From Flat to Fabulous

Rebecca Kemp Brent, Brother Ambassador

Zippered pouches are fashionable, useful, and fun. I like them better when they have a little depth, so I'd like to show you a simple technique: boxing the corners. You can add boxed corners to a ready-made pouch as well as one you're making from scratch, and I have two different methods to show you that yield very different looks.

First: the basic boxed corner

1. Fold the pouch right sides together so that one side seam is aligned with the center bottom. If there's a bottom seam, align the stitches (not the raw edges of the seam allowances); if there's no seam, make a creased guideline by pressing the bag in half.

NOTE: I like to press the seam allowances open or turn them in opposite directions to distribute the bulk.

2. Decide how deep you want the boxing to be. For a small zippered pouch, 1" of depth is plenty; for a tote bag, 3" or larger – even 6" – may work. We'll work with 2" for the first sample today.

3. The fold that matches the seamlines also creates a triangular point. From the point, measure along the seam and make a mark ONE HALF of the desired boxing depth...for this project, 1". (There's math; if you like geometry you've already recognized this, but if you prefer you can just trust me that "one half" works.)
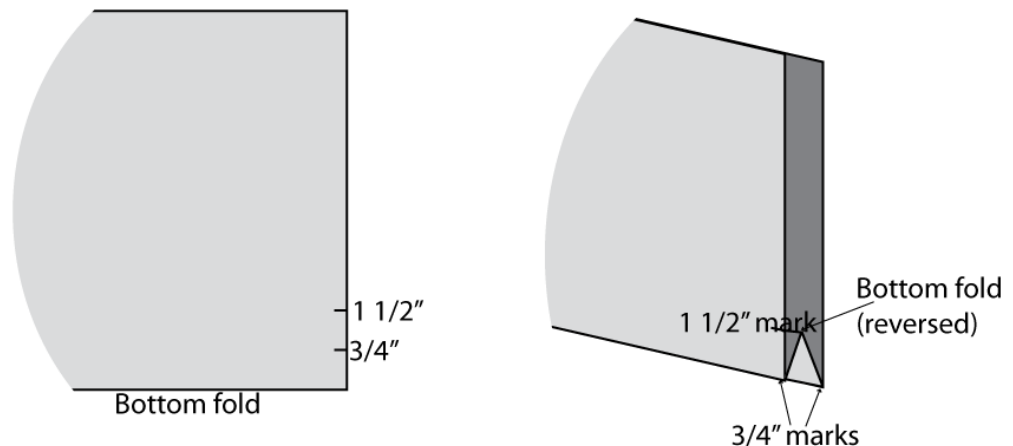
4. Draw a line perpendicular to the seam connecting the folded edges at the point you just marked. It's important that this line is at right angles to the seams, so I like to use a quilting ruler with grid markings.

5. Sew along the line you just drew. Turn the bag right side out and you'll have a neatly boxed corner. Repeat the steps to box the second bottom corner, too.

OPTIONAL: You may want to trim the boxing seam allowances ¼" – ½" from the seamline. If I'm working with an unlined pouch, I also like to serge or overcast the raw edges of the seam. Trimming the boxing seam is optional, but becomes more important with longer boxing seams; having the triangles of a 6" boxing seam flopping about in your tote can get messy.

<u>Next, a boxed corner with style</u>

1. This pouch has a boxing depth of 1½". Cut out your pouch fabric as usual and set the zipper into the upper edges.

2. Sew the bottom seam or fold the bag, right sides together, at the bottom. Measure and mark the side seams 1½" and ¾" (or the boxing depth and half of the boxing depth) above the bottom of the pouch.

3. Make a "W" fold at the bottom of the first side seam by folding the bottom seam or crease up to meet the 1½" mark, turning the fabric so that wrong sides are together (reversing the fold). You'll be sliding the bottom crease/seam in between the two sides of the pouch. The ¾" marks will become right-sides-together folds, positioned at the lower points of the W.

4. Sew the pouch side seam through all layers, catching the W fold securely. I find it's important to pin this seam before sewing, to keep the raw edges of the inner layers from slipping inward. Repeat for the second side seam/corner.

5. Turn the pouch right side out and tidy up the folds so that there's a neat triangular fold at the bottom of each side seam.

<u>Fastest cuts for speedy sewing</u>

If you have a Scan N Cut, you can scan the pattern for a zippered pouch (up to 12" x 24") into the machine and then use the digital cutter to accurately cut out multiple fabric pieces. It makes assembly-line sewing of several bags for gifts quick and easy.

Have you ever seen a pouch pattern with a notch cut out of the bottom? That's another way to approach boxing the corners. Essentially, the seam allowances are already trimmed, and all you have to do is sew the side seams and then refold to match the edges of the boxing seams.