



Shortcut to a Faced Hem

There's no need for a separate pattern

BY MARCY HARRIELL

A few years ago, I found myself making an outfit for the New York City Ballet's fall gala—in the final 24 hours before the event. I was sure I could knock out my look overnight. My ensemble would include a red leather bustier (from my stock of superhero couture), paired with a floor-length brocade skirt. All went according to plan, until it was time to finish the full skirt's sweeping hem.

On the day of the gala, I leveled the hem and considered how to finish it quickly. From a box of supplies I'd been saving, 5 yards of horsehair braid peeked out at me. Suddenly, I decided it wasn't a gala if I wasn't wearing horsehair. After stitching the full length of the horsehair to the hemline, I realized I'd attached the braid upside down. It was now impossible to ease the horsehair's

gathering edge into the hem allowance's curved upper edge. There was nothing to do except cut the horsehair off and start over.

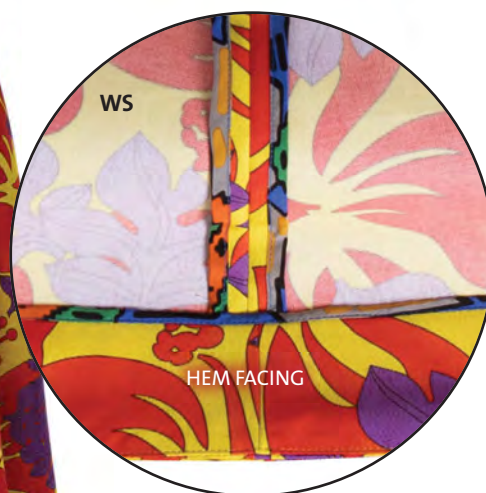
As I sliced 3 inches of hem away, something clicked: What if I could use those lost inches, by turning them upside down? With mere hours left before the gala, I went for it. And to my utter glee, I found that by inverting the detached hem and applying it back to the hemline as a facing, I had a generous, flat hem. The cut-off piece's circumference and curve were almost the same as the skirt's, with no need for gathering at the upper edge. With this facing in place, I didn't miss the horsehair—or the red carpet. I strolled out of the apartment decked out in my handmade finery, ready to grace the gala in style.

Marcy Harriell, @marcyharriell, is a Threads digital ambassador as well as a star of Broadway, television, and film. She can be found on YouTube with her husband, as the Handmade Harriells.



The author twirls with delight in a maxi dress with a beautifully faced hem.

Pattern: Simplicity 9041, modified. Fabric: polyester bengaline, Chic Fabrics, New York.



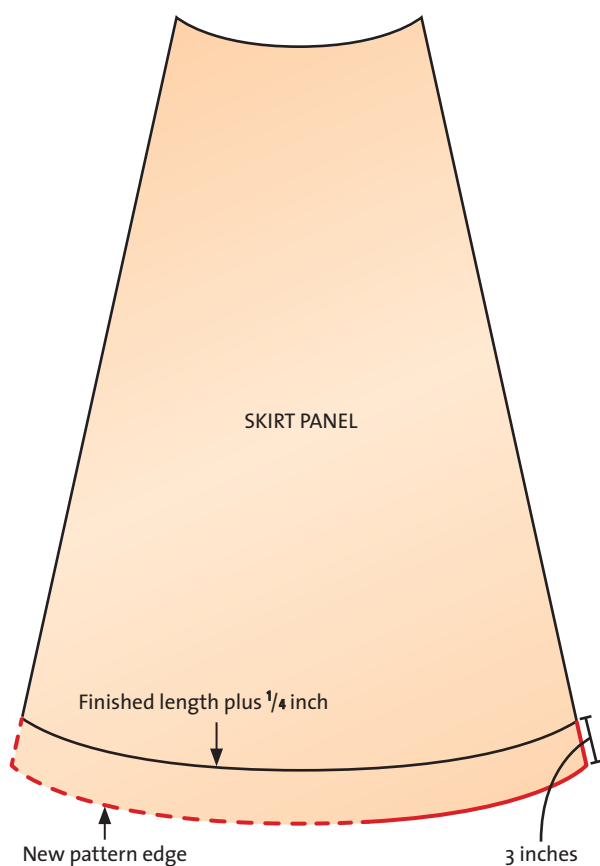
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Enjoy the full details of Marcy's gala outfit story at [ThreadsMagazine.com](https://www.threadsmagazine.com).

Prepare the skirt

Start by lengthening the pattern, then cut and construct the skirt, as far as the hem finish.

1 Lengthen the skirt. Determine the desired finished skirt length, plus $\frac{1}{4}$ inch for a seam allowance. Mark this line, then extend the pattern. Measure and make a series of marks 3 inches down from the line. Connect the marks.



