



Echidna Sewing Charity Sewalong

October 2020: Share the Dignity

Project: Tote bag

Materials needed:

Tote bag

- 1m of fabric (We used the same fabric for inner & outer bag, pocket, handles then added embellishments)
- 1 x [Kimberbell Faux Leather Navy](#)
- 1m of 640 Pellon or Interfacing
- [Frixion Marker](#) or Chalk Pencil
- [Rasant thread](#)
- [Aussie Flora Designs](#) (or an embroidery design of your choice)
- [Cutaway stabilizer](#) (4" bigger than largest hoop)
- [Echidna Clips](#)
- [Echidna Sewing Scissors](#)
- 1 x Magnetic Closure (available from your local craft or hardware store)
- 2 x Stainless Steel Key Rings (available from your local hardware store)

Embroidery embellishment on tote bag (optional)

- [Bobbin thread](#)
- [Softlight Mercerised Cotton](#) (to achieve matte finish)
- [Cutaway stabilizer](#)

Cutting instructions

Bag:

- 1 x bag front - 17" x 15" (if adding embroidery embellishment) or 16" x 14" (if using patterned fabric)
- 1 x bag back - 16" x 14"
- 2 x leather - 4" x 14"
- 1 x leather strip (for mock welt pocket) - 2¼" x 8"
- 2 x leather tabs (for strap attachment) - 2.5" x 1"
- 2 x short bag handles - 4" x 12"
- 1 x long bag handle - 4" x 47" (two strips pieced together)
- 1 x pocket piece - 8" x 10"

Lining:

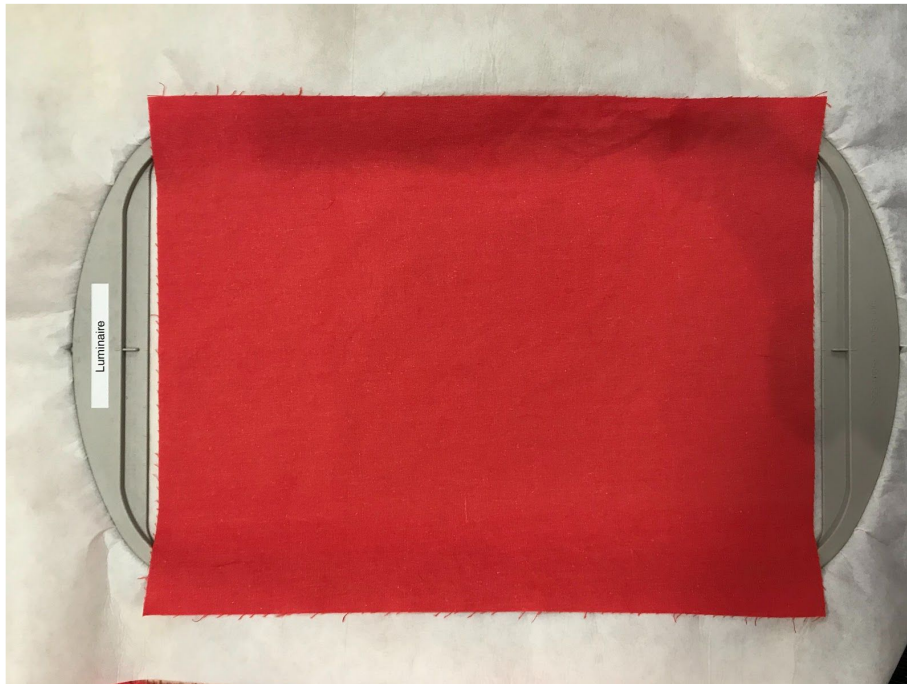
- 1 x bag front - 15" x 20"
- 1 x bag bag - 15" x 20"
- 2 x 640 Pellon - 15" x 20"

Embroidery Embellishment

If you choose not to embellish your tote bag with embroidery, the optional alternative is to use patterned fabric in which case these steps would be skipped.

Tips

1. Use a redwork design: It is simple digitizing that doesn't take long to stitch, uses one colour and the circular shape works well flipped and rotated in different directions.
2. To give a matte finish to the embroidery, use Softlight Mercerised Cotton thread
3. Hoop with Cutaway stabilizer - but don't cut it away! It will support the bag like an interfacing.



Instructions

1. Choose the design you wish to embellish your bag front with and load it onto a USB. We stitched a single redwork design and repeated it over the fabric.
2. Copy and paste as many designs that will embroider easily in your hoop. It doesn't matter if there is a gap between designs.

