



Lou Lou bag

A free tutorial by Sew Sofia Bag Patterns



The Lou Lou bag is a quick and easy pattern for beginners, teaching you basic bag-making techniques with minimal hardware. The bag has a front feature pocket, zipper closure, inner slip pocket, squared off base and an adjustable strap. A cute little number to carry the absolute essentials, perfect whatever your age!

Finished measurements: 7.75" tall x 6" wide," x 2" deep (20cm x 15cm x 5cm)

Skill level: confident beginner

Recommended fabrics

This pattern is suitable for light weight fabrics such as quilting cotton or linen. It can be made with slightly heavier fabrics too, such as laminated cotton or canvas, but you may want to omit a layer of interfacing. Some of the interfacing pieces exclude the seam allowance to avoid bulky seams throughout, making this pattern domestic machine friendly. If you'd prefer a more padded bag, consider using a fusible fleece on the exterior pieces instead of interfacing. Please read through the entire pattern before starting!

Shopping List

Note: fabric quantities may vary according to the fabric width and fabric print (i.e., fussy cutting, directional fabrics). These measurements are based on 44"/112cm width fabrics and interfacings.

Exterior: 0.5 yard/metre

Exterior contrast: one piece measuring 4.5" w x 5.5" h (11cm x 14cm) (*see cutting instructions on the next page)

Lining: 0.25 yard/metre (i.e., one fat quarter)

0.5 yd/0.5m fusible woven cotton interfacing (medium weight)

1 all-purpose 7" (18cm) nylon zipper or longer (either a size #3 or #5 zipper will work)

2 x 0.5" (12mm) D-rings

1 x 0.5" (12mm) slider buckle

Rivets or Chicago screws to attach the strap (optional)

Metal zipper end (optional)

Tailor's chalk or fabric pen

Frequently used sewing terms

Backstitch	reverse stitches to 'lock' at the start and end of a line of stitching
Baste stitch	longest stitch (e.g. length #4) setting within the seam allowance to hold fabric layers
Seam allowance	the stitching line from the raw edge of the fabric
Topstitch	use a longer stitch to sew a line of stitching to give a professional finish to the exterior

Abbreviations

W	wide	RST	right sides together
H	high	WST	wrong sides together
SA	seam allowance	RSO	right side out
RS	right side of fabric	WSO	wrong side out
WS	wrong side of fabric	RSD	right side down

Printing the Pattern

There are a lot of step-by-step photos in this pattern! If you can't work from a computer screen, I would suggest printing off the instructions in a booklet form and on a faster print option to save on ink and paper. Print off the pattern pieces on pages 12-15 at 100% or with your printer set to 'actual size'. Measure the 1" (2.5cm) square to check that you have printed off the correct size. Cut out the pattern pieces along the solid black lines. Trace and cut out the fabrics and interfacing pieces. This pattern can also be made without the pattern pieces by following the measurements in the cutting list below.

Cutting List

Measurements are given as **WIDTH x HEIGHT**, which is especially important to remember if using a directional fabric.

From the Exterior fabric cut:

- two **Body Pieces**: 6.75" x 8.5" (17cm x 22cm)
- one **Outer Slip Pocket**: 6.75" x 5.5" (17cm x 14cm)
- one **Zipper Tab**: 2" x 4" (5cm x 10cm) (unless using a metal zipper end)
- two **Strap Tabs**: 2" x 3" (5cm x 8cm)
- one **Strap** – there are two length options:
 - *for a child's bag*, cut one piece 2" x 44" (5cm x 112cm), or two 2" x 23" pieces (5cm x 58cm);
 - *for an adult's bag*, cut two 2" x 28" (5cm x 71cm) pieces.

From the Exterior contrast fabric cut:

- one **Feature Pocket Panel**: 4.5" x 5.5" (11cm x 14cm).

Tip: cut out the interfacing piece for the feature panel first, fold it in half and centre it on top of the exterior fabric to ensure that the entire image you want to feature is within the seam allowance.

