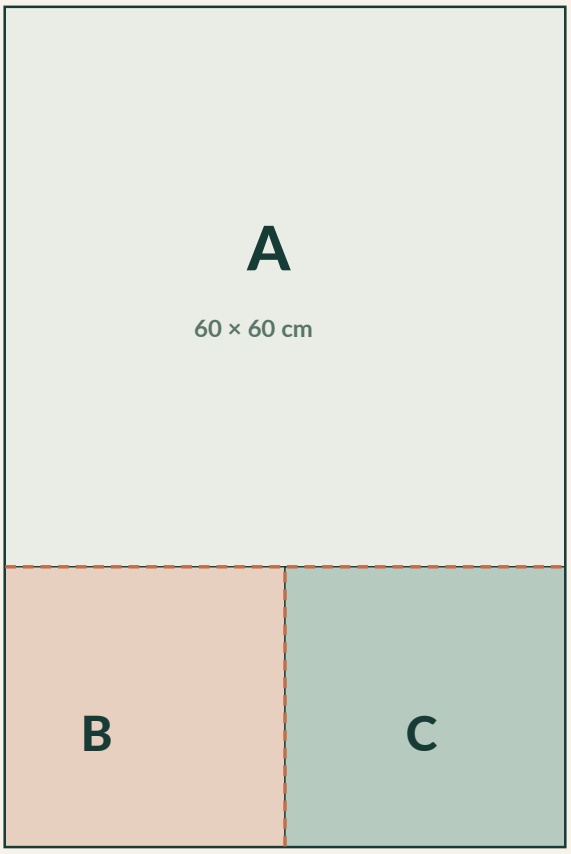
OFFCUTS & CREATIVE REUSE

Make a Reusable Fabric Gift Wrap

One clean rectangle. Three reusable cloths. No cut-off strip.



60 × 90 cm starting piece

A: 1 main wrap B, C: 2 mini squares

Included in this guide

Printable proportioned cut plan + wrap sequence

Double-turn hem math and a reuse record

Illustrative vector cut layout; not an actual fabric trial or full-size textile template.

Steadleaf Press / MAKE / M14 Offcuts & Creative Reuse / STP-MAKE-F007 / FREE practical guide / COMPLETE EDITION

One gift, three pieces of cloth, and no unusable offcuts from a clean rectangular starting piece. This project turns a prepared 60 × 90 cm woven cotton rectangle into one 60 × 60 cm wrapping square and two 30 × 30 cm mini squares. You can also skip cutting entirely by using a clean, already hemmed scarf, napkin or bandanna. The finished cloths can be unfolded, cared for and reused; they are not disposable decorative packaging.

The result is specific: a measured cutting diagram, a simple edge finish, one wrapped lightweight gift, and a brief record of what actually fitted. Neither the cut layout nor a picture proves a particular parcel will fit, that a knot will hold when lifted, or that a fabric will withstand washing. Test your own material and gift before relying on the result. There is no sewing-machine requirement; a slow hand-sewn edge is an option.

1. Pick one of two honest starting routes

Route A — no cutting. Find a clean, fully finished cloth square such as a fabric napkin, bandanna or suitable scarf. Confirm the care instructions, inspect for stains, loose decorations and tears, and try it around your particular gift. This is the simplest zero-new-offcut route. Do not cut something usable just to match a diagram.

Route B — a planned cut from a rectangle. Choose a stable, closely woven cotton or cotton-blend rectangle whose measured, prepared usable area really is 60 × 90 cm. A washed and pressed piece from an old sheet can work if it is sound, clean and appropriate for the project. A stretchy knit, slippery silk, thick upholstery fabric or fabric with a coating is a poor first attempt: the corners may be hard to tie, some materials require different edge finishes, and laundering is not interchangeable.

Use a tape measure or long ruler, washable or removable fabric marker, fabric shears, sewing pins or clips, a hand-sewing needle and compatible thread. You may use a sewing machine with its manual if you already know how to operate it safely. Keep sharp tools and loose cords away from children and animals. Never work with a needle left inside a gift wrap.

