

*Pattern Design Guides by Don McCunn***Contoured Waistband Skirt Design Variations**

These patterns can be used to make skirts with contoured waistbands. The instructions include how to create the patterns and basic sewing instructions.

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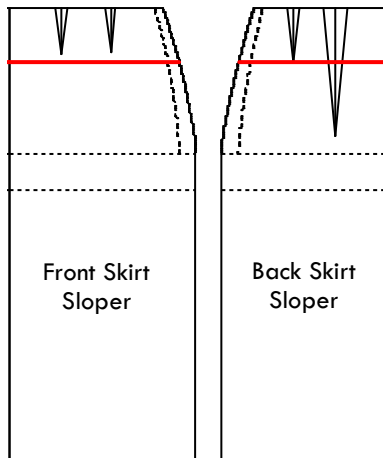
Design Enterprises of San Francisco
1007 Castro Street, San Francisco, CA 94114
(415) 282-8813 || Website: Patternmaking-Classes.com
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Contoured Waistband Skirt Design Variations

by Don McCunn

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The process of creating skirts with contoured waistbands illustrate how to convert a fitted sloper into original designs including tapered pencil skirts and flared A-line skirts. The illustration to the right shows both the front and back fitted skirt slopers that are used as a starting point.

To create an original design, draw the location of any new seams and darts for the design directly on the sloper patterns with pencil. The new seam for the contoured waistband is shown as a red line in this illustration. It is 3" (75mm) down from the waist line. The waistline can either be the natural waist as determined by the sloper or lower.

To create the pattern for a design, place a fresh sheet of paper on top of the sloper patterns, then trace the lines from the fitted slopers. For the illustrations that follow, this sheet of paper for the design is shown with a light blue background.



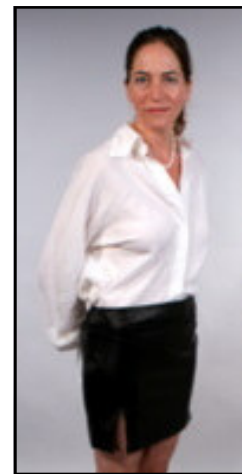
Pencil Skirt



A-Line Skirt



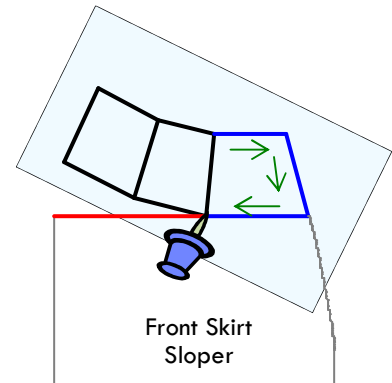
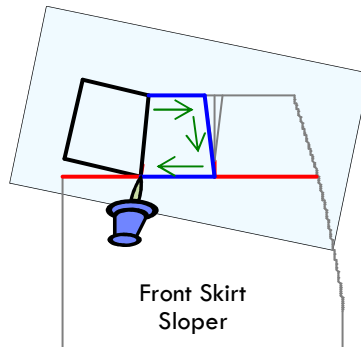
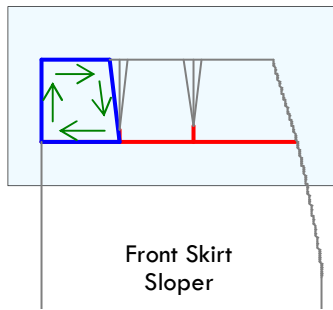
Pleated Skirt



No Dart Waistband

Contoured Waistband Skirt Design Variations, cont'd

Waistband Pattern

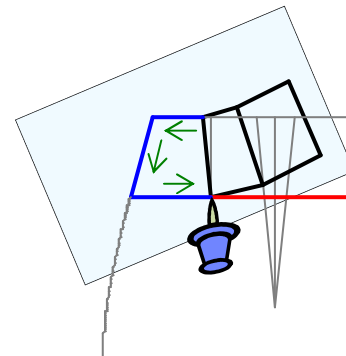
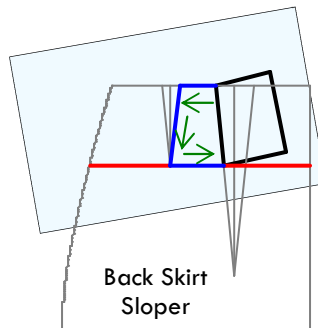
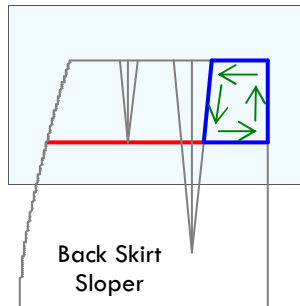


Front Waistband Pattern

1. Trace the first section of the waistband pattern as shown by the blue lines above. This includes the center front, waist, edge of the first dart, and new waistband line.

2. Put a pin where the first dart intersects with the design line for the waistband.
3. Pivot the top design paper so that the first dart edge is on top of the opposite dart edge.
4. Trace the second section of the skirt waistband. This includes the waist, the closest edge of the second dart, and the new waistband line.

5. Put a pin where the second dart intersects with the design line for the waistband.
6. Pivot the top design paper so that the traced dart edge is on top of the opposite dart edge.
7. Trace the third section of the skirt waistband. This includes the waist, the side seam, and the new waistband line.



Back Waistband Pattern

1. Trace the first section of the waistband pattern starting at the center back as shown by the blue lines above. This includes the center back, waist, edge of the first dart, and new waistband line.

