

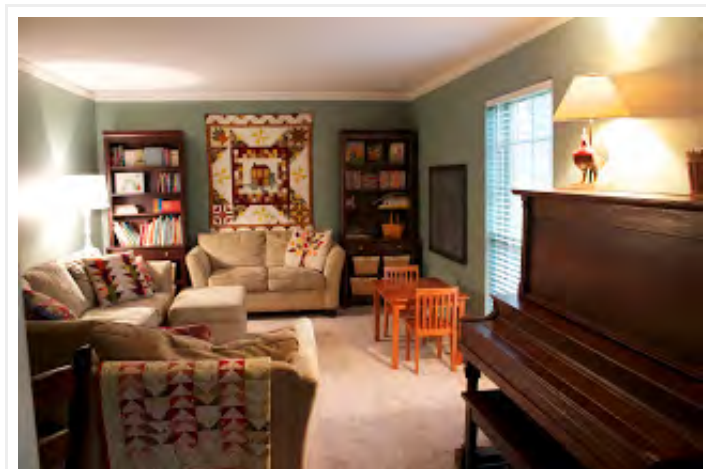
# Girl Friday Sews {Traveling in Circles Tote}



## [Girl Friday Sews Blog Hop](#)

But first a little peek of where I work.

Our living room is where we (all four kids, mommy and daddy) work and play. It is also the first room you see when you walk into our home. Naturally this room has to serve its purpose but also look the part. So, housed in every drawer, door, and basket are supplies. For example, in the baskets on the lower part of the bookshelves pictured are blocks and puzzles and other toddler friendly goodies. Our home school supplies are kept in containers and live in closets or on shelves until our home school days.



The piano is a recent addition. It belonged to my husband's Granny Mary.

In the picture below, you can see our computer armoire opened up. This is where I can pull up a chair and use the computer to blog and goof off get ready for our school days. Continuing with the container theme, the red milk crates housed in the armoire hold curriculums for my older daughter (1st grade) and my middle daughter (preK). When these things are not in use, I can safely and neatly shut the armoire door, for a clean look.



My mother made the quilt on the wall as our wedding gift. It is a signature quilt.

You see, some people are container gardeners. They grow their tomatoes and flowers in pots on patios or in other found places. I am a container organizer, which basically means I organize my mess in containers. Sometimes the containers are cute. Sometimes they are rubbermaid. I'm aiming for cute with the tutorial I'm sharing today!



I made the "Traveling in Circles Tote" in the hopes of having a cute place to organize my hand sewing things. I'd love to have it so that I can pick up this pouch and sew while watching the kiddos play or conducting a quiet part of our homeschool days. (I'm thinking English Paper Piecing! My fav!)



Pockets filled with paper templates, perle thread, regular thread, and needles.

The Traveling in Circles Tote has a place for everything with customizable interior pockets and two zippered pockets on the inside of the lid. You may find this design familiar if you are a fan of [Vera Bradley](#). I have a [Vera Bradley bag](#) of a similar design. It's one of my favorites but instead of buying a new one, I wanted to make one displaying some of my favorite fabrics.

I'm in love with the results and I'm happy to share how to make one for yourself.

A few notes before we get started. This tutorial is very long. I don't know if I've ever seen one longer! So pack a snack. The project isn't hard, but it is a multi-step project. Hence the length. If you have any questions please let me know in the comments. I will answer back in email form as well as in the comments if I feel other readers would benefit.

Thank you for reading and thank you to Heidi for including me in the [Girl Friday Sews Blog Hop](#).

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## Traveling in Circles Tote Tutorial

### Materials:

- \* one half yard print (I used an [Echino](#) print)
- \* one half yard solid (I used [Essex hot pink linen](#))
- \* 3 zippers: {1} 22 inch non separating, 2 at least 6 inches non separating
- \* Lightweight muslin
- \* Batting scraps
- \* 8 inch Circle Template ([included here](#))
- \* Optional: light weight interfacing (Pellon 906F is shown and used on my yellow version pictured above.)

### Cutting:



Print and cut out the downloaded circle template.

(Link above.) Fold your paper template into quarters. During the side panel assembly and bag assembly steps, you will need to mark your circular and cylindrical pieces at each quarter.