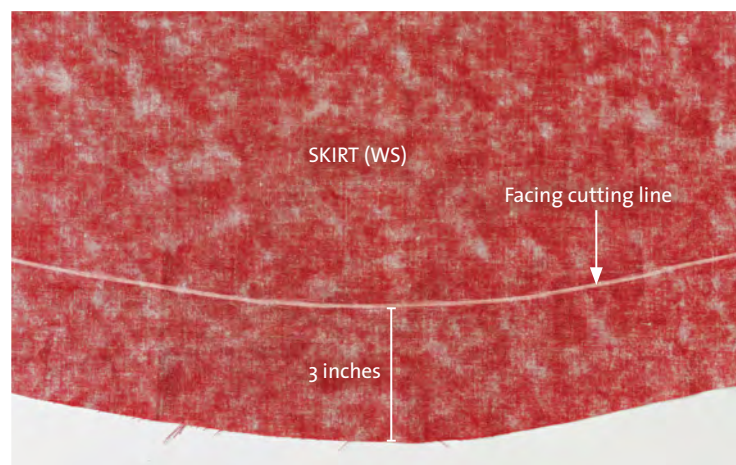
2 Sew the skirt. Leave the hem unfinished and let it hang overnight. This allows any bias portions to stretch and settle.

3 Even the hem edge. Measure and trim it as needed to ensure a level edge.

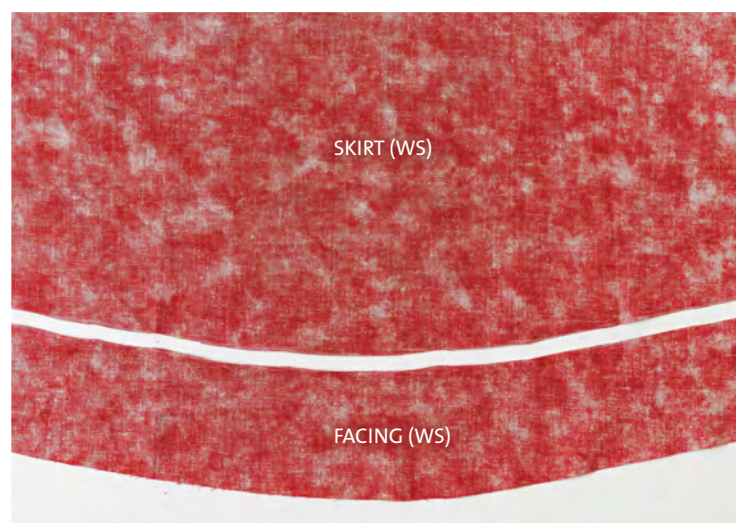
Cut and attach the facing

The facing is created from the extended hem allowance added in step 1, under "Prepare the skirt." You'll trim it off, resize its circumference slightly, and attach it to the skirt for a neat, smooth finish.

1 Mark the facing cutting line. Mark 3 inches up from the lower edge around the circumference of the skirt. At each vertical seam, lock the seam by backstitching just above the line (not shown).

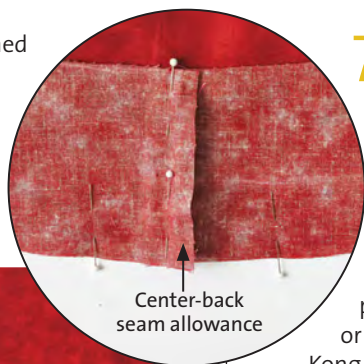


2 Create the facing portion. Cut along the line you just drew to separate the 3-inch-wide facing.



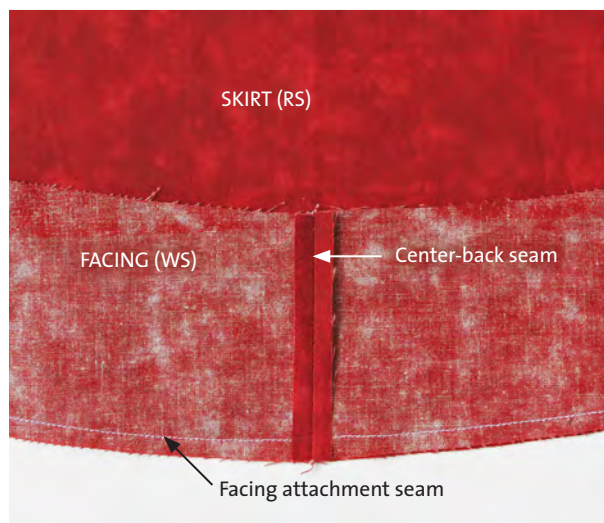
3 Pin the facing to the skirt. The facing has a slightly longer circumference than the skirt's new lower edge, and you'll need to remove the excess. To judge the amount of excess, loosely pin the facing to the skirt with right sides together. Begin at center back, matching the center-back point or seam.

4 Trim the excess. When you have pinned the entire facing in place, measure the excess at center back. Subtract $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from this measurement, for two $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-wide seam allowances; use a wider allowance if preferred. Trim the resulting amount from one short end.



5 Adjust the facing's fit, if needed. If the upper edge does not lie perfectly flush with the skirt, remove excess at the side seams and center front by creating more seams in the facing. Depending on the skirt's sweep, there may be little excess to deal with.

6 Attach the facing. With right sides together, repin it so there is a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-wide seam allowance on each short end at center back. Sew around the hem with a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-wide seam allowance, leaving the center-back seam open. Then sew the facing's center-back seam.



7 Understitch the seam allowances. Press the seam allowances toward the facing and understitch. Press the facing to the skirt's wrong side. If you have taken the excess out where needed in step 5 there should be no need to ease this edge for a flat finish.

8 Complete the hem. Finish the facing's upper edge as desired: Staystitch along the upper edge at $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, then press this edge under along the stitching. Alternatively, serge or zigzag the raw edge. For a more couture look, apply a Hong Kong finish. Then topstitch the hem or hand-sew it invisibly.

