

# Skirts

A skirt is easy to make and fun to wear. It's nice to be able to say, "I made it myself." You can make your skirt with elastic or with a drawstring at the waistline.

## What You Need

- one or two lengths of 45-inch fabric
- matching thread
- $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch elastic the length of your waist measurement (for an elasticized skirt)
- 3 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  yards of heavy cording (for a drawstring skirt)

## Fabric Suggestions

Choose a medium-weight cotton or cotton-blend fabric. Print, gingham, seersucker or lightweight denim are good choices. Avoid heavy fabrics such as corduroy and terry cloth. They do not gather well and are difficult to sew.

## How Much Fabric?

A single width of fabric may be enough for a skirt for a small, slender girl. A larger girl may want to make a skirt from one and one-half or two widths of fabric.

To decide how many widths you want, hold one width of fabric up to your waist. Gather it with your fingers to see how many widths you need. You may need more widths of lightweight fabric than of heavier fabric. Your skirt should be at least 4 inches larger than your hips.

To decide how long to make your skirt, measure the length of a favorite skirt. Remember to allow fabric for the heading and the hem. For in-

stance, if you want to make a 15-inch skirt, you will need 21 inches of fabric.

Skirt length	15 inches
Heading	2 inches
Hem	4 inches
Total length	<u>21 inches</u>

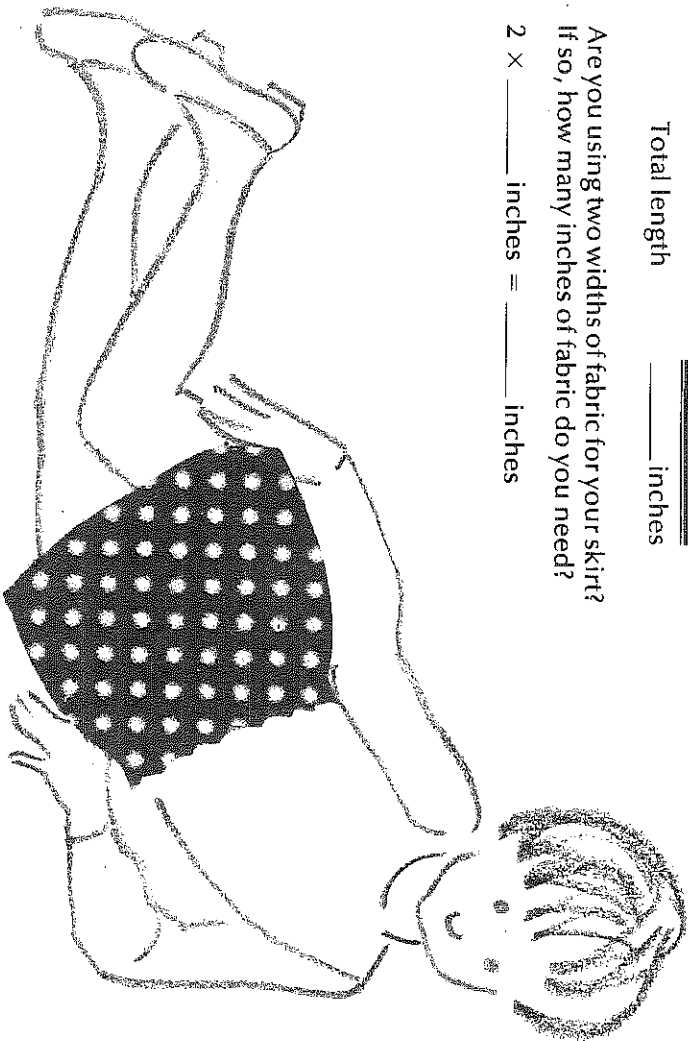
If you are using two widths of fabric for your skirt, you need to buy 42 inches ( $2 \times 21 = 42$ ). These are approximate measurements that allow for straightening fabric and shrinkage.

Figure out how much fabric you need for your own skirt this same way. Fill in the blanks with the measurements for your skirt:

Skirt length	_____ inches
Heading	_____ inches
Hem	_____ inches
Total length	_____ inches

Are you using two widths of fabric for your skirt? If so, how many inches of fabric do you need?

$2 \times$  \_\_\_\_\_ inches = \_\_\_\_\_ inches



## How to Make an Elasticized Skirt

- Prepare your fabric by pre-shrinking. Make sure it is thread straight.
- Measure and cut the fabric into the size pieces you need. If you are using two widths of fabric, cut your fabric in half along the crosswise grain. This gives you one piece for the front and one for the back. Measure and cut the elastic the length of your waist measurement.

