Whimsy Couture™

# Heirloom Garden Dress

This garment is a vintage-modern version of the smocked (Bishop) dresses but with shirring and decoration instead of pleats and smocking embroidery. The trim is optional but lends so much pretty-ness that you don't want to omit this. The fit is very roomy and hits at right under the knee or lower (depending on the width of lace you are adding). The softer the fabric you choose, the better is the wear comfort. Regular woven cotton could be too scratchy on the inside of the shirring for babies.

**List of required materials:**

- Lightweight woven materials such as lighter cottons, chambrays, voile, broadcloth etc.
- Sewing machine (with optional decorative stitching)
- Overlock machine/serger - optional
- Scissors
- Fabric marker (optional)
- Regular sewing thread
- Elastic thread
- Lip edge ruler or measuring tape
- Standard needle for woven material
- 1/4" band elastic
- Iron
- Double threaded hand sew needle. Double knot the ends.
- Safety pin (3/4 or 1") such as this one:
- Soft, unruffled lace or other delicate trim
- Crochet flowers or other tiny embellishments

**Seam allowance:** 3/8" (or half a presser foot) unless stated otherwise

**Sizing chart – based on 42 inch wide fabric WITH print direction**

| Size | Appr. length from shoulder to hem (without trim added) | Dress bodice W x L Cut 2 | Yardage for dress | Short sleeves W x L Cut 2 | Yardage for short sleeves | 3/4 sleeves W x L Cut 2 | Yardage for 3/4 sleeves | Neckline elastic ¼" width cut 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NB | 13.5" | 15"x14.5" | 1/2 yd | 16"x6" | 1/4 yd | 16"x9" | 1/4 yd | 12" |
| 3-6m | 15.5" | 16"x16.5" | 1/2 yd | 16.5"x6 1/4" | 1/4 yd | 16.5"x10" | 1/3 yd | 12" |
| 9-12m | 18" | 17.5"x19" | 2/3 yd | 16 3/4"x6 1/4" | 1/4 yd | 16 3/4"x11" | 1/3 yd | 12 1/4" |
| 18m | 20" | 19"x21" | 2/3 yd | 17"x6.5" | 1/4 yd | 17"x11.5" | 1/3 yd | 12.5" |
| 2t | 22.5" | 20"x23.5" | 3/4yd | 17 1/4"x6 3/4" | 1/4 yd | 17 1/4"x12" | 1/3 yd | 13" |
| 3t | 24" | 21"x25" | 3/4 yd | 17.5"x7" | 1/4 yd | 17.5"x13" | 1/3 yd | 13.5" |
| 4t | 25.5" | 22"x26.5" | 3/4 yd | 18"x7" | 1/4 yd | 18"x14" | 1/2 yd | 14" |
| 5t | 26" | 22.5"x27.5" | 1 2/3 yds | 18.5"x7 1/4" | 1/4 yd | 18.5"x15" | 1/2 yd | 14.5" |
| 6 | 28.5" | 23"x29.5" | 1 3/4 yds | 18 3/4"x7.5" | 1/4 yd | 18 3/4"x16" | 1/2 yd | 15" |
| 7/8 | 30" | 23.5"x31" | 2 yds | 19"x7.5" | 1/4 yd | 19"x16.5" | 1/2 yd | 15.5" |
| 9/10 | 31.5" | 24"x32.5" | 2 yds | 19.5"x7 3/4" | 1/4 yd | 19.5"x17 1/4" | 1/2 yd | 16" |
| 11/12 | 34.5" | 25"x35.5" | 2 yds | 20"x8" | 1/4 yd | 20"x18" | 1/2 yd | 16.5" |

*if using the same fabric print for bodice and sleeves you will likely less yardage!

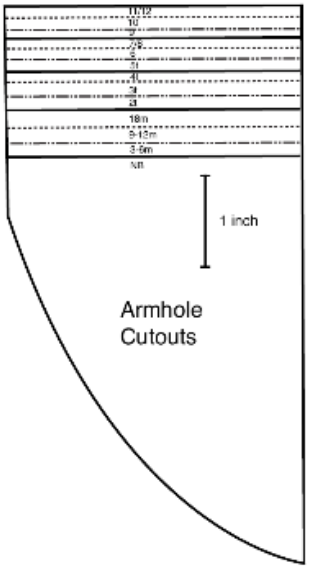
**Lace/trim yardages:**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| NB – 18m =2 yds | 2t – 5t = 2 1/4 yds | 6 – 12 = 3 yds |

*if the dress and sleeves are made out of the same fabric you want to add both yardages together to buy the correct amount of fabric.

**<u>To print out your templates:</u>**

Print out your templates without scaling. This is your armhole cutout:

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Cut out the size you are making.

