

# love Sewing

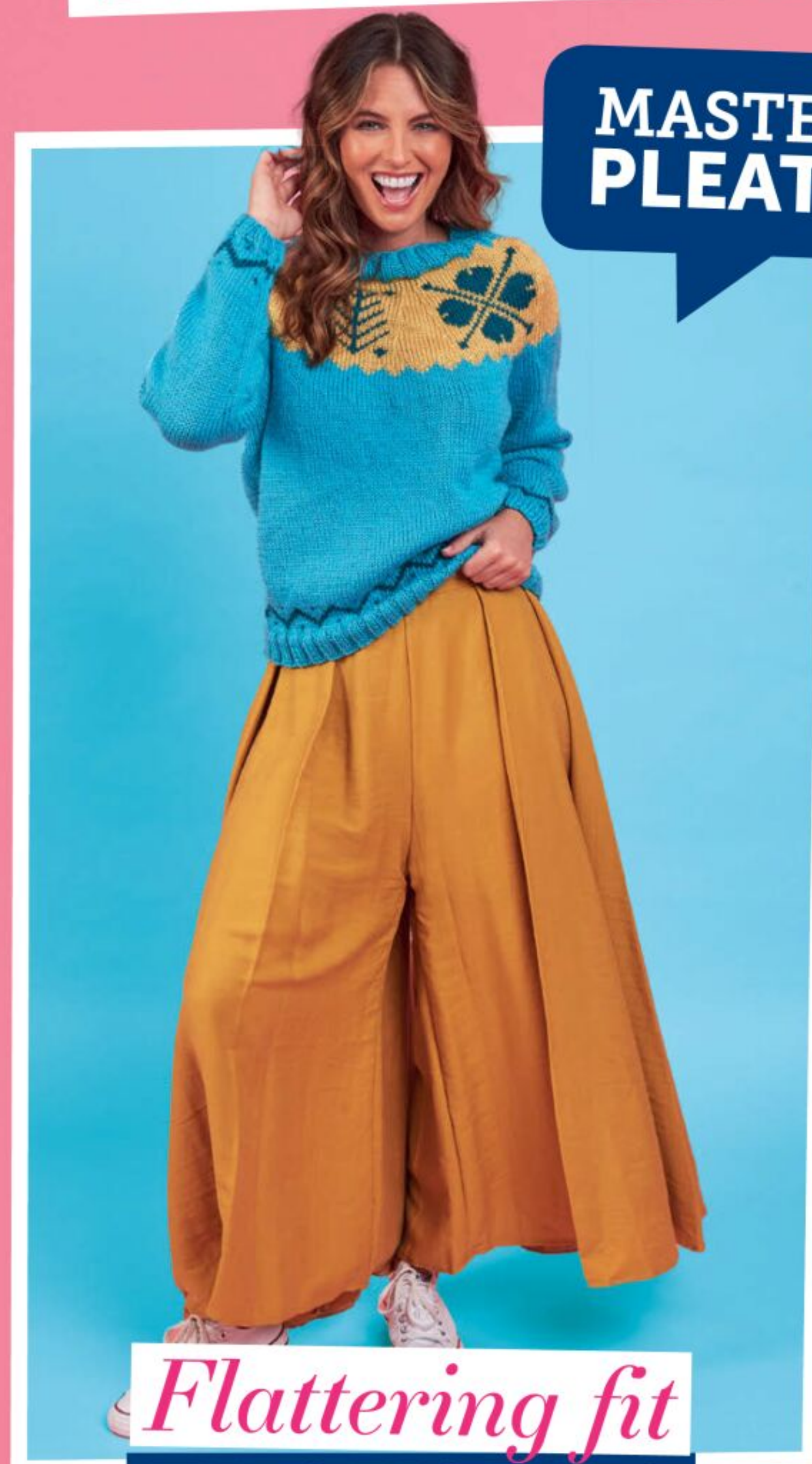
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# Smart sewing, made simple

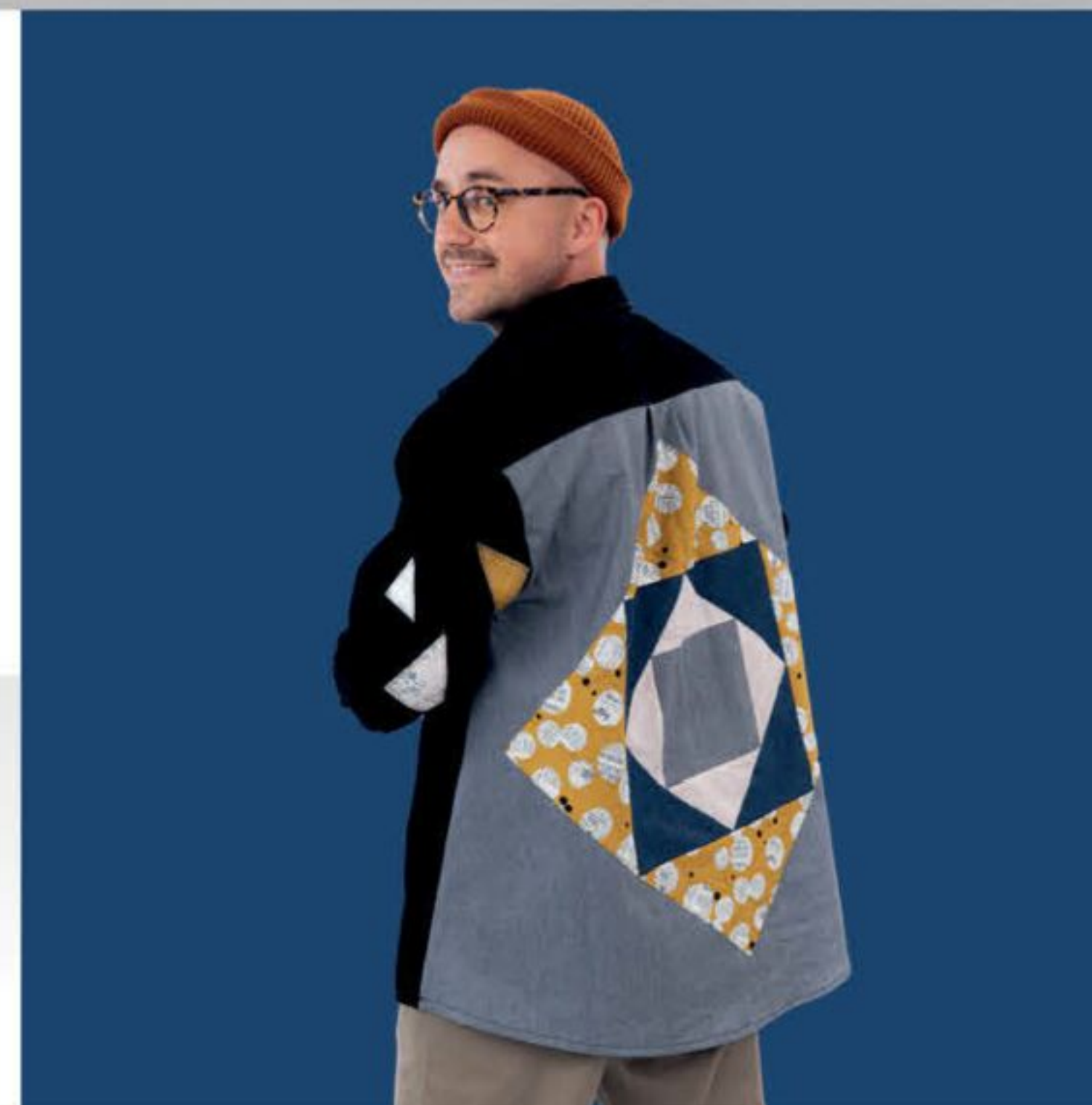
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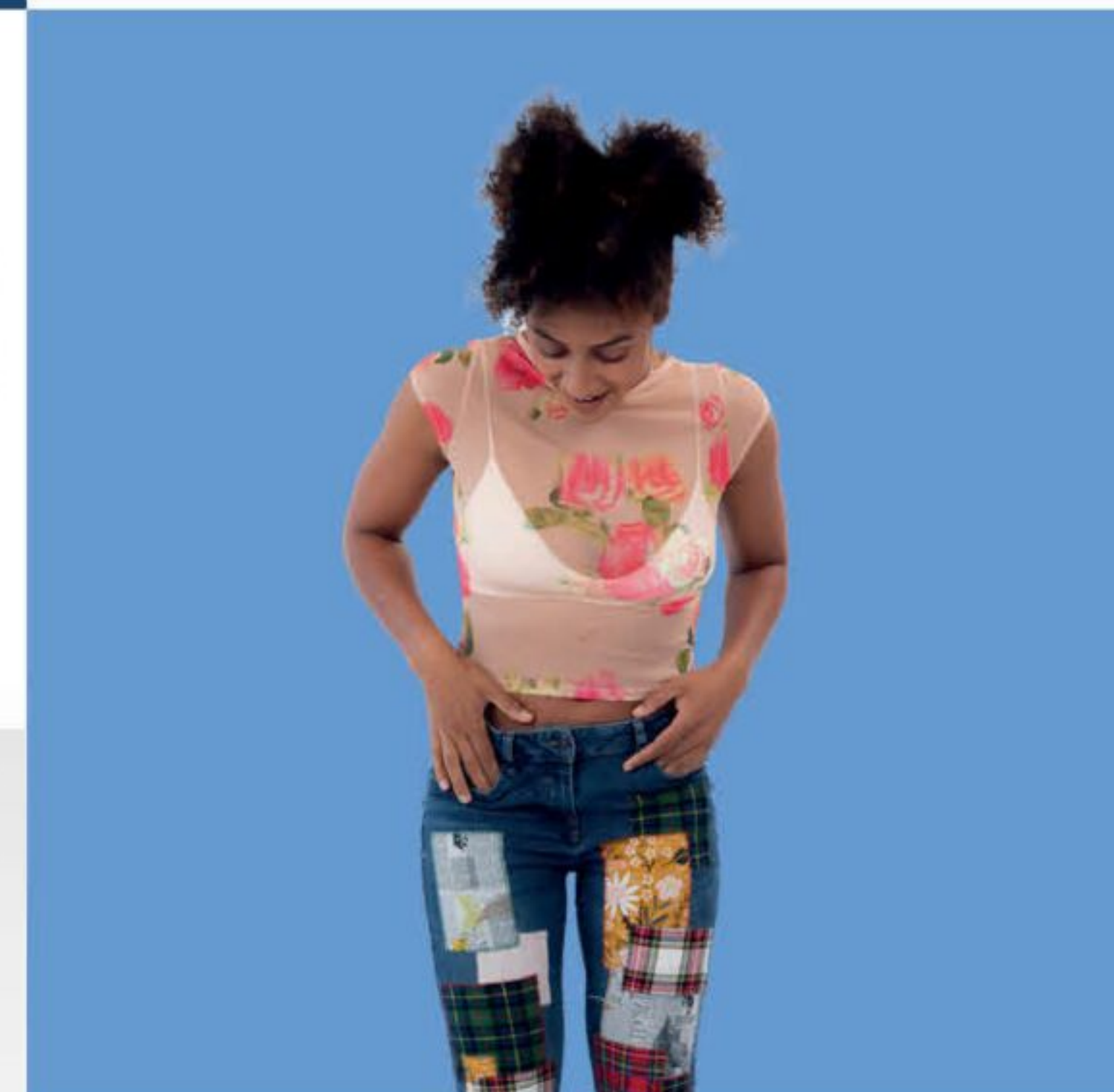
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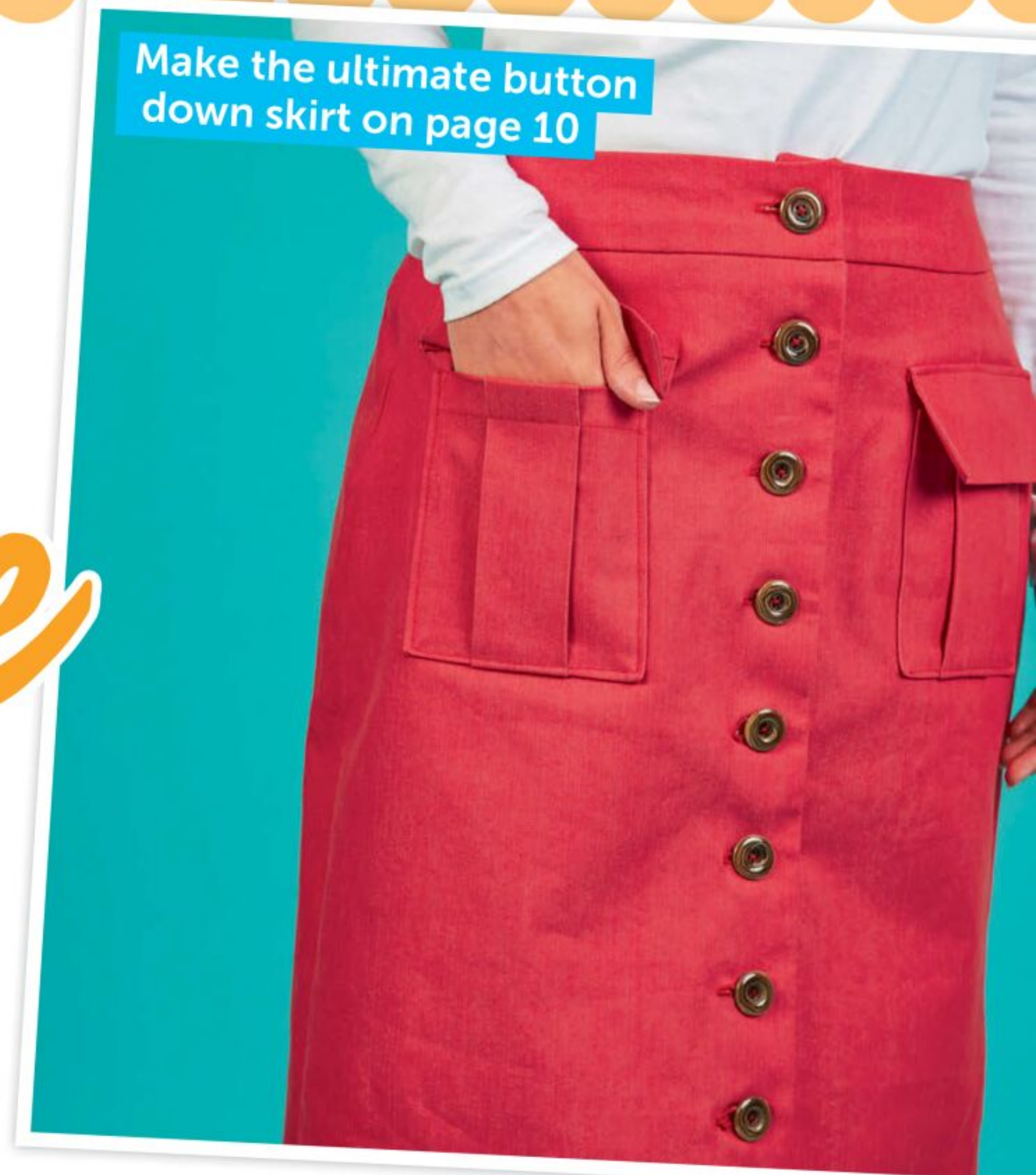




Welcome in the Christmas spirit on page 72

# Welcome

to issue 153 of  
*Love Sewing!*



Make the ultimate button down skirt on page 10

## Meet the TEAM



Jessica

### PRODUCTION EDITOR

Jessica loves all things crafting and has been sewing for as long as she can remember



Emma

### COMMISSIONING EDITOR

Emma loves making new on-trend outfits to add to her wardrobe each season



Megan

### LEAD DESIGNER

Megan is a keen crafter who loves sewing. Visit her Instagram [makes\\_by\\_megs\\_](#) to see her latest creations

As the evenings draw in and we start thinking about cosy makes and festive fun, this issue is brimming with inspiration to keep your creativity flowing. Whether you're stitching up a stylish new wardrobe piece or trying your hand at seasonal home décor, we've packed the pages with projects and ideas to keep your sewing machine humming.

This month, we are bringing you the Bobbins & Buttons cozy Noelle sweater dress, the ultimate winter and festive look. Pair with tights and boots for a casual look or go with sparkly heels for your Christmas party. We are also bringing you the adorable Monty mouse, who is going to be the perfect stocking filler this year.

We also have a downloadable Simple Sew pussy bow blouse and dress for you so that you can put your own twist on the returning trend. Nothing beats a classic and elegant style coming back to the forefront of fashion staples.

We have a plethora of sewing project for you this month including, a festive stag cushion and a pumpkin cushion, a button-down skirt and a spin on the on-trend bag charms. If that isn't enough, we also have the stunning frill seeker dress that is sure to impress, plus stash busting projects with Corinne Bradd.

Debbie Shore gets us all in the festive mood with "Tis' the Season," her guide to joyful seasonal sewing. If you've ever wondered what it's like to make sewing your career, our feature on Sewing as a Professional with Claire-Louise Hardie gives an inspiring look behind the seams.

We've also got conversations that connect you with the people behind the projects. Behind the Seams lifts the curtain on some clever tricks, while our Interview with Bobbins & Buttons delves into their creative journey. Amy Scarr shares her love for cosy pyjamas in this month's Inspiring Reads, and our history feature takes a look back at the evolution of the iconic pussy bow blouse.

So, thread up your machine, pour yourself something warming and settle in for an issue full of projects, stories and seasonal sparkle.

*Happy sewing!*  
Jessica





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# RECEIVE THE SEWING BEE BOOK BUNDLE

Turn to page 36 to find out more



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## Editorial

Production Editor Jessica Makin  
 Commissioning Editor Emma Cant  
 Sub-Editor Andrea Petrie  
 Lead Designer Megan Harvey  
 Photographer Jack Hauxwell  
 Artworkers Druck Media  
 Contributors: Corinne Bradd, Julia Claridge, Ashley Cramp, Claire Garside, Freya Gilbert, Claire-Louise Hardie, Sarah Laws, Liz Owen, Amy Scarr, Sophie Tarrant

## Advertising Enquiries

Group Business Development Manager – Chris Cooke  
[chris.cooke@practicalpublishing.co.uk](mailto:chris.cooke@practicalpublishing.co.uk)

## Publishing

Managing Editor Lee Campbell  
 Creative Design Manager Ian Danby  
 Associate Publisher Jenny Conduit  
 Group Membership Marketing Manager – Dan Tutton  
 Head of Publishing Becky Tutton  
 Head of Buying Lucy Pedder-Blythe  
 Strategy & Insights Director Dave Cusick  
 Managing Director Danny Bowler

## Distribution

Newstrade Seymour Distribution Ltd Practical Publishing International Ltd

## Contact

Practical Publishing International Ltd  
 Units 2 & 3 Bredbury Business Park  
 Bredbury Park Way  
 Stockport SK6 2SN  
[info@practicalpublishing.co.uk](mailto:info@practicalpublishing.co.uk)  
[www.practicalpublishing.co.uk](http://www.practicalpublishing.co.uk)  
 Tel: 0161 327 0440

## Subscription Enquiries

Tel: 0161 327 0441  
[subscriptions@practicalpublishing.co.uk](mailto:subscriptions@practicalpublishing.co.uk)

Love Sewing is published by Practical Publishing International Ltd ISSN 2054-832X

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# Sew, *what's new?*

The patterns, people, fabric and finds getting us sewing this month

## WORLD OF CREATIVITY



◀ With an emphasis on special sewing techniques, Vlieseline brings you the World of Creativity Collection! Ranging from sculptural structures, artistic patterns and 3D effects, these techniques will give your projects a certain uniqueness. So go on, let yourself be inspired! To find out more about Vlieseline products, please visit [www.vlieseline.com](http://www.vlieseline.com)

## LOVE LETTER TO BAGS

▼ The Missive bag is the perfect size for carrying your phone and keys on small adventures, compact enough to function as a bonus pocket without the bulk of a purse. With a detachable strap, the Missive Bag can be worn over your shoulder or as a belt bag. Sew Liberated Missive bag, £10, [www.thefoldline.com](http://www.thefoldline.com)



## SUVI DRESS

▲ This asymmetrical dress features ties incorporated into the front and back panels. The round neckline is finished with a facing, and the sleeves fall just above the elbow. A back slit lets you move with ease. Fibre Mood Suvi dress, £10.35, [www.thefoldline.com](http://www.thefoldline.com)





# FABRIC FOCUS

All fabrics available to shop at  
[www.fabricgodmother.co.uk](http://www.fabricgodmother.co.uk)



Barnaby check wool suiting in mole,  
£6.50 per half metre



Filipe houndstooth wool mix coating in  
black, £7.50 per half metre



Pietro bouclé coating in rust,  
£6.50 per half metre



Lionel wide stripe tumbled linen in  
chartreuse & chocolate, £11.50 per  
half metre

## THE CAROL BLOUSE

➔ With its easy fit, gathered scoop neckline and relaxed raglan sleeves, Carol offers the perfect balance of comfort and style. Choose a wide or narrow neckline and short or ¾ length sleeves. Madswick Carol blouse, £13, [www.thefoldline.com](http://www.thefoldline.com)



## COTTAGE CORE

♥ This is the cottage core blouse to end all cottage core style blouses! The three views of this shirt offers you to create your dream blouse, with a Peter Pan collar, high neck or frills, the options are truly endless here! M8620, £14.50, [www.sewdirect.com](http://www.sewdirect.com)



## THE 60S STYLE

➔ This sleeveless knit top and skirt has an adorable, scalloped hem, and you can stretch your skills with an invisible zipper closure. M8610, £14.50, [www.sewdirect.com](http://www.sewdirect.com)





## LOUNGING AROUND

➔ This is the ultimate cosy and comfortable lounge wear set for men. With pull-on drawstring pants with an elasticated waist for ultimate comfort, and your choice between a pull-on sweater or a classic button-up shirt. M8616, £14.50, [www.sewdirect.com](http://www.sewdirect.com)



## EVERYTHING BUT THE DRESS

This month, we are shining a light on all things accessories, as we all know it's the accessories that complete an outfit

@groovyooze



Learn how to sew any size scrunchie with this great tutorial over on Instagram!

@faye\_studios



This Emily tote is adorable and is great for everyday use, you can shop this amazing pattern at Faye Studios on Etsy

@heysewgeorgie



Here is the best example of going for it and following an Instagram reel tutorial. You never know, you might end up with something as amazing as this

@roberts.wood



This is such a great accessory, we can't wait to make our own flower twist mini bag!

@elevengoodpatterns



How can we not talk about this SoHo hobo bag pattern from [www.elevengoodpatterns.com](http://www.elevengoodpatterns.com)

@celineborthayre



This may not be an accessory for your outfit, but a home accessory counts too, right? This Juni butterfly quilt pattern from Celine is too good not to include



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*We love*  
**STYLE**

*Frill*

# SEEKER

Everyone needs a sophisticated go-to party dress, and this one ticks all the boxes, with its on-trend ruffle detail and curvaceous fit

Project **CLAIRE GARSIDE**

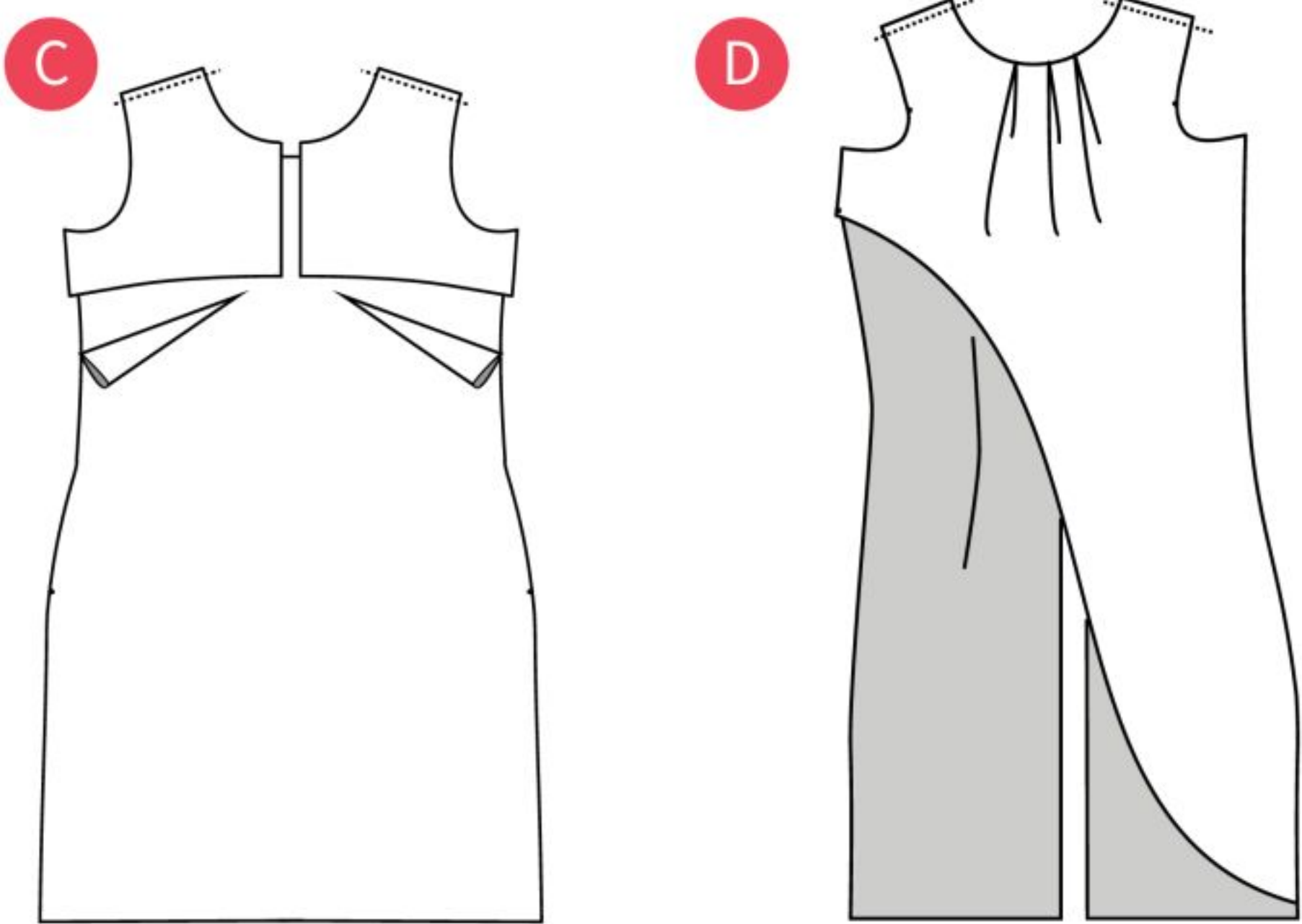
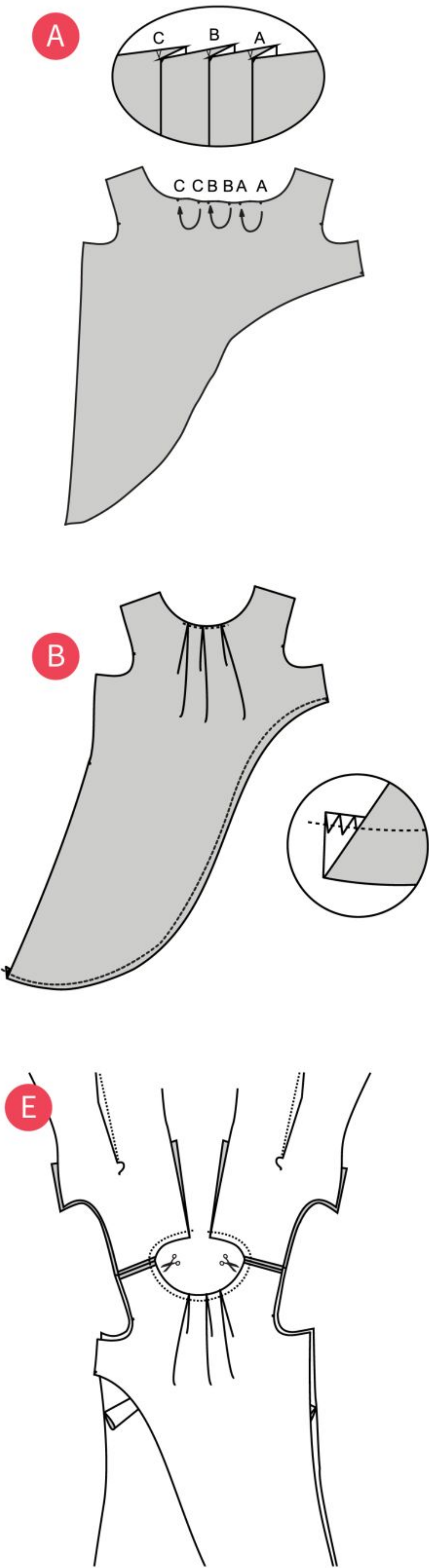
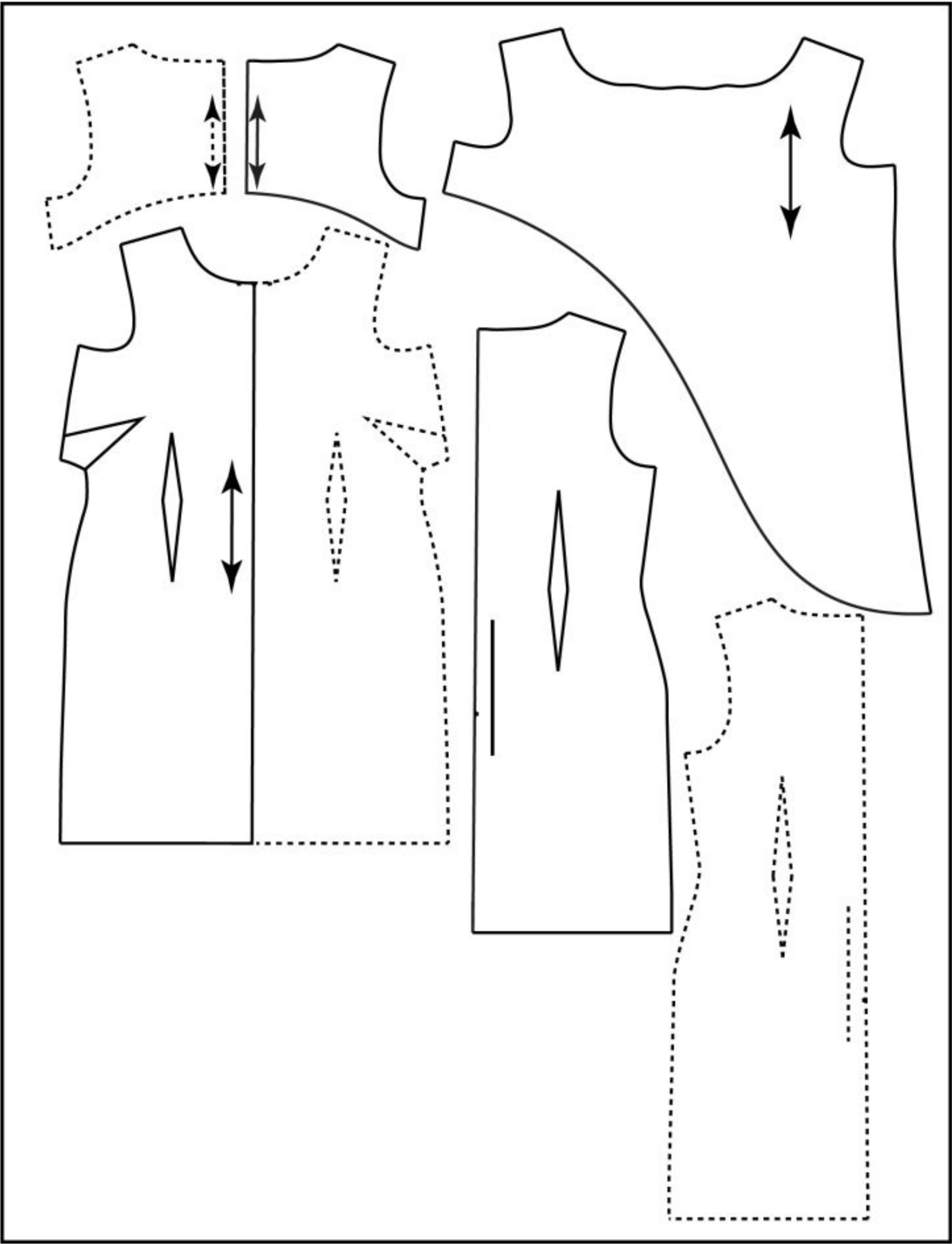


*Shopping list*

Landon smooth crepe in Emerald, £14 per metre, [www.croftmill.co.uk](http://www.croftmill.co.uk)



**LAYPLAN:**  
60"-wide fabric



**SIZING:**

	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
BUST	35"	37"	39"	41"	43"	45"	47"	47
WAIST	27½"	29½"	31½"	33½"	35½"	37½"	39½"	42
HIPS	27½"	29½"	31½"	33½"	35½"	37½"	39½"	42

**MATERIALS & TOOLS:**

- 2.2m of 60"-wide fabric for sizes 8-14 or 2.5m of 60"-wide fabric for sizes 16-20 crepe or similar-weight fabric
- 16" concealed zip
- co-ordinating thread
- templates downloaded from [www.craftworld.com](http://www.craftworld.com)

**NOTES:**

Finish the raw edges with a machine zigzag stitch or overlocker.