- Put the right sides of the fabric together. Pin the sides together with the edges even. Stitch a  $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch seam to make a tube. Backstitch at both ends. This makes the side seam. (If you use two fabric widths, sew two side seams.)

- Press the seam or seams open.
- To make the heading, stitch around the top,  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch from the edge. This kind of stitching — through one layer of fabric — is called “stay-stitching.” See Figure 21a.
- Fold the fabric toward the inside along the line of stay-stitching. Press. See Figure 21b.

- Fold the fabric to the inside once more. Make the fold 1 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches deep. Press to get a sharp crease. Pin the folded edge to the skirt. Stitch by machine along the pinned edge. Go all the way around the skirt except for a 2-inch opening. This is for the elastic. Backstitch at the beginning and end. See Figure 21c.

- Make a second row of stitching  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch from the top of the skirt. This makes a casing for the elastic. See Figure 21d.
- Pin a large safety pin to one end of the elastic. Slip it through the two rows of stitching. Push it through the casing.
- Lap the ends of the elastic 1 inch. Machine stitch an “X” several times to hold the ends together. See Figure 21e.

- Push the gathers away from the opening. Pin the opening closed. Machine stitch, being careful not to stitch through the elastic. A zipper foot, if you have one, makes this easier.
- Hem your skirt. Skip over the next section to find the directions for hemming.

20

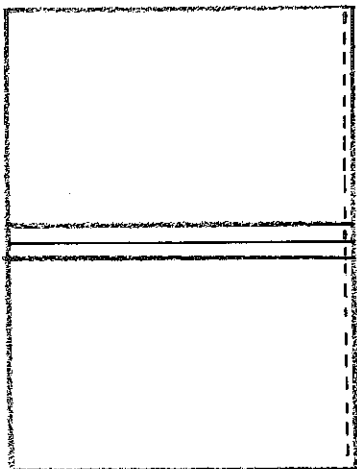
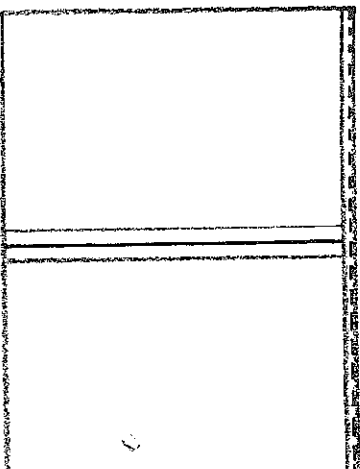
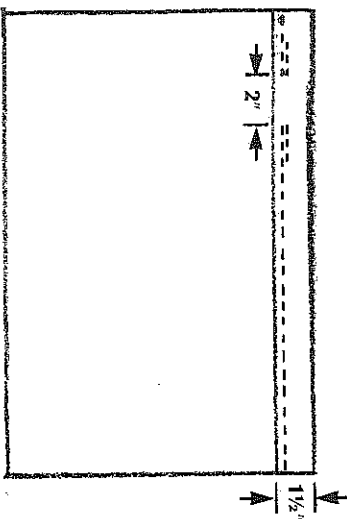


