

Simple knit-fabric skirt

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You will need:

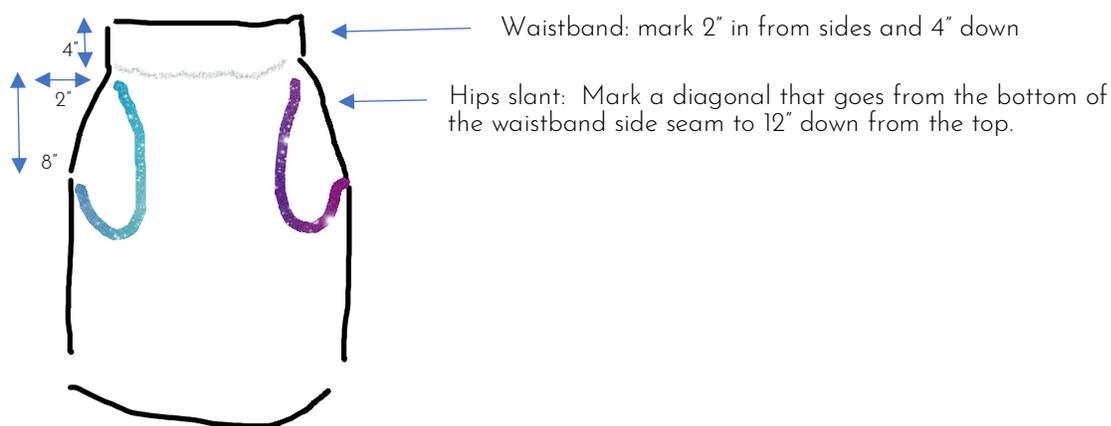
- Fabric—see below for amount
 - Sewing machine
 - Thread to match fabric
 - Elastic for waist
 - Spray starch or Terial Magic
 - Pins or glue stick
 - If making pockets, four small strips lightweight fusible interfacing.
 - Optional: twin needle for knits/jersey
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- **Measure from your waist to where you want the skirt to end.** For me, that is about 32" for a midi-length skirt with the bottom 10-12" of the side seam open for walking ease. If your skirt is shorter, about knee length, you don't need to leave the side seam open.
 - **Buy knit fabric** that has crosswise stretch that is at least 4-6" wider than your hip measurement (for wearing ease) and 6-8" or a bit more longer than your desired finished length (for waist casing and hem). If you want on-seam pockets, add 10-12" to this length since you'll likely use the full width of the fabric for the skirt pieces. For me, that meant I needed about 32 + 8 + 10, or 50". Since 54" is 1 1/2 yards, that works and allows for possible lengthwise shrinkage.

My hips (sigh) measure 43", so the 54" width or wider cotton is perfect for me. Depending on your size and the width of the fabric, you may need TWO lengths, one for the front, one for the back.

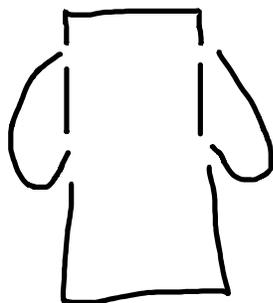
You can also make this skirt from woven fabric, just remember to double the overall length. Depending on hip measurements plus wearing ease, you may well be able to find the fabric needed for pockets along one side of each length. A slightly gathered skirt would be about 1 1/2 times your hip measurement. If your hips are 40", allot 60" all the way around. For a fuller skirt, go to 2 times or even 3 times. If you go that full and gathered, I definitely recommend taking an angled bit off the top to reduce the bulk at the waist.

- **PRE-WASH** and dry YOUR FABRIC! You want all shrinking to happen before you sew!
- If it looks like the fabric on the bolt is cut at an angle, make sure you end up with 51" (or your measurement) usable length after squaring up the ends.
- If needed, **square up** the ends of the yardage so upper and lower edges aren't running a diagonal across the knit rows.
- **Cut the fabric to desired length + 6 or 8"**, in my case 40".
- If your skirt is more than an inch or so below your knee and/or if your skirt has in-seam pockets, cut this piece lengthwise into two equal halves. It's way easier to set in the pockets into a proper side seam than other methods.

