Making my fabric labels

Free Canva on an iPad, an inkjet printer, transfer paper and an old cotton pillowcase.

My label size
4.5 x 1.64 cm | 45 x 16.4 mm | approximately 1.77 x 0.65 inches
These are the design dimensions, before any extra fabric margin for stitching.

1. Create a simple label

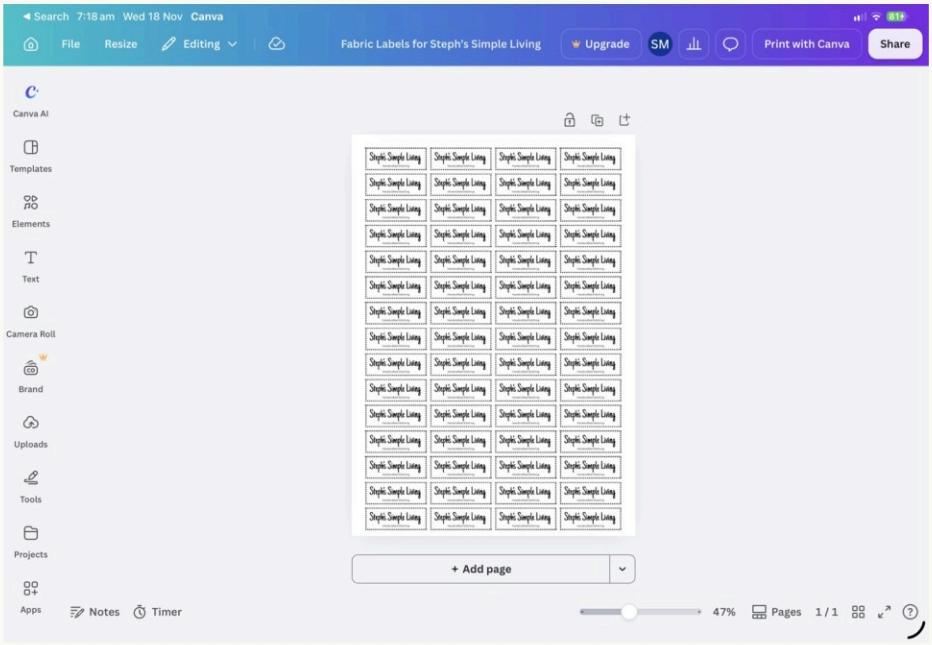
In free Canva, choose Create a design > Custom size. Select mm and enter 45 wide x 16.4 high. Start with a white background, add your name and, if you like, a small second line such as “Handmade by...” or “Handcrafted Stitching”.

Choose free fonts that remain readable at this small size. A simple border is optional. Leave space around the words for cutting and stitching. Items marked with a crown may require a paid subscription.

2. Save the design and make an A4 sheet

Choose Share > Download > PNG and save the label image to your iPad. Create a new, blank A4 design using Custom size: 210 x 297 mm (21 x 29.7 cm; about 8.27 x 11.69 inches). Use a design page rather than a Canva Doc.

Add your saved label using Camera Roll. Select it, open Position > Advanced, and keep the Ratio padlock closed. Set Width to 4.5 cm; Height should adjust to about 1.64 cm. Tap another field to apply the change. Check that the whole design remains visible.



My finished A4 design: four labels across and fifteen rows down, giving 60 labels.

Arrange, save and print

Keep the size and proportions unchanged when duplicating. Test on ordinary paper first.

3. Build one row of four

Select the first label and use Position to set X = 1 cm, Y = 1 cm, with rotation at 0 degrees. Duplicate it three times. Keep Y at 1 cm and use these X positions:

Label	X: cm	X: mm	X: inches*
First	1	10	0.39
Second	5.8	58	2.28
Third	10.6	106	4.17
Fourth	15.4	154	6.06

*Inches are approximate. Y = 1 cm = 10 mm = about 0.39 inches for this first row.

