

DIY Denim Shirt Tote Bag Tutorial



DIY DENIM SHIRT TOTE BAG

STEP-BY-STEP TUTORIAL

A charming upcycled tote bag made from a denim shirt, lace & floral trim, and cute charms!

FINISHED SIZE	MATERIALS	TOOLS	YOU WILL MAKE
<p>Approx. 32 cm (12.6 in) wide x 28 cm (11 in) high x 10 cm (3.9 in) deep (excluding handles)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 denim shirt (adult size) Cotton fabric for lining Fusible interfacing (medium) Lace trim (approx. 2.5 cm / 1 in wide) Floral embroidered trim Buttons (from the shirt) Embroidery floss (for rose) Key charms / pendants Jump rings & chain Fabric glue Sewing thread Basic sewing supplies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sewing machine Scissors Ruler / measuring tape Pins / clips Iron Seam ripper Fabric marker / chalk Needle 	<p>A unique and stylish tote bag made from a denim shirt with lace, floral trim, embroidery, and cute charm accessories!</p>

BEFORE YOU START	DENIM SHIRT PARTS YOU WILL USE	EXTRA MATERIALS (EXAMPLE)	FABRIC CUTTING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash and iron the denim shirt. Remove any unwanted embellishments. Plan your design and trim placement. 			<p>From the denim shirt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Front panel (with buttons & pocket): 2 pcs Back panel (upper part): 1 pc Bottom panel (from hem): 1 pc Handles (from sleeves or extra fabric): 2 pcs <p>From lining fabric:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Front & back lining: 2 pcs Side gussets: 2 pcs Bottom panel: 1 pc <p>Add 1 cm (3/8 in) seam allowance to all pieces.</p>

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 PREPARE THE SHIRT**

 Cut the sleeves off. Keep the front part with buttons, placket, and pocket.
- 2 PREPARE THE PANELS**

 Use the front part of the shirt (with pocket) for the front. Cut the upper back part for the back panel.
- 3 ADD TRIM & LACE**

 Pin the floral trim and lace across the front panel. Sew in place with a straight stitch.
- 4 EMBROIDER DECORATION**

 Embroider small roses or flowers on the pocket (optional).
- 5 ATTACH CHARMS**

 Attach charms using jump rings and chain. Secure well.
- 6 MAKE THE HANDLES**

 Use the shirt sleeves or denim fabric to make handles. Fold, iron, and topstitch.
- 7 ATTACH HANDLES**

 Turn the bag right side out through the opening. Push out corners.
- 8 SEW SIDE GUSSETS**

 Pew the bag gussets to inside the lining (right sides). Push out corners.
- 9 SEW BOTTOM PANEL**

 Attach the bottom panel to the bag. Repeat for lining.
- 10 ASSEMBLE THE BAG**

 Place the denim bag inside the lining (right sides together). Sew around the top edge, leave an opening.
- 11 TURN & PRESS**

 Take your trim with sides, the opening.
- 12 CLOSE**

 Turn the bag right side out through the opening, press the top.
- 12 TOPSTITCH**

 Topstitch around the top edge of the bag. Close the opening.
- 13 FINAL TOUCHES**

 Check all seams and trim any loose threads. Your denim shirt tote bag is ready!

DECORATION IDEAS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add more embroidery or patches. Use different charms to match your style. Try colorful lace or ribbon. 	CARE INSTRUCTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand wash or machine wash in cold water. Use mild detergent. Do not bleach. Hang to dry. Iron on low if needed. 	TIPS FOR SUCCESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforce handle stitches. Use interfacing for more structure. Press seams as you go. Take your time with embroidery and details. 	IDEAS TO USE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shopping bag Daily handbag Book bag Gift bag And more!
--	--	--	--

UPCYCLE WITH LOVE SEW WITH JOY CREATE SOMETHING UNIQUE

Turn an old denim shirt into a beautiful, practical tote bag featuring floral trim, decorative charms, pockets, and sturdy handles. This beginner-friendly upcycling project is perfect for shopping, books, craft supplies, or everyday use.