- If you are making pockets, cut them out on the lengthwise grain. You will need four pieces, two in each direction. I copied a pocket shaper from a pattern in my stash.
- If your waist is smaller than your hips by more than a couple of inches, you may **opt to narrow the waist**. To do so mark as shown in the following drawing. It shows a 4" waistband zone, pockets and main skirt pieces. You can adjust the 4" for the waistband casing if your elastic is narrower or wider. I used 1 ¼" wide no-roll waistband elastic cut to about 5" smaller than my waist. That was still comfortable/not too tight **and** still fit over my hips without aggravation. Cut the elastic a little longer though to test fit. See below.



- Clean finish all raw edges. I pulled out my serger for the first time in years, but the overcast stitch for knits on your sewing machine or a zigzag is perfect for a nice finish. You may wish to stabilize the fabric by starching the seam area generously or using Terial Magic so the fabric doesn't curl and behave badly.
- If making pockets, position them as indicated above, so ½" is above the waistband sewing line (pale gray line). Sew two of the sections to the front and two to the back, right sides together. You may use pins, Wonder Clips or (Yes, you can!) *washable glue stick* to "pin" the pieces together. Once sewn, you will have two pieces that look like this:



The pockets will stick out like ears.
Press the pocket seam allowances toward the pocket.
Edge Stitch the pocket to the seam allowances.

Here is an online tutorial on how to sew on-seam pockets that includes a free pattern for the pocket bag. Personally, I wanted my pockets deeper, deep enough to hold my cell phone. <https://www.tillyandthebuttons.com/2017/10/how-to-add-in-seam-pockets-to-garment.html>

- ❑ Sew the side seams from waistband to 10-12" above hem, pivoting as you reach and as you finish sewing around the pocket bag. Lockstitch at the end of the seam. Press side seams open. See link above for more info if you are new to sewing garments.
- ❑ Waistband casing: Fold down the top 2". Catch the top edge of the pocket bag inside the casing. Sew casing in place, leaving an opening about 2-3" at the center back.
- ❑ Insert the elastic—if you don't have a bodkin or similar tool, just use a large safety pin to lace the elastic into the casing. Pin the tail of the elastic to the outside so that it doesn't get pulled to the inside making you have to do it all over. Gather the fabric along the length of the elastic as you go. Make sure you don't TWIST the elastic (uncomfortable).
- ❑ Pull both ends out of the waistband casing. Double check the elastic didn't twist! Safety pin the ends together and try it on to make sure the elastic is tight enough that the skirt won't sag if you put a phone in the pocket, but not so tight it is uncomfortable or won't fit over your hips. Adjust as needed. Sew the elastic by overlapping the ends ½" and zigzagging OR butt the ends together, wrap with a scrap of fabric, and sew the fabric to secure both ends. Butted elastic is flatter but a tiny bit more fuss. Once sewn, distribute the fabric so the gathers are evenly spaced front and back.

Stitch in the ditch at each side seam. This keeps the elastic and seams in place and prevents the elastic from twisting inside the casing.

Sew the casing shut.

- ❑ HEM:
 - Iron up 2" or your desired hem depth. If you are making a skirt with open sides (for walking ease or style), turn the hem WRONG side up. Sew a ½" seam at either end. Turn right side out and press.
 - I like to use a twin needle for hems, which simulates a cover stitch (parallel lines). Because the bobbin thread forms a zigzag, this means the hem has some give and the thread is less likely to break when the knit fabric stretches.
 - Here's a quick tutorial on twin needles on knits:
<https://blog.colettehq.com/tutorials/tutorial-sewing-hems-on-knits-with-a-twin-needle>
For my skirt and top, I didn't stabilize, I just starched the area.
 - Wind an extra bobbin with enough thread to hem your skirt. Use this bobbin and the spool for the twin needle threads.
 - Pin the hem up on the right side, placing the pins about 1/8" from the edge (which is of course underneath). Careful pinning will allow you to sew the hem precisely from the top and catch everything.
 - On the open part of the side seams, glue stick the seam allowance in place to the wrong side.
 - Sew one hem, up one side of the open side seam (thereby securing the seam allowance), across the top, down the other open side of the side seam (ditto), the second hem, and then repeat going around the second open side seam.

- ❑ WEAR WITH CONFIDENCE AND JOY!