

Mitsy Kit Tote Bag

Sewing Instructions



Please read all instructions once through before starting project.

Mitsy Kit Tote Bag Kit includes four pieces of fabric.

- 2 pieces for the lining included in notebook sleeve 1
- 2 pieces for the outer bag included in notebook sleeve 2

Also included are the tote bag straps which are tacked / pinned in place to the right side of the lining.



You will begin your sewing project by laying your notebook sleeves with contents on the table so that the three fasteners of the sleeves are on the left side, so you can flip the sleeves over to the left like a book.



The Mitsy Kit Tote Bag Notebook sleeves should be sealed at the center top with velcro to prevent contents from slipping out.

Simply pull apart velcro to remove contents when ready.

When you are ready to begin your project, remove contents from sleeve #1 and place on table.



- Unfold the first sleeve fabric contents and lay flat on the table - you will feel two pieces of square fabric (13x13") that are safety pinned together.
- Feel the side of the fabric that has the safety pins face up in the burlap borders, make sure this side is facing you.
- You will also feel two strips of painters tape applied to two opposite borders of the fabric. These are meant to define the top and bottom sides of your project.
- Position the fabric so that the longer piece of tape is on the top side of your square piece of fabric. You should also notice that there are two pieces of the bag strap peeking out on the left and right sides of this top section, under the tape and tucked between the two pieces of lining.
- The bottom section opposite the top section has a smaller piece of tape that you will feel in the center of this section.



Tips and Frequently Asked Questions

- Before beginning sewing, make sure that all four sides of your fabric pieces are properly lined up so that the four corners of your squares are precisely aligned to each other.
- You may choose to remove the safety pins to adjust and fasten pieces together in place of safety pins. Make sure the points of the straight pins are facing the direction of your sewing to avoid stabbing yourself.
- Make sure that you have securely kept your two square pieces together by fastening with pins through both corners and inner sections of the three burlap strips (excludes top piece with painters tape). It is recommended to place your pins horizontally through the two adjacent pieces of burlap to fasten so that the pins do not get in the way of your stitching beneath the burlap and through the fabric.
- If you choose to leave the safety pins in that should be fine as long as you feel the two pieces are aligned at all four corners and fastened together properly. However, note that sometimes the thread can get caught on the safety pins.



- If you have not done so already, get your sewing tool kit and double thread your needle with a knot at the end. (If you need help with threading or knotting see the instructions for this in our selection of training modules first).
- Turn your square so that the long top piece of tape is on your right (if you sew from right to left) or on your left (if you sew from left to right).
- You will begin sewing right under the burlap border at the upper left or upper right corner of your fabric squares.
- Sew just under the burlap through the fabric (not through the burlap) from the corner where the long tape is fastened, until reaching the corner where the short tape is fastened.
- Hand stitch using a basic running stitch, and occasional back stitch making sure your stitches are fairly small (about 1/4") and close together to prevent any gaps.
- Once you have stitched underneath a pinned section, you can remove the straight pin or safety pin from burlap.



- Once you complete your stitching from one corner of your square to the other, you will turn your fabric so that you can continue sewing along the next side of the fabric.
- Once again begin sewing right under the burlap border intersection on the two corners of your fabric squares and continue a running and back stitch until you reach the painters tape that is in the center section.
- Tie off your stitching right before the painters tape.
- Begin your stitching again right after the end of the painters tape until you come to the next intersecting corners of your fabric pieces.
- Once again turn your fabric and begin sewing right under the burlap border and continue a running and back stitch until you reach the top section of the fabric where the longer piece of painters tape is located.
- Tie off your sewing with a secure knot and cut your thread.



- Remove both pieces of painters tape from the top and bottom side of your lining pieces.
- Now you can turn your lining fabric pieces right side out by putting your hand through the top open side and reversing so that the right side of the fabric is facing outward (side without burlap strips).
- Check your sewing to make sure there are no gaps or holes.
- You will note that the bag straps are pinned to the right side of the lining fabric with safety pins. Leave these safety pins in place for now.
- There will be a hole in the bottom of the lining where you removed the short piece of painters tape. This will be sewn later after turning the entire bag right side out through this hole in a later step.



