

Ruched skirt

Expand the pattern to add stylish gathers

Ruching has been a popular detail recently on ready-to-wear garments as well as on the runway. I set out to find a simple way to add ruching to a basic straight skirt. The result is a stylish skirt with ruching at the side front and a curved slit.

Achieving this look requires only basic pattern manipulation and construction. The skirt back and any facing or waistband pattern pieces remain the same, except for the back hem, as noted in the instructions. The skirt front is split and transformed, using the slash-and-spread method to create extra length that is then gathered.

The ideal pattern for this technique is a darted straight or pencil skirt with side seams and a center-back zipper. Front seaming or side panels may impede the pattern alterations, and skirts with an A-line or wider silhouette may not achieve the same effect as the skirt shown.

Learn this method and adapt it for other garments, such as blouses, dresses, or jackets.

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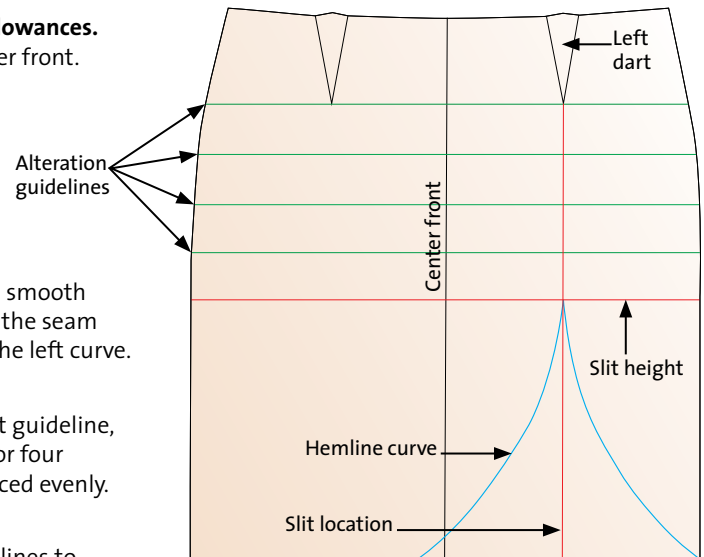
Update a classic straight skirt with a gathered side-front seam.

Pattern: McCall's 7631, modified.
Fabric: silk twill, MoodFabrics.com.

Trace the pattern and place the slit

Create the side-front ruched detail by adjusting the front skirt pattern piece. Mark the pattern accurately to ensure successful adjustment.

- 1 Trace the front skirt pattern piece, omitting the seam and hem allowances.** Create a complete front from the half-pattern. Place a line at center front.
- 2 Establish the side-front seamline.** From the left dart point, draw a straight line parallel to center front and down to the hemline. From this line, determine how high you want the slit. Draw a perpendicular guideline at the desired height.
- 3 Compose the hemline curves.** On the skirt front's left side, draw a smooth curve from the perpendicular line created in the previous step, to the seam and hemline corner. Repeat on the skirt front's right side, mirroring the left curve.
- 4 Place horizontal lines to guide pattern alteration.** Draw a straight guideline, the width of the pattern, across the two dart points. Draw three or four guidelines, parallel to the first one. These lines do not have to be spaced evenly.
- 5 Cut the pattern apart.** Cut along the vertical line and curved hemlines to separate the right and left sides, following the dart legs to incorporate the shaping into the seam.



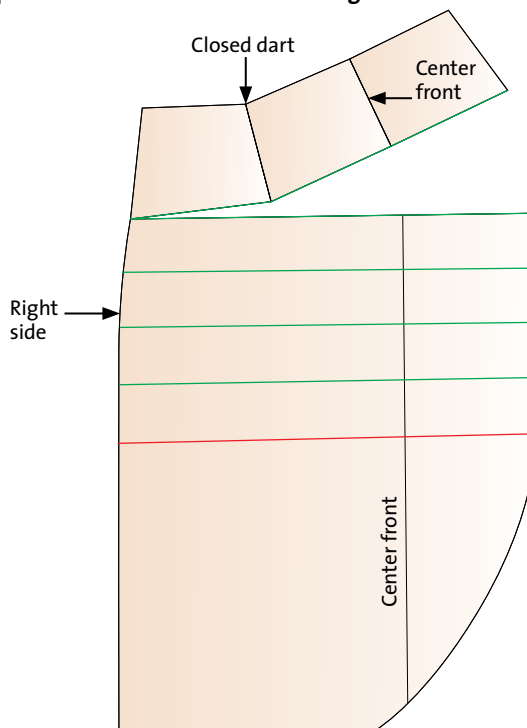
Mark the skirt front pattern piece to prepare for alteration.