Check the fabric's care label or known history. American Sewing Guild recommends laundering or otherwise preshrinking as appropriate **before** cutting, and checking lengthwise and crosswise grain. [1] A measuring plan made on unwashed fabric is not proof of the sizes you will have after its first wash. If the cloth cannot be washed safely or its treatment history is unknown, choose a different piece rather than declaring it suitable for repeated use.

2. Understand the zero-offcut layout before you touch scissors

The original diagram uses the entire usable 60 × 90 cm rectangle. Mark a transverse line at 60 cm from a 60 cm end, creating a square 60 × 60 cm region and a remaining 60 × 30 cm band. Then divide that band into two 30 × 30 cm squares with one line at the 30 cm midpoint.

- **Piece A — main wrap:** 60 × 60 cm cut dimensions. Intended for trial wrapping of an ordinary small, light box.
- **Piece B — mini square:** 30 × 30 cm cut dimensions. Useful for a tiny soft or lightweight item if the corners reach; otherwise keep it as a small reusable cloth accessory.
- **Piece C — mini square:** another 30 × 30 cm cut square. Use it separately, or keep it for a second trial rather than cutting it into disposable scraps.

The area check is exact: 60 × 90 = 5,400 cm². Piece A is 3,600 cm², and Pieces B and C are 900 cm² each. 3,600 + 900 + 900 = 5,400 cm². The two marked cuts partition the rectangle; they do not produce a fourth offcut. This is a *geometric no-offcut plan*, not a claim that manufacturing, washing, straightening damaged edges or the eventual lifecycle produces zero waste.

If you have 58 × 88 cm after laundering, **do not** pretend you still have 60 × 90 cm. Either use the rectangle as-is to wrap a suitable item without cutting or design a new partition from the measured usable dimensions. If the piece is stained or badly skewed, cut only after deciding how the unwanted area will be handled; the zero-offcut claim no longer applies automatically.

The accompanying A4 and US Letter cut-plan PDF is **schematic**, approximately 1:5. It cannot be placed over fabric as a full-size pattern. Measure each dimension directly on the textile; the printed numbers, rather than the physical printed outlines, govern your cuts.

3. Square the prepared cloth without creating unnecessary waste

Lay the dry, prepared fabric on a clear table. Smooth it without stretching the edges to make the ruler agree. Check the two long sides and the two crosswise edges against one another. They should form a usable rectangle with approximately right-angle corners. Woven fabric grain runs along its lengthwise and crosswise threads; grain can become distorted during production and handling. [1, 2]

If the rectangle is significantly off grain or uneven, stop. Your choices are to use a pre-finished cloth without cutting, gently prepare and square the fabric following reliable sewing guidance, or accept a revised plan with an honest account of the unusable edge. Do not use large scissor cuts to hide a discrepancy that should have been measured first. The exact cut plan assumes a **clean, usable** rectangle already exists.

Mark all dimensions on the wrong side if it is identifiable, using a removable marking method you have tried on an inconspicuous patch. For an unprinted fabric, label the top-left corner on a scrap of paper, not by permanently writing on the cloth. Check the 60 cm and 30 cm marks from more than one edge and see that the intended cut lines are straight before cutting. A few carefully placed clips can keep layers from shifting, but avoid cutting through stacked or folded fabric if you cannot verify the hidden layers.

4. Cut the three planned pieces

1. With the fabric fully supported, mark the full-width 60 cm division. Recheck it using the opposite edge. The first cut should leave one square-shaped 60 × 60 cm panel and one 60 × 30 cm band.
2. Cut along that marked line using appropriate fabric shears. Do not rush through the final centimetres or cut over the edge of the table. Move the fabric into a reachable position rather than stretching your body over the cutting path.
3. Lay the 60 × 30 cm band flat. Measure 30 cm along the 60 cm dimension, check again, and mark the second cut across its 30 cm width.
4. Cut the band once to form Pieces B and C. Keep all three pieces together and confirm their cut dimensions. If the material moved and a square is slightly irregular, record the actual result; do not invent a correction hidden from your own worksheet.

The printed diagram is an original teaching layout, not a licensed commercial sewing pattern and not evidence that a particular recycled textile was physically cut. Do not make more pieces just to use a whole sheet if the recipient will not reuse them. Route A is preferable when an existing cloth already fits the gift.