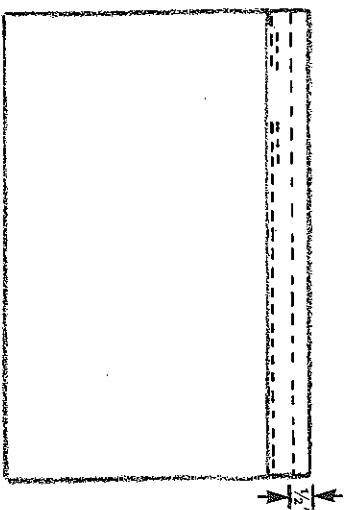
Figure 21a



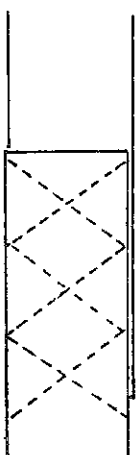
21b



21c



21d



21e

## How to Make a Drawstring Skirt

- Prepare your fabric by pre-shrinking. Make sure it is thread straight.
- Measure and cut your fabric into the size pieces you need. If you are making your skirt from a single width of fabric, cut the fabric in half along the lengthwise grain. If you are making your skirt from two widths of fabric, cut the fabric in half along the crosswise grain. This gives you one piece for the front and one for the back.
- Put the right sides of the fabric together. Pin the sides together with the edges even.
- Measure down 3 and 1/4 inches from the top of each side. Make a small dot with a pencil. See Figure 22a.
- Starting at the bottom edge, stitch to the dot; then backstitch for 1 inch. Repeat for the other side. Make the stitching 5/8 inch from the edge. See Figure 22b.
- Put your skirt on the ironing board and press the seams open, including the 5/8-inch seam allowance above the dot.
- From the top, stitch close to the fold of the seam allowance. Stitch to the dot, across one or two stitches and up the other side. Repeat for other side of the skirt. See Figure 22c.
- To make the heading, stitch around the top of the skirt front, 1/4 inch from the edge. This kind of stitching done through a single layer of fabric is called "stay-stitching." Repeat for the back of the skirt. See Figure 22d.
- Fold the edge to the wrong side along the stay-stitching and press.

- Fold down a hem 1 and 1/2 inches wide. Press and pin in place. See Figure 22e.
- Stitch along the pinned edges. Set the needle close to the fold. Backstitch at each opening. See Figure 22f. Make a second row of stitching 1/2 inch from the top of the skirt. This will make a "casing" for the drawstring. See Figure 22f.

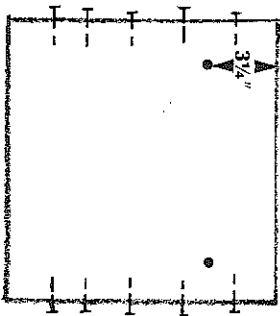
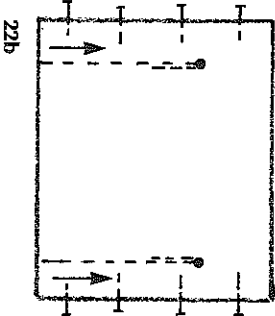
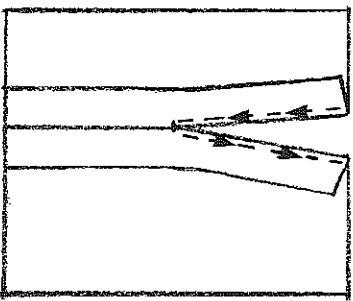


