Sew a Leather Bag with Liana Allday

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

(gentle guitar music) ^- Hi, I'm Liana Allday from Creativebug. ^I worked as a book editor at STC Craft for many years and over the last decade or so, I've been surrounded by some of the most amazing artists and designers. I've been really lucky to work with a lot of these people and I've soaked up a lot of their inspiration over this time. One of my favorite things to make are tote bags and I always loved the way that leather tote bags looked, but I've been really intimidated to work with leather. And it wasn't actually until a friend of mine got this really beautiful expensive tote bag that I thought, hmm, maybe I could make this myself. Really when I look closely at her bag, I realized that I was in love with the simple design of the bag and in love with the really really nice leather, so if I could just get ahold of the leather and figure out how to sew it on my home sewing machine, I could figure it out. And that's exactly what I've done. This bag is all about the leather, so we'll begin by talking about how to go shop for your leather, what to look for when you're buying a hide, the best weight to look for, and how to avoid imperfections. I'll talk about the best way to cut out the pieces, how to sew them together on your home sewing machine. Yes, even your home sewing machine can do this. And then when we're done, we're gonna make sure it's really sturdy. I'll show you how to condition it. And then you'll have an heirloom-worthy bag ready to wear for years to come. (light music)

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- Shopping for leather is the most important step in making a leather bag at home. It really all begins with the hide. So I can't stress enough that it's really important to go out and try to buy your leather in person if possible. I know it's really tempting to hop online and just dial it up and have it sent to your house but you will be surprised at the kind of emotional response that you have to the piece of leather that will become your favorite tote bag. So what you want to look for is a nice mediumweight leather. It's really up to you. You could go a little bit lightweight if you like a little bit of a floppier bag. I tend to prefer a medium weight. You want it to have a little bit of body but not too much. Remember it's gotta get through your home sewing machine so you don't want like a really thick sturdy piece of leather. So when you are shopping for leather, what you really want to do is roll it out and take a look at the whole hide, and I do recommend that you buy the entire hide. It feels a little bit crazy, you know you're going to be buying an entire cow here. If it makes you feel better, bring a girlfriend with you, maybe you can split the hide. Roll it out, and take a look for any imperfections and we'll go into that more in a little bit. A little hole here and there is fine but really what you want to make sure is that you're gonna have enough workable leather to have an 18 inch by 30 inch piece, plus four 1-inch straps that are between 29 inches and 35 inches long. If you have enough for that, then you've got plenty of leather. The next thing you're going to need is a cutting mat, some transparent quilting rulers... Quilting rulers are really up to you. Whatever you have at home or whatever you're comfortable with is fine. I do suggest you get one that has a long length to it. I think it's really helpful when you're cutting out a long strip of leather. But I also like having these little quilting rulers on hand. I think they're really helpful when you need to cut out a corner like this and it just feels more manageable. But again, it's totally up to you. A rotary cutter with a nice fresh

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blade is really helpful. It's gonna give you a nice clean edge. For the thread, it's really important that you use a synthetic blend. You don't want to use cotton thread for this project. The chemicals that are used to tan the leather will actually corrode the cotton thread over time, which would make your bag a little bit less sturdy than you would probably like so I really recommend that you use either a polyester or a nylon thread. You also probably want to avoid using an upholstery thread because it's probably gonna be a little bit too thick for your home sewing machine so you might have some problems with that. But again, experiment, see what works, you never know. We're gonna need some tailor's chalk, some little scissors, some big scissors, I always like to have a measuring tape on hand. You're gonna need to use binder clips when you're working with leather. Actually if you work with straight pins you'll leave holes in your leather which you really don't want, so that's why it's extra important to use binder clips and I find it helpful if they are in pretty colors but that's just me. Minis or mediums will both work fine. And then of course you're going to need a leather needle. This is a crucial component to sewing with leather. If you try to sew leather with your regular all-purpose needle you're gonna have problems. A leather needle looks just like a sewing needle but as you can see it has this extra sharp point and that is what is used to puncture the leather and it's got a nice big hole too so it's great to work with. It's gonna make all the difference when you're sewing with leather. This type of needle doesn't usually come standard with your machine so you'll wanna check your manual to see what type of needle you need to get and you can usually order it online or you could even get it at your sewing store. Another optional item that you might want to have on hand is a walking foot. This is usually used for quilting. It helps keep layers of fabric together and I find it's helpful when working with leather but again you don't need to have it. You will also want to have some leather cleaner and conditioner. You don't have to do this but after you put in all that work in sewing your bag you might as well protect it from the elements, right? And most importantly, you are going to need your home sewing machine. Any machine will work for this. I'm going to be working on my 15-year-old Kenmore that has absolutely no bells and whistles and I want you to know that you can really use your home machine too.

