



## **Whimsy Couture Sewing Tutorial**

### **Sleeves, Straps & Ties**



This tutorial is an addition for my STRAPPY TOPS/DRESSES and EASY BREEZY SHIRRED TOPS/DRESSES tutorial and all other ones with straight chest lines. You can create a unique look of straight chest garments by adding different sleeves and straps!

1

Required materials:

-sewing machine –serger (optional for specific projects!) –fabric pen –scissors –iron –pins-thread

## **Ruffle Straps:**

These tie in the back!



Cut your fabric as follows:

2 long strips for the straps – length of straps will allow for tying a small bow! For longer straps please increase length up to 10 inches.

Sizes 0 months – 24m                      26 x2.5 inches

Sizes 2t – 5t                                      28 x3 inches

Sizes 6 – 12                                      32 x4 inches

Width and length are subject to preference!

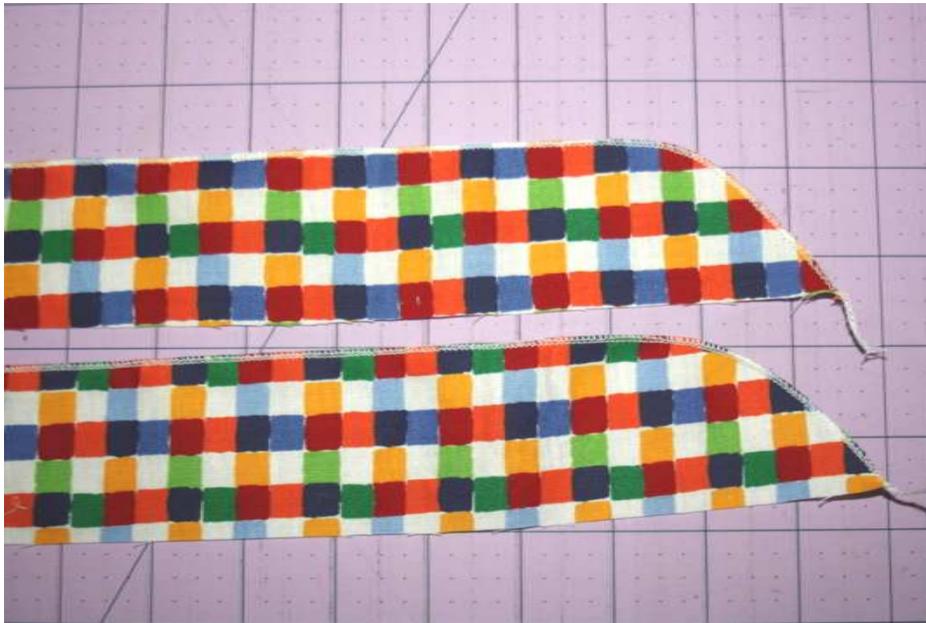
Cut 2 flutter ruffles according to PDF templates

2

These should be the fabric pieces you have cut out. 2 long pieces for straps and 2 curved pieces for flutter ruffles



Serge/roll hem (or use a narrow zigzag stitch) the curved edges of both ruffle strips:



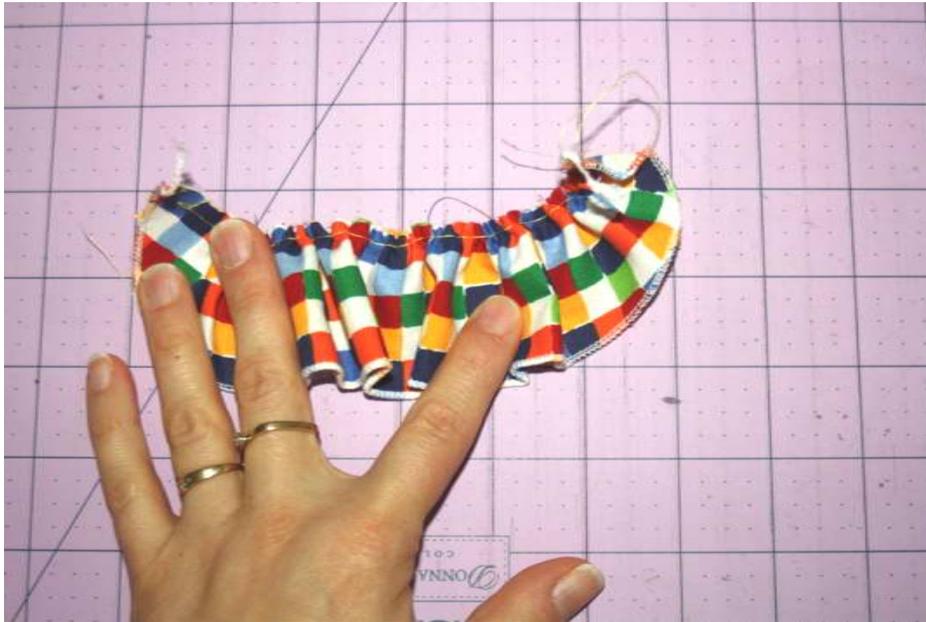
Gather the straight edge according to these instructions:

