

Nancy's Notions

sewing inspiration • education • tools & more
800.833.0690 nancysnotions.com

Little Dresses for Africa

Follow the simple directions below to make a dress that will be a prized possession for a grateful little girl in Africa. Use fabric yardage, or modify a purchased or gently used pillowcase. Mail completed dresses to Little Dresses for Africa, c/o Nancy's Notions®, 333 Beichl Ave., Beaver Dam WI 53916-0683, and we'll ship the dresses to their destination. If you would like confirmation that your dresses have been received at Nancy's Notions®, please enclose a self-addressed stamped postcard. For additional information, go to littledressesforafrica.org/blog/.

Dress with Elasticized Top

Materials required:

- $\frac{5}{8}$ yd.–1 $\frac{1}{8}$ yd. cotton fabric, depending on size
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ yd. double fold bias tape
- 12"–18" elastic, $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide, depending on size
- Coordinating all-purpose thread

Making the Dress

Note new sizing!

1. Cut a fabric rectangle the width of the fabric and the length indicated.
Finished dress length is measured from the shoulder to the hem.

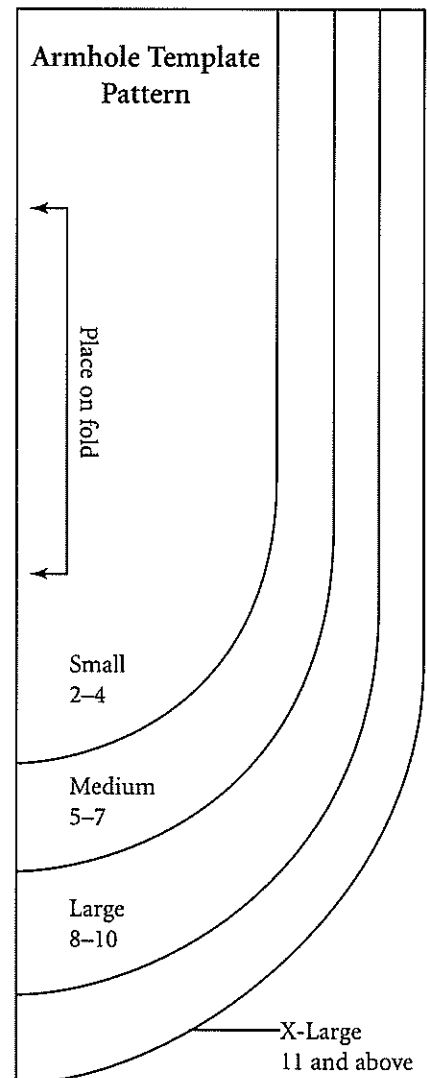
Size	Size of cut rectangle	Finished dress length
Small (2–4)	19"–26" L x 42" W	16"–23" long
Medium (5–7)	27"–32" L x 42" W	24"–29" long
Large (8–10)	33"–37" L x 42" W	30"–34" long
X-Large (11 and above)	38" L or more x 42" W	35" or more long

2. Fold fabric in half, meeting selvage edges. Stitch or serge the seam. Press seam open or to one side. Center seam on the stitched tube. (This will be the center back of the dress.)
3. Cut out armholes on upper side edges using the appropriate Armhole Template Pattern at right.
4. Fold under casings at the front and back top edges (the edges containing the armholes). Fold edge under $\frac{1}{4}$ ", then $\frac{1}{2}$ " to make each casing. Edgestitch casings.
5. Cut elastic into two equal lengths (6" for size small, 7" for size medium, 8" for size large, and 9" for size X-large). Insert one length into each casing. Thread elastic through the casing; stitch elastic ends to the outer edges of the casing to prevent them from pulling out. This gathers the front and back edges.
6. Cut two 38" lengths of double fold bias tape. Open tape and turn under $\frac{1}{4}$ " on each end to finish the ends of the tape. Refold tape and encase armhole, allowing equal tape extensions at each end of the armhole so the dress can be tied at the shoulders. Edgestitch tape.
7. Hem the lower edge by turning under $\frac{1}{4}$ ", then 2". Edgestitch.

You're finished! Wasn't that easy?

Optional trim ideas:

- Add one or two pockets.
- Add a band of a contrasting or coordinating fabric to the dress.
- Add lace or other trims.
- Add an appliqué.
- Add machine embroidery.
- Use your imagination! This is a great way to use bits and pieces of leftover trims and fabrics.



