

Mollie
MAKES

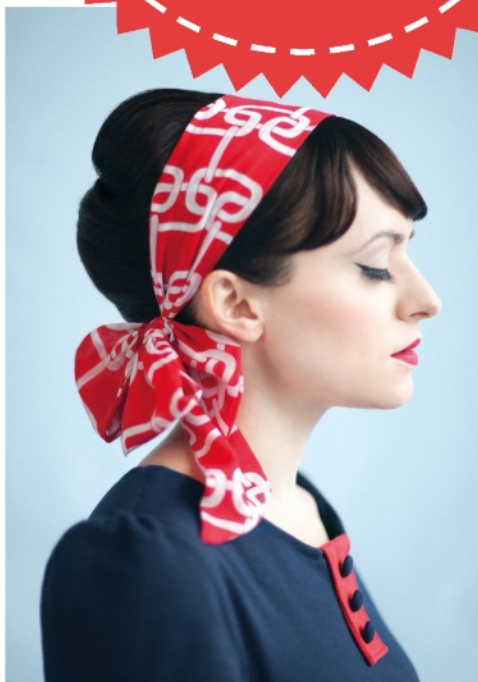
SPECIAL EDITION!

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FROM TOP
DESIGNERS





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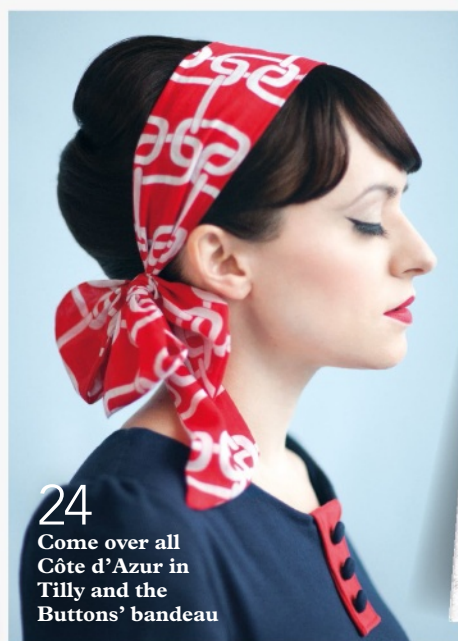
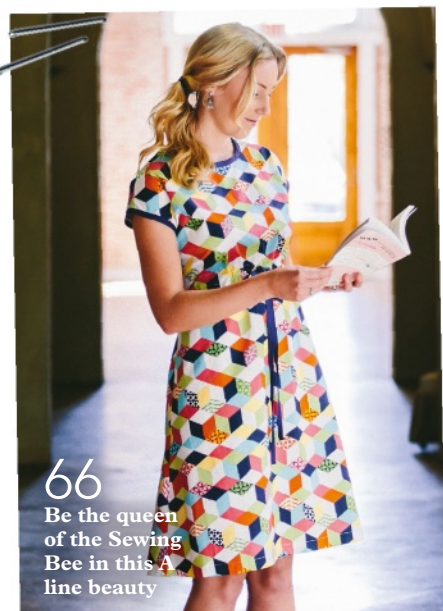
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MAKE YOUR OWN CLOTHES AND ACCESSORIES

Cover photography: *Clockwise from top left*: House shoes: **JOANNA HENDERSON** from **A YEAR IN CRAFTS** (Cico books).
Skater Dress: **TIFFANY MUMFORD & CHARLOTTE MEDLICOTT** from **THE GREAT BRITISH SEWING BEE: SEW YOUR OWN WARDROBE** (Quadrille Publishing).
Tote Bag: **CHRIS MIDDLETON** from **MAKE & DO** (Hardie Grant). Quilting Bee Dress: **NISSA BREHMER** from **JUST FOR YOU** (Search Press).
Mini knickers: **ALI ALLEN** from **THE SECRETS OF SEWING LINGERIE** (Kyle Books). Headband: **ELLIE SMITH** from **LOVE AT FIRST STITCH** (Quadrille Publishing).

Back cover photography: *Clockwise from top left*: Pyjamas: **NASSIMA ROTHACKER** from **LEARN TO SEW WITH LAUREN** by Lauren Guthrie (Octopus Publishing).
Raincoat: **KIT LEE, SHINI PARK** from **ADORN** (Hardie Grant). Zip Jacket: **JULIAN WARD** from **THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO DRESSMAKING** (David & Charles).
A Line Skirt: **CAROLINE ARBOUR** from **HOME SEWN FRENCH STYLE** (Cico Books).

SEWING

MAKE YOUR OWN CLOTHES AND ACCESSORIES



Know how

Tip-offs and good buying advice on the essential sewing techniques

14 SEWING MACHINE TOUR

A whistle-stop tour around your most important piece of sewing equipment

20 BUYING A MACHINE

Tips and advice before you part with your cash

22 FABRIC GUIDE

The lowdown on marvellous materials

28 ELASTIC KNOW-HOW

There's more to elastic than knickers...

34 BUTTON KNOW-HOW

Behind the scenes with buttons

50 ZIPS KNOW-HOW

We open up about zips

102 BIAS BINDING KNOW-HOW

How to make your own bias tape

128 SEWING GLOSSARY

A quick A-Z of stitching

Introducing

Good reads plus advice and inspiration, from the sewists in the know

18 ME AND MY MACHINE

Stitchy folk spill the beans on their beloved sewing machines

40 JAPANESE PATTERN BOOKS

Beautiful inspiration with love from Japan

57 RECOMMENDED READING

Our faves pages to flick through for DIY inspiration

72 TEA & CHAT WITH LISA COMFORT

We discover more about the woman behind the fabulous Sew Over It shops and cafés

86 DUTCH DOTS

A chinwag with the inspirational Dutch dressmakers, House of Dots

91 BEGINNER'S BOOKS

Raid the bookshelves for newbie help and advice with our round-up of the must-buys

Projects

It's here! Everything from a sassy skater dress to an asymmetric zipped jacket

17 OOH: COLOUR-POP DRESS

Transform a skirt and top into a gorgeous frock

24 BRIGITTE SCARF

Channel some 60s style with Tilly Walnes

30 DIY DRESS

An old skirt and top meet to make something new and fabulous!

36 DETACHABLE COLLAR

Get the preppy look in an instant

42 CASUAL SKIRT

A sweet lace slip to dress up or down

46 A-LINE SKIRT

Whip up this simple skirt for quick fix of timeless French chic

52 JEANS-STYLE SKIRT

A can-do skirt to give you can-do attitude

60 PYJAMA SHORTS

A pretty lazy project for cosy lie-ins

65 OOH: DAY-DATE DRESS

A beautifully grown-up dress



84
Just add
Hasbeens for
perfection!



42
Whip up a lace
skirt from our
Japanese pattern

- 66 QUILT-PRINT DRESS**
Colour plus geometry equals simple style
- 78 SKATER DRESS**
From The Sewing Bee's Tessa Eveleigh
- 94 ZIPPED JACKET**
Think different with Wendy Ward's jacket
- 99 OOH: NEWSBOY CAP**
Flat caps are back! Read all about it...
- 104 SEE-THRU RAINCOAT**
A pretty project for a rainy day
- 108 EVERYDAY TOTE BAG**
Stitch and go with Beci Orpin's easy accessory
- 113 OOH: ORIGAMI BAG**
Lola Nova takes inspiration from paper folding for her chambray market bag
- 114 MINI BLOSSOM KNICKERS**
Whip up the cutest pair of undies imaginable
- 119 OOH: OMBRE KIMONO**
A dip-dyed fabric wraparound for laid-back Sunday lounging
- 122 SOFTLY SLIPPERS**
A pair of cosy shoes to keep your toes toasty
- 127 OOH: DIY WARDROBE**
Add glossy-magazine glamour to your boudoir with this DIY fashion rail

Our fave patterns

The hot list of the best indie designer's patterns out there. Sewalicious!

- 38 FAVOURITE TOPS**
A selection of smart, sassy and stylish shirts and tops and blouses
- 58 FAVOURITE SKIRTS**
Get wrapped in this selection of pretties
- 84 FAVOURITE DRESSES**
Fantastic frocks to make your day
- 92 FAVOURITE TROUSERS**
Tomboys rejoice – here's our pick of the best trews in town
- 100 FAVOURITE JACKETS**
Winter wrap-ups to warm the heart
- 120 FAVOURITE LINGERIE**
Ooh-la-la what a cutie – a fine selection of undies and nightwear to make

DESIGNER MAKERS

Mollie Makes Sewing is packed with fabulous projects from the top indie-pattern designers & teachers



24 TILLY WALNES

Is the founder of Tilly and the Buttons, and the author of *Love at First Stitch*. She's passionate about teaching sewing skills at her shop-based workshops and online



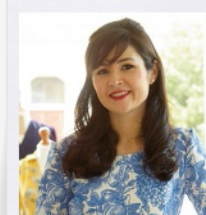
60 LAUREN GUTHRIE

A finalist on BBC 2's Great British Sewing Bee, she runs a shop, sewing workshops and blog. Her book *Learn to Sew with Lauren* is out now



94 WENDY WARD

Former fashion designer Wendy teaches dressmaking and pattern cutting. We love her new book *Beginner's Guide to Dressmaking*



72 LISA COMFORT

After graduating from London College of Fashion Lisa worked for Bruce Oldfield and Phillipa Lepley. The successful seamstress has just opened her second shop and cafe

Contributors



The Great British Sewing Bee

May Martin and Patrick Grant (we prefer sans beard) are judges on *Mollie Makes'* fave tv show.

Tessa Eveleigh is the designer of the projects in the book from the second series, *The Great British Sewing Bee*, *Sew Your Own Wardrobe*.
Step out in Tessa's Audrey dress on page 78.

www.quadrille.co.uk



Beci Orpin

Born in the 70s to hippy parents who spent most of their time travelling around in their campervan, Beci's carefree childhood opened her mind to the creative side of life. She's an all-round creator whose hands are never still.
Make Beci's patchwork tote bag on page 108.

www.beciorpin.com



Caroline Fairbanks-Critchfield

Caroline is a mum of four based in Florida. An author and top blogger, she comes from a family of creatives and computer geeks, and started her blog *SewCanShe* to give makers something fun to sew every day.
Make Caroline's quilt-print dress on page 66.

www.sewcanse.com



Beth Huntington

Beth, aka the Renegade Seamstress, is passionate about transforming and reviving clothing to create new pieces. While a typical day involves teaching, Beth also loves to write and is the author of the *Refashion Handbook*.
DIY Beth's s from a top and skirt on page 30.

www.chicdevelopments.wordpress.com



Shea Henderson

A true queen of sewing, ex-maths teacher Shea loves to bring beautiful geometry to her designs. She owns her own pattern company, Empty Bobbin Sewing Studio, and has also authored *School of Sewing* to inspire other sewers.
Buy a sewing machine with her help, on page 20.

www.emptybobbinsewing.com



House of Dots

Dynamic duo Marielle and Hester opened the doors of the House of Dots in 2009, bringing happiness to many in the shape of beautiful made vintage dresses. Detail, good fit, beautiful fabric and the perfect length are their buzz words.
Learn about their success story on page 86.

www.houseofdots.nl

Other contributors

Alice Blackledge, Jen Gardner, Jo Gulliver, Sarah Montrose, Kerry Moyle, Caroline Rowland, Davina Rungasamy, Helen Self and Philip Sowels

SEWING

MAKE YOUR OWN CLOTHES AND ACCESSORIES

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INDIE SPIRIT



Welcome to *Mollie Makes Sewing*. Join us as we celebrate the vast sewing and pattern-making talent out there. I love the fact that so many creative sewists are now connected via blogs, Instagram and Pinterest boards, tv shows and inspiring new books. *Mollie Makes Sewing* is packed with wardrobe staples to make, plus we've rounded up the very best indie patterns out there too. It's never been a better time to become a #sewcialist...

Jane

Jane Toft, Guest Editor
www.twitter.com/janetoft



Colette Patterns are on our favourites list every time. Founder Sarai Mitnick makes sure her patterns flatter a wide range of body types. Her eye for a beautifully styled shot and gorgeous fabric choices don't go amiss either!
www.colettepatterns.com

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Happy NEW YEAR!

NEW YEAR LACE CAPE PAGE 36

EASY KNIT POM SCARF PAGE 96

MAKE IT! JEWEL-KNIT KITSCH TURBANS FAIRY LIGHT FOLKLOP INSPIRED HEADBANDS GINGERBREAD HOUSE DOORS BOHO PATCHWORK POUFFES BOW TIES FOR D 5 NEW ADI

MAKE IT! CROCHET! GRANNY SQUARE ISSUE CHEVRON KNIT DIY CUSHION TRAINER UPDATES STITCHED SKITTLE GAME TURN A JUMPER INTO A SKIRT FRINGED WALL HANGING 5 WAYS WITH STONES

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youtube.com/user/MollieMakes

INTRODUCING...



THE LATEST IN SEWALICIOUS GOODNESS - HANDPICKED JUST FOR YOU



Combining the French flare for fashion with beautifully styled photos, **Vanessa Pouzet is definitely on our hot list.** From exquisite designs for little ones to sassy stylish designs for grown up girls, her patterns are an inspiration. All are available as PDF downloads. If your French is a little rusty she even has a selection in English. Turn to page 100 to see her gorgeous 'Trendy' cape pattern.

www.vanessapouzet.com



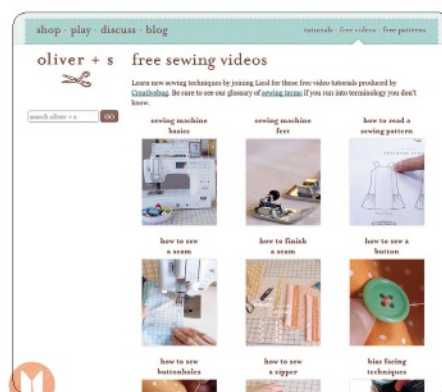
TOP READ

Gertie Sew's

We're long-time fans of Gertie, aka Gretchen Hirsch and her take on the 1950s 'American Look'. Her second book *Gertie Sew's Vintage Casual* includes 10 paper patterns ranging from skirts and dresses to trousers, jackets and tops. With an emphasis on vintage-style construction it's a winner. www.abramsandchronicle.co.uk www.blogforbettersewing.com



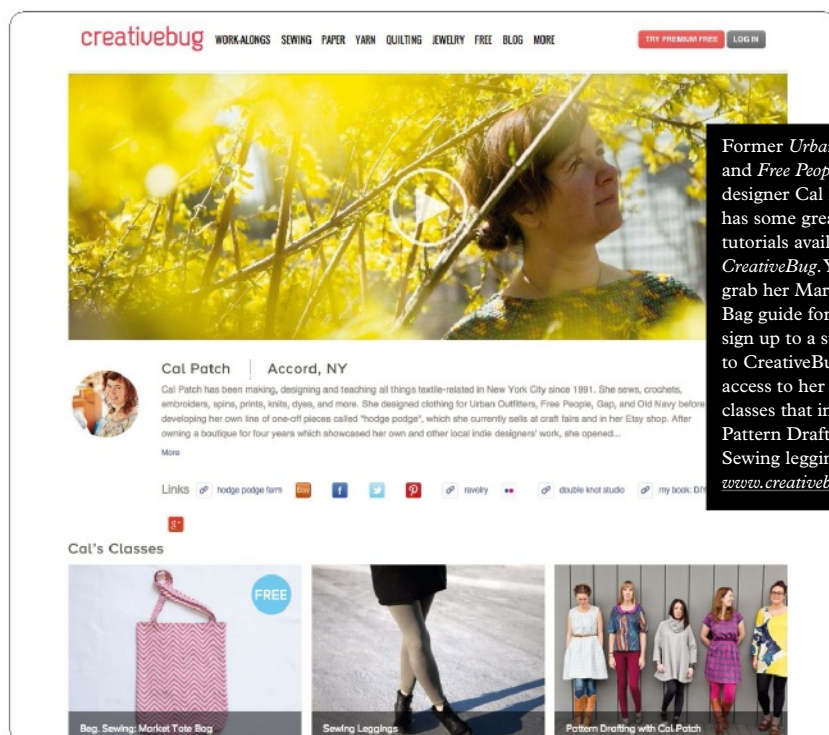
Following the success of her *Sew Over It* sewing cafe/workshop, Lisa Comfort has opened a new shop in Islington, London. Read our Q&A with Lisa on page 72.



The Purl Bee blog from Purl Soho in New York is a treasure trove of sewing know-how, including free video tutorials. Drafting Japanese Sewing Patterns is a particular favourite. www.purlbee.com www.purlsoho.com



From the talented Sarai Mitnick and her team at Colette comes an exciting new digital magazine! Free to view, but subscribers get 2 free patterns each month. premium.seamworkmag.com



Former *Urban Outfitters* and *Free People* designer Cal Patch, has some great video tutorials available via *CreativeBug*. You can grab her Market Tote Bag guide for free and sign up to a subscription to *CreativeBug* to gain access to her other classes that include Pattern Drafting and Sewing leggings. www.creativebug.com



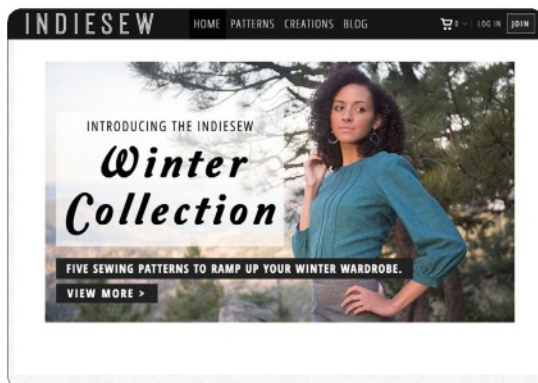
PHOTOGRAPH: MATT AUSTIN

➞ In the beautiful cobbledstoned courtyard of Lyme Regis Town Mill, in Dorset, Caroline Smith has created Sew La Di Da Vintage. A workshop and creative HQ, where she designs and teaches how to create 'vintage' patterns cut to modern sizes. Also available to buy online, we're in love with the swirly 1950s-inspired Sweetheart pattern (pictured). www.sewladidavintage.com

WEBSITE TO WATCH

Indiesew

Combine Allie Olson, an advocate for independent sewists, with coding whizz Steve Herschleb and you get Indiesew. "Indiesew strives to provide the highest quality sewing patterns created by independent designers to sewing enthusiasts in a manner that fosters creativity and connection among the online sewing community," says Allie. We're all for that! www.indiesew.com



FOR THE BOYS

Thread Theory

Patterns for the men in our life can be a little, er, dull. Step up Morgan (a girl!) and Matt from Vancouver Island, BC, Canada. Thread Theory patterns are designed by Morgan, drafted by Suncoast Customs, and made into PDF patterns by Matthew. Their blog is also host to sew-alongs and tutorials. www.threadtheory.ca

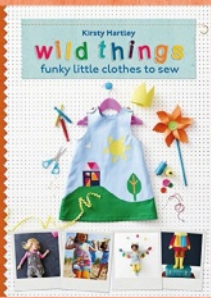


From the 2014 Alpine Collection comes the Finlayson sweater (top) and rugged Jutland trousers.

PHOTOGRAPHS: THREAD THEORY DESIGNS, MATTHEW MEREDITH



A stunning collection of PDF patterns available in French (and a limited number in English), *Republique de Chiffon* is packed full of must-have designs. www.republiqueduchiffon.com



COMING SOON

Wild Things – Funky Little Clothes To Sew features unique clothes for children. Author Kirsty Hartley is a fashion lecturer at Manchester University, and founder of kid's clothing range Wild Things: Funky Little Dresses. (Check out her exclusive dress and Davy Crockett hat designs for *Mollie Makes* in issue 25). Published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson in April 2015. Hardback, £20 and eBook format £10.99 www.orionbooks.co.uk www.wildthingsdresses.com



PHOTOGRAPH: GUILLAUME GILBERT. WWW.GUILLAUMEILBERT.COM



Leaving a career in interior design, Montreal-based designer Heather Lou founded Closet Case Patterns in 2013. Her *Ginger Skinny Jean* Pattern is a figure-flattering triumph. www.store.closetcasefiles.com

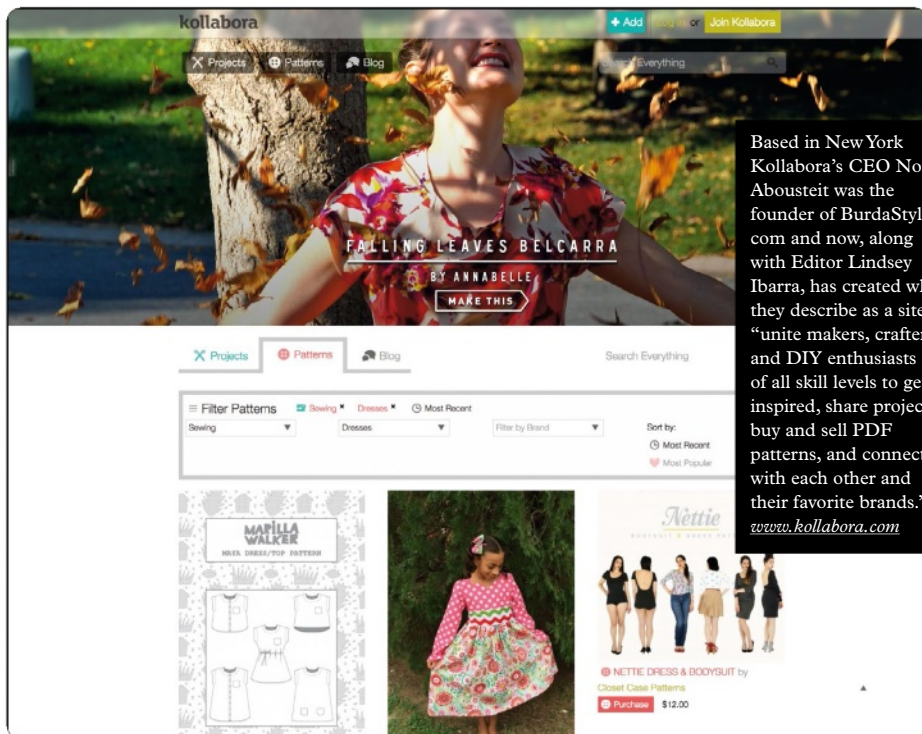
Welcome to the sewcialists

A *sewcialist* is a person who enjoys sewing and uses social media to engage with others who also enjoy sewing. Sewcialists are an online community. We sew, we love to talk about sewing on social media, we are sewcialists. You may very well be a sewcialist without knowing it, and already be part of our community.

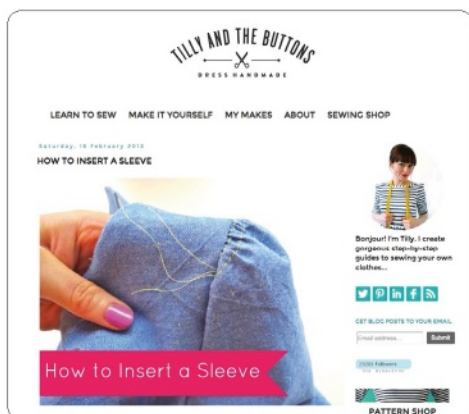



Sewcialist manifesto

Use #Sewcialist and become part of a global community who love to talk sewing on social media. sewcialists.org Try avid #sewcialist Joost de Cock's interesting new website MakeMyPattern. beta.makemypattern.com



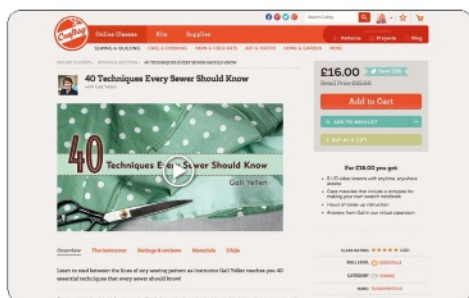
Based in New York Kollabora's CEO Nora Abousteit was the founder of BurdaStyle.com and now, along with Editor Lindsey Ibarra, has created what they describe as a site to "unite makers, crafters, and DIY enthusiasts of all skill levels to get inspired, share projects, buy and sell PDF patterns, and connect with each other and their favorite brands." www.kollabora.com



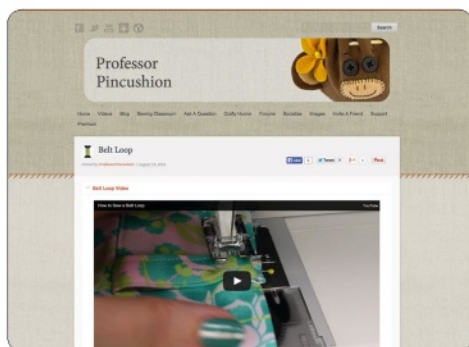
www.tillyandthebuttons.com



www.burdastyle.com



www.craftsy.com



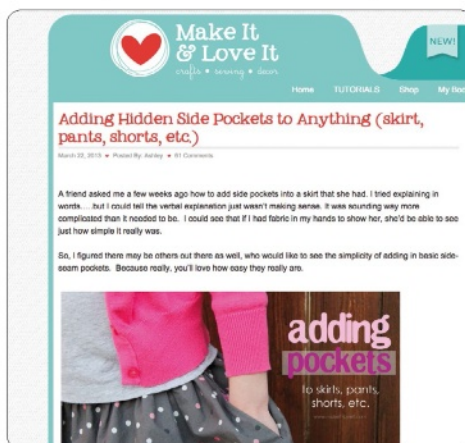
www.professorpincushion.com

BACK TO SEWING SCHOOL

There is nothing to compare with attending a workshop run by a dressmaking expert, but if that isn't possible there are plenty of great sewing and dressmaking tutorials available online. Plus, most indie pattern designers will run 'sewalongs' via their blogs to help beginners with sewing their latest pattern. Check out our round-up of the best tutorials.



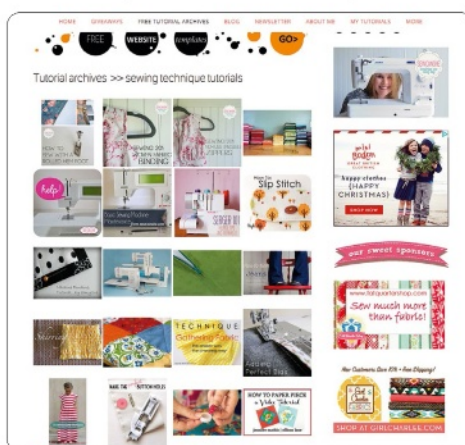
www.lauraaftermidnight.com



www.makeit-loveit.com



www.sewmamasew.com



www.sewcanshe.com



DESIGNER FOCUS

Chinelo Bally

She's the girl with zero fabric fear. She doesn't need a pattern, and you leave her with an old tee she'll refashion it into something jaw-droppingly beautiful. Yes, it's Chinelo Bally, the freehand cutter from Great British Sewing Bee whose garment reveals were easily the best thing about the tv programme! Chinelo – a finalist in the BBC's Great British Sewing Bee 2014 – has joined up with Create and Craft tv to bring us simple tips, fun ideas and a unique approach that will inspire you to get creative with your sewing. The informative video tutorials offer an insight into Chinelo's distinctive approach to pattern-free dressmaking. From videos on how to insert a zip and creating buttonholes, to choosing fabrics and creating your own embellishments, Chinelo promises that we can all achieve spectacular results! www.createandcraft.tv/chinelo

Read our Q&A with Chinelo on the Mollie Makes blog. www.molliemakes.com

Catch up with Chinelo on her own website chinelobally.com

Your new BEST FRIEND

Settle down at your sewing table and enjoy a tête à tête with your gadget – you'll soon be on first name terms!

Sewing by hand can be wonderfully relaxing, but if you're in a hurry to get your latest knock-out frock finished in time for the party you can't beat a nifty piece of machinery. Whether you're a complete sewing newbie or a relative beginner who could do with a swift refresher, here's our top-to-bottom guide to help you find your way around your work horse. We reckon you'll be running up fab projects in no time! If you're keen to treat yourself to a new machine, turn to page 18 for the tried-and-tested choices of our sewists.

NEEDLE

A sewing machine needle moves in and out of the fabric without going all the way through as it would in hand sewing. Most machines come with a needle already in place, but your manual will show how to swap it for a different one. Standard needles are typically size 75 or 80 (UK sizing). For tougher jobs, such as sewing denim or very heavy curtains, go for a larger number – 110 or 120. When sewing a fine fabric such as organza or a sheer net curtain, use a fine size 60. When you buy your fabric, it's worth asking which needle is best for the job.

FOOT

This is the metal attachment that sits beneath your needle and holds your fabric in place. There's a lever to move it up and down. Raise it up when positioning your fabric and move it back down when sewing. The basic presser foot is the one you'll use most, though there are dozens of speciality feet for everything from quilting to attaching zips and creating buttonholes.

BOBBIN

This small plastic or metal spool sits in a special housing underneath the sewing area, below the foot and needle. Check the manual for your machine to find out exactly how to load your bobbin. Once loaded, the bobbin thread and the top thread feeds meet to form each stitch.



THREAD FEED

Your spool of thread sits at the top of the machine. It threads through a series of numbered channels and loops before it reaches the needle. This maintains an even thread tension and avoids tangles. Your machine will have a numbered dial that can be raised or lowered to adjust the tension as your fabric requires.

STITCH SELECTOR

Dials, switches, knobs... the method used to change the stitch type varies between machines, but the principle is the same. For most projects, all you'll need are the basic straight stitch and zig-zag. Once you're more experienced, you can try some of the more decorative stitches your machine has to offer.

STITCH WIDTH

Sometimes this function is built in, so the machine automatically adjusts itself as you change the stitch type. If your machine has a dial, leave the width at 0 for straight stitches because the needle doesn't need to move from side to side. For all other stitches, adjust the width as needed, practising on a scrap of fabric first.

HAND WHEEL

Use the hand wheel to move the needle up and down manually. It's essential for controlling the sewing line in tight spots and corners. To avoid your thread getting caught or tangled, be sure to always turn the wheel towards you. When winding bobbins, you'll need to disengage the needle action by pulling out the hand wheel. Consult your manual to learn exactly how to do this on your machine.

