

How I made a Tyvek Tarp Tent

Improvised by Joseph Jackson, July 2010

For a week-long cycling trip, Troop 651

Tyvek is a non-breathable, light-weight, fairly waterproof, rip resistant fiber paper used largely in the construction industry as a house wrap for use under siding and other fascia to prevent drafts. It has also been used in the packaging industry for lightweight waterproof mailer envelopes. Typically hobbyists and enthusiasts acquire remnants from Tyvek rolls from new building construction sites, where the end of the roll is freely given. Rolls start out 100' by 9'.

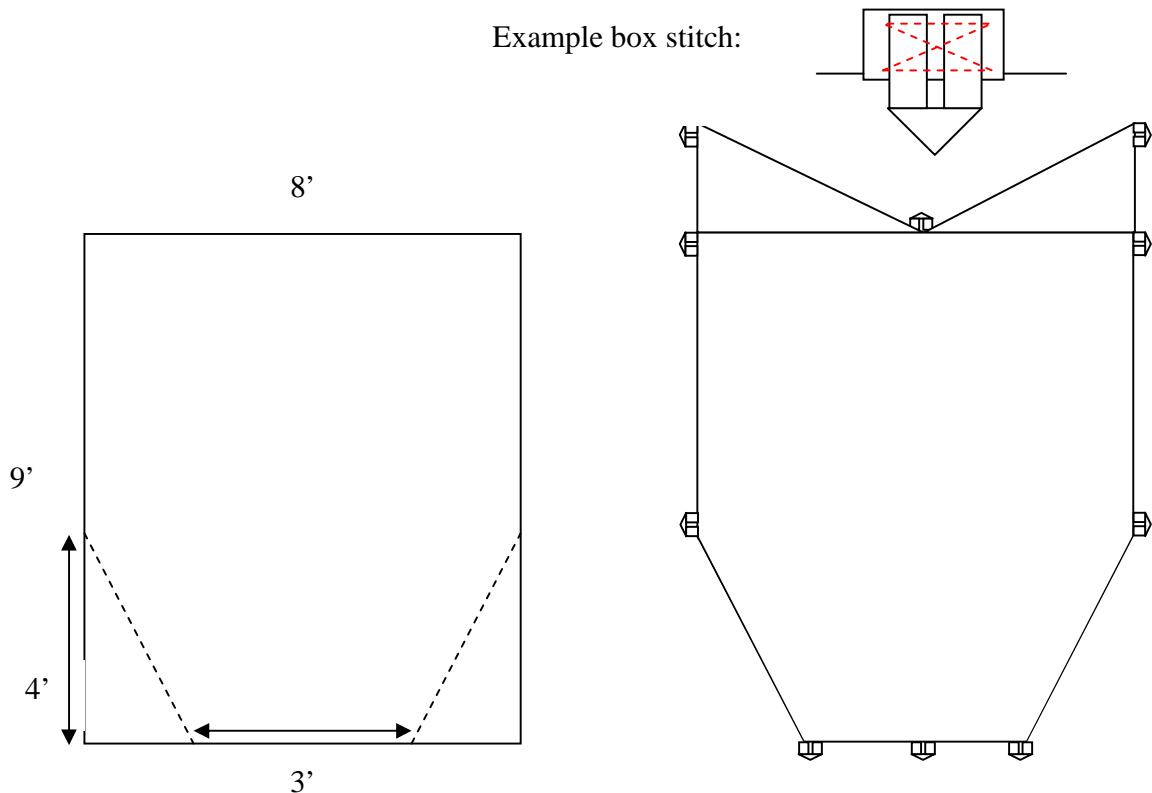


You can make a simple rectangle tarp, use your imagination, or use my design, modified to be more like a backpacker's tent with more privacy. The only sewing considerations that should be taken are these:

Sewing the tarp tent:

- ❖ The triangles cut from the bottom I sewed directly on the top so I could stake or tie them closed as doors. Feel free to adjust the amount of *legroom* at the foot of your tent.
- ❖ The grommets webbing I made of a long strip of Tyvek 1.5 inches wide folded in half and stitched lengthwise. I cut 6 inch segments for each loop.
- ❖ When you sew grommets/loops, fold two little patches to reinforce the edge that you are sewing the loop onto. This gives five layers of Tyvek for the loops to grip.
- ❖ Avoid stitching back and forth along the same line, because each needle punch weakens the Tyvek. Consider making a box stitch instead.
- ❖ I cut a *coffin shaped* ground cloth of Tyvek to go inside to keep me off the dirt.

Example box stitch:



Setting up the tarp tent:

- ❖ The tent can be set up using hiking poles, a stick, a tree, or anything about as tall as your sternum. (Calibrated for my greatest degree of comfort!)
- ❖ I just used some nylon string I had lying around and borrowed some stakes from another tent. Many ultralight campers will tie off to rocks or sticks found along the way.
- ❖ Staking into the grommets directly seals the sides against wind and most bugs, staking into attached string raises the tent a few inches and allows a draft.
- ❖ Stake the two foot corners of the tent first, and then raise the peak for the main triangle.
- ❖ Add other stakes working from the back to the front, keeping in mind that proper tension will maintain triangle shapes as you work your way around.
- ❖ In bug season, a bug net or yard of tulle will provide plenty of solace.



The combined weight of my tent shown here, plus 9 aluminum stakes and a sheet of Tyvek for the ground cloth weighs around 1 pound. Leave out the stakes and the ground cloth, and you've got an 8 ounce tent! A brief note about Tyvek: the sound of it crinkling can be fairly noisy, so most people who want to make the fabric "quieter" will run it through the washing machine and dryer to soften it before cutting and sewing.