Sew a Cordyline Top with Fancy Tiger

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

Hi, I'm Jamie. -And I'm Amber. And we own Fancy Tiger Crafts, which is an awesome craft supply shop in Denver, Colorado that sells supplies for sewing, knitting, crochet, embroidery, felting, and spinning. We also teach workshops on all of those crafts. We love making garments, the sailor top is a garment that I developed, and it is a classic at Fancy Tiger. The sailor top has raglan sleeves, which are really easy to put together. It's a simple sleeve construction. And there is a gathered neckline, so you'll be learning how to do gathering. And also, we're going to do a hem that mimics that facing, so it's really nice, it complements the edge of both the sleeve and the hemline. It's been taught to a lot of different people, a lot of different body types, and it looks great on everyone. We're both wearing the sailor top today, and we love it!

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

For making your sailor top, you'll need a few materials. You'll need a minimum of two and a quarter yards of fabric, starting with the extra small size, but check your pattern to see what measurements you fit into, and get that amount of material. You'll also need the pattern, which you can download and print out. You'll need tape to tape your pattern together, and paper scissors for that as well. You'll need fabric shears, and pinking shears. You'll need pins, and a measuring tape to measure yourself. You'll also need thread snips. If you don't have thread snips, you can use your fabric shears, too. You'll need a sewing gauge, thread, chalk, and I like to trace my pattern onto Swedish tracing paper to make it last longer. You're also going to need some tools such as a sewing machine, an ironing board and iron, and we're also going to be using a sleeve board today, but if you don't have one, that's all right. Your regular iron will be great.

Chapter 3 - Construct Top

Selecting size and creating paper pattern

I'm going to start by taking Jamie's measurements to see what size she's going to be. Wait, turn around. So I'm going to try and keep the tape measure parallel to the ground, and then if you just want to bring this around, and make sure it's going across the fullest part of her bust, and parallel to the ground. She's a 34 at the bust. So I'm going to make note of that on my pattern measurements. You can find the pattern measurements in your downloadable pattern. Now I'll measure her waist. I'm pulling it pretty tight, because she has clothes on over her body. So I just want to make sure I'm getting as close to what her body measurement actually is. And she's 28 inches at the waist. I will mark that on my pattern measurements. She's right in between a small and a medium. You might think your hip is right here, but your hip is always going to be the widest part. So for me, it's a little bit lower down. And so, if you notice, she doesn't fall into one size range. She goes from small to small/medium to medium/large. That's okay, this garment is made with a lot of room in here, and you can see in the finished garment size, her bust is going to fit into the size small, her waist is going to fit into that size small, because it's really roomy there. And also her hips are going to fit into the small size fine. You don't want it to be tight on your hips, but this is a loose fitting garment, so it's going to work really nicely in a size small for Jamie. You'll have your printed out pattern. There is

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two parts to it, and you're going to tie all of them together. Each of these is an 8.5x11 piece of paper, which you're going to join together at the triangles. The triangles are all numbered, so you'll be able to put it together like a puzzle. There is a little one inch square, so you can just use your measuring tape to measure and make sure that that is in fact one inch in both directions. If it's not one inch, double check your printer settings and make sure that page scaling is set to none. So now we're going to go ahead and tie all of this together. We're going to trim the edges off of our pattern. You want to trim it down to the line here. Keep as straight as possible as you can on this line. You could also use a paper cutter if you have one. Once you've trimmed the right edge off, you'll be able to join those two triangles together. For all your pattern pages, you're going to trim off the right side and the bottom side. And then you're going to match up those triangles and tape them together. I'm going to go ahead and trim them and hand them off to Jamie to tape them together. So now we've pieced together two of our pattern pieces. The front and the back of the Sailor top. You're going to piece together the other set the same way for the rest of your pattern pieces. What I like to do is use Swedish tracing paper to trace out my size. This paper is really transparent and it holds up really well, so you'll have a long lasting pattern if you do this. You will just take a pen and lay the tracing paper on top of your pattern and you can go ahead and just trace your size making sure to transfer all your markings onto the Swedish tracing paper. I'm tracing the size small now, so I want to follow the lines that match up with the size small. You can see the S here, and you want to make sure that you're staying with the size small the whole way. I also like to make sure and transfer the name of my pattern, the size that I'm doing, the pattern piece, and how many pieces I'm going to cut, which you can all take from the pattern piece. So trace that onto your Swedish tracing paper as well. If you don't have Swedish tracing paper, you can use regular tracing paper. You can also just cut out your pattern as it is taped together. I would just tape it a little more securely and cut it out and you can trace directly onto your fabric from that. Swedish tracing paper is a bit like fabric, so I'm going to use my fabric shears and cut this out carefully right along the line that I've drawn. I'm going to make sure and get this little notch here, too. You're going to go ahead and trace the rest of your pattern pieces, and if you're using Swedish tracing paper, go ahead and trace them onto it and cut them all out.

