

Sew Easy Purse - It's Reversible!

by [babair](#) on April 25, 2008

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Author: babair [author's website](#)

I'm trying to be all things to all people. :-)

Intro: Sew Easy Purse - It's Reversible!

This is a great project for anyone who has not done much sewing. There are no fancy stitches. No buttons, zippers or tricky bits either.

It is also a great project for anyone who loves purses but has trouble finding THE PERFECT PURSE. This is one purse that will be the right size and the right color. The strap will be the exact right length. Because you make all of those decisions.

This is great purse, because it's reversible too. So if your plans change, just flip it inside out and have a completely different look.

Finally, this project will give you basic purse assembly skills. After this one, you can make another one -- maybe with TWO straps! Or with a button loop instead of a flap! Your design. You decide.

To start, read through all of the steps and get the following materials and tools together.

+-----
| Like the idea, but lack the materials, time or motivation?
| You can buy this purse at my etsy store, ArtsiBitsi.
| <http://artsibitsi.etsy.com>
+-----

Easy Reversible Purse – with flap closure



Materials:

- 1/3 yd each of contrasting fabrics
 - Two D rings
 - Coordinating thread
- OPTIONAL**
- Fusible Interfacing
 - Ribbons, beads, buttons, other notions

Tools

- Sharp Scissors
- Straight Pins
- Iron
- Sewing Machine

Time:

2 or more hours, depending on sewing ability

Step 1: Before you start

The fabric that you pick will affect your experience, and your results.

If you're a beginner, I recommend that you get something cheap and lightweight to start with. You can iron some fusible interfacing to the back of it to make it a little stiffer.

A word about fabric...

Think about how much structure you prefer in a purse. Lightweight cottons will make a very casual, slouchy bag that hangs straight down, and takes on the shape of whatever you have in it.

Think about your sewing skill. Velvet (or anything with a nap) is very hard to control under the foot of your sewing machine. Some people have a lot of trouble with fleece because stitches tend to disappear into it. On the other hand, fleece or felt won't unravel.

Finally, think about how you want to use the bag. Bags for everyday need to be very sturdy. You wouldn't want to carry a satin purse to the office where it might get snagged.

My choice – I used some flannel backed vinyl for this project that I embellished by drawing on animal prints with sharpies and painty pens.

It's pretty cheap stuff. I picked it up for less than \$4 /yd at Walmart.

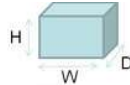
I don't really recommend that you try it on this project, unless you've used it before. It shows every wrong stitch and it gets pretty thick in some sections.

Step 2: Measure, Measure, Cut

This is your purse, so you get to decide how big it should be. Basically, you want to cut four pieces (two of each color), each of them two inches wider and one inch higher than your favorite purse.

1) Measure your favorite purse.

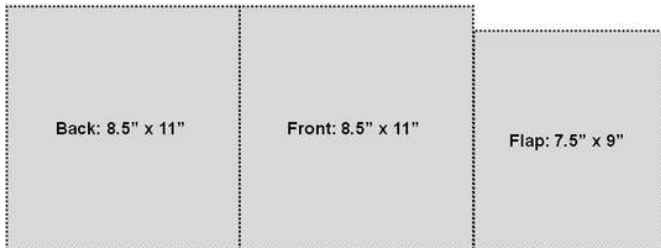
- Height (H):
- Width (W):



2) For each fabric, cut 2 pieces. These will be the front and back of your purse

- Add W+2. This is the length of your cut pieces.
- Add H+.5. This is the height of your cut pieces.
- For example, my purse is H=8, W=9. I cut two pieces 8 ½" x 11"

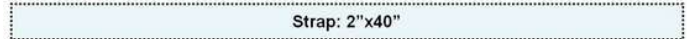
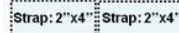
3) From each fabric, also cut 1 piece that is two inches smaller for the flap.



1) From each fabric, cut two pieces 2"x4". These will be tabs that connect the purse to the strap.

2) From each fabric, cut one piece that is

- 2" wide x 40" long for a strap that crosses your chest.
- 2" wide x 32" long for a shoulder bag.
- 2" wide x 18" long for a regular handbag.



If you don't have enough length, go ahead and piece it together, by sewing together 1.5" wide strips until you have the right dimensions.



Step 3: A zebra and a giraffe go into a bar.

I've cut all of my pieces and laid them out.

All the pieces cut!