**<u>To cut out the dress pieces:</u>**

Fold your fabric over from side to side (print direction going down if applicable)

| | |
|---|---|
| With the FOLD on the left, place your armhole cutout into the upper right corner and pin. Then cut around it. Repeat with other dress piece. | Repeat this with both sleeves: |

**<u>These are the pieces you have cut out:</u>**

1x front dress piece and 1x back dress piece:

2x sleeve pieces (mine are short sleeves):

**<u>To sew the sleeves to the dress pieces:</u>**

Place one sleeve piece (with right sides down) onto one main dress piece, aligning the right armhole curve as shown. Pin in place and sew along the white dashed lines:

Serge/zigzag stitch the edges:

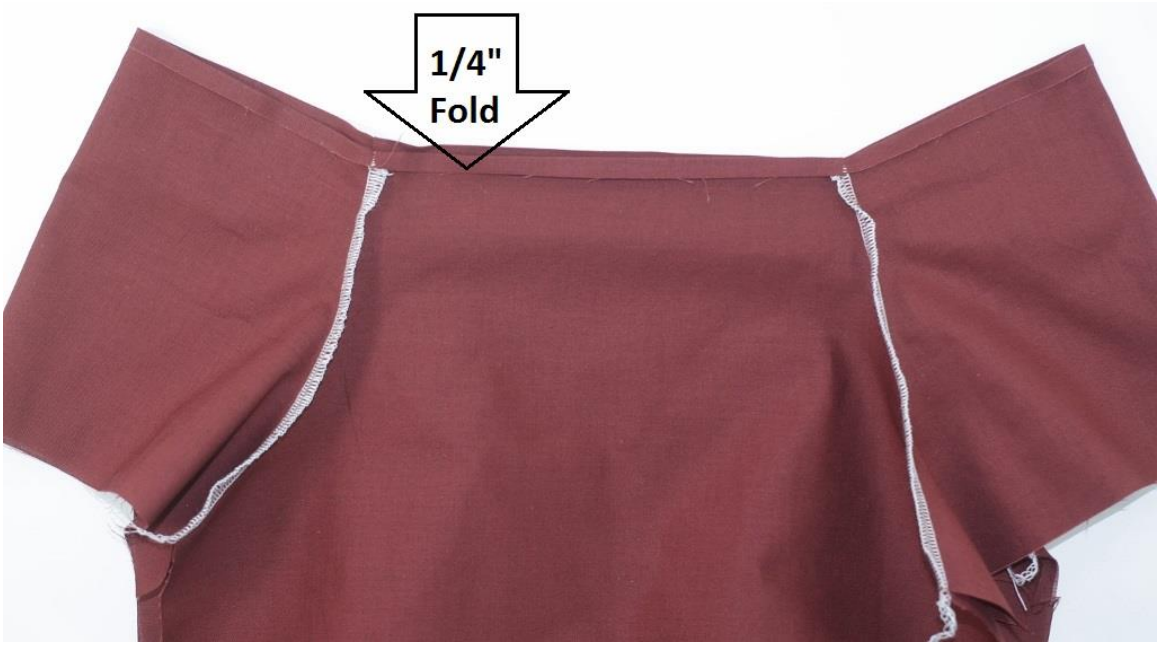
Repeat this step with the second sleeve and sew it to the left armhole curve:

Last step is to sew the other main dress piece to both sleeve armhole curves:

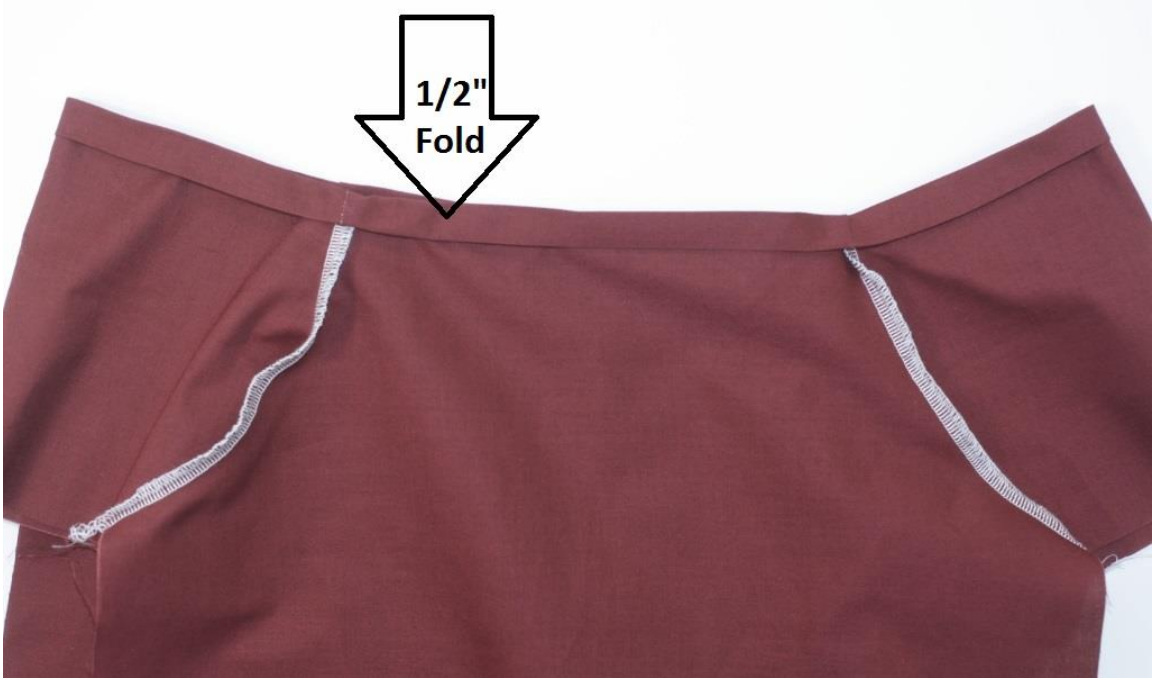
Serge/zigzag stitch all raw edges:

**To make the neckline casing:**

Fold down the neckline ¼” and press all the way around:




Fold it down once more 1/2" and press:

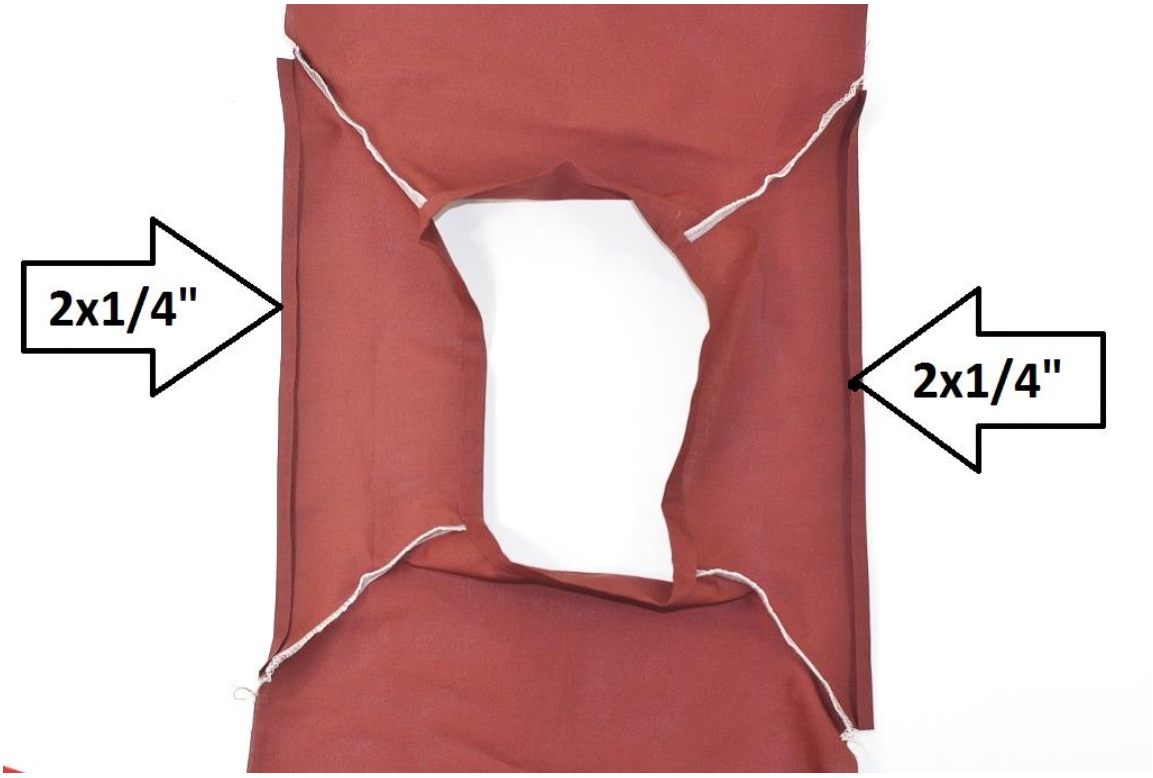


Sew in place right along the inner folded edge. Leave a 1” opening in the back center. Backstitch the beginning and end:

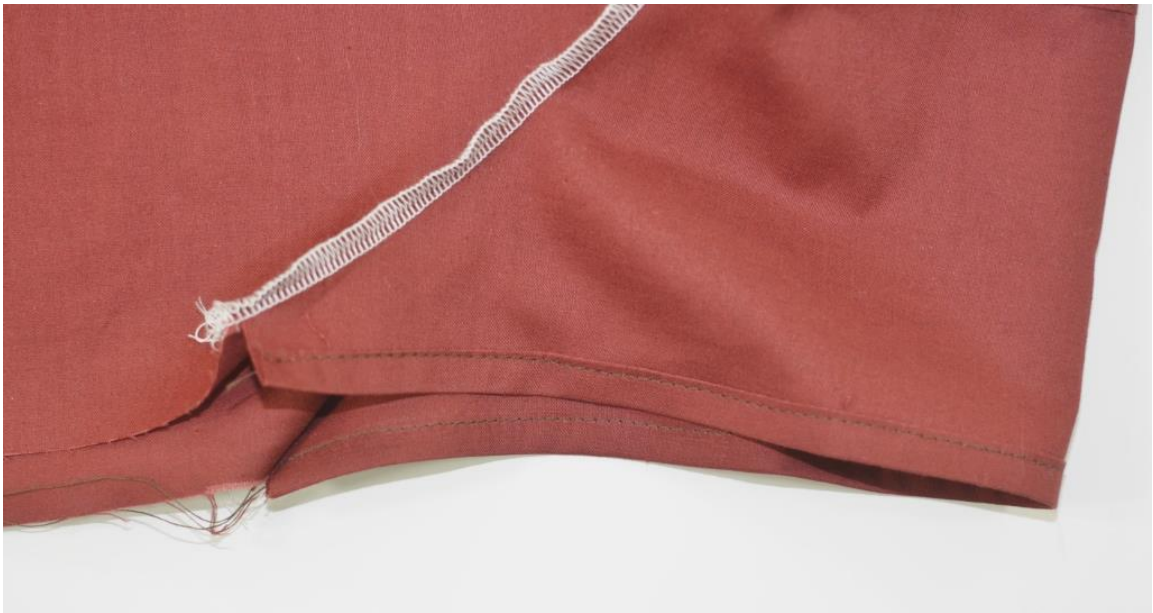
This is your sewn neckline casing:

**To sew the sleeve hems:**

Fold up the sleeve hems to 1/4” and press, then fold up once more 1/4" and press:

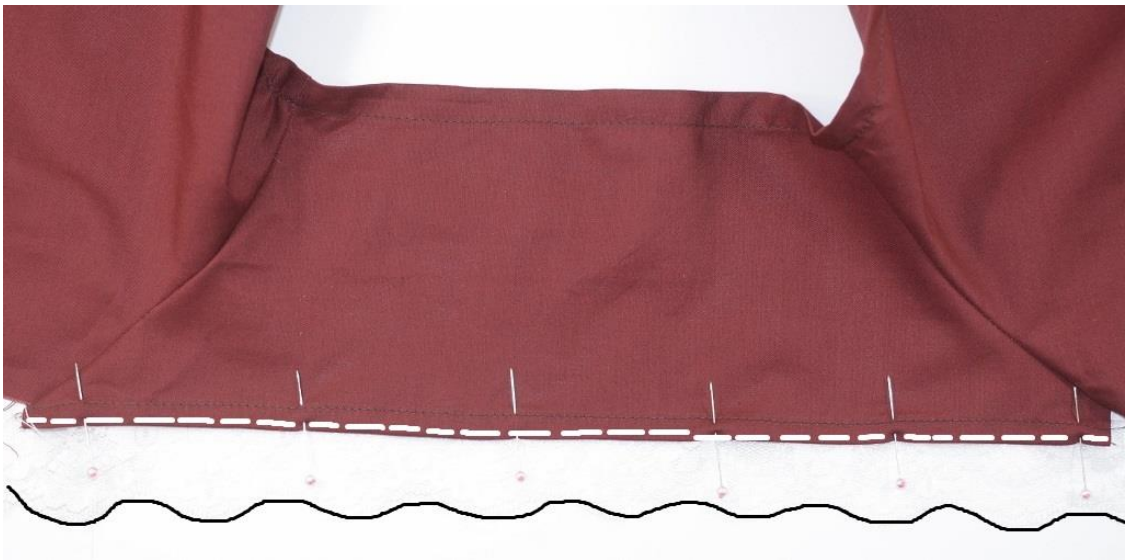



Then sew in place along the inner folded edge. This is your sewn sleeve hem now:



**To sew the trim to the sleeve hems:**

Pin your trim to the UNDERSIDE of the sleeve hem aligning with the hem stitches. Then sew in place along the top of the sleeve hem right along the outer edge as shown with the white dashed lines:



(I draw the curvy edges of the lace because the pictures don't show it well enough). This is your sleeve hem from the right side:

Here is what it looks like from underneath:

Here is what the dress looks like now (with the lace outlines marked):

**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 tightly. You can pull slightly on your elastic thread while you are winding it up.

