

Decorative Hemband

Create a decorative contrasting hemband for almost any dress, skirt or tunic! This method of adding a hem adds a punch of color as well as a bit of weight to the lower edge of a garment, enhancing the hang and drape.

Materials needed:

Pattern of your choice that has a fairly straight hemline. This will NOT work well for a circle skirt or an exaggerated A-Line design.

Contrasting fabric that coordinates with the project being made, usually 1/2 a yard or less will be sufficient.

Matching thread

Rotary cutter, ruler, and mat

Scissors

Sewing machine and serger

1. Measure the length of the edge on the garment where the hemband will be added.
2. Decide on the finished width of the hemband.
3. Double the width as determined in step 2 and add 3/4" for the seam allowance.
4. Cut a strip by the width of fabric from the contrasting fabric. Two strips will be needed if the garment edge exceeds 42-43".
5. If two strips are needed, piece them right sides together along one of the narrow ends with a 1/4" seam allowance and press the seam open.
6. Fold 1/2" to the wrong side along one of the narrow ends and press, then fold the strip in half widthwise, wrong sides together and press.
7. Beginning at either the side or center back seam, begin with the pressed under end of the strip. Place the raw edges together and begin stitching about 2" from the seam. Use a 3/8" seam allowance.
8. Just before reaching the beginning, stop stitching and allow about 1" of overlap on the strip, trimming away the excess. Open out the pressed under end of the strip and place the cut end inside, then fold closed once more.
9. Finish the seam.
10. Serge, then press the seam away from the strip.
11. Edge and topstitch the hemband as desired.

Variation: Pieced Hemband

The pieced hemband is a great way to make the main fabric look as if it is a border print.

Two contrasting fabrics will be needed to complete this look.

1. Follow Steps 1 and 2 from the Decorative Hemband instructions.
2. Decide on the width of the center contrasting fabric. Subtract this amount from the total width of the finished hemband desired. For example, a finished hemband of 6" with a 3" wide center will leave 3" for the fabric above and below it.
3. Divide the remaining width by 2. For example, the 3" left over from Step 2 would be 1 1/2".
4. Now add 1/2" to the upper and center strip widths to accommodate a 1/4" seam allowance. For example, there would be the center contrast at 3 1/2" and the upper strip at 2".
5. For the lower strip, add the desired finished width PLUS 1/2". The extra width is folded around to the back side with only a narrow portion showing from the front. For example, the lower edge of 1 1/2" would be added to 6" and 1/2" for the seam allowance for a total of 8".
6. In our example here, the upper strip will be cut at 2" wide, the center at 3 1/2", and the lower at 8 1/2".
7. Follow Steps 4 and 5 in Decorative Hemband.
8. Piece the strips together along the long edges with the contrast as the middle strip with a 1/4" seam allowance.
9. Press the seams away from the center strip.
10. Follow the remainder of the steps in Decorative Hemband to add it to the garment.

Technique written by Kay Whitt of Serendipity Studio for It's Sew Easy, 2015.