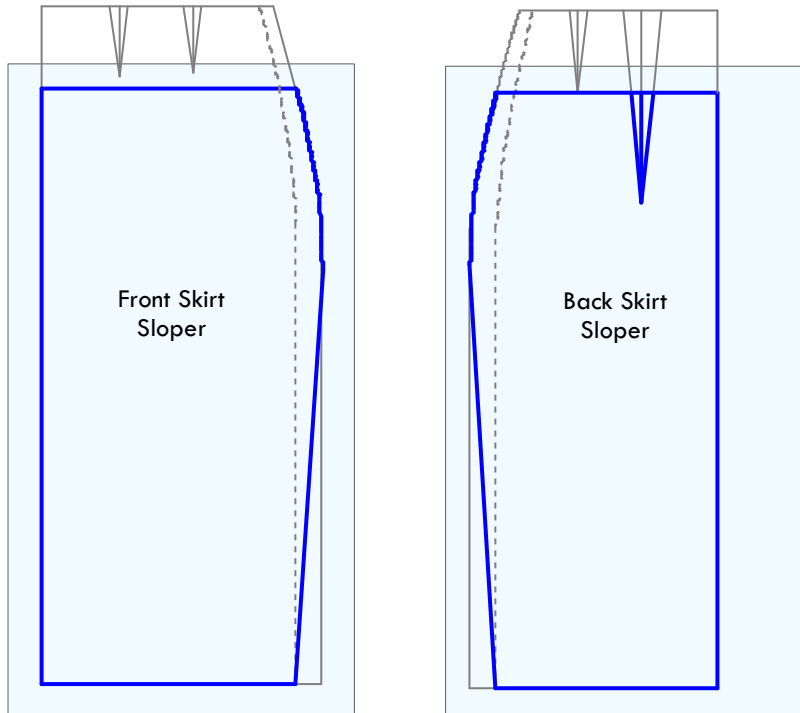
2. Move the design paper so that the traced dart edge is on top of the opposite dart edge.
3. Trace the second section of the skirt waistband. This includes the waist, the closest edge of the second dart, and the new waistband line.

4. Put a pin where the second dart intersects with the design line for the waistband.
5. Pivot the top design paper so that the traced dart edge is on top of the opposite dart edge.
6. Trace the third section of the skirt waistband. This includes the waist, the side seam, and the new waistband line.

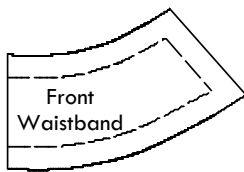
Contoured Waistband Skirt Design Variations, cont'd

Pencil Skirt, not Lined

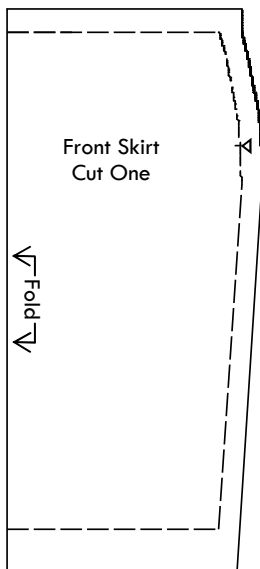
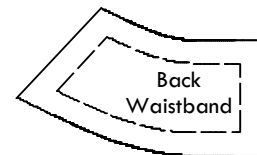
To create the bottom of a tapered pencil skirt, trace the sloper patterns from the design line for the waistband to the desired hem. In this example, the hem is at knee length and the skirt is tapered in to the hip measurement.



To reduce the hem even more, stand with your legs set apart by the maximum length of stride you want to take and measure what the circumference of your hem should be.



The center front line is a fold line. Add seam allowances to all the pattern pieces. Common seam allowances are 1/2" (12mm) or 5/8" (16mm). But you may also make the side seams wider to allow for body changes. Add sewing notches to the hip line.

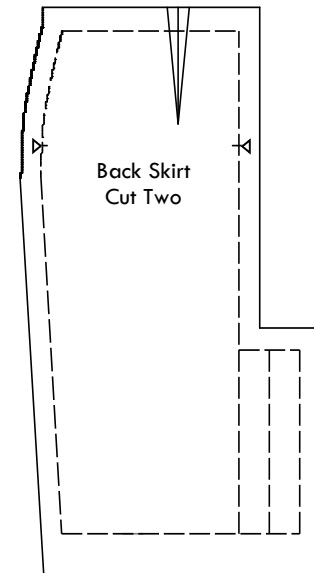


You can add a kick pleat to the center back seam as shown on the right. This kick pleat has a finished size 2" (5cm) wide by 8" high (20cm). This pattern shape is for an unlined skirt. For a lined pencil skirt pattern, see page 5.

The skirt uses two waistbands. One waistband is sewn to the body of the skirt. The other waistband is sewn to the inside of the skirt and is the waistband facing.

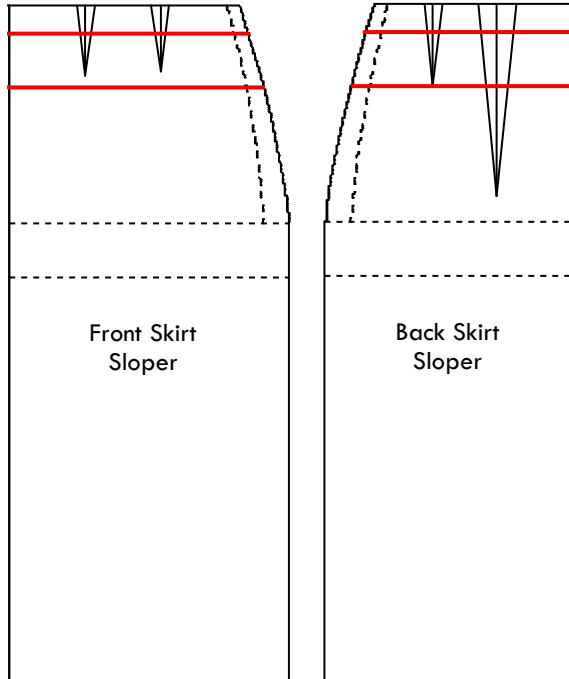
A nice detail is to trim 1/8" off of the top seam allowance for the waistband facing. This will cause the top seam of the skirt to roll to the inside of the garment.

