

Guidelines for Making Sundresses from Fabric

Dress a Girl Around the World Basic Requirements:

You are about to create a once-in-a-lifetime dress for a young girl. Yes, it will be beautiful, but be aware that harsh conditions also require durability and that modesty is critically important.

- Use 100% cotton, prewash if possible.
- Use a stitch length of 3-3.5 to sew straight, smooth, and strong seams.
 - Problems? Try:
 1. Clean lint from all parts of your machine.
 2. Rewind the bobbin. Is it the correct one for your machine (bobbins ARE NOT universal)?
 3. Change the needle, or make sure you are using the correct needle for the fabric.
 4. If your thread breaks easily, it is too old. Don't use it!
 5. If you are still having problems, it is probably time to have your machine tuned-up.
- Always backstitch to reinforce where noted.
- All seams must be finished – no raw edges. Trim all loose threads.
- If you see your hand through the fabric when held up to light, use it only for pockets or trim.



Step 1: Cut the Fabric

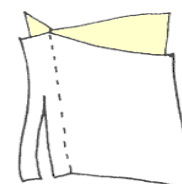
- Use the chart for the size you wish to sew. Most fabric is 42-44" wide. For larger sizes, you will use the entire width. For smaller sizes, fold the fabric for the width needed.

<i>Dress Sizes</i>	<i>CUT Width</i>	<i>CUT Length</i>	<i>Finished Length</i>	<i>Armhole Pattern</i>
6m	30"	17"	14"	Infant/A
12-18m	30"	19"	16"	Infant/A
24m	30"	21"	18"	Infant/A
3	32"	22"	19"	Small/B
4	34"	25"	22"	Small/B
5	36"	27"	24"	Small/B
6	40"	29"	26"	Medium/C
7	42"	31"	28"	Medium/C
8	42"	33"	30"	Medium/C
9	42"	35"	32"	Medium/C
10*	44 - 54"	37"	34"	Large/D
11*	44 - 54"	39"	36"	Large/D
12*	44 - 54"	39"	36"	Large/D

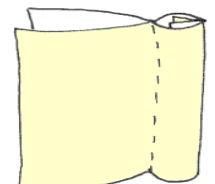
* If dress is less than 52" wide, make a hemmed slit (no longer than 6-8") to allow for ease of movement.

Step 2: Sew the Side Seam(s)

- In most cases, you'll sew one 1/2" side seam (the fold is your other "side seam"). Notch it to help center the attached tie.
- Finish the seam with a French, overcast, or serged stitch.
- A French seam is ideal for fabric that ravel easily.
- To create, match wrong sides, sew a 1/4" seam, and trim. Press to one side.
- Turn fabric so that right sides are together. Press. Sew a 3/8" seam, enclosing the raw edges of the previous seam. Press this seam to one side. Make sure you have enclosed the raw edges on the pretty (right) side of the fabric.



Step 1: Sew wrong sides together and trim seam allowance.



Step 2: Turn so right sides are facing and stitch close to the seam.

Step 3: Hemming the Dress

- Turn up and press 1/4" of fabric. Then turn up a measured 2" of fabric and press as you go.
- Carefully stitch the hem on the underside using bobbin thread that matches the fabric. Press.

Step 4: Cutting the Armholes

- Use the armhole template for your size dress from the DAG website.
- With right sides out, carefully fold the seamed/hemmed fabric in half so that the top, bottom, and sides are aligned. Pin the armhole template to the top and side edges. Cut. Unless the side seam has been serged, it is usually an excellent idea to restitch the side seam.



Step 5: Creating the Casing

- At the top of the dress front, fold 1/4" to the wrong side and press. Refer to the elastic chart below. Fold over 3/4" if using 3/8" or 1/2" elastic; fold over 1" if using 3/4" elastic. Press. *Note:* It is important to adhere to these measurements in order for the armhole to be the proper size.
- Stitch close to the folded edge from the backside. Repeat for the back.
- For a more finished look, edge stitch along the top fold of front and back.