Set your sewing machine to the longest stitch length and the highest number tension. This way your machine should automatically gather your fabric! (If your machine doesn't allow this setting you may set your tension to 2-3 and to the longest stitch length and sew. Then manually pull the upper thread to gather your ruffle. )

Sew along the raw edge with a seam allowance of about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch very slowly.

3

This should now be your ruffle. Repeat with other ruffle strip.



Take your long strap piece.....



4

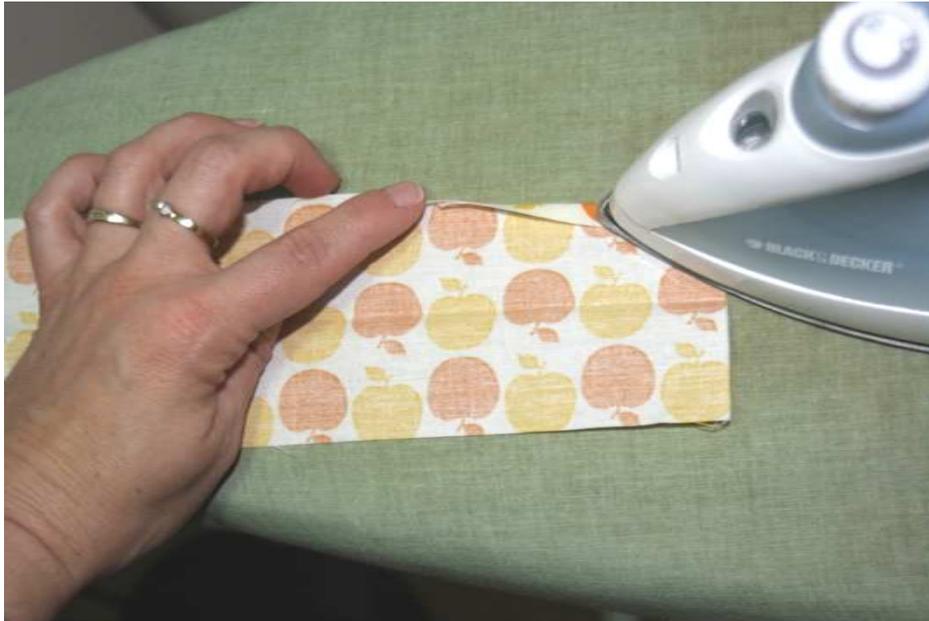
.....fold it over in half with wrong sides in and press.



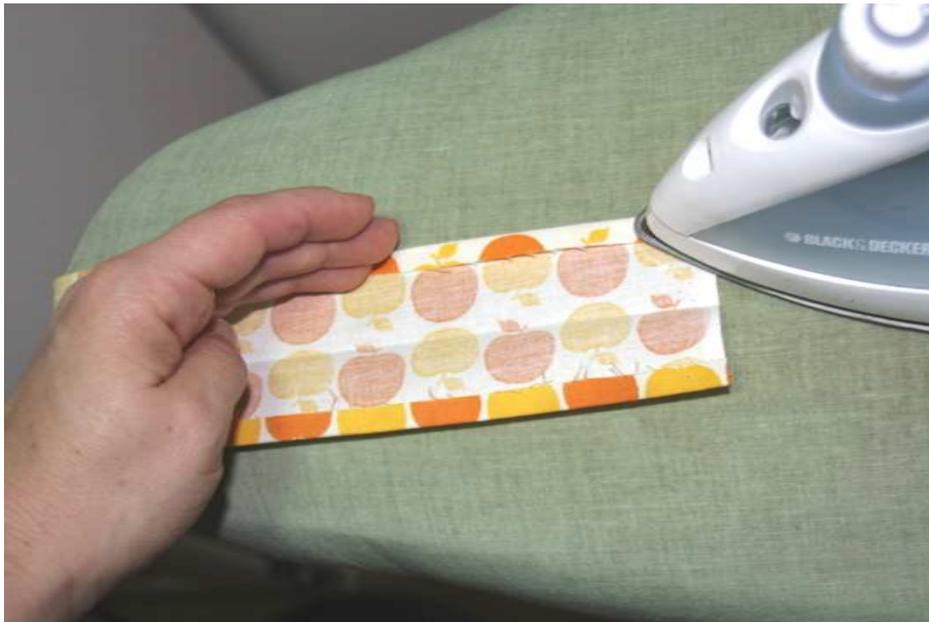
Unfold it.....