When you do this, cut one front waistband and one front waistband facing and two back waistbands and two back waistband facings.



Contoured Waistband Skirt Design Variations, cont'd

Lowered Waistband



Another design variation is to lower the waist from the waistline established for the sloper. To do this add a new waistline to the slopers. The example to the left drops the waistline by 1" (25mm).

Follow the exact same procedures as described for the waistband pattern except you will trace this new design line rather than the waistline of the sloper.

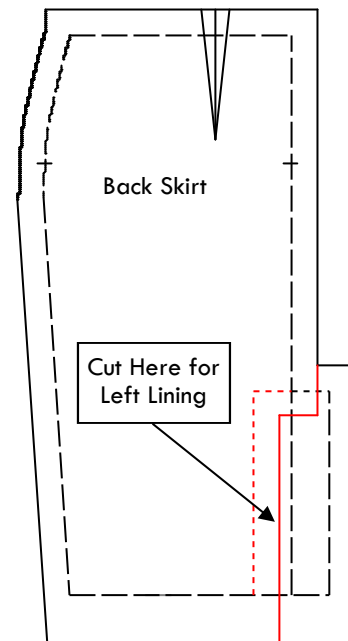
Patterns for a Lined Pencil Skirt

The patterns for a lined pencil skirt requires a different shaping for the kick pleat as shown in the pattern to the right.

The left lining is trimmed down as shown by the red lines on the pattern and the photo below.



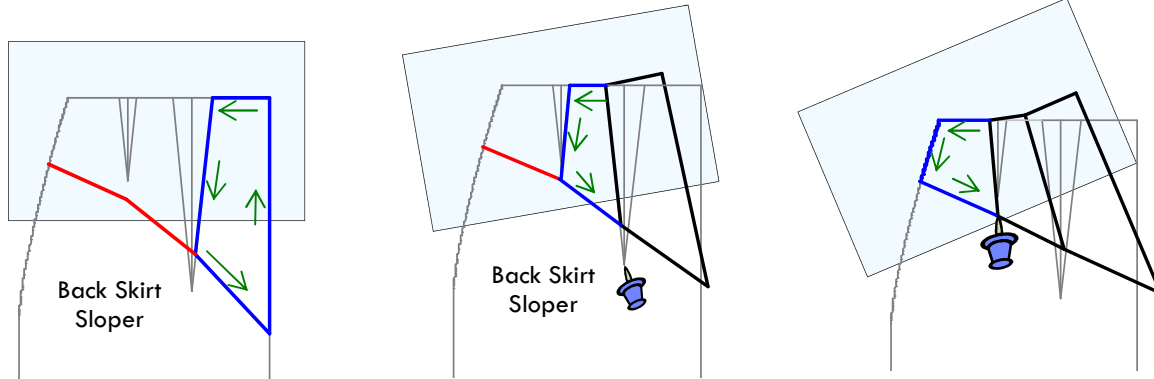
Lining for Pencil Skirt



Contoured Waistband Skirt Design Variations, cont'd

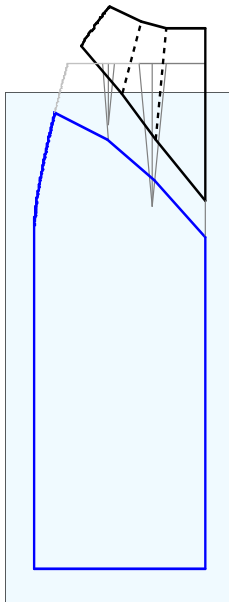
No Dart Waistband

For the leather skirt, shape the back yoke/waistband to eliminate the need for a dart. To do this the design line should curve down from the side of the waist to as close as possible to point of the hip dart.



Back Waistband Pattern

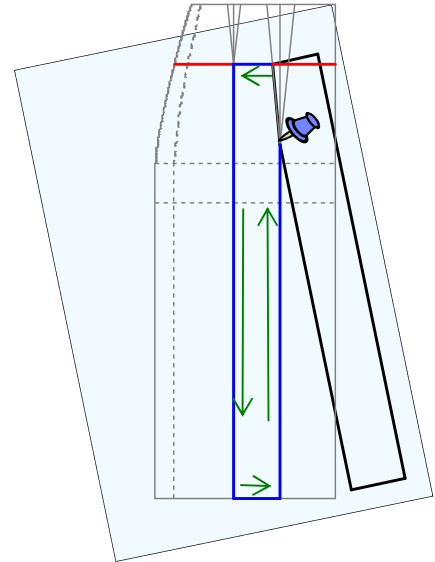
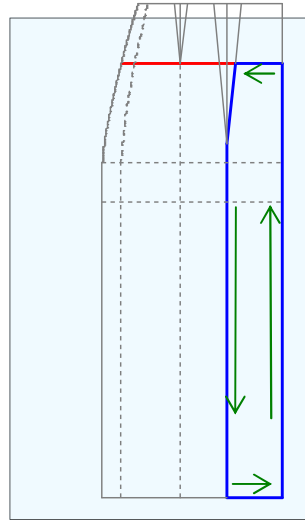
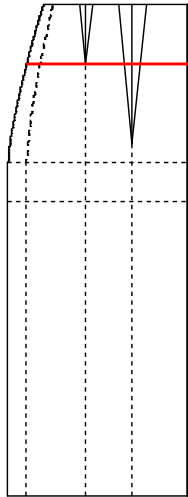
1. Trace the first section of the waistband pattern starting at the center back as shown by the blue lines above. This includes the center back, waist, edge of the first dart, and new waistband line.
2. Place a pin in the point of the hip dart, then move the design paper so that the traced dart edge is on top of the opposite dart edge.
3. Trace the second section of the skirt waistband. This includes the waist, the closest edge of the second dart, and the new waistband line.
4. Put a pin where the second dart intersects with the design line for the waistband.
5. Pivot the top design paper so that the traced dart edge is on top of the opposite dart edge.
6. Trace the third section of the skirt waistband. This includes the waist, the side seam, and the new waistband line.



