

sandrahd's Pettiskirt Photo Tutorial

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I don't post much, but I really do lurk a lot, so I hope no one thinks "who does she think she is?" when you read this! I've been eying all of the beautiful pettiskirts, and came this close to buying during the latest group buy, but I'm impatient, and the 4-5 month estimated turnaround was just way too long for me to wait. So, I read all of the tutorials I could find and ordered 5 yards of light pink and 5 yards of dark pink nylon chiffon and a yard of light pink satin charmeuse, waited 5 days for it to come in and off I went.

I am going to include a lot of pics of the process here (This is the "who does she think she is" part), so if you aren't interested in seeing those or in my blah de blah about the process, skip to the bottom for modeled pics.

I made 2 skirts: one for my 4 year old, and one for my 13 month old. For the 4 year old, I made each tier 6 inches long, the fluff 2.5 inches wide (ruffled and attached down the middle), and the waistband, 12 inches wide (it will be folded over to be 6 inches at the end—like the Martha tute) by 40 inches (2X her waist measurement of 20 inches). For ydd, I made each tier 4 inches wide, the fluff 2 inches wide, and the waistband 8 inches by 36 inches (her waist is almost 18 inches). For both skirts, the length of the first tier was 3 times the waistband measurement, so 120 inches for odd, and 108 inches for ydd (by the way, the fabric is 54 inches wide, so it was 2 strips of fabric for this tier of ydd's skirt, which worked out nicely.) The 2nd tier was 3 times the first tier measurement and the fluff ended up being about 3 times that measurement—since I did it in the flat, I didn't worry with exact measurements on the fluff.

The first skirt took a while to get the process down and work out the kinks, but the 2nd skirt really only took about 4 hours with interruptions, and the measurements to be gathered aren't that much different between the two. (the length is the major difference)



First of all, I was amazed at how small 10 yards of this fabric is folded up!

Ok, here are my tips for anyone who might want to make one of these:

1. Invest in a ruffler foot. If you have one, get to know it now! (There is a free e-book on YCMT that is really good for using a ruffler.)
2. Ruffle your strips and sew them to the tier above all in one step!
3. Don't try to do this in the round. (I found that even when I had my ruffler calibrated correctly to a 3 to 1 ratio, the sheer amount of fabric to be ruffled caused it to end up with variances by the end. By doing it in the flat, I was able to trim off any excess and move to the next step.)
4. Cut your fabric w/ a rotary cutter and ruler and have it folded, so you are cutting through several layers of fabric at once. (I used a slotted quilting ruler, and that is by far one of my best investments—I use it all of the time!) When I was cutting the fluff strips, I was cutting through 10 layers of chiffon at a time, and it worked out fine.
5. When you are attaching the strips of fluff with your ruffler, pay attention to which way the fabric wants to curl on the sides. Place it through your ruffler so that the edges would curl down, not up. If you do it the other way, as it feeds through, it will want to curl in on itself, and you will have to fight to keep it from getting caught up and sewn.
6. Oh, and I figured this one out on the 2nd skirt I made, and I'd say this one saved me soo much time: Don't bother with sewing your strips of fabric together on the ends. As the strip being ruffled runs out, let it go all the way through the ruffler, and then put a new one in, so that they butt together or overlap just slightly. As the piece tier not being ruffled runs out, just place a new one under the foot with the ends overlapping slightly, they will be joined at the bottom this way, and then they will be joined at the top when that tier gets ruffled and attached to the one above it. Trust me, you can't tell on the finished product.



So, here's what I did. Like I said, cut the fabric folded. For the fluff, I cut the strips lengthwise, so each of my fluff strips are 5 yards long. I made 2 skirts: for the big one these were 2.5 inches wide, and for the small one, I made them 2 inches wide. I used between 6 and 10 strips for each skirt—if you do it in the flat, it doesn't have to be an exact science.



I started at the bottom, attaching the fluff to the bottom tier. The ruffler at work.



Then, I attached the bottom tier to the 1st tier.

Repeat the process until you get 2 skirt pieces (2 tiers and fluff+ skirt piece). Ruffle/Attach each skirt piece to the long sides of your waistband. This isn't a very good picture, but when you are done, it will look like this.



Now, fold this piece in half top to bottom and sew from the bottom of one skirt piece up across the waistband and to the bottom of the other skirt piece. Leave a small opening slightly off-center on the waistband to insert your elastic (like on the Martha tut). Fold the waistband in half, wrong sides together, so that one of your skirt pieces is inside the other one. Sew the casing for your elastic and insert it.



And VOILA! I do like the proportions better on the smaller skirt, so next time, I may make the ruffle factor higher on the bigger skirt or add 1 more layer, but I am happy with the result, and with the fact that it didn't take nearly as long as I expected it to. (Please ignore the toy clutter.)

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