STITCH LENGTH

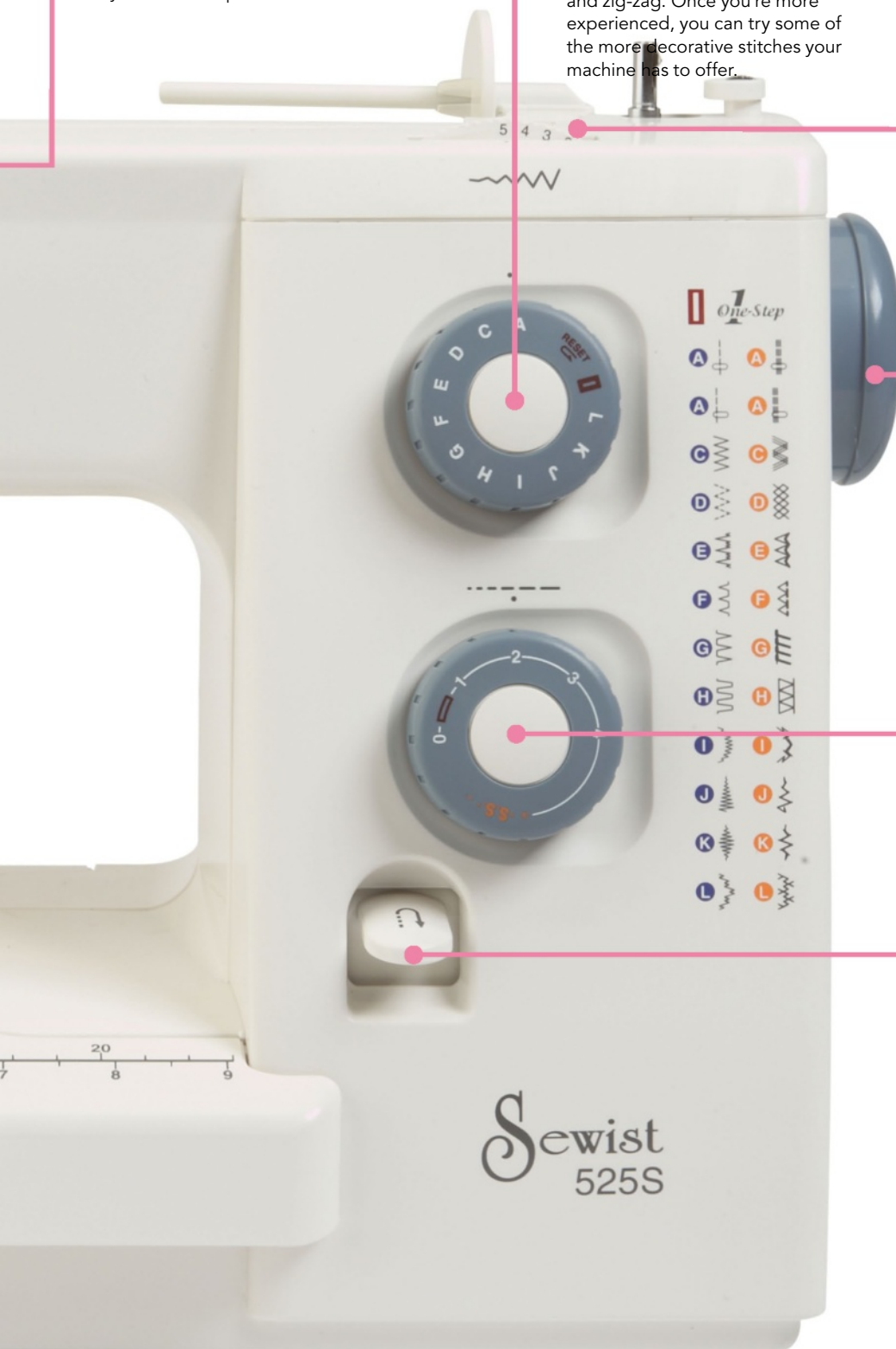
A dial or knob will enable you to change the length of your stitches, whether they're simple straight stitches, zig-zags or any other pattern. A long stitch length is useful for creating quick tacking lines. For regular sewing, aim for a length of around 2 or 2.5cm, which will be strong enough for most ordinary seams.

REVERSE STITCHING

Most machines have a button or switch that enables you to sew in the reverse direction. Even older machines should have a method for reverse stitching. It's the best technique to start and finish off your sewing – all you need to do is stitch forwards and backwards for a few centimetres to secure your threads.

FOOT PEDAL

The foot pedal is connected to the machine and sits on the floor. The pedal is pressure-sensitive, so gentle pressure results in slow stitching, while pressing harder will run the motor faster. Some machines also have a separate speed control, which gives you even more command over your pace.





HOW TO... MACHINE STITCH

01 Raise the presser foot and slide the fabric under it where you want to start sewing. Your machine probably has an **indicator guide** on the plate, giving measuring guides for seam allowances. Line up the fabric edge with this guide.

02 As you **control the speed** of your sewing with the foot pedal, feed the fabric under the presser foot. If you find that you need to support the fabric with a little more tension, hold it in front of, and behind, the foot and ease it gently through.

03 It's easy to turn a corner without finishing your thread. Make sure the needle is down in the fabric at the point where you need to turn, then raise the foot and spin the fabric round. Lower the foot and carry on sewing.

04 Once your stitching line is done, finish securely by making a few stitches back and forth over your line. With the needle in the up position, raise the presser foot and pull out your fabric. The threads will still be attached, so snip these off.

Get the best from your sewing machine

01 Use the same colour of thread in the top and bottom spools for most of your sewing – only use different colours when you're creating decorative stitching.

02 Use the same type of thread in the top and bottom spools, as you'll find you get a more even tension.

03 Always ensure your fabric is flat and smooth, as you will get neater stitching. Pressing all of your fabric before you start sewing is a good rule to work by.

04 Always work a few stitches on a spare scrap of the same fabric you will be using before you begin, to make sure the tension is correct. Different thread and fabric need different tensions. If the

stitches are loopy or overly tight then you need to change the tension so that the top and bottom thread loop together evenly. Read your machine manual to see how to change the tension as each machine differs.

05 The most important thing about machine stitching is keeping your stitching straight. Machines come with marked measure lines on the needle plate – keep the edge of your fabric running along it as you stitch to guarantee a straight line. Stitch very slowly to start with and increase your speed as you gain confidence.

06 If you are stitching curves, stitch very slowly and gradually ease the fabric round using both hands so you stitch a neat curved line.

07 Don't forget to clean your machine regularly as fluff gets caught under the teeth and this will stop your machine working smoothly. Your manual will show you how to remove the needle plate and get all the fluff out.

08 Get your sewing machine serviced regularly or if you don't feel it stitching the same as usual – it will make a great deal of difference! Look online to find your nearest machine service or repair shop, or ask at a fabric shop for recommendations.

09 Keep your sewing machine covered up when you're not using it to keep the dust out, and protect it from accidents. With your new-found skills you could even make your own pretty cover!

10 Have a look at all the different stitches your machine can do and read your manual, which will tell you what to do with them. Mostly, you will only use the straight stitch for seams and hems, but the zig-zag stitch can be just as useful – it's brilliant for working along the edge of a fabric to stop it from fraying. You can alter the length and the width of the zig-zag using your machine dials, so adjust it to suit your fabric weight. The zig-zag stitch can also be used for decoration so have a practice to see which different effects you like.

11 Change your needle regularly – they become blunt with use, and your machine won't stitch as well. Make sure you buy the correct needles for your machine.

Ooh

I COULD DO THAT...

Peach
melba

Colour pop til you drop in this stunning circle dress. The zingly brights will lift the spirit on dark, winter days, underneath a woollen coat, while we'd certainly bring this away with us on a sunny trip with the girls come spring time. It's a high-to-low hem, and the full skirt means you'll need plenty of fabric. But it'll be worth it for all that twirling you're bound to do once it's finished. Swit-swoo!

melissaesplin.com



ME AND MY SEWING MACHINE

We asked our fave stichy peeps to give us the lowdown on the most important gadget in their crafty world – and their buying tips



01 ZEENA SHAH

I was given my Janome 419S for my 14th birthday and it's been going strong ever since. I'd recommend a machine that has metal parts; don't be tempted by cheap deals as the machines are often filled with plastic components that don't last as long as metal ones. www.zeenashah.com



07 JAZZ DOMINO HOLLY

I love my itty bitty John Lewis Mini machines! I got them for my pop-up craft club, the Handmade Hangout. They're perfect for sewing on the go and they come in a rainbow of colours. Always take a sewing machine for a test drive and shop around. www.jazzdominoholly.tumblr.com



02 KATIE ALLEN

My Janome Sewist 525S was a whim purchase after my 21st-birthday-present Singer expired. She's served me well, munching through fabric, leather and a few pins. Look for recommended brands rather than fancy functions – you won't need them. www.katiestitches.wordpress.com



08 OONA BALLOONA

My Riccar 2000 is a vintage Japanese machine. I love that I can fix him myself; I like the tinkering that comes with vintage machines. Ricky was found at a goodwill store while visiting my in-laws. I loved him too much to leave him there. www.oonaballoona.com



03 CHRISTINE LEECH

I've got a Juki HZL-E61. It's not flash but does what I need. The foot pedal took some getting used to, but I love it now. I bought the extension table that makes the needle bed bigger so it's easier to manoeuvre fabric. If there's one for your machine, buy it! www.sewyeah.co.uk



09 LISA COMFORT

I use a Bernina Activa 140 – I love how durable Berninas are. In return for working for our GCSEs, my parents said they'd take us on holiday. My big sister went to New York. A few years later, I asked for a sewing machine. And I still use it today. Who needs New York?! www.sewoverit.co.uk



04 TILLY WALNES

I recently began using a Janome 6600P, a pro machine with strong guts and smooth stitching. It does lots of whizzy things such as memorising stitch sequences. For years I used a basic Janome J3-18. It's good to start simple and upgrade later. www.tillyandthebuttons.com



10 ZOE LARKINS

My Singer Capri is a vintage, reconditioned machine that I got for my 25th birthday. It's only got straight stitch and zig-zag, but that's all I need! It weighs a ton but feels invincible. With an occasional service it will last forever. www.lovefromhetttyanddave.blogspot.co.uk



05 SARAH FIELKE

I love my Janome Memory Craft 6500 because it's easy to use, has a good walking foot, automatic thread cutter, needle down function and machine blanket stitch. It's eight years old and gets a huge workout. Don't buy a machine with a lot of features you don't need. www.sarahfielke.com



11 MELODY MILLER

I have a commercial-grade Singer, the CG590. It's like the Ford truck of sewing machines, it's a work horse – I'm pretty sure I could sew through my dining room table. You can have an amazing experience with a very affordable machine. www.melodymiller.typepad.com



06 TIF FUSSELL AKA DOTTIE ANGEL

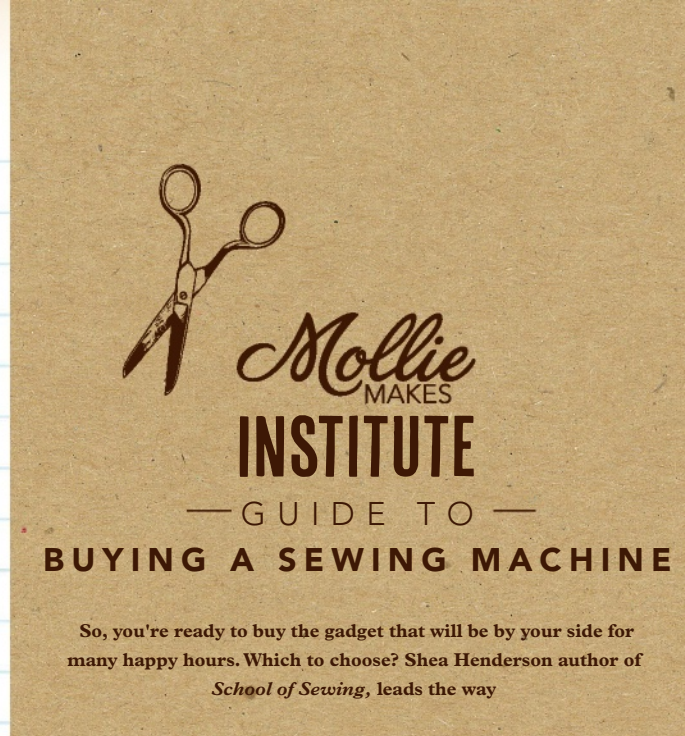
Miss Ethel is a Husqvarna Viking Emerald 116. She's a sturdy work horse. When we met over six years ago, it was love at first sight. Look for a solidly built number who does a good job of basic stitching. And give her a name so she knows you love her. www.dottieangel.blogspot.co.uk



12 LEANNE GARRITY

I use a Janome Decor Excel II 5024. It was affordable and has done the job for a few years – it does everything I need. I recommend not getting the cheapest machine, but you don't need to go way over budget to get something decent. www.chichideehandmade.blogspot.co.uk





WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Shopping for a machine can be overwhelming. But it certainly doesn't have to be that way. At its core, sewing is using thread and a needle to sew fabric together using a straight line. That is really all you need.

However, we live in a world full of options. And, boy, do we love options! Based on my own experience and that of the women in the *School of Sewing*, I have classified features as 'must-have,' 'nice-to-have,' and 'bonus'. Like finding the right college or house (or even spouse!), you'll know in your gut it's the right one when you find it.

MUST-HAVE FEATURES

A great stitch

A solid straight stitch with excellent thread tension is essential.

A sturdy base

Does the machine bounce or move around when you sew? If you want perfectly straight stitches, you need a machine with a heavy base.

Adjustable needle positions

Being able to adjust the needle from the center to the left or right is extremely useful for topstitching, sewing zippers, or achieving a specific seam allowance.

A free arm

Removing part of the base allows you to sew more easily in tighter spaces, like shirt sleeves or around the tops of tote bags.

NICE-TO-HAVE FEATURES

Needle up /down

When this feature is engaged, the needle remains down when you stop sewing. This means that when you pivot at a corner, a curve, or stop to reposition your hands, the fabric won't shift and the stitches will stay perfectly in line.

Drop-in bobbin

I prefer these for a beginner simply for ease of use in winding and inserting and for the ability to easily see how much thread is left on the bobbin.

One-step buttonhole

Making a buttonhole in one step is far easier and faster than in a traditional four step method. Select the right setting, lower your presser foot, and instantly sew a buttonhole.

Bright light

Unless you'll be sewing only on sunny

days near big windows, you'll want a bright light to illuminate the needle/presser foot area.

AWESOME BONUS FEATURES

Automatic thread cutter

Push a button and the machine trims the top and bottom thread close to your fabric.

Adjustable speed control

Controlling your speed by pressing less on the foot pedal is fine, but to really control the speed of your sewing, an adjustable slider is very useful. I use mine each time I sew a curve. This option is especially helpful if a child will be using your machine..

Needle threader

Rather than squint and aim for the needle hole, you can use this mechanism to pull the thread through the hole. It's a feature I use each time I thread my needle.

MACHINE-SPECIFIC REVIEWS

There are numerous places to look for user reviews. Blog posts can be limited and hard to find, and Amazon.com does not sell every model from every manufacturer. I recommend the machine review section of PatternReview.com. Users post everything from price paid to pros and cons of specific machines. This is the place to go if you want real feedback from people about specific models. Keep in mind, though, that a review from another person should not take the place of a test drive on the machine yourself.





Metal parts

Metal is simply more sturdy than plastic. Look for a machine with as many parts and pieces made from metal as possible. Keep in mind that many machines will have metal parts inside, but will be covered in a plastic housing. If you're unsure, ask the dealer.

WHERE TO BUY

New, used and borrowed

The sewing machines of today are not what they were when your grandmother learned to sew, or even when your mother learned, which can be both good and bad. You'll see more plastic parts, but you'll also see more options and features. There isn't one magical machine that has every feature for an amazing low price. But hunting is half the fun, right?

FROM A LOCAL DEALER

Buying from a local dealer is my number-one recommendation. They know their machines inside and out and offer a full line of machines from basic to fancy computerized machines, sergers, and embroidery machines. Different dealers specialize in specific brands, so ask around and search manufacturer websites for dealers in your area.

Buying a model on the lower end of the price range from a dealer might mean you can upgrade or use the same specialty attachments and accessories with a nicer machine from the same manufacturer down the road. Plus, many dealers offer free classes with the purchase of a machine or maintenance deals for the first year. Dealers also often offer pre-owned or trade-in

machines for sale, which may be a great happy medium for you.

ONLINE

If you don't have a local dealer for the machine you want, or if you don't have a local dealer at all, buying online may be the answer. However, if something goes wrong, you don't have a store to rely on for maintenance or classes, and some manufacturers do not sell their machines online or limit the models that are offered.

USED OR HAND-ME-DOWN

Buying used can be tricky. There are many people who buy expensive machines, only to find that sewing is not for them. These machines can be a great buy, but you should proceed with caution. If a machine has not been used in years (or even months) you have no guarantee that it really is in great working condition.

Hand-me-down machines or borrowing from someone can be a nice low-commitment option. If the machine has been gathering dust, I recommend having a sewing machine technician examine it before you buy or start sewing. If you can find a solid new-to-you machine that has been serviced and used regularly, you've got a winner!

SOME PARTING ADVICE

Avoid the basic models offered in chain stores. A £50 machine sounds like a fabulous idea, but if you experience problems, there is no store to back you with help, service, and classes. Set a budget that you are comfortable with. It can be very easy to want more and more machine!



SHEA HENDERSON

Once upon a time, I was a maths teacher. Today, I produce sewing patterns under the name Empty Bobbin Sewing Studio. Even with the fun I was having with my kids and business, I missed teaching and the personal interactions that come along with it. I



missed the planning, the advice giving and the encouraging. *School of Sewing* was the perfect storm: the desire and excitement from both teacher and student, a sewing curriculum based on achievable and usable projects, and the commitment to working together for a year. Each time one of my students learned a new sewing trick and reacted with wide eyes and excitement, my energy was renewed and my heart was full. That excitement and potential is what I wish for you as you work through my book. Get your copy, published by Lucky Spool, from www.searchpress.com for £14.99 (RRP £16.99) with free UK P&P.

THE TEST DRIVE

Once you find a machine you want to buy, check out the following:

- What accessories and presser feet come with the machine?
- Watch it sew a buttonhole. Does the buttonhole look nice when finished?
- What if you want to upgrade in the future? Is there a trade-in program? Can you use your presser feet on that upgrade machine, too?
- How many layers can it sew? Try sewing on a variety of fabrics, including very thick layers like denim and home decor fabrics. You may need to change the needle for this part of the test. Examine both the topstitches and those on the underside of the project. Can it handle sewing four or six layers of fabric?
- How much noise does it make while sewing?
- Are classes and maintenance included with the purchase?
- Be sure you are the one who is sitting at the machine and sewing during any test drive, rather than the salesperson.



Mollie
MAKES

INSTITUTE

— GUIDE TO —

FABULOUS FABRICS

So, you've fallen in love with heaps of gorgeous fabrics. Now read our handy guide to pairing a winning fabric with all your projects, every time

WOVEN FABRICS

COTTON

Cotton is one of the world's most popular woven fabrics. It's strong, easy to work with and can be washed at high temperatures. However, it creases easily, so do make sure you press cotton fabric regularly as you cut and stitch it.

Most patchwork fabrics are made from 100% cotton, which is ideal as you can buy a variety of patterns and colours and join them together without any problems, as they are all the same weight. Polyester cotton works in the same way, and has the advantage that it will crease less, but it doesn't have the crisp feel of pure cotton.

LINEN

Linen, woven from flax fibres, is even stronger than cotton, although it also has a higher tendency to crease. Its natural appearance makes it ideal for that homespun look, but again, remember to press it regularly as you

are working if you don't want to end up with a project that's more bedraggled than vintage!

Linen is also perfect for sewing into jackets and trousers as when washed and pressed it is lovely and crisp.

HEAVIER WEIGHT FABRICS

Home furnishing fabrics, canvas, cotton drill, denim and corduroy (including needlecord) are great choices for projects that need a bit more strength, such as bag and aprons. They will also add more structure to the finished projects so will look better as well.

Some soft furnishing fabrics have the added bonus of a protective stain-resistant finish, making them ideal for sewing seat pads or outdoor tablecloths.

DELICATE FABRICS

Silk, cotton lawn and some vintage fabrics need a little more extra-special care as they are much finer to work with. Use these for lingerie, camisole tops,

summer dresses and accessories such as headbands and headscarves.

OTHER FABRICS

FELT AND FLEECE

Felt is created by condensing woollen fibres, either using a machine or by hand in soapy water. Fleece is also known as polar fleece and has a combed nap which makes it warm and cosy. Always iron fleece with a thin cloth on top of it to prevent the fleece from being flattened too much.

These fleece fabrics are very popular with beginners because they are fray-resistant, don't stretch and can easily be cut to any shape.

KNIT FABRIC

Also known as jersey, these fabrics have a knitted structure, though they are made by machine with a very fine thread. Knit fabric has lots of drape and stretch, and is often used for clothing. You'll need to use a special ball point needle for machine sewing, and as it frays easily, it's generally best to overlock the edges, too.

NET AND LACE

Net and lace are made by knotting together lengths of thread to create a pattern. These materials are often used as decoration, and are best cut with small, sharp sewing scissors for a neat finish. They can be used for appliqué or chosen to edge or decorate an item. Check what your fabric is made from before you wash it, in case of shrinkage.

INTERFACING

Interfacing gives an extra layer of support to your material. Choose one that's slightly lighter than your main

SIDE TO SIDE

Woven fabrics are made from two groups of threads: a warp (the threads that run lengthwise) and a weft (the threads that run widthwise). The fabric may be plain or patterned, according to the colour and sequence of warp and weft yarns used.

It will also have a border around the edge called a selvedge, which is more tightly woven to prevent the fabric from unravelling before use. If you are making a project that is going to be used a lot then choose a fabric that can be easily washed and is colourfast.



FABRIC WIDTHS

Fabrics are sold in standard widths, which vary according to their purpose. Patchwork, dressmakers' or cotton cloth usually comes in standard widths of 90cm (36in) or 115cm (45in). Some manufacturers use metric units and some use imperial, so a fabric measuring 36in will be a bit wider than 90cm. A fat quarter is a quarter of a yard of fabric (half a yard of fabric cut in half across the length). This gives you a piece of fabric about 45.5 x 56cm or 18 x 22in. Soft furnishing fabric is often 137cm (54in) wide and is useful for bags and aprons as it's thicker and stronger.

fabric, and if you're using a fusible (iron-on) option then always test it on a scrap first.

Interfacing is available in different weights and as an iron-on or sew-in version. With fusible interfacing, press the shiny side to the wrong side of your fabric. Tack sew-in interfacing to the wrong side of the fabric pieces around the edges. Medium interfacing is soft and you should use this to add a little body to your finished item. Firm interfacing is stiffer and will add more definition and structure.

INTERLINING AND WADDING

Curtain interlining is a more flexible alternative to interfacing and will give projects such as bags and baskets a fuller look without being too stiff. Tack this to the wrong side of your main fabric then work with it in the usual way. It's ideal for putting between the main fabric and lining on the base of a bag.

Wadding comes in many different weights and materials and is probably best known as the padding that's used between the top layer and backing on quilts. It's also good for adding shape.

TEAR-AWAY STABILIZER

This non-woven material is perfect for using to back machine embroidery as it adds body to the finished item and supports the fabric holding the stitches. After you have finished the embroidery, gently tear away the excess stabilizer.

VINTAGE FABRICS

The beauty of vintage fabrics is that they already have that worn look and will give a unique feel to your project. Buy fabric items such as table linen, curtains and old clothing from sales and cut them up to use again. Hand wash vintage fabrics before use to remove possible dirt.

Printed cottons are ideal for quilting and smaller projects.

Cotton fabric is versatile and easy to use, though it can crease easily.

KNOW YOUR NAP

Nap is the direction of the raised pile on a material such as velvet and fleece, and it makes the fabric look and feel different for different angles. If you brush 'against the nap', the fabric feels rougher.

When you cut out different pieces make sure that the nap runs in the same direction on each one. If you are sewing clothing, ensure the nap runs down the body, as that is the direction it will usually be brushed by hands when worn.

Alternatively, if the pile runs up the garment, it will give the fabric a darker, more lustrous appearance.





60's *Siren*

Work the Brigitte Bardot look with Tilly
Walnes' effortlessly cool accessory



PHOTOGRAPHS: ELLIE SMITH

HOW TO MAKE... A 60S HEADSCARF

MATERIALS

- Fabric 15 x 150cm (6 x 60in)
- Thread (to match fabric colour)
- Large sheet of paper

Nothing shouts French Riviera chic more than an elegant headscarf tied around your noggin as you sashay down the highstreet (backslash Cannes). Injecting a retro holiday vibe into your wardrobe (and a quick fix for a bad hair day), this is one classy accessory no silver screen goddess should be without. Easy to make and a great fabric stash buster, why not sew a few to match your favourite outfits – then whiz one up for your besties, they'll be so chuffed! Muah.

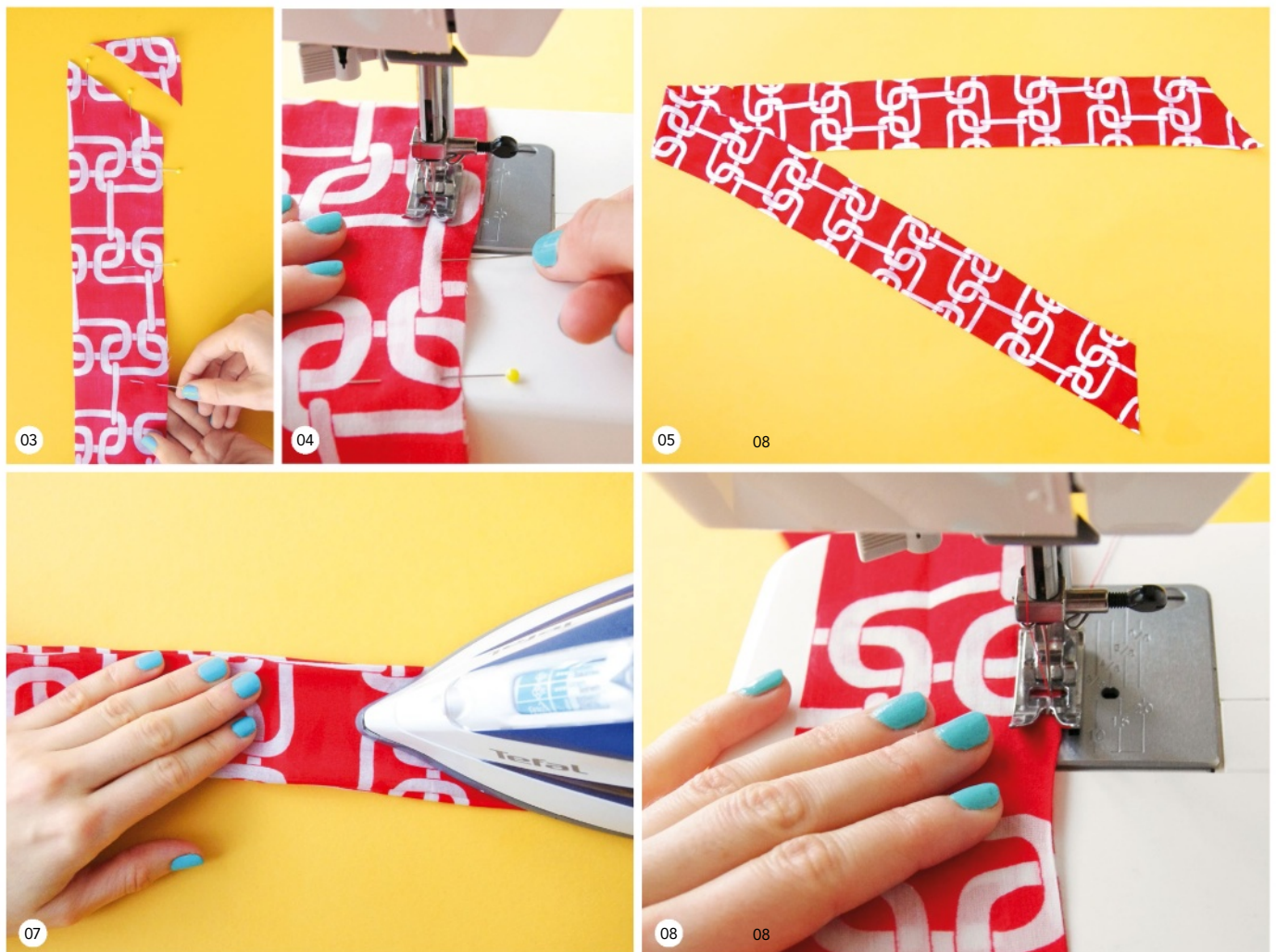
01 Make a paper pattern. Draw a rectangle onto paper, 65cm (25in)

long by 15cm (6in) wide and cut it out with paper scissors (remember, don't use your fabric scissors on paper). Fold your fabric in half widthways and **pin the paper pattern to the fabric** so that one short edge is lined up with the fold – cutting the fabric on the fold like this will result in a piece double the length of the pattern. Avoid pinning the pattern to the woven edges of the fabric (or the 'selvedges') – you don't want to use those in your scarf as they are woven slightly differently to the rest of the fabric.

02 Cut out the fabric around the paper pattern.

03 Fold the fabric piece in half lengthways. Have the side that you want showing on the outside of the scarf (the 'right side' of the fabric) on the inside of the fold. Press along the fold line. If you want **diagonal ends on your scarf**, cut them now. Pin together the raw edges. We're going to leave a gap in the stitching so we can turn the scarf right sides out later; make two small markings towards the middle of the long raw edge, about 8–10cm (3–4in) apart. Mark with a chalk pencil, washable pen or a tiny snip into the edge of the fabric.

04 Sew the scarf. Using a 1.5cm (5⁄8in) seam allowance, start sewing



from one short end, backtacking to secure the stitches. **Pivot at the corner**, and sew along the long raw edge until you reach the first marking. Backtrack to secure and trim the threads. Start sewing again from the second marking, backtacking to secure, pivoting again at the corner, sewing down the other short edge, and backtacking to secure the end. Trim the threads.

05 Trim the scarf seam allowances. Trim them down to about half their current width. **Snip diagonally across the corners**, about 3mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in) from the stitching and being careful not to cut through the

stitches. These steps will help make the seams less bulky.

06 Turn the scarf right sides out.

Turn it through the gap in the stitching, then use a pin to gently pull each corner out into a point.

07 Press the seams with your iron

to neaten them. At the gap, turn the raw edges to the inside of the scarf and press the folds.

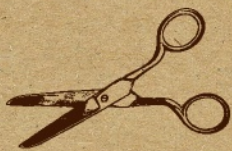
08 Sew up the gap. Sew a line of stitches close to the edge along the gap to seal it, backtacking at either end. Your scarf is ready!



Love at First Stitch

Tilly taught herself to sew after office life and now loves to inspire others to make their own clothes at www.tillyandthebuttons.com

Readers of *Mollie Makes Sewing* can buy *Love At First Stitch* by Tilly Walnes for £15 (RRP £20) with free UK P&P. Call 01256 302699 quoting code CF1. www.quadrille.co.uk



Mollie MAKES INSTITUTE

— GUIDE TO — ELASTIC

—
Create gathered effects as well as smocking and stretch by using elastic in your projects. Our guide explains how to add elastic concealed in casing, as well as stitch rows of elastic directly onto fabric
—



PHOTOGRAPH: © LOUPE IMAGES/EMMA MITCHELL

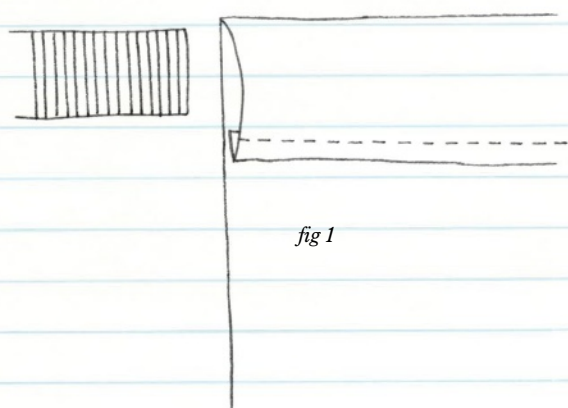


fig 1

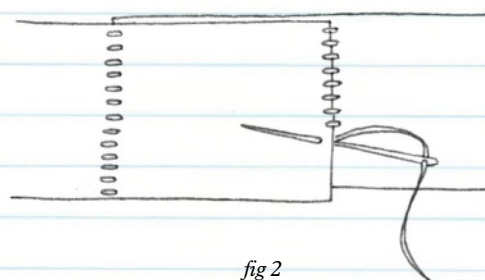


fig 2



fig 3

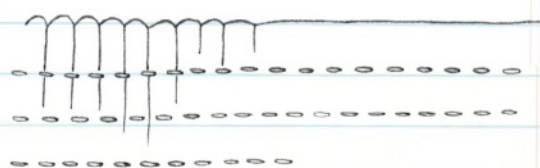


fig 4

STRETCH IT OUT

Elastic is a really useful sewing material, both for dressmaking and for household and craft projects. It allows you to give fabric fullness, and can be threaded through a hem or stitched directly to the fabric itself. Stitching with elastic in your sewing machine is known as shirring or gathering, and produces a more gathered effect.

