

Lap Fidget Blanket

A Free Sewing Pattern for Dementia & Memory Care · daytodaydementia.com

A beginner-friendly lap blanket pattern with zippers, buttons, ribbons, and a pocket — sized, sequenced, and built with safety in mind from the first stitch. This pattern pairs with our full written guide, “How to Sew a Fidget Blanket for a Loved One With Dementia,” at daytodaydementia.com/articles.

KEY SAFETY PRINCIPLES

- Finished size: approx. 20" x 24" — large enough for several features without being heavy or hard to manage.
- Every attached feature is stitched to survive real pulling: double or triple-stitched, no loose small parts.
- No item under 1.5" that could detach and become a choking hazard — see the safety checklist on page 3.
- Not appropriate for anyone who tends to put objects in their mouth or tear at fabric — check with the care team first.

Materials List

- 1 background/front panel fabric, 22" x 26" — quilting cotton or lightweight canvas holds stitching well.
- 1 soft batting or fleece, 22" x 26" (middle layer for warmth and body).
- 1 soft backing fabric, 22" x 26" — minky, fleece, or flannel feels comforting against the hands.
- Assorted large buttons (1"+), an 8–10" heavy-duty zipper, wide grosgrain ribbon, large snaps or Velcro, a thick cord or shoelace, and 2–3 contrasting fabric scraps (corduroy, silky lining, terrycloth).
- Heavy-duty matching thread, sewing machine, fabric scissors, pins or clips, fabric marking pen.

Feature Layout Diagram



Finished panel: approx. 20" wide x 24" tall (front feature panel)

Construction Steps

Step 1 — Plan your feature zones

Before cutting, sketch your 22" x 26" front panel into 4–6 zones on paper or directly on the fabric with a marking pen: a zipper zone, a button-flap zone, a ribbon-braid zone, a textured-patch zone, and a pocket zone are a good starting set. Spacing features out (rather than crowding them into one corner) gives each one enough fabric underneath for secure stitching.

Step 2 — Build and attach each feature

- Zipper zone: sew the zipper onto a rectangle of contrasting fabric, then stitch that rectangle onto the front panel around all four sides.
- Button-flap zone: sew 3–4 large buttons onto the panel, then stitch a flap with matching buttonholes over them.
- Ribbon-braid zone: sew three lengths of wide ribbon securely at one end only, so they can be braided and unbraided.
- Textured-patch zone: appliqué a contrasting-texture patch with a dense zigzag stitch around the entire edge.
- Pocket zone: sew a simple fabric pocket onto the panel, secured on three sides.

Step 3 — Assemble the quilt sandwich

1. Layer: backing fabric (right side down), batting, then the front panel with features (right side up).
2. Pin or clip generously around the edges and through the middle.
3. Stitch around the entire perimeter, leaving a 4–5 inch gap on one side to turn right-side out.
4. Trim corners, turn right-side out through the gap, press flat, and hand-stitch the gap closed.
5. Optional: quilt a simple grid or a few straight lines through all three layers to keep the batting from shifting.

Safety Stress-Test Checklist

Complete every item below before the blanket ever reaches your loved one. Re-check after every wash.

- ☐ Pulled firmly on every button — none give or loosen.
- ☐ Tugged hard on every ribbon, cord, and braid end — all attachment points hold.
- ☐ Yanked the zipper pull in both directions — the zipper stays fully attached to the panel.
- ☐ Pressed firmly on every seam and patch edge — no gaps or loose stitching.
- ☐ Confirmed no piece is smaller than 1.5" that could fully detach.
- ☐ Checked that this is an appropriate activity for this specific person (not for someone who mouths objects or tears fabric).
- ☐ Planned to re-inspect all attachments every few weeks and after every wash.

A GENTLE NOTE

- Day to Day Dementia offers peer support and companionship — not medical care.
- This pattern is general guidance, not a substitute for your loved one's care team's input on which sensory activities are safe and appropriate for their specific needs.

You are not alone in this.

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