3. Hoop the Cutaway stabilizer only and spray 505 onto the back of the bag fabric. Place in the hoop so the edge can be embroidered. Using paper tape, stick the fabric $\frac{1}{4}$ " onto the stabilizer ensuring the foot has a smooth path to travel over when stitching off the fabric. Embroider the fabric until all spaces are filled to your satisfaction. You may have to hoop several times to fill in the gaps.



4. Remove the embellished fabric from the hoop and square up to 14" x 16".



Bag Construction Instructions

1. Using a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam, stitch the leather to the bag front and back.



2. Press using an *aplique mat* to prevent leather being scorched. Set aside while you create the handles.

Next Step: Handle Construction

There are two sets of handles attached to this bag.

Short handles

1. Fold and iron the two 4 x 12" fabric strips in half lengthwise.
2. On each handle, fold and iron the raw edges into the centre of the fabric. Clip them together in preparation for stitching.
3. Using your dual feed foot or walking foot, increase the stitch length to 3mm and sew along the open edge.
4. Repeat and stitch along the folded edge.

Long handles

1. Join the two strips of fabric together. Trim back to 47" long.
2. Fold and iron the fabric strip in half lengthwise.
3. Then, fold and iron the raw edges into the centre of the fabric. Clip them together in preparation for stitching.
4. Using your dual feed foot or walking foot, increase the stitch length to 3mm and sew along the open edge.
5. Set aside.

Bag construction continued...

1. Attach the short handles to the bag front and back. Measure and mark with Frixion pen 4 ½" from *each side* of the front and back panel. Centre the handles on the 4 ½" markings at the top of each panel, aligning the raw edges. Using a quarter inch seam stitch along the top securing the handle in place. Repeat the placement and stitching process for the back of the bag.
2. Measure a 1 ½" square on the bottom corner of the leather on the front and back of the bag. This will form the bag base.



3. Carefully cut each square.
4. Iron Pellon onto the rear of the two lining pieces.
5. Trim both lining pieces to the size of the front pieces (14" x 19 ½")
6. Measure and cut 1 ½" square on the bottom corner of each lining piece.
7. Measure 1 ½" down from the top and centre of each of the lining pieces. Mark and attach the magnetic closure on each piece. Set aside.



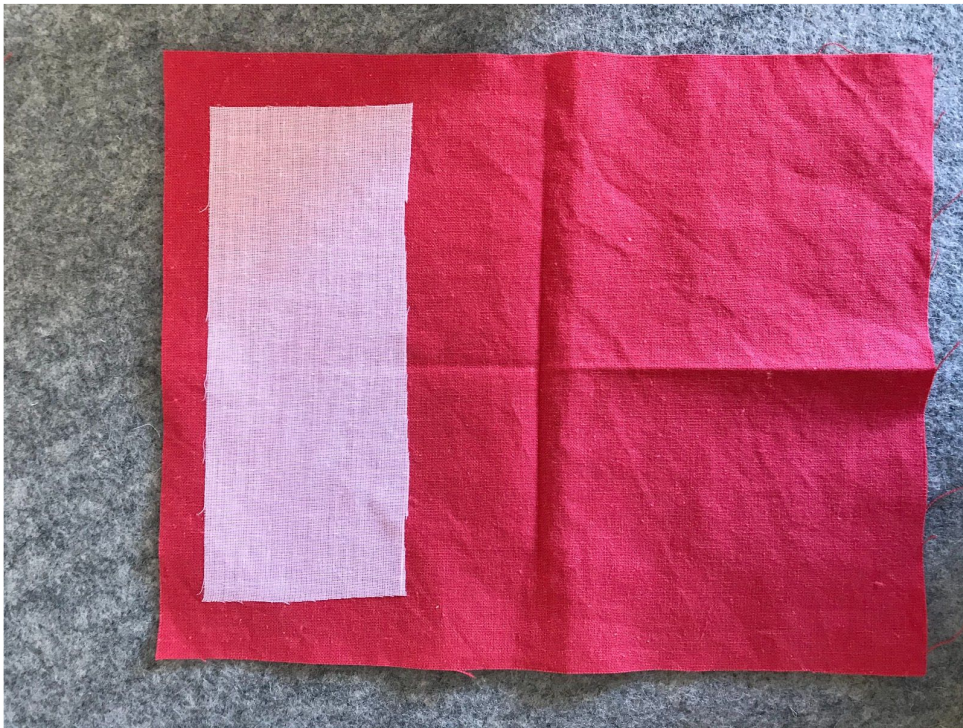
Mock Welt Pocket

Welt pockets are bound, flat pockets that are completed with a welt or reinforced border along the edge of a piece of fabric. They are commonly found on tailored jackets and the back of a pair of slacks.