MAKING A CASING FOR ELASTIC

If you want to sew a hem or casing for elastic to go through, then you'll need to make sure the elastic can move easily through it, or it won't gather the fabric properly.

- 1 Measure your elastic width then add 6mm for ease and twice the thickness of the elastic.
- 2 Turn the fabric over 1.5cm then over again to the width you calculated in step 1. Stitch the hem down close to the folded edge (see fig 1).

JOINING THE ENDS OF ELASTIC

When you have threaded the elastic through the casing or hem and adjusted it so it's the correct length, you *can* just knot the ends if you want. However, for some items you may find this knot looks too bulky, so you should overlap the ends and stitch them together instead – either by hand or machine (fig 2).

ATTACHING ELASTIC TO FABRIC

If you want to stitch elastic straight to your fabric rather than through a casing, divide the fabric into quarters and mark with a pin.

Now cut your elastic to size, then divide this into quarters and mark with another pin.

Match each pin on the fabric and elastic, and pin the two together in these places.

To join the elastic to the fabric use a wide, long zigzag stitch, stretching the elastic out between the markers as you sew (see fig 3).

SEWING WITH ELASTIC

Sewing with elastic is called 'gathering' if you only stitch one row. It is called 'shirring' if you stitch more than one.

First mark the line on your fabric where you want the elastic to be sewn. Make sure you use tailor's chalk or an air-erasable marker pen so the line won't show afterwards.

Use ordinary sewing thread for the top thread in your sewing machine, and shirring elastic on the bobbin. You must wind the elastic onto the bobbin by hand to make sure it is the correct tension. You need to pull the elastic slightly so it doesn't lie loosely round the bobbin but don't pull it too much or it will be overstretched. This won't take too long to do, as you'll soon get into a rhythm of pulling it to just the right tension so it winds neatly around the bobbin.

Now set your sewing machine to its longest stitch length as this will allow a longer length of elastic for each stitch, giving the fabric more stretch and pull when it's finished.

Stitch along the marked line as you would normally (going backwards at the beginning to secure the thread and elastic). Make sure the fabric remains flat as you are stitching – you may need to hold it in place as you stitch. When you come to the end of the line, reverse stitch to secure the ends of your thread and elastic.

SHIRRING

If you are stitching more than one row of elastic (shirring) then the fabric will gather after stitching the first row. Make sure you hold the fabric in front of and behind the needle to keep it flat, taking care not to overstretch it (see fig 4).

For a tightly gathered piece of fabric, stitch the rows of elastic 6mm apart, or for a looser effect, space the rows 1.5cm apart.

When you have finished stitching your rows, tighten the elastic thread by pressing it gently with a steam iron. Place a clean cloth on top of the fabric and hold the iron gently over it to allow the steam to flow through.

THREADING ELASTIC

The easiest way to thread elastic through a casing is to attach one end to a safety pin and thread this through. You can also buy threaders or bodkins. To stop the elastic coming all the way through the casing, hold it in place at the far end with a safety pin.

TOP TIPS

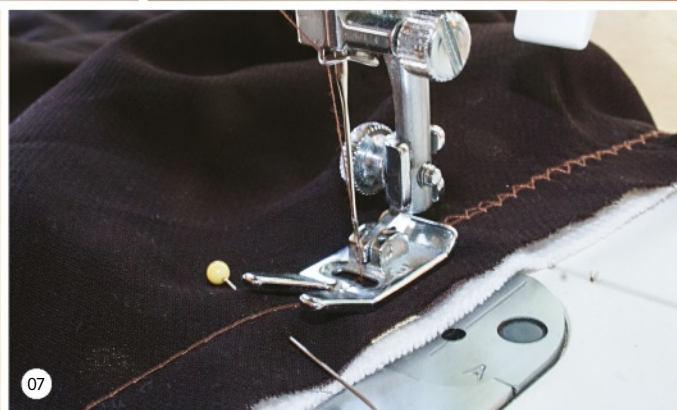
Stitching elastic needles

The best needle for stitching elastic to fabric is a stretch needle. They have rounded points that penetrate between the fabric threads rather than pierce them. The point of a stretch needle is less rounded than the point of a ballpoint needle so it works better for elastic.



NEW ADVENTURE

Combine an old skirt and top and what do you get? A unique DIY dress, says Beth Huntingdon



HOW TO MAKE... AN UPCYCLED DRESS

MATERIALS

- An old skirt
- An old top

MATERIALS

- Tape measure
- Pencil and notebook
- Basic sewing kit
- Sewing machine
- Elastic

We all have a few bits and pieces lurking at the bottom of the wardrobe – once-loved items of clothing that never see the light of day now. But here's Beth Huntington, aka the Renegade Seamstress, with a great recycled dress idea. "Originally, this skirt didn't have the most flattering silhouette," she says. "The bias cut just seemed to make it cling to all the wrong places – but somehow, I just can't resist a good polka dot."

As Marc Jacobs said, "There is never a wrong time for a polka dot." Oh, how right you are, Marc! Beth combined the polka dot skirt with a cream charity-shop knitted top. "To me, it was the perfect mix," she says. Here's her How To...

Measuring for fit

For successful refashion, you'll need to take **several measurements**. So gather up a friend you can trust, a flexible

measuring tape, a pencil, and a **sewing notebook**. The measurements I use most often are my **waist, hips, distance from waist to hips, bust, arm circumference, arm length, distance from waist to preferred hem length**, and distance from shoulder to waistline.

There are many other **measurements** you'll need if you decide to get into pattern drafting, but for now, these are the **basic measurements** you'll need.

To measure your bust, raise your arms to shoulder height and have a friend place the tape across the **widest part** of your breasts, under your arms, and around your **back** to where you started. Make sure to keep the tape level.

For your waist measurement, wrap the measuring tape around your **natural waist** (this is usually the smallest point, not necessarily where you wear your **waistband**).

To measure your hips, wrap the

measuring tape around the **largest** part of your hips.

For the distance from your waist to your hips, place the end of the measuring tape on your natural waistline, **at the side**, and measure straight down to the largest part of your hips.

For your **upper arm** circumference, measure around your bicep.

To measure your arm length, bend your arm slightly at the elbow, start at your **shoulder** (feel for the **bony point**), and measure down the outside of your arm and over the elbow to your **wristbone**.

To measure the distance from your shoulder to your waist, start at the top of your shoulder, run it down over your **bust**, and have your friend read the tape at your **waistline**.

To determine the **distance from your waist** to your **desired hem length**, start at your natural



waistline and let the tape fall straight down **your side**. Have your friend read the tape at your desired hem length. You might want to measure **several skirt lengths** at once.

Stitching your new dress

01 Measure from your **waistline** down to your desired hem length. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ in for your **seam allowance**, and mark this distance from the bottom of the skirt up, all the way across the skirt.

Cut across. If your skirt is lined, cut the lining at the same time as the **outer skirt** and make sure you keep them together.

02 Measure from your **shoulder to your waistline**. Add a $\frac{1}{2}$ in seam allowance, and mark across the bottom of your **old top**. Cut.

03 Pin the top of the skirt and **lining together**.

04 Using the **longest stitch** on your machine, baste all the way across

the **top of the skirt** and the lining.

05 **Fold your top** in half, lining up the side seams, and mark the **centre front** and centre back at the bottom. Repeat with the **skirt**.

06 Tuck your top down inside the skirt, with **right sides** together. Line up the raw edges, **matching** the side seams, centre fronts, and centre backs. **Adjust the skirt** to fit the top by pulling the **basting stitches** to gather. Pin in place.

07 Then stitch all three layers together using **zigzag stitch** and a $\frac{1}{2}$ in seam allowance.

08 Cut a piece of $\frac{1}{4}$ in-wide **elastic** to your waist size minus 3in.

09 Mark the **elastic in half** and then in quarters.

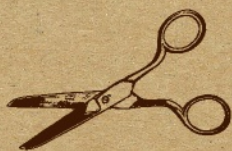
10 With the cut ends at the centre back, and matching the **quarter marks** to the centre front and side seams, pin the **elastic** to the waistline seam allowance.

11 Finally, using zigzag stitch, and keeping the **marks lined up**, stretch the elastic slightly as you sew it to the waistline. **Ta dah!** Your dress is finished. Do you have that **new-dress glow**?



The Refashion Handbook

You can find more upcycled garments in *The Refashion Handbook: Refit, Redesign, Remake for Every Body* by Beth Huntington. Beth refashions outdated treasures into chic, tailored clothing and accessories. *Mollie Makes* readers can get a copy for £14.99 (RRP £16.99) including free UK P&P. www.searchpress.com



Mollie MAKES INSTITUTE

— GUIDE TO — BUTTONS AND BUTTONHOLES

"Button, button – who's got the button?" From flat buttons, to shanks and those pesky button holes, give your stitchy projects a professional finish with our guide to flawless fastenings.

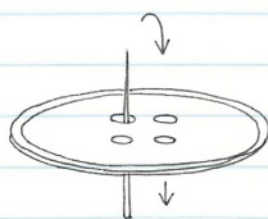


fig 1

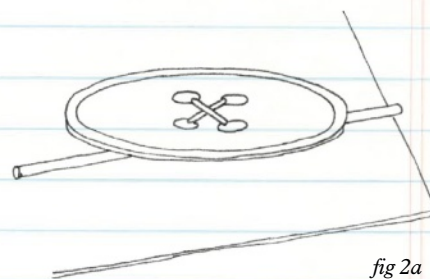


fig 2a

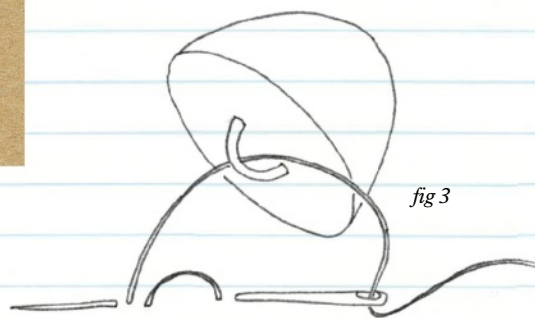


fig 3

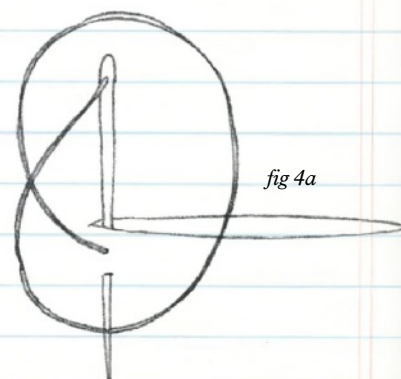


fig 4a

TOP TIP

Did you know – buttonhole stitch is worked in exactly the same way as blanket stitch? The only difference between the two is that you work the stitches close together for buttonhole stitch, and a little shorter. Now you know – and you thought button holes were tricky!

PREPARE AND CUT YOUR FABRIC

One of the basic sewing skills everyone should know or learn is how to sew on a button. Obviously this is essential, even if it's just for sewing buttons back on after they've fallen off shop-bought items – but it's important to sew them on securely. When buttons are sewn on to high street garments they are sewn on by machine. If the beginning or the end of the thread is not secured tightly then the button will easily fall off.

SEWING ON A FLAT BUTTON

Flat buttons usually have two or four holes, and sit flat on the fabric with no shank. There are two ways of sewing these on:

HOW TO ATTACH A FLAT BUTTON TO THINNER FABRIC

Use an ordinary sewing thread doubled-up. Cut twice the length of thread you need, then fold it in half. Thread the two ends through the eye of your needle, leaving you with a loop at the other end. Push the needle down through the fabric exactly in the centre of where you want your button to be, without pulling the thread all the way through. Now push back up, then thread the point of your needle through the loop and pull.

Your thread is tightly secured to the fabric. Work a few small stitches on top of each other where the loop lies and it will be even more secure.

Pass your needle up through one hole of the button and down through the other, into the fabric and repeat (fig 1).

If your button has two holes, repeat this about six times until your button feels nice and secure. If your button has four holes then there are different ways to sew it on depending on the pattern you want on the top of the button.

When you have finished, remember to work a few small stitches on top of each other on the back of the fabric to secure the end, then snip the remaining thread.

HOW TO ATTACH A FLAT BUTTON TO THICKER FABRIC

If the buttonhole that the button is going to go through is on quite thick fabric, then you will need to create a shank for the button. This makes sure that it sits slightly away from the fabric it is attached to, giving it a little movement and allowing it to be pushed through the buttonhole, while not rubbing the fabric too much. This is quite important when working with larger flat buttons too. Sew the button on as before, but this time slide a needle or cocktail

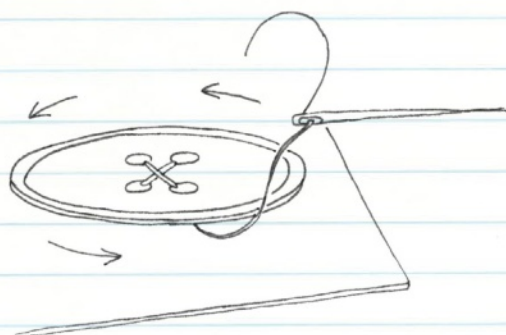


fig 2b



Find self
cover buttons
at Blooming Felt
www.bloomingfelt.co.uk

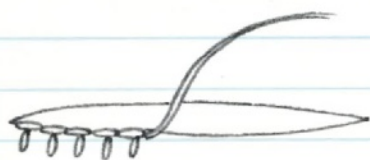


fig 4b

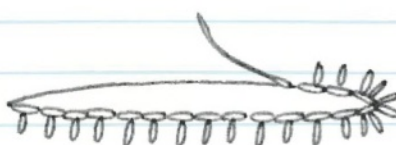


fig 4c



fig 4d

stick underneath the thread, as shown, so the button is sewn on loosely (fig 2a).

When you're done, wrap your thread three or four times around the loose thread underneath the button, take the needle down through the fabric, then fasten off (fig 2b).

ATTACHING A SHANK BUTTON

A shank button has a protruding shank at the back of the button which keeps the button away from the fabric – this way the layer of fabric sits flat when the button is pushed through the buttonhole.

Attach your thread to the fabric in the centre of where the button is to be placed, in the same way as with a flat button. Stitch through the shank and into the fabric six or seven times until it feels nice and secure, then finish off the thread securely on the wrong side of the fabric (fig 3).

MAKING BUTTONHOLES

You can make a buttonhole either by hand or machine, depending on the finished effect you want. To work out the length of the buttonhole, take the button diameter, and add the button height plus 3mm (1/8 in). Decide where you want your finished button to lie, then carefully draw the buttonhole line onto your fabric.

HAND-STITCHED BUTTONHOLES

Cut along your drawn buttonhole line using small sharp scissors.

Attach your thread securely on the back of your fabric at one end of the cut line. Work Buttonhole Stitch all along one side making sure the looped end of the stitch is on the raw edge of the fabric (figs 4a and 4b).

At the ends work a semi-circle of Buttonhole stitch then continue down the other side (fig 4c). When you reach the end work a bar of short stitches all lying close together to strengthen the end then fasten off your thread (fig 4d).

MACHINE-STITCHED BUTTONHOLES

If your machine has a buttonhole foot and setting then you can easily make buttonholes by machine. Your machine handbook will explain exactly how to do this as settings do differ slightly from one machine to another.

Once you have stitched your buttonhole, use a seam ripper or a pair of very sharp scissors to cut the fabric inside the buttonhole. Be careful not to cut through any of your stitches.

It's always best to practice making buttonholes on a spare scrap of fabric before you stitch on your garment to make sure they are neat and that the button fits snugly through.

SELF-COVERED BUTTONS

Self-covered buttons are a great way to co-ordinate your buttons with a project, as you can use left-over scraps of fabric from your sewing. Or, you can use miss-matched fabric for a striking effect – your choice!

Self-cover buttons can be bought in either plastic or metal, and come in a range of diameters from 11mm to 45mm (1/2–1 3/4 in). These buttons are easy to cover without the need for any tools, just a small scrap of fabric.

First cut out your chosen fabric into a circle with a diameter 1.5cm (1/2 in) bigger than the button diameter.

Sew a gathering thread all around the edge of the fabric making sure it is securely fastened off at the beginning.

Place the top part of the self-cover button in the centre of the back of the fabric then pull the gathering thread up tightly round the button and work a few stitches over each other to secure. Finally, press the back of the button over the gathered fabric to complete.

You can find many self-cover buttons can be bought with a tool that will help you attach the fabric – this can save a lot of time, as you don't need to use a gathering thread, and you'll get exactly the same finish with or without the tool.



Pop Your Collar

Fix up, look sharp! This dapper pointed collar is a wardrobe pep up no-brainer



HOW TO MAKE... A DETACHABLE COLLAR

MATERIALS

- Template from www.molliemakes.com/downloads
- Rectangle of outer fabric 30 x 20cm (12 x 8in)
- Rectangle of lining fabric 30 x 20cm (12 x 8in)
- Piping cord approx. 4cm (1.5in) long (or long enough to loop around your button)
- A small button – ours is 13mm (0.5in) in diameter
- Sewing machine
- Iron

Pep up tired tops with a snappy collar and give your wardrobe a new (and inexpensive) lease of life. Detachable collars are quick to make and can be worn with multiple garments making them price-per-wear superstars. Experiment with different combos – pair a patterned fabric collar with a neutral top, or vice versa. Don't forget, a collar will jazz up a round-necked dress in no time! If you like your outfits served with a shot of snazzy night-time glamour, go to town embellishing a plain collar with little sparkly gems.

01 Fold the outer fabric rectangle in half widthways and **cut out the template**, at www.molliemakes.com/downloads, Mollie Makes issue 39. Trace the pattern onto the lining fabric and cut.

02 Pin the outer and lining fabric together, **right sides facing**. With the lining face up, pin your piping cord between the fabric at the left-hand corner. **Pin and sew the collar**, starting at the centre, leaving a gap to turn.

03 Turn and use a knitting needle to gently **push out the corners** into crisp points. You can also use a

pin from the outside to gently pull the corner into shape.

04 **Press firmly with an iron.** Use steam to coax the fabric and define the pointy corners – a saggy collar is not going to cut it.

05 Make small, neat hand stitches to **close the opening**.

06 Finally, sew the button on the **opposite corner** to the loop.



Leanne Garrity

Leanne is a DIY blogger, freelance writer and designer-maker for her accessories label, Chi Chi Dee Handmade. She's completely self taught, and loves working from home in her pyjamas. She recently moved with her partner from London to the Bavarian Alps, where she goes for a daily swim in her local watering hole, Swan Lake. (For real.) www.chichidee.com

Top drawer

From gorgeous evening tops to office-friendly shirts and blouses, take a gander at our favourite top patterns



Drapey wonderment with this **drawstring-neck top**. And it can be stitched as a dress too! That's some 2-4-1 goodness right there.
www.themakersatelier.com

PHOTOGRAPH: PETRA LÖNNQVIST



Button up with the two-tone Wenona shirt. www.namedclothing.com



For a simple, versatile top, nab the Sencha blouse. www.colettepatterns.com

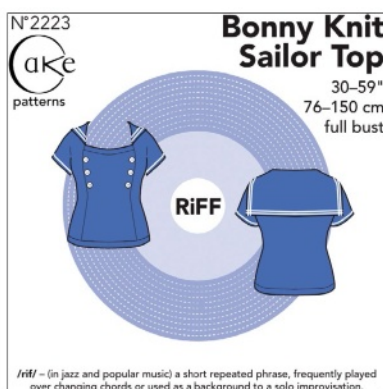
PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL BAMFORD PHOTOGRAPHY WWW.PAULBAMFORD.COM.AU



The Pussy Bow Blouse has bangle sleeves to show off your bling. patternrunway.com



The Roxanne top has an a-symmetrical hem. www.victorypatterns.com



Ahoy there! Set sail with these nautical beauties. www.sewingcake.etsy.com



The Mathilde blouse has a cute button-back opening. www.tillyandthebuttons.com



japanese inspiration

CHECK OUT THE BEST OF
JAPANESE STYLE



SWEET DRESS BOOK

Yoshiko Tsukiori

(Laurence King, £14.95)

Yoshiko trained at the top Bunka Fashion College in Japan and brings a round-up of blouses, camisoles, shifts, kimonos and coats. With techniques to practise, such as French sleeves, shirring and ruffles, we'll be in heaven. We love the surprise details in Japanese garments: turn around in the blouse on the cover (above) to reveal a ribbon-tie back. www.laurenceking.com

GIRLY STYLE WARDROBE

Yoshiko Tsukiori

(Laurence King, £14.95)

Here Yoshiko turns her attention to the little monkeys in our life with smart dresses, smocks, trousers and even a parka, all of which are easy to adapt to different fabrics and lengths. What about making a cute cap, clasp purse and drawstring bag to gift? In true Yoshiko-style find fab details, like bows, pin tucks, patch pockets and lace edging. Sweet. www.laurenceking.com



DRAPE DRAPE 3

Hisako Sato

(Laurence King, £19.95)

If you're big fans of gathers, folds and outsized blouses you'll swoon over the latest draping book from Bunka College. Pattern cutting pro Hisako showcases her tucks, twists, gathers and she doesn't stop there, giving each technique a twist or knottable string feature. These are clothes for dreaming in; we adore the petrol one-piece twist drape dress. www.laurenceking.com



STYLISH DRESS BOOK

Yoshiko Tsukiori

(Laurence King, £14.95)

Thank you, Yoshiko, for sorting out our top half in this amazing line-up of cool tops and tunic dresses. Most are

loose fitting, pop-over-the-head or button-up designs, so are easy to wear, and great projects for newbie sewists who want to save zips for later. As you'd expect from Japanese style, there's simple shapes and classy, individual details a-plenty and you'll get into some nifty crafting too, making flowers with ric-rac and embroidering gorgeous patterns on a bodice. In fact it's the embellishments that make these garments unique so once you've got the know-how, why not customise some old togs using your new skills? These patterns take you into the heady world of gorgeous fabrics such as linen, lace, voile, wool gauze, rayon wool and more. We're in stroke-touch-wear heaven. www.laurenceking.com



FEMININE WARDROBE

Jinko Matsumoto

(Laurence King, £14.95)

Once you've dragged your gaze from the lush pics we reckon you'll be freeing-up your diary to be with your trusty

machine for as long as it takes to make these threads all yours. The fab thing about this book is that Jinko (also of Bunko College fame) has based her designs on seven shapes and a minimum of pattern pieces. So, even sewists with little dressmaking experience can make many of them. Divided into three themes, party in über bows and sash ties, hit the town in contrasting fabrics or go to the beach in frills and sweetheart necklines. High five to being utterly feminine. www.laurenceking.com



JAPANESE SEWING BOOKS

Yi Farn

With a love of sewing for her two little girls, a passion for irresistible Japanese clothing, plus the knowledge to translate Japanese patterns into English, Singapore-based Yi Farn is our go-to girl for the lowdown on any new Japanese pattern books or any tricky translation needs. She's totally indispensable. www.japanesesewingbooks.com

READER OFFER We love the simple shapes and quirky photos of these sewing books. Laurence King are giving *Mollie Makes Sewing* peeps 30% off their Japanese sewing titles (offer valid until 10th March). Enter JAPAN35 at www.laurenceking.com

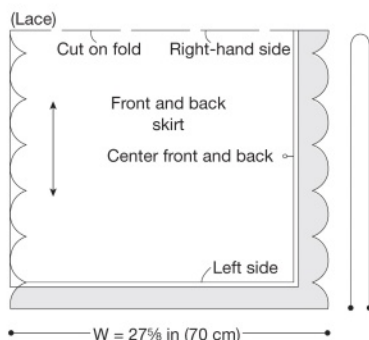
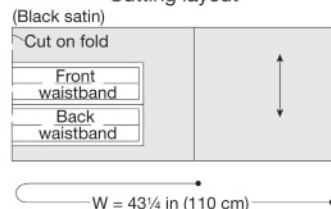




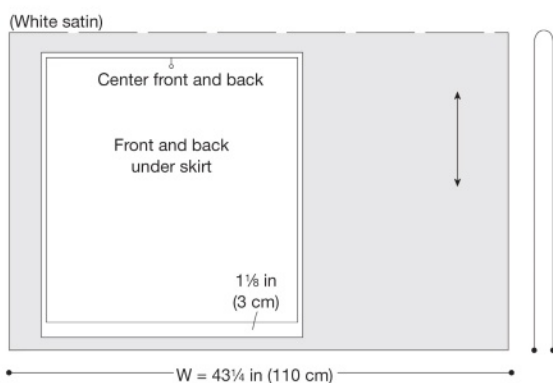
SWEET VISION

— — — — —
Indulge your ladylike side and whip up this
layered lace lovely to wear day or night

Cutting layout



* Unless stipulated, seam allowance is 3/8 in (1 cm)



* Unless stipulated, seam allowance is 3/8 in (1 cm)



HOW TO MAKE... A LACY LAYERED SKIRT

MATERIALS

■ **Leavers lace:**
W 70cm (27 1/2 in)

■ **Sizes XS and S:**
130cm (51 1/8 in)

■ **Size M and L:**
140cm (55 1/8 in)

■ **White cotton satin (under skirt):**
W 110 x L 140cm
(43 1/4 x 55 1/8 in)

■ **Black satin (waistband):**
W 110 x L 30cm
(43 1/4 x 11 3/4 in)

■ **Elastic:**
W 2.5 x L 80cm
(1 x 31 1/2 in)

Introduce a dash of romance into your day with this lovey-dovey lace skirt. The elastic waistband makes it easy to get the fit right (and it's a bonus at big dinners too!). Hit all the right style notes and mix it up with urban high-tops, or go all-out girly and dress it up with flats. Why not DIY the design and make the satin waistband in a pop of colour, or go 80s punk with neon pink lace! Wowzers!

This is such a fab skirt for newbie stitchers and with simple gathers at the waist and a beautiful fabric which speaks for itself, it's a look you can rock from day to night. Just add metal or leather accessories to toughen up the oh-so-sweet look.

Pattern pieces

Front and back skirt, front and back waistband. Download the pattern at www.molliemakes.com/downloads

01 Lay a piece of thin kraft or tracing paper underneath the lace.

Sew the left side seam, right sides together, and press the seam allowance toward the back.

02 Sew the sides of the under skirt, right sides together.

Overlock or stitch and **zigzag the seam allowances** of both pieces together. Press the seam allowances toward the back.

03 Make a **threefold hem** on the under skirt.

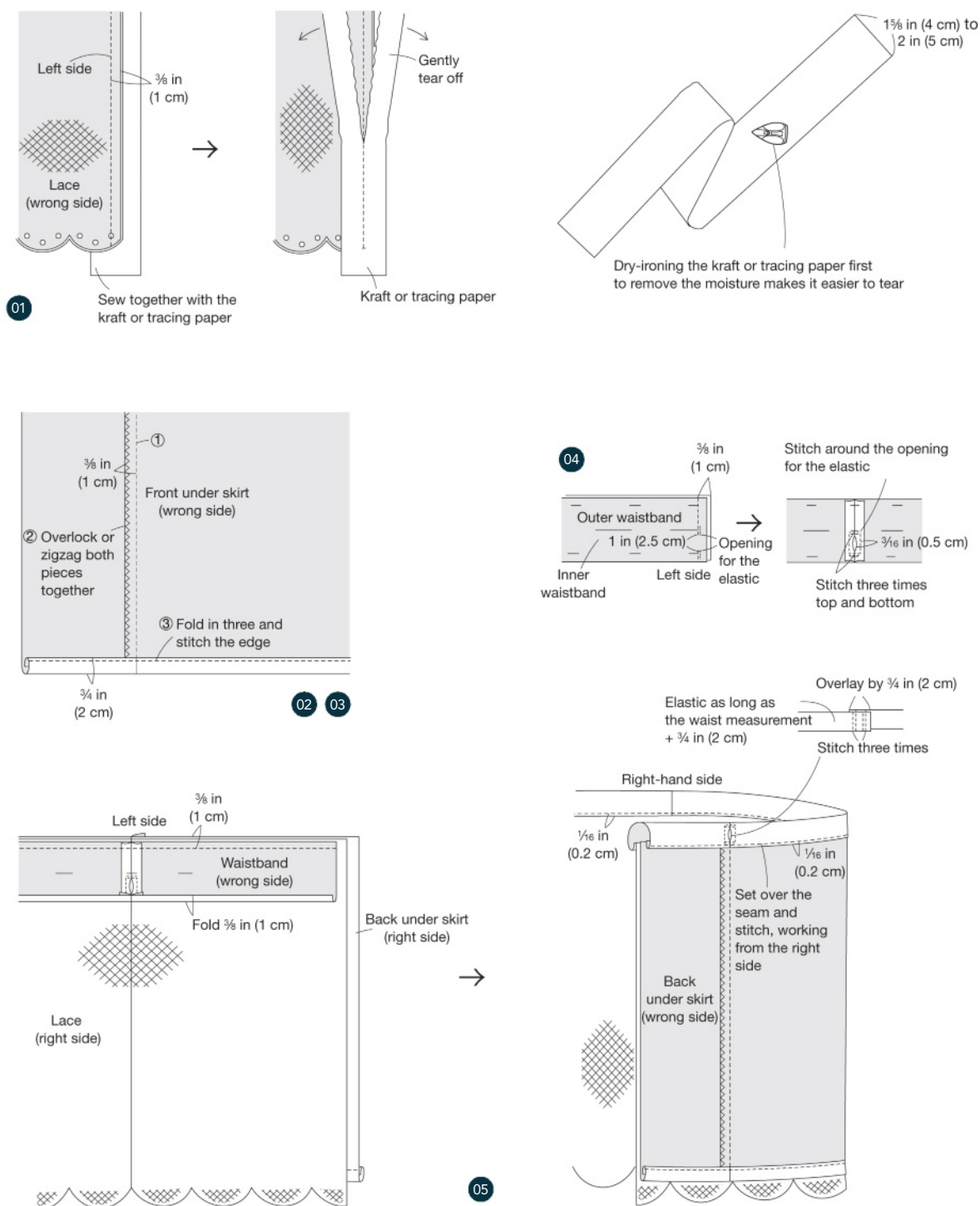
04 Sew the **ends of the waistband** and make the opening to pass the elastic through.

05 Lay the lace on the under skirt, both right side up, and then **attach the waistband** over them with right sides together. Fold the waistband over to the inside and stitch in place. **Thread the elastic** though the waistband and stitch to secure. Pull on your wisp of loveliness and float off into the salmon-hued sunset.