Cut and spread the pieces

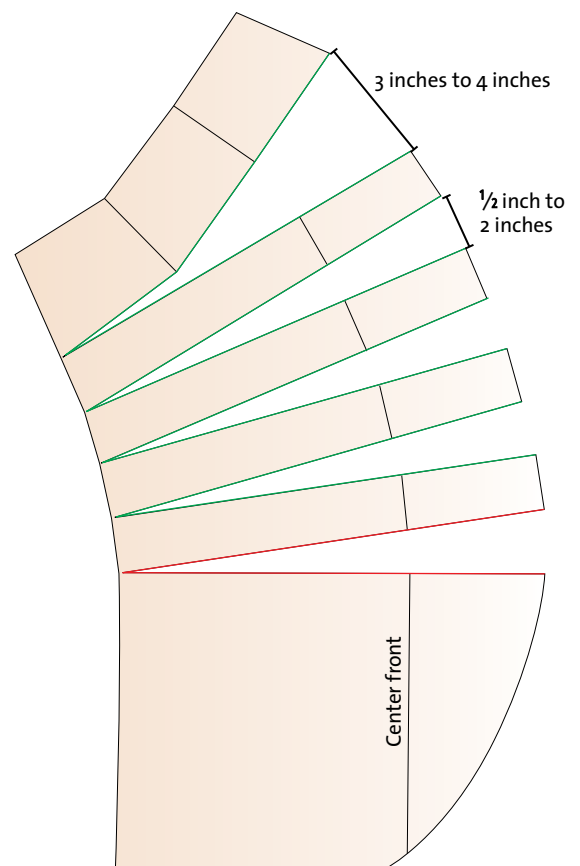
Modify the front skirt pattern pieces to create volume for ruching.

- 1 On the right pattern piece, cut to, not through, the side seamline on the top guideline.** Cut one dart leg to, not through, the guideline. Close the dart and secure with tape.

- 2 Cut all guidelines to, not through, the side seamline.** Spread the top section 3 inches to 4 inches from the section below it. Spread the other openings from 1/2 inch to 2 inches apart. The more you spread them, the denser the gathers will be. Tape them to another sheet of paper, keeping the paper pieces flat.



Cut the top guideline and close the dart.

