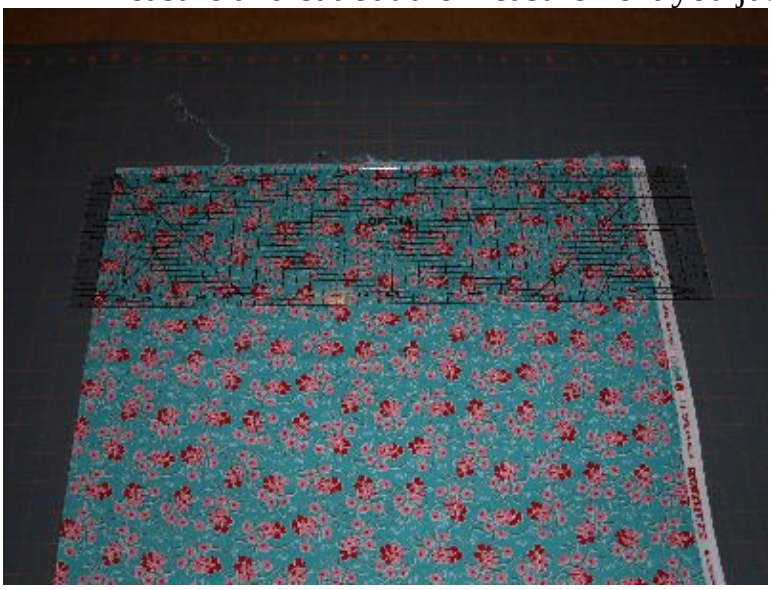
Shirred Top/Dress Tutorial
SewingMamas.com
By Krista

Supplies:
measuring tape, fabrics, fabric pen, ruler, scissors/rotary cutter, elastic thread, pins, iron, & of course, your sewing machine ☺

- First start with measuring. Measure around the chest. Next you want to measure from the top of the armpit to the length you want the top/dress to be. For my DD I measured 20” for her chest and 10” for the length of the top.
- Length Measurement- Now we decide what kind of finish the top & bottom will have and this will tell us how much to add to our length measurement. For this top I am going to do a rolled hem. I usually cut ¼” off so I will add ½” to my total length (1/4” for the top and ¼” for the bottom) So my length is 10.5”
- Width Measurement- For my DDs top I double her width measurement (but depending on the size you need and the fabric width you can sometimes do 1 and a half instead of 2 times the width, shirring can be very forgiving) So my width is 40”.
- Lay out your fabric and use your ruler and fabric pen (or rotary cutter) to measure and cut out the measurement you just figured out above.



TIP: If your width measurement is bigger than the measurement from selvage to selvage, you will need to cut 2 pieces.

Now it’s time to sew! Finish the top & bottom edges with the technique you chose. Here’s my rolled hem. (see below for a couple other finishes I did to show you)
TIP: If you had to cut 2 pieces to accommodate your width measurement, stitch one side seam first & then finish the top & bottom edges.

Now to the shirring. Use regular thread in the top and elastic thread in the bobbin. I wind several bobbins (I have to do it by hand) and keep them ready. I start by lining the edge up 5/8” & stitch my first row of shirring. When I get to the end of the fabric I leave the needle in the fabric, turn to a 90 degree angle and stitch about 3 stitches (along the side edge), leave the needle in the fabric and rotate it again 90 degrees lining up the other side of your presser foot with the first row of shirring.

Continue the technique until you do the amount of rows desired, I did 7 rows for my DD. When I'm done I tie the thread and elastic thread together for added security.
TIP: keep track of your elastic thread and if you need to switch the bobbin you will want to finish the row at the end of the fabric as opposed to the middle

Now we are ready to stitch the seam. I use a French seam. First stitch the seam WRONG SIDES together ¼”.

Then stitch the seam RIGHT SIDES together 3/8” (this encloses the first seam we just did). And press the seam to one side.

Now for the magic part. Turn your top/dress wrong side out and steam the shirring. This will shrink it up but it will still be stretchy.

Now all we have left is to add the ties. I've decided to do "V" type halter style so I cut a piece of ribbon and pinned it to the front middle. Then following the top shirring line I stitched it a couple times.

Added a fabric covered button and viola…all done ☺

Different edge finishes….

<u>Folded over hem</u>-

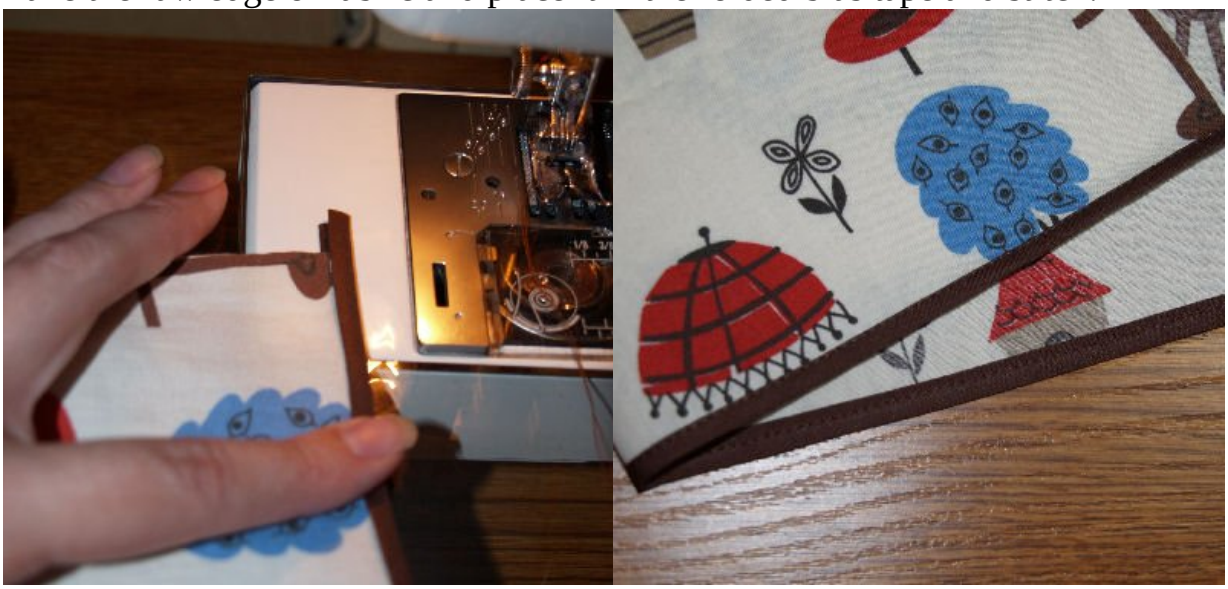
measure ½" and iron ~ 1st picture

Fold ¼" under. (take the raw edge and put it against the folded & ironed inside edge) ~ 2nd picture

stitch along the edge

Double fold Bias tape hem-

Take the raw edge of fabric and place it in the folded bias tape and stitch.



TIP: notice that one edge of the bias tape extends a tiny bit more than the other…make sure the extended edge is at the back. This will make sure you catch the back part of the bias binding while stitching.

On this one I did regular ties straps by cutting out 4 pieces of ribbon and stitching them in place just like I did the halter ties.

All done ☺