
Sewing Hacks for the Katie Dress with Brittany J Jones

Chapter 1 - Sewing Hacks for the Katie Dress

Overview

(upbeat music) - Hi, my name is Brittany J Jones. I'm the co-owner of Melanated Fabrics, a sewing blogger, and brand ambassador for Husqvarna Viking. In this class, we're gonna use Mimi G's Katie dress pattern and we're gonna alter it to two new looks. The first look would be an everyday top with an optional pocket. And the second, we'll be adding a waist casing with a draw string to add definition to the waist. Shirt dresses are really great because they are versatile, easy to style, and hack.

Materials

- Let's review the materials that we're gonna use to add a drawstring to the Katie dress. First thing we're gonna use is a ruler. I have a two by 18 ruler here. You're also gonna need some thread. Thread for your machine as well as for your bobbin. I have some snippers here as well as marking tools. I have a pen, but you can use chalk if you prefer that. I also have scissors, pins. I also have a loop turner here. This is optional for turning out our drawstring. And here is some scrap fabric. The scrap fabric we can use to create our waistband casing as well as the drawstring. If you do not have this, you can use some bias tape as well as some drawstring cording. We're also gonna need an iron, our sewing machine, and a finished Katie dress. If you do not have a Katie dress, please refer to the course materials. We have the PDF available for you there or you can use your own shirt dress that you have in your closet. To alter the Katie dress into a top, I'm gonna be using this finished Katie dress right here in this rust color that I've made, and the only thing that we will need for this hack is coordinating thread.

Shorten to shirt-length

- To alter the Katie dress into a top, I'm gonna begin working with my finished Katie dress right here, and then I'm gonna take my ruler, and I'm gonna be measuring down to 18 inches right here from the front along the button band. So starting right here, I'm going to grab my ruler, and I'm just gonna measure down 18 inches, and then I'm gonna be sure to add 5/8 of an inch for seam allowance. So I'm gonna place a mark right here at 18 inches, and then I'm gonna add 5/8 of an inch for seam allowance. So I'm just gonna slide the ruler down and add 5/8 of an inch, and I'll place a mark there. For you and your Katie dress or your shirt dress that you may want to alter, you can try your dress on and then decide where your desired length would be. You may want to come down further. Or if you want more of a crop-top style, then you can mark yours a little bit shorter. Once I have my marking here with the 18-inch plus 5/8 of an inch, I am then going to bring this line across, but, first, I want to measure down the back. So I'm gonna open up the dress, gonna fold the dress in half so I can get the back measurement of it. To do that, you can just put your shoulder seams together just so we can get the center back of the dress here. From here, I'm gonna grab my ruler. And right here at the top of the center back seam, I'm going to measure down 20 inches plus 5/8 of an inch. So here's 18, I'm gonna add my two and then 5/8 of an inch for seam allowance. Now I'm just gonna begin measuring over and connecting my lines. For this, it's best to start with dashes to make sure that everything is even, and then we can do a full line once we meet. If you want another point of reference while you are marking out where you wanna cut for your top, then from your

