

Chemise Construction

Measurements Needed:

Body Length – from where you want the chemise to sit at the top, to where you want it to fall at the bottom. 54"-58" is a good default if you want a roughly floor-length chemise and are "average" height. Add 2" for bottom hem and top edge channel for drawstring.

Arm Length – from the top of your shoulder to the wrist. Add 6-12" depending on how poufy you want your sleeve.

Fabric:

Cottons (muslin & broadcloth) are easy to work with, durable, and very easily washable. Muslin is available in several widths, both bleached (white) and unbleached (buff). Broadcloth is commonly 42"-45" wide and sold in an array of colors. Cotton gauze feels nice, but can be harder to work with and may be too sheer (depending on weight) for practical use. Linen (or linen-cotton blends) will require additional finishing to prevent seams from fraying, but are more period correct. *ALL fabrics should be washed and machine-dried to achieve shrinkage before you start cutting. Iron according to instructions/fiber content when dry. When buying fabric remember to allow for shrinkage after purchase & washing but before cutting! This is more important for linen and linen/cotton blends than for broadcloth or muslin.*

For an "average" sized adult (sizes roughly 10-24) use 42"-45" wide fabric.

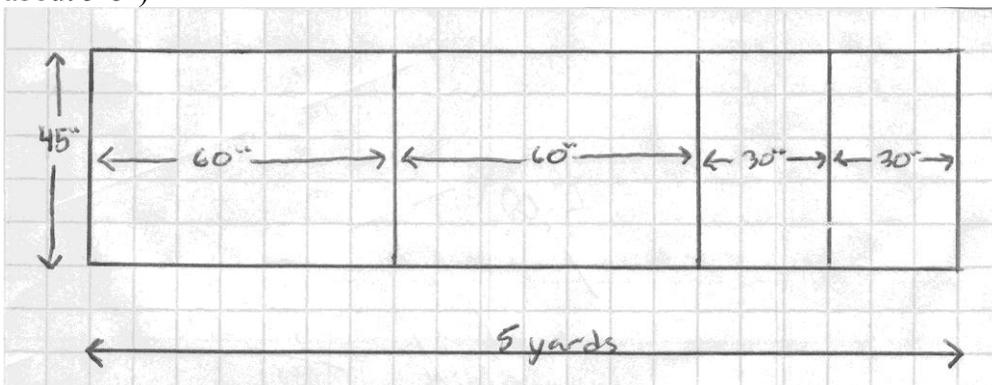
For a smaller adult/large child, consider using 36" wide fabric, or cutting down 45" fabric to 36".

Larger adults (over size 24) can consider 54" wide fabrics, depending on their preferences for how the chemise is to fit.

Notions: a spool of $\frac{1}{4}$ " or $\frac{1}{2}$ " grosgrain ribbon (5-6 yards), about 2' of $\frac{1}{4}$ " or $\frac{1}{2}$ " elastic, several safety pins in varying sizes

Step One:

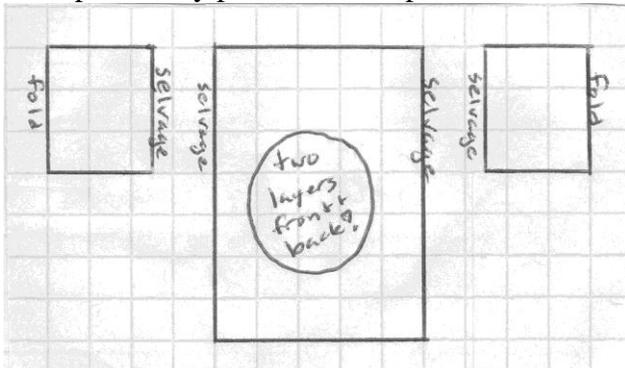
Begin by laying out your fabric. (The example will show an "average" floor length chemise fitting someone about 5'8")



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Step Two:

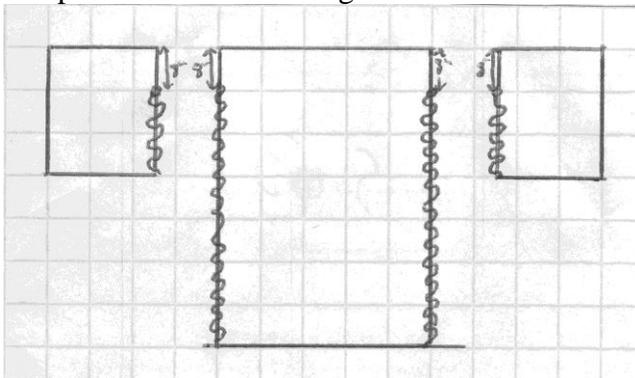
The two 60" long pieces are the front and back of the body, the two 30" pieces are each one sleeve. Open and line up the body pieces. Sleeve pieces should be folded each in half, selvages aligned and laid out like this:



Note that if you're using fabric with a "right side" or "good side" it should be on the *inside* of the layout.

