

-Do It Yourself- Practice Flags!

By Catina Anderson

Most practice flags are a simple, solid-colored rectangle made from a lightweight flag fabric such as polychina silk or nylon lining. Using practice flags for fundamentals and during muddy rehearsals helps extend the life of your show flags! You can purchase inexpensive practice flags from equipment supply catalogs (some provide free practice flags with the purchase of a show flag) or save a few dollars making them yourself!

Here are easy-to-follow instructions for a simple, rectangular practice flag to fit a 6-foot tall flag pole.

Materials:

A Minimum of 55.5 inches in length of 45" wide polychina silk or nylon lining (approximately 1 5/8 yd)

Scissors

Measuring tape (or yard stick)

Sewing machine

Thread

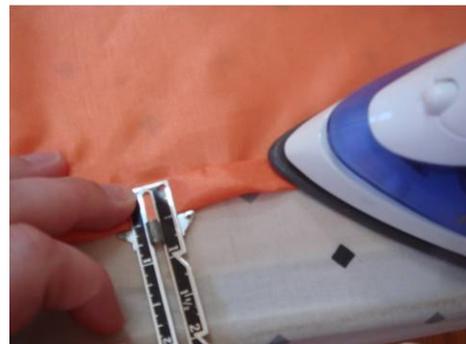
Iron

Dimensions:

The dimensions of a practice flag are variable based on instructor preference. I prefer the flag to end exactly half way down the pole and then I choose a length that spins well without too much folding over when the flag is spun. Taking into account an approximately 1" end cap at the top of the pole and the overall pole length for a 6 foot pole being 72" I make my flags 35" along the casing side. I attach the flags to the pole with electrical tape though you certainly could add Velcro if you prefer.

Instructions:

1. Cut a rectangle piece of fabric in the dimensions you prefer. To determine your pre-sewn dimensions simply take your desired finished flag dimensions and add 2" to the width (down the pole) and 4.5 inches to the length to account for the casing and hems. This gives a ½ inch finished hem all the way around the flag. I start with a pre-sewn rectangle that is 37" x 55 ½"
2. On all four edges, fold over ½ inch of fabric and iron in place. Then fold over ½ inch again, so that the cut edges are concealed, and iron in place. This creates the hem around the flag and hiding the raw edges helps to reduce fraying



OPTIONAL STEP:

Follow the instructions below to make neat corners that hide all the raw edges!

1. Make the first fold in for the hem by folding over 1/2" of fabric and iron in place.
2. Then fold the corner over so that the edge meets up with the unfinished edge of the fabric (this hides the unfinished edge of material at the corner to prevent the possibility of fraying) and iron in place.



3. Finally, fold the hem over once again another 1/2" so that all unfinished edges are hidden. Then iron in place. You should end up with a neat diagonal line in from the corner.



3. Sew the hem in place with either a straight stitch or a zig-zag stitch.
4. To create the casing, measure 2 1/2 inches. Fold over and iron in place.



OPTIONAL STEP: If you wish to add tabs to your silk to more easily attach the electrical tape, follow the steps below:

1. Cut out a rectangle of fabric approximately 2" x 3 1/2"
2. Fold in 1/2" along the long edges to meet in the center



3. Then fold again to hide all raw edges.



4. Fold in half lengthwise to create the tab loop and then sew into the pole casing at the fold.



5. Sew down the pole casing twice (to create two parallel seams) to hold the casing securely in place (if you wish to add Velcro, do so before sewing the casing in place). Practice flag casings take a lot of abuse so the double seam helps delay the need for repair.

Fabric can be purchased through many of the supply catalogs as well as from fabric wholesalers such as those listed in our web links.