4. Group the row and fill the page

Select one label, open ... > Select multiple, then select all four. Tap Group (selecting together alone does not group them). Duplicate the grouped row, leaving its size and rotation unchanged.

Keep each row at X = 1 cm. Start with Y = 1 cm and add 1.9 cm (19 mm; about 0.75 inches) for each new row. The Y positions in cm are:
1, 2.9, 4.8, 6.7, 8.6, 10.5, 12.4, 14.3, 16.2, 18.1, 20, 21.9, 23.8, 25.7, 27.6.



The light-fabric inkjet transfer paper I used.

5. Download and test print

Rename the design clearly. Mine is Fabric Labels for Steph's Simple Living. Choose Share > Download > PDF Print, with crop marks and bleed off.

Print one copy on ordinary A4 paper, one page per sheet. Check the full sheet fits and measure one label: roughly 45 x 16.4 mm. If a scale setting is available, use 100% / actual size. The measured test is your final check.

Once happy, print on the printable side of your transfer paper. My Light 2.0 paper says "No Mirror". Other papers differ, so follow your own packet for mirroring, media settings and paper loading.

Transfer onto cotton fabric

This is my method with TransOurDream Light 2.0. Follow the instructions supplied with your own paper.

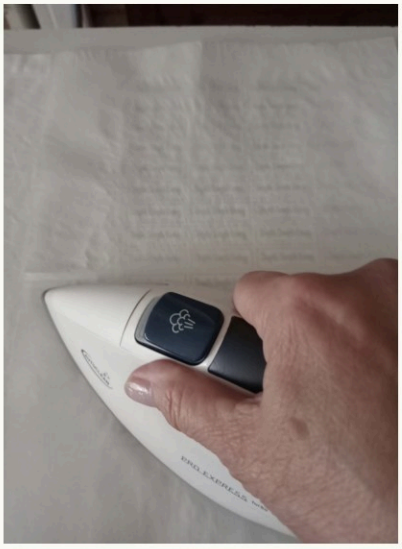
6. Prepare the fabric and a firm surface

I used an old cotton pillowcase, giving it another use. Smooth and pre-press the fabric as directed by the transfer paper instructions.

A firm surface matters. Although I worked at my ironing board, I placed a large chopping board on top to provide the firm surface my instructions required. Use a stable, heat-resistant surface suitable for the ironing temperature; not every chopping board is suitable for heat.



The full printed sheet on the pillowcase before transferring.



Applying heat over the covering sheet.

7. Apply the transfer

For my paper, the backing is peeled off before ironing. The printed transfer goes face up on the fabric and is covered with the supplied protective paper. The photo above shows the printed sheet before this preparation.

I followed the packet for iron temperature, steam setting, pressure, ironing time and removal of the covering paper. Work over the entire sheet as directed. Keep nearby completed transfers protected when working on the next sheet.



The transferred labels on cotton, before cutting.

Use your own packet
Transfer papers can use different peeling and ironing methods. A test on a scrap of the same cotton helps check the result before making a large batch.

Cut, stitch and keep a supply

One preparation session, with labels ready for future handmade projects.



I repeated the transfer process for each sheet, filling one side of the pillowcase.



A few cut labels beside a finished bib, with a label sewn on.

8. Cut out the labels and sew them on

Once the transfers are finished and ready to handle according to the packet, cut out each label. Leave the fabric margin you want for stitching. Sew the labels securely onto your handmade projects, as I have done on this little bib.

Follow the transfer paper's care and washing directions for the finished fabric. Keep the packet instructions with your supplies so you have them next time.

My bulk-making approach

Because I'm all about efficiency, I repeated the process for several sheets on one side of the pillowcase. If I'm setting everything up, I may as well make a supply so I don't need to do it again for a while.

Next time: the short version
Search Canva for Fabric Labels for Steph's Simple Living → download as PDF Print → test on ordinary A4 paper → check the size → print on transfer paper → transfer to cotton following the packet → cut and sew.