*Alternatively, cut out the printed **Feature Pocket Panel** pattern piece on page 14 to make a paper template, place it over your fabric and trace around.*

From the Lining fabric cut:

- two **Body Pieces**: 6.75" x 8.5" (17cm x 22cm)
- one **Outer Slip Pocket**: 6.75" x 5.5" (17cm x 14cm)
- two **Inner Slip Pocket** pieces: 5" x 5.5" (13cm x 14cm)

From the fusible medium weight interfacing cut:

- four **Body Pieces**: 6.75" x 8.5" H (17cm x 22cm)
- one **Outer Slip Pocket** (fuse to lining piece): 5.75" x 4.5" (15cm x 11cm)
- one **Feature Pocket Panel**: 3.5" x 4.5" (9cm x 11cm)
- one **Zipper Tab**: 2" x 4" (5cm x 10cm)
- one **Inner Slip Pocket**: 5" x 5.5" (13cm x 14cm)
- two **Strap Tabs**: 1" x 2" (2.5cm x 5cm)
- one **Strap**: *for a child's bag*, cut one piece 2" x 44" (5cm x 112cm) or two 2" x 23" pieces (5cm x 58cm); *for an adult's bag*, cut two 2" x 28" (5cm x 71cm) pieces.

Seam allowance

- Unless otherwise specified, the seam allowance (SA) is 0.5" (13mm) throughout
- Baste stitching SA is 1/4" (6mm) at a long stitch length
- Topstitching SA is 1/8" (3mm) at a long stitch length

Preparing the pieces

1. Fuse all interfacing pieces to the WS of their corresponding pieces. Where the interfacing is smaller, centre this on the fabric before fusing in place. This will help to keep the seam allowances as bulk free as possible, making life easier for your machine!

2. If you did not use the printed pattern pieces, on the WS of the two interfaced **Body Pieces** and **Lining Body Pieces**, mark a 0.75" (2cm) square on each bottom corner and cut out.

Tip: mark a "T" at the top of each piece to help with bag construction.



Front Feature Pocket

3. Take your **Feature Pocket Panel**, fold under the longer side edges to the WS by 1/4" (6mm) and press.

Pin the panel centred on to the **Outer Slip Pocket** piece and topstitch the sides only at 1/8" (3mm).

Tip: fold both panel and pocket pieces in half to make a centre crease, this will help to align the Front Feature Panel onto the Outer Slip Pocket.

Place the exterior **Outer Slip Pocket** RST with the **Outer Slip Pocket Lining** piece, pin and stitch the top and bottom edges.



Turn RSO, press well and topstitch along the top edge only.

4. Measure and pin the **Outer Slip Pocket** 1.5" (4cm) down from the top of an exterior **Body Piece**.

Using a longer stitch length, stitch in place at 1/8" (3mm) SA, along the sides and bottom edges to secure the pocket to the front body piece. This will now be referred to as the **Front Body Piece**. Set aside.



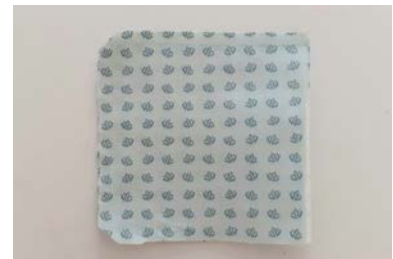
Inner Slip Pocket

5. Pin the two **Inner Slip Pocket** pieces RST. Mark 1" (2.5cm) on either side of the top (short) edge with tailor's chalk. Starting from the second mark that you made, stitch all the way around with a 1/4" (6mm) SA, stopping at the other mark to leave a small gap for turning through the top.

Clip the corners on the diagonal, being careful not to cut through the stitching. Turn the pocket piece RSO through the gap, carefully poke the corners out with a chopstick or similar, press well and topstitch along the top edge only.

Place the finished pocket piece centred and 1.5" (4cm) down from the top of a **Lining Body Piece**. Stitch in place along the sides and bottom edges. Set aside.

Tip: to help align the pocket, fold the Body and Pocket pieces in half to make a centre crease.



Strap Tabs

6. Fold the **Strap Tabs** lengthwise in half WST to form a centre crease. Open out, then fold each long raw edge in towards the centre and press.

Fold again in half, encasing all raw edges and press to make a 0.5" x 3" (13mm x 8cm) tab. Topstitch along the long edges only.



Fold the **Strap Tabs** in half, short edges matching and loop a D-ring up to the fold.

Pin the **Strap Tab** together to prevent it from moving, then stitch together about 0.5" (13mm) from the ends, backstitching a few times to secure. Set aside.



Zipper Tab

7. Fold the **Zipper Tab** piece RST, matching the shorter ends. Pin and stitch the sides and bottom edge only at 1/4" (6mm) SA, leaving the top raw edge open.

Trim the stitched corners of the tab being careful not to cut into your stitching. Turn the tab RSO, carefully poke the corners out with a chopstick and press.

