

Tote Bag - STM 2

Project Overview

Create a lined tote bag with a full width front pocket and accent trim using quilting weight cotton and basic sewing machine techniques.

Materials & Cutting Instructions:

(See layout on page 4)

Exterior fabric: Cut 2 pieces 14" long x 12" wide

Lining fabric: Cut 2 pieces 14" long x 12" wide

Straps: Cut 1-piece lining fabric WOF x 4"; remove selvage ends, then cut into two pieces about 21"

Exterior Pocket: Cut 1 piece lining fabric 14" long x 12" wide

Pocket Accent: Cut one piece exterior fabric 4" long x 12" wide (or contrasting fabric of your choice)

Interfacing: Use Pellon SF101 fusible interfacing to cut 2 pieces 13 ½" long x 11 ½" wide for tote front and back; also cut one piece 6 ½" long x 11 ½" wide for the pocket

90/14 universal sewing machine needle recommended



Instructions

All seams are ½" unless noted.

Front Exterior Pocket

1. Fold the 14" pocket piece in half with wrong sides together, creating a piece that measures 7" by 12".
2. Place the 6 ½" x 11 ½" pocket interfacing adhesive side down on the wrong side of the fabric, butting it up against the center fold. Leave about ¼" of fabric visible along the three raw edges. Fuse the interfacing to the pocket.
3. Refold the pocket, making sure the exterior fabric of the interfaced side is facing up. The folded edge should be at the top.
4. Choose the finished width you want for the pocket accent, then fold the edges under and press so the strip is straight and even.



5. Position the accent strip where you want.

Remember you will lose ½" at the pocket bottom because of the seam.

6. Open the pocket to its full size so you are only attaching the accent piece to the interfaced half. Pin or clip to the pocket sides matching raw edges and machine baste at ¼" from the side edges.
7. Pin the length of the accent piece in place, then topstitch ¼" from each edge.
8. Fold the pocket right sides together making a tube by matching raw edges. Pin or clip the bottom edge.
9. Sew along the bottom edge with a ½" seam, backstitching at both ends.
10. Turn the pocket right side out and press. Topstitch ¼" from the upper folded edge, then set the pocket aside.



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Exterior

1. Fuse a 13 ½" x 11 ½" piece of interfacing to the wrong side of each tote exterior piece, keeping the interfacing centered so about ¼" of fabric remains visible around all four edges.
2. Lay one exterior tote piece right side up. Place the exterior pocket on top so the pocket's bottom edge sits 2 inches above the bottom edge of the tote front.
3. Make sure the pocket is straight, centered, and even with both sides before continuing.
4. Pin or clip the sides, then baste both sides ¼" from the edge.
5. Pin the pocket along the bottom edge at even intervals, then topstitch ¼" from the bottom edge to secure it to the tote front.
6. If you prefer a divided pocket, mark the vertical center of the pocket. Backstitch, sew from the bottom of the pocket to the top, then sew back down slightly to one side of the center line, backstitching to secure the seam.

Make Straps

1. Fold each strap in half lengthwise, with the wrong sides together. Press to make a center crease.
2. Open the strip and fold one long raw edge toward the center crease; press carefully without flattening the crease.
3. Turn the strip so the remaining raw edge is closest to you. Fold that raw edge toward the center crease and press.
4. Fold the strap in half again so the folded edges meet.
5. Clip or pin each strap on the double folded edge. Topstitch ¼" along the double-folded



edge, across the bottom, and up the single folded edge.

6. To finish, fold the raw ends of each strap in half and place a pin at the center point.

Attach straps

1. Measure and mark 3 inches in from both side edges on the tote front and tote back.
2. Align the center point of one strap with the 3-inch mark on one side of the tote front, right sides together and pin. Bring the other end of the strap to the 3-inch mark on the opposite side and pin it in place.
3. Repeat this process with the second strap on the back tote piece.
4. Check that both straps are centered on the marks and not twisted, then machine baste them ¼" from the top edge to hold them securely.



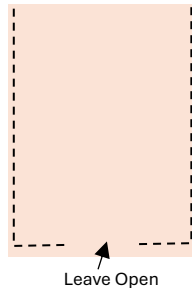
Forming Exterior of the Tote

1. Pin or clip the tote front and back right sides together, making sure the straps line up and are tucked inside.
2. Reset the machine to a 2.5 stitch length, then begin at the upper right corner, backstitch to secure seam, and continue stitching down the side until you are ½" from the bottom corner.
3. With the needle down, raise the presser foot, pivot the fabric, and sew across the bottom edge to the left corner.
4. Pivot again, sew up the left side and finish with a backstitch at the upper left edge.
5. Trim the bottom corners at a 45-degree angle.
6. Keep the tote right sides together.

