

Shirt to Tote Bag

We can easily create fun and quirky tote bags out of old shirts.

Material Required

Two Full Sleeves Shirts. We have chosen one chequered and one plain shirt for this. Shirts can be of medium size or larger

Chalk

Pair of Scissors

Beaded Pins

Matching Thread

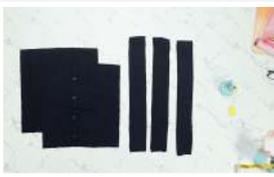
And a Loop Turner

Take one shirt and open it completely. Keep the front of the shirt facing you as shown. For the ease of creating this bag we have made a template which is 16 inches in length and 15 inches wide. Now place the square template on the shirt in such a way that the pocket comes under the template. When you place the pattern on the shirt, make sure you place the template on the pocket and have sufficient fabric above (at least 2.5") & at the sides (at least 1") of the pocket. Please note that the pocket is required and should be part of the fabric of the bag. Pin the template onto the shirt. Ensure you are pinning both the layers of the fabric. Once done, outline the template onto the fabric with a piece of chalk. Unpin the template. Now with a pair of scissors cut out the fabric and keep it aside.

For the belt of the bag we have created another template of 2 ½ inches width. The length of the belt template will be around the same length as of the sleeve. We need three pieces of fabric for it. Place the template onto the sleeve and pin it to both the layers of fabric. Mark the outline with the help of a chalk. Unpin the template. Cut on the marked line with a pair of scissors. We now have two strips ready. For the next strip, Place the template along the left over body fabric as shown.. Pin, Mark, Unpin and cut.

To summarize we now have 2 rectangular pieces for the bag and three strips for the belt or handle of the bag.





We will repeat the same steps on the other shirt.

Just like before two square pieces and three strips for the handle. Let's pin the handles first. Join the top of the first two strips right side facing and pin as shown. Now take the bottom of the second strip and turn it so that the right-side bottom of the second strip matches the right-side top of the third strip as shown and pin these together.

Moving onto the square pieces. Place them right side facing the right and pin all the four corners as shown in the tutorial. We will have to stitch all around the square except for the top, like pointed out, but do remember to keep an opening of about 3 inches while stitching so that you can turn the bag inside out. Mark the opening with the help of a chalk.

Moving on to the checkered shirt. Just like the plain shirt pieces join the top of the two thin strips right side facing right side. Then take the bottom of the middle strip and fold it in such a way that the right side faces the right side of the third strip. Pin the top. Repeat the same for the square pieces. Place them right side facing right side and pin all four corners. Note- you do not have to leave a 3 inch gap for this piece.

After all that detailed cutting and pinning its time to get stitching. Take the checkered fabric to your Usha Janome Allure Dlx sewing machine. Place the edge of the square piece under the presser foot. Set the pattern selector dial to A and stitch length to 2.5. Begin stitching with a steady pace. Remember we need to just stitch the three sides and leave the top open. When you come to the corner. Stop and cut the thread and continue stitching. Once you are done, cut off all the fraying edges like shown in the tutorial. To recap, we've stitched the sides, the bottom and left the top open. Now, take the pinned strip and stitch one end like indicated in the tutorial, don't forget to do reverse stitches at the start and at the end to secure your stitches. Remove the pins after you finish stitching and move to the other end. Stitch the other end as well and remove the pin. As you can see, we've joined all the three strips together.

Next, take the plain shirt. Begin sewing from one side but remember to leave 3 inches marked gap un-stitched to turn the bag inside out. Do Reverse stitch at the mark. Cut the thread and start sewing from the other mark. Continue sewing till you reach the corner and cut the thread. Repeat the same process on the other two sides as well. Align them with the presser foot and sew till you reach the corner. Remember, we have to leave the top un-stitched. As you can see the



gap also is left un-stitched.

Then take the pinned plain strip and exactly like the checkered strips, sew the pinned edges. Remove the pins as you sew. Even for something small as the strips, back stitches are extremely crucial. Your final stitches should look like this.

Now, lay both the strips next to each other. Place the plain colored strip onto the checkered strip right side facing the right. Make sure you match the corners correctly. Align the matched strip with the edge of the presser foot and sew the longer side. Keep sewing till you reach the end. Leave the horizontal end and begin sewing on the other side. Cut the thread. Once you are done, take a loop turner and insert it inside the strip through the un-stitched horizontal side and keep pushing the cloth backwards till the loop turner comes through the other un-stitched side. Now hook the loop into the cloth like shown and pull the loop turner out. You should now be easily able to turn the strip inside out. We will need to flatten the seams and give the bag handle a neat look.

Let's iron the strip to remove the creases and set the fold. See how much crisper and cleaner out strip looks post ironing?

Time to work on the main bag, take the two square pieces we've stitched and lay them side by side. We've stitched the edges of the checkered piece, take the un-stitched side and flip the fabric inside out, be careful with the edges. Push the corners out to ensure a neat finish.

Then take the plain lining fabric and place the checkered fabric inside it like shown right side facing right. Push the bag strap inside on the chequered fabric as well. Now let's look at the placement of the three layers. Match the seam of the lining fabric with one end of the strip and then match the seam of the main bag fabric with the side seam of the lining fabric bag and place it over the center of the strip. This will give you three layers of fabric. Pin them together. Notice that the strip should come in between the lining bag and the main fabric bag as shown.

Before repeating the process on other side, ensure that the handle is not twisted and pin in place between the two main fabric. Don't forget to mind the seams.

For extra support while sewing, pin the fabric together at the top on both sides. Now, we will be sewing all around the top like indicated.

Adjust the fabric under the presser foot and start



sewing. Go all around the opening of the bag and ensure the handles are sewn correctly onto the seams. Do a reverse stitch at the end of secure the stitches. Remember the 3 inch gap we left in the lining fabric. Use that gap to bring the main checkered fabric on the outside. Be careful and patient in this step so that you don't tear the fresh stitches. Now it's time to close the 3 inch gap. Place the fabric under the presser foot and do a straight stitch to close this gap. Remember to use reverse stitches at the start and the end of the gap. Now insert the lining back into the bag. We now need to neaten the top opening. Let's iron first.

Flatten the opening and iron to fatten in fabric. Do this step all around the opening of the bag. Just one more step to go. Place the top opening side of the bag under the presser foot right side up and do a top stitch all around the opening to hold the fold in place.

And we are done! Our DIY bag is now ready. Your tote bag is not just stylish but also environment friendly. You can carry it for grocery shopping or even to college to flaunt your handiwork. The tiny pocket is the perfect place to store your glasses, change or things you want to access easily. We absolutely love it.