Clear View Vinyl Tote for Events and More

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*I can see right through you!* Did you know that many venues no longer allow closed totes and bags to be brought in? If you want to carry in a larger bag, they require it to be see-through. We have come to the rescue for your summer events and festivals with this fashionable and functional Clear View Vinyl Tote. It’s fully finished inside and out with a removable pocket and base insert that allow the tote to be either semi or completely transparent. There’s also a detachable shoulder/crossbody strap.
If you’ve never sewn on vinyl, it’s easier than you might imagine. We have a full tutorial on sewing with laminates, vinyl, and oilcloth that you can review prior to starting for information on specific tools and techniques. But in general, it’s no harder than working with a stiff cloth substrate – especially for this project since you aren’t sewing on the vinyl itself. Our seams are all combined with one or more layers of quilting cotton, so stickiness is kept to a minimum.

This tote is meant to hold lots and give you easy access to all of it. We kept the top open so there’s no fumbling with a clasp when your hands may already be full with other items (or little people) to carry!
There’s a fully adjustable strap that can be worn over the shoulder or crossbody… or detached completely. You can then use the fabric handles to carry the bag. Dritz Metal Hardware makes it so easy to add these kind of functional elements. Follow our steps below, including a link to an even more detailed tutorial on making adjustable straps.

If you are in a situation where the tote is required to be completely see-through from every side, just lift out the base panel and un-snap the pocket. Ta-da – a clear-view of all the contents. This also creates a great water resistant bag to take to the beach or pool.
When you can get away without full transparency, snap on the handy pocket and pop the base panel back into place. The pocket is stabilized with separate panels of mid-weight interfacing so it keeps its structure but folds with a crisp crease at the bottom and flap. The base insert is sized to easily ride up and over the bound bottom seams but still sit flat.

Speaking of those bound seams, that is exactly what you have on the inside. We show all the steps below for our easy stitch-and-wrap method. Even the box corner can be created with a bound seam. There are no exposed sharp vinyl edges anywhere on the tote.
The finishing touch was a cute Dritz Leather Label at the front of the tote, identifying it as an "original." There are six different Dritz Leather Labels from which to choose as well as two metal options. It's a great way to personalize your work.

Our thanks for our friends at Dritz for sponsoring this project and for keeping us up-to-date on their latest tools and notions to make your sewing easier and more creative. To find out more, we invite you to visit the Dritz website or blog; or follow them on Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.
Our Clear View Vinyl Tote finishes at approximately 12” high x 12” wide x 5” deep with standard carry handles and a fully adjustable shoulder/crossbody strap.
Sewing Tools You Need

- Sewing machine and standard presser foot
- Quarter Inch Seam foot; optional but helpful for keeping a precise seam on the vinyl
- Walking or Even Feed foot; or use your machine’s built-in fabric feeding system, such as the great AcuFeed™ Flex system we use on our Janome models

Fabric and Other Supplies
• TWO Dritz 8mm Double Cap Rivets in Nickel
• Dritz Rivet Cutting & Setting Tools for Double Cap Rivets
• ONE ½” Dritz Swivel Hook and D-Ring in Nickel
• FOUR Extra-Large 7/16” Dritz Metal Eyelets with Setting Tools
• TWO 1” Dritz D-Rings in Nickel
• TWO 1” Dritz Swivel Hooks in Nickel
• ONE 1” Dritz Slide Adjuster in Nickel
• THREE Dritz Plastic Snaps in Pink and Plastic Snap Setting Tools
• ONE Dritz Leather “Original” Label

• 1 yard of 44” wide quilting weight cotton for the top trim/facing, handles, strap, and base; we originally used Blooms in Beige from the Flo’s Little Flowers collection by Louis and Irene – any cotton with a petite print could work well
• ⅔ yard of 45” wide 16 gauge clear vinyl for the main bag panels; we used 54” vinyl off-the-roll in 16 gauge
• ½ yard of 45” wide mid-weight fusible interfacing for the pocket, D-Ring loops, and strap; we used 45” Pellon Décor Bond
• ½ yard of 20” wide lightweight fusible interfacing for the top trim/facing and the handles; we used 20” Pellon Shape Flex
• One sheet of plastic canvas for the removable base; you need just one 11” x 4” rectangle
• All-purpose thread to match fabric
• See-through ruler
• Fabric pen or pencil
• Iron and ironing board
• Pressing cloth
• Scissors
• Awl or small sharp scissors to help cutting the holes in the vinyl
• Rotary cutter and mat
• Seam gauge
• Seam ripper
• Straight pins
• Clips to hold vinyl
• Small hammer to set rivets and grommets; we recommend a soft leather mallet or a ball peen hammer
• Heavy metal, stone or wooden block to use as a cutting and hammering surface; we use a small granite block

