

STM 2 Tote Bag

Materials

Fabric A: 1/2 yard for main body – Cut 2 rectangles 12 1/2" x 15 1/2"

Fabric B: 1/4 yard for middle strip – Cut 2 strips 2 1/2" x 15 1/2"

Fabric C: 1/4 yard for top strip – Cut 2 strips 3 1/2" x 15 1/2"

Lining: 1/2 yard – Cut 2 rectangles 15 1/2" x 17 1/2"

Straps: 3/8 yard – Cut 2 strips 5" x (WOF) width of fabric

Fusible Batting – Cut 1 piece 15 1/4" x 34 1/2" and 2 pieces 1" x 42" for straps.

(Optional) fabric for inside pocket – Cut 2 pieces 8" x 6" and 1 piece of fusible interfacing 7 3/4" x 5 3/4"

Matching Thread



Instructions

TOTE EXTERIOR

1. Use a 1/4" seam allowance to sew each middle strip to a top strip along the 15 1/2" edge, right sides together. Press seams open.



2. Line up each middle strip with the 15 1/2" edge of each main body rectangle, placing right sides together. Pin and sew the pieces together. Press the seams open.



3. Layer the two pieced panels, right sides together. Sew the panels together along the BOTTOM edges. Press the seams open.



4. On a protected ironing surface (parchment paper or an applique pressing cloth works well for this) place the pieced panel wrong side up. Place the shiny side of the fusible batting face down on the wrong side of the pieced panel. Following the manufacturer's directions fuse the two pieces together. (The batting should have been cut a tiny bit smaller than the fabric panel.)



5. Fold tote with right sides together, being sure to carefully match the strips so there is one continuous line on the finished tote. Sew from top to bottom with a 1/4" seam. Press seams open. (This can be challenging.)

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TOTE LINING

(OPTIONAL Pocket)

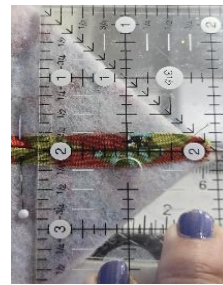
If you want to add a pocket to the inside of your backpack, now is the time to do it. (See cutting sizes on first page.) Fuse the interfacing to the wrong side of one piece of 8" x 6" fabric. Place pieces right sides together, pin, then stitch with a 1/4" seam leaving a 2" – 3" opening at the side or bottom. Turn it right side out and press well. Center and pin the pocket about 5" down from the lining top. Topstitch on three sides with a 1/8" or 1/4" seam, leaving the top open. Be sure to backstitch at the beginning and end as there will be stress on the corners when putting things into the pocket.



1. Place the 2 lining fabric pieces right sides together, then pin, leaving a 4" opening at the bottom so the tote can be turned right side out. Use a 1/4" seam on the sides and bottom. Backstitch before and after the 4" bottom opening. Press seams open. (This can be challenging.)



2. Make box bottoms in both the exterior and lining sections. Fold the bottom corner, matching the side and bottom seams, to form a triangle. Pin in place. Measure and mark a line 2" from the triangle's point. Stitch on the line as shown below, backstitching at each end. Do this for all four bottom corners (2 for the exterior and 2 for the lining). Trim the seam allowance to 1/4".



3. Turn the exterior piece so the print is right side out. Leave the lining wrong side out. Press the boxed side and bottom creases at this point in both the lining and exterior pieces. Use a ruler to help you measure 2" from the sewn seams. This extra step gives a much nicer finish and shape to your tote.



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TOTE STRAPS

1. The next step is to make the straps. They are usually about 30" long but can be adjusted to suit your needs. Fold and press the strap fabric in half, then bring each edge to the center and press again. Lay the 1" piece of fusible bating along the center crease, pressing to adhere it. Afterwards refold the fabric and give it another press to form the strap. Do for both straps.



2. Straps can be attached to the tote in two different ways. You will need to decide which way you prefer before going on to the next step. The first is with the straps tucked and sewed into the top between the exterior and lining as shown in the project sample at the beginning of the instructions. The second is to attach them to the outside of the tote using an X stitching pattern. (See illustration at Step 7 of "Assemble the Tote" on page 4.)
3. If you use the X attachment you will need to press the ends of the straps under 1/2", then repress the straps before topstitching so that they have finished ends.

4. Change your stitch length to 3.0. Topstitch 1/8" to 1/4" away from the folded edges of the strap. If using the X method, be sure to stitch across the ends to give it a finished look.



5. Tucked and sewn in method
With the right side of the tote exterior facing you, measure over 3 inches from the left side seam. Place the left side of the strap at the 3" mark, then pin it in place. Measure over 3" from the right-side seam and make a mark or use a pin to mark. Let the strap hang down from the left side, making sure there are no twists in it. Bring it up to the 3" mark from the right-side seam and pin in place. Do the same thing on the back side of the tote. At this point it is safest to baste the straps in place about 1/8" from the top edge as shown in the photo.
6. If you have chosen to attach the straps with an X, that will be done after the exterior and lining are attached.



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ASSEMBLE THE TOTE

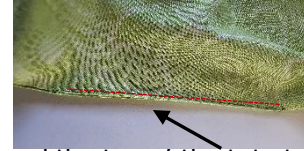
1. Set the exterior (right sides out) into the lining (wrong sides out). Match the side seams, then pin or clip together as shown. If you have already attached the straps they will be inside, ready to be sewn in.



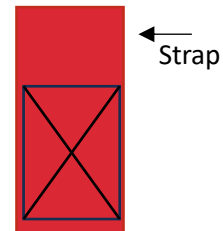
2. Stitch completely around the tote with a 1/2" seam allowance. There are places where it will be very thick. Go slow and lengthen your stitches if necessary. Be sure to backstitch at the beginning and end. You may need to reduce the pressure foot tension. If your machine has a free arm, this is the time to use it. It will make stitching much easier!
3. Reach into the opening you left in the lining and pull the exterior piece through the opening.



4. Push and poke the exterior and lining corners out so they look crisp. If you did not press in the creases in Step 3 on page 2, you may want to do it now. Once everything looks good, carefully pull out the lining and edge stitch the opening closed.



5. Press around the top of the tote to give it a sharp edge,
6. Topstitch around the tote top using a 3.0 stitch length 1/4" from the edge. Start and end at a side seam, making sure to backstitch.
7. If you opted to attach the straps to the outside you have one final step. Measure in 3" from a side seam, then pin one end of a strap in place. You will determine how low you want it to be. Attach the other end to a mark 3" from the opposite edge. Draw an X on the end of the strap, then stitch in place. You will want to stitch it twice for extra strength.



CONGRATULATIONS – your tote is ready for you to enjoy!

This pattern was modified and adapted from Tote Bag by Sara Trail published in Make 1-Hour Gifts for Sew Teach Me 2 after the publication went out of print.