**Helpful tips on sewing with elastic thread:**

http://whimsycoutureboutique.blogspot.com/2010/08/no-more-shirring-problems-ever.html

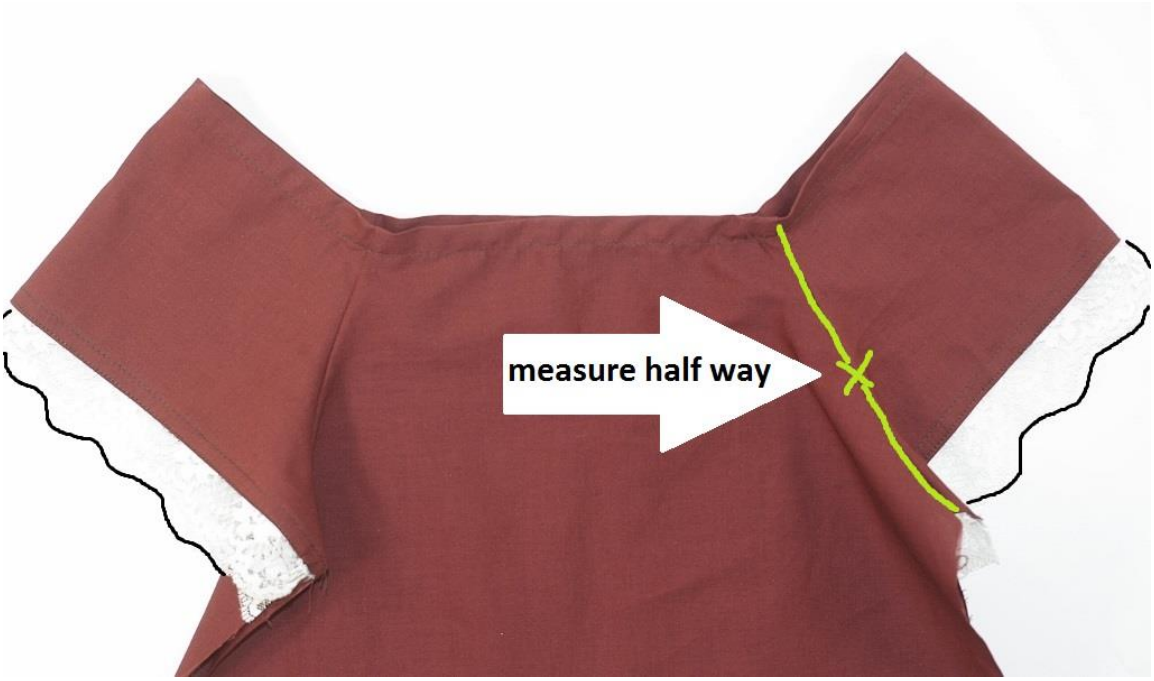
http://whimsycoutureboutique.blogspot.com/2010/01/tutorial-how-to-shirr-fabric.html

If you have a Brother sewing machine, this YouTube video might help:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RvXzoFzvVFQ

Insert the bobbin with the elastic thread into the lower part of your machine and thread the upper with regular thread.

Mark the area until where to sew the elastic thread rows. Measure half way down from the top edge to the armhole corner. Place a small safety pin where I marked the X or use a threaded hand sew needle to stitch a tiny knot:




Either draw lines along the neckline in a 3/8” distance along the dashed lines or go directly to sewing.

