

Red gingham ombré top - sewing instructions

EU 36 . 4 pieces . seam allowance 10 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 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.

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.

Derived, not seen

The back is not visible in the photograph, so it was derived: a plain back and a centre-back seam, cut to match the front.

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

CHECKED FABRIC: match the checks before you cut. Cut single layer, right side up, and turn the paper over for the second copy of a mirrored piece, so both copies sit on the checks the same way; a piece marked ON FOLD is traced, flipped along its fold line, traced again and cut whole. Place a piece's centre line (or fold line) on the middle of a check, and its hem line on the same horizontal check line on every piece. Then put each side-seam notch of the front and of the back on the same horizontal check line (Patterns Scissors Cloth: centre front and back first, then side seams). Buy extra cloth for this (see the cutting layout).

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. 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.

2b. Staystitching

Before any seam is sewn, staystitch every edge that will be bound or faced (NECK, ARMHOLE): a regular straight stitch 6 mm from the raw edge, inside the 10 mm allowance, so the curve cannot stretch while it waits through the seams, 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. 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 BODICE: 2 x dart on the garment - press the fold toward the centre.

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

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

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

2. FRONT BODICE <-> BACK BODICE (SHOULDER) - eased seam, 10 mm allowance, press the allowances open (the ease shrinks out under the iron).

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

BACK BODICE is 1% longer than FRONT BODICE here: ease it in evenly between the notches, with no gathers showing.

3. FRONT BODICE + BACK BODICE <-> FRONT SKIRT + BACK SKIRT (WAIST) - plain seam, 10 mm allowance, press the allowances open.

waist seam (bodice -> skirt): CF <-> CF, side <-> side, CB <-> CB

notches - FRONT BODICE waist edge (107 mm of this piece's 171 mm seam, measured with the dart closed): single notch at 48 mm from the dart leg (58 mm from its outer end); BACK BODICE waist edge (107 mm of this piece's 171 mm seam, measured with the dart closed): double notch at 48 mm from the dart leg (58 mm from its outer end); FRONT SKIRT waist edge (107 mm of this piece's 171 mm seam, measured with the dart closed; this stretch ends at the dart leg): single notch at 58 mm from its outer end; BACK SKIRT waist edge (107 mm of this piece's 171 mm seam, measured with the dart closed; this stretch ends at the dart leg): double notch at 58 mm from its outer 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 4 seams each close a ring - sew them after the flat work above, in this order.

4. BACK BODICE <-> BACK BODICE (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

OPEN SECTION: from 0% to 100% of its length (260 mm) stays open: sew only the rest and backstitch where the opening begins. After the

zip is in, turn the open allowances under along the seam line and slipstitch them to the zip tape, clear of the teeth.

5. BACK SKIRT <-> BACK SKIRT (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)

SLIT AT THE HEM: the 296 mm at the hem end stays open; sew down to the notch on this edge and backstitch. Press the seam open and press both slit allowances under along the seam line down to the hem. When you hem, turn the hem up first, then fold the slit allowances back over it (mitre the corner), and topstitch around the slit 6 mm from its edges, across the top of the slit.

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

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

FRONT BODICE: stop this seam at the small tick on its side edge; past the tick the edge is free (finished, not sewn to another piece).

BACK BODICE: stop this seam at the small tick on its side edge; past the tick the edge is free (finished, not sewn to another piece).

notches - FRONT BODICE side edge (193 mm seam): single notch at 96 mm from its lower end (96 mm from its upper end); BACK

BODICE side edge (193 mm seam): single notch at 96 mm from its lower end (96 mm from its upper end). Match the ticks; the two sides line up there.

7. FRONT SKIRT <-> BACK SKIRT (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

notches - FRONT SKIRT side edge (299 mm seam): single notch at 149 mm from its lower end (149 mm from its upper end); BACK SKIRT side edge (299 mm seam): single notch at 149 mm from its lower end (149 mm from its upper end). Match the ticks; the two sides line up there.

3c. Edges that are finished, not sewn

These run right round the garment but meet no other piece, so they appear in no step above. Each one is a raw edge until you finish it - bind it with bias strip or turn it back on a facing. The length given is the finished garment measurement, so cut binding to it plus overlap.

NECK - 393 mm round, across BACK BODICE + FRONT BODICE. Finish after the seams that form it are sewn and pressed.

ARMHOLE - 439 mm round (each side), across FRONT BODICE + BACK BODICE. Finish after the seams that form it are sewn and pressed.

HEM - 950 mm round, across FRONT SKIRT + BACK SKIRT. Finish after the seams that form it are sewn and pressed.

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.