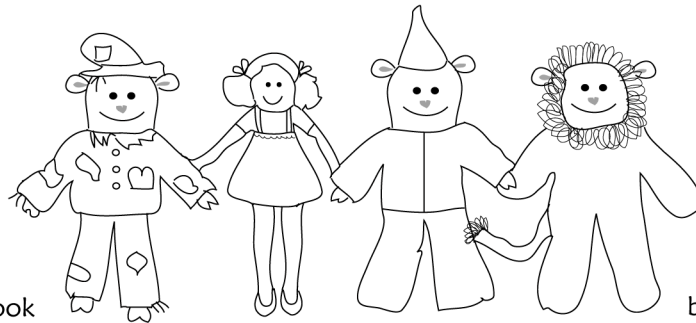
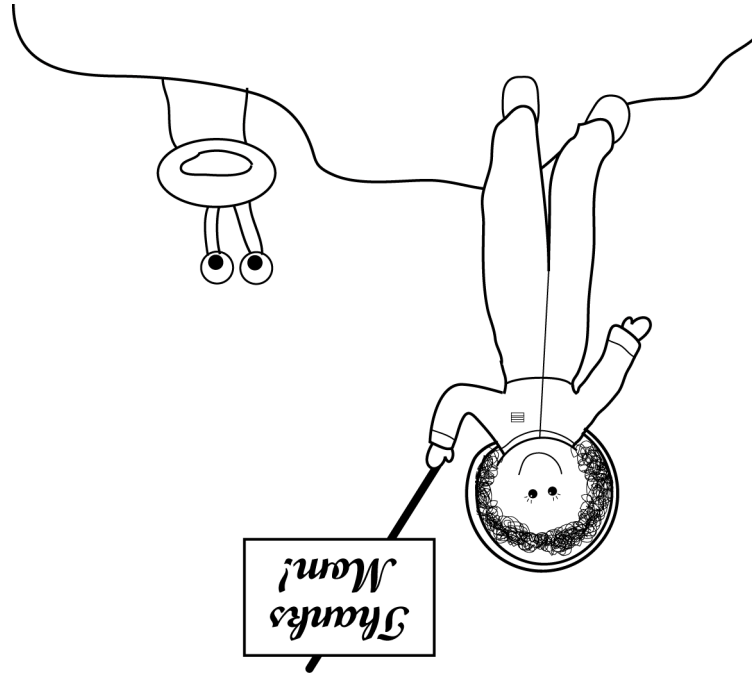


You can make Puppet Costumes!



a hands-on book

by Christy Graunke



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You can make Puppet Costumes!

Illustrated; includes index (hooray!)

1. Puppetry 2. Costumes 3. Sewing 4. Theatre, performing arts

No puppets were harmed in the making of this book (although they did become better dressed!)

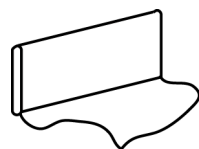
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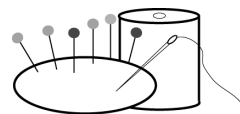
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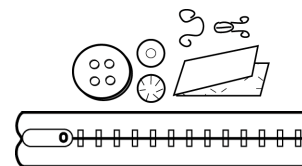
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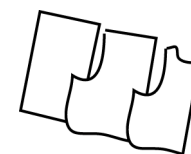
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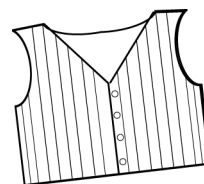
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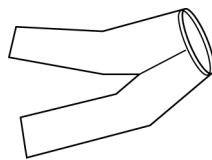
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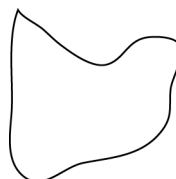
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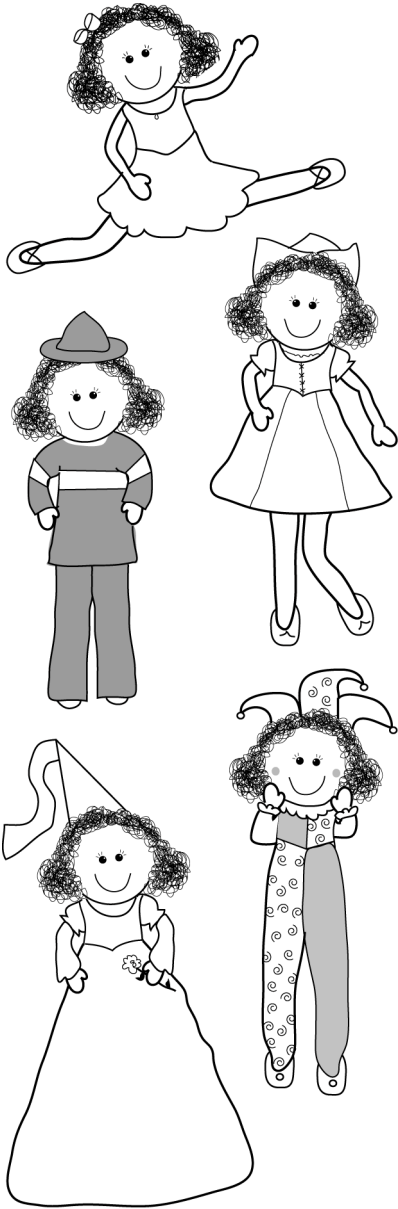


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First things first: of characters & costumes



Creating characters through costumes

Costumes enliven and impress, entertain and inform. They help the audience tell the good guys from the bad guys, the Cinderella in rags from the Cinderella in magical riches. They can turn the same puppet into a dancer, a firefighter, a milkmaid, a princess, or a clown. Making a costume is a lot like making a whole new puppet. And that's exciting!

You don't need to sew perfectly to create recognizable characters through costumes, but you do need a willingness to experiment and an idea of what you want your costumes to look like. Before you get started, you also need to consider your type of puppet, type of theatre, and your stage setup.

Types of puppets

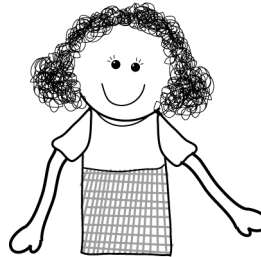
Puppets come in all different shapes, sizes, and styles, but you can use the same techniques to costume just about any body. From a costuming standpoint, the most important thing all puppets share is movement. Your puppet should move as easily in its costumes as a human actor would, since puppets depend on motion for a successful performance. Of course, different kinds of puppets move in different ways, so it helps to know a little bit about your particular type of puppet.

Hand puppets

Most hand puppets have a tube-shaped body that's simple to costume, but (on the other hand) can also present a real challenge. The shape (or lack thereof) works fine for t-shirts, but how can you make elegant outfits for a body that looks like a steam rolled salami?

Fortunately, there are some simple techniques that won't leave you (or your hand puppet) feeling flat.

- Use contrasting fabrics rather than one solid color to give the costume some depth and shape
- Create a waistline using a skirt (page 77), belt (page 113), or pants, even if your puppet doesn't have legs (page 96)
- If applicable, put the waistline higher up than it would be for a full-bodied puppet
- Use shaping on sleeves and skirt waists, like the gathering technique shown on page 22

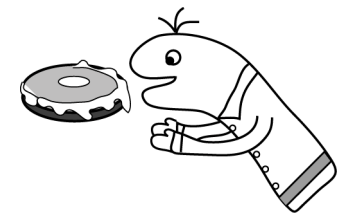


Perhaps most importantly, don't make the costume too tight fitting since this only emphasizes your puppet's flat figure. Both the hand puppet (Teddy) and the marionette (Ginger Sweets) on the covers of this book have flat, tube-shaped bodies, but as the pictures show, you can costume just about anything if you put your hands to it.

Although many hand puppets move mainly at the mouth, you need to make sure your puppet's arms can move freely as well. Don't be afraid to spend a lot of time in the "Sleeves" chapter until they fit just right.

Once you have the sleeves made, make sure to adjust the length (as on page 59) to allow for movement.

NOTE: For sock and other soft-bodied puppets, you may need to stuff the body before costuming so that your puppet's body becomes approximately the same size as when your arm is inside.

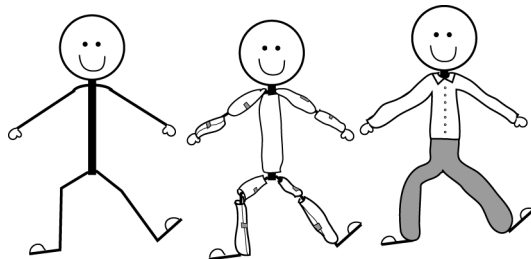


Marionettes

Some marionettes have extremely shapely figures while others have loosely connected stick-like bodies that provide very little shape at all. For shapely puppets, you either need to make your costumes very loose or shape them up by following the directions in the “Easy pattern making” chapter.

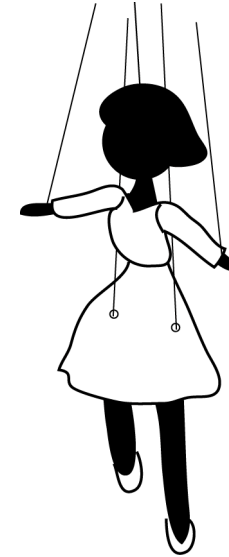


For stickly marionettes, you may want to wrap your puppet with a few layers of paper towels before costuming to help you make the clothes fit more loosely. (Make sure to leave the joints uncovered so you can test your puppet’s movement.) This helps “flesh out” your puppet’s clothes and gives your puppet more room to move around.



No matter what type of marionette you have, you need to make sure that the strings can move freely since marionettes depend on a complete range of body movements for performance.

Many performers restring their marionettes after costuming, using a needle to poke the strings through the fabric. If that’s not practical for your puppet, you may need to make small holes in the costume for the strings to go through (using the hand made buttonhole technique from page 34). Make sure to position the holes for the “up” movements of the strings.



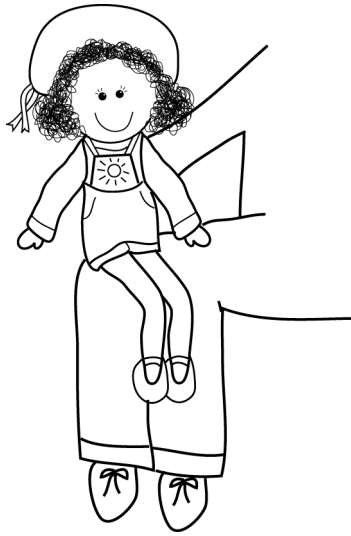
Rod puppets

Some rod puppets have a shape and movement similar to hand puppets, while others are more like marionettes. Take a look at both of the previous sections to see which parts apply to your rod puppet.



Ventriloquist characters

Since many ventriloquist characters have the same shape as hand puppets, they have many of the same costuming issues (see page 3). In general, ventriloquist characters move around a lot less than other puppets since they tend to stick close to their performers, but their costumes still need to allow them to be flexible, especially for arm movement.



Finger puppets

Many finger puppets are so small and so simple they may best be costumed with pieces of felt and glue. For others, the techniques in this book may work just fine, but you'll have to be awfully good at making tiny seams!



Shadow puppets

I would say most of the techniques in this book don't apply to shadow puppets at all (since they're usually cut from cardboard, wood, or leather), but I'm sure you could make them work if you really wanted to...



Dolls & stuffed animals

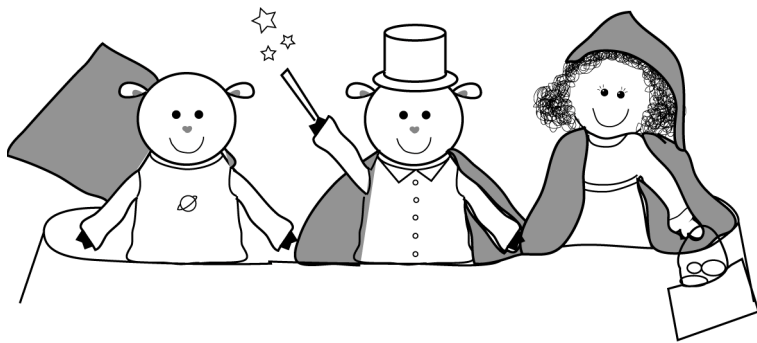
Dolls are not puppets. Puppets are not dolls. But both can be characters, and you can use a lot of the same techniques to costume just about anything. Unlike puppets, most dolls don't "work for a living" by putting on shows, but "play" dolls can get just as much hard use and require just as much flexibility.



Types of theatres

Your costuming needs depend not only on what kind of puppets you have, but on what kind of performance group you belong to.

In a puppet ministry, for example, you may have one or two full productions a year and spend the rest of the time putting on small skits. You need a collection of various wardrobe essentials that you can throw together at a moment's notice. When you make a costume, try to think of ways to make the parts more versatile, like leaving the blouse and skirt separate or finishing the outfit with a hat (see page 101). If you look at the covers of this book, you can see that many of the pants, capes, shirts, suits and even dresses are reused for more than one outfit. (See the "Cover story" on page 118 for details.)



If you belong to a professional theatre or traveling troupe, you need to look not only at the individual costumes, but at the wardrobe as a whole. Do the costumes complement each other or help distinguish one character from another? Although you may be concentrating on one show at a time, it's always nice to be able to reuse (parts of) costumes for later shows.

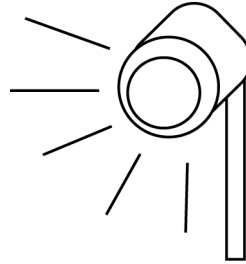


In a solo act (like many ventriloquists have), your puppets may not need a lot of different outfits, but their costumes need to suit their personalities exactly since costumes help create their character.

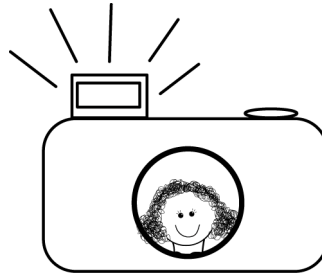
No matter what kind of theatre you work in or what kind of puppet you have, you need to make sure that your puppets are well covered for performances. See page 109 for details.

On stage

Unless you perform in television or video, your puppet costumes will probably be seen from at least several feet away, possibly under bright lights. This has a big impact on how you need to make and decorate them. I've seen costumes that look downright hideous when viewed close up, yet give just the right sparkle on stage.

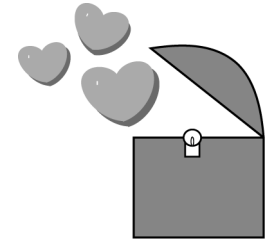


In the ideal setup, you'd be able to test your costumes in the actual stage and lighting you're going to use for performance. In the real world, that's not always possible. One trick I've learned from making the covers of this book is to take snapshots. The flash of a camera can mimic the bright lights and distance of a stage, and this helps you see if your costume's fine details might get lost during performances. You might even say this helps you adjust your costumes until they're picture perfect...

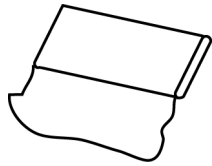


Caring for your costumes

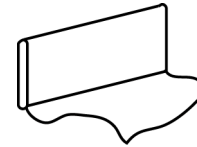
I know it's tempting to just toss everything in a heap after a gruelling performance, but after all the hard work you put into your puppet costumes, it's nice to be able to use them over and over again. You should be able to machine wash most costumes unless you've done a lot of hand sewing (like beadwork) or used delicate fabrics. Any costume worthy of the name should be able to tolerate gentle hand washing.



To store costumes, the plastic zipper bags that blankets and sheets come in (or even large ziplock bags) work very well since they keep dust and must out and all the pieces in. Just make sure the costumes are nicely folded (to prevent awkward wrinkles) and all the fasteners are closed (so they don't snag on things and tear off). If you pack your costumes in a trunk or cabinet, put the items that don't handle squashing well (like hats) on top. A little TLC and your costumes can last for years of performances.



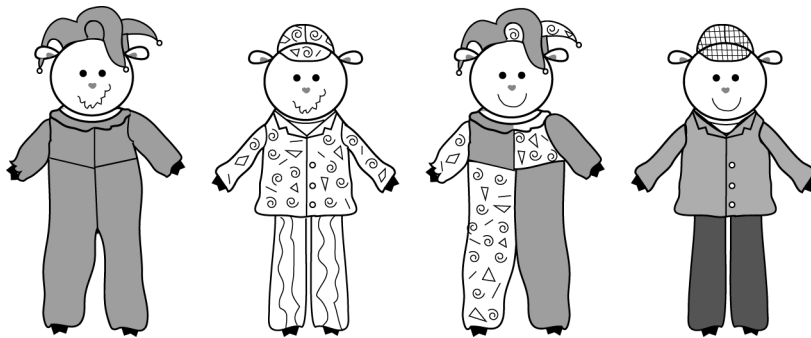
Choosing fabric



The most important choice

Take a closer look at the costumes on the covers of this book and you can see that many of them are pretty much the same except for the fabric. In the Wizard of Oz scene on the back cover, for instance, the Scarecrow, Tin Woodsman, and Cowardly Lion outfits all came from the same basic pattern (except for the hats), yet their overall appearance is strikingly different. You really don't need a lot of pattern styles to achieve variety since fabrics can do that for you.

Even more importantly, the kind of fabric you choose helps bring out the character you want to create. Imagine a jester dressed in all plain brown fabric, or a detective coat in wild, dazzling colors. Would anybody recognize them? Matching characters and fabric is undeniably one of the most important costuming tasks.



Can you guess?

What material is the white ruffled skirt of the Bo Peep, Ginger Rogers, bridal, and princess costumes made out of? Dryer sheets! That's right, over 150 used dryer sheets sewn together. (And that's not even counting the sleeves and hats.)

Even though used dryer sheets aren't usually considered fabric, they are surprisingly easy to work with and *very* light weight. (Always a consideration when your arm has to hold that costume up!) How's that for getting something out of nothing?



What to look for

To help you pick out the right fabrics for your costumes, I've boiled down what I consider to be the key factors when choosing fabric.

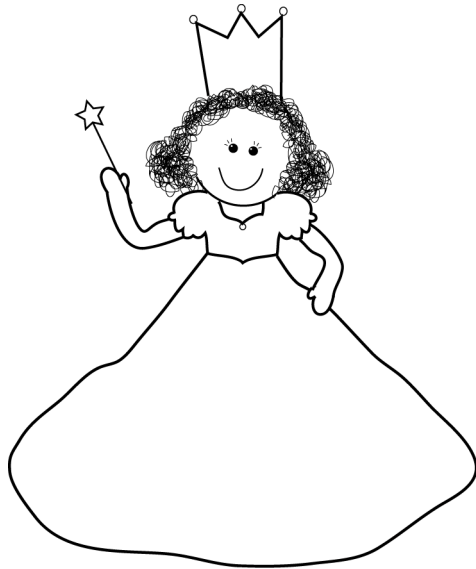
1. **Color & pattern** — look for colors that complement your puppet's skin and hair tones, yet contrast enough to be seen from a distance. (You can even take your puppets to the fabric store to help you pick out!) The colors you use should also complement your puppet's personality and character. Soft pastels work well for milder characters (like the Bo Peep and Dutch girl outfits on the front cover), while flashy or vivid colors work better for others.



You can also decide whether you want fabric with a preprinted pattern (like the tiger stripes and disco print on the inside front cover). Watch out for patterns that have to be carefully lined up (such as pronounced stripes) or are so large they look odd when cut into puppet-sized clothes (see page 46). A small, random pattern is usually the easiest kind to work with.

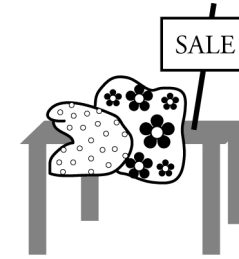
2. **Thickness** — if your hand shows through the fabric when you hold it up to the light, it may be too thin for a costume, particularly if it's light colored and your puppet has dark skin. (This is often a problem with very cheap cottons and with sheer, fancy fabrics.) At the same time, try to avoid fabric that's exceptionally bulky (like sweatshirt material or polar fleece) unless bulk is what the costume calls for, since these can be difficult to work with and often add unnecessary weight to the costume.
3. **Readiness to ravel & wrinkle** — few fabrics are more frustrating to work with than those that fall apart or wad themselves up before you even try to sew them. Look carefully at the cut edge of the fabric to check for signs of raveling and loose strings. Almost all fabrics ravel a bit, but if a fabric looks as if it's rapidly growing its own hair, steer clear. To test for wrinkling problems, try squeezing a fistful of fabric in your hand and then letting go.
4. **Shine** — many costumes, from princess robes and ball gowns to Tin Woodsman outfits and suits of armor, depend on catching the light during a performance. If you can, try to consider what kind of lighting your costume might be subjected to when choosing shiny fabric.

5. **Swooshiness** — if you are making a long, full robe or skirt, try unrolling a bit of fabric and holding it up to see how it hangs. Some fabrics are naturally stiffer than others and insist on making awkward points rather than soft folds. Others drape down beautifully. This isn't a concern for many costume parts (like close-fitting shirts), but can make or break the dramatic effect of a wide ballroom gown.



6. **Stretchiness** — a useful quality for making pullover shirts and human-hands sleeves. Very stretchy fabrics usually require some kind of interfacing along the seams (see page 23).

7. **Price** — even if most of your fabric comes from sale tables or neighbor's scraps (as mine does to this day), you can still pick the right fabric for the costume if you consider the other factors. At the same time, I strongly caution against making a decision based solely on price, since I have (on several occasions) ended up making the same costume *twice* when the first fabric didn't hold out.



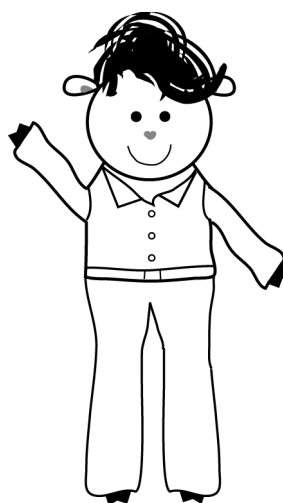
Types to choose from

Since fabrics masquerade under many different labels, it's always a good idea to look at the end of the bolt to see exactly what kind of fiber a fabric comes from.

Many of the most familiar fabrics (including calico, corduroy, gingham, felt, fleece, seersucker, muslin, denim, velvet, and velour) come from cotton, while many others (satin, jacquard, taffeta, and chiffon) are usually made from polyester. Understanding the available materials can help you predict how the fabric will work for your costume.

✂ **Cotton** — cotton fabrics are generally easy to work with, come in a wide variety of colors and patterns (calicos often work well), are readily available, and usually not too expensive. On the down side, some cotton fabrics wrinkle or ravel too much, or are simply too thin. To avoid this, you can try cotton-polyester blends, which often provide the best of both fabrics.

✂ **Polyester** — if you immediately think leisure suits, take a look in your local fabric store and think again. Polyester comes in an incredible variety of styles, colors, textures, and brilliance. Some costumers despise synthetics as second-class, but for those who want fabulous results on budget, polyester can't be beat. Because polyester fiber creates a lot of different kinds of fabric, each behaves in its own special way. Most are exceptionally easy to work with (since they tend to lie flat and don't ravel much), but be sure to apply the fabric tests described earlier in this chapter before picking one out.



✂ **Nylon** — notorious for its role in stockings and panty hose, nylon also works for capes, raincoats, and other slick clothing. Since nylon that's not "rip-stop" tends to ravel horrendously, polyester-nylon blends can make good substitutes.

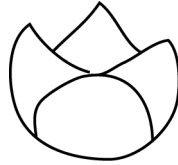


✂ **Rayon** — I have been quite wary of using rayon ever since the day I wore a knee-length rayon skirt to an interview and it wrinkled so badly I had to wear a coat all day to keep my underwear from showing. At any rate, I highly recommend squeezing a fistful or two to examine for wrinkling before buying.

✂ **Muslin** — a coarse, whitish cotton cloth used mainly for making patterns, trial runs, dolls, and quilt backings, muslin has a reputation for being cheap (and that's why people use it). But don't ignore the regular cottons and cotton-poly blends—you can often find something of finer quality (and in more color choices) that's just as inexpensive.

✂ **Stretch-knits** — can be made of many fabrics but usually come from cotton. You can easily identify them by seeing how much they stretch. For tips on working with stretchy fabrics, see page 23.

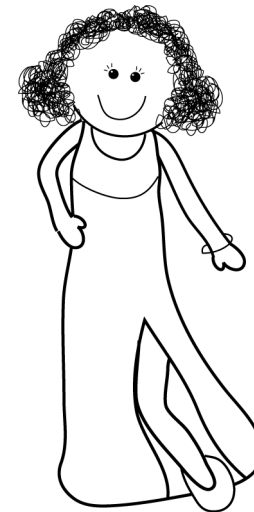
- ✂ **Felt & flannel** — if you need a fabric that never ravel, felt or flannel may be a good choice. Flannel works better for clothing (because of its softness), while felt's stiffness makes it excellent for hats.



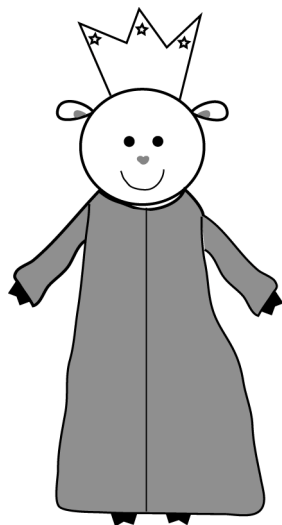
- ✂ **Fleece & polar fleece** — non-raveling but often bulky, these work well for soft, fuzzy costumes.
- ✂ **Fake fur** — when using fake fur, try to cut only the backing, not the fur. Some people do this with a razor blade; others work carefully with a scissors. Fake fur can be great for trimming muffs and winter coats, but may be too thick for an entire costume.
- ✂ **Satin** — if you ever see two fabrics you like, one marked satin and one marked polyester, don't be fooled. Most satin is made from polyester. (The really fine stuff comes from silk.) The word "satin," like many fabric terms, refers to the weaving method, not the type of material.
- ✂ **Acetate** — okay, not all satins come from polyester. Acetate ones don't usually iron quite as nicely, but they sew together just fine. Make sure to use a press cloth when ironing them (see page 20) since they tend to water-stain easily.

- ✂ **Jacquard** — a fancy term for satin (usually polyester) with a pattern woven into it.
- ✂ **Tissue lamé** — temptingly glitzy, fabulously shiny, dazzlingly colorful, and (to top it off) inexpensive. The downside? About half of it may ravel away to nothing before you get a chance to use it. (I even had one costume ravel apart right through the seams!) If you use lamé, buy a lot more than you'll think you need and leave extra seam allowance. There are creative ways to alleviate raveling (see "Special techniques for raveling fabrics" on page 23), but for your first few projects, you should definitely try something less troublesome.

- ✂ **Silk** — I don't think I've ever actually used silk, but you might try it if you have a special project in mind. Just be sure to use an extra fine needle in your sewing machine—some silks are so fine they must be sewn by hand. (You might also need extra delicate silk pins.) If silk's not in your budget, look for a good polyester satin. They can be just as shiny and smooth, but with a significantly smaller price tag!

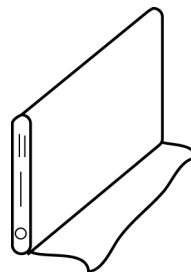


- ✂ **Velvet & velour** — thick and luxurious looking, these cotton fabrics work great for royal robes, dresses, and even stage curtains. Velour is often cheaper and easier to work with than velvet, and a close cousin, panaleur, outshines them both.



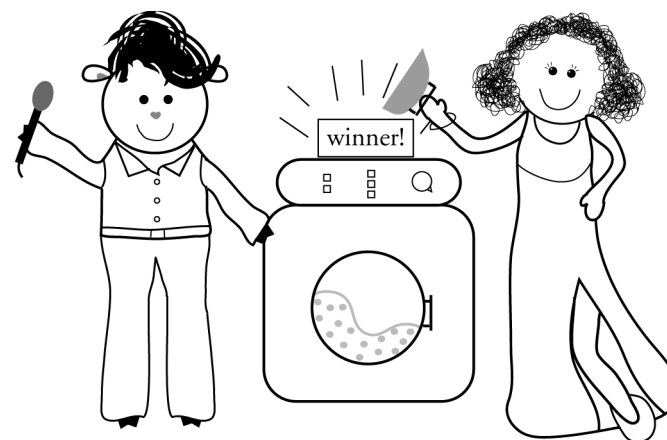
More on buying fabric

Most fabric is sold by the yard (or eighths of a yard) from large cardboard bolts 44-45” or 60” wide. Check the end of the bolt for important information like the fabric type, price, and any special washing instructions. (You probably want to avoid the “dry clean only” ones.)



Make sure to check out the remnant or discount tables too. Since most puppets are smaller than people, you don’t usually need a lot of fabric to costume them. When fabric stores have leftover pieces of fabric that aren’t much use for human clothes, they usually sell them at very decent markdowns. Make sure to ask for a further discount if the fabric is damaged. You can usually cut around small holes and imperfections, but major defects are never a bargain.

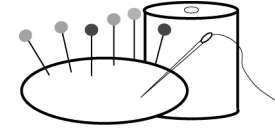
Once you get your fabric home, it’s a good idea to wash and dry it before you start using it, since fabrics may shrink or bleed the first time. If necessary, trim off any raveling threads and iron the fabric using the guidelines on page 20.



For tips on using your fabric, see the “Cutting out fabric” section on page 45.



Basic sewing steps



You can sew (and still have fingers left!)

You don't need to sew perfectly to create great costumes, but it sure helps to know the basics. If you haven't done much sewing before, don't worry! This chapter can help you get started.

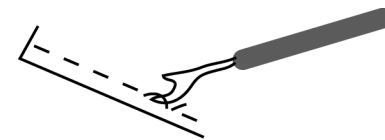
Essential equipment

Although you can sew with just a needle and thread, I highly recommend having access to tools like these:

- ✧ Seam ripper (an absolute *must* for removing stray stitches and icky seams)
- ✧ Measuring tape (the soft, flexible kind works best)
- ✧ Sharp scissors, preferably used only for sewing (paper dulls scissors rapidly)
- ✧ Straight pins, small to medium sized
- ✧ Sturdy thread (very cheap thread tends to break and jam your machine)

Words to know

- ✧ **right side** — your fabric's best looking side
- ✧ **seam allowance** — distance between seam and edge of fabric (usually 1/4")
- ✧ **presser foot** — part of sewing machine that holds fabric in place while the "feed dogs" pull it through (must be lowered in order to sew)
- ✧ **seam ripper** — the most important sewing tool!



