

Waisted Kirtle (Cotehardi) Construction

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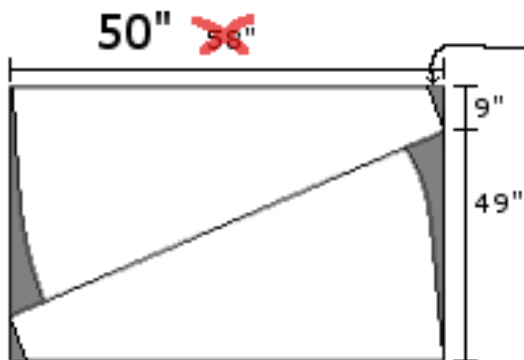
This handout covers the construction methods used to create a waisted kirtle. These dresses are seen in a lot of images by Flemish and French artists in the late 1400s. For this workshop we'll be working on dresses made entirely (fashion fabric and lining) of linen. Practically speaking the fashion fabric could use wool or a brocade. In our period of study they may have lined these types of garments in linen or wool.



Bodice and Sleeves

The pattern for the bodice and sleeves will need to be individually fitted to you. It's easiest to have a friend (or several friends with some wine) help with this fitting.

Sleeves may be either short (shown in the image) or long.



Skirt

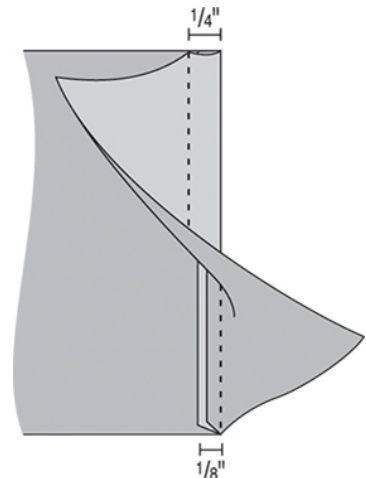
The skirt is sewn together from trapezoids. The center front should be straight-edge to straight-edge and the center-back should be sewn bias-to-bias. All other seams are straight to bias.

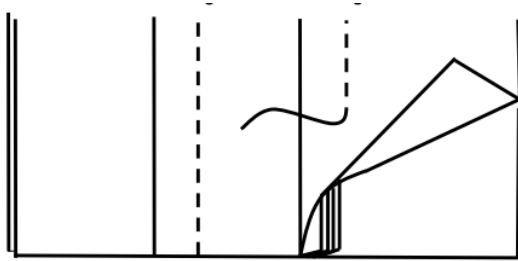
Measurements on the diagram may need to be adjusted to fit your measurements.

Seams and other sewing terms used

French Seam - Place the wrong-sides together and stitch near the edge. Reverse the fabric and run another line of fabric to enclose the seam allowance.

This is a fairly weak seam (only one line of stitching holds the two sides together. Good on straight or barely curved seams. It takes two lines of stitching to complete a single seam. Fairly bulky on wool, ok choice for cotton or linen. In the end, no surface stitching shows on the garment.



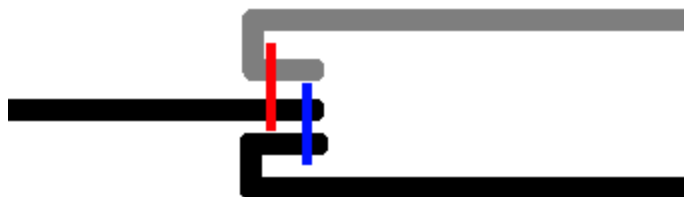


Stitch and Flip Seam - Requires a lined garment and will only work if you are making something that ends up flat or being a lined tube (ie, the bodice on our garment). Somewhat strong seam (one line of stitching holds the two sides together, BUT the seam is not as apt to fray as a basic straight seam). It takes one line of stitching to complete a single seam. Ok choice for tightly woven wool, linen or cotton May not wear as well for loosely

woven fabrics. In the end, no surface stitching shows on the garment (the seam may optionally be topstitched which would then show a single line of stitches on the exterior of the garment. This stitch works well on fitted garments as long as the garment does not require additional fitting after it is initially sewn together.