- Now it is time to remove the outer bag fabric pieces from the 2nd plastic notebook sleeve and place on the table with the side with the safety pins in the burlap facing upward, and the long piece of painters tape on the top section of the fabric squares.



Tips and Frequently Asked Questions (repeated)

- Before beginning sewing, make sure that all four sides of your fabric pieces are properly lined up so that the four corners of your squares are precisely aligned with each other.
- You may choose to remove the safety pins to adjust and fasten pieces together in place of safety pins. Make sure the points of the straight pins are facing the direction of your sewing to avoid stabbing yourself.
- Make sure that you have securely kept your two square pieces together by fastening through both corners and the middle sections of the three burlap strips (excludes top piece with painters tape). It is recommended to place your pins horizontally through the two adjacent pieces of burlap to fasten so that the pins do not get in the way of your stitching beneath the burlap and through the fabric.
- If you choose to leave the safety pins in that should be fine as long as you feel the two pieces are aligned at all four corners and fastened together properly. However, note that the thread may get caught on the safety pins.



- If you have not done so already, get your sewing tool kit and double thread your needle with a knot at the end. (If you need help with threading or knotting see the instructions for this in our selection of training modules first).
- You will begin sewing right under the burlap border intersection on the upper left or upper right corner of your fabric squares.
- Turn your square so that the long top piece of tape is on your right (if you sew from right to left) or on your left (if you sew from left to right).
- Sew just under the burlap through the fabric (not through the burlap) from the corner where the long tape is fastened, until reaching the adjacent corner.
- Hand stitch using a basic running stitch, and occasional back stitch making sure your stitches are fairly small (about 1/4") and close together to prevent any gaps.
- Once you have stitched underneath a pinned section, you can remove the straight pin or safety pin from burlap.



- Once you complete your stitching from one corner of your square to the other, you will turn your fabric so that you can continue sewing along the next side of the fabric.
- Once again begin sewing right under the burlap border intersection on the two corners of your fabric squares and continue a running and back stitch until you reach the next intersecting corner of burlap section.
- Turn your fabric square pieces so that you can begin sewing again along the next side of your fabric squares.
- Once again begin sewing right under the burlap border intersection on the two corners of your fabric squares and continue a running and back stitch until you reach top intersecting sections of burlap where the longer piece of painters tape is located.
- Tie off your sewing with a secure knot and cut your thread.
- You have completed sewing the outer portion of your bag. Check your sewing to make sure there are no gaps or holes. For now, you will leave this wrong side out (burlap facing outward) on your table surface.





- Next you will place the lining pieces sewn previously, with it's right side out (smooth side of fabric with no burlap facing outward) inside of the outer pieces of the fabric which is wrong side out (burlap facing outward).
- The bottom section of the lining (opposite the side with handles attached) should be inserted first into the outer bag fabric pieces. Smooth the inner lining bottom into the outer bag bottom so that the corners are aligned and the seams are aligned together.
- Make sure the long open sections of the inner and outer bag are also aligned along the top and side seams.
- Remove the painters tape from top sections of fabric.





- Make sure that the side seams of the inner and outer fabric are adjacent to each other, and the bottom corners of the inner and outer fabric are adjacent to each other.
- Also make sure the bag straps are tucked in between the outer bag fabric and inner lining bag fabric, still pinned to the inner lining.
- Next, place straight pins through the burlap borders in the top section of the bag to secure the outer bag fabric pieces to the inner lining bag fabric pieces.
- The tops of the bag straps should be still sticking out of the top of the inner and outer bag fabric pieces.
- Once the inner and outer sections of the bag are aligned and pinned securely, begin stitching through the fabric pieces under the burlap **along the top perimeter of the bag** from one seam all the way around the opening of the bag until reaching the beginning of this same seam.
- Make sure to do back stitching on the sections where the bag handles are sticking through to reinforce for strength.
- Once completed this stitching, you can turn the bag right side out by reaching into the hole in the lining and pinching the outer bag through the hole. Then pull the outer bag all the way through until the entire bag is right side out with the outer bag pieces and inner bag pieces adjacent to each other. (see pictures below)





- Next, find the opening in the lining fabric that was not sewn on the bottom center section.
- Hand sew a blind stitch to close this hole shut. If you need instruction on blind stitching please see our list of other sewing tutorials.