From the print cut:

- {2} 8.5 inch squares (pouch body)\*
- {1} 6 inch by 26 1/8 inch rectangle (pouch body)\*
- {1} 4 inch by WOF strip (pocket)
- {1} 10.5 inch by 8.5 inch rectangle (top, double zipped pocket)
- {5} 4 1/8 inch by 1.5 inch strips (zipper tabs)

\*Interfacing recommended if you use plain ole' cotton. Cut equivalently sized interfacing and apply to wrong side of these pieces per manufacturers directions.

From the solid cut:

- {2} 8 inch circles from Circle Template (bottom lining, top double zipped pocket lining)
- {1} 6 inch by 26 1/8 inch rectangle (inside panel and pocket lining)
- {1} 4 1/8 inch by 1.5 inch strip (zipper tab that shows from the lining)
- {1} 3 inch by 8 inch strip (handle)

From the muslin cut:

- {2} 8.5 inch squares (pouch body)
- {1} 6 inch by 26 1/8 inch rectangle (pouch body)

From the batting cut:

- {2} 8.5 inch squares (pouch body)
- {1} 6 inch by 26 1/8 inch rectangle (pouch body)
- {1} 1 inch by 6 inch strip

### Quilting:

Make three quilt sandwiches:

- {2} 8.5 inch squares sandwiches = muslin + batting + print



(Note: I did this wrong in my pictures, I didn't use muslin. It wasn't the end of the world, but I wasted a good chunk of my Echino and pink fabrics that are hidden now. Sad face.)

{1} 6 inch by 26 1/8 inch sandwich = muslin + batting + print



Makin' sammiches

Quilt sandwiches as desired. I did random straight lines.

From the now quilted squares, cut two 8 inch circles using the circle template.

Now you have your exterior top and bottom and side panels. Set these three quilted pieces aside.

#### Inside Pockets:

Now for making the inside side pockets.

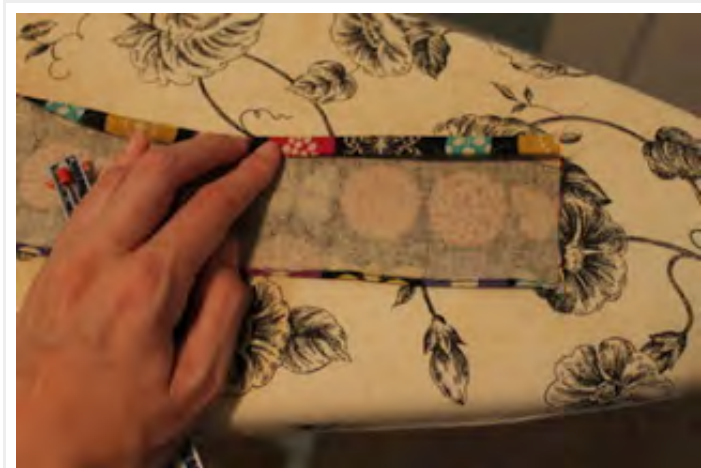
First, take your inside lining piece (6 inches by 26 1/8 inches) and cut 1.5 inches off. Now you will have two pieces: {1} 4.5 inches by 26 1/8 inches and {1} 1.5 by 26 1/8 inches. Set the 1.5 inch strip aside for now.



Cutting circles from quilted squares

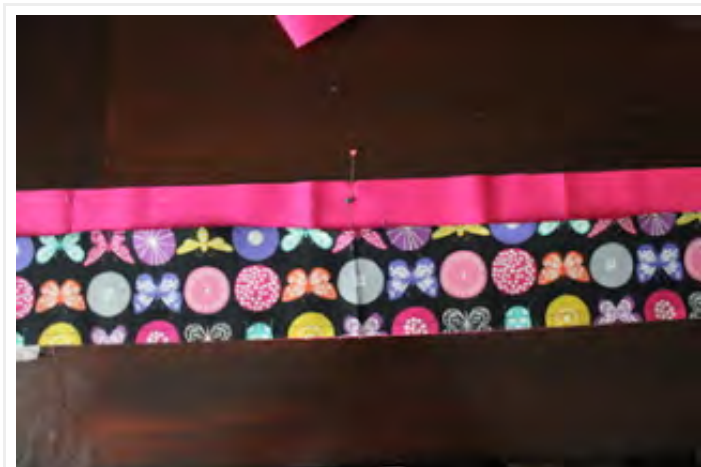


With your pocket fabric (4 inches by WOF), you will need to do two things: 1) Hem the top edge. I used a rolled hem, which didn't go so well with the linen. So fold and press the top edge under 1/4 inch. Repeat. Then top stitch using a 1/8 inch seam allowance from the top edge. 2) Leaving 6 inch thread tails on both ends, run two long basting/gathering stitches 1/8 and 1/4 inch from the bottom of your pocket piece. (I only used one stitched at 1/4 inch.)



