

*How to make*  
a tulip skirt



*An instruction book*

by DIYcouture



## *How to make a tulip skirt*

*An instruction book by*



'How to make a tulip skirt' is one of a number of instructions by DIYcouture.

We have three individual sets of instructions in printed form:

How to make a cloak  
How to make a pleated skirt  
How to make a gathered dress

We have a book called 'DIYcouture; create your own fashion collection' published by Laurence King that contains ten sets of instructions:

How to make a grecian dress  
How to make a romper  
How to make a straight skirt  
How to make a cloak  
How to make a pair of trousers  
How to make a hoody  
How to make a circle skirt  
How to make a goddess dress  
How to make a waistcoat  
How to make a slouch top

[www.diy-couture.co.uk](http://www.diy-couture.co.uk)

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## **Couture and human creativity**

A small number of high fashion houses in Paris are allowed to call themselves couture. They need to meet strict requirements in order to do so. This exclusivity is part of the identity of haute couture – marking out its value by limiting access. Couture garments have been described as “custom sewn for a select group of women who can afford them.”<sup>1</sup> In fact, if the element of exclusivity through cost is stripped away, the core of couture clothing is that it is custom sewn.

Couture clothing is clothing which is personally designed and individually fitted. As one couture house states, “the couturier’s ultimate gift, [is] that of being able to create wonderfully original ideas that... reflect the wearer’s personality.”<sup>2</sup> Perhaps it is too much to claim that clothing reflects personality, but it is indeed a gift to be able to make clothing that meets the wearer’s tastes, outside of what is currently ‘in fashion.’

And anyone can make for themselves. It is possible to adopt the role of designer and maker. A piece of hand-made clothing becomes ‘exclusive’ only to the extent that it is a one-off; it is exclusive to the maker because their thoughts and ideas have been focused on it for a period of time, and produced a unique outcome.

Becoming a designer and maker simply requires an understanding of the construction process, a process that traditional sewing patterns often render inaccessible through specialist terminology and through complicated layouts. Sewing is a visual activity and it makes sense to learn how to do it with visual guidance. DIYcouture seeks to demystify the construction process.

It is the ability to create that DIYcouture holds in most high esteem. Humans are makers before we are consumers. Although “capital seeks to solidify its power and profit over the existential needs of people to make themselves out of their own labour, intelligence and creativity,”<sup>3</sup> humans continue to be busy with our hands; to make, to give, to swap and to share.

## **Seeing backwards**

Because DIYcouture respects making, it holds in high esteem the hands that form the history behind each of the garments we buy on the high street. Of course, these are mostly not produced in couture houses in Paris, but on production lines scattered globally, which come and go according to the fluctuating whims of trends and markets.

There are hands all over the world engaged in the production of clothing that flies off the shelves faster than it was made. On the whole, “the international visibility of the producers of real goods is eclipsed by the sartorial glow of the commodity.”<sup>4</sup> But even as chains of production become more complex, as processes are split and atomised and individual instances of making, which produce a whole, are divided across country borders, the desire to unpick objects – to take them back along the chain and understand where they came from – seems to be thriving.

DIYcouture would like to take part in making what is usually invisible visible; to bring it up out of the well, hauling it up so it exists above ground. By going through the motions of garment production, we can transport ourselves into a thousand different pairs of shoes that carry out the same actions as we do, and bring the beginning

of the assembly line closer to home. Perhaps if we physically understand the work that goes into clothing production, we can look backwards from a finished product that we receive and build a sense of value outside of a bargain price tag.

DIYcouture exists because of a belief in making, but also because of an impulse to take things apart. The desire to undo feeds not only the philosophy of DIYcouture but the practical methodology it applies to the making process. You can use your backwards spectacles to unpick the human history of a garment, and also to undo the practical process that built a garment from a flat piece of fabric. If you can see a whole piece of clothing and learn to undo it in your mind, then you can learn the making process. Clothes are made like cardboard boxes are made – by binding the edges of large flat shapes together. You can rewind a garment, just as you can flatten a cardboard box, and through undoing you can learn how to put together.

DIYcouture encourages you to use its series of books to understand the basics of garment construction so that you can demystify clothes making, and also to learn to look at a piece of clothing and mentally deconstruct it, so that you can learn to undo and ‘re’-make any piece of clothing you see.

## **Time and freedom**

Of course, being able to buy a whole garment – the end product of a process – gives us freedom: the freedom to spend our time in other ways, rather than in making clothes. Making a garment requires some planning and some patience – it meets none of the desires that seek satisfaction through ‘retail therapy.’ DIYcouture hopes

in a small way to slow down the process of consumption, helping people to produce long-lasting garments that are precious, rather than disposable. Fashion implicitly retains its obsession with what is new and what is next. As time *does* pass, an obsession with the new inevitably creates the unfashionable, which becomes waste. DIYcouture hopes to help build a physical antithesis of fast-fashion.

Being able to make a garment from start to finish gives us a sort of luxurious freedom too. This is the freedom to be in control of a whole production process – to see something through from start to finish. Our day to day existence is influenced by dissociative fragmentation, which takes away “the satisfactions associated with planning and practical skills that lead to a finished job, not just a partial one.”<sup>5</sup> If you have intellectual control over production, you are not just a consumer, you are a human that decides, thinks and makes.

<sup>1</sup> p. 07 *Couture Sewing Techniques* by Claire B Shaeffer

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.normanhartnell.com/house\\_style.html](http://www.normanhartnell.com/house_style.html)

<sup>3</sup> p. 05, ‘Piecwork: Home, Factory, Studio, Exhibit’ by Maureen Sherlock, from *The Object Of Labour: Art, Cloth and Cultural Production*

<sup>4</sup> p. 1 *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> p. 16, ‘Piecwork: Home, Factory, Studio, Exhibit’ by Maureen Sherlock, from *The Object Of Labour: Art, Cloth and Cultural Production*



*There are a few items you need in order to make clothes. These are:*

**Fabric** – The amount of fabric you need for the tulip skirt will depend on your size and on what kind of skirt you are making. You may be making a mini skirt, or a skirt that hangs below the knees. Have a look at pages p.8 below before buying your fabric, so that you can estimate how much you will use.

**Fabric scissors** – Get yourself a pair of fabric scissors. Cheap ones will work fine and more expensive ones will probably last you forever. Look after your scissors – don't cut paper with them, it will blunt the blades, which will start snagging your fabric.

**Tailors chalk** – You can get tailors chalk in the form of a big flat soapy triangle as pictured or as a pencil. Either will do. Tailors chalk allows you to make marks onto your fabric that easily brush or wash off. Rub the tailors chalk on in short, firm strokes whilst pressing the fabric down with your free hand to hold it securely.

**Pins** – You need a few pins, the sharper the better. When pinning, position your pins at right angles to the edge of the fabric. It is better not to sew over your pins, but if you sew over a pin pinned at a right angle your needle has a greater chance of not snapping.

**Tape measure** – Any tape measure will work, as long as it has numbers :)



**Sewing machine** – You can make professional garments with just two stitches, straight and zig-zag, which are the two most basic stitches found on nearly all sewing machines. You will only need these two stitches to make the tulip skirt. The internet is full of guidance on how to choose a machine. See the links section at [www.diy-couture.co.uk](http://www.diy-couture.co.uk) for a way into this.

**Thread** – You need to choose a thread that is a similar colour to your fabric. Take a cutting of fabric into the shop with you when you choose your thread. If you can't find an exact match, choose a thread that is slightly darker than your fabric.

**Bobbin** – Your sewing machine should come with a few empty bobbins, made of plastic or metal (as pictured). You need to wind thread onto this yourself. Your sewing machine instruction booklet will tell you how to do this.

**Quick Unpick** – You can't expect to get everything right the first time. Making mistakes when you sew is frustrating, because it takes three times as long to undo them as it does to make them in the first place. If only you could just Edit-Undo. Until then, you have the quick unpick. Unpicking is a good time to have a gaze out of the window – daylight helps you to see the stitches. Just slip the long metal spike under your unwanted stitch and push. The curved metal edge will slice through your thread. You can just cut every fourth or fifth stitch and pull your fabric gently apart to speed up the process.

Fabric is the essence of a garment and enough respect cannot be given to it. Choosing fabric is exciting, as you are being presented with shelves full of possibilities. You can look at each fabric and paint a mental image of your future garment made from this particular textile. It can also be confusing and stressful: you have to choose one possibility from many, homing in on one fabric and ruling out all the others. Quite simply, you have to strike out your intangible dreams and choose your physical reality.

There are two main pointers when it comes to fabric shopping.

## 1. Get physically involved

More important than having technical knowledge about fabric is having 'a feel' for it. Having 'a feel' isn't something you are either born or not born with, it's something you can develop. To develop 'a feel,' you need to start feeling. When you are in a fabric shop, scan over the fabrics and approach whichever one takes your eye – take a corner of the fabric and rub it between your thumb and fingers. Take the end of it in both hands and give it a couple of sharp tugs, first one way and then the other. Is it stretchy? Does it have any 'give' at all? Is it prickly, rough, soft, brushed, velvety? Unravel a bit of the fabric and let it hang – 'founce' it with your hand: cup your hand underneath it and lift it up a few times, as if you are guessing the weight of a bag of mushrooms. Does the fabric flop into folds with gravity? Is it stiff? Is it light and floaty?

You will have an idea of what you want from a fabric, so think about this when you are feeling around. The fabric will exert its own properties onto the garment that you make, and you have to accommodate its wishes. Do you want your skirt/top/dress to flop in folds, to cling to your body, or to stick out stiffly? Do you want the garment to look innocent and

delicate, or durable and hardy? Do you want a futuristic feel or something more organic and rustic? Fabric will dictate all of this.

## 2. Ask questions

Fabric shop staff are usually very knowledgeable about their stock, and often have a fondness for it too. Ask them questions – they will most likely give you more information than you thought you needed. You can ask them what the fabric is called, how wide the roll is, its washing/drying properties and where it comes from. Ask them whether they think it is suitable for what you intend to make. If you happen to like an expensive fabric, they can probably tell you why it is expensive e.g. it is pure silk produced by a unique herd of seventeen intelligent silk worms, hand spun and woven by monks in a village in the Himalayas. Sometimes fabric is expensive because it is 'designer' fabric. By asking questions you can start to tie together what you learn about fabric from feeling it and the more formal/tangible facts about fabric and its properties.

Throughout this book there are pictures of models wearing the different versions of the pleated skirt made from a range of fabrics. Page nine talks a bit about the differences between these skirts and may help you understand how fabric, as well as structural differences, can change the overall appearance of the garment.

In general, life is simpler if you avoid using extremely heavy (e.g. thick denim) or extremely light-weight (e.g. chiffon or organza) fabrics. Some sewing machines may struggle to sew thicker fabrics and your needles may snap. Thin fabrics take some skill and delicacy to manipulate, and sometimes your machine will chew up the fabric or snag on the fibres, causing the fabric to wrinkle up irreversibly.

## Fabric and fairtrade

At the moment, it is pretty unusual to find fairtrade, organic or recycled fabric in high street fabric shops. Where organic fabric is available, colours are often limited. There is, however, constant innovation in the textiles industry and as a result, a wide range of planet and people friendly fabrics do exist. There are links to some of these on the DIYcouture website at [www.diy-couture.co.uk](http://www.diy-couture.co.uk). Hopefully these will become increasingly available to the individual clothes-maker.

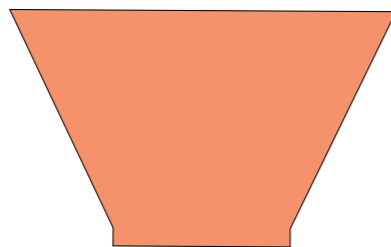
Ask the staff at your local fabric shops whether they have considered stocking fairtrade – maybe you can influence their decision as to whether to stock it in the future.



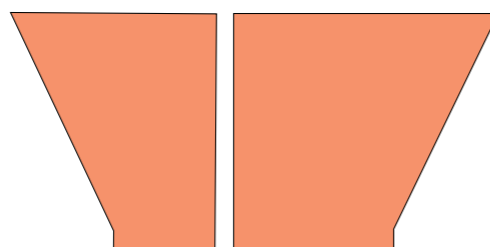
## Tulip skirt

The tulip skirt is a striking garment, shaped to look like the upside-down head of a tulip by a number of pleats at the top. It is made with three main pieces of fabric.

One piece forms the front of the skirt...



...and two make up the back.



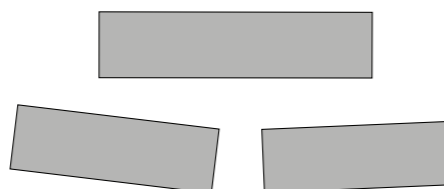
The skirt has a deep waistband made of three strips of fabric. One long strip for the front...



...and two shorter ones for the back.



Each of the waistband strips also has a lining.



The skirt is fastened with a zip, which is positioned centrally at the back and covered with a fly flap.



## Variations

*This set of instructions enables you to construct a tulip skirt. The instructions are a basic framework and allow you to add your own interpretation to the design to make a skirt that is purely your own. Here is a commentary on the photos printed throughout the book, which illustrate some of the variety of ways the skirt can be made and worn.*

The flowery skirt on [p.7](#) is made from a velveteen-like corduroy. It has six small pleats at the front and four more at the back, each using about 4cm of fabric. The skirt has been cut to sit just above the knees and has a fairly deep waistband with a finished depth of 7cm.

The salmon coloured skirt on [p.9](#) and pictured throughout the book is made of medium-weight, synthetic fabric which is fairly stiff. It has four extremely deep pleats at the front, each using up 10cm of fabric. The pleats are positioned quite far away from the centre of the skirt, towards the side at the top. The skirt has four slightly shallower pleats at the back, each using 6cm of fabric. It has a deep waistband, lined with a contrasting fabric. The seams at the sides of the skirt have been pushed to one side and stitched into place with straight stitch, giving the skirt additional stiffness and structure.