Chapter 3 - Make the Bag

Cut leather

- The piece of leather that I have in front of me is about half a hide. I know this seems like a lot of leather, and that's why I say you should buy one and split it with a friend or plan to make a couple of bags if you're going to go the whole-hide route. What you're looking for when you are selecting your leather are the usable parts and any imperfections that you want to avoid. So the best thing to do is just to roll out the whole hide and take a look. So when I look at this piece of leather, I can see right off the bat that I have a giant hole here that I definitely want to avoid, because you cannot fix a hole in leather. So once it's there, it's there forever. You don't want that to be in your bag. The part that I'm going to focus on for the body of my bag is in this section. This is a really nice, big, clean piece of leather. There's always gonna be a little bit of markings here. This is probably some scarring that was on the cow. It's just gonna happen. It's part of working with an animal hide. This section over here is also a nice section, but as you can see, you're gonna be limited by how much you can use. So this might be good for like a little clutch or a smaller bag, maybe a wallet. I actually love this leather so much. I think that the patina is so beautiful, and there's so much usable fabric that you can work with here. I think it's totally worth buying. It's almost impossible to find an animal hide that doesn't have a hole or a scar or something like that. So I think you just have to accept it and embrace it and use it. Cutting out pieces for this bag is super simple, 'cause they're all just basic

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rectangles. So the first thing you're gonna want to do is square up your edges. This one actually came with a nice, clean edge on it, which is fantastic, and now I just need to take care of this one ragged edge here. And the easiest thing to do is just to bottom-align your one straight edge, if you have that luxury, and just take your straight ruler and hold it right along the bottom. And that's gonna give you a nice, neat edge here. So we're just gonna cut right along this line. Press down nice and hard. You should be able to get it in one go. And that looks pretty nice. We are gonna go ahead and go all the way to the top, 'cause we might as well. It's just shy of 30 inches. The best part about working with leather is that you can actually leave these edges raw. They're not gonna fray. It's kind of like we're working with a really fancy, expensive felt, so it helps to think of it like that. If you get any kind of raw or jagged edge, you can just get in there with the rotary cutter or with some scissors and just snip it right off, just like that. Now that I have two nice, clean edges, I'm gonna go ahead and turn my mat. You're gonna find, as you're working with leather, that it's kind of big and bulky, and you're gonna want to just get at it at the right angle that feels good for you. You always want to be cutting away from yourself when you're using a rotary cutter and ruler. So do what you gotta do. Clear out some space. Work on the floor. Work on your dining room table, whatever makes the most sense for you. And when you're cutting out leather, just go slow. Just measure it out and make sure it's all lined up. This is some valuable material here. You don't want to waste it or make mistakes if you can avoid them. So take the time you need. I'm looking for the 30-inch mark, which I have found right here, and I'm going to be cutting 18 inches. So if I line up my ruler right along the bottom edge here, I should be in good shape. And let's just head on up. That should do it. Nice and neat. We're gonna turn the mat one more time to get the final cut on our bag body. Got the 18-inch mark right here, so once again, I'm going to line up my ruler with that trusty bottom edge. And make sure that's really lined up. And away we go. You gotta press down pretty hard here. And there we have it. This may seem like a really big piece of fabric to be using for this bag. I'm actually a big bag person. I like to have a generous size. And when you fold this in half to make the bag body, keep that in mind when you are doing this. If you want to make a smaller bag, that's totally up to you. Look at the bags in your closet and measure them, actually. It really helps. Just add about a half-inch seam allowance on either side if you're gonna go rogue and make your own bag size. And you can really customize this to suit your own style. The straps that I'm going to cut out are going to be 34 inches long and 1 inch wide, and you're going to need four of these. And actually, when I look at this, oh my goodness, I am so lucky. I have one, two, three, four straps right here before I get to this hole. I'm a lucky duck here. You might not get so lucky. And you might have to get a little more creative finding a place to cut out a nice long 1-inch strap. Remember, you are going to need four of them. They get doubled up and sewn together, and that's how you get that really sturdy, strong strap. And just like we did with the bag body, we're going to use our grid lines here to line up the straight edges. And go ahead and cut a 1-inch strap. I'm gonna keep on going. You can keep using that line. This is gonna be a little bit longer than our bag body, remember. So we're going up to the 34-inch mark. Perfect! Okay, you'll see I have stopped right here at the 35-inch mark. And remember, we're making 34-inch straps, but our leather starts one inch up from the bottom here, so you've got to do a little bit of math as you're cutting this. Now, I've just got to even up this other edge here, so that they are cut all the way up on both sides. What I would typically do is go ahead and cut out the length of all four straps and then just cut across the top in one fell swoop, so that I can just do one nice, even cut. In this case, I'm actually only going to cut out two straps, 'cause I have two cut out already. Take a minute to smooth everything out before you do this final cut. It just really helps to kind of let it hang naturally. Leather is really stretchy, so if you