Casual Sweet Clothes

Like? Us too. There are 17 more of these adorable garments in Japanese designer Noriko Sasahara's book. *Mollie Makes* readers can buy a copy of *Casual Sweet Clothes* (published by Laurence King) with 35% off (RRP £14.95) – just go to www.laurenceking.com and enter code JAPAN35 (valid until 10th March 2015).



Finished measurements

Units: in (cm)

	XS	S	M	L
Length	23 ¹³ / ₁₆ (60.5)	24 ³ / ₁₆ (61.5)	24 ⁹ / ₁₆ (62.5)	24 ¹⁵ / ₁₆ (63.5)
Waist	24 ³ / ₁₆ (62)	26 (66)	27 ⁵ / ₁₆ (70)	29 ¹ / ₁₆ (74)
Hips	41 ³ / ₄ (106)	43 ¹ / ₄ (110)	44 ⁷ / ₈ (114)	46 ¹ / ₂ (118)

The skirt length is the measurement to the scalloped lace hem





PARIS WEEKEND

**Out for brunch? Fix your what-to-wear
woes with Amélie Morin-Fontaine's
French A-line skirt**



HOW TO MAKE... AN A-LINE SKIRT

MATERIALS

- Pattern pieces J, K, L, M at www.molliemakes.com/downloads
- Patterned fabric, 1.2m (3½ yd), 110–115cm (44–45in) wide
- Iron-on interfacing (optional)
- 1m of bias tape
- Closed-end zipper, 20cm (8in)
- Hook-and-eye closure
- Sewing machine
- Sewing threads

DESIGN NOTES

- Take 1.5cm (¾in) seam allowances unless otherwise stated

Nothing says "I feel good this morning!" more than a new garment and we're smitten with this simple shape which you can make in any fabric you lay love-filled eyes on. Hip skimming, waist cinching and classic, what's not to like? Hitting both the casual and chic mark, a stitcher with some know-how could whiz it up in a morning then slip on a pair of flats, rustle up a small dog and step out to sip a café au lait.

For all-out French style opt for a solid colour fabric – a medium weight or quilting cotton with some stiffness is perfect for this silhouette – or give it a contemporary twist like Amélie has done here, with a graphic pattern featuring small, repeating motifs.

01 Place **tracing paper** on top of the pattern sheet and trace off pattern pieces J (back) (front), K (front), L (front hem facing) and M

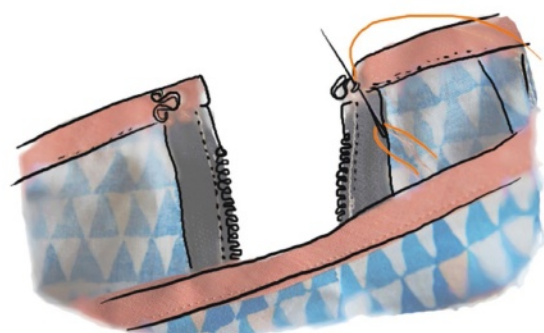
(back hem facing) in your chosen size (XS, S, M, L, or XL). Cut out the pieces.

02 With right sides together, fold the fabric once, bringing the left-hand selvedge to the centre. Pin the pattern pieces onto the fabric, following the layout guide. Note that all pieces are cut on the fold. Transfer **the zipper and dart marks** onto the front and back pieces. All seam allowances are included, so all you need to do is to trace the pattern pieces onto the fabric with a water-soluble pen or tailor's chalk and cut the fabric along those marks.

03 Fold the front fabric piece right sides together in order to align the dart marks. Pin and sew on the line, starting at the raw edges. Do not make backstitches at the point, but simply tie a knot with the thread tail. **Repeat for the darts** on the back piece.

04 Identify the left-hand side of the

UPDATE A CLASSIC SHAPE WITH A GRAPHIC PATTERN



skirt front: placing the front piece on yourself might help. With right sides together, aligning the raw edges, **pin and stitch the sides** of the skirt, starting from the bottom and working your way up. Stitch all the way up on the right-hand side of the skirt; on the left-hand side of the skirt, stop at the zipper mark. Press the seams open. Turn the skirt right side out.

05 For extra stiffness, apply **fusible interfacing** to both hem facing pieces following the manufacturer's instructions; this is optional.

06 Place the front and back hem facings right sides together, pin, and machine stitch the short ends. **Press the seams open.**

07 With right sides together, aligning the raw edges, pin the hem facings around the skirt, making sure that side seams are aligned. **Machine stitch the facings** in place, then turn the skirt wrong side out.

08 Fold the **hem facings** to the wrong side of the skirt and press. Fold under 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) along the top edge of the facings. Pin and stitch through all layers close to the fold.

09 Machine baste the seam allowance at the top of the left-hand side of the skirt. **Press the seam open.** Working on the wrong side of the skirt, place the zipper

right side down, centering the teeth of the zipper along the seam, and hand baste in place. Using a zipper foot, stitch the zipper in place, then remove all the basting stitches. See page 50 for our guide to fitting a zip.

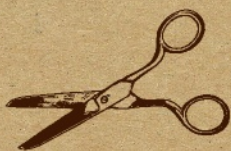
10 **Bind the top of the skirt** with bias tape. Stitch a hook-and-eye closure above the zipper.



Home-Sewn French Style

Amélie Morin-Fontaine has drawn on her 10 years of sewing and her French heritage to bring us a collection of beautiful ideas for our home and lovely selves. The ex-librarian currently lives in Martinique with her 10-year-old daughter and writes a blog sharing armfuls of stitchy inspiration. Catch up with her at www.mydaruma.wordpress.com Mollie Makes Sewing readers can buy her book *Home-Sewn French Style*, published by CICO Books, for £10.99 (RRP £14.99) including free UK P&P. Call 01256 302699 and quote GLR CODE 90P. www.cicobooks.co.uk





Mollie MAKES INSTITUTE

— GUIDE TO — INSERTING ZIPS

Sewing in zips can be a bit of a tricky skill to master, but the secret is to take your time and tack everything in place before you stitch.





fig 1

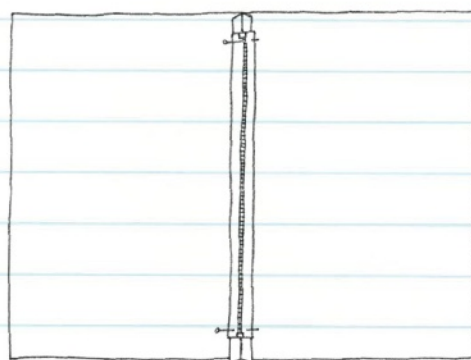


fig 2

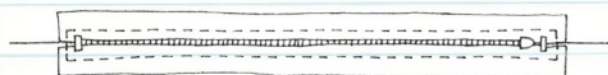


fig 3

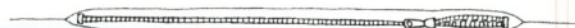


fig 4

ZIP IT!

If you're a first time sewer, inserting a zip probably seems like one of the most daunting things to tackle. It isn't as scary as it looks, we promise! Practise on a cushion cover to hone your zip inserting skills.

INSERT A ZIP INTO A CUSHION COVER

The following instructions show you how to insert a zip into the centre of the back of a cushion cover. This is the easiest method to use but can be easily adapted to place a zip in any seam.

CUTTING OUT YOUR FABRIC

Using a 36 x 36cm (14 x 14in) cushion cover (finished size) as an example and with a 1.5cm ($\frac{1}{2}$ in) seam allowance, you will need the following fabric pieces:

Front: 39 x 39cm (15 x 15in)

Back: Two pieces each measuring 21 x 39cm (8 x 15in).

The finished size of the zip from slider to the ends of the teeth needs to be 33cm (13in). If you buy a 36cm (14in) zip, though, you'll have more flexibility, as you can sew across the teeth at the end to make it the exact measurement you need.

SEWING THE SEAM

Use a 1.5cm ($\frac{1}{2}$ in) seam allowance throughout. Take the two back pieces and place them right sides together with the long edges at the top. Mark with a pin 2.5cm (1in) in from each side edge. Sew the two back pieces together up to the pin marks so you have two 2.5cm (1in) seams at either side (fig 1).

Change the stitch length setting on your sewing machine so it is at its longest and sew the

two back pieces together between the side seams you worked before. Take care not to stitch into these side seams, and don't finish off the ends of this new seam – the threads need to be loose so that you can easily undo the stitches later.

PINNING THE ZIP IN PLACE

Open out the fabric pieces and press the seam open with the wrong side up. Place your zip wrong side up over the seam and place the top of the slider just below the 2.5cm (1in) side seam. Pin the zip to the fabric making sure the centre of the zip runs down the centre of the seam. Place a pin across the other end of the zip just over the end of the 2.5cm (1in) side seam (fig 2).

SEWING THE ZIP

Before you sew your zip into place, make sure that the zip slider is facing outwards towards the side seam rather than tucked under the zip, or it will be difficult to get hold of it to open later as you are stitching. Remember to change your machine stitch length to normal before you sew on the zip! Change the foot in your machine to a zipper foot.

Starting about 5cm (2in) down from the slider and on the zip upper edge, stitch the zip into place, positioning your machine stitching half way between the teeth and the edges of the zip tape. When you reach the bottom of the zip keep the machine needle in the fabric, lift the foot and turn the fabric to stitch across the bottom of the zip. Repeat this to turn and stitch up the other side of the zip.

When you are opposite your starting point, keep the needle in the fabric and raise the machine foot. Now take hold of the slider and

push it so that you undo the zip beyond the machine needle. By moving the slider out of the way you can keep your line of machine stitches straight. Otherwise the bulk of the slider would make your needle run off a little and you wouldn't get a straight line.

Continue stitching up to the top of the zip about 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) beyond where the slider would stop. Keep the needle in the fabric, raise the foot and turn to stitch across the top of the two ends of the zip. Turn again to stitch down the other side of the zip to where you first started. Finish off the stitching by going backwards and forwards a few times, then snip the threads (fig 3).

Now undo the long stitches which you worked earlier. If you undo a few at one end you should be able to pull a thread to easily undo the remainder. You can now open and close your zip. Trim off the end of the zip if it is too long, about 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) outside the stitching (fig 4).

TOP TIPS

Most sewing machines come with a separate zipper foot, but if yours doesn't then you can buy one from a sewing machine shop or online. You can adjust the zipper foot so it is on the left or the right side of the sewing machine needle. This allows you to sew the zip without the presser foot applying pressure to the zip teeth. Without a zipper foot the teeth would get caught in the feed dogs and the fabric then wouldn't move to allow it to be stitched.





JUMP FOR JOY

Pair this can-do skirt from Jane Bolsover with boots
and a bright jumper for a perk-me-up on dull days

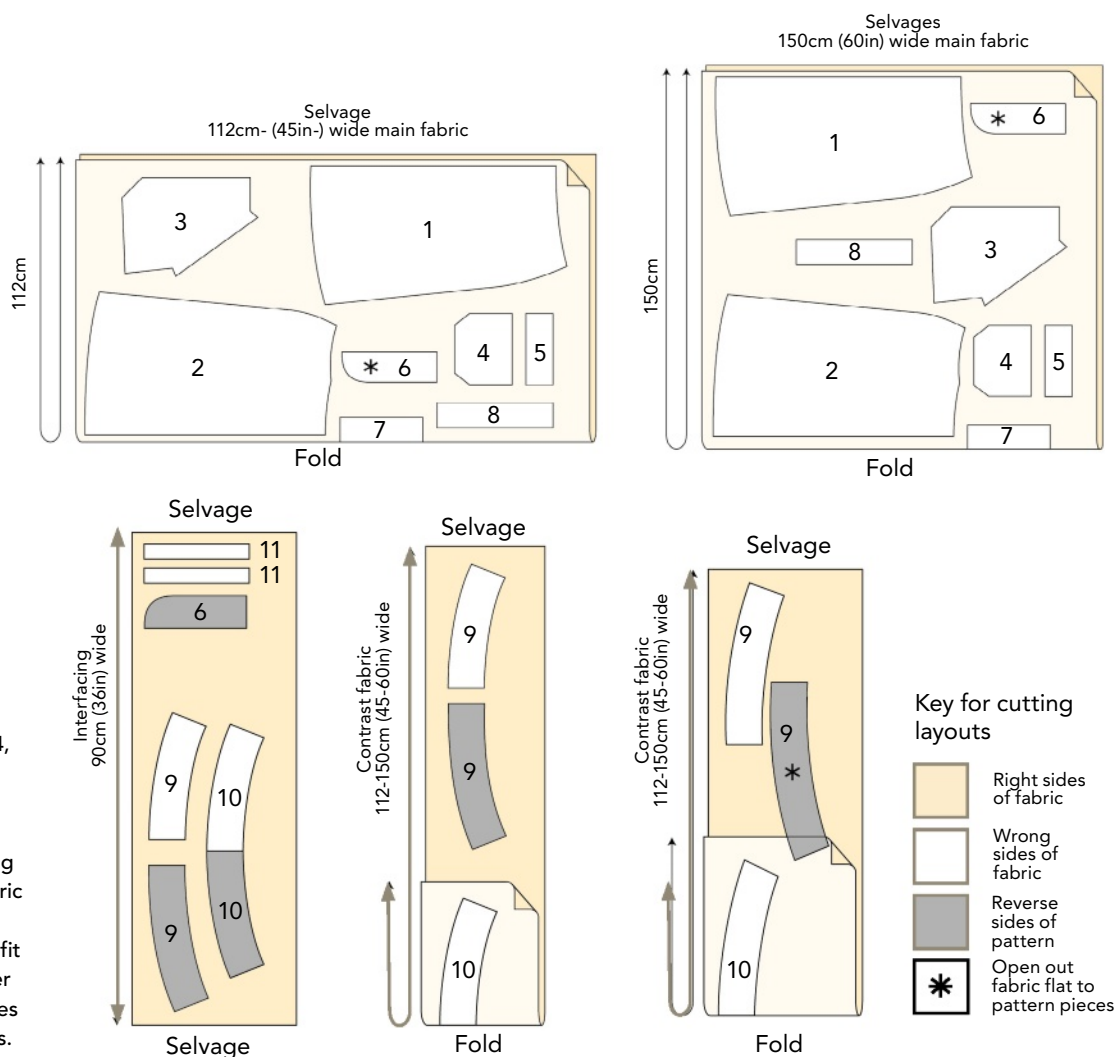


CUTTING OUT FABRIC

Use pattern pieces 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12.

NOTES

Fabric quantities and cutting layouts are for one-way fabric only. If using a fabric with a two-way design, you could fit pattern pieces into a smaller piece of fabric, but grainlines must be parallel to selvages.



HOW TO MAKE... A JEANS-STYLE SKIRT

MATERIALS

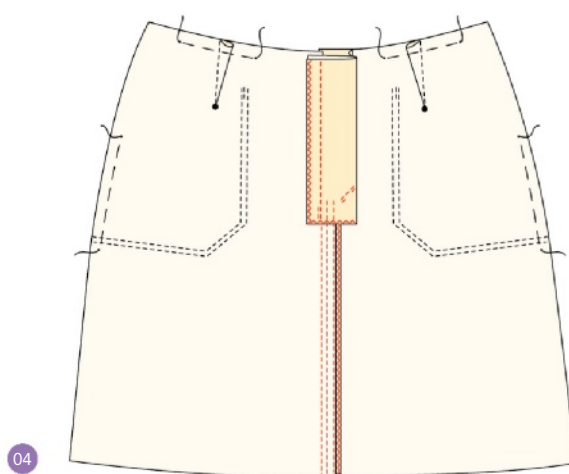
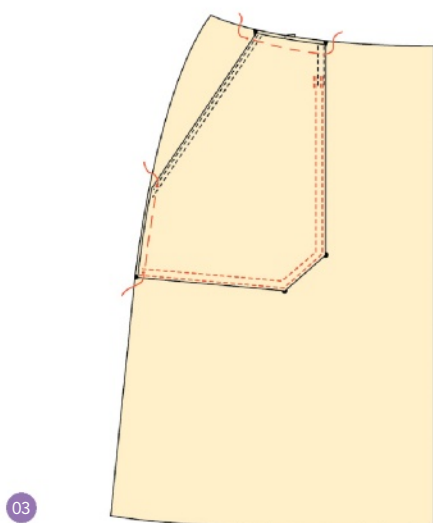
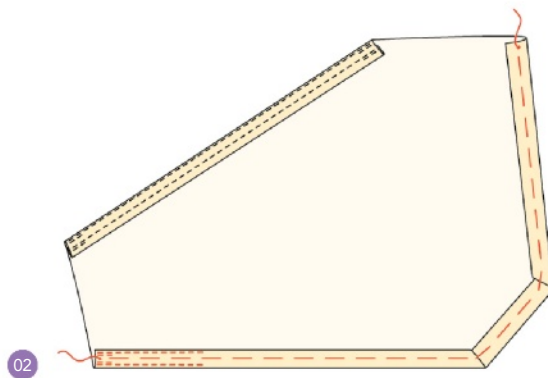
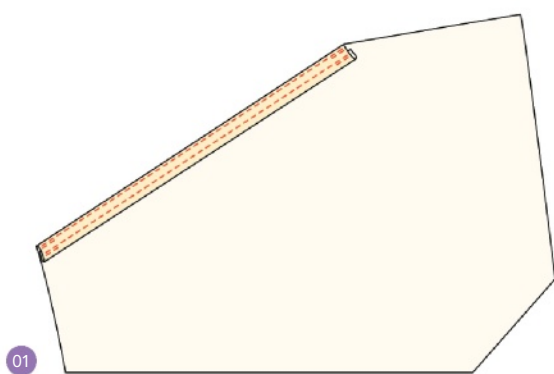
- Pattern from www.molliemakes.com/downloads
- Main fabric: Needlecord, denim, cotton drill, moleskin, velvet
- Contrast fabric: Soft cotton prints, gingham, shirting
- Matching thread
- 10cm (4in) zipper
- Medium-weight iron-on interfacing (see chart, right)
- 1.20m (1½yds) of 6mm- (¼in-) wide cotton tape
- 20mm (¾in) button

DESIGN NOTES

1.5cm (⅝in) seam allowances are included unless otherwise stated. Stitch seams with right sides together and notches matching, unless otherwise stated.

Sizes

Sizes UK	8	10	12	14	16	18
Fabric quantities 112cm- (45in-) wide fabric						
Main	1.20m (1 ⅓ yd)	1.20m (1 ⅓ yd)	1.20m (1 ⅓ yd)	1.20m (1 ⅓ yd)	1.20m (1 ⅓ yd)	1.20m (1 ⅓ yd)
Contrast	30cm (⅓ yd)	30cm (⅓ yd)	30cm (⅓ yd)	30cm (⅓ yd)	30cm (⅓ yd)	40cm (½ yd)
Fabric quantities 150cm- (60in-) wide fabric						
Main	90cm (1 yd)	90cm (1 yd)	90cm (1 yd)	1.00m (1 ⅓ yd)	1.00m (1 ⅓ yd)	1.00m (1 ⅓ yd)
Contrast	30cm (⅓ yd)	30cm (⅓ yd)	30cm (⅓ yd)	30cm (⅓ yd)	30cm (⅓ yd)	30cm (⅓ yd)
Fabric quantities 90cm- (36in-) wide medium-weight fusible interfacing						
Main	40cm (1 ⅓ yd)	40cm (1 ⅓ yd)	40cm (1 ⅓ yd)	40cm (1 ⅓ yd)	40cm (1 ⅓ yd)	40cm (1 ⅓ yd)
Contrast	30cm (½ yd)	30cm (½ yd)	30cm (½ yd)	30cm (½ yd)	30cm (½ yd)	40cm (½ yd)



Yes, yes, yes! Please get into my wardrobe now. But first, let me make you, lovely, practical skirt. And all sewists can make this go-to design – even those just starting out. It's one of those skirts that'll bring out your playful side, simply because you can run and jump without a care in the world. Plus it ticks all the right boxes: deliciously soft (baby cord or velvet anyone?), a contemporary drop-waist, jeans style, easy to make and fun to wear. Add a gorgeous contrast waist facing, and front pockets that form belt carriers, and you've got a skirt you'll want to wear and wear.

01 Following the appropriate cutting layout, **cut out all your fabric and interfacing** pieces. On each front pocket, press the interfacing strips to the wrong side of the fabric along the diagonal pocket edges. Press 6mm (¼in) to

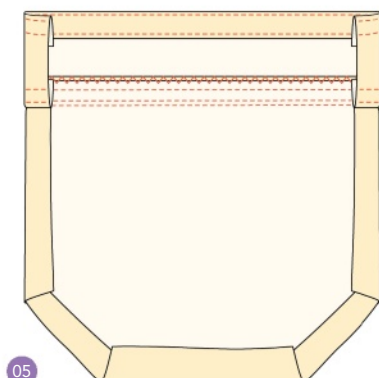
the wrong side on each diagonal pocket edge and then press over a further 1cm (¾in) enclosing the raw edge. Stitch the pressed edges in place with two rows of topstitching, with the first row close to the pressed edge and the second row 6mm (¼in) away.

02 Press 1cm (¾in) to the wrong side along the other straight edges of the front pockets, apart from the waist edge and the side seam edge; baste in place. Starting at the waist edge, **stitch the long pressed edge of each pocket** in place with two rows of topstitching, as in step 1, but for 6.5cm (2½in) only, and reverse stitching at the start to secure.

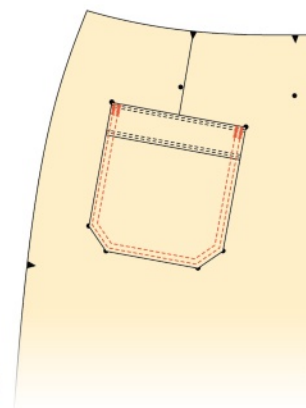
03 **Stitch the darts** on the skirt front and back pieces and press toward the center front and center back. Place one skirt front right side up on a flat surface and lay the corresponding front pocket right

side up on top, lining up the pocket corners with the marked pocket dots, and matching the waist and side seam edges. **Pin and baste the pocket in position** around all edges. Repeat with the remaining skirt front and pocket. Working from the right side of the fabric and starting at the side seam edge, stitch each pocket in place with two rows of topstitching, finishing 5cm (2in) below the waist edge, and reverse stitching to secure.

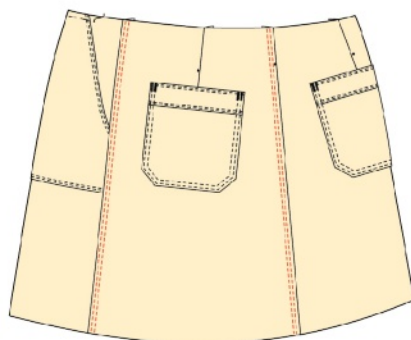
04 Finish the center front skirt edges and stitch together from the matched dots to the hem edge. Press interfacing to the wrong side of the zipper facing and finish the curved edge. **Insert the zipper.** If you have not already done so, snip into the left center front seam allowance at the base of the zipper, and press the seam allowances toward the right front. Stitch the seam allowances in place with two »



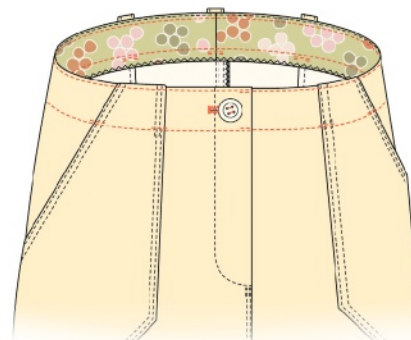
05



06



07



08

HOW TO MAKE... A JEANS-STYLE SKIRT

rows of topstitching from the base of the zipper to the hem edge.

05 Stitch a pocket band to the top edge of each back pocket, matching notches, with a 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) seam. Finish the seam allowances together and press them toward the pocket band. **Topstitch the seam allowances** in place, working one row close to the seamline and the second row 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) away. Press 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) and then a further 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) to the wrong side on the top edge of the band, enclosing the raw edges. Stitch the pressed edges in place with two rows of topstitching, as before. Press 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) to the wrong side on the remaining pocket edges.

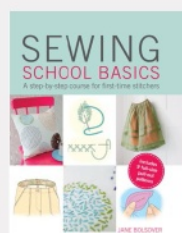
06 Apply the pockets to the skirt backs, making two rows of topstitching around the pressed edges to match the pocket top edges. Reinforce the pocket corners with zigzag stitches.

07 Stitch the skirt front to the skirt

back pieces at the side seams. Finish the seam allowances together and press toward the backs. Topstitch the seam allowances in place with two rows of topstitching to match the pockets. Stitch the skirt back pieces together at the center back seam. Finish the seam allowances together and press toward the left back; topstitch in place, as before.

08 Make up the belt carriers, cutting your strip into three equal lengths. Attach the carriers, but do not attach the fasteners at this

point. Keeping the belt carriers out of the way, topstitch the waist facing in place, stitching one row close to the waist edge, and a second row 3.5cm ($\frac{13}{16}$ in) down, reverse stitching over the edges of the pockets to secure at the front. Remove all basting, then stitch the loose ends of the belt carriers in place. Work a buttonhole on the right waist and **attach a button** to the left waist to correspond. Finally, finish the hem edge, press 4cm ($1\frac{1}{2}$ in) to the wrong side, and machine stitch in place.



Sewing School Basics

With 20 years' experience as a designer and writer specialising in sewing and crafts, Jane Bolsover has more fantastic projects for our nimble fingers in *Sewing School Basics*, published by CICO Books. Call 01256 302699 quoting GLR CODE 90F to grab a copy for £10.99 including free UK P&P (RRP £14.99).

RECOMMENDED READS

SEW YOUR OWN LINGERIE AND TOP DIY IDEAS

Reviewed by **VICKY GUERRERO**



LEARN TO SEW WITH LAUREN

Lauren Guthrie

(Mitchell Beazley, £25)

Ever fans of BBC Two's the *Great British Sewing Bee*, we heart finalist Lauren and her pretty creations. And now she gets to put all that passion into a great book for beginners. As you'd expect from Lauren's style, it's a celebration of sweet florals, Liberty prints and patterned bias binding focussing on simple projects for beginners. Bags, belts, simple tops will all be yours plus she'll hold your hand (well, metaphorically) as you tackle the Roman blinds. One for your Crimbo wishlist.

www.octopusbooks.co.uk

THE SECRETS OF SEWING LINGERIE

Katherine Sheers & Laura Stanford

(Kyle Books, £15.99)

Now, all Mollie girls definitely deserve beautiful undies so, not to let ourselves down in that department, fashion designers Katherine and Laura have come to the rescue with a range of gorgeous bras, knickers and camisoles in tulle, silk, chiffon and other soft fabrics. Bliss. There's also a wedding garter for any brides-to-be in your midst. A lovely idea for a special gift for gal-pals, for starters try the easy side-tie knickers to start you off on your lingerie-sewing journey. Just don't leave your lovely delicate creations out anywhere in the presence of a rampaging puppy...

www.kylebooks.com



LOVE AT FIRST STITCH

Tilly Walnes

(Quadrille, £20)

An absolute Mollie fave (we love her Tilly and the Buttons blog), Tilly throws her down-to-earth, can-do attitude into a brilliant new book featuring seven projects and full-scale patterns in eight different sizes. We all need a bit of encouragement and Tilly is as chatty as you'd expect as you start with simple projects, such as a scarf and pyjamas, moving onto skirts, dresses and a blouse. And all exude her lush vintage style, of course. Don't forget to tell Santa you've been a good girl this year.

www.quadrillecraft.com



JUST FOR YOU
Caroline Fairbanks-Critchfield and Sarah Markos
(C&T Publishing, £17.99)

The Florida-based bloggers, Caroline and Sarah at sewcanshe

are all about making sewing fun in the sun. In *Just For You* they bring us their easygoing tropical warmth, dishing up 24 sweet projects including purses, totes, skirts, tops and scarves that are easy for sewing peeps of all levels. The collection is arranged into 12 chapters for all-year inspiration, so steal yourself some time each month to treat yourself. That's an order!

www.searchpress.com



ADORN

Kit Lee and Shini Park
(Hardie Grant, £16.99)

Crack open your gem and bead tins and jazz up jackets and skirts as super fashionista diy bloggers Kit and Shini join forces to bring us a

fab collection of their top how-to's. Make a kaftan dress from scarves, paint up your heels in gold, give a camisole chain straps for a rock-chic look or embellish a skirt with broken jewellery to make it dazzle. The girls show that all if often needs is some basic sewing skills and a stash of lovely oddments to hit the downtown luxe vibe. Kit and Shini, we salute you.

www.hardiegrant.co.uk



HOME-SEWN FRENCH STYLE
Amélie Morin-Fontaine
(CICO Books, £14.99)

Bonjour les filles! If French elegance and style make you swoon, then make space for

this book on your coffee table. Amélie, a librarian turned designer and blogger (who likes dancing in her living room, always a good sign) shares her projects for homewares and clothes. Gorgeous fabrics abound, with Toile de Jouy, Breton stripes, vibrant Basque fabrics, and graphic prints for a chic Paris vibe. Make cushions, table linen, and more. Magnifique.

www.rylandpeters.com

Skirting the issue

Maxi, A-line, mini and pencil – we just can't get enough of the mighty skirt. Find your fave and sew it soon!