Cutting out pattern pieces

Included in your pattern is a layout diagram that's going to show you where to place your pattern pieces on your yardage. So I've started laying these out. You want to lay out several of the pieces on the fold. So just look for that marking. Whenever you see place pattern on fold, you're going to make sure and put that right against the fold of your fabric. Any time you're making a garment, you want to wash and dry your fabric before you make the garment so that it doesn't shrink once you make it. So before you cut out any pattern pieces, wash and dry your fabric, press it, and then you're going to fold it in half, because some of those pattern pieces are cut on the fold. In your pattern, there is a layout diagram which will show you where to place the pattern pieces on your fabric. So I've laid out my Sailor top back, Sailor top front, there's the sleeve and the sleeve facing. You also want to lay out the front yolk on the fold. Notice that you need to cut two of these on the fold. So we're going to trace it, move the pattern piece down, and trace it again, and the same with the back yolk. We're going to trace it, move the pattern piece down the fold, then trace it a second time. So I'll show you how to trace out one of your pieces starting up here with the Sailor top back. Using your chalk, just trace around the pattern piece transferring any of the marks and notches. Also notice the gathering marks here. Don't worry about this hem fold line, that one doesn't need to

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be transferred. Trace all of your pattern pieces now remembering to trace two of the front yolk and two of the back yolk. Once all of your pattern pieces are traced out, you're going to go ahead and start cutting. As you cut, make sure and cut those notches. You'll be using those to match pieces together later. Now that you have everything cut out, let's make sure you have all of your pieces. You should have two front yolks cut on the fold. You should have transferred your markings here. You'll also have two sleeves with markings at the shoulder, and two sleeve facings. Two back yolks, those were also cut on the fold. You should also have a back bodice and a front bodice with markings near the neckline.

Constructing sleeves

The first thing we're going to do is attach the sleeve facing to the sleeve. I have a finished garment here. We're going to make this nice, finished sleeve hem. First we're going to grab the right sleeve facing, and we're going to press the top edge of it which is the convex edge and we're going to press that down a quarter inch with our iron. And we will be using our sewing gauge with that. So this is the top edge of your sleeve facing, and you just want to fold this over a quarter inch, and press all the way down this top edge. You can use your sewing gauge to make sure that's a quarter inch, and then just press it all the way down. I'm just kind of eyeballing it once I got the idea of what the quarter inch is going to look like. And now I'm going to sew this piece to my sleeve. You're going to lay it right sides together on your sleeve and it should match at the notch here. I don't use pins for this part, but you can if you like. I'm going to sew this at a 5/8 inch seam allowance, back stitching at the beginning and the end of the seam. So now I'm going to trim this seam allowance with my pinking shears. It's a curved seam, so that will notch the seam allowance as I go and make it press really nice and flat. I'm trimming it down to a quarter inch. I'm just eyeballing this. I just want to cut away some of that excess seam allowance. And now I'm going to press this seam allowance in. Now I'm going to start by pressing my seam allowance towards the facing. Turn the facing to the inside of the sleeve, and press that flat. The front side of your sleeve has a single notch. You're going to match that with the front bodice, the raglan part here, which also has a single notch on it. And now we're going to sew this seam at 5/8 inch. And again, I'm going to back stitch at the beginning and end of this seam and sew it at 5/8 of an inch. Now we just need to finish this seam allowance. You could choose to zig zag or serge the edge of this, or use your pinking shears for a really easy finish to that seam allowance. And then we'll press it, so I'm going to pink that seam allowance and press it now. You can trim that down to a quarter inch just like you did the sleeve facing. So just press this seam allowance to make it nice and flat. Now we'll attach the back of that sleeve in the same way matching it up with the back bodice at the two notches. Again, I'll sew this at 5/8 of an inch. And then finish and press this seam in the same way that I did the other side of the sleeve. Now we're going to do the side seam, but first we're going to finish each of these edges that are going to be part of that seam with a zig zag so that when we sew our seam, we can press the seam allowance apart. Set your machine to your zig zag setting, and then we're going to sew right along the edge of the fabric. Notice I'm just doing one layer of fabric. I'm not sewing the right sides together. And I also have the sleeve facing open. Now we're going to do it for the other side of this seam. Now I have the right side facing me, it doesn't really matter. I'm just sewing one layer of fabric. And I also have this sleeve facing open. Now both edges of the fabric are finished with the zig zag, and we can go ahead and sew that seam. But first I like to pin it in a couple of places. You're going to line up the seams that you made when you sewed on the sleeve facing, and pin it there. And line up the sleeves of the raglan underarm and pin it right there as well. If you'd like to pin