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pull it, it will kind of hold that position. So just let it kind of do its own elasticity thing. And then, this piece is kind of in my way, so I'm just going to cut this piece away, just so I can see the numbers on my grid. A perfect piece of scrap leather for later. Hold on to all these bits. They'll come in handy down the road. Grab a ruler, it could be a ruler of any size. Line it up with your 34-inch mark right there. And there you go. All cut out. The next step is actually optional. What I really like to do is cut a little angle out of this strap. And actually, you can use your ruler to just place it over here. And then you're just gonna snip off the edges. It really couldn't be easier. And I think it gives the bag a nice, polished look. This is totally a design choice. If you want to leave them as is, you absolutely can. I just think it's nice to have a little angled corner here. The whole bag is a rectangle, so it's kind of nice to have a little divot just to mix things up. It's really helpful to use your grid lines. Make sure that your strap is falling within that one inch, and just in there with your rotary cutter and give these a little slice. They should pop right off. I like to flip my cutter around, so the blade is always close to the ruler. It just gives a little bit more of an exact cut. After you sew them, they might stretch out a little bit, and they might need to get a little bit of a trim with your scissors anyway. So do them the best that you can, and then we'll move on. You're gonna do this to all four of your straps. So that's eight times. Now you've cut out your bag body, and you have four straps that are all mitered at the edges. You are officially ready to sew.

