

Lace can be feminine, sultry, sophisticated, and youthful or mature. It has always been a symbol of luxury, but fortunately, lace is more available than ever. It is in style, it can be affordable, and it's easy to sew. All you need to know is how to sew a seam and a couple of edge finishing techniques, and you'll be wearing lace for dress-up and for play.

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# Lady Lace

Try this easy-to-sew  
filigree fabric

## Choose the lace

For your first venture, select a lace similar to the one shown here, which has a design on a mesh or net background with contiguous and joined motifs.

### BEAUTIFUL BORDERS MAKE LACE FUN TO USE.

Think of them as selvages. They most often take a scalloped form, and they can be manipulated to fit a garment's edge.

### PLAN YOUR PROJECT SO THE MOTIFS ALL FACE THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

Lace doesn't have a true grain, but it often has a directional design.

### MAKE SURE THERE'S ENOUGH BORDER TO FINISH THE GARMENT'S EDGE.

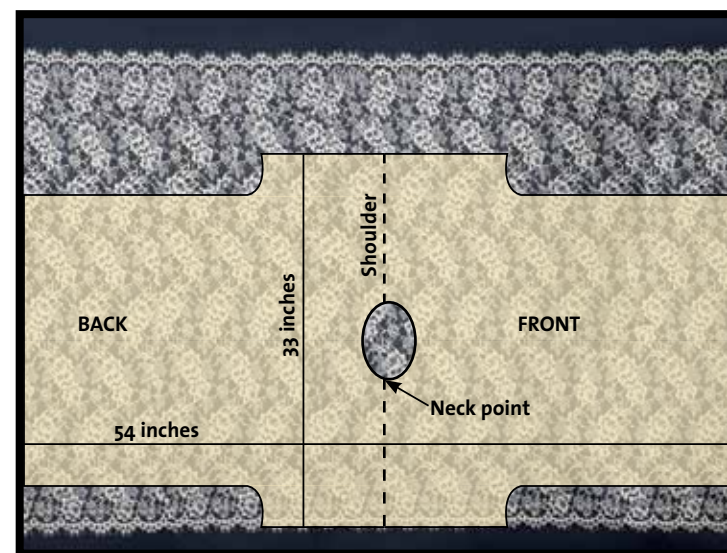
On this lace top, the only original edge is on the right sleeve. The neckline has an applied trim. The other edges have an applied border that was cut from the selvage.

## Pair lace with a pattern

The goal is to make a bodice that looks as if the lace were made in that shape—the seams don't show, and the edges appear to be an organic part of the fabric.

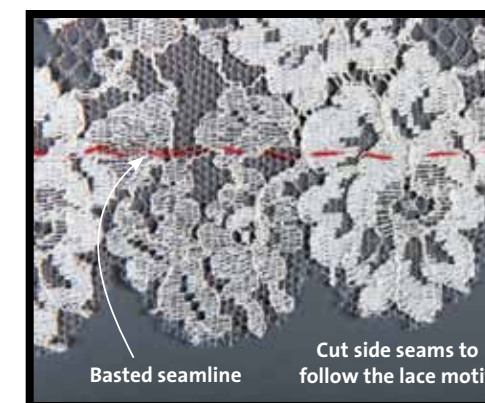
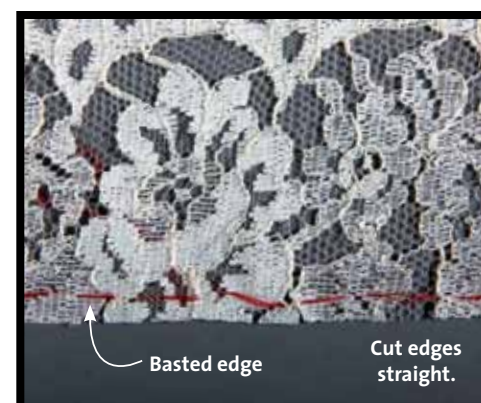
### Supplies

- 1½ yards lace with scalloped edges
- 1 yard fine braid
- Matching thread
- Pattern paper
- Hand-sewing needle
- Scissors
- Sewing machine



**1 MAKE THE PATTERN.** Trace the enlarged godet dress pattern from page 94. Make it 27 inches long from the neck point to the hem, on the front and back (54 inches total). Don't separate the pattern on the vertical seam; trace it as one piece with the front and back and right and left sides. The small size pattern is 33 inches wide from sleeve edge to sleeve edge.