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more, you can, but I just like to go for it. Switch your machine back to the straight stitch for this seam. And then sew starting at the sleeve facing keeping it open, And you're using a 5/8 inch seam allowance and back stitching at the very beginning and the end, which will be down at your hem. And then I'm just going to line up the seam as I go for the rest of it. Now we're going to press this seam open. If you have a sleeve board, you can use that here to press the sleeve. The last step for this sleeve is to finish the sleeve facing. We're going to fold it in along the seam with the sleeve, and where we press it at a quarter inch, the very first step, that's going to be tucked under. And we'll top stitch the edge of this down to the inside of the sleeve. Remove the tray of your sewing machine to make sewing the sleeve easier, and then it should fit over the sewing machine. I'm going to start at the under arm top stitching it along the edge all the way around the sleeve facing. I'm also going to back stitch here. And then back stitch at the end as well. You're going to do your sleeve facing, attach your sleeve, do the side seams, and finish the sleeve facing exactly the same way on the other side of the top.

Gathering The Yoke
- Now you've finished both sleeves and side seams, and it's starting to look like a top. We're now going to make the yolk, taking the yolk front and the yolk back and sewing them together along the shoulder seams. You're gonna put the yolk front and yolk back right sides together, and match up the center notch. Then sew them together at 5/8 of an inch and back stitch at the beginning and end of your seam. Now repeat it for the other side. Give these seams a quick press to open up the seam allowance. You'll do the same thing for the second yolk front and yolk back to make your yolk facing, which I've already done here. We're gonna take both of those, which are the same, and we're gonna put them right sides together. Matching up the shoulder seams and then pinning it there. Sew around the inside of the yolk at 5/8 of an inch. You'll keep these seam allowances open when you come to them. Keep matching up the seam allowance as you sew. Trim the seam allowance to a quarter of an inch with your pinking shears. Flip the yolk right side out and press. It might make it easier to press this flat if you press the seam allowance to one side first. Now you can fold it in half and press that seam flat. Because of the curved shape, you might need to press just a few inches at a time. Now it's time to gather the neckline. This part can be the most troublesome, but we'll do it one step at a time so it'll come out great. We're gonna start with the sleeve. We're gonna do a gathering stitch twice down the edge of the sleeve. The gathering stitch is a really long stitch, and we'll do one length of it at 3/8 of an inch and one length of it at 7/8 of an inch. That will allow us to gather the sleeve and do our seam to match it up with the neckline. We're gonna gather all four sections separately, the right sleeve, the front of the bodice, the left sleeve, and the back of the bodice, and then we'll be able to attach that to our yolk. I'm starting with the right sleeve. I'm gonna change my machine settings and put my stitch length on the longest stitch length, and then also change my tension to the strongest tension. So I'm moving this up to nine. That's gonna help gather my stitches. Then starting on my right sleeve, just after the seam, I'm gonna go ahead and stitch to the end of my right sleeve at 3/8 of an inch. I'm not back stitching. You're doing a gathering stitch here so make sure you do not back stitch and leave a long tail so that you can gather your threads later. Right next to the line I just sewed, I'm going to sew another line of gathering stitches at 7/8 of an inch. Repeat these two lines of stitches for the front bodice, the left sleeve, and the back bodice, stopping and starting at the marks. Your shirt should be partially gathered now. Because we cranked up the tension on the sewing machine, it's pulled the threads a little bit for us. If your shirt does not look as gathered as this, that's alright, we're gonna adjust the gathering with the threads

