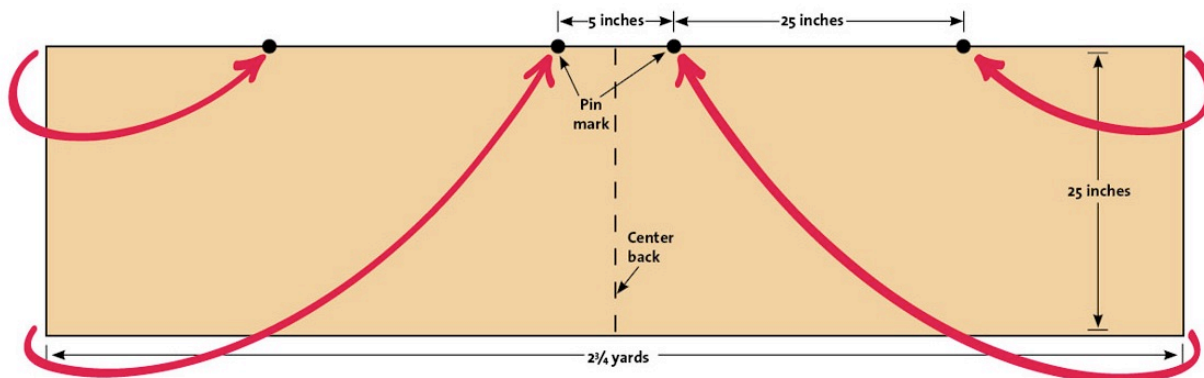


Ujamaa Grandmas ~ 30 Minute Jacket Workshop, March 23, 2011

This jacket pattern comes from Threads Magazine issue number 100. It is a one size fits almost all but there are many ways to vary the appearance and size. The jacket was featured on their website last year and you can find the "pattern" and pictures at <http://www.threadsmagazine.com/item/17365/30-minute-jacket>.

Preparing the fabric before assembly is an important step as all finishing and embellishing can be done on flat fabric making it easy and fast. Once the flat fabric is finished and embellished, putting the jacket together takes a few minutes. In the diagram below, the top long side will form the back neck opening, the shoulders and the sleeve seam and sleeve opening edge. The other long side will form the front edges and the bottom of the jacket.

1. Fold the rectangle in half crosswise to establish the center back. Measure 2 1/2 inches from both sides of the center back. Mark with pins.
2. Bring the lower corners to their corresponding pins at the neck. Pin the short edge to the long edge to form the sleeve.
3. Lap the long edge over the short edge. Topstitch or slipstitch the shoulder/arm seam together.



While the original jacket is quite simple, there are ways to modify the finishing and assembly to make it special. Most of what follows is about making the finished jacket something special.

Fabric size:

The standard sized jacket calls for a finished piece of fabric that is roughly 0.6 m x 2.5 m (25 inches x 2.75 yards).

There is some latitude in both length and width but be sure that the width to length ratio is sufficient to allow for sleeve opening. The **length** of the fabric will dictate the circumference of the jacket and the length and diameter of the sleeve opening. The **width** will dictate the length of the jacket and influence the length of the sleeves. There are some interrelationships between these features but in general this holds true.

A rule of thumb for width to length ratio that works well is roughly 1:4, that is the fabric is 4 times longer than it is wide. For example if you have a piece that is 20 inches wide then it needs to be about 80 inches long. A shorter person will get a good fit from a piece this size. Conversely, to size up, use the same ratio for a longer and wider piece.

That is the rule of thumb. Now what happens if you vary this?

If you make the finished fabric piece narrower than the 1:4 ratio, you get a bolero. For instance, make the fabric only 15 inches wide and 90 to 100 inches long and the finished jacket will be a short sleeved bolero with a wide sleeve.

If you make the finished fabric piece shorter than the 1:4 you get a jacket with shorter sleeves. For instance, make your finished fabric 25 inches wide but only 80 or 90 inches long. You can't make it too short or it may not have enough circumference to go around your body. OOPS.

If you vary from the rule of thumb, **always** pre-pin to test the sleeve opening before you sew. It only takes a minute.

Piecing: Your fabric can be pieced but make sure the seam is neatly finished and presentable on both side since most jackets can be reversible. Also ensure that the seam falls on the center back as shown in the diagram above..

Fabric suggestions:

Both sides will show on the finished jacket and most jackets can be reversible so find something that is good both sides. Fabrics with a bit of drape are best though firmer-hand fabrics can also be used successfully as long as it is not too hard.

- Light-weight wool or boiled wool
- Good quality fleece
- Woven cotton, linen or blend
- Silk
- Organza - really very nice
- Knits

If you don't have a two-sided fabric, make one by sewing two pieces of fabric together using one as a lining - a print and a coordinated solid or two coordinating solids. Remember, both sides will show even if the jacket is not made to be reversible. Be sure pieces are the correct size and are square and straight before sewing together. With right sides together sew all four sides leaving an opening for turning. Turn through the opening and press. Slip stitch the opening closed. Edge stitch or top stitch the entire perimeter of the finished piece. You can include trim in one of the long seams and/or the short seams. This trim would then be along the edge of the jacket fronts and the bottom and/or across the shoulders respectively.