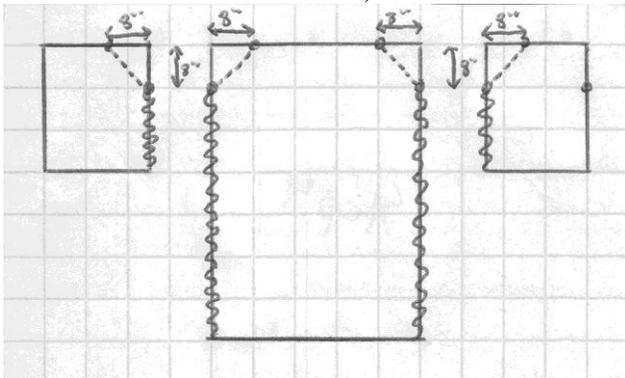
Step Three:

Along the selvages, mark 8" down from the top and place a pin. Do this for both body and sleeves. Sew from this point to the bottom edge.



Step Four:

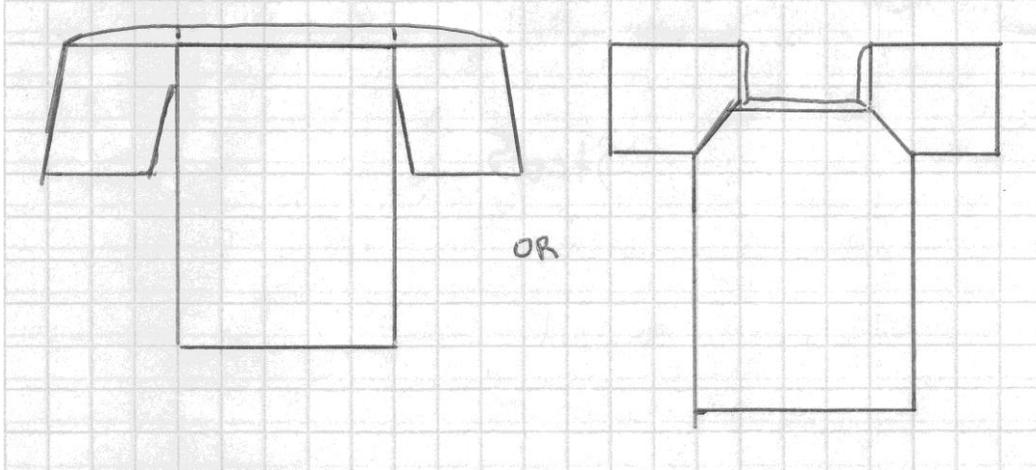
There are two simple variations at this point. If you expect to wear this off-the-shoulder, go to Step Five. If you plan to wear it on your shoulders, cut each piece at the top at a 45° (degree) angle. (I tend to use this as the default as it's more versatile)



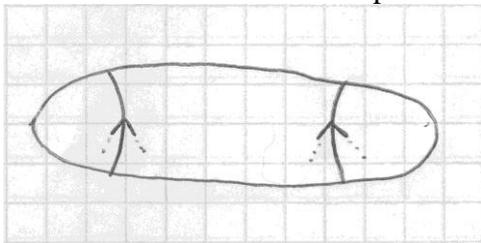
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Step Five:

Pin front and back, sleeve to body, on both sides along the 8" opening (if you did the 45' cut, it will be slightly larger) Remember before pinning to check if your body-tube and sleeve seams are on the inside or outside (they should be on the outside) and pin to the outside as you attach the sleeves to the body!

