

# How to Make a Bicycle Saddle Bag

Explore this Article ■ [Single Saddle Bag](#) ■ [Dual Saddle Bags](#) ■ [Things You'll Need](#)

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Saddlebags or panniers are an awesome add-on to your bicycle. Not only do they look aesthetically good but they are very functional as well! However, saddlebags can be a bit expensive or some available on the market just won't suit your taste. Why not make your own saddlebags? It's not hard as you think and as long as you have all the materials needed, it will take perhaps just a day or less to make. Follow these steps and let's get started.

## Things You'll Need

- ☐ Bicycle
- ☐ Bicycle Rear Rack
- ☐ Old bag
- ☐ 1/4-inch plywood approximately 12 x 14 inches
- ☐ Drill
- ☐ Saw
- ☐ 4 ordinary 1/4-20 nuts per bag
- ☐ 2 U-bolts per bag
- ☐ 2 L-Brackets per bag
- ☐ Wood Adhesive
- ☐ Foam board
- ☐ Measuring tape or ruler

## Method 1 of 2: Single Saddle Bag

**1 Find a suitable bag.** It's better if you can find something that is weatherproof for durability, but any bag you have will do in a pinch.

- Get a bag with that retro-appeal or euro-look. You could go an old army bag from a military surplus store.



- Visit the nearest thrift shop in town. There are no limits here in what style you want. You can even go for canvas grocery bags.

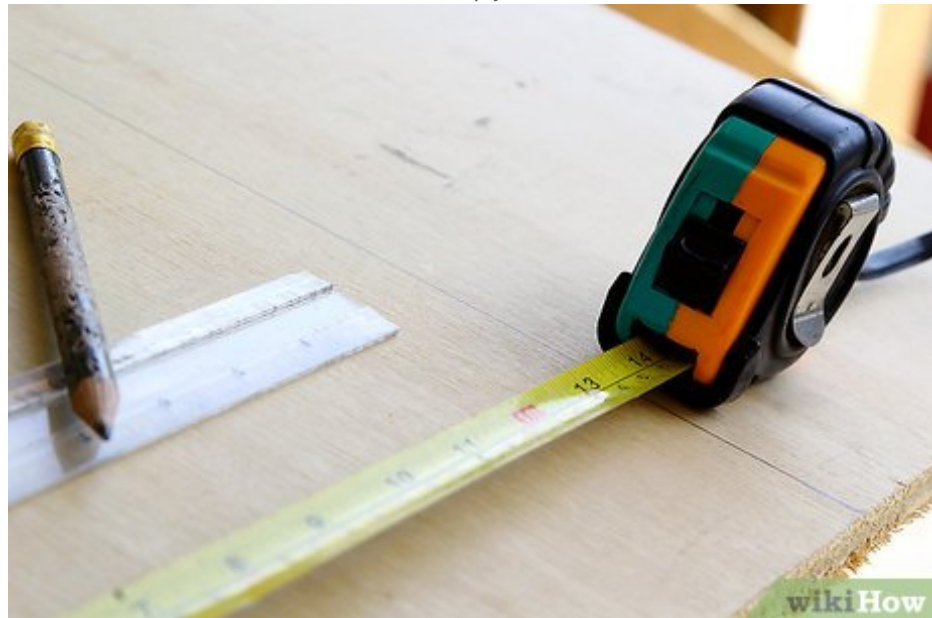




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**2 Measure the size of your bag.** Make sure to measure the length and width of the bag, as well as the base of the bag.

- Transfer these measurements to a 1/4-inch plywood.



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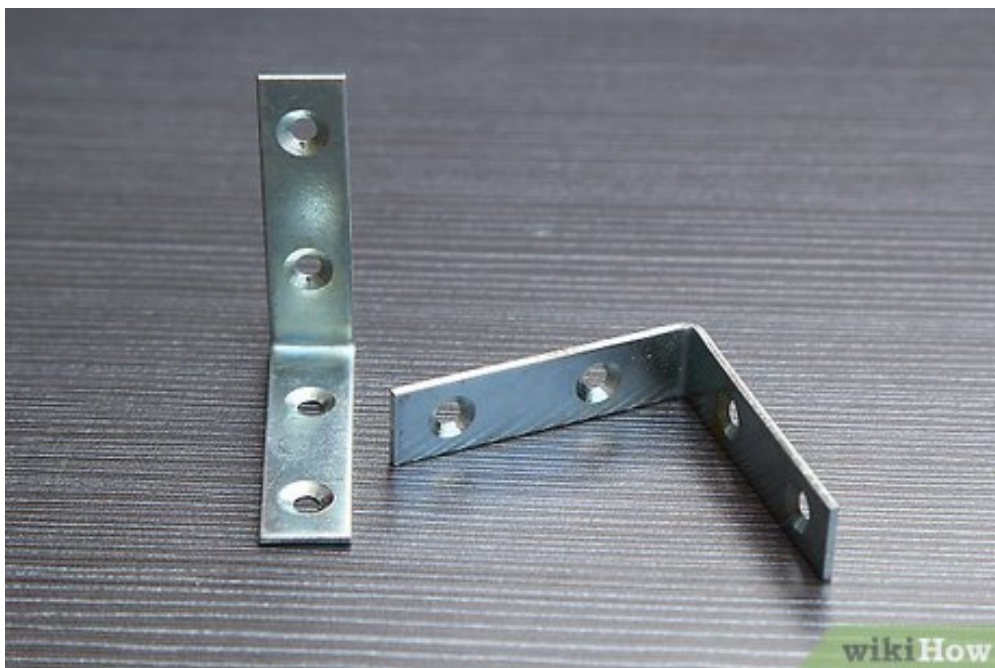
- Cut the wood to the size of your bag.