**2 PLAN THE LAYOUT.** Lay the pattern over the unfolded lace with the right sides up. Align one sleeve cuff along a scalloped border, positioning it to make the best use of the scallop shapes. Then, with a contrasting double thread, hand-baste the pattern outline on the lace.



**3 CUT THE LACE.** The neck edge has a ¼-inch seam allowance included; cut that edge, the front and back hem edges, and the sleeve without the bordered edge straight. On the side seams, cut around complete or partial motifs outside the basted line. Leave about ¼ inch extra to trim later. Cut the extra scalloped borders from the lace in a strip.

# Sew the seams and two edges

Finish the edges before you sew the seams because it is easier while the lace is flat. Practice the stitching on lace scraps first.



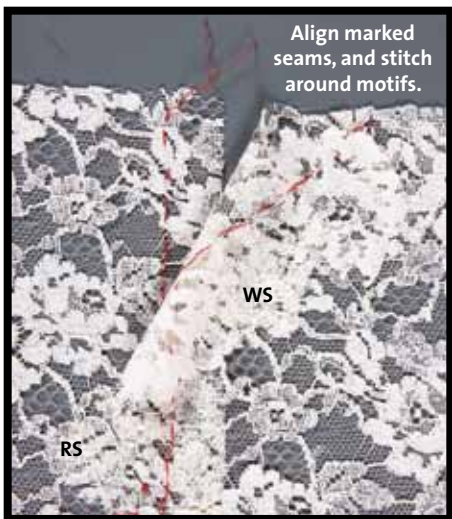
**1} TRANSPLANT THE BORDERS.** With right sides up on all pieces, lay the borders you cut off the yardage over the straight edges at the cuff and front and back hemlines. Position them so the scallop either comes to a point on the seamline or is at the widest part of the scallop. This way, you can stretch or shrink the scallop width to fit the edge when the seams join. Pin the scallops in position, and take the work to your machine.



**2} SET YOUR MACHINE FOR A ZIGZAG STITCH.** Make it 2 mm long and 2 mm wide. Install a darning foot and lower the feed dogs. Free-motion-stitch around the inside scallops to attach the border to the cut edge. Move the lace smoothly and at an even speed under the needle; avoid stitching in place. Trim along the stitching line.



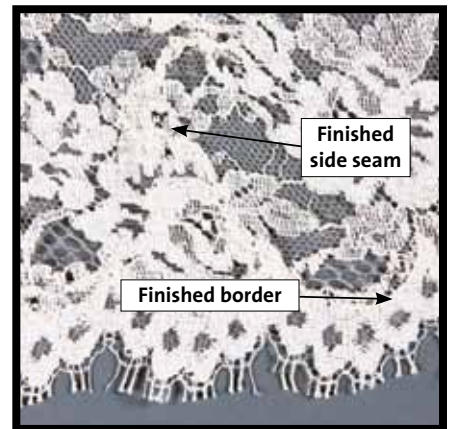
**3} FINISH THE NECKLINE EDGE.** I used a delicate, picot-edged braid. First, turn  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch of the neckline to the right side and baste. Pin the trim to the neckline edge with the tiny loops extending off the edge. With the same machine settings, zigzag the trim to the neckline from the right side. Trim any neckline seam allowance that extends below the trim. Finally, remove the basting.



**4} SEW LAPPED SIDE SEAMS.** Lap one front seam edge over the back seam, aligning the basting and the sleeve and hem edges. Pin along the seamline. Machine-zigzag around the free-form edge through both layers. Adjust the scalloped edges at the beginning and end of the seam, and stitch them with the seam. Repeat on the other side seam.



**5} TRIM THE SEAMS.** Trim any extra lace from the wrong side and any extended edges from the right side. Appliqué scissors make this trimming very easy. This completes your top. Remember, lace is fragile; it will last longer if you don't hang it on a hanger. Store it folded in a drawer.



PHOTOS: SLOAN HOWARD; STYLIST: JESSICA SAAL; HAIR AND MAKEUP: RICHARD COOLEY/UTOPIA/NYC.COM; ILLUSTRATION: MELANIE WENCARELLI; STYLING CREDITS: EARRINGS—M FLYNN (@MFLYNNJEWELRY.COM); JEANS—J BRAND JEANS (@BLOOMINGDALES.COM)