

# Sew A Tote Bag

## HOW TO SEW A SIMPLE PROJECT BAG

Pattern supplied by **STITCH & STORY<sup>®</sup>**



### YOU WILL NEED

- Fabric\* (min. 50cm x 125cm with little to no stretch such as cotton or canvas)
- Thread in a complementary or contrasting colour
- Measuring tape
- Dressmakers pins
- Fabric scissors
- Sewing machine (optional)
- Iron (optional but helpful for pressing seams)

**\*Tip** - Wash, dry and iron your fabric before starting.



## MEASUREMENTS

Body approx. 35cm (W) x 40cm (L) x 10cm (D)

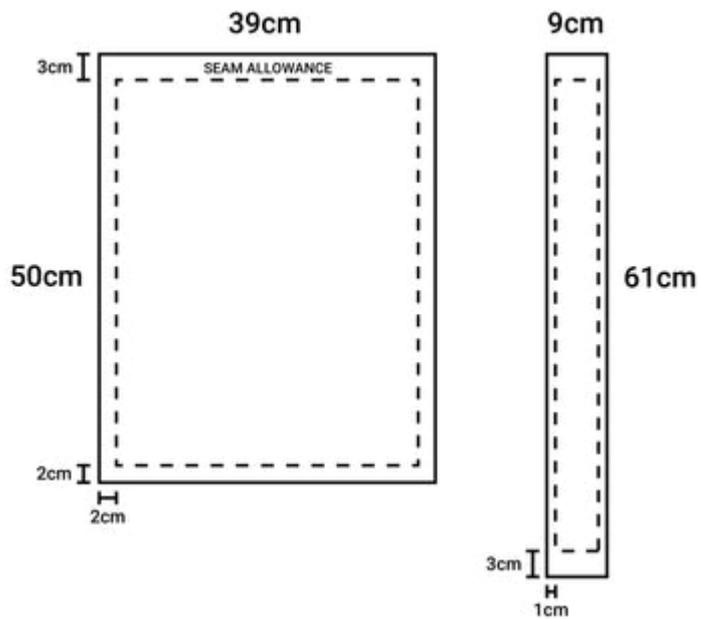
Handles approx. 3.5cm (W) x 55cm (L)



## PATTERN

### CUT

From your chosen fabric cut two Body Pieces measuring 39cm x 50cm and two Handle Pieces measuring 9cm x 61cm.



A simple tote bag is an opportunity to use up fabric from your stash so if you don't have enough in one colour or fabric type get creative and cut the body pieces out of two different ones, or cut the handles out of a contrasting fabric. You could also use old or worn bed sheets, or an old shirt instead of purchasing new fabric. Thrift stores and charity shops can also be a great place to source fabric if you're looking to be kinder to the planet and to your wallet.

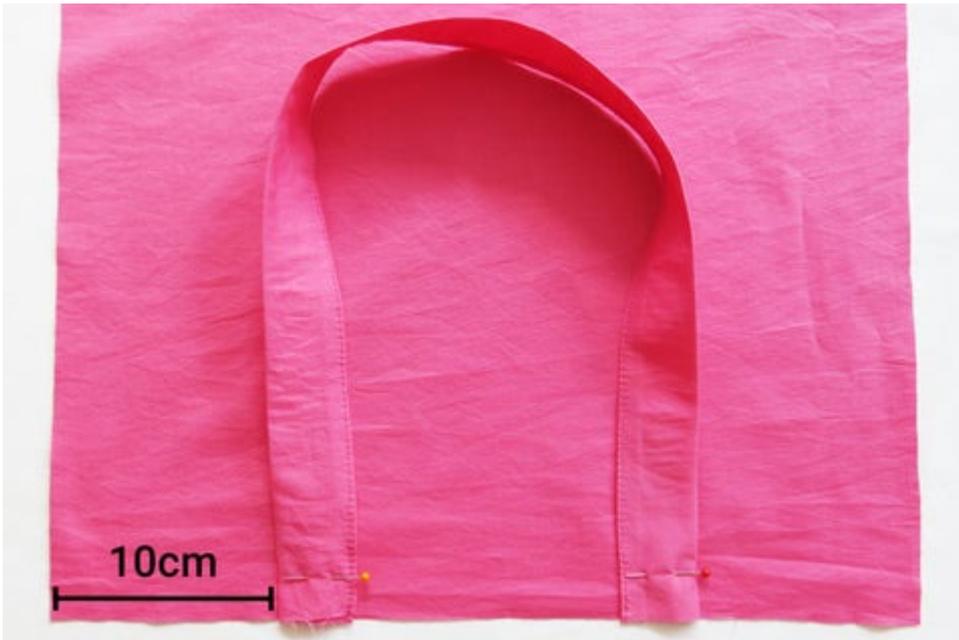
#### MAKE AND ATTACH THE HANDLES



**1.** Fold both of the Handle Pieces in half lengthwise so the two long edges meet and use an iron to press flat. If you are using a fabric that has a different front and back you want the front (or side you wish to be outward facing in the finished bag) to be on the inside. Sew the entire length of the open long edge leaving about a 1cm seam allowance.