.....fold down the TOP edge to about ¼ inch and press.....



.....repeat with BOTTOM edge



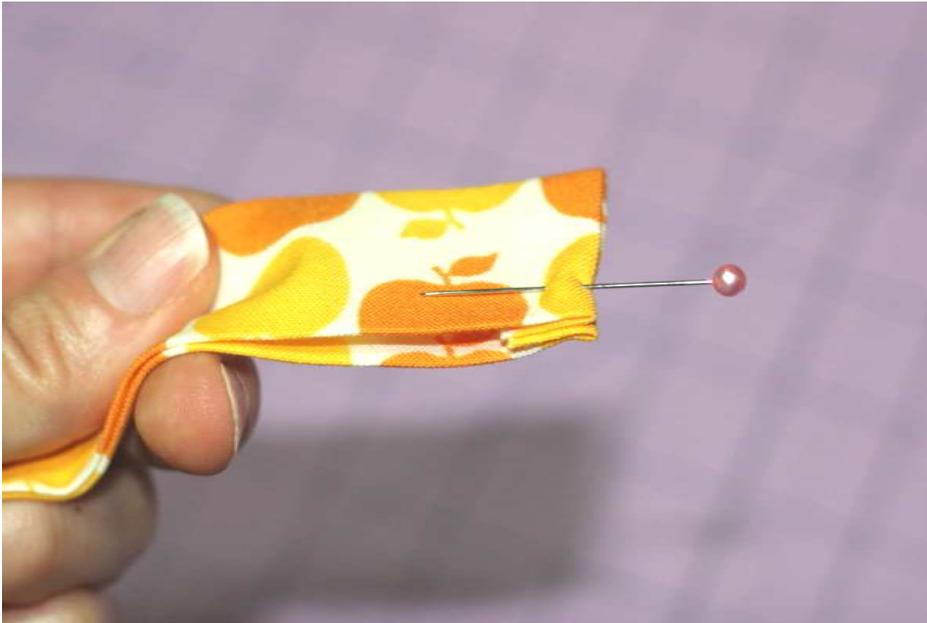
Refold entire strip as shown and press:



Take the edge which should be your end and fold down the small edge to about ¼ inch and.....



.....fold the strip together and pin.



Now position your strip to where you will have the just pinned end on the LEFT. The right end shall remain open.

Place your ruffle onto the INSIDE of the strip at about 2 inches away from the RIGHT (unfinished) end. You may distribute the ruffle strip to your liking and that it reaches nicely over the shoulders. Pin right onto the inner folded edge of the long strip.



Fold the top edge of the strap down to cover the just pinned area. Remove pins carefully and re-pin on top of the strap making sure the gathered area won't scoot out.



Take second ruffle and distribute ruffles to the same length as the first one.....



...then pin second ruffle onto the second strap as shown:



Straight stitch on top of strap very carefully. Sew through all layers. Repeat with other strap and ruffle.

These should now be your two finished ruffle straps:



To attach straps to your garment:

Pin the straps to the inside of your garment's front right at the upper casing's seam. Distance from side seam should be about 2 inches. Ruffles may be positioned at about 1/4 to 2 inches away from garment's top edge depending on likes and on how far the ruffles reach over the back!



