



### **Essentials Tote Bag**

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\*Fat Quarter (FQ)- a piece of fabric that measures ~18" x 22". Very popular in fabric and quilt shops already cut to this size.

### **Supplies:**

- Exterior fabric: 1/2 yard
- Bag Body Interfacing: 1/2 yard of fusible batting, foam interfacing, fusible fleece or even medium weight non-woven interfacing.
- Lining fabric: 1/2 yard
- Exterior pocket panel: 1 fat quarter
- Exterior pocket panel interfacing: 1 fat quarter of **Dura-Fuse** or other lightweight-medium fusible interfacing.
- Interior zippered pocket: 1 fat quarter
- Zipper tab ends: One scrap piece of fabric at 4" x 4"
- Zippers: one 9" or longer nylon zipper for interior pocket, one handbag zipper 16" or longer for main bag compartment.
- Shoulder straps: Two straps of any material (leather, pleather, cork, webbing, etc) that are 1/2"-1" wide and 28"-34" in length each for the shoulder straps.
- All purpose 100% polyester thread
- 80/12 or 90/14 Universal sewing machine needle (may need larger needle if using leather for straps.)
- Basic sewing supplies: rulers, cutting tools, plastic clips, fabric safe marking tool, iron + ironing board, sewing machine with straight stitch capability, zipper foot.

### **Cutting:**

- 1) Cut 2 exterior fabric at 12.5" x 15".
- 2) Cut 2 lining fabric at 12.5" x 15".
- 3) Cut 2 fusible batting or fleece, etc for exterior at 12.5" x 15".
- 4) Cut 2 exterior pocket panel fabric at 7" x 15".
- 5) Cut 1 exterior pocket panel interfacing (**Dura-Fuse**) at 7" x 15".
- 6) Cut 2 zipper tab ends fabric at 2" x 2".

### **Directions:**

- 1) Fuse or quilt exterior interfacing to both exterior fabric panels that measure 12.5" x 15".
- 2) Fuse the one 7" x 15" interfacing piece to the back of one exterior pocket panel fabric piece.
- 3) Grab both 7" x 15" pieces of exterior pocket panel fabric and place one on top of the other with pretty sides touching. Use a 1/4" seam allowance and sew down both long sides of the panels only. Reach in through one short end and flip the tube you created right side out. Press flat so seams are running along top and bottom. Topstitch 1/4" down from the top edge of the pocket panel only. (**Watch Video #2**)
- 4) On the exterior bag panel that will have the two pockets measure 2.5" up from the bottom edge and mark the line across the panel. (**Watch Video #2**)
- 5) Place the exterior pocket panel you created on the exterior bag panel so that the bottom (non-topstitched) edge is sitting on the marked line you just made. Line up the sides and place clips to hold. (**Watch Video #2**)

- 6) Using an 1/8" seam allowance stitch down the bottom edge of the exterior pocket panel to attach it to the exterior bag panel. Then stitch down both sides of the exterior pocket panel to further attach it to the bag exterior. **(Watch Video #2)**
- 7) Mark the half way point on the exterior pocket panel (7.5" in from either side) and draw a line down the middle of the panel, then stitch in the marked line to separate the pocket panel into two pockets. **(Watch Video #2)**
- 8) **Prepping zipper:** Cut your main handbag zipper down to 14" in length. Get rid of any metal (zipper stops on each end. Also, make sure you don't lose your zipper pull. **(Watch Video #3)**
- 9) Take both 2" x 2" zipper tab end fabric squares and fold in half first, then open and bring both edges in to meet the first crease line you made. Then refold everything on that first crease line- this will conceal raw edges. Repeat to the other fabric square. **(Watch Video #3)**
- 10) Insert cut zipper into the tabs you just made and topstitch to secure in place about 1/8" up from where the zipper and fabric meet. Repeat to the other end of zipper. Trim away excess fabric from zipper tab ends so it's flush with zipper tape edge. **(Watch Video #3)**
- 11) The prepped zipper should still measure 14" long with fabric tab ends installed. **(Watch Video #3)**
- 12) **Installing zipper pocket in lining:** This is a pretty involved process if you've never done it before. Please watch Video #4 for the detailed instructions.
- 13) **Attaching zipper to exterior and lining pieces:** Take one exterior panel, the prepped zipper and one lining panel and with a zipper foot on the sewing machine sew to one side of the zipper tape. Make sure zipper is center along top edge of panel. It should be 1/4"-3/8" shorter than the exterior and lining panels. Then take the remaining exterior panel and lining panels and sew to other edge of zipper tape. **(Watch Video #5)**
- 14) Press back layers of fabric and topstitch through all layers ~1/4" down from zipper on exterior panel side. Repeat to opposite side. **(Watch Video #5)**
- 15) **Constructing Bag Body:** Place the exterior panels pretty sides touching and the lining panels pretty sides touching. Place clips/pins all around. Mark a 5"-7" opening along the center of the bottom edge of the lining side. Sew all the way around making sure to skim the sides of the zipper tab ends. Do not sew through the bulk in that area. Seam allowance is 1/4" along the exterior panel sides and increase to 1/2"-5/8" seam allowance on the lining sides. This will help the lining lie flatter inside the bag because it makes it smaller. **(Watch Video #6)**
- 16) Reach in through the lining opening all the way through to the exterior panels and box out the four corners. This is confusing unless you see how it's done. For detailed instruction watch **Video #6**.
- 17) Trim excess seam allowance on all four corners then reach in through the lining to the bag exterior and flip the entire bag right side. Press.
- 18) **Attaching handles-** There are a lot of different options here. Anything will work as long as it can be sewn on the sewing machine or installed with hardware that can go through all the layers such as metal rivets, Chicago screws, etc. The easiest route is to sew on some pliable handles like a soft leather, faux leather, vinyl, cork fabric or webbing. For more info, details, suggestions and length of straps info **Watch Video #7**.