**2.** Turn your Handle Pieces inside out and again use an iron to press flat. To strengthen the seamed edge topstitch along each Handle Piece keeping close to the edge.



**3.** Lay both Body Pieces on a flat surface with the front side of your fabric facing up and pin your Handle Pieces to the short edge, 10cm in from the long edge. The ends of your Handle Pieces should line up with the short edge of the Body Pieces that are facing you. Make sure that the topstitched, seamed edge of your Handle Pieces is on the inside and that they aren't twisted.



**4.** Sew a couple of zigzag stitches at the end of each Handle Piece to secure them to the Body Pieces. This will be hidden in the hem but gives a bit of extra stability and ensures the Handle Pieces don't move when you are pressing and topstitching the hem at the top of your bag.



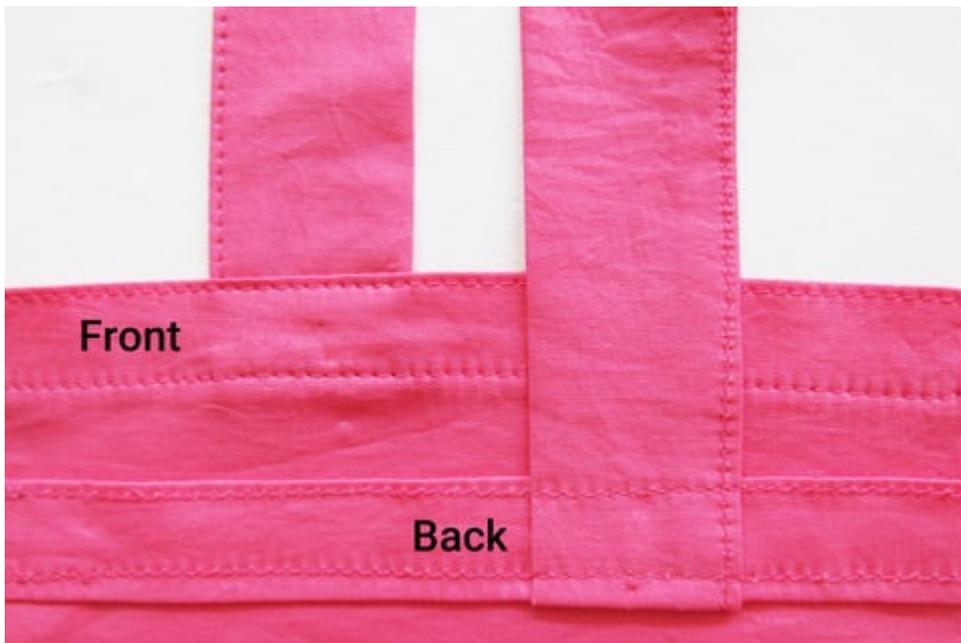
**5.** Turn your Body Pieces with the attached Handle Pieces over so that the back side of your fabric is facing up. Fold the top short edge (with attached Handle Pieces) over about 1cm and use an iron to press flat.



**6.** Fold the top short edge over again about 2cm, use an iron to press flat and pin in place. This is your hem. Make sure your Handle Pieces are folded back and pinned away from the Body Pieces.



**7.** Topstitch along both the top and bottom of this hem, making a neat edge for the top of your bag and ensuring your handles are properly secured.



#### SEW THE BAG TOGETHER



**8.** Lay your two Body Pieces on top of each other, back sides of the fabric facing each other, the front side of your fabric facing out. Line up the top hem and handles and pin together.



**9.** Sew down each of the long sides and then across the bottom, leaving a slightly less than 1cm seam allowance.



**10.** Remove the pins and turn your bag inside out. Use an iron to press the seams flat - particularly the corners.



**11.** Again sew down each of the long sides and then across the bottom, this time leaving slightly more than 1cm seam allowance. This seaming method hides the raw edges of your fabric and helps prevent any fraying.



## CREATE THE BOXED BOTTOM



**12.** With the bag still inside out, fold open one of the corners by pulling the two Body Pieces away from each other. The bottom and side seam should be lying directly on top of each other and the corner should be at a 90-degree angle. Use pins to mark a line perpendicular to the seams 10cm across. Sew along this line.



**13.** Repeat on the other side. Make sure the bottom seam is facing the same direction as the opposite corner; you don't want a twist along the bottom of your bag.



**14.** Trim off the excess fabric on these corners about 1cm away from the sewn line.



**15.** Turn the bag right side out, iron out any creases and you've finished!



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