Fold the top raw edge under by 0.5" (13mm) and press again. The finished **Zipper Tab** will measure 1.5" w x 1.25" h (4cm x 3cm). Set aside.

Optional: instead of making a fabric tab, use a metal zipper tab for a more professional finish.



Adding the zipper

8. Switch to a zipper foot. With the **Front Body Piece** RSU, place the zipper along the top edge RSD (teeth side down) and with the zipper pull to the left, aligning the zipper tape with the top raw edge of the body piece. Pin in place. The zipper will be longer than the **Front Body Piece**. Make a mark 0.5" (13mm) in along the top edge on both ends.

Tip: if using a thick exterior fabric such as vinyl or denim, or a thicker interfacing, make this mark 0.75" to help with the final assembly of the bag.

Starting at the first mark (the zipper pull end), stitch at 1/4" (6mm) SA*, stopping when you reach the second mark. Remember to backstitch at both ends.

Tip: if using a #5 size zipper, stitch with a 3/8" (1cm) SA.



9. Place the **Lining Body Piece** without the pocket RSD on top of the **Body Piece** with zipper attached, aligning the fabrics and pin in place. Flip the fabrics over to sew along the previous stitch line. At the second mark, with needle still down, lift the presser foot, open the zipper away from the needle and fold the loose end at a 90-degree angle up from the fabric, then lower the presser foot. Stitch the remaining 0.5" (13mm). Trim the excess zipper tape in line with the fabric.



10. Flip the fabrics over again and starting at the zipper 'tail' end, position the needle at the second mark. Keep the presser foot up, this time moving the zipper 'tail' down towards the **Body Pieces**, lower the presser foot and continue to stitch the remaining 0.5" (13mm).

11. Press the exterior and lining **Body Pieces** away from the zipper. Repeat these steps with the other exterior and lining **Body Pieces**.

Topstitch on both sides of the zipper through the **Body** and **Lining Body Pieces**.

Tip: if your machine has a free arm, you can also topstitch after the bag has been fully assembled if preferred.



Assembling the bag

12. Switch back to your standard presser foot. Position the **Strap Tabs** 0.5" (13mm) down from the top edge of the **front body piece** (just above the front pocket), with the D-rings pointing towards the centre and the raw edge of the tab ends extending 1/4" (6mm) off the sides. Stitch in place and backstitch to reinforce the stitching. Do not trim the strap tab ends.



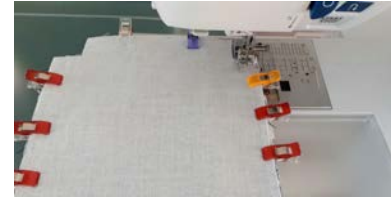
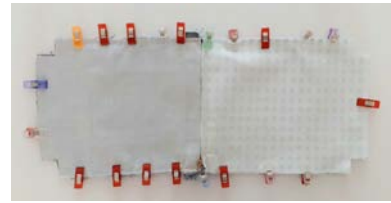
13. Open the zipper halfway. Separate and pin the two exterior **Body Pieces** RST and the two **Lining Body Pieces** RST. Make sure that the top seams and all edges line up and that the D-rings are pushed towards the centre of the bag. Tuck the zipper tail down towards the lining.

Starting from an exterior side, stitch all the way down one long edge, making sure that the zipper tail does not get caught in the stitching. Repeat with the other long side.

Tip: Using a zipper foot here will help get an accurate seam allowance at the top where the zipper is, without stitching over the zipper. If you need to, use a slightly smaller seam allowance here to avoid stitching over the zipper.

Stitch the bottom edge of the exterior **Body Pieces**. Also stitch the bottom edge of the **Lining Body Pieces** but leaving a central gap of about 3" for turning the bag through in a later step. Trim the seam allowances down to about half the width (apart from where you have left the gap for turning), to help reduce bulk.

Tip: if you prefer a larger gap for turning through the bag, do this on a side of the lining instead.



Create the boxy base

14. To create the boxy base, pinch the side and bottom seams of the **Exterior Body** RST, so that the seams meet at a cross. Open out the seams to reduce bulk when sewing and pin in place. Stitch at 0.5" (13mm) SA to close the corner gaps. Repeat this step with the **Lining Body** corners.



Gently pull the bag through the lining gap and turn RSO. Carefully poke the corners out, checking that your side and bottom seams are neatly centred. Trim the seam allowances to reduce bulk.