The spotty monochrome skirt pictured on the front cover and on [p.12](#) is made with a fairly light, floppy polyester. It has four pleats at the front and four at the back, each taking up 6cm of fabric. It has a fairly average sized waistband with a finished depth of 6cm and hangs just above the knee.

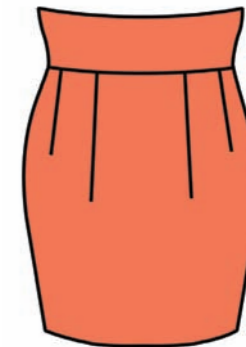
The tartan skirt on [p.14](#) is made using a stiff wool; the kind of fabric you would happily make a jacket with. The skirt has been cut very short, turning it into an almost bubble-shaped mini-skirt. It has six pleats across the front and four at the back.

The striped skirt on [p.18](#) is made with a stiff cotton that causes the skirt to hold its shape, sitting where it is told to sit, in a neat, structured fashion. The skirt is fairly short, with the hemline sitting mid-thigh. The waistband has a finished depth of 5cm. The skirt has six pleats across the front and four at the back, each taking up 5cm of fabric.

The emerald coloured skirt on [p.21](#) is made with a thin, light polycotton. The skirt has been cut very long, with a hemline well below the knee. It has six small pleats across the front and the back and a very large waistband, with a finished depth of 10cm. The waistband has belt loops on it and the skirt is tied at the waist with a ribbon.

The skirt on [p.23](#) is also long, sitting below the knee to create a graceful shape. The fabric is fairly tough cotton. The skirt has six pleats across the front, each taking up 6cm of fabric.

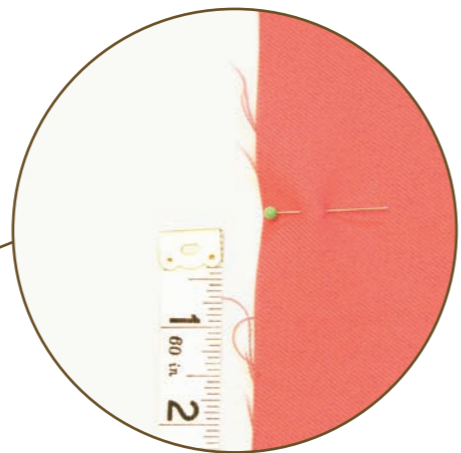
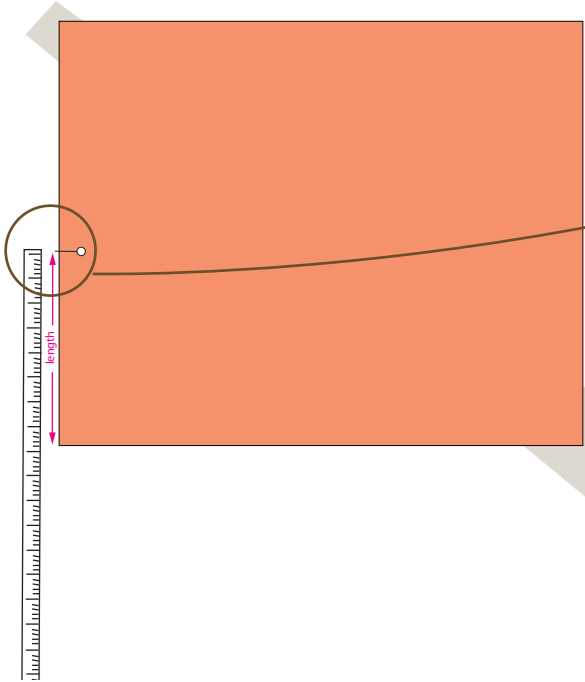
The lemon coloured skirt on [p.27](#) is made with a polycotton that is almost transparent it is so thin. This skirt has the most pleats - eight across the front and six at the back, each using 4 or 5cm of fabric. The large number of pleats create a lot of folds in the fabric.





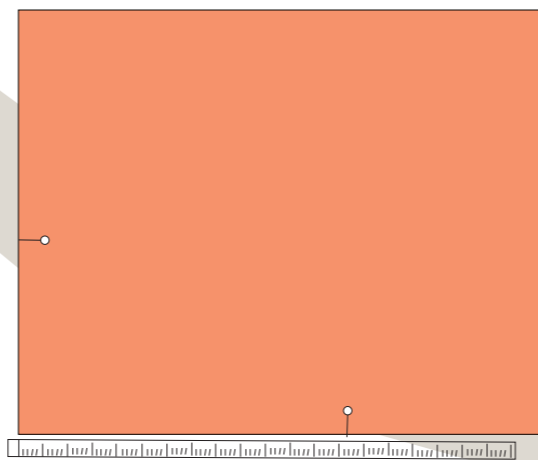


First, you need to make the shape that forms the front piece of your skirt.



You need to mark the **length** of your front piece onto your fabric. The length should be slightly longer than the length you wish your skirt to be. Measure from your waist down your leg to the place you want the skirt to hang. Take a note of this measurement, then add 3cm to it. This extra fabric will allow you to make a hem and a seam later on. Measure this **length** up the vertical edge of your fabric and mark it with a pin or a stroke of tailors chalk.

The top edge of your front piece needs to be as wide as the distance across your waist plus the amount of fabric you are going to use in your pleats. You can use the tables above right to help get this bit of maths clear. Measure the full distance around your waist then divide it in two. Add roughly 5cm to this number to allow for seams and a bit of adjustment room. We'll call this your **half-waist-measurement**.



You need to add additional fabric to this measurement to allow for pleats. Look at **p.8** and the images of the models throughout the book to decide how many pleats you will include and how big they will be. The pleats give your bum room inside the skirt, so make sure you are including enough extra fabric to allow your rear some space. The skirt photographed throughout has four pleats at the front, each pleat using 10cm of fabric, so a 40cm **pleat allowance** was calculated.

Full distance around your waist	÷ 2 =		+ generous 5cm seam allowance =	<b>Half-waist measurement</b>
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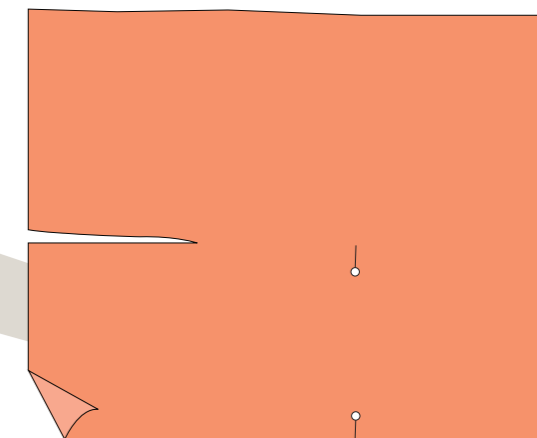
Number of pleats at front	x	Amount of fabric each pleat uses (cm)	=	<b>Pleat allowance</b>
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<b>Pleat allowance</b>	+	<b>Half-waist measurement</b>	=	<b>Waist width</b>
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These tables are here to help you work out the width your front piece needs to be across the waist edge. Don't worry too much about the total accuracy. The tulip skirt has been specifically designed so that you can make adjustments at the waist once it has been constructed. If you cut your piece a little bit too wide here, you will have a chance to make the waist smaller later.

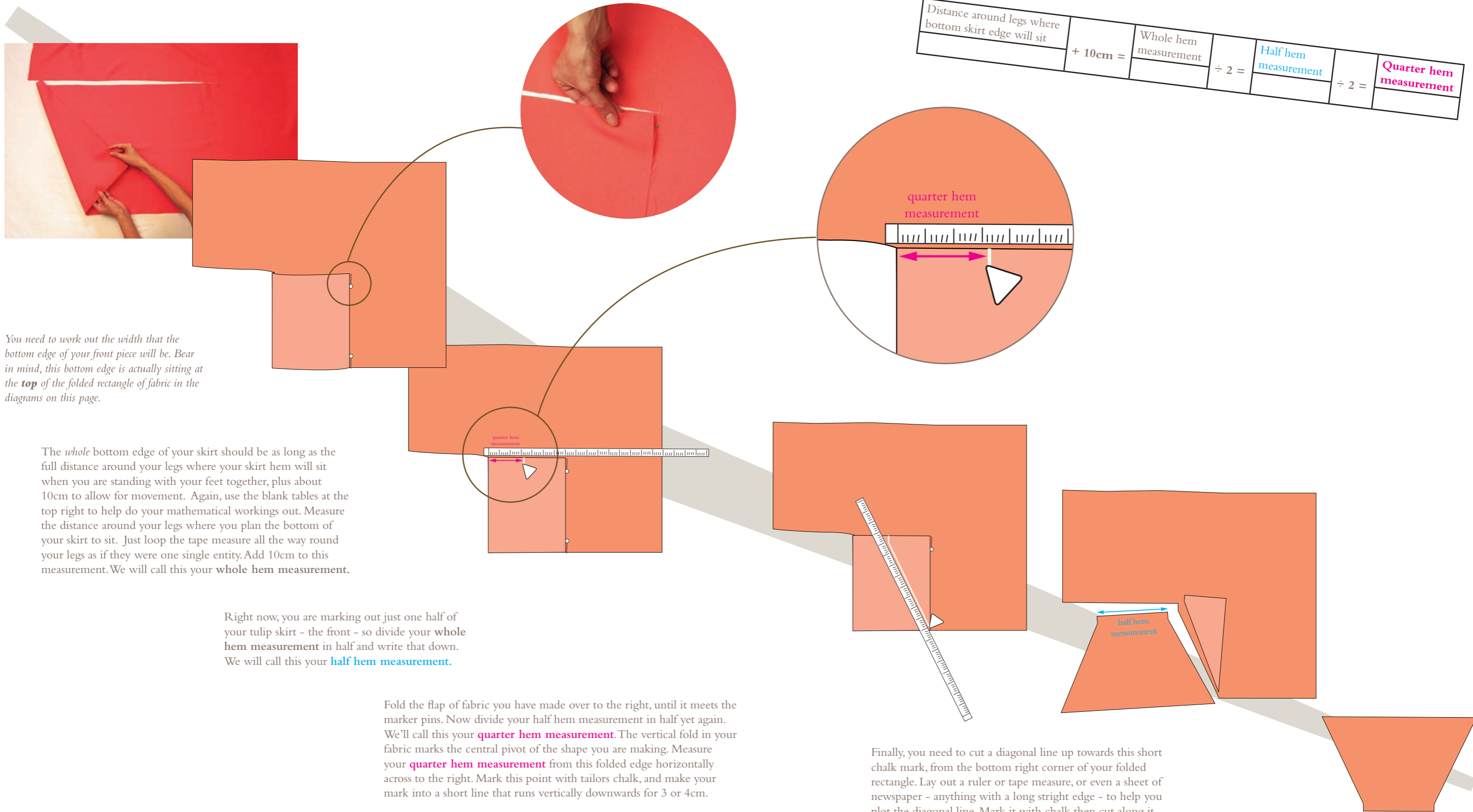


Add your **pleat allowance** to your **half-waist measurement**. We'll call this your **waist width**. This is the width your front piece needs to be across the top. Measure this distance across your fabric along the bottom edge and mark it with a pin.



Measure the same distance horizontally across from your length pin and mark that too. Cut along your fabric in a straight line towards this pin.

Mark the sloping sides of your front piece and cut it out.



Distance around legs where bottom skirt edge will sit	+ 10cm =	Whole hem measurement	÷ 2 =	Half hem measurement	÷ 2 =	Quarter hem measurement

You need to work out the width that the bottom edge of your front piece will be. Bear in mind, this bottom edge is actually sitting at the **top** of the folded rectangle of fabric in the diagrams on this page.

The *whole* bottom edge of your skirt should be as long as the full distance around your legs where your skirt hem will sit when you are standing with your feet together, plus about 10cm to allow for movement. Again, use the blank tables at the top right to help do your mathematical workings out. Measure the distance around your legs where you plan the bottom of your skirt to sit. Just loop the tape measure all the way round your legs as if they were one single entity. Add 10cm to this measurement. We will call this your **whole hem measurement**.

Right now, you are marking out just one half of your tulip skirt - the front - so divide your **whole hem measurement** in half and write that down. We will call this your **half hem measurement**.

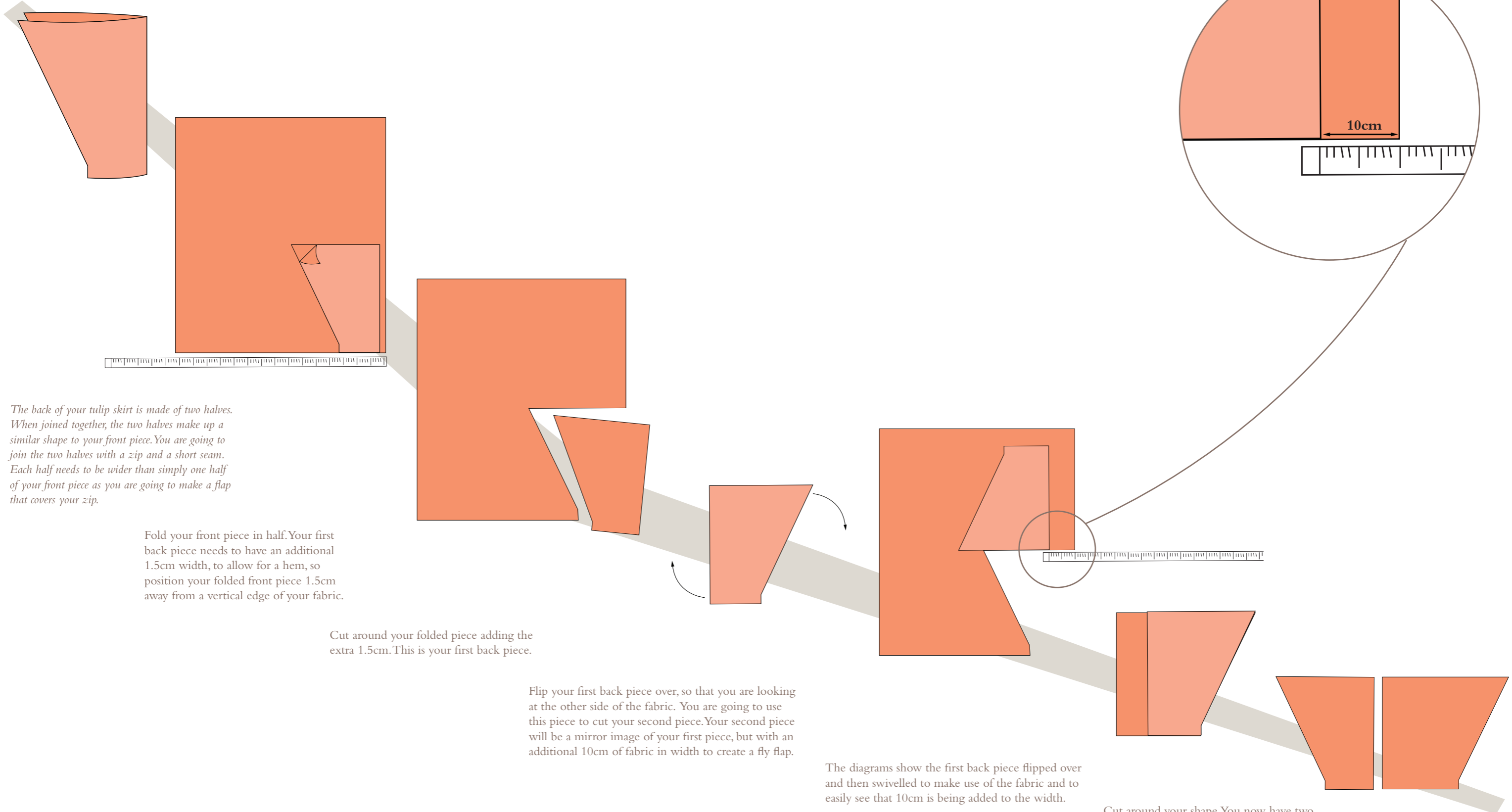
Fold the flap of fabric you have made over to the right, until it meets the marker pins. Now divide your half hem measurement in half yet again. We'll call this your **quarter hem measurement**. The vertical fold in your fabric marks the central pivot of the shape you are making. Measure your **quarter hem measurement** from this folded edge horizontally across to the right. Mark this point with tailors chalk, and make your mark into a short line that runs vertically downwards for 3 or 4cm.

Finally, you need to cut a diagonal line up towards this short chalk mark, from the bottom right corner of your folded rectangle. Lay out a ruler or tape measure, or even a sheet of newspaper - anything with a long straight edge - to help you plot the diagonal line. Mark it with chalk then cut along it.

You have made your front piece.



Now use your front piece as a guide for cutting your two back pieces.



The back of your tulip skirt is made of two halves. When joined together, the two halves make up a similar shape to your front piece. You are going to join the two halves with a zip and a short seam. Each half needs to be wider than simply one half of your front piece as you are going to make a flap that covers your zip.

Fold your front piece in half. Your first back piece needs to have an additional 1.5cm width, to allow for a hem, so position your folded front piece 1.5cm away from a vertical edge of your fabric.

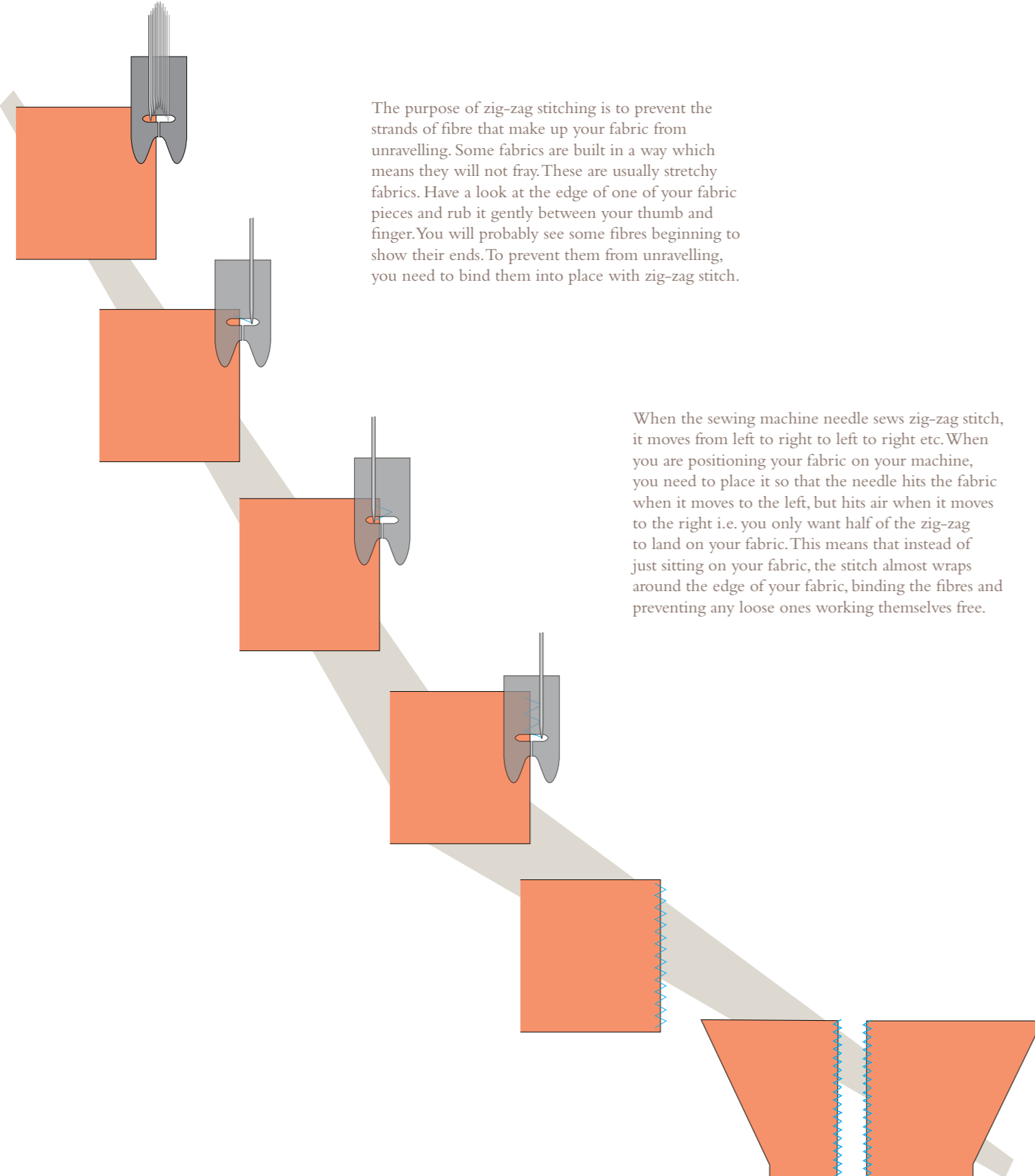
Cut around your folded piece adding the extra 1.5cm. This is your first back piece.

Flip your first back piece over, so that you are looking at the other side of the fabric. You are going to use this piece to cut your second piece. Your second piece will be a mirror image of your first piece, but with an additional 10cm of fabric in width to create a fly flap.

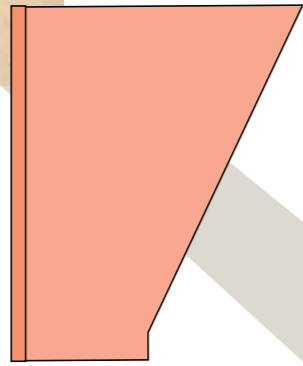
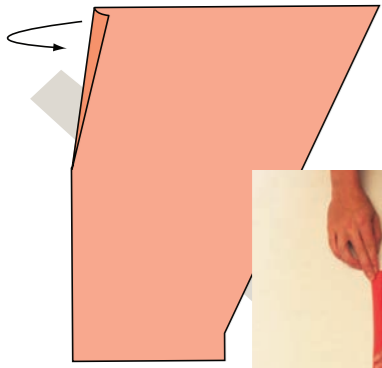
The diagrams show the first back piece flipped over and then swivelled to make use of the fabric and to easily see that 10cm is being added to the width.

Cut around your shape. You now have two back pieces, one wider than the other.

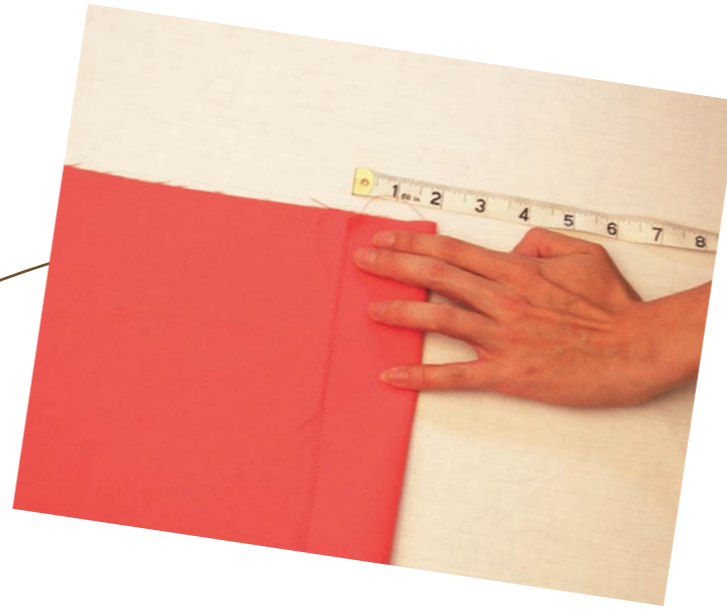
*Zig zag stitch down the long straight edge of each of your freshly cut back pieces.*



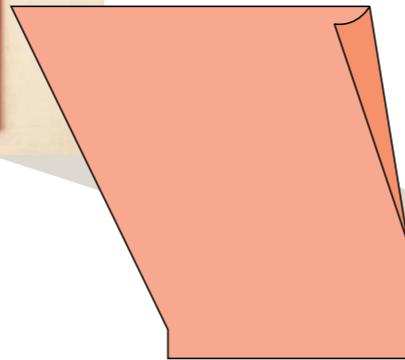
Prepare your two back pieces.



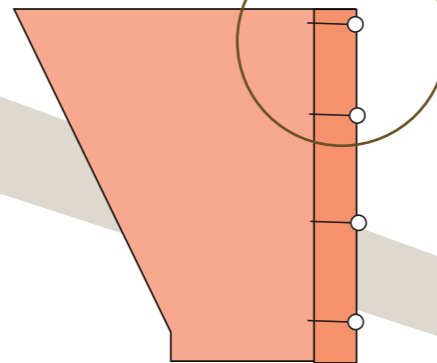
Take your narrower back piece and lay it out with the wrong side of the fabric facing upwards towards you. Grab the long straight edge you have just zig-zagged and fold 1.5cm of fabric over. Iron this fold flat.



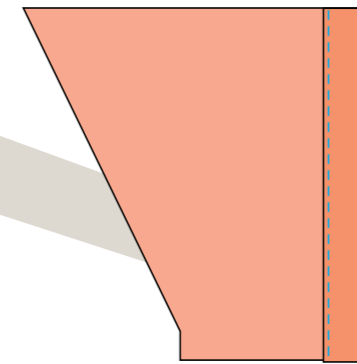
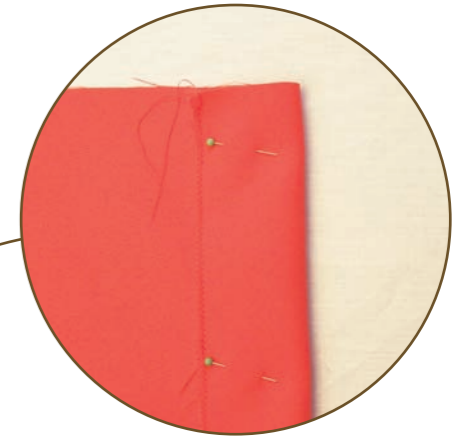
Now turn to your other, wider back piece. This piece is going to completely cover your zip, forming a sort of fly. You need to make a fairly deep fold so that the right side of the fabric is showing on both sides of the fly flap.



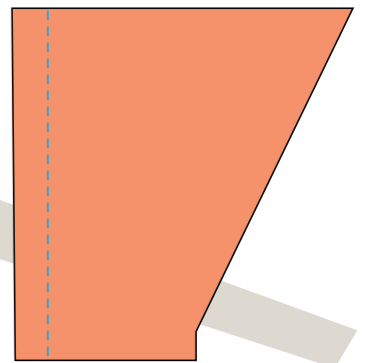
Lay your piece out with the wrong side of the fabric facing upwards towards you and fold the zig-zagged edge over. The fold should be about 5cm deep. Iron the fold down. You should be looking at a 5cm wide strip of the right side of your fabric, running vertically all the way up your shape. Pin this flap down.



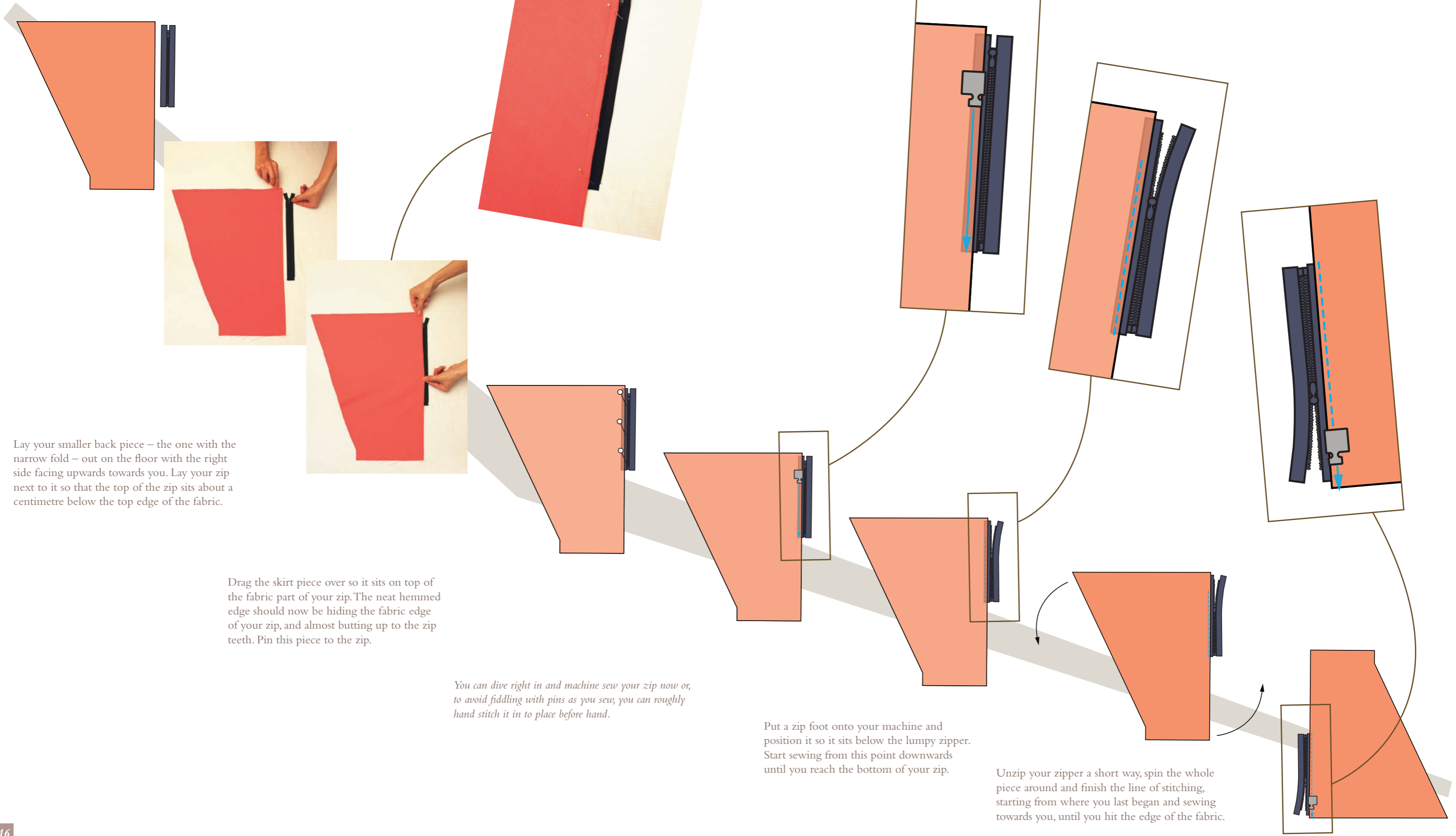
Stitch the flap into place with a line of straight stitch running close to the zigzagged edge of your fabric.



The two sides of the back of your skirt are now prepped and ready to go



*Attach your zip to the narrower back piece.*



Lay your smaller back piece – the one with the narrow fold – out on the floor with the right side facing upwards towards you. Lay your zip next to it so that the top of the zip sits about a centimetre below the top edge of the fabric.

Drag the skirt piece over so it sits on top of the fabric part of your zip. The neat hemmed edge should now be hiding the fabric edge of your zip, and almost butting up to the zip teeth. Pin this piece to the zip.

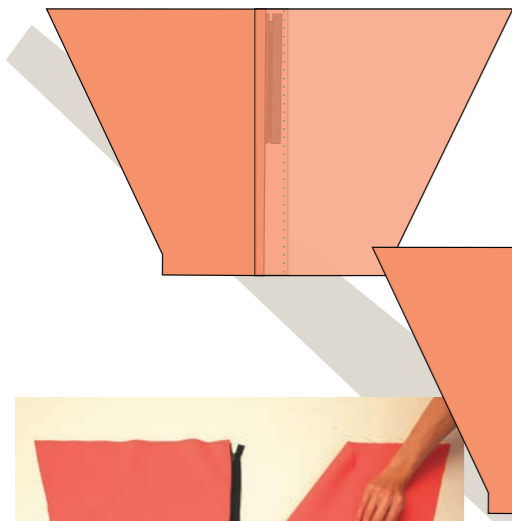
*You can dive right in and machine sew your zip now or, to avoid fiddling with pins as you sew, you can roughly hand stitch it in to place before hand.*

Put a zip foot onto your machine and position it so it sits below the lumpy zipper. Start sewing from this point downwards until you reach the bottom of your zip.

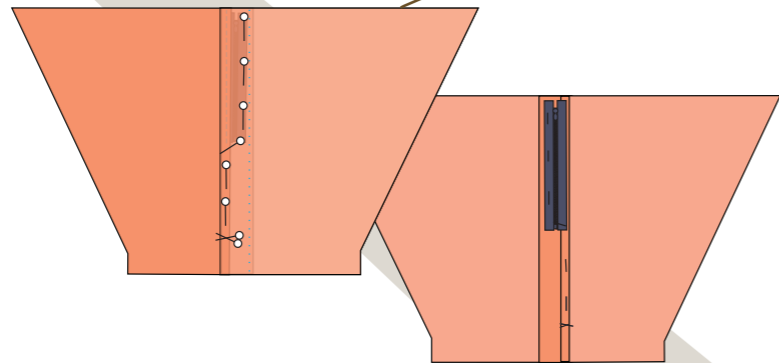
Unzip your zipper a short way, spin the whole piece around and finish the line of stitching, starting from where you last began and sewing towards you, until you hit the edge of the fabric.



Now create your fly, joining your two back pieces with the zip at the centre.



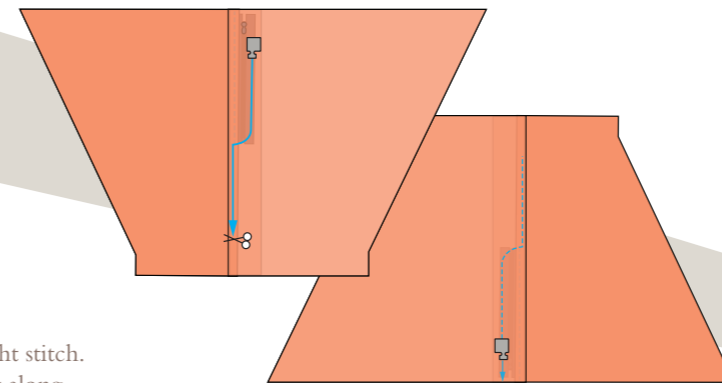
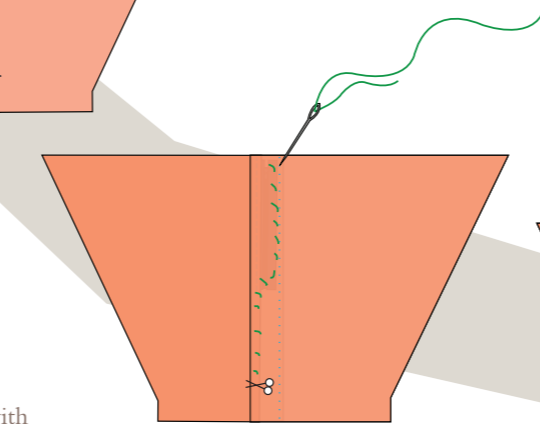
Take your second back piece and position the vertical edge so that it completely covers your zip. The edge of this piece should just overlap the vertical edge of the piece that is attached to your zip.



Pin the pieces together as shown on the diagram, with your pins going through your zip on the right then moving to the edge of your vertical edge underneath the zip. Make sure they are catching the fabric of the zip at the back.

If you would like a split at the bottom of your skirt to help with freedom of movement, mark this with pins now to remind yourself not to sew merrily all the way to the bottom of your skirt.

You are going to sew the pieces together with straight stitch. Using a contrasting colour thread, roughly hand sew along the edges you have pinned. This means you can get rid of the pins, and your stitches will act as a guide, showing you where your machine stitches should be landing.

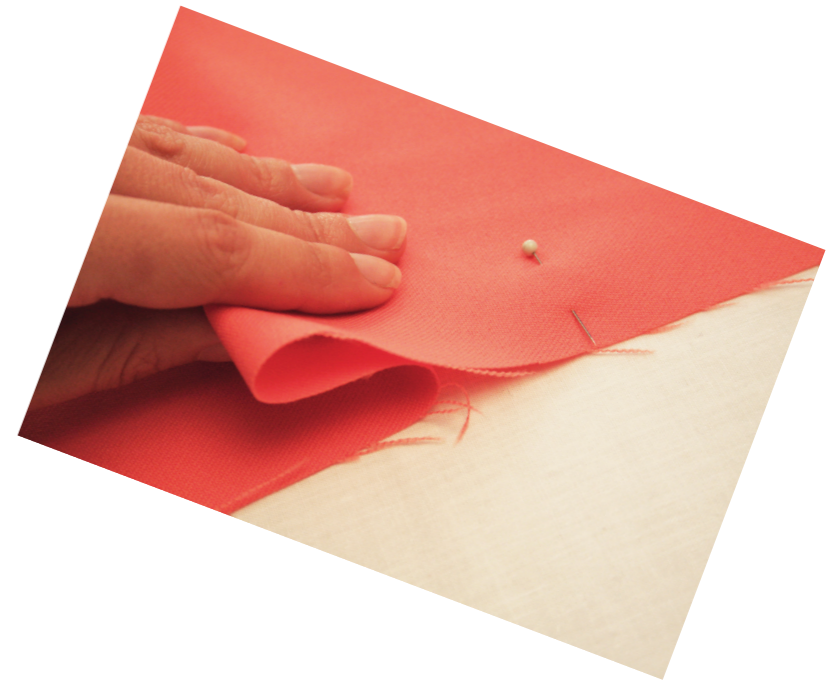
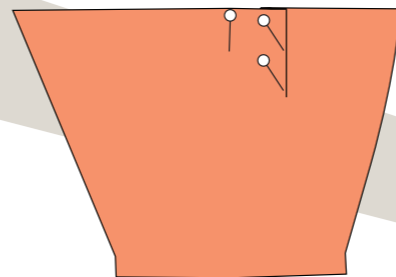
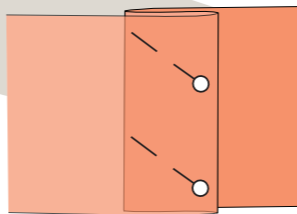
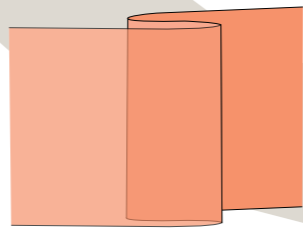
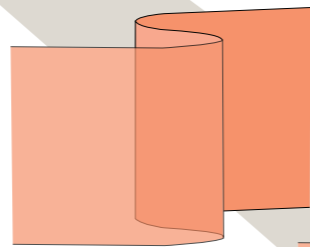
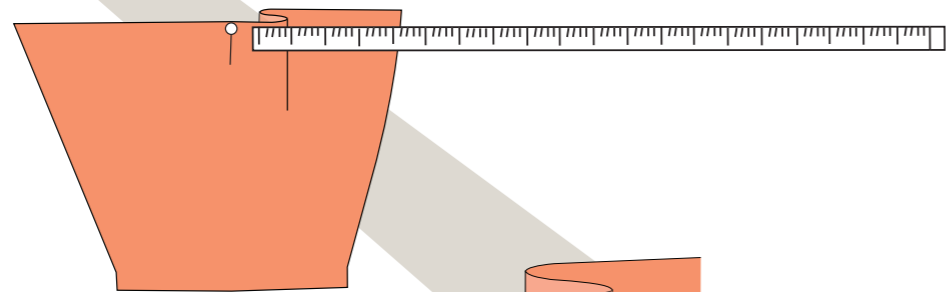
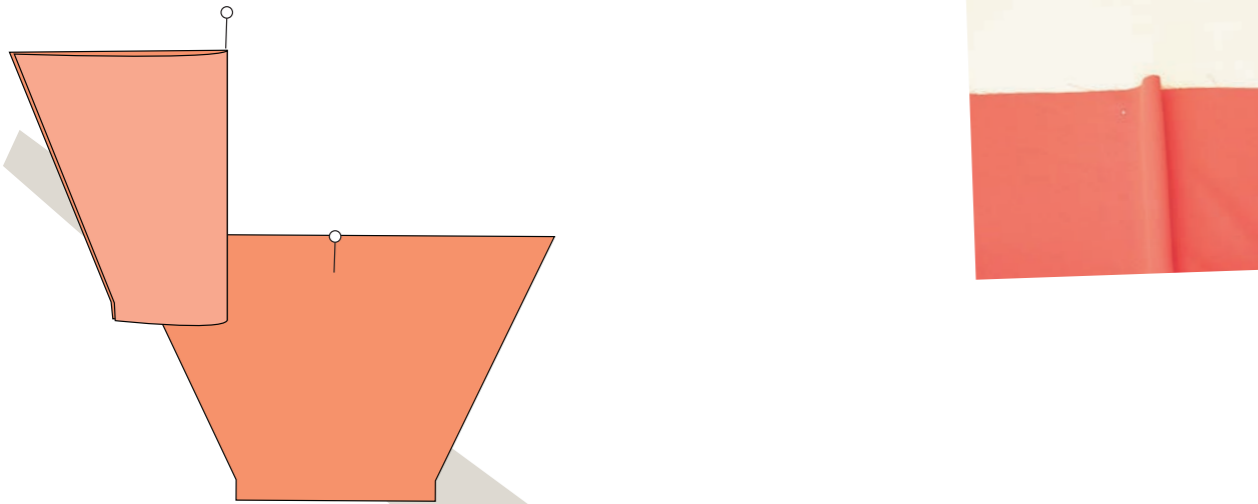


As before, start sewing beneath the lumpy zipper, until you reach your reminder-pins. Spin your skirt upside down, unzip your zipper a few cm and do a new, short line of straight stitch back to the top of the skirt.





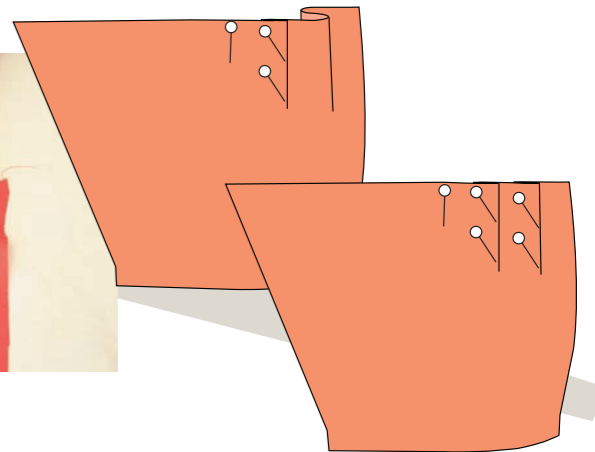
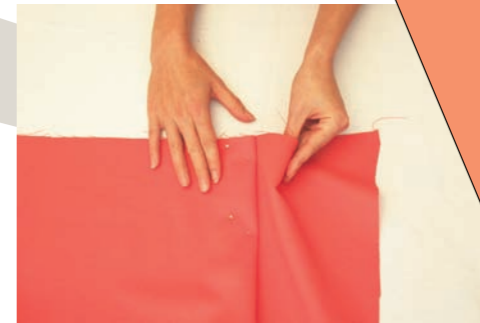
Next, create the pleats in your front piece.



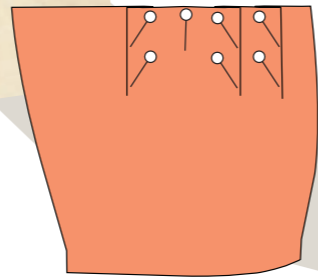
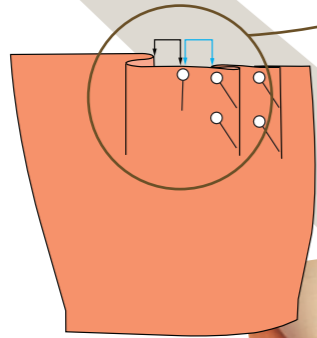
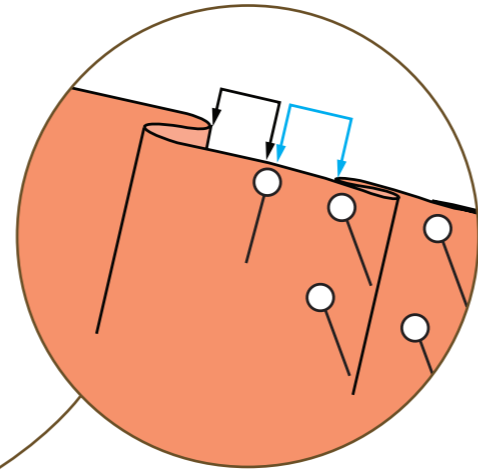
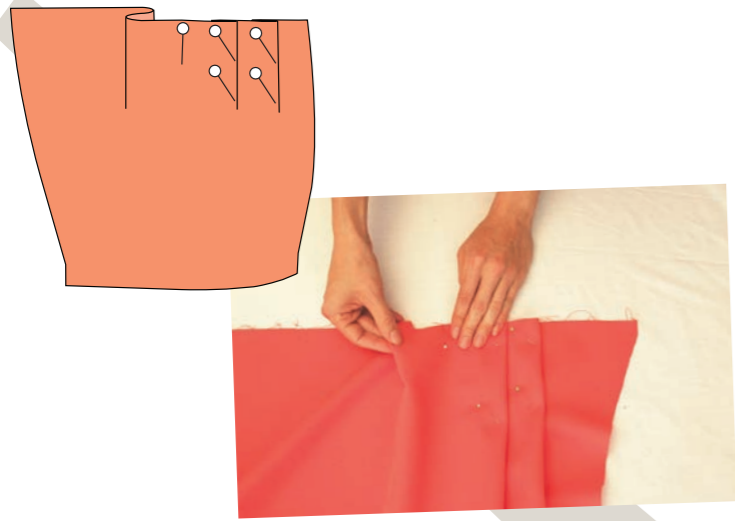
You need to create the pleats in your front and back skirt pieces to shape them at the waist. Take your front piece and mark the centre by folding it in half and putting a pin in - or making a mark with chalk - where it creases in the middle. This will help you to space your pleats evenly on either side of the centre.

Make your first pleat to one side of the centre. Check with a tape measure that the pleat uses the amount of fabric you planned to use. Use your fingers to check the pleat is roughly square/even. Pin the pleat into place with a couple of pins that catch both sides of the pleat - the fold you can see and the fold that's hidden at the back.

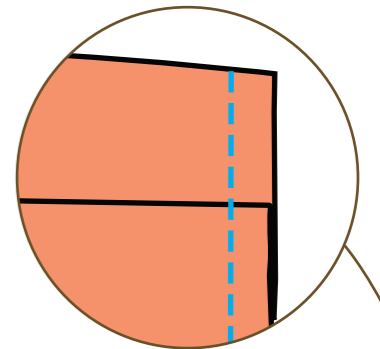
Once both pleats are pinned into place, just check that you have got at least 5cm of unpleated fabric at the outer edge of your pleats. This is the side of your skirt and will be sewn to the back piece - you don't want your pleat bumping right up against your side seam. If your pleats are too close to the side, unpin and make them sit nearer to the centre.



Finish pleating then sew your pleats into place.



Before you sew, measure the full pleated edge, just to check that it is about the same size as the half-waist-measurement you wrote down on p.10. If it is smaller, you will need to unpin your pleats and make them a little bit smaller, to release more fabric.

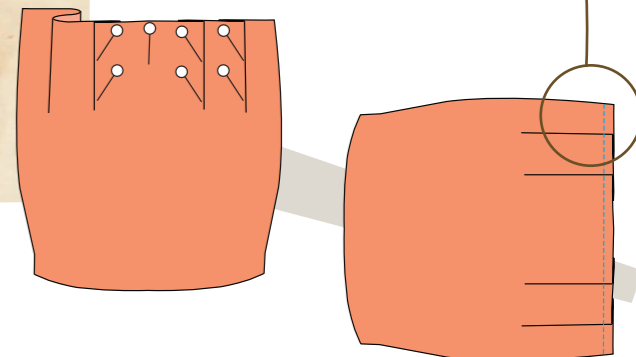


Repeat the pleating process on the other side of your front piece. These pleats need to be mirror images of the two you have already done; they should be roughly the same size, and roughly the same distance away from the centre.

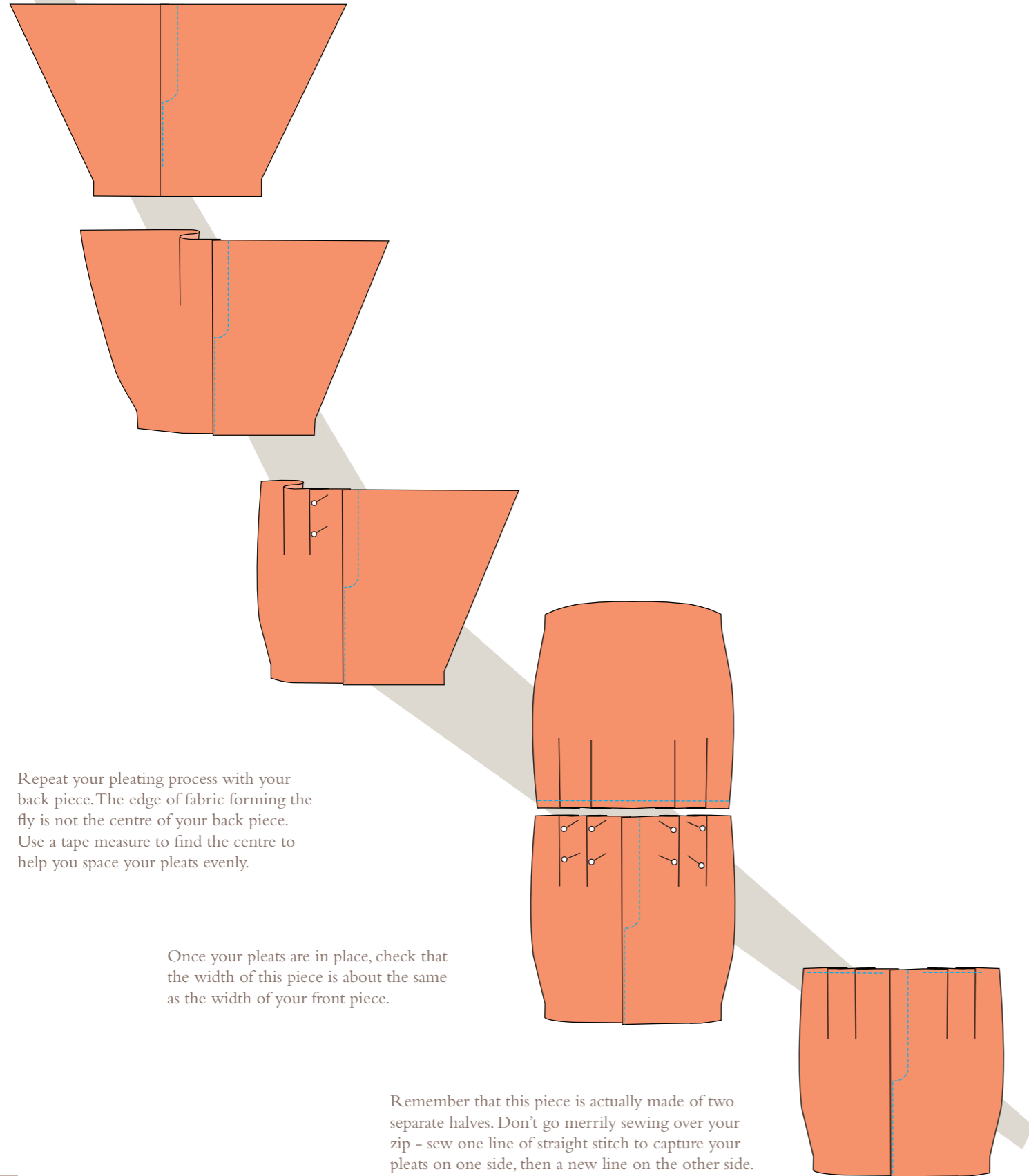
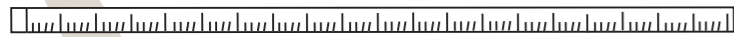
When you make the first pleat on this side, you can measure how far it sits away from the central pin and compare it with the equivalent distance on the other side. Or you can ignore numbers altogether and make a judgement based on a quick, rough finger based measurement, as shown in the picture above.

Make your last pleat and again check that it is roughly the same size as the equivalent pleat on the other side. Check too that this pleat sits no closer than 4cm to the edge of your fabric.

When all your pleats are pinned, sew one long line of straight stitch over them all. This should sit about 1.5cm inland from the top edge of your fabric.



*Pleat your back piece too.*



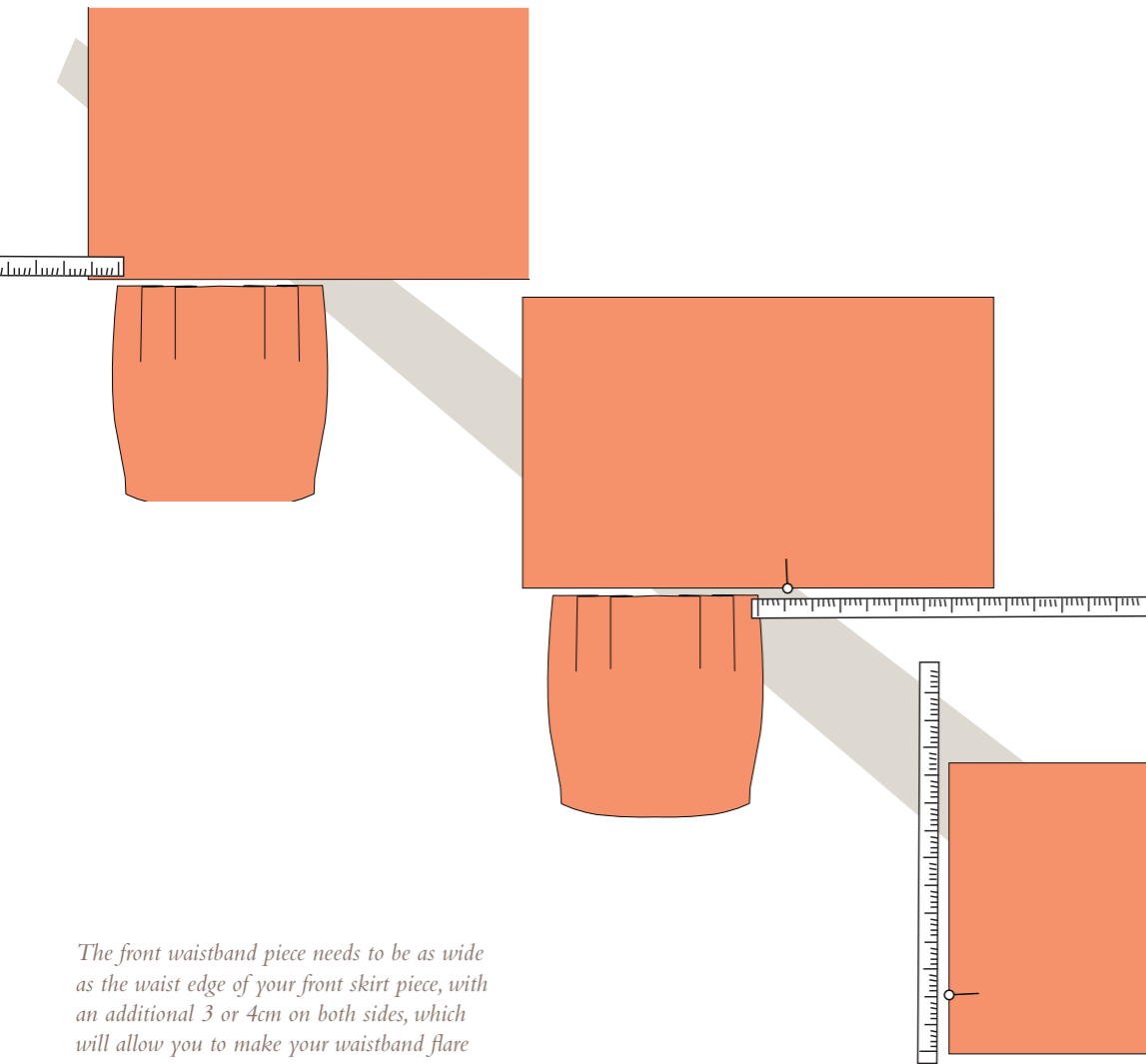
Repeat your pleating process with your back piece. The edge of fabric forming the fly is not the centre of your back piece. Use a tape measure to find the centre to help you space your pleats evenly.

Once your pleats are in place, check that the width of this piece is about the same as the width of your front piece.

Remember that this piece is actually made of two separate halves. Don't go merrily sewing over your zip - sew one line of straight stitch to capture your pleats on one side, then a new line on the other side.



You now have a complete front and a complete back and can start making your waistband.



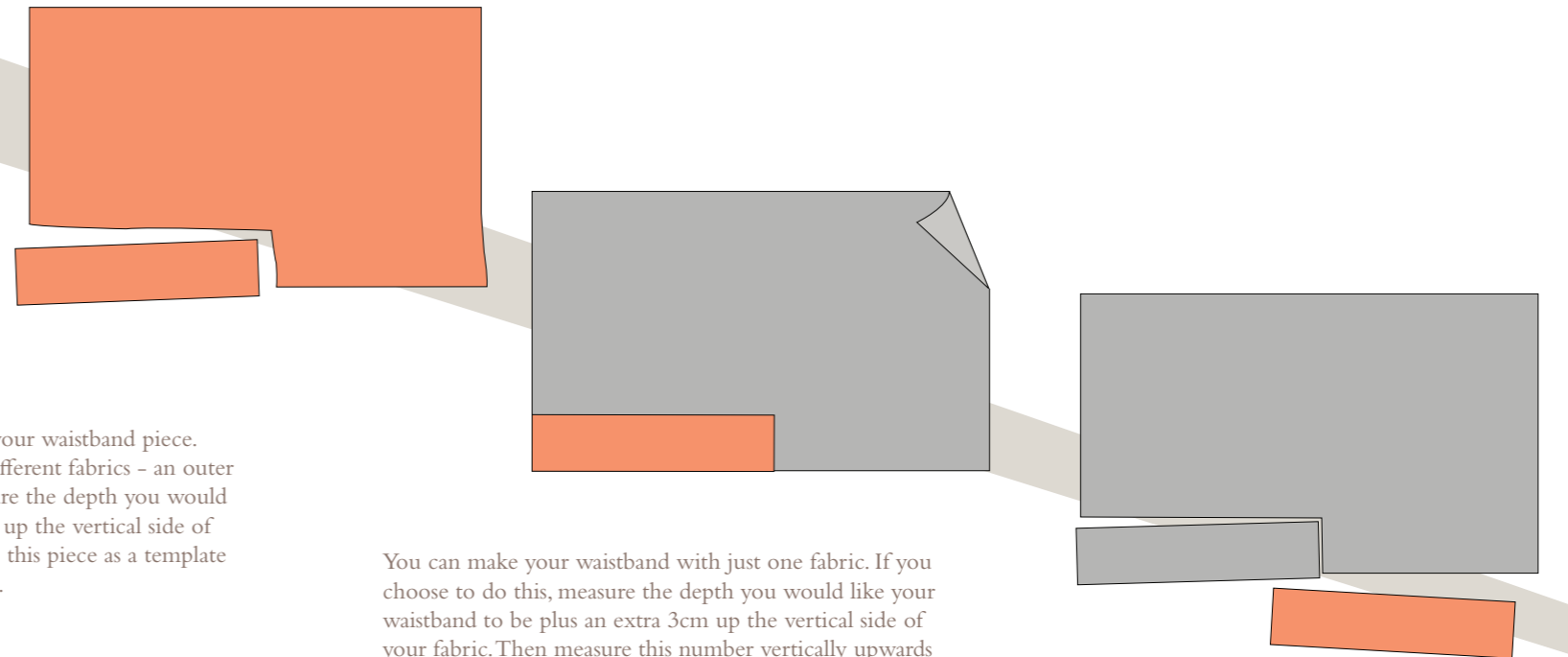
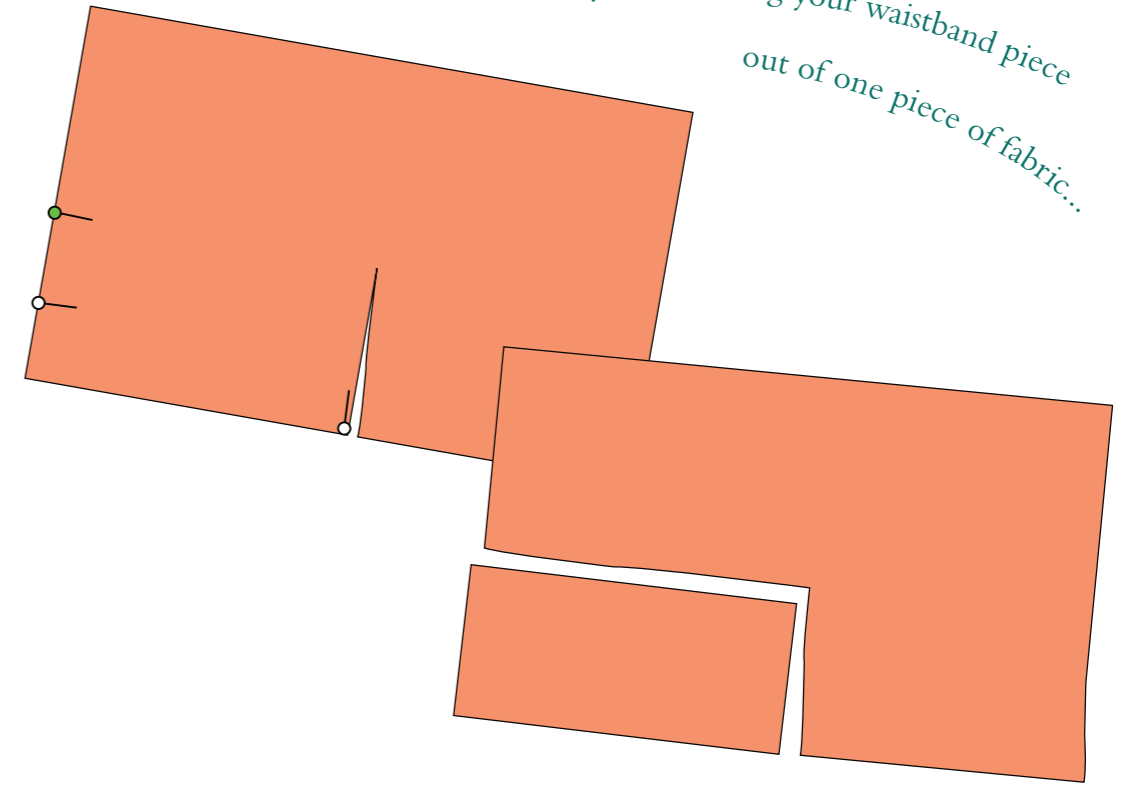
The front waistband piece needs to be as wide as the waist edge of your front skirt piece, with an additional 3 or 4cm on both sides, which will allow you to make your waistband flare out at the top, if you like.

Lay out your fabric and position your front piece beneath it, with the waist edge running parallel to the edge of your fabric. Position the front piece so that it sits 3 or 4cm inwards from the vertical edge of your fabric. Measure 3 or 4cm outwards, across your fabric, from the far side of your front piece and put a pin in there to mark the right width.

Now you need to decide how deep to cut your waistband piece. You can make your waistband out of two different fabrics - an outer and a lining. If you choose to do this, measure the depth you would like your waistband to be plus an extra 3cm up the vertical side of your fabric. Now cut this rectangle out. Use this piece as a template to cut a lining piece that is exactly the same.

There are many ways of making a waistband. This one is designed with a separate front and back, so that it has side seams. This is so that once you have made the skirt you can try it on and adjust the waistband to fit you. This leaves visible seams at the sides of your waistband, which you may or may not care about. If you want to attach a complete waistband that has no side seams, please download our Pdf titled 'A simple straight waistband.' Follow the steps there, then return to these instructions at p30.

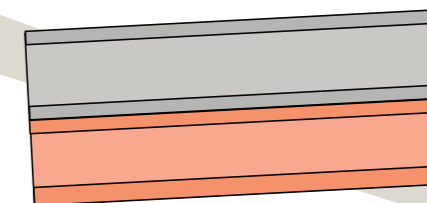
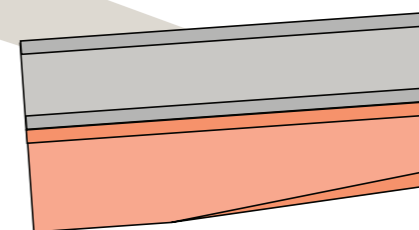
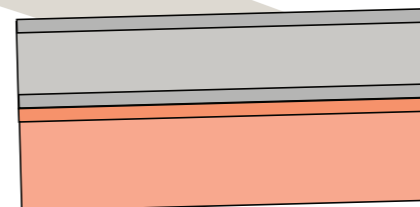
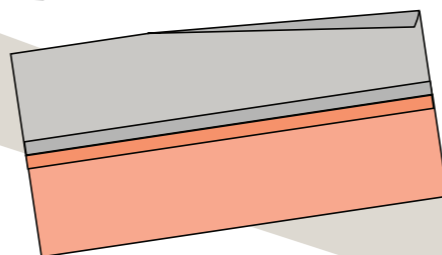
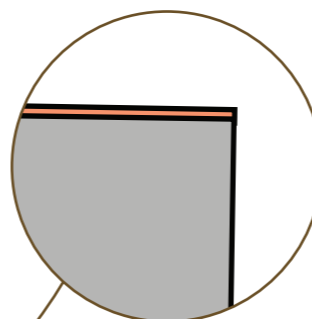
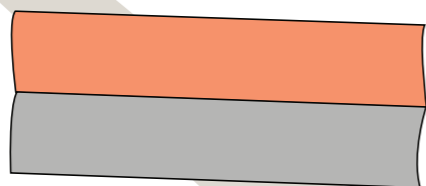
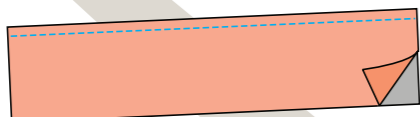
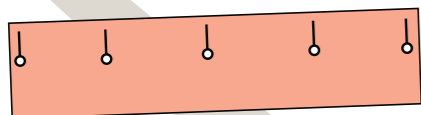
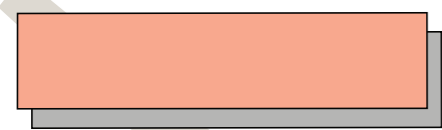
If you're making your waistband piece out of one piece of fabric...



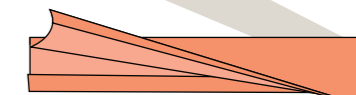
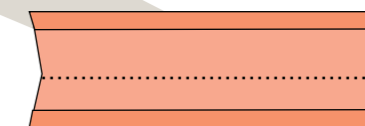
You can make your waistband with just one fabric. If you choose to do this, measure the depth you would like your waistband to be plus an extra 3cm up the vertical side of your fabric. Then measure this number vertically upwards again and put a pin in to mark that spot.



*Prepare your front waistband piece.*



*If you're making your waistband piece  
out of one piece of fabric...*



Lay your lining piece out with the right side of the fabric facing upwards towards you and lay the main piece on top of it, with the right side facing down. You should be looking at the wrong side of the fabric. Pin the two pieces together along one of the long edges. Sew them together with a line of straight stitch running about 1.5cm away from the edge. Open the pieces out as if you are opening a book, so that you can see the right sides of both your fabrics.

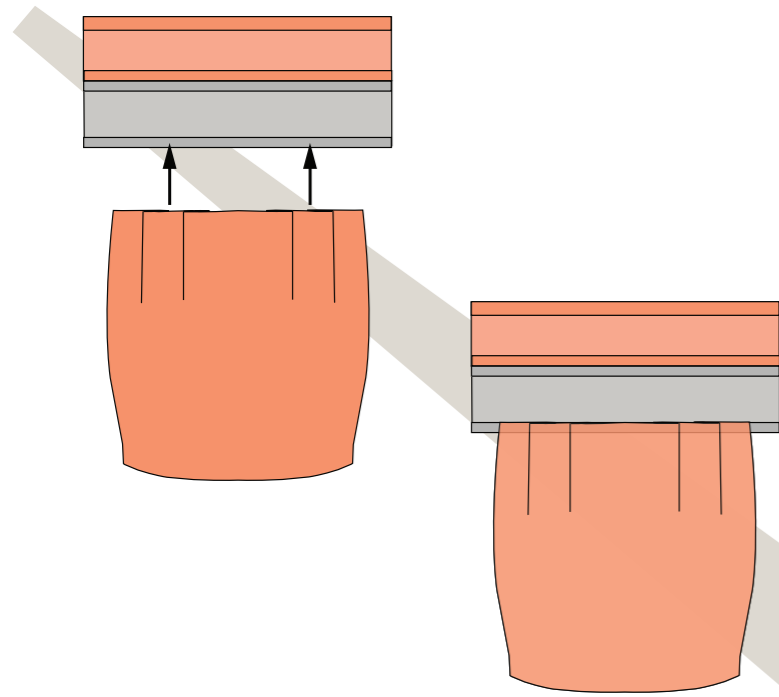
Fold the pieces back together, so they are concealing the line of stitching you have just made. Iron the fold flat, with the lining fabric sitting a couple of millimetres below the top edge of the main fabric.

You need to do a little bit more work with your iron to prepare the piece before attaching it. Open the piece up again so you are looking at the wrong side and fold over a strip of fabric about 1.5cm deep, along the long edge of your lining fabric. Iron this flap down flat.

Repeat this with your outer fabric, but make the flap just very slightly deeper. Making the outer side of your waistband piece a tiny bit shorter than the lining piece will help you sew it to your skirt without any trouble in just a moment.

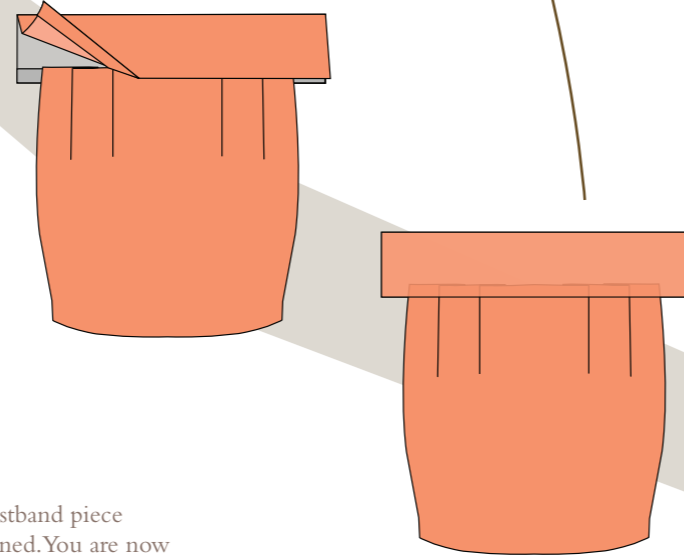


Now attach your front waistband piece to your skirt.

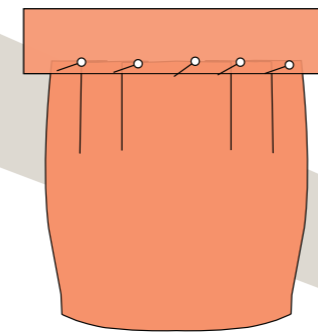


You can now attach your waistband piece to your skirt piece. You are going to sandwich the top edge of your skirt piece inside your waistband piece. Lay your skirt piece out with the right side facing upwards towards you. With your waistband piece opened up, drag the skirt so that the top edge sits on top of the folded flap of fabric that runs along the lining piece of your waistband.

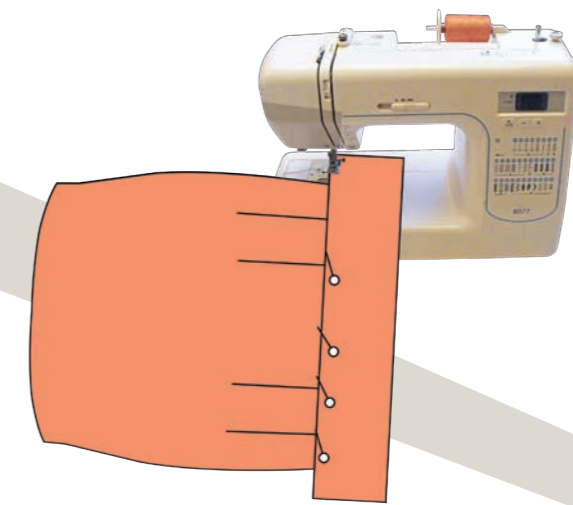
Now fold the right side of your waistband piece down, along the crease you have ironed. You are now encasing your skirt edge with the waistband. Allow the waistband to sit as it wants to, obeying the crease you ironed in i.e don't drag the front bit down further than it wants to go, or you may twist your waistband piece.



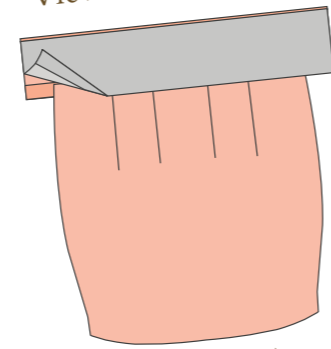
Stick pins into your fabric from the front, so that they are catching the whole sandwich of fabric you have made; the front waistband flap, the skirt itself which is hidden in the middle, and the back waistband flap.



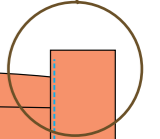
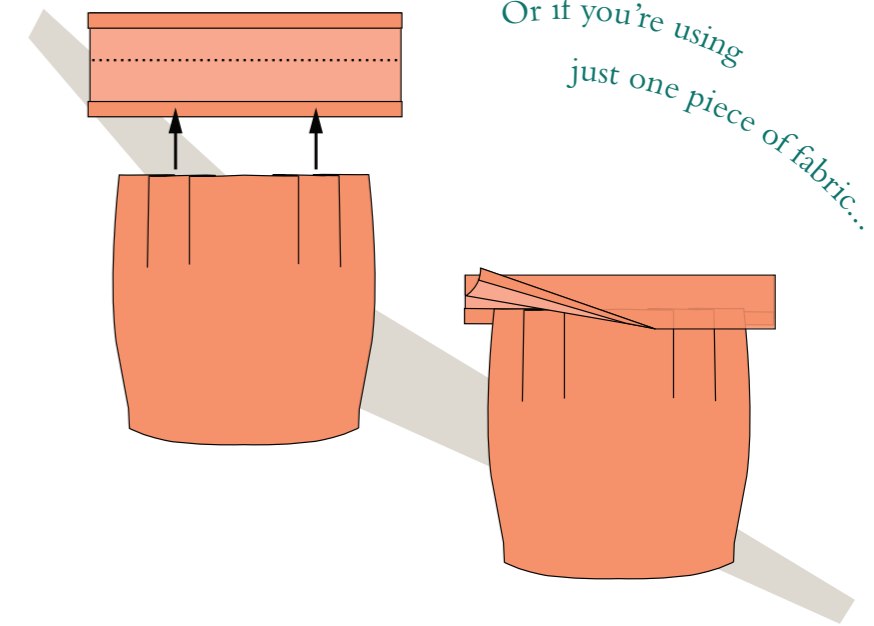
Now sew a line of straight stitch running close to the bottom edge of your waistband. Sew looking at the front of your skirt and take the pins out carefully as you go. As you ironed the back waistband flap slightly deeper than the front, you can rest assured that your stitches will be catching your waistband at the back, even though you can't see it.



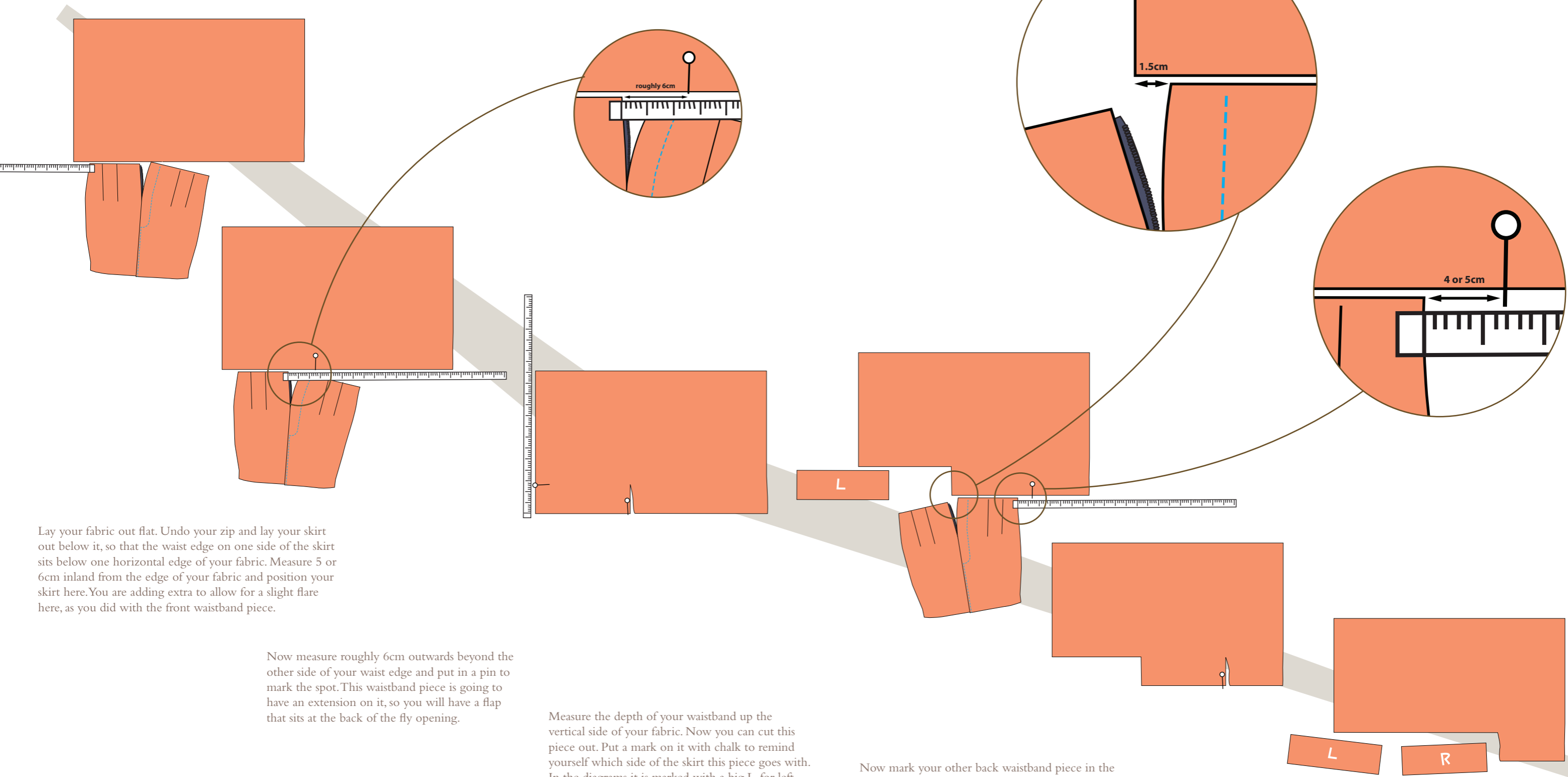
View from the back



Or if you're using just one piece of fabric...



Now you can mark and cut your back waistband pieces.



Lay your fabric out flat. Undo your zip and lay your skirt out below it, so that the waist edge on one side of the skirt sits below one horizontal edge of your fabric. Measure 5 or 6cm inland from the edge of your fabric and position your skirt here. You are adding extra to allow for a slight flare here, as you did with the front waistband piece.

Now measure roughly 6cm outwards beyond the other side of your waist edge and put in a pin to mark the spot. This waistband piece is going to have an extension on it, so you will have a flap that sits at the back of the fly opening.