Getting Started & Pattern Downloads

1. Download and print the Pocket pattern and the Grommet/Snap Placement template. These have been bundled into one PDF file to make the download easier.
   IMPORTANT: This download consists of THREE 8½” x 11” sheets. You must print the PDF file at 100%. DO NOT SCALE to fit the page. There is a guide rule on each sheet to confirm your printout it to scale.
2. Cut out the pattern pieces along the solid lines.
3. Butt together Removable Pocket Part A and Part B at the arrows as indicated on the pattern. Do not overlap. Tape together to form the complete pocket pattern.

4. Butt together the two pieces that make up the Grommet/Snap Placement template, using the printed arrows. As above, do not overlap. Tape together to form the complete template.

5. From the cotton accent fabric, cut the following:
   - Using the Pocket Pattern, cut TWO
     - TWO 18” x 4” rectangles for the top trim/facing
     - TWO 21” x 2” strips on the bias for the handles
     - TWO 2½” x 2½” squares for the D-Ring loops
     - ONE 26” x 6” rectangle for the removable base pocket
     - ONE 2” x 13” strip for the inner key leash
     - TWO 28½” x 3” strips for the shoulder/crossbody strap
   - From the remaining, cut enough 1½” strips to equal approximately 60” in total length for the inside seam binding — you’ll be cutting the strips into independent pieces to stitch in place so the length need not be exact

6. From the vinyl, cut TWO 17½” x 14¾” rectangles.

7. From the mid-weight interfacing, cut the following:
   - TWO 1” x 2” rectangles for the D-Ring loops
   - ONE 25” x 5” rectangle for the base pocket
   - TWO 27½” x 1” strips for the shoulder/crossbody strap
   - Using the Pocket Pattern, but cutting along the dotted seam line rather than the outside line, cut ONE. Then cut the piece apart into three pieces by cutting horizontally along the pocket flap fold line and the pocket fold line.

8. From the lightweight interfacing, cut the following:
   - TWO 2” x 21” strips on the bias for the handles — we are using the woven Pellon Shape Flex fusible, which is woven and so can be cut on the bias
   - TWO 18” x 4” rectangles for the top trim/facing

9. From the plastic canvas, cut ONE 11” x 4” rectangle

**At Your Sewing Machine & Ironing Board**

**Create and place the D-Ring loops**

1. Find the 2½” fabric squares, the 1” x 2” interfacing rectangles, and the two Dritz 1” D-Rings.

2. Fold the fabric squares in half, wrong sides together, and press to set a center crease. Unfold wrong side up so the crease line is visible. Place a piece of interfacing on each fabric square, aligning one long edge of the interfacing with the center crease line of the fabric. There should be ¼” of fabric showing beyond the interfacing on the other three sides. Following manufacturer’s instructions, fuse in place.
3. Re-fold each square right sides together and pin along the 2½” side.
4. Using a ¼” seam allowance stitch together just along the side; the ends are open and raw.

5. Turn right side through the open ends and press each tab flat.
6. Slip a tab through each Dritz D-Ring, pulling it through so the raw ends are flush. Pin together the raw ends.
7. Find one of the main vinyl panels. Measure 2” down from each upper corner of the vinyl and pin a D-Ring loop in place on each side.

**Prepare the bottom corners**

1. The vinyl is rather stiff to work with, so the easiest way to create the finished boxed corners is with a cut-out.
2. Measure and cut a 2½” square from scrap fabric of any kind. You could also use a scrap of paper.
3. Place this template in the bottom two corners of each main vinyl panel. Clip in place.
4. Cut out the two bottom corners from each main vinyl panel.
Create and bind the main body of the tote

1. Place the two vinyl panels together, sandwiching the D-Ring loops between the layers. All raw edges of both panels should be flush, including the bottom box cut-outs. Clip together all around.
2. Find the 1½” strip(s) of binding. Cut lengths to fit the two sides and the bottom of the layered vinyl panels.
3. Fold back one long edge of each binding length ¼” and press well.
4. Place a binding length right side down along one side, aligning the unfolded raw edge of the binding strip with the raw edges of the vinyl. Clip in place.
5. The ends of the strip should be flush with the top of the vinyl panels and the sides of the box bottom cut-out.
6. Repeat to clip all three lengths in place: both sides and across the bottom.

