

## Grow-A-Bag Tutorial- Version 1 (of the Version 2 bag)

Created by: CJ Gould, 2008

*Please do not sell this tutorial or claim it as your own. But, feel free to sell items made from this tutorial (giving credit to me for the design would be much appreciated, though!).*

The Grow-A-Bag is essentially a heavily modified Jordy bag-  
<http://www.craftster.org/forum/index.php?topic=32204.0>

The bag I'm making for the tutorial is a lunch bag (albeit a good sized lunch bag). It will measure about 10" wide, 12 1/2" tall, and 6" deep. At the end of the tute, I'll try to explain how to modify the measurements for other sizes.

And, sorry for the lousy picture quality- my camera is going on strike, it seems...

### Step 1: Gather your supplies



- Two contrasting, yet complimentary fabrics for the outside of the bag (You'll notice I tried to get away with 2 fat quarters. One is fine for the "accent fabric", but not enough for the main fabric...so I had to switch it out)
- Fabric for the bag liner (I'm using a shower curtain liner to line the inside of my lunch bag, but for the original bag, the lining matched the accent fabric)
- Narrow webbing for the handles (or you can make them out of fabric)
- Thread
- Closure of choice (I used loops and buttons on the original, but wasn't happy. I planned to use buttons and buttonholes for the modified version, but I'm feeling lazy. So, I'm using Velcro.)
- Interfacing (optional)

## Step 2: Cut your fabrics

The most tedious part (aside from sewing on buttons...which is why I'm using Velcro ;) )...

For this size bag, you'll need:

Accent fabric: 4 pieces that are 3" X 17"

Main Fabric: 4 pieces that are 5" X 17"

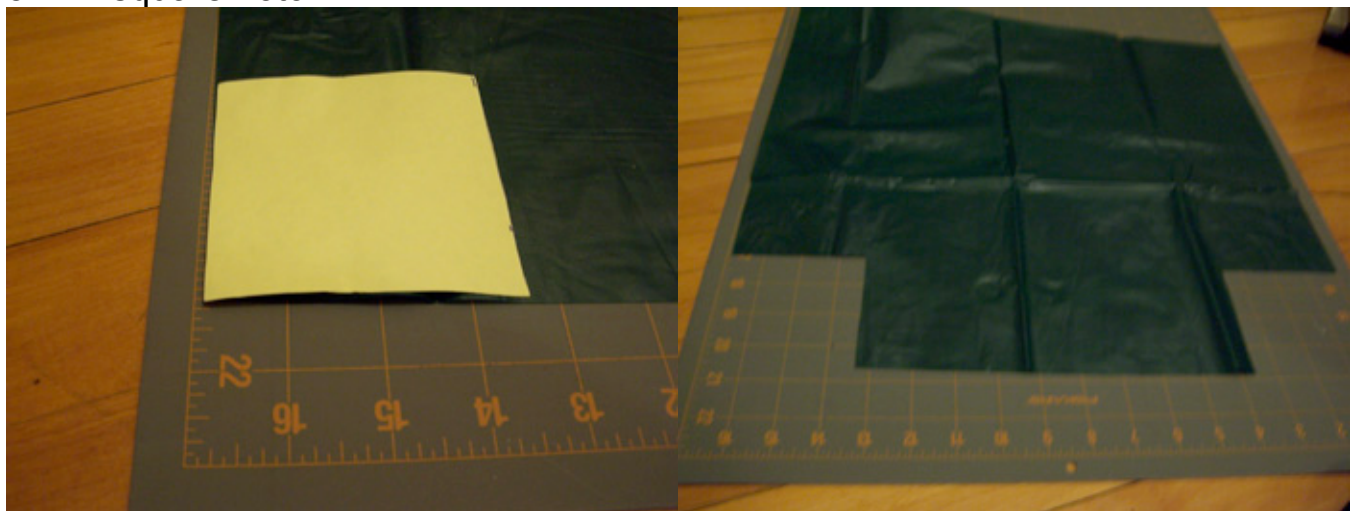
Main Fabric: 2 pieces that are 6 1/2" X 17" (these are the bottom sections)

Lining Fabric: 2 pieces that are 16 1/2" X 17"

Note: I am using 1/2" seams. Adjust the dimensions accordingly if you want smaller (or larger) seam allowances.