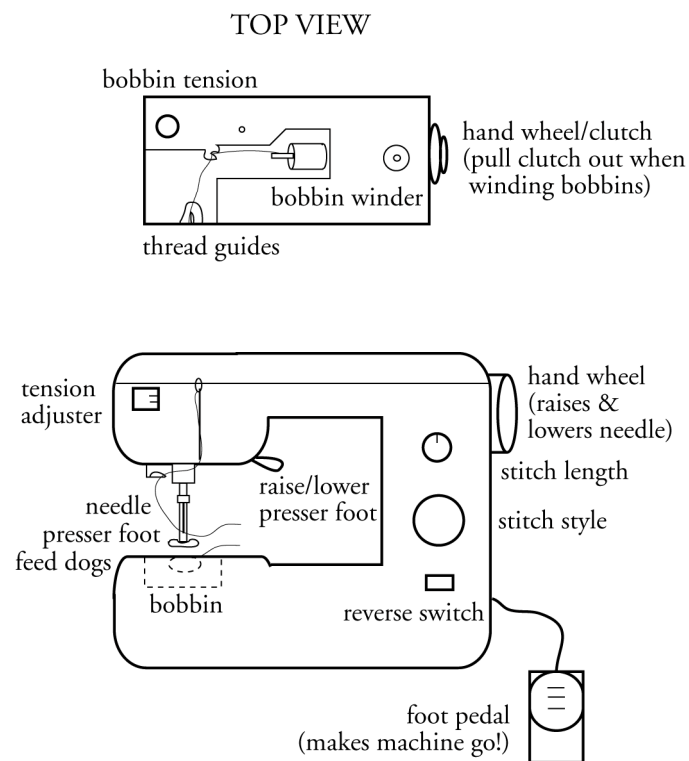
- ✂ Cardboard measuring mat (not absolutely essential, but very handy)
- ✂ Iron (and a place to iron—you can buy very small ironing boards that work on any flat surface)
- ✂ Sewing machine (as discussed below)

Sewing machines

Unless you're an expert handsewer, I recommend getting a sewing machine. They're fast, they do a good job, and they're easy to use. You don't need anything fancy—as long as it does straight stitching of adjustable lengths and runs decently, it'll do. Decorative stitches and zig-zags can be useful but they're not necessary. Many sewing machine stores sell inexpensive used models, and you can always trade up if you ever want a better machine. Be careful, however, about getting a machine that betrays you at every other stitch. The machine should run smoothly and without jamming, producing steady, even stitches. Run a test scrap and scrutinize the stitches carefully to make sure they're all the same length.



Since every machine is different, you need to check the manual to see how to wind bobbins and thread it. Most machines have a veritable gauntlet of gadgets (mine has seven) the thread must pass through before reaching the needle. If yours doesn't come with a manual and you've gotten tangled up trying, ask the people where you bought it or the people at your local fabric store for help.



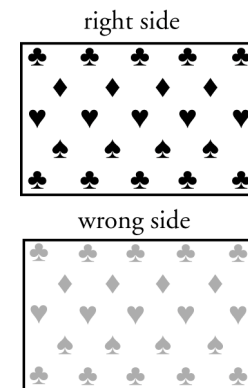
When your machine wants to quit working before you do

- ✂ Rethread the machine completely (top and bottom)
- ✂ Look for anything in the bobbin area that may be jamming things up. Broken needles, pins, and even lint build-up can prevent smooth operation. (Because of this, try to avoid sewing over pins whenever you can.) Then rethread the machine.
- ✂ Replace the needle and rethread the machine

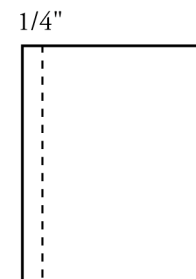
If all else fails, start looking for repair shops. (I can usually get my 10-year-old machine to behave just by waving a trade-in coupon in front of it a few times.) A reputable, friendly repair shop is an absolutely invaluable resource (if you have the good fortune to find one). Did I mention you should rethread the machine?

IMPORTANT first steps

As a general rule, you need to sew your fabric *right sides together*. The right side is the one you want facing out when the costume is finished. It's usually brighter, shinier, more finely printed, or just plain better looking than its opposite, the wrong side. (If try as you may, you can't tell the difference between sides, you're probably pretty safe in assuming it doesn't matter for that particular fabric.) By sewing fabric right sides together, you can turn the pieces right side out when you're done sewing, leaving the stitching and untidy ends inside the costume where they won't show.



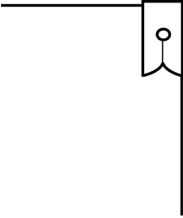
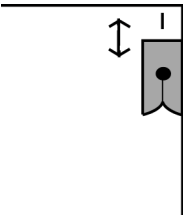
The distance between the stitches and the edge of the fabric is called seam allowance. One fourth of an inch (1/4") is the standard seam allowance for all the costumes in this book, and for most small costumes in general (5/8" is standard for human-sized clothes). This not only affects how far from the edge you sew, but the way you cut your fabric. You always need to make sure each of your costume pieces includes an extra 1/4" all the way around to get eaten up by the seam allowance. Having a sufficient amount of seam allowance is critical to the longevity of your costumes, since seams sewn too close to the edge are not only difficult to create, but liable to come apart at the most inconvenient moments.



Last of all, there's very little sewing that can't be redone. Keep your seam ripper handy and try it again (and again). So watch your fingers and start stitching!

Start stitching!

Since straight seams are the easiest to sew...

1. Get a fabric scrap (or a paper towel) and fold it in half right sides together.
2. Place your scrap in the machine so that the unfolded edges line up with the edge of the presser foot (this creates approximately 1/4" seam allowance). 
3. Turn the wheel on the side of your machine towards you to lower the needle into the scrap.
4. Next, put the presser foot down (there's usually a little lever for this). The presser foot must be down whenever you stitch. This allows the material to automatically feed through evenly—you should never have to push it. You only need to gently guide it through.
5. Press the foot pedal to stitch forward a few stitches, then stop.
6. Press the "reverse" level or button to stitch backwards a few stitches. This is the machine equivalent of tying a knot and will hold your stitches in place. 

Key to illustrations

✂ foot up, needle up



✂ foot up, needle down



✂ foot down, needle up

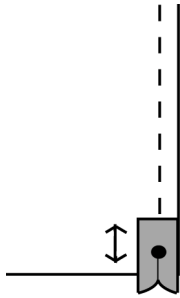


✂ foot down, needle down

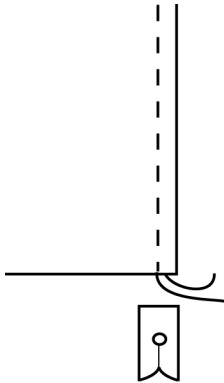


Some machines come with several changeable feet, each with a different purpose. A zipper foot is one of the most common (and most useful)! I still don't know what most of the feet on my machine are for, so don't worry if you don't have a lot of them.

7. Continue stitching forward until you get to the end of the fabric. Reverse for a few stitches again, then stitch forward off the end of the fabric.



8. Raise the needle to its highest position. This prevents it from becoming unthreaded.
9. Raise the presser foot and remove the fabric from your machine.



10. Cut off the extra threads hanging from the fabric so they don't get in the way later.

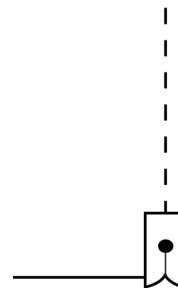
You did it! Look at that lovely seam! Turn your scrap right side out to admire it fully. If you can do that (plus a few more tricks explained shortly), you can sew the costumes in this book!

If your seams don't come out right (and this happens to everyone, beginner or expert), you can always use a seam ripper to tear them out and try again. That's the beauty of sewing.

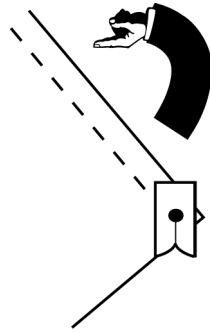
Up (and down) on the corner

Of course, you would have a difficult time costuming if you could only sew straight seams.

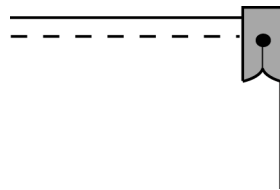
1. When you come within 1/4" of a sharp turn, lower the needle into the fabric, then raise the presser foot.



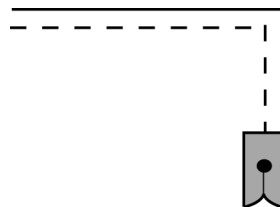
- Pivot the fabric to the left. Since you have the needle lowered, you won't lose your place in the stitching.



- Line the fabric up with the edge of the presser foot again, then lower the presser foot.



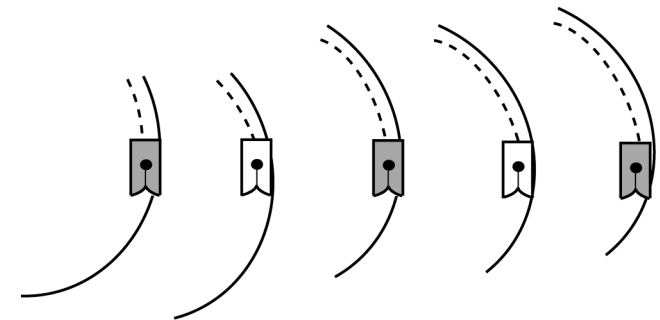
- Continue stitching merrily as usual!



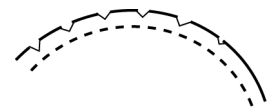
Rounding curves

Approach curves *slowly* and watch your fingers. For gentle curves, that's all the advice you need. For more rambunctious curves, you need to make lots of little stops and pivots (not huge changes in direction). (You may also want to shorten the stitch length.)

Whenever you feel the fabric becoming hard to steer, lower the needle, raise the foot, pivot the fabric just a little, then lower the presser foot again and continue sewing. Keep repeating this until you're back on the straight away.



Once you've completed your curved seam, you may need to snip the seam allowance here and there to make the costume easier to turn right side out (just be careful not to snip the seam...)



How hot?

Generally speaking, synthetic fabrics (like nylons and polyesters) don't tolerate heat as well as fabrics made from natural fibers (like linens, cottons, and silks).

Most irons these days come marked according to types of fabric rather than temperature, but if you're not sure which setting to use, try ironing a scrap of the fabric first. If you can get a nice crease without scorching the fabric, it's just right. Wait for the iron to get hot before you start pressing!

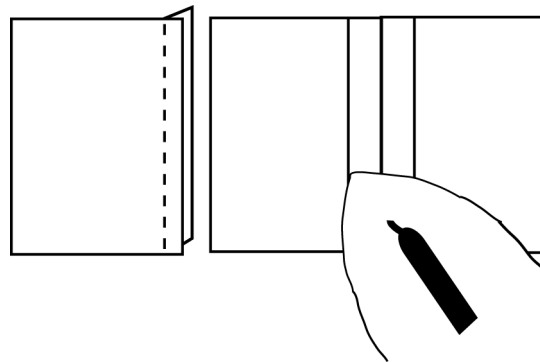


Pressing matters

Once you've sewn your seams, it's generally a good idea to iron them flat (but please don't try it with a paper towel, okay?) This helps the costume look and hang dramatically better. Some people like to iron their seam allowance to one side; others insist you must spread the seam open and iron it flat. Some fabrics naturally iron better than others, so my advice is do whatever your fabric wants to do. If it wants to lay to one side, iron it to that side. If it doesn't mind being ironed open, iron it open.

Beyond that, the key to good ironing (and good costuming) is to iron early and iron often. Don't wait until you've finished the costume. Instead, iron each seam or part that needs ironing as you go.

For many fabrics, you may need to spritz the costume with a bit of water from a spray bottle to get it completely smooth. For delicate fabrics, you can put a damp press cloth (like a cotton handkerchief) on top of the fabric to protect it from heat and water stains.

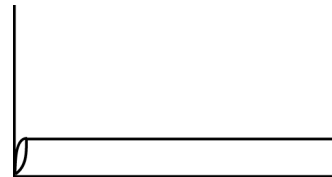
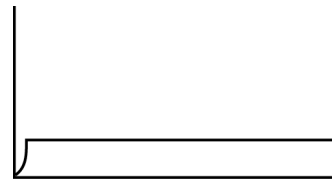


Hemming

Hems give edges (like necklines and the ends of sleeves and pant legs) a smooth, completed appearance. They also keep the fabric from raveling.

To make a hem:


1. Turn the edge under 1/4" (toward the inside of the costume). For curved edges, you may need to snip the fabric here and there as on page 19.
2. Iron the turned-under edge flat.
3. Turn the edge under another 1/4" (this encases the ends of the fabric and keeps them from raveling) and iron again if necessary.
4. Pin the folded-under edge to the fabric to hold it in place. Remove the pins as you stitch along the edge.




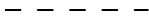
NOTE: For a softer hem, you may want to stitch the edge by hand using the whip stitch from page 26. To keep the stitches from showing on the outside, carefully poke the needle through just a few threads of fabric.

In stitches

For most sewing, a medium length straight stitch works best. If you use special stitch, set your machine back to normal as soon as you're done so you won't surprise yourself the next time you sew.

✂ **Zig-zag** 
 These can slow down raveling along the edges of seams (see page 23).

✂ **Decorative** 
 Nice, but not necessary. I like to use scallop stitches for decorative hems.

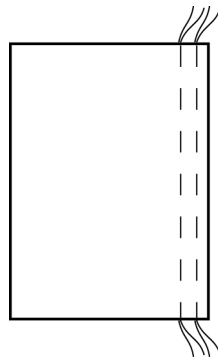
✂ **Basting** 
 A longer length straight stitch, basting is faster and easier to tear out than normal stitching. You may want to baste tricky seams first. If it works well with basting, then stitch it! Basting can also create gathering (see page 22).

It takes two threads to have a gathering

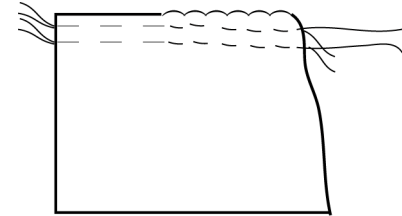
Gathering works great for creating fullness in sleeves, skirts, hats...just about anything that needs a bit of ruffle. It does, however, require extra fabric, and that means planning ahead. For light gathering, you need about 1.5 times more fabric than usual, while full, ruffly gathers take 2-3 times more.

You also need at least 1/2" in seam allowance (that's double the usual amount) since you need to sew two seams for each row of gathering. Gathering with a single thread causes uneven, difficult to manage bunches of fabric and makes the thread liable to break. (Try it on a scrap and see.) To create strong gathers:

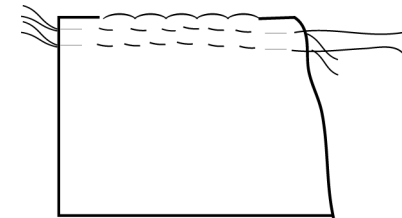
1. Set the stitch length on your machine to the longest length possible. (This creates "basting.")
2. Stitch along the edge of the fabric 1/4" from the edge. (Since you need to grab hold of the end threads, don't cut them off until you're completely finished with them.)
3. Stitch a second row of basting 1/4" from the first.



4. Grasp the top thread from one end of each row and pull *gently*. This causes the fabric to gather.



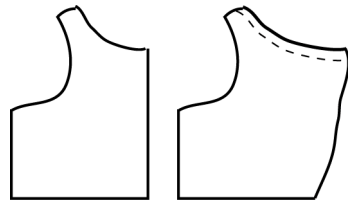
5. Gently spread the gathers to the other end of the fabric by pinching and pulling them with your fingers, then continue pulling on the threads. (You may want to gather from both sides of the fabric to prevent the threads from pulling out.)
6. Once your fabric has enough gathers, use your fingers to spread the gathers out as evenly as possible.



It's generally easier to overgather the fabric at first, then loosen the gathers (by spreading them out with your fingers) as you fit them to the costume. Once you have your gathers just the way you want them, you can stitch over them with a normal length stitch to help hold them in place. (Go slowly and hold onto the fabric firmly to keep the machine from pushing all your gathers out!)

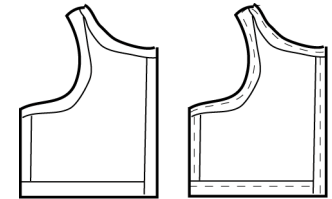
Special techniques for stretchy fabrics

Stretchy fabrics can be great for costumes since they usually ravel less than other fabrics and may even let you slip a simple costume on and off without using fasteners. However, some fabrics have so much stretch that you can't machine sew them without pulling them out of shape.



To fix this, you need a stabilizer. A stabilizer is a material that lends support to stretchy fabric. (It also works well for fabrics that are especially flimsy or delicate.) You can use any non-stretchy fabric (like a cotton, polyester, or cotton-poly blend) as a stabilizer, or you can use pre-packaged interfacing. The easiest kind to use is iron-on interfacing which, as its name suggests, has a special surface that sticks to fabric when heated with an iron. Just follow the directions on the package.

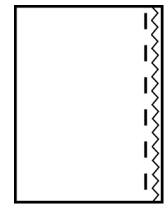
No matter what kind of stabilizer you choose, you need to attach a narrow strip of it to the *wrong side* (the side that won't show) along every edge of each stretchy costume piece. This doesn't require any extra seam allowance, but you do need to stitch (or iron) it on before you begin sewing the costume together.



Once the stabilizer is attached, you can sew the costume together as usual.

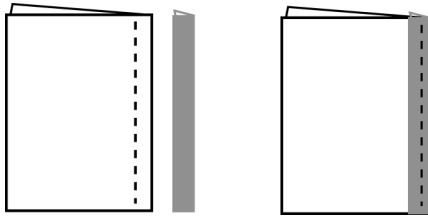
Special techniques for raveling fabrics

Even though it's a good idea to avoid raveling fabrics altogether, even seemingly well-behaved fabrics can become entirely different beasts after you get them home (especially after their first washing!)



One of the most common ways to slow raveling is to zig-zig stitch close to the edge of the fabric.

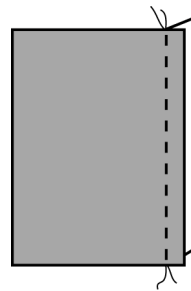
Alternatively, you can fold a piece of wide ribbon or a strip of non-raveling fabric over the seam allowance so the offending edges become enclosed. You can then stitch the ribbon onto the seam allowance. (Be careful to stitch to the right of the original seam, so the new stitches won't show on the outside of the costume.)



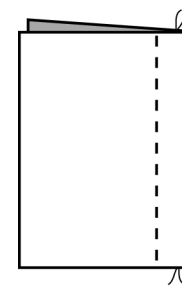
French seams

If you notice your fabric raveling but haven't actually started working with it yet, you may want to try "French seams." If you use this method, you need to *double* the seam allowance to 1/2" prior to cutting your fabric since each seam is actually two seams:

1. Place your fabric *wrong sides together* and stitch it together.



2. Turn your fabric *right sides together* and stitch the seam again, making sure that this seam is further to the left than the first seam. (This prevents the first seam from showing.)

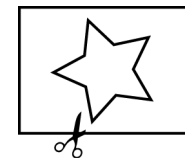


Now the seam is totally enclosed with no loose ends to ravel!

Easy appliqué

For some costumes, you may want to sew pieces of one fabric on top of another for a decorative or patchwork look, like that of the Supersheep, accordion player, fire fighter, and Scarecrow clothes on the covers of this book. You can use ready-made appliqué patches (like the flowers on the accordion player's lederhosen), or you can cut shapes from fabric:

1. Cut the shape you want from a piece of fabric that contrasts with the rest of the costume.



2. Place the shape on the costume. (If you want, you can use an iron-on product called fusible web—available in most fabric stores—to hold it in place, but this isn't really necessary.)

3. Zig-zag stitch around the edge of the shape to hold it in place and keep the edges from raveling. (If you don't have a zig-zag, you can use the whip stitch from page 26.) Be careful not to sew the costume shut!



Sewing by hand

Most of the costumes in this book can be done exclusively by machine (with your help, of course), but there are times when you may find sewing by hand quicker and easier, or perhaps even necessary.

A few of the most essential hand stitches include tacking, the whip stitch, and the backstitch. But before you can stitch, you need to start off.

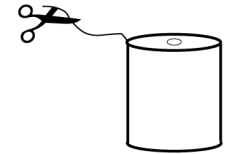
Start off

The key to hand sewing is to make small stitches that are as even as possible (and that takes practice!) To make things easier, try to find a medium sewing needle with a good sized eye.



When you cut your thread, make sure it's long enough to finish what you need to do but not so long that it becomes tangled and difficult to manage. To keep the thread from knotting, you can run it through a dryer sheet a few times before starting.

1. Find the end of the thread (it should be nested in a groove in the spool), and trim it off. This gets rid of any raveling or loose ends and makes threading the needle easier.



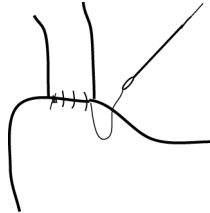
2. Poke the end of the thread through the eye of the needle.
3. Pull the thread through until you have a comfortable length of thread to work with, then tie a knot in the end of the threads. (Having two layers of thread makes the thread stronger and easier to tie off.)



You may have to tie several knots, one on top of the other, to make the knot large enough to not slip through the fabric. Then you're ready to stitch!

Tacking

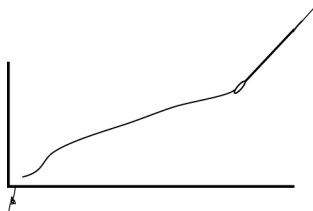
Tacking is any sort of casual stitch that holds small areas fabric in place, sort of like a soft, permanent safety pin. The whip stitch (shown below) works well for this.



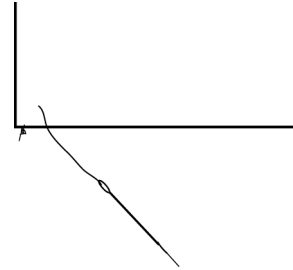
Whip stitch

Unlike many other stitches, the whip stitch curls around the edge of the fabric. It's quick and easy to do, and works well for seams that don't need a huge amount of strength. (For seams that need to take a lot of strain and abuse, I recommend the backstitch.)

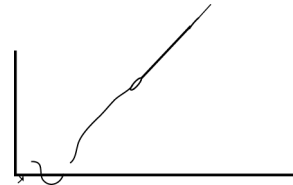
1. Once you've threaded the needle and knotted the thread (as directed on page 25), poke the needle through the underside of the fabric. Pull gently until the knot becomes snug against the fabric.



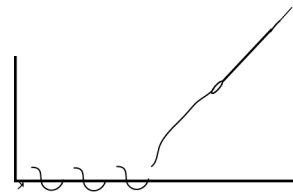
2. Bring the needle toward you, over the edge of the fabric.



3. Poke the needle through the underside of the fabric again, not too far from the knot. (The further away you go, the larger the stitches will be. Large stitches go faster, but don't hold as well as many small ones.)



4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until you come to the end of the section you want to stitch (or start to run out of thread).

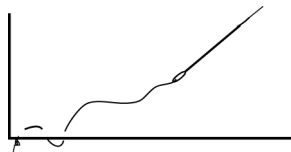
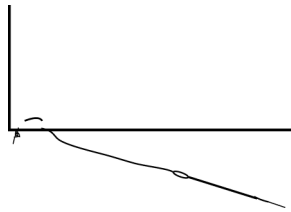


When you're ready to "Finish off," see page 28.

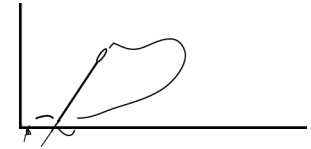
Backstitch

This classic stitch works great for holding fabric together—even large pieces that have to take a lot of strain.

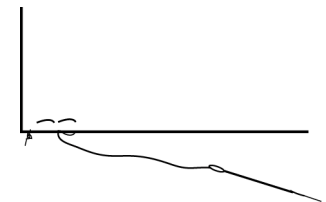
1. Once you've threaded the needle and knotted the thread (as directed on page 25), poke the needle through the underside of the fabric. Pull gently until the knot becomes snug against the fabric. Then poke the needle back down through the fabric a short distance away.
2. Poke the needle up through the fabric again, a short distance away from where you just came down. The shorter the distance, the smaller (and stronger) the stitches will be.



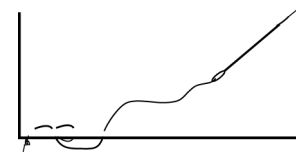
3. Put the needle down through the fabric in the same place that the first stitch ended and the second stitch started. (This “backward” stitch is what gives the backstitch its name and its strength.)



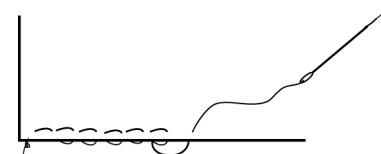
4. Pull the needle gently down through the fabric until the stitch becomes snug, but not so tight it strains the fabric.



5. Come up again where you want the next stitch to end.



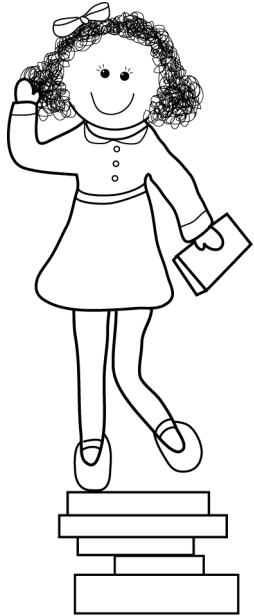
6. Repeat steps 3 and 4 until you've come to the end of the section you want to stitch, and you're ready to finish off! (See page 28.)



More sewing stuff

This chapter has just picked at the surface of basic sewing techniques. Most book stores offer a wealth of good multi-topic introductions, as well as in-depth information on more advanced styles and specialties.

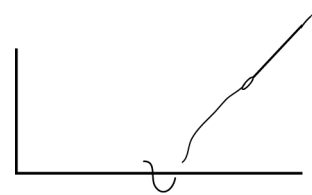
If you feel you need hands-on sewing help, you can find various levels of sewing classes at many fabric, craft, and sewing stores.



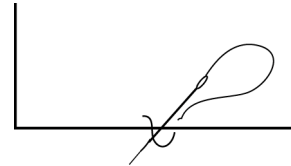
Finish off

Once you have your stitches completed, you need to tie another knot (or two) to hold them in place.

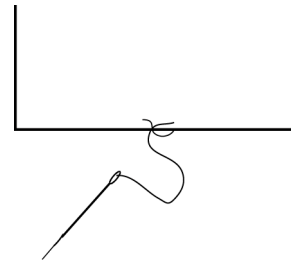
1. Poke the needle through the edge of the fabric to make a small loop.



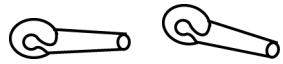
2. Put the needle through the loop.



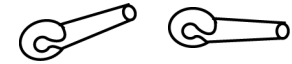
3. Pull gently until the loop closes up into a knot.



Repeat the knots as needed, and you're finished!



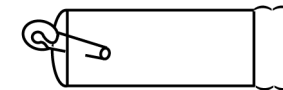
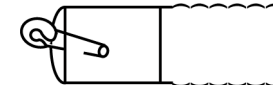
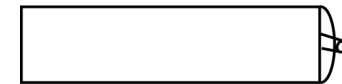
Nifty safety pin trick



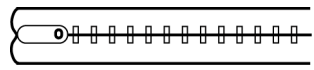
What's it for?

You can use the Nifty Safety Pin Trick whenever you need to turn a long, skinny tube of fabric (like a sleeve, strap, or waistband) right side out.

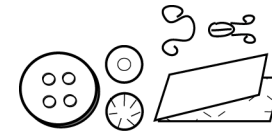
1. Stick the safety pin through one layer of the strap.
2. Push the safety pin head first into the strap (it's not as violent as it sounds).
3. Push the pin forward while pulling the material towards the pin so that the material bunches up and begins to go inside the strap.
4. Keep pushing and pulling until the safety pin comes out the other end.
5. Hold the material gently in one hand and pull the pin until all the material is right side out.
6. Remove the pin and you're done! Nifty, huh?



NOTE: For the best results, make sure to iron the fabric flat after you turn it!



Zippers, buttons, & more



What kind of fastener works best?

Unless you have a separate puppet for every costume, you probably want your puppets to be able to change their clothes. (Enter fasteners.) The kind of fastener you choose depends on the costume you're making, the performances it may be used in, and your personal preferences.

Major fastener types include:

- ✧ **Zippers** — the fastest, smoothest, and quietest way I know to get puppets in and out of their costumes easily and quickly. (This is especially important if you ever have to change your puppet's costume between scenes.) The only thing they aren't good for is very small openings.
- ✧ **Buttons** — great for any size opening (and decorative too!) If your puppet needs to make a quick costume change, however, you may want to consider installing a zipper or velcro in the back and using buttons for decoration only.
- ✧ **Snaps** — suitable for any size opening and fairly easy to conceal.
- ✧ **Hooks & eyes** — good for very small openings, but liable to come apart if the costume is too loose.
- ✧ **Velcro** — although quick and easy to install and to open and close, velcro has a tendency to snag on puppet hair, fuzzy cloth faces, shaggy carpet, loose threads, and anything else it can get its teeth into. It can also be loud. If you use velcro, make sure to get the sew-on kind since the gummy backed kind falls off far too easily.



IMPORTANT first step!

Unless the edges of your costume are already hemmed (like lined suits and vests), you need to make sure the costume fits your puppet before you begin installing any fasteners. Leave enough extra material along the opening to allow room for hems and fasteners (see chart below) and to allow your puppet some “breathing” room. Then trim off any excess.

