

Tapered Quilting for a Costume Underskirt

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Create Your Skirt Pattern

You'll need two measurements. Write them down here:

_____ **Waist**

_____ **Length** from waistline to lower edge of skirt (measure over the hips or the widest part of the body)

There's a little math, but you can do it all with a calculator. Just write each number down as you have it.

2 x _____ **Waist** = _____ (Put this number in the next blank, too. Why do we need to multiply the waist measurement by two? Because we're only using a half of the waist circle for the skirt.)

_____ ÷ 3.14 = _____ (Waist circle **diameter**; put this number in the next blank, too.)

_____ ÷ 2 = _____ (Waist circle **radius**)

_____ (**Diameter**) + _____ (**Length**) + _____ (**Length**) + 2" = _____ (Length of quilted fabric you'll need; add at least 1/4 yard for waistband and wiggle room)

_____ (**Radius**) + _____ (**Length**) + 2" = _____ (Width of quilted fabric you'll need)

[See Image 1]

If you need to piece your fabric to create enough width, do the piecing along the straight edges of the pattern. This will put the piecing seam in the skirt back, where it's not noticeable. Also remember that you can split the width of extra fabric to add to extra to each straight edge without buying twice the fabric.

[See Image 2]

Quilting the Tapered Design

1. Draw a centerline on the layered fabrics. This will be the center front of the skirt. Decide how many quilt blocks you will use between the waist and hem edges. Each block should be 1" smaller than the one below it. Our sample is 40" long, so our blocks are 10", 9", 8", 7", and 6"; to divide your skirt evenly, you can use some blocks that are just 1/2" smaller than the preceding ones, use two blocks of the same size at the top (waist) of the skirt, or simply allow the quilting motifs to extend beyond the skirt edges.

[See Image 3]

Note: In our illustration, the center blocks are shown as squares for clarity. You need only mark the lower-corner points of each square on your fabric. At the waistline, make two marks the desired width along the top edge of the uppermost block.

[See Image 4]

2. Divide the size of each square in half and mark additional points to each side of every square's bottom edge that are half the width of the square. For example, there are marks 5" to each side of the 10" square's bottom edge, and marks 4 1/2" to each side of the 9" square's base (which is also the top of the 10" square). Make two more marks beside the top edge of the square at the waistline, using the measurement from that square's base.

3. Mount your quilt sandwich sideways on The DREAM Fabric Frame so that the row of squares is centered in the quilting area.

4. In Dream Motion Pro, choose Select & Stitch and pick your desired design; the sample uses **quadflake**. Set the Placement Method to Four Points>Stretch. For the bottom design, use the two points at the bottom of the largest square and the two points at the bottom of the next square as the four points for your motif. The software will skew and fit the design to the uneven shape. Stitch the first design.

5. Proceed up the centerline of the skirt, repositioning the four points for each design. The two corners at the left edge of the block will match the preceding design's corners, and the two corners at the right edge will be closer together.

6. Reposition the fabric on the frame to stitch the bordering motifs along one side of the blocks. Choose a continuous line design in Pantogram (the sample uses **triangle arcs square**), arranging two motifs side by side to make a rectangular unit 10" x 5" (the actual size will be set by your placement marks). With Placement Method again set to Four Points>Stretch, quilt the bordering motifs from the hem to the waistline.

[See Image 5]

7. Reposition the fabric in the frame to stitch the bordering motifs on the other side. Flip the chosen design upside down, then position and stitch as before.

Quilting the Remainder of the Skirt

Choose your favorite method for quilting the remainder of the skirt area. The sample uses a diagonal grid of lines spaced 3" apart. Extend your quilting beyond the edges of the skirt pattern for the best finish.

When the quilting is complete, replace or redraw the pattern on the quilted fabric and cut out the skirt, adding 1/4" seam allowances to the waist and back edges.

TIP: It's a good idea to rough-cut the skirt hem edge an inch longer than the pattern, especially if you are working with non-quilted fabric. Pin the waist edges to a hanger and allow the skirt to hang overnight so

that the bias edges can settle into place, then try on the skirt and trim the lower edge evenly at the desired length.

Assemble the Skirt

1. Sew the back seam from the lower edge to a point about 7" below the waist. Serge or otherwise finish the seam allowance edges. Finish the edges above the seam separately, press 1/4" to the wrong side on each edge, and stitch the folded edges in place.
2. From unquilted fabric, cut a waistband 2 1/2" wide x the length of the waist edge plus 1". Press and stitch a narrow hem on each short end of the waistband by folding 1/4" to the wrong side twice.
3. Fold the waistband in half lengthwise and press. With right sides together, sew the waistband to the skirt. Press the waistband away from the skirt, turning the seam allowances toward the skirt. Topstitch the seam allowances in place 1/8" below the waistband seam.
4. Thread a length of grosgrain ribbon through the waistband. Use the ribbon to tie the skirt securely around your waist.