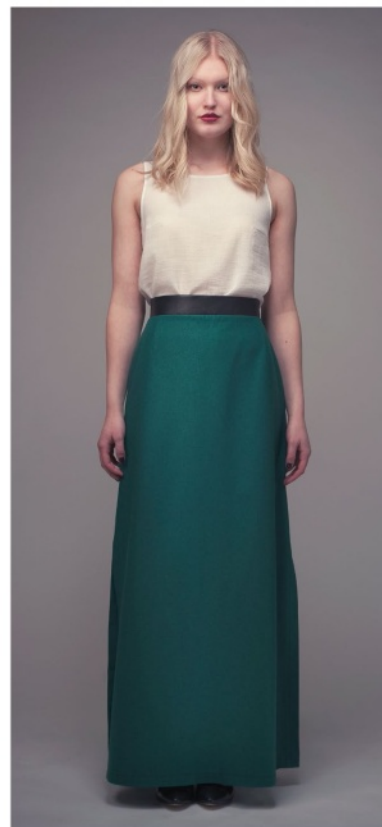
We want this high-waisted, A-line Ginger skirt now! Team it with a casausaual vest, or tick in a shirt and add a glitzy belt for first-date cool. www.colettepatterns.com



It's the perfect dungaree skirt – the **Madeleine!** www.victorypatterns.com



The **Charlotte** skirt has it all: high waist, peplum and ruffle. byhandlondon.com



PHOTOGRAPH: LISA SALONEN

We love how regal the **Rene Maxi Skirt** is! www.namedclothing.com



Love a classic A-Line. The **Emilie** pattern is free! www.spitupandstilettos.com



La Sylphide is a go-with-anything-anywhere skirt. papercutpatterns.com



PHOTOGRAPH: ELEONORE KLEIN; FABRIC: FROM LES TROUVAILLES D'AMANDINE

A quirky update on the A-line! **Anémone skirt**, boutique.deer-and-doe.fr

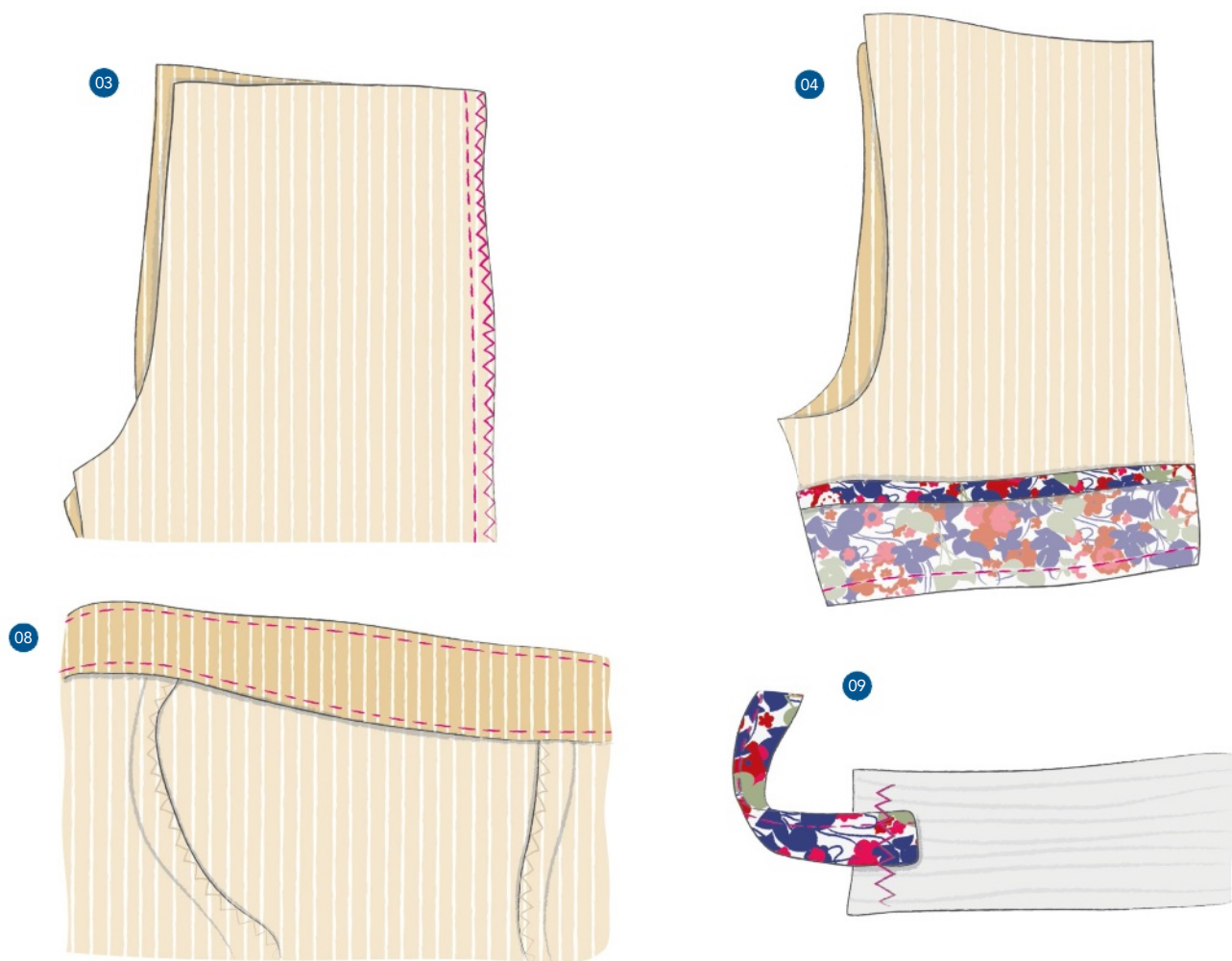


Lazy Mornings

Sew Lauren Guthrie's adorable pattern in a short or long option. Breakfast in your PJs has never been so pretty







HOW TO MAKE... PRETTY PYJAMA SHORTS

MATERIALS

■ Pattern from www.molliemakes.com/downloads

For short version

■ 1.2m (1 $\frac{1}{8}$ yd) of main fabric at least 114cm (45in) wide, such as medium-weight cotton

■ 60cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ yd) of contrast fabric at least 114cm (45in) wide, such as medium-weight cotton

■ Coordinating thread

■ Piece of 2cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in) elastic half your waist measurement

■ Piece of iron-on interfacing at least 5cm (2in) square

For long version

■ 2.4m (2 $\frac{5}{8}$ yd) of main fabric at least 114cm (45in) wide

■ 60cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ yd) of contrast fabric at least 114cm (45in) wide

■ Coordinating thread

■ Piece of 2cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in) elastic, half your waist measurement

■ Piece of iron-on interfacing at least 5cm (2in) square

We wholeheartedly believe that the making and wearing of these PJ shorts will bring loads of feelgood vibes your way. Yay!

Even newbie stitchers can get started on them thanks to Lauren's clear how-to and the fact that you don't need to worry too much about getting the fit right. A bit baggy? More comfy!

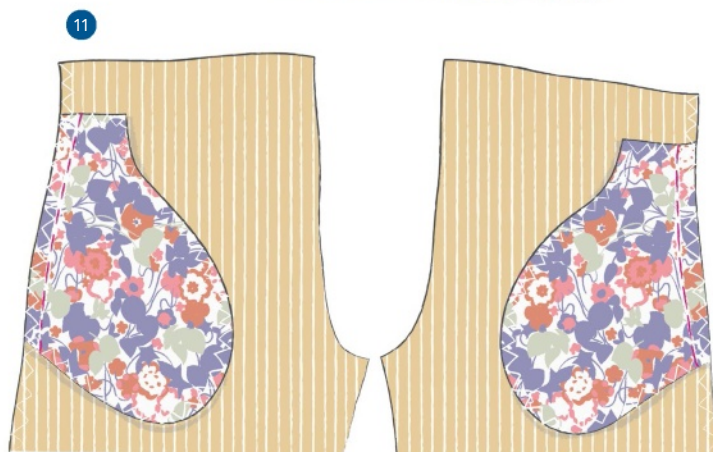
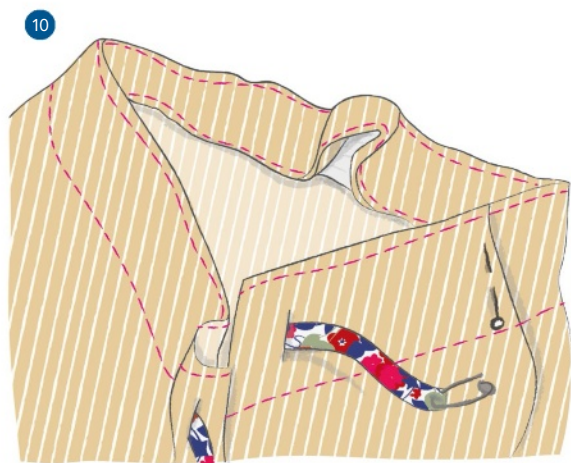
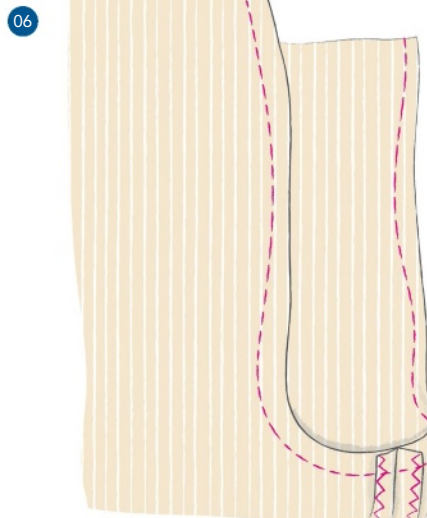
Whip up a pair for keeps then why not spread the love and gift to gal pals this Chrimble? Get your nimble fingers on some soft cotton fabric – we're drooling over this snazzy pinstripe and floral trim mash-up. And if you fancy a warmer pair this winter, we've got a full-length version for you too. Did we spend the afternoon in ours? Did you? Shhh, we won't say anything if you don't...

01 Following the cutting layout over the page and using the pattern from *Mollie Makes* downloads, **cut out the fabric pieces** in the two fabrics. Also from the contrast fabric cut two strips 50 x 5cm (20 x 2in) for ties. Transfer all pattern markings onto the fabric.

02 **Pin a front piece and a back piece** together, right sides facing, along the inside leg edges. Stitch the seam with a 1.5cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in) seam allowance (used throughout). Press the seam allowances open and finish them off. Repeat to join the other inside leg seam.

03 **Pin and stitch the side seams**, with right sides facing. Finish off the seam allowances together and press them towards the front.

04 Pin and stitch the front and back panels together at the side edges;



press the seams open. At the top (un-notched) edge of the panels press 1.5cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in) to the wrong side. Turn the pyjamas wrong side out and **pin the border**, also wrong side out, around the lower edge of each leg, matching side seams and notches and with the pressed-back edge at the top, as shown. Tack if you wish, then stitch 1.5cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in) from the lower edge.

05 Press the border down, away from the pyjamas. Turn the pyjamas right side out, and **fold the border up over each leg**; press it so that the seam you stitched in Step 4 is at the edge. Pin and tack, then topstitch the border in place 2mm (scant $\frac{1}{8}$ in) from its top (pressed-under) edge.

06 Turn one leg right side out. Place it inside the other leg (turned

wrong side out) so that the right sides of the fabric are facing.

Match up inner leg seams and front and back notches and pin in place; tack if you wish, then stitch the seam. Press the seam to one side and then finish off the raw edges together.

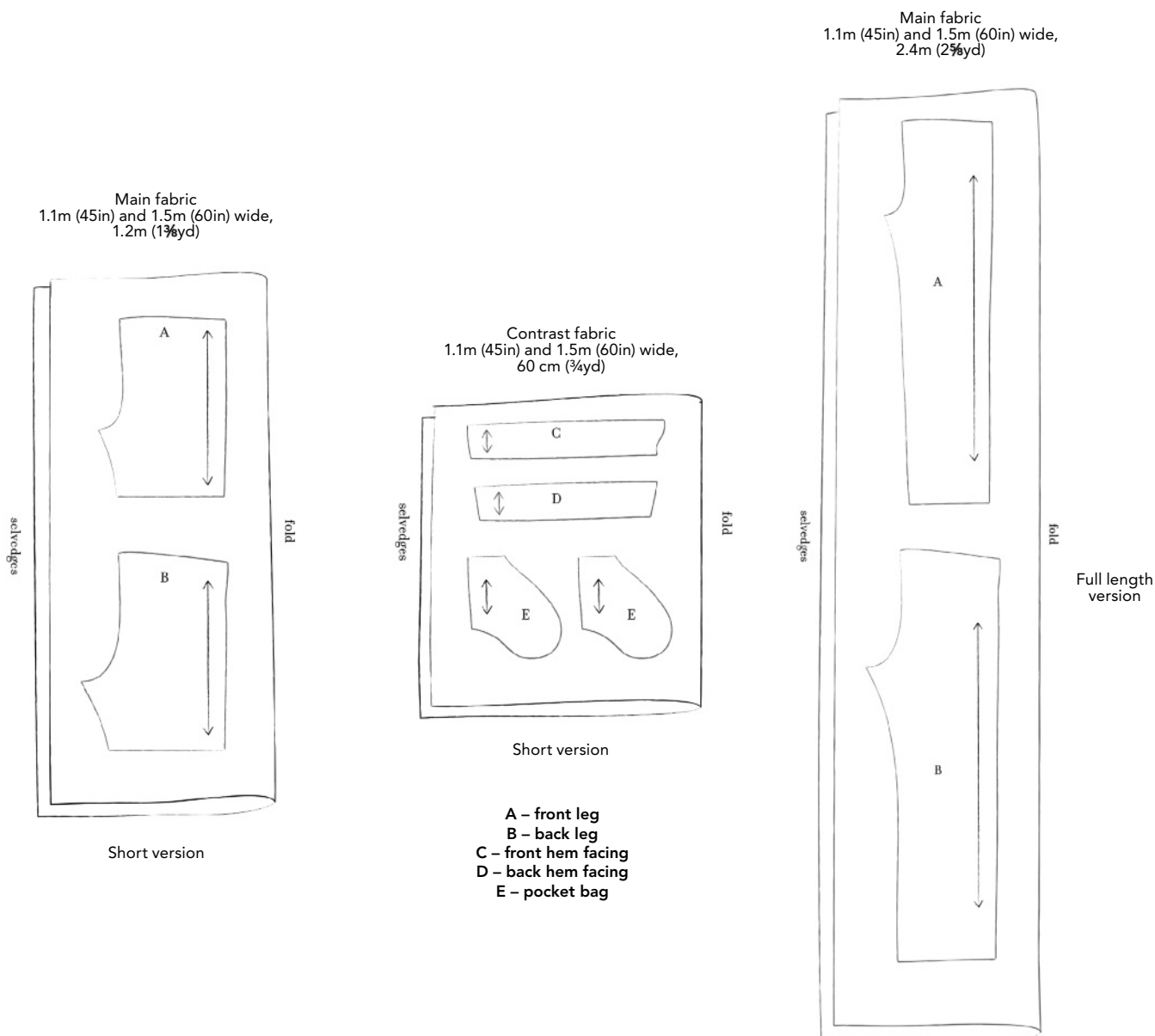
To make it easier to press the seam allowance to the wrong side, try machine-tacking 1.5cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in) from the raw edge and use this as a pressing guide. Then remove the tacking stitches.

07 Turn under and press 3cm ($1\frac{1}{4}$ in) along the upper edge of the pyjama bottoms, then turn under and press another 3cm ($1\frac{1}{4}$ in). This will be stitched later to form the casing for the elastic. Now open out the folds. Iron the small piece of interfacing to the

marking for the buttonhole on each side of the crotch seam. Stitch two buttonholes and cut them open.

08 Re-fold the casing and pin it in place. Topstitch 2.7cm (generous 1in) down from the top folded edge, leaving a gap of 8cm (3in) along the back. **Repeat with a line of topstitching** 3mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in) from the top; this will stop the elastic from twisting.

09 Press each tie piece in half lengthways, wrong sides together. Open out this fold and fold the raw edges in to meet the crease. Re-fold the tie, enclosing the raw edges. Topstitch close to the turned-in edges. **Tie a little knot at one end of each tie.** Attach the unknotted ends of the ties to the elastic with two or three rows of zig-zag stitch. »



HOW TO MAKE... FULL LENGTH PYJAMA BOTTOMS

10 Attach a safety pin to each end of the waist ties. Feed the ties through the gap in the casing you left at the back and out through the buttonholes at the front. **Pin the elastic to the top edge** of the pyjamas at each side seam, then topstitch it in place. Topstitch the gap in the casing to close it. (Stretch the elastic to make the fabric lie flat when you do this.)

Full length pyjama bottoms
with pockets

11 Cut out four pocket pieces from the contrast fabric. Finish off the raw edges of these pieces individually; repeat on the side

seam edges of the front and back leg pieces. Pin one pocket piece to each of the leg pieces with right sides facing and with the marked dots matching. **Sew each pocket piece in place** and press the pockets outwards.

Join the side seams as in Step 3

of the main version, sewing around the pocket edges as part of this seam, pivoting at the dots.

Turn up and press 2.5cm (1in) on the bottom edge of each leg, then turn up and press another 2.5cm (1in). **Topstitch the hems** in place 2.3cm (7/8in) from the bottom edge.



Learn to Sew with Lauren

For more ray-of-sunshine makes get hold of *Learn to Sew with Lauren* by Lauren Guthrie (Mitchell Beazley, RRP £25). It's available to *Mollie Makes* readers at £17.50, plus free UK P&P. To order, call 01903 828503 quoting Sew/MB609. Offer subject to availability, please allow 7 days for delivery. www.octopusbooks.co.uk



Ooh

I COULD DO THAT...

Day date
dress

Go dotty for this beautiful fitted dress with the sweetest Peter Pan collar designed by Leanne Barlow. Wear beneath a coat for pretty-as-pie winter glamour. We'd certainly dress up in this frock for lunches and tea, heck, it's so lovely we'd keep it on for dinner too.

Follow Leanne's tutorial on her blog – use a fitted top as a guide for the bodice then make a gathered skirt to fall just beneath the knee.

www.elleapparelblog.com



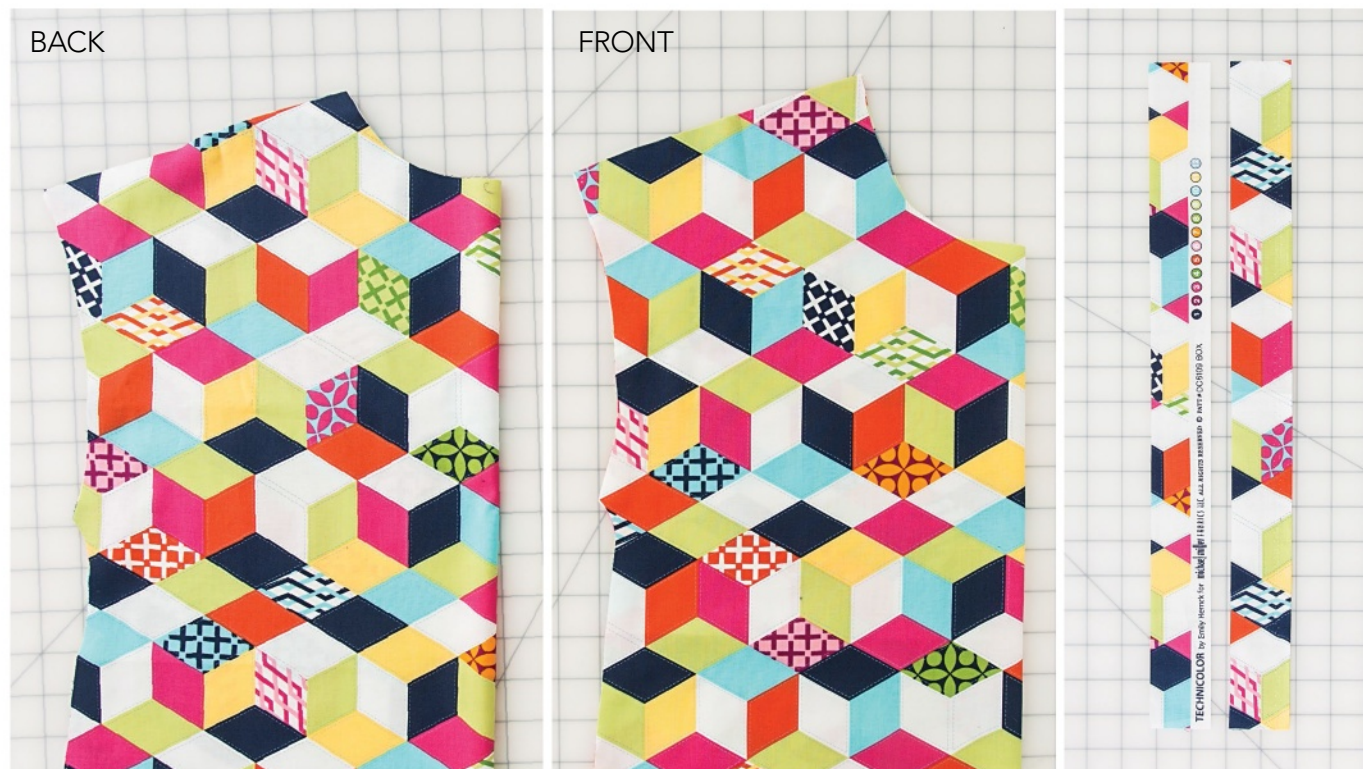


COLOUR BURST

**Sew yourself happy with this feelgood quilt
print dress by Caroline Fairbanks-Critchfield**

Cut the SELVEDGE to save the NAME of your FAVOURITE FABRICS AND DESIGNERS!

FABRIC: CUBIX BY EMILY HERRICK AND COTTON COUTURE FROM MICHAEL MILLER FABRICS



HOW TO MAKE... A QUILT-PRINT DRESS

MATERIALS

- Pattern at www.molliemakes.com/downloads
- Quilting-weight cotton or other lightweight woven fabric including cotton voile or rayon (see the chart and choose the size based on your bust measurement)
- Tear-away embroidery stabilizer: 1x1in square
- Water- or air-soluble fabric-marking pen
- Bias tape-making tool (optional)

NOTE

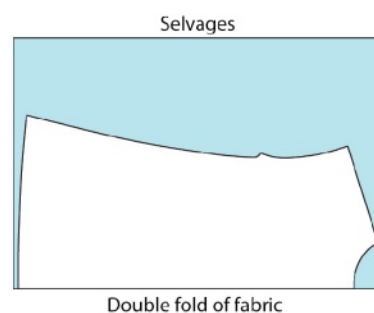
- Finished back length: 39½in from nape of neck to hem

Fabric requirements

Bust Measurement	Women's size	Main fabric	Co-ordinating fabric
30–32in	X-Small	2½ yards	½ yard
33–34in	Small	2½ yards	½ yard
35–36in	Medium	2½ yards	½ yard
37–39in	Large	2½ yards	½ yard
40–42½in	X-Large	2½ yards	½ yard

Sizing

Dress size	Strip height	Strip length
XS	1¾in	20in
S	1¾in	21in
M	1¾in	22in
L	1¾in	23in
XL	1¾in	24in





Treat yourself to some quilting love with this superstar knee-length dress in a colour-popping fabric that's sure to turn everyone's frown upside down. We heart the sweet blue drawstring waist and matching bias binding trim. Casual it up with trainers, or go girly with heels then hit the highstreet. Quilting queens rejoice, yay!

PATTERN NOTES

Only one pattern piece is required for this dress – it is divided into Part A and Part B on the pattern download. Trace both parts and tape them together along the line. Transfer the markings for both the front and the back neckline to your pattern piece. To make a tunic version, use only the Part A of the pattern piece. Do not tape the 2 parts together.

From the main fabric, cut:

- To cut out the dress all at once, arrange your fabric in 4 layers, with the 2 folds lined

up on top of each other. If your fabric is directional, cut it in half crosswise and turn 1 piece so the direction is the same before stacking the layers. Place the pattern piece along the folds. Cut out using the back neckline marking.

- Set 1 cut piece aside – this is the back of the dress.
- Recut the neckline of the remaining piece, following the pattern markings for the front neckline. This will be the front.
- From the larger fabric scraps, cut 2 strips for the drawstring casing.

From the coordinating fabric, cut 2 strips 1½in×width of fabric for the drawstring
1 square 14×14in for the bias trim.
Make 2in-wide continuous double-fold bias trim using this square.

Prepare the drawstring

Seam allowances are ½in unless otherwise noted. Finish seams with a zigzag stitch or serger.

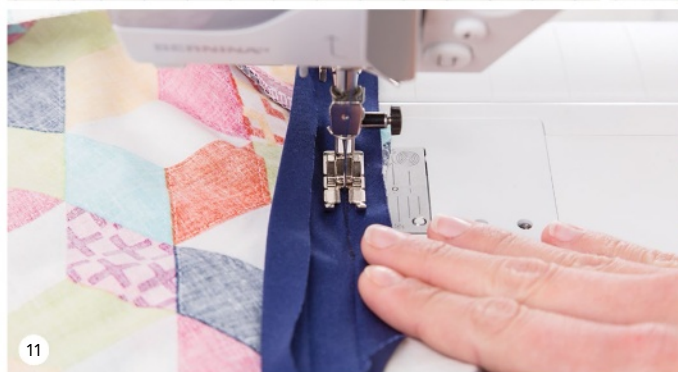
- 01 Sew together the two drawstring strips with right sides facing to make 1 long strip. **Cut the drawstring strip** to desired length. Fold and press in the same manner as the bias trim. Fold the short ends in and press. Stitch ends and long side closed.

Prepare the casing

- 02 Place the dress front piece on your work area with the wrong side facing up. Use a ruler and a water- or air-soluble fabric-marking pen to draw a straight line across the dress 4½in below the armholes. This is **the casing placement line**. Draw a casing placement line in the same location on the dress back piece.

- 03 Measure and draw two vertical lines, centered ½in apart and ½in long, on the 1×1in piece of **tear-away stabilizer**.

- 04 Fold the dress front piece in half to find the centre. Place the square of stabiliser directly beneath the center of the drawstring placement line (on »



HOW TO MAKE... A QUILT-PRINT DRESS

the wrong side). You can now neatly **sew buttonholes** over the two vertical lines.

05 Remove the excess stabilizer and **cut the buttonholes**.

06 Press all four raw edges of the **drawstring casing pieces** $\frac{1}{4}$ in to the inside. Stitch the fold down on the short ends only.

07 On the wrong side of each dress piece, **neatly pin a casing piece** centered between the sides of the dress with the top of the casing along the placement line. Now, stitch the top and the bottom of the casings close to the edge.

08 Pin dress pieces right sides facing and **stitch shoulder seams**. Press the seams toward the back.

Apply the bias trim binding

09 Open a folded side of the bias trim and **pin the right side of the bias trim** to the wrong side of the neckline, raw edges lined up. Begin pinning in the center back and leave about 4in of extra bias trim at both ends.

10 Begin sewing about **1in from the centre back** with a $\frac{3}{8}$ in seam allowance, or right in the fold.

11 **Sew around the neckline** and stop approximately 2in from the

starting point, leaving about 2in without the trim.

12 Finger-press the trim to the neckline until the trim meets, to see where the seam in the trim should be. **Pin together the tails** in the centre to mark the seam.

13 Open the **second fold** and stitch straight across the 2 tails of bias trim where you placed a pin.

14 Trim away the extra bias trim to $\frac{1}{4}$ in. Press the seam open. Finish stitching the trim to the **remaining 2in of neckline**.

15 Fold the bias trim to the front around the raw edge of the neckline. Gently press, using



steam if necessary, to help the bound **neckline lie smoothly**.

16 Pin, if desired, and **stitch the binding close** to the folded edge from the right side of the dress. Press.

17 Apply **bias trim to the arm openings** in the same manner as above, but there is no need to match up the ends. Simply sew the trim to the wrong side of the open armholes, turn and press to the front, and finish with topstitching.

Assemble the dress

18 Pin together the side seams with right sides facing. Stitch

from bound edge of the armhole to the hem. Be careful not to accidentally catch the drawstring casing in the seam. **Clip almost to the stitching in the curve** at the top by the armhole.

19 Press and **sew a 1in hem**.

20 Use a safety pin to **thread the drawstring** through a buttonhole, around the casings, and out through the other buttonhole. Wear with pride!



Just For You

Just For You by Caroline Fairbanks-Critchfield and Sarah Markos is available from Search Press. If you loved making your quilt-print dress, try out some other designs from the book. *Mollie Makes Sewing* readers can grab a copy for £15.99 including UK P&P (RRP £17.99). Visit www.searchpress.com



tea and
a chat with...

LISA COMFORT

Sewing entrepreneur, teacher, author and editor, Lisa Comfort is a busy bee. She reveals the secrets of her career success

Words: **CAROLINE ROWLAND** Photographs: **RACHAEL SMITH**

When setting up your own business there's always one essential ingredient to bring into the mix – passion. And dressmaking expert Lisa Comfort has this in spades. The love for her craft inspired her to open a sewing café Sew Over It in Clapham, South London in 2011. And more recently, in 2014, she opened a second shop in Islington, decorated in calming pastels. The two shops sell fabrics, patterns, kits and haberdashery, and offer courses covering all types of essential sewing skills from pattern cutting to quilting.

Lisa's love affair with needle and thread started way back when she was

young, having spent many afternoons stitching alongside her childminder Mrs Robinson. She continued sewing throughout her teenage years, but opted to study languages at university instead. While living in Italy she took a dressmaking course, which led her to study at the London College of Fashion on her return to the UK. Here she was offered a job with couture designer Bruce Oldfield, from which she gained invaluable industry experience before setting up on her own.

We sat down with Lisa to find out more about her crafty loves and inspirations, and what makes her tick.



Describe your style in a few words.

I would say feminine and classic with a vintage twist.

Which books and magazines are currently on your bedside table?

I'm reading a really lovely novel called *When God was a Rabbit* by Sarah Winman as well as a Marilyn Monroe biography – she's a big style icon of mine.

Name your top three creative blogs.

I like A Pair & A Spare (www.apairandasparediy.com), Tilly and the Buttons (www.tillyandthebuttons.com) and A Beautiful Mess (www.abeautifulmess.com).

Your sewing café Sew Over It is a great success. What was your inspiration for opening and how has it evolved?

The seed was sewn (literally) when I was working in couture fashion in London. I started teaching private sewing lessons on the side and soon realised I enjoyed this more than my day job. I was also becoming increasingly aware that a lot of people didn't know how to sew. My grandma's generation all sewed but my Mum's didn't. So if my generation didn't learn then it would become a lost skill.

I wanted to open a shop where like-minded people could meet, sew and learn together – this would be a space where



‘If my generation didn’t learn sewing, it would become a lost skill.’



they could work on their own projects and get help if they needed it. As for classes, I wanted them to be really varied and to offer new and exciting projects. My passion is dressmaking so we offer lots in that field.

Since opening, the business has grown a lot and there are new off-shoots to the original plan. We now have a range of dressmaking patterns and kits which we sell wholesale, meaning we can take Sew Over It to pastures new. We’ve also started to work with amazing brands such as Selfridges, Gap, John Lewis and Cath Kidston on in-store events.

Describe a typical working day.

If I’m working at the shop then I’ll get in for 9am and have a catch-up with my manager Kate before my class starts. I then teach from 10am-1pm. I enjoy teaching the beginner classes and helping people start off on their sewing journey. Next it’s lunch or sometimes a piece of cake (we have lots of cake in the shop!) and then onto meetings with various people. I often meet up with other brands to discuss events we’re running together. I then head back home before rush hour (as I often drive) and continue to work from home, usually catching up on emails. Sometimes I have to »

- 01 A vintage shirt dress stands proud with her garment friends – a 1940s wrap dress and a lace dress – in the shop.
- 02 Sewing supplies are stored in jars and bowls on a Sew Over

It signature blue painted shelf.
03 Lisa couldn’t resist adding a bit of Sew Over It blue to her home’s living room. The striking mirror was bought during a trip to India.



01 Colourful fabrics for use in the shop's **Intro to Sewing** class are closely guarded by an example of the Ultimate Shift Dress.

02 This beauty is a product of the **Mad Men Dress** classes.

03 The **Sew Over It** shop, filled with fabric and trimmings from all over the world.



work in the evenings, but that's the sacrifice I make for running my own business.

If I'm working from home all day then I'll usually be busy with designing or working on special projects, or writing my second book – it's all about sewing projects with a vintage twist, so keep your eyes peeled for it!

How does your creative process work? Do you keep sketch books or use any online resources?

A lot of it happens inside my head. I'm always absorbing inspiration from lots of different sources – from films; people I see on the street; books and museums. I will then develop these in my mind before sketching out designs. More recently, I've been asking the rest of the team to help evolve some ideas with me. It's good to discuss things with the other dressmaking teachers, as we have to think about how they'll work for classes.

Apart from your own shop, where do you source fabrics for your projects?

All over. I have someone who finds fabrics for us in Hong Kong and I recently went on a sourcing trip to Delhi, which was amazing. Closer to home, I love going to London's Goldhawk Road – I usually go there hoping to find one specific item and come back with loads!



‘Start simple. The hardest thing about dressmaking is the fitting, not sewing.’



Lots of people feel intimidated by dressmaking – what words of advice or encouragement would you give wannabe sewists?

