

Pattern Play: Halter Dress

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http://www.sewnews.com/articles/Pattern_Play_Halter_Dress

Stitch a flirty, beach-friendly halter dress by making simple alterations to a basic dress pattern.



Supplies

- Basic dress pattern with vertical waist darts & horizontal bust darts (such as McCall's 2401)
- Lightweight fabric & muslin (amount according to pattern envelope)
- All-purpose thread & notions (according to pattern envelope)
- Tissue or pattern paper
- Clear tape

Tip: For a playful look, mix two coordinating prints for the dress and neckline sections.

Prepare

Cut out the pattern pieces.

Before beginning the alterations, pin-fit or make a muslin fitting sample of the selected pattern.

Make any necessary fit adjustments to the pattern, and then trace a copy on paper, transferring all markings.

Alter

Determine how much additional length to add to the dress hemline, if desired. Align a ruler with the front pattern side seam at the lower edge, and then draw a line to the desired length, continuing

at the same angle as the original side seam. Repeat to lengthen the back pattern the same amount.

Measure from your upper-shoulder point to below your bust. Mark this length on the front pattern, and then draw a horizontal line across the pattern at the mark. Draw a second horizontal line 2" below the first line. Repeat to mark the under-bustlines on the back pattern **(1)**.

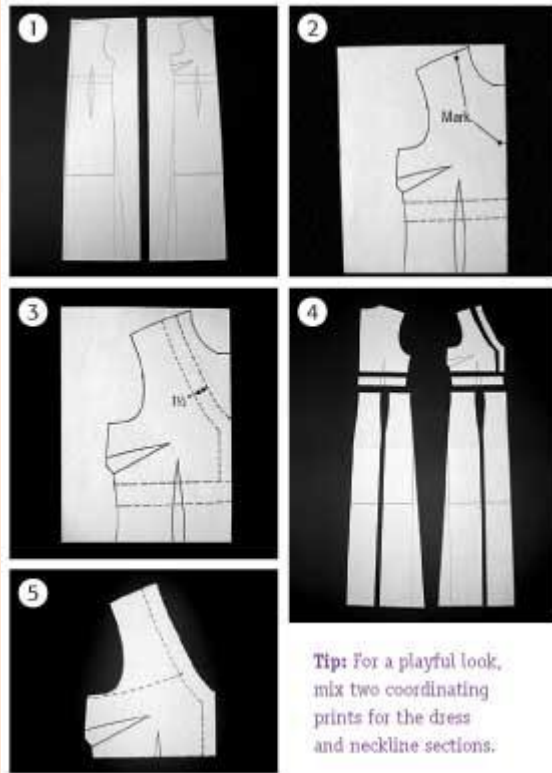
Determine how much to lower the pattern neckline; mark this point along the center front. Determine the shoulder strap location; mark along the front shoulder line **(2)**.

Lightly draw a line connecting the two marks. Using a curved ruler, alter the connecting line to create a gently curved neckline. Experiment with the curve shape until the desired look is achieved, and then trace over the neckline in pen or marker. Draw a second line 1 1/2" from and parallel to the neckline and center front **(3)**.

Draw a vertical line from the front waist-dart lower apex to the lower edge. Repeat

to mark a vertical line on the back pattern from the waist dart to the lower edge. Cut the front and back patterns along the marked lines **(4)**.

Align the front halter with the front bodice. On the front bodice, draw a gently curving line from the side seam just below the armseye to the neckline. Mark a notch where this line meets the halter **(5)**. Cut along the line.



Extend the bust dart upper line to meet the center front **(6)**. Cut along the line from the center front to the dart apex. Fold out the dart, transferring the fullness toward the center front **(7)**.

Position paper under the gap created by the closed dart; tape **(8)**. Make a note that the filled-in area will be gathered during construction.

