

PortabellOpixie™

by
Sandi Henderson
create something special

Shir Madness Tutorial

Shirring is a powerful sewing tool to have under your belt! The possibilities are endless. Shirring provides "on the whim" sewing-no pattern needed. You will need a package of elastic thread, usually found in the notions section of the fabric store. You will most likely find it hanging on the wall near the elastic.

Step 1

Wind the elastic thread loosely onto your bobbin by hand. Make sure not to stretch the elastic as you are winding it, or you will receive poor results. Don't use your machine to wind it, make sure do this by hand! Load into your machine just as you would your regular bobbin.



Step 2

Test your tension on a spare piece of the fabric you will be sewing on. Each machine is different, play with yours to find the right settings. What you want is to sew a section of shirring and have the fabric still stretch back to its original length without sliding along the shirring. If your tension is too tight, (or if you wound the elastic too tightly on the bobbin) your elastic thread will stretch too tightly when feeding out of the bobbin and your fabric will pull together too tightly.



Example of a properly tensioned row of stitching. (underside of fabric)

Step 3

Start a row of stitches. You may draw yourself a guide with a ruler and chalk, but I find it easiest to just line up your presser foot with the edge of the fabric and let the fabric be your guide. Make sure you leave a long tail of elastic thread to tie off later. Forward and reverse stitch 3-4 times to anchor the elastic. If you don't, it can unravel easily.



leave long tails



align presser foot with fabric

TIP: It is much easier to shirr around a finished garment than to finish off edges around shirring! Make sure you have finished edges wherever possible before starting shirring.

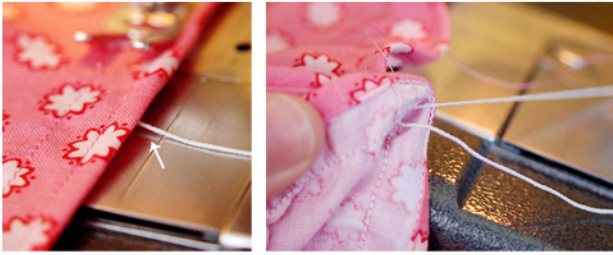




Shir Madness Tutorial continued..

Step 4

When you come all the way around the fabric and are ready to finish your first row of shirring, make sure you pull the tail from the elastic out of the way so it doesn't get sewn into your ending stitches. When your beginning and ending stitches meet, forward and back stitch 2-3 times. Pull the fabric away from the machine, giving yourself another long tail.



Step 5

You should now have two elastic tails. Tie 2-3 knots to secure the stitches and prevent the elastic from unraveling. Clip the ends.



Step 6

Begin a new row of shirring by lining up the presser foot with your last row of stitches. The fabric will have a slight ruffle to it, make sure you pull the fabric taught as you sew along your last row of stitches.



Step 7

Continue sewing new rows until you are done. You should have neat rows, that are all tied off individually. Take your iron and blast some steam along the elastic. This is always fun to watch as it bunches the elastic up nice and tight. You will still be able to stretch the fabric back to it's original shape.