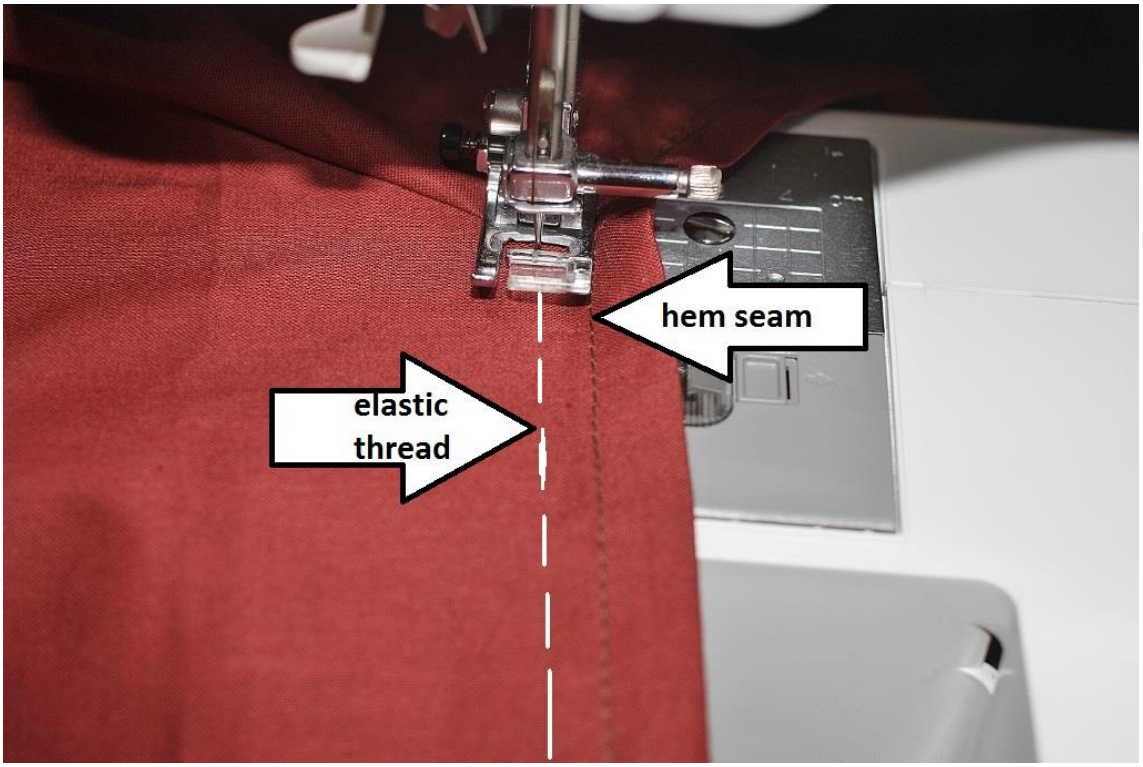
Insert your fabric into your sewing machine with right sides up and start sewing on the side where you added the half way mark as shown in picture above.

Start at the top edge 3/8” underneath the casing steam.

Leave a good 4 inches of elastic thread hanging out. Set your machine to the longest stitch length and the tension to 2-3.

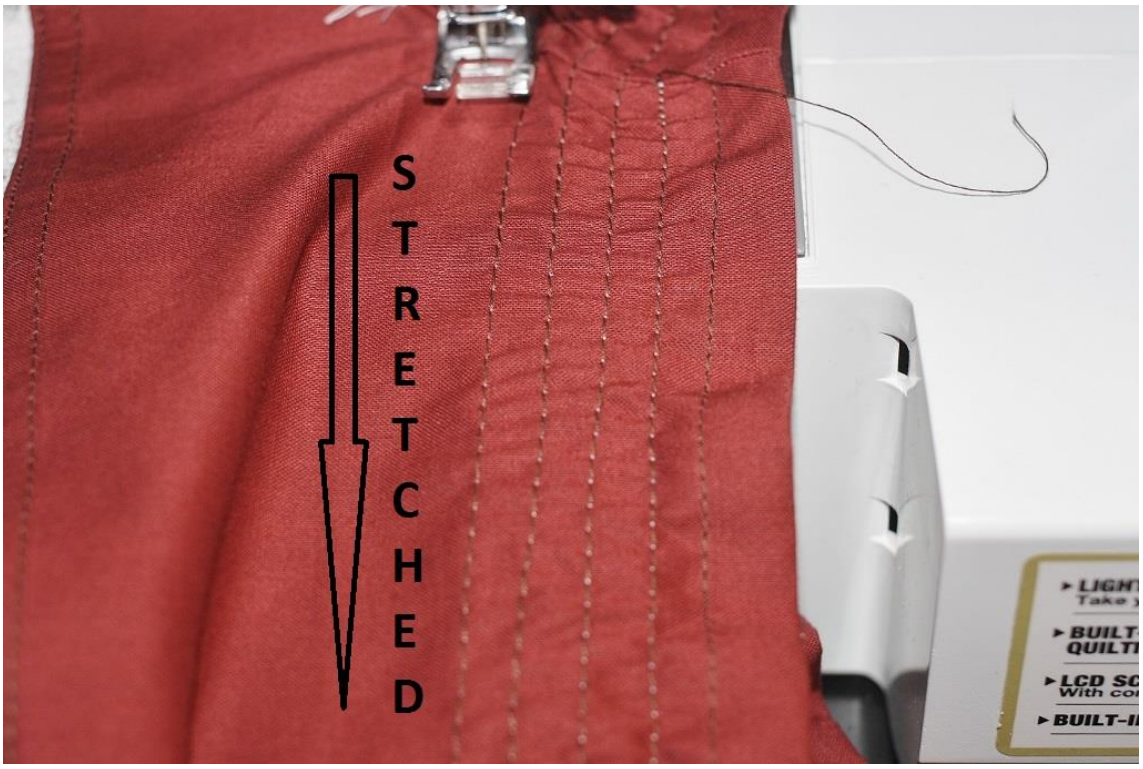
Start sewing 3/8” underneath the casing stitches.

