

## QUILTED TOTE BAG TUTORIAL

Bags, Quilting | 5 ●

Today Michael Ann shows you how to turn any quilt block into a unique tote bag. Michael Ann shares her sewing at from [Michael Ann Made](#), where she recently released a free PDF quilt pattern, the [Summertime Herringbone Quilt](#). You can learn more about Michael Ann's life and quilting in [her introduction](#).



Hello, Friends of Sew Mama Sew! I'm Michael Ann from [Michael Ann Made](#) and I am so excited to be crafting with you today!

I'm a long time seamstress but have only recently discovered the incredible world of quilting. Now that I'm trying out all kinds of new quilt patterns and designs, like this one [I just made for the New Year](#), I'm amassing quite the stack of odd quilt blocks... Enter the Quilted Tote!

With just a little bit of math, this tote can be made out of just about any quilt block. It's the perfect project for testing out a tricky new block, using up an odd block you found in your stash or for trying out a beginning quilting project without the commitment of a whole quilt.

So let's get started!

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#### Supplies:

- One or Two finished quilt blocks (between 6" and 12" large is best)
- Scraps to turn block into bag size
- Fabric for tote back if only using one block
- 1/4 yard of fabric for bag sides and handles
- 1/2 yard of fabric for lining
- 1/2 yard of quilt batting
- 1/4 yard of fabric for binding



First, we need to turn the quilt blocks into tote bag-friendly pieces.

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Measure your quilt block and decide how large of a bag you would like to make. I had a 10 1/2" block and decided I wanted a 12" x 15" sized bag (large enough to fit an on-the-go sewing project!). This means (when taking away 1/2" off the block's seam allowance) I needed to add 2" to the sides and 5" to the top and bottom of my block to make it big enough.

Now for the math: Take the amount you need to add to the top and bottom and divide by 2. Add 1/2" to that number for seam allowance. This will be the width of your top and bottom sashing strips. The length will be the length of your block (including the seam allowance). Cut two of these strips.

For the side strips, take the amount you need to add to the sides and divide by 2. Add 1/2" to that number for seam allowance. This will be the width of your two side sashing strips. The length will be the length of your block (including seam allowance) plus the amount you added to the top and bottom, plus 1/2" for seam allowances. Cut two of these strips.

Got it?!

Once you have your strips cut, sew the top and bottom strips to your block and press the seams open. Then sew the side strips to your block and press those open.

Repeat all of this for your other block if you are using two.



Next, cut out all the remaining elements needed to make your bag.

Using your finished block top as a template, cut two lining pieces (about an 1" larger on all sides) and two batting pieces (also about 1" larger on all sides).

To cut the side and bottom panel, decide how wide you would like your bag to be (I chose 2"). Add 1/2" for seam allowance; this number is your width. The length of your side panel will be the length of your block top, times two, plus the width of the bottom. Cut one side panel fabric strip that size. Cut one lining strip and one batting strip that size, plus about 1" on all sides.

For the inside bag binding, use the length of your side panel strip. Multiply that by two, add about 6", and cut enough 2" wide binding strips to piece together to make this length. Iron your full length strip in half, right sides out.

For the top binding, cut enough 2" strips to equal the top of the block top (times two) plus the side width (times two, plus 6"). Iron your full length strip in half, right sides out.

Finally, for the handles, cut four 28" x 2" strips from your handle fabric, and two from your batting.

And you're done with all math for this project! Phew!





Make a quilt sandwich from your quilt block top, batting and lining piece; place your lining fabric right side down, batting next and then the block piece on top, right side up. Baste and quilt how you desire (this would be a great chance to try some decorative hand quilting!). Do this for both your front and back pieces.

Make a quilt sandwich from your side panel, batting and lining piece. Baste and quilt how you desire (I used 1" horizontal lines).

When you're done, square the front, top and side panel pieces.



Sew the side panel to the block top, right sides together, using a 1/4" seam. It can help to make a small cut on the side panel piece where the corner of the block top meets to help bend the panel.

Now sew the back of the tote to the side panel, taking care to match up the corners and tops.





Bind the inside seams of the tote by stitching the raw edge of your folded binding to the raw edge of the tote. Stay within the 1/4" seam allowance you first sewed on the back.

When you come to the corners, fold the strip up and then back down to create a mitered corner.



To finish the binding, iron it away from the seam. Fold the binding to cover the raw edge, and then sew with your machine, taking care to stay within the seam allowance of your original seam. (It would be smart to use a thread color that matches your binding. Instead of bright white like I did...)



Bind the top of the bag the same way as above. When stitching, push the bindings of the side panels in towards the side panels. When sewing the back of the binding down, fold it over and pin, and then stitch from the top of the bag, as close to the binding stitching as possible to make it invisible.





Finish the ending of the binding using your favorite method (I kind of cheat and just fold each end under and overlap them a bit while I sew so they cover each other).



We're in the home stretch!

Sew the handles by layering the batting, one handle strip right side up, and one handle strip right side down. Stitch down each side using a scant 1/4" allowance. Turn the tube right side out and press. Turn the ends of the handle in, about 1/4" and pin. Repeat for the second handle.



Pin the handles to the side of your bag and sew them on with a pretty little square (again, using the same color thread would make them much less conspicuous).

Now throw that baby on your shoulder and admire all your hard work and effort! You made a darling little quilted tote bag, perfect for carting around all your crafty projects or just impressing everyone you meet!





This is quite a tutorial to get through, so if you have any questions at all please connect with me at my site, [Michael Ann Made](#) or through [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Pinterest](#).

Thanks so much for having me Sew Mama Sew, and have fun crafting!



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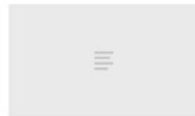
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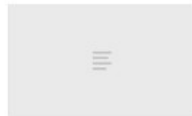
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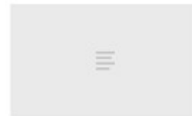
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