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Make a Pretty Pillowcase Dress

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The twist? You don't need to cut up an existing pillowcase to do it! Any little girl will love the freedom and comfort of this little dress—and it offers lots of opportunity for creativity!

by Barbara Weiland Talbert





Materials: 44/45"-wide fabric

- 1 yard print or solid for body of dress
- 3/8 yard contrasting print or solid for the bottom band
- 1 package single-fold bias tape, in a color that matches or contrasts with the dress or bottom band fabric
- 3 yards 3/4"-wide ribbon for ties
- Optional: 1 1/2 yards rickrack or other fun trim

Instructions:

1. Launder the fabrics to remove finishes and allow for shrinkage. Press to remove wrinkles. Fold each piece in half with selvages aligned and smooth out any wrinkles.
2. Cutting across the contrasting fabric, cut and 8 3/4"-wide strip for the bottom band. With right sides facing, pin and stitch the contrast strip to one edge of the pillowcase panel. Use a 1/4"-wide seam allowance. Serge- or zigzag finish the seam allowance and press it toward the contrast band.
3. With right sides facing, stitch 1/2" from the selvage edges to make a fabric tube. Press the seam open, using the selvages as the seam allowance—or trim to 1/4" and serge or zigzag both seam allowance together and press the seam allowances to one side. Figure 1.

4. Turn the fabric tube right side out and press gently along the seamline. Place on your cutting table.
5. Measure the child who will wear the dress from the middle of the front edge of her shoulder to the desired finished length.
6. Fold the banded fabric panel in half lengthwise. Beginning 4" below the band seam, measure up the length determined in step 3 and cut away the excess fabric. Figure 2. The excess band will be turned to the inside and stitched later and the upper edge will be finished with a casing.

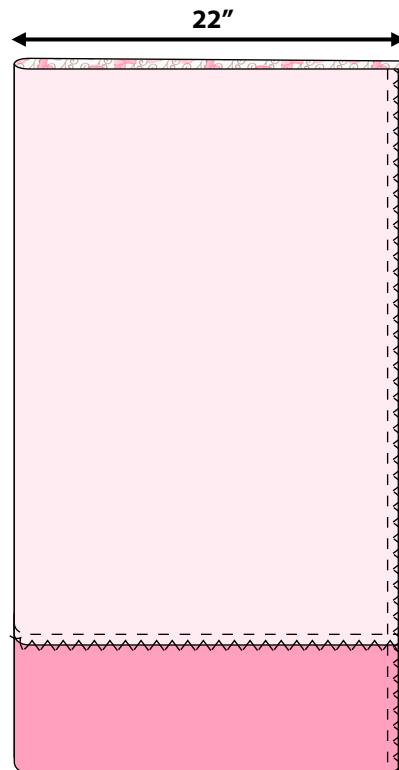


Figure 1

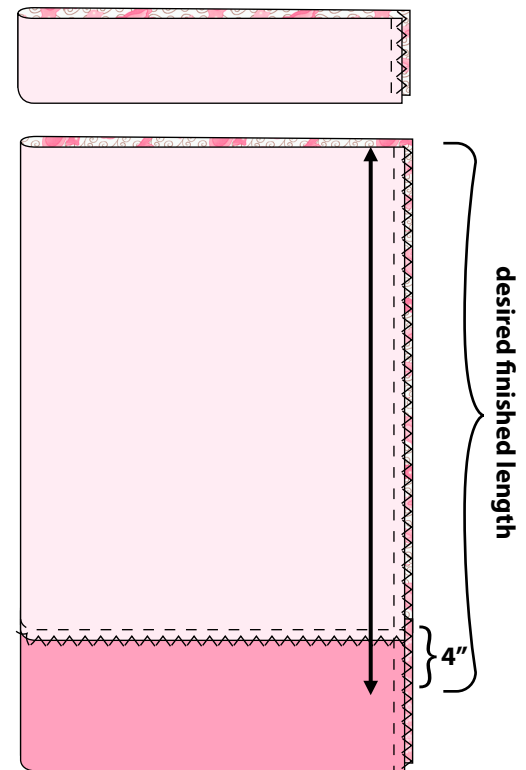


Figure 2



- 7. Fold the tube in half lengthwise with the upper raw edges aligned. Cut an armhole as shown. Also cut a gentle curve at the upper edge for the neckline. Figure 3.



Figure 3

- 8. Bind the armhole edges with contrasting bias tape. Figure 4.



Figure 4

- 9. For the upper-edge casing, measure one upper cut edge of the dress and add 1". Cut (2) 1 3/4"-wide true-bias strips that length from fabric leftovers or other fabric scraps in your stash.
- 10. Turn under and press 1/2" on one long edge of each piece of bias. With right sides facing and long raw edges even, stitch a bias strip to each neckline, allowing half of the excess length to extend at each end. Use a 1/4"-wide seam allowance and press the seam allowance toward the bias. Figure 5.

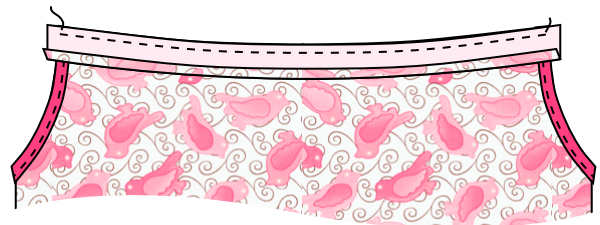


Figure 5

- 11. Understitch through all layers close to the seamline to make it easy to turn and press the casing. Turn in the excess at each end and press. Stitch 1/4" from the short folded ends and trim excess bias close to the stitching. Figure 6.

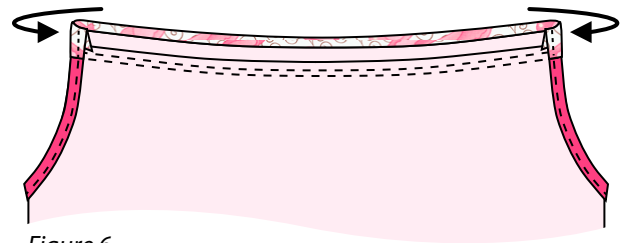


Figure 6



12. Turn the casing to the inside and press. Stitch the folded edge in place to finish the casing on the front and back of the dress. Figure 7.



Figure 7

13. Cut the ribbon into 2 equal lengths and thread each one through a casing to tie in bows over each shoulder. Trim the ribbon ends at an angle to prevent raveling.

Note: If you prefer, you can make narrow bias ties from fabric scraps or double-fold bias tape.

14. Serge-finish or bind the lower raw edge of the band to finish it. Then turn it to the inside of the dress so that it measures an even 4" all around. Press and secure with pins. Stitch in the ditch of the band seam to secure the band inside. Figure 8.



Figure 8

15. Optional: Add rickrack or other trim along the band seamline, turning under the end for a neat finish at the side seam.
16. You made it—a sweet little dress for a sweet little girl. And one more thing-- try the dress on the child, adjust the fullness along both casings for a comfortable fit, and tie the ribbons into bows. Before you remove the dress, pin the ribbons to the dress at the casing opening edges. Stitch through all layers at each end of each casing so you won't lose the ribbon in the wash.