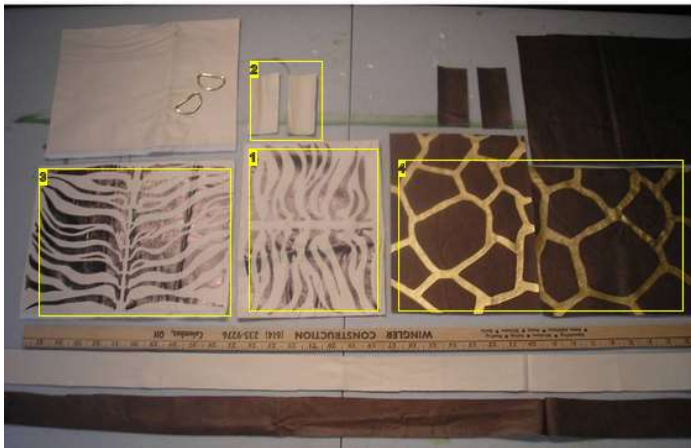


Image Notes

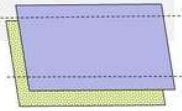
1. smaller flap piece
2. one set of strap tabs
3. Yeah, I freehand drew this on my vinyl with a black sharpie. Because I'm nuts.
4. I freehand drew these outlines with a gold painty pen.

Step 4: Start the straps

Put the right sides together and sew up both sides, longways.

- Make the straps
- Piece together, right sides together, so that each piece has different color on either side.

(mine are white on one side and brown on the other.)



- Sew up the sides of the strap.

Step 5: Turning (and turning and turning and...)

I hate turning. I've been known to recruit family members to do it for me. But this

See if you can find a small child to do this, or try the alternative technique described below.

- Turn inside out.

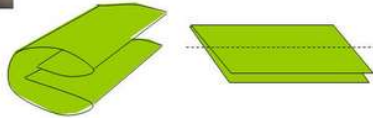
NOTE: I HATE this part. It can take a while, especially if the strap is very long and I'm using a non-stretchy fabric (like this vinyl). I keep some long handled paint brushes around for pushing the ends through. Or, if you have a very wide strap, you can push with a yard stick.



Alternate Strap Technique :

This only works with fabric that you can press flat (not like my vinyl).

Fold fabric towards center, and then in half.
Iron flat
Sew down center



Step 6: Finish the strap.

The key to a nice strap, is the finishing. You should iron it flat and top-stitch.

Even vinyl can be ironed, at the right temperature.

(if your sewing skills don't include straight seams, don't try to top-stitch. :-)

- Iron Flat (use the setting that is appropriate for your fabric)

- Top-stitch, if desired.

(I did, because otherwise, it wouldn't lay flat)



Step 7: Box it up.

Make two bags, one from each color.

Make sure to leave a gap in the bottom of one of them for turning later.

For each color, put together the large pieces, right sides together



Sew around three sides



You've made a bag!

Leave a 4-5" opening in the bottom of one of the bags.

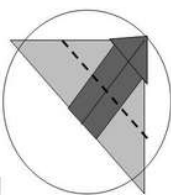
Step 8: Square the bottoms.

Square bottoms look bad on people, but they look good on your purse.

Learn this technique and your future sewing projects will be much enhanced!

- Pinch the bottom corners into triangles.

- Sew off about 1" and clip



View of squared corner from bottom of bag



Repeat for other piece.

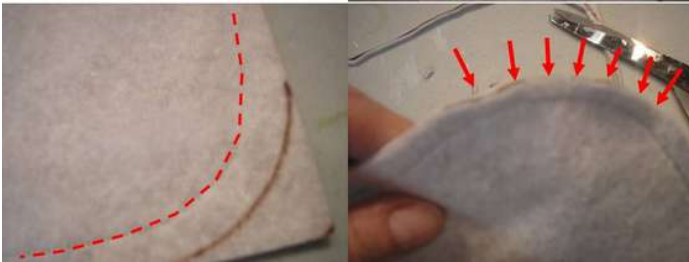
Step 9: Flatty McFlap

You should have two pieces of fabric left. These are the two sides of your reversible flap.

Round it off and sew it up.

Clipping the rounded corners will greatly improve the flatness of your flap.

- Start the flap.
- Put together the two pieces (one of each color), with right sides together.
- Mark and cut two round corners.
- Sew around three sides of the flap piece.
- Clip the rounded corners, so they'll lay flat when turned



Step 10: Flap finishing

Again, top-stitching is a nice way to finish off a piece. It just makes the edges lay flatter and look sharper.