underarm seam, I'm gonna measure down 11 inches. Again, this is my desired length for having to come down 18 inches for the front and 20 inches from the back. I'm gonna do 11 inches from the underarm seam. So, again, when you try on your dress, just decide where you want your markings to be and just create another point of reference under the underarm seam. Once you have dashed out your line, now you can go back and you can trace it in darker. Once we have created our marking for where we would cut the Katie dress to make it a top, if you have a button that is right along that marking, you can grab some snippers or seam ripper to take it off. Now we can go ahead and cut right along our marking. Before hemming the top, now, it's a great time to go ahead and try it on just to make sure that your hem is even. And if you notice that this dress is already cut on like a flare so the top kinda has this flare to it also, if that's not really your style and you want to trim it in a little bit, you can measure in three to 3 1/2 inches on both of the side seams, and you can stitch that down to create a new side seam right from up on the underarm, and that will take out the flare of the top. For my top, I'm going to keep the flare, and I'm just gonna clean up the edge just a little bit, so I'm gonna grab my scissors. And if I see that my line isn't so perfect, I'm just gonna trim it just to get everything nice and even. Go ahead and grab your ruler and start to measure up 1/4 an inch, pressing that in place. If you have a seam gauge, you can use that also. Once you have pressed under your 1/4 of an inch, we're going to fold over again 3/8 of an inch to complete our 5/8 of an inch narrow hem. Before we go ahead and stitch it in place, we wanna try our bottom button just to make sure everything is still lining up. So I'm just going to button this bottom button here. And you can see from this pressed hem that it is not even. I'm off by maybe 1/4 an inch, so I'm going to open up this hem. You can either trim this down a little bit more and then fold up again and press. Or you can just bring it down a little. And let's just kinda finger-press to make sure it lined up. Once you're good, you can go ahead and now press this in place. I am going to trim down some of the excess, and so you can also just match this up here. I'm going to place a mark where I need this to be. Then I'm just going to trim this portion off. Now we can go ahead and press this portion back into place, okay. Once your hem is even, now we can go ahead and stitch it at a 5/8 of an inch seam allowance. I'm gonna start stitching with the right side of the fabric facing up. Be sure to backstitch at the beginning and the end of your stitch. Depending on the type of fabric that you are using, you may need to use pins to hold your hem in place. But in my case, the press is good so I'm gonna start stitching now. (sewing machine whirring) Once you get to a thick part, you may want to use your handwheel just to get over that section. And continue stitching. (sewing machine whirring) To get a nice, clean hem, especially when you can't see your folded edge, you can use your finger as a guide to make sure that you are stitching straight. (sewing machine whirring) Go ahead and use your handwheel again once you get back to a thick portion of fabric. (sewing machine whirring) Once you have stitched your hem in place, you can just take a look at it. If you have any areas that you missed, like I did here, I'm just gonna go ahead and stitch that in place. (sewing machine whirring) Grab your snippers and clip off any loose threads. We can give our hem one final press. We've just taken our Katie dress and altered it into a cute top. So now you could take a fresh look at your closet and see if there are some dresses in there that you may not have worn in a while. Go ahead and grab those. Go through these same steps to hack it into cute tops that you can wear every day.

Add a pocket

- Now that we have our top complete, I'm gonna walk you through the steps to make an optional pocket. With the scrap piece of fabric, we're gonna cut the measurements five and a half by five. At the top we're gonna come down one inch and we're gonna place a mark. So go ahead and grab

your ruler and from the top measure down an inch. And at that inch mark we're gonna go ahead and play some marks along the side of the pocket. If we have fabric that is similar to mine where it's hard to tell the right from the wrong side, we could just grab a marking tool and I'm just gonna put an X right here. That way I know the wrong side of the fabric. Now we can go ahead and fold over a quarter of an inch along the top of the pocket. So grab your ruler and measure out a quarter of an inch. Once you've measured it out, we can go ahead and press it in place. I'm gonna flip it over to the right side and right at our full lines where we put those two markings, we're gonna fold right along the full line. If you need to, you can grab some pins to hold it in place. Now we can go to the sewing machine and we're gonna stitch all the way along the pocket at a half an inch seam allowance. Be sure to backstitch at the beginning and the end of your stitch and again we're using a half an inch seam allowance. (sewing machine clattering) Once you get to the corner, you can raise your presser foot, being sure to leave in your needle. We're gonna rotate the fabric, making sure that we stay on a halfway in seam allowance and then we're gonna continue stitching. (sewing machine clattering) If you pivot and you notice that you've gone too far, you can rotate back, drop your presser foot down, backstitch, and continue stitching. (sewing machine clattering) Now that we have stitched all the way along the pocket, we're gonna trim right here along the top corners just to reduce some of the bulk. Now we can go back to the iron. I'm going to flip out the corners of the pocket. And right along that stitching I'm going to press right along the stitching line that we did at a half an inch seam allowance. Now that we have our pocket pressed, we're gonna do a row of top stitching right here where we have our fold, making sure that we catch in this inner pressed edge. For the top stitch, I'm going to lengthen out my stitch to a 3.0, be sure to backstitch at the beginning and the end of your stitch. (sewing machine clattering) Go ahead and grab your snips or your sheers and trim off any loose threads. When the pocket is ready to be put onto the top, you can go ahead and try your top on just so you can mark the pocket placement. Once you have your pocket in the place where you will like to have it sewn, go ahead and grab some pins and let's pin it in place. Let's go ahead and edge stitch the pocket along the sides and the bottom edge which is gonna use the edge with the fabric as a guide stitching right along or as close to the edge as possible. Be sure to backstitch at the beginning and the end of your stitch. (sewing machine clattering) Look at how cute the pocket turned out. It's a really quick and easy option that you can add. And all we did was use the extra fabric that we cut off from the dress.