Use a 1.5cm seam allowance unless otherwise instructed.

**HOW TO MAKE:**

- 1 Create the darts on the front and back dress panels.
- 2 Press the bust darts down and the waist darts to the side seams.
- 3 Press the three pleats on the RS of the front frill panel by aligning each pair of notches. The pleat folds will point to the right-hand side when worn. (See Pic A.)

- 4 Neaten the frill panel hem by overlocking or zigzag-stitching the edge of the fabric, then sewing a 0.5cm single turn hem. Repeat for the back facing hems. (See Pic B.)
- 5 Join the WS of the main front dress panel piece with the RS of the back facings at the shoulder line. Press seams open. (See Pic C.)
- 6 With RST, join the frill panel to the back dress panels at

- 7 Lay the assembled front RS down on the workspace. Lay the assembled frill RS down on top and pin together at the neckline. Sew around the neckline and armholes using a 1cm seam allowance.
- 8 Trim the neck and armhole seam allowances to 0.5cm and snip into the seam



**Top tip**

Take time to pin your fabric well before sewing, slippery fabric will move around a lot as you sew





allowance around the curves, stopping short of the stitch line. (See Pic E.) Turn through by pulling each side through the shoulder seam opening.

**9** Lay the front of the dress so it is RS out with the frill panel lying on the top. Tack the frill to the front along the sides within the seam allowance. Now you will treat the two layers as one. Repeat for back and facing panel.

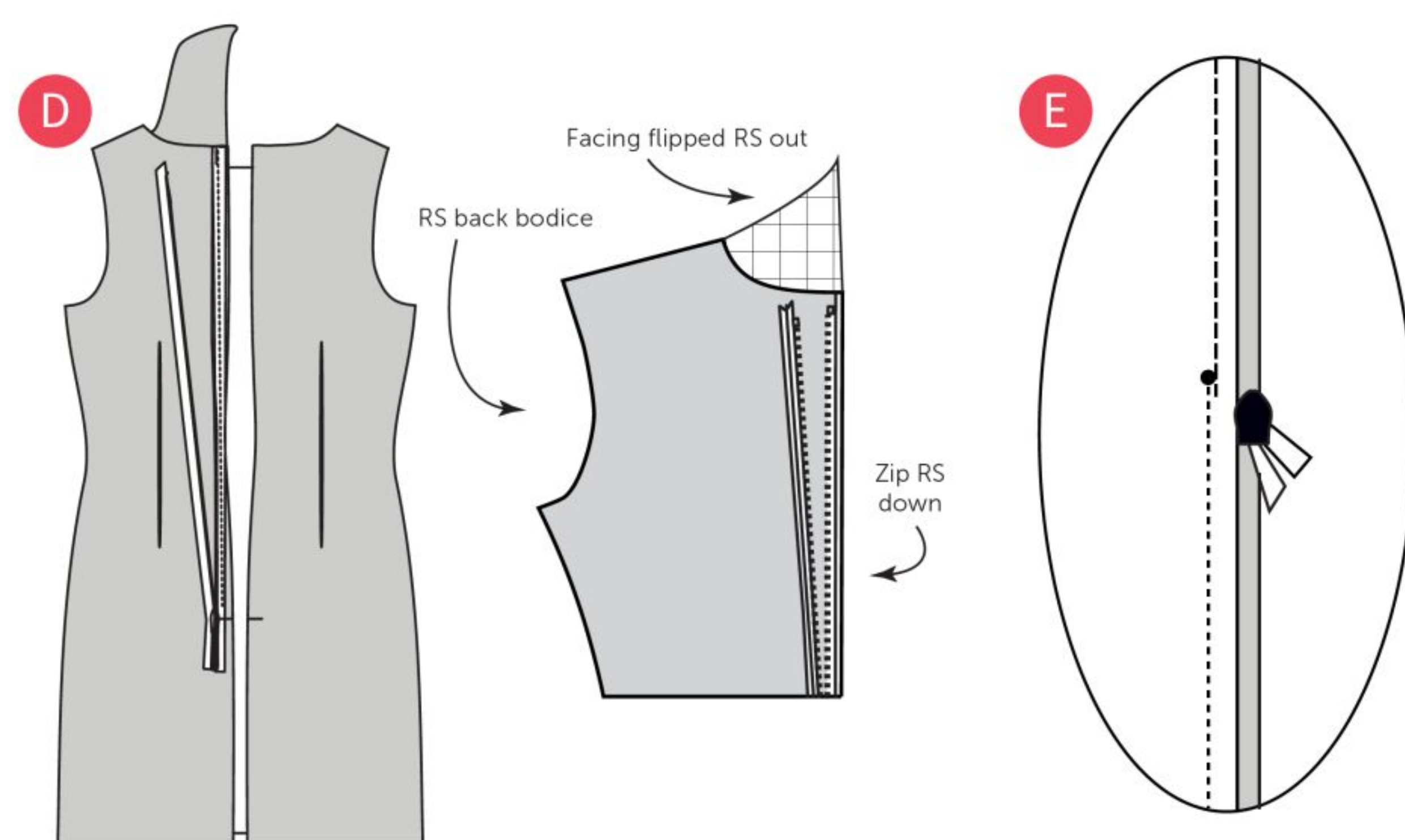
**10** Place the front and back RST and sew side seams with a 1.5cm seam allowance. Alternatively, try a French seam using our masterclass.

**11** Flip the facing up out of the way and insert a

concealed zip at the centre back seam. Stitch the zip down with zipper foot. Flip the facing over the neckline so that the back dress and the facing are RST and secure the facing to the zip through the two layers. Clip corner to reduce bulk and turn the facing through back to the inside of the dress. (See Pic D.)

**12** Starting from the last stitch of the zip, close the rest of the centre back seam, using your zipper foot. (See Pic E.)

**13** Double-turn the dress hem by 1cm.

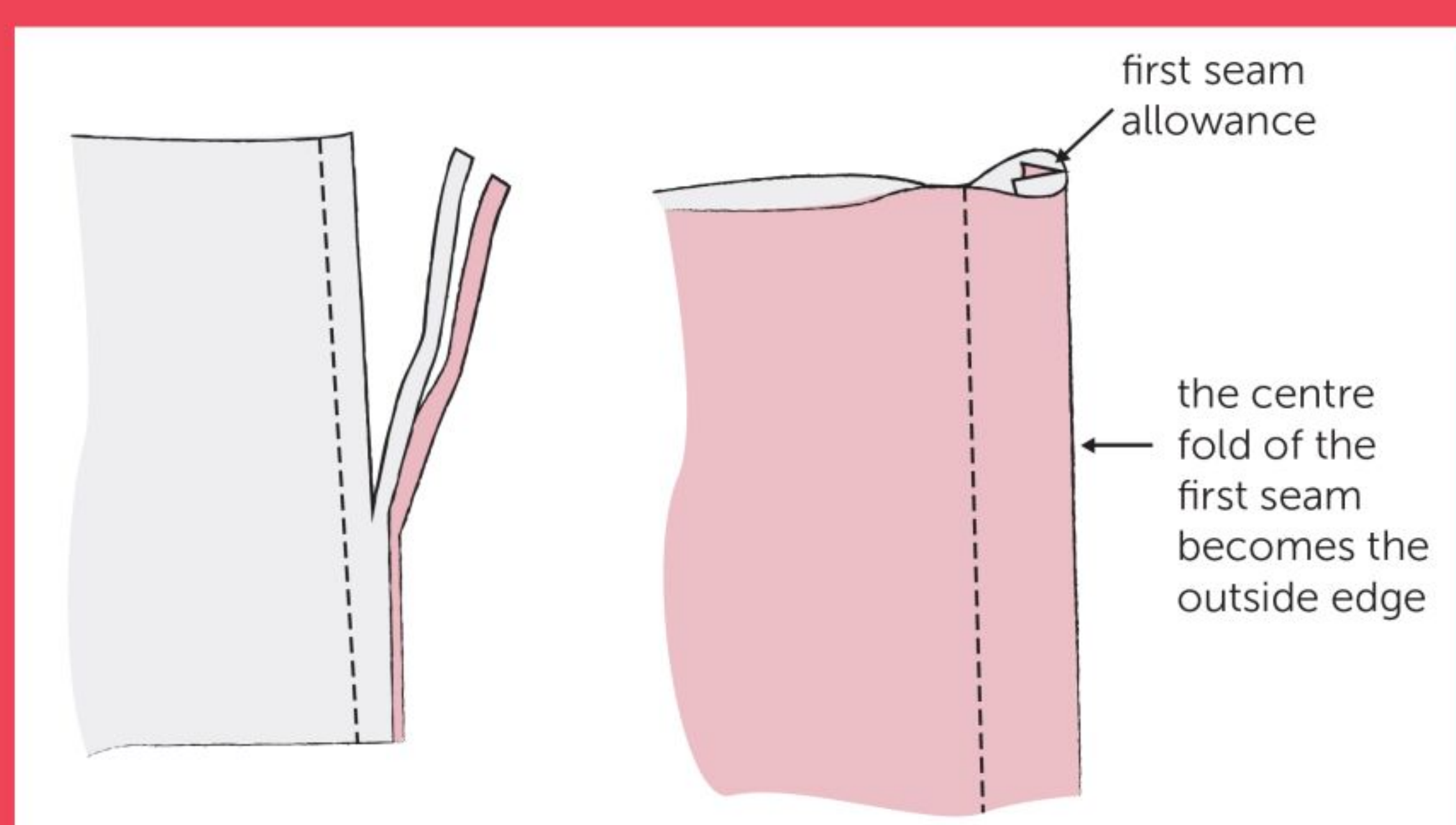


## MASTERCLASS FRENCH SEAMS

**1** Place your fabric wrong sides together – this is very important and it can be easy to forget. Sew a  $\frac{3}{8}$ " seam allowance from the raw edge and trim to  $\frac{1}{8}$ ".

**2** Press the seam open, then press over with right sides together.

**3** Sew a second seam at  $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the edge. This will trap the seam allowance edges neatly behind the second line of stitching.





# What goes around comes around

The pussy-bow trend has made a comeback and we have you covered



↑ Put a new twist on the pussy bow blouse by adding a button placket and a new front piece that beautifully gathers into a yoke. Sew Over It pussy bow blouse add-on pack, £7, [www.thefoldline.com](http://www.thefoldline.com)



↑ We love the fit, fabric and colour of this stunning pussy bow blouse from Lily Silk, the luxurious fabric really makes this a statement piece. Bow tie Jasmine blouse, £135, [www.lilysilk.com](http://www.lilysilk.com)



↑ We love how this blouse was styled for New Look, it adds a modern and dark academia trendy twist to a classic look. Pink pussybow neck blouse, £27.99, [www.newlook.com](http://www.newlook.com)



↑ This Vogue pattern is a classic option for a pussy bow blouse, with long sleeve and a large cuff, the silhouette is clean and simple. V1973, £18.50, [www.sewdirect.com](http://www.sewdirect.com)



↑ The Emilia dress is a fun and flirty shirt dress with a standing collar and classic pussy bow. This is a great modern look for a classic trend. Fibre Mood Emilia dress, £10.35, [www.thefoldline.com](http://www.thefoldline.com)



→ Turn to page 32 to make your own pussy-bow skirt or blouse!



*We love*  
**STYLE**



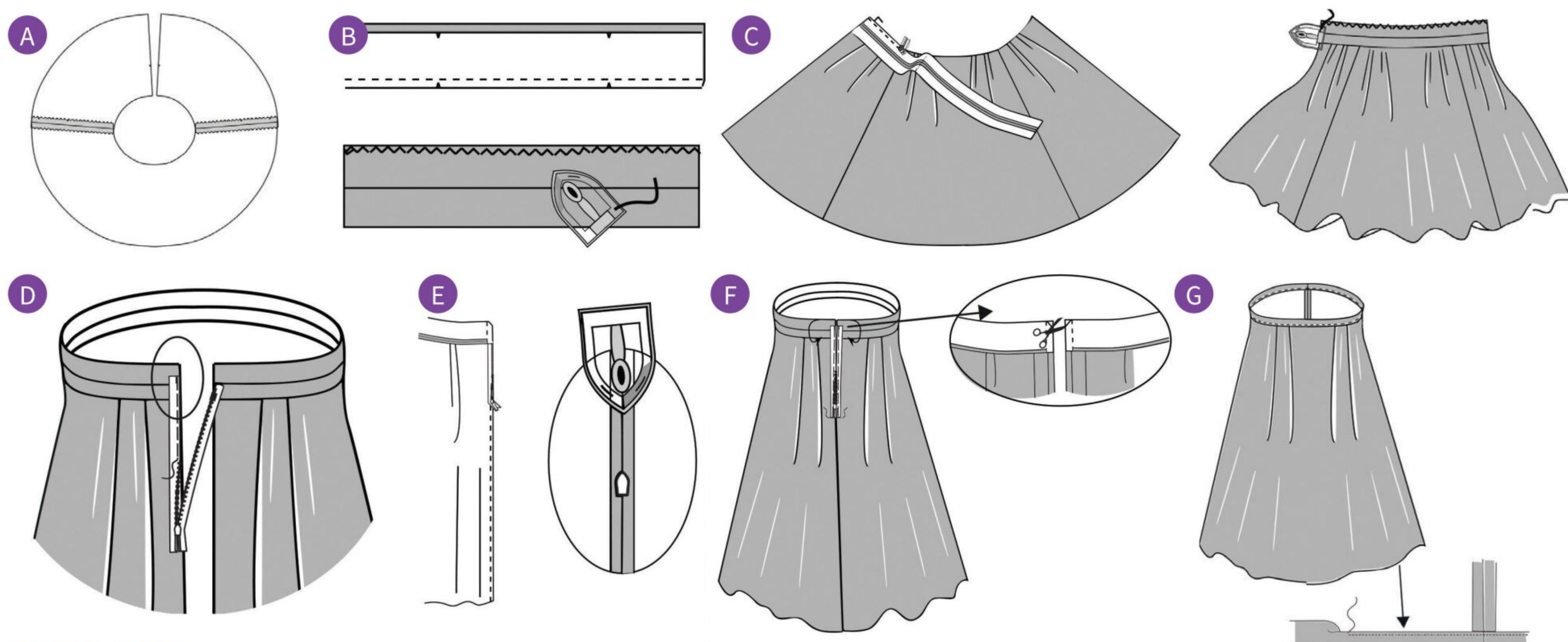
*Scattered*

**FLOWERS**

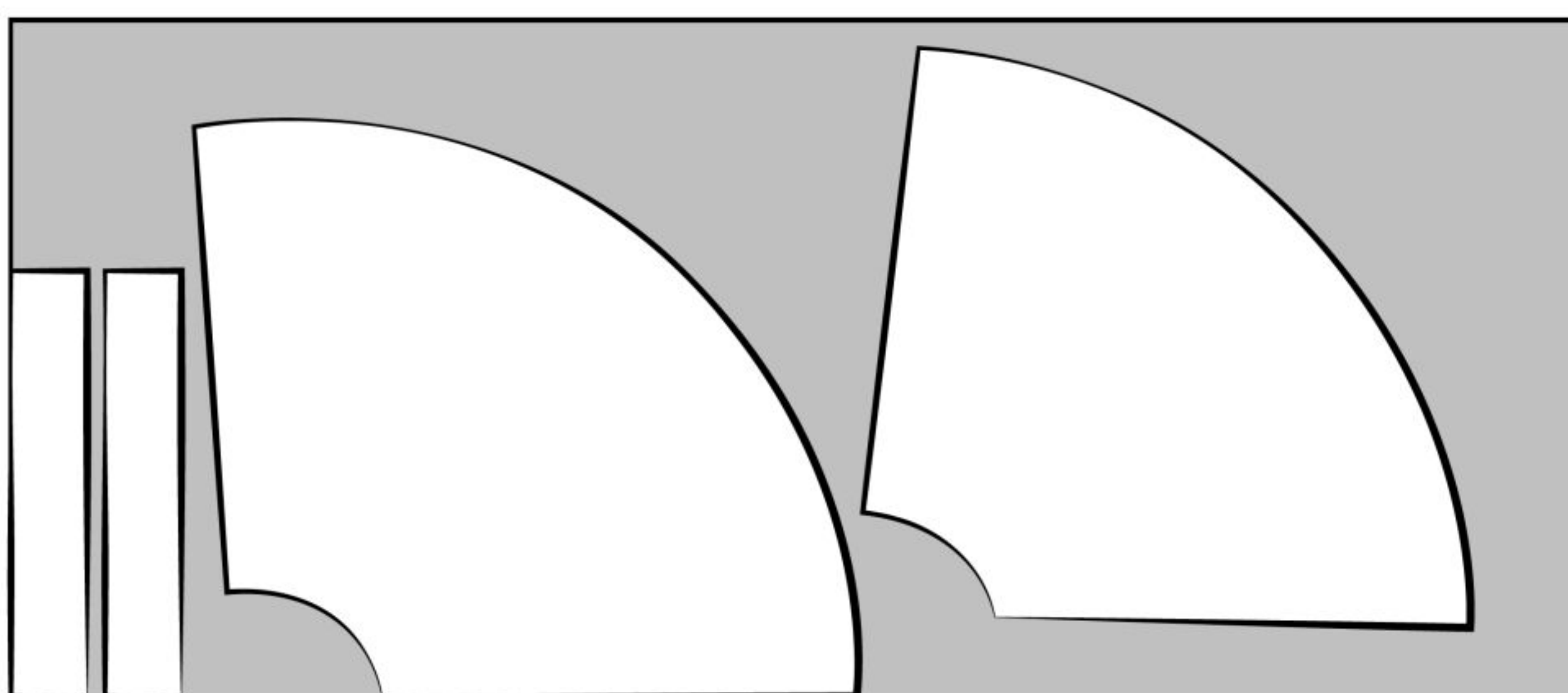
This quick-make skirt is a wardrobe must!

Project **CLAIRE GARSIDE**





## LAYPLANS:



## MATERIALS & TOOLS:

- Light-to-medium-weight cotton and blends, silk, silk blends, satin, polyester and viscose woven fabric blends (see fabric requirements table)
- 12"-long zip
- 30cm interfacing
- co-ordinating thread
- templates downloaded from [www.craftworld.com](http://www.craftworld.com)

## NOTES:

Use a 1.5cm seam allowance throughout unless otherwise stated. Layplans assume fabric is folded RST.

## HOW TO MAKE:

- 1 Attach back skirts to front skirt RST. Press seams open. (See Pic A.)
- 2 If you haven't already, iron on your interfacing to the wrong side of one of your waistband pieces. RST, join waistband pieces along the long edge. Zigzag what will be the bottom edge of your waistband. Press. (See Pic B.)
- 3 RST stitch the un-zigzagged edge to skirt waist. (See Pic C.)
- 4 Place zip halfway up waistband and stitch in place. (See Pic D.)

- 5 From the last stitch you made at the bottom of the zip, continue to stitch the centre back seam all the way to the bottom of the skirt. Press seam open. (See Pic E.)

- 6 Flip waistband over so the inside and outside are RST. Stitch down the waistband through the zip tape. Snip top corners and turn back through to the right sides. (See Pic F.)

- 7 Stitch the inner and outer waistbands together very carefully along the bottom of the waistband on the RS of fabric. Turn up hem by 0.5cm, iron and stitch. Repeat. (See Pic G.)

## Shopping list

Peter Horton Scattered Flowers  
Pima cotton lawn, £16 per metre  
[www.abakhan.co.uk](http://www.abakhan.co.uk)



## FABRIC REQUIREMENTS

Size	60"-wide fabric
8	1.62m
10	1.65m
12	1.68m
14	1.71m
16	1.73m
18	1.75m
20	1.77m

## FINISHED GARMENT MEASUREMENTS

Size	Waist	Skirt Length
8	28"	24"
10	30"	24"
12	32"	24"
14	34"	24"
16	36"	24"
18	38"	24"
20	40"	24"



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- 5 Denim wide stripes mid blue fabric, €29.20 (£25.33) per metre
- 6 Light blue woven velvet fabric, €20.80 (£18.04) per metre

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# Perfect PYJAMAS

It's officially cosy season, and Amy is here to share her expert tips to make your own pyjamas for yourself or a loved one

*V2119, make a classic two-piece set!*



## ABOUT AMY SCARR

Amy is the UK Brand Ambassador for Simplicity Ltd, which produces all your favourite Vogue, McCall's, Butterick, New Look and Simplicity patterns, available at [www.sewdirect.com](http://www.sewdirect.com). She shares tips and tutorials, fresh ideas and the best of the sewing community at [simplicitymccallsuk](https://www.instagram.com/simplicitymccallsuk) on Instagram



\*\*\*T&C's. All patterns shown available at [www.sewdirect.com](http://www.sewdirect.com). 30% Off offer expires 16th November 2025 23:59. Available on all sewing patterns in the Pyjama and Loungewear Category, including PDFs. P&P charges will apply unless your basket qualifies for free shipping.



There's nothing quite like slipping into sleepwear you've stitched yourself: perfect fit, dream-worthy fabric and not a scratchy label in sight. Forget overpriced shop-bought sets; we're talking pyjamas so comfy you'll be tempted to wear them for breakfast... and lunch. From slinky camisoles to classic button-ups, sewing your own sleepwear means bedtime fashion is firmly in your hands (and under your presser foot). So, grab that fabric you've been 'saving for something special' – it's time to sew yourself into sweet dreams. Fitting pyjama bottoms requires knowing your waist and hip measurements as well as the crotch length and "rise". Take a piece of string and measure from your front waist to back waist and making sure your string isn't riding up too much! Note the crotch point where the seam will sit between the legs. Rise is the length between this crotch seam and the waist point on the back and front, so you'll want to know how long each part measurement is. This will ensure close-fitting trouser legs that won't be too tight.

## PATTERN INSPIRATION

**Beginner-friendly or speedy makes:** Never made pyjamas? Pretty new to sewing? Or looking for a quick result...we recommend starting with one of these simple to sew designs. Simplicity 9132 is a Unisex style and a one-piece pattern. That's right, there's no side seam, just one piece that you cut out twice as a mirror pair. Quick and simple! Or why not try S3041, which also has sizing for children, teens and adults with a pyjama short or trousers plus a stretchy top to wear with them.

**Classic two-piece pyjamas:** You know the type I mean... a matching button-up top and trouser set, often in satin, cotton or flannel. Most commonly with a notched flat collar but occasionally featuring a stand collar style. Our best pattern for this style is Butterick 6296, which is a collab with indie pattern designer Lisette. There's a shirt style top, shorts and trousers to make. Or try a multi-garment pack like McCall's 8056 with belted robe, tops, shorts and trousers. Make in stable cotton lawn or push yourself and use a silky fabric. Learn a new skill by embellishing your set with piping details for a vintage look or practice sewing stripes with Vogue 2119.

**Camisole & shorts set:** Whip up a lightweight and strappy top with matching shorts, in cotton lawn or maybe,



silk or satin. Start with Simplicity 8800, which includes a robe, trousers, top and bralette for lots of value in one pattern pack. I've also written a guide full of bonus tips on [sewdirect.com](http://sewdirect.com) for working with bias cut fabric, perfect if you choose the Vogue Patterns 1834 robe, belt, camisole, slip, shorts and trousers. Or take a look at McCall's M8392 sleepwear, which includes fun ruffle hems.

**Tie front sets:** Featuring tie front closures instead of buttons for easier dressing, you may find this a more fun and modern project to sew. M8563 is our most popular design with ruffle trims and floaty sleeves. If you prefer a bit more security with your closures, try S3143, which is a take on the classic two-piece design with the vintage charm of a 1920s beach pyjama style. M8612 could be worn as a PJ top or a regular blouse with

it's pointed collar and multiple ties on the front; Make in a crisp fabric to get a neat collar shape.

**Lounge styles:** Made in Knit fabric and endlessly cosy for sleeping and lounging around! Knit fabric is stretchy, forgiving on fit and comfy to wear. Choose your size carefully, depending on whether you want a snug fit or loose style. You might like S9020 made all in knits with oversized tops, cuffed hem sweatpants or shorts and eye mask included. A bestselling design is our Unisex New Look design N6404 with baseball style raglan stretch tee and woven pyjama bottoms, perfect for flannel or cotton. If you're making cosy sleepwear for all the family, try S9455 for a Henley-style placket top and leggings-style bottoms. Henley plackets are interesting to sew and a real skill boost!





S3041

Amy's  
top picks



M8612, this can be worn  
as a pyjama top or blouse!



B6296



V1834, don't forget  
to check out Amy's  
full guide to this  
pattern at  
[www.sewdirect.com](http://www.sewdirect.com).



M8563, with ruffle  
trims and floaty  
sleeves





# 'Tis the season

Debbie is sharing her top five festive ideas that you can sew at home to welcome in the festive cheer

For many of us, Christmas crafting is an all-year-round affair! Whether it's gifts, gift bags, quilts or festive decorations, each stitch is meaningful, filled with love and will be seen, used and admired each year. As the creator of the sewn item, you can personalise each piece to make the gift even more special for the recipient, even a table place mat with a name appliqued or embroidered will make your dinner guest feel cherished. Here are five tips for creating personalised festive projects:

## GIFT BAGS:

I love the idea of a gift bag that can be used again and again, this can be a drawstring bag that the recipient can gift again the next year, or a bag that has another purpose, such as a cosmetic bag or storage pouch. If the bag will be re-gifted, it's a good idea to make a removable tag or fabric envelope with a handwritten note inside, or a heartfelt note written on a tag adds a meaningful touch. A brown card label, glued onto a frayed scrap of fabric and tied to the bag with string or ribbon is a quick and easy way of adding a message.

## TABLE MATS:

If you have an embroidery machine, you can add names and festive designs to your

tableware, if your guests visit each year, this is a lovely way of greeting them to the table with their own place mats! Appliqued initials is a simple option for longer names, writing or painting names with fabric inks is a good idea, draw first with an erasable ink pen if you're not too confident in your artistic talent! Personalised favour bags filled with handmade chocolates could be a sweet addition to your table setting.

## QUILTS:

It's always a nice idea to label your quilt with the name of the maker and date it was finished, but as a gift, it's quite meaningful to personalise even more by incorporating a message into the label. Our handwriting is often recognised, which makes labels like these even more special. I would still know my parents and grandparents' handwriting even after many years! Bear in mind the quilt may be washed at some point, so embroidered messages are a good idea, or make sure if you're using a pen that the ink is permanent. Try writing on a scrap of fabric and washing it to make sure! Don't write directly onto the quilt, that way, if you're not happy with the label, you can easily start again on another piece of fabric.

