

Hoito Bag



This bag is not your traditional bag with a well-defined bottom shape, side walls, and a top opening. It reminds me of the wrapping on a candied apple where all sides of the wrapping are gathered and held with a twist-tie at the stick which is the handle that you use to hold the apple while you are eating it. The bag, however, does have two 'built-in' fabric handles and two sides that are kind of self-closing because of elastic sewn in – there is no stick to be stuck into the contents of the bag.

I first saw one of these bags when I visited friends in Maui back in the 80's. The size of a Hoito bag is determined by the size of the square or rectangular piece of fabric that you use. Keep in mind that bigger tends to be synonymous with heavier, so it is best to go for the smaller size for your first bag. I speak from experience. The first one I made was big enough to put a queen size quilt in. Since then I've made smaller versions, generally big enough to hold a beach towel, suntan lotion, and a few other essentials needed for a day at the beach or by the pool. The bag also makes a great reusable shopping bag when you visit your local farmers market – just remember how heavy a watermelon and a few ears of corn can get.

Supplies:

Fabric – 1 yard

$\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide elastic – $\frac{1}{2}$ yard

Thin batting – 2 pieces 5" x 26"

Twill tape or strips of selvage – 2 pieces 36" long

$\frac{1}{2}$ " ribbon or fabric ties – 24" (optional)

Cutting:

Bag – Cut one 27" x 44" rectangle

Handles – Cut two 3" x 44" strips

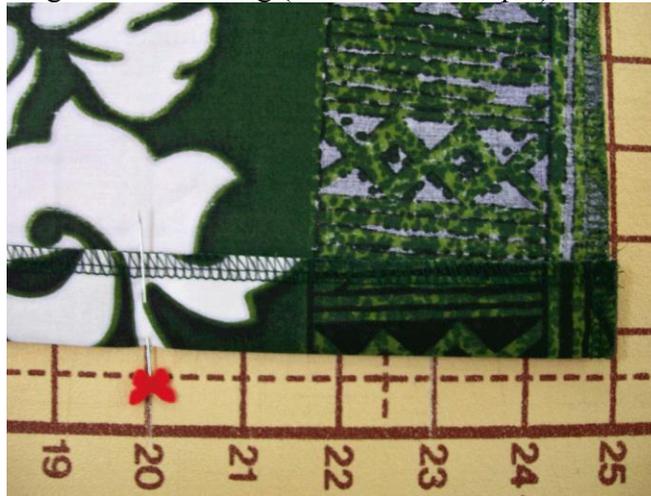
Batting – Cut two 5" x 26" strips

Bag Instructions:

1. Overcast all four raw edges of the bag fabric with a serger or sewing machine.



2. Press a 1" casing along both of the long (44" in this example) sides of the fabric.



3. Place a pin 5" in from both ends of both long sides.



4. Stitch the casing starting and ending at the 5" marks.



5. Cut elastic into two 9" pieces, and insert a length of elastic into each casing.



6. To prevent the elastic from disappearing into the casing, safety pin one end to the fabric before pulling the other end through.



7. Secure the elastic ends with a zigzag stitch.



8. Press and sew a 1 3/4" casing along the remaining two edges. Optional – if you want, cut two 12" lengths of ribbon or make your own ties from fabric. The ties can be centered and sewn under the casing for tying the bag shut.

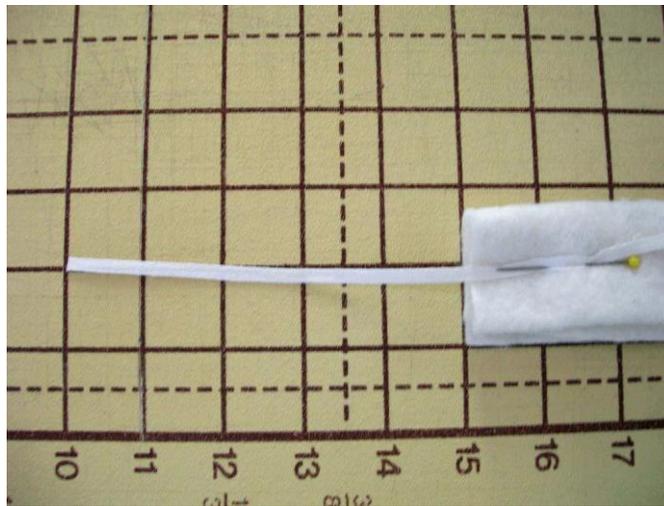
Handle Instructions:



1. Fold handle fabric, right-sides together, in half along its length and serge or sew with a 1/4" seam allowance.



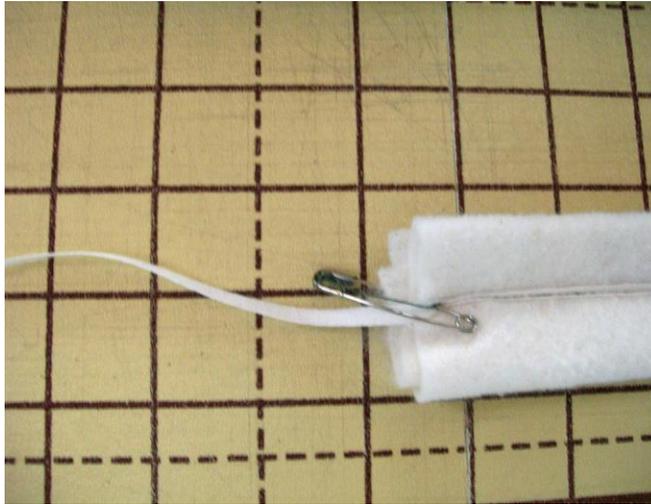
2. Turn fabric right-side out.



3. Fold batting width-wise into fourths to form a long and skinny batting strip. Use pins to help hold the layers together. Center the twill tape on batting, leaving a 5" tail at each end.



4. Stitch down the middle of the twill tape and batting through all thicknesses.



5. At each end of the batting strips, insert a large safety pin through the batting and twill tape.



6. Pull a batting strip through each handle. Gather the handle fabric so the ends of the fabric and batting are flush at each end.



7. Re-pin the safety pins through the handle fabric, batting and twill tape at all ends and pull a handle through each bag casing.

8. Remove safety pins and pull 2” of handle fabric free from batting at all ends.



9. For each handle, overlap the handle ends 2” and sew across the width using a zigzag stitch a couple of times.
10. Pull the handle through the casing until the stitched overlap is hidden in the casing.



11. Your Hoito bag is ready to use.