5. Finish the edges so the wrap can be used again

Cut woven fabric can fray. Seamwork notes that finishing edges helps reusable fabric gift wrap last, and identifies sewing or other appropriate edge treatments as options. [3] Choose an edge finish you can carry out safely with your fabric. Do **not** use an untested liquid adhesive on gift fabric as a universal substitute for a suitable finish: it may change the feel, washing behavior or safety of the cloth.

For plain, stable woven cotton, a **double-turned narrow hem** is a manageable beginner option. On each edge, fold approximately 5 mm to the wrong side and then another 5 mm, hiding the raw edge. Hold the turn with clips or with carefully placed pins, keeping pins out of your hand path. Stitch close to the inner fold using small consistent hand stitches or a suitable machine straight stitch. Use your fabric's care instructions and the iron manufacturer's instructions if pressing a crease; do not assume one temperature works for all fibres or leave a hot iron unattended.

Fold and secure the corners neatly; if they become too bulky, reconsider the fabric and finish rather than cutting arbitrary wedges that break the no-offcut plan. Work on all four sides. The double turn uses **5 mm + 5 mm = approximately 10 mm at each edge**. Two opposite hems together use about 20 mm (2 cm) of each cut dimension, so

the nominal finished dimensions are approximately **58 × 58 cm** for Piece A and **28 × 28 cm** for B and C. These are arithmetic estimates, not measurements from a stitched sample. A real hem, thick cloth or post-sewing wash may alter the result. If you use another edge method, record its allowance instead of borrowing these numbers.

After sewing, remove every temporary pin or clip. Sweep the workspace for loose needles and cut threads. Inspect the hem for an open gap, a sharp loose thread or fraying that would make another use unpleasant. A neat photograph is not a substitute for touching and checking the actual seams.

6. Choose a modest gift and test the fit

Place the **finished** large square flat and lay a small, stable, unbreakable gift near its centre. Start with a light box, not a glass jar, a sharp object or an expensive fragile item. Turn the square so its corners point broadly toward the sides of the box if that provides comfortable coverage. Before tying, check whether the four corners can reach and whether the fabric stays flexible around the object.

Fold a near corner over the gift, then fold its opposite corner over the top. Neaten excess fabric rather than pulling it into a hard crease. Gather the two remaining corners above the gift and tie them securely using a knot you can undo without ripping the hem. Explore Ecology demonstrates fabric wrapping by folding the opposite corners and tying the remaining fabric; there is more than one valid technique. [4]

Keep the parcel supported on the table while assessing the knot. Gently check that the cloth covers the gift and that the knot does not slide open under a slight hand movement. **Do not lift or carry the object by the knot or tails**, and never claim that this craft wrap can suspend a heavy or breakable gift. If the corners cannot reach, choose a smaller gift or a larger existing cloth; do not make a tight, risky knot to rescue an undersized wrap.

For Piece B or C, do a separate fit trial with a tiny object. A 28 cm finished cloth may not leave enough tails for your gift. It is completely acceptable to keep these as reusable mini cloths until an appropriate use is found. There is no requirement to turn them into food-contact cloths, children's playthings or load-bearing bags.

7. Compare two ways to give the wrap

Returnable household wrapping. Explain to the recipient that the cloth is reusable and invite them to return it after opening if both of you want to exchange it again. Attach any gift note with a removable paper tag rather than permanent glue or staples. The reuse agreement matters more than claiming a particular number of avoided paper sheets.

Wrapping that is itself part of the gift. Choose cloth suitable for the recipient and its intended future cleaning. Provide its care instructions or a clear statement that the fibre and care are unknown if that is the honest answer. Avoid representing a second-hand tablecloth as a sterile food textile. If the recipient does not want cloth, do not call the transfer of unwanted fabric a sustainability success.

A sample in your notes can be as simple as: “One prewashed cotton square, approximately 58 cm finished; wrapped a lightweight notebook box on the table; knot opened and re-tied twice; hand stitching inspected; washing durability not tested.” Report only what you really checked. Do not turn imagined wrapping examples into measured trials.

8. Care for the wrap and decide what to change

After opening, untie rather than cut the cloth. Check for knots that have pulled a hem, new stains or a torn corner. Clean according to the known textile-care instructions; do not claim every recycled cotton blend is machine washable, colorfast or suitable for tumble drying. Dry and store the cloth fully before folding it away. Recheck its measurements if later washing changes the fit.