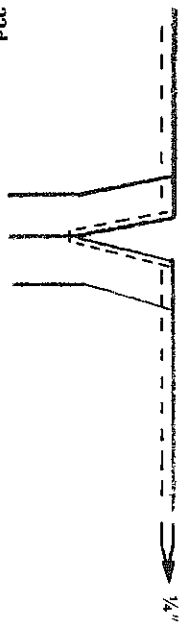
Figure 22a



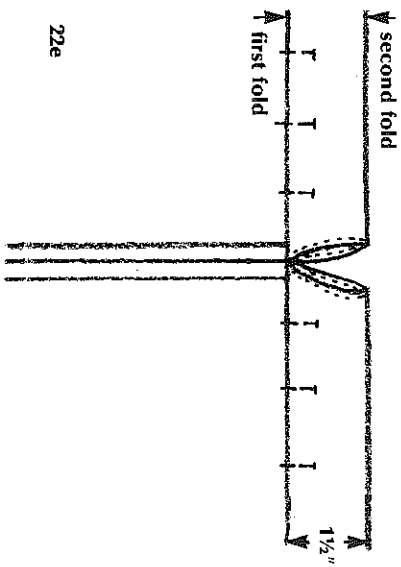
22b



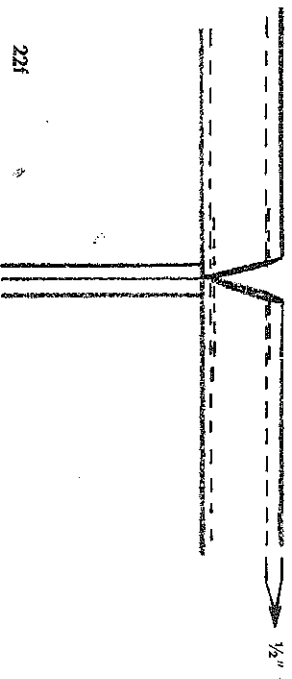
22c



22d



22e



22f

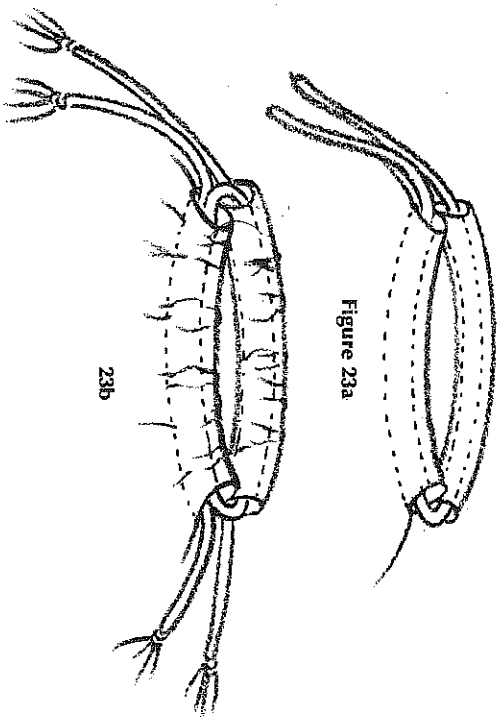


Figure 23a

23b

- Cut your 3 and ½ yards of cording in half. Fasten a large safety pin to one end of cord. Insert one end of cord through the front casing, starting at the opening in one side seam. Insert the other end of the same cord through the back casing. See Figure 23a.

- Starting at the opposite side seam, insert the second piece of cord through the casings. Tie a knot at the end of each of the cords, about 1 and ½ inches from the end. See Figure 23b. Pull the drawstrings to fit your waistline. Adjust the gathers.

- Hem your skirt.

### To Hem Your Skirt

- Try on the skirt. Experiment until you find the best length. Ask your leader or parent to help you decide.
- For the hem, stay-stitch around the bottom, ¼ inch from the edge. Fold the fabric along the stitching line and press. See Figure 24a.

- Turn the hem up 2 to 3 inches. Press to get a sharp crease. Pin to the skirt. Use a regular stitch length (10 to 12 stitches per inch) to stitch along the pinned edge. Stitch close to the fold through all thicknesses of fabric. See Figure 24b.

- Pull thread ends to the wrong side and tie.

### Try Another Skirt

If you make another skirt, change it in some way. Here are suggestions. Use rickrack, fringe or lace for trim. Add pockets. Fringe the bottom of your skirt instead of hemming it. Make your own patchwork cloth out of square pieces of fabric. Use self-fabric ties on a drawstring skirt instead of cording that you buy.

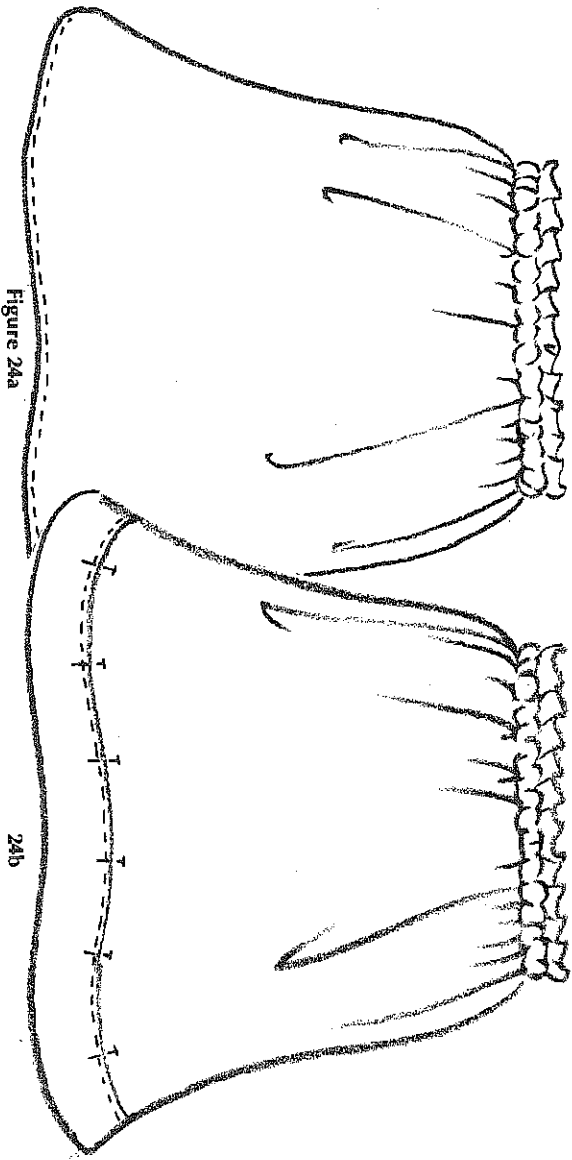


Figure 24a

24b