✂ **zippers** — 3/4”

✂ **buttons** — 1 1/2”

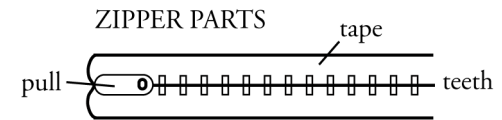
✂ **snaps** — 1 1/2”

✂ **hooks & eyes** — 1/2”

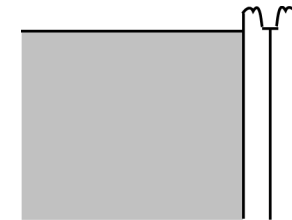
✂ **velcro** — 1/2-1 1/2” (see page 36)

If you're running short on room for hems and fasteners, you can make the hems smaller than normal by only turning the fabric under 1/4”, or even 1/8”. You can also try fasteners that don't need the opening to overlap, like hooks & eyes (page 35) or velcro (page 36).

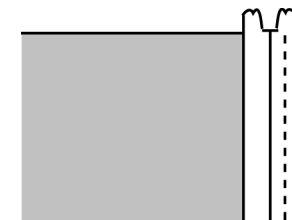
Put in a zipper



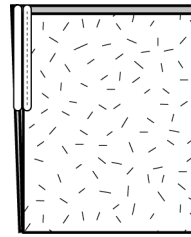
1. Place the zipper face down against the right side of the fabric, lining up the right edge of the zipper tape with the right edge of the fabric. The zipper pull should be just below the top of the costume opening.



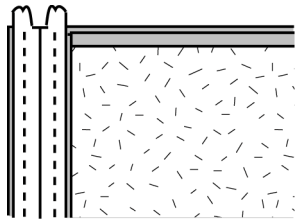
2. Stitch the zipper tape to the fabric. (If your sewing machine has a zipper foot, this is the time to use it.)



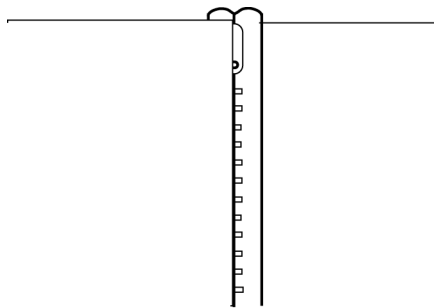
3. Fold the costume in half right sides together so the unsewn edge of the zipper lines up with the other side of the costume opening.



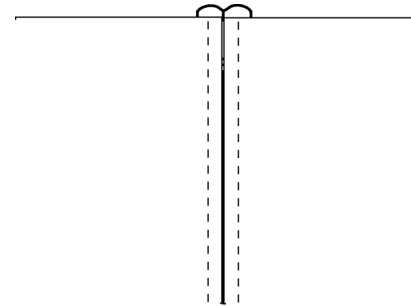
4. Stitch the other side of the zipper tape to the fabric.



5. Turn the fabric right side out and pull a little bit of material from either side of the costume towards the middle, making two flaps that just touch each other, covering the zipper. (I only drew one flap here for clarity of illustration.)

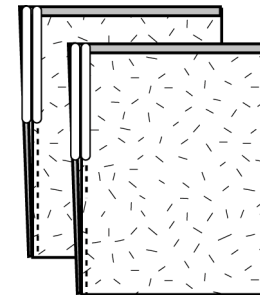


6. Stitch both flaps to the zipper tape.



7. Cut off any zipper tape that's sticking up above the costume.

8. Turn the outfit inside out and stitch the material below the zipper (right sides) together.

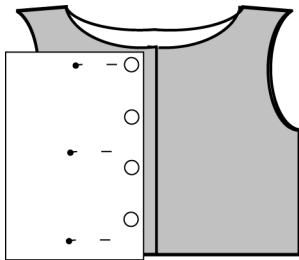
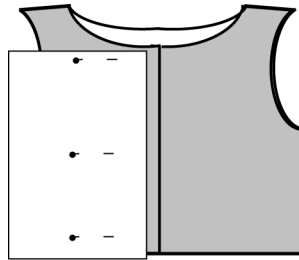


If you are making the costume for a hand puppet whose clothes are more than a few inches longer than its body, you may want to leave an open space in this seam so you can slide your hand into the puppet without hiking up its clothes (definitely the wrong kind of puppet show).

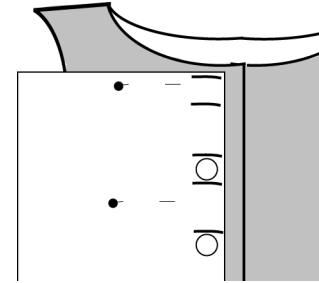
Buttons & buttonholes

Before you can make buttonholes, you need to decide where to put them. Some people like to mark the buttonholes directly on the fabric (using pencil or dressmaker's chalk), but I prefer to use paper towels.

1. First, pin a piece of paper towel to the fabric right next to where you want the buttonholes.
2. Lay the buttons out on the paper towel. (How many you use depends on the costume style and size.)
3. Arrange the buttons in a straight line, as evenly spaced as possible. Once you've got it right by "eyeing it," you can measure to make sure.



4. With a felt or ballpoint pen, draw a line on the paper towel at the top and bottom of each button to mark its place. Once you have the buttonholes marked, you can remove the buttons, but leave the paper towel pinned to the fabric.



Get ready for the buttonholes

Before you can put buttonholes in your puppet's costume, you need to follow the "IMPORTANT first step!" on page 31 and hem both sides of the opening using the technique from page 21. For crisper, neater buttonholes, you can add a stabilizer to the underside of the opening that will have the buttonholes. I recommend iron-on interfacing (available at most fabric stores).

NOTE: Since buttonholes can be tricky at first, you might want to practice on scrap fabric first.

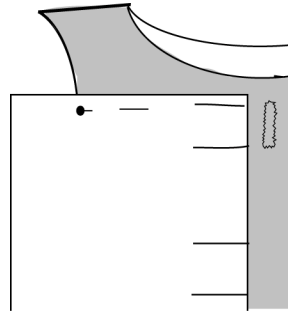
Sew the buttonholes

Each button hole has two parts—the hole itself, and the stitches that surround its edges. Without stitches to keep the fabric from tearing and raveling, the hole would just keep getting bigger until it could no longer hold the buttons in place.

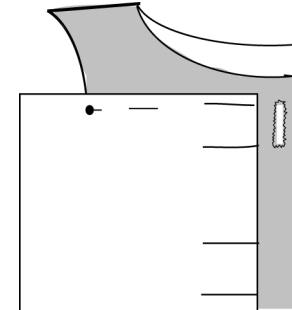
Some sewing machines have a special setting for making buttonholes. If yours does, follow the directions given in the manual. If your machine has a zig-zag stitch, you can also make buttonholes by machine. If not, you can make them by hand.

To sew the buttonholes by machine:

1. Set your machine to a *very short* zig-zag stitch. This usually means turning down the stitch length until the zig-zag is almost solid. (You may want to test various lengths on a scrap before you get started on the costume.)
2. Zig-zag stitch a rectangle next to each marking on the paper towel guide, no wider than the thickness of the button. (See page 18 for stitching techniques.)

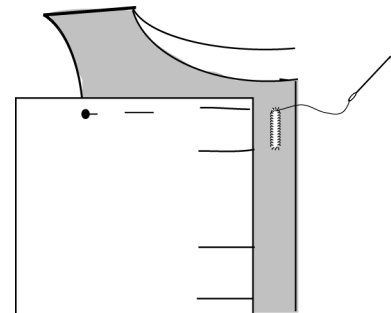


3. Slit open the buttonhole area using a sharp scissors or seam ripper. (Be careful not to tear the stitches!) I like to use a seam ripper to poke lots of holes in the buttonhole area first, since this makes the fabric much easier to slit.



To sew the buttonholes by hand:

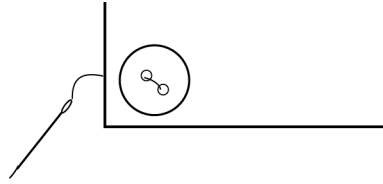
1. Make a slit next to each buttonhole mark, no wider than the thickness of the button.
2. Stitch around the edge of each hole using the “Whip stitch” from page 26, making the stitches as close together as possible.



Sew on the buttons

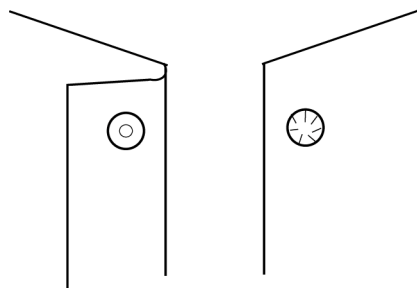
Before you sew the buttons on, make sure to line them up carefully with the buttonholes.

Buttons come in many different shapes, sizes, and styles, but you can sew them on in much the same way. Just make sure to stitch over the button at least 3 or 4 times to hold it in place.



It's a snap!

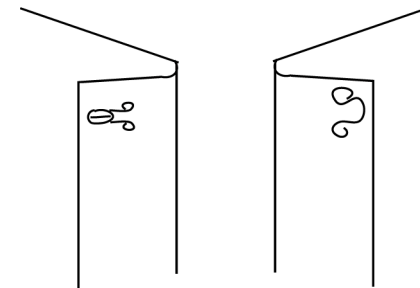
First, follow the "IMPORTANT first step!" on page 31 and hem the edges of the costume opening (see page 21). Then sew the snaps on (using the whip stitch from page 26) or buy a snap kit that allows you to bang them on with a hammer. Either way, make sure to position your snaps carefully so the two parts line up.



Hooks & eyes

Unlike many other fasteners, the two sides of the costume opening won't overlap when you use hooks & eyes. This makes them a good choice if your puppet's costume isn't wide enough for the opening to overlap. If you can, try to purchase locking hooks & eyes (the kind commonly used on brassieres) to make sure your puppet's costume doesn't accidentally come open.

After you follow the "IMPORTANT first step!" on page 31 and hem the edges of the costume opening (see page 21), make sure to place the hooks & eyes carefully. If the hook (curled piece) and eye (loop piece) are too far apart, the costume may bunch up in the middle when you hook them together. If they're too close, you may end up with a gap. In general, the end of each piece should be very close to the edge of the costume hem but not sticking out.

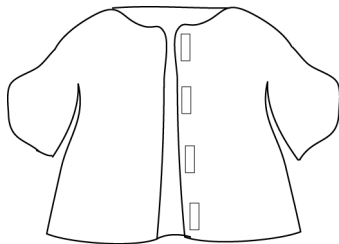


Velcro adventures

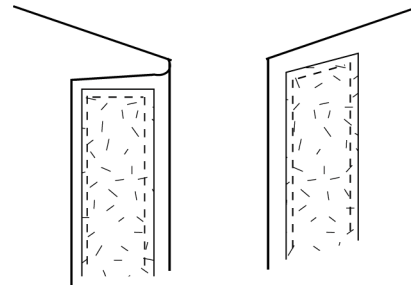
I've never found gummy-backed velcro very useful for costuming. It just doesn't stick well enough to take the constant use and abuse that puppet costumes go through. (I might add that trying to sew gummy-backed velcro can quickly ruin your needle or, worse, jam and damage your machine.)

The sew-on kind, however, works great. To install velcro, follow the "IMPORTANT first step!" on page 31 and hem the edges of the costume opening using the guidelines on page 21. Then place pieces of velcro on each side of the costume—one on the outside, the other on the underside.

You don't actually have to put a solid of piece of velcro all the way down the costume. A few strategically placed pieces can do just as well.

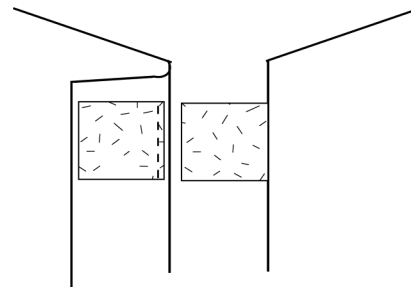


Once the velcro's in place, stitch around each piece.

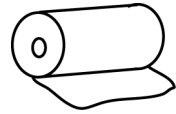


Unfortunately, the stitches do show on the outside of the costume when you sew on velcro this way. This might not be bad on the back of the costume, but it doesn't look so great on the front.

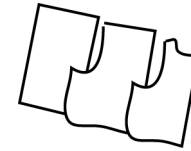
To avoid this, you can sew the velcro to the inside of the costume's hems. If you stitch only to the hem layer (and not to the costume itself), the stitching won't show.



This method isn't quite as sturdy as sewing the velcro on every side, but it works in a pinch. It's also great if the costume isn't big enough to make the opening overlap.



Easy pattern making



It *is* easy!

A lot of people think *all* pattern making must be hard. It's easy! All you need are some paper towels, your puppet, some scissors, and a little P&P (practice and patience). By actually shaping the pattern directly on your puppet (a technique called "draping"), you can see just what you need to do to make it fit right.

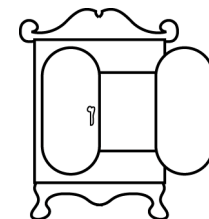
The two patterns shown in this chapter, the basic pattern front and (what else?) the basic pattern back, are essential for making many of the costumes in this book. In the chapters that follow, you can learn ways to modify the basic pattern pieces to create a wide variety of shirts, robes, vests, suits, coats, and dress tops. (And, as the "Choosing fabric" chapter explains, you can get a lot of variety out of each pattern just by using different types of fabric.)

I like to use paper towels for pattern making because they're more flexible than regular paper, more durable than tissue paper, and a lot cheaper than cloth. That way, you can experiment all you like without worrying about wasting fabric. And experimenting is the name of the game when it comes to pattern making!

Why not just buy patterns?

Try finding an 1820s ballgown pattern in size 2 toddler, and you'll immediately discover the problem. Besides the lack of styles, many puppets have a size, shape, or need for openings that just doesn't lend itself well to available patterns.

And since drastically altering an existing pattern is often harder than making one from scratch (trust me or try it yourself), get out those paper towels and give it a try! Basic pattern making is the door to a never-ending wardrobe.



Fitting room

Loose fitting clothing is always easier to make than very tight fitting clothing. This goes double for more shapely puppets (like many marionettes). If you're just getting started in costuming, it's a good idea to begin with fairly loose fitting costumes first. This adds to the style of the costume and, more importantly, gives your puppet room to move around without popping seams.

Fashion designers call this extra room "design ease." It also works as "fudge room," because no matter how carefully you plan and measure (or don't), it never comes out quite the way you think. The extra half an inch never hurts, and it's generally much easier to cut off extra than it is to add more.

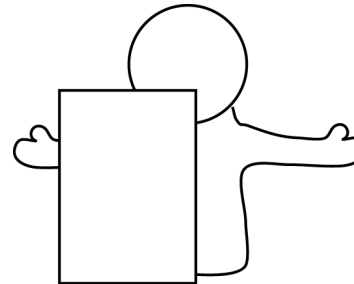
Get ready

If you have a hard-bodied puppet, you may want to cover it with an old nylon stocking first. That way, you can pin the pattern to the stocking as you work. For puppets who don't mind a little acupuncture (ouch!), you can pin the pattern directly to the puppet.

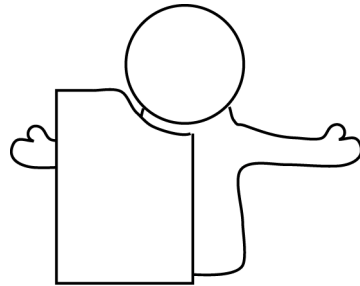
Basic pattern front

Lay your puppet on a flat surface, arms spread out. Or, if you are working with a marionette or other string puppet, hang the puppet up at a comfortable work level.

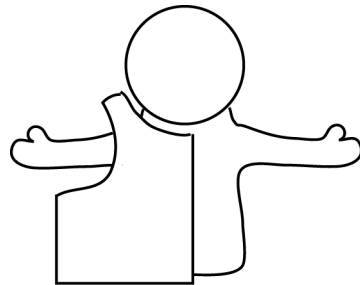
1. Place a paper towel (or two) on your puppet's body so the inside edge of the paper towel lies just past the center of your puppet's body (as shown below).
2. Make sure the top edge of the paper towel is high enough to fold over your puppet's shoulder, and the side edge can wrap around your puppet's side. (If you have your puppet upright, you may need a few pins to hold the paper towel in place.)



3. Being very careful not to cut your puppet (or yourself), cut a curved line just below your puppet's chin that extends from the side of the paper towel to the top. You've just created a neckline! Make sure the neckline is low enough not to interfere with the movement of your puppet's head, especially if your puppet has a moving mouth or jaw that drops.



4. Cut a second curved line to make an armhole, beginning at least an inch below your puppet's arm, making sure your puppet can move its arm freely.



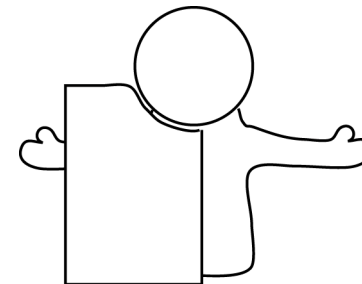
That's it! Once you've completed the back, you can work on fitting the front and back patterns together and shaping them to your puppet.

NOTE: After you've made your patterns, be sure to read the "Add seam allowance!" and "Cutting out fabric" sections at the end of this chapter. These contain crucial information about putting your patterns to work.

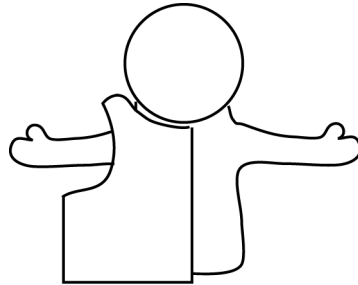
Basic pattern back

Making the basic pattern back is pretty much the same as making the front. In fact, you can use the front pattern as a guide to make sure the two patterns line up along the shoulders and armholes.

1. Lay your puppet face down on a flat surface, arms spread out (or suspend it from its strings), and place a paper towel on it in the same way as the front.
2. Cut a curved line below your puppet's head that extends from the side of the paper towel to the top of the paper towel. This line may be a little higher than in the front since you don't have to worry so much about head movement.



3. Cut a curved line to make an armhole that matches the one for the basic pattern front.



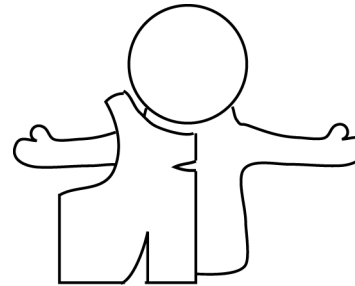
Shape up your patterns

If you're working with a relatively flat puppet (as many hand puppets are), you probably don't need to worry about shaping. Go ahead and skip on to the next section, "Fit the patterns to your puppet." If you have a more shapely puppet (like many marionettes), you need to make your pattern a little more shapely too. Here's how:

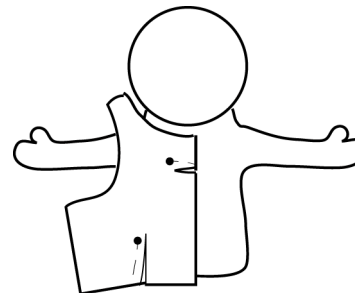
Darts. No, not that kind. These darts are little triangle-like pieces that you cut out of your pattern (and your fabric). By sewing together the edges of the opening (right sides together!), you create shape and dimension.

For most shapely puppets, the front of the pattern needs the most work. If you have a puppet with a large bustline, for example, you'll immediately see that most of the basic pattern front does not lie flat against your

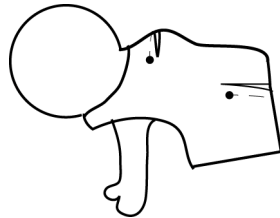
puppet's body. What you need to fix this is, in most cases, a couple of slits in the pattern—one running horizontally across (or just above) the bustline and another running vertically across the lower part of the pattern.



There's no solid rule for dart size, shape, or placement—it all depends on your puppet's particular figure. It will definitely take some experimenting. To avoid going through an entire roll of paper towels, you can pinch and pin sections of pattern together, and avoid actually cutting until you've found the right spot.

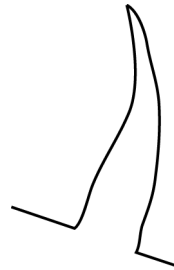


You know you're getting closer to the right combination of darts when the pattern starts to conform to your puppet's shape.



Remember that it's perfectly all right for the costume to be a little loose in places—the more relaxed the style, the easier your job will be. All this pattern fitting may seem like a pain now, but it's much easier to do this at the pattern stage than after you've starting cutting fabric. (It's also good practice for fitting the real costume!)

When you've decided where to put the darts, and about what size they should be, you're ready to cut them out of your pattern. Darts should always be slightly curved, rather than perfectly pointy. This makes them much less visible when sewn together, and gives the finished costume a softer, more natural look.

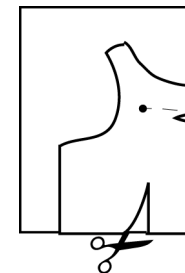


Once you have your darts cut out, trying pinning the edges of each dart together and placing the pattern on your puppet again to see how the shaping fits. (Don't worry about the neckline or armhole just yet.)

If the darts are just right, congratulations! (You should be writing this book instead of me.) If the darts aren't large enough, or are coming out too pointy, try unpinning them and rounding them out a little bit more. If the darts are too large, or just don't seem to have ended up in the right place, don't worry—that's why you're using paper towels! Just make note of any places where the pattern doesn't fit (does it need more shaping towards the top? at the waistline? some of both?) and try it again.

Once you get the darts taken care of, you probably need to readjust both the neckline and the armhole, since these tend to get pulled out of place. The easiest way I've found to do this is to lay your darted pattern on a fresh paper towel and trace around the darts.

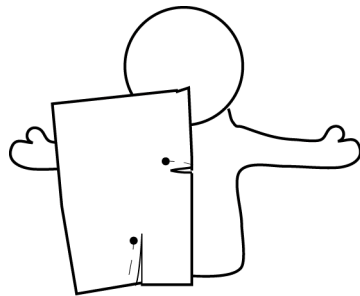
1. Pin your pattern to a fresh paper towel, lining up the lower right edges as closely as possible.
2. Copy the darts from your pattern onto the new paper towel, cutting carefully along the edges of the darts.



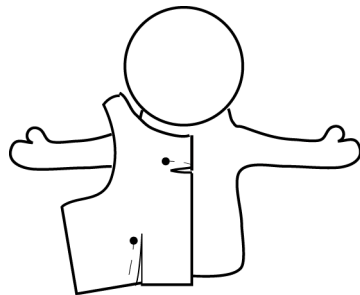
3. Remove your pattern from the paper towel. You now have an exact copy of the darts.



4. Pin the edges of the darts together, then position the paper towel on your puppet.



5. You can now cut out a new neckline and a new armhole by repeating the steps in the “Basic pattern front” section (beginning on page 38).

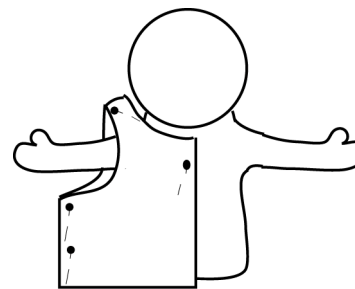


NOTE: As a alternative method, you can create the darts first, then make the neckline and armhole afterwards. This saves time in not having to remake the neck and armholes, but I always find it more perplexing to shape a “blank” paper towel than one that looks like a pattern to start with.

Fit the patterns to your puppet

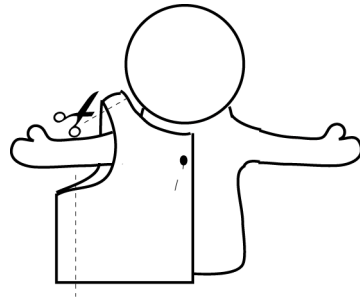
Now that you’ve completed the first part of the basic pattern front and back, it’s time to put them together and see how they fit your puppet.

1. Place both the basic pattern front and back on your puppet, pinning them together at the shoulder and side seams. (You may also need to pin the inside edge of each pattern to your puppet’s body or covering to hold it in place.)

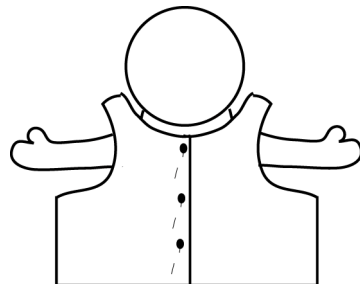


Now that you’ve shaped up your pattern, you’re ready to fit the front and back patterns to your puppet.

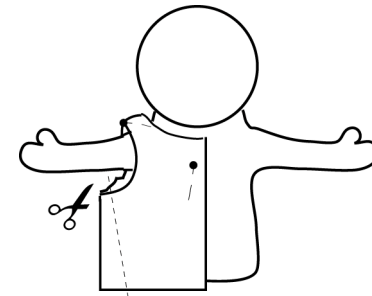
2. Look to see where the patterns need adjusting—often the sides stick out too far or the shoulder pieces are too long. Unpin the patterns as needed and trim them down a little bit. When in doubt, it's always better to leave the patterns extra roomy. You can trim off any excess later.



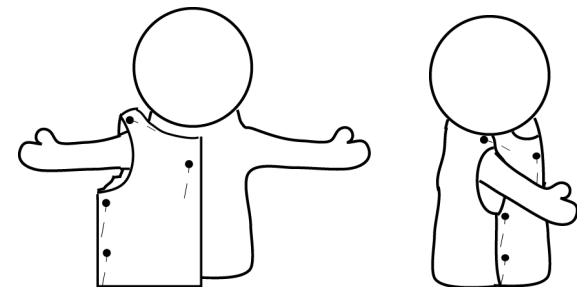
NOTE: If you have a hard time fitting the patterns with only half a pattern front and half a pattern back, you can make copies of each piece and pin them together so you have a complete set.



3. If your puppet has a slim waist or other special shape, you can adjust for that here too.



4. Keep trimming and repinning until the patterns fit together nicely.



Now that your pattern fits your puppet, you have only one critical step left before you can use your patterns: add seam allowance!

Much ado about fasteners

No matter what kind of fastener you plan to use, you need extra fabric *on each side* of the costume opening:

✂ **zippers** — 3/4"

✂ **buttons** — 1 1/2"

✂ **snaps** — 1 1/2"

✂ **hooks & eyes** — 1/2"

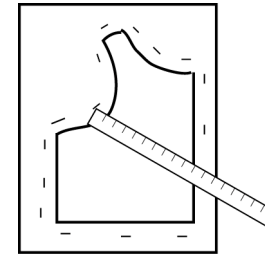
✂ **velcro** — 1/2-1 1/2"

This room is *in addition to* the extra fabric your puppet may need to move around comfortably.

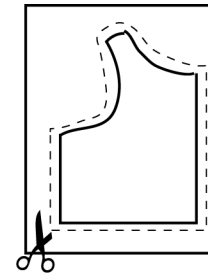
For information on fastener options and how to install them, check out the chapter “Zippers, buttons, & more” on page 30.

Add seam allowance!

Once you have your front and back pattern pieces fitted to your puppet, you need to take them off your puppet and add seam allowance—in this book, 1/4" is the standard (as explained on page 16). This means you need to add 1/4" all the way around your patterns.



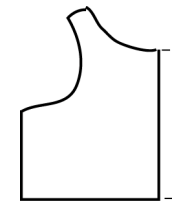
1. Lay each of your pattern pieces on fresh paper towels.
2. Mark 1/4" from the edge of each pattern in all directions (including any darts). **NOTE:** The edge that goes against the fold (see page 45) does *not* need added seam allowance since there is no seam.
3. Cut around your marks.



Now you have new patterns that include room for seam allowance!

Add room for hems and fasteners

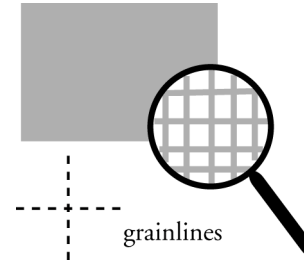
In addition to seam allowance, you need to add at least 1/2" extra to the inside edge of either the front or back pattern (depending on where you want the costume to open and close) so you have room to hem the edges. If you want to add fasteners, you may need even more (see sidebar). When in doubt, it's best to leave "extra" extra fabric and cut the excess off later.



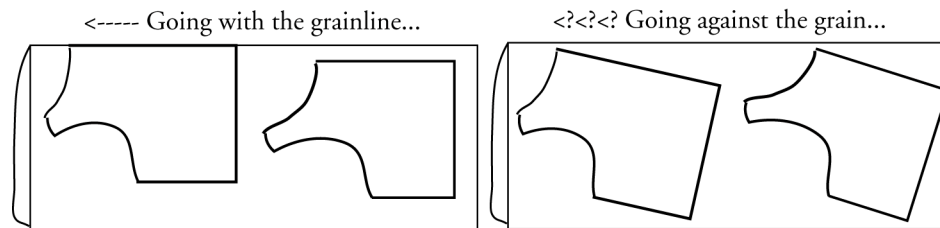
Cutting out fabric

If you want good results from your patterns, there are some key points you should keep in mind when cutting out fabric:

- ✂ **Grainline** — almost all fabrics have a grainline. Well, two grainlines to be exact. They come from the threads that make up the weave of the fabric. One grainline runs parallel to the finished edge (or selvedge) and the other runs perpendicular to it. You should be able to spot the grainlines by looking closely at the fabric, especially from the backside.

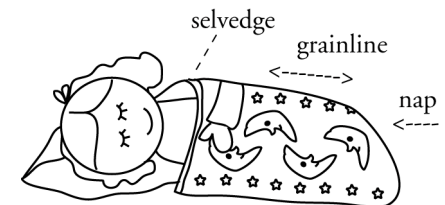


All your pattern pieces should line up with the grainline as closely as possible. Why? The grainline is fabric's natural bending point. Costumes cut with the grainline hang better and can even be easier to sew than those that go against it. It can sometimes be tempting to ignore the grainline when you're trying to squeeze just a few more pieces out of the last bit of fabric, but keep in mind that asking fabric to bend against its grainline is like asking you to bend over without using your back, hips, or knees.