7. Using a ¼” seam allowance (we used our Janome Quarter Inch Seam foot), stitch both sides and across the bottom through all the layers.

8. On both sides and across the bottom, fold each sewn binding strip up and away from the seam.
9. Then bring the folded edge of the binding down, wrapping the raw edges of the seam allowance. The folded edge should cover the seam line. Clip in place.

10. Stitch through all layers to secure. You now have finished bound seams on the inside of the clear tote.

Create the box corners

1. These corners are folded in the same manner as a standard cut-out box corner, but you will bind the seam allowance prior to stitching.

2. From your remaining binding strip(s), cut TWO 5½" lengths. Fold back one long raw edge ¼" as you did above. In addition, fold back both ends ¼".

3. Flatten the corners, aligning the bound side seams.
4. Place the binding strip across the raw edges of the flattened corner. Each folded end should be flush with the outer edges of the flattened corner and, as above, the unfolded raw edge of the binding strip is flush with the raw edges of the vinyl. Clip in place.

5. Stitch across, using a ¼" seam allowance.

6. As above, pull up the binding then wrap the folded edge around the raw edges of the seam allowance, covering the seam line. Clip in place. Remember, those binding ends should be tucked under.
7. Stitch across through all the layers to secure.

8. Carefully turn the tote right side out so all your pretty finished seams are now on the inside. Pull the side D-Rings out into position.
   
   NOTE: If you are new to boxing corners, know that these are slightly different than a traditional corner because of the binding, but you can learn all about standard corners from our full Boxed Corner Tutorial.

Create the removable base insert

1. Find the 26” x 6” base panel, the 25” x 5” interfacing panel, and the plastic canvas.
2. Center the interfacing on the wrong side of the base panel so there is ½” of fabric showing beyond the interfacing on all sides. Following manufacturer’s instructions, fuse in place.
3. Fold the panel right sides together so it is now 13” x 6”. Pin along both sides. Leave the raw end open.
4. Using a ½" seam allowance, stitch along both sides.
5. Press open the seam allowances.

6. Turn right side out through the open end. Using a long blunt tool, gently push out the corners so they are nice and sharp. A knitting needle, chopstick or point turner works well for this.
7. Press flat, pressing in the raw edges of the opening so they are flush with the sewn seams.
8. Insert the plastic canvas through the open end. It should go all the way in, clearing the opening so that opening can be pinned shut.
9. Edgestitch the opening closed. We switched back to our standard presser foot.

10. Insert the finished panel into the base of the tote. It should ride up and over the box corner seams.

Create the removable pocket with its snaps

1. Find the two pocket panels and three pieces of pocket interfacing.
2. The interfacing pieces should be placed on the wrong side of one panel so there is ½” of fabric showing beyond the interfacing on the outer edges. Following manufacturer’s instructions, fuse each piece in place.
3. There should be a thin crack between the three interfacing pieces which will allow the pocket to fold into its final shape with a sharper crease.

4. Place the plain pocket panel and the interfaced pocket panel right sides together. All raw edges of the two layers should be flush. Pin all around, leaving an approximate 4” opening along one side edge near the bottom for turning right side out.

5. Using a ½” seam allowance, stitch the layers together. Remember to pivot at each corner and to lock the seam at either side of the 4” opening.
6. **Clip the corners and press open the seam allowance**

7. Turn right side out through the side opening. Using a long blunt tool, gently push out the corners so they are nice and sharp. As mentioned above, a knitting needle, chopstick or point turner works well for this.

8. At this point in the construction, if you have fabric with a random motif as we did, your pocket panel is the same front to back and top to bottom. Make a decision now as to which is the front and which is the back as well as which is top and bottom. *This is important so you can keep proper track of the snap halves as you insert them*

9. Place the pocket panel “front side up” and flat on your work surface.

10. Find the pocket template pieces, which should be trimmed along the seam line so they are a perfect fit against the finished panel.

11. Place the top piece into position to mark for the flap snap.
12. Using the Dritz Rivet Cutting Tool, cut a hole through all the layers at the marked point.

13. Insert the top half of the Dritz Plastic Snap in the hole. This is “decorative” half of the snap with the happy flower cap. This is where you really need to keep track of front and back, top and bottom. Insert the happy flower cap through the hole from the exterior (front) to the interior (back) so the prong comes through on the interior side.
14. Place the snap socket into position over the prong and use the setting pliers to seal the cap to the socket.

