

# Crocheting Plastic Grocery Bags into Tote Bags

These instructions by Amelie Redman, Bethel, AK from Solid Solutions.  
(To get a copy of Solid Solutions contact the EPA Tribal Program, 271-6323)

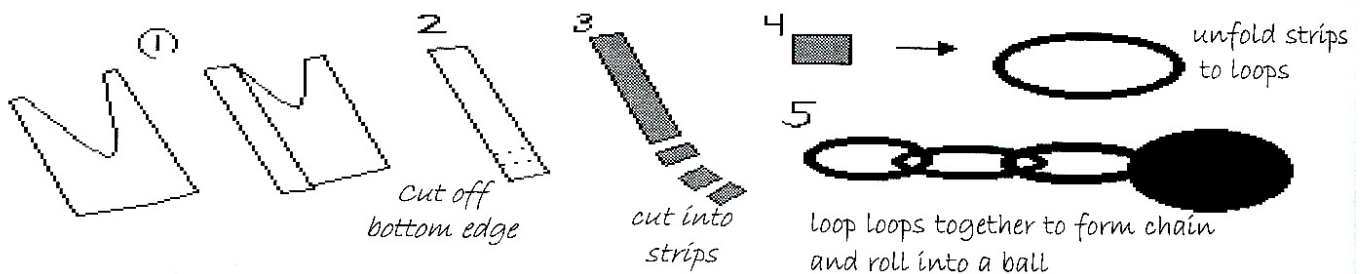


## Starting off

To create the plastic "yarn": one method is to cut around and around the bag making one continuous strip out of each bag, in the desired width, usually 1-2 inches.

My method is to

- (1) First fold the bag lengthwise to form a narrow roll.
- (2) Cut the bottom edge off then, working your way up the bag, cut into 1-2 inch wide segments.
- (3) These will be loops when unfolded.
- (4) Lastly, loop the loops together to form a continuous chain, and wind into a ball. When your ball is as large as a volleyball, you are ready to begin crocheting. The knots are not noticeable in the finished product.



### What size crochet hook to use:

I use a hook in the size range of F to I. The smaller hook will create a tighter, solid stitch and the tote will take a little longer to make. The larger hook makes a looser stitch and the bag works up faster.

### To start your tote bag:

Make a chain of stitches as long as you want the bottom of your bag to be, at least 25 stitches long. Double back on your chain and make single crochet (sc) at each stitch, putting 3 stitches in the same holes at the end of the chain as you turn to come back along the opposite side of the chain. Continue this until about the third row when you begin forming a rectangle bottom for your tote by putting three stitches in each hole at the four corners. Do this until the bottom of the tote is as large as desired.



### How to make the sides of the tote:

When the bottom is as large as required, simply stop adding the three extra stitches in the corners; this sc in each will make the tote sides. Keep crocheting until you have it as high as you like it. I find that if I want a definite bottom with a sharp turn defining the sides, I get this by increasing 4-6 stitches in the row after completing the bottom rectangle. (To decrease: draw up loops through 2 stitches that follow each other, with three loops on the hook, draw yarn through the 3 loops at once.)

### The handle:

After your tote is as deep as you like, turn the bag inside out. You will find that the stitches on the inside are more even and look better. Choose two points that you want the handle to connect on the tote. Make sure that these are directly across from each other. Opinions and styles differ at this point. I've tried a few different ways. One way is to chain 55-60 across to the other side and attach it. Now go back and forth lengthwise across the handle until you have the desired width. Make sure to attach it firmly on each side on each row. Another way is to sc 4-5 stitches, turn, chain one sc back across again. Continue in this manner until your handle is the length you want. Attach it firmly to the other side.



Hair clips can also be made with plastic bags!