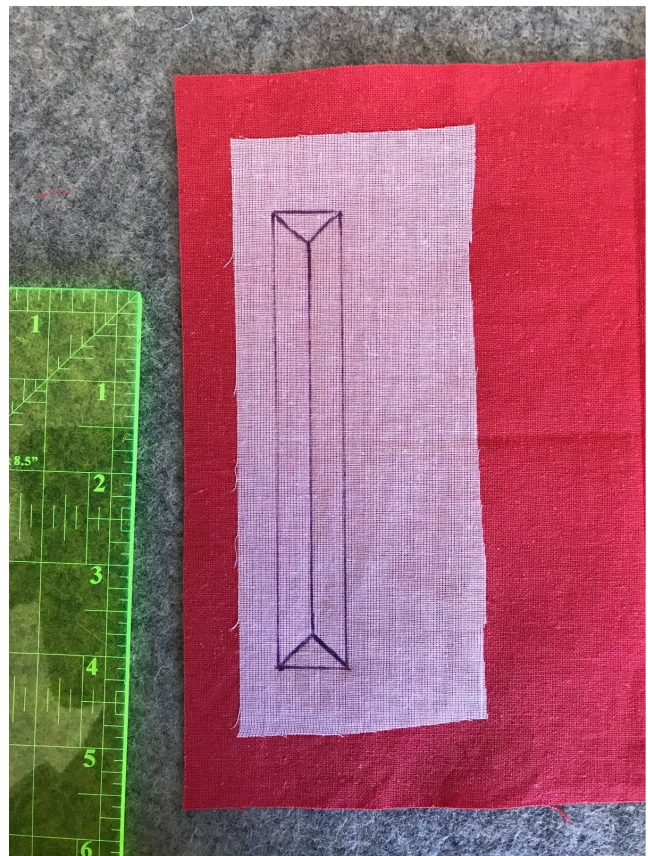
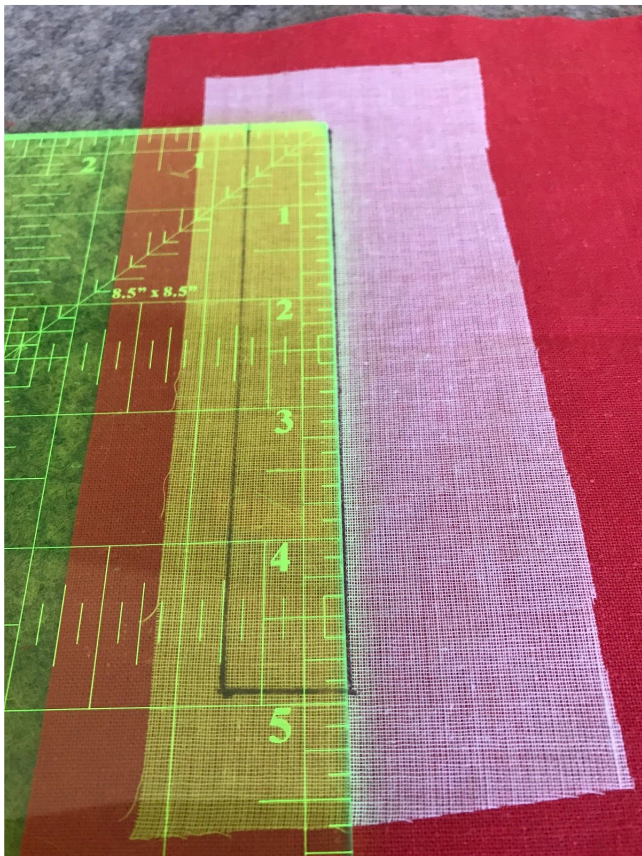
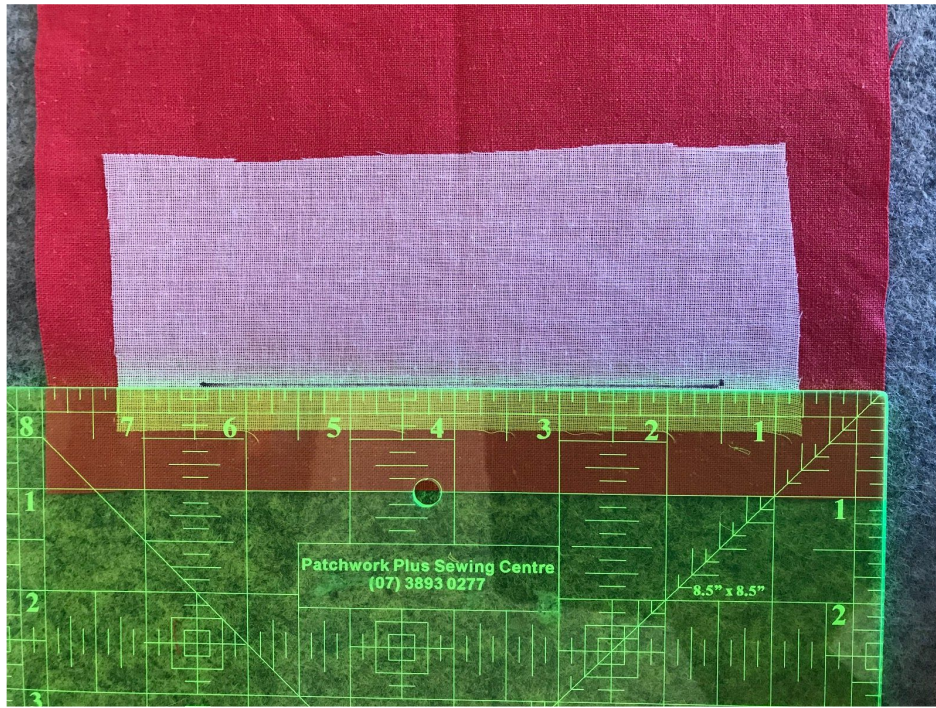
We have created a 'mock' welt pocket because we aren't using the complete welt to finish the pocket. Instead, we will use the remnants from the leather to create a feature piece in the pocket of the bag.

