

How to make our fabric bag with cotton tape straps

How to make the pattern

The pattern is a rectangle of paper measuring 45cm x 40cm, with:

- 'Cut On Fold' written on one short end
- '2.85cm turning' written on the other short end
- A Straight Grain arrow drawn parallel to one long side
- The instructions 'Bag pattern - Cut 1 on Fold' written on the pattern

Ingredients needed to cut out and sew bag:

1m of non-stretch fabric, ideally 100% cotton for ease of sewing

1m of matching or contrast 1" wide cotton tape for straps (we use 'herringbone cotton webbing', easy to find on Ebay)

A reel of sewing thread

A sewing machine

Scissors

Pins

Masking tape

An iron and ironing board

A chalk pencil (sharp)

A ruler

How to sew the bag



1. Fold the cut edge of the fabric over approx 47/48cm – enough for the height of the bag pattern, with right sides together and selvages (manufactured edges) together. Lay pattern on top slightly in from the selvedge, with the 'cut on fold' edge of pattern on the fold of the fabric and the grainline arrow parallel to the selvedge.

2. Pin the edge of the pattern that says 'cut on fold' right on the fold. Pin around the rest of the pattern, pins parallel to the edge and about half a cm in from the edge of the paper.

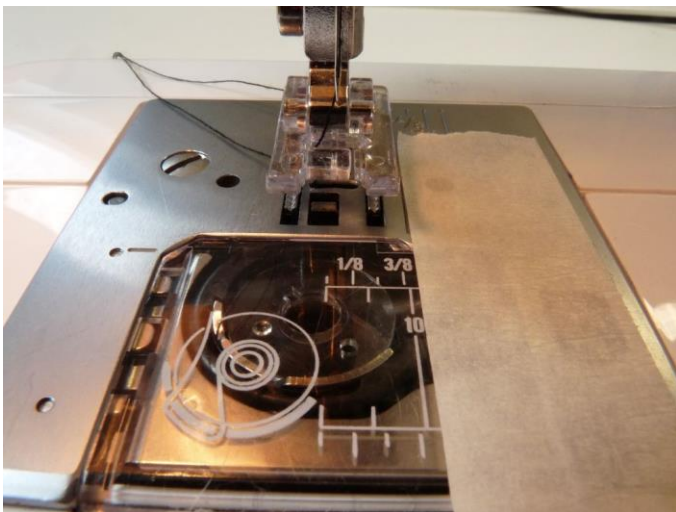
For our pinning tutorial visit:
sewbtn.com/sewtipsvideo



3. Cut round edge of paper on the 3 sides that are not on the fold. Then take pins out, remove paper and pin your long bag sides together as shown



4. Thread up your machine with same thread on spool and bobbin and set to straight stitch, central needle position, stitch length just under 3.



5. We'll be sewing with a 1cm seam allowance (SA). You can mark your 1cm SA with masking tape to make it extra visible



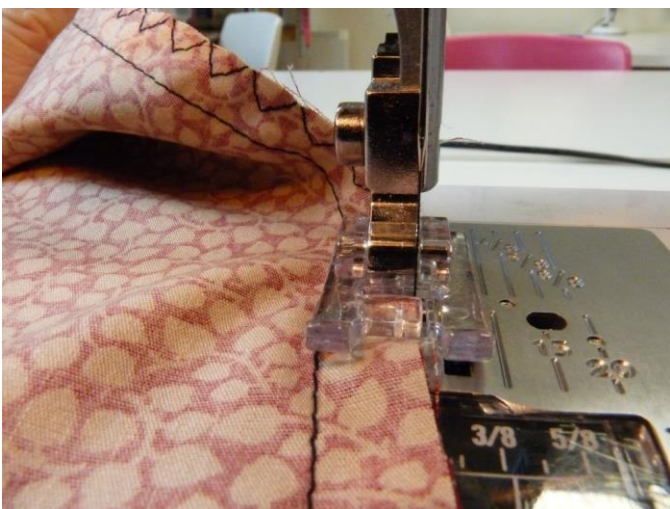
6. Sew the long sides of the bag with a 1cm SA, backstitching at start and finish of seam, and removing pins as you get to them.



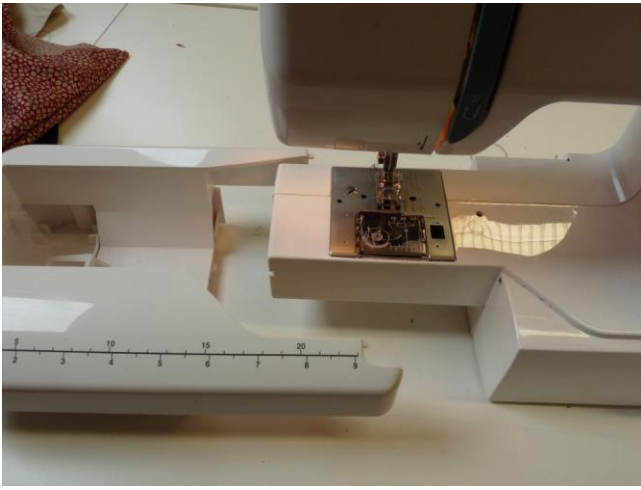
7. You should now start to see the beginnings of a bag with one end open and all other sides sewn or folded closed



8. Now to zig zag the raw edges to stop them fraying. Set your machine to '3 step zig-zag' (also known as 'serpentine' stitch), stitch width 5 and stitch length 1.5



9. This time, line your raw edge up with the slit in the foot on the plastic Janome 525s foot, or on a metal foot line just inside the right side of the oval hole in the foot. When you sew the stitch should zig-zag OFF the fabric when it goes to the right.