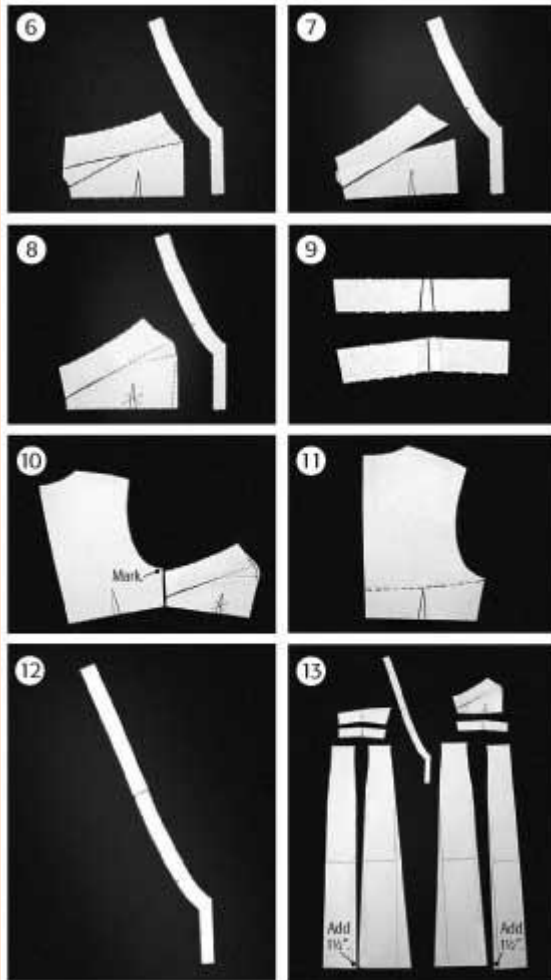
Fold out the dart excess on the front and back waistband patterns; tape **(9)**.

Align the front and back bodice patterns along the side seam. Mark the back-bodice side seam where it meets the front-bodice side seam upper edge **(10)**.

Draw a gently curved line connecting the back-bodice side seam mark to the center back **(11)**. Cut along the line. Ignore the back waist dart; instead, remove the dart width amount from the back side seam.

Measure the length needed to extend the shoulder strap to meet the back upper edge. Lengthen the front shoulder strap to this measurement **(12)**.

To widen to the front skirt sweep, add approximately 1 1/2" tapered to zero, to the center-front skirt panel vertical seamline at the lower edge. Repeat to add 1 1/2" to the side skirt-panel seamline. Repeat to widen the back skirt sweep **(13)**.



Cut

From the fabric, cut two front bodices, two halter/shoulder strap pairs, one front waistband on the fold, one center-front skirt panel on the fold, two side-front skirt panels, two back bodices, two back waistbands, two center-back skirt panels, and two side-back skirt panels.

Construct

With right sides together, stitch the side-front skirt panels to the center-front panel; press open the seam.

With right sides together, stitch the front waistband to the front-skirt upper edge; press open the seam.

Set the machine to a 4mm-long stitch. Stitch two rows along one front-bodice center-front edge using a 1/4" seam allowance. Repeat to stitch the remaining front-bodice center-front edge. Pull the thread tails to slightly gather the stitched edges.

With right sides together, position one left halter along the left bodice center-front edge; stitch. Repeat to stitch one right halter to the right bodice. With right side together, stitch the bodice center-front seam.

With right sides together, stitch the front bodice to the front skirt.

With right sides together, stitch the left side-back skirt panel to the left center-back skirt panel; press open the seam. Repeat to stitch the right side-back skirt panel to the right center-back skirt panel.

With right sides together, stitch one back waistband to each back skirt-panel upper edge. Stitch the left-back bodice to the left-back skirt upper edge, and then repeat to stitch the right-back bodice to the right-back skirt.

When stitching the center-back seam, install the center-back zipper following the zipper manufacturer's instructions.

With right sides together, stitch the side seams; press open.

Measure the left-front and back bodice upper edge, and then add 1 1/4"; record. Cut two fabric strips 1 1/2"x the recorded measurement for the upper-edge facing.

Rip out a few of the uppermost stitches along the left bodice/halter seam. With right sides together, position one facing strip along the front- and back-bodice upper edge; pin, and then stitch, using a 1/4" seam allowance.

Fold the facing long raw edge 1/4" toward the wrong side; press. Fold the facing toward the dress wrong side; press, and then pin. Topstitch the facing 1/2" from the edge. Restitch the bodice/halter seam. Repeat to attach the remaining facing to the right-bodice upper edge.

With right sides together, stitch the remaining halter pair along the center-front seam to create a halter facing.

With right sides together, align the halter facing with the dress halter. Stitch the entire upper edge, and then stitch the lower edge only along the strap portion. Turn the straps right side out and the facing toward the wrong side; press.

Fold the facing raw seam allowances toward the wrong side; press. Slipstitch the folded edges to the dress halter.

Stitch a 3/8"-wide hem along the dress lower edge.