•Admire your flap. Here are the two sides of mine.

•Top-stitch around the edges, if desired.



We are really close to being done!

Step 11: Putting it together - Part I

Pin the flap to one of your bag pieces, as described below.

Start to assemble the pieces

- Turn one of your bags right-side-out. Leave the other bag inside-out.
- Center the flap with the top edge of the turned bag.
- Flip it over (now the right sides are together), and pin to the bag



Step 12: Putting it together - Part II

Pin the strap tabs to the same bag piece.

- Fold each of the short straps over the D ring.
- Pin to the bag, just on either side of the flap

NOTE: If you pin these close to the seam, you may have too many layers of fabric to sew through later.)



Step 13: Putting it together - Part III

Tuck one bag into the other, right sides together.

Did you remember to leave a gap in the bottom of one of the bags?

Tuck the right-side out bag into the inside out bag.

Pin the top edge of the bags together.



Did you remember to leave a 4-5" opening at the bottom of one of your bags?

Step 14: Sewing - at last!

Very carefully sew the whole shebang together.

Go nice and slow, and stop often to rearrange your piece. If you rush it, you'll just end up with weird creases and pleats where you don't want them. (ask me how I know this)

Take all of the pins out. Or, after the next step, they'll be stuck in your purse forever. (again, ask me how I know)

Sew the top of the bags together.
Be careful to catch all of the layers of fabric.



Take all of the pins out.

Did you get all of them?

Step 15: A weird looking animal

I pulled the bags right side out.

The result looks like the spawn of some unholy serengeti union. Either a zebra eating a giraffe, or vice versa.

Your results may vary. :-)

Pull the inside bag out through the opening and turn it right-side out.

How cool is this?



Step 16: SEW CLOSE to being done.

Sew up that bottom seam.

Now it's time to sew that opening closed. (I use the sewing machine, but you could probably get a nicer effect by hand sewing.)

Push one of the bags into the other one.



Step 17: Connect the strap

You can sew the strap, or try something else.

I have a rivet tool that I use a lot for joining heavy fabric.

Or, put in some grommets and lace it together?

Or, wrap it with leather?

Your design, you decide.

LAST STEP!

Attach the long strap.

Perhaps the easiest way to do this is to just --

- Run the strap through the D-ring
- Fold over the end and sew

NOTE: small binder clips are better than pins in some situations.



I usually sew an X pattern.

Step 18: And... we're done!

How cool is this. I got two bags for the price of one. It's exactly the right size for my stuff, the strap fits me perfectly, and its going to be great for my next shopping safari.

What will you make?

+-----
| Like the idea, but lack the materials, time or motivation?
| You can buy this purse at my etsy store, ArtsiBitsi.
| <http://artsibitsi.etsy.com>
+-----



This bag is Wild – inside and out 😊



Related Instructables



FUN LITTLE PURSE: recycle crafting by cdawisconsin



Recycled Denim Cell Phone Pocket by topazcat



STYLISH INNER TUBE PURSE by Sylviasvideofyi



Juice Purse by poi_pai



Recycle Denim/Jean into Reusable parts with no waste. by passionfly



Make A Denim Purse With Cardboard by Creativeman

Comments

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hammer9876 says:

You drew the fabric patterns freehand? Wow. I love the giraffe pattern. Then again, the zebra pattern is pretty awesome, too. "Gold painty pen." Would you tell us what kind of ink/paint you used? Has the gold paint worn well, as in, has it flaked off or anything? You may be interested in www.spoonflower.com. No, I don't work for them.

Apr 20, 2009. 4:36 PM [REPLY](#)



babair says:

Thanks. Both sides got a little scuffed up eventually. But the gold definitely lasted longer than the black sharpie ink. Here's a link for the pen: <http://www.createforless.com/ZIG+Painty+Pen+Medium+Tip+Bulk+Gold+Spice/pid54304.aspx> <http://www.createforless.com/ZIG+Painty+Pen+Med> you're just into the giraffe thing, try picking up a plain brown leather bag from the thrift store and painting your pattern on it.



hammer9876 says:

Thanks!

Apr 20, 2009. 8:13 PM [REPLY](#)



lancmaltby says:

love the bag(s)!!! Great job!

Jun 30, 2008. 7:11 AM [REPLY](#)