7. Trace the lower portion of the skirt pattern to pick up the new design line.
8. Add seam allowances.

Contoured Waistband Skirt Design Variations, cont'd

A-Line Skirts

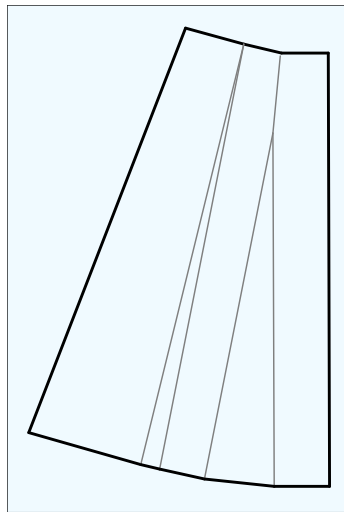
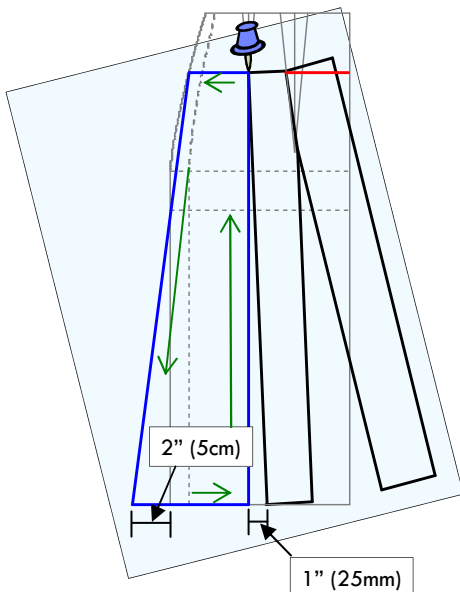


Back Skirt Pattern

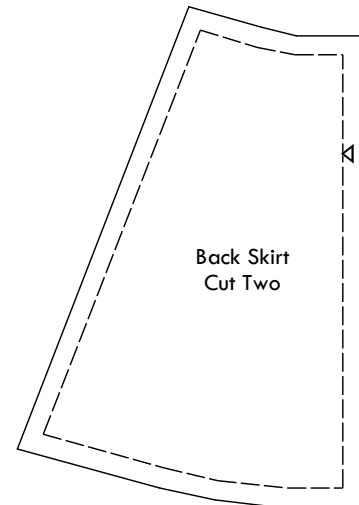
1. On the sloper, extend lines from the point of the darts straight down to the hem. These will be reference lines for adding fullness.

2. Place the paper for tracing the design on top of the sloper.
3. Trace the center back portion of the skirt. This includes the center back, new waistband line, first dart line, and hem.

4. Put a pin at the point of the dart.
5. Pivot the top design paper so that the traced dart edge is on top of the opposite dart edge.
6. Trace the second section of the skirt.



Back Skirt Pattern
without seam allowances

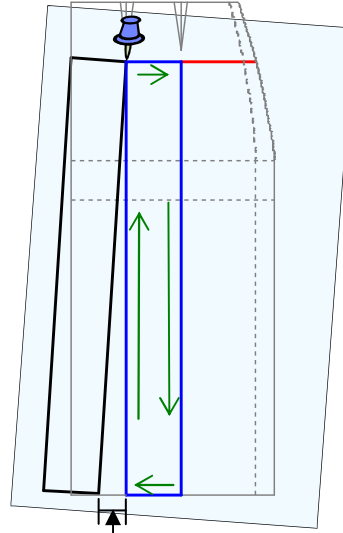
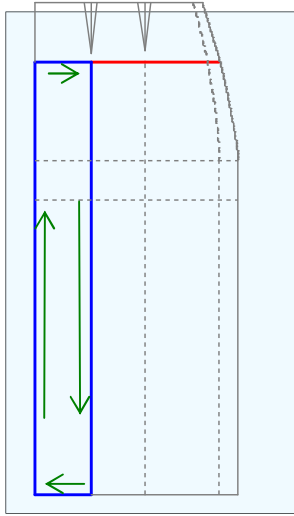


7. Put a pin where the second dart line intersects with the waistband line.
8. Pivot the top design paper to add 1" (25mm) to the hem.
9. Trace the second section of the skirt extending the side seam out by 2" (5cm).

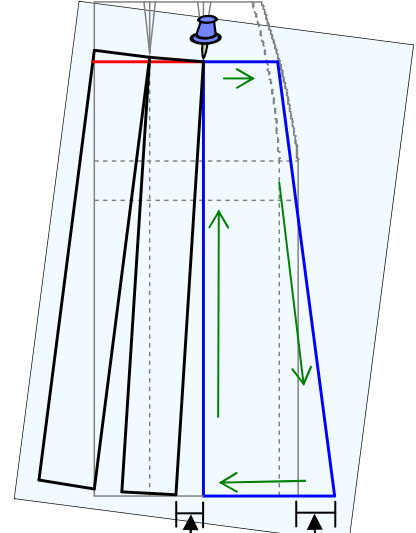
10. Add seam allowances to the pattern.