Preparing pocket piece

Using the prepared pocket piece and the lining piece mark the center of each and pin them together at the center.



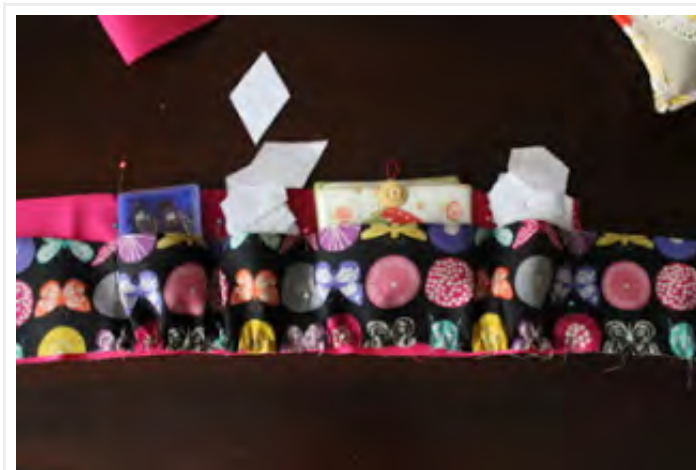
Pocket and lining centered and pinned.  
(so bummed my pocket is turned upside down!)

Now, you will make your pockets. Working with the right side of the pocket, pull on one thread tail (or both bobbin tails if you sewed two lines of basting stitches) to gather the pocket fabric until you reach your desired pocket depth. You will pin to mark your pocket seams. Be sure to pin your fabric so it is resting straight and not pulled in one direction. Also be sure to pin in a straight line. In the picture below, the pin pair on the right is pinned correctly (straight) and the pin pair on the left is incorrect (not lined up, fabric misaligned).



Pin to mark where to sew your pocket seams.

Play with your gathers and notions to see 1) how big you want your pockets and 2) how many pockets you want. I ended up with 8 pockets of varying size. I also had about 5 inches of pocket fabric hanging off the lining fabric on both sides.



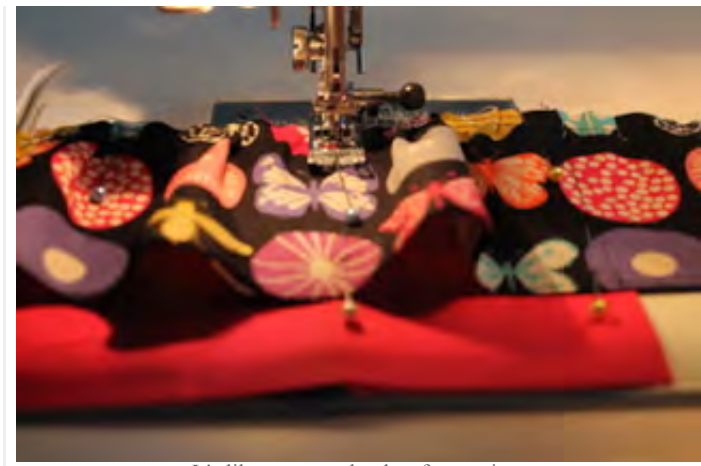
I'm happy with these pockets and I'm ready to do the other side.

Repeat to make the left half of your pocket.

Once you are satisfied with your pockets, stitch along the bottom edges using a 1/8 inch seam allowance.

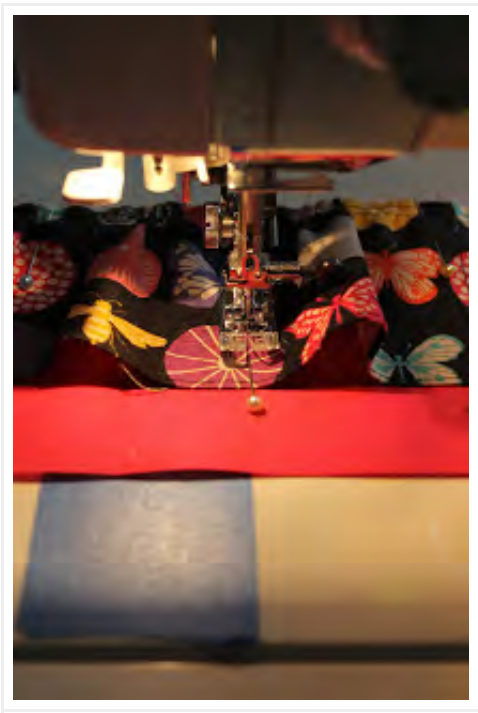


Next, sew your pocket seams. Starting at the bottom edge of your pocket, begin sewing vertically, backstitch, and continue stitching.