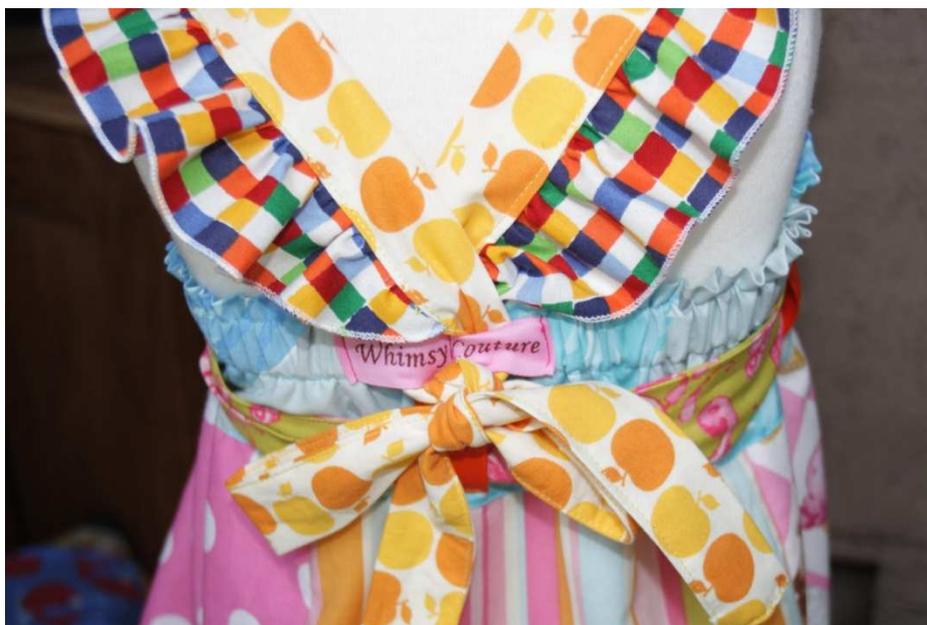
Sew with backstitching (use the same color thread as you used for the casing):



In order to loop the straps through in the back you may want to sew a garment label or piece or ribbon on as shown (other options are to sew in a buttonhole right below the casing and elastics)



This should now be your finished cross back straps:



## **Shirred Straps:**

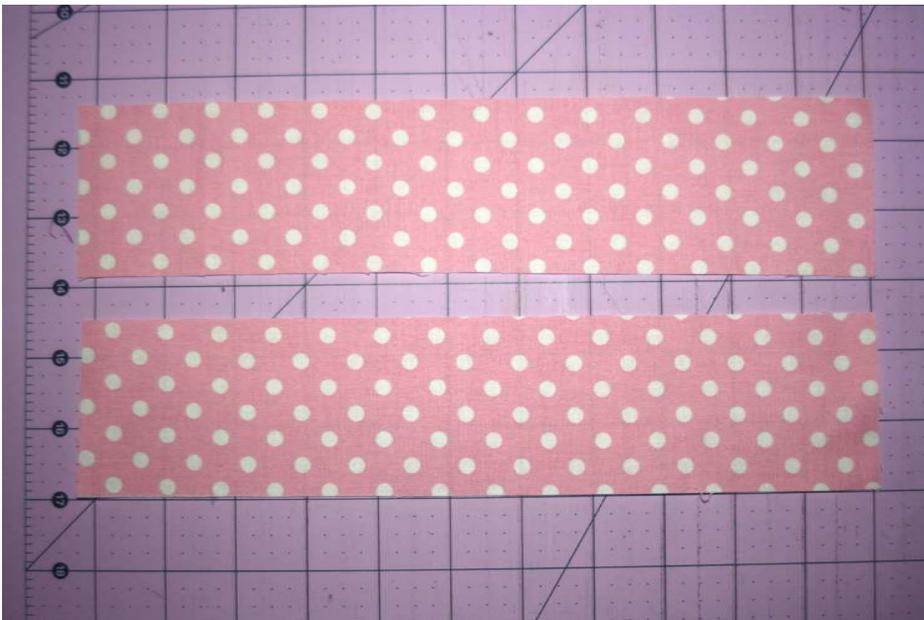
Shirred straps can be made slim or wide to cover the entire shoulder. They are often also called “capped sleeves” if they cover the shoulder.



