Projects > Tote Bag Pocket

This is a quick way to add a useful pocket to a tote bag. The sample displays the use of a contrasting fabric for interest. The button closure is another opportunity for embellishment. Using the Circle Sew Attachment assures accurate stitching for the completed project.
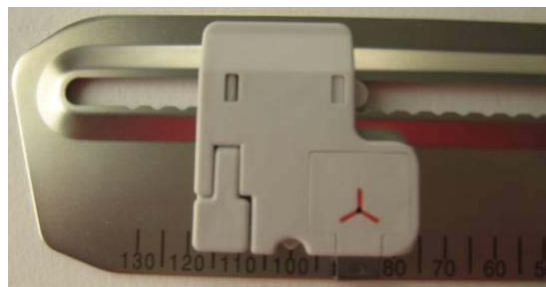
Materials and Supplies

- Brother Embroidery and/or Sewing Machine
- Brother Circle Sew Attachment
- A tote bag that could use a pocket
- Two 10″ squares of fabric that coordinate with the tote bag
- One 10″ square of stabilizer the same size as the fabric
- Matching thread, bobbin thread
- A button to close the pocket
- A chopstick (the kind used for eating)
- A 2″ wide, ½″ tall piece of a product that seals two pieces of fabric together

Instructions

1. Measure the area on the tote bag where the pocket will be placed to determine the size of the pocket to be created. The fabric measurements given will create a pocket that is 9″ or less.

2. Fold one square of fabric into fourths to locate the center point.

3. Mark the center point on the *wrong* side of the fabric.

4. Place the two squares of fabric right sides together. Keep the marked square on top.

5. Place the stabilizer underneath the fabric squares.

6. Follow the manufacturer's directions to attach the circle sew attachment to the sewing machine.

7. Insert the locking pin for the circle sew attachment through the marked center point attaching all three layers together.

8. Attach pin (with fabric) to the locking device.

9. Move the slider unit to stitch a circle the desired size of the pocket. The sample was stitched with the slider at the 100mm mark.

Arrow points to 100mm marker. Pin latches in the hole to hold fabric securely in place.

10. Lower presser foot and select a straight stitch.

11. Stitch a complete circle and end with a back tack .

12. Release pin from unit and remove from attachment.

13. Remove pin from fabrics.

14. Tear away the excess stabilizer.

15. Notch the edges of the seam allowance to remove bulk when the circle is turned.

16. One inch in from the seam line on the lining fabric make a small slit (1.5″) in the fabric. This is so the circle can be turned inside out. Turn fabrics right side out.

17. Insert the blunt end of a chopstick through the slit and push gently on the seam allowance. This will help the seam lay flat.

18. Press the circle.

19. The slit in the lining may be closed by hand stitching or by inserting a small piece of a fabric joining product that could be ironed into place permanently sealing the fabric edges together.

20. Fold down a part of the circle that will be the flap where the lining will show. The sample piece is turned down approximately 2″.

21. Press the "flap" in place.

22. Fold to find the center point of the flap.

23. Attach the buttonhole foot to the machine. Insert button into foot.

24. Stitch a buttonhole in the "flap". The sample buttonhole was stitched through all four layers of fabric.

25. Place pocket onto tote bag. When the desired location is found secure position with pins.

Hint: If the pocket is placed near the bottom of the tote bag the bag will be more stable than if it is placed higher up.

Slit used to turn fabrics right side out. Close edges prior to attaching pocket. This will be the bottom edge of the pocket.

26. Select a stitch to attach the pocket to the tote. The sample is done with a blanket stitch.

27. Mark the position to attach the button.

28. Stitch the button in place. Using button foot "m" and the button sewing on stitch makes this a simple task.

29. Enjoy using your new pocket on the tote bag!

Note: *The sample is an economical tote bag that did not have a pocket. This would also be an excellent method to cover up any undesired printing on a tote bag.*