Be sure to check while you are sewing that your elastic thread has not jumped out from over the bobbin. That sometimes will happen and cause your elastic not to gather. If this does happen just rewind your elastic thread!

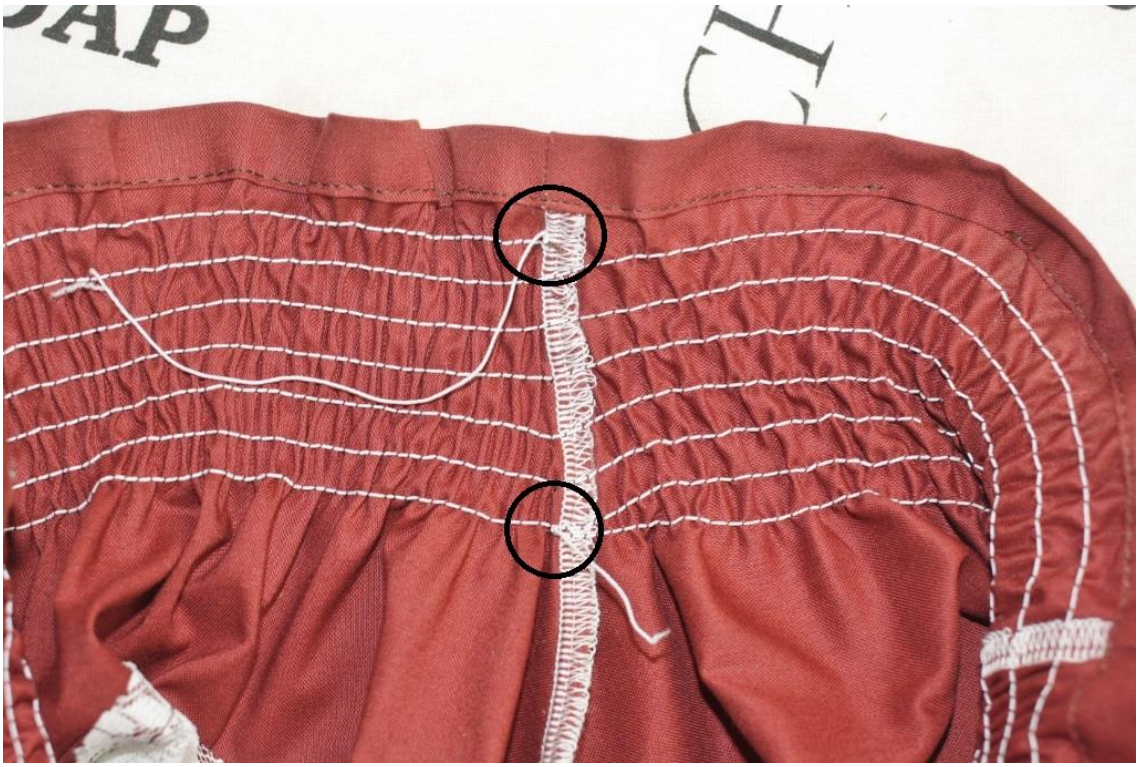



Sew row by row, continuously. Sew all the way around the upper area of your garment:

To prevent the fabric from bunching up under your presser foot, gently stretch the fabric towards you while holding it from the back:




Continue to sew until you reach the marked half way point on the sleeve/bodice seam. Once you are done with shirring, cut your threads off and double knot them on the inside as shown in the circles, then trim threads off about 1/4":



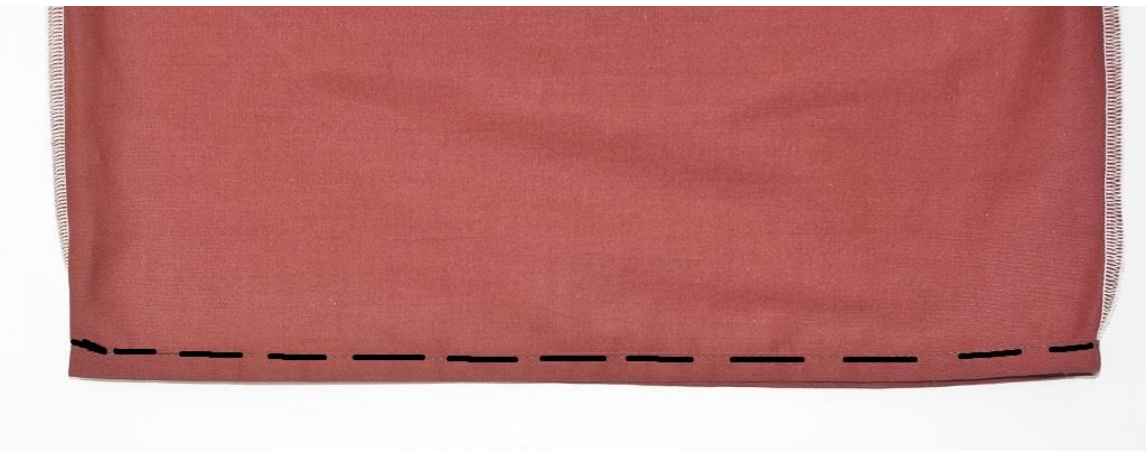
Take out the half way mark thread if applicable.