Start simple. It's really important to start with basic shapes that require little fit. The hardest thing about dressmaking isn't the sewing but the fitting – skirts are the best way to begin and, if you can, go to a class to help you along. Then from there, try a few at home before going back to a more advanced class to learn how to make a dress. Choose easy fabrics to work with, such as cotton, so the challenge isn't sewing the fabric but learning about the

construction and fit. If you try something too hard, too soon, then you'll find it stressful and off-putting.

What's been the highlight of your crafty career so far?

It's hard to pick just one! Writing my first book was definitely a highlight, as was appearing on TV's *Kirstie's Vintage Home*. But sometimes the best moments are when classes I've designed are successful. Afterwards, I'll receive photos of people wearing their finished projects – that's definitely one of the best and most rewarding feelings. »

- 01 It's heads down at Sew Over It as Lisa guides three students on their sewing journey.
02 A collection of studs and ribbons

- Lisa brought back from her buying trip in India.
03 The class listings board – a selection of what's on offer at the sewing cafe.



01

01 Lisa in her second home – the Sew Over It shop and sewing cafe. 02 Sewing inspiration and new pattern ideas, pinned up in a corner of Lisa's home.



Sew Over It by Lisa Comfort

Lisa's book contains 25 fun projects with step-by-step photo instructions, as well as plenty of advice, inspiration and tips for all levels of crafter. Choose from simple quick-to-sew accessories or try your hand

at something more advanced, such as a skirt. There are also ideas for how to customise, update and adapt vintage garments to suit you. Lisa gives instructions for making items using a sewing machine, as well stitching by hand. *Sew Over It* is published by Ebury Press, £12. www.eburypublishing.co.uk



02

What digital and social media channels are exciting you right now?

Pinterest – it's my new obsession. I was a bit slow on the uptake, but since buying my flat I've used it all the time for inspiration. I'm also addicted to Instagram.

Where do you like searching for creative inspiration?

I love vintage books – and Pinterest boards, of course! I also take a lot of inspiration from travelling around London and checking out what other people are wearing. It may be a silhouette of a dress or a combo that is interesting. There is inspiration everywhere – you just have to be in the right mood to see it!

What projects are you currently working on?

I am currently topping up my winter wardrobe. I have just finished a couple of Betty dresses in wool and a Joan dress. I am now making a couple of Twiggy dresses – this is a new pattern we're about to release for a class. It is a Sixties-inspired dress with princess seams, a Peter Pan collar and contrasting cuffs.

Finally, what do you think is the best piece of creative advice you have ever been given?

Don't worry about fashion trends – make clothes that suit your style and figure. 🍷



Ooh

I COULD DO THAT...

Evergreen dress

If there's one item we all need in our wardrobe it's an **evergreen dress**. You know the one – the go-anywhere, with-anything, dress-it-up, dress-it-down, **always-flattering**, evergreen dress. Merricks Art's little number is super **simple to make** too, with only a little bit of pleating to get your teeth into. Head to her blog for her photographic step-by-step tutorial. www.merricksart.com



PHOTOGRAPHS: TIFFANY MUMFORD AND
CHARLOTTE MEDLICOTT, ILLUSTRATIONS: KATE SIMUNEK



Sewing **SISTER**

**Give-us-a-twirl in Tessa Eveleigh's Great
British Sewing Bee sassy skater dress**



FIT AS YOU GO

When you are working with a pattern such as this one, which has many points for adjustment, you need to work on the fit in two stages.

■ Adjust the fit of the dress at pattern stage

Take your measurements. Decide what size to cut the pattern. Because there is a waist seam, you can even choose to make the bodice to one size and the skirt to another. If you do this, you may need to smooth out the line of the side seams so they match at the join with the waist. Adjust the length of the bodice if necessary.

■ Adjust the fit at shell

When you have stitched the basic shell of the bodice together, try it on. If it is too tight or pulls anywhere, let out the seams or darts nearest to where it pulls. If there are bubbles or surplus fabric, pinch it in along the darts or seams and adjust. Do the same with the skirt. Once the pieces have been adjusted, you are ready to put on the facings and finish the hem.

HOW TO STITCH THE DARTS

Transfer the markings from the pattern

All the pattern markings need to be accurately transferred to all layers of fabric. The easiest way to do this is to use a dressmaker's tracing wheel and carbon paper. When you have cut out the pattern pieces, choose a carbon paper that is similar in colour to the fabric. Slip one piece of carbon paper face down between the two layers of fabric and another piece face down between the paper pattern and the top piece of fabric. Pin in place to keep the layers stable. Now use the tracing wheel to trace over all the dart lines. Check the lines have transferred in the form of a line of dots, then remove the pins

Pin and tack

Fold the first dart along the fold line, matching the dots at the widest part. Match the dart lines and pin. Tack just inside the dart lines.

Stitch

Starting at the widest part of the dart, stitch down the dart line, just outside the tacking lines. When you get to the sharp point at the end, take a few extra stitches on the fold to make a crisp, clean point. Cut off the threads leaving long tails. Tie the two end thread tails together in a knot and trim.

Finish

On the right side, press the darts open, working the iron right into the point to flatten it out. On the inside, press the dart towards centre of the garment. Use your dart know-how to make lovely clothes.

HOW TO MAKE... A SASSY SKATER DRESS

MATERIALS

- Pattern pieces at www.molliemakes.com/downloads
- 2.5m (2¾ yd) cotton check, 115cm (45in) wide
- 36cm (14in) invisible zip
- 60cm (24in) matching bias binding for armholes
- Small hook and eye
- Matching thread

SIZES

- Women's sizes 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18

FABRIC

- Printed cotton, woven cotton, cotton drill, challis or denim

For vintage-inspired fun that's bang on trend you really can't go wrong with this gingham

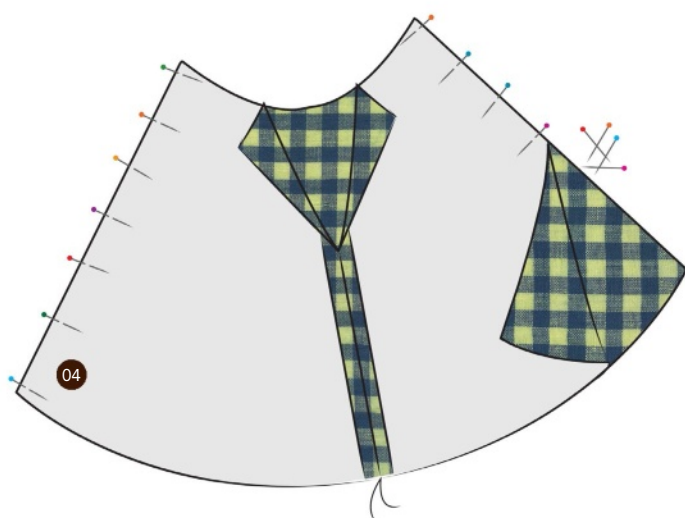
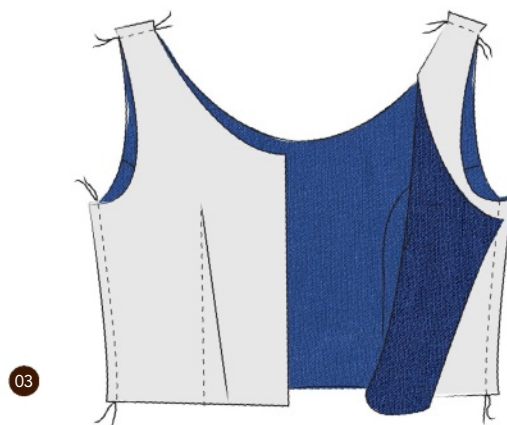
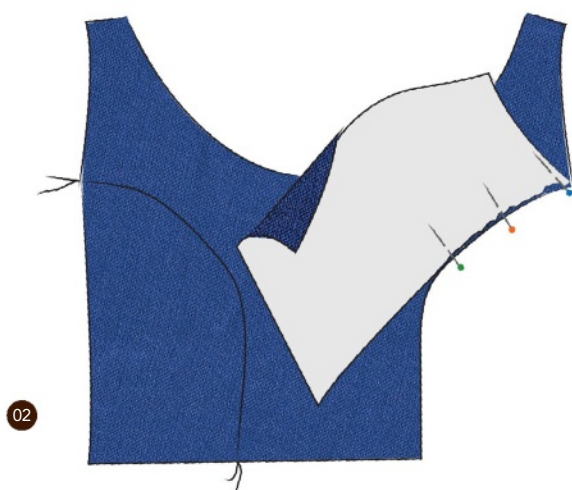
dress. With full bias-cut skirt, fitted bodice and flirty sleeves, it's totally flattering and easy to adjust to suit your size – thanks to darts, princess seams and waist seam. Go dance.

Stitch the darts

01 Transfer the dart markings from the back bodice pattern piece to both layers of fabric. Now, pin, tack and stitch the two darts, then press them towards the centre.

Prepare the front bodice

02 With right sides together and matching the notches, **pin the left front side bodice** to the left side of the centre front bodice. Repeat with right front side bodice. Stitch. Using a sharp pair of scissors, clip



CRISP DARTS CAN REALLY MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO A HANDMADE GARMENT. PRESS THE DARTS OPEN TO ACHIEVE A GREAT RESULT!

into the seam allowance at the curves, taking care not to cut any stitches. Press the seams open.

Stitch the bodice seams

03 With right sides together, match the front and back bodice pieces at the shoulder seams and side seams. Pin and stitch. Now try on the bodice and make any adjustments. Press the seams open and finish off the raw edges.

Stitch the skirt seams

04 With right sides together, pin the back skirt seam from the hemline up to the position of the bottom end of the zip. Stitch and then press the seam open.

With right sides together, match the side seams of the skirt and pin. Stitch the seams and press them open. Now it's time to try on

the skirt and make any necessary adjustments so it fits well.

Join the bodice to the skirt

05 With right sides together, pin the bodice to the skirt, matching the side seams. Pin, tack and stitch then press the seam open. Finish off the raw seam edges.

Insert the invisible zip

Insert the invisible zip, ensuring that you align the top of the zip tapes with the raw edge at the back neck.

Prepare the sleeves

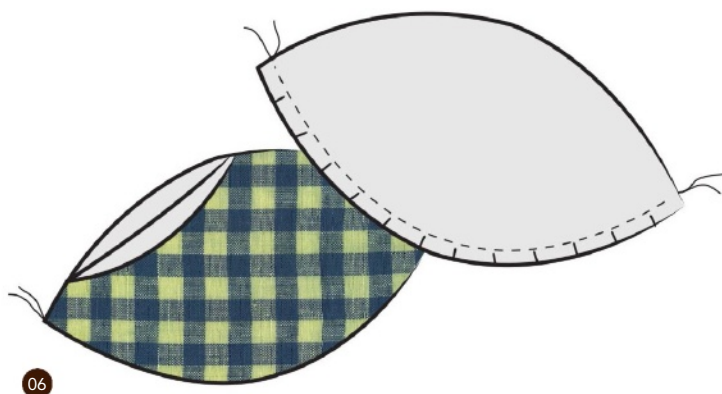
06 Pin two sleeve pieces with right sides together and stitch around the outer edge. Clip the curves and press the seams open. Turn the sleeve right side out and press. Repeat to make the other sleeve.

Attach the sleeves

07 With right sides together and matching the notches, pin the sleeves to the upper part of the armholes, making sure you only pin the lower raw edge of each sleeve to the dress. Tack and then stitch both sleeves. Trim the seams and clip the curves. Make a snip in the seam allowance of the armhole on either side of the sleeves. Press the seams open and inwards. Turn in the remaining raw edge of each sleeve by 1cm (3/8in) and press. Turn the dress inside out. Pin the turned-in edge over the stitchlines you have just completed and neatly slipstitch in place.

Bind the armholes

08 Make up 60cm (24in) of bias binding and cut it in half. Now find the centre of the first piece and,



When you've Attached the Bodice to the Skirt, insert An invisible Zip. See our how-to on page 50 for tips!

HOW TO MAKE... A SASSY SKATER DRESS

with right sides together, **pin the bias binding** around the lower part of the armhole, starting at the side seam and working outwards to the edge of the sleeves. Stitch in place. Turn the bias binding to the inside of the armhole and press. Turn in and press the raw edge, then **slipstitch it in position** on the inside of the dress. Trim the ends of the bias binding and turn them under, then slipstitch in place.

Prepare the neck facing

09 With right sides together, pin one back neck facing to each end of the front neck facing at the shoulder seams and stitch. Press the seams open. At the outer edge, turn and **press a 1cm (1/2in) hem** to the wrong side and stitch in place.

Apply the neck facing

10 With right sides together, pin the neck facing to the dress. **Match the shoulder seams** and pin, then pin around the front neck facing and to one side of the back. Go back and pin the other side of the back facing. Stitch. Clip into the seam allowance at the curves. Press the seam open press the facing to the inside of the dress.

Finish

11 Turn in the raw edges of the back neck facing and **slipstitch them discreetly** in place down each side of the zip. Stitch a small hook and eye firmly and neatly onto the inside of the dress above the zip. Hand-stitch the hem. Now for the exciting part: put on your amazing dress. Do a twirl, all for yourself, then show your friends!



The Great British Sewing Bee: Sew Your Own Wardrobe

Listen up! *Mollie Makes Sewing* readers can buy a copy of *The Great British Sewing Bee: Sew Your Own Wardrobe* by Tessa Eveleigh, published by Quadrille, for the special price of £20 (RRP £25) with free UK P&P. Call 01256 302699 quoting offer code CE8. www.quadrille.co.uk

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Time to dress up

From empire to A-line, Peter Pan collar to pussy-bow, you're sure to find a dress pattern to sew. Here are our faves!



Gotta love a Chelsea Dress for a modern take on the classic baby doll. Pick your yoke fabric for some mix 'n' match fun.

www.christinehaynes.com

PHOTOGRAPH: SUZANNE GIPSON



We all need a **Staple Dress** in our 'dresses' – and this is it! www.april-rhodes.com



Seasons change... but the **Dahlia** number is an all rounder. www.colettepatterns.com

PHOTOGRAPH: © SCHNITTCHEN.COM



We're a little in love with the **pleated chest** on the **Zoe** dress. www.schnittchen.com



Sew the **Out and About** frock for perfect simplicity. www.shopsewcaroline.com



Ooh la la! Go *très chic*, 60s style with the **Françoise** pattern. www.tillyandthebuttons.com



For cute **secretary** style, sew the **Hazel** dress. www.victorypatterns.com



tea and
a chat with...

HOUSE OF DOTS

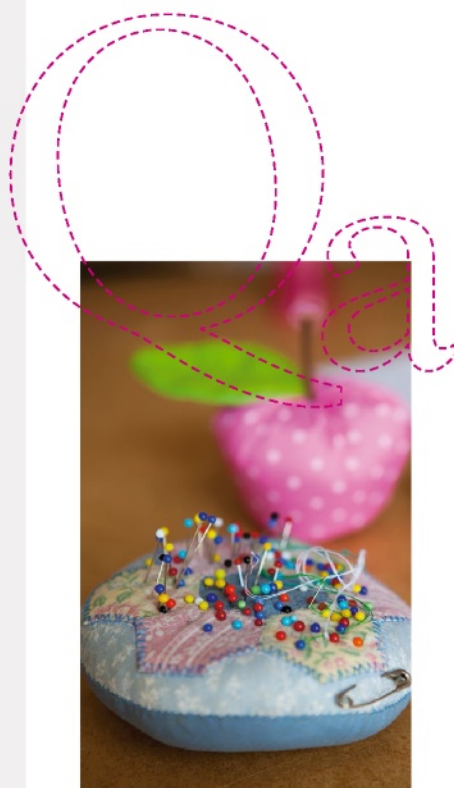
The duo behind the Dutch vintage-style dress store tell us how they combine their inspirations to design fabulous frocks

Words: **HELEN SELF** Photographs: **HENNY VAN BELKOM**

House of Dots was launched in 2009 after Mariëlle Sinke-Pieterse (above right, in the dots) and Hester de Nijs Bik (left, in checks) met at their children's school. They soon discovered they shared a passion for vintage clothing and fabrics – Mariëlle has a textile background while Hester is a teacher turned stay-at-home mum. Hester had wanted a creative career for a while, and meeting Mariëlle was the kick-start she needed. Their vintage-style dress idea was formed in the playground, and they soon launched a

webshop, House of Dots, and a store in Haarlem in the Netherlands.

Mariëlle and Hester design all the dresses, inspired by the 1920s to the 1960s. They take pride in detailed workmanship, a perfect fit and fine fabrics, and the dresses are beautifully finished. They're not just party dresses either, as the range includes work and home wear. Each design has an evocative name, such as Molly Blue Stripe and Cherry Sue BBQ, adding to the charm that saw e-boutique ModCloth's House of Dots selection completely selling out.



Can you describe the House of Dots style in a few words?

Hester: Feminine, vintage, detailed, inspired by uniforms and costumes.

Mariëlle: Our tagline is 'For that vintage feeling in a new dress'.

Which books and magazines are currently on your bedside table?

Hester: I love magazines such as *Milk*, *Papier Mache*, and *Flow*.

Mariëlle: I'm reading *Pastries* by Pierre Hermé. The 'à la mere de famille' recipe books to me are wonderful, relaxing and a great inspiration for me!

What are your top three creative blogs?

Hester: This changes constantly, but at the moment I love Hello Sandwich (www.hellosandwich.blogspot.nl), Oh Happy Day, (www.ohhappyday.com) and Studio Sjoe Sjoe (www.studiosjoesjoe.com).

Mariëlle: I'm not a huge blog follower, but I'd recommend Lisa Manuels (www.lisamanuels.blogspot.nl), because of the beautiful things she sells; and I Am Baker (www.iambaker.net) where everything is mouth-watering, beautiful and a real baking inspiration!



‘Finding the perfect red patent Mary Janes is becoming an obsession!’



How does your creative process work?

Hester: Because Mariëlle and I always agree so quickly on designs for House of Dots, our creative process doesn't take as much time as you'd expect. We get inspiration from fabrics, but we also use resources such as Google Images.

Mariëlle: I see a lot that inspires me on the street, on television, in old books, on the internet and in films. I take in details, colours and fabrics, and then glue these images together in my head to form an idea for dress design. But very often, too, when Hester and I see or feel a fabric,

we instantly know what kind of dress we should make with it.

Where do you like searching for creative inspiration?

Hester: I love to cycle in Amsterdam and visit thrift and vintage shops. And I like bookshops (ahhh, that smell!), vintage magazines, old movies, holidays in Britain, bakeries, seaside souvenir shops, cities like Paris and Berlin, the Dutch countryside, piers, deckchairs, vintage markets, French movies, vintage air hostess and maid uniforms. »

01 Welcome to the shop – we're sure Andrew Lloyd Webber wrote a musical about that clothes rack...?

02 Hester and Mariëlle's creative space is snugly housed in a former milk factory in the

centre of Haarlem.

03 The mood board in the ladies' former workshop, with postcards from Club Geluk and textile museum Tilburg, an apple brooch from a former collection, and a cookie Hester baked for Mariëlle



01

01 Mariëlle's kitchen cabinet houses a Gmundner fish plate, blue cups from Villeroy & Boch, a dotted milk jug and brown teapot from a great aunt, and heart-shaped bowls. The blue cotton bag is from Club Geluk.

02 Hester's bedroom, with bonnet by Het Grote Avontuur.

03 Crockery from grandma, thrift shops and GreenGate.



03



02

Mariëlle: I look in thrift shops, for old dresses. And on the internet, doing image searches for things like 'vintage wedding dress', 'vintage hairdo tutorial', or 'red patent Mary Janes' (finding the perfect pair is becoming an obsession!).

Which digital and social media channels are exciting you right now?

Mariëlle: Instagram. Finally we both own a smartphone! We just launched #dressvintagethursday. Our posts are mainly about our 'House of Dots' days @houseofdots_marielle

What projects are you currently working on?

Hester: We're working on our autumn/winter collection, while at home my current favourite 'projects' are making lemonade and baking cookies with my children, and helping my daughter start her own blog.

Mariëlle: A wintercoat, a 'blanket vest' from 'Club Geluk', a fox blanket and I'm knitting a little pink baby cardigan for one of our models who just had a baby girl!

What's the best piece of creative advice you've ever been given?

Hester: I can't remember ever having been given creative advice... that's really strange, isn't it? But I find a lot of comfort in wise words found on the internet, such



‘Start simple. The hardest thing about dressmaking is the fitting, not sewing.’



as, ‘Don’t compare your beginning to someone else’s middle’ and, ‘An essential aspect of creativity is not being afraid to fail’. I need this kind of advice because sometimes I paralyse myself by comparing myself to others.

Mariëlle: ‘Long thread makes a lazy seamstress!’ When I’m sewing by hand I tend to use too long a piece of thread and get all tangled up. A teacher told me the saying when I was about ten, and each time I cut a length of thread I can hear her say that. It’s the best and most true advice I ever got and I’m still too stubborn to listen!

What sewing machines do you use?

Mariëlle: We just use standard Pfaff and Singer sewing and overlock machines, nothing heavy or industrial.

Do you need a tidy environment, or do you like a bit of chaos?

Hester: I’m really good at making a mess but I don’t want anyone to be disturbed by it, so I’m constantly fighting the chaos.

Mariëlle: I start off tidy but in no time it’s chaos, in which I’m constantly losing my scissors... But when I’m finished I like to tidy up ready for the next day again, for a fresh start. »

01 This used to be a studio/workshop (with Mariëlle busy on the left, and Hester on the right), but it’s Mariëlle’s bedroom again.

02 A Molly Blue Stripes dress with camera decoration from Miko Design.

03 A peek into Hester’s cupboard, with an expressionist cat drawing by her daughter Lotta, a vintage sugarbowl and basket, a homemade fabric brooch and a trinket box with little red shoes on the lid.



01

01 Visit the House of Dots website for a hand-drawn wardrobe to die for!

02 Hester and Mariëlle use simple Singer and Pfaff sewing machines and overlockers for their dresses.



House of Dots

See Hester and Mariëlle's fun and funky illustrated website for a gorgeous range of highly wearable vintage-style dresses we defy you not to fall in love with. Part of their wardrobe is available in shops in Amsterdam, Belgium and Austria.

www.houseofdots.nl



02

What advice would you give to other people who want to start a creative business or career?

Hester: First work out what you'd really like to do. Don't look for a niche that doesn't suit you. If you do something that you love, you attract the people you're looking for.

Mariëlle: Stay true and close to yourself and make something you love. Secondly, find a catchy, suitable name for your product and build your brand and styling around it.

Have you ever thought how you would develop the business?

Hester: Ahh, we have so many plans! And so little time! I'm happy things aren't going too fast, but we would love to design some more things in the spirit of House of Dots, such as shoes, bags and our own fabric.

Mariëlle: We would love to have more selling points and expand our little brand slowly to nice, customer-friendly, vintage-loving boutiques all over the world.

What advice would you give the Hester and Mariëlle of ten years ago?

Hester: You have to stop dreaming. JUST DO IT! NOW!

Mariëlle: Yes – start your own business, right now!

RECOMMENDED READS

WE'RE SPOILT FOR CHOICE WITH BEGINNERS' GUIDES

Reviewed by **VICKY GUERRERO**



THE GREAT BRITISH SEWING BEE SEW YOUR OWN WARDROBE

Tessa Eveleigh

(Quadrille, £25)

Newbie sewists really can't go wrong with this second book from the BBC Two series. The best bit is that the patterns are clear and on full scale sheets in a separate pack – just trace them off and you're good to go. With a super-duper selection of projects for a spread of ages, from pencil skirt to wrap dress, covering sizes 8 to 18 and ideas for menfolk and little ones too, there's something for everyone. How about a pair of leggings? Go get!

www.quadrille.co.uk

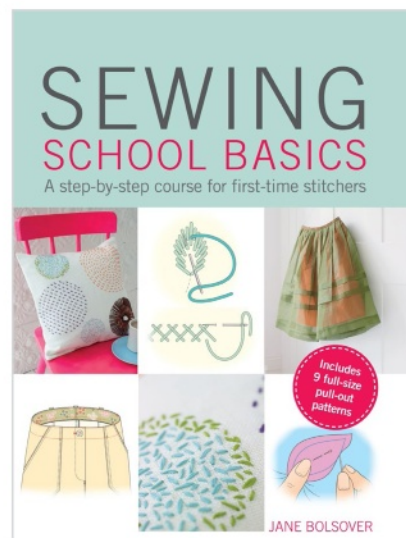
THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO DRESSMAKING

Wendy Ward

(David & Charles, £19.99)

Wendy has taken six simple, oh-so-stylish shapes and shows you everything you need to know to complete them. Measurements, sewing seams, hems, inserting zips? Pah, easy-peasy. Make a T-shirt, maxi dress, fishtail skirt, zipped jacket and shift dress and wear with pride. And if you're already experienced, there's a fab section on how to customise the pieces to make them your own.

www.fwcommunity.com/uk



SEWING SCHOOL BASICS

Jane Bolsover

(CICO Books, £14.99)

This is a book your grandma might put in front of your fumbly paws for your first steps into sewing clothes and home furnishings. You'll work through patchwork, dressmaking, curtain-making, quilting and embroidery. Homemakers, here we come. What kit you need, what fabrics, how to use patterns? Tick. Workshops? Tick. Exciting step-by-step projects? Tick. Hand-embroidered cushions, a lined throw, a shirred sundress and an organdie pleated skirt will all be yours.

www.rylandpeters.com



THE REFASHION HANDBOOK

Beth Huntington

(C&T Publishing, £16.99)

We love the trend for diy chic and Beth (aka the renegade seamstress) knows a

thing or two about transforming tired and forlorn charity shop finds into snazzy wallet-friendly new togs. Hot on the heels of her successful blog the diy queen has now amassed a bundle of her top customisations into a new book. Turn an old T-shirt into a sweet fitted top or make a handbag from a tablecloth and a vintage leather jacket. Ideas a-plenty.

www.searchpress.com



MAY MARTIN'S SEWING BIBLE

May Martin

(HarperCollins, £25)

Star of BBC Two's the Great British Sewing Bee and Women's Institute figurehead, May Martin brings her 40 years of experience

as a sewing teacher into this tome where she shares her tips and tricks for beginners. Overlocking, fastenings, hemming, it's all in here, with 40 projects from clothing for women, men and kids, to crafts and home furnishings. If you've got a sewing machine and lovely fabric you can't wait to cut into, you're ready to go!

www.harpercollins.co.uk



MAKE & DO

Beci Orpin

(Hardie Grant, £20)

If we could have one design guru over for a cuppa and girly crafting session this

Christmas, it would have to be Beci. Give her some paper, scissors and fabric and she'll whiz up amazing creations in no time, and being the good egg she is, she's now sharing her latest collection of fun and clever ideas. Open up Make & Do and have a lovely afternoon, read her chatty introductions, follow her colourful illustrations and get in a making mood. It's almost as if she's there!

www.hardiegrant.co.uk

Killer kecks

*With these top trews
everyone will be asking,
"Where d'ya get them
jaaayns?" Time to swing
yer pants in celebration*



Love these **pleated pants**. With a slim fit leg, the pattern is **adaptable** into shorts, so your pins are sorted for all seasons.

www.papercutpatterns.com

PHOTOGRAPH: LIISA SALONENS



Skinny jeans with striking front pockets.
Jamie Jeans, www.namedclothing.com



The **Portia** trousers – wide-legged trews for office chic. www.sewmesomething.co.uk



Love the scalloped hem on the **Peter & the Wolf** pants. www.papercutpatterns.com



Oh lawks, we just love these **Turia dungarees**! www.paulinealicepatterns.com.



Get party-ready in your versatile **Holly Jumpsuit**. www.byhandlondon.com



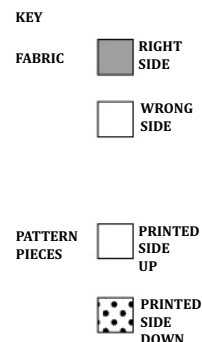
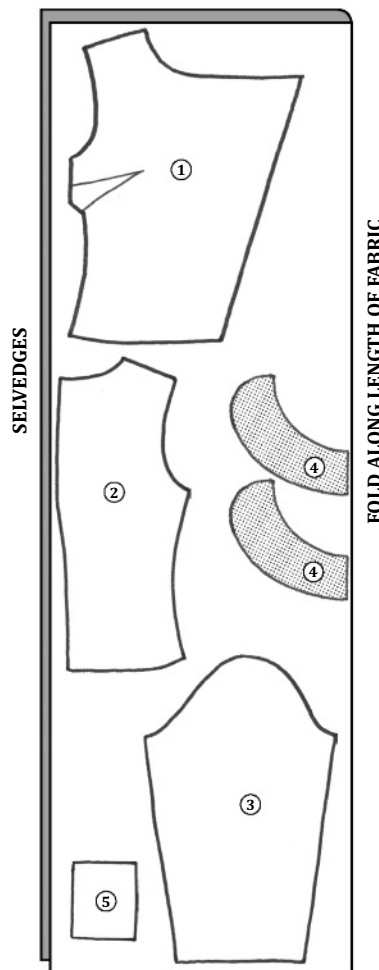
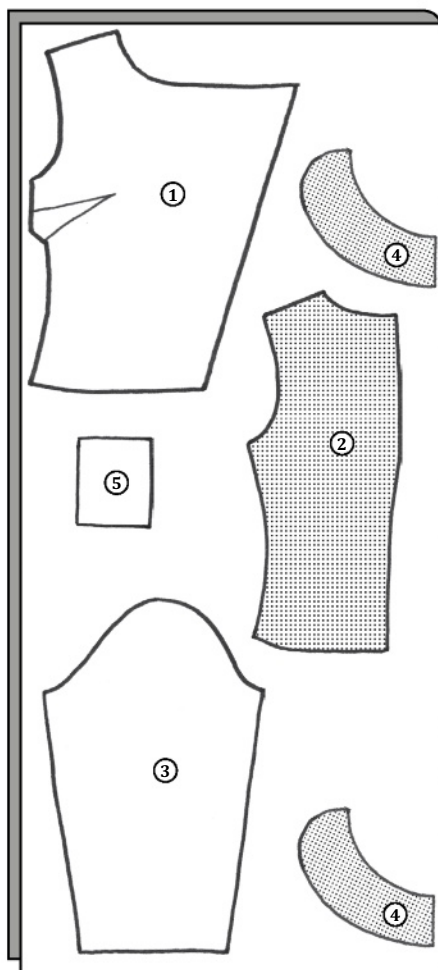
We fancy the pants off these **Chataigne** shorts. boutique.deer-and-doe.fr

PHOTOGRAPH: ELEONORE KLEIN. FABRICS FROM LES TROUVAILLES D'AVANDINE

ZIP AND GO

**Shun the middle of the road with
Wendy Ward's striking jacket**





Key to pattern pieces:
1 - jacket front
2 - jacket back
3 - sleeve
4 - optional collar
5 - optional pocket

HOW TO MAKE... A ZIPPED JACKET

MATERIALS

- Pattern pieces at www.molliemakes.com/downloads
- If using minimum 112cm (44in) wide fabric – 1.9m
- If using minimum 140cm (55in) wide fabric – 1.5m
- Light- to medium-weight iron-on interfacing 10cm (4in)
- Matching colour sewing thread
- Open-ended zip 41cm (16in)
- Bias binding 7m approx. and no wider than 16mm (5/8in)

We love a diagonal zip, and can't wait to get started on Wendy Ward's cool-as-a-cucumber jacket. Layer over a floaty top and skinnies to hit a casual, tailored look; or make it in pale denim and team with a patterned maxi dress for a freewheeling, summer boho vibe.