## GIFT TAGS:

Although many of us use shop-bought gift tags, you may find it more economical to make your own and as a sewist, a sewn fabric tag could be expected! These can be round, rectangular, or a little more intricate; such as a Christmas tree or bauble. Felt is an ideal fabric as it doesn't fray, sew two pieces together either by hand or on your machine. A hand-sewn blanket stitch always looks lovely. Use a fine-tipped pen to write your message, practice first on a scrap of fabric to make sure the ink doesn't bleed. Another idea is to cut an image from a piece of Christmas fabric, sew together to a plain backing so that it can be written on and fray slightly around the edge. Punch a hole and thread ribbon or twine through to tie.



## PERSONALISED GIFTS:

Of course, it's not just packaging that can be personalised, a small, affordable personal gift can often have more meaning than a more expensive gift. A bookmark for the reader, a set of sewn coasters, zipped pouches, a pin cushion or needle case for the sewer, an embroidered heart, or an embroidery hoop framing a special message. Choose fabrics with prints or colours that may be special to the recipient or create a memory gift using clothing that belonged to a loved one. You could set a tradition of handmade Christmas decorations with names and dates embroidered on them, a new one for each member of the family to be added to the tree each year. Youngsters may enjoy a handmade Advent calendar, filled with simple treats or small toys. Personalised reusable fabric Christmas crackers are a thrifty option, which again, can make an appearance year after year. In times when we'd all like to save a little money, we should upcycle things we have and use up our scraps to create the most heartfelt and meaningful gifts, I think handmade, personalised gifts where every stitch is stitched with love is an excellent idea, not just for Christmas, but any occasion where a gift is deserved.





# *Pleated* **CULOTTES**

These swishy, pleated culottes are a modern wardrobe update for all seasons

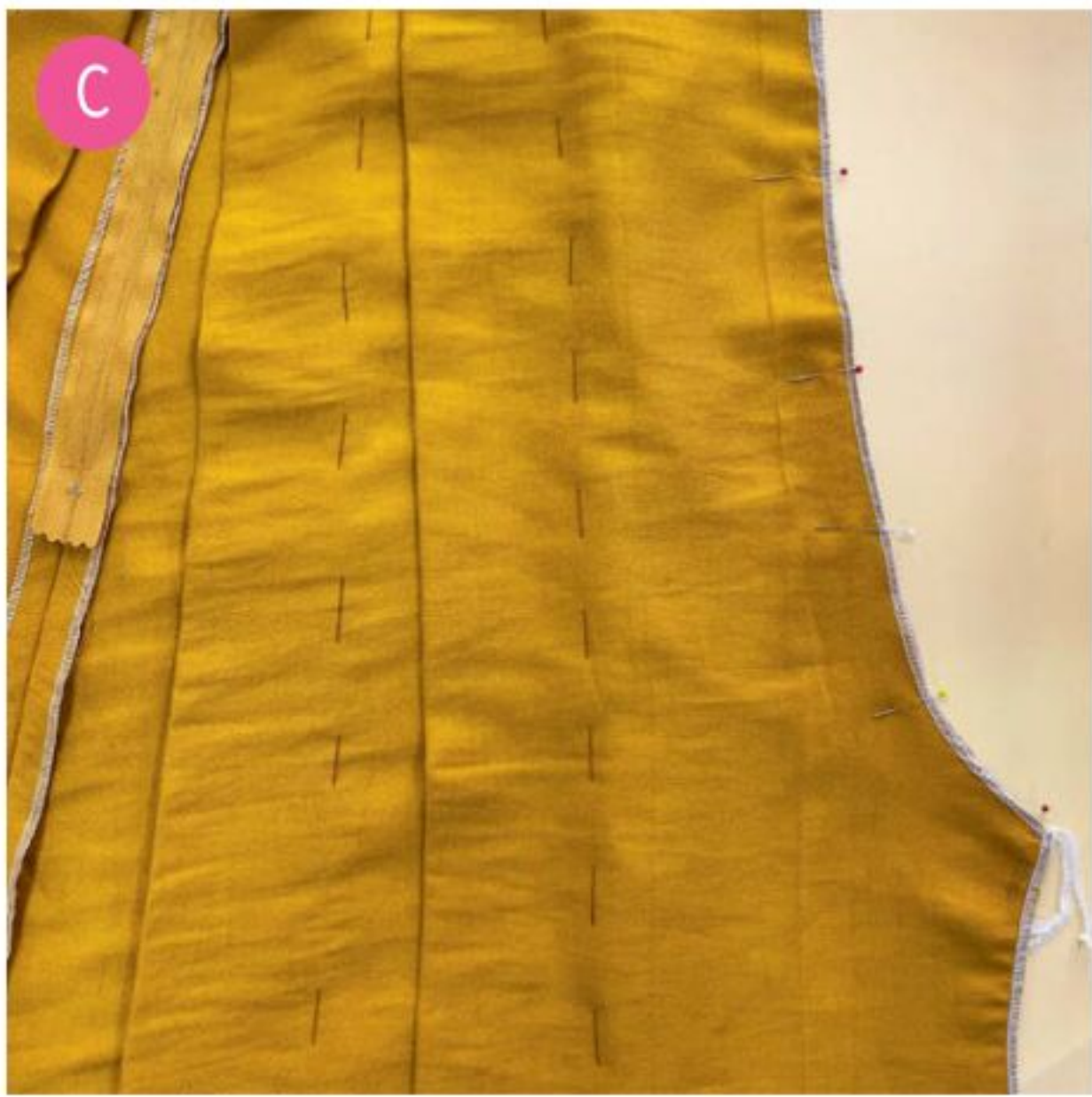
Project **SARAH LAWS**

*Why not try knitting yourself  
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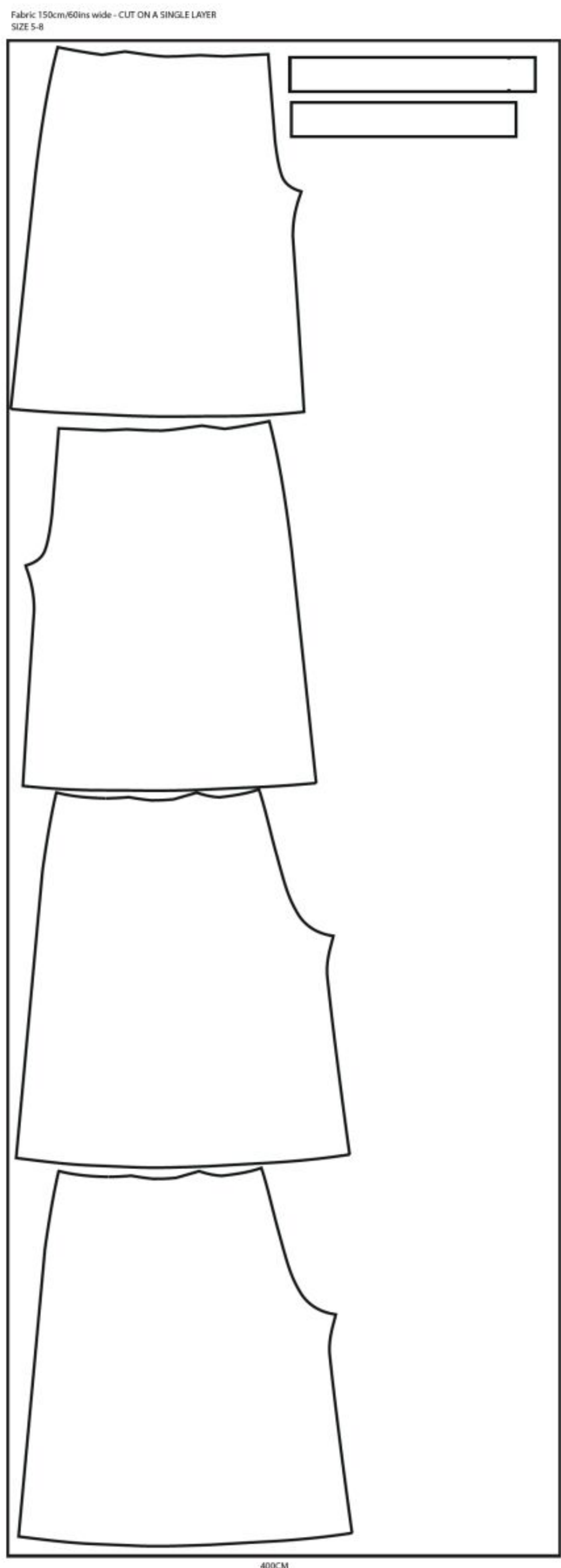
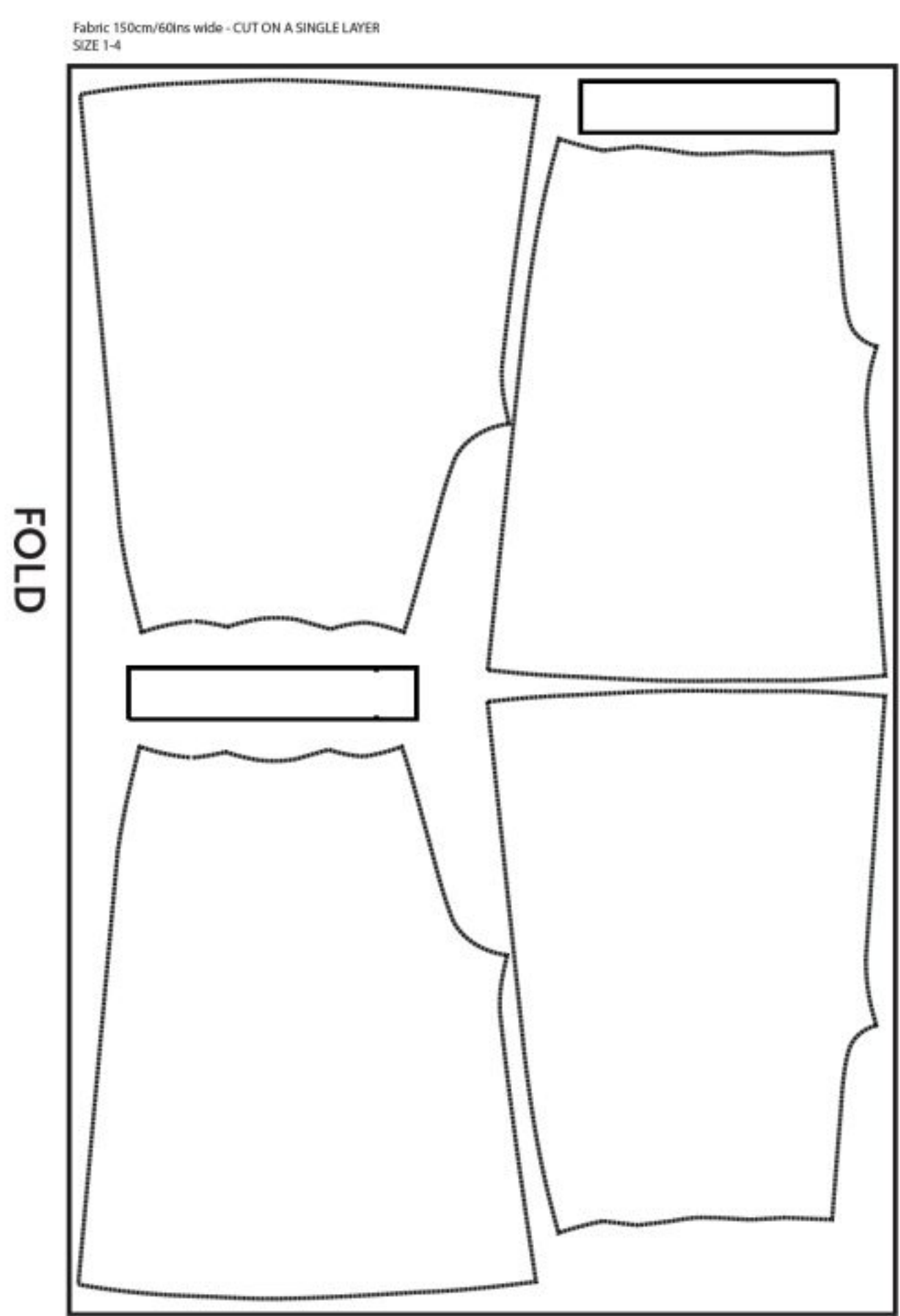


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Holidays* online at  
[www.craftworld.com](http://www.craftworld.com)





## LAYPLAN:



## MATERIALS & TOOLS:

- 150cm wide fabric for the main body
- 25cm medium-weight iron on interfacing to match the fabric
- 9" concealed zip

## RECOMMENDED FABRICS:

Woven fabrics with good drape, that press well including viscose twill, cotton twill, linen, chambray, viscose crepe

## NOTES:

All seam allowances are 1.5cm unless stated otherwise.

We recommend using an overlocker or zigzag stitch on a sewing machine to finish the edges of the fabric before constructing using a straight stitch on the sewing machine.

All fabrics are placed RST before sewing, unless stated otherwise.

Make sure you have transferred all the notches. You will need them,

especially to press the pleats.

## CUTTING & PREPARATION:

- A. Front – cut 2
- B. Back – cut 2
- C. Waistband – cut 1 plus 1 in interfacing
- D. Fly shield – cut 1 plus 1 in interfacing
- E. Pocket bag – cut 2 in self-fabric OR lining
- F. Pocket facing – cut 2
- G. Belt loops – cut 1

## HOW TO MAKE:

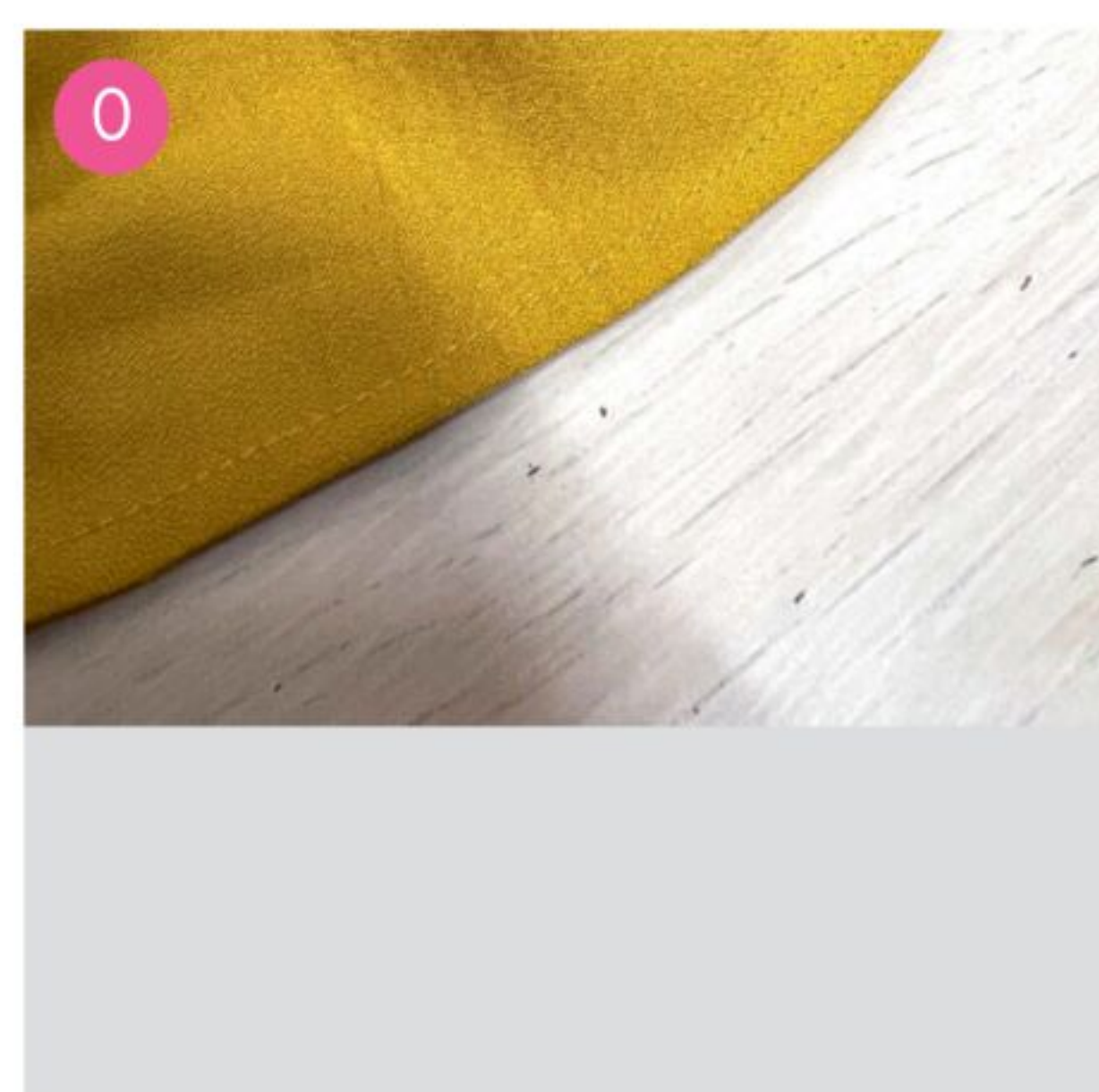
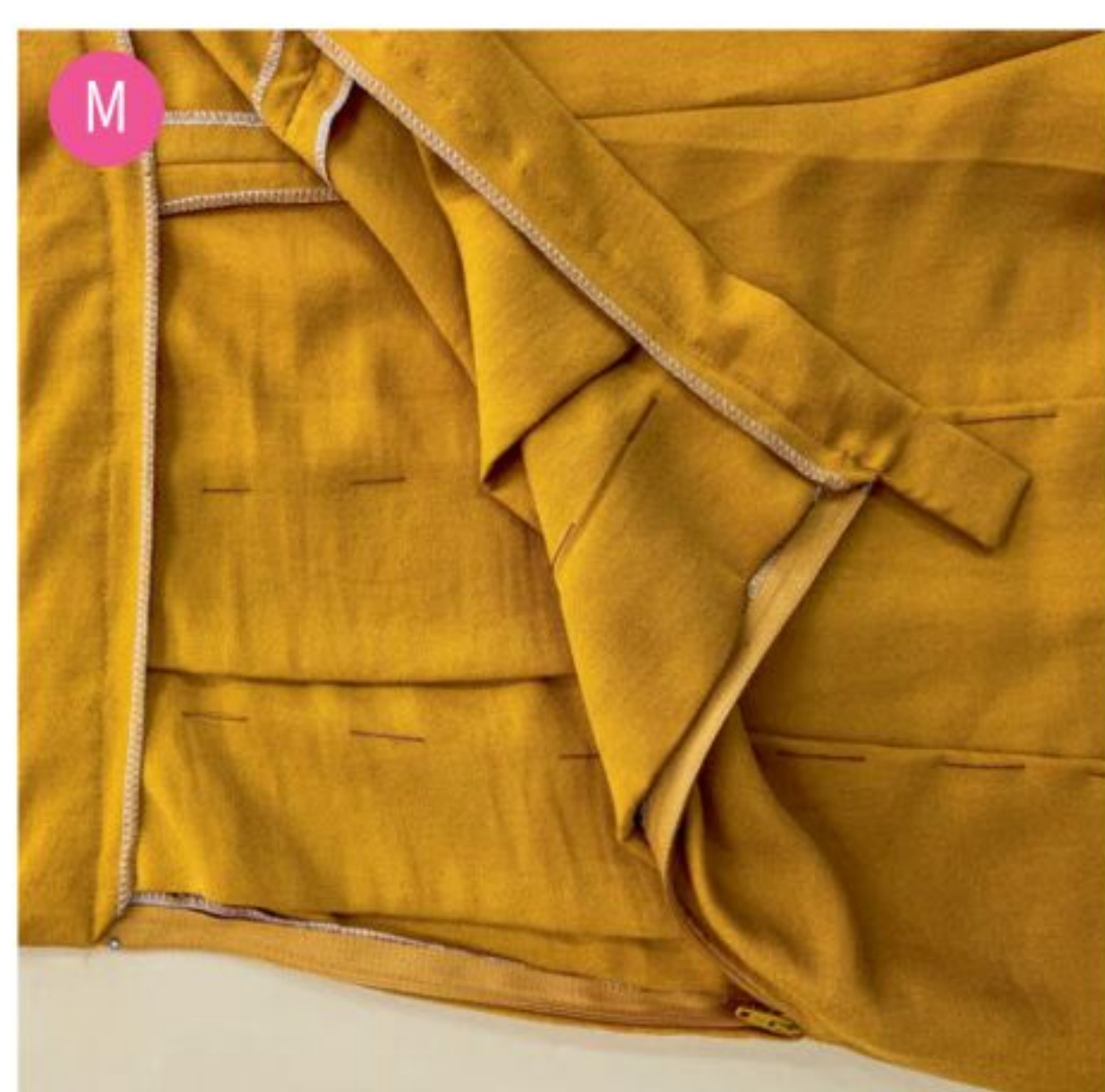
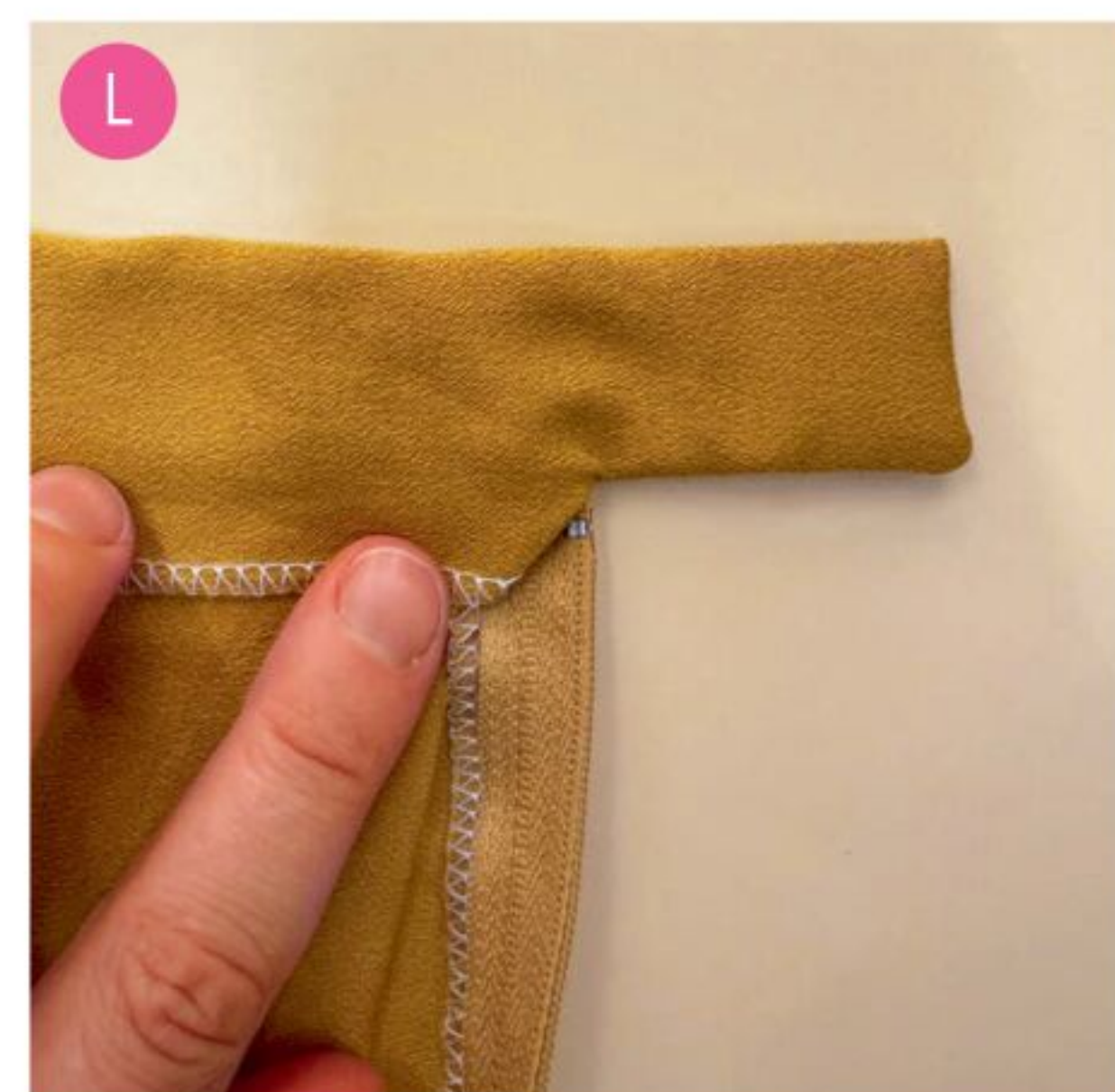
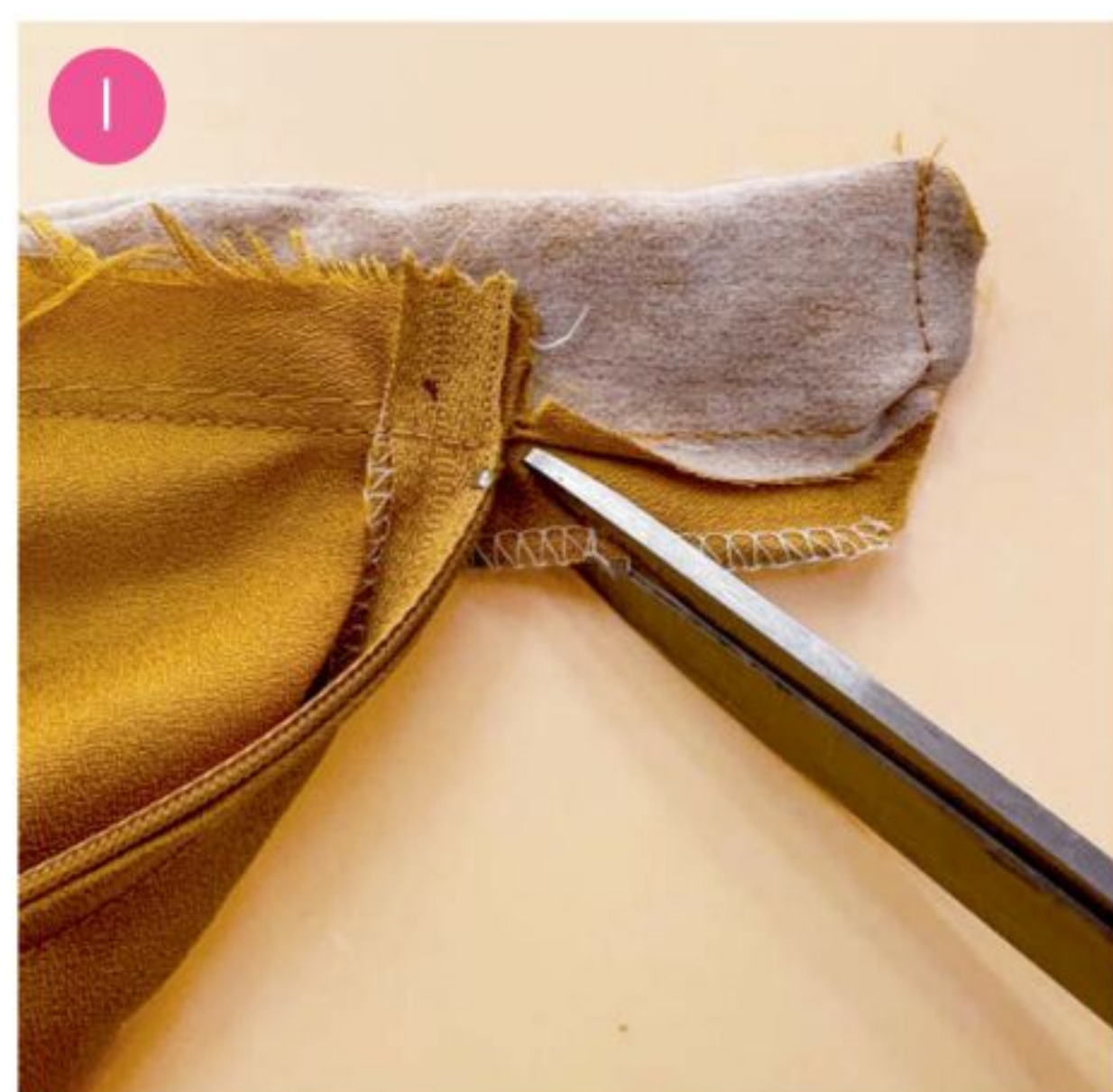
- 1 Finish all the raw edges of the outside leg, inside leg and crotch on the front and back panels. Do not finish the waistline, hems or facings at this point.
- 2 Press and hand tack the pleats. All pleat folds face in towards centre front and back from the outside. Use the notches at the waist and hem as guides for where to fold. (See Pic A.)

## REQUIRED MEASUREMENTS (IN CMS):

Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>Bust</b>	82	87	92	97	102	107	114	126
<b>Waist</b>	66	71	76	81	87	93	99	109
<b>Hip</b>	90	95	100	105	110	115	120	130



- 3** Stay stitch the waistline edge of each panel stitching within the seam allowance.
- 4** Join the front panels at the crotch seam. Repeat for the back panels
- 5** Sew the front to the back at the left side seam. Sew the right side seam to the notch. At the notch change you stitch length to a long basting stitch and use this to close the rest of the seam. (See Pic B.)
- 6** Insert a regular dress zip into the right side seam. (See Pic C&D.)
- 7** Join the front and back at the inside leg seams. Press the seams open. (See Pic E.)
- 8** Apply interfacing to the waistband.
- 9** Finish the lower (inside) edge of the waistband
- 10** Attach the waistband to the outside of the waistline. There will be 1.5cm overhanging at the front and a larger overhang at the back (use the notches to position correctly – the notches should align with the zip opening). (See Pic F.)
- 11** Fold the tab section of the waistband with RST and stitch around the waistband



tab. (See Pic G.)

- 12** Trim the corner and seam allowances and turn out to create a neat corner and

button tab. (See Pic H.)

- 13** Snip the waistband seam allowance as shown and fold to diagonal snipped section

in on itself to create a neat finish. (See Pic I, J, K&L.)

- 14** Press the waistband in half with WST so that the

seam allowance covers the waistline seam on the inside. (See Pic M&N.)