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- You should now have two wood panels, one for the back of the bag and the other for the bottom of the bag.



**3** Obtain two L-brackets

- Attach the back and bottom of the saddlebag using the L-brackets.



- Add wood glue for more strength and allow to dry. You now have a board for your saddlebag.







**4** Tuck the board inside the bag.



**5** Find something sharp (like a scissor or ice pick) and poke the corners. The holes should be at least 1 to 1.5 inches (2.5 to 3.8 cm) away from the corners.

- Get a large screwdriver to make the holes bigger.



- These 4 holes will be use to join the wooden board to your bag.

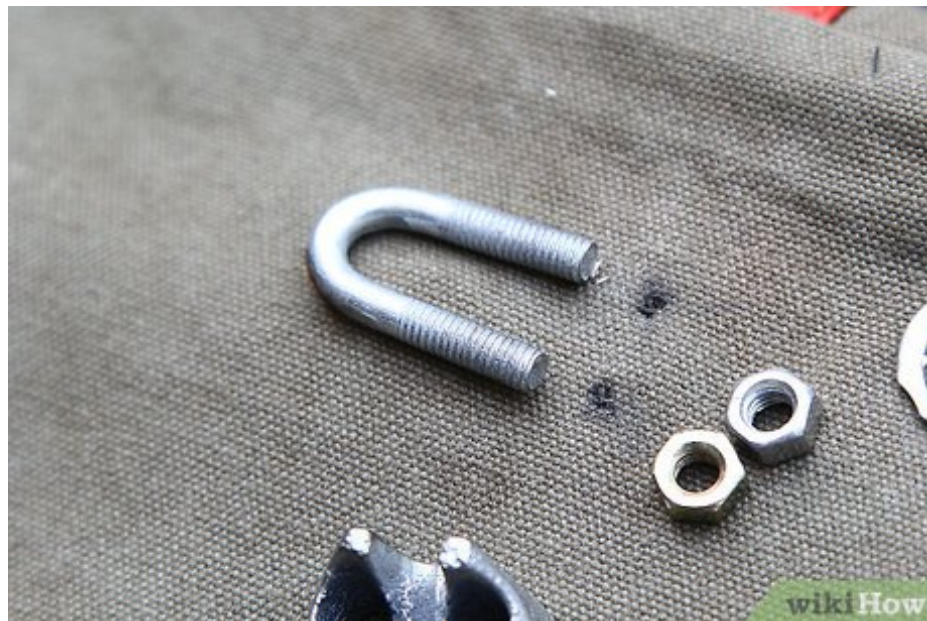






**6 Obtain two set of U-bolts.** They should be about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch (0.6 cm) in size, depending on the **size of the frame of your bike**. For a test fit, mount the U-bolts on the bike rear rack. Get the measurements of the U-bolt from the rack and apply this to the saddlebag.

- Poke the holes for the U-bolts.







**7** Remove the board from the bag.



**8** **Drill the holes for mounting.** Using the markings the board got from the sharp object you used to poke the bag as a guide.

- You should have 4 holes for you to attach the board to the saddlebag.



- Drill another set of holes for the U-bolts so you can mount the saddlebag to the bike rear rack.







**9** **Insert the wooden board once more.** Screw 4 ordinary 1/4-20 nuts on to the holes you made accordingly.

- Screw the nuts on the 4 corners of the bag, securing together the bag and wooden board.





**10 Prepare the rear rack.** Get your U-bolt and place them on the rack. It is better you place the saddlebag on you left side of the bike so it won't interfere with any moving part of the bike, like the sprocket.

- Insert the U-bolt from the bike rack to the fabric of the bag.







**11** Insert the U-bolt to the bag, passing through wooden board.



**12** Secure the saddlebag to the rack by tightening the nut of the U-bolt.



- 13** Add a foam board to the bag for insulation, to dampen the cargo and hide the wood frame.





## 14 Tuck the bag's straps in and you're ready to go.

- Cleaning is easy- simply loosen the nuts of the U-bolts. You can even detach the bag and carry it when off your bike.





**15** Now you're done! This saddlebag can carry approximately 4 kilos of cargo.



**16** Looks cool on your bike! Enjoy your own DIY bicycle pannier.



## Method 2 of 2: Dual Saddle Bags



- 1 Visit your nearest thrift shop and buy two identical bags.



- 2 Measure the length and width of both bags.



### 3 Transfer these measurements to a piece of plywood.

- Cut the plywood into size.







**4** Insert the plywood into the bag.



**5** Install a bike rear rack (this is where you will mount the saddlebags)



- 6** Place the bag on the side of the bike rear rack. Visualize where to mount the bags.
- Mark the areas where you will put holes on the bag where the U-bolts will go through.







**7** Poke holes on your markings.



**8** Get your drill and make holes passing through the plywood inside the bag.



**9** Place the U-bolt on the the bike rear rack.



**10** Mount the bag and secure them with the U-bolts and nuts.





**11** Do the same steps for the other bag.

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