Follow these steps to create the mock welt pocket:

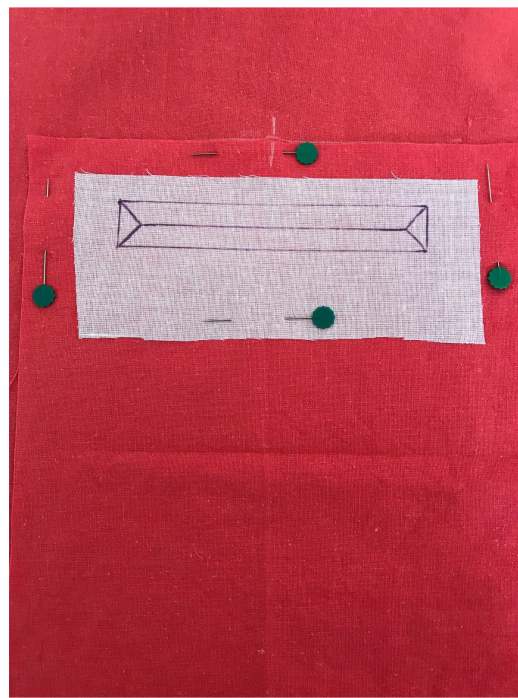
1. Take the piece of pocket fabric and iron a 2 ½" x 6 ½" interfacing one inch from the top short edge, centering in the middle of the pocket.



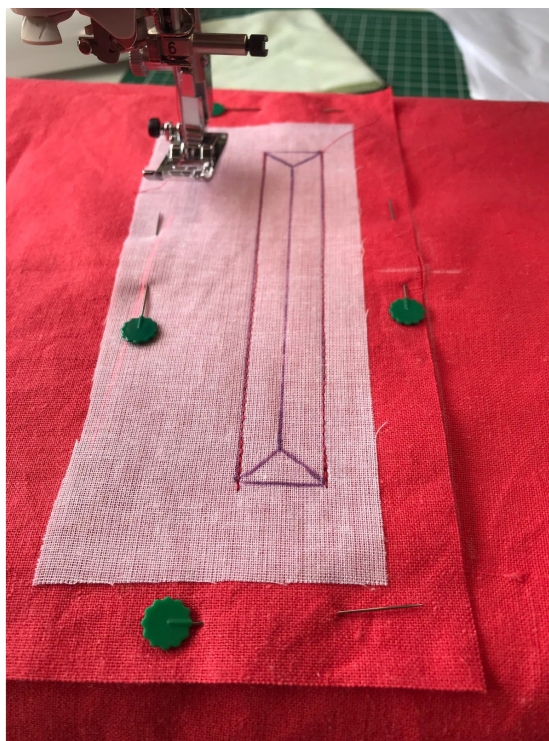
2. With a Frixion pen or chalk, draw a rectangular box onto the interfacing 1" down from the top of the pocket and 1 ½" in from each side. Draw down the center of the rectangular box and add Y markings to each end of the rectangular box.