Once you've got the hang of the basic style, you can go to town customising – add patch pockets or a cute Peter Pan collar. As well as denim, this jacket looks ace in canvas or corduroy, and works well in heavy knits such as jersey cotton or boiled wools too.

You'll tick the technique boxes of sewing seams and darts, and setting-in sleeves – and because all the exposed seams are beautifully finished with bias binding, you'll get plenty of practice with that too. Use a colour to match your fabric or go for a flash of contrast.

Cutting your fabric

Refer to **Cutting Plan One** if using 140cm (55in) wide fabric (with or without a **one-way print**).

Refer to **Cutting Plan Two** if using 112cm (44in) wide fabric (with or without a one-way print). Fold your

fabric **in half**, so you can cut mirror-image pieces where **indicated**.

Sewing notes

Seam allowance: 1.5cm (5/8in), except armholes and neck, which are 1cm (3/8in).

Hem allowance: 1.5cm (5/8in).

Note: These seams are neatened using bias binding as a trim or **visible edge:** centre back, shoulders, side seams, underarm.

Key to diagrams

Shaded = right side (RS)
White = wrong side (WS)

SIZE	1	2	3	4	5
BUST	98.5cm (38¾in)	102.5cm (40½in)	106.5cm (42in)	110.5cm (42in)	115.5cm (45¼in)
WAIST	89.5cm (35¼in)	98.5cm (38¾in)	97.5cm (38½in)	97.5cm (38¾in)	106.5cm (42in)
LENGTH	47cm (18½in)	47.5cm (18¾in)	48cm (18¾in)	48.5cm (18¾in)	49cm (19¼in)
SLEEVE LENGTH	59cm (23¼in)	60cm (23¾in)	61cm (24in)	62cm (24in)	63cm (24¾in)



Applying fusible interfacing

01 To stop the **shoulders, neck and the front edges** of the jacket stretching, cut 1.5cm (5/8in) wide strips from your interfacing.

Iron them onto the WS of the jacket back shoulder, and front and back neck **seam allowances**, with the edge of the interfacing just **inside the edge** of the fabric, so the interfacing covers the seam line 1.5cm (5/8in).

It's a good idea to use a **pressing cloth** or towel to protect your iron from the interfacing. Do the same to the **diagonal front edges** of the jacket fronts.

Note: the interfacing strips aren't shown on the rest of the diagrams.

Marking the zip position

02 Mark the zip position on the left jacket front with a **line of tacking**, so that it's visible on the RS of the

fabric, ready to **position the zip** accurately later.

Sewing the jacket

03 Join the **centre back** seam of the jacket backs.

04 Make **darts** in the jacket fronts.

05 Join the **shoulders** of the jacket fronts to the jacket back, RS facing.

06 Join the **underarm seams** of the jacket sleeves.

07 Join the **side seams** of the jacket back and front.

08 Insert the **sleeves** using a 1cm (3/8in) seam allowance.

Inserting the zip

09 Separate the zip. Place the **right-hand side** of the zip, face down onto the RS of the **right jacket front**, with the teeth level with the seamline, 1.5cm (5/8in) in from the **edge of the fabric**.

Position the stopper at the top of the zip, level with the **notch** at the top of the seam, and turn in the top of the **zip tape**. Pin, tack and machine in place with a zipper foot on your machine.

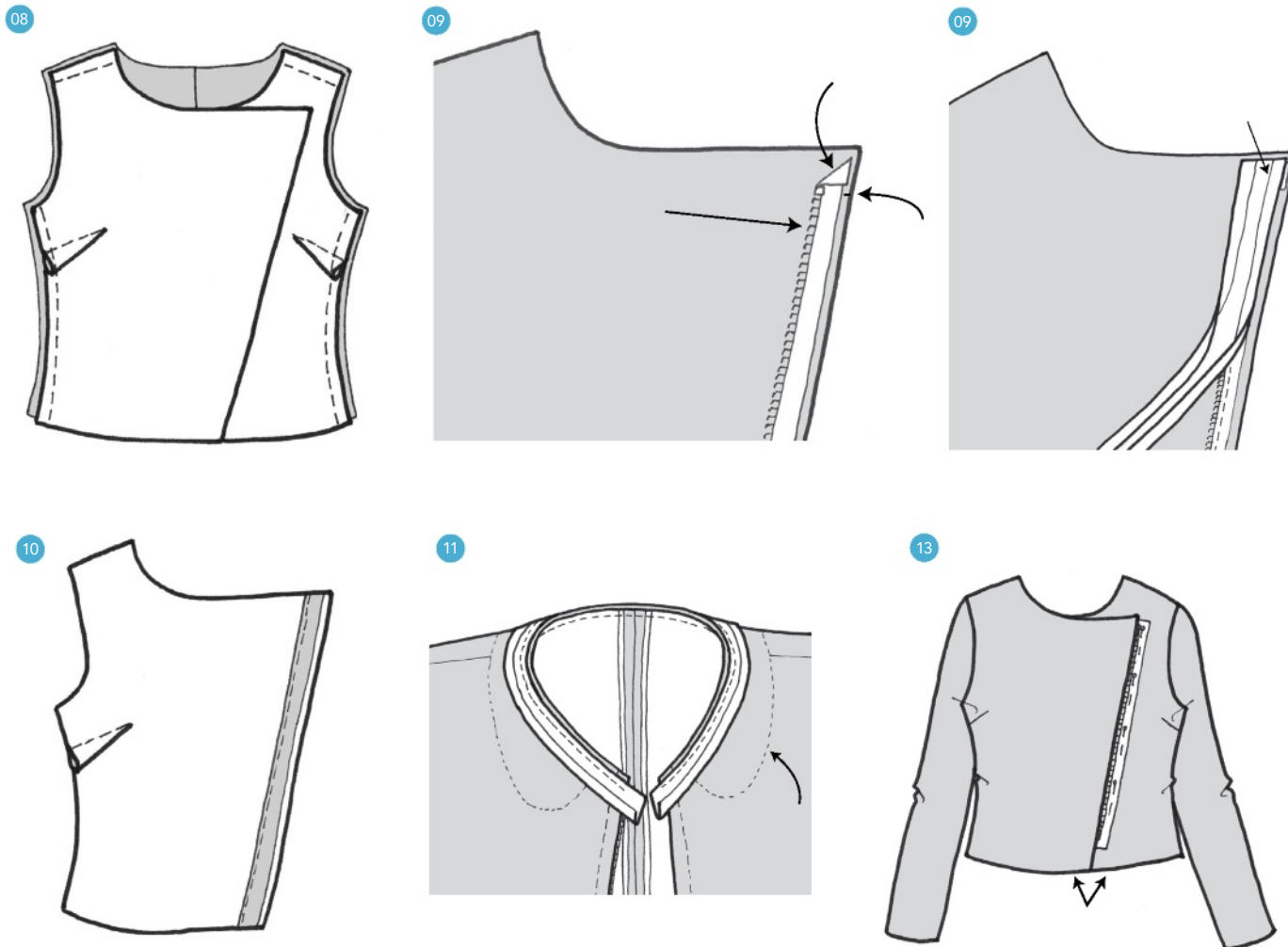
Finishing the front edges

10 Finish off both **front edges** of the jacket fronts with bias binding used as a **facing** (turn to page 102 for our bias binding How To).

Make sure the **first line of stitching** for the bias binding on the right front is level with the line of stitching **attaching the zip**. Next, cut the bias binding level with the **top and bottom** of the front edges.

Finishing the neck edges

11 Finish the **jacket neck** edge with bias binding used as a facing. Make »



HOW TO MAKE... A ZIPPED JACKET

sure you have at least 1.5cm (5/8in) of binding **extending beyond each front edge**.

If you choose to have a collar, this will be **sandwiched** between the jacket and bias binding.

Hemming

12 Hem the **sleeves** and the bottom of the jacket, using **bias binding** as a facing. Make sure you finish the ends of the binding appropriately – the **sleeve hems are circular**, while the hem at the bottom of the jacket has **open ends**.

13 Re-attach the **left side** of the zip to the (now-attached) right side of the zip. Pin the left side of the **zip into position** over the line of tacking on the left jacket front. Ensure the **hems are level** on each

side of the front when the zip is **pinned** in place.

To finish, tack the zip into position, then **machine into place** with a zipper foot on your machine. Your new jacket is ready to **wow!**



Beginner's Guide to Dressmaking

This project and many others can be found in *Beginner's Guide to Dressmaking* by Wendy Ward, published by David & Charles (© FW Media International, Ltd 2015), priced £19.99. *Mollie Makes Sewing* readers can get their copy for £14.99 inc free UK p&p*. Just call 01206 255777, quoting the code: MM214.

*OFFER CLOSES 10TH MARCH 2015



Ooh

I COULD DO THAT...

Newsboy
cap

Read all about it! Flat caps in bang on trend shocker! Well, actually we're not so surprised. After all, they're warm (especially when stitched from classic tweed), practical (they keep the rain off, while letting you actually see out from underneath), and they look pretty darned awesome with a waistcoat and jeans. Stitch yours from Waffle Patterns' free download, and you'll be headline news. wafflepatterns.tumblr.com

A woman with curly hair is wearing a beige, knee-length cape with a toggle closure. She is also wearing teal gloves and dark pants. The cape has a wide collar and a single toggle on the front.

Winter warmers

One of the reasons we love winter is the opportunity for a new winter coat. So many amazing styles!

Stay warm *and* stylish this season, with this **Trendy Cape** pattern from Vanessa Pouzet. Sling it on, for perfect ladies who lunch chic.
www.vanessapouzet.com

PHOTOGRAPH © SCHNITTCHEN.COM



The collarless **Audrey coat** (left), is a great beginners' pattern. Or try the **Eve jacket** pattern with its amazing collar/hood. www.schnittchen.com

PHOTOGRAPH: AMELIA SHEPHERD



For utilitarian chic, go for the **unlined raw-edged coat**. www.themakersatelier.com

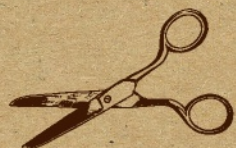


Can't resist a duffle, especially this **Short Duffle coat** www.wafflepatterns.etsy.com



The **Watson jacket** (left) has it all: double-breasted, fitted with **capelet**! For more cover, choose the **Milano cape**, for classic girly chic. www.papercutpatterns.com

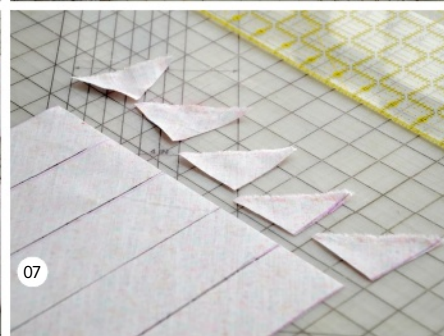




Mollie MAKES INSTITUTE

— GUIDE TO — MAKING YOUR OWN BIAS BINDING

Let Alexandra Smith talk you through getting sussed with bias binding – now you can add a contrasting flash to Kit and Shini's see-through raincoat (page 104) and Wendy Ward's asymmetric zip jacket (page 94). Use a rotary cutter and bias tape maker tool to get oh-so-neat results.



WE'RE BIASED, YOU KNOW

Want to know what is really great? Making your own bias tape. It does take a little time and effort, but is well worth it. Because I work primarily with natural fibre fabrics, I find that making my own bias tape out of the same fabric type produces much better results and there is that whole 'variety is the spice of life' thing. I do use packaged bias binding as well for the sheer convenience of it, but make my own when I can.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- A good size rectangle of fabric (for this example I used about a ½m (0.5yd) of cotton print, but you can use a smaller rectangle with no problem)
- A fabric marker, pencil, or tailor's chalk
- A long ruler (clear quilting type works great!)
- Rotary cutter and self-healing mat or fabric shears
- Bias tape maker tool (not essential, but highly recommended)
- Thread
- Iron and ironing board

There are a few different methods to making bias tape, I will be showing you how I make mine, but you should explore other methods to find what suits you best. Bias tape making tools are pretty nifty and inexpensive gadgets that come in a couple different sizes from ¼in up to 2in. The width marked on the package is for single fold bias tape, so a 1in bias maker tool will make ½in double fold, etc.

PREPARE AND CUT YOUR FABRIC

Lay out your rectangle of fabric wrong side up. To find the bias, simply fold the fabric so that the edges meet to form a triangle as shown. Press the fold and this line is the bias grain. Unfold fabric.

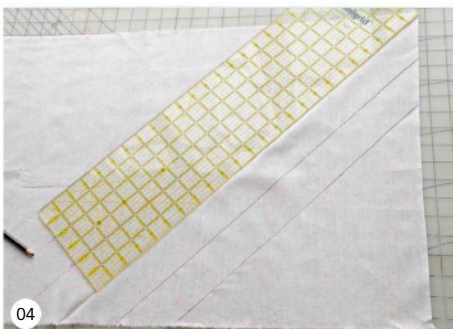
Using a long ruler, begin marking off strips along the bias by measuring equal distances from the line you pressed. Your strips should be twice the width of your completed bias tape. Since I am making 2.5cm (1in) bias tape, my strips are going to be 5cm (2in) wide. As I get close to the corner, the strips become quite small so I generally discard those as I don't want to bother with the



Whatever Lola Wants

Find super stitchy blogger, Alexandra Smith, at Whatever

Lola Wants and glean fantastic ideas and inspiration a-plenty. She has also penned the book *Simple Sewing with Lola Nova* where she leads you through some fabulous projects, transforming your charity shops finds into lovely bags and gifts. Catch up with Lola Nova at: www.lolanovablog.blogspot.com



really little bits.

Once you have marked off your strips, use a rotary cutter, ruler and self sealing mat, or fabric shears to cut along the lines to make your strips. I then cut off the angled ends of the strips as shown.

Place two strips at 90 degree angles with the right sides together, raw edges matching and pin in place. Sew diagonally across the two strips as shown. Continue sewing the remaining strips together in the same manner to create one long strip. Sew each one the same way so that your seams are all in the same direction. Trim all of your seam allowances to a scant 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) and press the seams open. Trim the seam bits again. Now that you have a nice long bias strip, let's make it into binding!

THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB

To insert the strip into the bias tape maker tool, fold one end into a point with the wrong side facing up, insert the strip into the wide end of the tool. You can use the tip of a seam ripper to

gently guide the strip through. Make sure that your strip is centered in the tool as shown.

Gently pull the tool as you hold the end of the strip and press with the iron as you go. Continue to press the entire length of the strip. You now have a nice amount of single fold bias tape. If you would like to make it into double fold bias tape, simply fold the tape in half with the single folds on the inside and press.

How much bias tape will it make? You can first calculate the area of your fabric rectangle by multiplying the length by the width, and then divide that number by the width of your strips. This will give you a rough approximation since you may not be using the smaller corner strips of the fabric. To tell you the truth, I don't do the math, I just go with this bit:

A half yard of fabric will yield a good several yards of bias binding of most widths. I will often make a smaller amount for a specific project that requires only a little bit of bias tape, so it's up to you how much you make at any given time. Now, go give it a try!



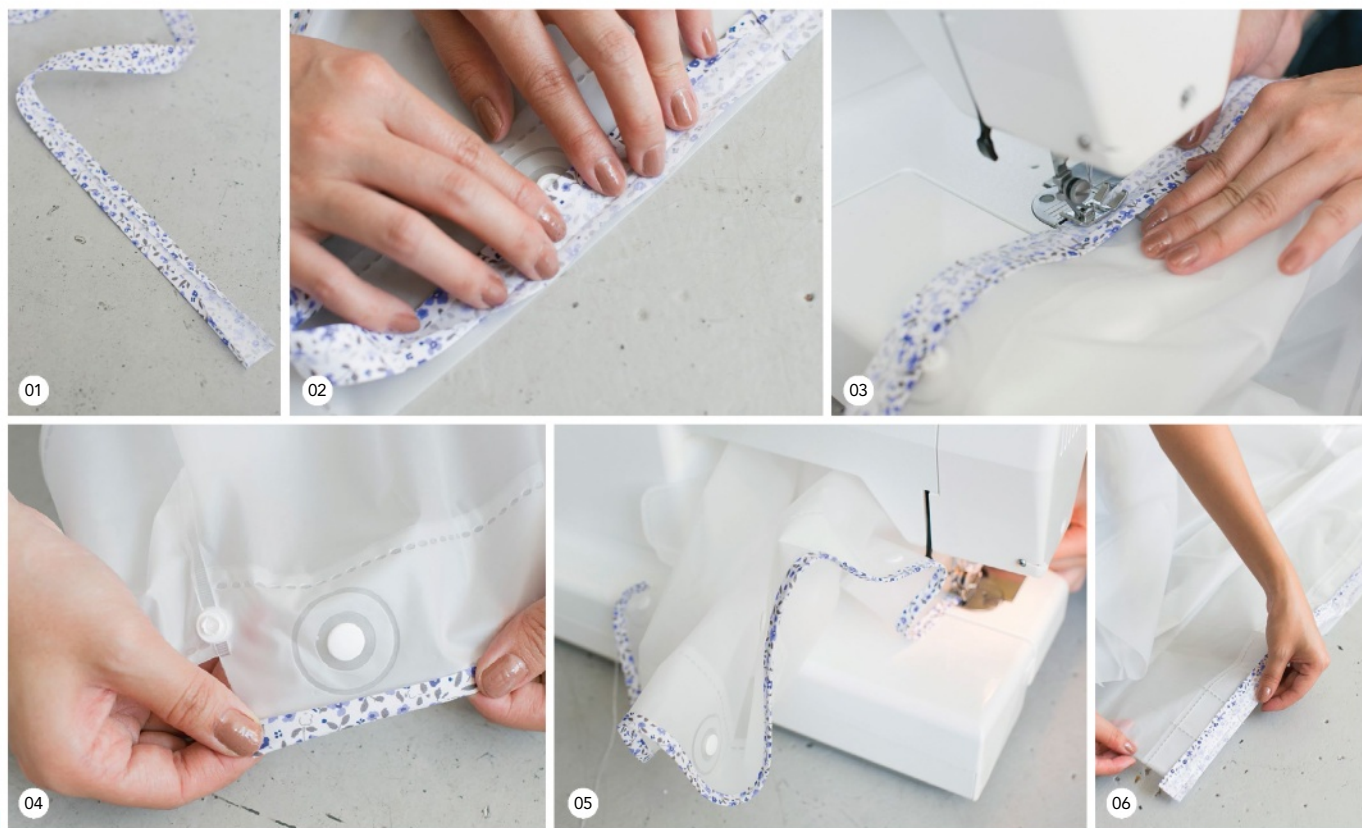


RAINY DAY MAKE

Wanna go puddle-jumping? Here's a solution
that's both practical and pretty. Weehee!



FOR A TWIST ON A 60S STYLE PRETTY-UP A SIMPLE
CLEAR MAC WITH A FLASH OF BIAS TAPE TRIM



HOW TO MAKE... A SEE-THROUGH MAC

MATERIALS

- 4m (13ft) of floral print single-fold bias tape (enough to cover front opening, sleeve cuffs, hood and hem)
- Measuring tape
- Fabric scissors
- Raincoat
- Pins
- Matching colour thread
- Sewing machine

Outdoors girls rejoice – we've got on-the-go raindrop busting style all wrapped up with this cute diy project, thanks to the creative talent behind *Adorn*. All you need is a cheap and cheerful see-through raincoat and some bright floral bias tape to make the trims and you're ready for some fun outside in the drizzle! Go on, you know it makes the hot cuppa and chocolate brownie afterwards all the more worth it...

Thinking ahead, this is a look that'll totally rock during the festival season, and why not make a couple of these handy cover-ups for little ones – just scrunch them into a bag for those will-it, won't-it grey sky days.

- 01 Measure the amount of **bias tape** you need for each area.
- 02 Open out one side of the bias fold. With the **floral-print side down**, line it up to the inside edge of the raincoat. Pin to secure it.

- 03 Sew along the bias fold with a straight stitching line.
- 04 Turn the raincoat right side up and open out the bias tape. **Fold the bias tape** fully around the edge of the raincoat. The sides of the bias tape should line up on the inside and outside edges of the

raincoat. Then pin to secure it.

- 05 Sew a straight stitching line close to the outside edge of the bias tape, removing the pins as you go.
- 06 Repeat steps 1–5 to **decorate the other parts** of the raincoat. You're set to greet the rain in style!



Adorn

We love fossicking through charity shops for that perfect secondhand skirt or jacket and gems and jewellery, and know you do too! So, be inspired by Kit and Shini's how-to's (love the photography) and get addicted to DIY fashion. *Adorn* is published by Hardie Grant for £16.99. www.hardiegrant.co.uk



Kit Lee and Shini Park

Designers, photographers and creative consultants, busy girls Kit (left) and Shini (right) give new cool to old threads in their fab blogs. Steal their style at: www.styleslicker.com (Kit) and www.parkandcube.com (Shini).

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In this third edition of *Mollie Makes Home*, we bring you more inspiration from the **homes of stylists**, boutique owners and designer makers. Beautiful spaces made **quirky and individual** with clever styling, handmade touches, and upcycled and salvaged furniture. We share **our favourite projects**, including woven wall-hangings and patchwork pillows. Plus, find a special first-ever print edition of award-winning *91 Magazine* inside.

Available from WH Smith, newsagents and supermarkets or order online at
www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/stitch-craft



PHOTOGRAPHS: CHRIS MIDDLETON



EVERYDAY BAG

Raid your fabric stash and whiz up
Beci Orpin's patched tote today



HOW TO MAKE... A PATCHED TOTE BAG

MATERIALS

- Fabric: 4 pieces fabric for outer, approx. 35 x 45cm (13¾ x 17¾in) each, including seam allowance
- 4 pieces fabric for lining (use the same fabric as for the outer, or a contrasting colour)
- 1 piece fabric for bottom (I used velvet), approx. 35cm (13¾in) square
- 1 piece fabric for bottom lining, approx. 35cm (13¾in)
- Square stiff interfacing, for bottom piece only
- Iron
- 16 x 12mm (½in) gold rivets
- Hammer
- 2m (2yd) of 1cm (½in) natural rope (size no. 7), cut in half

A Beci Orpin project always gets us excited – lovely colours, easy to make and a real mood-brightener. So when we came across this fantastic tote bag – check out the patchwork design and fab fabrics! – we thought, "This is us sorted for an afternoon's sewing! Bliss."

It's a bag for casually throwing over your shoulder to run errands, pop out for a coffee with the girls, and generally make your day so much chirpier. Beci chose a lush bold check and mustard yellow but go for whatever colour combos float your boat.

You might need to flex your muscle power to fix the big rivets

– but hey, us stitchers have brawn as well as beauty. Once you've got the hang of it, why not make another one or two for gifting this Christmas? It'll surely make your girl pals pleased as punch.

- 01 Following the templates, **cut out all the fabric pieces** as indicated.
- 02 **Iron the interfacing** onto the wrong side of the bottom piece.
- 03 Sew the **long edges** of the outer fabric pieces together to create one **large piece**, then sew the two long edges together to **make a tube**. Then repeat with the lining fabric pieces.
- 04 Iron all the **seams open**.
- 05 With right sides facing together,



pin and then **sew the bottom outer piece** to the outer fabric tube. Then make small cuts around the **bottom piece** to make this easier to manipulate (less tucks will be needed).

06 Repeat with the **lining and bottom lining pieces**, but leave a 10cm (4in) gap when sewing, so you can turn the **fabric** the right way out later.

07 Turn the outer fabric right way out. **Place the outer fabric inside the lining** so that the right sides are facing. Sew the top seam.

08 Pull the outer fabric **through the hole** left in the bottom of the lining. Iron the top seam.

09 Using a pencil, **mark small**

dots where the rivets are to be inserted. I positioned them on either side and two **in between** each seam (four rivets per panel).

10 **Cut small holes** in the marked spots, so that the inner cylinder of the rivet can fit through.

11 **Hammer the rivets** into

position. Do this on a hard surface. Sew up the bottom of the lining.

12 **Thread the rope through the rivets.** Thread one piece of the rope through one side of the bag and **one piece** through the other side, fastening each end with a knot. There, it's **in the bag!** »



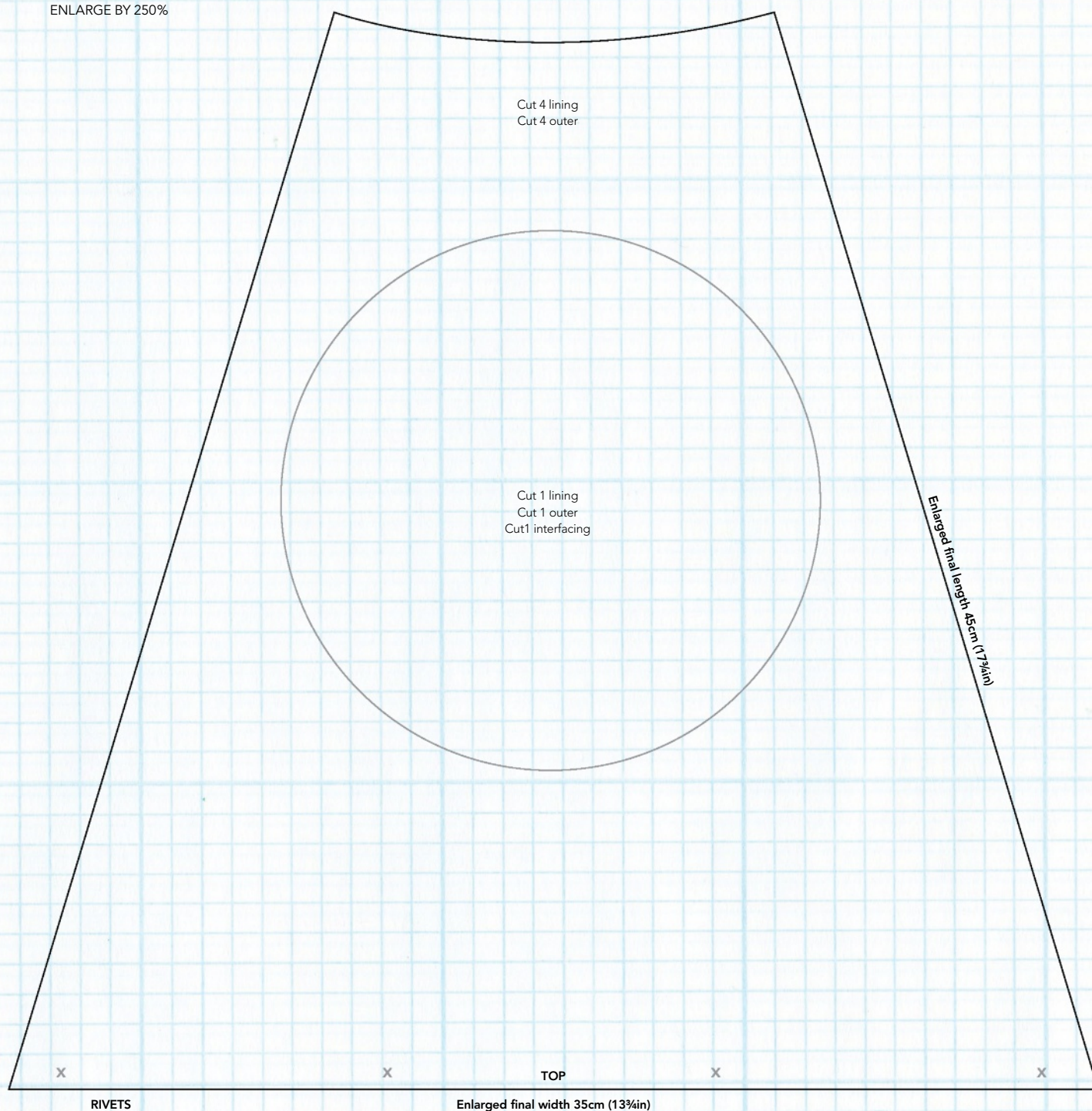
Make & Do

Our fave textile designer from down under is back with another colour-popping book, jam-packed with winter-blues-banishing projects. Readers of *Mollie Makes Sewing* can buy *Make & Do* by Beci Orpin for £18.00 (RRP £20) including free UK P&P. Call 01256 302699, and quote code GLR CG4 www.hardiegrant.co.uk

TOTE BAG

BY BECI ORPIN

ENLARGE BY 250%



Thank you for making this project from Mollie Makes Sewing. The copyright for these templates belongs to the originators of the project. They work hard to create projects for you to make and love, so please don't re-sell or distribute their work without permission from Mollie Makes and Hardie Grant. We don't mind if you make a copy for a friend but please do not make any part of the templates or instructions available to others through your website or a third party website, or copy it multiple times without our permission. Please pass on this information if you make a copy for a friend. Copyright law protects creative work and unauthorised copying is illegal. We appreciate your help.



Ooh

I COULD DO THAT...

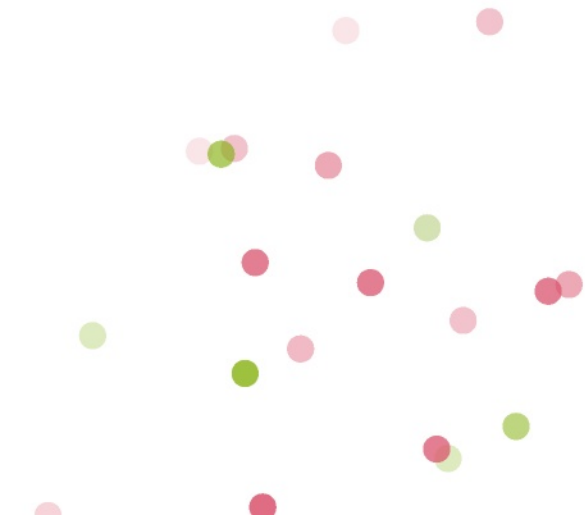
Origami bag

Origami is all the rage right now, but why should our paper-lovin sisters have all the fun? Lola Nova agreed and made this super-slouchy Origami Market bag. "The name is taken from its unique folding technique," she says. "It makes up in a flash and is nice and roomy for all of your market treasure." Lola's version was based on a bag she received as a gift that was handmade by a family friend from the Philippines. Find the tutorial on her blog. www.lolanovablog.blogspot.co.uk

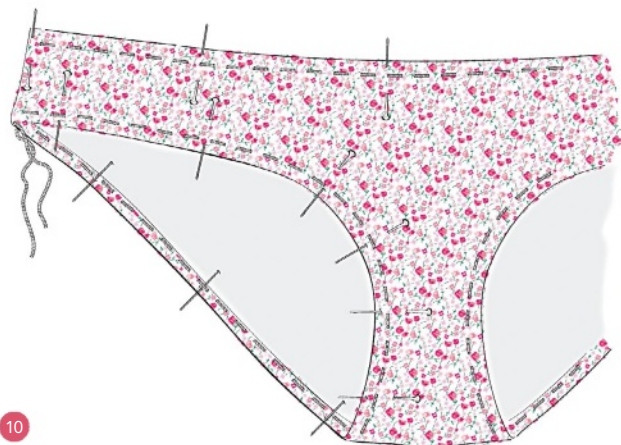
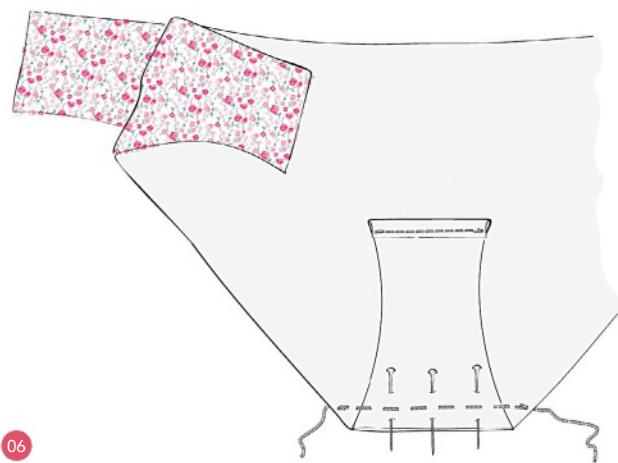


Hello, blossom

Shake your booty in these
pretty-as-a-posy minis and
feel on top of the world







HOW TO MAKE... A PAIR OF MINI KNICKERS

MATERIALS

- Patterns at www.molliemakes.com/downloads
- Cotton lawn fabric (0.5–1m)
- 8mm leg and waistband elastic (1.5–2.5m)
- Cotton jersey for the floating gusset
- Ribbon for the bow

What does a gorgeous girl wear underneath her awesome new hand-sewn frocks? Lush undergarments of course and here's an oh-so-cute pair of cotton lawn knickers from professional lingerie designers Katherine Sheers' and Laura Stanford's new book. A great project to progress your sewing skills, you'll soon be whizzing up lots of these lovelies to give as all-out girly pressies – go to town personalising them, handpicking lovely fabrics, trims and bows from your local haberdashery. A perfect design for many shapes, this style sits on the hips with a slight fullness to the front and back panels.