15. Place the center paper template into position on the back side (the interior side) of the panel, using the flap fold line as your guide. Insert a pin through the two snap positions.

16. Transfer the position of the marking pins to the fabric with a fabric pen or pencil.
17. Okay, time to pay attention again to which side is which.
18. You are inserting the stud halves that will snap onto the socket halves that will eventually be inserted onto the tote’s top facing/trim. This means the plain cap should be on the interior of the pocket. Insert the prong of the cap from the interior through to the exterior.

19. Place the stud over the prong on the exterior of the pocket.

20. Using the setting tool, press to seal the two halves together.
21. Repeat at the opposite side of the pocket panel.

22. Finally, fold up the bottom of the pocket into position to mark for the final half of the flap snap (the stud half). Fold the top flap down to mark the correct position. Our stud was approximately ¾" from the bottom seam of the panel.

23. Unfold the bottom so the panel is once again flat and insert this half of the snap. The plain cap should be on the interior
24. Once the snap halves are sealed, re-fold the bottom back into its correct position and pin along both sides.

25. Edgestitch along both sides to secure the fold. This edgestitching also seals the original opening used for turning.

Create and mark the top trim/facing

1. Find the top trim/facing panels and their matching lightweight interfacing panels. Place an interfacing panel on the wrong side of each facing panel; all edges of both layers should be flush. Following manufacturer’s instructions, fuse in place.
2. One each panel, fold back both long edges ½” and press well to set a crease.
3. Fold in half, wrong sides together, so the folded edges are flush. Press well, again to set a crease.

4. Unfold so all the crease lines are visible. Place the ends right sides together, aligning the creases. Pin in place.

5. Using a ½” seam allowance, stitch both seams to form a loop.
6. Press open the two seam allowances.
7. Turn the loop right side out. Fold in half along the original center crease line (wrong sides together) but keep the outer edges raw and flat (in other words, do not re-fold the long edges ½”).
8. Find the Grommet/Snap Placement template.
9. Flatten the loop so the two seams are at each side. Measure to find the exact center points along the front and back of the loop. Insert a pin at these center points.
10. Align the center of the paper template with the center pin points.
11. On one side of the loop, mark for the two snap halves and two grommets. On the other side of the loop, mark for just the two grommets. The side with the marks for the two snap halves will be at the back of the tote.
12. Transfer all pin points onto the fabric with a fabric pen or pencil.
13. Re-fold the trim/facing into its final shape with the raw edges folded back along their original crease lines.

Create the key leash

1. Find the 2” x 13” strip. Fold it in half, wrong sides together to set a center crease line. Unfold wrong side up so the crease line is visible.
2. Fold in each long raw edge to meet in the middle at the crease line. Press well. Both ends are raw.
3. Fold in half again along the original center crease line so the folded edges are flush.

4. Edgestitch along the folded edges to secure into the final ½" width.

5. Find the Dritz ½" Swivel Hook

6. Insert one raw end of the leash through the Swivel Hook, pulling it back on itself about 1”. Tuck the raw end under ½”
and pin in place.

7. Stitch across through all the layers to secure the Hook in place. We recommend double or triple stitching for extra security.

Stitch the facing into position

1. Slip the trim/facing over the top raw edge of the tote. Align the side seams of the facing with the bound side seams of the tote. Clip in place all around.
2. Insert the raw end of the leash under the facing. Pin it in place. It should be against the back of the tote (the side of the facing marked for both the snaps and the grommets). We placed our leash 1” to the right of the mark for the back right grommet (“right” when looking at the tote from the outside).
3. Edgestitch around the top of the tote through all the layers with a slightly lengthened stitch. Go slowly to insure you’re catching both the front and back of the trim in this one seam. This seam also secures the leash in position. We engaged the AcuFeed™ Flex fabric feeding system on our Janome machine. You could also use a Walking or Even Feed foot to handle these thicker/trickier layers.

