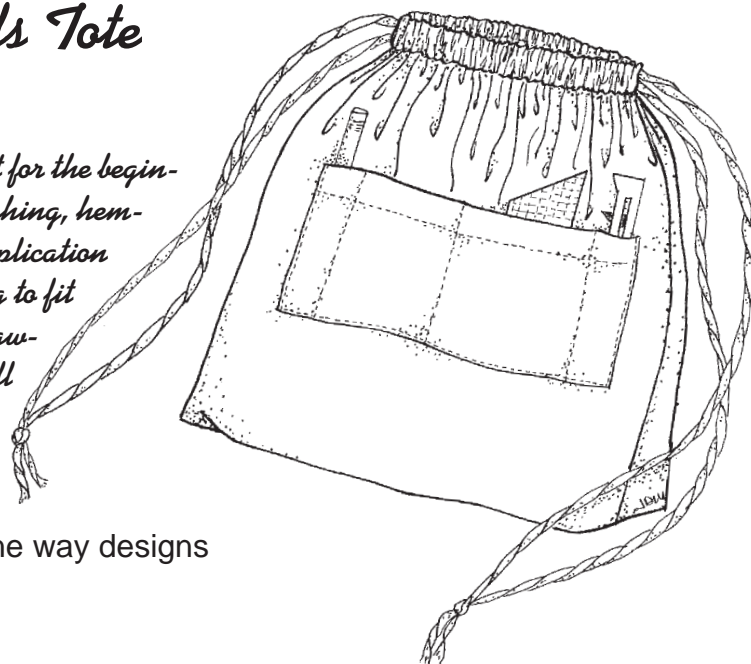


Sewing FUNdamentals Tote

by Jill McCloy

This simple and practical little project is great for the beginning or returning sewer. It teaches clean finishing, hemming, top and edge stitching, patch pocket application and how to make a casing. All without having to fit a thing and resulting in a pretty and useful draw-string tote. With all this to build on, what will be next?



Materials:

- 1/2 yd. Medium weight fabric, no one way designs
- Thread to match
- 2 1/2 yd. cording or ribbon

Miscellaneous:

- Scissors
- Straight pins and Pin Cushion
- Ruler
- Hem Gage
- Marking Pen or Marking Pencil
- Safety Pin or Bodkin

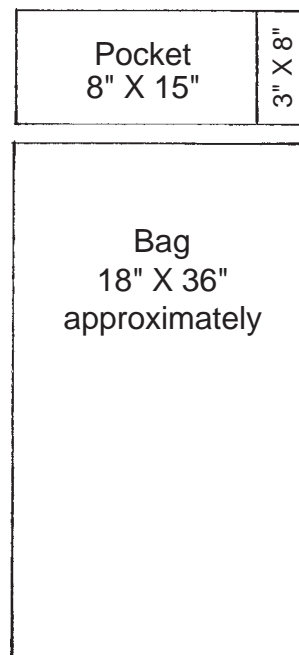
Directions

Cutting: A half yard of fabric should measure 18" X about 42" to 44". Fabric width varies from manufacturer to manufacturer, but it really doesn't matter whether your fabric is 40" or 45" wide as long as it is within that range.

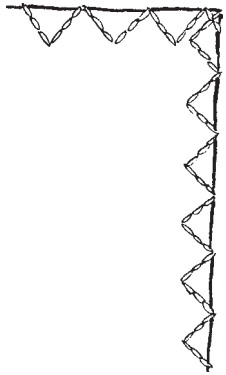
Cut an 8" X 18" strip from one end. Then, cut a 3" X 8" from one end of the 8" X 18" strip. The 8" X 15" strip will be the pocket and the 3" X 8" piece is a practice scrap. The remaining fabric is the bag.

Clean Finishing: Clean finishing is used to make the cut edges of the fabric to look nice and to keep them from raveling. Choose from the following examples.

Serger Finishing—If a serger is available, this is the fastest and most professional of the three techniques given for this project. Use the serger to barely shave the edge of the fabric to create a nice clean finish that won't affect the size of the pieces. Don't try to serge around corners. Just finish one side at a time. You may use a fray sealant to seal the ends of the thread chain before trimming the threads. Take care with the sealant, it can stain the fabric.



Machine Overcasting



This technique creates a nice finish. Use a 3-Step Zig-Zag stitch and an Overcast foot. The overcast foot has a stitch finger that is placed along the cut edge of the fabric. It supports the thread so that the thread does not scrunch the edge of the fabric as the stitch is formed. Do not try to stitch around corners. Stitch one side at a time and trim the threads. No fray sealant is needed.