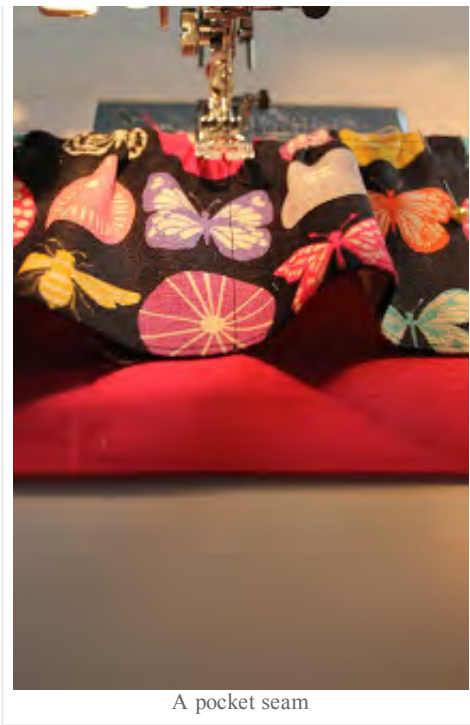
It's like connect the dots for sewing.

Keep sewing until you reach the top of the pocket being sure to backstitch to secure the top edge of the pocket to the lining.



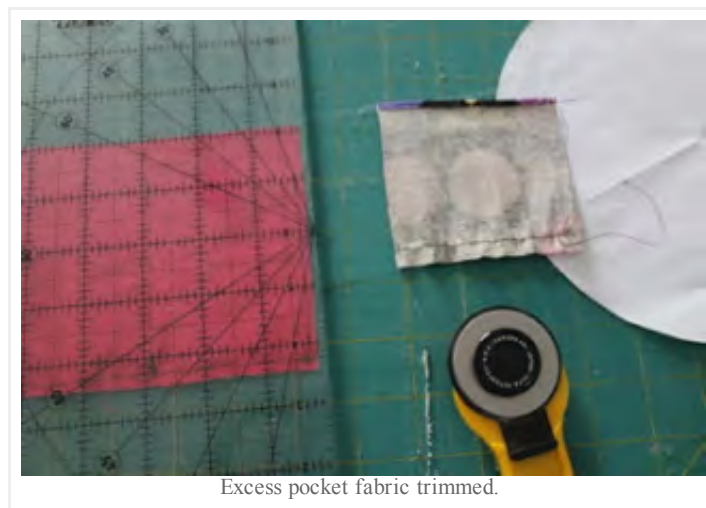
The picture below shows one finished pocket seam. Sew all of your pockets seams being sure to also sew along the two sides using a 1/8 inch seam allowance.





A pocket seam

Once you are finished, turn your pocket and lining over and trim off the excess pocket fabric.

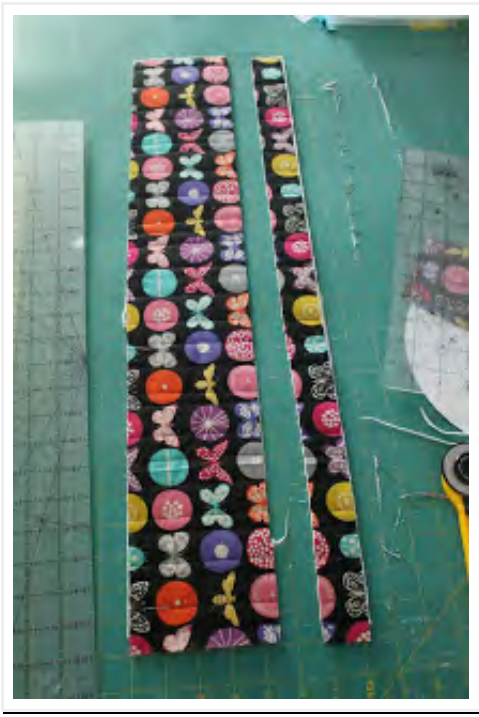


Excess pocket fabric trimmed.

