Eat breakfast on it this morning, turn it into a handbag this afternoon. Well... maybe skip the eating breakfast part to avoid orange juice stains. This terrific tote started its life as a pretty placemat! Construction is fast, easy... and inexpensive. All you need are a placemat with an eye-catching design, four plastic grommets, and a little bit of fabric for the handle. You might even have a few placemats in your linen cabinet that would fit the bill. Definitely a candidate for the 'this-would-make-a-great-gift' list.

**Sewing Tools You Need**

- Any Sewing Machine (we recommend the Janome 4120QDC)

**Fabric and Other Supplies**
• 1 placemat with a pretty Fall design: we used a 19” x 14” placemat from Crate & Barrel in 100% cotton with cotton cord embroidery
  NOTE: We found ours a while back at Crate & Barrel and no longer see this exact style on their website, but I’m sure you can find something just as pretty!
• ½ yard of 60” faux suede in a color to coordinate with your placemat for the handles: we used a chocolate brown
  NOTE: You can substitute another fabric for the faux suede; it was a great coordinating option for our placemat choice and the soft texture made the handle knots easy to tie.
• 1 package of 1” curtain grommets to coordinate with fabric: we used Dritz® Home Curtain Grommets (they're snap-on!) in Bronze
• All purpose thread
• See-through ruler
• Seam gauge
• Fabric pencil
• Iron and ironing board
• Small sharp scissors
• Straight pins

Getting Started

1. From the faux suede, cut TWO strips 4½” x the width of the fabric.
2. Remove any manufacturer tags from the back of the placemat.
3. Press well.
4. Determine the position for your grommets. I placed mine ½” from the top edges (the 14” sides) with the center point of the grommet 2½” from each side.
   NOTE: Make sure you test the position of your grommets using both the plastic template and the grommet itself.
5. Mark the position for all four grommets. Fold the placemat in half and make sure the grommets will line up exactly on both sides. Otherwise your handle will be all wacky.

6. Install the grommets. If you are new to this technique, see our tutorial. The Dritz®Home grommets snap-on and are very easy to install. I’ve summarized my steps below.

7. Zig-zag around the marked circles, which we recommend in our tutorial, but which I felt was particularly important on this project because of the loose weave of the fabric and the fact I was cutting through embroidery.

8. Cut out the holes with a pair of small, sharp scissors.

9. Insert the front half of the grommet from front to back, then snap on the back. Repeat to insert all four grommets
At Your Sewing Machine & Ironing Board

1. Fold the placemat in half, WRONG sides together. Align the grommets.
2. Increase the length of your machine’s standard straight stitch.
3. Stitch both sides of the placemat together, approximately ¼” from the edge. Stitch from the bottom to the top. When you get to the top, stitch back and forth several times to reinforce the opening corners.
   NOTE: The actual distance will depend on the placemat you chose. You should get as close to the edge as possible, but you do have to account for the bulk of the placemat’s seamed edges. On my placemat, 1/4” was about as close as I could get and have the machine stitch smoothly.

The handles

1. Find the 4½” x WOF suede strips.
2. Place a strip over your shoulder and determine where you want your tote to hang. Add about 10-12” to this measurement to account for the part of the strap that goes through the grommet and knots. I cut my strips to 57”, which was 46” to allow the tote to hang about waist level plus 11” for the knot.
3. Fold each strip in half lengthwise and pin, leaving an 2-3” opening in the middle of the long side.
4. Mark a point on each end.
5. Stitch each strip, using a ¼” seam. Follow your drawn point on one end, pivot at the corner, stitch down the long side, back tack at the opening, clip your thread, move to the opposite side of the opening, complete your seam down the rest of the long side and around the opposite drawn point.
6. Trim around the end points to ¼”
7. Turn each strip right side out through the opening.
   NOTE: See our tube turning with a hemostat; it's so easy!
8. Press each strip, turning in the raw edges of the opening so they are flush with the sewn seam.
10. One handle threads through the front grommets and the other handle threads through the back grommets.
11. Thread each end through the grommet from back to front, making sure the top of the strap is flat and smooth; you don't want a twist in the strap as it goes up and over your shoulder.

   12. Make a simple double knot, leaving about a 2" tail hanging against the outside of the bag.
   NOTE: A double knot is necessary with the thin faux suede to insure the handle won't pull through the grommet. If you use a heavier fabric, you might be able to get away with a single knot.
13. We hand-stitched a Sew4Home label to the inside of our bag.

Contributors

Project Design: Alicia Thommas
Sample Creation and Instructions: Liz Johnson

Other machines suitable for this project include the Elna SewFun and the Baby Lock Grace.

Storage Solutions

This project and patterns (if any) may be downloaded for personal use only. No electronic or printed reproduction permitted without the prior written consent of Sew4Home LLC.
Copyright 2009-2020 Sew4Home LLC. All Rights Reserved.

Source URL: https://sew4home.com/projects/storage-solutions/one-hour-wonder-placemat-tote