

amy hood arts: DIY Two-Layer, Drawstring, Perfect Summer Skirt



This is an A-line skirt with two layers, a casing at the top, and a drawstring closure. It seems like a long tutorial, but that's because I include how to sew a buttonhole by hand. You'll draft a simple pattern according to your measurements. I used voile, which makes for a light, flowy skirt. So if you use something of a similar weight, you can expect a similar effect. If you use something heavier, the effect will be a bit stiffer.

Materials: 2-2.5 yards of fabric (or more), depending upon the lengths of your layers—we'll do a wee bit of math down below; thread to match; basic sewing stuffs. If you don't want to make the drawstring yourself, you'll need enough of a matching (washable) cord or ribbon to comfortably go around your waist and tie.

What to Do

1. First, draft your pattern. (I promise, this takes way less time to do than it takes to explain it.) I used the guidelines in [Sew What! Skirts](#). Take your hip measurement at the widest point and add 1" for ease and 2" for seam allowance. Then divide by 4, because we're only drawing out one quarter of the skirt—you'll place the straight edge (on the left in my photo & diagram) against the fold line. (Fold your fabric selvage to selvage and cut so the grain travels from waist to hem.)



When you cut, you'll be cutting out the entire front (or back) at once. Decide how long you want your skirt to be, as well as how wide at the bottom. I had two yards of fabric and used it all—my bottom layer measured 19" and my top layer 17". Since we're cutting out two of each piece, that adds up to 72" (2 yards) exactly. I made my top layer two inches shorter than the bottom, but play with that however you like. Just remember to make sure you have enough fabric for

what you want to do. You also need a hem allowance (1/2") and a seam allowance (1/2"), so add a full inch to your desired finished skirt length—on both layers.

So, to draft: Make a dot on the left edge of your paper, near the top. Placing your ruler perpendicular to the straight edge of your paper, measure out equal to your (hip measurement + 1 inch + 2 inches) divided by 4. For me, this is 9.75". Mark that point. If you want a curved waist, make another dot 1/2-1" above this mark. I went with a straight waistline, but really, I'm not so curvy. Up to you. Draw a gently curved line from your first dot to the higher dot—or just make a straight line. Either way, that's your waist.

Measure the length of the longer layer down the straight edge of the paper. Draw an angled line from the other end of the waist to the hem. Think about how much flare you want on your skirt, and this may depend on the width of your fabric, too. My bottom edge measures 15 1/2" on the pattern (so 62" total). Gently curve the hem line. (To do this, I used a curved waist and then measured my skirt length down from the waistline at several points. Then I connected the dots. Then I erased the curved waist and went with the straight one instead.) Make a line on your pattern to indicate where the top layer will be—just measure the difference up from your hem, and connect the dots so it's also curved. In my picture below, you can see that after I cut the bottom layer pieces, I just cut on my line to get my shorter pattern piece.

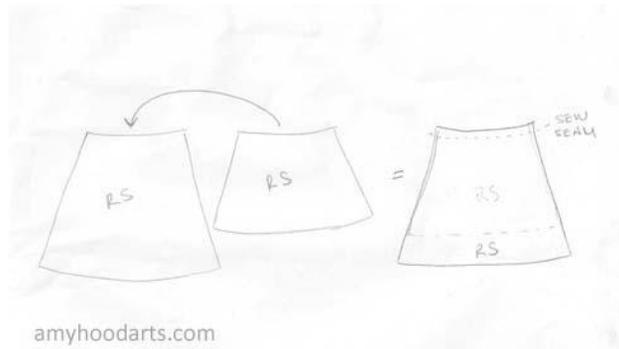


2. Cut out your pieces. Place on the fold line and cut two of each layer. It doesn't matter if your fabric is right side out or in, as long as you're consistent.

3. Sew your side seams, waistline to hem, for both layers. Because I used voile, I decided to use French seams so that my raw edges were encased. I felt that zigzagging the edges on such a thin material would be a bad choice. French seams are easy! Instructions are included in [this Sew, Mama, Sew! post on seam finishes](#).

4. Hem each layer. If you are on friendly terms with your rolled hem foot, that would be perfect for a lightweight material. Otherwise, fold up a narrow hem. I ironed up 1/4" and then another 1/4", then stitched.