#### Side assembly:

In this step you will make the side panel of the carrying case. You will need your inside side pocket sewn in the previous step and the quilted side panel.

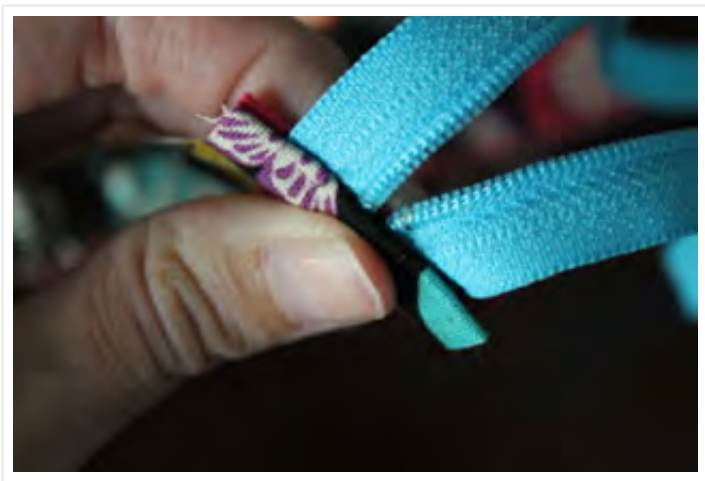
First, take the quilted exterior side panel (6 inches by 26 1/8 inches) and cut 1.5 inches off. Now you have two pieces: {1} 4.5 inches by 26 1/8 inches and {1} 1.5 by 26 1/8 inches.



Next you will make your zipper tabs. Choosing {2} 1.5 inches by 4 1/8 inch strips, fold each short side under 1/4 inch, press, repeat. Note: both sides of the zipper tabs will show; so one should match the exterior and the other should match the lining.



Making sure the zipper is not twisted, sandwich zipper ends in between zipper tabs and pin in place.



Sew along each short end using a 1/8 inch seam allowance.



Grab your four lining pieces. Matching the short ends together, fold in half with right sides facing together. Stitch along the sides using a 1/2 inch seam allowance. When sewing the piece with the pockets, make sure the pockets don't accidentally get sewed.



Press each seam open.



Note: I used pins to mark each quarter of the circle.

Using the circle template, mark each quarter of a circle for each piece. I used pins. You can see them in the above picture.

Using the bottom exterior panel right side facing out and the zipper right side facing in. Match the top edges together, matching first the quarter circle marks, and pin in place. Stitch along the upper edge using a 1/8 inch seam allowance.



Next, turn the lining piece with pockets inside out and right side up (pockets down). Place it over the exterior piece (with zipper still at the top). Match the quarter circle marks first and then pin around the circle. Sew along the top edge using a 1/4 inch seam allowance.



Flip the piece right side out matching the bottom of the lining piece to the bottom of the exterior piece. Press. Pin the bottom edges together and baste together using a 1/8 inch seam allowance.



Next you will sew the upper portion of the side panel. First turn your bottom exterior inside out and right side up (pockets down). With your upper exterior piece right side out (right side - to - right side) line up the upper edges of these pieces, matching quarter circle marks first, and pin in place. Sew along the upper edge using a 1/8 inch seam allowance.



Leaving the upper exterior piece in place, turn the skinny upper lining piece inside out. Putting the upper lining piece over the circle, matching quarter circle marks first pin in place. Sew along the upper edge using a 1/4 inch seam allowance.



lining pieces should be right side to right side in the step

Turn the side panel right side out and press upper portion of the tote. Match and pin the upper edges together and baste using a 1/8 inch seam allowance.



Match and pin the raw edges of the upper portion together

Good job! Set the side panel aside for now.

**Top, Double Zipped pocket:**

In this step you will make the pockets inside the top lid.