Dress with Bias Tape Ties

Materials required:

- $\frac{5}{8}$ yd.–1 $\frac{1}{2}$ yd. cotton fabric, depending on size
- 3 yd. double fold bias tape
- Coordinating all-purpose thread

Making the Dress

1. Cut a fabric rectangle the width of the fabric and the length indicated.
Finished dress length is measured from the shoulder to the hem.

<u>Size</u>	<u>Size of cut rectangle</u>	<u>Finished dress length</u>
Small (2–4)	19"–25" L x 42" W	16"–22" long
Medium (5–7)	26"–31" L x 42" W	23"–28" long
Large (8–10)	32"–37" L x 42" W	29"–34" long
X-Large (11 and above)	38" L or more x 42" W	more than 35" long

2. Fold fabric in half, meeting selvage edges. Stitch or serge the seam. Press seam open or to one side. Center seam on the stitched tube. (This will be the center back of the dress.)
3. Cut out armholes on upper side edges using the appropriate Armhole Template Pattern on p. 1.
4. Cut two lengths of bias tape long enough to bind the armholes. Bind cut edges of armhole and edgestitch tape.
5. Fold under casings at the front and back top edges (the edges containing the armholes). Fold edge under $\frac{1}{4}$ ", then $\frac{3}{4}$ " to make each casing. Edgestitch casings.
6. Cut remaining bias tape into two equal pieces. Stitch folds and cut ends of tape together with a narrow zigzag to prevent stitches from breaking. Insert one piece through each of the casings, allowing equal extensions at each end. Machine stitch at center front and center back to prevent tape from pulling out of the casing.
7. Hem the lower edge, turning under $\frac{1}{4}$ " and then 2". Edgestitch hem.

To wear the dress, pull up tape ties to gather the top of the dress to fit. Tie bias tape at the shoulders.

Optional: Trim dress as desired. Several possibilities are listed on p. 1.

Modifying a Pillowcase to Make the Dress

Materials required:

- One new or gently used cotton pillowcase
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ yd. double fold bias tape
- 12"–18" elastic, $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide, depending on size
- Coordinating all-purpose thread

Making the Dress

1. Trim off the seamed end of the pillowcase. Do not cut off the hemmed edge; it will be the hem of the dress.
2. Cut out armholes on the cut edge, using the Armhole Template Pattern as a guide.
3. Fold under casings at the front and back top edges (the edges containing the armholes). Fold edge under $\frac{1}{4}$ ", then $\frac{1}{2}$ " to make each casing. Edgestitch casings.
4. Cut elastic into two equal lengths (6" for size small, 7" for size medium, 8" for size large, 9" for size X-large). Insert one length into each casing. Thread elastic through the casing; stitch elastic ends to the outer edges of the casing to prevent them from pulling out. This gathers the front and back edges.
5. Cut two 38" lengths of double fold bias tape. Open tape and turn under $\frac{1}{4}$ " on each end to finish the ends of the tape. Refold tape and encase armhole, allowing equal tape extensions at each end of the armhole so the dress can be tied at the shoulders. Edgestitch tape.

Optional: Trim dress as desired. Several possibilities are listed on p. 1.

Britches for Boys

T-shirt Makeover for Shorts

Use these simple instructions to make a T-shirt into comfortable knit shorts for boys in Africa—the shorts will become a prized possession. Please use a new or “like-new” T-shirt for this project. (There are restrictions in some countries regarding used clothing and import taxes.) Mail completed britches to Britches for Boys, c/o Nancy’s Notions®, 333 Beichl Ave., Beaver Dam WI 53916-0683, and we’ll ship the britches to their destination. For additional information, go to littledressesforafrica.org/blog/.

SUPPLIES:

- Adult sized T-shirt (Approximate sizes: Small T-shirt = size 4–6 shorts, Medium = size 8–10 shorts, and Large = size 12–14 shorts.)
- Rotary cutter, mat, and ruler
- Matching all-purpose thread
- 1 yd. drawcord elastic
- Stretch Needle, size 75/11
- Optional: Twin Stretch Needle, size 4.0 mm/75
- Optional: Seam sealant such as Fray Check™
- Optional: 1½ yd. cotton cording

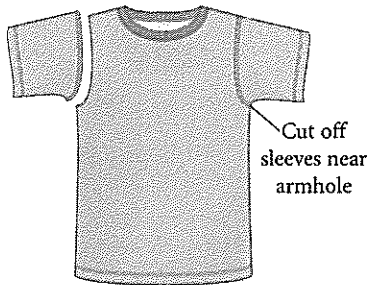
INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Prepare T-shirt.