- 15** Stitch in the ditch of the waistband seam to secure the inner waistband.

- 16** Create a buttonhole on the front waistband and add a button to the tab or add a trouser hook and bar fastening.

- 17** Remove the tacking stitches from the pleats.

- 18** Finish the hem raw edges with an overlocker. Turn up the hem 1cm and top stitch to secure. (See Pic O.)







# Style it Your Way

Style your new culottes your way, we are taking some inspiration from the one and only Claudia Winkleman!



◀ Why not sew your own scarf to complete your look?  
Matchy Matchy quilt scarf, £12, [www.thefoldline.com](http://www.thefoldline.com)

▶ Claudia's iconic look has been on all our minds. We can't wait to shop some oversized jumpers, here are some of our favourites that will match perfectly with your new culottes.



◀ Sew your own jacket, perfect to face that winter cold.  
Atelier Jupe Dani jacket, £19, [www.thefoldline.com](http://www.thefoldline.com)



▶ Nothing completes a winter look more than a basic pair of black Chelsea boots. Leather chelsea block heel boots, £68, [www.marksandspencer.com](http://www.marksandspencer.com)

♦ Add a pop of colour with this cosy ribbed roll neck jumper.  
Ribbed roll neck jumper, £28, [www.marksandspencer.com](http://www.marksandspencer.com)



◀ Treat yourself to this luxurious wool blend jumper. Wool blend roll neck jumper, dune melange, £109.99, [www.johnlewis.com](http://www.johnlewis.com)

▶ We love the ribbed roll neck and cuffs on this jumper. Beige wool blend roll neck jumper, £79, [www.nobodyschild.com](http://www.nobodyschild.com)





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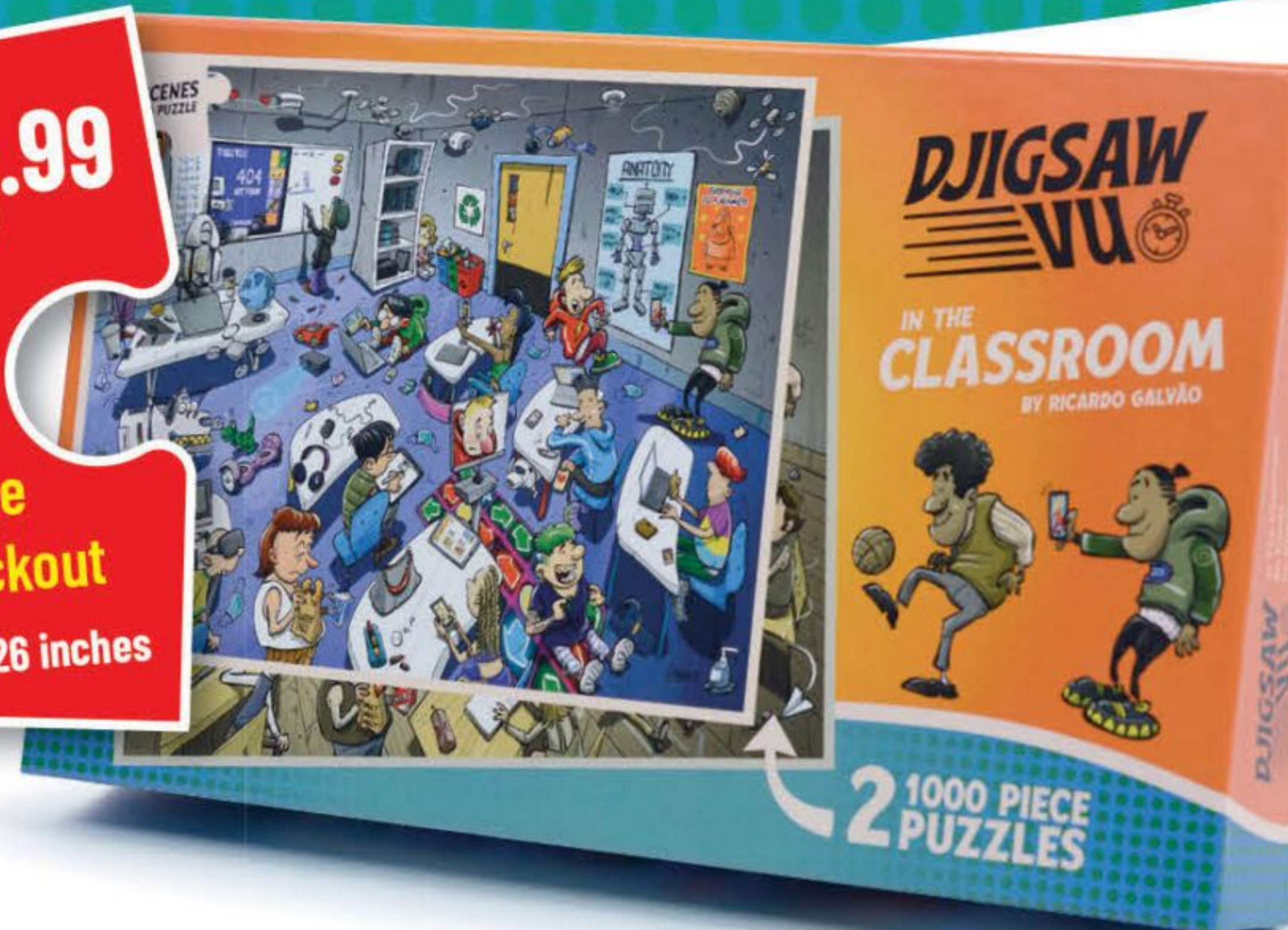
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*The pussy-bow*

# BLOUSE

The pussy-bow blouse began life as a symbol of expression for working women and has since become a symbol of solidarity and empowerment



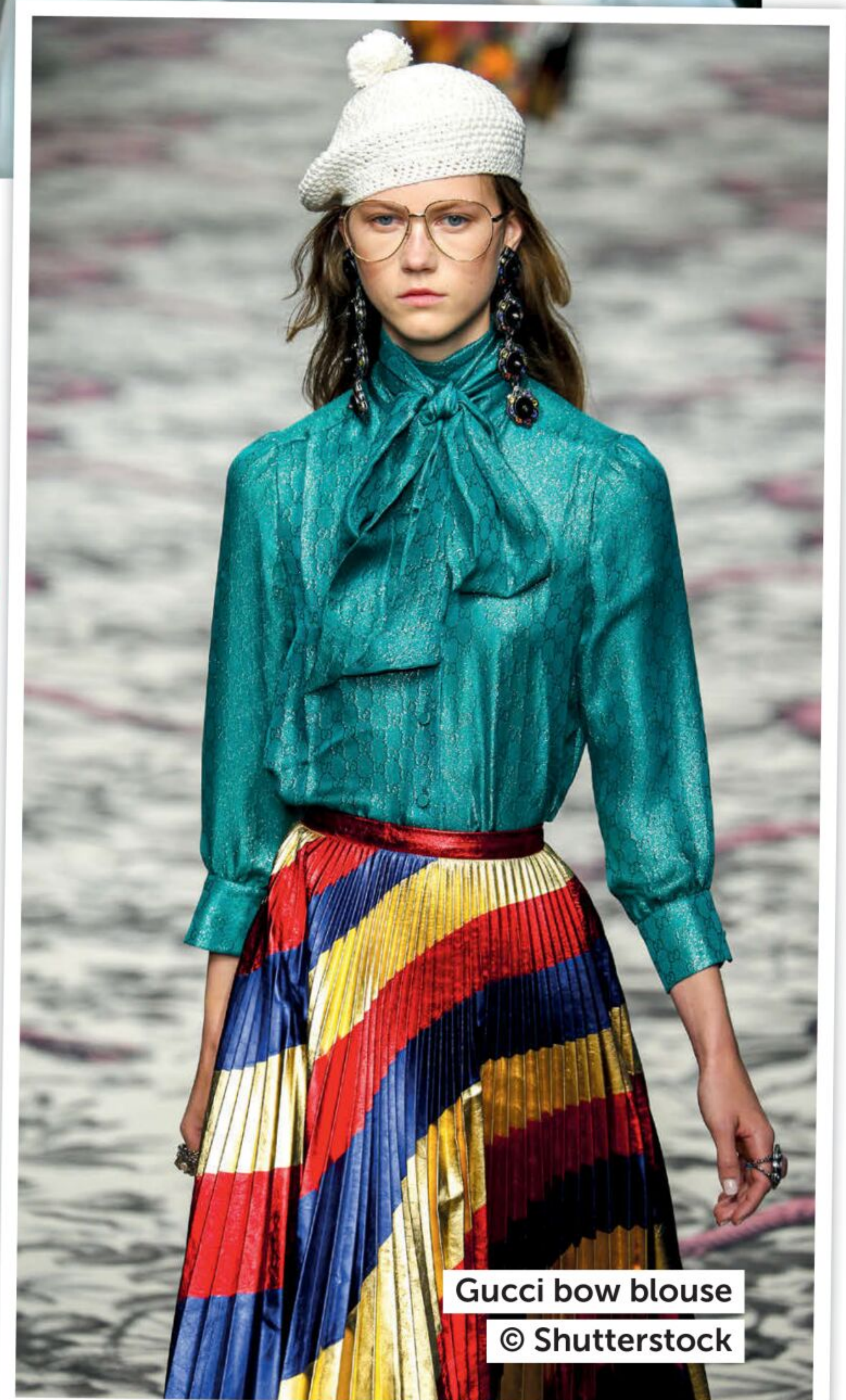
The pussy-bow blouse is a classic design that has become a power dressing staple synonymous with strong women throughout history. Perfect for a wide range of fabric types, the garment's distinctive neckline bow is designed to be tied in several ways to allow you to create an individualised fashion statement. The pussy-bow blouse dates back to the early 20th century when in 1934, the St Petersburg Times advertised a pattern for a collar that could be worn in four different ways, one of which included an 'intriguingly feminine pussy-cat bow tied high under your chin'. Named for its resemblance to the traditional bow that would be tied around the neck of a kitten, the blouse found its way into popular fashion and in the 1960s, pussy bows became a fixture in American fashion houses, having been featured by designers such as Coco Chanel and Yves Saint Laurent. Over the years the pussy-bow blouse has evolved into a symbol of power for women in popular culture. In the 1960s and 70s, as new opportunities began to grow and develop for working women,

Alice Bah Kuhnke, Sweden's First Minister of Democracy stood up in solidarity with Sara Danius



*Over the years the pussy-bow blouse has evolved into a symbol of power for women in popular culture*

so did the popularity of the blouse. Trailblazing women who led the way to the top of their corporate careers had no established examples of how to dress and so looked to their male counterparts for cues. The blouse emulated an alternative to the traditional suit and tie, combining masculine work wear with a frill of femininity which made it an ideal choice for women who were looking to stand out and make an impact in a male-dominated environment.



Gucci bow blouse © Shutterstock





A smart alternative to a shirt and tie

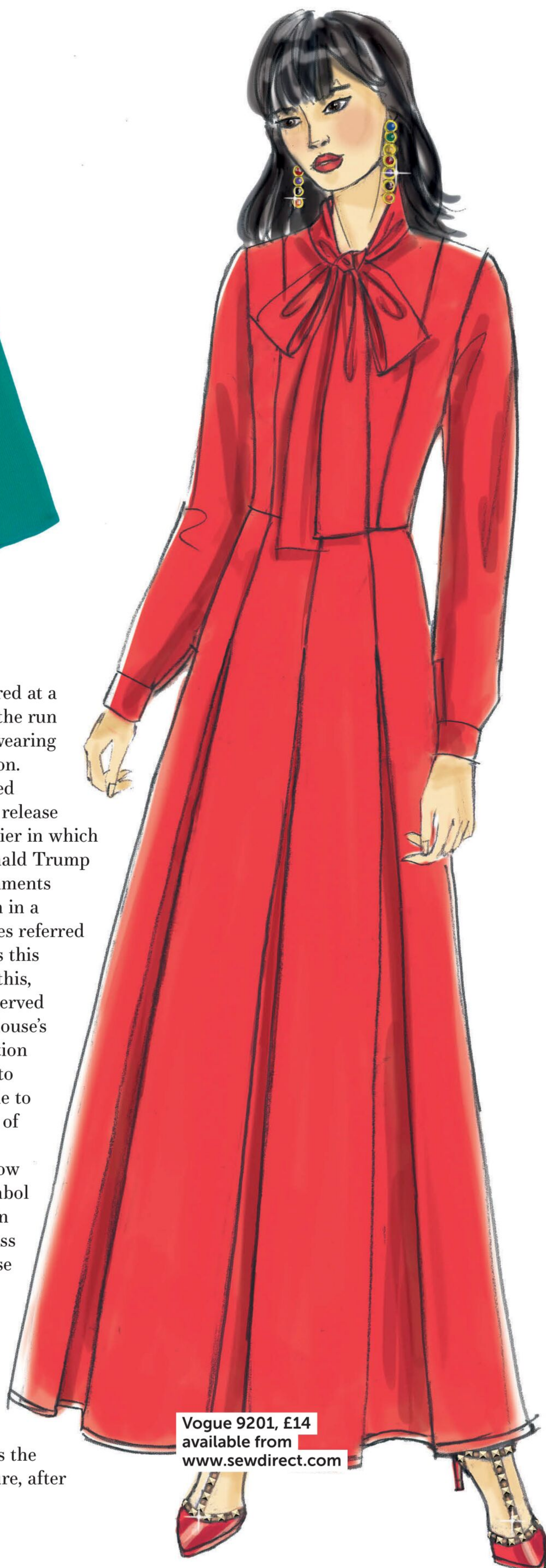
The pussy-bow blouse's status as a symbol of power was later solidified in the 1980s when Margaret Thatcher became the UK's first female Prime Minister. Adopting the pussy bow as a key part of her political image, she reportedly remarked that she felt bows were 'softening' and 'pretty' and the look has since gone on to be emulated by numerous other political figures around the world including the world's favourite former First Lady, Michelle Obama. The style has long since been associated with the Iron Lady and at Thatcher's funeral in 2013, Samantha Cameron notably paid tribute by wearing a gold pussy-bow blouse.

The pussy-bow blouse typically appears in one of two style options; attached to a v-neck or extending from a keyhole opening. Paired with cuffed sleeves, dartless bodices and easy-fit silhouettes, they are a wardrobe winner for many women. Suited to lightweight fabric that allows plenty of drape, this blouse is a stylish yet versatile look that is simple to recreate yourself. You can also tailor the size of your bow to create a modest or dramatic effect!

In more recent years, the pussy-bow blouse has continued to be worn as a statement piece by women in a position of power. Most recently the blouse made international headlines when, in 2016,

Melania Trump appeared at a presidential debate in the run up to the US election wearing a fuchsia Gucci variation. The appearance sparked controversy due to the release of recordings days earlier in which the now-president Donald Trump made some choice comments about grabbing women in a region that is sometimes referred to by a similar name as this timeless look. Despite this, Melania's appearance served as a reminder of the blouse's unwavering sophistication and brought it back into focus, allowing the style to resurface at the height of fashion.

Even now, the pussy-bow blouse is used as a symbol of feminist solidarity. In April 2018 women across Sweden wore the blouse to show their support for deposed head of the Swedish Academy Sara Danius. Danius had been forced from her role as permanent secretary of the academy, which awards the Nobel Prize in Literature, after



Vogue 9201, £14 available from [www.sewdirect.com](http://www.sewdirect.com)



weeks of accusations of sexual abuse against a man with longstanding ties to the group. Believing the disposition to be unfair, both public figures and private citizens shared pictures of their blouses through social media to show their support for the first female head of the centuries-old body.

The pussy-bow blouse is a constant subject of fashion focus and can be seen featured in the Bowes Museum's upcoming photography collection *Catwalking: Fashion through the Lens of Chris Moore*. On from 7th July 2018 – 6th January 2019, this major exhibition has been curated by Chris Moore who has been at the forefront of fashion for over six decades. Capturing key moments at legendary fashion shows from names including Balenciaga, Chanel, Dior and Alexander McQueen, the iconic photographs offer an insight into the evolution of fashion.

Why not try the Sew Over It Pussy-bow Blouse?  
UK Sizes 8-20, £14.50,  
[www.sewoverit.co.uk](http://www.sewoverit.co.uk)



Royals have been rocking the pussy bow blouse for generations!





We love  
**STYLE**



View A

Download your  
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# *The Pussy-bow Dress* & **BLOUSE**

This timeless design will become your  
favourite wardrobe staple as a blouse  
or dress

Project **SIMPLE SEW**



MATERIALS & TOOLS:

- lightweight fabric like cotton poplin, lawn, crepe, viscose or satin
- 14" (dress) or 9" (blouse) concealed zipper
- pattern downloaded from [www.craftworld.com](http://www.craftworld.com)

NOTES:

Seam allowance is 1.5cm unless stated otherwise.

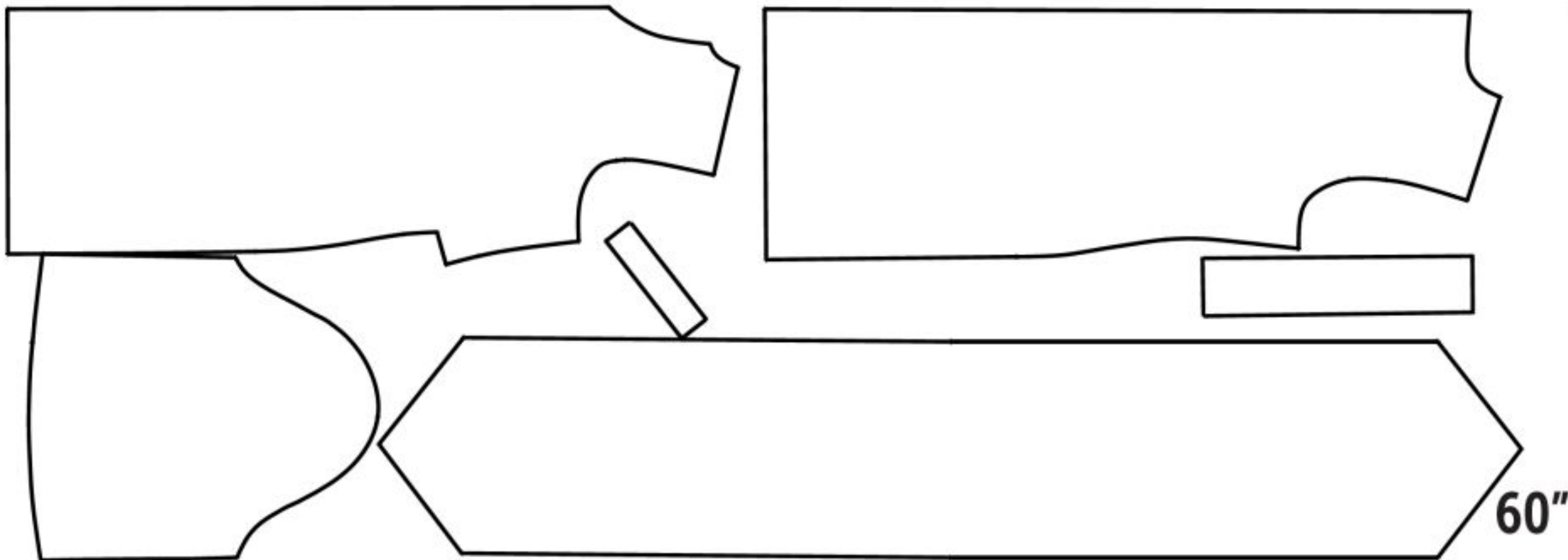
Steps are the same for both the blouse and dress view.

HOW TO MAKE:

- 1 Sew the darts in the front bodice, then press towards the centre front. Repeat for the back bodice pieces. (See Pic A.)
- 2 With RST, join the front and back bodice together at the shoulders. Press the shoulder seams open. (See Pic B.)
- 3 With RST, apply the facing to front neckline. Clip into seam allowance by 0.5cm, then snip into the seam allowance at the pointed 'V' of the neckline, stopping just before you get to the stitching line. Turn facing through to the inside of the dress and press. You can top-stitch the neckline if you wish. (See Pic C.)
- 4 With RST, pin one edge of the tie in place, aligning the centre backs, and sew

between the notches. When you have stitched this edge, fold the tie over, RST, and pin. Sew the tie seams finishing at each notch as shown on the image. Turn the tie through to the right side and push the corners of the necktie out to a point. Slip-stitch the centre back

LAYPLAN:

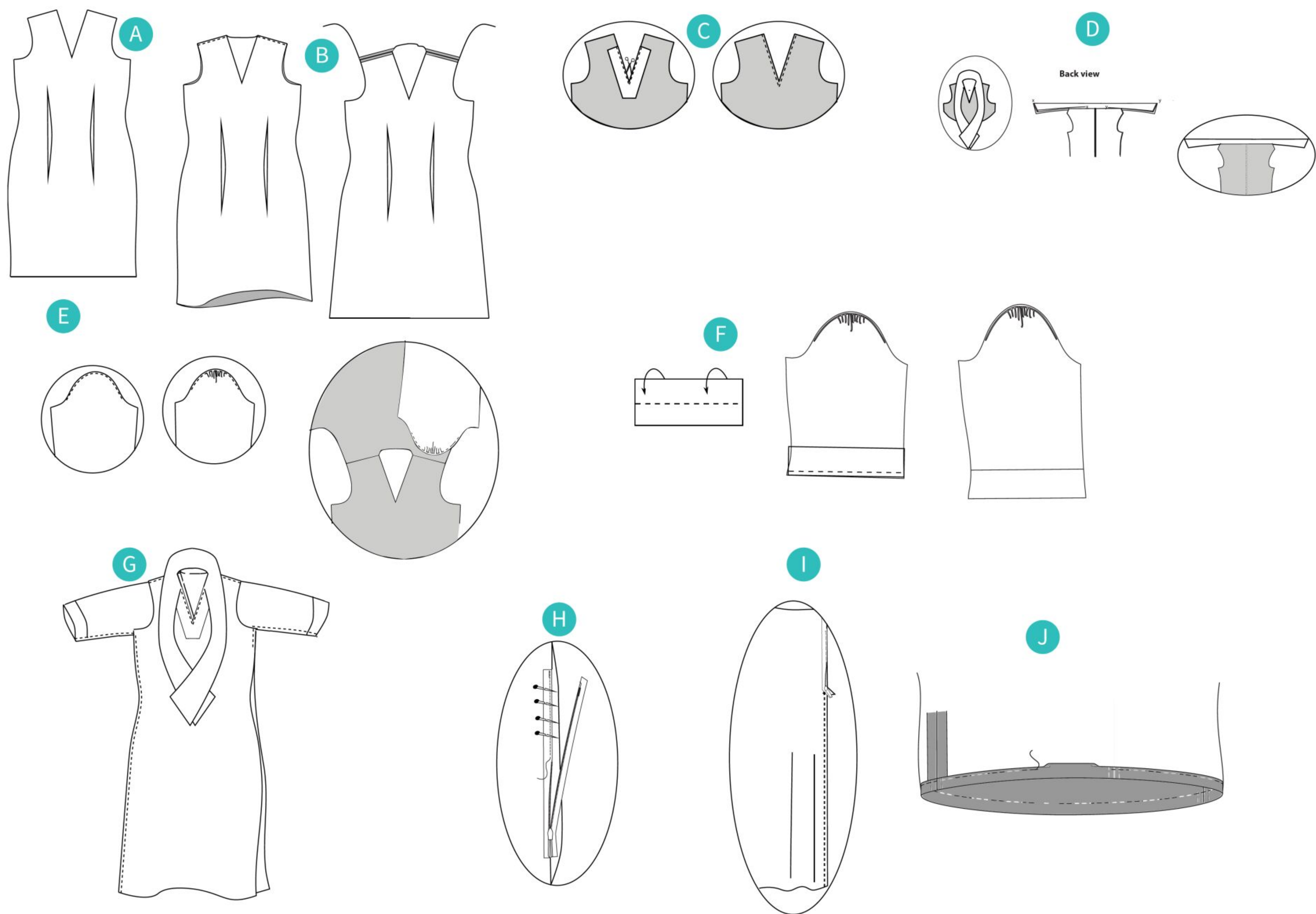


FABRIC REQUIREMENTS (IN M):

	DRESS		BLOUSE	
Size	45" wide	60" wide	45" wide	60" wide
8	3.6	2.1	2.8	1.3
10	3.7	2.1	2.9	1.3
12	3.7	2.2	2.9	1.3
14	3.8	2.2	2.9	1.4
16	3.8	2.2	3	1.4
18	3.9	2.2	3	1.4
20	3.9	2.2	3.1	1.4







gap closed neatly. Press seam flat. (See Pic D.)

**5** Sew a line of gathering stitches in the curve of the sleeve head between the notches marked on the pattern piece. Gather the sleeve slightly so it will fit the curve of the armhole when flat. Pin the sleeve in place flat and sew to armhole, removing pins as you go. (See Pic E.)

**6** Fold over sleeve cuff, WRONG sides together and press. On the RIGHT side of the sleeve, align the cuff with the raw edge of the sleeve hem, stitch in place and press the seam open. Then press the whole seam downwards. (See Pic F.)

**7** With RST, stitch the right side seam, starting at the bottom of the sleeve cuff and continuing all the way

up the sleeve and around the bodice to the bottom of the hem. Press this seam open. Repeat for the left side seam, again starting at the sleeve hem but stop stitching at the zip notch and backstitch to secure. (See Pic G.)

**8** Insert a concealed zip using your preferred method. (See Pic H.)

**9** Complete the side seam by sewing from the bottom of

the zip down to the hem and press the side seam open. (See Pic I.)

**10** Now all you need to do is hem the skirt. This dress has a 1cm hem. Turn the hem, pin in place and stitch close to the edge. Press the hem in place to complete. (See Pic J.)