Finished Size:

- Width: 12.6 inches (32 cm)
- Height: 11 inches (28 cm)
- Depth: 3.9 inches (10 cm)

Skill Level: Beginner to Intermediate

Seam Allowance: $\frac{3}{8}$ inch (1 cm)

Materials Needed

Main Materials

- 1 adult-size denim shirt
- Cotton lining fabric ($\frac{1}{2}$ yard)
- Medium-weight fusible interfacing
- Floral trim
- Lace trim (1 inch / 2.5 cm wide)
- Matching thread

Decorative Supplies

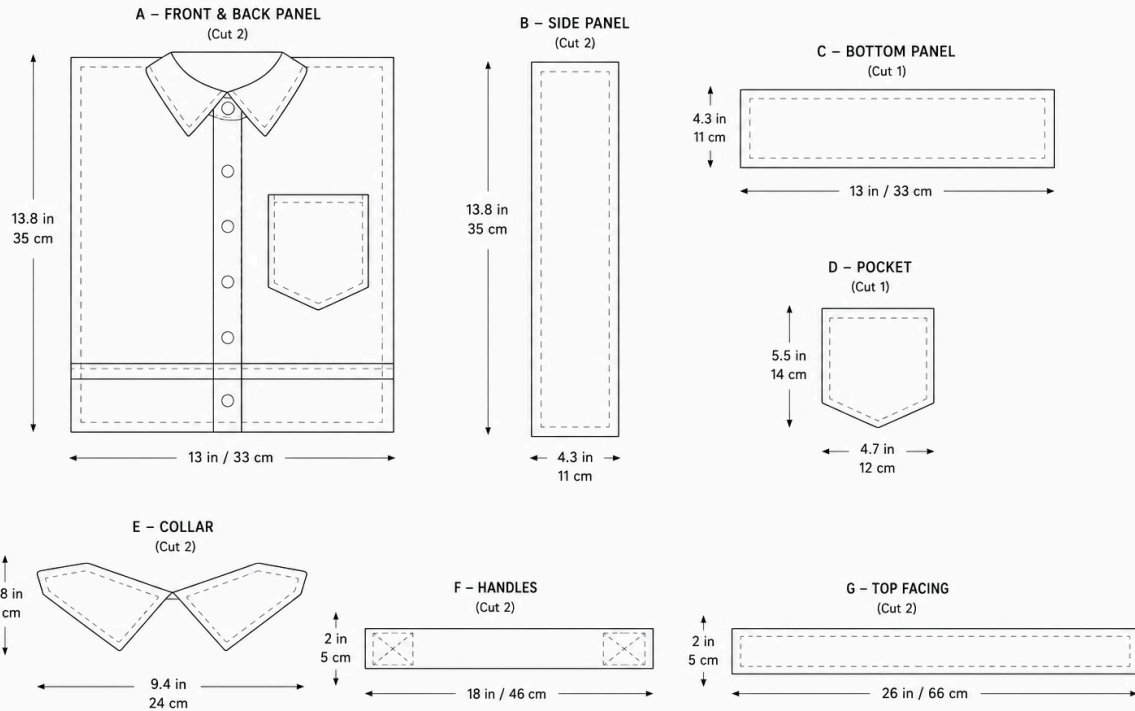
- Embroidery floss
- Decorative buttons
- Charms
- Keychains
- Jump rings
- Ribbon (optional)

Tools

- Sewing machine
- Fabric scissors
- Rotary cutter
- Measuring tape
- Pins or clips
- Iron

DENIM SHIRT TOTE BAG – PATTERN

BAG MAIN PIECES ONLY



Step 1: Prepare the Denim Shirt

Wash and dry the denim shirt.

Press thoroughly.

Remove:

- Sleeves
- Side seams
- Collar (save for decoration if desired)

Keep:

- Front button placket
- Front pockets
- Shirt front panel

The shirt front will become the front of your tote bag.

Step 2: Cut the Main Bag Panels

Front Panel

Using the shirt front:

Cut:

- 13½" × 12"

Center the button placket.

Keep at least one pocket visible.

Back Panel

From the shirt back:

Cut:

- 13½" × 12"

Press flat.

Step 3: Cut the Bottom Panel

Cut denim:

- 13½" × 4½"

This creates the bag depth.

Step 4: Cut the Side Gussets

Cut two side pieces:

- 12" × 4½"

These create structure and depth.