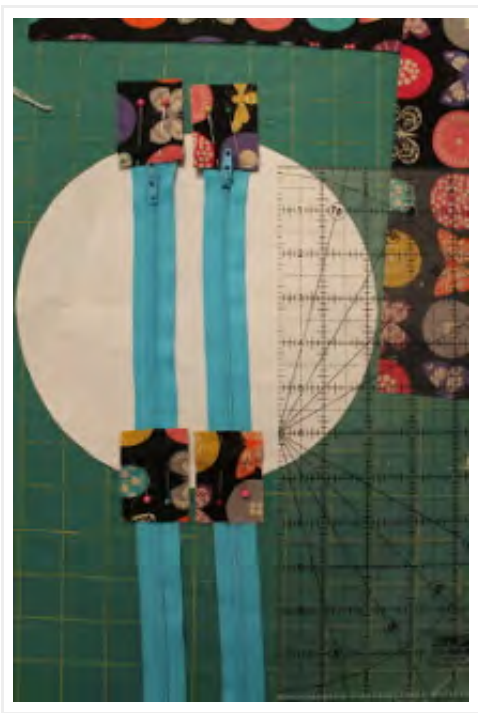
Take your remaining {4} 1.5 inch by 4 1/8 inch strips, fold in half and press.



Taking the last two zippers, pin a zipper tab (folded side toward the zipper) in place at the top of each zipper. Top stitch along the folded edge using a 1/8 inch seam allowance.



Pin the remaining two zipper tabs about 6 inches from from the top of the zippers. Sew along the folded edge using a 1/8 inch seam allowance.



Trim the zipper tails to a 1/2 inch.



Taking the 8.5 by 10.5 inch rectangle, cut {1} 1.5 by 8.5 inch strip and {2} 4.5 inch by 8.5 inch strips.



Lay your pieces out like so. This is where we are headed.



Pin the zipper on the right (in the above picture; in the below picture, it is the top zipper) to the center piece. Stitch in place.

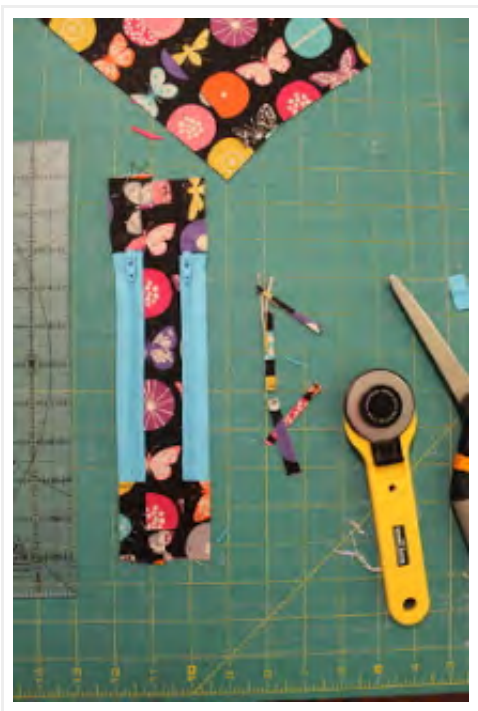




Press seam to the side. Do NOT top stitch. Repeat with the zipper on the bottom.



Press and trim excess fabric. This piece will be your center divider.



Pin and sew the side pieces on to the corresponding zipper (e.g. right side to right zipper). Press seams to the side.



Top stitch only on the side (not along the center divider).



Only top stitch on the side and not in the center.

Repeat with the other side.



Pin your circle template to this piece being sure to center the zippers. Cut out.



Match your zippered circle to your lining circle (right side up, right side up). Pin in place.



Baste the circles together using a 1/8 inch seam allowance. Top stitch both zippers along the center divider. These top stitched seams will create each pocket.



This is what the back (wrong side) will look like when you are finished.



**Handle:**

This is the last step before assembly! To make the handle you will need the 3 inch by 8 inch strip, the 1 inch by 6 inch piece of batting, as well as the top exterior circle panel.



Fold each long edge under by 1/4 inch. Press.



Fold the handle piece in half, matching folded edges together. Press. Unfold the piece and center and tuck the batting under one folded edge. Fold it back together, and press. Top stitch along each long edge using a 1/8 inch seam allowance.



On the right side of your top exterior circle, along the center line place a mark at 2 inches and 6 inches. These marks indicate where the handle begins.



Line up one raw edge of the handle along the mark and pin in place. Stitch along the raw edge using a 1/8 inch seam allowance.



