

Oversized pockets

Update a flared skirt silhouette

A familiar style can look new with the addition of a simple but unexpected element. I refreshed a traditional flared skirt with an unusual patch pocket, inspired by a skirt I noticed online. The skirt I saw was lavishly full at the hem but, like most gored skirts, it fit fairly close to the body from the waist to the hip. The hip pockets, which were the source of the skirt's charm, stood out from the skirt along their top edge. The effect was to make the waist area look small in comparison. I'll walk you through how I chose a pattern, modified its shape, and drafted and constructed the pocket.

Rhonda Buss taught fashion design at Ray College of Design in Chicago, where she lives, and she works as a custom clothier, specializing in costumes and bridal.



A lined and faced pocket has enough body to stand away from the garment.



Fullness has been added to the skirt front from the hip to the hem leaving the skirt nicely fitted near the waist.

Plan the pattern changes

Find a skirt pattern, make a muslin, and determine where to modify it.

CHOOSE A PATTERN

Start with a gored skirt pattern that has side-front and side-back seams. I chose Simplicity 1560. Other patterns that can work are Burda 6714, Butterick 6044, Butterick 6179, and Simplicity 1282.

MAKE A MUSLIN

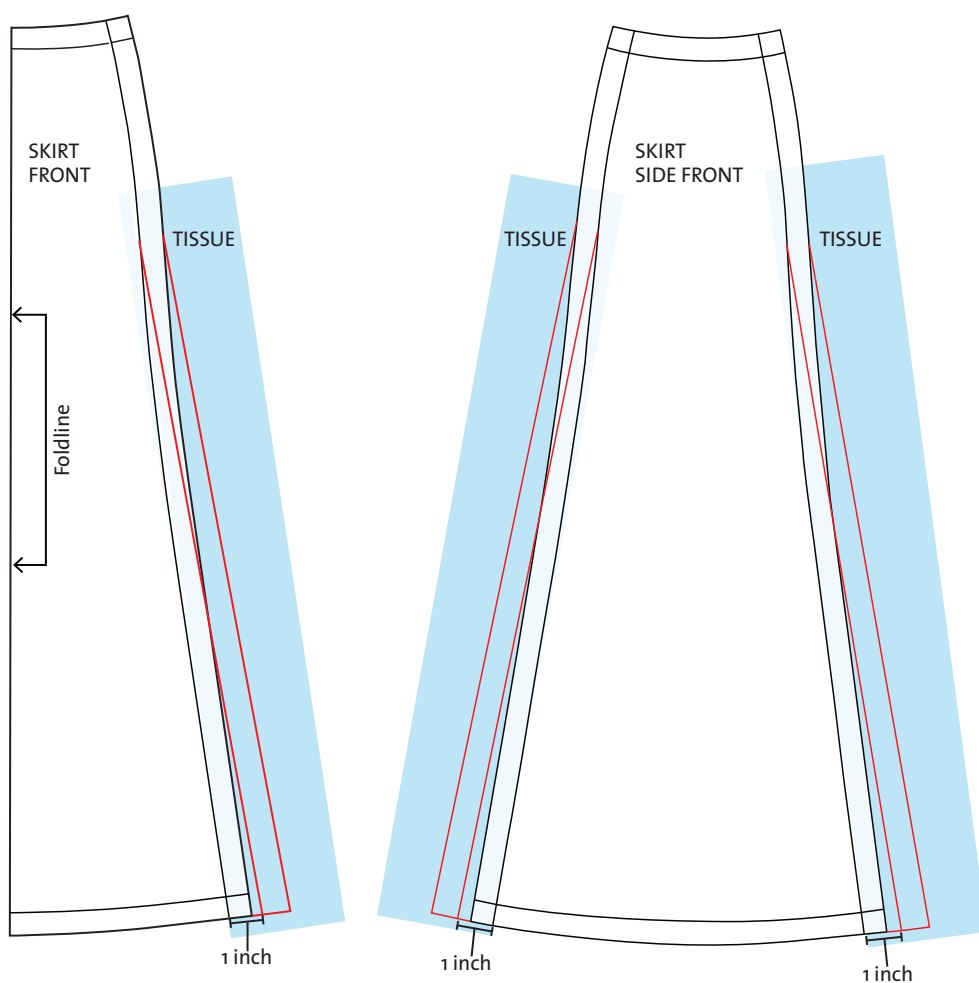
Sew a muslin test garment to check the fit and to see if you want to change the fullness. I decided to add to the sides and along the center-front panels. I also decided to reduce fullness on the back to avoid wrinkles from sitting. Mark the point on the seamlines where you want the change in flare to start.