Sew bag

- I like to start by sewing the body of the bag. But, before you can do anything, you wanna make sure that your leather needle is in place. And if you are going to be using a walking foot you wanna go ahead and pop that on. Every machine is a little different. On mine I just... unscrew the bolt on the side. And it just comes right off. Gotta lift up my foot... to release it. A common mistake people make when they're putting on the walking foot is they leave this little bar down but actually it needs to be lifted up in most cases... so that it... rests on this little bolt here. There. And then, just hold it in place. Screw in the bolt on the side. Make sure it's nice and secure. Your walking foot is all set. Now you are ready to test your stitch tension. Now tension is really important when you're sewing leather. You don't want it to be too loose and you don't want it to be too tight. You're gonna get some funky results. And we want just nice, smooth stitches. So, every machine is a little bit different but the first thing you wanna do is set the stitch length to a nice, long length. I have about 3-1/2 here. And then you want to go ahead, and you can just start wherever you are, put your needle in. I have one piece of leather folded in half here, so I'm sewing through two layers. And the reason why I'm doing this is because all of the sewing we are doing on this bag is sewing through at least two layers of leather. So go ahead and fold your leather in half and try it out, see how it looks. And let's take a look. Looks pretty good. Checking both sides here. Don't be alarmed if your machine sounds like a jackhammer. Remember, you're sending two layers of leather through it. It might not have seen that kind of action before, so there might be a little bit of shaking, a little bit of noise. But, unless your needle breaks, you're in good shape. If you look at your stitch line and it's looking a little bit loose, it will usually be on the back side that will look a little bit loose, you want to adjust your tension by going up in numbers. If it's looking a little tight or if your thread is breaking, then you want to go down in numbers. So, just remember that rule of thumb. Keep sewing stitch lines and until you are happy with the way it looks and then you're ready to get started sewing your bag. Turn this so that the... right sides are facing each other. You wanna make sure that these top edges are really nice and lined up. And then... instead of pinning... like you normally might with a piece of fabric, we're gonna use these binder clips. They don't leave any marks, they're super easy to

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remove, and they just hold everything where it needs to be. I'm just placing them every couple inches. As I said before, leather is pretty stretchy so if you don't secure it, it can slide around. Alright, let's go ahead and sew it. When you start a stitching line, make sure you leave a nice, long tail here because you're gonna be tying knots at the end later. And actually, when you're sewing with leather, you don't want to back stitch because it will leave some unnecessary marks in the fabric. We just want this to be nice and smooth. So we're gonna line up the leather right with the edge of the foot, the 3/8-inch mark. And, away... we go. I like to go nice and slow. You're in no rush here. There's not really any backing up if you make a mistake because you're making puncture holes so, take your time. Again, just leave a nice, long tail. And then, slightly tedious but worth the effort, go ahead and just tie up these loose tails. Pull it nice and tight right up against the fabric. I like to do two or three. And then, go ahead and clip your ends. As you can see, this one here is a little bit off. As I said, leather can be kind of slippery. So, if it really bothers you, you can go ahead and just trim this off... and it'll be totally fine. For me, I'm just gonna leave it. I probably won't even notice it once the bag is turned right-side out. Again, it's totally up to you in how perfect you want it to be. Clip and sew the other side of your bag the exact same way. Sometimes you might hear a funny clanking noise when you sew. It is always smart to investigate what that clanking noise might be. You never know if your stitches are turning out funny on the other side. And if they are, you just need to stop. You might need to rip it out. On the side of the bag it's not gonna be that big of a deal because it's gonna be hidden in that seam. You might as well just stop and get it right. Just like before, we're gonna tie up these loose tails. And then once these side seams are done we're going to box the corners of the bag. Boxing the corners is really one of those cool tricks that gives your bag its bag-like shape. It kind of forms a wall, like a nice, soft wall. And it give the bag a nice bottom. So, this is the top of the bag here. This is the corner... at the bottom. And it really couldn't be easier. So, the first thing that you're gonna do is just lay out your bag on a cutting mat or on another gridded ruler. And you're just gonna find the 2-1/2 inch mark up from the bottom of the bag. There's one, two, two and a half. Just gonna mark that spot right there. Make it nice and clear. Nobody's every gonna see this, we're marking the inside of your bag. And then, from the seam line, so you don't wanna measure from the edge, you wanna measure from the seam. One, two... and a half. And again, just make it nice and clear. Do yourself a favor. And then, reach into the bag, and this part feels a little bit awkward, 'cause you need to squeeze out the sides here. Helps to just give it a nice shake. What you want is for this blue dot to be exactly above where this blue dot is. Normally this is something in sewing where you would use a pin to poke it straight through and make sure that it's coming out exactly on the other side. But in this case, we don't want to poke any holes in our leather, it's gonna leave permanent marks. So, we just pinch. You can kind of feel it. Feels good to me. So I'm gonna take it over to my mat here. I'm going to try to line up this blue dot with a horizontal line and also with this vertical line. It's just helpful... make sure we're doing all of our edges nice and neat. Take another ruler, slide it on top, and just... mark your line. You might need a few times here, so you can really see it. Then, clip the edges so they stay put and you take it back over to the machine. And you will just sew right along that line that you drew. Sometimes it helps to just get it started with a hand crank. Get this outta my way. Sometimes when you get to that... extra layer of fabric there you need to give it a special tug... with your back hand. And there it goes. And just like before, you want to hand-tie knots in the tails at the beginning and end of all your seams. Let's see how that first corner looks. Oh, that's cool. See, it's starting to give the bag some structure. It's starting to stand up on its own here. And you can see the bottom of the bag is starting to form. So let's go ahead and do the other corner the exact same way. And this time I decided to sew with