The back skirt pattern is now complete.

Contoured Waistband Skirt Design Variations, cont'd



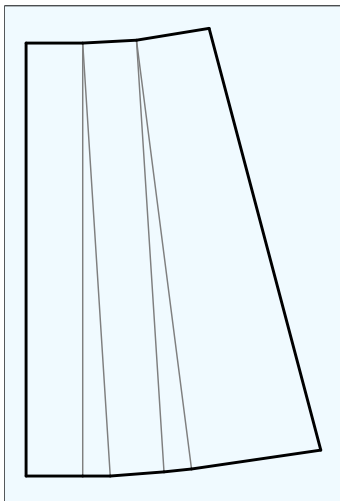
1-1/2" (38mm)



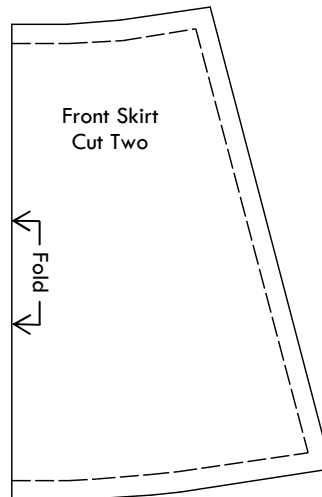
1-1/2" (38mm) 2" (5cm)

Front Skirt Pattern

1. Place the paper for tracing the design on top of the sloper.
2. Trace the center front portion of the skirt. This includes the center front, new waistband line, first dart line, and hem.
3. Put a pin where the first dart line intersects with the waistband line.
4. Pivot the top design paper to add 1-1/2" (38mm) to the hem.
5. Trace the second section of the skirt.
6. Put a pin where the second dart line intersects with the waistband line.
7. Pivot the top design paper to add 1-1/2" (38mm) to the hem.
8. Trace the second section of the skirt extending the side seam out by 2" (5cm).



Front Skirt Pattern
without seam allowances



9. Add seam allowances to the pattern.

The front skirt pattern is now complete.

Contoured Waistband Skirt Design Variations, cont'd

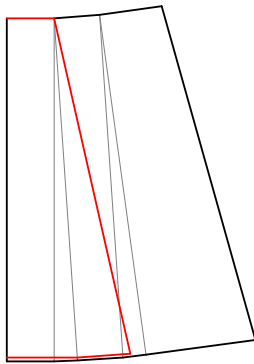
Adding a Pleat

To create a skirt similar to the one in the St. Paulie commercials add a pleat to center front.

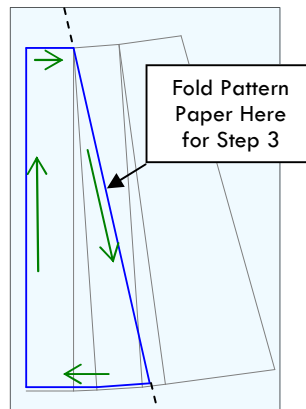
The inside box pleat is made from a contrasting color and the pleat is sewn so that this second color becomes more obvious when the person moves.

To add a pleat, start with a pattern that has already been adjusted for the desired fullness and add the pleat to that.

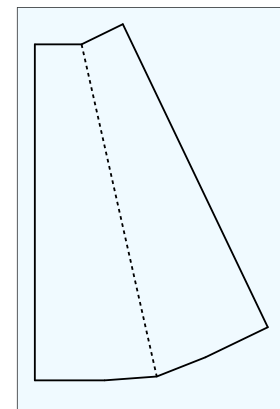
To hide the pleat seam, extend the center front out by 1/2" (12mm).



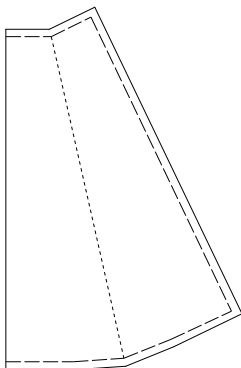
1. Draw the lines for the pleat on the pattern that has the desired silhouette. Note that to hide the pleat the hem is shortened by 1/4" (6mm).



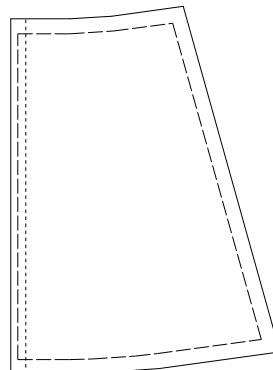
2. Trace the center front, waist, pleat fold, and hem.
3. Fold the paper just as the pleat will be folded along the pleat fold line.
4. Trace the waist, center front and hem on the folded section.



5. Unfold the pattern paper. The pattern for the pleat should be as shown above.



6. Add seam allowances to the waist, side of the pleat, and the hem.



7. Extend the center front of the skirt out 1/2" (12mm).
8. Add a seam allowance to the center front.

Sewing Instructions

Fabric Selection

Before you can cut out your skirt, you will need to select the fabric. Lay out the patterns to determine how much fabric you will need as illustrated in Figure 1. Most fabric is 44" (112cm) wide.

The tapered skirt is fitted and will work with a variety of fabrics such as wool, denim, or cotton. The fabric you select will depend on where and when you plan to wear it.

