Small Tote Bag

Tutorial by Diana Rehfield

Dimensions:
Bag is 7-1/2 inches wide by 8 inches tall and 4 inches deep
Straps are 1 inch wide by 17 inches long

Contents

Supplies and Cutting

You will need the following for this project:

- 1/4 yard front and back material

- 1/2 yard bottom, sides, lining, and straps material (if all the same)

Cut as follows:

Part	How Much	Colors/Types
Front and back	8 inches wide by 8-1/2 inches tall* (2)	your main color or print
Lining	12 inches wide by 19-1/2 inches tall (1)**	solid, probably same color as bottom and sides
Sides	20 inches by 2-1/2 inches (2)	solid, probably same color as bottom
Straps	18 inches by 4 inches (2)	solid, probably same color as bottom, sides, and lining
Bottom	8 inches by 4 inches (1)	solid
Stabilizer for straps	17-1/2 inches by 3/4 inch (2)	heavyweight or medium weight, depending on how stiff you want your straps to be; Pellon 809 works well
Stabilizer	11-1/2 inches by 19 inches (1)	I like Pellon 809 fusible stabilizer

* Height and width are only important if you are working with a directional print.

** If you are using a directional print for the lining, cut the height 1/2 inch taller and cut across and seam the two pieces together with the prints in opposite directions (outward).

Add Bottom Panel to Body

All seams are 1/4 inch wide unless otherwise specified.

Unlike making quilts, backstitch at the beginning and ending of each seam in this project.

1	Sew one of your blocks to the long edge of the bottom panel fabric, keeping in mind which will be the top and bottom of the block if you have a preference.	
2	Sew the other block to the other side of the bottom panel, again checking on up/down if necessary.	
3	Press the seams towards the front and back blocks.	

Add Side Panels to Body

1	Sew a side strip to one side of your block panel.	
2	Press the seam towards the side strip.	
3	Repeat steps 1 and 2 for the other side strip.	

Prepare Lining

1	Center the stabilizer on the lining. Smooth them out.
2	Iron fusible stabilizer onto the lining. If you are using non-fusible stabilizer, then baste around the edges of the stabilizer and lining.
3	Mark vertical lines on the stabilizer at 4 inches from each long edge, dividing the panel vertically into three sections.
4	Stitch vertical lines through the layers on your marking lines.
5	If you did not already do so, machine baste all the way around the layers, 1/8 inch from the edge.
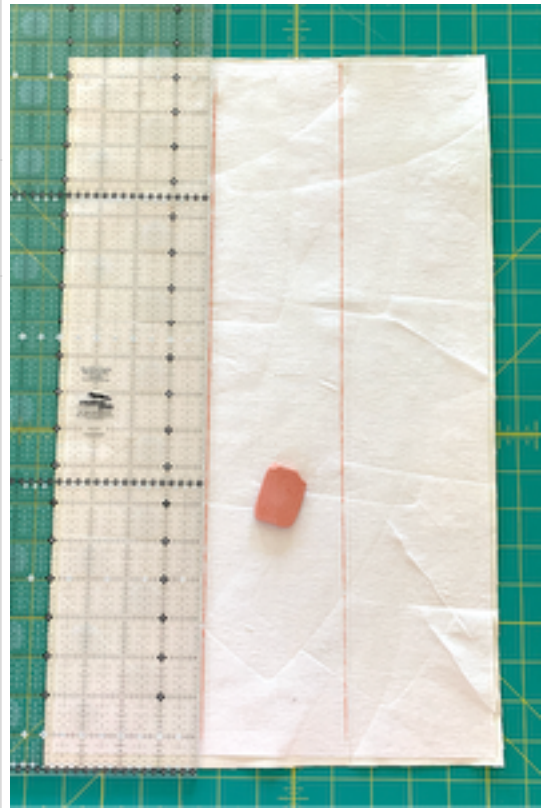
Assemble Body and Lining

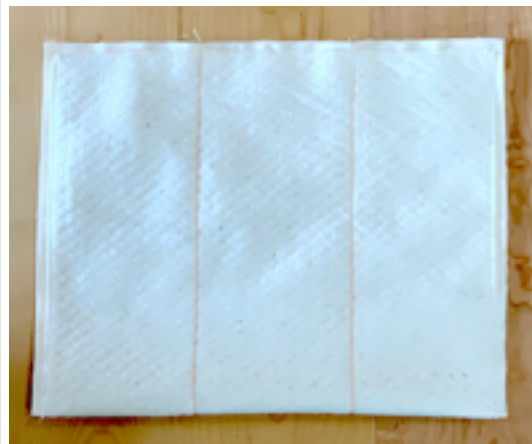| 1	Sew body side seams, right sides together. **Note:** Start your stitching at the top of the bag to make sure the seams meet evenly.	
2	Put your hand into the bag body and fold one corner as shown.	