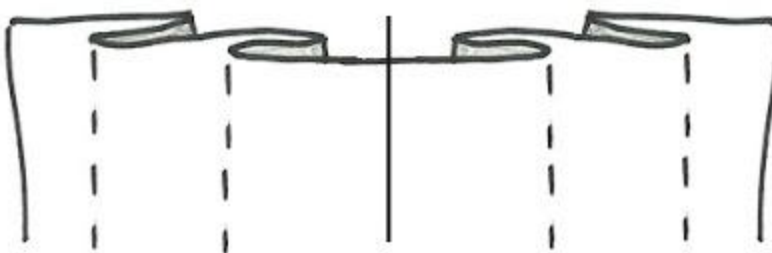
Stack two pattern pieces which end up sewn together next to each other in the same orientation they are going to be sewn. Each stack should have the lining piece and the outer fashion fabric for a single piece of the pattern. Keeping the seam edges together, split the right-most pattern piece. That is lay the fashion fabric of the right-most pattern piece on top of the left pattern piece with the right-side of the fashion fabric together. Also lay the lining fabric of the fabric of the right-most pattern piece under the left pattern piece with the right-side of the lining fabric together. Pin along the seam and then carefully sew that seam. When the fabrics are unfolded you will end up with the two pattern pieces sewn together and the seam allowance enclosed between the layers of the right-most pattern piece. Continue adding pattern pieces to the right of the sewn portion until all pattern pieces have been sewn together. It is possible to sew the first pattern piece to the last pattern piece by "flipping" the pattern pieces around the whole garment, sewing the seams together and then flipping the whole assemblage inside-out.

Hand Finished enclosed seam



This seam is used to attach the sleeves to the bodice and to attach the bodice to the skirt. This requires at least one of the sides of the seam to have two layers (fashion fabric and lining). Attach one side of the seam to ONLY the fashion fabric layer of the other side of the seam (shown in blue in the image). Fold this seam so it will end up sandwiched between the

fashion fabric and the lining layer. Fold the lining layer and hand stitch this down to the seam (shown in red on the image).



Pleats

A pleat is a type of fold formed by doubling fabric back upon itself and securing it in place.

Knife pleat - (right and left hand side of the picture) A simple pleat formed where folds are pressed to one side in the same direction. Sometimes

called "side pleats"

Box pleat - (center of the pleat picture) Back-to-back knife pleats.

Fabric sources:

Linen:

Fabric-store.com <http://www.fabric-store.com/> Nice weights, nice colors, good prices.

IL19 is a good medium weight linen. Great for tunics/chemise/dresses or pants.

IL20 is a good lightweight linen. Good for light weight summer tunics/chemise.

4C22 is a good heavy weight linen. Good for heavy-duty pants.. or for garments which need more body.

Wool: Wool is expensive.. I tend to buy it as I find it.. but I don't really have a reliable source.

Joanne's wool is hit-or-miss.. but tends to be in the \$20/yard range. Mostly medium/heavy weight.

Occasionally <http://fabric.com> has had nice price on summer weight wool.

Stone Mountain and Daughter tends to always have what I'm looking for.. but they're fairly expensive.

Ebay is hit-and-miss.. but sometimes there are deals to be found there.

Sometimes there's just no way around it.. and you -have- to go on a fabric buying trip to the LA Fabric District.

Construction Steps:

- Wash fabric (8-9 yards necessary)
- Cut out the bodice and sleeves. Note: these have two layers. (~1/2-3/4 yard per layer)
- Cut out the skirt. (8 trapezoids see cutting plan above) (~7 yards for the whole skirt, it's unlined)
- Sew skirt together. (French seam the panels together with bias edges towards the back of the skirt. End up with bias to bias at the center back. Better swoosh and the front hangs straight.)
- Make the short sleeves (sew inner and outer fabrics together along what will be the end of the sleeve edge. Then sew them into a tube making sure that the seam is matched up between the inner and outer layers). Iron this.
- Completely sew the bodice together and try it on to test the fit (use stitch and flip seams on front/back/2 sides then stitch the neckline on the front pieces before attaching the sleeve strap to the back piece and stitching the back pieces)
- If you're adding a lace, open up the front of the bodice and add eyelets.
- Attach the short sleeves to the bodice (sew down on the outside then flip and hand sew down the inside)
- Attach the skirt to the bodice (Put a box pleat at the center-back and then knife pleat either side to fit the top of the skirt to the bottom of the bodice. Sew the skirt to the front layer of the bodice and then flip the back layer of the bodice around to make a hidden seam on the inside).
- Hem the dress