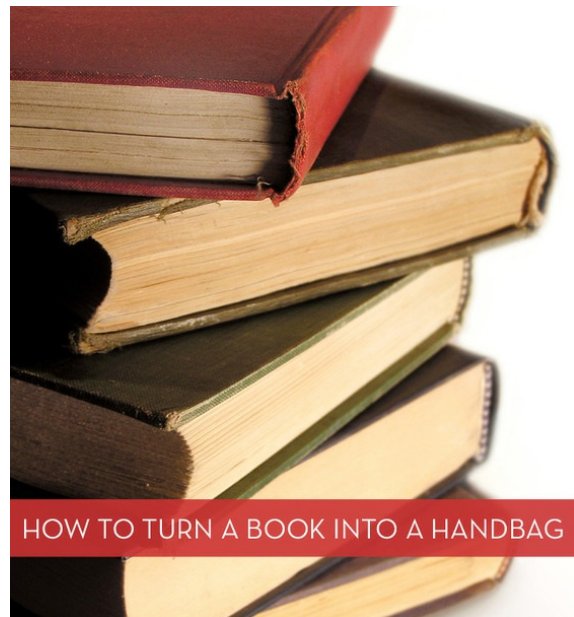


Curbly Video Podcast: How to Make a Handbag out of a Recycled Book

by Chris Gardner



I have a penchant for purchasing stuff that's cool, but for which I don't have specific plans or use. Case in point: I have piles of pulp and sci-fi novels from the 40s-60s. The art and colors are amazing, and the language provides for ridiculous quotes for ages. But after I slice out the illustrations, and force my way through the first and last chapters so I can say I 'read' them, these dime store masterpieces don't escape from their cardboard homes often.



Thus, enter this project: an adorable handbag featuring the incredible art of 'literature'.

Click play, or go [here to watch the video](#).

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MATERIALS

- A hardbound book with an appealing cover
- Fabric (1/2 yard or so)
- Sewing machine or needle and thread
- Scissors
- Utility knife
- Craft glue
- Store-bought [or handmade] purse handle
- Colored markers
- Polyurethane finish, Mod Podge, or watered-down white glue

Step 1

Use the utility knife to cut the pages away from the binding. Be careful if you're using an old book (especially a initially inexpensive one); don't cut through the cover. Make several light passes if necessary.

Step 2

If your book is worn, color in any white areas with matching markers.

Step 3

Stand the book vertically on a piece of paper, opened as wide as you'd like the handbag to open. Trace its shape on the paper. Cut out the shape, adding a half inch (for seam allowance) on each side.

Step 4

Cut the triangle in half along its height. Copy each half of the triangle onto the fabric twice, adding another half inch for seam allowance along the height. You'll have four triangles, two of each shape.

Step 5

Pin one of each of the triangles with right sides together, and sew along the height. This will recreate the larger triangle that you traced from the book. Sewing a seam along the middle helps to encourage the sides to fold inside the handbag when closed.

Step 6

Copy this larger triangle onto a fresh piece of fabric. Pin the sides right sides together, and sew along all three sides, leaving a tiny opening at the bottom to invert. There's no need to sew the opening, as it will be glued on the inside of the book.

Step 7

Repeat steps 5-6 to create a second triangular side panel.

Step 8

Cut four 2x3" (or whatever will fit in the slots of your handles) strips of fabric, fold along the length, and sew right sides together. Invert them (it'll be difficult) to create four 3" tabs.

Step 9

Lay the book cover flat on the fabric, and cut out the shape, adding an inch on all sides. Fold this extra inch over and iron to make a lining panel.

Step 10

Attach the handles by gluing the tabs to the cover. Then, glue one side of the side panel onto the edges on one side of the book.



Step 11

Dot that half of the book with glue, and glue one half of the lining panel to the side glued in step ten.

Step 12

After the glue dries a bit, glue the other long side of the triangle end pieces to the other half of the book, and cover with the lining panel. This will take a little patience and finagling, but it will come together. Press down to secure the glue.

Step 13

Add any embellishments, such as buttons, beads, etc, if you wanna give your bag a little additional flair.

Step 14

Finish with a protective coat (either glue or polyurethane based).

Step 15

Fill with the essentials (or, in my case, give it to someone with impeccable taste), and be on your very stylish and recycled way



Like repurposing old stuff? Then you'll want to [check this out...](#)