Finish the bag!

15. Press the lining gap seams inwards by 0.5" (13mm), pin and stitch to close with a 1/8" (3mm) SA.

Push the lining into the bag right into the corners.

Press the bag to give crisp neat edges.

Tip: if the lining is creased, give it a light press before pushing it into the exterior.



16. Trim the stopper off the end of the zipper. Insert the zipper end into the **Zipper Tab** and pin in place. Starting on the side closest to the zipper end, stitch a square to secure the tab in place.

(If using a metal zipper end, install it according to manufacturer's instructions.)



Shoulder strap

17. If you cut two **Strap** pieces, place the two shorter ends RST at a right angle exactly as pictured and stitch a diagonal line from where the ends meet to the corner. This serves to reduce bulk when joining strap pieces together.

Trim the triangular ends to 0.25" (6mm) and press the seam open.



Fold under both short ends of the **Strap** by 0.5" (13mm) and press. Fold it in half WST, long raw edges matching and press to make a centre crease.

Open out, then fold each long raw edge in towards the centre and press.

Fold again in half, encasing all raw edges and press to make a 0.5" (13mm) narrow strap. Secure the open edges together with pins/clips. Starting with the open side of the **Strap**, topstitch around all four edges.



18. Thread one end of the **Strap** up and over the slider bar, fold under by 1.25" (3cm) and pin in place. Being careful not to have the slider too close to the presser foot, stitch to secure in place about 1" (2.5cm) from the strap end, ensuring that you backstitch at start and stop.

Tip: a zipper foot can help with the above step.

If your machine can handle more layers, stitch a second line 0.5" (13mm) from the strap end.

You could also use a rivet or Chicago screw here to secure in place.



19. With the **Strap WSU** (the stitched strap end facing up) loop the free end of the **Strap** through one D-ring attached to the bag, then pass it up and over the slider. Now loop the free end of the strap through the second D-ring, fold under by 1.25" (3cm) and pin in place. Check that you can adjust your **Strap** before stitching in place.

Tip: if you'd like, you can add a couple of rivets or Chicago screws to secure the strap in place.

Your bag is finished! Congratulations!



Variations

- Add a slip pocket to the back to make a double-sided feature.
- No hardware, no problem. Simply create fabric loops from the Strap Tabs, stitch close to the body of the bag so that they extend by 0.5" (13mm). Create a narrow, fixed length strap. Insert the strap ends through the fabric lengths and tie a knot to secure in place.
- Add a button or other embellishment to the feature pocket.
- Leave off the shoulder straps to create a cute zip pouch for stationery or toiletries.

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The Lou Lou Bag

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Body Piece

6.75" w x 8.5" h (17cm x 22cm)

Cut

**2 main fabric
2 lining fabric
4 interfacing**

0.75"
(2cm)
square

*Fuse interfacing to exterior and lining pieces
before cutting out the bottom squares*

0.75"
(2cm)
square

1"
test
square

The Lou Lou Bag

Feature pocket panel

4.5" w x 5.5" h (11cm x 14cm)

Cut 1 exterior contrast

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1"
test
square

The Lou Lou Bag

3.5" w x 4.5" h (8cm x 11cm)

Feature pocket panel interfacing

Cut 1 interfacing

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In addition, cut the Strap
in exterior fabric & interfacing
as follows:

For a child:

Cut one 2" x 44" (5cm x 112cm)
in exterior fabric & interfacing or
cut two 2" x 23" (5cm x 58cm)
in exterior fabric & interfacing

For an adult:

Cut two 2" x 28" (5cm x 71cm)

The Lou Lou Bag

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Outer slip pocket

6.75" w x 5.5" h (17cm x 14cm)

Cut
1 main fabric
1 lining fabric

The Lou Lou Bag

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Outer slip pocket - interfacing

5.75" w x 4.5" h (15cm x 11cm)

Cut 1 interfacing

1"
test
square

The Lou Lou Bag

1"
test
square

Inner Slip Pocket

5" w x 5.5" h (13cm x 14cm)

Cut
2 lining fabric
1 interfacing

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Strap tab

2" w x 3" h
(5cm x 8cm)

Cut
2 main fabric

The Lou Lou Bag

Strap tab - interfacing
1" w x 2" h (2.5cm x 5cm)
Cut 2 interfacing

Zipper tab

2" w x 4" h
(5cm x 10cm)

Cut
1 main fabric
1 interfacing

The Lou Lou Bag