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Lining

1. Before sewing the lining, compare one lining piece with the tote front to make sure they are still the same size. If needed, adjust the lining seam allowance so the finished lining will fit smoothly inside the tote.
2. Pin or clip the lining pieces with right sides together, leaving a marked 4-inch opening along the bottom for turning the tote right side out.
3. Begin at the upper right edge with a backstitch, sew down the side, pivot at the corner. Continue along the bottom until you reach the start of the marked opening; backstitch to secure.
4. Restart sewing at other side of the opening, stitch to the corner, pivot, and sew up the left side, finishing with a backstitch.
5. Trim the bottom corners at a 45-degree angle.
6. Turn the lining right side out and gently push out the corners.



3. Pin the side seams together, nesting them to reduce bulk.
4. Pin or clip around the top edge, spacing the fabric evenly as you go.
5. To join the tote exterior and lining together, slide the open top of the bag around the machine's free arm. The wrong side of the tote exterior with the fusible interfacing should be facing up.
6. Sew around the top edge using a 1/2" inch seam allowance. Backstitch at the beginning and end and add extra backstitching over each strap for reinforcement. When stitching through thicker areas with multiple fabric layers, slow down and use a longer stitch length.
7. Turn the tote right side out through the 4-inch opening in the lining. Press the opening edges neatly together, then machine stitch it closed with a 1/8-inch seam.
8. Tuck the lining inside the tote and press the top so that the edges are even and the straps are positioned on the outside.
9. Topstitch around the tote's upper edge with a 1/4-inch seam allowance to secure the lining.
10. Give the tote a final press.



Completing the Tote

1. Slip the lining into the tote exterior with the right sides facing each other.
2. Check that the side seams are aligned, and the straps are tucked between the two layers.

Admire your finished tote! Enjoy it and think about making more as gifts for your family and friends.



Standard sewing terms, fabric quantities used, and a home cutting diagram, are included on the following page.

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Standard Sewing Terms

WOF: Width of Fabric

RST: Right Sides Together

WST: Wrong Sides Together

Baste: Long temporary stitches used to hold fabric pieces in place before final sewing.

Backstitch: Reverse stitching at the beginning or end of a seam to secure it.

Clip: Use sewing clips instead of pins to hold fabrics together.

Nest: Match seams by fitting the two seams together with one seam going to the right and the other to the left. This reduces bulk.

Pivot: Turn a corner with the needle down.

Topstitch: Visible stitching sewn close to a finished edge. The stitch length is usually lengthened to 3 or 3.5.

At-Home Fabric Requirements and Cutting Guide

½ yard cotton exterior/outside fabric

½ yard cotton lining fabric*

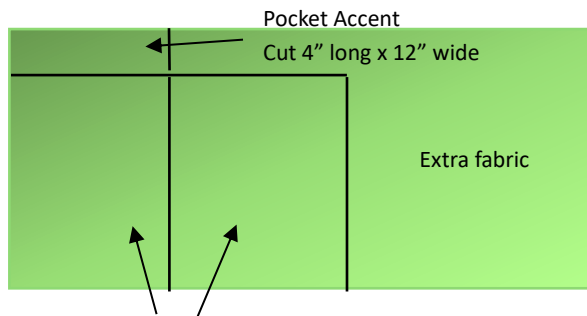
¾ yard 20" Fusible interfacing – Pellon SF 101 is recommended

* If you want wider straps, purchase 5/8 yard and cut strap piece 5" by width of fabric

Illustrations below are shown for reference only and are not to scale.

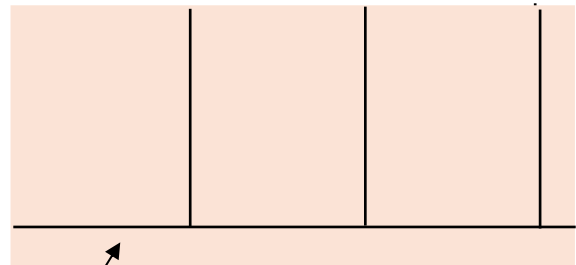
✂ Cut on solid lines

½ yard Exterior/Outside Fabric



Cut two fronts 14" long x 12" wide

½ yard Lining Fabric

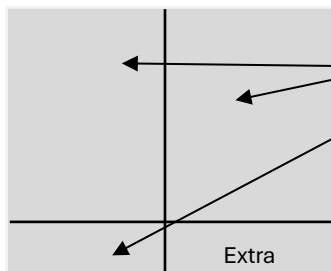


Cut one piece 4" x width of fabric for straps

Cut three 14" long x 12" wide

Two are for lining, one is for exterior pocket.

¾ yard 20" wide Fusible Interfacing



Cut two 13 ½" long x 11 ½" wide

Cut one 6 ½" long x 11 ½" wide

This pattern was adapted from the free internet pattern by Virginia Lindsay, The Best ½ yard Tote. Sew Teach Me has added to the pocket idea and developed step-by-step written instructions for beginning sewers. We appreciate her idea.