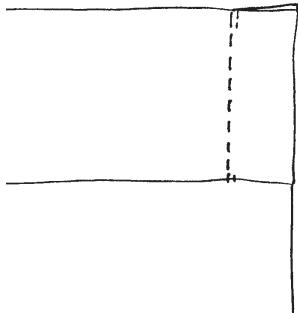
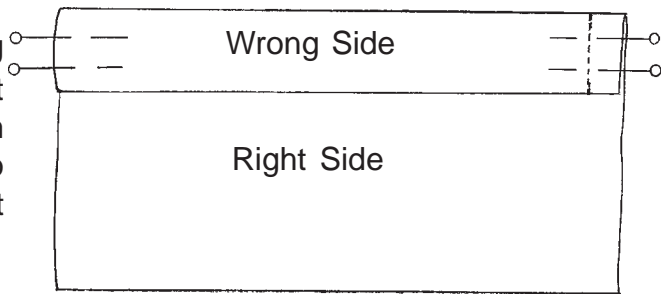


Pinking

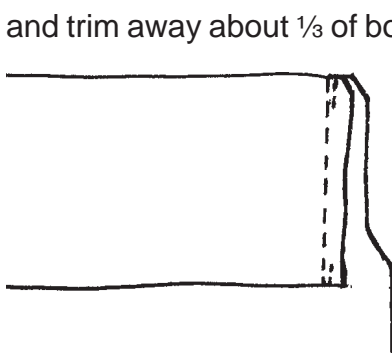
Straight stitching and pinking is an adequate clean finish if the other two methods are not available. Stitch a line of straight stitching $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the cut edge of the fabric. Use pinking shears to trim close the stitching. Clip thread tails.

Practice the clean finishing methods on the scrap. Select a technique and finish all four edges of the pocket and bag pieces. The clean finishing stitches will not be illustrated after this point.

Pocket Construction: Form a hem on one long edge of the pocket by folding $1\frac{1}{4}$ " to the right side and pinning in place. Use a 2.5 mm straight stitch and a $\frac{5}{8}$ " seam allowance to stitch from the fold to the edge of the pocket hem. Trim threads.



Clip the fold of the seam allowance to the stitching line.

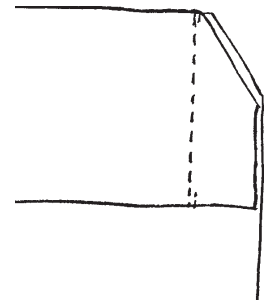


Trim the corner of the seam allowance at an angle to eliminate bulk in the corner.

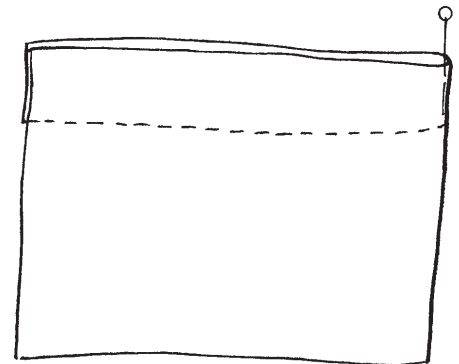
The seam allowances also need to be graded to eliminate bulk. To grade, start from the hem fold and trim away about $\frac{1}{3}$ of both layers of the seam allowances. Angle the

cut to the fabric edge so that the seam allowance within the hem is trimmed, and the remaining seam allowances are untrimmed. Trim away about half of the remaining fabric from the hem seam allowance. Repeat for the other side of the pocket.

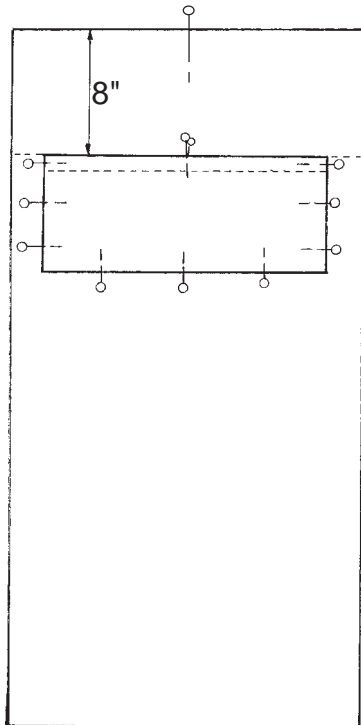
Finger press the seams open to create a neater edge when pressing the hem.



