

Easy Cap Sleeve on a Sleeveless Dress or Top

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Add an easy cap sleeve to a sleeveless dress or top using these easy steps!

Try to match your fabric type and color to the clothing piece as much as possible. For example, use cotton on a cotton dress and satin on a satin dress. The weight of the fabric should be the same or a bit lighter than the weight of the dress or top.

Note: This technique will not work on spaghetti strap or tank-top styles.



Fabric and notions:

- 1/4 yard fabric that matches the color and weight of the dress or top
- matching thread
- Wonder Tape sewing adhesive
- 9"x12" piece of paper and pencil

Create the pattern piece:

1. Measure around the sleeve armhole and write down the measurement (round to the nearest 1/4 inch): _____
2. Divide that number in 1/2" and write it down here: _____
3. Add 1" to that number for the seam allowances: _____
4. Draw a horizontal line on the paper that is the length of the number you wrote down in step 3. Make a mark at the half-way point on that line. This line is the width of the sleeve pattern.
5. Divide the number in step 2 by 3 and write that here (round to the nearest 1/8 inch):

6. Add 1/2" to the number in step 5 for the seam allowance: _____
7. At the center of the vertical line, draw a vertical line upwards the number calculated in step 6. This will be the height of the sleeve pattern.

8. Find a lid or bowl that is about twice the diameter of the sleeve pattern height (the number in step 6. Place the center of the lid over the half way point on the horizontal line and use the curve of the lid help you draw a nice curved shape at the top of the sleeve pattern. curve the sides out to meet the outer edges of the horizontal line. The shape will be similar to 1/2 of a football.
9. Cut out the pattern piece.

Cutting:

1. Make a diagonal fold in your fabric so that the fold line is on the bias. Place the horizontal line on the pattern piece against the fold. Pin or use pattern weights to hold in place.
2. Cut out the sleeve pattern around the curved edge.
3. Repeat to make 2 sleeve pieces

Sewing:

1. With the sleeve piece still folded as cut, pin the top curved edges together.
2. Finish the top edges with a zig zag stitch or a serger.

Tip: If you are using a regular sewing machine (not a serger), start sewing at the top of the curve and sew to the point. Cut threads and start at the top again to sew the other side. This will prevent the small corner from getting stuck in your needle plate when you start sewing.
3. Fold the sleeve piece in half and make a pencil mark at the halfway point (the top of the curve).
4. Apply Wonder Tape sewing adhesive 1/8" away from the top curved edge. Adhere the sleeve to the armhole, matching the halfway mark with the shoulder seam. The sleeve should be inserted into the armhole 1/2".
5. Hand or machine sew the sleeve to the armhole.

Tip: If the dress or top has a line of stitching that runs around the armhole, sew directly on top of this stitching from the outside to secure the sleeve. If the dress or top has a lining or facing (so no stitching is visible around the armhole), then it is preferable to hand sew the sleeve in place with invisible stitches.