

HOW TO MAKE A STURDY BAG HANDLE

From: Kay Whitt, Designer for [Serendipity Studio](#)

It's easy to make a great sturdy handle for a bag! Just follow the steps below. This method can be applied to just about any bag pattern and is also useful for making the tabs that connect the handle to the bag.

SUPPLIES:

Fabric (can be quilting cotton, denim, twill, or home decorating weight)

Lightweight fusible interfacing (I like to use Pellon)

Rotary Cutter, Ruler, & Mat

[Bag Hardware of your choice](#)

[Sewing Machine](#)

[Polyester Thread](#)



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Measure the inside space of the hardware that the handle will be attached to. This will determine what the finished width will be. It is desirable for there to be a small amount of ease so that the handle functions without binding up against the hardware. For example, if the opening measures $1\frac{5}{8}$ ", then a desirable finished width would be $1\frac{1}{2}$ ".
2. To cut the strips for the handle, **double** the determined measurement from **Step 1**. For example, $1\frac{1}{2}$ " x 2 = 3".
3. Next, determine how long the handle needs to be.
 - If the handle needs to be attached onto the bag sides to wrap around the bottom, allow for the amount of handle that will not be accessible for actual handle use, then add the amount that will form the actual functioning portion.
 - If the handle needs to be adjustable, add the extra amount desired.
 - If the handle will be simply added to a piece of hardware that is already attached to the bag, then only a small extra amount will be needed for attachment.
4. Once a length has been determined, cut the fabric from selvage to selvage the width determined in **Step 1** until the desired length is achieved from **Step 3**. Trim off the selvages. If necessary, piece the strips right sides together with a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam, pressing the seam allowance open. Repeat this process **ONCE** more so that there are two strips the determined length from **Step 3**.
5. Cut enough of strips from lightweight interfacing to fuse to the wrong side of each handle strip. Overlap the ends of the interfacing by $\frac{1}{4}$ " as necessary so that the fabric is fully stabilized. If the fabric is heavier than quilting cotton, it may only be necessary to interface one strip since the fabric has its own bulk. Use your own discretion to determine what the fabric needs.
6. Once the strips have been interfaced, place them right sides together and stitch along one of the long edges with a $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance. If the strips are particularly narrow, the seam allowance can be reduced to $\frac{1}{4}$ " or $\frac{3}{8}$ ".
7. Press the seam allowance open. **DO NOT** trim the seam allowance.
8. With the wrong side facing upward, **fold** the outer edges of the handle toward the edge of the seam allowance and press. Complete this step for both sides of the handle.
9. Fold the handle, wrong sides together along the seam and press. The outer folded pressed edges should meet up.

10. Edgestitch the outer folded edges together, then edgestitch along the seam. Topstitch 1/4" from the first row of stitching if desired.
11. Press the handle, then add it to the bag per the pattern instructions.

