

# Handy Tote

This tote is 17" high x 17" wide.

There's a large lined outside pocket for a notebook or folder plus interior pockets large enough for a cell phone.

The fabric for the body of the tote should be sturdy like denim, canvas, or upholstery fabric.

The interior pocket, the lining for the exterior pocket, and the lining for the strap should be lightweight. I used cotton quilting fabric.



**Main Body:** For this bag, I cut one 37" high x 18 1/2" wide piece of sturdy fabric. If you have a one-way fabric you will need to cut two 19 1/2" high x 18 1/2" wide pieces of the main fabric.

**Strap:** Cut two 35 1/2" x 2 1/2" pieces of fabric. One the sturdy fabric and another from the cotton print. For extra padding, I also cut a piece of batting the same size.

**Interior phone pocket:** Cut one 10" wide x 11" high from the cotton print.  
Cut fusible interfacing 10" wide by 5 1/2" high

**Exterior notebook pocket:** Cut two 13 1/2" wide x 11" high, one from the sturdy fabric, the second from the cotton print.

**Key holder:** 3 1/2" x 2 1/2" of the cotton fabric. A key clasp hook.

## POCKETS



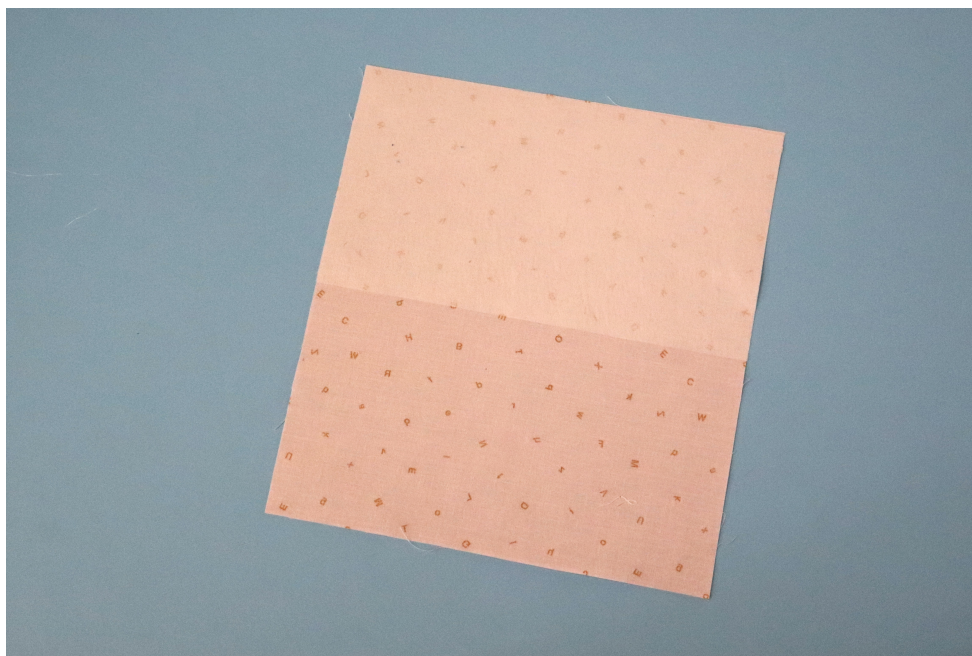
Take the main body piece, or one of the 19 1/2" high x 18 1/2" wide pieces.

First do the interior cell phone pocket

### **Interior Cell Phone Pocket**

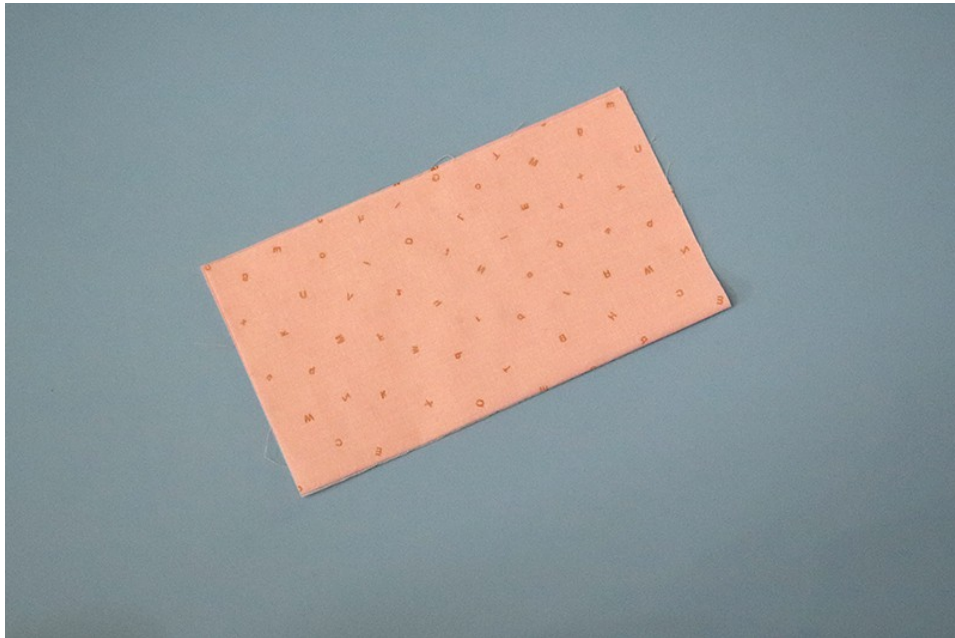
Finished Pocket will be 9 1/2" x 5 1/2"