Words to know

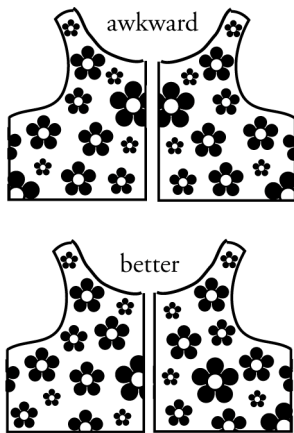
- ✂ **grainline** — direction of the threads in a fabric (all pattern pieces must be cut parallel to the grainline)
- ✂ **bias** — imaginary line 45° from the grainline
- ✂ **selvedges** — the pre-finished edges of a fabric
- ✂ **nap** — fabrics with a pattern that must be used in a particular direction, like stripes or bunny rabbits. These usually require extra fabric, since each piece must be cut to go with the direction of the nap. (Fabrics that have a random pattern, or none at all, are “without nap.”)



More fabric tips

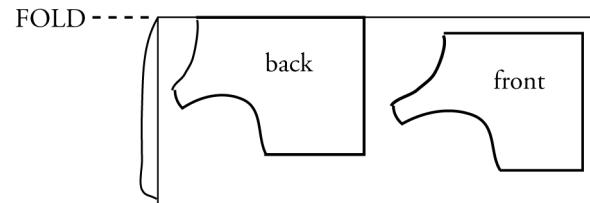
If you are using a very large or conspicuous pattern (and these don't work well for most puppets) try to make sure that you're not cropping the pattern in an odd place.

Also try to consider how the pattern will look when the pieces are put together—perfectly symmetrical pieces can create some odd shapes.



You can avoid this problem altogether by using small prints or patternless fabrics.

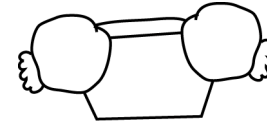
- ✂ **Naps and patterns** — in addition to grainlines, some fabrics also have patterns. When the pattern must be used in a particular direction, the fabric has a “nap.” Make sure when you layout your pattern pieces that the pattern goes in the same direction for all pieces. (As an exception, you may want a pattern to go in a different direction on the sleeve pieces than on the rest of the costume.)
- ✂ **Folds** — you almost always need to fold your fabric in half *right sides together along the grainline* before laying out your pattern pieces. You do this because, as I'm sure you've noticed, the patterns you've created only go halfway across your puppet's body, but you need to cover both halves. To do this, you can either make two separate pieces and sew (or fasten) them together, or make a single piece that goes all the way across by cutting it on the fold. For most costumes, you'll want one of each. The layout might look something like this:



Now that you have your basic front and basic back patterns ready to go, you're ready to turn to the “Sleeves” chapter.



Sleeves



Sleeve styles

Sleeves can be extremely simple, or they can be one of the fanciest parts of the costume. Some major sleeve types include:

- ✂ **Straps** — the most basic sleeve of all. Whether made from fabric (see page 113) or pieces of ribbon or trim, these work great on many dresses and jumpers. And you don't even need a pattern!
- ✂ **Straight sleeves** — the standard way to cover your puppet's arms. They can be long or short, loose or tight, but they all start with a pattern (described in the next section).
- ✂ **Puff sleeves** — for a fancier, ruffled look. They're not much harder to make than straight sleeves (and even have more "fudge" room), and they can really add to your costumes. (All three dresses on the front cover of this book have puff sleeves.) To make puff sleeves, you need a modified straight sleeve pattern, some extra fabric and the gathering technique from page 22.
- ✂ **Human hand sleeves** — sleeves made to fit over your arms so your own (gloved) hands become the puppet's hands. Human hands sleeves have a T-shape—one part for the puppet's arm, and a perpendicular part for yours. See page 49 for instructions.

Consider this

- ✂ **Length** — if your puppet uses velcro wrist bands to hold on its arm rods, or has unfinished elbow or wrist joints, you may want long sleeves to cover them up.
- ✂ **Tightness** — looser sleeves are easier to fit and easier to get on and off. (That's important if your puppet has to make a quick change!) Sleeves should never be so tight that they restrict arm movement.
- ✂ **Poof** — a real bonus for flat-figured hand puppets who need all the shape they can get!

Patternless sleeves (the easy way out!)

If you have a terrible time fitting sleeve patterns (as I often do!), my suggestion is: don't. You can actually add sleeves to a costume without making a pattern at all. Just cut a rectangle of fabric large enough to generously cover your puppet's arm on both sides, sew it to the costume, and trim off the extra. This method isn't perfect, but it works just fine, especially for fairly flat puppets. You can finish the end of the sleeves using the "Cuffs & hems" directions from page 59.

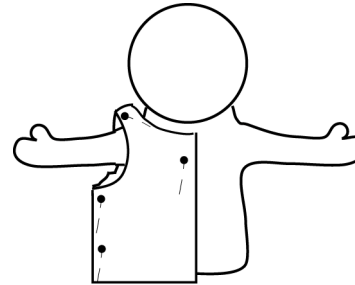
For patternless puff sleeves, you need a rectangle of fabric 1 1/2 to 2 times wider than for a straight sleeve. This extra fabric gets squished into ruffles when you gather the top edge using the technique explained on page 22.

Make the sleeve pattern

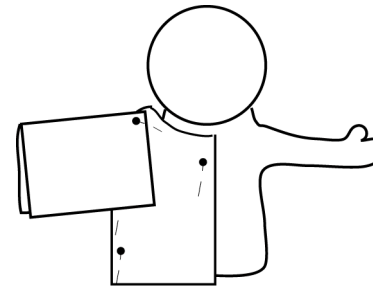
Before you can make a sleeve pattern, you need to complete the basic front and back patterns described in the "Easy pattern making" chapter so you have something to fit the sleeve to. You also need your puppet.

1. Lay your puppet on a flat surface, arms spread out, or suspend it from its strings at a comfortable level.

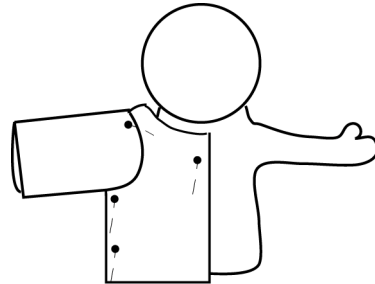
2. Pin the front and back pattern pieces together and place them on your puppet.



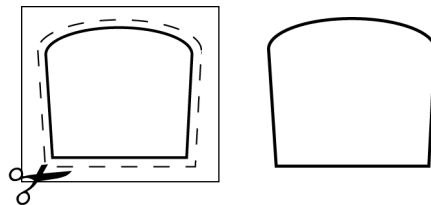
3. Place a paper towel (or two) over your puppet's arm. It needs to be tall enough to cover the armhole completely in front and back, and long enough to extend over your puppet's hand. (Don't worry if the sleeve looks way too long. You can shorten it when you're finishing the costume.)



4. Trim the paper towel to match the shape of the armhole in front and in back.



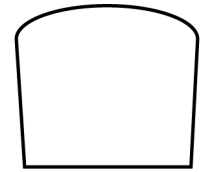
5. Remove the sleeve pattern and unfold it. To add seam allowance, lay the pattern on a fresh paper towel (or two) and trace 1/4" all the way around. Cut along the trace marks and you've got a sleeve pattern!



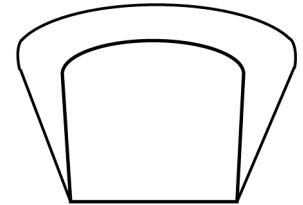
Puff sleeve patterns

To make a puff sleeve pattern, you need to start with a straight sleeve pattern by following the directions in the section above.

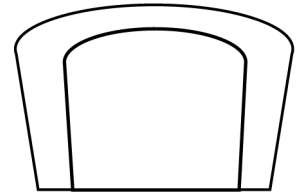
Place the straight sleeve pattern on a fresh paper towel (or two). Trace loosely around it, making the top part at least twice as wide as the straight sleeve.



If you want to gather the puff sleeve at the top only, make the bottom of the sleeve the same width as the straight sleeve pattern.



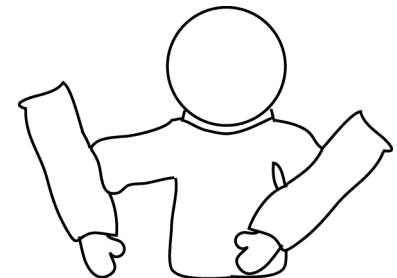
If you want to gather both ends, make the bottom of the sleeve twice as wide as the straight sleeve as well.



To gather the top (and if you want, the bottom) edges of the sleeve, use the gathering instructions on page 22.

Human hands sleeves

Finding ready-made costumes for human hands puppets can be especially difficult. Now you don't have to—you can make them yourself!



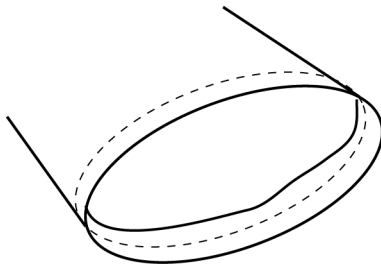
Because human hands sleeves need to give a bit, stretchy fabrics work best, but any fabric will do.

Make the “puppet” sleeve

You can make the puppet’s part of the sleeve the same way you would a regular puppet sleeve—just follow the pattern directions on the previous pages. Make sure the sleeves are long enough to cover your puppet’s arms with at least an inch or two to spare.

You can then cut out, sew, and attach the puppet sleeves to the costume according to the directions in the “Shirts & robes” or “Suits & coats” chapters.

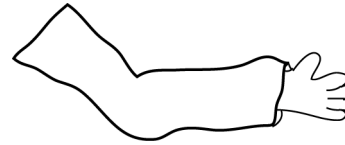
Once you have the puppet sleeves completed and attached, fold the ends of each sleeve under 1/4” and iron and stitch them flat.



Now you need the “human” part of the sleeve.

Make the “human” sleeve

1. Cut a piece of fabric wide enough to wrap loosely around your arm (plus 1/2”) and long enough to extend from your wrist to halfway between your elbow and shoulder (plus 2 or 3 inches).



2. Fold the fabric in half lengthwise right sides together and stitch the edge opposite the fold.



3. Turn the sleeve right side out and make a second sleeve the same way.

Finish the human sleeves

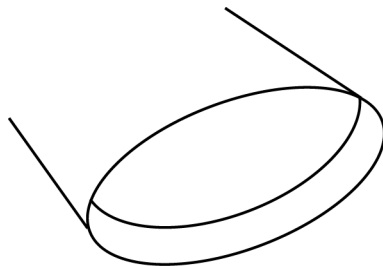
To make sure the sleeve stays secure around the puppet’s glove (and your arm), you should finish both ends of the human sleeve with elastic. Elastic comes in various widths—1/2” works best. You need about 1 1/2 yards of elastic to finish the ends of both sleeves.

Cut two pieces of elastic long enough to wrap around a human wrist securely but without cutting off any circulation. If you can't find a length that works for everyone who might use the costume (a real challenge when you're on a puppet team!), use the largest possible measurement. Those with smaller wrists can tighten the sleeve with safety pins.

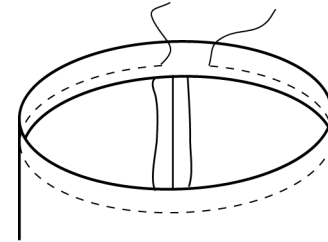
The other two lengths of elastic need to be long enough to wrap snugly but comfortably around the human performer's bicep. (Again, you may need to compromise a bit on this one—when in doubt, go with the largest measurement.)

Once you have the elastic cut, you can insert it into the ends of the sleeves.

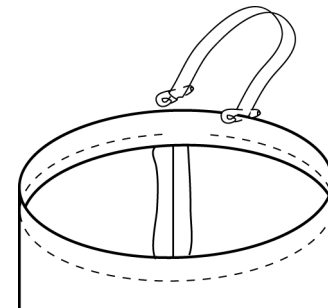
1. Fold one end of the sleeve under about 1" (or 1/2" wider than the elastic you're using, whichever is larger).



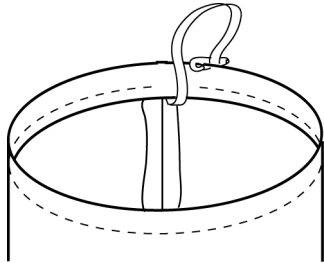
2. Starting at the sleeve's seam, stitch 1/4" from the edge, stopping when you get within 1/2" of your starting point. (You need this opening to insert the elastic.)



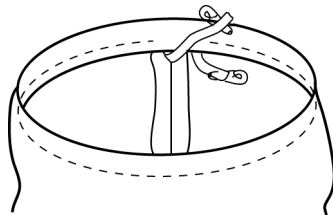
3. Put a safety pin through one end of the elastic. Pin the other end to the edge of the sleeve. (This keeps it from getting pulled all the way in.)



4. Insert the safety pin into the opening in the end of the sleeve and begin pushing it through.



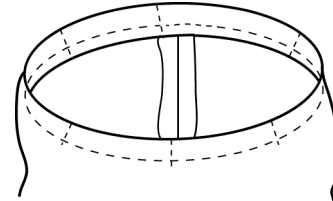
5. The fabric should begin to bunch up, but that's okay. Just keep smoothing out the bunches and pushing the pin through until it comes out the other side.



6. Make sure there are no twists in the elastic (if there are, you need to pull the elastic out and try again). Then remove both pins, overlap the ends of the elastic, and stitch them together.



7. Slip the elastic into the cuff and stitch across the opening. Once you smooth the gathers out, you may want to stitch over the elastic here and there to keep it from twisting.



There! You've got the elastic through one end of one sleeve...only three more to go!

Put the sleeves together

Once your human and puppet sleeves are complete, you need to sew them together.

1. Place the human sleeve on the puppet sleeve, right sides together. The two sleeves should be perpendicular to each other, forming a "T."



2. Stitch the sleeves together.
3. Attach the other puppet and human sleeves together in the same way and you're finished!



Shirts & robes



So many uses for shirts

Shirts are a standby for any puppet wardrobe, casual or dressy, hand puppet or marionette, male or female. By varying the length of sleeves, type of collar, and closure type (button down, zipper back, or pullover), you can make a wide variety of looks from the same basic style. You can even turn a “shirt” into a simple robe, coat, pajama top, or dress top! As always, your choice of fabric has the greatest influence on how the shirt looks. Just about any kind of fabric works—cottons, polyesters, flannels—but if you want to make a pullover shirt, you need to use something a little bit stretchy.

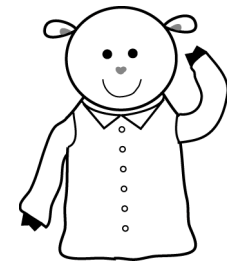
What you need

- ✂ Basic front, back, and sleeve patterns, as explained in the “Easy pattern making” and “Sleeves” chapters
- ✂ Fabric (*at least* enough to cut out two sleeves, two fronts, and two backs according to the fabric cutting guidelines on page 45)
- ✂ Matching thread
- ✂ Fastener(s) of your choice (see the chapter “Zippers, buttons, & more”)

Shirts & robes, suits & coats... what’s the difference?

In this book, the outfits in the “Shirts & robes” chapter do not have a lining, while those in the “Suits & coats” chapter do. This distinction is somewhat arbitrary since you can, of course, make coats that are unlined and robes that are lined.

Lined costumes generally work well when you want the edges to have a finished, stitch-free look. (See page 60 for details.)



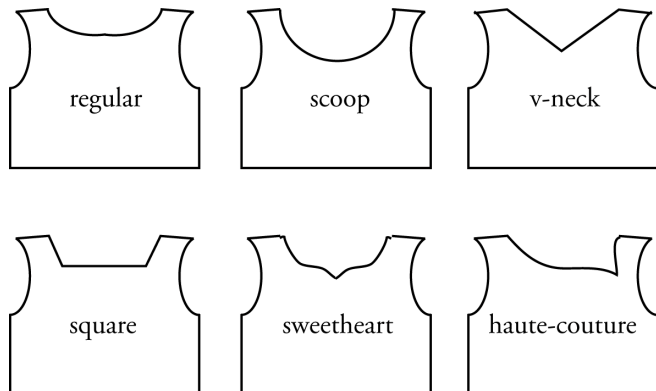
Tweak the pattern

Once you have completed the basic front, back, and sleeve patterns (by following all the directions in the “Easy pattern making” and “Sleeves” chapters), you only need to modify them a little bit to make a shirt.

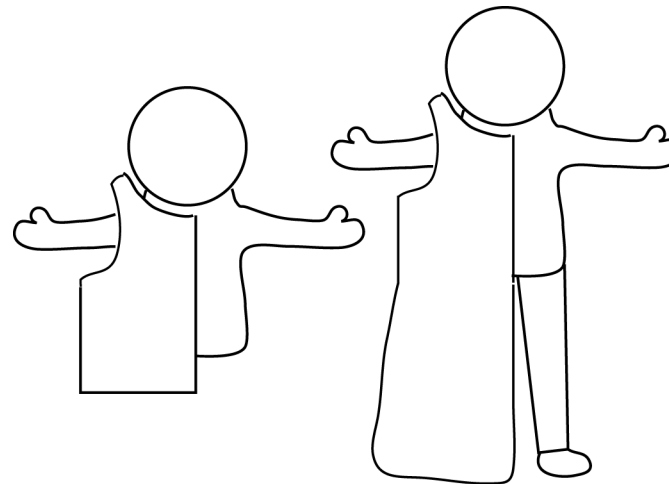
First, you need to decide whether you want the shirt to open in front or in back and what type of fastener you want to use. (For guidelines, see the “Zippers, buttons, & more” chapter.)

If you’re not sure what you want to do in the way of fasteners, just add 2” extra. That’s a safe amount for any type of opening.

You may also want to adjust the pattern’s neckline. (Remember to add at least 1/2” to the neckline for seam allowance so you have room to hem it!)



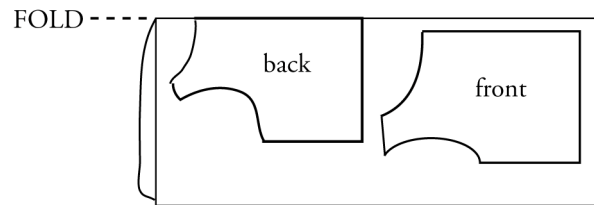
You can also adjust the pattern’s length:



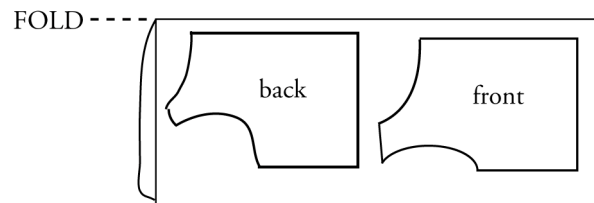
Lengthening the shirt pattern works well for simple robes. For a very full, swooshy robe what you really want is a dress in disguise. See page 87 for more information.

Cut out the fabric

To make a shirt (or robe), you need to cut out two sleeves, plus the front and back pieces. If you want your puppet’s shirt to open and close in the front, you need to layout your pattern pieces with the back piece against the fold and the front piece away from the fold. (Remember that the edge along the fold does *not* need seam allowance.)



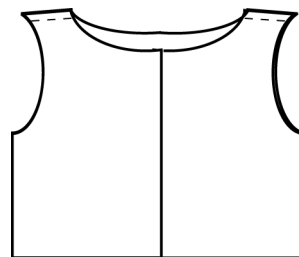
For a shirt that opens in the back (or needs an opening in the back for you to get your hand through), place the back piece away from the fold.



For a pullover shirt that needs no opening, cut both the front and back pieces along the fold.

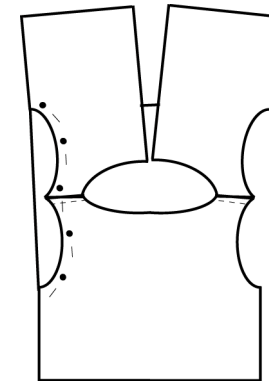
Sew the front and back together

1. Place the front and back right sides together, lining them up along the top.
2. Stitch the front and back together along the shoulders only.

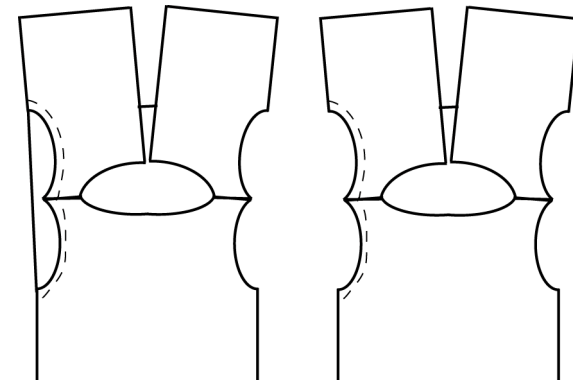


Attach the sleeves

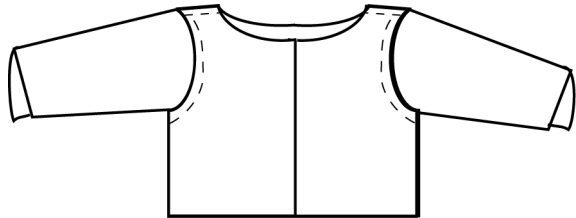
1. Spread the shirt out flat.
2. Place the shirt on one of the sleeve pieces *right sides together*, lining up the corners of the sleeve with the corners of the armhole. Pin the sleeve to the shirt.



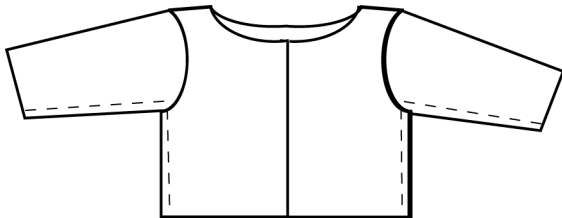
3. Stitch the sleeve and the shirt together, then cut off any excess sleeve fabric.



4. Attach the other sleeve to the shirt in the same way.
5. Fold the shirt in half right sides together (or in other words, turn the shirt inside out).



6. Stitch along the underside of one sleeve, then pivot and stitch down the side of the shirt. Do the same for the other side. (For pivoting instructions, see page 18.)

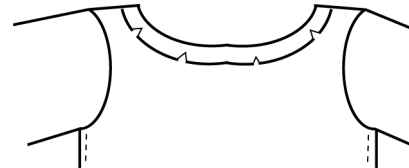


Finish the top of the shirt

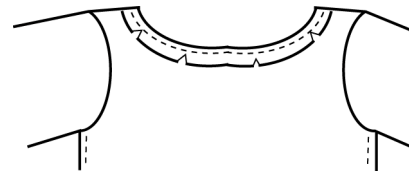
You can finish the top of the shirt with a simple hem or you can add any kind of collar you like. (To add a collar, skip the hem-making steps and go on to the next section, “Add a collar (optional).”)

To hem the shirt (without adding a collar):

1. Fold the edges under 1/4” and iron them flat. (You may need to make small cuts in the fabric here and there to get it to turn under more easily.)



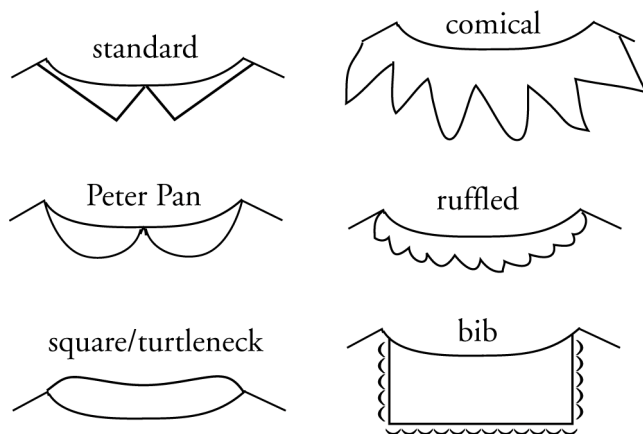
2. If you have enough fabric to do so, turn the edges under another 1/4”. This encloses the edges and helps prevent raveling.
3. Stitch all the way around the top of the shirt. (This can be a good place to use a decorative stitch if you have one.)



You’re finished! Now you can complete the ends of the sleeves by following the steps in the “Cuffs & hems” section on page 59. (Or, if you’ve changed your mind about adding a collar, you can do that now.)

Add a collar (optional)

Before you can begin making a collar, you need to decide what you want it to look like. A few basic styles include:

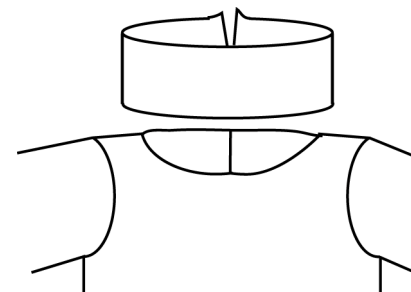


You can create the collar directly from fabric, but you might want to practice on paper towels first. Once you get a shape you like, you can use the paper towel as a pattern.

To make a standard, Peter Pan, comical, or square collar:

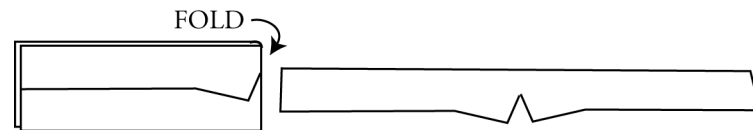
1. Cut a rectangle of fabric that's long enough to wrap all the way around the shirt's neckline with a few inches to spare, and at least as tall as you want the

collar. (This can be same fabric as the shirt, or it can contrast with it, depending on the style you want.)



2. Fold the fabric in half widthwise (if you want the collar to be symmetrical) and trim it into the shape you want, leaving an opening where the costume needs to open and close. Remember to make the collar 1/4" larger all the way around than you actually want it to provide for seam allowance.

Standard collar for a shirt that closes in back



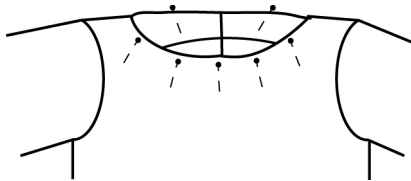
Standard collar for a shirt that closes in front



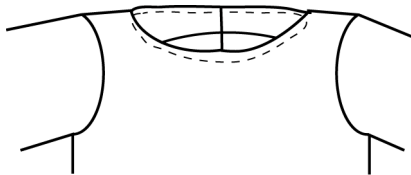
3. Cut another piece of fabric identical to the first.
4. Place the two pieces of fabric right sides together and stitch them together along all the edges except the top.



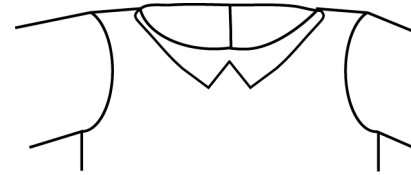
5. Turn the collar right side out. (You may need to use a blunt object, like the end of a pen or a seam ripper, to get the corners nice and crisp.) Then iron it flat.
6. Line up the unsewn edge of the collar with the *inside* of the top of the shirt, matching up the opening in the collar with the opening in the shirt. Pin the collar in place.



7. Stitch the collar to the shirt, removing the pins as you go.



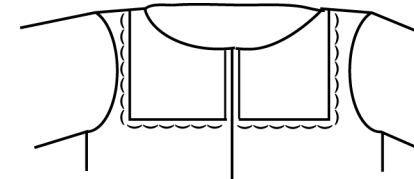
Turn the collar down, give it a really firm ironing, and you're done! Go on to "Cuffs & hems."



To make a ruffled collar, you can use a ready-made piece of trim or lace, or you can gather the top edge of a long piece of fabric by following the directions on page 22. Then hem the ungathered edges (page 21) and attach it to the shirt just like a standard collar (steps 6 and 7).

Bib collars work especially well for shirts that don't open in the front (otherwise, you'll have to make "half bibs," as shown below). To make a bib collar, cut a rectangle that nicely fits the front of the shirt, rounding out the top to match the neckline. Hem the edges of the fabric (as shown on page 21) and attach it to the costume just like a standard collar (steps 6 and 7). If you want, you can stitch a piece of lace or trim around the edges.

If you want, you can make half bibs for the back of the costume by cutting the bib in half down the middle.



Cuffs & hems

Before you finish the ends of the sleeves, you need to make sure they're the right length for your puppet *(plus 1/2" for the upcoming hem!)*

For long sleeves, the fabric should cover your puppet's wrist but not its hand, even with its arms extended. To achieve this, you may need to make the sleeve a little longer on the backside than on the front.



Once you have the sleeves cut to the right length, you can hem the ends by following the directions on page 21.

For a more stylish finish, you can add cuffs to the ends of the sleeves. (You can also use cuffs to lengthen sleeves if necessary.) To make cuffs:

1. Cut two pieces of fabric, each twice as wide as you want the cuff plus 1/2" and long enough to wrap around the end of the sleeve with 1/2" to spare.
2. Fold each piece in half lengthwise right sides together and stitch across the edge opposite the fold.

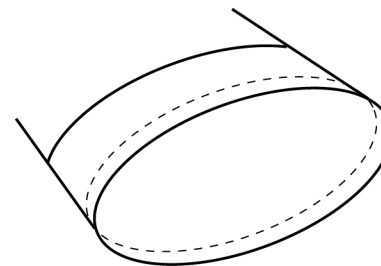


3. Turn the fabric right side out using the "Nifty safety pin trick" from page 29, then iron it flat.

4. Fold the fabric in half widthwise (right sides together) and stitch the end opposite the fold closed.



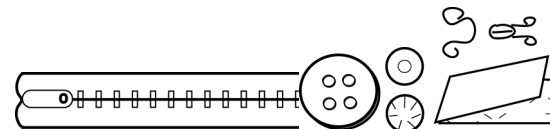
5. Place the fabric on the end of the sleeve and stitch 1/4" from the edge all the way around.

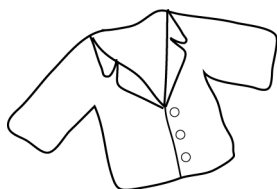


Turn the cuff right side out and you're finished!