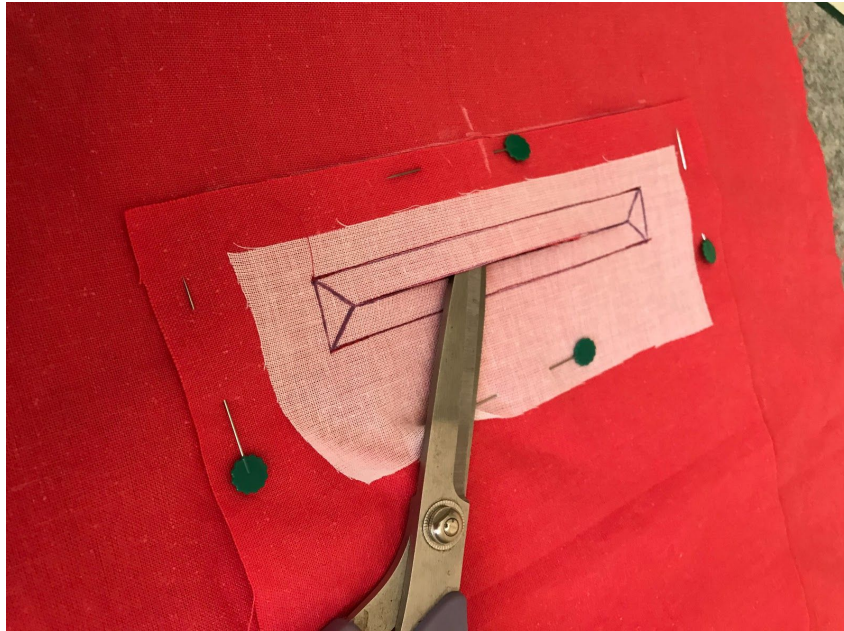
3. Draw a line 3" from the top raw edge of the bag back. Pin the pocket in place aligning the middle of the pocket with the center on top of the bag back.



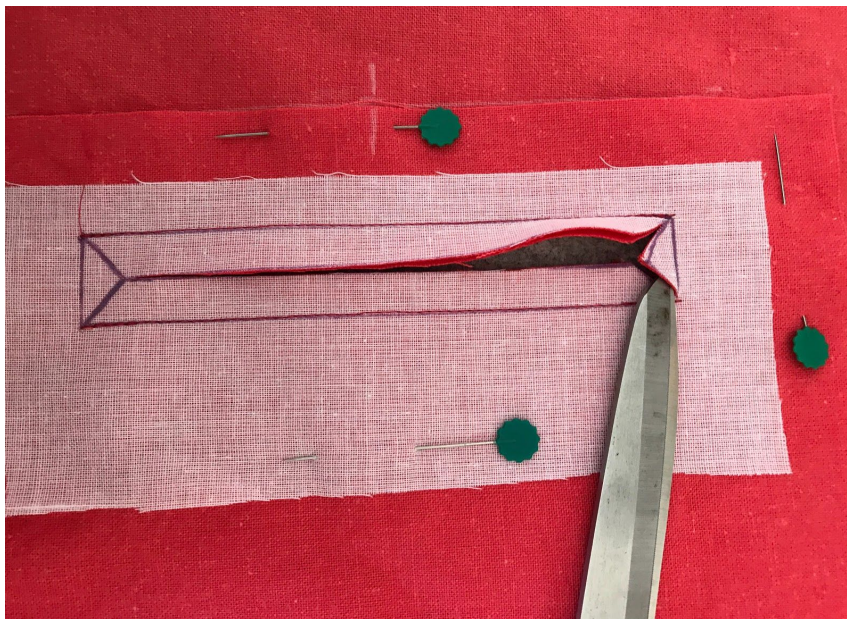
4. Stitch along each side of the rectangular box.



5. Cut along the center of the rectangular box to the beginning of the Y.



6. Cut into each end of the Y whilst being careful not to cut the stitching.



7. Remove the pins and fold the pocket to the back of the bag, press the seams flat to create the bound rectangular opening.



