

Pattern Design Guides by Don McCunn

Dirndl Skirts



These instructions show how to create a dirndl skirt. They have been prepared for the online class “How to Make a Lower Torso (aka Skirt) Sloper.”

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Dirndl skirts are made from a rectangle of fabric that is gathered at the waist. They have a long history being commonly used in peasant skirts. The main challenge is to determine how much fullness to use for the rectangle.

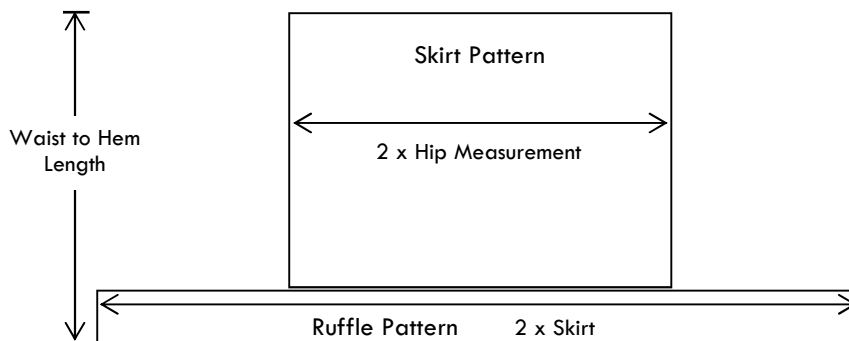
The Pattern

To determine how much fullness will look correct for a given fabric, follow the steps below.

1. Machine sew a line of straight stitches along one edge of the fabric.
2. Pull one of the threads to gather the fabric to the appearance desired.
3. Put pins on either end of the gathers.
4. Measure the distance between the pins and record the result.
5. Remove the gathers and measure the distance between the pins.
6. The difference between the results from Step 4 and the results of Step 5 tell you how much fullness to add for the skirt.

For example, if the gathered fabric is 5" then when the gathers are removed the fabric is 10", you will be using double fullness. That is the amount of fullness used in the skirt shown with these instructions. This skirt also has a ruffle at the bottom with the same amount of fullness.

To determine the size of the skirt rectangle you can use either the waist measurement or the hip measurement. In this example the hip measurement is used.



Sewing Instructions

Fabric Selection

Dirndl skirts should be made from fabric that gathers well and will drape nicely. The exact yardage you will need will depend on how much fullness you use as described earlier.

Waist Elastic

A dirndl skirt can be gathered into a waistband or use elastic at the waist for a pull on style skirt. The example used for these instructions uses an elasticized waist.

Hem Finish

For this example the narrow rolled hem of the ruffle is created using fusible thread.

Materials

Qty	Item	
1	Skirt Fabric	_ yds
1	1/2" Elastic	1 yd
1	Fusible Thread	

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. Cut the fabric to the length desired.

Step II. Narrow Rolled Hems

The steps below describe how to create a narrow rolled hem using fusible thread.

1. Place fusible thread in the bobbin.
2. With the fabric right side up, stay stitch just inside the seam allowance around the hem.
3. Press the seam allowance to the inside fusing it to the body of the skirt.
4. Trim the hem allowance close to the fused line of stitches.
5. Roll the hem along the edge and press in place.
6. Change the bobbin back to regular thread.
7. Top stitch the hem in place.

Step III. Finish the Skirt

1. Zigzag the edges of the fabric.
2. Sew the side seam of the skirt and the ruffle.
3. Gather the ruffle and pin it to the body of the skirt, right sides together.
4. Sew the ruffle to the skirt, then press.
5. Gather the body of the skirt and pin the wrong side of the skirt to the elastic.
6. Zigzag the elastic to the skirt.
7. Turn the elastic so it is encased in the skirt fabric then zigzag in place.