## FINISHED GARMENT MEASUREMENTS (IN INCHES):

Size	Bust	Waist	Hips	Sleeve length	Neck to dress hem (back)
8	37	30	38	16	36
10	39	32	40	16¼	36¼
12	41	34	42	16½	36½
14	43	36	44	16¾	36¾
16	45	38	46	17	37
18	47	40	48	17¼	37¼
20	49	42	50	17½	37½





View B



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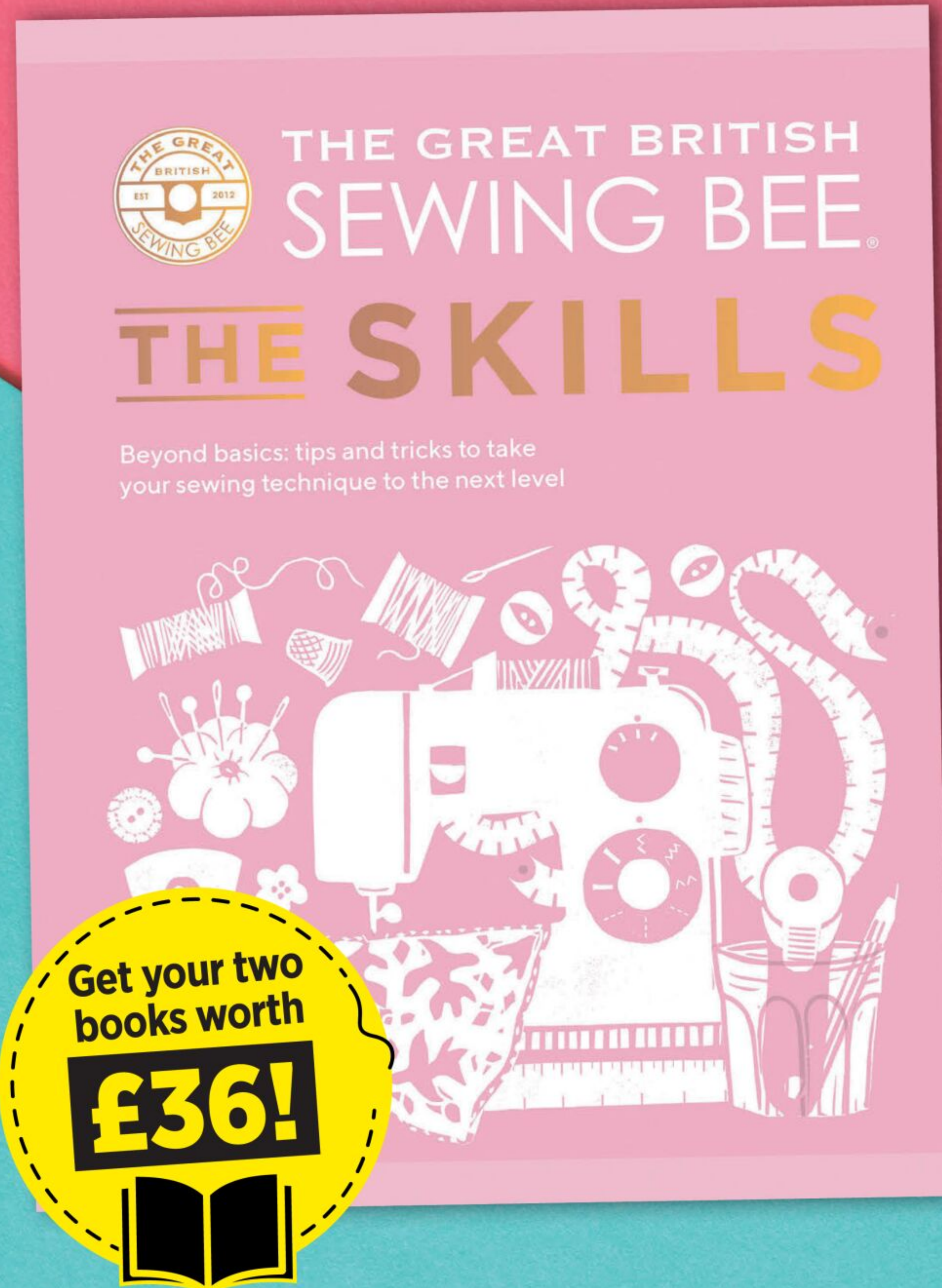


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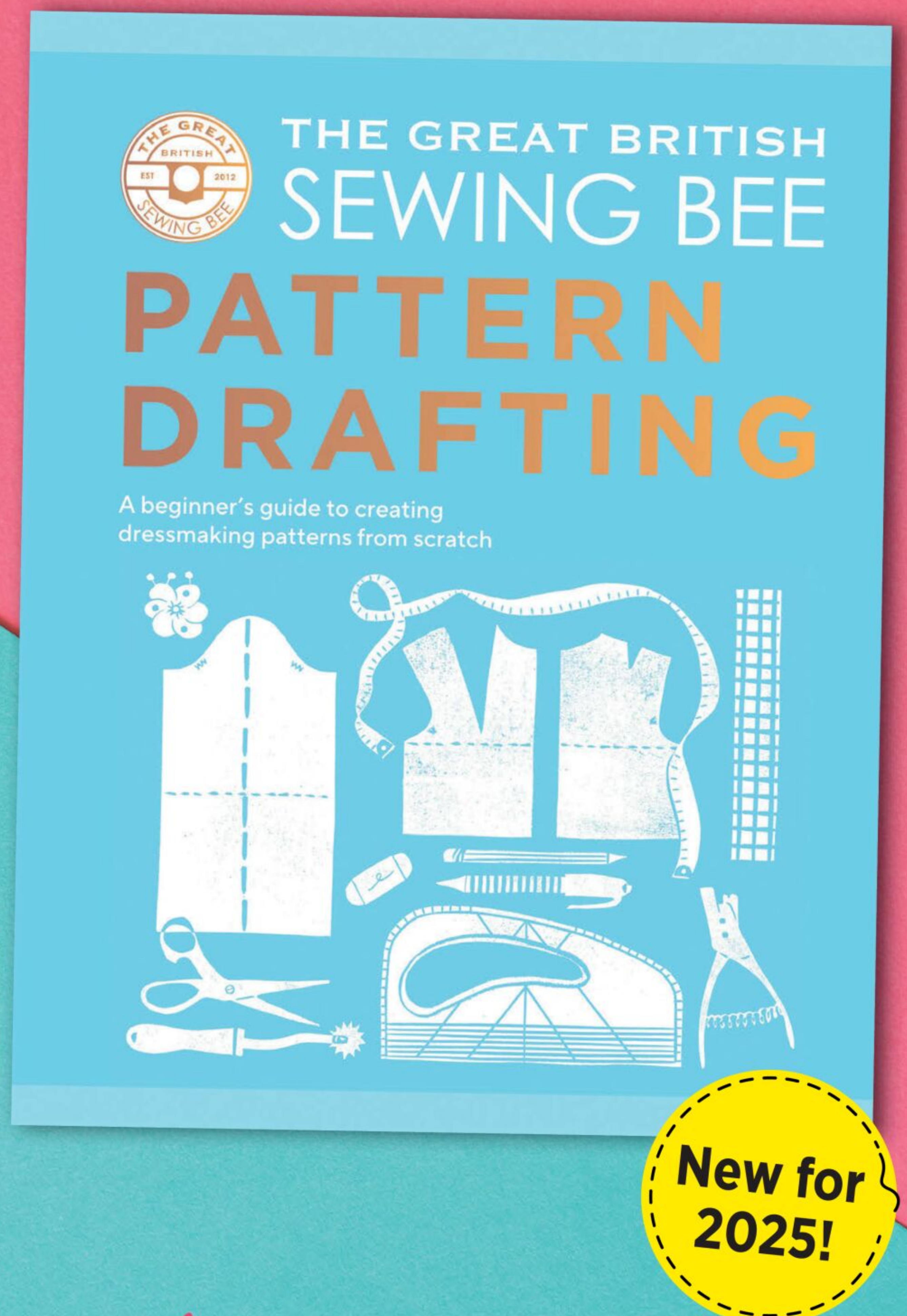


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Suggested fabrics:  
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# *Cosy Noelle* **DRESS**

Sew a sweater dress in soft brushed jersey for a quick and cosy make

Gift not available in all territories



# Bobbins & Buttons



This month, we teamed up with the incredible team of Bobbins & Buttons to bring you your cosy Noelle dress paper pattern. Here is everything you need to know about the incredible designer, Julia Claridge

## How did your sewing journey start?

My sewing journey began when I was about seven years old. My mum was a keen sewer and worked as an occupational therapist. One day, when I was off school, she took me along to her workplace, where she kept a few old hand-crank sewing machines for her patients. While she worked, she showed me how to use one of the machines and gave me some scraps of fabric to play with.

I was immediately hooked. I loved watching the tiny stitches form as I turned the handle and from that moment on, I wanted to sew more. Soon after, Mum began letting me help make some of my own clothes – and that's really where it all began.

## What inspired your work?

My pattern range is all about creating practical, versatile designs that stand the test of time. A pattern only makes it into the range if I feel it offers enough versatility – styles that can be dressed up or down, worn across the seasons and made in a variety of fabrics.

Most designs begin life as a practical solution for my own wardrobe or my family's. The kids' patterns started when my children were little – I loved making them clothes in fun prints, but I didn't want to spend too long on each garment since they grew so quickly! That's why the children's patterns are all quick and simple to sew.

My ladies' patterns are styles I wear every day myself, so it's always a joy to see customers making and enjoying the same pieces in their own wardrobes.

## Can you tell me more about Bobbins & Buttons (what makes yours different to other sewing brands?)

When people ask me what makes Bobbins & Buttons different, I always find it a little hard to answer – so I recently asked my



class members what they thought. Their responses were wonderful and reminded me of what really matters.

They told me they value the gentle encouragement, the freedom to work at their own pace and level and the support they receive, no matter what project they're tackling. They also love the creative input – those moments when they're unsure how to use a fabric

or start something new and we figure it out together. They spoke about the community: the friendships that have formed, the care and the joy of being surrounded by people who share the same love of sewing.

That feedback made me realise that the same values underpin my pattern range too. The designs are intended to be approachable for beginners, yet still



interesting for more experienced sewists. Each pattern is named after someone who inspires me, often someone from my classes, which makes them feel even more connected to our community.

At its heart, Bobbins & Buttons is about more than sewing – it's about encouragement, creativity and the relationships that grow through making.

### What are your top three sewing patterns you've created?

One of my latest patterns – and probably my favourite – is also proving to be a best-seller: The Compton trousers. These are a tapered-leg, pull-on trouser with a wide elastic waistband, named in honour of one of my fabulous customers, Claire Compton. They're such a joy to make quick, simple, and effortlessly stylish. I've seen so many variations – holiday-ready versions, smart workwear, casual weekend pairs and even dressy styles.

Another favourite is the Jayne pinafore dress, a simple pull-on style with no zip. It's the kind of piece that works beautifully all year round, layering easily over a T-shirt in summer or a cosy sweater in the cooler months.

Then there are the Lynn and Dean sweatshirts, male and female cut sweatshirt patterns. These are brilliant patterns for overlocker lovers, as they can be sewn entirely on the overlocker. Practical and versatile, it's a wardrobe staple – I'm actually wearing one as I type this!

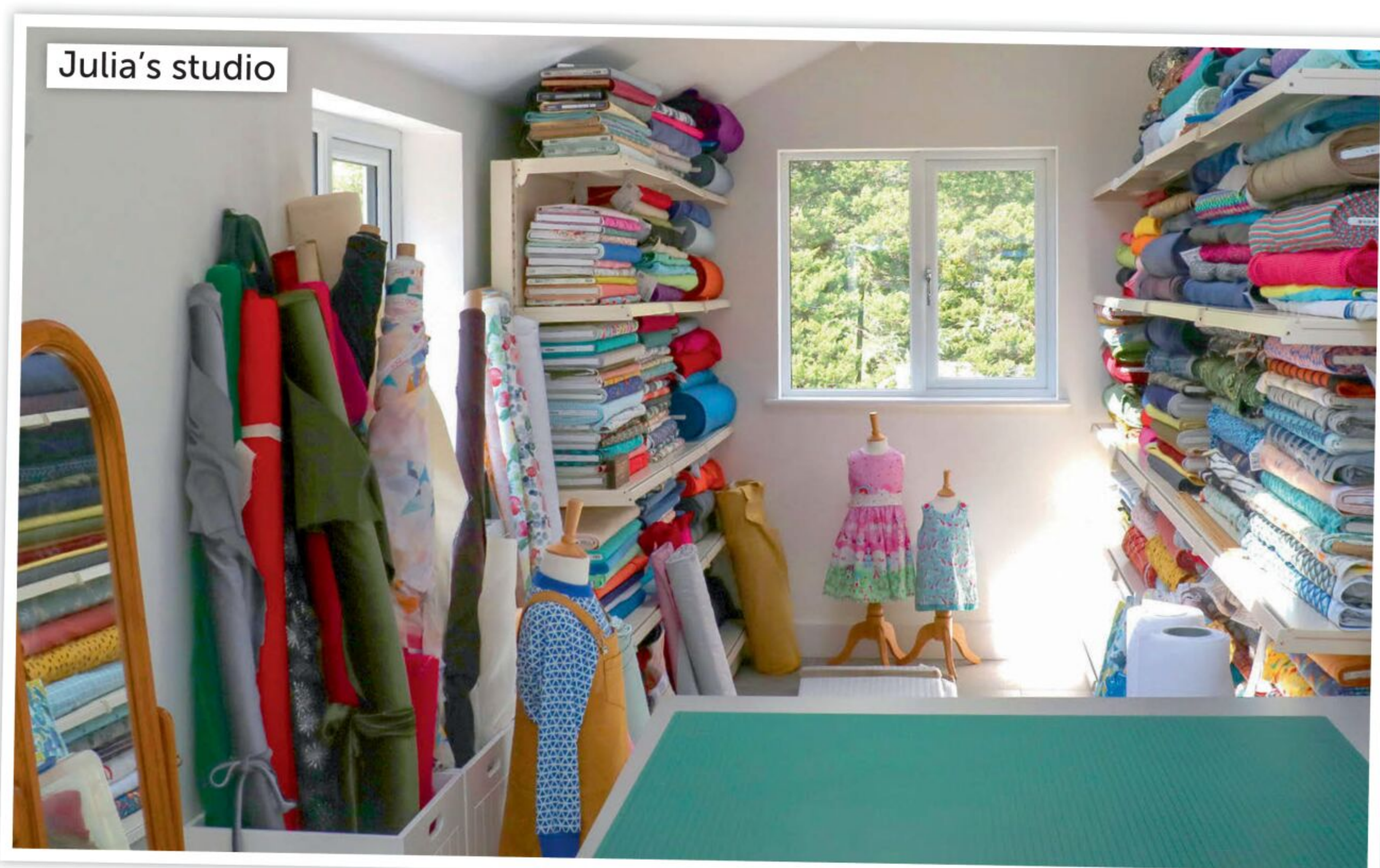
### Do you have anything exciting planned/coming up for Bobbins & Buttons?

Yes, there are lots of new patterns in the pipeline and I'm also working on an exciting new subscription offering. It's still in the early stages, but I'm exploring all the ways it could work. My goal is to make sure it captures the key elements of Bobbins and Buttons – bringing together community, practical sewing skills and learning, all wrapped up in a stylish and inspiring way!

### What is some advice for someone who is thinking about starting to sew?

The best advice I can give is to just get stuck in – waiting for the “perfect time” might mean you never start! Once you take that first step, you'll find sewing is an exciting and rewarding place to be.

Try to work without expectations or time pressure. Enjoying the process is one of the most important parts of sewing and the little discoveries you make along the way are what make your journey so



special. Every stitch, every project, is part of learning something new and creating something fabulous.

### What is the best advice you have been given as a business owner that might help readers?

As a small business, I think it's important to know your why – to be clear on the mission of your business. Running a business can be tough and there will be times when you need to dig deep and stay focused. It's also important to remember that one person's success might look very different from another's.

In the early days of my business, my success was simply being flexible enough to collect my kids from school and be a mum when I needed to be. Defining

success for yourself – and acknowledging your own achievements is important.

### Can we know a little more about your sewing classes?

Most of my sewing classes are general dressmaking classes and I keep the numbers small so I can spend time individually with everyone. Every sewing journey is different – one person might be very new to sewing and just finding their feet, while another might have years of experience but wants to get to grips with working with jersey or improving garment fit. Sometimes it's about building confidence, getting support, or refreshing old skills. I love helping everyone progress along the path they want to take, at their own pace.



Lynn sweatshirt, £16 and Compton trousers, £18  
[www.bobbinsnbuttons.co.uk](http://www.bobbinsnbuttons.co.uk)



David raincoats, £16, Frances leggings, £12 and Joseph joggers, £15  
[www.bobbinsnbuttons.co.uk](http://www.bobbinsnbuttons.co.uk)





Jayne dress, £22  
[www.bobbinsnbuttons.co.uk](http://www.bobbinsnbuttons.co.uk)



We love  
**BAGS**

### Top tip

Trace your templates lightly to avoid leaving marks that are hard to remove. Test your pen on a scrap piece of leather first to make sure it wipes away cleanly.

### Shopping list

Stof France heavy soft faux leather fabric in shades metallic pearl, gold & metallic rust, £12.99 per metre, [www.minerva.com](http://www.minerva.com)

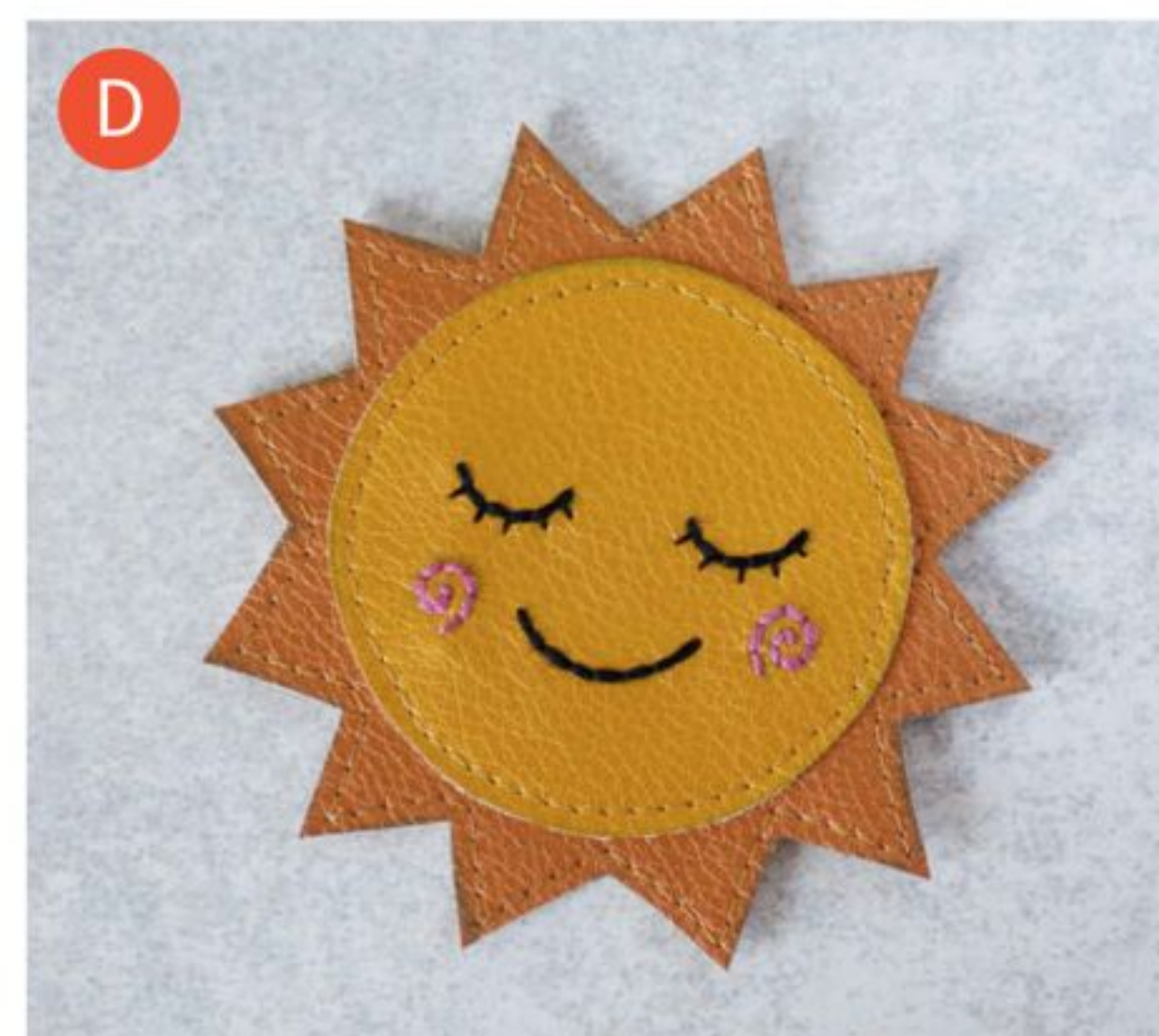
Sun &

**MOON**

Add a touch of celestial magic to your accessories with this handcrafted sun and moon leather bag charms

Project **SOPHIE TARRANT**





Combining rich textures, delicate embroidery and a splash of metallic shine, these charms make perfect bag accents or thoughtful gifts. Whether you're treating yourself or creating for a loved one, this project is a great introduction to both embroidery and leatherwork – making it the perfect project for those looking to try something a little different.

## MATERIALS & TOOLS:

- 25x140cm of metallic silver, gold & rust faux leather
- silver & gold machine thread
- black, purple & pink embroidery thread
- embroidery needle
- embroidery hoop
- gold bag clip fitting
- eyelet punch
- gold eyelets
- eyelet tool and mallet
- template downloaded from [www.craftworld.com](http://www.craftworld.com)

## HOW TO MAKE:

**1** Use a water-erasable fabric pen to trace the moon shape onto the right side of your silver leather, the sun beams onto the rust-coloured leather and the sun's face onto the gold leather. Don't cut them out yet. (See Pic A.)

**2** Mount the gold leather sun face into a small embroidery hoop with the right side facing up. Thread an embroidery needle with six strands of black floss and work a backstitch along

*Top tip*  
Use six strands of embroidery floss at a time for bold, visible stitches and take your time with the backstitch to create smooth, consistent lines on the faces.

the eyes and mouth, then add tiny eyelashes using two strands of black. Use six strands of pink floss to stitch along each cheek spiral. Tie the threads at the back of the work to secure. Once the embroidery is complete, cut out the sun face. (See Pic B.)

**3** Place the embroidered sun face onto the centre of the sun beam piece, with the right sides of both facing up. Use gold-coloured thread to work a machine top stitch all around the edge of the face to secure it to the beams. (See Pic C.)

**4** Cut a 20cm square of rust-coloured leather and place it right side down. Position your sun piece on top with the right side facing up, then work a straight machine top stitch all around the edge





## Top tip

Use strong thread and work a square of stitching across the overlapped section of each strip to ensure your charms stay securely attached to the clips.

of the beams, stitching up and down each one until you reach the starting point again. Once stitched, carefully cut out the entire sun shape, snipping through both layers. Your sun is now complete. (See Pic D.)

**5** Repeat the process to make the moon, this time without the beams. Mount the silver leather in your embroidery hoop and add the facial details using a backstitch. Remove it from the hoop, then layer it with a second piece of silver leather with the right sides of both facing out. Machine top stitch all around the edge of the shape using silver thread, then cut out the finished moon. (See Pic E.)

**6** Add eyelets to each charm so they can be fixed together. Use an eyelet punch to make a small hole at the top of each charm, then set a gold eyelet in place using an eyelet tool and a mallet. (See Pic F.)

**7** Finally, you can fix everything together. Cut two strips of rust-coloured leather measuring 1x20cm with pinking shears. Thread one strip through the sun's eyelet, add a bag charm clip onto it, then overlap the short ends to form a loop and stitch them together to secure. Repeat with the second strip and the moon charm, adding them onto the same bag clip to join the two pieces together. (See Pic G.)





# HALLOWEEN REIMAGINED

Most Halloween children's costumes are worn once, made of plastic and destined for landfill. But yours doesn't have to be!

WORDS: ASHLEY CRAMP

## THE BIG QUESTION

The big question is this: how can we, as makers, embrace the spirit of 'All Hallows Eve', aka Halloween, without buying fast-fashion plastic costumes? We're all pressed for time, especially in autumn. The kids are back at school, harvest festivals are in full swing, Halloween looms and dare to mention that the Christmas play season is creeping in.

“

*83% of Halloween costumes sold in the UK contain non-recyclable, oil-based plastics, primarily polyester which can take 20 to 200 years to decompose in landfill!” figures via [www.wastemanaged.co.uk](http://www.wastemanaged.co.uk)*

”



## THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND 'THE SCARY STATS'

Fast fashion Halloween costumes are a hidden environmental horror. Most are made from synthetic fibres like polyester, which shed microplastics and take decades to break down. In the UK alone, an estimated seven million costumes are discarded each year, with 83% containing non-recyclable plastics. That's roughly 2,000 tonnes of waste, equivalent to 83 million plastic bottles. (figures via [www.wastemanaged.co.uk](http://www.wastemanaged.co.uk)).

## THE SMALL ANSWER TO A BIG QUESTION

Yes, time is short, and the temptation to grab a readymade costume off the rack is strong. As sewists, we know the joy of transforming scraps into something magical. Halloween can be a chance to show our kids or grandchildren that imagination matters more than trends or perfection.



## ABOUT ASHLEY CRAMP

Ashley Cramp is a lifelong sewist and the voice behind *Threads by Ashley*. She shares practical sewing advice, sustainable fashion tips and creative refashioning ideas. Find Ashley on Instagram @threads.byashley







## A LOVE SEWING HANDMADE HALLOWEEN CHALLENGE 2025

This October, skip the plastic, can you make a costume without buying anything new? Challenge yourself to create a costume using only what you already have – scraps, second-hand finds and a little imagination. Make something meaningful, reuse what you've got, bonus points for visible mending and cheeky labels!



Simplicity 3027, £14.50,  
[www.sewdirect.com](http://www.sewdirect.com)



Simplicity 9836, £14.50,  
[www.sewdirect.com](http://www.sewdirect.com)

## IDEAS & INSPIRATION:

### DIY PROPS & ACCESSORIES

Turn everyday materials into spooky showstoppers:

1. Cardboard magic: Cut, paint, layer, then spray silver, gold, or shiny black for drama.
2. Paper mâché: Great for masks, horns, or creature features.
3. Old tights or socks: Stuff them to make snakes, tentacles, or ghost arms. How about a spider hat?
4. Plastic bottles: Cut and reshape into armour, wings, or sci-fi gadgets.
5. Tin foil: Crinkle it for texture, wrap it around cardboard for metallic effects.
6. Buttons, beads and broken jewellery: Add sparkle or eerie detail.
7. Natural finds: twigs, leaves and pinecones, perfect for woodland creatures or forest fairy folk.

### TOP TIP

*Take your little ones on a foraging walk, gather twigs, sticks and pinecones, make some spool brooms or masks provided by Mother Nature!*



### NO SEW, VERY EASY COSTUME HACKS

You don't need a sewing machine to make something brilliant this season:

8. Knotting & tying: Great for capes, headbands or layered skirts.
9. Safety pins: Instant draping, gathering or attaching scraps.
10. Hot glue: Ideal for quick fixes, trims and sticking fabric to cardboard.
11. Hand sewing: A few stitches go a long way, especially for felt masks or patchwork details.
12. Stapling: Best for cardboard accessories or fabric on card props.
13. Fabric tape or fusible web: For temporary hems or sticking layers together.
14. Elastic bands & ribbon ties: Easy closures for masks, wings or arm cuffs.

### INVOLVE THE CHILDREN

Let children lead the way, give them space to sketch or dream up their own costume ideas. They will usually have something wonderfully unexpected in



mind! Make it a shared project: upcycle together with painting, dyeing, cutting and sticking.

Encourage their imagination by building a story around the character they've created. For example, who are they, where did they come from and what powers do they have?

### 10 SIMPLE SUSTAINABLE COSTUME IDEAS:

1. Cardboard robot: Use old boxes, foil, and bottle caps. Spray silver or black, add buttons with hot glue or tape. Think Tin Man from *The Wizard of Oz*.
2. Forest fairy: Use twigs, leaves and earthy tones. Felted accessories or stitched- on foliage make it magical.
3. No sew mummy: Tear old sheets into strips, knot or safety pin them over white clothes. Add smudged eyeliner for effect.
4. No sew mummy version 2: Layer strips of old white fabric or muslin. Knot, pin, or hand stitch for texture. Add a vintage brooch or lace trims for unexpected elegance.
5. Thrifted time traveller: Mix eras – 80s jacket, Victorian blouse, futuristic sunglasses. Let the chaos tell the story.
6. Patchwork witch: Layer leftover fabric squares into a skirt or cape. Add visible mending and a handmade broom (twig + yarn).
7. Net curtain ghost: Drape yourself in old net curtains or lace sheers for a floaty, ethereal look. Add tangled threads, a scrap-fabric sash and trailing hems.
8. Curtain call phantom: Use old curtains or sheers to create a dramatic cape or veil. Add curtain rings as bangles or belt loops. Perfect for a ghost who's just stepped offstage. Add a mask, think *Phantom of the Opera*.



# FABRIC FAVOURITE

All fabrics are available to purchase at [www.dalstonmillfabrics.co.uk](http://www.dalstonmillfabrics.co.uk)



3D fantasy cotton print in Halloween spider, £9.50 per metre



Groovy ghouls polycotton print in purple, £3.30 per metre



Halloween polyester foil knit, spiders web, £3.49 per metre



Floral skull cotton poplin in black, £6.60 per metre



Cheshire cat glowing smile cotton print, £8.50 per metre



Alchemists' notebook printed cotton in black, £8.50 per metre

*Halloween can still be spooky, joyful, and full of magic, just with less stuff and more imagination*

9. Minnie Mouse scrap-friendly edition: Wear a red or pink skirt (bonus points for polka dots), a black top and DIY mouse ears made from felt or cardboard circles glued to a headband. Add a bow made from leftover fabric or ribbons. Draw on a nose with eyeliner. Sweet, iconic and easy to make with what you already have.
10. Quick mini vampire: Black trousers or leggings and a white shirt or turtleneck. For a cape, use a black scarf, fabric scrap or even a dark pillowcase pinned at the shoulders. A little pale face powder, dark eyeshadow under the eyes and red lipstick or face paint. Slick back hair with gel.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Store and reuse for next year. Halloween doesn't need to be rushed, wasteful or wrapped in plastic. Set aside a space, maybe in the attic, to store costumes and props, you could add to it throughout the year.

By embracing creativity over consumption. Hand stitching, hot gluing, and reimagining what you already have, every little thing really does help. Halloween can still be spooky, joyful and full of magic, just with less stuff and more imagination. It's how you wear it not where it came from.



