

BEANBAG DONUTS for Object Support

Thanks to Heather Joynes and Sue Valis, Conservation Department, Australian Museum

INGREDIENTS:

Washed unbleached muslin, cotton thread, polystyrene beads, sewing machine.

TO ASSEMBLE:

1. Draw 2 concentric circles as a pattern - the sizes we use are approximately:

- (a) small – 2" diameter inside 6" diameter
- (b) medium - 3" diameter inside 8" diameter
- (c) large – 4" diameter inside a 10" diameter

These sizes can vary depending on your job. Leave a ½" seam allowance.

2. Pin 2 layers of washed unbleached muslin fabric and trace the pattern onto the fabric.

3. Cut around the perimeter of the outer circle and then cut out the inner circle.

4. Sew around the edge of the inner circle and reverse the fabric seam (you may need to iron this down).

5. Sew the seam around the edge of the outer circle, leaving approximately a 2" gap. You may wish to zig-zag or overlock the outer edge so that it doesn't fray.

6. Fill the inside with polystyrene beads. Use a paper funnel to direct the polystyrene beads into the casing.

7. Finish sewing the 2" gap.



3D VARIATION:

To make the donut 3D for a more convex shape, use a strip sewn between the two outer edges of your original circle. A starting point could be about 3" raw width (with ½" for each seam), giving you a 2" height.

INGREDIENT VARIATIONS:

Note that you can use polypropylene pellets to fill the bag instead of polystyrene, but this material is more expensive and will make pillow heavier.

If you need a very smooth surface for the finished product, you can also use washed 100% polyester fabric like Tyvek (beware of poly acetate which looks and feels very similar but is unstable). It is difficult to sew but has a good finish for items that have very textured surfaces prone to abrasion by cotton.

These donut supports are easily made in bulk by volunteers and then used as needed to support objects.