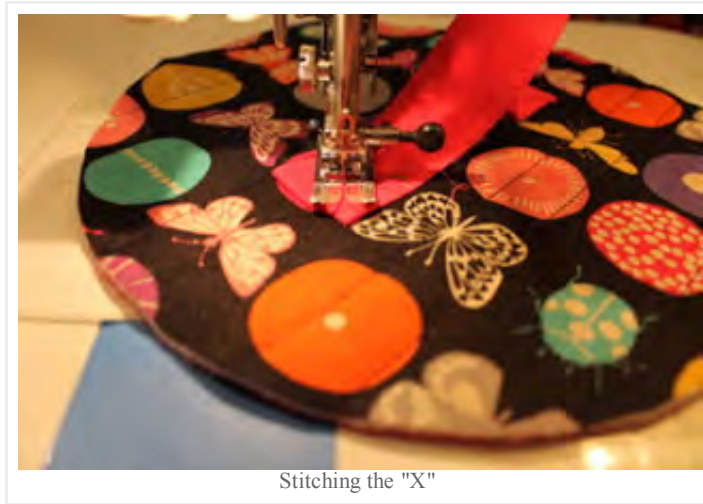
Match the other raw edge of the handle to the other mark and pin in place.



Stitch along the raw edge using a 1/8 inch seam allowance.



Next, on each side of the handle, pin one inch of the handle material flat against the top. Stitch parallel to each pin (or perpendicular to the handle). Stitch along the now folded edges where the handle begins and stitch an "X" to secure the handle to the top. Repeat for the other side.



Stitching the "X"



Handles secure. Note there is a line of stitching where the pin is.

#### Assembly:

Almost done! While not necessary, a heavy duty needle and wonder (or binder) clips will help tremendously with assembly.

Before pinning pieces together be sure to mark each piece at each quarter circle.



First, you will need the side panel turned inside out and right side up (pockets down) and the top exterior, upside down.



Match the quarter circle marks first and pin all around the edges.



Sew along the pinned edges using a 1/4 seam allowance.





Voila.



Second, turn this piece upside down (pockets up) and get your top lining, zipper side down and half way open.



Matching the quarter circle marks together first, pin all around the edges. Take care to squish everything out of the seam line ensuring you won't accidentally sew a stray pocket. Leave a good chunk unsewn for turning right side out. I left an entire quarter of the circle open.



Kinda looks like a scared turtle at this point.

Sew along the edge using a 1/2 inch seam allowance.



Carefully clip seams so the circle will lay flat. Gingerly turn it right side out. You will need to hand stitch the opening closed.



Ok, two more then done.

Now, turn your carryall right side out and upside down (pockets up). Take your lining fabric and place in right side down. Match quarter circle marks first and pin in place. Sew along the pinned edge using a 1/4 inch seam allowance.

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Last! Turn the beast right side up (pockets down) and still right side out. Grab your bottom exterior.



Almost done!

Place your bottom exterior right side down on top. Match and pin first the quarter circle marks (mine are pins seen in the picture below) and then pin all around.



Place top right side down, my picture is deceiving because I used my exterior as the muslin. It's about to disappear. Sad face.



Mid pinning and clipping

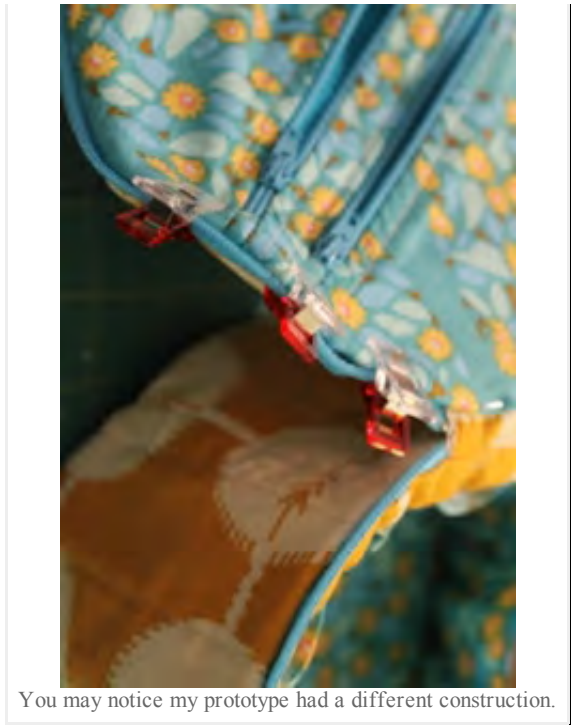
Again, take care to squish everything away from the seam line. Also leave a quarter of the circle open (unstitched) for turning right side out.



Stitch around the edges using a 1/2 inch seam allowance. Carefully clip seam allowances and gingerly turn right side out.



Hand stitch the two openings closed and you are done my friend!



You may notice my prototype had a different construction.

The tote finishes at 8 inches across and 5 inches tall.