Turn the pocket hem right side out. Poke the corners out so that they are nicely pointed. Press the hem. Press under the $\frac{5}{8}$ " seam allowances on the bottom and sides of the pocket. Stitch the hem in place with a straight stitch.



Fold the pocket in half crosswise to find the center. Mark with a straight pin.

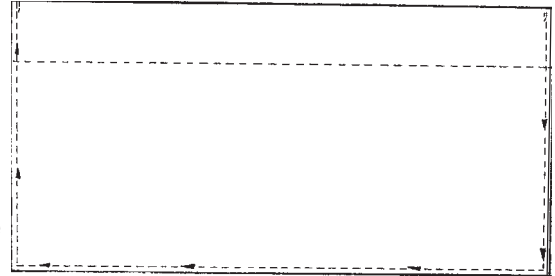


Fold the bag in half lengthwise to find the center. Pin mark the center as for the pocket.

Measure 8" down from one narrow end on the right side of the bag and mark.

Place the pocket, right side up on the marked line of the bag. Center it by aligning the pins. Pin the sides and bottom of the pocket to the bag.

Stitch the pocket to the bag. Start at the hemmed edge of the pocket and back stitch to tie off. Stitch close to the edge down the right side of the pocket.

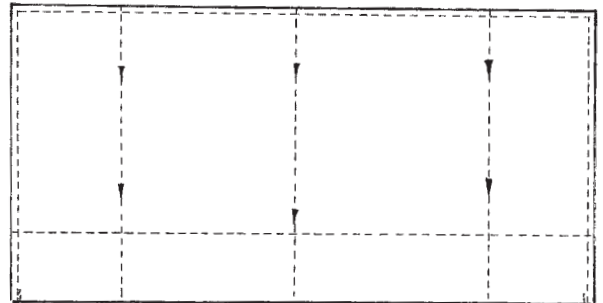


Stop and pivot at the bottom of the pocket.

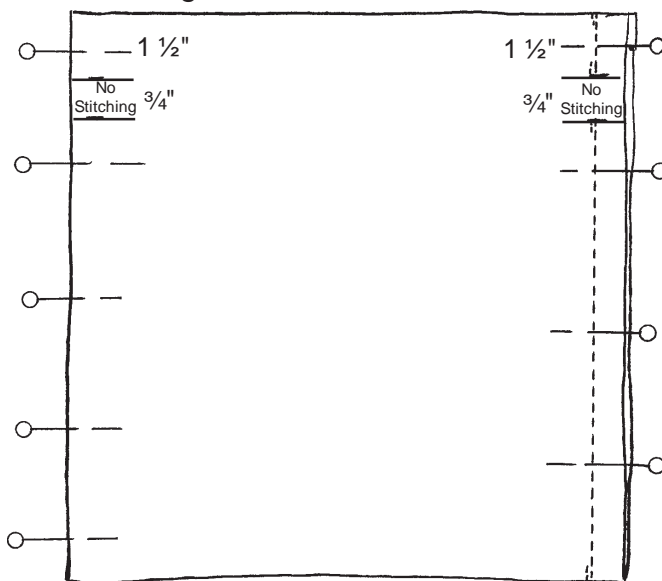
Use Needle Stop Down or use the hand wheel to lower the needle into the fabric. Raise the foot and turn the fabric counter clockwise, lower the foot and stitch along the bottom edge of the pocket.

Pivot at the next corner and stitch to the hemmed edge of the pocket. Back stitch to tie off.

The pocket is too long and open to be practical. It needs to be stitched into sections. Use a ruler and marking pen or pencil to draw stitching lines for the pocket sections. Space the division lines as desired, but do keep them perpendicular to the pocket bottom.



Stitch on each line. Backstitch at the beginning and end. Start at the bottom of the pocket and stitch toward the hem to prevent the fabric from shifting.

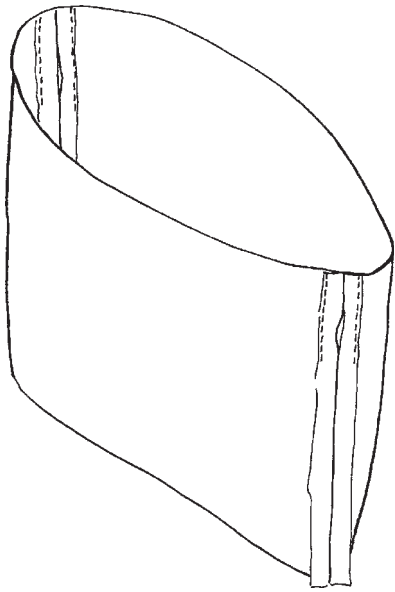


Side Seam and Casing: Fold and pin the bag right sides together.