8. Top stitch around the edge of the rectangle to reinforce the opening.



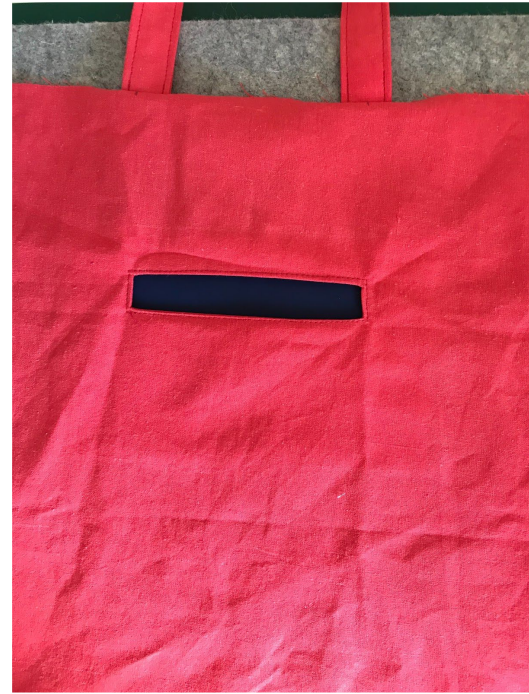
9. Using double sided tape, stick the leather strip to the inside of the pocket.



10. Stitch in place.

11. Fold the pocket up so the top and side edges are seated together. Stitch the three sides of the pocket together, pushing the bag back away from the pocket as you sew. And you should be finished.



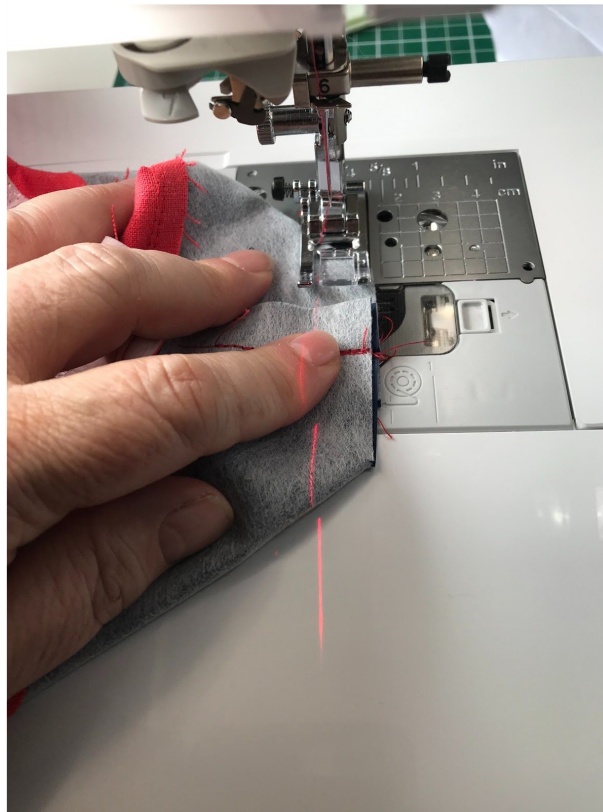


Sewing the bag together

1. Using a $\frac{5}{8}$ " seam, stitch down each side of the main making sure the leather meets perfectly at the side seams. Then stitch along the bottom of the leather.



2. Flatten the leather seams in opposing directions and clip together. Stitch, then Turn in the right way.



3. Repeat the same process as above for the lining, *except* leave a gap of 6" along the bottom of the bag to turn it through. You now have an outside bag and a lining.
4. Attach the tabs for the long strap by measuring 6 ½" down the side seam from the top of the bag, mark with a Frixion pen. Fold the leather tab in half (wrong sides together) and center on the 6 ½" mark (the fold of the leather facing upwards) Stitch in place and repeat for the other side.
5. Using Echidna clips or pins, join the outer and inner bag together at the top, pushing the short handles down to prevent stitching them into the seam.
6. With your dual feed/walking foot and using a 5/8" seam, sew around the top of the bag joining the lining to the outer bag..
7. Turn the bag to the right side by pulling the outside bag through the bottom of the 6" lining in the bag base. Push the seams through making sure the leather and side seams are flat. Then, slip stitch the lining base closed.
8. Press the top of the bag inner and outer flat, and topstitch ¼" around the top. Be careful not to sew the magnetic closure.
9. To attach the long handle we used a ring holder and fed the leather and fabric through to create the handle attachment.
10. The bag is finished.