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this side facing up. I thought it might give me a little bit more control as I pull the several layers through. But really, you can do it either way, same result. You can have this on the top or on the bottom. Your boxed corners are done. At this point, if we were working with another fabric than leather, you might actually want to trim off these corners here. But I like to leave them on. I think that they give the bag some nice structure. They make the bag feel extra sturdy on the bottom. And, I don't know, they might get in your way if they stay down there. If they're bothering you, you can always trim them off. You might lose some lip gloss down there or find a quarter or two. But, otherwise, they really don't get in the way that much. Let's turn the bag right-side out, see how we did. You want to press out those corners with your hands. Really get in there with your fingers, poking at those edges. Do the other side. Looking nice and neat. Oh, I'm happy with that. And there you have your bag body.

Sew straps
- The straps of this bag need to be extra sturdy because after all, you're making a really big bag. You're going to fill it up with a whole bunch of stuff and you need a strap that going to be able to support that. So in order to make that happen, you want to double up your straps and you're going to sew them together. What I have here is a finished strap and the sewing is going to begin at this corner and we'll go all the way down. You're just going to follow your foot. This is the trickiest part. You're gonna go a couple stitches down, a couple stitches up, pivot, and go all the way back down. Same thing here. Couple stitches in, couple stitches out, and you're done. And again, you'll just be tying your ends there. You'll begin by stacking your two straps on top of each other. You want the wrong sides facing each other so the right sides will be facing out. Just do it as best you can and just start clipping them along the edge. Be as neat and accurate as you can but again, don't drive yourself crazy. This leather really does like to stretch. It's going to stretch over time especially as you use the bag and you put weight on it. You can see on the finished strap right here, I have a little overlap where they didn't match up perfectly. Let it go, once you put that on the bag and you start using the bag, it's going to stretch out. Your hands are going to be on it. It's going to roll in over time and they'll become just like one. So just keep on clipping all the way down to the end. And you can see here, I have a little bit extra on top. You can either clip that off now or you can clip it off later. It's really up to you. I think I'll just go ahead and clip it off now. And who knows? Maybe we'll clip it again later. It is the nature of leather. We're ready to take this to the machine and start sewing. You just wanna to line up your needle right here with this edge. I think it's easier to start on a straightaway. And then you also want to make sure that you are about a quarter inch from the edge. On my foot, that is lining up exactly with this little medal piece here. And really if you wanna go closer to the edge, you can. I find this is just an easy spot for me to find on my machine. The most important thing is that you pick a stitch with and you stick with it. This is decorative top stitching on the outside of your strap. And that you will notice if it's kinda weaving in and out as you go. All right, nice and slow. Check to make sure nothing's funky. Looking good. Always check to make sure nothing is funky. Now as you sew, just keep an eye on these two straps. Make sure one isn't sliding off in one direction or another. Just keep them nice and centered. Hold them with your hand. These little binder clips give you a good opportunity to check in and make sure nothing has gone off the rails. Looking good still. Okay, in this corner, it's matching up almost perfectly. As you can see, I've got a little bit extra here. I'm gonna go in with my scissors. Just give a tiny little haircut. Again, it's totally fine if it's not perfect. That little corner is going to bug me though. All right, that'll do. And let's do the tip. Now stop right when you get to that point. With the needle down, you're