Triple pattern, S3060, £14.50, [www.sewdirect.com](http://www.sewdirect.com)





# *Make Me Next*

## **SKIRT**

Rock the military trend with this smart utility skirt. You'll love creating the button front and those eye-catching cargo pockets

Project **CLARIE GARSIDE**

### *Top tip*

If you don't want to try a twin needle, topstitch using a regular needle with one or two rows of stitching

### *Shopping list*

Expanse denim in red, £16.95 per metre,  
[www.croftmill.co.uk](http://www.croftmill.co.uk)





MATERIALS & TOOLS:

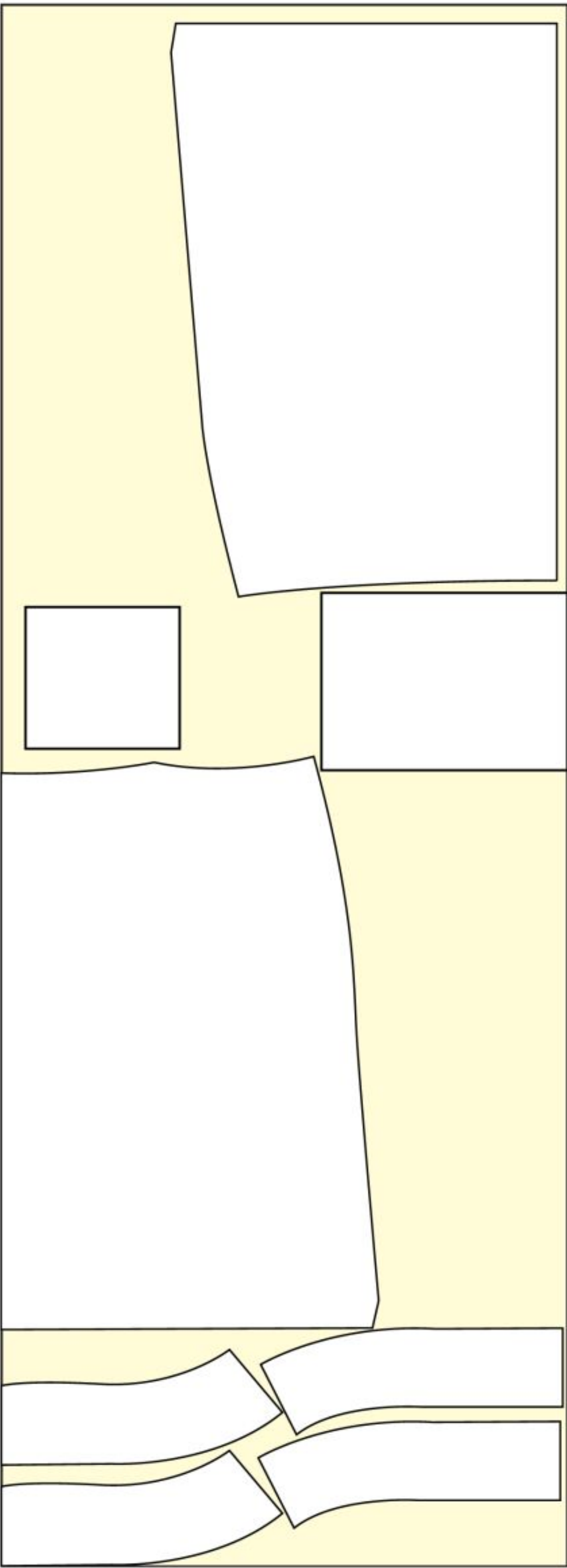
- 1.6m of 45"-wide or 1.1m of 60"-wide medium-weight fabric
- 22" dress zip
- 50cm lightweight fusible interfacing
- co-ordinating coloured thread for topstitching
- templates downloaded from [www.craftworld.com](http://www.craftworld.com)

NOTES:

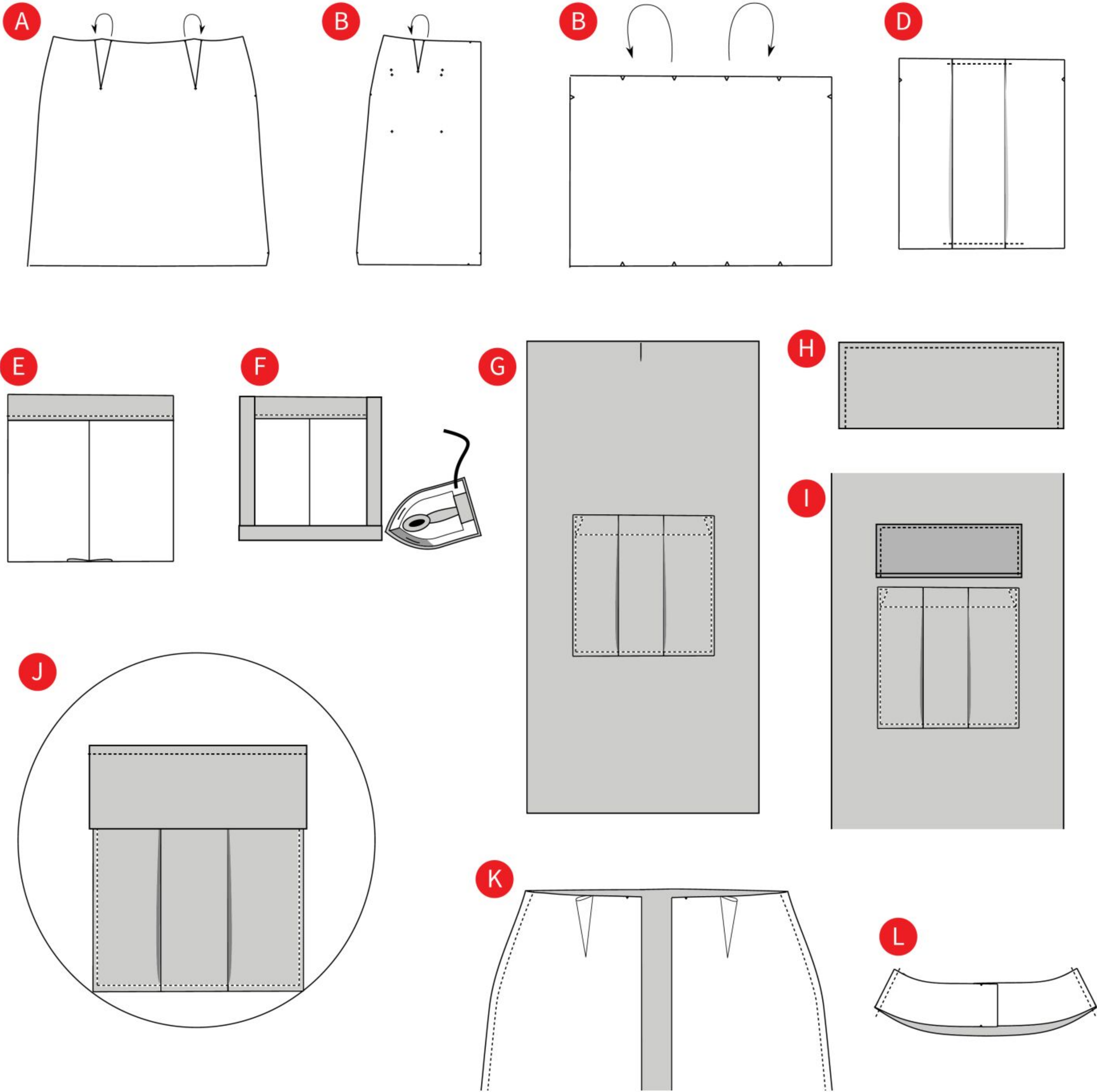
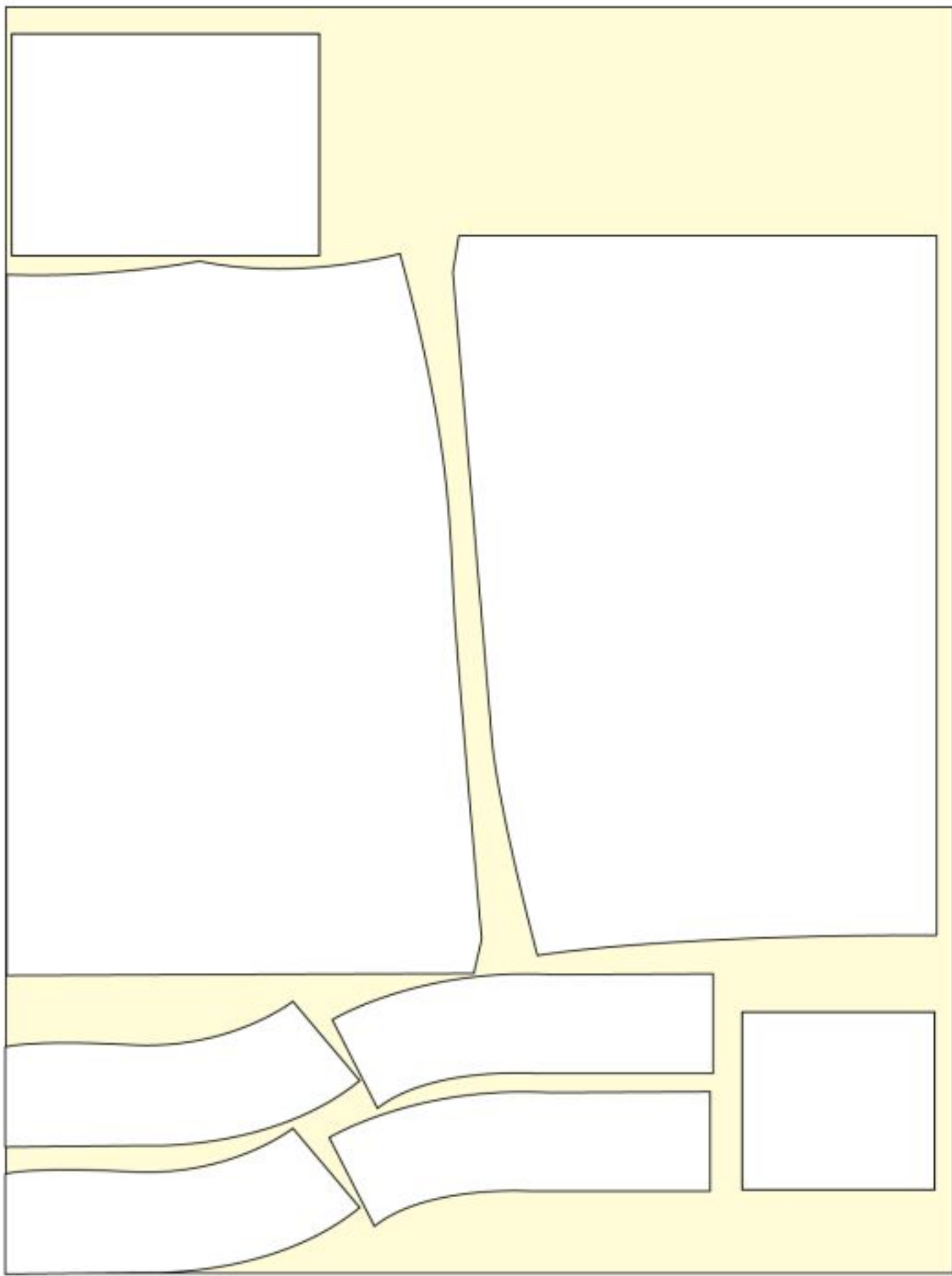
A 1.5cm seam allowance is included unless otherwise stated.  
We recommend medium-weight fabric like drill, khaki, denim or canvas.

LAYPLAN:

45"-wide fabric



60"-wide fabric



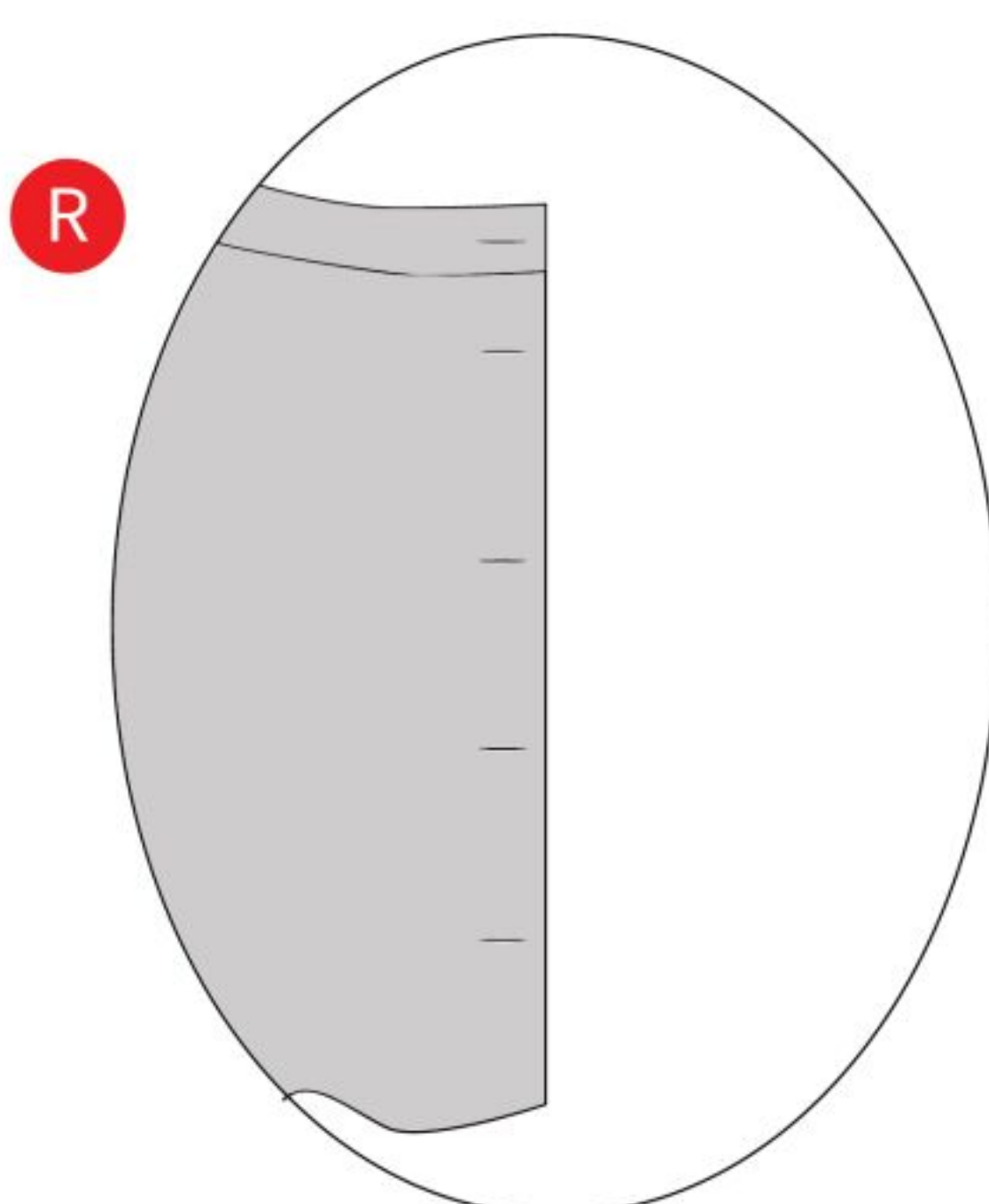
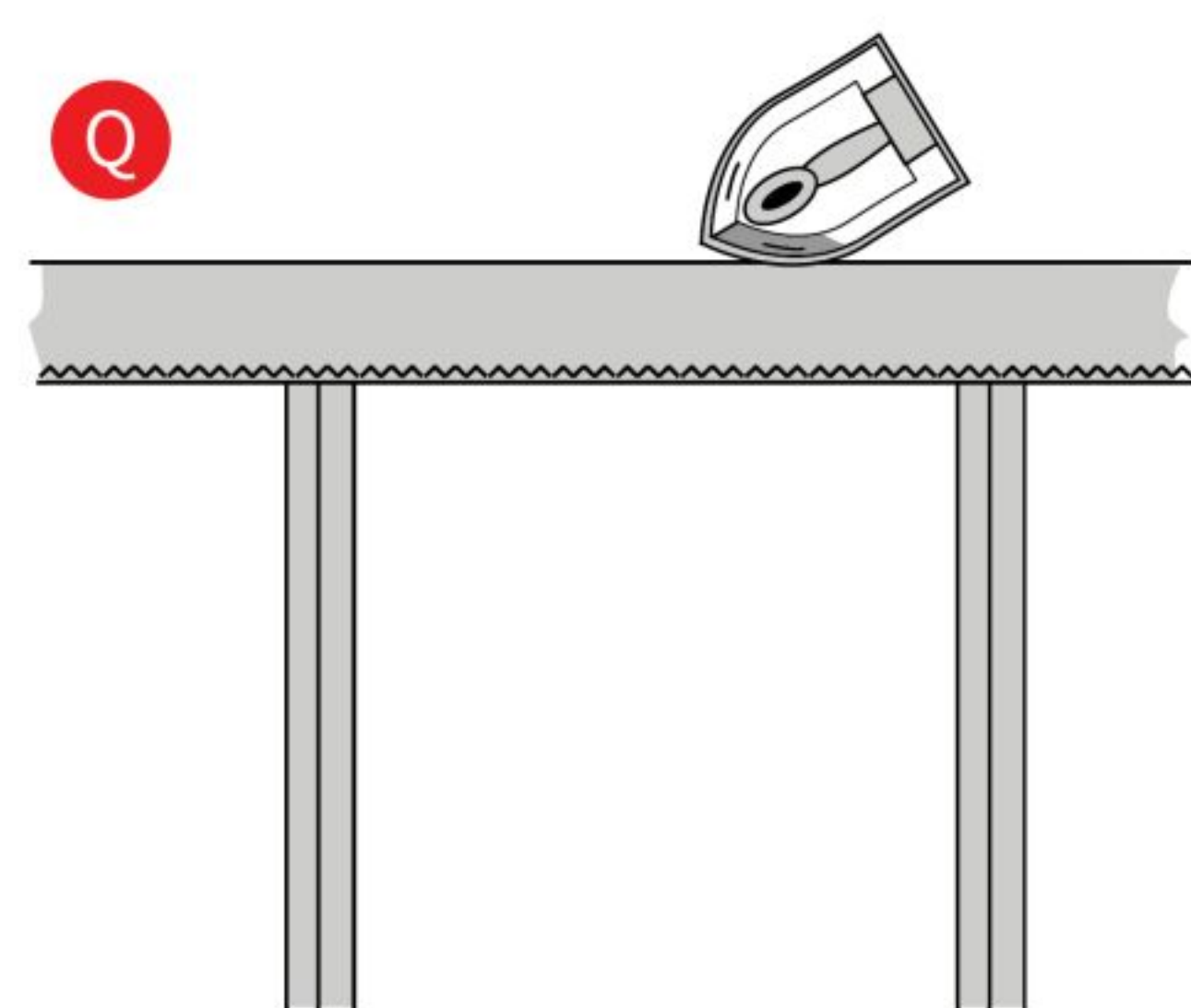
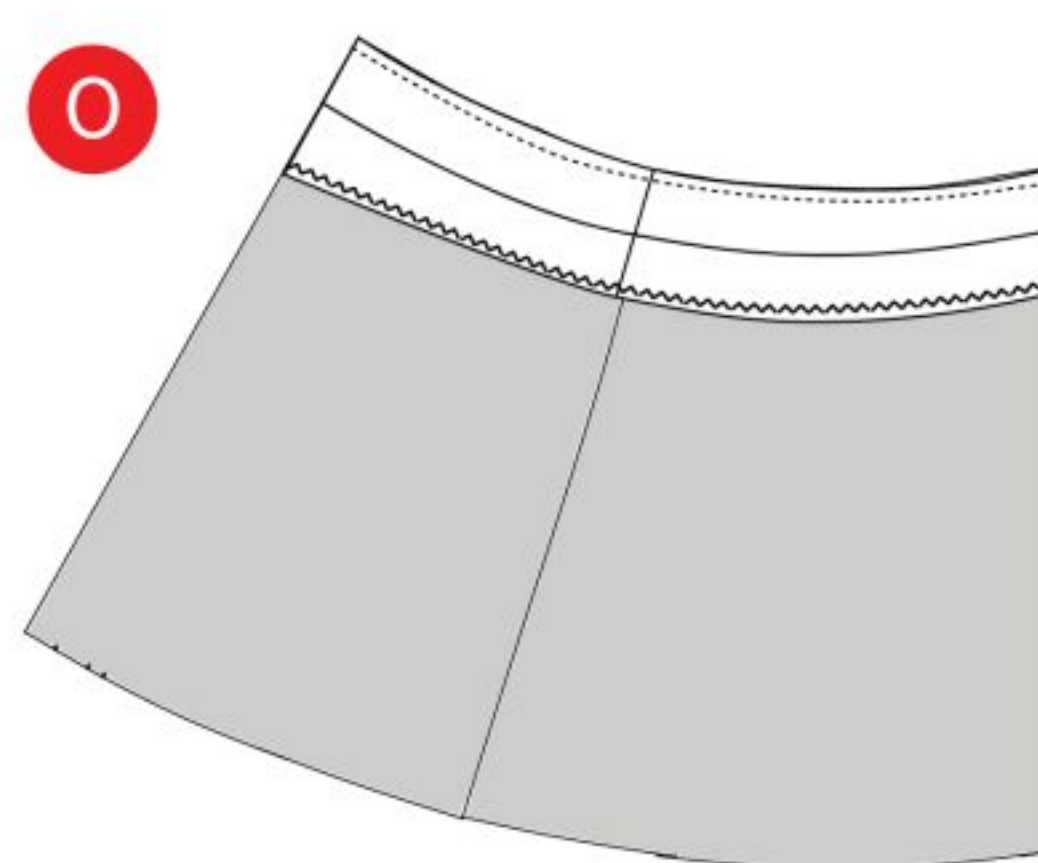
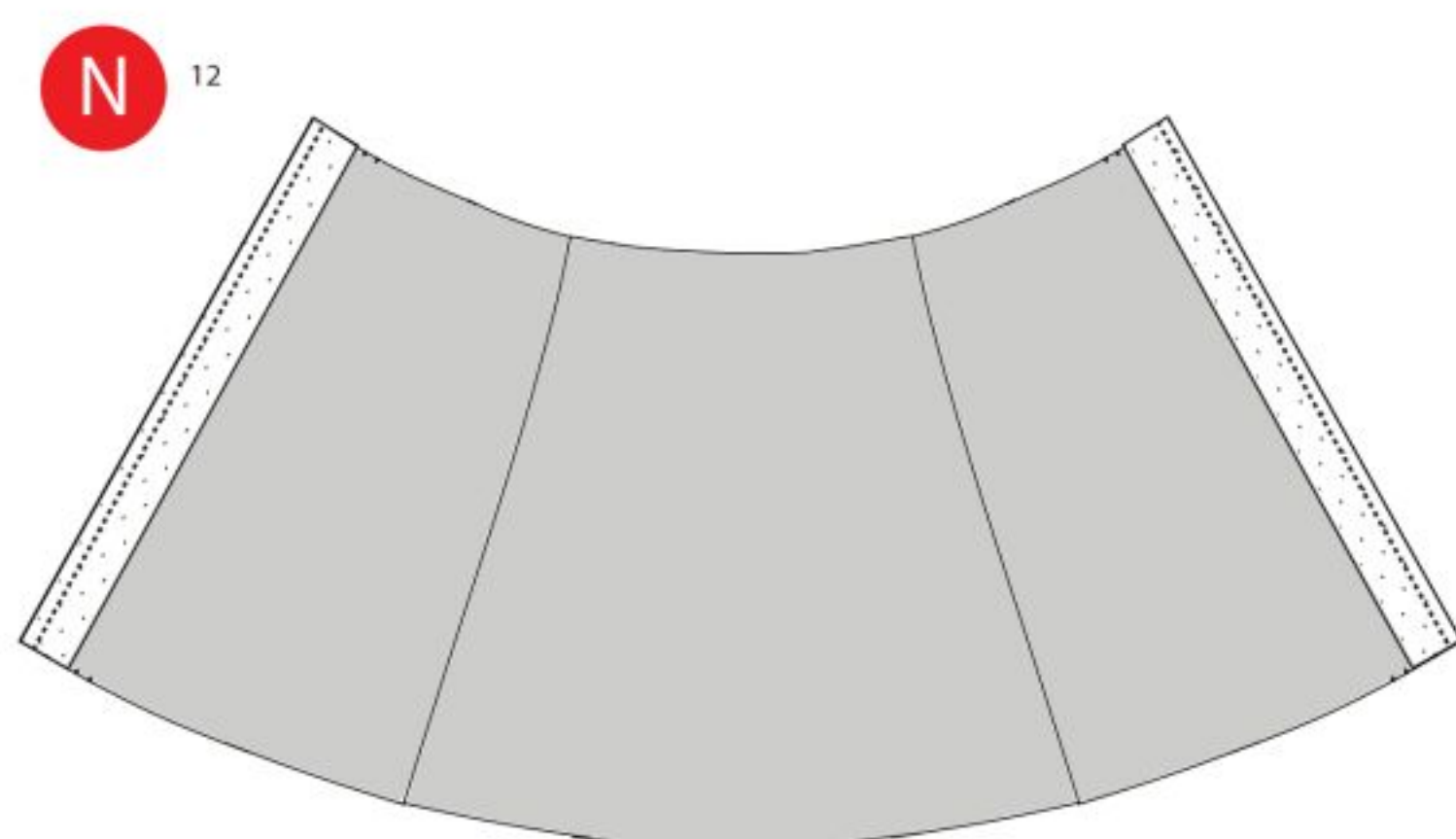
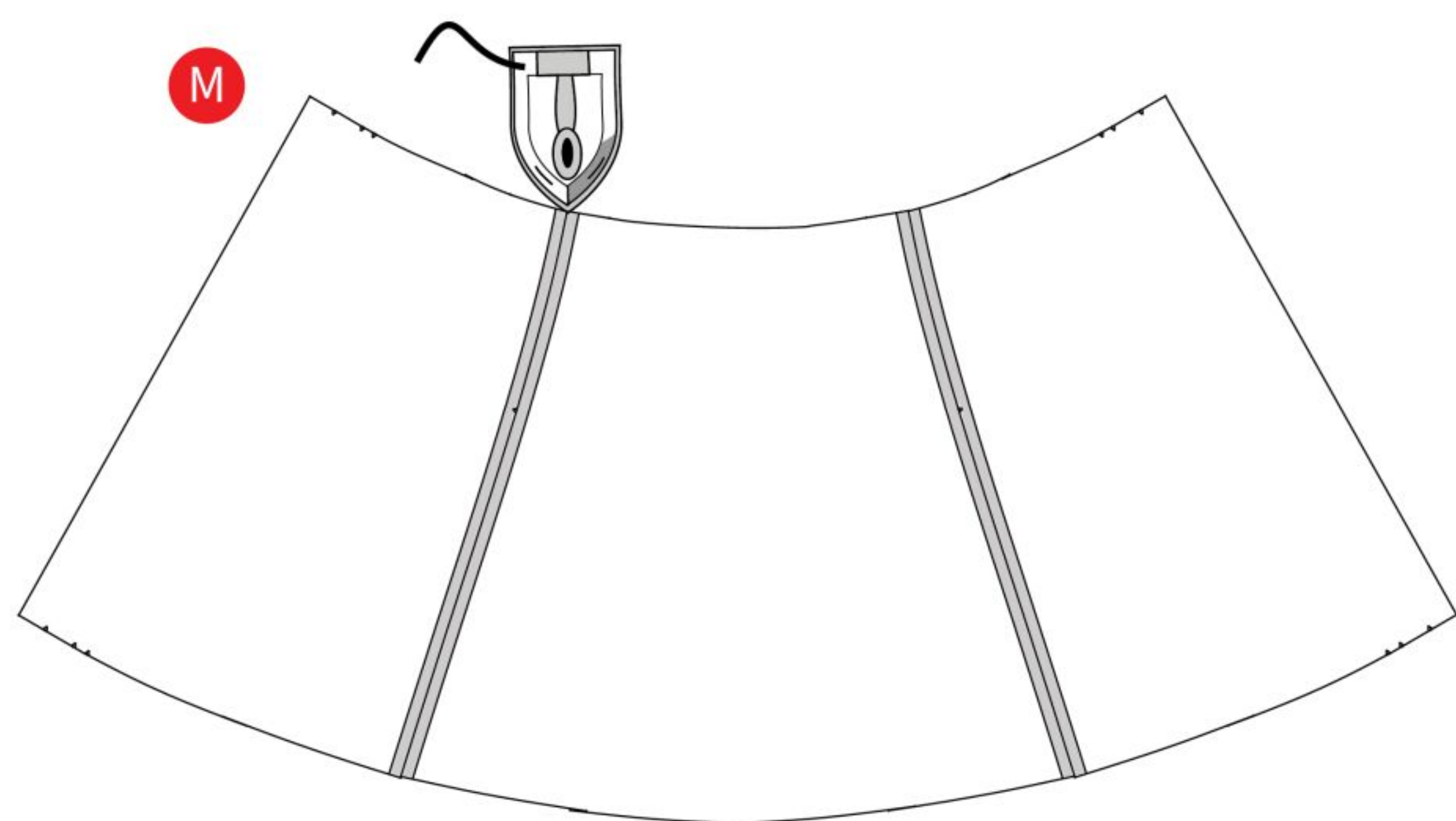
HOW TO MAKE:

- 1 Sew in the darts on the front and back skirt. (See pics A & B.)
- 2 Press the pocket pleats in place. Stitch the pocket pleats within the seam allowance at the top and bottom. (See pics C & D.)
- 3 Flip the pocket over so it is RS down, turn over the top edge by approximately 2cm and stitch in place. (See Pic E.)
- 4 Turn in the remaining pocket sides by 1cm and press firmly. (See Pic F.)
- 5 Place the pocket where marked in the pattern piece, and pin in place.
- 6 Topstitch the pocket in place, pivoting around corners and leaving the top edge of the pocket open. Stitch a small triangle in the corner of pocket edges as shown to strengthen the pocket opening. (See Pic G.)
- 7 Fold the pocket flap in half, right sides together (RST) and stitch along the short edges, with a 1cm seam allowance. Turn through to the right side. Press. (See Pic H.)
- 8 Place the raw edge of the pocket flap parallel with the pocket opening (this is marked on the pattern piece) and stitch in place along the raw edge.
- 9 Fold the flap over and press, topstitching along the top edge of the flap. (See pics I & J.)
- 10 With RST, stitch the skirt

SIZING:

FINISHED MEASUREMENTS	6	8	10	12	14	16	18
WAIST	25"	27"	29"	31"	33"	35"	37"
HEM	43"	45"	47"	49"	51"	53"	55"
LENGTH	21"	21"	21"	21"	21"	21"	21"





together at the side seams. (See Pic K.)

**11** With RST join each pair of waistbands at the side seams. (See Pic L.)

**12** Press the seams open on the skirt and waistbands. (See Pic M.)

**13** Join the inner and outer waistbands together at the upper edge, then clip and notch and press seam open.

**14** Finish one lower waistband edge with a zigzag stitch.

**15** With RST, attach the interfaced button stands to the skirt on the centre front edges. Press seams open and then press flat back inside the skirt. If you like you can topstitch too.

**16** With RST attach the unfinished edge of the waistband to the skirt waist. Press the seam upwards. (See Pic N.)

**17** Press over the inner

waistband over at the upper edge and pin in place. (See Pic O.)

**18** Stitch in the ditch of the waistband by sewing along the seam line where the waistband meets the skirt. This will sew through all the layers, securing the facing on the inside. (See Pic P.)

**19** Turn up the hem of the skirt and topstitch in place. (See Pic Q.)

**20** Using a buttonhole foot, sew the buttonholes onto the right-hand side front as worn, in the positions marked on your pattern sheet. (See Pic R.)

**21** Hand-sew your buttons onto the left-hand side to finish.

### Top tip

Stitching in the ditch is a technique to secure the facing to the garment by sewing along a seamline from the right side through all the layers





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*Sneak peek! Coming in  
issue 154 of Love Sewing*



## MASTERCLASS

# Amazing LACE

Next month, we are bringing you a luxurious lace pencil skirt pattern! So, here is a lace masterclass to help you prepare





Lace is a fabric favourite for creating a really special garment as it comes in a range of dramatic colours and styles. Follow our top tips for great results:

### KNOW YOUR LACE

Lace varies tremendously in price and quality, from £10 per metre to over £300! The lace you choose will depend very much on what you are making. Let's look at some of the main types of lace.

#### 1. Chantilly lace

A heavily corded lace on tulle, often beaded with an ornate edge. Used in bridalwear, primarily in white, ivory and black.

#### 2. Alençon lace

This is an all-over lace, with the design incorporated into a tulle background. It may or may not have a decorative border. Available in a variety of colours, this is an easy lace to work with.

#### 3. Guipure lace

A heavily embroidered fabric with no tulle backing, but open spaces. This lace is also available in a range of colours and is a lace recently favoured by designers.

### CHOICES CHOICES

When it comes to picking your project, it's best to choose simple shapes and use the border as the finished edge of the garment. However, if you are making an A-line or circular skirt, then the lace border edge has to be cut off carefully and then stitched back in place when the garment has been completed. Lace often requires cutting in a single layer as the pattern needs to be centred on the pattern pieces for the most pleasing finish. Make sure you avoid large lace motifs on the bust or bottom!