If one hem loosens, repair that ordinary stitch line before the next use. If the cloth becomes unsuitable, consider a different safe textile project consistent with its condition rather than asserting infinite reuse. Reuse is a practical possibility that depends on whether people actually retain and use the wraps.

9. Three common decisions, without a made-up success story

Your piece measures 60 × 88 cm after washing. It is not the 60 × 90 cm example. You may use the whole rectangle without cutting; if you want equal square pieces, redesign from actual dimensions and record any resulting remnant. Your label should not say “no-offcut 60 × 90 plan completed.”

Your gift is too wide for the large square. Stop pulling the four corners. Try a previously finished larger scarf if available, choose a smaller parcel, or use ordinary wrapping for this occasion. A difficult knot is not evidence the cloth is correctly sized.

Your offcut fabric unravels unusually quickly. Stop before producing all three pieces. Confirm whether your material needs another edge treatment or a different beginner project. No printed guide can certify stitch durability on a material it has never physically seen.

Finish with four simple records: the prepared usable fabric size; the actual cut sizes; your chosen edge treatment and finished measurements; and the outcome of one on-table wrapping and untying trial. Leave unperformed tests blank.

References and editorial limits

[1] American Sewing Guild, “Preparing Your Fabric” (2022). Prewashing, fibre-care guidance and checking grain before cutting. https://www.asg.org/preparing-your-fabric/

[2] Sewing & Craft Alliance, “Properly Preparing Your Fabrics — Part 1.” Lengthwise and crosswise grain and consequences of off-grain fabric. https://www.sewing.org/learn_to_sew/properly_preparing_fabric.html

[3] Seamwork, “3 Ways to Wrap Your Gifts in Fabric” (2023). Usable fabric sizes, edge finishing and fabric wrapping. https://www.seamwork.com/sewing-tutorials/3-ways-to-wrap-your-gifts-in-fabric

[4] Explore Ecology, “Wrap Your Gifts with Fabric” (2020). Fabric wrapping by folding and tying, as an alternative to disposable packaging. https://exploreecology.org/wrap-your-gifts-with-fabric/

The 60 × 90 cm partition, three-size calculation, visual cut plan, optional double-turn hem arithmetic, two-page printable worksheet and example records are original Steadleaf Press editorial material. No third-party photograph or diagram is reproduced. The examples are hypothetical, not documented material tests. No physical sewing, wash, cutting, knot-retention or gift-lifting test was performed. This is a low-load decorative wrapping guide, not a toy, safety restraint, protective cover, food-service textile or instructions for supporting fragile objects. The original manuscript received independent textual review, with a final PASS verdict. No physical sewing, wash, cutting, knot-retention or gift-lifting test was performed.

TWO WAYS TO BEGIN

A / NO CUT

Use a clean, already hemmed square when it fits your gift.