To make comfy shirred straps as shown in the above picture please cut your fabric according to the following chart:

Size	width	length
3-6m	2"	10.5"
12-18m	2 ¼ "	10 ¾ "
2t	2.5"	11"
3t	2.5"	11 ¼ "
4t	2.5"	11.5"
5t	2 ¾ "	11 ¾ "
6	2 ¾ "	12"
7/8	3"	12 ¼ "
9/10	3"	12.5"
11/12	3"	12 ¾ "

These should be your cut straps pieces:



Finish the edges. Long edges may be roll hemmed (or use a narrow zigzag stitch) and short edges serged with an overcast stitch:



**To sew in the elastic:**

Wind some elastic manually onto your bobbin. I use the shown brand but any brand available at craft/fabric stores will be fine! Wind the thread tight but not too tight. You can pull slightly on your elastic thread while you are winding it up.



Insert the bobbin with the elastic thread into your lower part of your machine and thread the upper with regular thread. Insert your fabric into your sewing machine with right sides up and start sewing right at the edge with a good 4 inches of elastic thread hanging out. Set your machine to the longest stitch length and the tension to 2-3. Sew about a ¼ inch away from the edge. Be sure to check while you are sewing if your elastic thread has not jumped out from over the bobbin.

That sometimes happens and will make your elastic not being gathered. If that happens rewind your elastic thread!

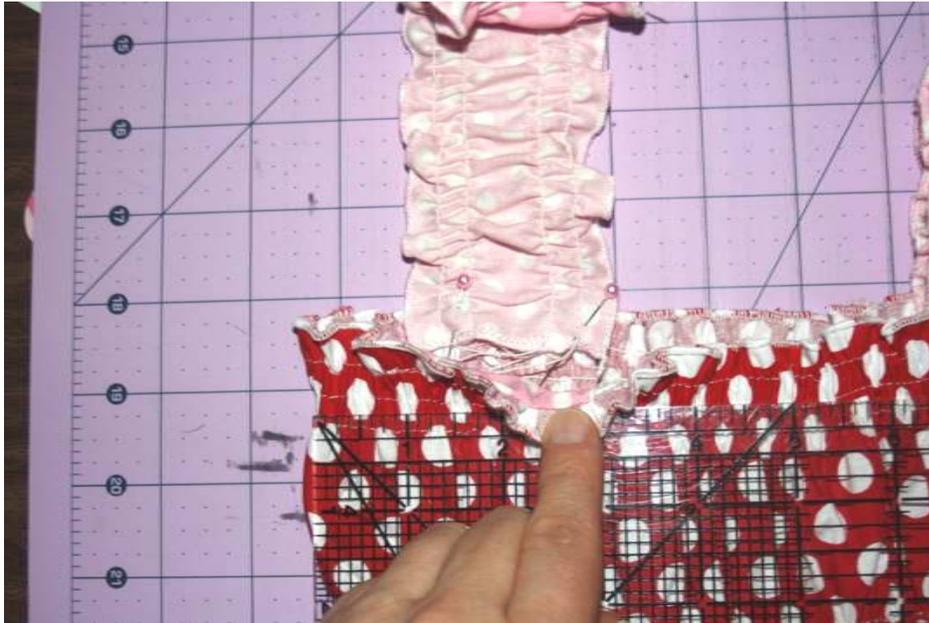


Sew 2 rows of elastics on each side of the strap. Stay about half a presser foot away from first row. Repeat with other strap. Double knot all elastic threads that are hanging out.

This should now be your finished shirred strap:



Pin your strap to the inside of your garment at about 1.5 – 2 inches away from the sides:



Sew with backstitching right along the upper seam of your elastic thread. Repeat with other side and repeat with other strap.

This should now be your sewn on shirred strap:

NOTE: if you shirred straps don't look gathered very much press them with a steamed iron for a couple of seconds. Steam pulls elastic threads closer together!



## **Shirred Flutter Sleeves (straps):**

To make those adorable and whimsical flutter sleeves with shirring please cut your fabric the same as the shirred straps! Again, you can make them slim according to sizing chart or add about 1 inch to the given width to make them as shown in this picture:



These are the fabric pieces you want to start out with. Serge/finish the long edges and serge/zigzag stitch the short edges:



NOTE: if you don't have a serger or don't like to use a zigzag stitch to finish the edges you may cut your fabric strips wider and fold the edges under twice and sew them down as you would finish regular hems!

To sew in the elastics to make the flutter style: Unlike the straps in the section above sew all rows of elastic in on one side only! I sewed 4 rows of elastic to give it enough hold.



**To pin them to your garment:**

First, distribute all gathers evenly before you begin. Then tuck under all hanging threads and pin the straps to your garment by aligning the outer edge of the strap almost all the way against the side of your garment:



Sew the other side of the straps down by moving the straps a little bit towards the middle (about 0.5 inch). This will create a more defined back.