For the A-Line skirt, select a fabric that drapes well. If you select a stiff fabric, such as denim, you might end up with a skirt that looks more like a lamp shade. To determine if a fabric will drape, hold up a corner and look at how it falls. You can do this even on a bolt of fabric in the store. Try fabric you know will be stiff then try fabric that has a lot of drape such as a tee-shirt knit and notice the difference. You can then try fabrics that are not so obvious. This is how you can teach yourself how to evaluate fabric for its ability to drape.

Interfacing

The shape of the contoured waistband can be enhanced by using an interfacing. The interfacing adds a certain amount of body. If you are creating a lightweight summertime skirt, you may want to skip the interfacing. But if you are using a knit or leather, you should definitely use an interfacing for the waistband to stabilize its shape.

Some interfacing will stretch while others will not. The weight of the interfacing can also vary. If you are interfacing a knit or leather, you should definitely select an interfacing that does not stretch. I like to use a fusible interfacing.

Zipper Closure and Hem Tape

A 7" to 9" (18 to 24cm) zipper and a hook and eye are used for the closure. An invisible zipper is a good option to consider. To install the zipper, you may choose to follow the instructions included here or the ones included with the zipper.

For a fitted skirt the hem may be self faced. For the A-Line skirt, the bulk of the hem may be reduced by using hem tape.

Materials

| Qty | Item | |
|--------|---------------------|---------|
| 1 | Skirt Fabric | ___ yds |
| 1 | Interfacing | 1/4 yd |
| 1 | Hook and Eye | |
| 1 | 7" (18cm) Zipper | |
| 1 or 2 | Package of Hem Tape | |

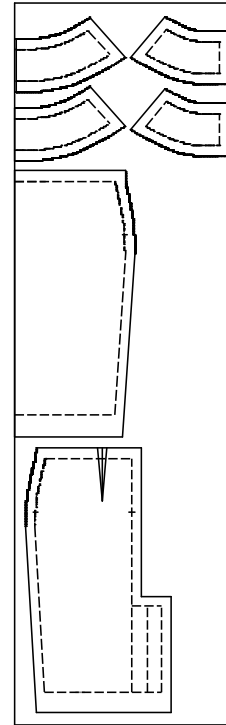
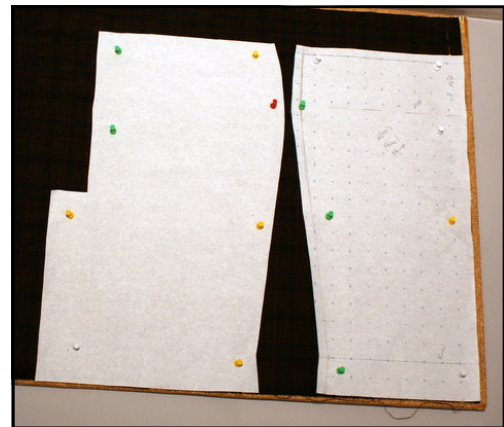


Figure 1 - Fabric Layout
Fabric is folded in half lengthwise

Step I. Cut the Fabric

There are a variety of factors that may be involved in cutting the fabric. The steps below are the most common.

1. If the fabric is to be washed, preshrink it.
2. Press the fabric to remove wrinkles and ensure the lengthwise grain is at right angles to the crosswise grain.
3. Straighten one end of the fabric. To do this, pull a single crosswise thread, then cut along the line that is left.
4. Fold the fabric right sides together.
5. Place the pattern pieces on the fabric. The front patterns should be aligned with the fold of the fabric.
6. Pin the pattern pieces to the fabric.
7. Cut the fabric keeping the fabric as flat as possible. Cut notches as required to align the front and back sections during sewing.



Patterns pinned in place using cork board

Sewing Instructions, cont'd

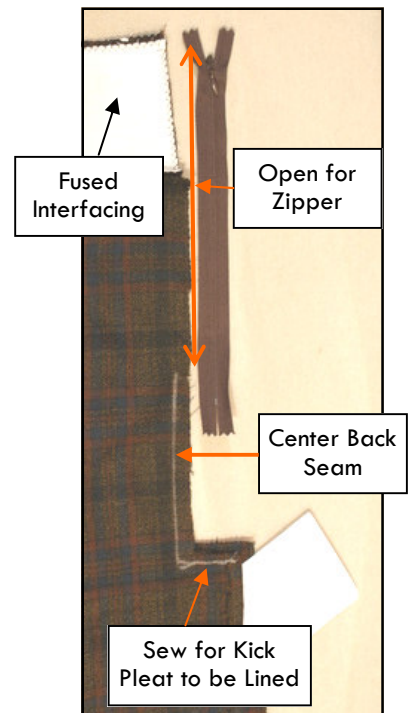
Step II. Sew the Back Waistband and Zipper

The next step is to sew the back waistband to the body of the skirt then add the zipper to the center back seam.

1. If you are using an interfacing for the waistband, fuse it to the pieces of the waistband that will be the outside of the skirt. If you are not using fusible interfacing, zigzag the interfacing to the waistband during Step 2.
2. Zigzag the edges of the fabric so they will not unravel.
3. Mark, then sew the back hip dart.
4. Pin the outside waistband pieces to the body of the skirt, right sides together, then sew.
5. Clip the seam allowance, then press open.
6. Pin the center back seam together.
7. For lined skirts turn back the seam allowance for the right side of the kick pleat and machine baste in place.
8. Sew the center back seam from the sewing notch at the hip to the hem. If you have a kick pleat at center back, stop at the top of the kick pleat instead of sewing all the way to the hem.
9. Machine baste the center back seam from the waist to the sewing notch at the hip. Use a long stitch.
10. Clip the excess thread from the machine basting at the sewing notch but not at the waist.
11. Press the center back seam open.
12. Close the zipper and pin the pull tab of the zipper 3/4" (2cm) below the waist seam line.
13. Hand baste the zipper to the center back seam. Keep the zipper centered over the center back seam. Keep the hand basting close to the teeth of the zipper.
14. With the zipper foot in your sewing machine, sew the zipper. When you look at the right side of the fabric, this will appear as top stitching around the zipper.
15. Remove all the basting.