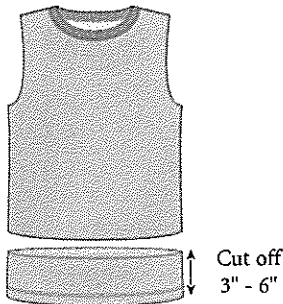
- Lay a T-shirt flat on a table in front of you with hem toward you and neck closest to the opposite side of the table.
- Lay sleeves flat and to each side of the shirt.

2. Cut leg pattern from the T-shirt.

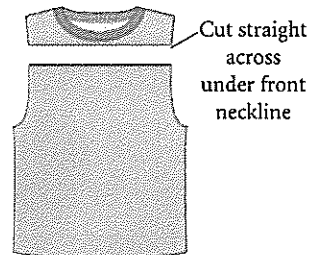
- Cut off both sleeves near armhole seams. These rounded cuts will become the crotch of the shorts.



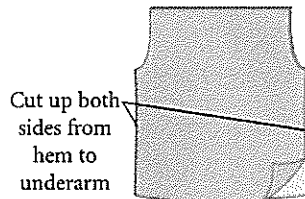
- Determine shorts length. Cut off 3"–6" from the bottom of the T-shirt, depending on shorts length.



- Cut a 2¼" band from the fabric trimmed off the bottom of the T-shirt and set aside. (waistband)
- Mark a straight line across pattern just under the front neckline ribbing, the same distance from each shoulder seam. Cut along this line through both layers of the T-shirt.



- Cut open each side from the hem to the underarm. These two pieces are the legs of the shorts.

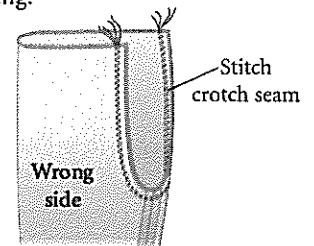
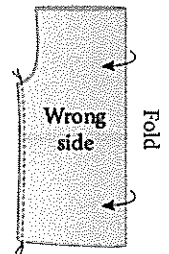


Note: This technique is especially good for shirts with logos as they will remain intact on the sides of the finished shorts.

3. Complete the shorts.

- Insert a Stretch Needle, size 75/11.

- Sew or serge each leg seam, right sides together, with a ¼" seam.
- Turn one leg right side out. Tuck the leg that is right side out inside the other leg, meeting right sides and matching leg seams and curved crotch area.
- Stitch or serge crotch area, using a ¼" seam. For added reinforcement, restitch the seam close to the original stitching.



4. Prepare the waistline.

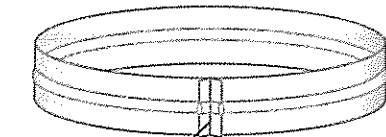
- Quarter mark waistline with pins or a fabric marking pen.
- Trim the length of the 2¼" wide waistband that was set aside.
 - Measure the waistline of the shorts and add ½" for seam allowances.
 - Trim waistband to the measured length.

- Stitch short ends of the new waistband; press seam open.
- Quarter waistband with pins or a fabric marking pen.
- Match waistband to waist, right sides together. Position seam at a side; stitch with a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam. Press toward waistband.

Note: If you prefer to make a corded waist instead of using drawcord elastic, eliminate steps 5–7. Simply leave an opening in the waistband seam for the cording and match that seam to the front of the shorts. Turn down and stitch waistband casing so that it measures about 1" from the seam to the fold, and stitch in the ditch of the seam. Trim excess waistband fabric and add cording through the opening in the seam.

5. Prepare the drawcord elastic.

- Cut the elastic 4"–6" smaller than the waistline measurement of the shorts.
- Join short ends of the elastic with a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance.



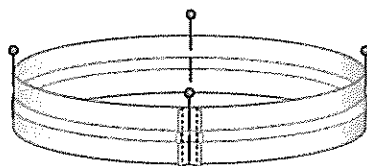
Join elastic with a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance

Open seam. If desired, stitch down edges of the seams.