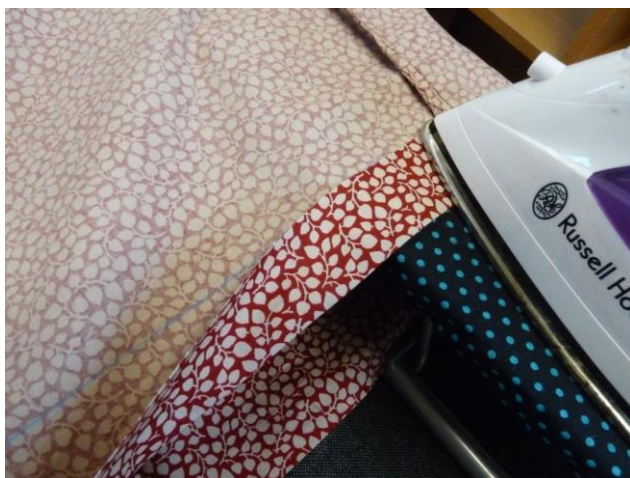
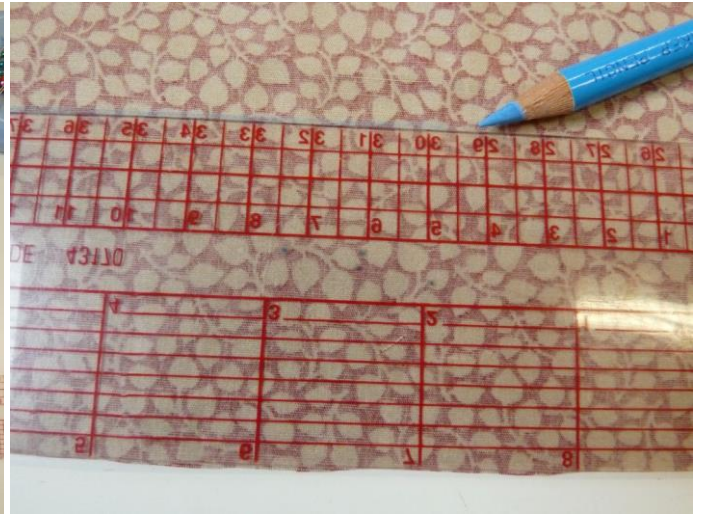
10. Then remove the base of the machine, so you can feed your bag onto the 'free-arm'. Zigzag round the top edge of the bag – sew round the circle, overlapping the start and end of your stitching – this way you don't need to backstitch



11. Iron your zigzagged seam and top edge flat, stretching slightly if it has gathered a bit

12. Place your bag on the table. Using a grader ruler & chalk pencil, draw a chalk line 5.7cm (the width of the grader ruler) from the top raw edges, on both sides. If you don't have a grader ruler, you can measure that distance with a normal ruler (or round up to 6cm is fine). If you don't have a chalk pencil you can use a normal pencil or sharpened tailors chalk block.

If your fabric is pale or thin, press very lightly so it doesn't show through to the right side. (pics overleaf)



13. Feed your bag onto a sleeve board or the narrow end of the ironing board and press the raw edge to the line, therefore creating a fold that's 2.85 cm (or 3cm if you drew line at 6cm)



14. Cut your piece of cotton tape in half. Fold your bag with side seams on top of each other as shown



15. Place your straps under the turned top edge, an equal distance from the stitch seam and the folded outside edge as shown. Pin in place with 2 pins per strap as shown



16. Now loop the strap end over the top of the bag and tuck under the turned top edge in the same position but on the other side of the bag. Then drop the straps down the side of the bag away from the top edge, ready to sew



17. Set your machine as in step 4: Thread up your machine with same thread on spool and bobbin and set to straight stitch, central needle position, stitch length just under 3.



18. Place the turned top edge of bag under the machine as shown, with the needle inserted just above the zig-zagging.

Now place a piece of masking tape on the base of the machine, up against the folded top edge – this is to use as a guide to sew the same distance from the edge all the way round



19. Sew round, keeping to the edge of the masking tape and backstitching back and forth over the straps (for extra strength) as you get to them. Remove the pins before you get to them



20. Now fold up the strap and pin with 2 pins as shown



21. Place on the machine and line up the folded top edge with the inside of the right hand 'toe' of the plastic Janome 525s foot. Or if using a metal foot, sew 2-3mm in from the top edge (you can place a piece of masking tape on the base of the machine in front of the foot once you've positioned the bag). Sew round in a circle backstitching back and forth over the straps as before and overlapping the start and finish (so you don't need to backstitch) to secure it



22. Iron the top edge and press the side seams to one side



23. To turn through nice corners, fold the seam allowance at the corner over and pinch with your finger inside the bag and thumb on the outside. Then turn through, pushing your thumb into the corner. You can poke closed but pointy scissors into it to get an even better corner



24. Your finished bag – well done! Remember to take it with you when you go shopping to avoid using plastic bags!