This is your finished shirred area. Do not steam press this area yet!

**<u>To sew the bottom hem of the dress:</u>**

As you did with the sleeve hems, fold up the bottom edge 1/4" and press, then fold up once more 1/4” and press:

Sew along the inner folded edge along the black dashed lines:



Pin your trim the same way you did with the sleeve hems:

And sew it on:

**To sew the sides:**

Turn your dress with wrong sides out and pin the sides from underarm to the bottom hem. Then sew along the white dashed lines with backstitching the beginning and end:

Serge/zigzag stitch the raw edges.

**To insert the neckline elastic:**

Secure a small safety pin to one end of the elastic. Insert it into the casing:

Once both ends meet, overlap 3/8” and pin, then hand stitch together with at least 10 stitches:

This is now your finished dress:

If your shirred area is much looser than the neckline elastic you may now steam press it to let the elastic thread shrink under the steam.

# Optional décor:

Sew some cute flowers to the neckline yoke and add decorative stitching to the last row of elastic (practice sewing the decorative stitching on a piece of shirred fabric to test it before sewing it to your dress):

Store bought tiny ribbon flowers and mini pom-pom trim added:

The white hand crocheted flowers were provided by:

2KuteKreations

https://www.etsy.com/shop/2kute

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Design examples:

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For questions please email whimsycouture@hotmail.com

Thank you so much for using this pattern!

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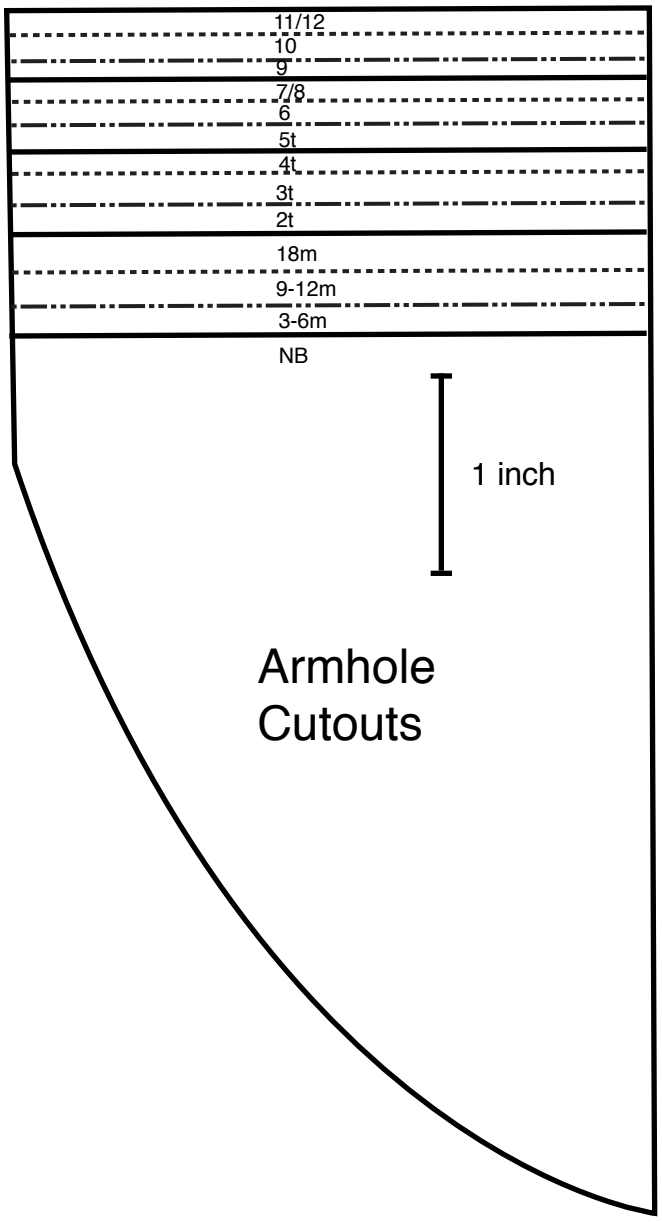


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