

Black polka-dot A-line midi skirt - sewing instructions

EU 38 . 4 pieces . seam allowance 15 mm

0. Paper first

Print the pack at 100% scale, then measure the square on page 3 of the A4 pattern with a ruler. If it is not 100 mm, DO NOT CUT. Trim the sheets along the LEFT and TOP edges, overlap them until the corner targets (a cross in a circle) of neighbouring sheets sit exactly on each other, and tape. The page map is on page 2 of the A4 pattern.

Body and finished garment measurements

EU 38: standard size-table body, not your personal measurements. All circumferences below are in cm; garment minus body is the constructed ease. Seam allowances are excluded.

Waist: body 70.0 / garment 71.0 / ease 1.0 cm.

Hip: body 94.0 / garment 98.0 / ease 4.0 cm.

Fabric and ease decisions

Fabric mechanics are unmeasured. The existing pattern uses its recorded default ease; this is not a fabric-specific fit approval. Sample evidence applies only to its stated load, direction, method and time. It does not establish seam elasticity, movement, pressure, comfort or physical fit. Test a toile and your actual cloth before final cutting.

1. Cutting

Cut along the OUTER line; the default 15 mm seam allowance is inside it, except where a different edge allowance is printed. The inner fine line is the stitching line. The arrow on each piece (grainline) must lie PARALLEL to the straight grain of the fabric - set it askew and the garment will twist on the body. A piece marked "ON FOLD" is placed against the folded edge and is never cut along it.

- #1 SKIRT FRONT: CUT 1X ON FOLD
- #2 SKIRT BACK: CUT 2X MIRRORED
- #3 WAISTBAND FRONT: CUT 1X ON FOLD
- #4 WAISTBAND BACK: CUT 2X MIRRORED

2. Markings

Notches (the small ticks on an edge) tell you where two pieces meet. Cut each piece out on its solid line first; then, at every tick, snip 3 mm straight into the allowance from the cut edge, along the tick (a double tick is two snips). The tick is printed 7 mm long only so that you find it; it stops 8 mm short of the stitching line, so a 3 mm snip never reaches the seam. On a piece cut with no allowance (a binding strip) mark the tick with chalk instead of snipping. A single tick marks a FRONT edge, two ticks close together mark a BACK edge (Tilly: "two notches together usually indicates the back of a pattern piece"). A seam that joins a front piece to a back piece (a side seam) carries a single tick on BOTH pieces, so the two ticks you match always look the same. Each seam step below names its notches piece by piece, with the distance along the edge. Darts (the triangular wedges) are traced with a tailor's pencil, points included.

This pattern also carries LINES DRAWN ON THE PIECE (not cut, not sewn): trace them onto the fabric with tailor's chalk before you unpin the paper. Each one is listed with the piece it belongs to and what it is for.

- WAISTBAND_FRONT / PLACEMENT LINE 1 (placement): WAISTBAND FOLD LINE: 30 mm from each long seam line; the fold is the finished top edge

- WAISTBAND_BACK / PLACEMENT LINE 1 (placement): WAISTBAND FOLD LINE: 30 mm from each long seam line; the fold is the finished top edge

3. Sewing order

This order is the construction order of this skirt, every seam of the stitch graph in it: the darts and the centre back with its zip while the pieces are flat, then the side seams, then the waistband in the round.

Seam allowances: after stitching each seam, neaten each raw allowance edge on its own with an overlock (serger) or a narrow zigzag close to the edge, so the cloth cannot fray inside the garment; then press as the step says. Bound edges, hem turns and fold lines need nothing extra.

1. DARTS - sew every dart before any seam that crosses it. Fold the piece right sides together so the two drawn legs lie exactly on top of each other, stitch from the wide end to the point, run the last 10 mm along the fold and tie the threads at the point (no backstitch there).

SKIRT_FRONT: 2 x dart on the garment - press the fold toward the centre.

SKIRT_BACK: 2 x dart on the garment - press the fold toward the centre.

2. SKIRT_BACK <-> SKIRT_FRONT - plain seam, 15 mm allowance, press the allowances open.

Centre-back seam: concealed zip from the waist to 20 mm below the hip line, sewn below it.

ZIP OPENING: from the waist seam line down to the notch on this edge (226 mm). Neaten both allowances along the whole seam first and leave the seam open. Insert the concealed zip now, as section 3b.1 describes; then sew the rest of the seam (494 mm) from just below the zip stop to the hem and press it open.

notches - SKIRT_BACK centre back edge (720 mm seam): single notch at 226 mm from its upper end (494 mm from its lower end). Match the ticks; the two sides line up there.

3. SKIRT_FRONT <-> SKIRT_BACK - CLOSING SEAM: this one closes a ring, so flat work becomes a tube. 15 mm allowance, press the allowances open.

Skirt side seam, hem to waist, after the darts.

4. WAISTBAND_FRONT <-> WAISTBAND_BACK - CLOSING SEAM: this one closes a ring, so flat work becomes a tube. 15 mm allowance, press the allowances open.

Waistband front to back at the side seams, flat and unfolded.

