



How to Assemble a Tote Bag

Assembling the straps ...

- > After your fabric is all cut out, with **RIGHT SIDES TOGETHER**, fold each of the straps in half along the fold line so that the X's meet the O's.
- > Pin at each of the corners and place another pin in the middle.
- > Make sure your edges are lined up evenly.
- > Place the strap piece under your sewing machine presser foot.
- > The folded edge of your strap will be on the left and your cut "raw" edge will be on the right.
- > Line up the cut edge with the 1/2" mark on your machine.
- > Place or slide your seam guide on the 1/2" mark line to help you guide your fabric straight.
- > Place the material under the oval "window" in your presser foot at the top of the strap.
- > **VERY IMPORTANT:** Lower the presser foot lever. (Your presser foot must always be lowered when you sew or your threads will get terribly tangled, and you will have a serious mess. You might even have to take your machine in for repairs!)
- > Sew forwards (press down on your foot control, slowly) for 4-5 stitches and stop.
- > Now hold down your "Back Stitch" lever or button, press your foot control and slowly stitch backwards, up almost to the top of the strap for 3-4 stitches.
- > Continue forward again keeping the cut edge of the fabric next to the 1/2" line or your seam guide. (It's good to have a straight line!)
- > About 1/4" to 1/2" before you get to the bottom of the strap, stop. Hold your back stitch lever down again and then proceed forward to the end of the strap.
- > Lift up your presser foot and cut the threads on the post of the machine or on the thread cutter.
- > Repeat the previous steps with the second strap.
- > Use a safety pin to pin into the area between your stitching and the cut edge on one end of your strap.
- > Turn the safety pin into the "hole" of your strap and shuffle/slide the pin and the material through the hole until the strap is turned right side out.
- > Remove the pin and repeat with the other strap.
- > Use your iron to press the strap so that the fold is on one side and your stitched edge is on the other.

Assembling the bag ...

- > Place the bag pieces together so that all edges and sides match, **RIGHT SIDES TOGETHER**. Pin through both layers at all the corners.
- > Sew the bag together with 1/2" seam allowance down the **SIDES** and **BOTTOM** where you marked a "1" on your fabric.
- > **DO NOT** sew in the corner area marked with the "2" and the "star."
- > Make sure to forward-and-back stitch at the three areas you are sewing.
- > Press seams open.

- > Now at the bottom of your bag where the two "2" corners are, bring the seams together so the stars line up with **RIGHT SIDES TOGETHER**.
- > Pin and stitch across the small area with forward-and-back stitching at 1/2" seam allowance.

Finishing your bag ...

- > Turn bag right side out.
- > Line up the ends of the straps where the star marks are, with the stars on one side of your bag. (The strap should be flat and look like a smile.)
- > Pin and stitch across the top of the bag several times back and forth at 1/2" on both strap ends.
- > Repeat these steps with the second strap on the other side of the bag.
- > Flip your handles up so that you can hold your bag.
- > Fold the top of the bag 1/2" all the way around the top, including where the straps are.
- > Stitch around the entire top of the bag, including stitching across the tops of the straps.
- > Press the bag and you're all done!

Extra pocket ...

- > Feeling confident and ready for an extra step? Take the remaining square of fabric, fold it in half with **RIGHT SIDES TOGETHER** and stitch around the edges at 1/2" seam allowance, but leave one side open by 2".
- > Trim the corners and turn the square right side out.
- > Press and then place the square on the inside of one side of your bag. Stitch around 3 sides of the square right on the edge of the square to create your pocket.
- > Note: This step can be done before sewing the front to the back of the bag, but is not necessary.