Refine the silhouette

Transfer your markings from the muslin to the pattern seamlines. Then change the seamlines to increase fullness in the front and reduce fullness at the center back.

ADD FLARE TO THE FRONT

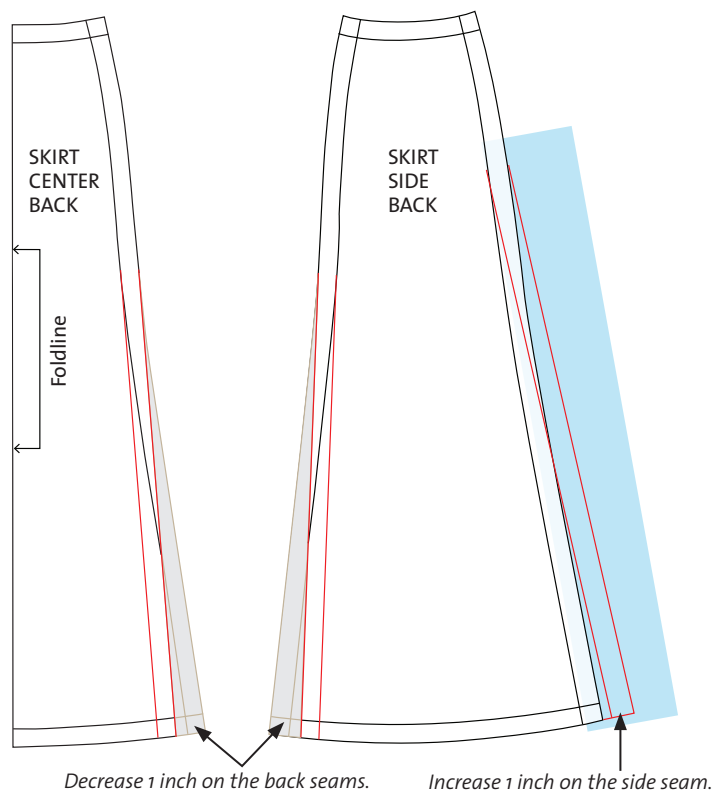
- 1** Tape a tissue strip to the center-front pattern's side-front edge. Extend it from the hip to the hem.
- 2** Transfer the hip mark on the muslin seamline to the pattern paper. Then, at the hemline, mark a point on the pattern paper 1 inch out from the seamline.
- 3** Draw a line between the marks at the hip and the hem to create a new seamline. Next, add $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch seam allowances.
- 4** Repeat steps 1 thru 3 on the side-front pattern piece, increasing the pattern width symmetrically. Draw a line connecting the marks at the hip and hem to create a new seamline. Then add a $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch seam allowance.



Increase 1 inch where indicated on each seam.

REDUCE FLARE ON THE BACK

- 1 Adjust the back side seams.** Repeat steps 1 through 3 from “Add flare to the front” (on page TK) only on the side seams of the side-back pattern piece.
- 2 Lay the center-back pattern piece flat.** At the hem, mark a point on the tissue 1 inch in from the seamline.
- 3 Narrow the center-back piece.** Draw a line starting at the hemline mark to the area on the seamline near the hip where it starts to flare, straightening the seamline to reduce the flare. Add a $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch seam allowance.
- 4 Repeat steps 2 and 3 to reduce flare on the side-back pattern piece.** Reduce only at the seamline joining it to the center-back section.