This should now be your sewn on strap from the armpit point-of-view. You can see the little gap between straps:



## Long Straight Straps To Tie Into A Bow:

If you like to make those versatile long straps please cut your fabric as follows:

Size	width		length
0-12m	3"	x	30"
18m-2t	3.5"	x	34"
3t-6	4"	x	38"
7-12	4.5"	x	42"

Sew and finish them according to section "RUFFLE STRAPS" at the beginning of this tutorial!

The straps shown in the picture below loop through the front (buttonhole). The straps are sewn on to the back. This dress can also be worn reverse!



## Frilly Straps:



For these cute straps you want to prepare your straps according to the section “RUFFLE STRAPS” but leave the ruffle part out! For extra long straps for tying into a bow, as shown on the garment below, please increase length of your straps by about 10 inches. Lay finished straps aside.

Cut 2 equally long strips according to this sizing chart:

Size	width	length
0-12m	1”	16”
18m-3t	1”	17”
4t-6	1”	18”
5t-8	1 ¼ ”	19”
9-12	1.5”	20”

All measurements are subject to preference and can be altered. Width may not be smaller than 1”!

These should be the 2 strips you have cut out:



Serge/roll hem long edges. Leave small edges raw.

NOTE: due to the narrow size of these strips it's not recommended to fold the long edges under and sew. You may also use a narrow zigzag stitch to finish the edges!



Set your machine to gathering stitch which may be this setting: tension to highest number and stitch length between 2-3. Sew right along the middle. No backstitching. Your machine should automatically gather your fabric. Some machines may not accommodate this setting. Then please sew with the same setting and gently pull the upper thread to gather your fabric. Best is to double knot the other end.



These should now be your ruffled frills. Steam press them carefully in shape so they will end up laying straight.



Take your previously prepared straps and position the frills in the center as shown. Fold down the left side of your frilly strip twice and pin. Pin entire frill. Leave right side raw and flush with your straps' end. Sew with color coordinating thread right down the center. Repeat with other strap.



Attach your straps to your garment.



For the backside you may sew in a buttonhole to pull the straps through. Another option is to sew in a garment label or piece of ribbon as shown in the first section "Ruffle Straps".



**Embellish with fabric yoyos:**



Cut out your fabric circle in the desired size from the template. For small yoyos use small size. This should be your fabric circle and thread a needle with double thread and double knot the end:



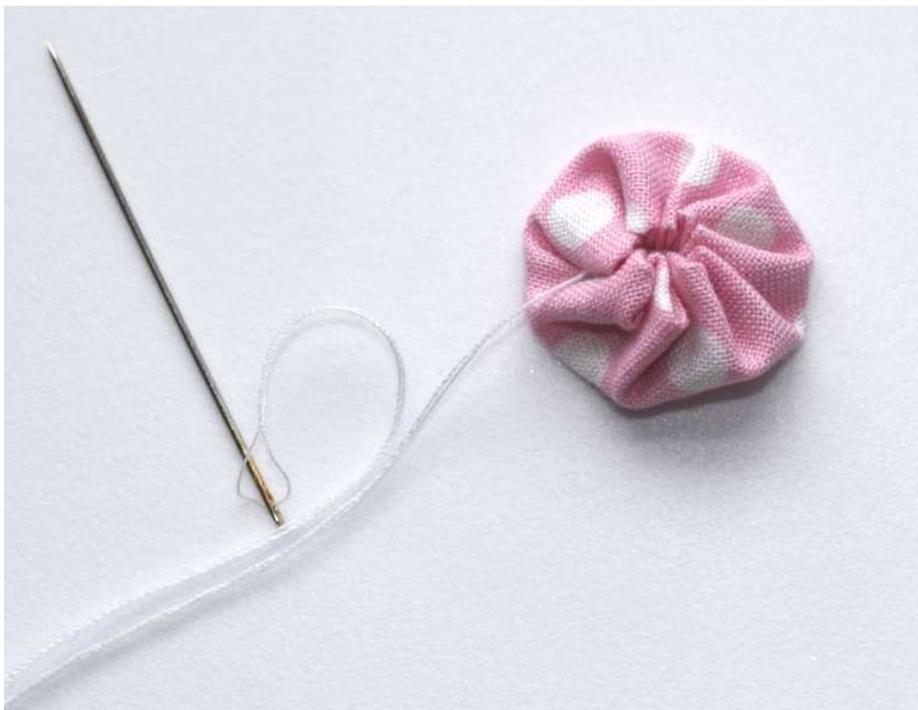
Insert your needle into the outer fold of your circle. Fold should measure about 1/8 inch. Go all the way around folding and inserting your needle as shown. Stitch one time from top and then from the bottom up. You want to stitch in a “wave” method.



