
Sew the Triangle Bag with Sanae Ishida

Chapter 1 - Sew the Triangle Bag

Overview

(upbeat music) - Hi, my name is Sanae Ishida. I'm an author, illustrator, and maker of many things. In this class, I'll teach you how to sew a triangle bag inspired by a design that's been around in Japan for generations. It uses origami folds and very basic sewing techniques. It's eco-friendly, good for beginners, and you can sew it up in under an hour. (bouncy music) There's no pattern for this bag but there's a little bit of math so you can make it any size you want to. You can make it small enough to just fit your lunch or big enough for a trip to the market. (bouncy music)

Materials

- This bag is very simple, so you only need a few materials. You'll need about 1 1/2 yards of woven fabric for the bag. You'll need about 1/4 yard, or just scrap fabric for the handle. You can use either a non-fraying fabric, like leather or suede, or you can use woven fabric for the handle as well. You'll need fabric shears, small scissors, a ruler, coordinating thread, a marking tool, hand sewing needle, pins, and a seam ripper, just in case. You'll also need a sewing machine, an iron and an ironing surface.

Draft and cut

- You can customize this bag to any size you like with a simple math equation. For the main portion of the bag, you only need one piece of fabric. And the important thing is to keep a 1 to 3 ratio for the height and the width before adding the seam allowance. For example, I randomly decided that I wanted my bag to be about 17 inches high. So that's 17 inches. And then it's a 1 to 3 ratio. So 17 times 3 is 51 inches wide, and that's before adding the seam allowance. So we will be adding a seam allowance of 3/4 inch on each side, which means 1 1/2 inches total for the width and then 1 1/2 inches total for the height in terms of seam allowance. So that's $1.5 \times 17 = 25.5 + 1.5 \text{ seam allowance} = 27$ inches. Inch, inch, inch, inch. I have a finished bag to show you right here. And it ends up being about 17 inches high from the handle to the bottom. And then about 23 inches wide. I experimented with different sizes, and this is the large. And then I came up with some dimensions for a medium size and a small size, which you can see here. And here's the medium and the small without the handle attached yet. Although you can leave it without the handle, if you like. And the dimensions will be available as part of the class materials. But again, you can make it any size you want using the 1 to 3 ratio, plus the seam allowance. I've already traced the main part of the bag onto the fabric, and you'll do the same on the wrong side of the fabric. So you can see the rectangle here. I usually draft the pattern so that the height is parallel to the selvage, or the grain line, but because of the way the bag is folded, it really doesn't matter. Depending on how much fabric you have available, you can also flip it and draft it the other way, cross grain. You could also draft the pattern on the fold, but I found, and maybe it's human error, that sometimes I end up with these funny little corner divots, or might not be quite straight. So for me, it works out better when I draft it as a single layer. Now we'll move on to the handle piece. I'm using suede. It's a non-fraying fabric. I like to cut it to about 4 inches by 6 inches, which seems to work really well for the large size and medium size. I adjust it to be slightly smaller for the small size. And for non-fraying fabrics, we will sew with the wrong sides facing, and then half-inch and trim. And you just want to make sure that it's comfortable in your

hand and that there's enough height to cover the bag handle pieces that will then go inside here. Now, if you choose to use a fraying fabric, like woven fabric, you'll need to add 1 inch to the height and 1 inch to the width for the seam allowance because we'll end up hemming the edges and sewing it a little differently from the non-fraying fabric.

Fold bag and sew

- Once you've cut out your main fabric piece, we'll hem all the edges. We're going to start with the long edges. You're going to fold $\frac{3}{8}$ " towards the wrong side, so, that's about $\frac{3}{8}$ ". I'm going to use the eyeball method here, fold, and press. And then we'll be folding another $\frac{3}{8}$ ", to encase the raw edges. Fold again, another $\frac{3}{8}$ ", and press all the way down. And we'll repeat this for the other long edge. Now take it to your machine, and we're going to edge stitch along the inner fold. Place it under the presser foot to align that inner opening. Just a regular straight stitch. (sewing machine whirring) Be sure to back stitch. And I don't bother pinning, since the pressed folds stay put pretty nicely, and then make sure to backstitch. (sewing machine whirring) And clip. Repeat for the other side. (sewing machine whirring) And we'll do the same thing for the short sides. Be careful with these corners. You want to make sure you fold and tuck it in to make sure that the edges are flush, like so. (sewing machine whirring) We'll place the hemmed fabric with the right side facing up, and now we'll fold, and pin. We'll start with bringing the upper right corner down, and then the lower left corner up. And then we're going to pin along these two edges. And these are more placeholder pins because we're going to be doing some more folding, and rearranging, origami style. Good. This next fold is a little tricky. We're going to take this edge and we want it to line up with this edge. So we'll take this corner here, and fold it up. Keep the fabric flat. And then, we're going to pin these two edges together. So take the pins that you used earlier and now, with right sides facing, we're going to pin them. And we're just pinning the two edges. You may need more pins. There you have it. Now it's pinned, let's flip it over. And now it's this edge and this edge that we want to pin together. Okay. Make sure you're pinning only the edges. I accidentally caught the other part of the bag right now. Bonus if you can get the stripes to match up, if you're using striped fabric. And then we'll be sewing along that hemmed edge there. And I like to sew with this overlap side on top. It just makes it easier to know where to start from. So we'll start here and then go all the way down, and then repeat on the other side, and you might have to sort of make sure your shape looks good, and to sort of adjust. Yeah, that's looking good. Keep in mind that it won't exactly match up here at the top and it doesn't matter since we'll be sewing it together later. Let's take it to the machine. We're going to sew just to the left of the hemmed edge, starting at the top. Make sure it's a back stitch. (sewing machine whirring) And now repeat for the other side. Let me line this up a little better. Okay. (sewing machine whirring) Looking like a bag already. Now, this center section is a high stress point, you know, when you're putting things in and out, so we're going to reinforce it with a few stitches, back and forth. And that also helps flatten this area where it gets bulky with multiple seams. When you're tacking it down, you want to make sure that the edges are overlapped like that. Sometimes you can accidentally have it folded under. So make sure it's flat, and we're going to be sewing just along that seam line a few times. Let's get it under the presser foot. Make sure your thread is not tangled. Line it up with the seam, and then we're just going to sew back and forth a few times to reinforce this area. (sewing machine whirring) That should be good. And repeat for the other side. And there it is. The original Japanese design doesn't come with a handle piece, and actually, the way it works is you would put whatever you want to put inside, and then just tie the pointy edges there. And then it would be your bag like that. You can consider this done, or, if you'd like to add a