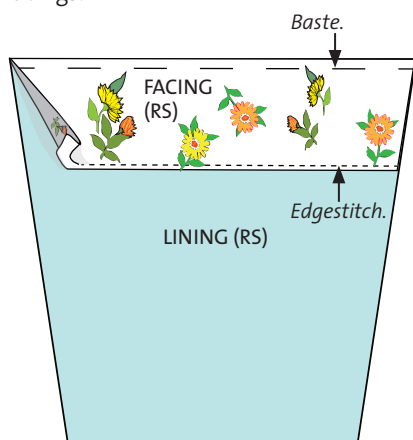
Create your pocket

The patch pocket is cut wider at the top edge. It is lined and faced to give it enough body to stand away from the skirt. Start by drafting the pocket pattern. Adjust as desired for your skirt and proportions.

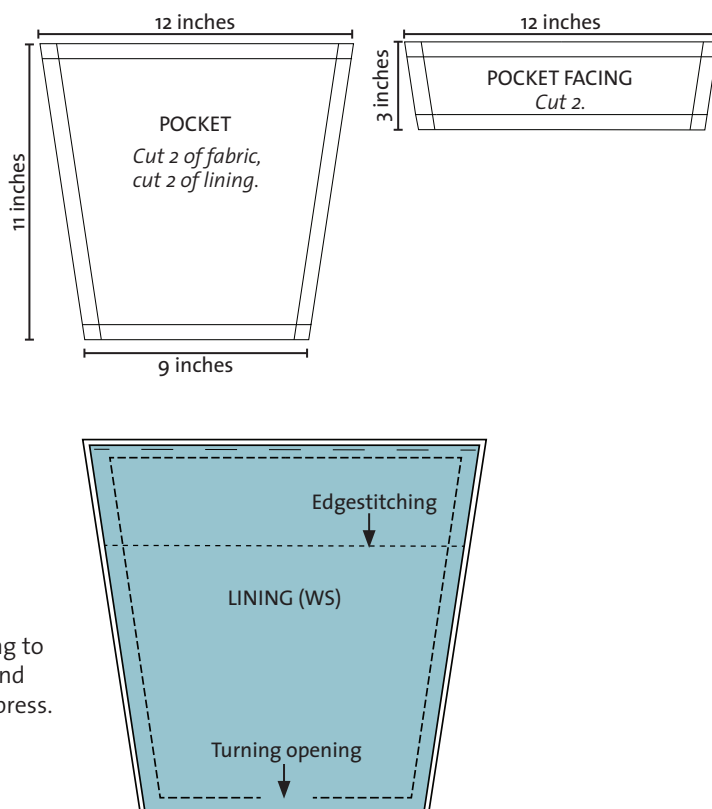
CONSTRUCT IT

- 1 Cut the fabrics.** Cut two pockets, two corresponding lining pieces, and two facings.

- 2 Press the facing's lower edge under $\frac{5}{8}$ inch.** With right sides up, pin the facing to the lining, aligning the upper and side edges. Edgestitch the facing's lower edge. Baste across the top edge.



- 3 Join the pocket and lining.** With right sides together, pin the lining to the pockets. Stitch around all the edges, pivoting at the corners and leaving a 3-inch opening on the lower edge. Turn right side out and press.



ATTACH IT

- 1 Position the pocket.** Pin its lower edge, centered on the side seam, approximately 14 inches below the waistline. The level can be adjusted to your liking.
- 2 Adjust the pocket's shape.** Bring the sides closer together to bow the top edge outward. Try the skirt on to see the effect. When you are satisfied, pin the pocket in place.
- 3 Edgestitch the pocket to secure.** Starting at one top corner, edgestitch the pocket sides and lower edge to the skirt, pivoting at the bottom corners and back-tack at both ends.

Assemble the skirt

To add body to my fabric and accentuate the skirt's fullness, I added a cotton underlining. This also provided extra support for the oversized pockets. Then I constructed the skirt.

- 1 Stitch the skirt panels together, and insert a zipper.** Leave one side-back seam open to allow the skirt to lie flat, making it easier to attach the pockets.
- 2 Construct the pockets and pin their lower edges to the skirt.** Try on the skirt to adjust the pocket sides. Pin them in the desired position, then edgestitch them. Stitch the remaining skirt seam.
- 3 Construct the lining and facing.** With right sides up and waistlines aligned, edgestitch the waist facing's lower edge to the lining. Baste the waistline edges together and treat the unit as one.
- 4 Join the lining to the skirt.** Finish the hems and closures.



Oversized patch pockets stand out just enough to be noteworthy.