Step 6: Inserting the Elastic

- Refer to chart. Cut front and back lengths of elastic for the size dress you are making. Non-fold elastic works best.
- Attach a safety pin to the front elastic and push it through the

<i>Dress Sizes</i>	<i>Elastic Width</i>	<i>Front</i>	<i>Back</i>
6 - 24m	3/8 "	5 1/2"	6 1/2"
3 - 5	1/2"	6"	7"
6 - 9	1/2 "	7"	8"
10 - 12	3/4"	9"	10"



front casing. When its end reaches the end of the casing, secure with a straight pin or baste. Continue to push the elastic through to the other end of the casing and secure again. Repeat for the dress's back casing.

Step 7: Attaching the Dress Ties

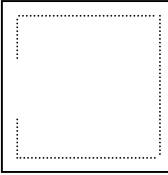
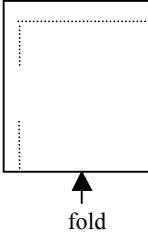


- Refer to chart. Cut two equal lengths of extra wide double fold bias tape.
- Fold each in half and mark the midpoint with a pin. Fold in the ends and press.
- Open tape. With right sides of fabric and bias tape together, pin the midpoint of the tape (raw edges together) to the armhole center.
- Stitch in the ditch of the bias tape fold from the front to the back.
- Fold tape to wrong side of fabric, making sure that all edges are all the way into the fold.
- Start sewing the edges together at one end of the tie (backstitch to secure the thread). Sew slowly and evenly, making sure that you "catch" the backside of the bias tape.
- At the 4 points where the ties meets the dress top, stitch, backstitch, and then continue forward. At the end of the tie, backstitch again. You can use a straight, zigzag, or decorative stitch.

<i>Sizes</i>	<i>Length</i>
6 - 18m	30 "
24m - 6	34"
7 - 9	36 "
10 - 12	38"



Step 8: Pockets

- All dresses should have at least one pocket that's an appropriate size for the size of the dress with a minimum finished size of 5x5 inches.
- If you are making your own pockets, there are two ways to do so:
 1. Cut 2 pieces of measured fabric for each pocket. One will act as the facing. If you wish to add lace, ribbon, rickrack, etc., sew it to the front piece. With right sides together, start above the middle of one side and sew a backstitched 1/4" seam around to a point 2-2 1/2" from where you started (you'll use this opening to turn the pocket). Trim seams, clip the corners/notches on curved seams. Turn pocket right side out and push out the corners with a point turner, chopstick, etc. Press. 
 2. Use 1 piece of measured fabric and fold. The fold will be the pocket bottom. Sew trims to the front side. With right sides together, start at the bottom fold and sew a 1/4" seam up the side to below the middle of the pocket. Backstitch. Allow a 2-2 1/2" opening. Then sew up the side, along the top, and down to the fold. Trim seams and clip the corners. Turn the pocket right side out and push out the corners with a point turner, chopstick, etc. Press. 
- To place the pocket on the dress, find the halfway point from the top casing to the hem. Move the pocket 1 - 2" above that halfway point and about 2" from the side seam. The turned opening should face the dress's side. Pin securely.
- Before attaching, check to make sure the pocket is "straight" on the dress (both side corners are equidistant from the side seam and both bottom corners are equidistant from the hem).
Note: This is even more important if you are attaching two pockets.
- Attach the pocket, stitching close to the edge and backstitching at both top corners.
- If you use premade pockets, be aware that all are not equal! A premade pocket can be the perfect match, but at times, the workmanship isn't. So take it apart and make it perfect!
- Stitch lace, ribbons, etc. to the pocket and then turn and press raw edges to the back side.
- Stitch the pocket to the dress as described above.

Step 9: Last Steps

- If you wish to "garnish" your dress with buttons, bows, appliqués, etc., make sure they are sewn on and not glued.
- Attach a size tag to the dress. If you have a *Dress A Girl* label, stitch it to the bottom right side of the dress above the stitched hem.
- Stand back, admire the dress you've made, and get ready to create another beauty!