Take the 10" wide x 11" high piece and fuse the interfacing on half of the wrong side of the fabric.





Fold 11" sides up, wrong sides together and stitch 1/4" seams on the three open sides, leaving an opening for turning on one side. Turn right side out and poke out the corners. Top stitch close to the top edge, then 1/4" away from top edge.



To mark the center—

Fold the pocket in half and press, then fold the the main body in half and press. This pocket is on the inside of the bag so you will place it on the wrong side of the fabric. Position the pocket 6" from the top with the pressed center of the pocket on the pressed center of the bag.



Stitch close to the edge along both sides and the bottom, catching the opening. Stitch 1/4" inch away from edge. Stitch down center of pocket to make two pockets.  
*To make these pockets extra durable. I repeat all the stitching.*

## Exterior Large Pocket

This pocket will be 13" wide x 10 1/2" high. Big enough for a paper notebook or iPad!

I usually embellish the exterior pocket with an applique or machine embroidery. Now is the time to do that!



Put right sides together of the two 13 1/2" wide x 11" wide pieces of fabric—one is the sturdy fabric and the other is cotton. Stitch around all four sides with 1/4" seam allowance, leaving an opening to turn right side. Trim corners, turn right sides out and poke out corners.





Stitch top close to edge then  $\frac{1}{4}$ " from edge. Fold in center and press to create a fold. This pocket goes on the same piece that the interior pocket is on. But it goes on the right side of the fabric. This way the stitching lines are covered up from the interior pocket. (clever, right?)



Place on the right side of the main bag piece and 4  $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the top. Make sure the exterior pocket and interior pocket are going in the same direction!



Sew around the three sides. First close to the edge, catching the opening, then  $\frac{1}{4}$ " away. *Again, to make the pocket extra durable, I repeat all of the stitching.*

## MAIN BODY OF BAG

Depending on if you are using one or two pieces for the main body, either take your one long piece or the two 19 1/2" x 18 1/2" pieces of the main body (*Make sure the pockets are going in the correct direction*) and put the **WRONG SIDES** together. Sew 1/4" on two sides if you are using one long piece or on the two sides and the bottom if you are using two pieces.



Turn "wrong" side out (so the new seams are on the inside) and put **RIGHT SIDES** together.





Sew 1/2" seams on the two sides if you are using one long piece or on the two sides and the bottom if you are using two pieces.

*To make the bag extra durable, I stitched the sides and bottom again.*

Nice clean seams!



## **PLEATED BOTTOM**

Turn tote wrong side out.

At the bottom, turn sides in 2 1/2".



Sew a 1/2" seam across the bottom.  
*Sew that seam again.*

## FINISHING THE TOP EDGE

Turn the top raw edge to the inside 1/2", press. Turn under another 1/2" and press.



Make tab for key. Take the 3 1/2" x 2 1/2" piece and press under 1/4" on each 3 1/2" side. Fold together. Slide key clasp hook through the folded piece.





Fold in half and tuck into the top folded hem about 3 1/2" from side seam before stitching the top hem.



*I use a denim needle when I make this hem. 110/18. There are many layers of thick fabric to go through.*

Stitch close to both edges of the hem.

## **STRAP**



Take the three pieces of strap fabric—sturdy, cotton, and batting. Glue the batting on to the wrong side of the sturdy fabric so it doesn't move around. (I just use an Elmer's Glue Stick. It has never gunked up my sewing machine)

Take the both pieces of fabric for the strap and with right sides together, sew along all four edges with a 1/4" seam. I leave an opening on the middle of the side seam. Turn right sides out. Press. Top stitch close to all sides, catching the opening.



Place the end of one of the handles 2 1/2" from the top edge on one of the side seams.



Stitch the handle down, starting at least 1/2" below the top edge. **You do not want to stitch through that top hem—too many layers!** Stitch a box on the bottom of the strap. It should be about 2" square. Sew an X in the box for extra stability. I also sew an extra reinforcing seam along the top and bottom of the box. Do the same on the other side of the tote with the other end of the strap.





DONE!