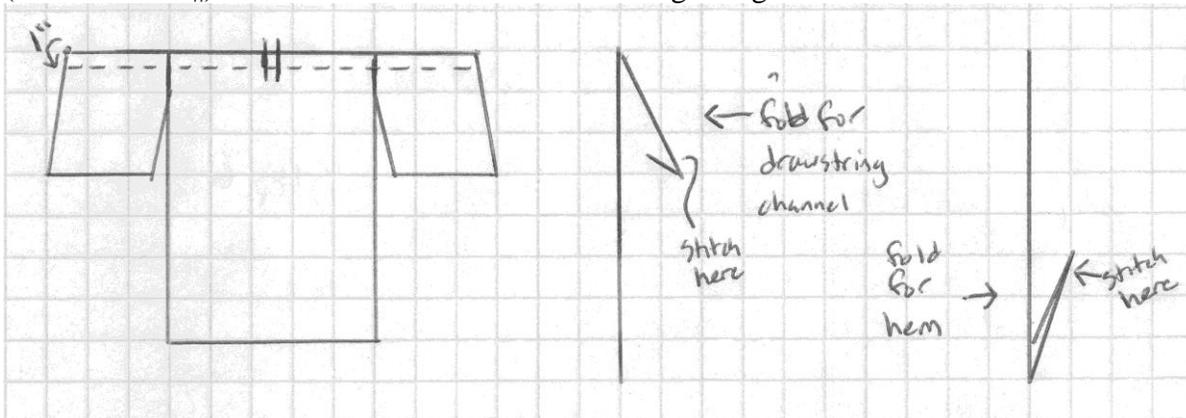


At this point, the entire neckline including the tops of the sleeves should be open, forming one long neckline, and look like this from the top:



Step Six:

Paying attention to which side your seams are on (they should still be on the outside), turn the neckline down $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1" creating a tube to accommodate a drawstring, and stitch down. To prevent fraying (especially if using linen or linen/cotton blends) fold down 1", then turn under $\frac{1}{4}$ " and stitch down. Be sure to leave a 1" opening (shown with a ||) at the center-front for the drawstring strings to stick out and be tied.

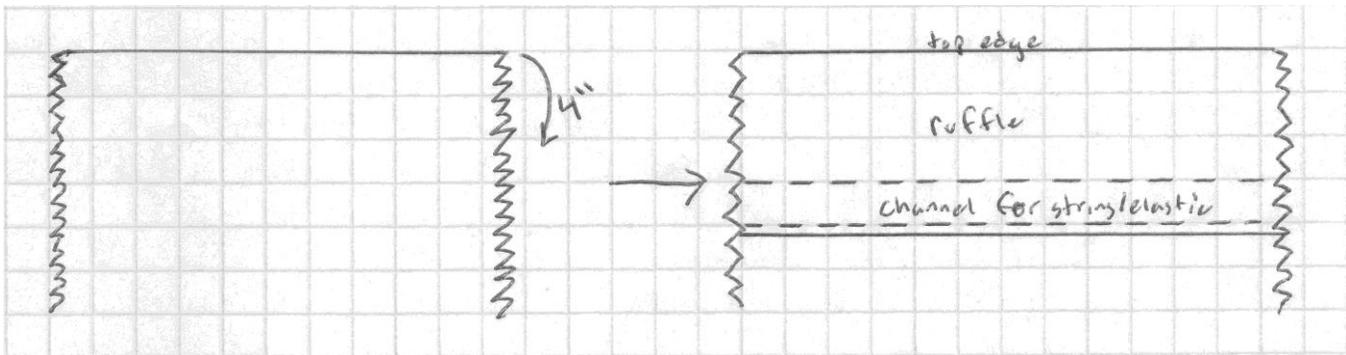


Finish the end of each sleeve in a similar fashion, leaving room to insert either drawstring or elastic.

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The hem at the bottom of the body of the chemise should be folded twice, about ½” wide. This will hide the raw edge and prevent fraying. No need to leave openings for string or elastic here!

Variation: To produce a “ruffled” edge, add 4” to each measurement. At step 6, turn down top edge and sleeves by 3”-4”, then tuck under the ¼” to hide the raw edge. Stitch once close to the edge, once ¾” above that. The same can be done to the sleeve ends to produce a ruffle.



Step Seven:

Using a safety pin (crochet hook, etc) thread about 4 yards of drawstring or ribbon (¼” or ½” grosgrain works well – nothing slippery!) through the neckline.

Using a safety pin thread drawstring (2 yards) OR elastic (measure to fit comfortably around your arm just below the elbow) through sleeve-ends. Elastic will be slightly large around the wrist. Stitch ends of elastic with ½” overlap by hand. Use button or quilting thread if possible.

