

*Pattern Design Guides by Don McCunn***Handkerchief Hem and Circular Skirts**

These instructions show how to create a skirt with a handkerchief hem and circular skirts. They have been prepared for the online class "How to Make a Lower Torso (aka Skirt) Sloper."

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Handkerchief Hem and Circular Skirts

by Don McCunn

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This example of a Handkerchief Hem skirt has been created the same way you can create circular skirts. It is made from a square of fabric which is silk in this case. It uses a circular opening for the waist. The zipper is added through a slit in the fabric. This could be changed to a circular skirt by changing the shape of the hem.

Skirts such as this require a fabric that drapes well. In my “Introduction to Pattern Design” class I encourage people to experiment with the fullness of fabric using quarter scale “circular skirts” to learn the characteristics of fabric. Four comparisons are shown in the photos below.

Some people will prototype designs in muslin, then cut them out of fashion fabric. But notice the difference in the drape of muslin and gingham. It is very important to know the quality of the specific fabric you are working with before you create a skirt with this type of fullness.



Canvas and Knit T-Shirt Fabric



Muslin and Gingham Fabric

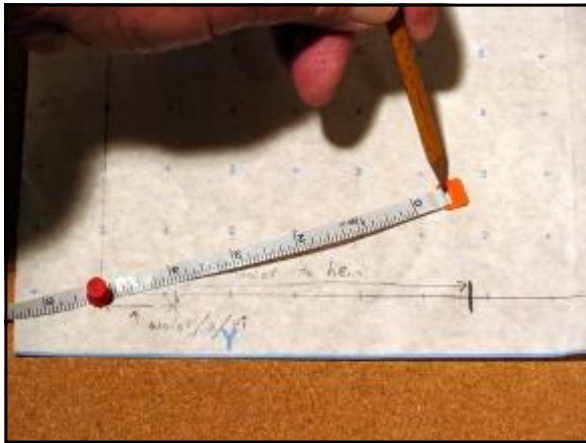
The Handkerchief Hem and Circular Skirts, cont'd

Creating the Pattern

The pattern for a Handkerchief Hem or Circular skirt is relatively easy to make. To create the waist opening, draw a pattern that is a quarter of a circle. This pattern can then be placed on the folded fabric.

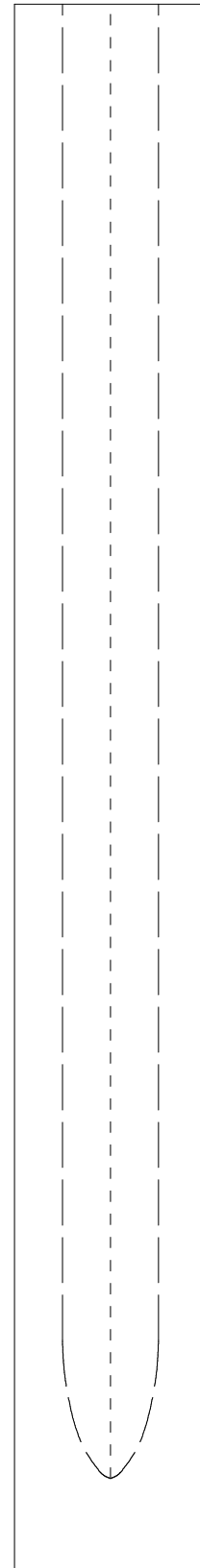
1. Measure the circumference of the waist at the desired level for the waist line of the skirt. This may or may not be the natural waist used for the sloper.
2. Divide the circumference by the mathematical pi/2 to find the radius for the waist circle. If you are using a computer with a Windows operating system, use the computer's calculator to do this.
 - a. Change the calculator's "View" menu option to "Scientific."
 - b. Type in the waist circumference measurement.
 - c. Press the / key.
 - d. Press the pi key near the bottom of the key pad.
 - e. Press the / key.
 - f. Press the 2 key.
 - g. Press the = key.
 - h. Record the resulting measurement.
3. Use a tape measure to draw a quarter of the circle using the radius determined above as show in the illustration below.
4. Add a 1/4" seam allowance.

To create a circular skirt, draw the hem by putting the waist to hem length on the pattern, then use the same tape measure technique to create a circular hem.



Zipper Opening

For the zipper opening you can either slit the fabric from the waist opening to the hem and create a center back seam, or you can use the pattern shown to the right to create a faced opening. The sewing instructions that follow, will show how to use the zipper opening pattern.



Pattern for Facing & Zipper Opening

Sewing Instructions

Fabric Selection

Before you can cut out your skirt, you will need to select the fabric. The Handkerchief Hem and Circular Skirts will work with a variety of fabrics but they should have a nice drape as described earlier.

Zipper Closure

A 7" to 9" zipper and a hook and eye are used for the closure. An invisible zipper is a good option to consider. The elastic and bias tape are for the waist.

Narrow Rolled Hems

If you do not have a technique for sewing narrow rolled hems, I strongly recommend purchasing fusible thread. The instructions that follow will describe how to use it.

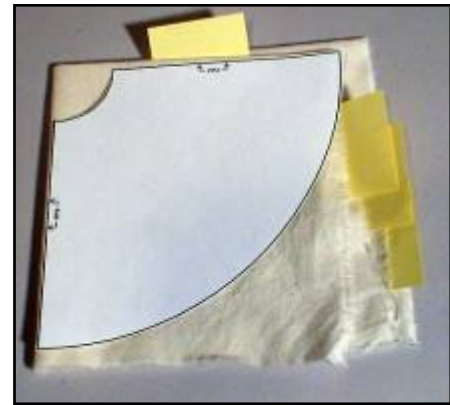
Materials

Qty	Item	
1	Skirt Fabric	2 yds
1	1/4" Elastic	1 yd
1	Double Fold Bias Tape	1 yd
1	Hook and Eye	
1	Zipper	
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. Fold the fabric wrong sides together along the lengthwise grain.
5. Cut the length of the fabric to match the width of the fabric.
6. Fold the fabric along the crosswise grain.
7. Place the waistline pattern on the folds of the fabric, see illustration. Pin the pattern pieces to the fabric.
8. Cut the fabric keeping the fabric as flat as possible.



Example showing a circular skirt pattern laid out along both folds.

Step II. Sew the Zipper



1. Sew the facing to the body of the skirt, right sides together. In this example, the facing uses fusible interfacing.
2. Cut the zipper facing along the center line, then turn it to the inside.



3. Hand baste the edge of the facing in place.
4. Hand stitch the opening so the edges butt together.
5. Hand baste the zipper in place.



6. Sew the zipper.
7. Remove the basting.

Sewing Instructions, cont'd

Step III. Complete the Waistline

With light weight fabric, such as the silk shown in the example, the edge of the waist open can stretch during the sewing process. Stay stitching the waistline seam allowance immediately after it is cut will minimize this problem. The steps below were used for the example.

1. Cut a length of 1/4" elastic that is the length of the waist circumference for the skirt.
2. Zigzag the elastic to the wrong side of the waistline seam allowance stretching as necessary.
3. Hand baste bias tape to cover the elastic. The middle fold of the bias tape should follow the edge of the seam allowance.
4. Turn the bias tape to cover the seam allowance, then topstitch in place.
5. Turn the bias tape to the inside of the garment, then topstitch in place.



Bias Tape Basted to Edge of Waist

Step IV. 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.