### LOOK SHARP

Using specialist pins and needles is advised. Use new fine pins as well as needles as both can easily snag delicate fabric if blunt. (Glass-headed or flower-headed pins are great as they are more easily seen on lace fabric). Use a machine needle size 60-75 (9-11) Sharps or Universal and a stitch length of 1.8-2mm for seams.

### WHICH SEAM?

Sometimes, the goal is to match the lace design at the seams, for instance, on the centre front or back seams, so that it looks like one continuous piece. The best way to do this is to cut one side out on the single layer, then position that piece on top of a large expanse of fabric, matching the motifs perfectly. Use the position of this piece as a guide for positioning the mirrored piece, overlapping any seam allowances. Just remember to remove the original piece before you start cutting!

### LET'S FACE IT

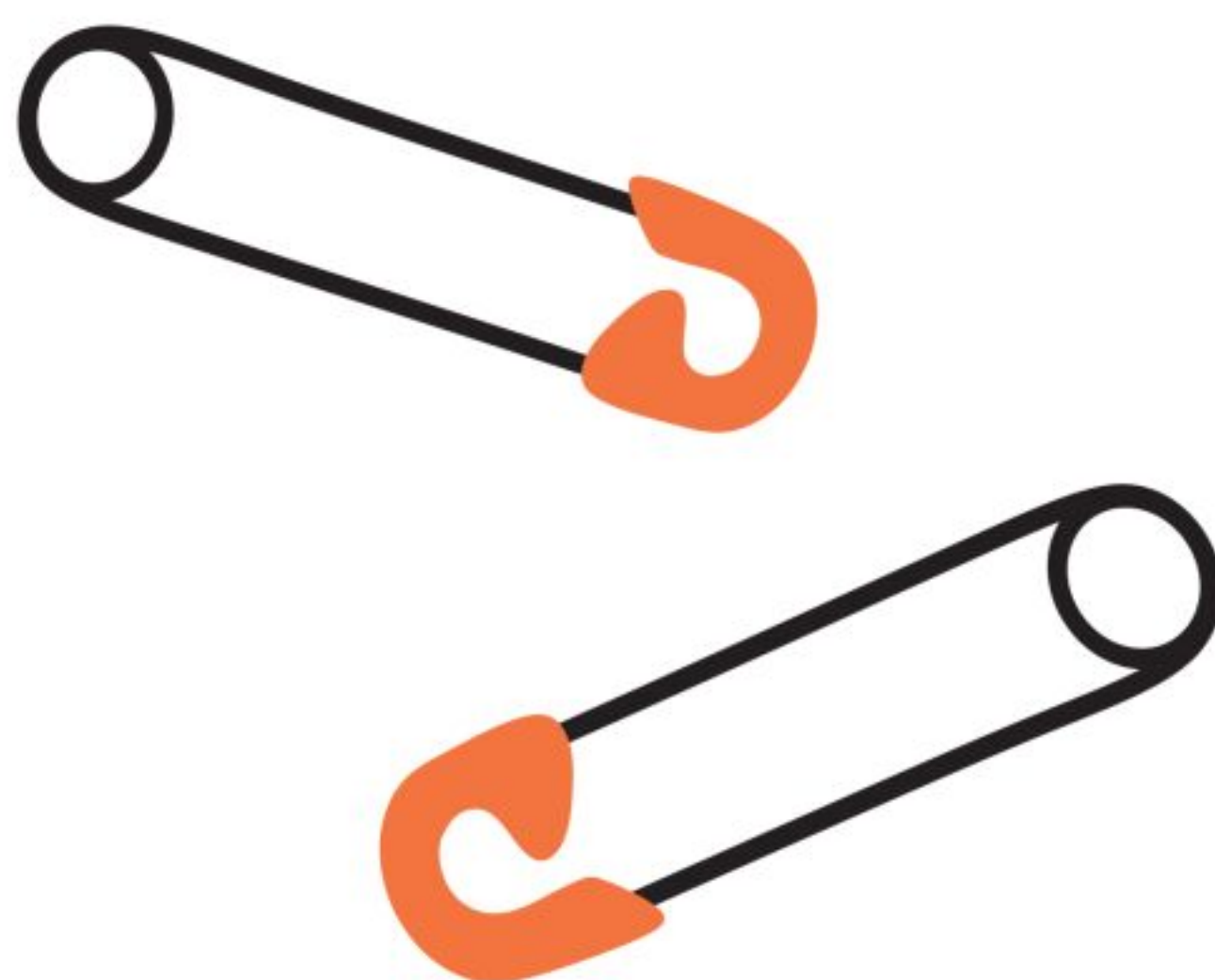
Rather than use standard interfacing for collars, cuffs and buttonhole areas, provide the needed support and stability by using a sheer organza or one or two layers of fashion fabric as the interfacing.

### SEW WRONG

If it is difficult to tell the right from the wrong side of the fabric, mark one side as 'wrong' with a small piece of masking tape so that you always put pieces together correctly. The masking tape can be written on with helpful notes too, if, say, a side front and side back of a princess-seam pattern look identical!

### CLEVER CONSTRUCTION

This will reduce the bulk. We recommend mounting the fabric onto a base for ease of construction such as silk dupion or silk satin so these two types of fabric can be treated as one and no special seam treatments are required. A dart in lace can be made in exactly the same way as a dart in fabric. If you are making a dart in the lace only, make the dart in the normal way, then stitch again 3mm away and trim off the surplus fabric, then press as normal. If you are making the dart with mounted fabric, tack or baste around the open dart for stability before beginning construction.



## WHY NOT TRY?

Fabric Favourites  
All fabrics available to purchase  
from [www.croftmill.co.uk](http://www.croftmill.co.uk)



Double scallop lace in scarlet,  
£12.95 per metre



Floravine lace in sugar plum,  
£12 per metre



Lady in red lace,  
£12 per metre



Dahlia lace,  
£19.95 per metre



# Cosy up & **RELAX**

Make yourself and your loved one, a hot water bottle cover this autumn to keep the chill away! This fun and easy pattern is a quick make and includes some interesting techniques, including quilting, bias binding and using a popper

Project **FREYA GILBERT, CRAFTY SEW AND SO**







## MATERIALS & TOOLS:

- 50cm of outer fabric & lining
- 50cm of fabric for quilting
- 50cm of cotton blend wadding
- 1m of bias binding
- snap or popper and tool to attach
- template downloaded from [www.craftworld.com](http://www.craftworld.com)

## RECOMMENDED FABRICS:

craft cotton and quilting cotton

## NOTES:

All seam allowances are 1cm unless stated otherwise.

## HOW TO MAKE:

**1** Cut and layer pieces of your outer and under fabrics together, with the wadding between, slightly larger than your pattern pieces and quilt

them together with your choice of pattern. I like to do a diagonal grid pattern, with the stitching 3cm apart for this project.

**2** Use the template to cut out all the pieces of the pattern and cut the pattern pieces from the lining fabric.

**3** Bind the straight edges of the back of the cover together with the bias binding, both the quilted fabrics and the lining fabric, WST. Baste the layers together around the remaining three sides.

**4** Sandwich the back pieces between the quilted front fabric and the front lining fabric, RST and pin.

**5** Sew around the fabrics with a 1cm seam allowance, leaving a 15cm gap along the bottom.

**6** Trim down the seam allowance down by half.

**7** Turn the cover out through the gap left, making sure the fabrics are on the correct sides, and give it a good press.

**8** Turn in the fabric at the

opening in and close by hand.

**9** Install the popper/closure at the centre of the overlap to secure the opening.





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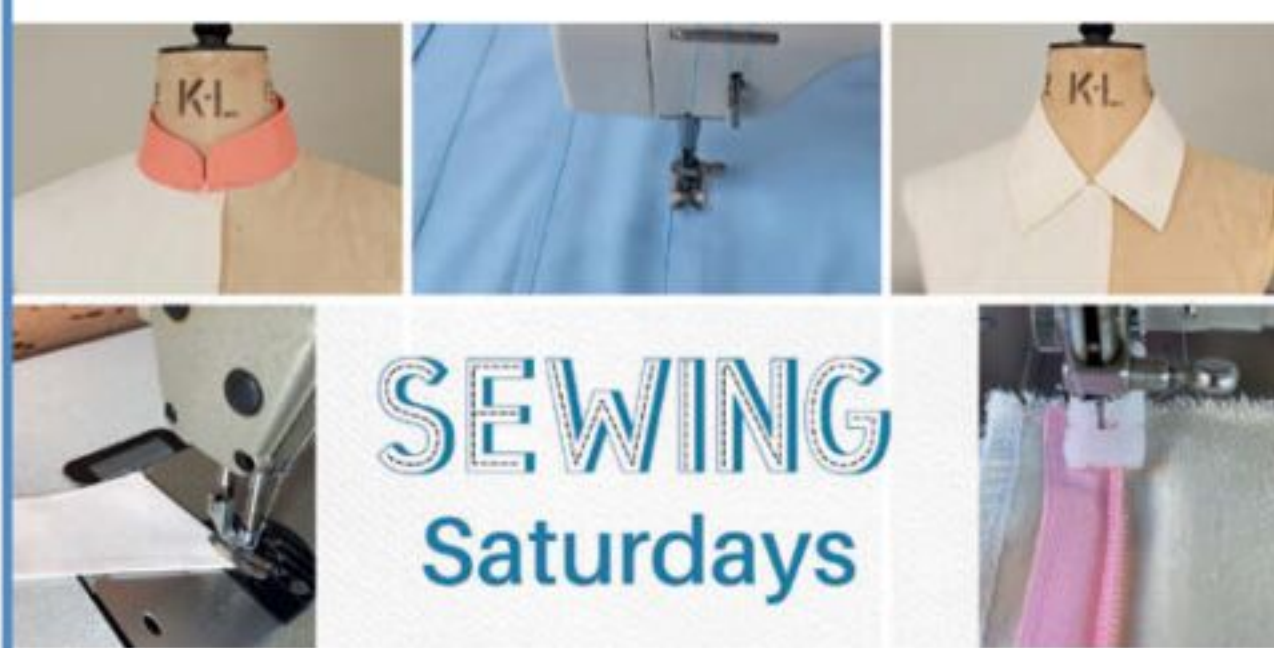
Dollys Fabric has a wide range of gorgeous fabrics including William Morris Rose & Hubble The Craft Cotton Company and lots more. We also stock haberdashery. Also we offer a wide range of workshops and a young sewers class for more info contact Vanessa on 07807019839

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# Sewing as an **EXPERT**

## WITH THE **THRIFTY STITCHER**

Claire-Louise is here to share her experience of creating a sew-along through the eyes of a professional seamstress

I recently ran an online sew-along creating my “jumpsuit of dreams”. My vision was a woven jumpsuit that I could comfortably wear when doing yoga, that I could also wear in my everyday life.

The main reason for doing the sew-along, rather than just quietly creating this outfit, was to document the process I apply as a pro stitcher to my own personal projects. You see, my training wasn't in using sewing patterns, (although as a young teen, that's

where I started), so how I structure my sewing project plans isn't necessarily how sewing patterns will instruct you.

Many of the sew-along attendees were fascinated by the way I approached it, so I thought I'd share with you too. Aside from drafting my own patterns, the main difference is that I fit as I sew a lot more and free myself up to changing a construction order based on my available time. Sewing patterns will follow a logical order which is very sensible, but sometimes I choose to do things out of a logical order if say the next step is time-consuming, but I'd like to progress and have a short window of sewing time.



### ABOUT **CLAIRE-LOUISE**

Claire-Louise is an author, pattern designer, teacher and costumer. We recommend her online course [www.thethriftystitcher.co.uk/sewing-courses-we-offer/](http://www.thethriftystitcher.co.uk/sewing-courses-we-offer/)

Claire-Louise's book, *Clone Your Clothes*, available to buy for £16.99 at [www.searchpress.com](http://www.searchpress.com)

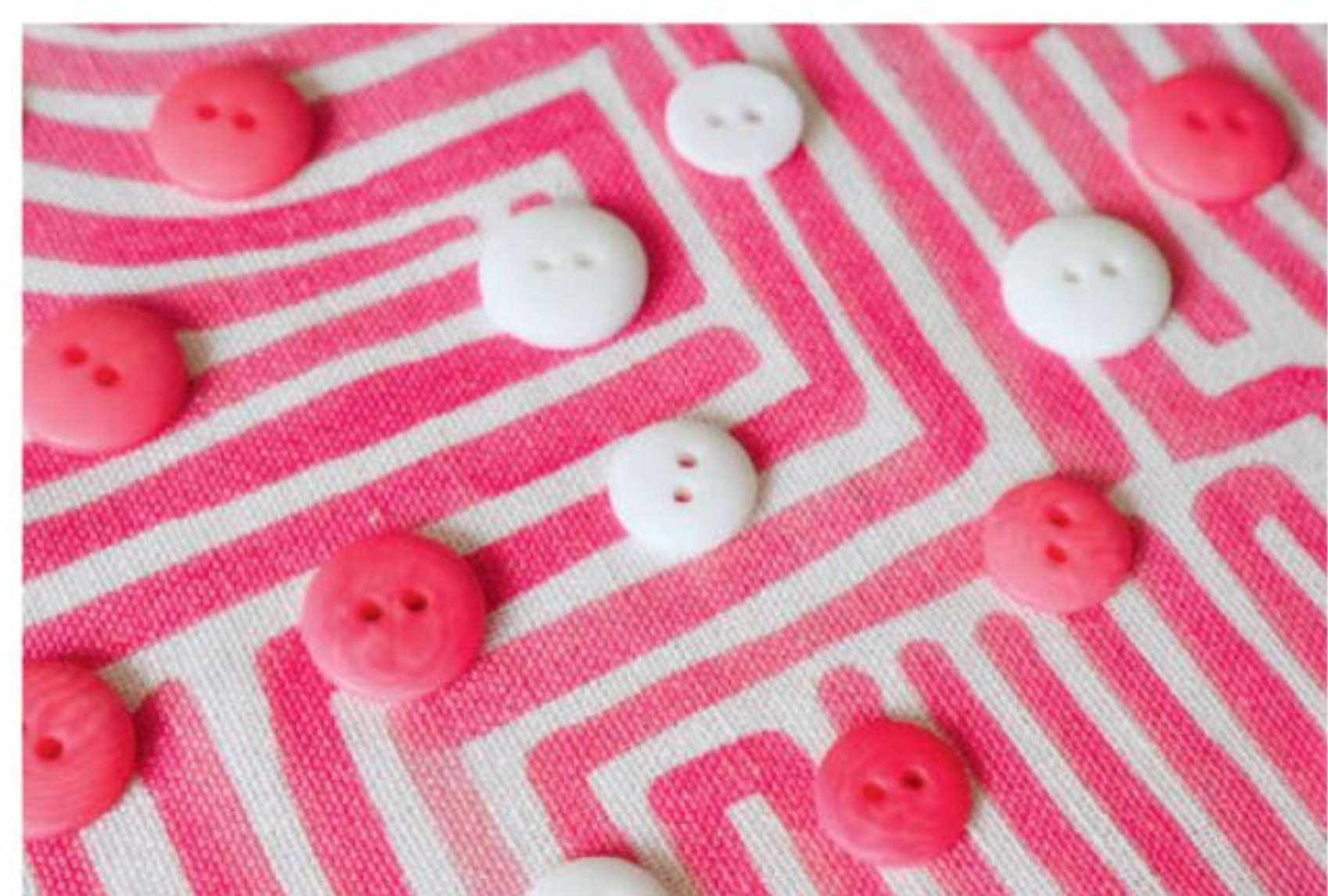
Join Claire-Louise's monthly sewing club and learn how to take your sewing to the next level with expert tips, tricks and techniques to try. Visit [www.thethriftystitcher.co.uk](http://www.thethriftystitcher.co.uk) to find out more





# 1 IDEATION AND PLANNING

I was asked by a recent student why I didn't sew more for myself. And the truth is that as someone who tries to live sustainably, I already have enough clothing! I try to sew things when I have a specific need, like overheating in yoga classes wearing polyester activewear.



For the last year, I've been dreaming about wearing something floaty in natural fibres to yoga when it's warm that also looks kind of cute on me too! I spotted a ready-to-wear jumpsuit that I loved the design of and then spotted the perfect dupe fabric at Guthrie & Ghani.

Why didn't I just buy the ready-to-wear version? Well, I knew that the proportions would mean the armholes would be too low on me at 5'2 and that the empire line seam would be too high on my full bust. However, a self-made version could fit exactly as I wanted.

After getting my inspiration and buying three metres of the G&G Ariadne viscose linen, I then started to think about what pattern to use. These were all contenders, although the Nina Lee is probably the closest. The others I thought could be hacked.



Leo dungarees, £14, [byhandlondon.com](http://byhandlondon.com)

However, I wanted a pattern that would be as good a fit in the bodice area as possible, as quickly as possible, so I decided to clone the top part of a well-fitting dress. This was just a personal choice, as I've never used any of the patterns I found before, so I don't know how well they would work on my body.

I then hacked a wide leg trouser pattern that fitted well to create the lower section of the jumpsuit.



Tilly & the Buttons Skye sundress, £14, [www.tillyandthebuttons.com](http://www.tillyandthebuttons.com)



Nina Lee Carmel jumpsuit, £9.50, [www.fabricgodmother.co.uk](http://www.fabricgodmother.co.uk)





## 2 SENSE CHECKING THE PATTERN

You may well have heard of the Palmer/Pletch tissue fitting process? As a costume maker, I always worked near my mannequin and tried on pattern pieces to check how they looked as I drafted. Since I wanted to change the pattern's style lines from my cloned dress, for example, scoop the neckline at the back and check the dart height. So, my first toile fit was as good as it could be. I used a mannequin that is the right bust circumference as me, although it's not a body double to drape the pattern! I also popped on one of my bras, so I could check if the straps were covered.

I then tweaked my pattern, reducing the gaping armhole, truing the curved back neckline and raising the under-bust seam

line. This saved me wasting a toile fit. If you don't have a mannequin, you could do this on yourself.

Even if I had used a sewing pattern, I would still "try on" my paper pattern before cutting a toile and I always walk seamlines to check they all match.

So, here's where I deviated from standard sewing plans, I continued working just on the bodice, before I made the trousers pattern and toile. This is because the trousers hang from the bodice, so if the bodice needs to be altered, which it usually will, then the trousers will also then need a corresponding adjustment, aka double the work! So, I cut and fit the trousers after the bodice was finalised, so I didn't waste time.



## 3 FITTING THE BODICE

I know many of you hate making a toile or a muslin, but honestly, it's usually well worth the time investment. If you're pattern hacking or drafting from scratch, it's essential. I always toile even when cloning from a well-fitting garment because the patterning process is imperfect.

Prepping the toile – I'm the queen of creating shortcuts, but one thing you should not skip is stabilising your necklines and any curved areas straight after cutting out and before sewing anything else. I like to use a fusible interfacing. As soon as my pieces were cut, I stabilised the neckline so there

was no chance of me stretching out the necklines and armholes as I handled the bodice in construction.

Although the back bodice would be on the fold in the final garment, I added a seam in case that area would need adjusting. The fold can be re-added later.

I also sewed all the seam allowance lines with a thread I could see, so I knew where the seamlines would be. In this case, it was the centre front, necklines, armholes and waist seam.

There were a few tweaks to be made before the trousers were added and a second toile fit could happen.

The weight of the trousers impacted

the bodice fit. Pattern adjustments I made:

- Raised the waistline
- Adjusted dart height
- Corrected the armhole gaping by balancing pattern
- Filled in the scooped back to cover bra
- Re-shaped front neckline to a better scoop shape

At this stage, I planned a second "wear fit toile"; this is something done in the fashion industry to flag up any issues that only appear as a garment is worn. Sadly, I ran out of time, although I wish I had done this.



Full 360 view of the toile. I used an old sheet as the first toile!



## 4 MAKING UP THE TROUSERS

This is one of those stages I did out of a normal sequence, as needed to stick to the sew-along schedule and was time poor. I cut out the trousers first and sewed them up to a semi-finished stage.

I chose to add side seam pockets and used a pocket from another dress to draft these. I also made sure they extended to the waistline, so they didn't flap around like elephant ears inside the trousers.

## 5 MAKING UP THE BODICE

Once the pattern adjustments were done, cutting and sewing the bodice for a fit was straightforward. I was still thinking about the front opening and how to construct it, so the first fabric fit was simply pinned at the front.

## 6 FIRST FIT IN THE FABRIC

Most sewing patterns will have you sewing all the way through the process, without suggesting where to pause and fit.



Once my jumpsuit was constructed and before I added all the edge finishes like hems, plackets and bindings, I wanted to fit and check everything. This is important even if you've toiled as the fashion fabric is always going to react slightly differently than the toile cloth. Plus, when you make pattern adjustments there can be

unexpected knock-on effects. Much easier to tweak a side seam before a facing and binding has gone on than afterwards!

## 7 FINAL FIT TWEAKS

As expected, there were a couple of minor tweaks to be made at this stage before I closed all the edges and added the fastening:

- Pinched in the side seams a little
- Lifted the outside of the shoulders

## 8 FINISHING OFF THE JUMPSUIT

My original inspiration garment had a hidden button placket at the front. As I was making this on a deadline to wear at a yoga festival, I simply ran out of time to work out how to sew this into a closed seam. Instead, I did more of a Henley placket opening, with exposed buttons and was very happy with how it looked.



Even though I'm an experienced maker I did a test sample of this opening in the same fabric. Whilst doing the test, I realised that the neck binding would need to be added before the placket, this is why testing sewing processes can be invaluable.

I had left the armholes unfinished before doing the placket opening, this was to allow for one last fitting and the opportunity to make armhole/side seam adjustments if needed.

Once the buttons and buttonholes were in place, I had my final fit. I did in fact make a teeny tweak to the armhole and then finished off in the same way as the neckline with a binding.

And then my jumpsuit was all ready to waft about in at the festival!



## FINALLY – REVIEWING THE FINISHED GARMENT

The final stage for me is to review how a garment feels when I've worn it for an extended time and a few times. Had I made time for a wear test, I might have flagged up a couple of the issues I would like to tweak in future versions.

Yes, there will be future versions as I invested time and effort so the bodice could be a good sleeveless bodice pattern for both jumpsuits and dresses

### My final notes for V2:

- Add lingerie loops at the shoulder to stop straps slipping off shoulders.
- Adjust the angle of the shoulders, feels too square.
- Lower armhole a touch, as the binding makes it feel a little smaller than I was hoping for.
- Work out a way to make the width at the leg hem adjustable, so it can be wider, then narrower for yoga. I did feel like I may have flashed my pants when doing lying down leg raises....

I have worn this jumpsuit in several places now and I'm thrilled with the outcome. And whilst it may seem that I had a lot of fittings and pattern tweaks, ultimately that is what got me to a final garment I love without lots of unpicking.



# Stash-busting

# PATCHWORK

Whether you use it as on the dining table, or double the size to create a funky bathmat, this simple project is a must for anyone with a box of random fabric scraps that's too good to ignore

Project **CORINNE BRADD**





The eye-catching diagonal stripe pattern can be arranged in several ways and is a great starter block for newbie patchwork. Accurate cutting and stitching will help when matching seam lines at the edges of the blocks, but if you're unsure, the addition of narrow sashing strips between each block can fool the eye into thinking every line is spot on while making each block 'pop'.

### MATERIALS & TOOLS:

- 100% printed cotton fabric scraps
- a coloured towel you want to upcycle
- template downloaded from [www.craftworld.com](http://www.craftworld.com)

### CUTTING & PREPARATION:

Cut your fabric into 3.5cm wide strips, the smallest section needs to be 7cm long if you're making individual triangles.

Alternatively, you can sew three long scraps together in rows and cut several triangles from one long panel.

### HOW TO MAKE:

**1** Press your fabric scraps and cut into 3.5cm wide strips. Take three different prints and cut one at 7cm, one at 12cm and the last at 17.5cm. Fold and crease each strip in half and stitch RST with a 5mm seam allowance, matching the crease lines to make a pyramid shape.

**2** Use the triangle template to cut the edges of the fabric into a triangle. Make a second block in this way and sew the two together on the long edge to make a square.

**3** Alternatively stitch three long strips of fabric together and use the template to cut several triangles from the panel, flipping the template each time to get as many triangles from your fabric as possible. Continue making

blocks using different fabrics, you will need 12 squares to make the draining board mat measuring 36x48cm when completed.

**4** Choose a fairly plain fabric in a complementary colour and cut into 2.5cm strips. Arrange your blocks as you desire and sew a length of sashing between each block in a vertical row. Use longer pieces of sashing to join these rows together, taking care to match up the horizontal sashing lines as closely as possible to make a trellis effect. Press the whole panel and trim the edges if necessary.

**5** Place the panel onto an old, clean towel, keeping





the piece 2cm away from any hems. Trim the towel 1cm from the edges of the patchwork and ensure it is completely flat before pinning at regular intervals all over the mat.

**6** Use a coordinating thread to topstitch the patchwork to the towel with diagonal lines, first following the centre line of each block and then working from corner to corner in the opposite direction. Sew around the border of the mat, 2mm in from the edge and cut away the excess towelling.

**7** Use more sashing to bind the edges of the mat. Sew strips end to end to make a continuous piece at least 180cm long. Flip the mat over and stitch the strip to the back with a 5mm seam allowance. Start in the centre of one long side and leave a 10cm piece of sashing unstitched at the beginning. Mitre the corners neatly as you work around the edges and stop 20cm from the beginning.

**8** Take the unsewn ends of the sashing and butt together, creasing the fabric where they overlap. Sew the ends of the sashing together on the crease lines and trim the excess before continuing to stitch to the mat for a perfect fit. Turn the mat over and fold the binding to the front. Turn in 5mm on the raw edge and pin to the top edge of the mat, mitring the corners as you do so. Top stitch the binding with a coordinating thread, 2mm from the inner folded edge.

#### **Made too many blocks?**

If you've cut far more strips than you needed, you can use them to create matching hot mats, placemats and coasters with leftover towelling backing. Experiment with block placement, practice matching up all those diagonal seams or hone your neat top stitching skills on these bonus projects





# MACHINE FOCUS

*We take a look at the best beginner and advanced sewing machines from Frank Nutt*

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**Price:** £189

If you're new to sewing, the Janome 2200XT is an excellent user-friendly choice for all projects. With 22 built-in stitches and an automatic 4-step buttonhole feature, it's perfect for everyday tasks like mending, dressmaking, quilting and free-motion embroidery. Its compact design has just two dials for pattern selection and adjusting the stitch length, giving beginners the confidence to start stitching without complication.

This machine offers practical stitches and durable performance and is a great all-rounder. The included snap-on presser feet make sewing seams, inserting zippers, creating buttonholes, finishing edges and adding decorative details a joyful task. The 4-step buttonhole feature ensures quick and stress-free buttonhole creation, while the built-in side thread cutter saves time and keeps your workspace tidy.

The free-arm design makes sewing circular items like sleeves and cuffs effortless. Removing the accessory compartment allows you to manoeuvre your fabric easily and access the front-loading bobbin area when it's time to reload. The drop-feed feature will enable you to try freehand embroidery and add unique, creative touches to your projects.

The 2200XT has accessory storage to keep your presser feet and tools organised and includes a soft cover to protect the machine when not in use. From lightweight, silky fabrics to heavyweight denim, this model can handle all sorts of materials, enabling you to design without limits.

For anyone ready to start this new hobby, the Janome 2200XT will provide a straightforward sewing experience to encourage a new generation of creativity.



## Bernina 435

**Price:** £1,495

The Bernina 435 sewing machine is ideal for experienced sewists who want to take their skills to the next level. It's packed with helpful features that make every project faster, easier and more fun. The Bernina hook ensures precise, even stitching to help complete projects to a high standard. With a 5.5mm stitch width and an extra-large bobbin, you can sew for longer without stopping, a must-have if you're a quilter. Its versatility allows you to work on various projects, from delicate silks to thick layers.

With 150 decorative stitches and three alphabets, the Bernina 435 gives you endless ways to customise your projects. This machine makes it easy to add decorative touches or create custom lettering. The modern colour touch screen is simple, and the built-in Sewing Consultant helps you find the best settings quickly. The multifunction knobs make it easy to adjust stitches, and the semi-automatic needle threader makes the setup stress-free.

For larger projects, like quilts or big designs, the Bernina 435 offers a 7-inch workspace to the right of the needle. The slide-on extension table adds even more space, making big projects easier to handle. The Bernina 435 consistently delivers professional results with its adjustable presser foot pressure that works seamlessly with all fabric types, from delicate silks to thick layers.

The B435 is a versatile machine that gives you the confidence to undertake any sewing task, big or small. If you're ready to take your sewing to the next level, the Bernina 435 will help you do so with precision and ease.