Some light-weight cottons can be folded lengthwise to make a two sided fabric of a suitable width; a 45-inch wide fabric will be 22 inches wide when folded and finished. First be sure the fabric is square and straight. If the selvage is presentable, with right sides facing, sew the short edges, turn and press. Now with wrong-sides facing stitch up the selvage edge. Include a decorative trim in the selvedge edge as an embellishment along the fronts and the bottom. Remember that if the trim is on one side only, it will only show on either the fronts or the bottom but not both. If the trim is sewn into the opening to extend beyond the edge of the fabric, it will show both along the fronts and the bottom. If selvage edge is not pretty, finish as you would two separate pieces with one side on the fold.

Flat finishing and embellishments:

All four sides of your fabric should be finished before you assemble the jacket. If you have made a two sided fabric as above, your edges are already finished. Lucky you! If not, here are some suggestions:

1. A one-inch double-turned hem will work for most fabrics and gives a nice weight to the edge. Fold over 1 inch, fold over 1 more inch, edge stitch the first fold, top stitch if you wish. Use a straight stitch or decorative stitch and again, be sure it is pretty on both sides. Allow for this turn when you cut your fabric piece.
2. A serged edge is a reasonable option for some fabrics.
3. Apply trim or ribbon along one or both long edges. This can enhance either the sleeves or the fronts and bottom or all three if you trim both long sides.
4. If you are making a two-sided fabric as above, add piping in a long edge seam or to all four sides for more impact.
5. Some fabrics fringe nicely and just need to be stabilized with a row or two of short, close stitches. Use the fabric as is and the fringe will extend from the edge of the jacket. Or fold back and stitch close to the fold and then fringe it. In this way the fringe will lie on top of the jacket.
6. Boiled wool, fleece and some firm wovens may not need to be finished. Use your judgment. Or add a decorative blanket stitch along the edge to perk it up.
7. Add hand or machine embroidery along one long edge - especially nice on a sheer. This is nice on either long edge - across the shoulders or on the front and bottom edges. See a great example in the magazine.
8. Add one or more rows of machine decorative stitches one any or all edges. You may need to reinforce to do this effectively and in which case a double fold will work nicely.
9. Use your imagination. There are many other ways to customize the jacket edges. We haven't even mentioned beads or appliques.

Fastening:

Follow the pattern directions to assemble the jacket, finding the middle on one long side and folding the short sides up as illustrated. If you have decorated only one long side, make sure you fold appropriately to place this embellishment on the shoulders or the fronts and bottom as you wish. Bring the short sides up to the top long side and fasten, leaving about 5 inches open in the middle; this is the back neck opening. You can lap the short sides on top or underneath the long side. Either way works fine. Try it on before you permanently fasten these seams.

There are a number of ways to fasten the seams and some become integral to the embellishment. In the workshop we are going to use buttons sewn through all layers as described in 2 below.

1. The simplest finish is to sew the short edges to the long edge as shown in the diagram. I use two rows of stitching to keep it nice and flat and reversible.
2. Use buttons either functional or not to fasten the edges. If non-functional, space buttons evenly along the width once you have lapped the fabric and sew them on through all thicknesses. Ten buttons are just about right if you use a 3/4 inch or larger buttons. If you prefer smaller buttons then you will require more. If the buttons are to be functional, you of course need to make button holes on one long side while the fabric is flat. It takes some minor figuring and measuring beforehand to determine buttonhole locations but with functional buttons you can unbutton the jacket to make a shawl. There will be a row of buttons along each short edge and a row of button holes along one long edge. If you are into buttonholes, you can make buttonholes the whole length of one long edge. If not then for larger buttons, 10 buttonholes spaced evenly on either side of the back neck opening will be enough. Individual snaps can be used the same way. Buttons or snaps can be closed in a variety of ways besides into a jacket. Bonus!
3. Use snap tape on one long edge and both short edges; sew innies on one and outies on the other. Apply the tape at the flat finishing stage. As with functional buttons, you can unsnap them to make a shawl or use a variety of closers for a draped shawl. Snap tape comes in black or white.
4. Use hook and eye tape as above.
5. Use an exposed, decorative, separating zipper. Sew one side of the zipper on a short edge and the other side of the zipper in the appropriate place on the long side. Make sure the bottoms of the zipper are in the right orientation on both pieces. Fold under the top of the zipper to make it neat - or not to make it edgier. If the fabric is double (i.e. lined) then if you wish, the zipper can be sewn into the seams when you are sewing up the fabric in the flat stage. Some of those really flashy zippers can add a nice bit of added colour or sparkle.

One last thought:

Having given all this information about size of the flat fabric, there is one more option that I have thought of and tried. If you have a particularly soft fabric with a nice drape, you can make a long jacket - knee length or longer - with a lovely draped front lapel. Here's how.

Start with a piece of fabric that is good both sides and full width (45 inches or 112 cm.) by at least 2 metres long. Finish all the edges and do all your embellishing in the flat. For a long-sleeved jacket, start assembling the jacket by placing a pin at the centre of one long side. Measure 2.5 inches (12 cm.) and 27 inches (65 cm.) on either side of the centre pin and place a pin at each measurement. Now start to pin the short edge as shown in the diagram above. Start pinning from the 27 inch mark and work your way towards the centre. When you get to the 2.5 inch mark stop pinning. The remaining fabric will form the draped lapel. Try it on to ensure you are happy with the sleeve openings. Make any adjustments then permanently fasten the pinned seam using your favourite technique. A soft, light-weight fabric is the best option for this style of jacket. In cotton or silk voile it would make a great beach cover-up: in a flashy fabric, a nice evening cover.