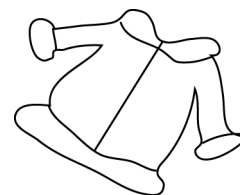
Finish with fasteners

You can finish the shirt with the fastener of your choice—a zipper, buttons, snaps, velcro—by following the advice in the chapter "Zippers, buttons, & more."





Suits & coats



Lining up the possibilities

In this book, the outfits in the “Shirts & robes” chapter do not have a lining, while those in the “Suits & coats” chapter do. This distinction is somewhat arbitrary since you can, of course, make coats that are unlined and robes that are lined.

Some people suspect that adding a lining automatically makes costuming more difficult. Although linings do take extra fabric, they can actually save you time since they can eliminate the need for hems. This can be especially useful for very small costumes parts like dress tops. (See the “Dresses & jumpers” chapter for more information.)

Linings generally work well for costumes that need finished, stitch-free edges—like tuxedos and dinner jackets, or dresses with elegant necklines. Linings also come in handy for materials that are difficult to hem, such as fake fur or fabric that ravels, and can help give shape to thick or flimsy fabric.

When working with lined costumes, make sure the fabric and lining pieces match up before you sew them together, since it’s harder to trim off extra material at the end (as you can with unlined costumes).

Stylish reminders

Even though various costume parts might not look very much alike, you can make them in almost exactly the same way.

On the back outside cover, for example, I made both the top of Glinda’s pink dress and Fred Astaire’s tuxedo using the instructions from this chapter. They may have different necklines, different sleeve types, and different closure styles, but they’re basically the same type of top. The most important difference is not the style, but the fabric. See the “Choosing fabric” chapter for details.

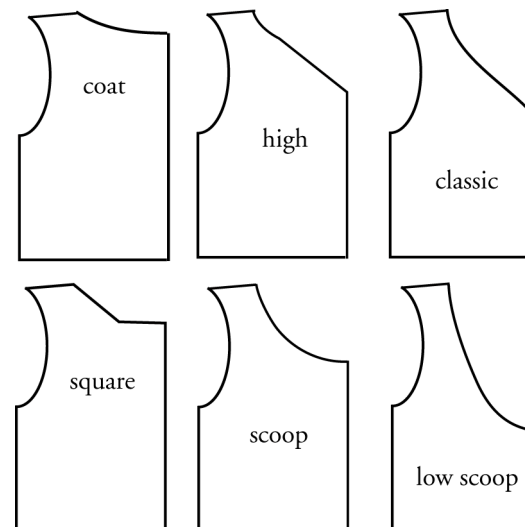
What you need

- ✂ Basic front and back patterns (as directed in the “Easy pattern making” chapter)
- ✂ Basic sleeve pattern (from the “Sleeves” chapter)
- ✂ Fabric for the outside of the suit (enough to layout two pattern fronts, one pattern back, and two sleeve patterns, plus a little extra, according to the guidelines on page 45)
- ✂ Fabric for the lining of the suit (enough to layout two pattern fronts and one pattern back, plus a little extra)
- ✂ Buttons, a zipper, or the fastener of your choice

The lining should definitely be a lightweight fabric, as you don't want to make your costumes any heavier or bulkier than necessary. Looks aren't really critical, but you should pick something that's a lighter color than the outside fabric to keep it from showing through.

Tweak the pattern

Once you've completed the basic front and back patterns (from the “Easy pattern making” chapter), you may want to adjust the neckline a little bit:

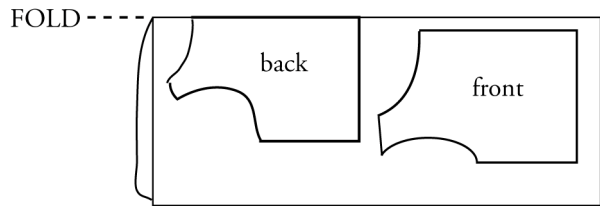


Cut out the pieces

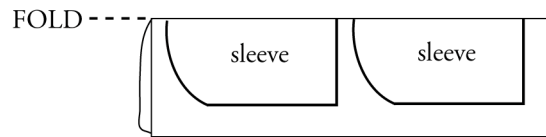
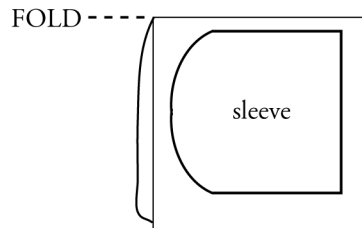
To make a suit, you need to cut:

- ✂ Two front pieces from fabric
- ✂ One back piece *cut on the fold* from fabric
- ✂ Two front pieces from lining material

✂ One back piece *cut on the fold* from lining material



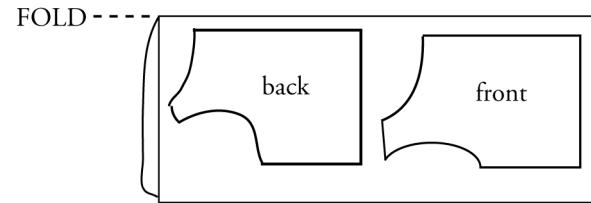
You also need two sleeves cut from fabric. You can either cut out two complete sleeve patterns, or (if the sleeves are symmetrical) you can cut out two half-sleeve patterns placed against the fold.



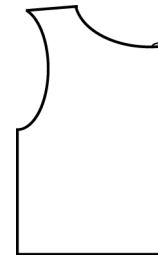
If you need an opening in the back...

If you have a puppet that needs an opening in the back of its costumes (like many traditional style ventriloquist characters), or you want to place a zipper or other fastener in the back of the suit, there are a few steps you need to follow before you can continue.

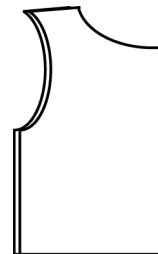
1. Cut out your back pattern pieces with 1/4" extra fabric (or lining material) on the inside edge.



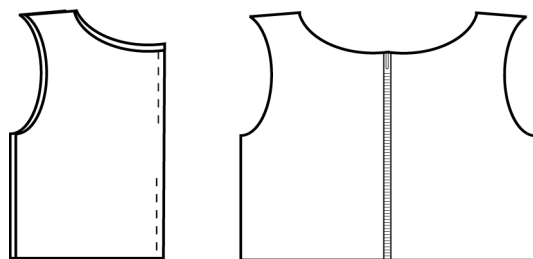
2. Fold the inside edge of each back piece under 1/4", iron it flat, and stitch along the edge.



3. Place each fabric piece right sides together with its matching lining piece and stitch them along the inside edge.



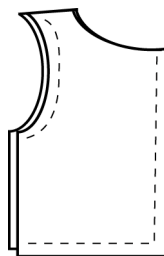
- Place the back pieces on top of each other (fabric sides together) and stitch along the inside edge, leaving an opening where your puppet needs it. **OR...** Insert a zipper (or other fastener) instead of stitching. (See the chapter “Zippers, buttons, & more” for instructions.)



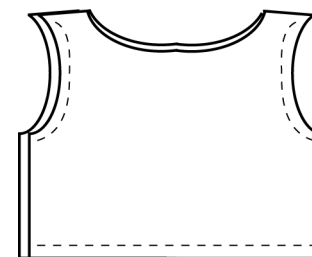
Now you can continue with the rest of the suit!

Sew the lining to the fabric

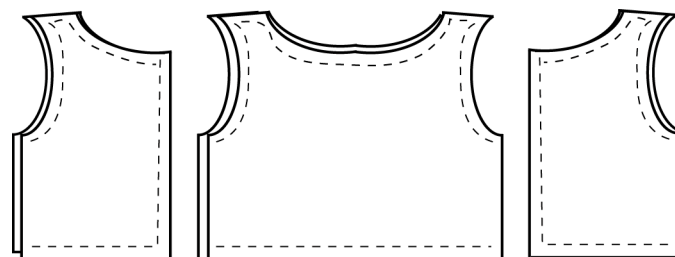
- Place one of the lining front sections and one of the fabric front sections right sides together.
- Stitch along the armhole, bottom, and inner edges, leaving the outside and top edges open.



- Do the same for the other lining and fabric front sections.
- Now do the same for the lining and fabric backs.



If you do not want to add a collar or lapel to the suit, stitch the top of each lining/fabric section (as shown below) and skip to the section “Sew the front and back together” on page 65. If you do want to add a collar, leave the tops unstitched and go on the next section.

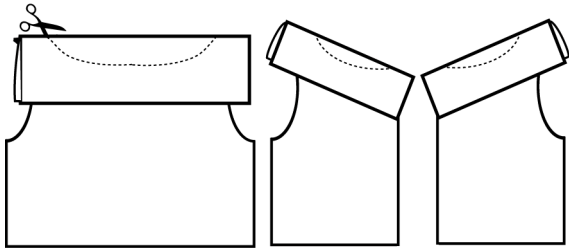


Add a collar or lapels (optional)

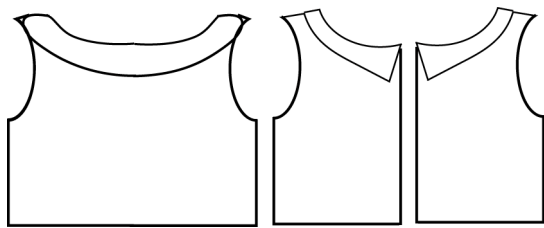
If you want to add a collar or lapels, it's best to do that now before stitching the front and back sections together. That way, the unfinished ends of the collar end up in between the lining and fabric layers. You need to make the collar (or lapel) in three separate sections—one for each of the front pieces and one for the back.

To make a collar or lapels:

1. Cut three rectangles of fabric—one that's at least as wide as the back of the suit, and two for the sides. Each rectangle should be at least *three times* as tall as you want the finished collar or lapel.
2. Fold each piece of fabric in half lengthwise *right sides together* and pin to the corresponding suit piece. Trim one edge to match the shape of the neckline.



3. Trim the rest of each piece into the shape you want for the collar or lapel. (For collar ideas, see page 57. You may want to practice on paper towels first.) Remember to trim the fabric 1/4" larger than you actually want it to provide for seam allowance.



4. Stitch along all the edges of each piece except for the tops.

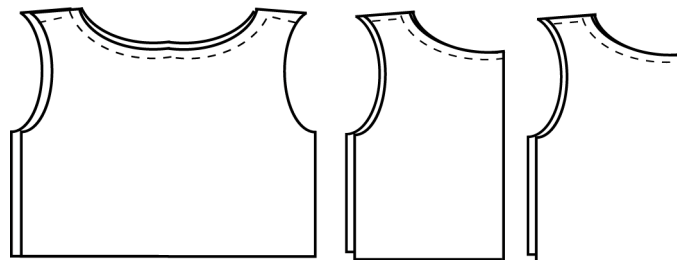


5. Turn all the pieces right side out and iron them flat. Then stitch along the open edge of each piece.



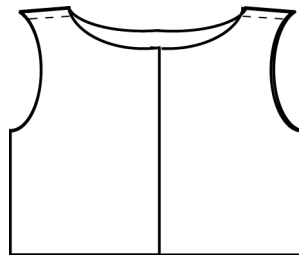
6. Tuck the collar or lapel pieces in between the layers of suit fabric and suit lining and pin them in place. Make sure to line up the neckline of the collar or lapel with the neckline of the suit.

7. Stitch along the edge of each piece, removing the pins as you go. Make sure to sew through the suit fabric, lining, and the collar or lapel.

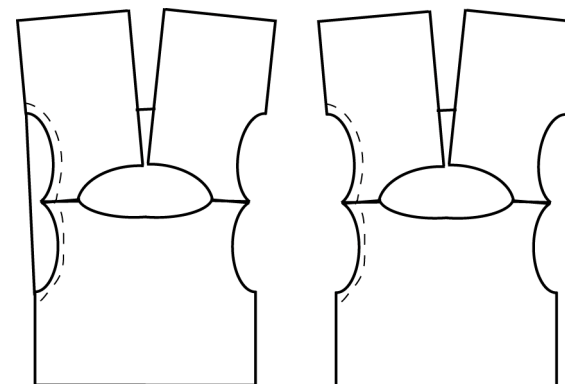


Sew the front and back together

1. Turn the front and back pieces right side out and iron them flat.
2. Place the front and back pieces right sides together, lining them up along shoulder seams.
3. Stitch the front and back together along the shoulders only.



3. Stitch the sleeve and the suit together, then cut off any excess sleeve fabric.

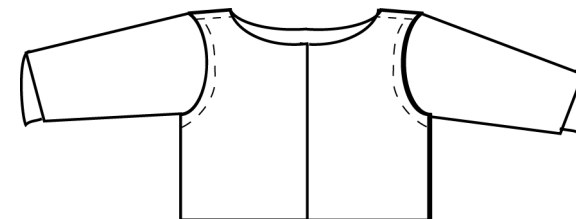
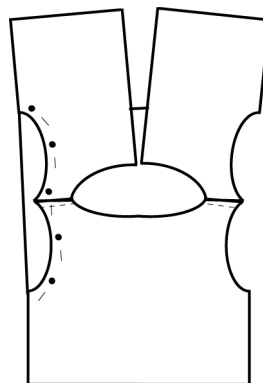


4. Attach the other sleeve to the suit in the same way.

The suit should now look something like this!

Attach the sleeves

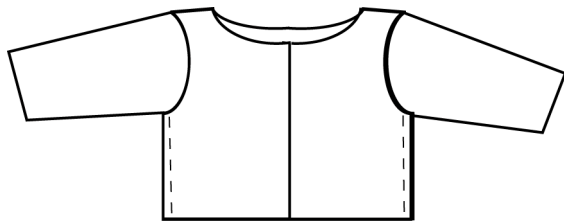
1. Spread the suit out flat.
2. Place the suit fabric side down on one of the sleeve pieces *right sides together*, lining up the corners and middle of the sleeve with the corners and middle of the armhole. Then pin the sleeve to the suit.



Sew the sides and sleeves

To finish the sides of the suit (or coat), I recommend using the “French seams” technique from page 24. This keeps the inner seams from raveling and prevents unsightly loose threads from hanging out. Once you sew the sides, you can close up each sleeve by stitching along the lower edge (right sides together!)

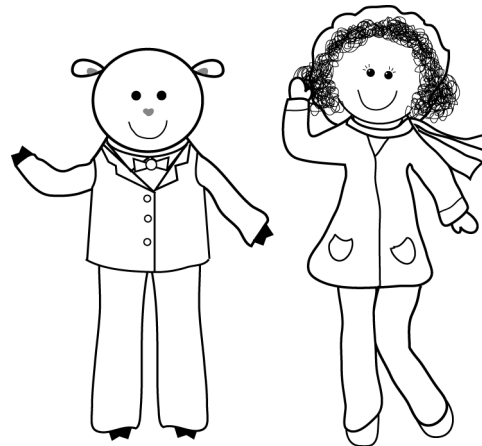
To finish the sides of the suit in the usual way, simply stitch along the sides of the suit (right sides together!), then pivot and stitch along the lower edge of the sleeves. (For pivoting advice, see page 18.)



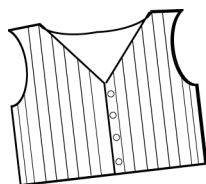
To finish the ends of the sleeves, see the “Cuffs & hems” section on page 59.

Finish with fasteners

You can finish the suit with the fastener of your choice (buttons work particularly well) by following the advice in the chapter “Zippers, buttons, & more.” Since the suit has two layers (the fabric and the lining), you don’t even need to hem the opening—just go ahead and put in the fasteners. Then your puppet will be ready to suit up!



NOTE: If you want to add a hood to your puppet’s coat, please see page 107.



Vests



Well-dressed with vests

Whether peeking out from a dapper dinner jacket, providing the finishing touch on a well-heeled rodeo rider, or lending just the right attitude to a bartender, taxi driver, or barber shop quartet, vests can make a snazzy addition to your puppet's appearance.

And, by making the vest reversible (optional), you can create two costumes in the time of one!

What you need

- ✂ Fabric for the outside (enough to cut out two basic pattern front and backs)
- ✂ Fabric for the lining (same amount as the outside fabric)
- ✂ Buttons (optional)
- ✂ Basic pattern front & back
(as described in the “Easy pattern making” chapter)

Sew many fabrics

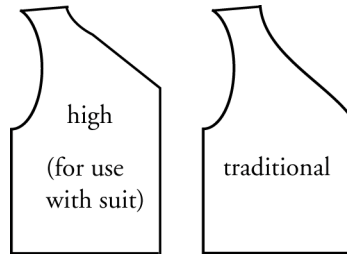
When choosing fabrics for a reversible vest, make sure that neither fabric is so dark it would show through the other.

Beyond that, you can use any fabric you want! Depending on the look you're looking for, you can make vests from satin (polyester), denim, doe suede, even wild cotton prints. The inside doesn't need to match the outside at all.

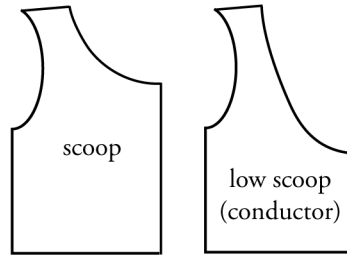


Tweak the pattern

Once you have your basic front and back patterns (from the chapter “Easy pattern making”) ready to go, you can use them as is, or you may want to adjust the neckline.

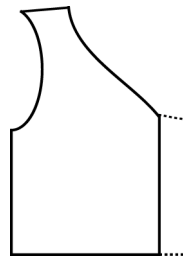


(If you plan on using the vest with a suit, make sure the neckline on the vest is high enough to allow the vest to show.)



Adjust for fasteners

You probably want some sort of fastener in the front of the vest, like buttons, snaps, or velcro. If so, the pieces for the vest front need to be able to overlap 1-1 1/2”. So, you need to extend the inside edge of your front pattern by this amount.

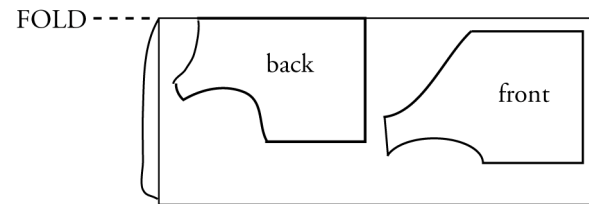


Cut out the fabric and lining pieces

To make a vest, you need:

- ✂ 2 front pieces cut from fabric
- ✂ 1 back piece cut *on the fold* from fabric
- ✂ 2 front pieces from lining material
- ✂ 1 back piece cut *on the fold* from lining material

The layout should look something like this:

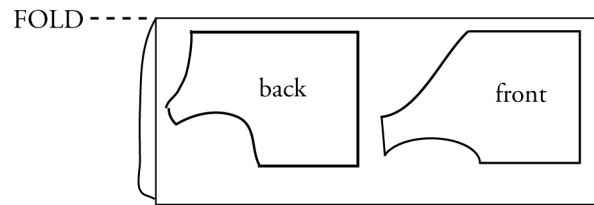


For more information about cutting out fabric, please see page 45.

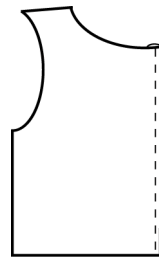
If you need an opening in the back...

If you have a puppet that needs an opening in the back of its costumes (like many traditional style ventriloquist characters), or you want to place a zipper or other fastener in the back of the vest, there are a few steps you need to follow before you can continue.

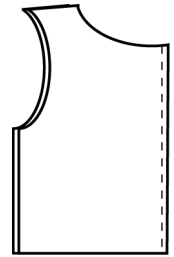
1. Cut out your back pattern pieces with 1/4" extra fabric (or lining material) on the inside edge.



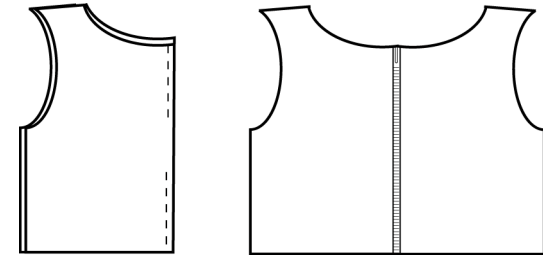
2. Fold the inside edge of each back piece under 1/4", iron it flat, and stitch along the edge.



3. Place your each fabric piece right sides together with its matching lining piece and stitch them along the inside edge.



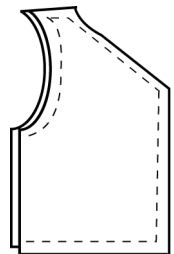
4. Place the back pieces on top of each other (fabric sides together) and stitch along the inside edge, leaving an opening where your puppet needs it. **OR...** Insert a zipper (or other fastener) instead of stitching.



Now you can continue with the rest of the vest!

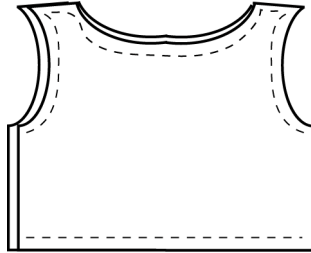
Sew the lining to the fabric

1. Place one of the lining front sections and one of the fabric front sections right sides together.
2. Stitch along all the edges *except* for the edge underneath the armhole.



3. Do the same for the other lining and fabric front sections.

4. Now do the same for the lining and fabric backs.



Turn the vest right side out and you're ready to "Put on the finishing touches" (page 71).

Sew the front and back together (for reversible vests)

With reversible vests, some of the stitching will show, so be extra careful to use a matching colored thread. If the inside and outside of the vest are wildly different colors, you can put one color thread in the top of your machine and another color in the bottom (bobbin). Just make sure that when you stitch the vest together, you have the fabric that goes with the top color on top, and the fabric that goes with the bottom color on the bottom.

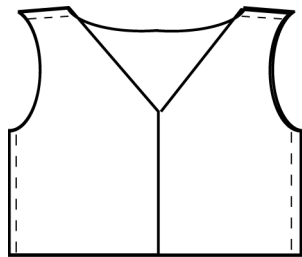
Sew the front and back together (for single-sided vests)

If you don't need the vest to be reversible, go ahead and follow these steps. For a reversible (two-sided) vest, skip this section and go on to "Sew the front and back together (for reversible vests)."

1. Turn all the vest pieces right side out and iron them flat.

2. Place the front and back pieces fabric sides together, lining them up along the sides and shoulders.

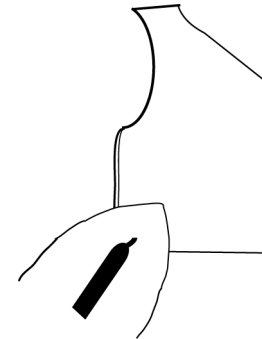
3. Stitch the front and back pieces together along the sides and shoulders.



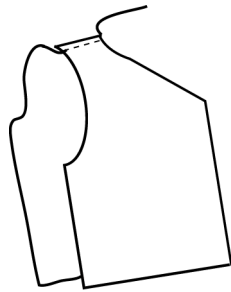
1. Turn all the vest pieces right side out and iron them flat.

2. Turn the unstitched side edge on all the pieces under 1/4" and iron firmly.

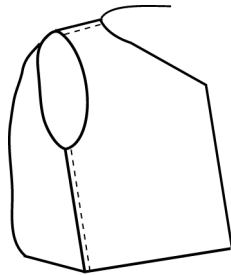
3. Place the front and back pieces fabric sides together, lining them up along the sides and shoulders.



- Overlap the front and back shoulder edges by 1/4" and stitch them together.



- Overlap the outer sides of the front and back pieces by 1/4" and stitch them together.

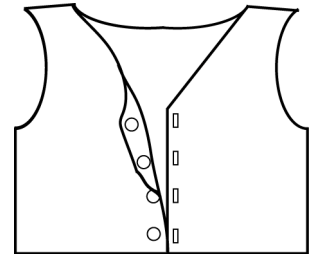


You're now ready to put the finishing touches on your (puppet's) reversible vest!

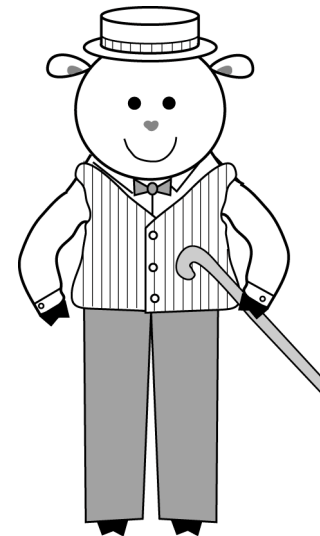
Put on the finishing touches

If you want, you can add buttons (and buttonholes) to the front of the vest by following the directions on pages 33-35.

For reversible vests, you need to put buttons on the inside and outside of the vest so you can button it no matter which side is facing out. Make sure that both sets of buttons line up with the buttonholes.



Now that's well-dressed!





Cinderella's sack dresses



What you need to start

This is the “little black dress” of puppet wardrobes, only better since you can make it any color or style you want. It’s also one of the easiest costumes to make. You don’t even need a pattern, but you will need:

- ✂ Fabric (enough to wrap around your puppet’s body with a few inches to spare, plus at least six inches more to make sleeves)
- ✂ Matching thread
- ✂ Lining material (same amount as fabric—this can be the same fabric, a light cotton, or even some inexpensive lace)
- ✂ Waistband (the same fabric, a contrasting one, or some wide ribbon or trim long enough to wrap around your puppet’s waist with a few inches to spare)
- ✂ Zipper (or the fastener of your choice)

How much fabric you need also depends on the length you want the dress, and on how full or tight you want it to be.

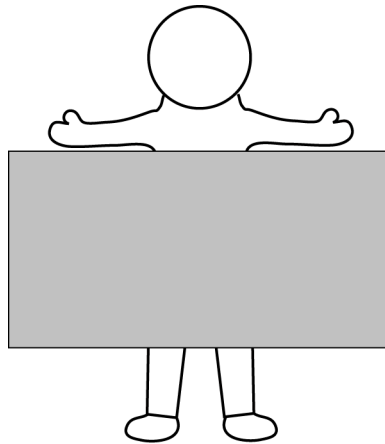
A style classique...

From the white dress she wore as an early starlet to her lavenderish outfit in the opening sequence of “The Muppet Show,” puppet diva Miss Piggy shows sack dresses can indeed be stylish.

From flapper girls and disco dresses to slinky gowns and simple bridal wear, sack dresses are great for just about any form-fitting style. As with most costumes, the fabric you choose will have the greatest impact on how the dress looks, but the length is important too.

Make the "sack"

1. Cut a rectangle from your chosen fabric that is wide enough to wrap around your puppet's body with a few inches to spare (the wider you make it, the baggier the dress will be), and long enough to reach from just under the puppet's arms to about three inches past where you want the bottom hem.

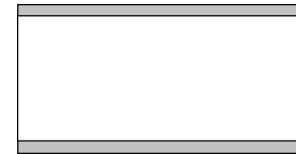


2. Cut another rectangle the same width but about two inches shorter to make the lining.

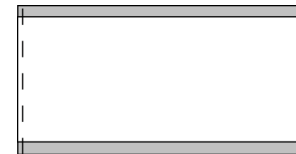
3. Place the fabric and lining rectangles right sides together, then stitch them together along the top and bottom (long) edges. It's okay for the dress fabric to bag out a little.



4. Reach inside and turn the material right side out like you would a pillowcase. Since the lining is shorter, the dress material will fold itself under a little bit (automatic hems!)



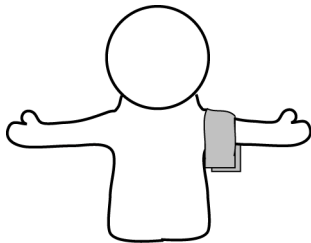
5. Baste the ends of the sack shut, making sure to catch both the dress fabric and the lining.



You can put a zipper (or other fastener) in the dress by following the instructions in the chapter "Zippers, buttons, & more."

Make the sleeves

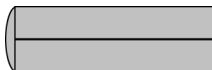
1. Cut two fabric rectangles (twice as wide as you want the sleeves plus half an inch) that are long enough to loop over your puppet's shoulder from an inch below the arm in front to an inch below the arm in back.



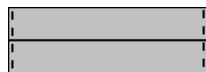
2. Fold each rectangle in half widthwise right sides together, then stitch the edge opposite the fold closed.



3. Turn both rectangles right side out (using the Nifty Safety Pin Trick), adjust them so that the seam is in the middle of the sleeve, and iron them flat.

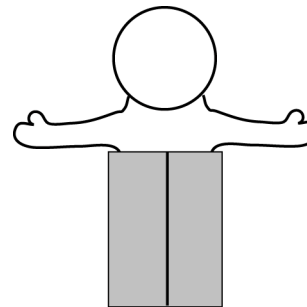


4. Baste the ends of each sleeve closed.

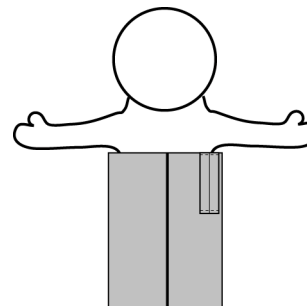


Attach the sleeves

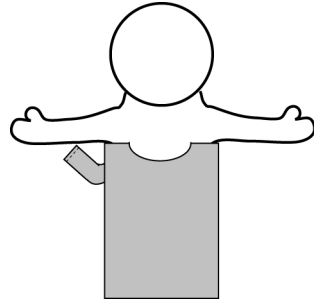
1. Slide your puppet into the dress so that the top is just below your puppet's arms. Line up the zipper (or other fastener) with the middle of the puppet's back, and smooth the extra fabric to the front of the dress. (This may be easier if you pin the dress to the puppet first to hold it in place.)



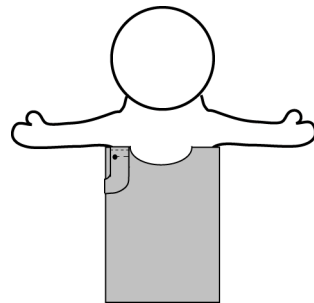
2. Place one of the sleeves on the back of the dress with the seam facing up. Match up one of the basted edges with the top of the dress, and pin the sleeve close to the edge of your puppet's body.