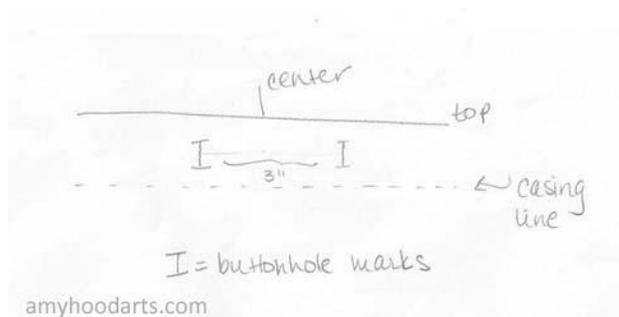
5. Now it's time to sew the layers together. Give them a press and lay them in front of you side by side, right sides out. Now, take the shorter skirt—the one that will be on top—and put it INSIDE the longer skirt—the one that will be on the bottom.



Line up the side seams and pin around the top. You should be looking at the right side of the bottom layer. If you peek inside, you'll see the wrong side of the top layer. If you think about this too much, your head will hurt. But trust me. Now sew around the top with a $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance. Press your seam. Flip your skirts. Ta-da! Your top layer is right where it should be, right sides out.

6. Leave the skirt for a bit to make your drawstring. I wanted to keep it simple for myself, so I just cut a strip the entire length of my fabric—72". I wanted a narrowish drawstring, so I cut my strip $1\frac{1}{4}$ " wide. Make it the same way you'd make binding tape (Wendi Gratz has a nice tutorial [here](#))—iron it in half, open it up, iron each side in to the fold, then iron in half again, folding in the raw edges at each end. Then, sew straight down, close to your open edge (where you actually have two folds showing). The final drawstring was about $\frac{1}{3}$ " wide.

7. Now decide which side is the front of your skirt. Find the center and mark it. Measure $1\frac{1}{2}$ " from each side and mark that—those are the buttonhole placements. Make sure the measurement is the same from each mark to each side seam, just to be sure. Mark about $1\frac{1}{4}$ " down from the top edge (give or take; whatever makes you happy)—that's where you'll sew to finish the casing. Center an approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ " vertical line—so, about $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the top and the same from the casing line—at each mark. Those are your buttonhole marks. The length of your buttonhole may vary depending upon your drawstring. (This is why you make your drawstring first, so you can test it against your buttonhole length and make sure it will fit.)



8. If you're using a lightweight material, cut some muslin to back your buttonholes. (It won't hurt to have backing even on a heavier weight cotton, is what I think.) I used a one-inch square of muslin behind each buttonhole. Pin it in place and then, using sharp scissors, make a small snip through both fabrics. Carefully cut along the line. REMEMBER: The buttonhole is only through the top layer of the skirt.



9. (You can, of course, do the buttonholes on your machine. If so, skip ahead to step 10.) I used the same thread I'd used in the machine, doubled. I had a really hard time with it until I ran it along a piece of beeswax (undyed, from a candle). It was so much easier after that!! You're going to work your muslin and skirt fabric together as if they're one. Bring the thread in from behind—go ahead and knot it, nobody is going to see the back because it will be hidden inside the casing. You want to be neat but you don't need to stress. Make a couple stitches along the top of the buttonhole. I'm using contrasting thread in this example just so you can see.



Now begin your [buttonhole stitch](#) down the right-hand side. You'll be looping the thread around the raw edge of both materials. If there are some muslin strings coming loose, gently pull them out. (I was much neater with the real buttonhole than I was with this example.) Go carefully and slowly and keep your stitches close together, to cover the

fabric. When you get to the bottom, stitch across the bottom a couple of times, then flip it around so you're working down the other edge.



Finish it all up. You can trim the muslin closer on the back, if you want. Make the other buttonhole. See, the ones I made on my skirt are much neater!



10. Now that you're done with the buttonholes, you can close the casing. Sew 1 1/4" (or whatever you decided) down from the hem line, all around, from the right side. You don't need to leave an opening, since you have the buttonholes.

11. Pin a safety pin to the end of your drawstring. Feed it into one buttonhole, all the way around, and out the other. I knotted my drawstring at the very ends.

There you go. You're done! Happy summer!!