Step 5: Cut the Lining

Using cotton lining fabric:

Cut:

Front Lining

- 13½" × 12"

Back Lining

- 13½" × 12"

Side Gussets

- Two pieces 12" × 4½"

Bottom

- One piece 13½" × 4½"

Step 6: Apply Interfacing

Fuse interfacing to:

- Front panel
- Back panel
- Bottom panel

This helps the bag maintain its shape.

Press carefully following manufacturer instructions.

Step 7: Add Decorative Trim

Measure approximately:

- 2 inches above the lower edge

Pin floral trim across the front panel.

Place lace directly beneath the floral trim.

Sew both trims using straight stitches.

Press.

Step 8: Add Embroidery

Using embroidery floss:

Embroider small flowers, roses, or leaves.

Suggested placement:

- Pocket corners
- Near floral trim
- Beside button placket

Keep embroidery simple and balanced.

Step 9: Attach Decorative Charms

Choose:

- Teddy charms
- Heart charms
- Key charms
- Floral pendants

Attach using:

- Jump rings
- Small chains

Secure near pockets or upper corners.

Step 10: Make the Handles

Using denim sleeves.

Cut:

- Two strips measuring 24" × 4"

Fold lengthwise.

Press.

Fold raw edges inward.

Topstitch both long edges.

Finished handle width:

- Approximately 1 inch

Step 11: Attach Handles

Position handles:

- 3 inches from each side edge

Pin securely.

Sew a square with an X inside for reinforcement.

Repeat several times for strength.

Step 12: Assemble the Outer Bag

Sew:

Front Panel → Side Gusset

Back Panel → Side Gusset

Attach bottom panel.

Use:

- 1 cm seam allowance

Press seams open.

You now have the complete outer bag.

Step 13: Assemble the Lining

Repeat the same construction process with the lining pieces.

Leave a turning opening:

- Approximately 4 inches

in the bottom seam.

Step 14: Insert Outer Bag into Lining

Place:

- Outer bag right side out
- Lining wrong side out

Insert outer bag into lining.

Right sides should face each other.

Match:

- Side seams
- Corners
- Handle positions

Pin carefully.

Step 15: Sew Around the Top Edge

Stitch completely around the bag opening.

Use a consistent seam allowance.

Backstitch at the beginning and end.

Step 16: Turn the Bag

Pull the bag through the opening left in the lining.

Carefully push out corners.

Shape all edges neatly.

Step 17: Close the Lining

Fold raw edges inward.

Sew opening closed.

Use:

- Hand ladder stitch
- Or machine stitch

Insert lining into bag.

Step 18: Press the Entire Bag

Press:

- Top edge
- Side seams
- Bottom corners

Shape carefully.

Step 19: Topstitch the Opening

Topstitch around the upper edge.

Distance from edge:

- $\frac{1}{8}$ inch (3 mm)

This provides a professional finish and helps the lining stay in place.

Step 20: Create Optional Interior Pocket

Cut lining fabric:

- 8" × 8"

Fold top edge twice.

Sew.

Attach to lining before final assembly.

Perfect for:

- Phone
- Keys
- Wallet

Step 21: Reinforce Stress Points

Sew extra reinforcement stitches:


- Handle attachments
- Side seams
- Bottom corners

This greatly increases durability.


Step 22: Final Decoration


Optional additions:


 Fabric flowers

 Denim bows

 Additional charms

 Lace accents

 Appliqué patches

 Handmade labels

Finished Measurements

Your completed **DIY Denim Shirt Tote Bag** should measure approximately:

- Width: 12.6 inches (32 cm)
- Height: 11 inches (28 cm)
- Depth: 3.9 inches (10 cm)

Uses for Your Tote Bag



Shopping bag



Book tote



Crochet project bag



Sewing supply tote



Handmade gift bag



Everyday handbag



Farmer's market tote

Care Instructions

- Machine wash cold
- Gentle cycle
- Mild detergent
- Do not bleach
- Hang dry
- Iron on low heat

This charming upcycled denim tote combines the character of a vintage shirt, decorative floral trims, useful pockets, and sturdy construction to create a unique handmade bag that is both stylish and practical.