3. Loop the loose end of the sleeve under the puppet's arm to the front of the sack.

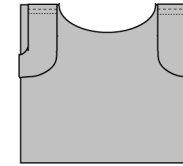


4. Keeping the extra sack fabric smoothed out of the way, match up the basted edge of the sleeve with the top edge of the sack front, pinning it close to the edge of your puppet's body.



5. Pin the other sleeve to the other side of the sack in the same way. Most of the extra sack material should end up in a pile between the two sleeves.

6. Carefully remove the dress from your puppet, then stitch both sleeves to the sack in front and in back just a hair below the basting line.

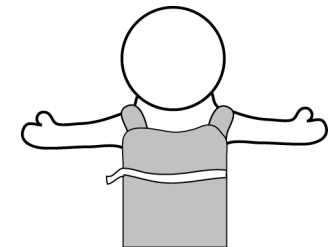


Turn the sleeves right side up. (Starting to look like a dress, isn't it?)

Make the waistband

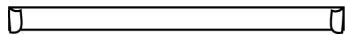
The waistband is what really pulls this dress together. You can make one using the same technique you used to make the sleeves (page 74), or you can use a ribbon or piece of lace trim. In any case, the waistband should be long enough to wrap around your puppet's waist with just about an inch to spare.

For hand puppets (especially those that don't have legs), you may want to put the waistband higher up.

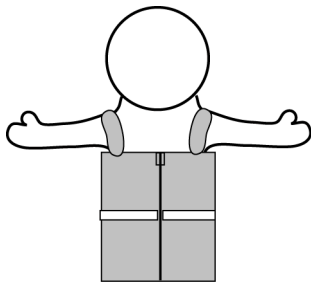


Attach the waistband

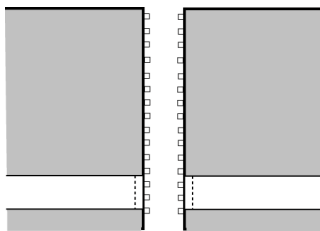
1. With the wrong side of the waistband facing up, fold the short ends of the waistband over a quarter of an inch and iron them flat.



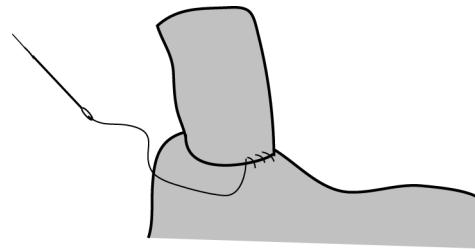
2. Wrap the waistband snugly around the dress at the height you want the puppet's waist (this should be a little higher for legless puppets) so that the ends are lined up with, but not overlapping, the zipper.



3. Unzip the zipper and stitch the waistband to the sack.



4. Arrange the extra material on the front of the dress until you get it the way you like. You may need to stitch it to the waistband and sleeves here and there to hold it in place. (This will be easiest if you stitch only the inner layers whenever possible. For information on hand stitching, please see pages 25-28.)



Congratulations!

You've finished the sack dress!
(Give yourself a hand.)

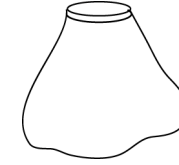
Variations & tips

By making the sack dress very short, you can use it as a dress top or shirt.





Skirts



Piece by piece

One of the easiest ways to make a skirt is to use sections that are about three times wider at the bottom than they are at the top (like triangles with the top point cut off). This gives the skirt flow while keeping the waist smooth. You can make this type of skirt long or short, full or sleek. How wide the skirt ends up depends upon how many sections you use (even numbers work best) and on how much wider the bottom of each section is than the top.

What you need

- ✂ Paper
- ✂ Fabric
- ✂ Matching thread
- ✂ Lining fabric

To figure out how much fabric you need, make the section pattern according to the directions on pages 78-79. You need enough fabric to cut out however many sections you've chosen to use, plus a little extra.

How many sections?

- ✂ Glinda, Bo Peep/Princess — 2
- ✂ Fortune teller — 4
- ✂ Carmen Miranda, dirndl — 6
- ✂ Flying maid, cheerleader — 8
- ✂ Dorothy/Little Red — 12


In most cases, 6-8 sections work best, since very few sections can be hard to manage, while too many sections become tedious to sew. With narrowly striped or gingham fabric, you can use many narrow sections to create a pleated look (like the “Dorothy” dress).

(Don't forget to plan for extra fabric if you want to make a matching top!) You also need at least as much lining material as fabric—more if you want to make lots of layers of underskirting.


You can attach the skirt to any kind of top you want—even to the basic sack dress made waist-length instead of dress-length. (For more dress ideas, please see the “Dresses & jumpers” chapter.) And, besides making a pretty dress on its own, you can also make the skirt just out of lining material to get a flowy, petticoat-like slip for your puppet to wear with any outfit needing a lot of poof.

Start with measurements


1. Measure your puppet's waist.
(I'll use 16" as an example.)
2. To figure the width of the top of each section, divide the waist measurement by the number of sections you plan to use. (For example, 8.)

 EXAMPLE $16 \div 8 = 2$ inches


3. To find the bottom width, multiply the top width (result of step 2) by 3.

 EXAMPLE $2 \times 3 = 6$ inches
--

4. Add half an inch (for seam allowance!) to the top and bottom widths (results of steps 2 and 3).

 EXAMPLE $2 + 0.5 = 2.5$ inches $6 + 0.5 = 6.5$ inches

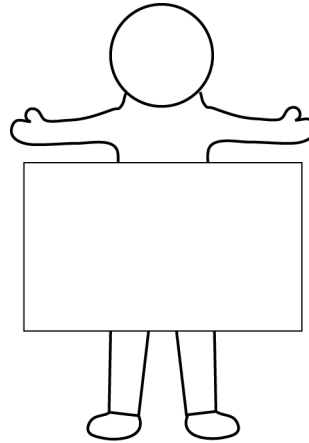
5. Divide the results of step 4 in half. This is the measurement you use in making the skirt pattern.

 EXAMPLE $2.5 \div 2 = 1.25$ inches $6.5 \div 2 = 3.25$ inches
--

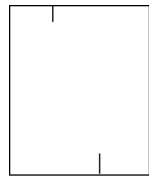
That wasn't so bad, was it? Now that you've got your puppet's measurements in hand, you can use them to make a pattern.

Make the pattern

Get a piece of paper that's at least as wide as the bottom section measurement (or tape several pieces of paper together) and cut it so that it's about two inches longer than the distance from your puppet's waist to where you want the bottom of the skirt.

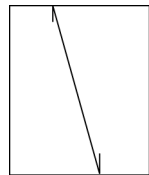


1. Fold the paper in half widthwise.

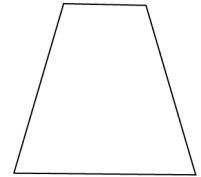


2. Starting from the fold, mark the distance of the top and bottom widths (step 4 of previous section) at the top and bottom of the paper.

3. Connect these two points with a straight line.



4. Cut along this line, unfold the paper, and you've got yourself a skirt pattern!

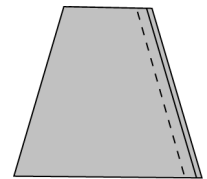


With another piece of paper, cut a lining pattern identical to the first section pattern except an inch and a half shorter.

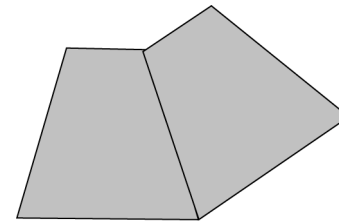
Sew the skirt

Using your respective pattern pieces, cut the number of sections you've chosen to use out of dress fabric, and an equal number out of lining material.

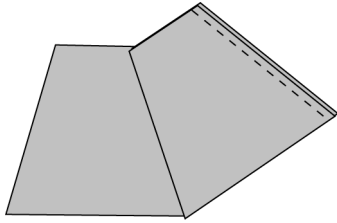
1. Match up two of the dress sections right sides together, then stitch them together along the long edge.



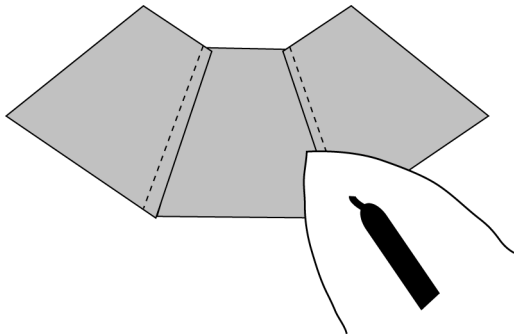
2. Unfold the sections you just stitched.



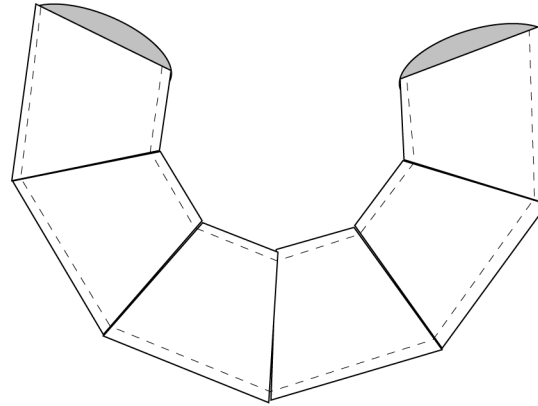
3. Place another dress section right side down on top of one of these sections, matching up and stitching the (unsewn) long edges.



4. Unfold this added section, and keep adding and stitching dress sections together in this way (right sides together!) until they form a continuous string.
5. Set the dress sections aside, and stitch all the lining sections together in the same way. When you're finished, iron all the seams flat.



6. Place the dress sections and lining sections right sides together, then stitch them together along the top and bottom. It's okay for the dress fabric to bag out a bit.



7. Reach into the skirt and turn it right side out like you would a pillowcase.

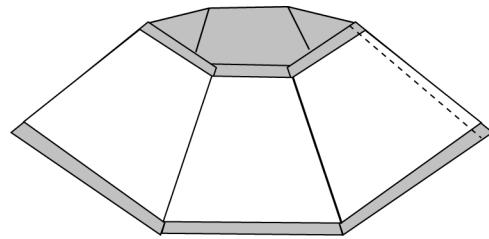
Because the lining is shorter, the dress fabric should fold itself under a little bit. (Automatic hems—wow!)

Finish the skirt

NOTE: If you want to attach the skirt to a top, you may want to do that before sewing it shut. This will allow you to put a zipper in both the top and the skirt in one fell swoop. (For more information and ideas, please turn to the “Dresses & jumpers” chapter.)

To finish the skirt without fasteners:

1. Fold the skirt in half widthwise so that the dress fabric is on the inside, then stitch the edge opposite the fold shut. If you are making the skirt for a hand puppet and the skirt is a lot longer than your puppet's body, you need to leave an open space in this seam so you can slide your hand into the puppet without hiking up its dress.



2. Turn the skirt right side out.

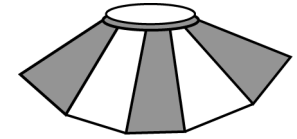
It should now look like a skirt!

Variations & tips

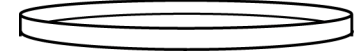
- ✂ For a finished, professional look, you can attach the skirt to a waistband (page 113). Remember to sew the band to the skirt right sides together!



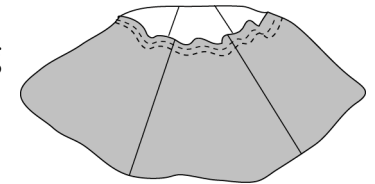
- ✂ To make a whimsical or cheerleader skirt, try alternating sections with contrasting fabrics.

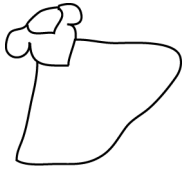


- ✂ If you want a skirt that really has shape, use a boning hoop. Boning is a thin strip of plastic covered by a sheath of fabric, or a single strip of stiff polyester. It's sold by the yard in most fabric stores. Just cut the boning to the same width as the bottom of the skirt, and before you sew the ends of the skirt shut, insert the boning in between the lining and the skirt fabric. You may want to hand stitch it to the lining here and there to hold it in place. (See page 25 for hand stitching information.)



- ✂ For a full or ruffled skirt, you can use the gathering technique discussed on page 22. Just make the top of each skirt section an inch or two wider than normal, but make the lining sections normal size. Once you have all the skirt sections sewn together, gather them until they match up with the lining sections. Then sew the skirt together as usual.





Dresses & jumpers



What type of top?

- ✧ Carmen Miranda — jumper
- ✧ Bo Peep/Princess — jumper
- ✧ Dutch girl — jumper
- ✧ Cheerleader — vest
- ✧ Little Red/Dorothy — suit
- ✧ Bride/Ginger Rogers — sack
- ✧ Glinda — suit
- ✧ French maid — shirt

You can learn more about all these tops on page 83. (The dresses not listed are “Cinderella’s sack dresses”—see page 72.)

Shirts into dresses

By combining outfits like shirts with skirts, you can create not “shirts,” but dresses. (Amazing!?) This chapter doesn’t explain how to make shirts and skirts, but it does explain how to put them together—and why you might want to consider doing so.

To dress or not to dress?

No, I don’t mean to ask whether or not your puppet should get dressed. (Obviously I’m all for that—if I weren’t, I wouldn’t be writing a costuming book!) What I mean is: Sometimes it’s very convenient to have a complete dress in one piece. For example, you may want to put a single zipper through both top and skirt for easy changing (as for the Dorothy of Oz/Little Red Riding Hood dress). For other outfits (like the Dutch girl blouse and jumper), you may wish to leave the top and bottom separate so you can use them over and over again with several different costumes.

And this doesn’t have to be limited to dresses, either. As with the Juggling Jester on the front cover (or Cowardly Lion on the back), you can sew a pair of pants to a top to create rompers too. (In most cases, however, it’s more useful to leave the pants separate.)

Types of tops

You can use any of the “Shirts & robes,” “Suits & coats,” “Vests,” or even “Cinderella’s sack dresses” as dress tops. But you may need to make them a little shorter than usual. While shirts and suits generally cover the puppet’s entire torso (and sack dresses cover much of the body), outfits used for tops reach only to the waistline. When in doubt, it’s better to make the top too long and trim it down later.

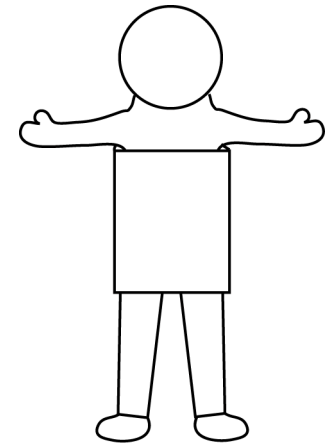
Jumper tops—the wraparound

These types of tops work really well for flat-bodied puppets. If you have a more shapely puppet, you can use the traditional tops listed above, or the top from the next section, “Jumper tops—the half wraparound.”

Wrap-around jumper tops are actually sort of a simpler, shorter version of “Cinderella’s sack dresses.” I’ve used them for the lavender Bo Peep/Princess jumper on the front covers. By making the top extra long and gathering the top and bottom edges (page 22), I even created a ruffled bikini top for the Carmen Miranda dress!

To make a wrap-around jumper top...

1. Cut a rectangle of fabric that’s twice as tall as you want the top (plus 1/2”) and wide enough to wrap comfortably around your puppet’s upper body with enough extra room for fasteners (see page 44).



2. Fold the fabric in half right sides together and stitch along the side edges.



3. Turn the top right side out (you may need a blunt object, like a pen, to get the corners out) and iron it flat. Stitch along the bottom edge. (It doesn’t matter that the stitches show, since they’ll be covered up when you attach the top to a skirt.)



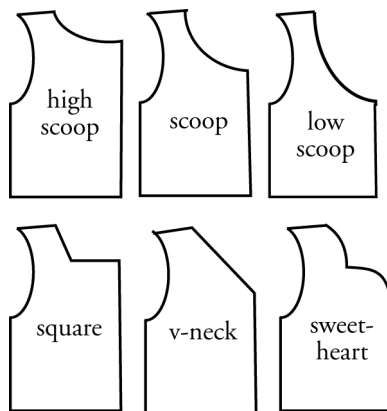
If you want to put a single fastener (like a zipper) in both the top and skirt, it’s easiest to “Attach the top and skirt” first (page 87). For fastener instructions, see the chapter “Zippers, buttons, & more.” If your puppet doesn’t need any fasteners, you can simply fold the jumper top in half (right sides together!) and sew the back shut. Once you have the top completed, you can “Add straps” by following the directions on page 86.

Jumper tops—the half wraparound

Unlike full wrap-around jumper tops, the half wrap-arounds work well for any type of puppet. They're also a little more shapely, and allow a greater variety of necklines. (The Dutch girl on the front cover has this type of top.)

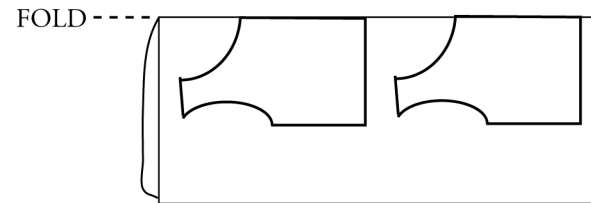
To make a half wrap-around jumper top, you need a “Basic pattern front” from page 38 and enough fabric to cut out four of these pieces. (If you're running short on fabric, two of the pattern fronts can be cut from a lightweight, light colored fabric to make the lining.) You also need enough fabric to cover your puppet's back *twice*.

Once you have the basic pattern front ready, you can adjust the neckline to suit the style you want. (Scoop necks work particularly well for jumpers.)

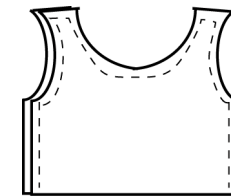


To make the front of the jumper top:

1. Fold your fabric in half right sides together and place the pattern on it *with the inside edge against the fold*. Cut out two pieces of fabric this way (one for the outside, one for the lining.)



2. Unfold your fabric and lining pieces and place them right sides together. Stitch the fabric and lining together along all edges except the bottom.

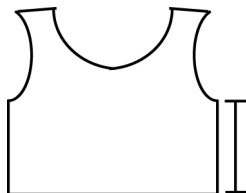


3. Turn the fabric right side out (using a blunt object to turn the corners if necessary) and iron it flat.

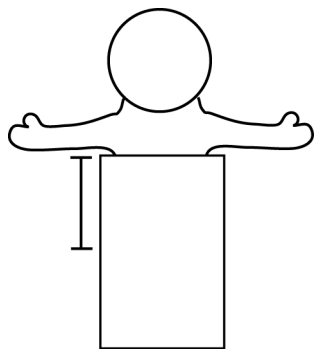
Now that you have the front section done, you have a choice about how you want to make the back—in one piece with no fasteners (coming up next), or in two pieces with fasteners (as described on page 85). Fasteners are quite handy for a tight fitting outfit, but for a fairly loose jumper, you probably don't need fasteners, especially if you make the straps button in the back.

To make the back of the jumper top with **NO** fasteners:

1. Measure the side of the jumper front under the armhole.



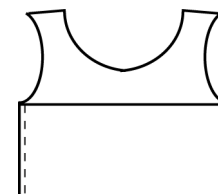
2. Cut a rectangle of fabric that's twice as tall as this measurement, and wide enough to cover your puppet's back plus an inch or so.



3. Fold the fabric in half heightwise *wrong sides together* and stitch along both sides.



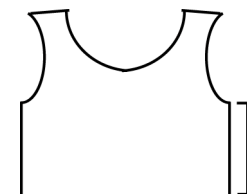
4. Place the fabric against the jumper front right sides together and stitch them together along the sides.



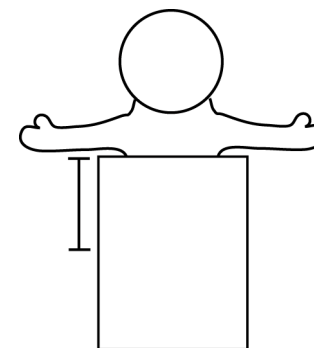
Turn the jumper right side out, and you're ready to "Add straps" and "Attach the top and skirt!" (See page 86.)

To make the back of the jumper **WITH** fasteners:

1. Measure the side of the jumper front under the armhole.



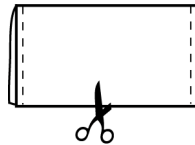
2. Cut a rectangle of fabric that's twice as tall as this measurement, and wide enough to cover your puppet's back plus 2-3" (depending on the type of fastener you want—see page 44).



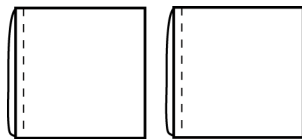
3. Fold the fabric in half heightwise *right sides together* and stitch along the two side edges.



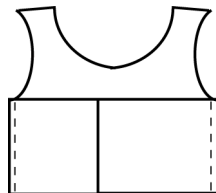
4. Cut the fabric in half down the middle.



5. Turn each piece right side out and iron it flat, then stitch along the open side of each piece.



6. Place the stitched side of the pieces against the sides of the jumper front (right sides together). Then stitch the jumper front and back together.



If you want to put a single fastener (like a zipper) in both the top and skirt, it's easiest to "Attach the top and skirt" first (page 87). For fastener instructions, see the chapter "Zippers, buttons, & more."

Once you have the top completed, you're ready to "Add straps!"

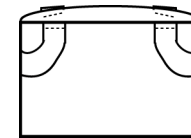
Add straps

1. To make straps for the jumper top, follow the directions on page 113. Make sure each strap is long enough to wrap from the front of your puppet's jumper top over its shoulder to the back of the jumper, plus an inch or so for seam allowance.



2. Put the jumper top on your puppet to decide where to position the straps.

3. Remove the top from your puppet and sew the straps to the top right sides together.



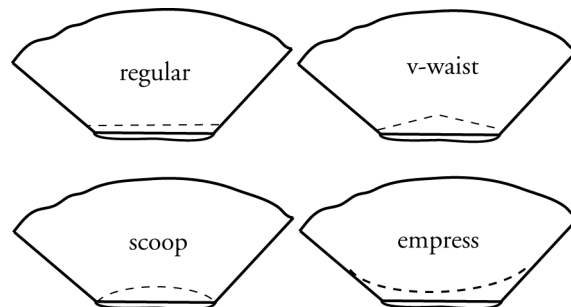
To get your puppet's jumper on and off more easily, you can put a buttonhole in one end of the strap and a button on the inside of the jumper where you want the strap to attach. (See page 33 for more information on buttons and buttonholes.)



Attach the top and skirt

Whether you're creating a dress or a jumper, you need to be able to attach the top to the skirt.

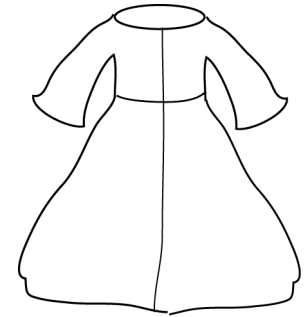
1. Place the top and skirt right sides together and pin them together. Depending on how you position the top, you can create different waistlines. (For legless hand puppets, you may want to make the waistline higher than normal to allow the skirt to show.)



2. Stitch the top and skirt together, removing the pins as you go.
3. Turn the top right side up and you're finished!

Dresses as robes

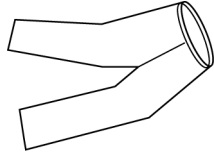
As mentioned in the “Shirts & robes” chapter, you can make simple robes just by extending the length of a shirt (or suit) pattern. But for really full robes, you need a top attached to a skirt. You can make the top of the robe just like a normal shirt (or suit) and attach a skirt to it by following the directions in the previous section, “Attach the top and skirt.”



Gathered skirts made from relatively few sections work especially well for flowing robes. (See the “Skirts” chapter for more information.)

A reminder on style

The Glinda and Dorothy dresses on the back of this book don't look much alike, but with a closer look, you can see that they're both a top (a “suit”) attached to a skirt, made almost exactly the same way. This goes back to the true key of costuming—it only takes slight variations in style (and in fabric!) to make a great variety of outfits. These few basic choices—what kind of fabric, what kind of sleeves, what length of skirt, what kind of embellishments—do a lot to enhance the breadth of your puppet's wardrobe.



Pants



Pants for all puppets

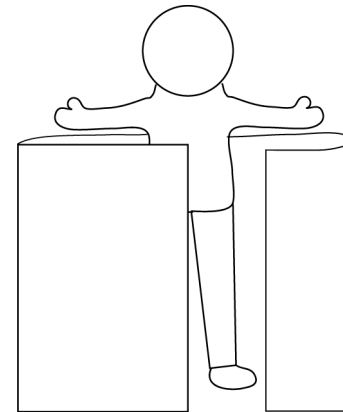
All puppets can wear pants! With the directions in this chapter, you can make pants for full-bodied marionettes and hand puppets, ventriloquist characters, even puppets that need an opening in the seat of their pants for your hand to go through. And you can make suspenders to make sure those pants stay in place during performances (see page 95). Even *legless* puppets can wear simple pants, overalls, or even lederhosen (page 96).

Other uses for pants

By varying the length (and the fabric!) of the pants, you can make shorts, undergarments, even pajama bottoms. You can also vary the width of the legs to make tight pants, bellbottoms... even the baggy pants of the jester on the front cover.

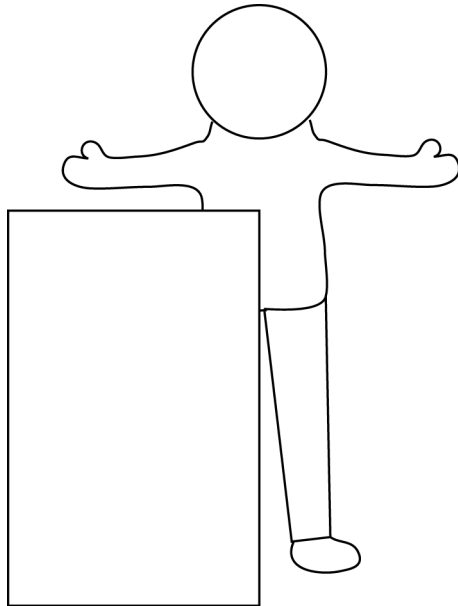
What you need

- ✧ Fabric (enough to wrap around your puppet's body *twice*, covering at least an inch or two above its waist to an inch or two below its ankles)
- ✧ Matching thread
- ✧ Small fasteners (optional) like snaps, buttons, velcro, or hooks & eyes (see the chapter "Zippers, buttons, & more" for fastener information)



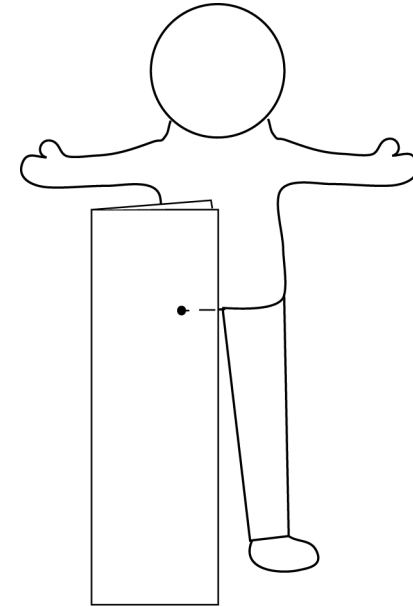
Make the pant legs

1. Cut a rectangle wide enough to wrap comfortably around your puppet's leg. (The wider the rectangle, the baggier the pants will be.) The rectangle should extend from an inch or two above your puppet's waist to an inch or two below its ankles.

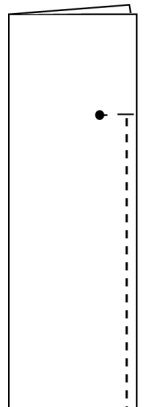


2. Cut another rectangle the same size as the first.
3. Fold one rectangle in half lengthwise right sides together.

4. Place the folded rectangle on your puppet's body. Put a pin through both layers of fabric (but not your puppet!) where your puppet's legs and body meet.



5. Take the folded rectangle off your puppet, and, beginning at the pin, stitch the edge opposite the fold closed. The area above the pin should remain open. Once you have finished stitching, you can remove the pin and turn the fabric right side out.
6. Repeat steps 4-5 for the other rectangle, and you've completed the pant legs!

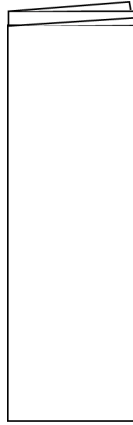


Attach the pant legs together

To turn the pant legs into pants, you need to sew the top part of the two legs together.

1. Place the pant legs right sides together so that the unstitched areas lie on top of each other.
2. Stitch together the top section of the *inner layers only*, leaving the outer two layers unstitched.

You've completed the front of the pants! How you finish the back depends on your type of puppet. For puppets who do NOT need an opening in the seat of their pants, follow the directions under "Finish the back of the pants (no opening)." For puppets who do need an opening (like many hand puppets), SKIP the next section and go on to "Finish the back of the pants (with opening)."

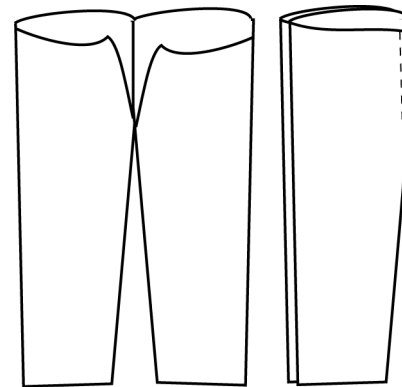


Finish the back of the pants (no opening)

To get your puppet in and out of its pants more easily, you may want to insert a fastener. Fasteners are extremely useful for puppets whose waists are smaller than their hips (like many marionettes), but aren't really necessary for straight-bodied puppets (like many hand puppets).

If you want to insert a fastener in the back of the pants, now's the time to do so. See the chapter "Zippers, buttons, & more."

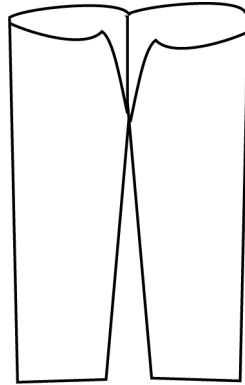
To finish the back of the pants without a fastener, turn the pants inside out, then stitch the back flaps right sides together. (This is easiest if you fold the pants in half, one leg on top of the other.)



