

Here is a quick project for a skirt that, depending on the fabric, will go either out on the town or down to the beach. Make it simple or over the top embellish it. It is adorable on a toddler and may even venture into the realm of the princess. The serger will make short work of this simple skirt. Create the crinkle effect by wetting the finished skirt and wrapping it to a broomstick to partially or fully dry.



Supplies

- Baby Lock Accolade Eight Thread Serger (Instructions also work for four thread serge)
- Ruffling Foot
- Fabric Amount depends on the individual project and type of fabric. See instructions below for fabric type and yardage calculation
- Serger Thread
- Elastic for Waistband
- ¼ " for light weight fabrics or smaller sizes
- ¾ " for medium weight fabrics
- 1" or wider for heavier fabrics

Instructions

Pick a Fabric, Just About Any Fabric and Set Up the Serger

This tiered skirt looks good in just about any fabric from the very soft and sheer to velvets to quilting cottons. The type of fabric will determine how the skirt will hang and the amount of fabric required. For example, a thicker or stiffer fabric such as velvet or dupioni will not use as much yardage as a soft, drapery fabric that gathers very well. Of course, the length of the skirt, style choices such as the number of tiers and the size of the skirt also affects the yardage requirements.

Use the following guidelines for purchasing fabric:

- Purchase about 2 yards of 45" fabric for a four-tier skirt that finishes about 26" long and a circumference of less than 40".
- Purchase about 3 to 3 ½ yards for a circumference of greater than 40" or a longer skirt with more tiers.
- Make tiers with different fabrics or pieced scraps of fabrics. When combining fabrics, choose fabrics of similar weights and care requirements.
- Buy more fabric than you think you need. Any extra fabric would make a great scarf!
- Completely customize the tiers by adding or subtracting the number of tiers, changing the depth of the tiers, and gathering more or less into the individual tiers.

The rate of gather is determined by the setting on the differential feed of the machine and by the type of fabric. The best way to determine how any fabric will gather is to serge a test swatch. Cut a 10" strip of fabric and gather as you would for the project. Unless a very, very full skirt is the goal, a good final reduction of the 10" width would be about 6" to 7".

Measure the sample to determine the ratio of gather and the approximate amount of fabric to cut. When stitching the sample, keep the following in mind:

- Thinner fabrics cut on the crossgrain (selvedge to selvedge) will gather better than thicker fabrics. Thicker fabrics may not gather at all.
- Use a long stitch length (maximum is "4" on the Baby Lock serger) for the most gather.
- Use a Ruffling foot for more effective gathering. Hold the fabric under the foot longer by placing a finger behind the foot and releasing the gathered fabric slowly.

- Fabric can be gathered with an overlock stitch, a cover/chain stitch or a combination stitch. The combination eight thread stitch (triple cover stitch and four thread overlock) will generally gather the most.
- The left needle thread of the four-thread overlock stitch can be used to pull more gathers in a piece. After serging, pull this thread to create additional gathers. This method can't be used when serging two fabrics together using the Ruffling foot. Serge the fabric first, then adjust the gathers to fit the flat fabric.

Construct the Skirt Using the “Flat Method”

In the “Flat Method” for tiered skirt construction, the ruffled tiers are sewn to each other before the skirt is sewn together as a tube. Use this technique for the quickest tiered skirt construction. When creating a broomstick skirt on a serger using this method, rectangles cut to a specific width are not necessary. Cut a rectangle for the top waist tier and create a long rectangle for the remaining tiers.

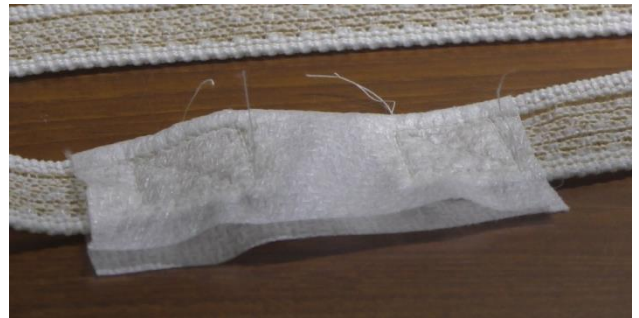
Determine the width of the top tier by measuring the largest circumference of the body from waist to upper thigh. Add 2”-3” to the measurement for the width of the top tier for adult sizes. Determine the desired length of the top tier and add 2” for an elastic casing. Cut the fabric in a single layer for accuracy. The rectangle for the remaining tiers will all be the same length and about six to eight times the width of the top tier. Remember, this is only an estimate and the actual length needed depends on how well the fabric gathers. Use the measurement of the 10” gathered sample to estimate the length.

