

Making a T-Shirt Dress

Verify your materials are appropriate prior to sewing. We want the t shirt and the fabric to be thick enough that when you put your hand under one layer of fabric, you CAN NOT see the outline of your hand. Please use t shirts that are in good condition. Please be sure that the t shirts are not overly boxy or stretched out at the bottom. All girls are conscious of their appearance. Girls in undeveloped regions are particularly proud if they are not pregnant. We don't want them in baggy oversized shirt dresses. (Would you bring your child or grandchild to church wearing that shirt?) Be sensitive with print on shirt ie. No ice cream cones and cupcakes for a malnourished child, no white princesses on a dress going to a black girl, no English writing, no scary themes, avoid Christmas for Muslims.... Dark colors are best when washing is very limited.

Pockets Cut two pieces of fabric 6 ½" x 13". Fold the rectangle in half, right sides together and stitch around leaving a one-inch opening at the bottom. Turn the pockets right side out. Press the pockets forcing the seams to the edges. Sew your Dress a Girl label on one pocket. Lay your skirt fabric flat and place the pocket on the skirt several inches down from the top of the skirt. Centered equally from the middle line. Ensure that the top of the pocket is the fold. On the finished garment you want the pocket slightly lower than the waist. Top stitch the pocket on, reinforcing the top edges. (If you are only using one pocket, please place it on the right-hand side of the dress)

Cut the T Shirt *Lay the t shirt out flat on a table. Look at the style of the shirt. Does it have any taper toward the waist? Girls prefer the t shirt dresses because it shows a bit of figure. They like to prove they are NOT pregnant, where girls are often with child far too early. On the boxy shirts, either serge or zigzag the side seams in to give a bit of shape. (Muslim girls over puberty (approx age 10) need to have their elbows covered so long sleeve shirts work well.)

Visualize and mark the waist line or above for empire waistline. Add an inch for the seam and cut the T shirt.

Cut the fabric Use the full width of fabric either 44 or 45". Do NOT cut off the salvages.

1. Determine the t shirt size. Look at the chart below and figure out the finished length of the dress.
2. Measure the length of the shirt from the mid shoulder point to the bottom of the cut shirt.
3. Subtract the length of the shirt from the finished length of the dress.
4. Add 3 inches for seam allowances (to adhere the shirt to skirt) and material to hem the dress.
5. Now you know how much fabric to cut to make the skirt. Cut fabric length.

Make skirt Fold the fabric in half with right sides together, and sew the two short edges together forming the back seam. Press open. You'll end up with a larger circle of fabric. Fold over the bottom edge 1/2" twice and stitch hem. (If you are making a large or extra-large dress please make a 3 -4 inch kick pleat in the bottom hem to allow the girl to run without lifting her dress.)

Gather or Pleat Gather - Run two rows of gathering stitches along the top edge of the fabric and gather fabric until it equals the width of the t-shirt.

OR You may choose to evenly pleat the skirt instead of gathering. Please use pleats that are symmetrical rather than a tuck here and there and a hunk at the end.

Putting the two together Turn skirt inside out and place t-shirt inside the skirt (right sides together). Match and pin the cut edge of the shirt to the top of the skirt at front line point, back point and side seams. Now you have four quarters that are all equal. Then evenly spread out gathers to fit area. Stitch twice all the way around. Serge or zigzag edge. OR

Pleat the extra evenly and symmetrically using up the excess skirt fabric to fit shirt. Stitch seam twice.

Top Stitch Press the seam upwards and top stitch. (Stitch on the shirt very close to the seam all around the dress.)

Embellish and Finish You may add ties to pull the dress in and make a bow in the back. You may choose a self-tie belt. You may add buttons to appear like a pin on the shirt. Rickrack around the neck makes it look like a built-in necklace. Avoid craft ribbon and delicate items that will not withstand washing on rocks and will disintegrate with long wear. Avoid glue and iron on. Securely top stitch everything on. Let loose your creativity.

Check the garment. Is it God's best dress? Have you cut all loose threads? Are all areas of stress reinforced? Will this dress last a girl three years if she wears it EVERY day?

Finished Length		
Baby		Length 14 – 16"
Small	Size 1 - 4	Length 18 – 22"
Medium	Size 5 – 7	Length 28 – 30"
Large	Size 8 – 10	Length 32 – 34"
Ex-large	Size 12 - 14	Length 36 – 38"

***For Baby shirts-** multiply shirt width by **4** to a maximum of 45 inches. This will be the width of the skirt fabric. Use the salvage edges (instead of cutting them off).

11/18