- Once the hole in the inner lining is sewn, you can remove the safety pins that are attaching the bag straps to the inner lining on both sides of the lining.
- Finally, just tuck the inner lining into the outer fabric pieces and smooth out the bottom so that corners are aligned.
- To make the corners as pointed as possible, use a chop stick or pencil to gently poke the corner sections.

Your lined tote bag should now be complete and ready to enjoy!!!!





Frequently asked questions:

What if the participant has a hard time putting the needle through the fabric?

- The goal is to have as much participant independence / engagement as possible. Adapt your level of involvement as needed and look for opportunities to increase participant involvement as they progress.
- If participants have severe arthritis in their fingers or their hands are trembling - you can adapt by helping to put the needle half way through the fabric and allowing participant to pull the needle through.
- If participants have use of only one arm / hand – you can adapt by using an art easel and clamps holding the fabric in place to allow the participant to sew the project on the easel. If this is too difficult for the participant, another option is to hold the fabric in place for the participant while they push the needle down through the fabric, and slightly bend the fabric to help them weave the needle back up through the fabric.



Frequently asked questions:

What if the participant sews through the burlap instead of fabric?

- Have the participant use their sense of touch to feel the burlap borders on the fabric.
- Remind the participant to always use their thumb and index fingers to feel the burlap guide and direct their needle just under the guide through the fabric.
- Some participants may need more guidance than others depending on vision and cognitive abilities. It may be necessary to repeatedly cue the participant to feel for the burlap guide and sew beneath it. Allow opportunities to see if the participant makes progress by remembering themselves to check for the burlap guide by touch.



Frequently asked questions:

What if participant sews an overcast stitch instead of running stitch?

- The overcast stitch will not provide a strong, straight seam so this should be removed with a seam ripper and corrected.
- You may need to help the participant understand that a running stitch involves alternating stitches up and down through the fabric. To help them, have them push their needle just under the burlap down through the fabric pieces to the back. Emphasize that this step is going DOWN through the fabric. Then instruct them to feel where the thread is coming out of the back side of fabric and move their finger slightly right or left of the thread (depending on which direction they are sewing) about a ¼ inch. Then emphasize that they will put the needle back UP through the back of fabric to the front.
- Some participants may need more guidance than others depending on vision and cognitive abilities. It may be necessary to repeatedly cue the participant to go up and down through the fabric. Allow opportunities to see if the participant makes progress by remembering themselves to do the running versus overcast stitch.



Frequently asked questions:

What if there are gaps or holes left in the lining or outer bag?

- Usually gaps or holes in the project are due to either too large stitches or missing stitches. After every step of the project (sewing lining, sewing outer bag, sewing top perimeter of inner and outer bag together) you should check the fabric for gaps or holes so that it can be fixed before the next step. This will allow the gap or hole to be fixed before proceeding.
- Instruct the participant to make their stitches smaller if necessary, or to perform more back stitching to help tighten their seams. You may also want to check to make sure that the participant is properly tying off their stitching between rethreading as this could be another source of stitching becoming loose.



Frequently asked questions:

What if the participant has a hard time tying off their thread?

- The thread should be tied off once there is about 3 inches of slack left to their sewing needle. This allows enough thread to easily tie a knot. If the participant has left too little slack in their thread it may be necessary to help manually tie a knot, or to have them cut their thread and then back stitch over their prior stitches with a new threaded needle to secure stitching.
- A helpful hint for those who are vision impaired – Once there is about 3 inches of thread left attached to the sewing needle, have the participant take a small bite of their fabric and pull their needle through the fabric half way and stop. Then have them put their finger through the loop of thread that was made from the fabric to the needle and pull the needle through the rest of the fabric while the thread loosely wraps around their finger. Next have them put their needle through the thread loop around their finger, remove finger and place on top of intersecting thread while tightening knot. Repeat this process a second time to securely fasten a knot.