

HOW TO SEW A CROSS BODY ZIPPER TOTE - FREE PATTERN

I also used metal zippers because I love the bit of bling that they add (like jewelry on your tote), but of course you may use a nylon zipper if you wish. I do recommend using handbag zippers (metal or nylon) because they have wider tapes. If all you can obtain is regular width zippers, though, they will work too.

I decided to piece the exterior of the little bag from 2 1/2" strips. It makes it more interesting and lets you use up scraps too. You are going to LOVE the foundation piecing technique that I used.

CROSS BODY ZIPPER TOTE PATTERN

You will need:

- 9 fabric strips 2 1/2" x 9" (for the tote exterior)
- 1 fabric rectangle 18 1/2" x 9" (for the tote interior)
- 1 rectangle of fusible fleece 18 1/2" x 9"
- 1 zipper 9" or longer
- 2 pieces of twill tape or ribbon that are 1/2" - 1" wide and 2 1/2" long (to make the strap loops)
- 60" piece of rope, twill tape, or ribbon for the strap (can also be sewn from a 2 1/2" strip of fabric as seen below)

Foundation Piece the Bag Body:

1. Apply the fusible fleece to the wrong side of the 18 1/2" x 9" rectangle of fabric.
2. Lay the first 2 1/2" x 9" strip against the fusible fleece with a 9" edge aligned with the top 9" edge of the body piece. Baste the strip in place 1/8" away from the top edge.
3. Turn the body piece around and lay the second strip on top of the first. Stitch the strips with a 1/4" seam allowance.
4. Open the second strip and smooth it against the fusible fleece. Place the third strip on top of the second, and sew it in the same way.
5. Foundation piece (you are doing it!) all 9 strips to the fusible fleece side of the body piece. Trim away any extra foundation fabric, if needed. Then baste the unsewn edge of the final strip 1/8" from the edge.

ATTACH THE ZIPPER:

1. Clip or pin the zipper to one of the 9" edges of the body piece, right sides together. The zipper should be centered against the 9" edge.
2. Stitch the zipper to the body piece with a 1/4" seam allowance. Use a zipper foot if necessary. (Since I am using a wide handbag zipper, I did not need to use my sewing machine's zipper foot for this step.)
3. Trim away 1/8" from the fabric and interfacing layer of this seam - not the zipper tape. Simply cut along the basting stitches that are 1/8" from the edge.

When this step is done correctly, you will be able to fold up the zipper and on the lining side of the tote, the zipper tape will completely cover the raw edge of the fabric and interfacing layer.

4. Fold the zipper up away from the tote exterior and topstitch on the fabric, 1/8" from the seam.
5. Fold the body piece in half, with the remaining zipper tape against the other 9" fabric edge. Pin or clip in place.

Stitch along the zipper tape with a 1/4" seam allowance. Trim 1/8" from the fabric/interfacing layer. Then topstitch just as before.

6. Fold the 2 1/2" tab strips in half and baste them to the sides, just above the zipper. Make sure you are only sewing through the top fabric/interfacing layer - stitch a scant 1/4" from the edge.

Note: Arrange the tote with 1 strip, or most of 1 strip above the zipper. The top strip might wrap around to the back a little bit.

SEW THE SIDES OF THE TOTE:

1. Turn the tote inside out and line up the foundation pieced strips that are below the zipper, as shown above.
2. Pinch the strip at the bottom into a 1" pleat. You should see two stitching lines running along the bottom of the tote lining.

Pin or clip the sides together. Make sure the zipper is 1/2 way open.

3. The next step is to sew down both sides of the tote with a 1/4" seam allowance.

If you used a metal zipper like I did, make sure you go very slowly (hand turning the wheel) as you sew across the metal zipper teeth. If you feel or see the needle hitting metal, wiggle the tote until the needle slips in between the teeth.

4. Trim away the extra zipper tape using heavy duty scissors (not your fabric scissors!).

BIND THE RAW EDGES (OPTIONAL):

1. Cut 2 strips 9" x 1 1/2"
2. Center a strip along one side of the bag (on the inside). Stitch with a 1/4" seam allowance.
3. Turn the tote over. Fold the long raw edge of the binding to meet the raw edges of the tote.

Fold the top edge of the binding down before wrapping the binding around the raw edge and pinning or clipping in place as seen above.

Fold and secure the bottom edge of the binding just like the top (not shown).

4. Stitch the binding close to the edge.

CAUTION: Make **very** sure you know where your metal zipper is so you can hand-wheel slowly over it. This time you won't be able to see the teeth.

Repeat steps 2-4 above to bind the other raw edge.

MAKE AND ATTACH THE STRAP:

If you are using a rope, twill tape, or ribbon strap - you can simply tie it to the loops or (if it is thick enough) slip it through the loops and tie knots at the ends.

For one of my totes, I made a fabric strap by sewing together 2 1/2" strips to make one 60" long strip. Then I folded and pressed it in half with the edges pressed to the inside.

Finally, I topstitched 1/8" from both long edges.

See how cute it looked!

I embellished these zipper totes with zipper pulls made with ribbon, twill tape, and a tassel.

Have fun using materials from your stash!