

All-Purpose Reusable Tote Bag

This handy bag will take only an hour or so to complete. See how easy it is to make one and you're sure to make many to use for all your groceries and "totables." A set of these bags would make a terrific gift for your eco-friendly friends!

YOU WILL NEED

- Thread
- Piece of strong cardboard (12½" x 7")
- Fabric: Choose a strong, durable fabric such as Home Decorating fabric, cotton duck or twill, or oilcloth.*

* If you choose oilcloth, you may need a walking foot or Teflon foot for your sewing machine.

Version 1: Straps are short, for hand-carrying.

Fabric: 1½ yard of 54-60" wide in a solid or a pattern that can be "railroaded", (that is turned sideways and still look good).

Version 2: Straps are long enough to be used as shoulder straps.

Fabric: 1¾ yards of 45-60" wide solid, stripe or pattern, (but not a one-way, directional pattern).

1. Prepare fabric pieces from the pattern layouts:

- Cut a rectangle 42½" x 22½". Cut two long strips: Version 1, the strips are 4" x 54"; Version 2, the strips are 4" x 63". Cut a rectangle 9" x 28½". (See Diagrams 1 and 2)

2. Make Straps:

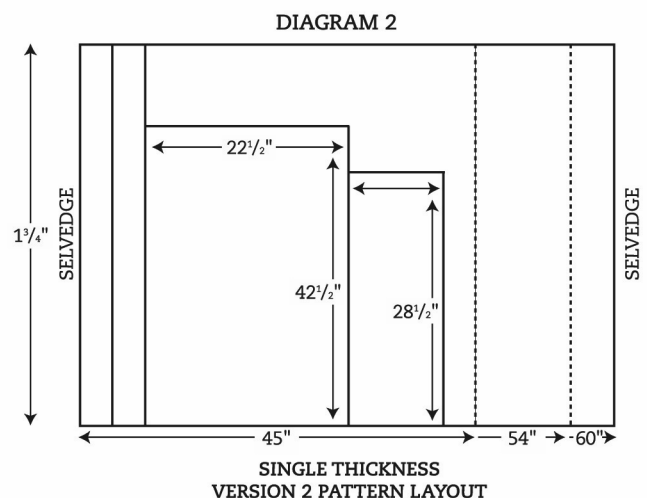
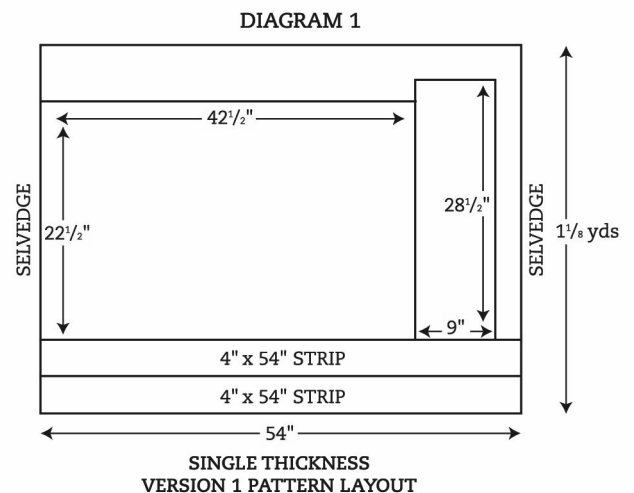
- Join the two long strips at short ends to make a continuous circle (Version 1 is 107", Version 2 is 125"). Press seams open.
- Fold in half lengthwise, wrong sides together and press.
- Open. Using crease as a center point, fold raw edges in so they meet at the crease. Press. Fold in half again, creased edges together. Now you have a long circle with no raw edges, 4 layers thick and 1" wide.
- Topstitch ¼" from each edge all along the circle.

3. Finish Raw Edges of Bag:

- Clean-finish 42½" edges of large rectangle (turn under ¼" and stitch or serge).
- Clean-finish 22½" edges of large rectangle (turn under ¼" and stitch or serge).
- Make top hems: Fold 22½" sides down 1". Pin, stitch and press.

4. Mark Center of Bag with a Crease:

- Fold bag in half, top hems meeting, press. The crease at the bottom will be a guideline for strap placement and later to form bottom corners.



FABRIC PLACE BASEMENT

5. Attach Straps

- Open bag and lay flat right side up. Pin straps in place. Short seams in the straps go directly over middle crease. Position edge of straps 7" from sides of bag. **(See Diagram 3)**
- Stitch in the ditch (stitch over the topstitching) on each long side of the straps.
- Reinforce straps at tops of bag with additional stitching. **(See Diagram 4)**

6. Assemble Bag

- Fold bag in half right sides together, with top hems aligned with each other and straps meeting. Pin, then stitch side seams using $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance.

7. Form Bottom Corners: (See Diagram 5)

- Open the bag. Keeping right sides together, refold the bag matching side seam with bottom crease, forming a triangle. Pin to keep in place.
- Measure and mark where triangle is $3\frac{1}{2}$ " from seam to fold (see diagram). Stitch across. To strengthen, add a second line of stitching close to first.
- Trim triangle to $\frac{1}{2}$ " of new seam.
- Repeat for the other side.

8. Topstitch Sides:

- On the top hem of the bag, measure $3\frac{1}{2}$ " from each side seam and place a pin.
- Fold evenly down from marker pins to corresponding corners on bottom of bag.
- Press and topstitch $\frac{1}{4}$ " from crease. Repeat for the three other sides.

9. Make Envelope for Cardboard Bottom:

- Clean-finish long sides ($28\frac{1}{2}$ " edges) of small rectangle (turn under $\frac{1}{4}$ " and stitch or serge).
- Clean-finish 9-inch edges of small rectangle (turn under $\frac{1}{4}$ " and stitch or serge).
- Make side hems: Fold 9" sides down 1". Pin, stitch and press.
- Fold rectangle in half right sides together with the side hems meeting. Stitch side seams using $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance.
- Turn right side out. Insert cardboard and set in the bottom of the bag.