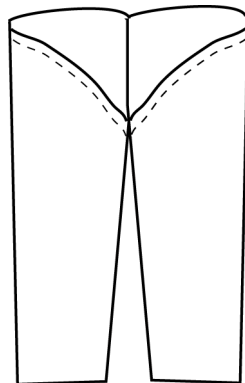
Now that you've got the back all sewn up, it's time to "Finish the ends of the pants" and "Fit the pants to your puppet."

Finish the back of the pants (with opening)

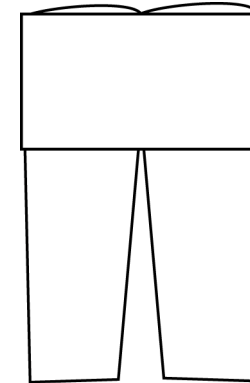
1. Once you have finished stitching the front of the pant legs together (as directed in “Attach the pant legs together”), unfold the pants and turn them over.



2. Fold the back flaps under and stitch along the folds.



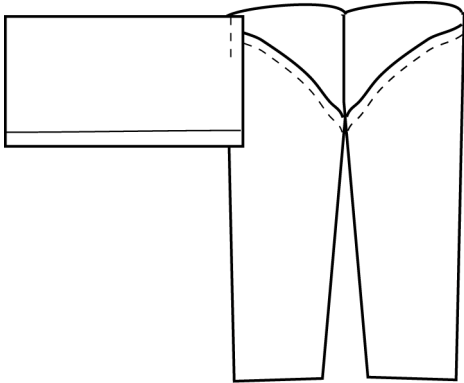
3. Cut a rectangle of fabric that's about an inch wider than the pants and long enough to cover the opening with an inch to spare.



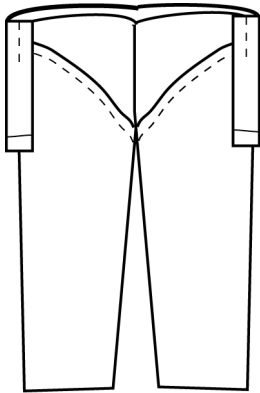
4. Turn the bottom and side edges of this piece of fabric under 1/4", iron them flat if needed, and turn them under another 1/4". Then stitch along the edges.



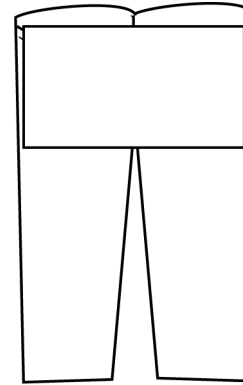
5. Place the fabric right side down against the back of the pants, close to the edge. Stitch the top of the fabric to the pants.



6. Wrap the fabric rectangle around the front of the pants (this may squish the pants a bit, but that's okay). Place the edge of the fabric (right side down) on the edge of the back of the pants and stitch.



7. Flip the rectangle over so it covers the opening in the back of the pants.

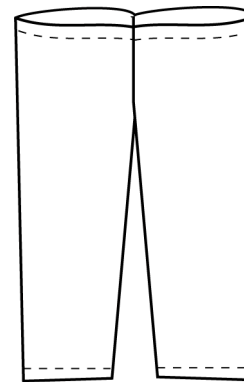


You now have a covered opening you can get your hand through to work your puppet!

Finish the ends of the pants

If you sew as accurately as I do, you may need to even off the top of the pants with a scissors first.

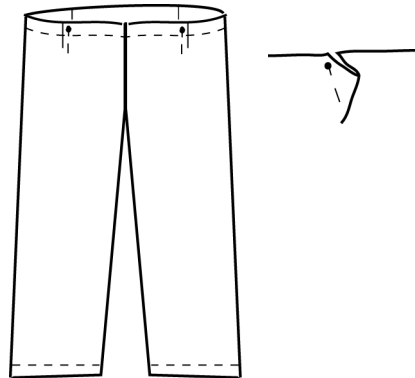
1. Hem the top of the pants.
(See page 21 for instructions.)
2. Do the same for the bottom of each pant leg.



Fit the pants to your puppet

Once you've "finished" the pants, you may need to adjust them here and there to fit them to your puppet. Maybe the hips are too wide or the waist needs slimming. You can fix this by putting "tucks" in the waist.

1. Turn the pants inside out and put them on your puppet. Pinch the fabric to form a small triangle (a tuck), and put a pin through the fabric. See how this makes the pants tighter? Add more tucks around the pants as evenly spread as possible.

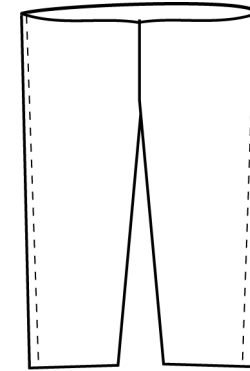


2. Remove the pants from your puppet and stitch along the inner edge of each tuck.

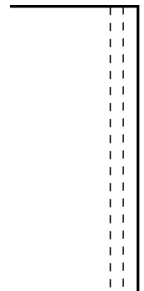


That's it! Once you turn the pants right side out, the tuck won't really show.

To make the legs of the pants less baggy, you can turn the pants *inside out* and stitch along the outer edges of the legs.



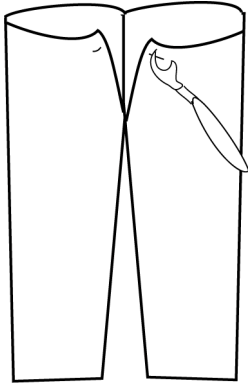
For even more drastic adjustments, you may need to turn the pants inside out and restitch some (or all) of the seams further inward. Just remember that a little goes a long way. Try stitching just a little bit further in than the original seam, then try the pants on your puppet again.



To make the pants wider, you can add extra fabric at the seam in the back.

To widen pants with no opening in the back:

1. Remove the stitches in the top section of the back of the pants with a seam ripper.



2. Cut a rectangle of fabric that's wide enough to extend the pants sufficiently plus 1/2", and long enough to cover the opening in the pants plus 1/2".



3. Hem the top edge of the rectangle by folding it under 1/4" and ironing it flat. Fold the edge under another 1/4" and stitch along the edge.



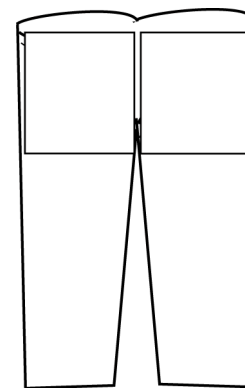
4. Turn the pants inside out and place the rectangle on top of the opened seam (right sides together!). Stitch it to the edges of the pants on both sides, then trim off any extra fabric.



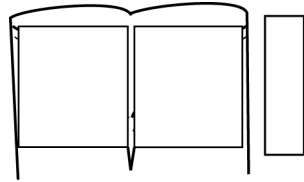
5. Turn the pants right side out and try them on your puppet again! (They should fit better this time.)

To widen pants with an opening, all you really need to widen is the opening's cover. You can either remove the cover and replace it with a wider one, or you can add a strip of fabric to the existing one.

1. To add a strip of fabric to the existing cover, cut the cover in half down the middle.

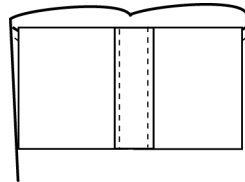
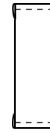


2. Cut a piece of fabric wide enough to extend the pants sufficiently, and as tall as the cover plus 1/2".



3. Hem the top and bottom edges of the fabric.

4. Turn the pants inside out and place the fabric right sides together against the cut edges of the pants cover. Then stitch them together along the edges.



5. Turn the pants right side out and try them on your puppet again. (They should fit better this time!)

Keep those pants up

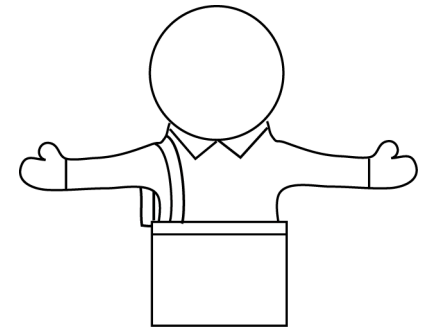
Once you've made such beautiful pants, you want to make sure they stay on your puppet. Hand puppets, in particular, tend to have flat, waistless figures that allow the pants to slide off way too easily.

Since belts don't work well for puppets (especially those that don't have waists to start with), I recommend the classic pants keeper-upper, suspenders.

These suspenders can go under your puppet's shirt (where they won't show) or they can go on the outside. Make sure to choose a light color (like white) if you don't want them to show. You can sew the suspenders to the pants or attach them with safety pins.

You can make the suspenders out of ribbon, or you can make them out of fabric:

1. Cut two pieces of fabric long enough to wrap over your puppet's shoulder from the front of the pants to the back of the pants plus 1/2". They should be twice as wide as you want the finished suspenders plus 1/2".

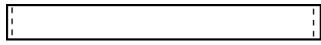


2. Fold each piece of fabric in half lengthwise right sides together and stitch the edge opposite the fold.



Pants

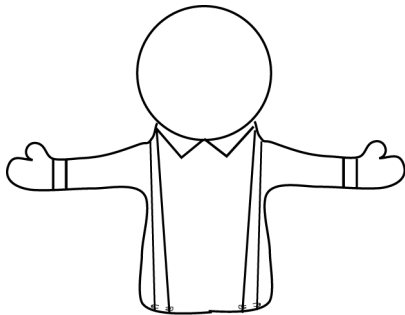
3. Turn the fabric right side out using the “Nifty safety pin trick” from page 29, and iron it flat.
4. Tuck the ends of the fabric inside the suspender (so you won’t have any loose ends to ravel), then iron and stitch the ends flat.



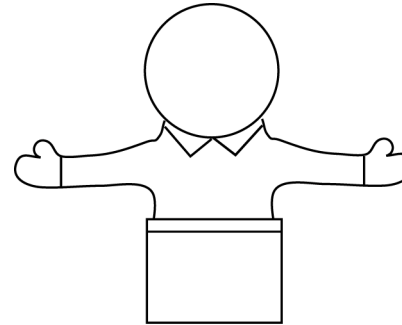
5. Make a second suspender the same way.

Pants for legless puppets

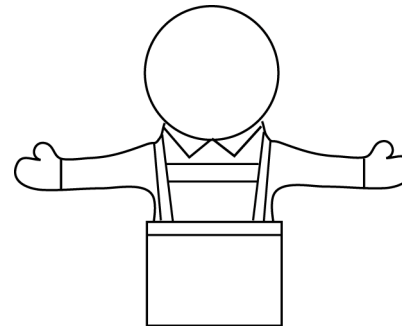
Why put pants on a legless puppet? Puppets without legs (like many hand puppets) often need the illusion of legs, and they also need more shape in their costumes. Pants can do both! You actually don’t need real pants, just their appearance. This can be as easy as making suspenders (as described in the previous section) and safety pinning them to your puppet’s shirt.



For a more sophisticated legless look, you can wrap a piece of fabric around your puppet’s lower body. Just hem the top fabric to give it a nice, finished edge. (See page 21 for instructions.) You can even add suspenders, if you like.

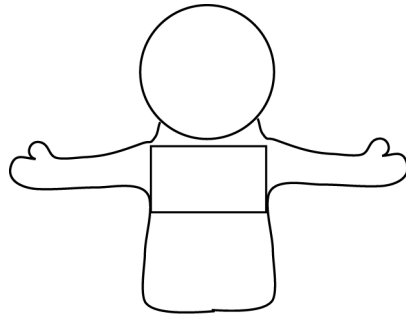


By adding an extra piece of fabric between suspenders, you can even make lederhosen! Just use the same basic recipe as for the suspenders themselves (page 95) only shorter. Then sew the fabric to the suspenders right sides together.

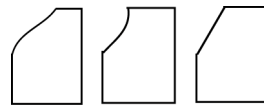


You can even turn your puppet's pants into overalls by adding a top:

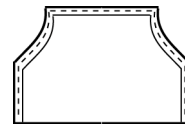
1. Cut a piece of fabric about as wide as your puppet's chest and as tall as you want the overall bib plus 1".



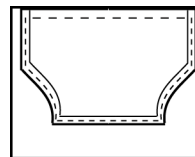
2. Fold the fabric in half widthwise. Trim the edge opposite the fold to the shape of your choice. (Remember to leave 1/2" extra for hem allowance.)



3. Unfold the fabric and hem the top and side edges. (See page 21 for hemming instructions.)



4. Place the overall bib and the pants right sides together, lining up the lower edge of the overalls with the waist of the pants. Then stitch them together.

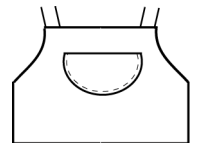


5. Make the straps according to the suspender directions on page 95. You can sew them to the overalls right sides together, or you can use a fastener like snaps, buttons, or velcro. (See the chapter "Zippers, buttons, & more" for directions.)

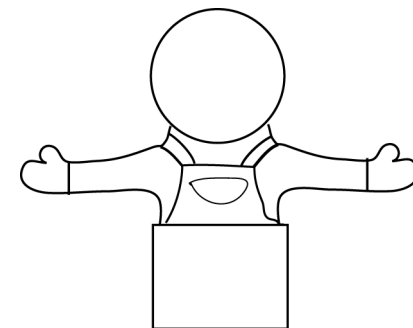
If you want to add a pocket, cut a piece of fabric to the right shape and size, hem the top edge, and fold all the other edges under 1/4". (You may need to snip the edge here and there to get it to turn.)

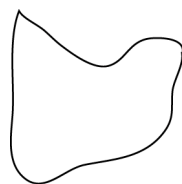


Iron the edges firmly, then place the pocket on the overall bib and stitch around all the edges except the top. (Since these stitches show, make sure to use thread that matches the fabric.)



And the overalls are finished!





Capes



The great puppet capers

What do magicians, musketeers, Superman, Zoro, and Little Red Riding Hood all have in common? You guessed it—capes! Capes can add dramatic effect to any puppet's stage presence, especially entrances and exits. Making a cape is a lot like making a pillowcase, so you only need a few materials.

What you need

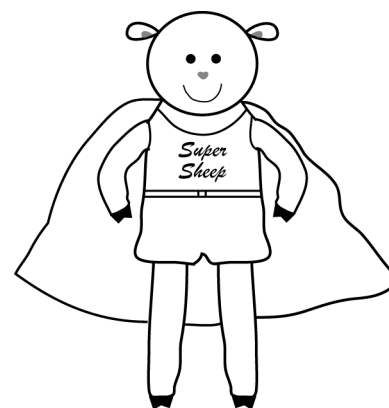
- ✂ Large rectangle of fabric
(at least twice as much as the size of the finished cape)
- ✂ Matching thread
- ✂ Safety pins (optional)

If you want to add a hood to your cape (see page 107), you need extra fabric for that too.

Why use two layers?

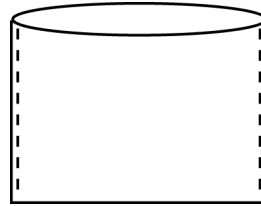
Since both sides of a cape show, you generally want both sides to look equally nice.

For a simple cape, you can choose a soft fabric that doesn't ravel (like fleece) and just cut it to size. That way, you don't have to sew anything! You can attach the cape to your puppet's costume using the guidelines on page 99.



Make the cape

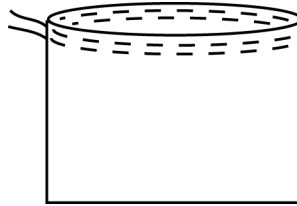
1. Fold the fabric in half right sides together.



2. Stitch along the edges perpendicular to the fold, leaving the edge opposite the fold open.

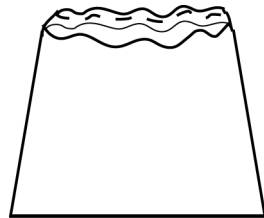
3. Turn the fabric right side out.

4. Gather the open edges of the fabric (using the directions on page 22), making sure that you *do not sew the layers together*.

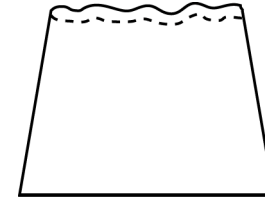


Close the cape

1. Once you've finished gathering both layers of the cape, fold both gathered edges inside the cape so the basting no longer shows.



2. Pin these edges together, then stitch the cape shut with a matching colored thread.



Add a hood (optional)

If you want to make a hood for the cape, see the directions on page 107 of the “Hats” chapter. Once you've completed the hood, you can stitch it to the top of the cape (right sides together!) or you can make it removable by attaching it with safety pins (see page 100 for guidelines).

Attach the cape

You can either attach the cape to an outfit using strategically placed safety pins (making the cape removable for use with other costumes), or you can attach it permanently by sewing it on.

Either way, the cape's primary attachment should be in front of your puppet's shoulders. This helps prevent the cape from dragging down the back of your puppet's

costume, and allows the puppet (and hence, your arm) to carry the weight of the cape more easily.



Safety pin method

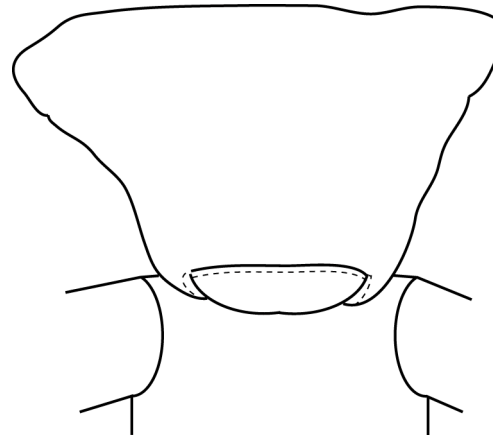
To get the best results from safety pins:

- ✂ Use many small safety pins rather than a few large ones, since large pins can leave awkward gaps.
- ✂ Start the pin from the inside of the costume.
- ✂ Avoid pinning through the top outside layer as much as possible. (This is easy with capes, since the cape has two layers.)

- ✂ Start by pinning the “stress” points (the ones that carry the weight of the costume), then work on filling in the gaps. (For capes, start with the front of the shoulders—the cape’s main attachment—and the middle of the back. Then pin the rest of the edges.)
- ✂ If at first you don’t succeed, pin, pin again!

Sewing method

Once you have the cape positioned on the costume (as directed in the “Attach the cape” section on page 99), pin the cape to the costume. Stitch them together, and you’re ready to fly! (Or at least your puppet is...)





Hats

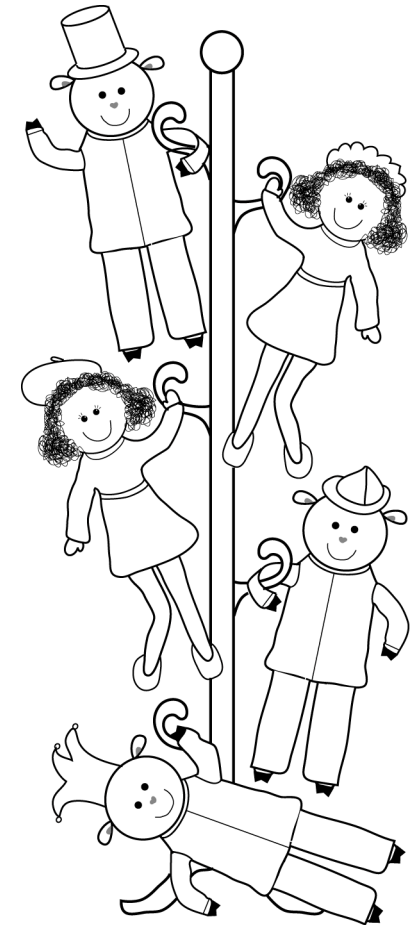


Top it off

Hats can be costumes of their own. Put a red helmet on your puppet, and poof! You've got a firefighter! A police officer, a cab driver, a sailor, a painter, a chef...the list goes on and on. After years of costuming, I'm totally convinced there's no simpler way to create many types of characters than through hats. And they're especially useful when you need to throw together a skit in a hurry. You don't always have time to make costumes from top to bottom, and when that happens, I recommend that you start at the top. (Oh yes...they're also useful for completing the look of a costume too.)

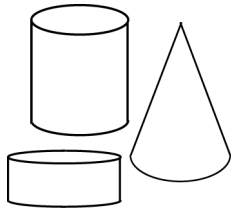
Hat making can get quite complicated—it's really a craft of its own—but you can make simple hats without much trouble at all. The main types of hats covered this chapter include:

- ✂ **Tube hats** (like top hats, boaters, jester hats, and crowns)
- ✂ **Gathered hats** (like bonnets, berets, and chef's hats)
- ✂ **"Soft shape" hats** (like Dutch caps, rainhats, woodsman and detective hats, and fire helmets)
- ✂ **Hoods** (like Little Red riding hoods and astronaut and knight helmets)



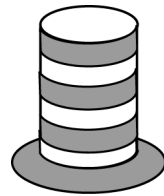
Tube hats

Tube hats work well for top hats, boaters, jester hats, crowns, and the lower parts of chefs' hats. You can get a lot of different styles just by varying the height and shape of the tube. And by cutting the edge of the tube at an angle, you can even make cone-shaped hats like those of the princess and Tin Woodsman.



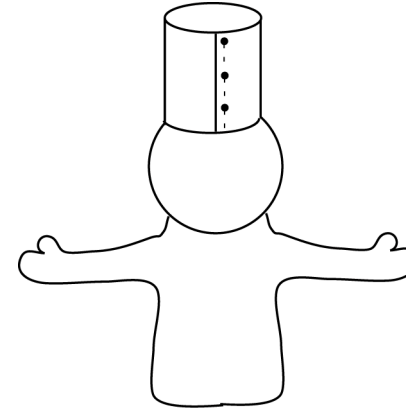
The easiest way to give the hat the stiffness it needs is to make it from felt. Since felt only comes in a limited number of colors, you may want to cover the felt with fabric (as explained in step 3).

For a whimsical effect (like a jester hat), you can use one kind of fabric for the inside of the hat, and a contrasting fabric for the outside. By using striped fabric (or sewing together pieces of contrasting fabric), you can even make a "Cat in the Hat" hat.



Make the tube

1. Cut a rectangle from felt that's as tall as you want the hat (plus 1/4" if you plan to add a top, and another 1/4" if you want to add a brim) and wide enough to fit comfortably atop your puppet's head when the ends of the rectangle are pinned together.



2. For crowns and jester hats, you can cut the top of the rectangle into points.



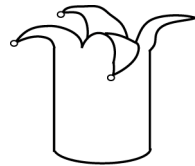
3. If you want to cover the felt, cut two identical rectangles from fabric. Sandwich the felt between the two pieces of fabric, with the right sides of the fabric facing out. Then stitch (or zig-zag stitch) them together along the edges using a matching colored thread.



4. Fold the rectangle in half right sides together and stitch the edge opposite the fold closed.



For crowns, just turn the tube right side out and you're done! By putting weights (like bells) on the ends of the points, you can make the hat curl down for a jester look.

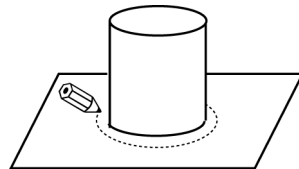


For tops hats, boaters, and the like, continue on with the directions "Add a top (optional)" and "Add a brim (optional)".

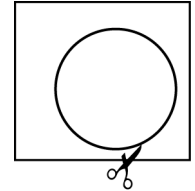
To make a chef's hat, skip to the "Gathered hats" directions on page 105.

Add a top (optional)

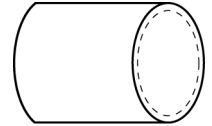
1. Place the end of the tube on a piece of paper and trace around it, about 1/4" away from the edge of the fabric.



2. Cut out the paper along the trace mark, then use the paper as a pattern to cut out a piece of fabric or felt for the top of the hat.



3. Turn the tube inside out, pin the top to the edge of the tube and stitch all the way around (removing the pins as you go).



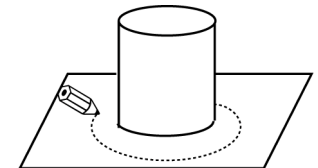
Turn the tube right side out, and you're ready to "Add a brim (optional)."

Add a brim (optional)

You can make brims that go all the way around the hat (as explained in the next paragraph), or partial, "duck bill" brims (explained on page 104). These brims work for more than just tube hats, too—you can use the same technique to add brims to gathered and soft shape hats.

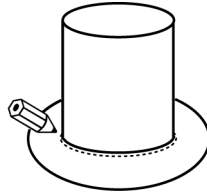
To make a brim that goes all the way around the hat:

1. Cut a circle of felt about 2-4" wider than the tube (or hat) itself. You can trace a bowl, a paper plate, a pot lid, a watermelon rind...

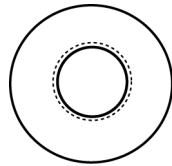


whatever you happen to have handy that's the right size. (Maybe even a compass!) Or you can use the tube as a guide and just eyeball it.

- Place the end of the tube (or hat) on top of the felt circle and trace around the edge.

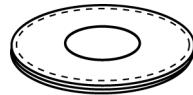


- Cut out the center of the circle, approximately 1/4" smaller than the trace mark. You should end up with a doughnut like shape. (This allows your puppet to get its head into the hat.)



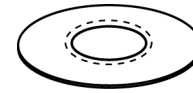
If you want to cover the brim with fabric (to match the rest of the hat):

- Cut out two fabric circles identical to the felt. Place the two fabric circles right sides together, put the felt circle on top, and stitch all three layers along the outside edge.

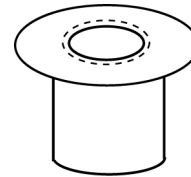


- Turn the brim right side out (you may need a blunt object like the end of pen to get everything smooth) and iron it flat.

- Stitch all three layers (felt and fabric) together along the inside edge.



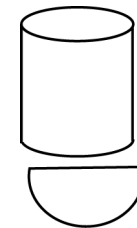
To attach the brim to the hat, place the inside edge of the brim and the end of the tube right sides together, pinning them in place. Stitch them together (removing the pins as you go), and you've got a hat!



For a very finished, professional look, you can hand stitch a piece of complementary ribbon (or a strip of fabric—see page 113) over the seam between the brim and tube. This part shouldn't show, so it's not really necessary, but it can be a nice touch.

For a partial brim (like a soldier's helmet or baseball cap):

- Cut a half circle of felt about the same width as the tube (or hat).
- Cover it with fabric using the same method as in steps 4-6 of the previous section (optional).



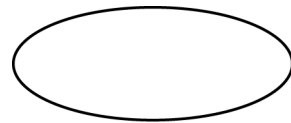
- Attach it to the hat as shown above.

Gathered hats

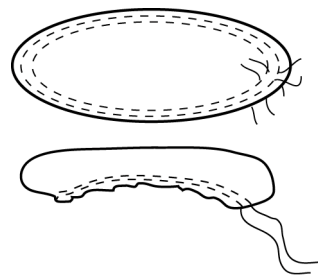
Gathered hats include everything from bonnets, shower caps, and surgical scrubs to the top part of a chef's hat and the suitor's hat on the inside front cover. And much more! The gathered part of the hat can be as large as your puppet's head, or it can make up just part of the hat (like the Bo Peep bonnet with a gathered back and large brim).

To make a gathered hat:

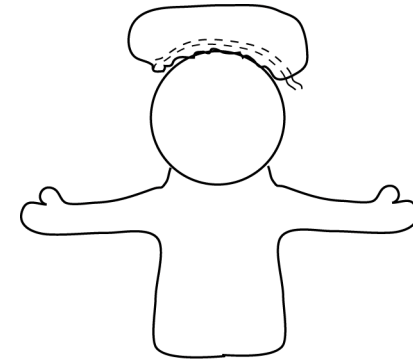
1. Cut a circle of fabric that's about twice as big as you want the finished hat.



2. Gather the edges of the circle using the technique from page 22.

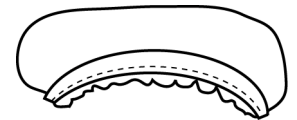


3. Adjust the gathers until the hat fits your puppet's head.

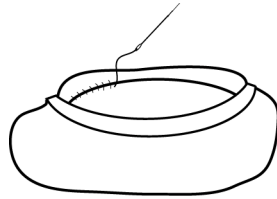


To finish the hat, you can attach it to a tube (page 102), add a brim (page 103), or simply enclose the lower edge with a strip of fabric:

1. Cut a rectangle of fabric that's about 3" wide and long enough to wrap around the gathered edge of the hat.
2. Place the fabric right sides together against the gathered edge of the hat, lining up the lower edge of the fabric with the lower row of gathering. Then stitch the fabric to the hat. (Go slowly and hold on to the fabric tightly to keep the gathers from getting pushed out.)



3. Turn the unstitched edge of the fabric to the inside of the hat and hand stitch it in place using the whip stitch from page 26. If you stitch carefully, and only put the needle through the inner part of the fabric, the stitches won't show on the outside.



CongrHATulations! You've made a gathered hat!

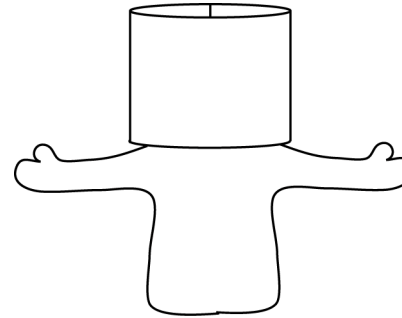
"Soft shape" hats

With this technique, I made hats for the Dutch girl, woodsman/accordion player, detective, firefighter, Scarecrow, and sou'wester costumes. (How's that for variety?) You can make just about any type of hat with a semi-triangular or rounded shape (hats for baseball players, sailors, pirates, nurses...)

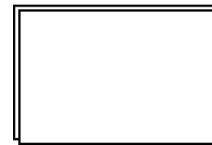
Depending on how stiff you want the hat, you can use two layers of fabric, one layer of felt, or (for the stiffest soft hats) a layer of felt covered with two layers of fabric.

