hang them over a nail by the remaining seam, so that two roughly equal parts are hanging down on each strip. Alternatively, you can hang the strips from the edge of your table, counter or desk using some tape.
7. Begin braiding the strips together, treating the two halves of each strip as one strand in the braid. Try not to braid the strands too loose or too tight.
8. Continue braiding until you near the ends of the strips, then tie another strip (folded in half along the seams like the first three strips) to each strand of the braid. Continue this process until you have used up all your strips, making a braid roughly 20-30' long.
9. Once you've finished braiding, use the needle and thread to sew across each end of the braid, then trim off the excess plastic. A thimble is highly recommended for sewing the plastic braids.
10. The finished braid will most likely have a wide side and a skinny side. To make the base of the basket, curl the braid, skinny side up, until you are happy with the size of the base, which will determine the width of the basket.
11. Double-thread your needle, making sure the knot at the end is quite large.
12. Sew four lines of stitches across one side of the base – one vertical, one horizontal, and two diagonals, all meeting at the center of the base.
13. For each line of stitches, anchor the thread to the edge of the base by threading it through one braid over and over again. Thread the needle through every other braid, keeping the thread taut as you go. Anchor the thread to the opposite side of the base, then cut.
14. Once the base is finished, take the remaining braid and lay it on top of the outermost braid of the base, anchoring it to the braid below every 1-2" using a double-threaded needle.
15. Continue building up the sides of the basket by winding and anchoring more layers of braid to the ones below until you are satisfied with the height of your basket.
16. Tuck the end of your braid behind the topmost layer on the basket and sew into place.