Use the Ruffling foot on the serger to make quick work of skirt construction. The Ruffling foot helps the fabric gather better by pressing the fabric closer to the feed dogs and can be used to sew a flat piece to a gathered piece in one operation. Refer to the instruction sheet or the inspiration guide for loading the fabric onto the foot. Serge and gather the very, very long rectangle to the bottom of the top tier keeping the top tier flat. The long rectangle will be right side up under the foot and the top tier will be right side down in the slot of the foot. When reaching the end of the top tier, serge off and remove the piece from the machine. At the cutting table, lay the two pieces as flat as possible and trim the excess rectangle. Attach

the next tier in the same manner. When attaching the final tier, check that enough of the very long rectangle remains to gather onto the tier above. Cut additional fabric if necessary and seam onto the rectangle. Straighten the edge and pin or clip the tiers together matching the seams on the side. Sew the side seam with a four-thread overlock or a five-thread combination stitch. Remember to adjust the differential feed lever to N before serging the final seam.

Complete the skirt with a simple elastic waist and a quick hem. Wrap a piece of elastic snugly around the waist and cut. Use one of the following two methods to create an elastic waistband.

Method One - Turn down the top edge of the waistband $\frac{1}{2}$ ", press and then 1" to create a casing for the elastic. Sew leaving a 2" opening to insert the elastic. Thread the elastic through the casing making sure that it does not twist. Join the ends of the elastic with a scrap of fabric patched over the two ends and securely sewn as



shown in the photo. Finish stitching the casing to enclose the elastic. Distribute the waistband along the elastic and prevent the elastic from twisting by stitching vertically through the waistband at approximately the side seams.

Method Two – Serge the elastic directly to the top edge of the fabric with a four thread overlock. Join the ends of the elastic with a scrap of fabric patched over the two ends and securely sewn. Divide the elastic and top edge evenly into four quadrants and pin or clip the elastic to the wrong side of the fabric with the edge of the elastic along the raw edge of the fabric. Serge along the edge of the elastic removing the pins or clips and stretching the elastic to match as you serge. Use the Lace joining foot to help guide the elastic along the raw edge of the top tier. Fold the elastic down and pin or clip. Stitch the serged edge with a chain or cover stitch while stretching the waistband flat.



Create a Broomstick Skirt “In the Round”

This method for skirt construction takes slightly longer, but may be the preferred method for a skirt out of challenging fabrics or when a more controlled gather is desired. The rectangles in this method are pre-cut to size and sewn together after they are gathered. Use the formula below as a general guideline to determine the size of the rectangles for a 26” long, four-tier skirt. Cut the rectangles on either the crosswise, lengthwise or bias grain of the fabric. Fabric cut on the cross grain (from selvedge to selvedge), may produce a nicer gather because it has more give than the lengthwise grain. Trim the selvedge and seam the short ends to create the width of the tiers. Fabric cut on the bias will drape and gather beautifully, but will require more fabric and may be more challenging to sew. For best results, cut the fabric in a single layer regardless of the grain direction chosen.

When calculating the width of each tier, each layer will be about 1 ½ times wider than the tier above. Measure to find the largest circumference of the body from the waist to the middle thigh for the top tier.

- A = the largest circumference + 2” of ease. (As an example, use 38” as a circumference and add 2” for a total of 40”.) The top tier is this measurement (A) wide and 6” deep. In our example, use a rectangle 40” by 6”.
- The second tier is $A + \frac{1}{2} A$ and 6” deep. In our example, use a rectangle 60” by 6”.
- The third tier is $2 \times A$ and 7” deep. In our example, use a rectangle 80” by 7”.
- The fourth and bottom tier is $(2 \times A) + \frac{1}{2} A$. In our example, use a rectangle 100” by 8”.

Sew each tier together on the short sides to create rings or tubes. The top tier will be finished on the top edge with elastic for a waistband and the remaining tiers will be gathered as a single layer on the top edge using a four thread overlock stitch on the serger. Divide each of the sections together into four parts and match the sections together. Clip the sections together. Adjust the gathers by pulling the right needle thread to create more gathers or clip the serger thread to release the gathers. Seam the sections together using the four-thread overlock stitch. Create a waistband using one of the two methods detailed above and hem the bottom tier using the serger stitch of your choice.