

Happy Improv Tote

Featuring Stonington by Denyse Schmidt

Brighten any day with this handy tote. Easy-to-piece improv blocks make a fabulous one-of-a-kind carryall.

Collection:	Stonington by Denyse Schmidt
Technique:	Improvational Piecing, Sewing
Skill Level:	Experienced Beginner
Crafting Time:	Weekend*
Finished Size:	11 ¹ / ₂ " x 13 ¹ / ₂ " x 4" (29.21cm x 34.29cm x 10.16cm), excluding handles

*Crafting time based on Experienced Beginner skill level

Project designed by *Melissa Peda*

Tech edited by *Linda Turner Griepentrog*

Fabric Requirements

- (A) (1) 2½" (6.35cm) Stonington Design Roll (40 pieces)
- (B) ½ yard (22.86cm) coordinating Designer Essentials Solids fabric of your choice, for lining

Additional Requirements

- **Coordinating and Contrasting Coats® Dual Duty XP all-purpose thread**
- (2) 17" (43.18cm) squares batting
- (2) 17" (43.18cm) squares muslin
- ⅛ yard (11.43cm) medium- to heavyweight fusible interfacing, 45" (114.30cm)
- Rotary cutter/mat/ruler
- Sewing machine
- Basic sewing and pressing supplies

Cutting

WOF = Width of Fabric

Fabric B, cut:

(2) 16" (40.64cm) squares, for lining

Fusible interfacing, cut:

(2) 2½" x 21" (6.35cm x 53.34cm)

Design Note

Improv piecing doesn't use standard size pieces and there really is no "pattern"—the directions allow you to do your own thing and create a design to your liking. Follow the tote photo if you prefer, or create your own patterning. A single pieced block is used for the tote front and another for the tote back.

Sewing

Note: Seam allowances are ¼" (.64cm) unless otherwise noted. Sew pieces right sides together.

1. For the beginning of the improv block, cut a shape (square, hexagon, octagon or triangle) from the scraps of **Fabric B**.
2. Sew a 2½" (6.35cm) **Fabric A** strip to one side of the shape, press the strip open and trim the ends at an angle.
3. Sew another 2½" (6.35cm) **Fabric A** fabric strip to an adjacent side of the center shape. Press and trim the ends at a different angle from the first strip addition.
4. Continue adding assorted **Fabric A** strips in the same manner until the pieced block reaches 16½" (41.91cm) square. As you build the design, keep the initial solid shape off center to achieve a visually pleasing arrangement. Trim the block edges to square.
5. Make a second block following Steps 1-4.

Tote Assembly

6. Layer the muslin, batting, and quilt block (right side up). Baste.
7. Quilt wavy lines from top to bottom, or quilt as desired.
8. Repeat Steps 6-7 for the second block.
9. Trim the blocks to 16" (40.64cm) square.
10. With right sides together, sew the (2) blocks together along the sides and bottom edges.
11. To box the corners, fold the tote lower corners to align the side seam with bottom seam. Draw a perpendicular line 1½" (3.81cm) down from point. Stitch on the line and trim the corner to ½" (1.27cm) seam. Repeat for the lower tote opposite corner.

12. Piece together leftover 2½" (6.35cm) **Fabric A** strips to create (4) 2½" x 21" (6.35cm x 53.34cm) handle strips.
13. Following the manufacturer's instructions, fuse a 2½" x 21" (6.35cm x 53.34cm) fusible interfacing to the wrong side of two pieced strips.
14. Sew the long edges of one interfaced handle strip to an uninterfaced strip using a ½" (1.27cm) seam allowance. Turn right side out and press. Edgestitch both long edges of the handle. Repeat for the second handle.
15. Repeat Steps 10-11 with the 16" (40.64cm) **Fabric B** lining squares, leaving a 4" (10.16cm) opening in the bottom for turning.
16. With raw edges even and being careful not to twist, pin the outer handle edges 4" (10.16cm) from tote front side seams and baste in place. Repeat for the tote back.
17. With right sides together and matching side seams, place the tote inside the lining with the handles tucked between. Sew around the upper edge.

Finishing

18. Turn the tote right side out through the lining opening. Press.
19. Turn under the edges of the lining opening and stitch closed.
20. Tuck the lining into the tote, extend the handles, and edgestitch around the top.