NOTE: You can shape the hat directly on the fabric, but if you're squeamish about wasting fabric or not getting it "right" the first time, you may want to practice on paper towels first.

1. Cut a rectangle of fabric large enough to wrap completely around your puppet's head. Then cut a second, identical rectangle.

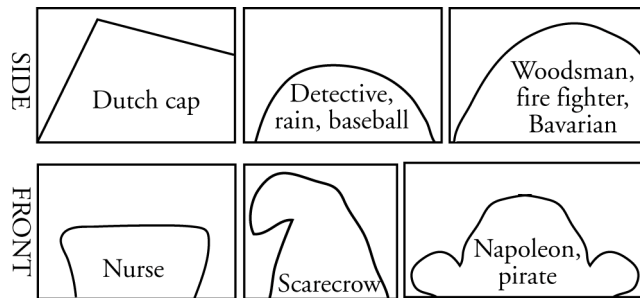


2. Fold each rectangle in half widthwise *wrong sides together*. If you want to make the hat stiffer, cut two rectangles of felt (the same size as the folded fabric) and slip one between the layers of fabric.



3. Place the two pieces of fabric on top of each other, lining them up as closely as possible.

4. Mark a shape for the hat using a pencil or pins. (When in doubt, it's easier to make it too large the first time and stitch it smaller later.) Just make your best guess, keeping in mind the style you want and the shape and size of your puppet's head. You can shape the hat as seen from the side or as seen from the front.

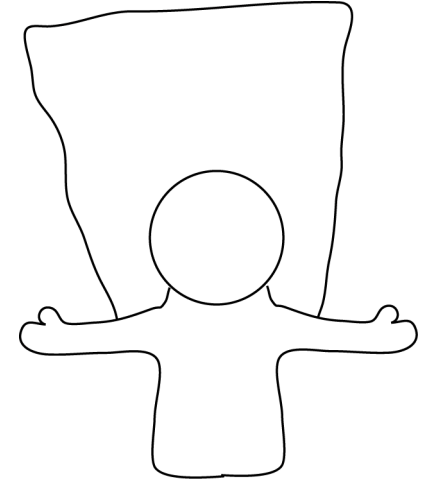


5. Stitch along the line, then turn the hat right side out and try it on your puppet. If it fits, congratulations! Trim off the extra fabric and you're done. If the hat is too large, or doesn't have quite the right shape, turn it inside out and try again, removing the previous stitches if necessary. Keep repeating and restitching until you achieve the look you want.

You can attach a brim to the hat if you want to (by following the directions from the "Add a brim (optional)" section on page 103), or your puppet can wear the hat just as it is.

Hoods

1. Cut a rectangle of fabric that's wide enough to wrap around the back and both sides of your puppet's head (plus 1/2") and tall enough to cover its head completely from front to back.

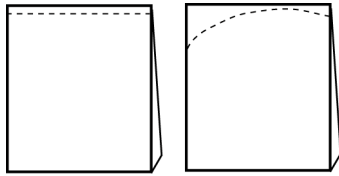


2. Fold the fabric in half heightwise right sides together and stitch along both sides.



3. Turn the fabric right side out and iron it completely flat.

4. Fold the fabric in half widthwise and stitch along the top edge. For a rounded hood, stitch in a gentle curve rather than a straight line.



5. Turn the hood right side out (ironing it again if necessary) and try it on your puppet. If the hood is too large, repeat step 4, stitching a little further away from the edge of the fabric.
6. To hem the bottom of the hood, fold both layers of fabric inside the hood 1/4". Iron the edge flat and stitch along the lower edge.



You can sew the hood to a costume (right sides together!) or you can make it removable by attaching it with small safety pins.

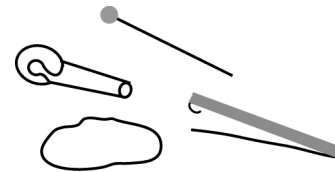
Keep that hat on

Since puppets tend to move a lot during performance, you may need to take some preventative steps to make sure that hat stays on your puppet's head.

Straps can provide a decorative and functional embellishment for some kinds of hats, especially bonnets, helmets, and party hats. See page 113 for strap making instructions.

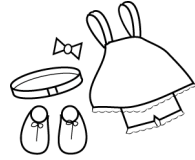


If you have a soft puppet, you may be able to pin the hat directly to your puppet's head with straight or safety pins. For delicate or hard



bodied puppets, you might try attaching hair clips to the inside of the hat. For hairless puppets, that gummy, playdough like stuff some people use to hang posters on the wall might do the trick.

You'll definitely have to experiment to see what works best for your type of hat and your type of puppet, but the effort will be well spent if it keeps your puppet's hat in place.



Shoes & accessories



Complete your costumes

Even after you've finished the main part of the costume, it may still need a few more pieces before it's complete. Whether you're looking for underclothes, shoes, belts, cummerbunds, ties, aprons, or accessories, you've come to the right chapter for completing your puppet costumes.

The great puppet cover-up

Since you never know just what might happen during a puppet performance, you need to make sure that everything you don't want the audience to see is well covered. Undergarments are as much a part of puppet costuming as the clothes that show. Besides maintaining modesty, you can also use undergarments to cover unsightly joints, unpainted limbs, and other imperfections.

You can make undergarments the same way you would a skirt or short pair of pants (as explained in their respective chapters), or you can use the simple recipe on the next page. Unless you want the undergarments to match the costume exactly, you can make them from a neutral fabric and reuse them for several different outfits. (Ginger Sweets, the marionette on the covers of this book, wears a simple white cotton & lace cover up with all her clothes.)

Dressed in the best...underwear?

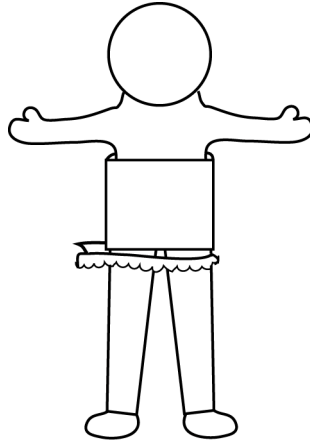
The dryer sheet underskirting for the Bo Peep (and Princess) outfits on the covers of this book was so extensive that I decided to cover the bodice with lace and turn it into an outfit of its own—the wedding gown on the inside back cover!

With an extra layer of sparkle and detachable sleeves (they button to the inside of the dress), it even became the Ginger Rogers dress on the outside back cover.

Most undergarments don't have to be that complicated (you can make extremely simple ones using the recipe on the next page), but it does go to show that even clothes that don't usually show are an important part of costuming.

To make a basic puppet cover-up:

1. Cut piece of fabric that's wide enough to wrap snugly but comfortably around your puppet's lower body plus 1/2", and tall enough to cover about half your puppet's torso.



2. Cut a piece of lace, ribbon, or trim (for the bottom edge of the cover-up) that's long enough to wrap around your puppet's lower body plus 3-4".

3. Hem the top and bottom edges of the fabric using the technique from page 21.

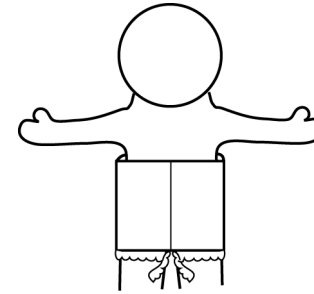


4. Fold the fabric in half widthwise right sides together and stitch the edge opposite the fold.

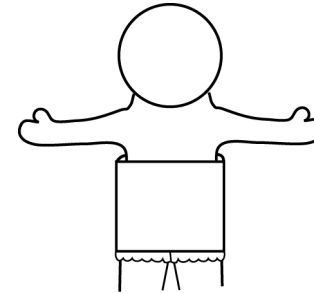


5. Turn the fabric right side out and place it over your puppet's lower torso so that the bottom of the fabric just barely covers the very top of your puppet's legs. Move the seam to the middle of your puppet's back.

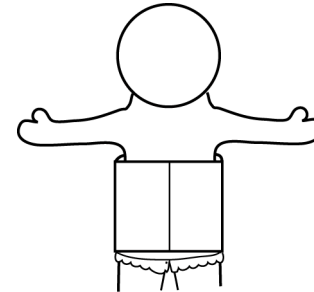
6. Wrap the piece of lace or ribbon around the bottom of the fabric and position it so there are equal amounts of extra lace or ribbon at the middle of your puppet's back.



7. For puppets who do NOT need an opening in the seat of their pants, stitch the lace to the fabric all the way around. Then pull the extra lace or ribbon in between your puppet's legs and hand stitch it to the lace or ribbon on the front.



For puppets who DO need an opening in the seat of their pants, stitch the lace to the front of the fabric (leaving the back side open). Then wrap the extra lace or ribbon in between your puppet's legs and hand stitch it to the lace or ribbon on the front. (For information on hand stitching, see page 25.)

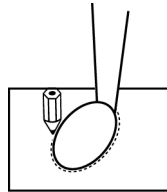


Now that's a great puppet cover-up!

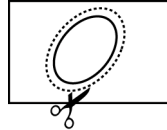
Soft shoes

These soft shoes have three main pieces—the sole, the part that wraps around the foot, and the top (optional). If your puppet has rather flat feet (1 1/2") or less, you can actually forgo the wrap-around part and just stitch the top to the bottom. (Right sides together!)

1. Trace around your puppet's foot on a piece of paper. Make sure to hold your pencil perpendicular to the paper—otherwise, the tracing could end up too small.



2. Add 1/4" to the tracing all the way around (for seam allowance) then cut out the paper.



3. Using the tracing as a pattern, cut out a piece of fabric for the sole of the shoe.

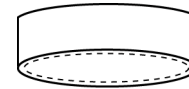
4. Cut a rectangle of fabric that's just over twice as tall as your puppet's foot and long enough to wrap completely around it with 1/2" to spare.



5. Fold the fabric in half lengthwise *wrong sides together* and stitch along the bottom edge.



6. Pin the stitched edge of the fabric rectangle to the bottom of the shoe, right sides together. Then stitch them together, removing the pins as you go.



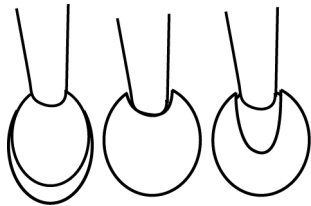
7. Stitch the ends of the fabric together, then turn the shoe right side out.



For open top shoes (like the yellow ones that appear on every cover of this book), that's all you need to do. Take a peek at the next page if you want to add straps or laces. And yes (to let the other shoe drop), you can make a second shoe the same way.

If you want to add a top to the shoe:

1. Cut a piece of fabric to the size and shape of the top of your puppet's shoe (you can practice on a paper towel first if you like), leaving an open space around your puppet's ankle for its foot to get in and out. Make sure the fabric is 1/4" bigger all the way around than you actually want it. For dress shoes, you can cut the fabric in a sort of U-shape.



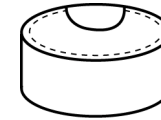
2. Cut a second piece of fabric identical to the first.
3. Place the two pieces of fabric right sides together and stitch along the top edge.



4. Turn the fabric right side out and iron it flat. Then stitch along the outer edge.



5. Pin the fabric and the shoe right sides together. Then stitch them together around the edge, removing the pins as you go.



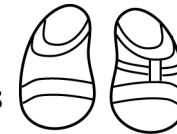
Variations & embellishments

To finish the shoes, you can make laces or straps using ribbon or strips of fabric sewn according to the

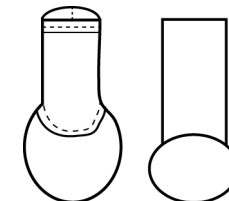


“Belts & headbands” directions on page 113. You can make very small buttonholes in the shoes by following the directions on page 33, but I recommend just sewing the embellishments to the shoe (see page 25 for hand stitching techniques).

If you want to make sandals, you can attach straps to a base made from felt (or another stiff, non-raveling fabric) that's just a little larger than your puppet's foot.



For boots, cut a rectangle of fabric that's wide enough to wrap around your puppet's lower leg and stitch it (right sides together) to the opening of the shoe. Then turn the boot inside out, stitch the back closed (right sides together), and hem the top using the directions on page 21.



Socks & stockings

I don't usually make socks or stockings for puppets since human ones work so well. You can usually find baby or doll socks that suit your puppet, and the large array of nylon sizes stretches to fit just about anything. If you can't find footwear that's just right, you can trim down ready made stockings.

Belts & headbands

You can also use this simple technique to make straps, hat bands, garters, suspenders, shoelaces, cummerbunds, and (as shown in the next two sections) ties.

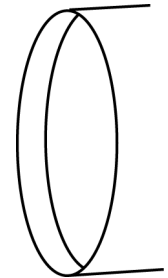
1. Cut a piece of fabric long enough to wrap around your puppet's waist (or head or whatever) with about an inch to spare. The fabric should be twice as wide as you want the finished band plus 1/2".
2. Fold the fabric in half lengthwise right sides together and stitch along the edge opposite the fold.



3. Turn the fabric right side out using the "Nifty safety pin trick" from page 29 and position the seam in the middle of the back of the band.



4. Tuck the ends of the fabric inside the band (to keep them from raveling) and iron the whole thing flat.



5. Stitch the ends of the band shut.



Depending on what you want to use the band for, you may want to stitch the ends of the band together, tie them together, attach them to an outfit, or add velcro, buttons, or snaps for easy opening and closing.

Bow ties

To make a true bow tie, all you need is a band of fabric long enough to wrap around your puppet's neck with about 6 inches to spare (which you can make by following the directions in the previous section). Just tie it on in approved bow tie fashion and your puppet is ready to go!

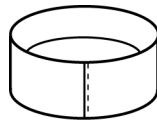
If you're not so handy with knots, you can make a pin-on bow tie:

1. Make a band (by following the directions in the previous section) from a piece of fabric that's about 6-9" long and 3-5" wide (depending on the size of your puppet and how large you want the tie).

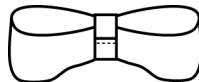


2. Make a second band from a piece of fabric that's about 2-2 1/2" wide and 4" long.

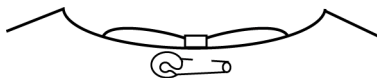
3. Sew the ends of the first band together, forming a loop.



4. Wrap the second band around the middle of the loop, pulling it tightly. Then sew the ends of the second band together and trim off the extra fabric.

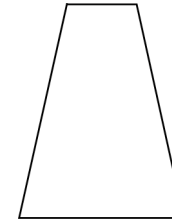


5. Arrange the fabric on the front of the tie and attach the tie to your puppet's shirt with a large safety pin. (By putting the pin on the inside, it won't show.)

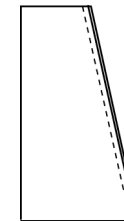


Neck ties

1. Cut a strip of fabric that's wider on one end and narrower on the other. It needs to be about twice as wide as you want the finished tie plus 1/2".

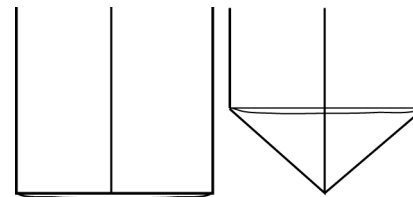


2. Fold the fabric in half lengthwise right sides together and stitch along the edge opposite the fold.



3. Turn the tie right side out using the "Nifty safety pin trick" from page 29.

4. Fold the wide end of the fabric into a point and iron it flat. To keep the point in place, you can either hand stitch the fabric together (see page 25) or use an iron-on product called "Stitch Witchery" available in most fabric stores.

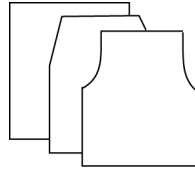


5. Finish the narrow end of the tie in the same way, and you're set!

Aprons

What would a Flying French maid outfit be without a fluffy white apron?

1. Cut a rectangle of fabric that's 1/2" larger on each side than you want the finished apron. If you like, you can trim the fabric into shape.

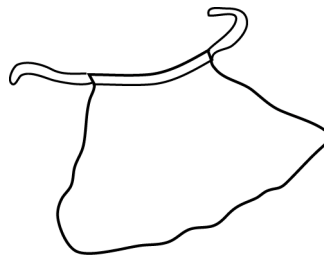


2. Hem all four edges of the fabric using the technique from page 21.



3. Make fabric straps for the apron (by following the directions on page 113), or use pieces of lace or ribbon.
4. Stitch the straps to the apron right sides together.

For a ruffled apron, you can leave the top edge unhemmed and gather it using the technique from page 22. Finish the gathered edge by sewing it (right sides together!) to a strap (page 113) or a piece of ribbon or trim.



Scarves and handkerchiefs

All you need for a scarf or a handkerchief is a rectangle of fabric. Just finish the edges (using the technique from page 21) with very small hems. Some machines have a special roller foot for this—if yours doesn't, just fold the edges of the fabric extra tightly.

Accoutrements

Your puppet's accessories are as much a part of its character as everything else it wears. Boas, jewelry, flowers, feathers, sequin and bead embellishments, or even baskets of fruit could be just what your puppet's costume needs for a finishing touch. (Imagine Carmen Miranda without a fruit hat, or a cheerleader without pom poms!)

When choosing accessories, consider how each item will look when viewed from a distance as well as close up (depending on your stage setup). Small details may not be visible from the audience's point of view, while highly contrastive accessories may draw too much attention.

No matter what kinds of ornaments you decide to use, make sure all your puppet's accoutrements are securely attached before performing!

? ? ? What if... ? ? ?

The costume doesn't come out right?

Sometimes, despite your best efforts, things don't go quite as smoothly as planned. It's usually pretty easy to see how to deal with pieces that are too long (since you can shorten them with a scissors), but what can you do when the costume comes out too small? Or too wide? Or just doesn't fit right?

General tips

- ⌘ Put the costume aside for awhile and come back to it later. You'll approach the situation better when you're not frustrated.
- ⌘ Try to rework or replace pieces of the costume (just the sleeves, just the collar, just the front) rather than the whole thing. There are usually only a few parts that really need work, and once you've fixed them, the whole costume will look better.
- ⌘ *Persist.* Even if the costume isn't salvageable, you've traded a little bit of fabric for a lot of experience, so nothing's wasted. If you have trouble with certain aspects of costuming (like fitting patterns or making button holes) practice those skills on scrap fabric. Make a note of what worked well, what didn't work so well, and things will go smoother next time. (You should see some of my early costumes!)

(Not) sew perfect?

Remember that you don't have to make every seam line up perfectly for the costume to work overall. The audience won't see your stitches—they only see the role the costumes play in your puppet show. If you've created a recognizable character through costume, you've succeeded!

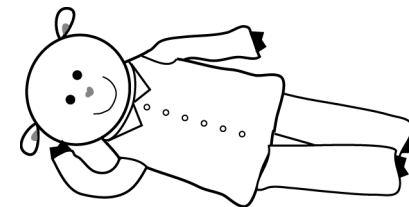


Too large

- ✂ **Trim the fabric** — depending on what part of the costume is too large, you may be able to simply trim off the excess fabric. This works especially well for shortening sleeves, pant legs, shirts, and skirts. If trimming isn't possible, try resewing the seams.
- ✂ **Resew the seams** — as explained in the “Basic sewing steps” chapter, you usually stitch seams 1/4” from the edge of the fabric. If the costume comes out too large, you can restitch some of the seams further inward. If the costume fits, you can then trim off the excess fabric. (See page 93 for an example.)
- ✂ **Tuck or gather** — you can take up extra fabric in some costumes by putting in small tucks (like on page 93) or gathers (page 22).
- ✂ **Add fabric** — for necklines that are too large or too low, adding a collar (or similar piece of fabric) can make the opening smaller. (See page 57.)
- ✂ **Restyle or reuse** — even if a costume comes out totally too large, you may still be able to use it. Maybe you can learn to live with it. Maybe it would look fine with an extra shirt (like a blouse or turtleneck) underneath. Or maybe it would fit another puppet.

Too small

- ✂ **Add fabric** — you can enlarge many costume parts by adding strips of fabric along the seams. These pieces can be decorative (like the cuffs on page 59) or simply functional. Try to make them as inconspicuous as possible by adding them along the back seam or sides. (See page 93 for an example.)
- ✂ **Redo the hems** — if the costume isn't wide enough, you can redo the hems along the opening (if the costume has one) by removing the stitches and making new hems that only turn under a 1/4” or even an 1/8”. (See page 21 for hemming techniques.) If the neckline of the costume comes out too small, you can turn the hem under another 1/4” or more and restitch it. You'll have to remove the collar first (if the costume has one) and reattach it.
- ✂ **Change fasteners** — some fasteners take up less room than others, like the velcro strips shown on page 36. This can give your puppet the room it needs to perform.





Cover story



Outside front

- ✂ **Supersheep** — it's a bird, it's a plane, it's a...shirt (page 53), shorts (page 88), and cape (page 98)! Planet cut from fabric and zig-zag stitched to shirt. (See page 24.)
Fabrics: blue and red polyesters, cartoony cotton
- ✂ **Juggling jester** — a floppy tube hat (page 102) with bells tops off this jovial shirt & pants combo with alternating fabrics and dryer sheet ruffles.
Fabrics: multi-colored cotton, green stretch-knit, dryer sheets
- ✂ **Dutch girl** — this gathered skirt (pages 22, 77) with attached jumper top (page 84) and button-down straps (page 86) makes a beautiful dirndl when worn with a gathered-sleeve white blouse (page 47). A white felt hat (page 106) tops it off.
Fabrics: blue cotton calico, white poly-cotton, tan and white felt
- ✂ **Sou'wester** — hidden suspenders (page 95) keep these pants ship-shape.
Fabrics: nylon
- ✂ **Tap dancer** — a brimmed tube hat (page 102) with dapper red & white hatband (page 113), bow tie (page 113), and matching vest (page 67) make this suit ready to get up and dance.
Fabrics: blue polyester, red, white, and tan cotton
- ✂ **Bo Peep** — a cloud of dryer sheet underskirting (pages 8) peeps from beneath this lavender jumper with detachable, button-on lace sleeves. Framed by a matching dryer sheet bonnet (page 105).
Fabrics: dryer sheets, lace, lavender cotton
- ✂ **Accordion player** — these lederhosen (page 96) and matching hat (page 106) are perfect for any puppet polka.
Fabrics: polyester stretch-knit
- ✂ **Carmen Miranda** — this leftover apron material became a feast of fancy when trimmed with beads, a holiday garland (75% off!) and artificial fruit. Gathered sleeves (page 49) and jumper top (page 83) complete the look.
Fabrics: cotton

Inside front

- ✂ **Princess** — what a difference a hat makes! Except for the lavender tube hat (page 102) trimmed with dryer sheets, this is simply the Bo Peep outfit from the outside front cover with the skirt pulled down.
Fabrics: cotton, dryer sheets
- ✂ **Suitor** — with a gathered hat (page 105), gathered sleeves, and gathered knickers, this outfit is perfect for romantic gatherings.
Fabrics: velour, panaleur, light blue stretch knit
- ✂ **Jungle Sheep** — this proves that even “Cinderella’s sack dresses” (page 72) can be masculine when made from the right fabric.
Fabrics: tiger-striped polyester
- ✂ **Sir Teddy the Sheepish** — with a removable silver hood (page 106) and a plume of synthetic doll hair, the Tin Woodsman from the back cover became a knight in shining armor! *Fabrics:* polyester

- ✂ **Magician** — by borrowing “Fred Astaire’s” tuxedo (outside back cover) and the Supersheep’s cape (outside front cover), this puppet put together an outfit like magic!
Fabrics: red and black polyester, velour lining, wool pants
- ✂ **Magician’s “assistant”** — this dazzling drippy “Cinderella’s sack dress” (page 72) steals the show.
Fabrics: SNORK (Sorry, No One Really Knows)
- ✂ **Rabbit ears** — even Teddy (the sheep puppet) gets into the act with this clever disguise.
Fabrics: white fake fur
- ✂ **Disco happy** — a short “Cinderella’s sack dress” (page 72) with matching headband (page 113) goes perfectly with a yellow ribbon waistband and nylon shoes (the same ones worn by Carmen Miranda and the cheerleader, made from the leftover Sou’wester material).

Fabrics: purple polyester-rayon, yellow nylon

- ✂ **King** — of the dance floor in a purple polyester robe (page 53) yellow cotton crown (page 102).
- ✂ **Flapper girl** — a “Cinderella’s sack dress” (page 72) decked with fringe and a matching headband (page 113) goes beautifully with a boa and Dorothy’s red shoes (outside back cover).
Fabrics: red poly-cotton, sequined polyester shoes

Inside back

- ✂ **Fire fighter** — a black shirt with yellow stripes (page 24) and a red helmet (page 106) provide perfect puppet protection.
Fabrics: leftover flapper girl material (inside front cover), black wool, yellow cotton

✂ **Chef** — it didn't take much to cook up this outfit...just a combination gathered/tube hat (page 102) with a white shirt (from the tuxedo and tap dancer suits) and pants (from the soldier groom below).

Fabrics: white cotton, white felt

✂ **Shepherd** — this fetching robe (page 54) really reels 'em in with a matching belt (page 113) and contrasting scarf (page 115).

Fabrics: cotton

✂ **Woodsman** — by putting a green shirt (page 53) and brown belt (page 113) over the lederhosen from the outside front cover, this polka-meister does double duty.

Fabrics: green polyester stretch-knit, brown cotton

✂ **Little Red** — by borrowing Bo Peep's shoes (outside front cover), Dorothy's dress (outside back), and adding a detachable hood (page 106) to the Supersheep cape (outside front

cover), this Red Riding Hood is ready to roar.

✂ **Wolf** — with a furry shirt and hood (page 106) and the Scarecrow's pants (outside back cover), this big baaad wolf looks like one mean cookie.

Fabrics: fake fur ("fuzzy felt")

✂ **Soldier groom** — a red suit (page 60), white pants, black boots (page 112), and half-brimmed tube hat (page 102) make this soldier a stand-out.

Fabrics: cotton, cotton-poly blend

✂ **Bride** — for the story beneath this outfit, see page 109.

Fabrics: dryer sheets, lace

✂ **Cheerleader** — hooray for vests (page 67) and sectioned skirts (page 77)! This skirt shows alternating fabrics can be fun.

Fabrics: blue and yellow cotton

Outside back

✂ **Glinda** — it doesn't take magic to make a dress this pretty, just gathered sleeves, a layer of shiny fabric, pink beads, and a boning hoop (page 81). A crown (page 102) made of felt, leftover Tin Woodsman material, and two layers of shiny lace from the Ginger Roger's dress top it all off.

Fabrics: polyester satin, cotton lining, shiny sheer polyester

✂ **Jungle grrrl** — this "Cinderella's sack dress" (page 72) shows the wild side of fashion with artificial flowers & pink lace shoes.

Fabrics: poly-cotton stretch knit

✂ **French maid** — this maid has got it made with a black lace-trimmed skirt, attached shirt top, and fishnet stockings. A frilly apron (page 115) and gathered-trim cap top off the ensemble.

Fabrics: black cotton, white poly-cotton, black & white laces

- ✂ **Scarecrow** — this appliqué patchwork (page 24) and soft hat (page 106) may not scare anyone, but they make a great costume!
Fabrics: cotton, yellow ribbon
- ✂ **Toto** — my mom's real dog JoJo
- ✂ **Dorothy** — a simple sectioned skirt (page 77), shirt (page 53) and straps (page 113) let the ruby slippers (page 111) do the rest.
Fabrics: cotton, lace, red sequined polyester
- ✂ **Tin Woodsman** — this super shiny polyester shirt and pants was so stretchy it needed a stabilizer (page 23). A cone-shaped tube hat (page 102) tops it off.
Fabrics: polyester
- ✂ **Cowardly Lion** — there's no need to be shy when you're this well dressed with a matching shirt (page 53), hood (page 107), pants (page 88), and tail (page 113).
Fabrics: poly-cotton blend, yarn
- ✂ **Fred Astaire** — is puttin' on the ritz with this top hat (page 102), bow tie (page 113), and lined tuxedo (page 60).
Fabrics: black polyester, velour lining, wool pants, cotton shirt
- ✂ **Ginger Rogers** — “diamond” earrings grace this dazzling outfit (page 109).
Fabrics: dryer sheets, sparkle lace
- ✂ **Fortune teller** — I see a white blouse from the Dutch girl outfit (outside front cover), shoes from Carmen Miranda, Disco happy, and the cheerleader, a bright skirt (page 77) and matching scarf (page 115)...
Fabrics: cotton
- ✂ **Detective** — it doesn't take Sherlock Holmes to deduce how this outfit was made...soft hat (page 106), unlined coat with matching belt (page 113), and Fred Astaire's tuxedo pants!
Fabrics: wool pants, cotton hat, polyester coat

About the puppets

Teddy, a 30” tall foam-bodied hand puppet, looks dashing in just about anything. When he's not busy being costumed, his hobbies include weight lifting and yodelling.



Ginger Sweets, a 32” tall soft-bodied marionette, enjoys modelling, ball room dance, and para sailing. She is currently seeking a studio career in Manhattan (but will settle for Hollywood!) and has natural curls.



ABC

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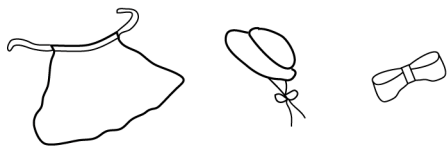
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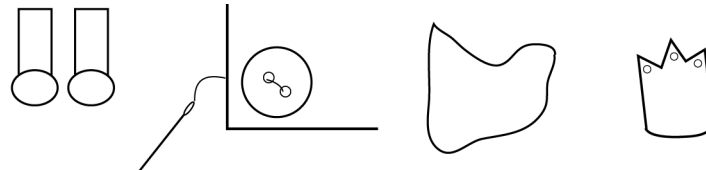
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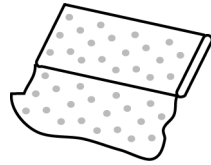
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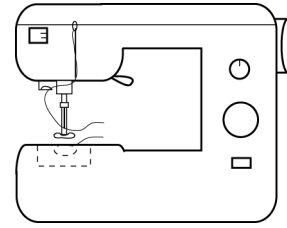
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