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gonna lift up the foot, turn it, and you should be able to see that you're little tapered corner is matching up with your line. Take a couple of slow stitches. Let's go ahead and take three. I even like to hand crank just to make it nice and exact. Pick up that foot again with needle down. And then go ahead and do one across. Just a nice horizontal stitch. Turn it one more time. And one more. And we are ready to go back down the other way. Now you're in the home stretch. You're just going to sew along this straight side until you reach that other corner. And you don't need to clip this side because it's already pretty secure from sewing up the other side. All right and once again, we're nearing that point. Remember we're going to stop right here and pivot. So just ease your way on up. One more. I'm gonna turn. Put that needle down. Take a couple, I'm gonna go ahead and just hand crank it. 'Cause why not? Turn it again. Actually there, I think that's too close to the end. I'm just gonna do... Go back this way. And we're done. Let's take it out and see how we did. This one you can tell I really maintained my distance from all edges. I'm pretty happy with how that one turned out. In the meantime, don't forget to tie your threads. I know you're becoming a pro at hand tying knots at this point. And then if you want, you can always go in with your scissors and do a little bit of trimming. I know I like to do that. And then of course, you'll wanna do the exact same thing with your other strap. You might notice that you have some little scratch marks on the backside of your leather and that's just because it's going against the feed dog. It's extra thick, it's being pressed down at a pretty high pressure but they're just little scratch marks that's just like if you ran your nail along it and in fact, if you rub your finger over it, they start to disappear. So they really go away if you put leather conditioner. Either which way, I wouldn't worry about it too much.

Chapter 4 - Finish the Bag

Attach straps and finish

- We just need to add the straps, and your bag is going to be finished. The best way to add the straps is to get out your gridded ruler again, and you're just gonna look at the side seam here, and measure four inches in. So, let's place it right on that line. We have some long straps here, so I'm gonna place these about 2 1/2 inches down from the top. Needs to be nudged up a little bit. Once you've found your spot, you can just clip these in place. And it feels a little wonky, but that's okay, it's normal. It'll stay. It'll stay as long as you need it to. And then, we'll figure out the other side. Same thing. We're four inches in, 2 1/2 inches down. Now, before you start sewing, you want to check a few things, and make sure that they are looking right. You want to make sure this is not twisted. This needs to be all facing the same direction. You, also, want to make sure that you have the side that you prefer facing out. I happen to think that top stitches look better than the stitches that are on the back, but that's just me. If you think that this side is looking better for you than this side, that's fine, either way works. And, most importantly, before you start sewing, you want to pick it up gently, of course, and hold it up to you. You gotta make sure that this is the right size bag for you. Go stand in front of a mirror, take a look at it, make sure it's comfortable, reach your hand in, check that this gonna work for you, because once it's on, it's on. If it helps you could even clip the back side of the bag, too, but I'm gonna go ahead, and just sew the front side for now. Remove that first clamp, and just make sure you are securely holding this. It can shift around. Slide it in there. And again, you might need to go rogue, and move that one over, too, just to make room. This part's a little tricky. It's not impossible. Just go slow. Take extra care before you drop your needle in to make sure that bottom layer of the bag is out of the way. Make sure you are lined up with your previous stitch line. You're actually just going to be stitching right over what you've already stitched, so you have a nice guide right there. When you've got it, you just wanna be a little below the top edge of