Add a drawstring waist

- The Katie dress features a high-low hem, and it is a really beautiful, flowy dress. If you would like to cinch in the waist of that dress, I am gonna walk you through the steps to create a waist casing. Grab your Katie dress, and go ahead and try it on. With your dress on, you can tie a belt around you, just to get a placement of where you would like your casing to be. Once you have that placement, mark it with a marking tool. And now we're gonna grab a piece of scrap fabric or some bias tape to create the casing. Your casing should be 1 1/2 inches wide and the length around the waist placement. I'm gonna be using a shorter piece here, but remember the length of your casing should be the length around the waist placement that you've marked. We're gonna fold under 1/4 of an inch along all four edges toward the inside of the fabric. So this is the wrong side facing up, and we're gonna fold under 1/4 of an inch along all four edges. Start folding 1/4 of an inch, and let's press it in place. (steam hisses) (steam hisses) (steam hisses) Now that we have all four edges of the waist casing pressed it in at 1/4 of an inch, let's place it onto the dress. I've measured down 11 1/2 inches on the front, four inches down from the side seam, and 13 inches down from the center back.

That is where my placement will be. Let's mark out the placement. First, I'm gonna do dashes, and then I will connect the lines. So go ahead and grab your marking tool. Following along with the markings that we just marked on the dress, we're gonna grab our waist casing, and we're gonna place it right along the bottom of the line. So I'm taking my casing here, and I'm measuring it up with the bottom of my markings. We're gonna grab some pins and pin it in place. I'm starting the casing right before the button band. If you measured and you have extra, we can just trim this portion off and fold in 1/4 of an inch. Now we can do an edge stitch right along the top portion of the casing, all the way to the other side. We're going to leave this portion open to insert the drawstring, and then we will begin doing an edge stitch along the bottom portion of the casing, all the way to the other side. Backstitch at the beginning and the end of your stitch. Let's trim away any loose threads. The waist casing is on. Let's get started with the drawstring. To create the drawstring, we need to take our waist measurement and multiply it by 1.5. Once you have that number, we're gonna put a piece that is the length of the waist measurement by 1.5, and the width is gonna be an inch and 1/2. I'm going to use a smaller piece for this demonstration. With right sides facing, we're gonna fold our fabric, and we're gonna stitch lengthwise at 3/8 of an inch. Trim the seam allowance. Using a loop turner, we're going to insert it through the drawstring and pull it through so that the right side is facing out. With the drawstring turned right side out, we're gonna grab a safety pin and go ahead and put it through the waist casing. Once we have it through, then we're gonna knot the ends of finish the drawstring. Grab a safety pin. We're going to pin it to one end of the drawstring. And now we can pull it through the waist casing. Now that we have the drawstring pulled through, we can remove the safety pins, and we can knot the ends of the drawstring. How easy was that? With just some scrap fabric or optional bias tape, we were able to add some waist definition to a dress. With the steps learned in this class, you now have the confidence to give old dresses new life.