This should now be your finished circle:



Pull gently on the thread gathering your circle into a yoyo. Adjust the folds on top by stitching from the underside if necessary.



This is now your finished fabric yoyo:



Sew your fabric yoyos on and done!

To easily transform a t-shirt with adding cute ruffles please cut fabric for ruffles according to your shirt's armhole. Once you have trimmed off the sleeve measure the entire opening and cut your fabric twice the length! The width that your ruffle should be may not exceed 2" otherwise it's not looking nice. For sizes 0 month t-shirts through size 18m I suggest to use 1.5". For sizes up you can use 2" width.

## Adding Ruffle Sleeves To Shirts:

This is a great way to customize shirts.

Below is my long sleeve shirt that I want to transform.



Trim sleeve off right next to the seam:



Measure the armhole circumference and take this measurement times two (x2). This should be your measurement for cutting the ruffle strips. Cut 2 ruffle strips and finish one long side by either roll hemming or serging. You may also zigzag stitch with a narrow stitch.

The width of the ruffle strips may be no less than 1 inch and probably no wider than 2 inches.



Ruffle (gather) your strips as described in section FRILLY STRAPS on page 23. Repeat with other strip.



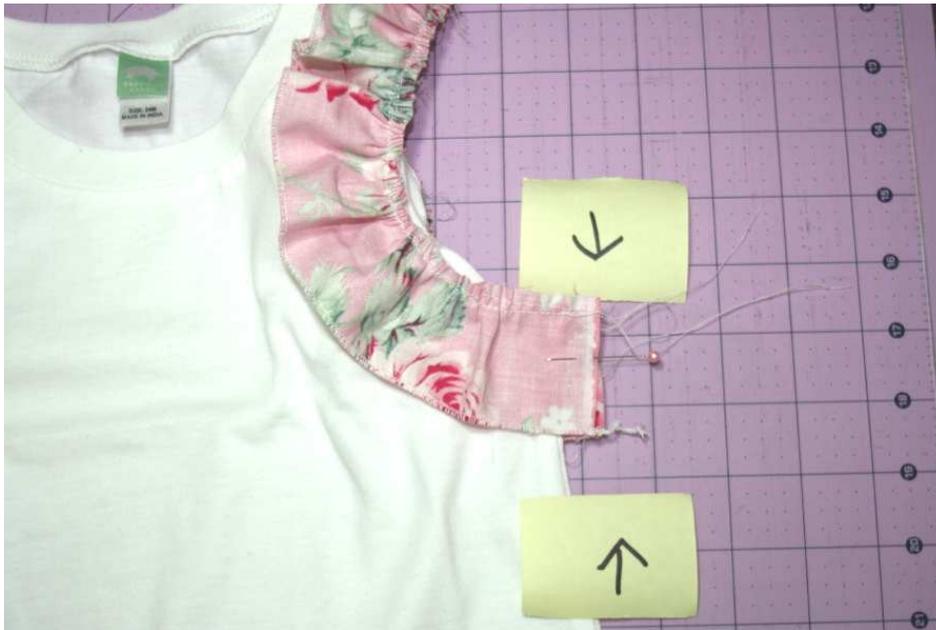
Pin the ruffle to the armhole, right sides facing, having the ends of the ruffle align with the armpit.