Laying and cutting out the pattern pieces

- 01 Iron the cotton lawn and cotton jersey fabric.
- 02 Fold the cotton lawn in half along the crosswise grain. Lay front and back **paper pattern pieces** on the fold, pin in place and cut out.
- 03 Fold the cotton jersey with the main stretch perpendicular to the fold. Lay the **floating gusset paper pattern piece** along the fold, pin in place and cut out.
- 04 Remove the pins and **open the paper pattern pieces** out flat.

Sewing a floating gusset

- 05 Turn the seam allowance along the top edge of the floating gusset

pattern piece to the wrong side of the fabric and **topstitch in place**.

- 06 Align the gusset seam of all three pattern pieces by laying the front and back panel right side to right side. Then place the **floating gusset wrong side uppermost** onto the back panel. Pin, tack and sew along the gusset seam.
- 07 Turn the floating gusset so that it sits wrong side to wrong side with the front panel. It should sit centrally with a gap down each side. **Tack in place** along the leg lines. Press the gusset seam flat.

Sewing a french seam

- 08 Lay the front and back panels wrong side to wrong side and align



the side seam. Pin, tack and sew a 5mm seam allowance. Trim the seam allowance to 3mm.

09 Turn the front and back panels right side to right side, **press the seam allowance** flat and sew another 5mm seam allowance to complete the French seam. The side seam has a 10mm seam allowance to allow you to sew a French seam which encloses the raw edges of fabric within it.

Attaching elastic

10 Turn the seam allowance for the **waistband and leg** openings, pin and tack in place.

11 To determine how long the waistband and leg elastic should

be, **measure around the waistline** of your pattern pieces and cut the elastic 20% shorter than this measurement. Add 3cm back into the length of the elastic before you cut it (this extra will make it easier to join the ends of the elastic together afterwards). **Repeat for the leg openings.**

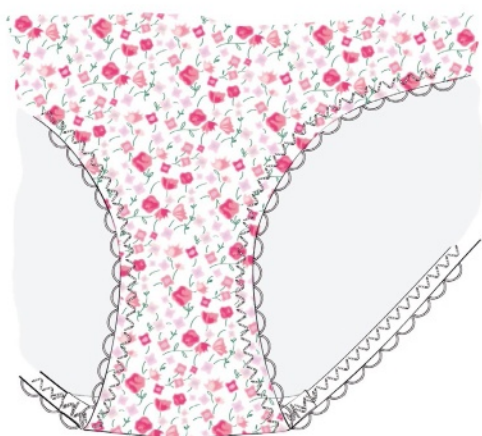
To accurately calculate the lengths of elastic required, always measure the garment itself not the paper pattern pieces. Then, because elastic varies in modulus, once you've determined the length of the waistband elastic, slide it onto your body to see if it feels comfortable. If you need to make any adjustments, this change can

then be applied as a percentage to the leg elastic too.

12 Make one length of **leg elastic into a loop**. Overlap the elastic by 15mm at each end. This won't be the finished overlap, but it gives you and your machine something to grip onto while you sew the ends together. It will be trimmed in the next step.

13 Sew one, back and forth row of stitches through the **centre of the overlap**. Trim each end by 10mm to leave 5mm each side of the join.

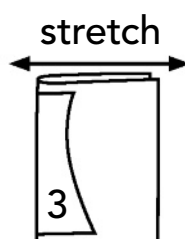
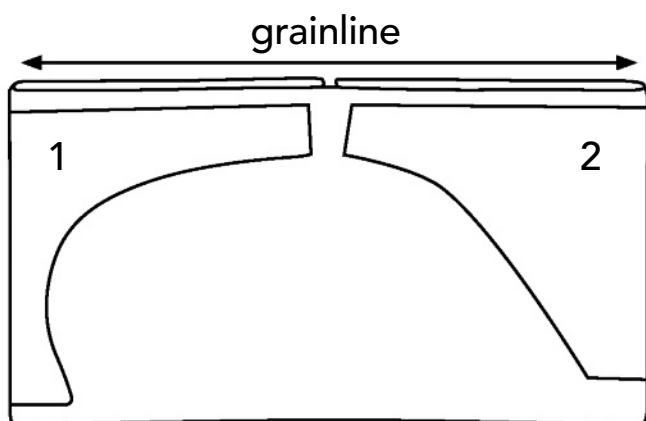
14 **Divide one leg elastic loop** into four equal sections, marking it with four pins, one of which should sit on the elastic join. Align this pin with the gusset seam of the leg »



15



18



HOW TO MAKE... A PAIR OF MINI KNICKERS

opening and pin together. Divide the rest of the leg opening into four equal sections and align each with one of the pins.

Use the pins as markers to ensure you achieve an even amount of tension along the elastic. If you'd like to make things even easier, **divide the elastic and leg opening into eight sections** rather than four, to give you twice as many markers to work with.

15 Sew the elastic to the leg opening using a zigzag stitch just a little narrower than the width of the elastic. Start sewing just after the elastic join at the gusset seam (so that you finish sewing on the join). Stretch the elastic out to sit flat against the fabric as you go. Do not try to stretch the fabric itself.

16 Repeat steps 14 and 15 with the other leg opening and then with the waistband, aligning the elastic

overlap with the left-hand (as worn) side seam.

Sometimes, after sewing the elastic to a garment, the tacking stitch can visually distort the edges, causing it to look as though the garment is not very elasticated. This is particularly true of garments which contain a mix of fabric types. Don't panic; once you remove the tacking, the elastic will be released.

17 Remove the tacking from around the waistband and leg openings.

Attaching a bow

18 Attach a little bow to the front panel centre front by **hand sewing small bar tacks** through the bow loops right beside the knot. This is better than stitching through the knot itself which can turn the bow loops into 'bunny ears'!

Your minis are now **ready to be wrapped** in crinkly fresh tissue paper and a ribbon bow to be given as a sweet gift, or kept and worn by you. You deserve it.



The Secrets of Sewing Lingerie

The Secrets of Sewing Lingerie by Katherine Sheers and Laura Stanford is published by Kyle Books. *Mollie Makes Sewing* readers can grab a copy for £12.99 including free UK P&P (RRP £15.99). Call 01903 828503 and quote KB SOSL/MM or email mailorders@lbsltd.co.uk



Ooh

I COULD DO THAT...

Ombre kimono

Swish around in a sumptuously floaty, dip-dyed kimono. We love Leanne Garrity's hot-pink version so much. Sure, it's a great cover-up at the beach, but that doesn't mean you can't wear it over a polo neck and skinnies come winter time too. It's flirty, it's flattering, plus it's such an easy-stitch – whip it up using just one piece of fabric. No annoying sleeves to stitch! Find the dip-dye and stitch instructions on our blog.

www.molliemakes.com

A brief encounter

Invest in your delicates by making them yourself. It's not that tricky, plus it'll mean your smalls will have a big impact



This Cinnamon slip pattern
doubles up as a cami.

www.colettepatterns.com



Ooh la la! Add some va va voom to your lingerie drawer with this French-style **Lili bar** and **Rose** panties from Ohhh Lulu. www.ohhhlulu.etsy.com



PHOTOGRAPH: LISA SALONEN

Underwear as outwear with the **Virna** mini-top www.namedclothing.com



Go for a vintage feel with this slinky **Nutmeg** set. www.colettepatterns.com



Purl Soho's classic **Woman's robe** is super comfy. www.purlsoho.com



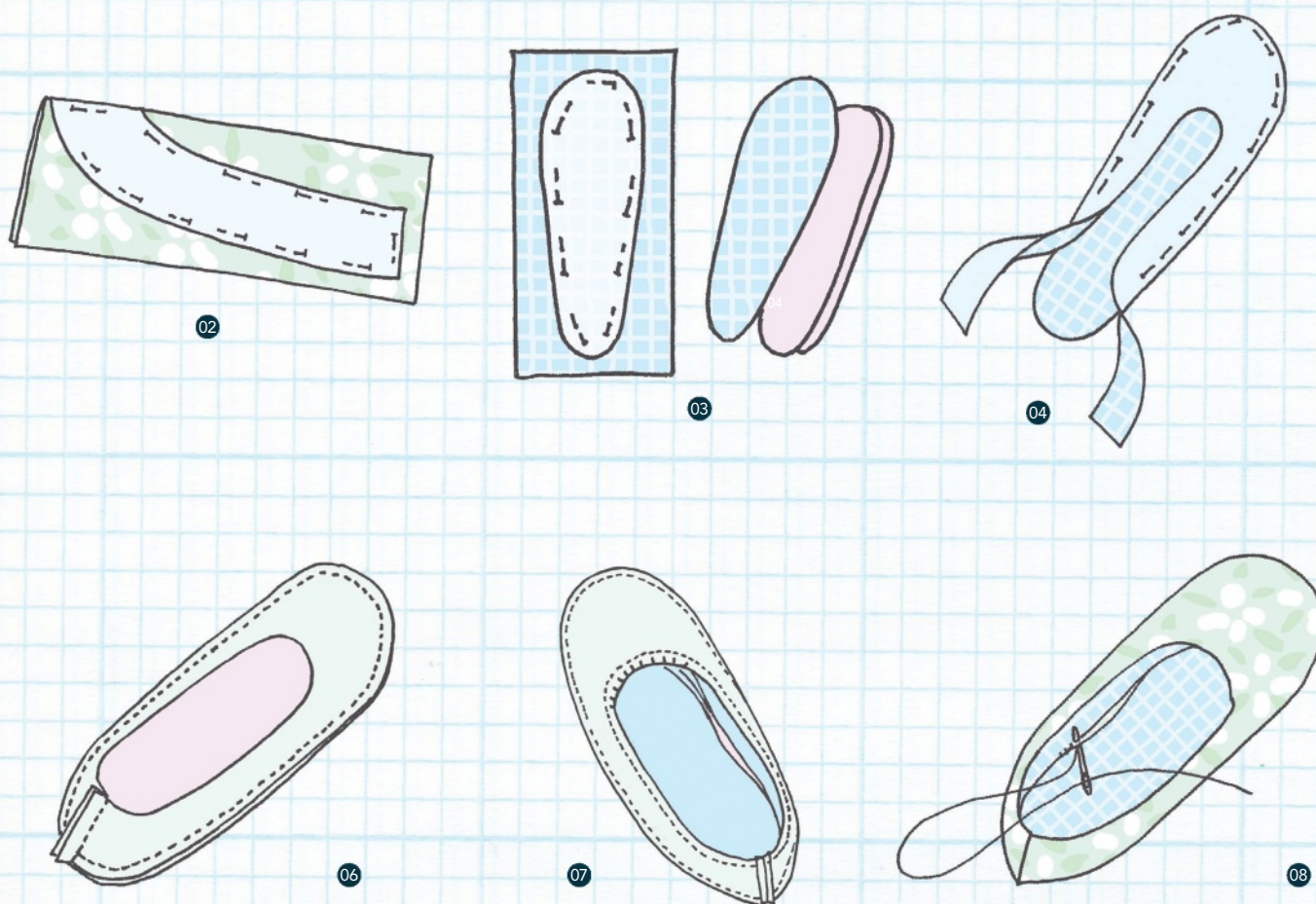
Keep your cool with a split-back **Lakeside** pyjamas set. shop.grainlinestudio.com





SOFTLY, SOFTLY

Fashion Clare Youngs' sweet
upcycled slippers from easy-
to-find fabric remnants



HOW TO MAKE... FABRIC SLIPPERS

MATERIALS

- Tracing paper
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Fabric for the lining
- Medium or heavyweight iron-on interfacing
- Iron
- Fabric for the outer section
- Faux suede for the sole
- Pins
- Sewing needle and basting thread
- Sewing machine
- Embroidered ribbon (optional)
- Sewing thread (optional)

Bust some stash with these quick-to-make fabric slippers – so soft that no-one will hear you tiptoe in late on Christmas Eve! We think retro gingham and pastel floral makes a sweet statement, but the beauty of these tootsie treats is that any leftover pieces of material can be revitalised – got some old curtains or pillowcases hidden away? Pull 'em out! Even the sole has been recycled from a preloved faux suede garment.

Add a personal detail with a homemade label – cut a motif from a pillowcase or tablecloth, add a bright snippet of fabric or a piece of colourful, embroidered ribbon.

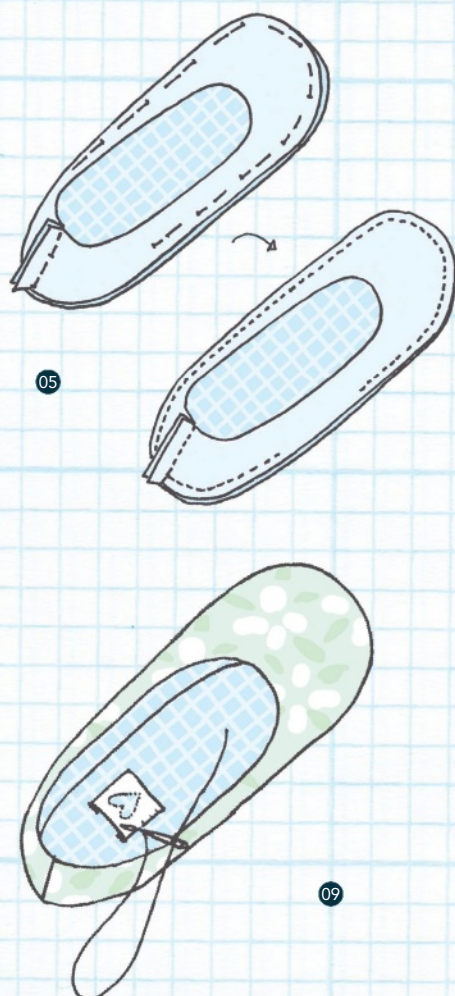
01 Choose the pattern for small, medium, or large. Trace out the shapes for the side section and

the sole, and cut these out to **make templates**. Follow the manufacturer's instructions to iron some interfacing to the back of the lining fabric (it needs to be large enough to cut two soles).

02 Take the remaining piece of lining fabric and fold it in half. Pin the template on top so that the front section aligns with the fold, as shown. Cut out the shape and repeat so that you have **two lining shapes**. Then repeat twice more with the outer fabric.

03 Use the sole template to cut out two shapes from the **faux suede** and two from the lining fabric backed with interfacing.

04 Take the **lining sole** and fold it in half at the toe to find its centre. With right sides facing, centre the toe of the lining side section over



the toe of the lining sole. Pin all around, easing the fabric around the curves. Stop about 10cm (4in) before reaching the heel.

05 Place the two raw ends of the lining fabric together, wrong sides facing. Adjust a little to make sure that the seam they make sits at the centre of the lining sole at the heel and that the sides of the slipper fit neatly. Pin and **sew the back seam**. Trim the seam allowance. Continue to pin the lining fabric to the lining sole. Baste, remove the pins, and sew with a 1cm (½in) seam, leaving a 7cm (2¾in) gap in the seam along one long side. Repeat to make the second inner section and turn both pieces right sides out.

06 Now repeat Step 5 to **make the two outer sections**. You don't need to leave gaps in the seams of the outer sections. Leave both

outer sections right sides facing.

07 With right sides facing place the lining section inside the outer section. Line up the tops of both sections, pin, and then sew. **Make snips in the seam** all around the inner curve, as shown, stopping approximately 3mm (¼in) short of the stitching. Trim the seam allowance along all other other parts of the slipper.

08 Turn the shoe the right way

out through the gap in the inner seam. **Sew up the gap with small slipstitches**, tucking the raw edges in. Push the inner section into the outer section for a neat fit. Press.

09 Cut a section of **embroidered ribbon** measuring 5cm (2in) for each slipper. Turn in the raw edges on each side and use small slipstitches to sew to the lining. Pop on your slippers and dance round your home in joy! »



A Year in Crafts

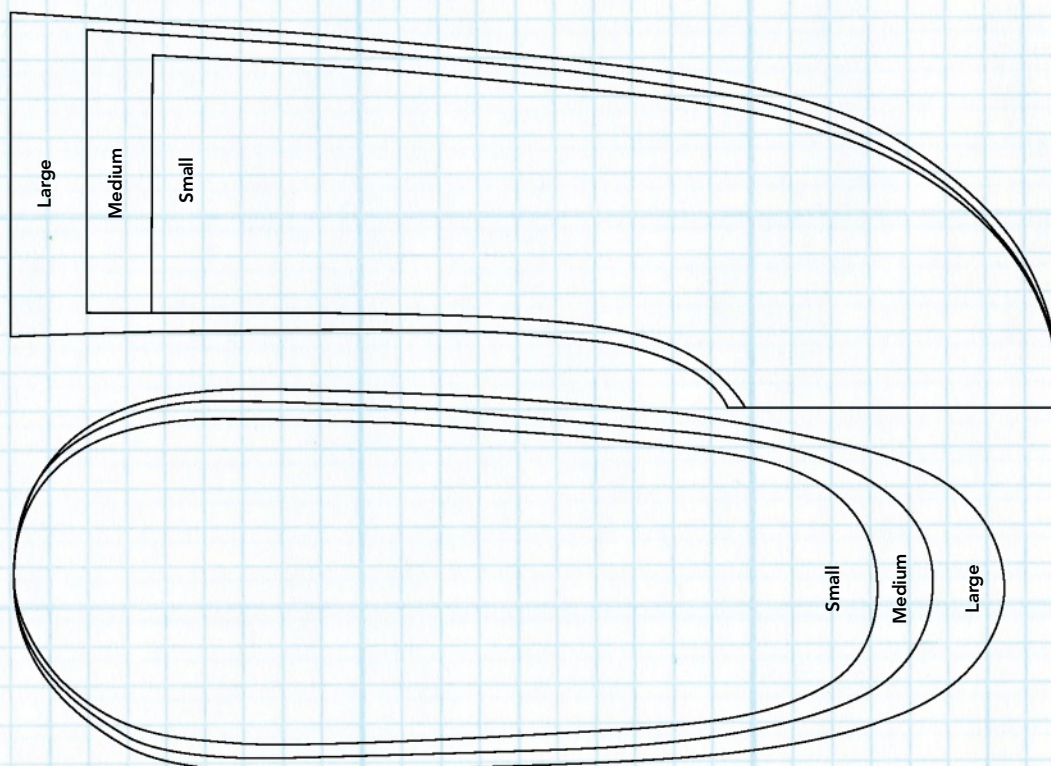
Clare has got your Crimbo gifts sorted with her bumper book of heartwarming makes. *A Year In Crafts* by Clare Youngs is published by CICO Books and *Mollie Makes Sewing* readers can snap it up for £10.99 (RRP £14.99) including free UK P&P – call 01256 302699 and quote GLR CODE O40. www.cicobooks.co.uk



FABRIC SLIPPERS

BY CLARE YOUNGS

ENLARGE 100%



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DIY dress rail

www.smittenstudioonline.com



SEWING GLOSSARY

From appliqué to zig-zag stitch, our go-to guide will get you up to speed with all the sewing terms you'll need

APPLIQUÉ

A decorative technique that involves sewing a smaller piece of fabric onto a larger one. It may be done by hand or using a machine.

BACKSTITCH

This can be done by hand or using a machine. Particularly useful when you start or end sewing, stitch back over your sewing line to stop stitches coming undone.

BIAS

The bias lies at 45 degrees to the lengthwise and widthwise grains of the fabric. Fabrics have more stretch when cut along the bias.

BIAS BINDING

This is a length of fabric that has been cut on the bias so that it'll bend easily around curves. It's used to bind or enclose the edges of fabric for a neatly finished look.

BLANKET STITCH

This stitch is used to reinforce the edges of a piece of material. It may also be decorative.

BODKIN

Blunt-headed needle used for threading ribbon, elastic or cord through a casing or a hem.

BOLT

A length of fabric stored on a roll. They are commonly found in fabric shops, where they can easily be stacked for display.

CASING

Parallel rows of stitching form a tunnel of fabric through which elastic or cord can be threaded. Often used at a waist edge.

DARN

To mend worn areas and holes in fabric, this involves sewing across the hole to create a new surface, using a weaving technique.

DART

Often found in women's clothing, this is a small fold sewn into the fabric. It helps shape the material more closely around the body.

EASE

Evening out extra fabric when joining two seams together of slightly different length, for example, sewing a gathered skirt into a waistband.

FABRIC GLUES

These come in permanent and temporary forms, and as sprays or liquids. Use them to hold fabric together for sewing or to attach embellishments.

FACING

Facing is a fabric trim or lining that finishes the edge of a garment, rather than leaving it raw.

FAT QUARTER

Fabric is often sold in fat quarters. Effectively this is a quarter of a metre (or yard) cut in a rectangular shape as opposed to across the bolt as a strip of fabric.

FELT

A woollen fabric that has been washed so the fibres bond together and don't fray. It's great for creative projects and quick makes.

FINISH

An edge is described as finished when it has been sewn or hemmed to reduce fraying. The technique used will depend on the fabric.

FOOT

On a sewing machine, this sits under the needle and keeps your fabric in place. Specialist feet are available for different techniques, such as a zipper foot for sewing zips into place, buttonhole foot to sew buttonholes, or a quarter-inch foot, which features markings to keep hems or seams even as you sew.

FUSIBLE INTERFACING

A strong adhesive webbing often available under the name of Bondaweb, this sticks one layer of fabric to another when ironed.

GATHER

Gather your fabric by sewing a line of running stitches and pull up the thread to create folds.

GRAIN

The arrangement of threads in a piece of fabric. Lengthwise grain is created by the warp threads and crosswise grain by the weft.

GUSSET

Piece of fabric shaped to fit into other seams for added ease of movement, or to add a base to a bag, for example.

HEM

To hem a fabric, turn its edge under (towards the inside) and sew it in place. This helps prevent fraying.

INTERFACING

This is a layer added to the wrong side of a piece of fabric to provide extra strength or stiffness. It may be ironed on or sewn in place.

LINING

An underlying, often lightweight fabric used to give a neat finish, as well as to conceal seams and the back of stitching.

MITRED CORNER

The 45° diagonal seam made where two different pieces of fabric meet at a corner. Often used in cushion making.

NOTCH

This is a mark on a pattern that helps you align fabric pieces before they're joined together. Notches are often shown as triangle shapes.

NOTION

A general term for sewing tools and accessories. Notions include needles, pins, threads tape measures and buttons.

OVERLOCKER

An overlocker (sometimes called a serger) creates seams using overlock stitch, which encases the fabric edges in the seam. These used to be industrial machines but are now available for domestic use.

PATTERN PAPER

This paper, ready marked with a grid for you to draw up your own patterns, is available in many haberdashery shops.

PINKING SHEARS

A pair of scissors that have a zig-zag edge. They can be used to reduce fraying or for decorative purposes.

PINS

There are different types of dressmakers' pins available. Look for ones with glass rather than plastic heads so they won't melt when you press over them.

PIPING

Trim made from bias-cut strips of fabric, usually containing a cord, to edge garments or soft furnishings.

PLEAT

An even fold or series of folds in fabric, often partially stitched down. Often found in skirts to add shaping at the waistline.

PRESS

A method of smoothing out creases that's gentle on the grain. Lift the iron between presses rather than running it across your fabric.

QUILTING

Placing a layer of wadding between two layers of fabric and sewing through all three layers by hand or machine to create a padded item.

RAW EDGE

The edge where a piece of fabric has been cut. This may unravel over time if it isn't properly finished.

REVERSE STITCH

Machine stitch that simply stitches back over a row of stitches to secure the threads.

RIC-RAC

A flat, zig-zag-shaped decorative fabric braid that can be sewn or glued onto projects.

RIGHT SIDE

The front of a piece of fabric, which shows the design. Some fabrics don't have an obvious right side.

ROTARY CUTTER

A popular tool with quilters, this can cut through multiple layers of fabric in a straight line. It should be used with a cutting mat.

RUCHING

Several lines of stitching worked to form a gathered area.

RUNNING STITCH

A basic stitch used for many hand-sewing purposes and as the basis of embroidery. Made by passing the needle in and out of the fabric to create evenly spaced stitches.

SATIN STITCH

This stitch is used to create a solid 'filled' area or line. It can be produced with a sewing machine, using a very narrow zig-zag stitch, or sewn by hand with stitches lying very close together.

SEAM ALLOWANCE

The distance that you need to leave between your stitches and the raw edge of the fabric. This is typically 7mm, 13mm, or 16mm and will be noted on your pattern.

SEAM RIPPER

A tool used to unpick stitches by cutting through the thread. It helps prevent damage to the fabric when removing seams.

SELVEDGE

The edge of the fabric, usually tightly woven so that it doesn't fray. It may include information such as the manufacturer and repeat length, if the fabric has a pattern. There are also coloured circles to show the shades that are used in the pattern.

SLIP STITCH

Use this to apply bindings or appliqué, or to close seams after you've turned an item the right way out. This technique is a good way to make an invisible hem and gives a better drape than machine finishing, which can be too heavy.

STANDARD FABRIC WIDTHS

Fabric sold on the roll comes in different standard widths. Metric to imperial conversions may vary, so always measure the fabric yourself if the width is important.

STRAIGHT STITCH

The basic sewing machine stitch. Alter the stitch length using the relevant dial on your machine.

TOP STITCH

A row of stitches, visible on the right side of the fabric, that runs parallel to the seam about 7mm from the edge. It helps the seam lay flat and is often decorative.

TENSION

Even stitches are important in hand and machine sewing so your fabric doesn't pucker. Adjust the tension of the thread and bobbin on a sewing machine to ensure perfect, even stitches. Check your tension on a scrap of fabric before beginning a new project.

TACKING STITCH

Typically a long running stitch used as temporary fixing stitches before an item is sewn permanently. Referred to as basting in the USA.

WADDING

Filling material used for stuffing items and often for quilting. It can be natural, man-made or a blend of both and is typically available to buy by the metre. Small quantities can be bought by the bag.

WARP

Warp threads run lengthwise along a woven fabric, at right angles to the weft. There is almost no stretch or give in the warp threads of a fabric.

WEFT

Weft threads run crosswise along a woven fabric, at right angles to the warp. Weft threads sometimes contain a little stretch.

WRONG SIDE

The back of a piece of fabric, which usually shows no design. Some fabrics don't have an obvious wrong side, for example felt or a gingham cotton.

ZIG-ZAG STITCH

This machine stitch is used on the raw edges of a seam to reduce fraying. A narrow version of this stitch is often used around buttonholes. It can also be sewn as a decorative hand stitch.

THE BACK PAGE PROJECT

Wendy Ward has no truck with clothes for special occasions. It's all about the everyday



Name: Wendy Ward
Occupation: Fashion designer, sewing teacher and founder of MIY Workshop

PHOTOGRAPH: JULIAN WARD



Wendy takes up to five students per class so she can really teach.

I've always sewn from the age of around 12 when my dad gave me a beautiful hand-operated old **Singer sewing machine**. I made loads of **really simple 80s style batwing tops** and bow ties that might even look quite cool again now!

For me the best thing about being able to sew is making comfortable, everyday **clothes that fit well**. There's also something so engrossing about working with your hands, I sometimes find it meditative – I forget about everything else that's going on around me.

After a **fashion degree and seven years as a designer** I decided to re-train as a teacher and got the keys to MIY Workshop on Christmas Eve 2011. It's in a great location in central Brighton. **I teach sewing, dressmaking and pattern cutting** and it's a real pleasure meeting such a varied bunch of people. In my book *The Beginner's Guide to Dressmaking* I write clear instructions and design simple clothes for everyday wear, not just special occasions! **I'm passionate about making the everyday**. If you're going to invest all that time and beautiful fabric into a project, I can't see the point in making clothes you're only going to wear now and again.

Wendy

Check out Wendy's range of sewing pattern, tools and courses at www.miyworkshop.co.uk.



At an MIY workshop you can learn to sew, alter, repair and customise your togs.

CURRENTS

- Looking at: *Abby Glassenberg* – I find her honest and open approach to creative life very refreshing.
- Eating: Everyday I have a kiwi fruit with my breakfast – I'm sure it helps keep me ticking over!
- Listening to: *Kate Tempest* – so real and so talented, she's like a breath of fresh air, I love her work.

Turn to page 94 for Wendy's asymmetrical zip jacket

Go ahead... get creative!



JP760 A ¾ size machine that is light enough to carry to classes, yet packed with 60 stitches and full of computerised features to make sewing easy.



DXL603 With built in stitches for quilting and heirloom as well as general sewing this is an excellent all round machine. Stitch selection and settings are so easy on the large information LCD screen.



QXL605 All the features of the DXL603 but with an automatic built-in thread cutter and advanced feeding system for precise stitching.



TXL607 Our first model with alphabet & memory facilities. It has direct stitch selection for the most useful stitches and a handy panel for quick selection.



MC5900QC This machine has computerised precision and is packed with over 500 stitches including 10 auto 1-step buttonholes. Type in and edit lettering from 3 full alphabets and create custom combinations of up to 50 stitches, it's all in the finer detail.



Janome has a great range of machines to offer the very best in computerised sewing.

Sewing difficult fabrics can get really tricky even for the more experienced. Janome machines are reliable and robust and tackle difficult fabrics with ease. The Memory Craft 5900QC has an incredible range of stitch options... whilst the portable Jem Platinum, DXL603 / QXL605 and TXL607 models are high specification machines at affordable prices.

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SEWING

MAKE YOUR OWN CLOTHES AND ACCESSORIES

The team behind *Mollie Makes* brings you 132 pages of ideas for sewing your own collection of dresses, skirts, jackets and accessories. 14 must-have projects with easy-to-follow instructions. From delicate Liberty lawn knickers to a twirly skater dress from The Great British Sewing Bee team. With a focus on independent designers we showcase the very best in up-to-date dressmaking patterns. Plus we take a peek behind the scenes into the lives of our favourite sewists.

www.molliemakes.com