Create the adjustable strap

1. Find the two 28½” x 3” strips for the shoulder/crossbody strap, the matching interfacing strips, the Dritz Slide Adjuster and the two 1” Dritz Swivel Clips.
2. Using a ½” seam allowance, seam together the two strips end to end to create the full 56” length.
3. Fold the finished strip in half, wrong sides together, and press well to set a center crease line. Unfold wrong side up so the crease line is visible.
4. Place the interfacing strips on the wrong side of the fabric, aligning them along one half of the fabric strip with the center crease line as a guide. There should be ¼” of fabric showing beyond the interfacing along the remaining sides. The interfacing should be butted together end to end. Following manufacturer’s instructions, fuse in place.
5. Fold in each long raw edge ½”. Press well. Fold in one end ½” as well. The opposite end is raw.
6. Fold in half again along the original center crease line so the folded edges are flush (the sides and the one end).

7. Edgestitch along the folded edges to secure into the final 1” width. Remember to pivot at the one finished end to secure it as well.

8. Thread the finished end up and over the center bar of the Dritz Slide Adjuster.
9. Bring the end back on itself about 1" and pin in place. Stitch across through all the layers to secure the slider in place.

10. Find the opposite raw end of the strap. Thread this raw end, bottom up, through one of the 1" Dritz Swivel Hooks.

11. Thread the raw end back through the Dritz Slide Adjuster, right side facing up, going up and over the center bar – up and over the existing secured end. This creates your adjusting loop.
12. Keep pulling the raw end through, eventually threading it through the remaining 1” Dritz Swivel Hook. Pull the raw end back on itself about 1” and tuck under the raw end. Pin in pace and then stitch in place as you did above to secure the Slide Adjuster. Before stitching, do a quick check to make sure there are no twists in your strap.

13. Clip the strap to the tote’s D-rings. Adjust the strap to your desired length.

   NOTE: The steps are summarized here to keep the instructional length manageable. If you are new to creating an adjustable strap, click through to review our full step-by-step tutorial on this technique.

Create the handles

1. Find the two 21” x 2” strips of fabric and lightweight interfacing – both cut on the bias.
2. Apply the interfacing to the wrong side of each fabric strip. All raw edges of both layers should be flush. Following manufacturer’s instructions, fuse in place.
3. Fold each handle strip in half, right sides together. Pin along the long side. Both ends are raw and open.
4. Using a ¼” seam allowance, stitch the long side of each handle.
5. Turn right side out through the open ends. If you are new to turning narrow tubes, we have a great tutorial that shows a technique using a hemostat.
6. Press flat.
7. Edgestitch along the seam on each handle.

8. Set aside the handles.

**Insert the final snaps and all the grommets, and attach the handles**

1. Gather all the Dritz Grommets and Tools as well as the two remaining Dritz Plastic Snap halves.
2. Your top trim/facing should already be marked with the position for the snaps and grommets. You can double check the position of the snap halves using your completed pocket.
3. Following the same steps as above, insert the two snap halves. The happy flower caps should be facing out on the exterior of the bag – the back/outside of the bag.

4. The socket halves are on the inside of the trim/facing.

5. Use the Dritz Setting Tool to seal the cap to the socket.
6. Use a grommet ring, centering it over your previously marked point, to trace an enlarged circular opening.

7. Carefully cut out the circular opening. Insert the grommet stud from the outside through to the inside.

8. Place the grommet cap into position and use the Dritz Setting Post and Anvil to hammer the two halves together. Set all four grommets in the same manner.
NOTE: If you are brand new to working with metal grommets, check out our full tutorial.

9. Find the handles.

10. Insert each raw end of each handle through a grommet. Insert the raw end from the exterior of the tote through to the inside. Fold back the raw end ¼” then pull this folded end back on itself about 1”. Pin the folded end in place.

11. Stitch across through all the layers to secure.

12. Before stitching, check that your handle loops have no twists in them.

Rivet the Dritz Leather Label

1. Find the exact center point along the top trim/facing at the front of the tote. Mark this point with a pin.

2. Place the Dritz Leather Original Label at this point, centering it top to bottom within the trim/facing.
4. First cut the hole with the Dritz Cutting Tool to match each outer hole on the label.
5. Set the back cap into position through the hole from back to front. You should use a very hard surface to hammer against for the best seal. We like to use a small block of granite.
6. Place the front cap onto the stud of the back cap, and, using the setting anvil, hammer to seal.
7. Repeat to add the second rivet.

NOTE: Riveting is easier than you might think (especially with the Dritz tools), and we’ve summarized the steps above. Check out our Metal Rivets Tutorial if you are brand new to the technique.

We received compensation from Dritz for this project, and some of the materials featured here or used in this project were provided free of charge by Dritz. All opinions are our own.

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Storage Solutions

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