Infinite Gore Skirt Construction

Measurements needed:

Hips – Hips/posterior at the widest point. Add 4” for “wiggle room”.

Waist to Floor – Add 3” to allow for the hem and for making a tube for the waistband.

Be honest, and measure loosely... this is important to get IN to the skirt!

Fabrics:

Cottons (broadcloth or heavier) are easy to work with, durable, and very easily washable. Broadcloth is commonly 42”-45” wide and sold in an array of colors. Linen (or linen-cotton blends) will require additional finishing to prevent seams from fraying, but are more period correct. Neither of these commonly have a right/wrong side to the fabric. *Note that patterned fabrics will be more difficult to use in terms of lining up the patterns, and fabrics with a distinct “good” and “bad” side to the fabric require special handling not covered here.*

ALL fabrics should be washed and machine-dried to achieve shrinkage before you start cutting. Iron according to instructions/fiber content when dry. When buying fabric remember to allow for shrinkage after purchase & washing but before cutting! This is more important for linen and linen/cotton blends than for broadcloth or muslin.

You will need 4-8 yards of fabric depending on your preference of fullness/weight for the skirt. I tend to use 6 yards of cotton broadcloth – it moves well and is not ridiculously heavy.

Notions: 1” or 1¼” wide elastic, “no-roll” style if possible... 6” shorter than waist measurement

I will use the following measurements as the example:

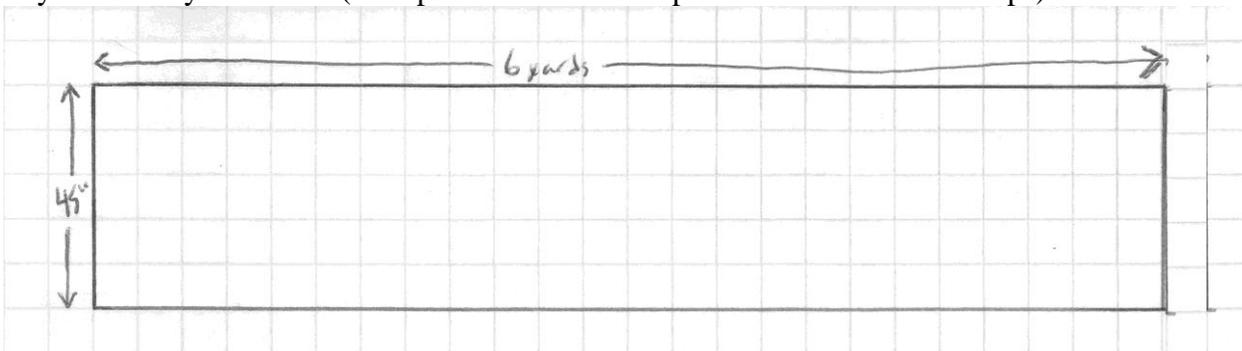
Hips = 46” + 4” = 50”

Waist to floor = 40” + 3” = 43” (if you get a fraction, round up for the sake of simplicity)

6 yards 44/45” broadcloth

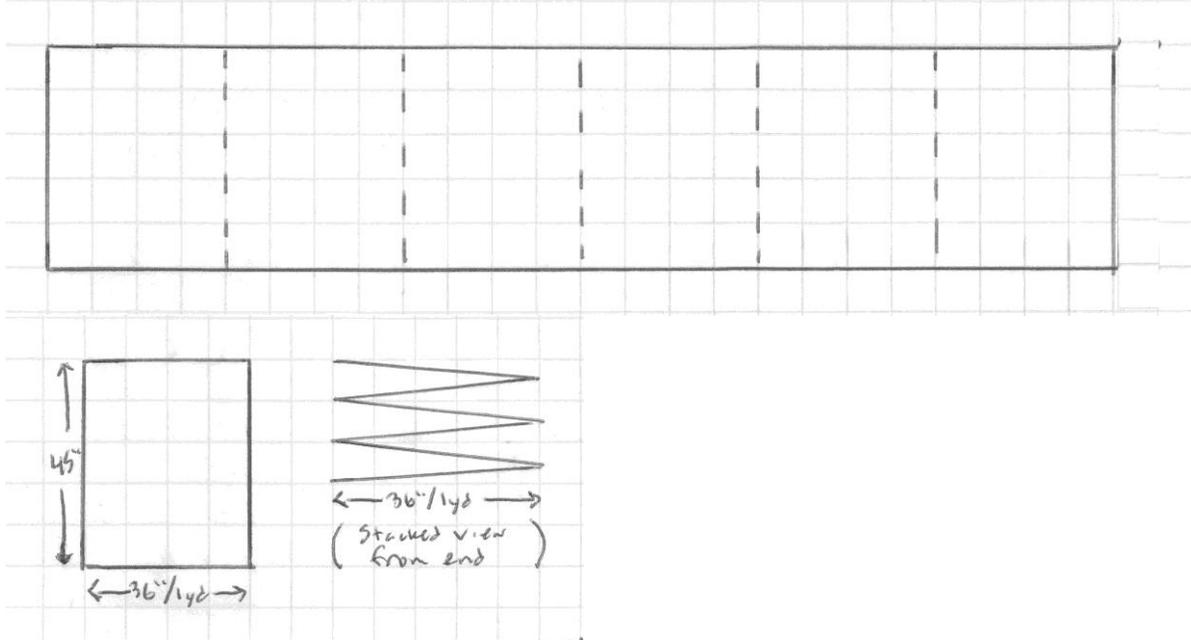
Step One:

