

Bow Cap-Sleeve Mini Dress - sewing instructions

EU 36 . 5 pieces . seam allowance 10 mm

0. Paper first

Print the pack at 100% scale, then measure the square on sheet 3 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 black corner marks form whole squares, and tape. The page map is on sheet 2.

Body and finished garment measurements

EU 36: 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.

Bust: body 84.0 / garment 90.0 / ease 6.0 cm.

Waist: body 66.0 / garment 68.5 / ease 2.5 cm.

Hip: body 90.0 / garment 95.0 / ease 5.0 cm.

Finished length

EU 36, standard size-table body: centre front 73.4 cm from the neck edge to the hem, centre back 71.9 cm. The hem sits 34.4 cm below the waist, 23.6 cm above the knee.

To change the length, measure your own waist-to-hem length first. Add or take off the same amount at the hem of every piece: extend (or shorten) each seam line straight on in its own direction and redraw the hem parallel to the printed one, square to each seam.

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 10 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 FRONT: CUT 1X ON FOLD
- #2 BACK: CUT 2X MIRRORED
- #3 SLEEVE: CUT 2X MIRRORED
- #4 FRONT KEYHOLE 1 BINDING: CUT 1X UNFOLDED, ON THE BIAS
- #5 FRONT BOW: CUT 2X MIRRORED

A piece marked UNFOLDED is drawn folded at its centre line only to save paper: trace it, flip it over the marked line to get the full strip, and cut that full strip ONCE through a single layer with its arrow on the bias (45 degrees to the selvedge). Do not place its centre line on the cloth fold.

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 3 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. A single tick that meets a seam of the other piece (the top of the sleeve cap) has no partner tick: it goes to that seam line. 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.

- FRONT / FRONT BOW 1 ATTACHMENT (placement): Bow/tie attachment point: stitch the ribbon ends here (right/center side, one side only).

2b. Staystitching

Before any seam is sewn, staystitch every edge that will be bound (NECK): a regular straight stitch 3 mm from the raw edge, inside the 5 mm the binding will cover, so the curve cannot stretch while it waits through the seams, the zip and the fitting. Sew in one direction on each side: a neck edge from the shoulder or strap corner towards the centre, an armhole from the shoulder or strap corner down to the underarm. Handle these edges as little as possible until they are finished.

3. Sewing order

This order is not invented: it is the topological order of the stitch graph. The seams that keep the work FLAT come first; the seams that close a ring and turn flat work into a tube come after them (flat construction).

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. Where a step says to finish the two allowances together, neaten them as one. 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).

FRONT: 2 x side bust dart on the garment - press the fold DOWNWARD.

FRONT: 2 x fish-eye (double-pointed) waist dart on the garment - press toward the centre; clip the fold at the waist so it lies flat.

BACK: 2 x fish-eye (double-pointed) waist dart on the garment - press toward the centre; clip the fold at the waist so it lies flat.

2. FRONT <-> BACK (SHOULDER) - plain seam, 10 mm allowance, press the allowances open.

shoulder seam: shoulder edge <-> shoulder edge, neck <-> neck

3. FRONT KEYHOLE 1 BINDING <-> FRONT (FRONT KEYHOLE 1 BINDING SEAM) - BINDING: FRONT KEYHOLE 1 BINDING is a double-fold strip cut to four times its finished width, with no allowance; the edge it binds is cut ON its drawn finished line (no allowance inside the opening - do not look for a second line there). Fold the strip in half lengthwise, then fold each long raw edge in to the centre crease; slip the cut edge of the opening into that fold and stitch through all layers close to the inner fold, from the right side. Join the short ends with the allowance included at the strip's ends. Nothing is trimmed or pressed open.

FRONT KEYHOLE 1 BINDING: stop this seam at the small tick on its binding 0 edge; past the tick the edge is free (finished, not sewn to another piece).

4. SLEEVE <-> BACK + FRONT (ARMHOLE) - eased seam, 10 mm allowance: do not press it open. Finish the two allowances together and press them toward the SLEEVE.

the sleeve cap is set into the armhole, its lower corners at the underarm ends of the armhole; ratio 1.04 = cap ease (woven 3-5%)

SLEEVE is 4% longer than BACK + FRONT here (ratio 1.04): ease it in evenly between the notches, with no gathers showing.

notches - SLEEVE front sleeve cap edge (189 mm of this piece's 386 mm seam): single notch at 93 mm from its centre-line end; SLEEVE back sleeve cap edge (196 mm of this piece's 386 mm seam): double notch at 96 mm, single notch at 196 mm from its outer end; the notch at 196 mm goes to the SHOULDER seam line (no partner tick); BACK armhole edge (189 mm seam): double notch at 93 mm from its lower end (96 mm from its upper end); FRONT armhole edge (182 mm seam): single notch at 93 mm from its lower end (89 mm from its upper end). Match the single ticks to the single ticks and the double ticks to the double ticks; the two sides line up there.

The remaining 5 seams each close a ring - sew them after the flat work above, in this order.

5. BACK <-> BACK (BACK CENTRE BODICE) - CLOSING SEAM: this one closes a ring, so flat work becomes a tube. 10 mm allowance, press the allowances open.

back centre zip (bodice): the garment opens here

ZIP OPENING: along the whole seam (375 mm); machine-baste the opening shut on the seam line, neaten both allowances and press the seam open. The same zip runs on through the next zip step; it goes in once, where that step says.

