

Tote bag in soft leather



The products you need:

- Waxed side, pull-up
- Cutting board
- Cutting board, nylon
- Power knife
- Sewing needle, size 1
- Waxed linen thread 18/5
- Ruler
- Steel square
- Leather marking pen
- Rawhide maul
- Craftplus leather rougher
- Plastic spatula or brush
- Aquatack
- Japanese chisel 1-pronged, 5 mm
- Japanese chisel 2-pronged, 5 mm
- Japanese chisel 6-pronged, 5 mm

Step 1

We recommend reading the entire guide before you start working on this project.

The tote bag consists of three parts: The bag itself, an inner pocket, and two straps/handles.

Sketch the three parts onto the front of the leather by using a leather marking pen and cut them out.

Part A (the bag itself): 45 cm x 65 cm

Part B (the pocket): 18 cm x 24 cm

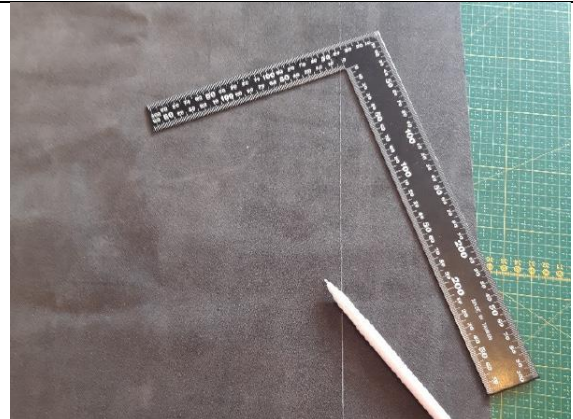
Part C: 2 straps each measuring 70 cm x 5 cm



Step 2

Draw a line lengthwise 10 cm from the edge on the back of the leather.

You will be needing the outlines later when the uppermost edge will be folded.



Step 3

Straps (part C)

Glue Aquatack on the back of the two straps. Fold them in the middle lengthwise to create two pieces each measuring 70 cm x 2.5 cm. Make sure to fold them precisely in the middle.



Step 4

The pocket (part B)

Use your leather marking pen to outline a 5 mm seam allowance on one short and one long side of the pocket. The outline of the short side will be the top of the pocket.

Make the holes for the decorative stitch on the short side of the pocket. Begin and finish the stitch 5 mm from the edge. In the corners, use a Japanese chisel with just one prong in size 5 mm to get a nice stitch. For the remaining holes you can use a Japanese chisel with 6 prongs in size 5 mm.

When sewing, use a thread that is four times as long as the length you will be sewing. There must be a needle at both ends of the thread.

Use saddle stitch when sewing. Finish your stitch by sewing three stitches backwards to fix the thread.

Prepare a thread to sew the decorative stitch at the top of the pocket. Sew. Be careful not to pull too much on the thread, as you are now only sewing one layer of leather.



Step 5

Marking for sewing on the pocket

Draw a line on the front of part A, where the pocket will be sewn on.

Use the template further down this page to see where you will have to rough the leather.

Rough the leather on both sides of the corner to prepare for the gluing and stitching of the pocket. Rough the inner side of the line so that it won't be visible.



Rough the short side of the pocket as well - on the opposite side of the outline you made in step 4.

Step 6

Gluing and sewing on the pocket

The bottom of the pocket must be sewn on with the right side facing up, so that you get a hidden seam.

Apply Aquatack to the bottom of the pocket where you roughed the leather and to the corresponding short, roughed side on part A.

Place the pocket so that the bottom edge of the pocket aligns with the outline on the bag. Make a mark 5 mm from the edge for stitching.

Make holes with the Japanese 6-pronged chisel in size 5 mm. Begin and finish your sewing 5 mm from the edge.

Make sure not to tighten the stitches too much when sewing. This is important to pay attention to, when sewing in soft leather.



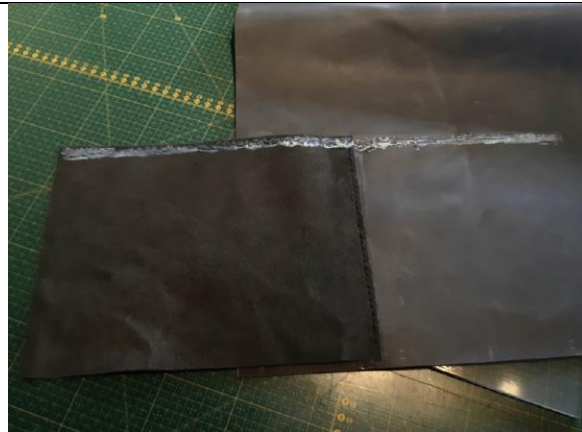
Step 7

Gluing and sewing on the pocket lengthwise

Apply Aquatack on the back of the pocket 0.5 cm from the edge and inwards, and on the corresponding roughed piece on part A.

Unfold the pocket and glue the pieces together.

Prepare your thread for sewing on the long side of the pocket to the bag. Now sew.

