Drafting Flat Front/Elastic Back Pants

by arasmama
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Start with a pair of elastic waist pants that you like the fit in the hips and legs. Measure around the fullest part of your hips and your waist (where you like your pants to sit, not your natural waist). I have 38" hips and 31" waist.

First we will adjust the rise. Assuming that the pants pattern you are starting from does not have a separate waistband, you are going to need to adjust the front rise, but may not need to change the back. I use 1 ¼" elastic in these pants. Your pants will need to be adjusted for whatever size elastic you are using. If the elastic size is different than you normally use for this pattern, remember to add or subtract the correct amount from your rise! I added ½" to the back rise of my pants, since I normally use ¾" elastic. I then cut off 1.25" off the front rise. I came up with that measurement by taking the ¾" + ¾" = 1.5" (current rise that is used for a waistband) then subtracted the seam allowance I would need for attaching the new waistband.

Now you are going to redraft the front piece so that the side seam slopes in to fit your waist perfectly. To do this, measure across the front of your body to the middle of your side. I did this by wearing fitted (zippered) pants and measuring across my front from side seam to side seam. My measurement is 17". This means I need my finished front panel of my pants to be 17".

Using my 17" finished measurement for my front, I divided it in ½ (there are two front pieces) and added ½" (1/4" seam allowance for each seam). I measured 9" across my front leg piece, starting at the crotch seam, and put a pen mark where the waist needed to end. I then re-cut my outseam, starting at the widest part of the hip, curving in a bit towards the waist mark. This cut is marked at #1 in the first picture.

The back panel of my pants needs to be 21" (hip measurement – front panel = 21") plus ease. I used 2" ease (1" on each side). Ease will make it easier to pull over your hips. The more ease, the easier they are to get all, but
you will also have more fabric at your back waist. I needed my finished top measurement to equal 12".
21" hip measurement + 2" ease = 23"
23" divided in half for each side of the back = 11.5"
11.5" + .5" (1/4" seam allowance for each seam) = 12"
It worked out with my pattern that I could just draw a line straight up from the hip. This is marked as #2 in the first picture.

Now you need a front waistband piece. My finished front measurement was 17",

plus I need seam allowance on both ends of the waistband, so the length I need is 17.5". I am using 1 ¼" elastic. My waistband needs to be 3" wide (1.25" + 1.25" for elastic + .5" for both seam allowances). This is marked #3 in the first picture.

Now that your pattern is drafted, we will move on to sewing instructions.

Flat Front Pants Sew Along

First, iron interfacing onto the back of your waistband. I like to use Pellon precut waistbands.

Next, serge the inseam of both legs. Then serge the rise. DON'T serge the outseam yet, this is very important!

Then, serge the waistband to the FRONT of the pants. Easy to tell which the front, it will have a substantially lower rise. Serge the top edge of the waistband also.

Next, decide on the length of your elastic. I just take a piece and stretch it comfortably across my back from side seam to side seam, keeping in mind the serging it will stretch it slightly. Take that piece and serge it to the top of the back on the inside of your pants.

Next, serge down both outseam, starting at the top of your waist. Make sure you catch the elastic in the seam. I also like to stitch in the ditch at the back center of the elastic, just to tack it down.

Your waist will look like this:

Next, you will fold over your waistband, starting at one side seam, you are going to stitch in the ditch along the front waistband. You may want to iron a seam in your waistband. Since I use the pre-molded waistband interfacing, it gives me a nice fold already.

Make sure your waistband seam on the inside is folded down. Inside view:

Keep topstitching around. When you get to the other side seam, you are going to keep stitching over the back elastic, stretching it flat as you go. If you need a better guide, stop at the side seam and back tack, then flip the pants so you are stitching the back with the inside facing up and you can see the edge of the elastic. That is the only waistband stitching I do, if you like, you could add another row of stitching through the center of the back elastic.

Now just hem them and you are done!

Front:

Back:

Side:

Done from a child's pattern: