

# Making Your Own Culottes Pattern

By Angela B. Trenholm, 695 Eastbourne Road, Kelowna, BC, V1X 5L1

E-mail: [thetrenholmfamily@hotmail.com](mailto:thetrenholmfamily@hotmail.com)

Copyright March 2003

These instructions may be distributed freely at no cost only.

## Heavy Denim



Front  
(Shown with six pleats)



Back  
(Shown with extra pleats)

## Light Denim / Chambray



Front  
(Shown with six pleats)



Obviously, these culottes have lots of flair



Back  
(Shown with no extra pleats)

Hello ladies! I hope these instructions will be a help to you as you try to sew culottes that are not only modest but pleasing in appearance, and comfortable to wear.

All you need is your tape measure, a marking tool (I like my children's washable markers) and your fabric. Good choices are: denim, chambray, rayon, knit, poly/cotton, really, just about anything. That is another beauty of this pattern. Fine flowered prints add even more modesty.

I have strived to make a pattern that is both functional and modest, while eliminating a great deal of bulk that is often found in some patterns. This pattern can even be made with heavy denim, though it does give a little bulkier appearance, but at least you don't look like you're wearing a tent.

There is one feature of this pattern that I have seen only rarely in other patterns (centre front and centre back pleats—which I have found essential for modesty) and another feature that I have added in order to reduce bulk at the waistline, yet still give a full-skirt appearance, and this is an angled inner leg, versus the straight-vertical inner leg of a pant pattern. You can also create an endless array of different culotte patterns by adding the centre front and back pleats, as well as the angled inner leg to any commercial pant or skirt pattern (adding the crotch section as well to the skirt.)

I would love to hear from anyone who makes this pattern, and if you have any questions, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail or mail.

Once you have made your first pair of culottes, you will find they are really not difficult to sew. There are very few pattern pieces, in fact, only three pieces for each of the two different styles I am going to show you. Firstly, you will need a few measurements.

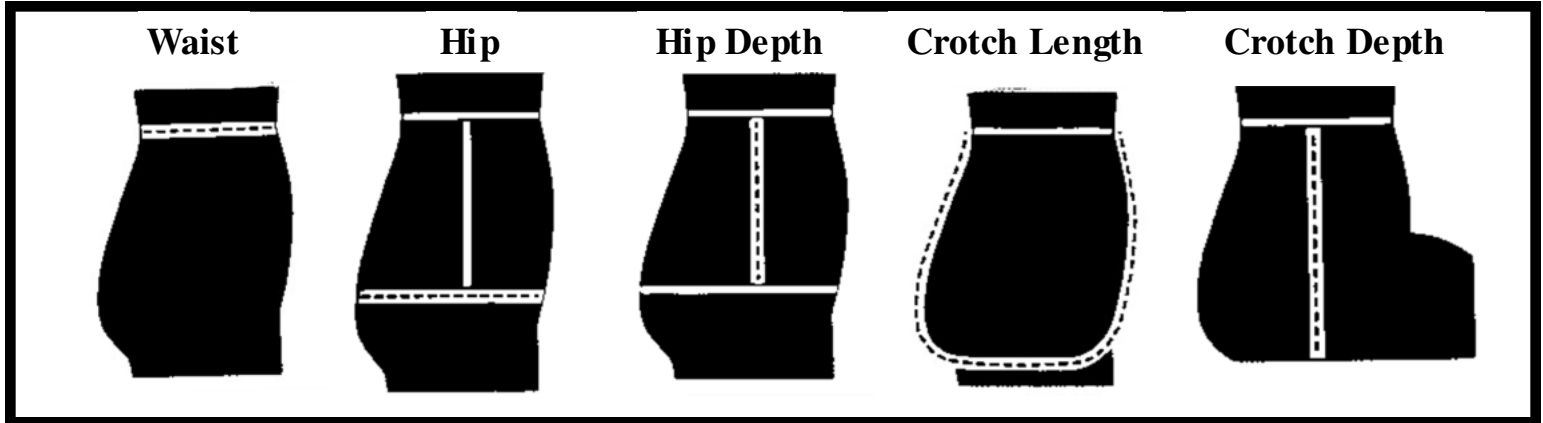
Taking proper measurements is essential, so let's start there. If you tie an elastic or string to the waistline of the person you are measuring, it will be much easier. If you have a hard time finding the waistline, get the individual to bend sideways and this will create a crease on their side: this is the waistline.

The hip is the fullest part of the buttocks, and you will need to also measure how far from the waistline this fullest part is for the Hip Depth.

For the Crotch Length, measure between the legs from front to back (or back to front) as shown above. The Crotch Length can easily be obtained by having the person sit down (with proper posture) on a firm chair and measuring a straight line down from the elastic to the chair seat.

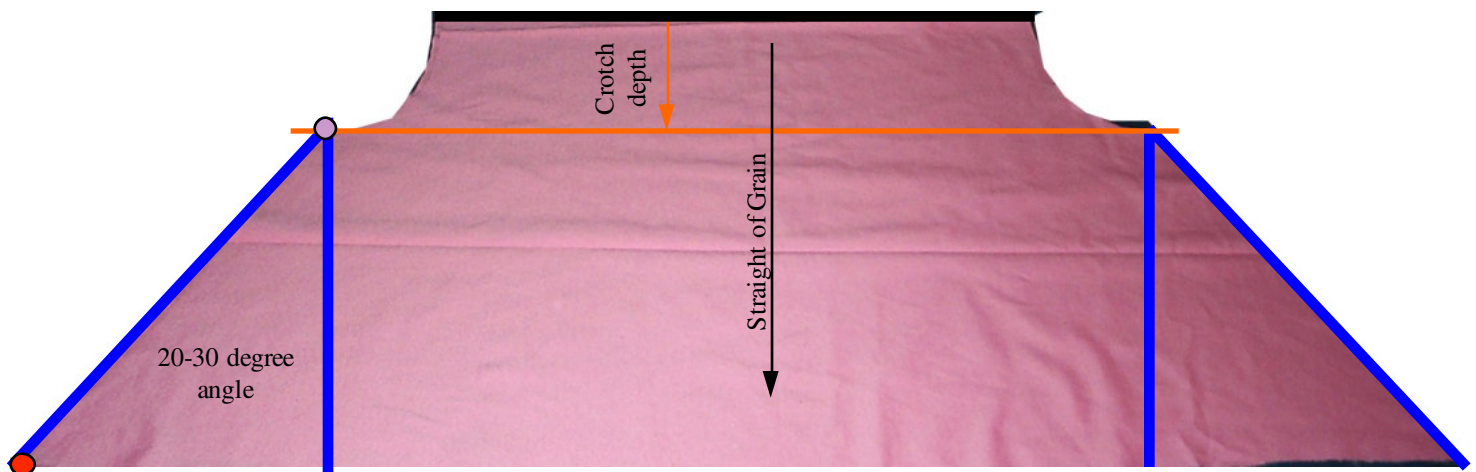
The following chart also gives guidelines for ease to added to your measurements, if needed. (These are general guidelines found in most sewing fitting books.

Fabric Requirements will depend on your size. Further instructions to follow.



### **Ease Chart**

1" to 2"	1" to 2"	None	1" if hips are less than 37" 1 1/2" if hips are 37: to 40" 2" if hips are 40" or more	1/2" if hips are less than 37" 3/4" if hips are 37" to 40" 1" if hips are 40" or more
----------	----------	------	---	---



Notice how the inner leg seam angles out at between 20- 30 degrees—indicated by the blue lines. The greater the angle, the fuller the leg will be, etc. I have found 20-30 degrees is adequate to eliminate any hint of a pant look.

All you really need for this pattern is the top section (indicated by thick black line) with about 1" below the crotch. The width of your fabric will really determine how much angle you get to put in the inner leg.

The goal is to have six front pleats (3 per side) and, although you may add some, no pleats are needed in the back (besides the centre front and back pleats that are critical to this design (Note: Centre Front and Back pleats can be varied from 2-4" depending on size.

**For Integrated Front and Backs:****Front Section: (HM + Ease) divided by 2 + 15"**

(Hip Measure + Ease) divided by 2 + 8" Front and Back Pleat (4" X 2) + 6" for 3 Front Pleats (2" X 3)

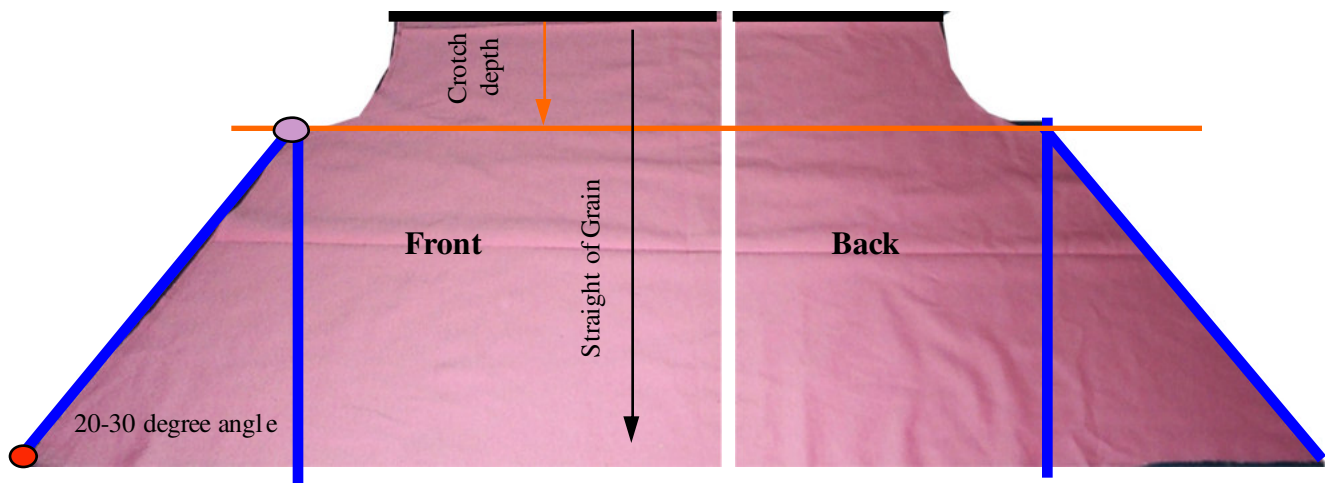
- 1" for Seam Allowance (1/2" X 2)
- 

**For Separate Front and Backs:****Front Section: (HM + Ease) divided by 4 + 11"**

(Hip Measure + Ease) divided by four + 4" Front Pleat + 6" for 3 Front Pleats (2" X 3) + 1" for Seam Allowance (1/2" X 2)

**Back Section: (HM + Ease) / 4 + 1"**

(Hip Measure + Ease) divided by 4 + 4" Back Pleat + 1" for Seam Allowance (1/2" X 2)

**Setting up the crotch line:**

There are various ways to do this. If you have a pant or other culotte pattern, simply use that. If not, here's the "from scratch" instructions. To figure out your front/back crotch length, divide the total crotch length (with ease added in) in two, then subtract 1/2 inch on the front length, and add a half inch to the back, and you have your needed measurements.

Example:

$CL = 20'' + 1.5''$  (for 38 inch hips) = 21.5" divided by 2 = 10.75,  
then subtract 1/2" = 10.25" for front, and adding 1/2" = 11.25" for back

Now, take a tape measure, and using your determined front or back crotch length, start at the top and drape the tape in the shape of the a typical crotch line, with the vertical line going slightly outwards of the straight of grain and ending at the crotch depth. It will surprise you how well the tape measure almost automatically forms the proper line. Now simply trace that line for your pattern.

Roughly centering this pattern piece at the top of your fabric (two layers), draw a line from the end of the crotch line (lilac dot) to the edge of your fabric (red dot), checking to make sure you have a minimum 20 degrees at both inner legs, adjusting the location of the pattern piece so that both sides have the same angle, but having any excess fabric all to one side, as this will make it easier to cut your waistband, but not necessary, as there is usually

enough fabric cut out of the crotch area to create a waistband.

### **The Waistband**

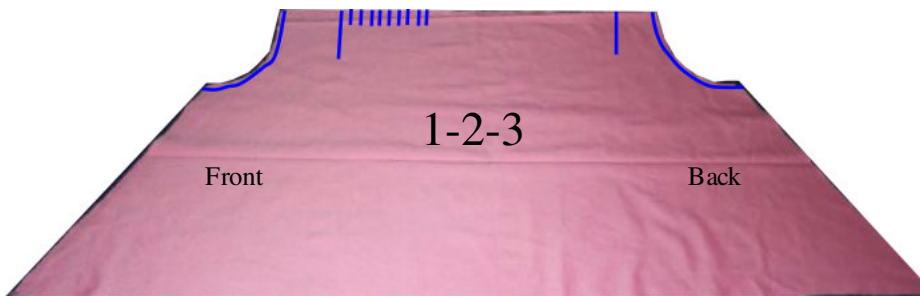
The waistband will be cut in one piece, with the seam being put on one side.

**The Waistband = Hips + 3" by 3 1/2" deep**

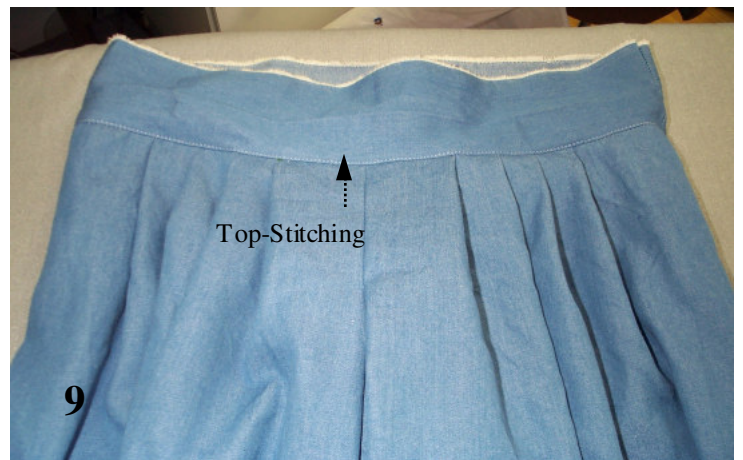
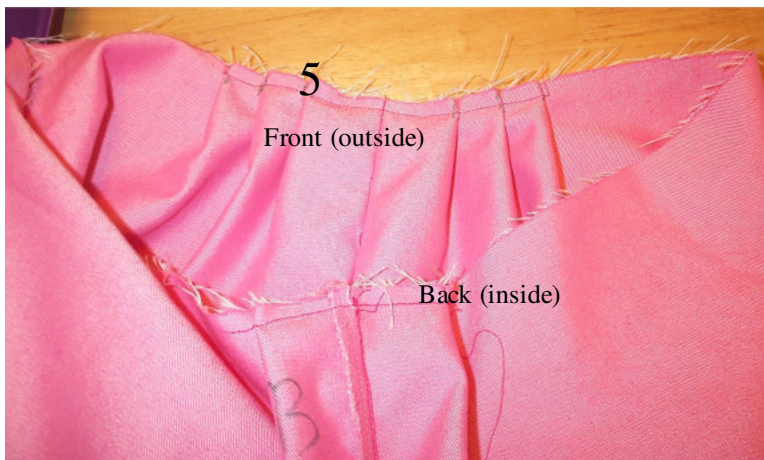
The Waistband (WB) will be 3 1/2" deep by the following:  
WB = Hips + 2" Ease + 1" for Seam Allowance (1/2" X 2)

### **On to the Sewing!**

1. Mark the Centre Front and Back Pleats by drawing a line with the straight of grain, 2-4" away (depending on what you used) from the crotch seam line, and as long as 1/2 way down your belly or backside, and sew.
2. Marks front pleats with 9 lines (after the large pleat) at 1" intervals.
3. Sew crotch line, finish edge.



4. Align centre of crotch seams with centre of pleats, pin and baste in place.
5. Now create front pleats by pinning the first line with the third line, then fold it inwards in behind the larger Centre Front pleat, use the 4th and 6 lines to create the next one, and the 7th and 9th lines for last. The pleats will be pointed to the side seams on the outside (as shown), but to the centre front on the inside. In this picture, they have already been pinned, then basted.



**Note:** Pleats can be stitched down from the topside to flatten appearance, which is especially pleasing with heavier fabrics. See first page.

6. If you have side seams to sew, sew now.
7. Fold the waistband in half on the length, then join the two short ends, sewing the side seam but, leaving an opening to insert elastic later.
8. Pin waistband to culottes (pinning side that has no opening), stitch.
9. Flip waistband and all waist seams up, top-stitch close to edge of waistband, slightly tugging at waistband to ensure seam is laid flat.
10. Fold waistband down, carefully pin in place, stitch in "ditch" of waistband seam to secure.

**11.** Hemming: Lay culottes on flat surface with inner leg seam in centre. Cut off excess triangle as shown.

**12.** Fold culottes with inner leg seam (and side seams if any) now on the side, and trim to make nice curve, as shown. You may you to fold in a few places like this to the hem even. Do this for both legs, but compare both inside leg seams to make sure they are the same measurement, and adjust accordingly as well as side seams.

**13.** Turn up hem desired depth (usually 1/4" rolled hem, or 1/2 with a serged or zig-zagged edge).

**14.** Cut 1" elastic 2-4" smaller than waist measurement. Insert elastic into waistband, stitch ends closed. Zig zag over opening to seal.



### **Instructions for Culottes With Yoke**

Follow most of the steps for the previous, but making the waistband section as follows:

$$\text{Yoke} = \frac{1}{2} \text{ Belly} + 4 \frac{1}{2}''$$

(Measurement 1/2 way down your belly (M) + 3 1/2" for waistband, + 1/2" Seam Allowance)

Deduct the 1/2 Belly measurement from the crotch length to create the remaining bottom pattern piece.  
It will look like a stunted version of the previous pattern.

Hope you enjoy your culottes!

By Angela B. Trenholm, 695 Eastbourne Road, Kelowna, BC, V1X 5L1

E-mail: [thetrenholmfamily@hotmail.com](mailto:thetrenholmfamily@hotmail.com)

Copyright March 2003

These instructions may be distributed freely at no cost only.

Please include this cover sheet with my contact information so I may be contacted for any questions or concerns.