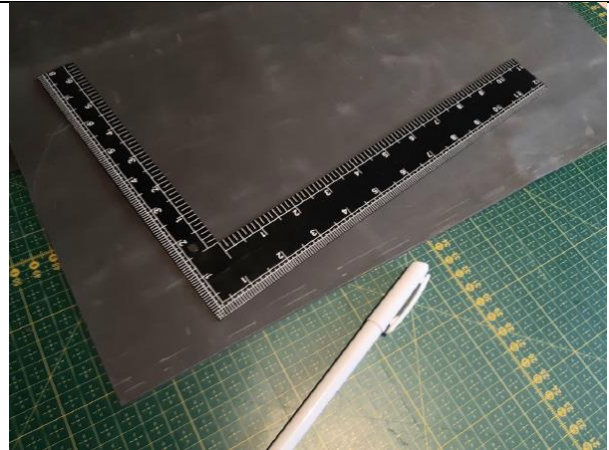


Step 8

Outlining for sewing the bag

The bag must be sewn together so that you get two visible stitches next to each other.

On the short side of part A (the opposite side of where the pocket is attached), you must make two markings on the front of the leather - one marking 5 mm from the edge and the second marking 10 mm from the edge.



Step 9

On the short side, where the pocket is attached, you must draw a guideline on the front. Draw the line 15 mm from the edge and roughen the leather from the line out towards the edge.

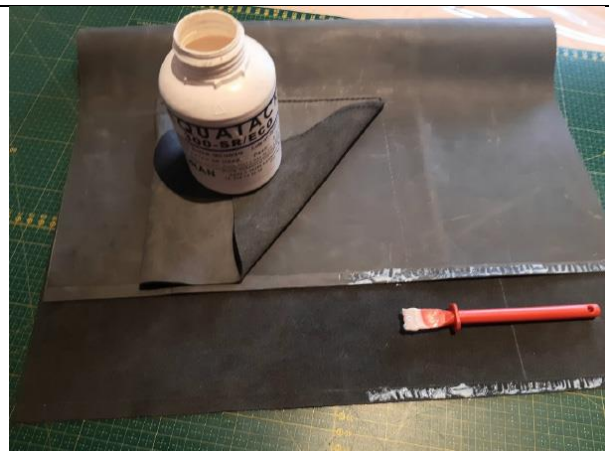
On the opposite short side of the bag, you must also draw a guideline 15 mm from the edge and in towards the back.

Apply Aquatack on the roughed area on the front and back.

Glue the two pieces together to create a 15 mm overlap.

Use a Japanese chisel with 6 prongs in the size 5 mm to make two holes in the two markings 5 mm and 10 mm from the edge, you made in step 8.

Prepare your thread and sew the two stitches with saddle stitch. Make sure not to tighten the stitches too much.



Step 10

The uppermost edge of the bag

Turn the bag inside out.

Apply Aquatack from the uppermost edge and 9.7 cm down - not all the way down to the folded line (the one you drew in step 2).

Fold the uppermost edge down to this line to create a 5 cm fold.



Step 11

Bottom

Fold the bag so that the innermost seam is placed 6.5 cm from the edge.



Step 12

Make a mark 5 mm from the bottom edge. Make holes with a Japanese chisel with 6 prongs in the size 5 mm. Begin and finish your stitch 5 mm from the edge.

Sew the bottoms together by using saddle stitch. Make sure not to tighten the stitches too much.



Step 13

To make the bag more spacious, you must fold the bottom.

Place the bag so that bottom corner gets turned into a point.

Draw a line on the corner the place, where the corner is 4 cm from edge to edge. Use a steel square to ensure that the seam is placed in the middle before drawing the line.

Make holes with a Japanese chisel with 2 prongs in the size 5 mm.

Sew the bottom. Don't tighten the stitches excessively.

Repeat this process on the other side. Turn the bag with the right side out. Be meticulous when turning the corners to ensure that they are nice and pointy.



Step 14

Straps

Make a mark on the two straps with a Japanese chisel in size 5 mm. Make a mark on the long side that hasn't been folded and in both ends of the strap.

Begin your marking at the ends and continue lengthwise. Make sure to create a hole in both corners - this will create a nice stitch.

Repeat this process on the other strap.





Step 15

Placing the straps

Measure 7 cm inwards from the side and 4 cm down from the uppermost edge of the bag. Roughen the leather where the straps will be glued onto - the roughed edge must be 2 cm wide and begin 0.5 cm from the uppermost edge to ensure that the roughed edge isn't visible.

Make this marking twice on the front and twice on the back.

Apply Aquatack on both the bag and on the last three centimetres of the straps.

Glue the straps onto the bag. Place a cutting board inside the bag and "remake" the holes - just put the prongs from your chisel down through the holes you made on the straps.

Sewing on the straps

Sew on the straps by using saddle stitch. We recommend that each strap get stitched of two rounds, because it's quite a long piece that will be sewn. Be careful not to tighten the stitches too excessively.



You have now finished making your bag :)

