

MAGNIFICENT MAXI DRESS

Maxi dresses are perfect for any occasion, and the Baby Lock Imagine makes this little number so easy to create, too. Stitch it up in just a few hours and wear it the same evening.

BEGINNER/ INTERMEDIATE SEWER



Maxi Dress By: Stephanie Struckmann

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What You'll Need

- Baby Lock® serger
- Baby Lock® sewing machine
- 4 cones Madeira® Aerolock Premium Serger Thread
- 1 spool Madeira® Aerofil Sewing Thread to match fabrics
- Simplicity Pattern 1257 (we'll be using the bodice portion of this pattern)
- 2 Knit fabrics – Bodice and Skirt (see step 1)
- ¼" clear elastic
- Tracing paper (optional)

Directions

1. First, we need to figure out how much fabric to purchase. I purchased a yard for the bodice and its lining, and it was perfect (with a little extra to spare)! Measure your waist. You need about double that amount (wide) to gather the waist up. If your waist, for example, is 30" or smaller AND you are purchasing a 58"/60" wide fabric, then you just need to buy the skirt length (plus 2" for seam and hem) in yardage (I think I bought 2 yards to have a little extra to spare for a floor length dress).

(If your waist measurement is more than 30, then you may need to purchase double the length in yardage to get the desired width for double the fullness gathering.)

2. Let's begin! Shorten the bodice pattern to where you want your waistline to hit. Add a ¼" serger seam allowance at the neck and arm holes (we need to add a little serger seam allowance only at the neck and armholes). Cut 2 fronts and 2 backs all on the fold.



3. Pin pretty sides together at the neckline and armholes. Carefully serge your armholes and necklines with a 4-Thread Overcasting Serger Stitch. Try not to cut much, if any, off.



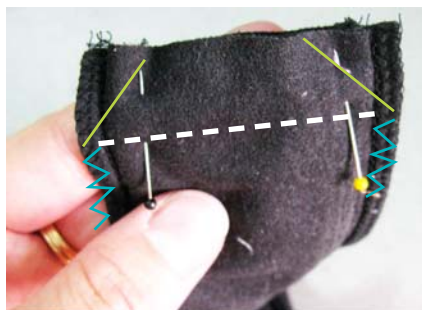
TIP: When using the serger pinning isn't typically recommended because of its intensity and the blade, but for some projects it's necessary.

When "sewing" with the serger, pin parallel with and about an inch away from the edge and be cautious to remove the pins before they even get close to the foot.

4. Turn both bodices right side out and press the seams. Turn the front bodice (only) inside out again. Push the back bodice straps (ensuring they don't twist) up into the inside-out front bodice straps. Sew a 5/8" seam allowance on your sewing machine, stitching across over



your overcasting stitches (I stitched this line twice to make it sturdy). Clip the corners of the shoulder strap seam allowance and reinforce/backstitch just over the ends of your overcasting stitch at the corners there. Pull them out revealing your pretty shoulder seam and press.



Stitch 5/8" seam.
Clip corners and seam allowance.
Reinforce stitch over overcasting stitches at new corners.



Pull seams right side out and press.

- Now, we need to serge your side seams. Open up your front and back side seams and pin them together. If this isn't making sense, lay the bodice flat, the front on top of the back, as if it were a tank top lying flat. Then, lift the top layer up and back flat. Flip over the whole "tank top" and repeat. The straps should be sandwiched in between. Even out those side seams and pin an inch from the edge for serging, making sure the straps, or any other fabric, don't get pinned or stuck in the side seams.

Go ahead and serge your side seams, cutting off about a 1/4" (since the pattern was built for 5/8" seams).



- Now, turn it right side out and try it on for fit! You can still go back up into the shoulder or side seams if you need to alter the fit. You may need to tailor the waistline if it's lower in the front or back (making sure to leave about a 1/2" for seam allowance). You can taper it, as shown below, or if the entire bodice needs to be shortened, you can cut straight across.



TIP: To taper, mark at the center back how much you want to cut off. Try to keep the drawn line straight (perpendicular to the fold) for about an inch at the center back. Then slowly curve down just past the side seam.



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6. Let's work on the skirt, shall we? You basically need two large rectangles. You'll cut your front and back the same. Use your full waist measurement as your rectangle width and cut the length as desired, plus a couple of extra inches for good measure (we can hem it exactly later). Serge the long edges of the skirt side seams with a 4-Thread Overcasting Stitch (I chose to pin my fabric so as to keep the stripes matched up).



7. Gather the top edge of your skirt.

8. Match and pin pretty sides together of your bodice and skirt at the waistline, matching side seams and spreading the gathers out evenly. Serge that seam together with a 4-Thread Overcasting Stitch. Be careful to remove your pins way before they even get near the foot!

9. Let's go ahead and add the 1/4" clear elastic at the seam for extra strength and stability at the waistline. Insert your elastic into the Elastic Serger Foot about 3" following the instructions for the foot. You'll just serge an additional line around your waistline seam with the clear elastic inserted. Try not to clip any off (or lock your blade to ensure this).

It's nice to have serged it once already so the seam is held in place while you insert the elastic and don't have to worry about pins.



10. Almost finished! It's time to hem! Try your dress on and mark your desired length. You may use a 3-Thread Rolled Hem and cut off right at that length or serge a 4-Thread Overcasting stitch, press up and sew in place.

11. Yay! You're done...unless you want to make a belt to go with it (then, you're almost done)!

