

The best thing is that you can make a tote bag out of any fabric you have on hand. Make patchwork pieces using scraps from your stash (we used denim with organic hand printed hemp from Red Seed Studio and a pillow case lining), but you could use a beautiful op-shopped tea towel, tablecloth or pillowcase, or even adorn plain fabric with a doily and buttons. The possibilities really are endless.

This tote measures 34cm wide x 25cm high, with a generous 6cm gusset base - but you can make yours any size you want (leave out the gusset if you want to make a flat bag). If your fabric is a thinner weight, you'll need to use some interfacing (or better yet, an old flannelette sheet) to give it some stability. All seam allowances are 1/2cm, unless otherwise indicated.

YOU WILL NEED

Body Fabric: 2 pieces outside fabric, 2 pieces lining and 2 pieces interfacing, each 35cm x 41cm

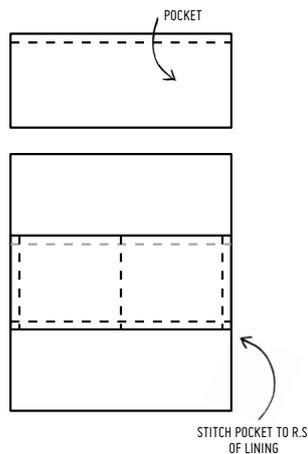
Straps: 4 pieces 6cm x 76cm

Internal pocket pieces: 15cm x 35cm wide

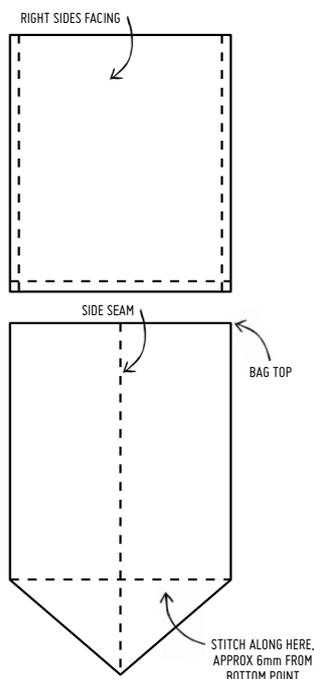
Sewing machine, thread, needle, pins, scissors and measuring tape

INSTRUCTIONS

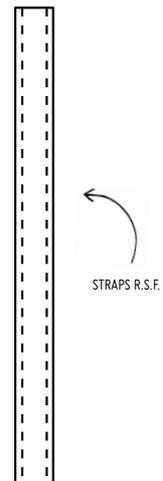
**1** Turn the top of your pocket over twice, using a 1/4cm seam, to make a neat edge. Press (iron) in place and top stitch. Turn the bottom edge over the same way, press then pin into place onto one lining piece - about 7-10cm from the top edge of the bag. Stitch along the bottom and two sides of the pocket, securing it to the lining piece. Stitch this big pocket into three smaller pocket sizes using a straight stitch.



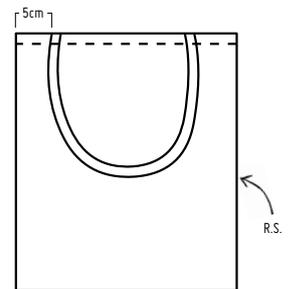
**2** With right sides facing, sew the two outside bag pieces together leaving the top open. Stitch one interfacing to wrong side of one lining, then repeat with other pieces. With right sides together, sew the two lining pieces together, leaving the top open. You'll now have two bag-looking shapes. Zigzag or overlock the edges and trim. To make the gusset squash the bottom corner flat sideways - the side seam of the bag needs to sit flat in line with the bottom seam of the bag. Measure 6cm and stitch across the triangle corner. Repeat for the other side and for the lining piece. Cut the triangle corners off and zigzag the edges.



**3** To make the straps, pin right sides facing and stitch along the full length on both sides - don't stitch the ends closed. Turn your strap tube right way out and press flat. Repeat with other strap. You can get a special turning tool, or make your own with a safety pin and shoelace. Simply thread the lace onto the safety pin and feed it through the tube. Pin the safety pin onto one end of your strap and pull the shoelace at the other end; your tube will start to turn in on itself. Keep pulling until you can turn it right way out. Top stitch your straps along both sides - we did lots of straight lines of stitching as a decorative feature.



**4** With your bag outside piece facing right way out, pin your straps in place along the top of the open (unstitched) bag, about 5cm from each edge. The raw edge of the straps sits in line with the raw edge of the bag, with the strap hanging down. Make sure you don't twist the straps. Stitch around the whole raw edge (top) of your bag to keep the straps in place.



**5** With your bag lining inside out, and your bag outside right way facing, insert the outside into the lining bucket with the straps tucked inside; the fabrics will be right sides together. Pin the side seams of your bag together, plus a few more pins around the whole of the bag top. Start stitching from one of the strap points (which is about 1/3 way in). Stitch all the way around the whole top of the bag, leaving an opening between the strap pieces (the middle 1/3 of one side of the bag top) to turn your bag right way out. Pull the bag lining through this hole, and turn it until you have the bag right way out. Tuck the raw edges in and press in place, then top stitch the whole bag around the top opening. Voila!