Measure and mark the seam allowance 1 1/2" from the top edge of the bag. Measure and mark 3/4" down from the first mark.

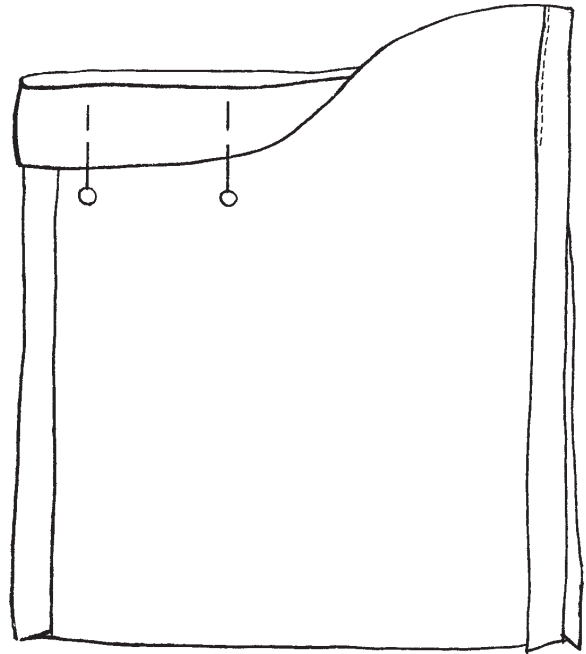
Using a 5/8" seam allowance, stitch from the top edge of the bag to the first mark, back stitch at the beginning and end of the stitching. Don't stitch between the markings. Skip to the next mark. Still using a 5/8" seam allowance, back stitch, stitch to the bottom of the bag and back stitch again. Repeat for the other side.

Casing: Clip the fold of the seam allowance to the stitching line at the bottom of the bag. See pocket illustration for reference.



Press the seams open. Edge stitch each edge of each seam through the bag from the top of the bag to just below the opening for the casing. This stitching keeps the seams flat inside the casing so that the drawstring doesn't get hung up on the seams when it is threaded through the casing.

With the bag wrong sides out, measure 1 1/4" down from the top edge. Fold and pin to the wrong side at the 1 1/4" marking to form a casing. Press.

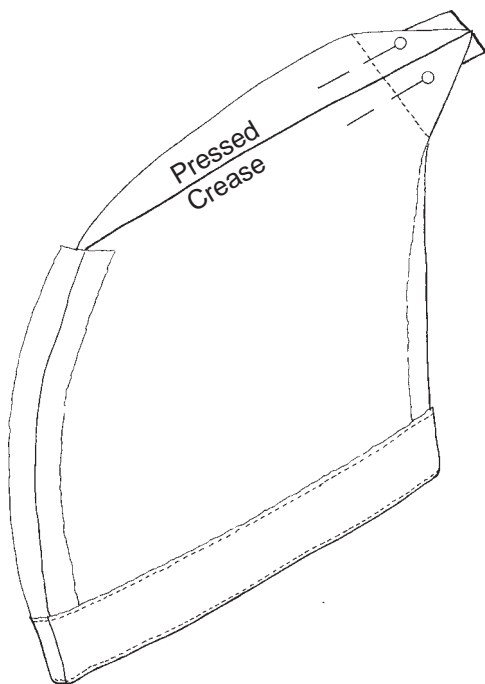


Stitch all the way around the bag close to the folded edge. This stitching keeps the casing flat for a neater appearance.

Stitch all the way around the bottom edge of the casing. Align the side of the foot with the edge of the casing for an easy to follow guideline.

Optional Box Corners. With the bag inside out, press a crease along the bottom of the bag to mark the foldline. Then, fold one bottom corner so that

the corner makes a point and the side seam is aligned with the pressed foldline. Pin.



Draw a line across the corner 2" from the point. Stitch on the line. One box corner is complete. Repeat for the other side. Turn right side out.

Inserting the Drawstring. Cut the drawstring into two, 1 1/4 yd. pieces. Attach one end of one piece to a safety pin or bodkin. Insert the pin into one opening in the casing and thread the cord all the way around the casing, skipping the second opening and bringing it out at the starting point. Remove the pin and knot the ends of the cord together. Repeat with the other drawstring using the remaining opening in the casing.

Terrific! The bag is finished and can be filled with sewing goodies. GOOD JOB!!!!