Stitch down edges of seam allowance

- Quarter-mark the elastic with pins or a fabric marking pen, using the seam as one of the quarter marks.

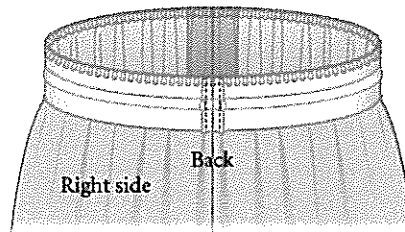


Quarter-mark the elastic

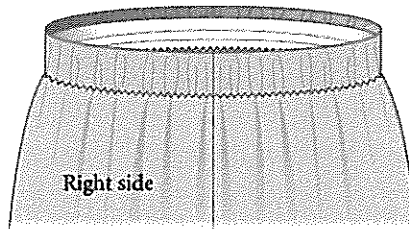
6. Attach the elastic.

- Meet right side of the elastic to right side of the garment, positioning elastic seam at the center back of the waistline.
- Match quarter marks of elastic and garment. Pin.

- Stitch or serge the upper edge of the elastic to the cut edge of the waistband, removing pins as you come to them and stretching elastic to fit. If you're serging, be careful not to trim the elastic.



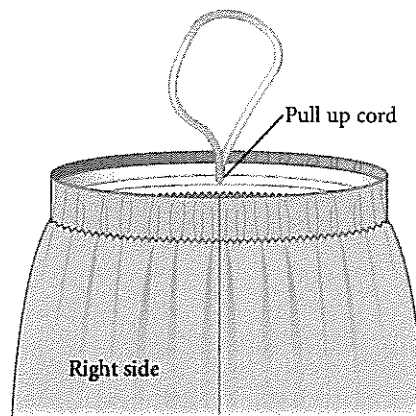
- Fold the elastic to the wrong side of the waistband. Pin at side and center seams. Use a sewing machine to zigzag the lower edge of elastic to the garment, stretching the elastic to fit. Stitch from the right side of the garment to keep stitching just above the waistline seam. As an option, use a straight stitch. Stretch elastic and stitch in the ditch from the right side of the waistband.



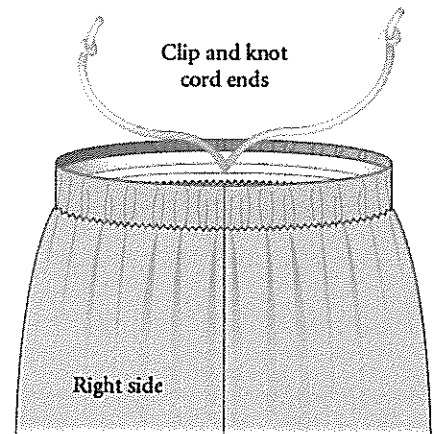
Note: To make sure the waistline seam is covered on the wrong side, you may want to baste the elastic in place from the wrong side first.

7. Complete the draw cords.

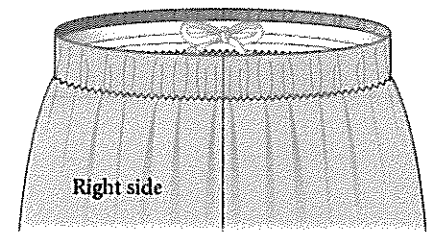
- Pull up cords through middle of the elastic at center front.



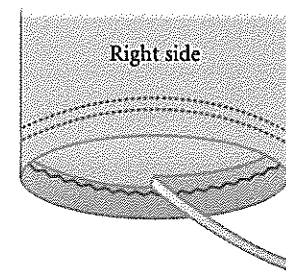
- Clip the cords and knot the end of each cord. Optional: Apply seam sealant to cord ends.



- When wearing the garment, pull up the cords to fit. Tie ends for a comfy, adjustable waistline finish. Cords tie on the inside of the shorts.



8. Hem shorts using your favorite method. A Twin Stretch Needle makes a great hem on knits. Fold up the hem and stitch from the right side, following your machine manual instructions for twin needle stitching. Trim excess hem allowance.



Project Design: Modified instructions provided by The Lutheran Quilting Group, Necedah WI
 Editors: Diane Dhein and Pat Hahn
 Illustrations: Natalie Nguyen and Laure Noe