handle piece, we'll go over that next.

Attach handles

- For the handle piece, you have the option of using a non-fraying fabric or a fraying woven fabric. Let's go over the fraying woven fabric first. Remember that we cut the four by six-inch with a one-inch seam allowance added, and we're going to double fold the edges and then hem that. We're going to start by folding about 1/4 inch towards the wrong side. I'm just eyeballing it here. And then fold again another 1/4 inch. And then do the same for the other side. You'll edge stitch along the inner fold on both sides, and it will end up looking like this. Once you have the edges hemmed, we'll sew with right sides together with a 1/2-inch seam. You can pin if you want, but it's easy enough to sew without pinning. Let's bring it to the machine. We're going to sew with a 1/2-inch seam allowance. Make sure to backstitch the beginning and end of the seam. Just hold it to keep the edges aligned there. (machine whirring) Going to hold it. (machine whirring) There we go. Okay, here's the handle piece. Grab your bag. We're just going to make sure that the pointy end fits into the handle nicely, that it's not too tight or too loose. See if I can find that end. There we go. And that seems like a good fit, but if you wanted it to be tighter, you can just sew another seam a bit closer. This looks good for me, so I'm going to trim the seam allowance and turn it right side out. (scissors clicking) There's your fraying woven handle piece. If you're using a non-fraying fabric, like I am, we are going to sew with wrong sides together. I've decide this is the right side for me, but you might prefer that side. But this is right side for me and wrong side, so we're going to sew it wrong side together with a 1/2-inch seam allowance. Let's take it to the machine. I'm going to increase the stitch length a little because my fabric is leather and stretchy, and an increased stitch length will help it shift a little less. Place it under the presser foot with a 1/2-inch seam allowance. We're going to backstitch at the beginning and end of the seam as always. (machine whirring) I'm just making sure it doesn't shift. (machine whirring) And backstitch. Again, you can double check that the handle fits nicely onto the bag and then trim the seam allowance to somewhere between 1/8 and 1/4-inch. (scissors clicking) There you go. From here on out, the steps will be the same, whether you're using the fraying woven or non-fraying handle piece. Now, to attach the handle, we're going to take one of the pointy ends and insert it into the handle, pull it out the other end. Where are you, handle? There we go. And then we're going to overlap the pointy ends. Overlap it a couple inches and then we pin it in place. I try to pin this end that's underneath the fabric right at the tip so I know where the tip is. And remember that this overlapped section is going to be hidden under the handle piece, so don't worry about making it look perfect or anything. And then we're going to sew a diamond shape, like so. If you increased your stitch length, we're going to clear it and reset it. There you go. Put it under the presser foot, and I will just align the edge of this top fabric to my presser foot and start sewing to create a diamond shape. Remember to backstitch as always. (machine whirring) Stop about 1/4 inch from the edge, pivot. (machine whirring) Again, stop about 1/4 inch. I'm basing it on that edge of the presser foot to gauge my 1/4 inch. I pinned it just where the tip of the underlying fabric is, so I know to stop around there. (machine whirring) That's good. Pivot. And you can also feel the fabric underneath to double check. (machine whirring) And then backstitch. All done. Now you have a diamond shape. You can see the front and back side. And you will just slide your handle. And if you'd like, you could slip stitch the ends here to the bag fabric, but I never do. And your bag is done. We have the woven handle version and we have the non-fraying fabric version. And the reason we sewed the non-fraying fabric wrong sides together is, it doesn't fray, so it's easy to do it that way and you can just trim it. And also, sometimes, with leather or faux leather

or these types of fabrics, there's a possibility that the stitches causes perforation when you try to turn it right side out. So I embrace it as a decorative element. You can even add embellishments, like embroidery or sashiko stitches or even add a pocket. These bags are really light and easy to fold up, and you can take them with you anywhere.