5. WAISTBAND_FRONT (folded, both long edges) <-> SKIRT_FRONT - folded band seam, 15 mm allowance through all three layers; neaten the three allowances together and press them down, away from the band.

Folded waistband to the skirt waist (darts sewn): both band long edges (seam plies) and the skirt waist at equal length, one stitch line.

Fold WAISTBAND_FRONT on its marked fold line, wrong sides together, so its two long raw edges lie exactly on each other (notches matched); baste them together 5 mm from the edge. Both edges are one layer pair on this single stitch line with SKIRT_FRONT; nothing is gathered (1:1).

6. WAISTBAND_BACK (folded, both long edges) <-> SKIRT_BACK - folded band seam, 15 mm allowance through all three layers; neaten the three allowances together and press them down, away from the band.

Folded waistband to the skirt waist (darts sewn): both band long edges (seam plies) and the skirt waist at equal length, one stitch line.

Fold WAISTBAND_BACK on its marked fold line, wrong sides together, so its two long raw edges lie exactly on each other (notches matched); baste them together 5 mm from the edge. Both edges are one layer pair on this single stitch line with SKIRT_BACK; nothing is gathered (1:1).

3b.1 Zip and pieces sewn onto the surface

Zip: a concealed (invisible) zip in the centre-back seam; the opening is 226 mm, from the waist seam line to 20 mm below the hip line, so the hips pass with it open; buy a 30 cm concealed zip. Press the coils flat from the back with a cool iron.

Open the zip and lay one tape face down on the right side of one back edge, coil on the seam line, top stop 3 mm below the waist seam line; stitch with an invisible-zip foot close to the coil down to the notch. Close the zip to check the two sides line up at the waist seam and the hip, open it again and stitch the other tape the same way. Sew the seam below with an ordinary zip foot, starting 5 mm above and 2 mm outside the last zip stitch. Shorten a longer zip at its lower end: whip-stitch a new stop across the coil and cut 20 mm below it. The waistband is attached over the tape tops afterwards; its ends are finished as section 3b.2 says.

3b.2 Waistband: interfacing, ends and hook-and-bar

The waistband is 30 mm finished and 710 mm round (table waist 700 mm + 10 mm ease); it is cut 60 mm deep between the seam lines and folded on its marked line.

1. Before step 4: fuse lightweight woven interfacing to the OUTER half of each waistband piece, from the outer seam line to the fold line; test it on a scrap first.
2. Before the band goes on (steps 5 and 6): fold each back waistband piece right sides together on its fold line and stitch across its centre-back end on the seam line (15 mm), from the fold to the raw edges. Trim the corner, turn right side out and press; the two finished ends will meet edge to edge above the zip.
3. Sew the folded band to the skirt in the round, matching side seams and notches, the finished ends exactly at the zip edges. Press the allowances down into the skirt.
4. Sew a hook-and-bar (or a hook and eye) to the inside of the two band ends so the band closes edge to edge, the hook on the wearer's right.

Fit: the finished waist and hip are the reading's design ease on the EU38 size table, not a fitting; try the skirt on before the hem. The darts' openings are solved by the pattern engine for this size.

3c. Complete edge finishes

HEM: one, finished edge 1348 mm. Design assumption, not a measured source detail.

The cutting pattern includes exactly 25 mm on this edge. Turn the raw edge 10 mm to the wrong side, then turn another 15 mm; the second fold is the drawn finished edge. Press and stitch close to the inner fold. This hem curves where it meets the flared seams, so the turned-up allowance is about 23 mm longer in all than the line it is stitched to (up to 12 mm on one piece, mostly near the seams). Before turning, run a long ease stitch (4-5 mm) 5 mm from the raw edge, draw up the bobbin thread until the allowance lies flat against the garment, and steam-press; never fold a pleat (Seamwork, Sew Two Basic Hems). test the hem turn on the toile before cutting the final fabric.

4. Machine, needle and thread

Fabric mechanics have not been verified for this pattern. These are general examples. Pick your fabric first, then read your row from the table below.

For a light cotton: Universal needle 80/12, all-purpose polyester thread, stitch length 2.5 mm.

Choose the row for your actual cloth and test on a scrap:

- cotton and other light wovens (lawn, poplin, gingham, voile): Universal 70/10 - 90/14
- fine and sheer (chiffon, organza, silk): Microtex (or Universal) 60/8 - 70/10
- linen: Universal 70/10 - 90/14
- woven wool and tweed: Universal 80/12 - 90/14
- cotton twill / denim: Jeans 70/10 - 110/18
- jersey and knits: Jersey (ball point) 60/8 - 80/12
- very stretchy knits: Stretch 75/11 or 90/14
- satin, silk, microfibre: Microtex 60/8 - 90/14

Interfacing: choose a type compatible with your actual cloth and test a scrap first. Follow its manufacturer instructions for temperature, moisture, pressing time and cooling. The printed appearance does not identify the fabric or its interfacing requirements.

Needle and stitch-length figures: Schmetz "Needles by Fabric Type"; thread: Gutermann Sew-all No. 100; stitch length: Deer & Doe; interfacing: Vlieseline.