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that are hanging out of the end of our gathering stitches. And then we will match it up with the yolk. Open up the yolk, and notice the marks on the yolk. Those are gonna match up with the raglan seams. We want to lay the yolk onto the bodice so that we'll be able to place it right sides together all the way around. Pin those in place. To make sure you have the front yolk matching with the front bodice, notice the single notch here. The back yolk will match with the back bodice with a triple notch. I'm gonna pin the yolk to the front bodice at the notch. Working one section at a time, gather the stitches so that the bodice matches with the yolk. I'm pulling on the two thread ends from my gathering stitches to make this gathered part the same length as the yolk, and then I'll even out the gathers. Once it fits nicely, I'm gonna pin it in a couple more places. Now for the other side of this sleeve, I'll find the threads that are the other end of the gathers, and pull those until the bodice matches with the yolk, evening out the gathers as I go. Pin that. And keep working your way around the yolk, each section gathering until it matches. That was hard, but that was the hardest part, so now we're almost done. Now we're gonna sew the yolk on at 5/8 inch of a seam on the sewing machine.

Attaching the yoke

You want to change your machine settings back to your normal stitch settings. And change your tension as well back to normal. And then we're going to go ahead and sew this gathered neckline to the yolk at 5/8 of an inch. It doesn't really matter where you start, but I'm going to start at one of the seams. And back stitch at the beginning and the end of this seam. I'm straightening out the gathers right now. So if you see any that are really bunched up, you can spread them apart so that you don't have a bunch of puckers right in one place. Make sure that the yolk doesn't fold up underneath, because you don't want to catch that in your seam. Keep adjusting your gathers and remove your pins as you go. I'm back at the beginning of this seam, so I'm going to back stitch and then take it out. Take out the gathering stitches. Trim the seam allowance, and then we'll finish the yolk. Some of them will be showing on the right side of your fabric. So you can start pulling the strings out there. It's okay if they break. You just want to get all of those stitches out. I'm going to use the pin to help me get that stitch. You'll take the gathering stitches out all the way around the yolk. The ones on the inside of your yolk don't matter as much, because you can't see them and you'll probably trim them off when you're trimming your seam allowance. So I'm going to find my stitching line, not the gathering stitches, but the line of stitching that connected the yolk to the bodice. And trim about a quarter of an inch from that line. You might wind up snipping off some of that gathering stitch. Once you've trimmed the seam allowance, press it towards the yolk. Fold the yolk down towards the inside of the shirt. We're going to press the raw edge of this yolk facing under. Just so that it covers the stitch lines. That will be about a quarter of an inch. You're going to fold the yolk facing to the inside of the shirt, and we're going to, from the right side, stitch in the ditch to catch that yolk facing. So I just want to make sure that we're going to catch it. So I'm going to pin it in place from the right side, and make sure that my pins catch that yolk facing on the inside of the shirt. Pin it all the way around. We're going to stitch in the ditch, which means to sew along the existing seam. And by doing that, we'll catch the inside of the yolk facing. Always make sure that quarter inch is tucked under, and that you're catching it with your pin. You're going to stitch in the ditch from the right side. You want to stitch right in the line of stitching where your yolk meets your gathered neckline. And I'm going to start right on this raglan seam. Go really slowly when you stitch this. You want to stay as close to that seam line as possible. Just go slow, and keep your stitching as straight as you can. This gives you a really beautiful finished neckline. Give it a quick

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press, and it'll look even better!

Chapter 4 - Finish Top

Hem and finish top

All we have left is the hem. Super easy! I'm going to flip the shirt inside out and press the bottom raw edge under at two inches. Use your sewing gauge to measure two inches, and turn the raw edge up towards the wrong side of the shirt and press. Open up this raw edge that you just pressed, turn it under a half inch, and press that down all the way around. Turn this back in where you first pressed it two inches, and we're going to stitch it down right along the inside of this hem, and back stitch at the beginning and end of this seam. I love the way this wide hem finishes off the shirt, it sort of mimics the shape of the wide sleeve facing here and the yolk. How's my shirt coming? It's done! -Oh, my God! It looks so awesome! Thanks, Amber! It's gonna look great on you! Thank you! If you're an obsessant sewer like we are, you, too can have 13 Sailor tops in a variety of fabrics. I've also done a few shirts that I've experimented with Indigo dye with, and those were really fun. We love this one which is a linen cotton blend that our friend made, and it features tigers. So fancy! And no wardrobe would be complete without a bunch of different shirts in adorable floral prints. This shirt works great with different scales, too. These bigger florals look really awesome in the Sailor top, and even smaller prints look really great. This is my friend Sarah's top, and I really love it. I think I'm going to have to make one for myself. It really works for a lot of the print, body types, a lot of different sizes, it's just a really flattering, amazing shirt that you can make out of almost any woven fabric.

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