## Step 3: Cut the bottom notches

To make the wide bottom of the bag, you'll need to cut out notches from the lining pieces and the 2 bottom sections of the main fabric. For this bag, I cut out a 3 1/2" square notch.



#### **Step 4: Stitching together the outside of the bag: Part 1**

With right sides together, lay the first accent strip along one edge of one of the main fabric strips. Pin in place. You are starting at the top of the bag, so if you have a fabric with an obvious direction, you may want to pay close attention to the orientation of the strips. Stitch together along the pinned edge.

Take another main fabric strip and, right sides together, lay it across the other edge of the accent strip. Pin and stitch.

Take the second accent strip and, right sides together, lay it across the other edge of the second main fabric strip. Pin and stitch.

Take the bottom piece and, right sides together, lay the long, un-notched edge across the other edge of the second accent strip. Pin and stitch.

You will (hopefully) end up with one side of the bag stitched together like this:



Repeat with remaining strips for the second side of the bag.

## **Step 5: Stitching together the outside of the bag: Part 2**

Press the seams towards the main fabric of the bag. You might notice in the photo below that I didn't do this. I realized afterwards that I should have, since it will make things a bit easier a couple of steps from now.

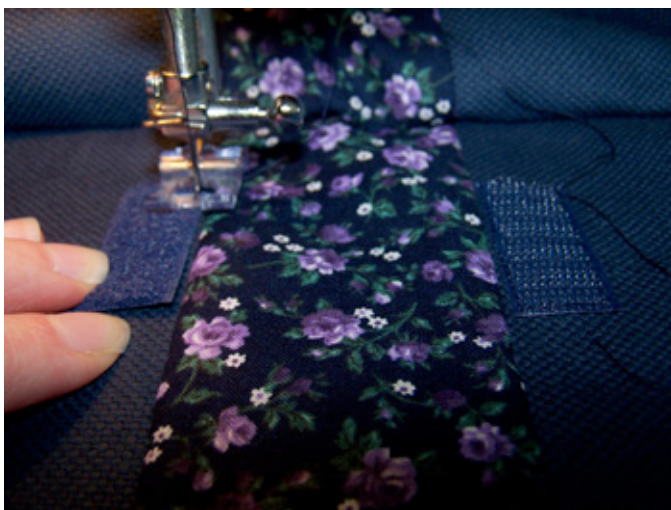
Right sides together, and matching all seams, pin and stitch the sides of the bag. Do not sew the bottom of the bag.



## **Step 6: Making the outside closure: Part 1**

If you are not using Velcro, you will skip this step...

Position the Velcro strips evenly around the bag, stitching in place close to the edge of the accent fabric. For this bag, I used 2 strips on each 6" side of the bag, and 3 strips along each 10" side of the bag. The picture helps with this explanation...



## Step 7: Making the outside closure: Part 2- The Placket

This step is hard to explain, so I have a bunch of pics that may or may not be helpful.

First, tuck the top edge of the bag inside the bag, leaving a strip that is wide enough for your fastener (snaps, buttonholes, etc.). Since I used Velcro, I could use that as a guide. Press the fold.



Then, pull the top of the bag back out and fold the pressed edge over onto the accent fabric. You should be folding it along the seam line. See picture for clarification...I hope!

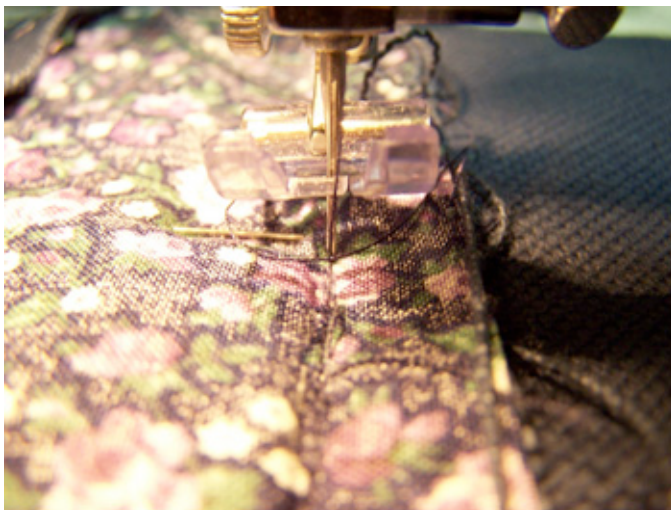


Press and pin in place.