Right Kick Pleat Seam Allowance turned back and basted



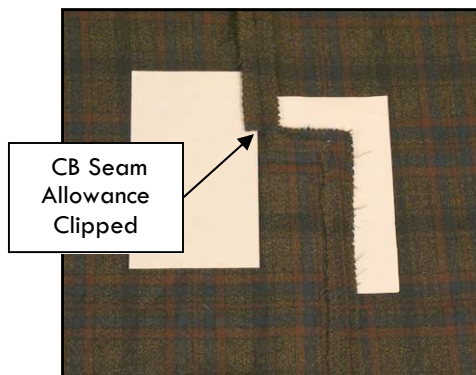
Center back seam sewn from zipper to pleat.

Unlined Skirts

If you are NOT adding kick pleats or pleats, proceed to page 13.

Lined Skirts

Your sewn skirt should appear as shown below. To finish the skirt, proceed to page 14.



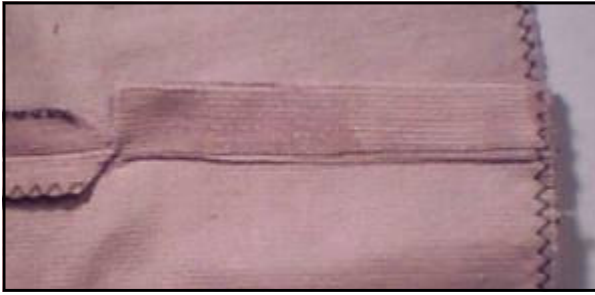
Kick Pleat for lined skirt



Zipper basted onto the center back seam.

Sewing Instructions, cont'd

Step IIIa. Unlined Skirts Sew the Center Back Kick Pleat



The right skirt kick pleat laps behind the left kick pleat.

1. Clip the top corner of the kick pleat at center back.
2. On the right kick pleat, press under the seam allowances, then clip the corner where they overlap.
3. Press the right kick pleat so the edge coincides with the center back line.



The left skirt kick pleat folded at center back.

4. Topstitch the right kick pleat to the body of the skirt.
5. Cut down the left kick pleat by the width of the finished kick pleat. (2" was specified on page 3.)
6. Press under the seam allowances, then clip the corner where they overlap.
7. Fold the left kick pleat at center back, then press.
8. Topstitch the long edge of the left kick pleat.
9. From the inside, place the right kick pleat over the left kick pleat, pin in place, then top stitch the top edge of the kick pleat.

Step IIIb. Front for the Pleated Skirt (optional)

1. Pin the front pleat to the front skirt panels, right sides together, then sew.
2. Press open the pleat seam.
3. Pin the pleat seams, right sides together, then machine baste the center front closed. [The center front line is 1" (2.5cm) from the edge of the skirt, see Step 7, page 9.]
4. Press the pleat in place.
5. Pin the pleat along the top edge of the skirt panel, then zigzag the edge.

Sewing Instructions, cont'd

Step IV. Finishing an Unlined Skirt

There are several ways an unlined skirt can be finished. For finishing a lined skirt, see page 14. The instructions below attach the bottom of the waistband to the body of the skirt using the “stitch in the ditch” technique. The hem for the fitted skirt is self faced while the skirt for the A-Line uses hem tape.

1. Pin the side seams of the skirt, right sides together, then sew.
2. Clip the side seam allowances, then press open.
3. Pin the side seams of the waistband facing, right sides together, then sew.
4. Clip the waistband facing side seam allowances, then press open.
5. Pin the waistband facing to the skirt along the waist seam, right sides together, then sew.
6. Clip the waist seam allowance, then press open.
7. Turn the facing to the inside of the skirt and baste the bottom of the waistband facing to the body of the skirt inside the exposed seam allowance.
8. Hand sew the center back edges of the facing to the body of the skirt.
9. Turn the skirt right side out and sew through the seam that joins the body of the skirt to the contoured waistband. This stitching attaches the waistband facing to the body of the skirt.
10. Sew a hook and eye to the top of the center back at the waist.
11. If you are creating a fitted skirt, turn under the hem and machine or hand sew the hem allowance to the body of the skirt using a blind hem stitch. The skirt is now complete.

For an A-Line Skirt:

11. Stay stitch along the hem sewing line.
12. Zigzag hem tape to the right side of the bottom of the skirt.
13. Turn under the hem and sew the hem tape to the body of the skirt using a blind hem stitch.

The illustrations below use contrasting thread colors and hem tape for illustration purposes.



“Stitch in the Ditch” from the inside.
(Red thread used to baste the facing to the skirt.)



“Stitch in the Ditch” from the outside.
(Black thread illustrates how the stitching runs inside the seam that joins the waistband to the body of the skirt.)



Hem tape zigzagged to the bottom of the skirt.
The black stay stitching above the hem tape is where the hem will fold over.

Sewing Instructions, cont'd

Step IV. Finishing a Lined Skirt

1. Pin the front waistband to the skirt, right sides together, then sew.
2. Clip the side seam allowances, then press open.
3. Pin the side seams of the skirt, right sides together, then sew.
4. Clip the side seam allowances, then press open.