Lay out all of your fabric. (It helps to have a second person for the first few steps)



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Measure one yard in from one end, fan-fold all your fabric to this width. You now have 6 stacked layers.



Step Two:

Now, the math!

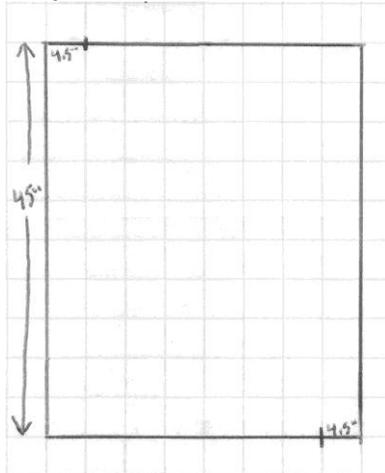
$((\text{Hips} + 4'')) \div (\text{\# of yards of fabric}) = \text{panel width}$

Panel width divided by 2 (because each panel is folded in half) = measurement for layout

So... $50'' \div 6 = 8.3''$... round up to 9'' for seam allowance (seam allowance should be over $\frac{1}{2}''$, not more than 1'').
 $9'' \div 2 = 4.5''$

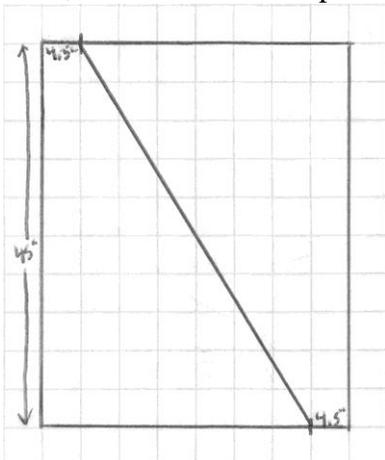
Remember, this needs to be pulled up **over** your hips to your waist, so it will look big, but it's not!

On your fabric, measure 4.5'' from each side of your 1-yard width:



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Next, connect those two points:



Step Three:

Before cutting, determine the length of your skirt – this step makes the process of hemming much easier! (If you skip this step you will need to trim points of fabric away later to find your hem.)

Waist to floor + 3" hem and waistband allowance...

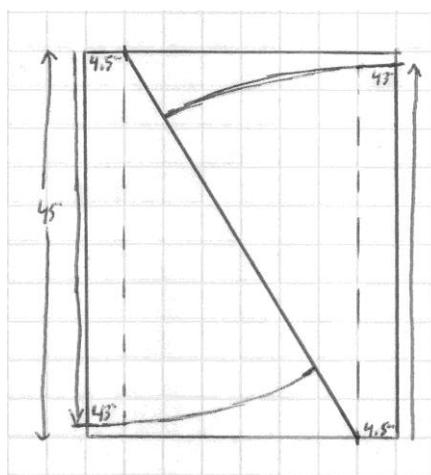
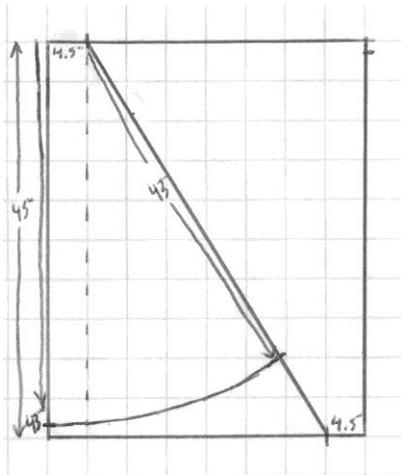
Why use a 3" hem allowance?