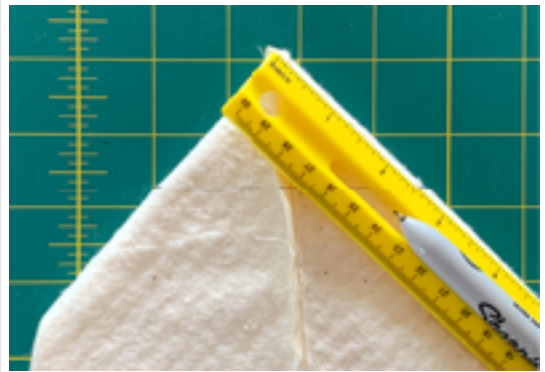| 3 | Turn over and stitch just to the left of the seam where the bottom panel meets the side panel as shown. | |
| 4 | Repeat steps 2 and 3 for the other side. | |
| 5 | Repeat step 1 for the lining. | |

6	Using the bag body as a guide for where to sew the corners, repeat steps 2 through 4 for the lining. **Note:** Instead, you can make a mark on the left and right sides of the triangle at 2-1/2 inches and draw a line across for stitching.	
7	**Trim all 4 corners you sewed.**	

Add Straps

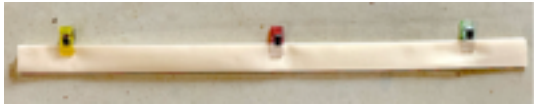|		
1	Fold over and iron one of the straps along the long edge.	
2	Center the stabilizer, shiny side down, along one of the edges of the stabilizer and gently iron into place.	
3	Fold the stabilizer edge over towards the center of the strap and press.	

4	Fold the other edge over towards the center of the strap and press.	
5	Fold the strap in half along the long edge and press, and then pin or clip.	
6	Topstitch the open long edge of the strap, 1/8 inch from the edge. **Note:** It might be interesting to use a contrasting color thread for the topstitching.	
7	Topstitch 1/8 inch from the other 3 edges of the strap.	
8	Repeat steps 1 through 7 for the other strap.	
9	Make a small mark along the outside of the body, 1 inch from each body seam.	

10	Line up the strap edge with the body edge just *inside* the mark you made and stitch as shown here.	
11	Repeat step 12 for the other side of the strap, making sure you have it twisted just once, the way a strap should be on a bag.	
12	Repeat steps 9 through 11 for the other side of the body (and the other strap).	

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Sew Body and Lining Together

1	Turn the body wrong side out.	
2	Turn the lining right side out.	
3	Put the body inside the lining, making sure the straps are pointing down inside the lining.	
4	Pin and sew a 3/8 inch seam around the top of the body and lining *except* leave open the space around one side seam, between the straps.	
5	Remove pins (if necessary) and turn the bag right side out by pulling the fabric through the opening you left.	

6	Push the lining down into the bag body.	
7	Press the top edge of the bag, folding over the open edges 3/8 inch to prepare for top stitching. **Note**: I like to use the narrow end of the ironing board for this pressing.	
8	Topstitch at 1/8 inch all around the top of the bag, making sure the straps stay out of the way.	

You're done! Happy dance! Take a photo and share it!

Quicklist

Here is a summary of the steps to make this small tote bag.

1. Prepare two body panels, each 8 inches wide by 8-1/2 inches tall.
2. Add bottom panel between main panels, 4 inches by 8 inches.
3. Add side panels, 2-1/2 inches by 20 inches.
4. Cut the lining to 19-1/2 inches by 12 inches.
5. Cut the stabilizer to 19 inches by 11-1/2 inches.
6. Center the stabilizer (shiny side down) over the lining and iron together.
7. Sew the lining and stabilizer together using two vertical lines, each 4 inches from each long side.
8. Machine baste 1/8 inch from each side of the stabilizer.
9. Sew the body sides, right sides together.
10. Sew the lining sides, right sides together.
11. Sew the bottom corners of the body.
12. Using the body as a guide, sew the corners of the lining.
13. Trim the body and lining corners.
14. Cut two 18 inch by 4 inch straps.
15. Cut two 17-1/2 inch by 3/4 inch stabilizer strips for the straps.
16. Prepare and attach the straps to the body, 1 inch from each body seam, sewing along the top edge of each.
17. Turn body **wrong** side out, making sure straps side inside.
18. Turn lining **right** side out.
19. Place the lining inside the body and pin around the top.
20. Sew a 3/8 inch seam around the top, leaving open the space around one side seam, between the straps.
21. Turn the bag right side out and press along the top.
22. Topstitch around the top at 1/8 inch.