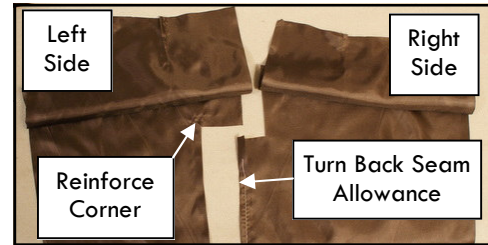
Adding the Lining

When you are sewing the lining remember that for the left and right side you are looking at the wrong side of the fabric. The right side of the fabric is next to the body. When you are sewing the fashion fabric of the skirt, not the lining, you are looking at the right side of the fabric. The wrong side is next to the body. This way the exposed seam allowances and darts are sandwiched between the fashion fabric and the lining.

1. Sew the back hip dart of the lining.
2. Pin the waistband lining to the skirt lining, right sides together, then sew.
3. Clip the seam allowance, then press open.
4. Trim the back left kick pleat of the lining as shown on page 5.
5. Reinforce the left kick pleat corner with stay stitching just inside the sewing line, then clip the corner.
6. Turn back the seam allowance of the right kick pleat and machine baste in place.
7. Pin the center back seam from below the zipper to the kick pleat, then sew.
8. Pin the side seams of the lining, right sides together, then sew.
9. Press open all seam allowances clipping as necessary.
10. Pin the lining to the fashion fabric of the skirt along the waist seam, right sides together, then sew.
11. Turn the skirt bringing the wrong sides together, then press the waist seam. If desired, edge stitch the waist seam.
12. Hand sew the lining to the zipper keeping clear of the teeth of the zipper.

Hemming the Skirt

13. Turn the lining hem allowance 1/2" (12mm) up from the desired hem length and top stitch in place. (Use a rolled hem if desired.)
14. Turn the left kick pleat along the center back line, right sides together, sew at the hem line.
15. Clip then turn, wrong sides together, see photo.
16. Turn the skirt hem under and machine baste in place.
17. Sew the hem in place using a hem stitch.
18. Hand sew the kick pleat to the hem.
19. Pin then sew kick pleat lining to skirt.
20. French tack the lining to the skirt at the side seams.
21. Sew a hook and eye to the top of the center back at the waist.



Steps 5 & 6 - Prepare the Lining



Step 14 & 15 - Left Kick Pleat Hem



Step 16. Hem Basted in Place



Step 17. Sew Kick Pleat to hem



Step 18. Sew Kick Pleat Lining to Skirt

Sewing Instructions, cont'd

Sewing Leather

Working with leather is different from working with fabric. Here are some basic pointers.

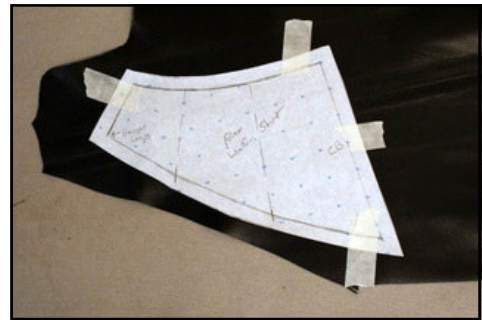
- Do not fold leather, you cannot remove creases.
- Sandwich leather between craft paper for a pressing cloth.
- Do not pin leather. The holes will be permanent.
- Tape pattern pieces to the leather to cut.
- Use binder clips to hold seams in place.
- Leather stretches--use fusible interfacing for waistbands.
- Use a sewing machine needle specifically for leather.
- Do not backstitch. Tie off the threads at the ends of seams.
- Use rubber cement to glue seam allowances flat.
- Use a rubber mallet to press seam allowances and hems.

For more information on working with leather I highly recommend *Sewing with Leather and Suede* by Sandy Scrivano.

For this leather skirt, I opted for a design that had no darts as described on page 6. The sequence of sewing is pretty straight forward. I used fabric for the waistband facing to minimize the bulk.

The Sewing Sequence

1. Cut the waistband from fusible interfacing.
2. Layout the pattern pieces on the leather to verify placement.
3. Fuse the waistband interfacings to the leather before cutting the leather. Use a medium heat. (Be careful of teflon irons and ironing board covers. I almost melted my leather when I applied my iron to the leather.)
4. Cut out all pieces of the skirt.
5. Sew the front and back waistbands to the body of the skirt.
6. Tie off the thread ends and tuck them into the seam allowance.
7. Use a small amount of rubber cement along the stitches.
8. Finger press the seam allowances open.
9. Pound the seam allowances flat using a rubber mallet. Use a round pole, such as a clothes hanger rod, to pound curved areas of the seam.
10. Sew the center back seam and zipper as described on page 11 except use glue or double sided tape to baste the zipper in place.
11. You can check the fit using binder clips to "baste" the skirt at this point.
12. Sew the side seams.
13. Glue, finger press, then pound the seam allowances.
14. Cut the waistband facing from fabric, then zigzag the edges.
15. Pin then sew the side seams of the waistband facing.
16. Clip the facing to the leather, right sides together, then sew.
17. Turn the facing to the inside, then glue, finger press, then pound the seam allowances.
18. Edge stitch the waist seam.
19. Tape the facing in place, then stitch-in-the-ditch to secure.
20. Turn the hem allowance under, then Glue, finger press, and pound in place.
21. Sew a hook and eye at the waist.



Pattern Taped to Leather



Waistband Interfacing Fused to Leather
(Note the use of craft paper.)



Waistband Clipped to Skirt
(Do Not Pin Leather)



Skirt "Basted" with Clips for a Trial Fit