Finished! Celebrate!

Now, load up your new favorite tote. Make one for your hand sewing projects.

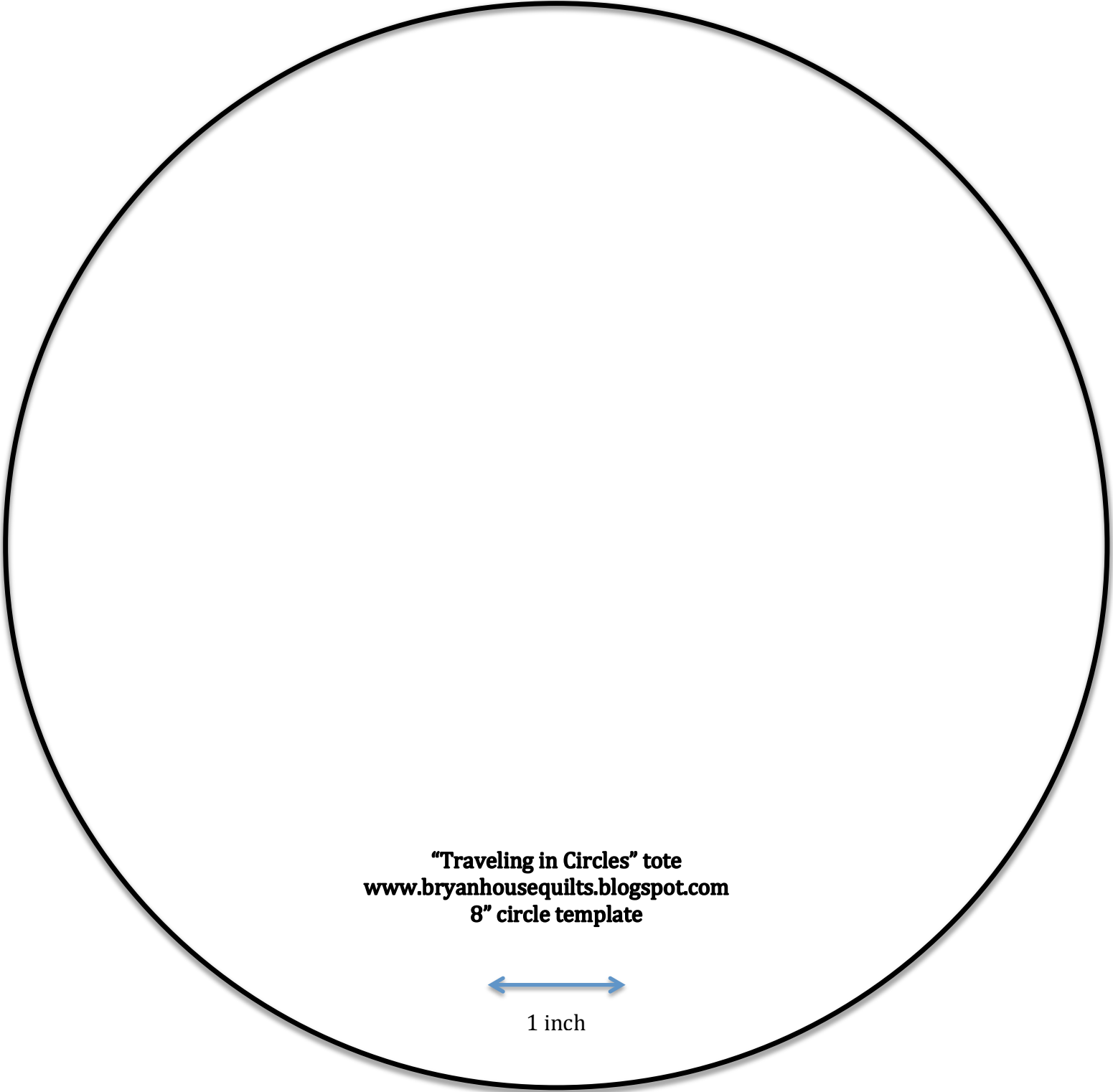


Make one for your cosmetics.



I know I'm already planning at least one more. One of my daughters has already claimed the one made from Anna Maria Horner fabrics.

Once you've made and stuffed one, show it off to your friends!



**"Traveling in Circles" tote**  
**[www.bryanhousequilts.blogspot.com](http://www.bryanhousequilts.blogspot.com)**  
**8" circle template**



1 inch