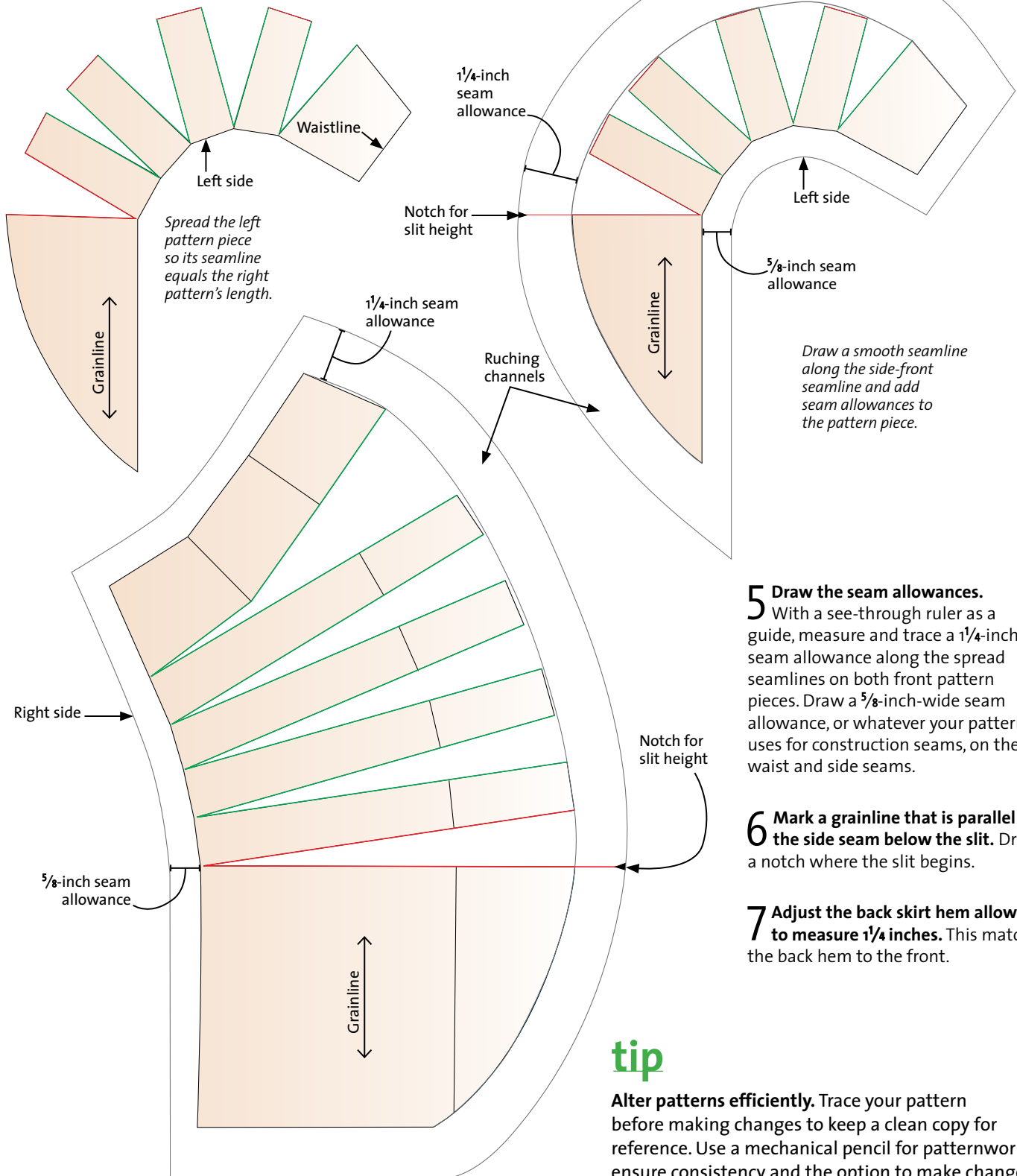


Cut all guidelines to the side seamline and spread.

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3 Measure the distance from the top of the slit to the waistline on the right pattern's spread edge. Following the same procedure, open the left pattern to the same measurement as the seamline on the right. Secure it to a piece of paper with tape.

4 Create a smooth seamline. Follow the line from the top of the slit to the waistline along the spread-open seam. Not all the points need to connect.



5 Draw the seam allowances.

With a see-through ruler as a guide, measure and trace a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch seam allowance along the spread seamlines on both front pattern pieces. Draw a $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch-wide seam allowance, or whatever your pattern uses for construction seams, on the waist and side seams.

6 Mark a grainline that is parallel to the side seam below the slit. Draw a notch where the slit begins.

7 Adjust the back skirt hem allowance to measure $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. This matches the back hem to the front.

tip

Alter patterns efficiently. Trace your pattern before making changes to keep a clean copy for reference. Use a mechanical pencil for patternwork to ensure consistency and the option to make changes.



Before ruching, the front and back hems do not align.



Draw the ribbons through the ruching channels until the front and back hems are even and the side seams lie flat without distortion.

Construct the skirt

Follow the pattern instructions to sew the side seams and attach the waist facing. Use ribbon and careful pressing to complete the ruched slit.

1 Join the front pieces. Press under $\frac{1}{4}$ inch on the curved edges of the two front pieces. Sew the two front pattern pieces together along the curved seam, right sides together, from the waistline to the notch at the slit. Press the seam allowances open and continue pressing 1 inch under around the front hems.

2 Complete standard garment construction. Insert the center-back zipper and complete the back darts. Press $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, then another 1 inch under on the back hem. Sew the front to the back at the side seams. Press the seam allowances open.

3 Pin the hem and curved slit edges. Topstitch or edgestitch all the way around the skirt on the turned-under $\frac{1}{4}$ inch edge.

4 Hand-sew a short thread length to the end of $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-wide grosgrain or satin ribbon. Leave the needle on the thread. Leading with the needle's eye, work the ribbon down the stitched casing, from the waistline to just past the slit's top. Leave at least 2 inches sticking out at the waist seam. Pull the needle out of the casing to the skirt's wrong side. Stitch across the ribbon to secure it within the casing at the slit. Clip the excess thread. Repeat for the other casing.

5 Pull the ribbons evenly until the curved seam above the slit straightens. Adjust as necessary to get the desired ruching and fit. Stitch across the casing opening at the waist to secure the ribbons.

6 Complete the waistline edge. Attach the facing, following the pattern instructions.

LINING THE SKIRT

To add a lining to the ruched skirt, cut the modified skirt pattern pieces from lining material. Sew the lining back and side seams and, with wrong sides together, attach it to the skirt along the zipper opening. After that, treat the two layers as one to neatly finish the hem and ruched detail.