BACK: stop this seam at the small tick on its centre back edge, where the BACK CENTRE SKIRT seam takes over (the next 344 mm of this piece's edge are the BACK CENTRE SKIRT seam); the edge runs on straight past it, so the tick is the only mark.

6. BACK <-> BACK (BACK CENTRE SKIRT) - CLOSING SEAM: this one closes a ring, so flat work becomes a tube. 10 mm allowance, press the allowances open.

back centre zip (skirt)

ZIP OPENING: from 0% to 59% of its length (203 mm); sew the other 141 mm of this seam with a normal stitch, backstitching at the zip stop, machine-baste the opening shut on the seam line, neaten both allowances and press the seam open. Put the zip in over the basting now, as section 3b describes, before the side seams are closed.

BACK: this seam starts at the small tick on its centre back edge, where the BACK CENTRE BODICE seam ends; the edge runs on straight past it, so the tick is the only mark. Match the other piece's start of this seam to the tick.

notches - BACK centre back edge (344 mm seam): double notch at 203 mm from its upper end (141 mm from its lower end). Match the single ticks to the single ticks and the double ticks to the double ticks; the two sides line up there.

7. SLEEVE <-> SLEEVE (UNDER SLEEVE) - CLOSING SEAM: this one closes a ring, so flat work becomes a tube. 10 mm allowance, press the allowances open.

SLEEVE under seam: corner <-> corner, hem <-> hem (reverse)

Steps 8-9 are ONE continuous seam joining the same two pieces: sew them in a single pass, without stopping at the hand-over ticks; the ticks only show where one part of the seam ends and the next begins.

8. FRONT <-> BACK (SKIRT SIDE SEAM) - CLOSING SEAM: this one closes a ring, so flat work becomes a tube. 10 mm allowance, press the allowances open.

skirt side seam: skirt edge <-> skirt edge, waist <-> waist

FRONT: the small tick on its side edge is where the SKIRT SIDE SEAM hands over to the BODICE SIDE SEAM (the next 154 mm); sew on through it.

BACK: the small tick on its side edge is where the SKIRT SIDE SEAM hands over to the BODICE SIDE SEAM (the next 193 mm); sew on through it.

notches - FRONT side edge (350 mm seam): single notch at 175 mm from its lower end (175 mm from its upper end); BACK side edge (349 mm seam): single notch at 175 mm from its lower end (175 mm from its upper end). Match the ticks; the two sides line up there.

9. FRONT <-> BACK (BODICE SIDE SEAM) - continues the step above in the same pass. 10 mm allowance, press the allowances open.

bodice side seam: waist <-> waist, underarm <-> underarm

notches - FRONT side edge (154 mm of this piece's 193 mm seam, measured with the dart closed; this stretch ends at the dart leg): single notch at 97 mm from its lower end; BACK side edge (193 mm seam): single notch at 97 mm from its lower end (97 mm from its upper end). Match the ticks; the two sides line up there.

3b. Zip and pieces sewn onto the surface

Zip: a centred zip, as the views show - the opening is 578 mm; buy a 60 cm zip. It is longer than the opening: put it in with its top stop at the neck as below; at the opening's lower end whip-stitch a new stop by hand across the teeth (8-10 stitches) and cut the zip 20 mm below it. With the zip opening machine-basted shut on the seam line, neaten and pressed open (steps above), lay the zip face down on the allowances, teeth centred on the seam, top stop 6 mm below the raw neck edge so it clears the 5 mm binding. From the right side stitch 6.5 mm either side of the seam and straight across just below the

stop, then unpick the basting. Put it in before the seams that cross its lower end are closed, then finish the neck edge over the tape ends.

- FRONT BOW (sewn onto FRONT): fold each strip in half lengthwise, right sides together, and stitch the long edge and one short end at 10 mm. Trim, turn right side out and press. Stitch the open ends to the placement mark on FRONT (section 2), then tie them into the bow.

3c. Complete edge finishes

NECK: one, finished edge 387 mm. Design assumption, not a measured source detail.

Use ready-made double-fold bias binding, 5 mm finished width (unfolded width 20 mm). Cut 407 mm for one edge: measured length + two 10 mm end turns. This is a purchased notion, not included in the cloth layout.

ZERO allowance is added to this bound edge: do not trim another seam allowance off it. Enclose the raw edge in the binding's centre fold; fold each short end under 10 mm. Baste, then stitch close to the inner folded edge, catching both sides. Round an inward curve (the underarm, a neckline corner) stretch the binding gently as you go so it lies flat without ripples; do not ease extra binding in, trim any surplus at the join. At a zip, install the zip first, end the binding at each zip edge and keep tape ends and teeth clear.

SLEEVE HEM: each of 2, finished edge 351 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. Distribute any extra length evenly without pleats; test the hem turn on the toile before cutting the final fabric.

HEM: one, finished edge 950 mm. Design assumption, not a measured source detail.

The cutting pattern includes exactly 35 mm on this edge. Turn the raw edge 10 mm to the wrong side, then turn another 25 mm; the second fold is the drawn finished edge. Press and stitch close to the inner fold. Distribute any extra length evenly without pleats; 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.