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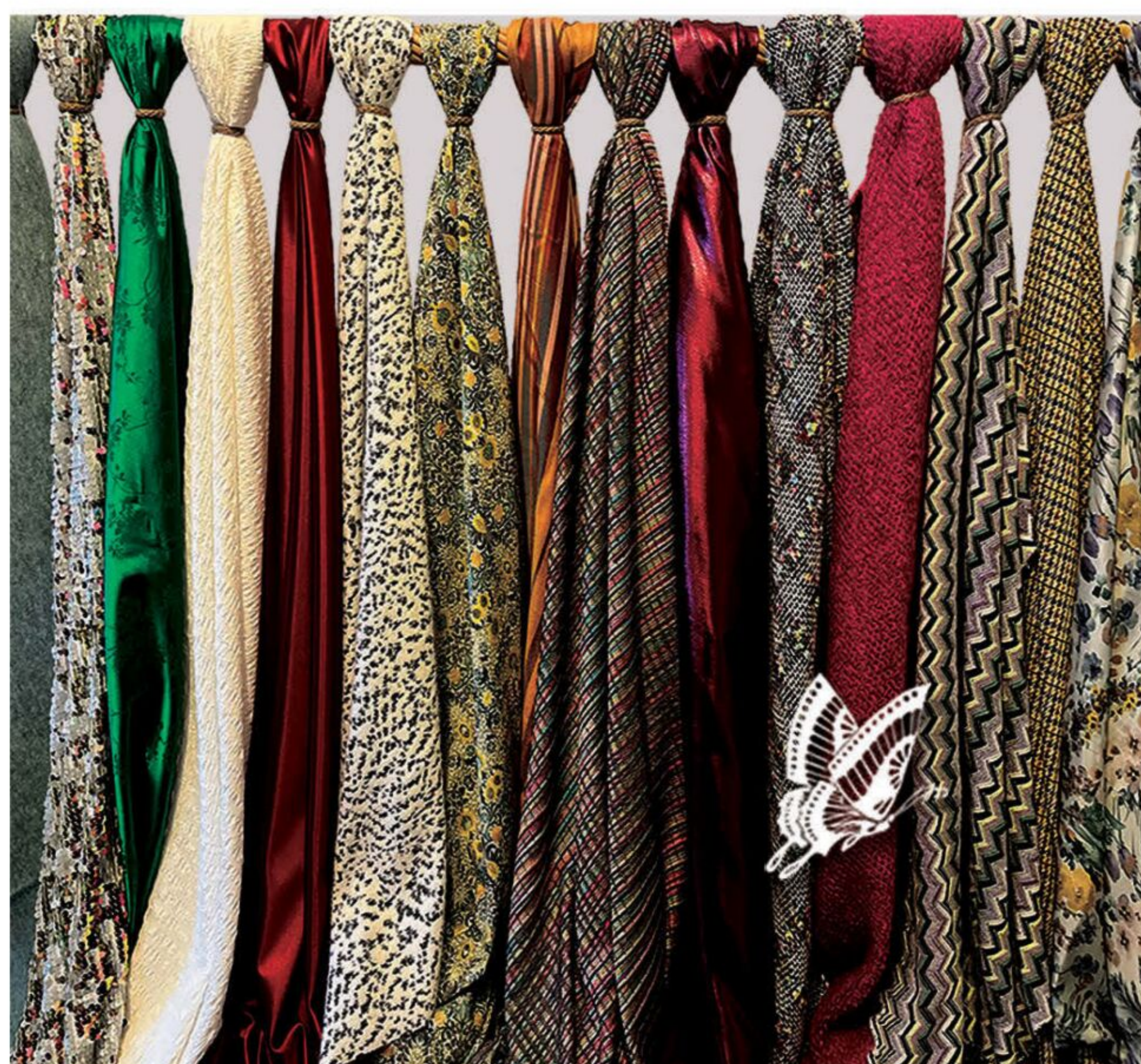
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▼ This unisex notched collar blazer is the perfect light layer for when the sun is still shining and there is a cool breeze in the air.  
M8614, £14.50, [www.sewdirect.com](http://www.sewdirect.com)



► This unisex casual button front shirt is great to throw on over a top for a relaxed fit.  
M8615, £14.50, [www.sewdirect.com](http://www.sewdirect.com)



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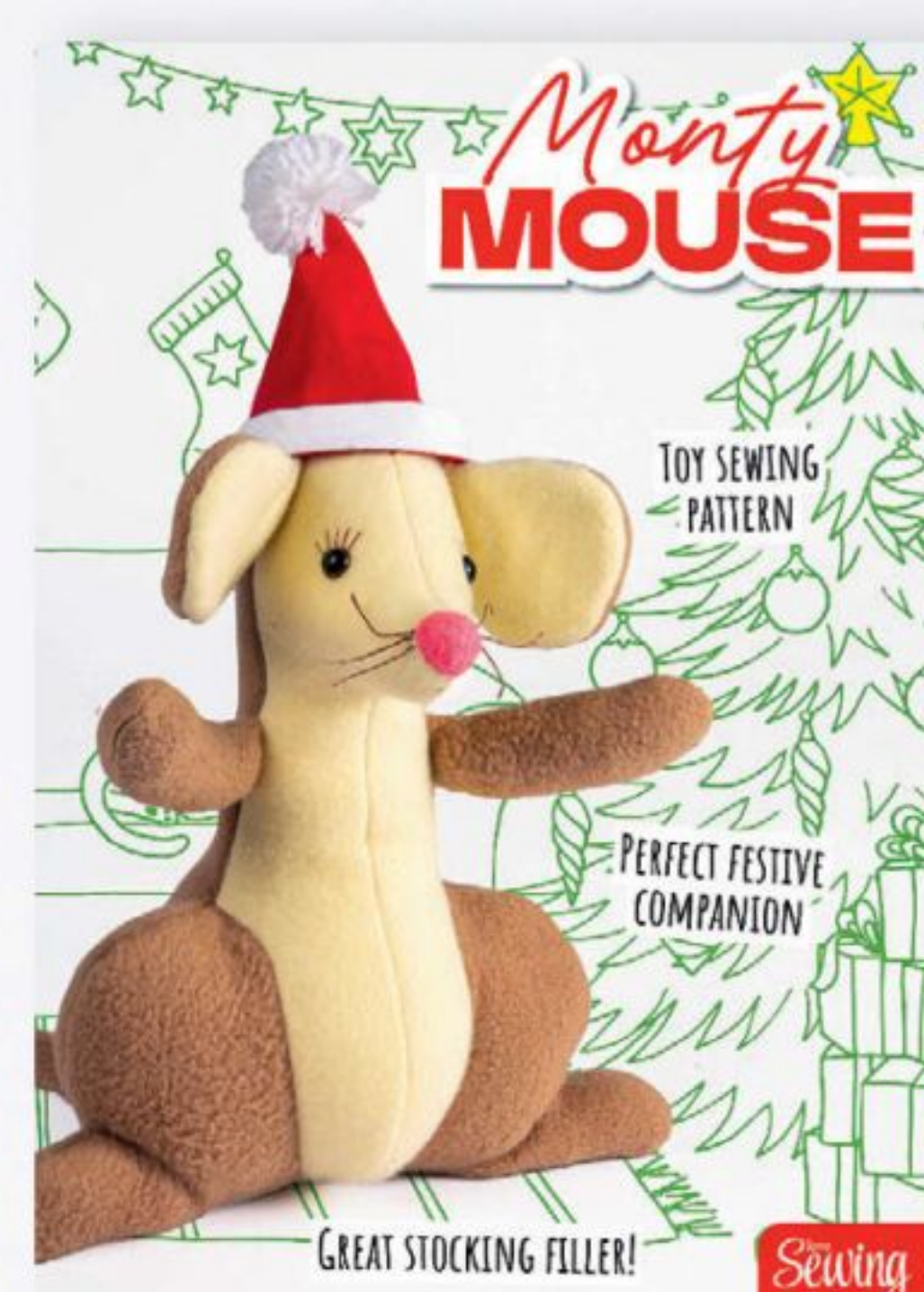


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Using a polar fleece makes this plush super cuddly and great for gifting. Why not design different hats for different occasions, a birthday crown, maybe?

### *We used*

Minerva core range polar fleece fabric in tan brown & vanilla, £10.99 per metre, [www.minerva.com](http://www.minerva.com)

# Monty **MOUSE**

This adorable festive mouse is the perfect way to welcome in the Christmas spirit. Either pop him on the fireplace, or gift him to a loved one



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*Top tip*

When cutting and pinning plaid fabric pieces, take the time to align the lines and checks so they flow neatly from one panel to the next

*Christmas Stag*

**CUSHION**

Bring a touch of cosy countryside style to your home with this charming stag cushion



Combining the rich texture of tweed with a classic Christmas plaid, it's the perfect blend of rustic and festive – ideal for adding seasonal warmth to your sofa or favourite armchair. The bold felt stag motif makes a striking focal point, while the Oxford border adds a smart, tailored finish. Whether you make it as a winter decoration, a thoughtful handmade gift, or a year-round feature, this project is a satisfying project you'll be proud to display.

## MATERIALS & TOOLS:

- 1m of 145cm-wide tartan fabric
- 50cm of 156cm-wide wool tweed fabric
- 1 45cm square of red felt
- 1m of 156cm-wide quilt batting fabric
- 40cm black zip
- red & green thread
- 45cm cushion pad
- template downloaded from [www.craftworld.com](http://www.craftworld.com)

## HOW TO MAKE:

**1** The front of the cushion cover is made from several pieces of fabric sewn together. Begin by cutting these pieces out. From your tweed fabric, cut one 32cm square. From your plaid fabric, cut two pieces measuring 12cm wide x 52cm tall and two pieces measuring 32cm wide x 12cm tall. Make sure the plaid pieces are cut with the fabric facing the same way up and take a moment to align the weave, so the pattern matches neatly across each section. (See Pic A.)

**2** Next, it's time to add your deer motif. Fold



your self-adhesive felt in half and position the stag template along the fold as shown. Using sharp scissors, carefully cut out the motif. Fold the tweed square in half and press to mark the centre, then open it back out and place it right side up. Peel away the felt backing and position the stag so it's perfectly centred on the fabric. Finish by working a straight machine stitch all the way around the motif with red thread to secure it in place. (See Pic B.)

**3** Before you begin assembling the cushion front, check that the woven pattern of your plaid pieces will line up neatly once they're sewn into place.

When you're happy with the layout,

lay the tweed stag panel flat with the right side facing up. Position the upper 12x32cm plaid piece on top with RST, aligning them along the top edge. Machine stitch along this edge with a 1cm seam allowance, then open the fabric out and press the seam. Repeat to attach the second 12x32cm piece to

**Top tip**  
Push the corners of your cushion out neatly when instructed, as they'll be stitched into the Oxford border in the next step and won't be accessible afterwards



the bottom edge in the same way. Finally, sew the two 12x52cm plaid pieces to the left- and right-hand edges, pressing each seam as you go. The cushion front is now complete. (See Pic C.)

**4** To make the cushion back, cut two pieces of plaid fabric

each measuring 52cm wide x 28cm tall. Place them RST and pin along one long edge, checking that the woven pattern lines up neatly. Starting at one end, sew the first 10cm of the seam with a 2.4mm straight stitch, then work a small reverse stitch to



lock it in. Switch to a 5mm straight stitch and continue sewing until you have 10cm left at the other end. Reverse stitch again, then switch back to a 2.4mm stitch and finish the seam. Press the allowance open. With the wrong side facing up, position the zip face down along the seam so the teeth sit directly over the seam line, and tack it into place. Turn the fabric right side up and using a zip foot, top stitch neatly around the 5mm section to secure the zip. When finished, use a seam ripper to carefully unpick the 5mm section of stitching, revealing the zip underneath. This is your finished cushion back. Open the zip halfway now. You won't be able to turn the cushion out in the next step without doing this, so don't forget! (See Pic D.)

**5** Cut a 52cm square of quilt batting and lay it flat. Place the cushion front on top with the right side facing up, then pin it in place all over to hold the layers together. Hold the cushion front and back pieces together with the RST, then machine stitch all the way around the edge with a 1cm seam allowance. Trim the batting so it's flush with the fabric edges, then turn the cushion cover right sides out through the open zip. Use a knitting needle or a chopstick to gently push out the corners for a crisp finish, then press the cover flat. (See Pic E.)

**6** Finally, add an Oxford border to the cushion. Using a ruler and dressmaker's chalk, mark a line 5cm in from each edge all the way around. Keep the layers lying flat, then work a machine top stitch along the marked line, using red thread on the top and green thread in the bobbin. Once the stitching is complete, insert your cushion pad into the cover and zip it closed to finish. (See Pic F.)

## Top tip

When working the Oxford border, use a 4mm stitch length and work slowly, ensuring you stick to the marked line

## Shopping list

Minerva Core Range polyester viscose suiting fabric in design 3, £9.99 per metre & Wool tweed suiting fabric in camel brown, £17.99, [www.minerva.com](http://www.minerva.com)





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## *Pumpkin Spice*

# CUSHION

Sew your own plush velvet pumpkin cushion – it's the perfect seasonal addition to your autumn décor!

Project **SOPHIE TARRANT**



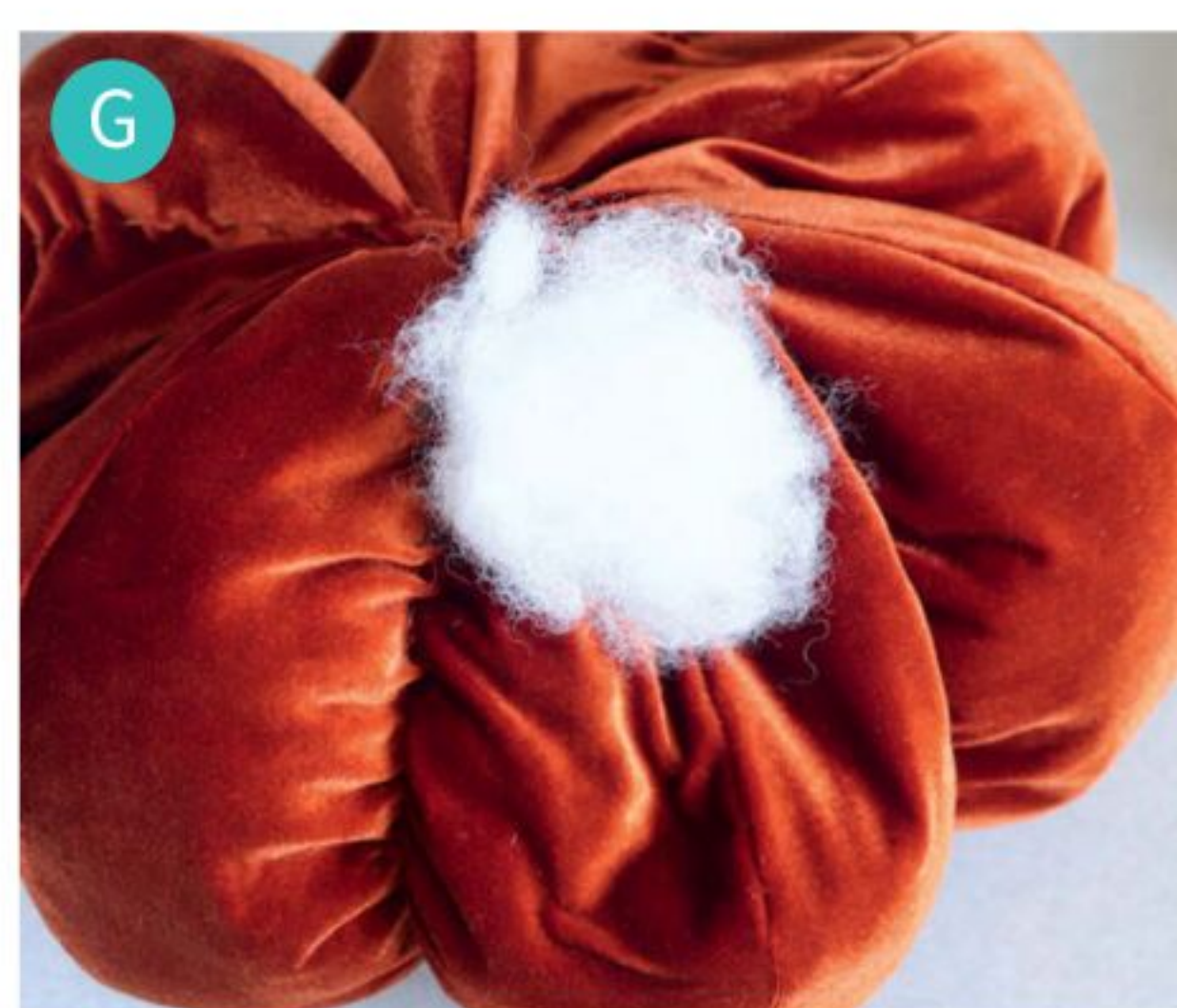
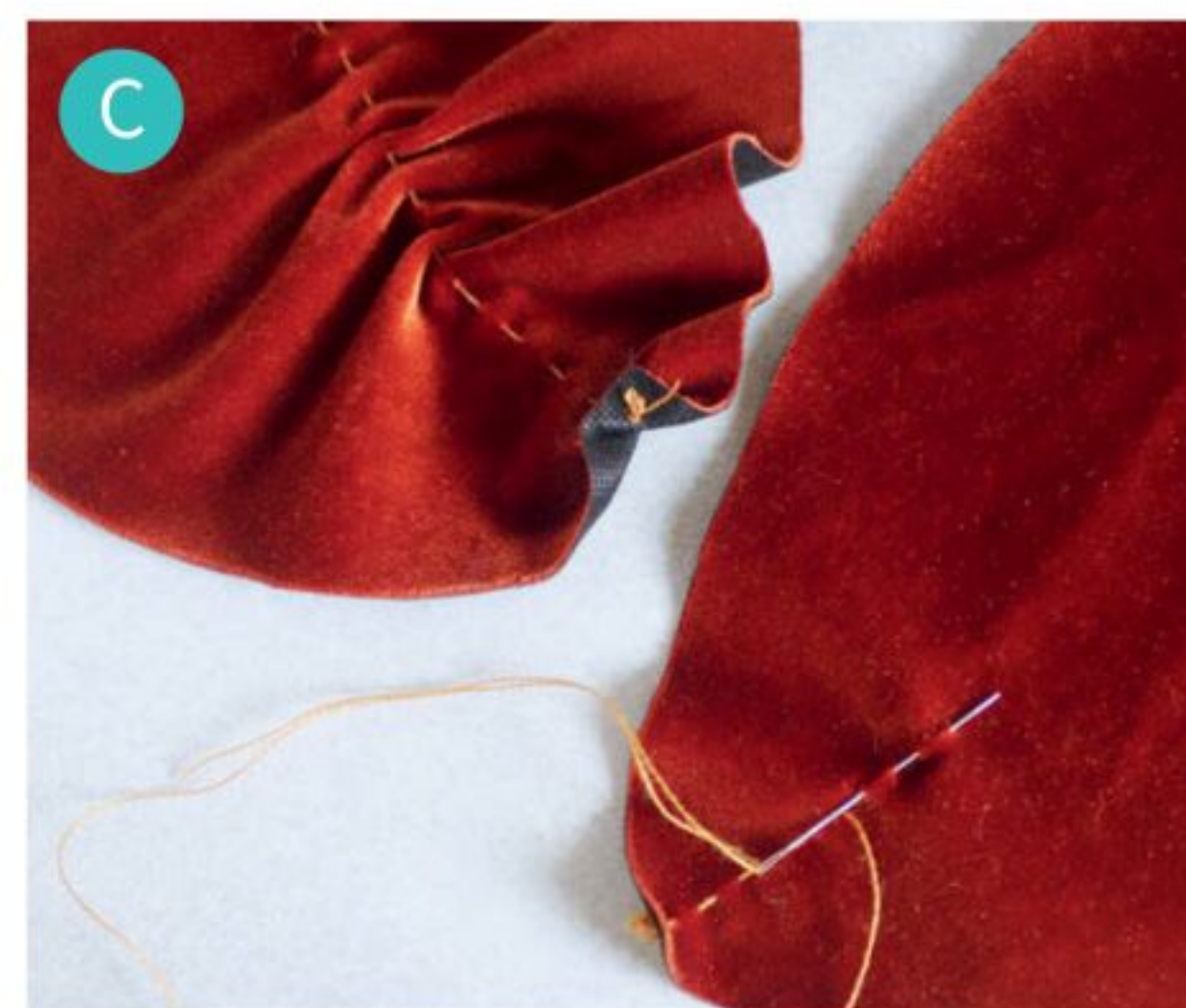
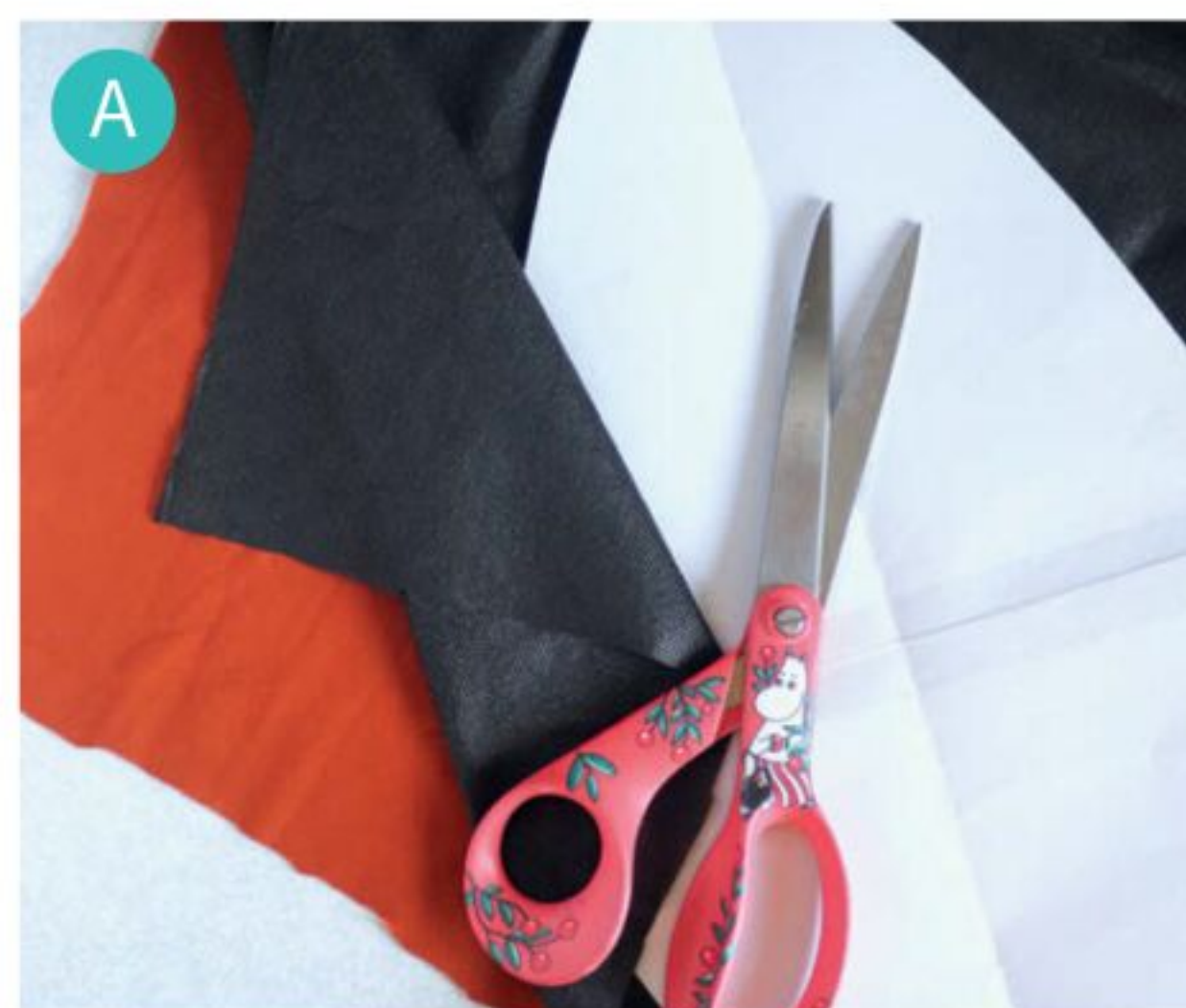
## MATERIALS & TOOLS:

- 1m of 150cm/59"-wide orange velvet fabric
- 1m of 90cm/35.5"-wide lightweight fusible interfacing
- one A4 sheet of orange felt
- regular and heavy-duty orange thread
- 17cm of wire
- toy stuffing
- hand sewing needle
- template downloaded from [www.craftworld.com](http://www.craftworld.com)

Using soft velvet, bold thread and a mix of simple hand and machine stitching, you'll create a beautiful, squashy pumpkin complete with a felt stalk and decorative ribbon. Whether you're a confident beginner or a seasoned sewist, this project is ideal for cosy evenings at home or thoughtful handmade gifting.

If you don't fancy or want a pumpkin cushion why don't you swap out the toy filling for beans or rice to make a doorstop instead.

Turn to page 79 for even more inspiration for alternative fabrics!



### Top tip

Velvet can be tricky to sew with, take your time and work carefully. Using a walking foot can make the process easier, as it helps feed the fabric layers evenly. This prevents slipping, shifting and puckering – all common issues when working with velvet

2 Using the main pumpkin template, cut seven pieces from your backed velvet. Ensure all the pieces face the same way up, so the velvet pile runs consistently across the entire cushion. (See Pic B.)

## HOW TO MAKE:

1 Start by backing your velvet fabric with a lightweight interfacing. This makes the material easier to handle when cutting out your pattern pieces and adds extra strength, too. Once your fabric is backed, download and print the paper templates and cut them out, following the instructions given to create your large main pumpkin piece from two smaller paper sections. (See Pic A.)

3 Prepare a hand sewing needle with a 50cm length of orange heavy-duty thread, then tie a knot in the end. Work a straight hand stitch down the centre of one of your fabric pieces, sewing from point to point. When you reach the end, gently ruche the fabric to gather it up slightly, then secure the thread with another knot to hold the ruching in place. Repeat this step for





each fabric piece, making sure they're all gathered to a similar size. (See Pic C.)

**4** Take two of your fabric pieces and, making sure they're still both the same way up (with the velvet pile running in the same direction), pin or clip them together along one long edge. Sew

along this edge using a straight machine stitch, leaving a 1cm seam allowance. Add a

third piece in the same way, then a fourth. Set this section aside. Repeat the process with the remaining three pieces to create a second section. You should now have two "halves" of your pumpkin – one slightly larger than the other. (See Pic D.)

**5** Next, make the pumpkin stalk. Use the template to cut three identical pieces from orange felt. Hold two of the pieces together with WST, then use a hand sewing needle threaded with orange heavy-duty thread to blanket stitch along one long edge. Add the third piece to the opposite edge of one of the joined pieces, then continue stitching to join all edges, forming a rounded stalk shape. Blanket stitch across the top edges to close and shape the top. Cut a 17cm length of wire and insert it into the stalk, then firmly fill it with safety toy stuffing. (See Pic E.)

**6** Place the two halves of

your pumpkin together with RST. Clip or pin the edges, making sure to sandwich the end of the stalk between the layers at the top, where all the pieces meet in the centre. Machine stitch all

the way around the edge, sewing through

both layers of velvet and the stalk.

Leave a 10cm gap in the seam at the bottom for turning and stuffing. (See Pic F.)

### Top tip

When stuffing the pumpkin, break the filling into small pieces and add it gradually. This helps you achieve a smooth, even shape and avoids lumps or hard spots

**7** Turn the pumpkin right sides out through the gap in the seam. Fill it with toy stuffing until it feels firm but still slightly squishable. Hand sew the opening closed with a neat ladder stitch. To give the stalk more shape, work a few small hand stitches around its base to ease out the felt and create a more 3D look. Finish by tying a length of purple velvet ribbon around the stalk for decoration, then gently bend the stalk to add character – and your pumpkin is complete! (See Pic G.)

### Top tip

When sewing the sections of your pumpkin together, gently push the gathered fabric towards the centre of each piece. This helps the pointed ends lie flat, making it much easier to align and stitch the sections neatly



## Shopping list

Minerva Core Range stretch panne velvet, £7.99 per metre from [www.minerva.com](http://www.minerva.com)



# Cosy up

Why not make some matching autumn pyjamas for your family this season

S3041, £14,  
[www.sewdirect.com](http://www.sewdirect.com)



- 1 Printed polycotton fabric autumn, £3.99 per metre
- 2 Minerva exclusive autumn orchard sweater knit stretch, £14.99 per metre
- 3 Lady McElroy Marlie cotton lawn fabric ecru, £14.99 per metre
- 4 Minerva Exclusive cotton fleece back sweatshirt stretch knit, £26.99 per metre
- 5 Deadstock wool blend coating fabric in brown, £5.99 per metre
- 6 Minerva Core Range 100% boiled wool coating in orange, £45.99 per metre

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# *This month, I'm making the* **NEW LOOK 6585 JACKET**

*This month, we are shining a light on the cosy and comfortable take on the New Look 6585*

**H**ello makers,  
I am onto fall and winter sewing and wanted a comfy lounge set for the cold weather. One of the many benefits of being an ambassador is that you get to try so many different types of fabric. I had seen a couple of jackets made from this Minerva Core Range heavy fur-lined sweatshirt knit and was immediately drawn in!

*“I am really smitten with this fabric and so happy I decided to try it”*

I live in the Northeast United States, and the fall and winter is very cold. When the fabric arrived, I was super happy with my choice. It's a beautiful, heavy fabric, the colour is gorgeous, but the real star is the ultra-soft fur backing reminiscent of a Minky fabric in feel. This fabric is so soft next to your skin and very warm to wear.

I knew immediately I was going to make the Simplicity 9272 pants with this fabric. I made a pair last year in a sweater knit, the fit is perfect and they are super comfortable. In this beautiful and warm fabric, I know they will get worn a lot. The pants have an elasticated waist with two front pockets and the legs are mid-sized. The pockets are slightly bulky, but the pants came together well, even in the heavy fabric.

I was going to make a sweatshirt to match but ended up making New Look 6585, a pattern I have had in my stash for a few years. I thought the shape of this jacket would work well with the fabric. By choosing this pattern, you really get to see the beautiful fur side and I thought it offered more versatility.

This pattern has been around for a while, and is a perfect pattern for any double-sided fabric. It has raglan sleeves, side pockets and no closures. I French-seamed the entire jacket to keep everything clean inside. Both patterns are very beginner-friendly. I chose the longer version of the jacket simply for more warmth, as I am always cold.

The fabric itself has a beautiful drape and, as I mentioned earlier, is so soft. It washed and dried beautifully. It laid out well and I cut it with scissors instead of a rotary cutter. I wasn't sure how it would sew but it was easy to handle and I had no problem doing French seams. I made a 1/4 seam and then a 3/8 seam very easily. I am really smitten with this fabric and so happy I decided to try it. I think this would be wonderful for a 3/4 zip pullover, jackets and any type of cardigan.

I am so happy I made this set, it's so practical for the upcoming weather and I know it will be worn on repeat. I am surely going to miss summer and all the fun dresses!

Happy sewing,

*Lorina*



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