Carefully turn the bag inside out, taking care not to draw any blood with the pins ;)

You will be stitching along the seam line between the accent fabric and the main fabric. This is why it was important to press your seams the right way in step 5- I broke 2 needles here because I pressed them the wrong way.



When you turn the bag back to the right side, you should have a lovely placket!



You'll repeat this process on the second section so that you end up with 2 plackets.

**If you didn't use Velcro**, you'll need to attach your fasteners now. So, hammer on snaps, sew buttonholes and buttons or whatever else you have.

### **Step 8: Finishing the outside of the bag**

Now, that the hard part is finished, you can relax. Because if you don't understand my directions, you're essentially making a Jordy bag from here on in...

With right sides together, pin and sew the bottom seam of the bag.



Then, matching up the bottom seam with the side seam, bring the sides of the notched section together to close up the bottom. Pin and stitch.



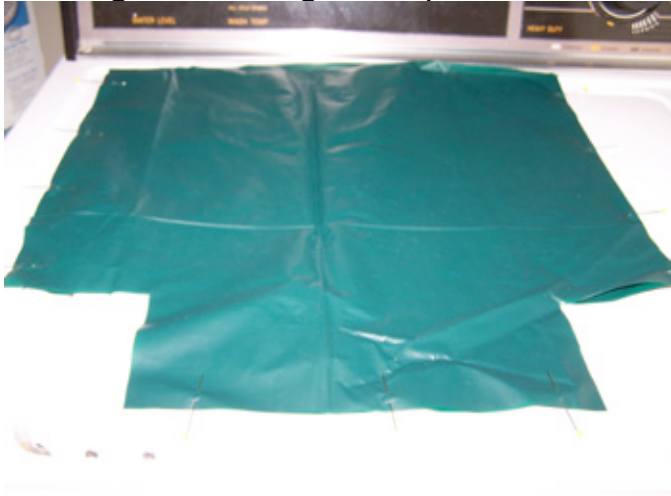
Pin bag handles in place and baste in position.



Admire your work...

### **Step 9: Making the lining**

With right sides together, pin and stitch the sides and bottom seam of the bag.



Sew the corners together just like you did for the outside section (I prefer to machine sew this part and leave the turning opening along the top edge of the bag).

Turn the lining right side out.

### **Step 10: Final assembly**

Turn the outside of the bag inside out. Tuck the lining into the bag (the right side of the lining should be facing the right side of the bag), and pin in place along the top edge.



Leaving an opening for turning, stitch the top edge of the bag.

Carefully turn the bag right side out through the opening. Press the top edge of the bag.

Topstitch around the top edge of the bag, making sure that you are closing up the opening.

And that's it!



**But wait! There's more....**

***What if you want to make a bag that is a different size?***

**Read on...and get your calculator ready...**

## Grow-A-Bag Math

*These calculations are based upon a bag with 5 sections that are equal in size.*

**First, determine the following dimensions:**

Bag Height (BH)- from the top to the bottom of the bag: \_\_\_\_\_

Bag Length (BL)- across the “front” of the bag: \_\_\_\_\_

Bag Width (BW)- from front to back of the bag: \_\_\_\_\_

Placket Size (PS)- based upon the size of your fastener: \_\_\_\_\_

Seam Allowance (SA): \_\_\_\_\_

**Length of strips (all strips are the same length):**

SA X 2 = \_\_\_\_\_

BL + BW = \_\_\_\_\_

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Height of accent strips:**

BH / 5 = \_\_\_\_\_

SA X 2 = \_\_\_\_\_

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Height of main fabric strips:**

BH / 5 = \_\_\_\_\_

SA X 2 = \_\_\_\_\_

PS X 2 = \_\_\_\_\_

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Height of bottom piece:**

BH / 5 = \_\_\_\_\_

SA X 2 = \_\_\_\_\_

BW / 2 = \_\_\_\_\_

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Notch size:**

BW / 2 = \_\_\_\_\_

SA X 2 = \_\_\_\_\_

**Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Lining:**

SA X 2 = \_\_\_\_\_

BH = \_\_\_\_\_

BW / 2 = \_\_\_\_\_

Total= \_\_\_\_\_

The length of the lining and the size of the notch are the same as the outside of the bag.

**I'm pretty sure that these calculations are correct, but if you find any errors, please let me know!**