B / PLANNED CUT

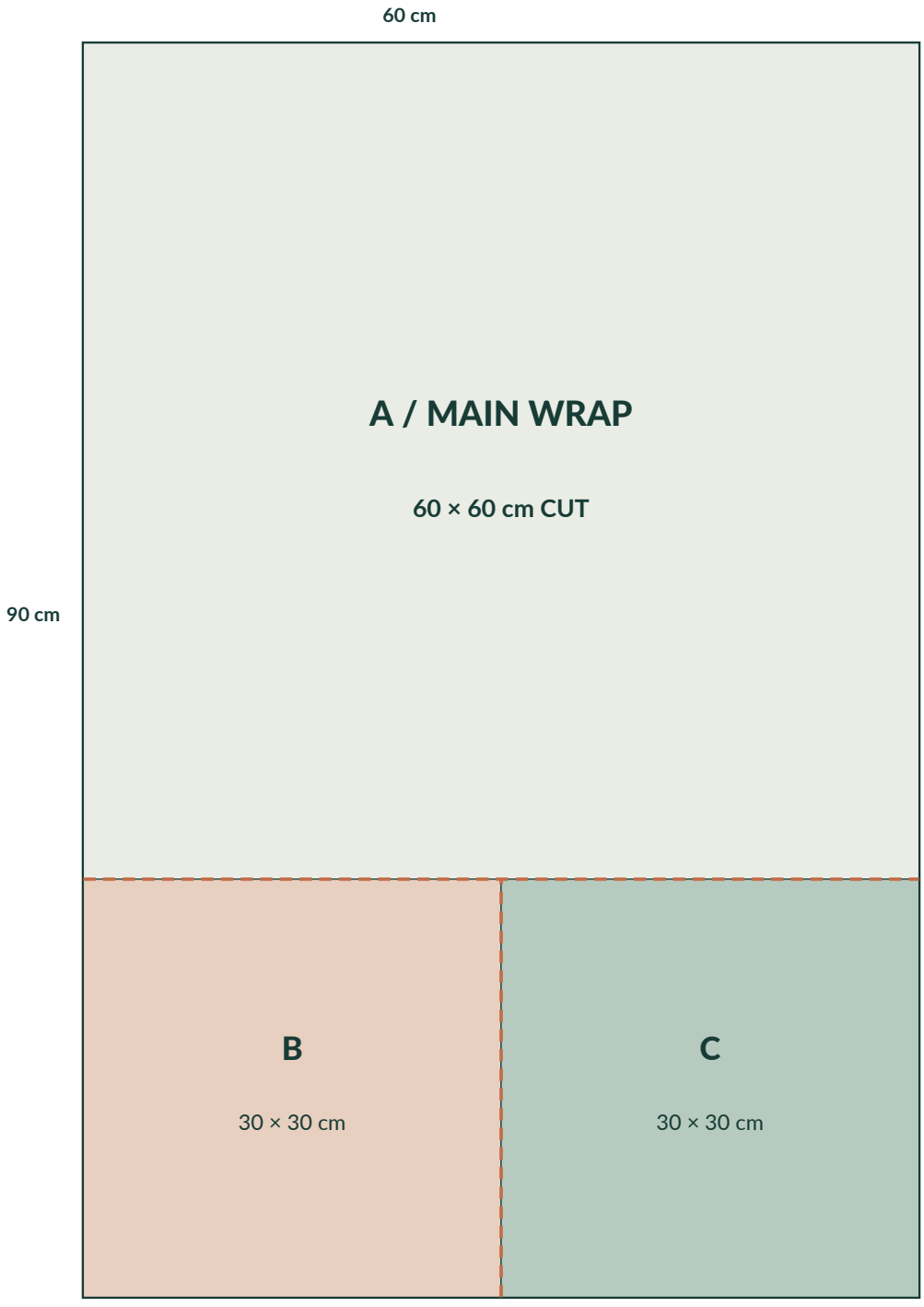
Use the 60 x 90 cm layout only after you measure the usable cloth.

Keep the no-offcut claim tied to what you actually measured.

NO-OFFCUT FABRIC CUT PLAN

Start with a prepared, usable 60 × 90 cm rectangle (AFTER any laundering).

Schematic at 1:5. This page is not a full-size textile-cutting template.



AREA CHECK: 60 × 90 = (60 × 60) + (30 × 30) + (30 × 30) cm²

Only exact for an already usable rectangle; crooked or stained edges may create waste.

Measure directly on cloth. Do not cut by tracing this reduced-size illustration.

MAKE · WRAP · REUSE / FIRST BUILD RECORD

Keep the actual sizes separate from those shown in the example.

Route chosen

A: already hemmed cloth / B: measured new rectangle

Fabric and care

Fibre / origin / care instructions: _____

Prepared usable size

_____ cm × _____ cm after washing / prep

Square / grain checked

Yes / No / Uncertain Method: _____

Cut / no cut

A _____ × _____ / B _____ × _____ / C _____ × _____ cm

Hem / edge treatment

Method: _____ Seam allowance per side _____ mm

Finished dimensions

A _____ × _____ / B _____ × _____ / C _____ × _____ cm

Needles and pins removed

Yes / No / Not used

Gift tested on table

Describe size and material: _____

Knot / closure

Covered? Yes / No Unties? Yes / No Not tested

Actual use plan

Recipient will reuse / Return within household / Undecided

WHAT WILL I CHANGE NEXT TIME?

~~This sheet records a physical test only if you actually complete one.~~

Decorative low-load fabric wrap. No claims of food, infant, toy or load safety.