I double-roll my bottom hem to prevent fraying: So bottom hem allowance=1"

Use the selvage (factory edge) at the waist to simplify folding for elastic= 1½" Use of the selvage means it does NOT have to be double-rolled!

So... Waist-to-floor+3"=43" for our example.

Use a tape measure to create a curved line at the bottom of each panel. Measure down 43" along the fold, AND 43" down from your 4.5" mark. Connect these two points, then use the 4.5" mark as the pivot-point for the bottom curve, swinging it towards the diagonal line. Do the same on the other half.

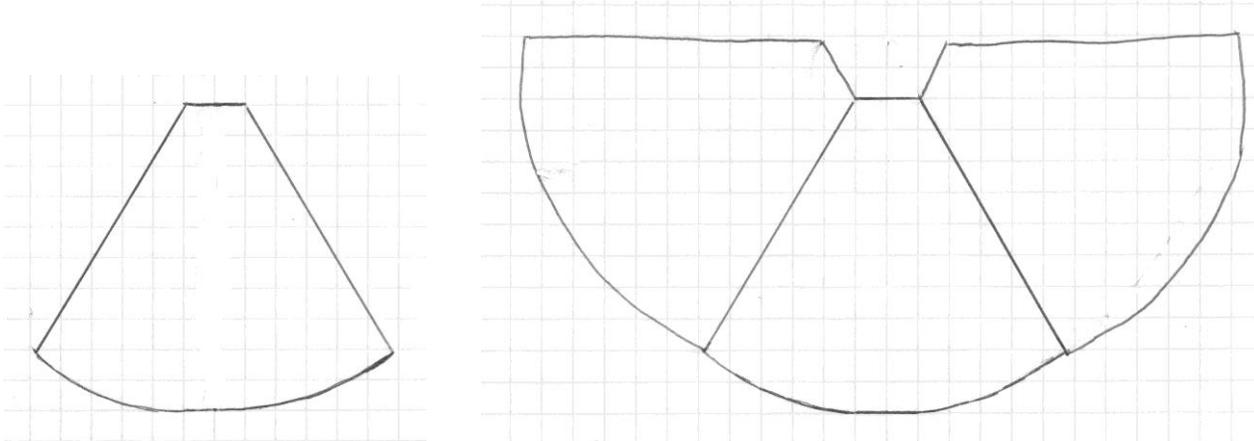


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Step Four:

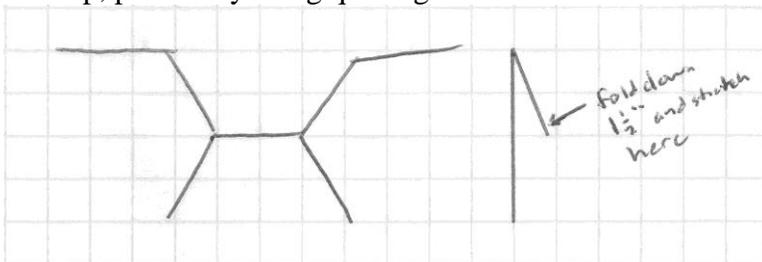
Next, cut along the diagonal marking through ALL layers of fabric. Then cut the bottom hem-line through all layers. You will have 5 trapezoids and two half-trapezoids. Stitch together the two half-trapezoids to form the 6th trapezoid.

Open out your trapezoids and being to pin them together side-to-side making sure all the seam allowances are in the same direction! (If sides don't quite line up, you want the narrow sides to be aligned exactly.) Stitch all vertical seams.



Step Five:

With all the vertical seams to the outside, fold down the top (narrow) part of the skirt 1½" to the outside. Pin. Stitch close to the factory edge of the fabric, leaving an opening about 2" wide to pass elastic through. Using safety pins, put the elastic (about 30" for this example) through the channel, and overlap by 1", stitch the overlap, preferably using quilting thread.



Step Six:

Last, double-roll and stitch down the hem. If sections do not line up exactly, it is OK to snip bits so that they do – this is a full enough skirt it will not be noticed if the hem isn't precisely even! Be sure you are rolling the hem to the inside of the skirt. Finish/tie off/snip any loose threads, and the skirt is complete!

