

# T-shirt Tote Bag



**Objective:** The student will learn to make something new from something old.

**Materials:**

- Old t-shirt or knit shirt; the stronger and thicker the fabric, the better
- Scissors
- Marker, pencil, or chalk to mark the places to cut
- Decorations: fabric paint, fabric markers, etc.
- Optional: fabric glue or hot glue

**Introduction:**

Making reusable bags or totes is an easy alternative to buying reusable bags or using plastic bags. They are durable and will last a long time. When considering the life-cycle of plastic and reusable bags, the manufacturing of plastic bags has a lesser impact on climate change, ozone depletion, water use, air pollution, and human toxicity. However, plastic bags and other plastics are the worst marine litter since they don't break down in a timely manner. The production of cotton bags has a larger impact on the environment than plastic bags, because of how cotton is grown and processed.

The best way to help reduce reliance on plastic bags and the environmental impact of buying new reusable bags is to use what is already in your house. Keep using those bags until they fall apart, no matter the material. When you need a new bag, consider making it from something else in the house – like an old t-shirt!

**Process:**

1. Turn shirt inside out and lay flat.
2. Mark the shirt where the handles of the bag will be. This includes marking where the sleeves meet the shirt and making a large U in the middle, starting at the edges of the collar. The handles should be about 3 inches wide, so keep that in mind!
3. Decide how deep you want the bag to be. Measure from the bottom of the handles down and draw a horizontal line across.
4. Measure an additional 3 inches down from the horizontal line and draw a second horizontal line.
5. Cut at the marked areas: sleeves, collar, and lower horizontal line – NOT the upper horizontal line.
6. Keep the bottom edges of the shirt lined up. Cut a 1 inch wide and 2 inch deep fringe into the bottom, making sure to cut the side seams too.
7. Keep the slits lined up. Tie the matching front and back fringe pieces into a double knot.
8. Once all the front and back pieces have been double knotted, take the first knot and tie it to the second knot. Tie the second knot to the third and continue until all of the pieces are connected. This will add extra strength and close any holes in the bottom of your bag.  
\* You can also use fabric or hot glue instead of tying.
9. Turn the bag right side out and decorate as desired!