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the bag. You're gonna drop your needle in, and start sewing. Once again, when you get to that pivot point, stop, turn. I'm gonna check and make sure, actually, I think I wanna go one more stitch. Can't hurt to just check and recheck. I'm gonna go ahead and hand-crank these. Turn it. Actually, I got one more to do. See, that's why you gotta sometimes just keep moving. Drop that foot again. One more hand-crank across. Turn the whole bag, and you gotta stuff this little bag through here. Don't worry, it'll be fine. Once again, I'm just gonna drop my foot. Hand-crank a couple more stitches. And I think, let me just see if that one will get me where I need to go, it does. And now, we can go back to using the machine. Gonna get rid of this guy. I don't need him anymore. And I'm right there at the top, so I'm gonna go ahead lift my foot, needle down, turn it, and just sew straight across the top. Done. Alright, let's take it out. We have a nice long tail. Let's see how we did. That looks pretty good. I managed to stay on the line, and I really do think it helps to hand-crank when you're going around that edge. It really gives you that little extra bit of control that you need when you're going around that kind of tricky corner. Let's go ahead, and sew the other side. Alright, you have fully attached one strap. Go ahead and tie off your knots, just like you have before, and then, you'll attach the other strap the exact same way. Before we go on though, I just wanna point out that these straps look like they were attached pretty well. I managed to stay on the lines, and they don't look very wonky, but I'm not always so perfect. I have another bag here, and I just wanna reveal some of my flaws, just in case, this is happening to you, and your stitch lines are not matching up perfectly when you are doing your strap. You'll see here, I managed to stay on the line here, but I had my previous line came in a little bit closer, and I stitched around it like this. I was happier with the way that this line looked, so I went ahead ripped this one out. Because, actually, once your bag is attached, you don't really need that decorative stitching that you did the first time when you made the strap, so you can remove it. You will have these little holes, so it will never be totally perfect. It's totally up to you. You can be a complete perfectionist if you want, or you can decide to let it go. I'm more in the let it go camp. You guys, you made your first leather bag. How great does this look? This is a classic bag. I think you're gonna be so happy with this. Before you start filling with all your stuff and take it outside, though, I really have to recommend that you put some sort of leather protector or conditioner on it. Cautionary tale, I actually made this bag for myself, and as you can see, it does have some stains on it. This is from a rainy day, maybe a little ink mark right there. I think, on the bottom, there's actually a grease stain, which is pretty bad, but it's on the bottom. And a little bit of dirt on the side. If I'd put a leather protector on there, probably a lot of this would have been easier to clean up, or wouldn't have stuck to it at all. Learn from me, and protect your bag before you take it out into the world. That being said, I do love the way that this leather has aged. This leather is actually the exact same leather as this one that I've been working with today. And you can see, it just gets a little bit darker with time. You get some nice coloring on it. This side actually looks really nice, and the straps, too. This were ones a little uneven and wonky, but because you hold that strap, you've got your hand on it, the natural oils in your hand and the stretching, they just make it all even out over time. It really just feels like it came from one piece. I'm going to show you how to apply conditioner. Of course, you're going to want to read the instructions on your bottle before you begin, and follow those instructions if they're different from mine. And I always recommend practicing first on a piece of scrap leather. You don't want to put it on your bag, and realize that it turned some crazy color, or that you really liked it better the original way, and then it's too late. Just apply a little bit to your rag, I like to smooth it out with my finger first. And then, just dab it on, and see what happens. As you can see, it darkens leather, just deepens the color. And that actually, when it dries, will not look so dark. When I first did this, I applied the conditioner to my leather, and I

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thought I had ruined it, because it turned so dark, but it really does dry out. And once the conditioner is dry, just go back with another clean rag, give it a good buff just to get off any excess, and you are good to go. As you can see, I've made these bags in lots of different colors and sizes. I, actually, really like the classic black bag. This was my original inspiration before I fell in love with the brown bag. And these are all really classic colors, but feel free to go wild. Leather comes in so many different colors, and I'm sure that they would look great in maybe a red or a yellow. Whatever floats your boat, go for it. Again, you're gonna have a really emotional reaction when you go pick out your leather at the leather store. So, don't limit yourself, go with what feels right. I really like the large size of this bag, but I'm, also, a big bag lady, as I said before. If you prefer to make a smaller size, go for it. Just cut it to the different dimensions, and you can adjust your strap length to fit. And, these make really great gifts for friends and family. Everybody's gonna be really pleased to get these, and don't forget to make one for yourself, because this is gonna be your new favorite bag, and you will be using it for the next several years, I'm sure.

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