This is how it should look now pinned on:



Align the ends of the ruffle together and pin. Then sew between arrows:



Serge/overcast the raw edges around the armhole and the seam of both ruffle ends:



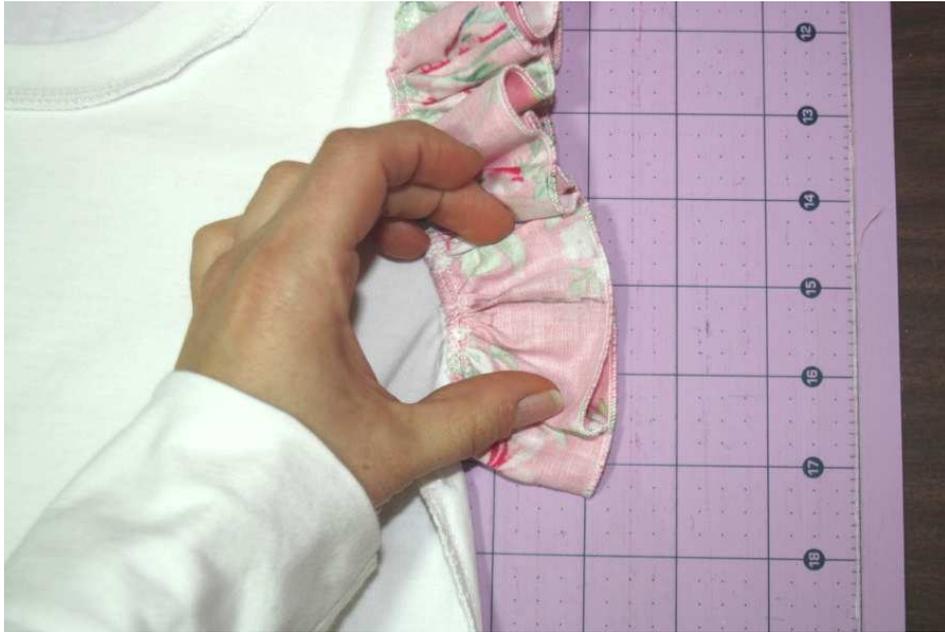
Topstitching is optional. This should now be your finished sleeve ruffle:



This is how it should look like from the inside:



TIP: if you discover that the armholes are pretty wide and want to slim them down this is what I suggest. I point out that my armhole is about 2 inches to wide:



Take a pencil and mark where you want the shirt with lower armhole part to slim down. Slowly ease out the line you are drawing towards the bottom of the shirt:



This is my drawn line:



Sew right on top of this line and serge/overcast raw edges or trim off with scissors and then serge/zigzag stitch raw edges. Repeat with other sleeve:



This should now be your finished shirt:



## Flutter Sleeves For A Tank Top:

To customize a simple tank top you can make cute flutter ruffles that you attach to the armholes. Add some fabric yoyos and you will have a one-of-a-kind tank top!



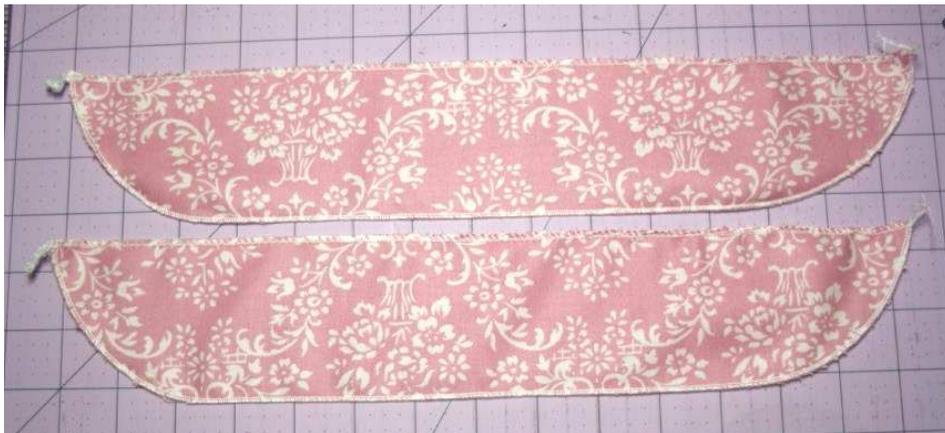
This is my tank top that I will start out with:



Cut 2 strips according to the PDF templates:



Serge/roll hem the curved edges and serge/overcast straight edges:



Ruffle/gather your strips according to section RUFFLE STRAPS on page 2:



Position your tank top as shown with the tank turned inside out and the armhole top edge facing you:



Pin ruffle onto the top edge of your armhole, wrong sides together, making sure to let the ruffle reach over the sides at equal amounts:



Sew with backstitching and straight stitch:



For all questions or suggestions to make this pattern better please email me at [whimsycouture@hotmail.com](mailto:whimsycouture@hotmail.com)

Thank you so much for using this pattern!

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