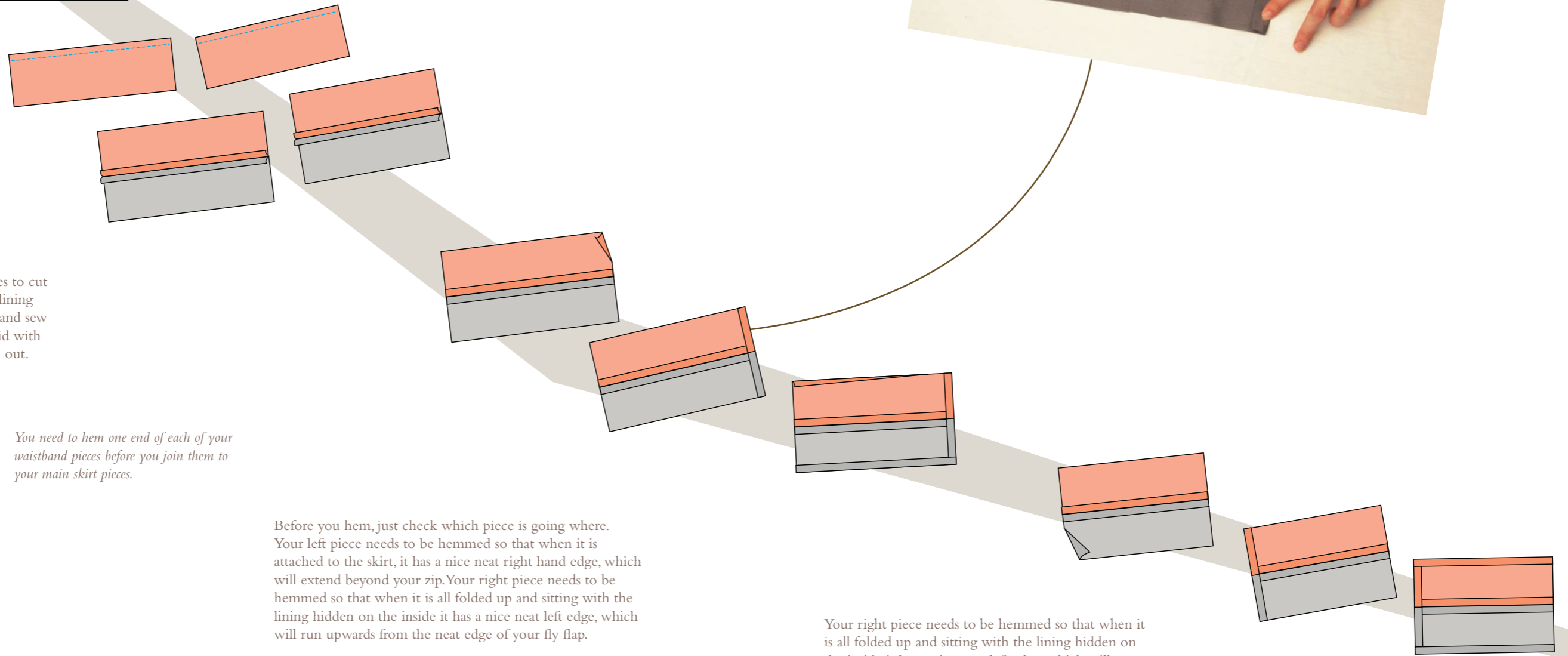
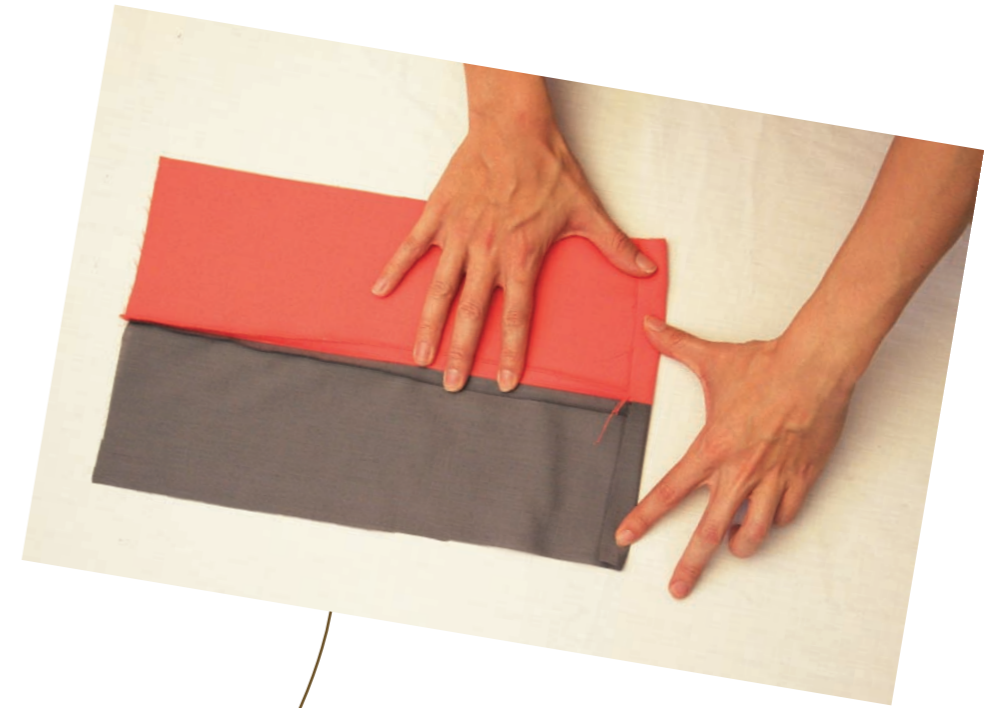
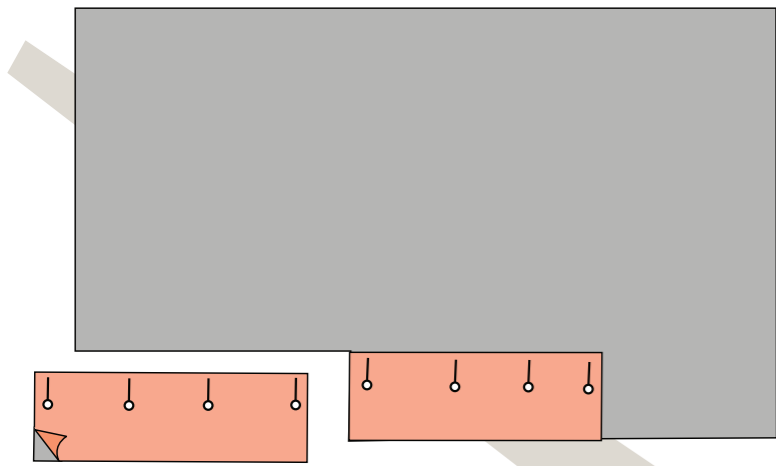
Measure the depth of your waistband up the vertical side of your fabric. Now you can cut this piece out. Put a mark on it with chalk to remind yourself which side of the skirt this piece goes with. In the diagrams it is marked with a big L, for left.

Now mark your other back waistband piece in the same way. This piece needs to have the extra 5 or 6cm to allow for flare, but it needs to be just an extra 1.5cm on the other side - the side with the fly flap.

Cut this piece and mark it to remind yourself which side of the skirt it corresponds to. Here it is marked with a big R, for right.



*Cut the lining and prepare your back waistband pieces.*



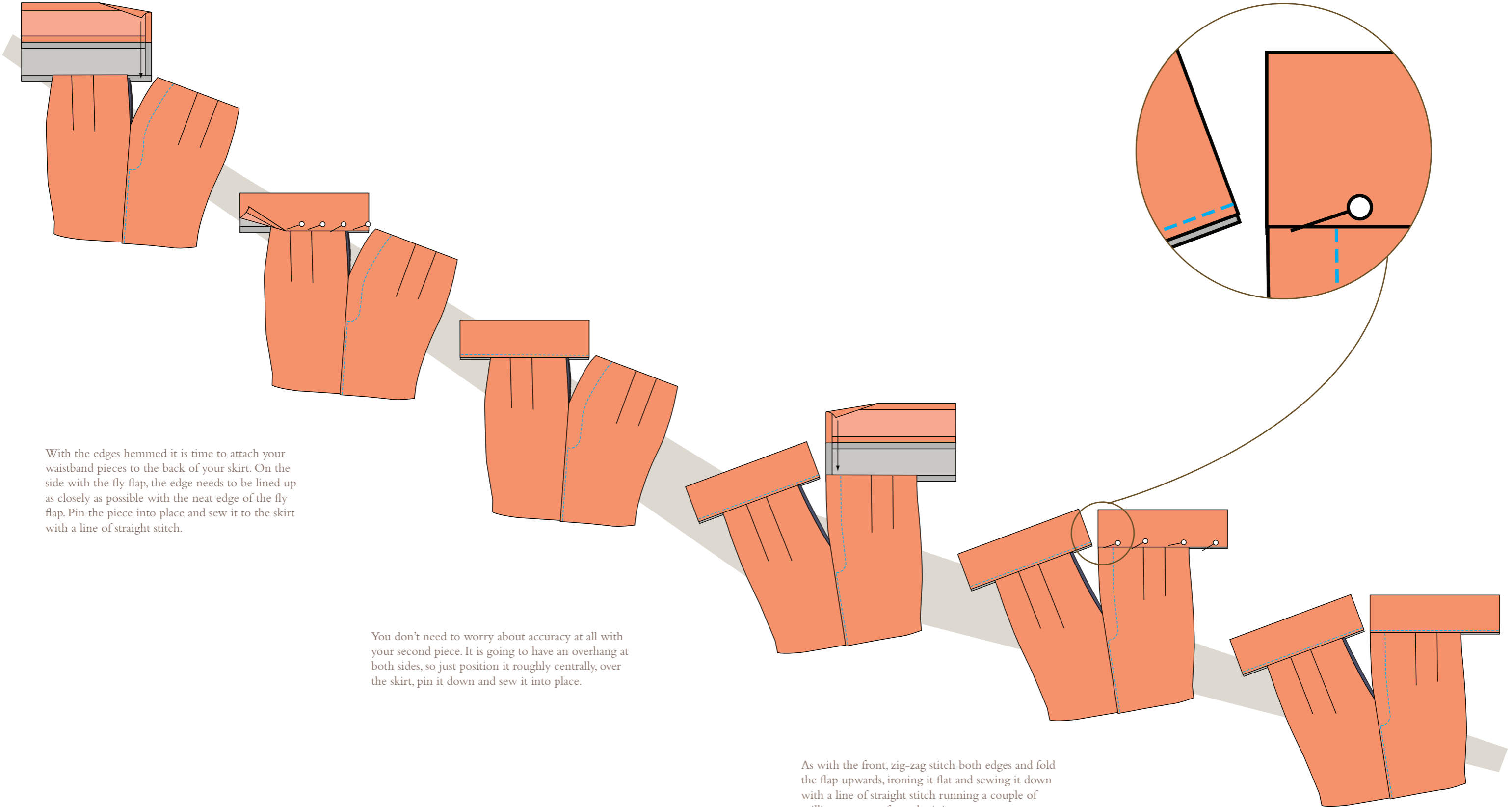
Use your left and right pieces as guides to cut two matching lining pieces. Pin your lining pieces to your main waistband pieces and sew them together in the same way you did with the front waistband piece. Open them out.

*You need to hem one end of each of your waistband pieces before you join them to your main skirt pieces.*

Before you hem, just check which piece is going where. Your left piece needs to be hemmed so that when it is attached to the skirt, it has a nice neat right hand edge, which will extend beyond your zip. Your right piece needs to be hemmed so that when it is all folded up and sitting with the lining hidden on the inside it has a nice neat left edge, which will run upwards from the neat edge of your fly flap.

Your right piece needs to be hemmed so that when it is all folded up and sitting with the lining hidden on the inside it has a nice neat left edge, which will run upwards from the neat edge of your fly flap.

*Attach your back waistband pieces.*

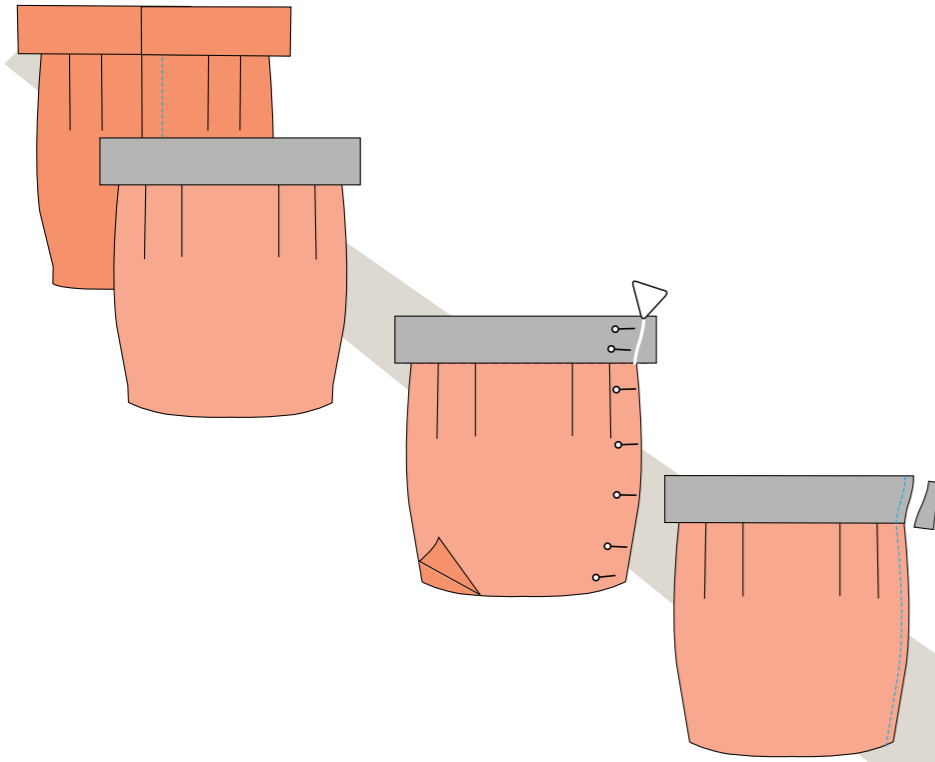


With the edges hemmed it is time to attach your waistband pieces to the back of your skirt. On the side with the fly flap, the edge needs to be lined up as closely as possible with the neat edge of the fly flap. Pin the piece into place and sew it to the skirt with a line of straight stitch.

You don't need to worry about accuracy at all with your second piece. It is going to have an overhang at both sides, so just position it roughly centrally, over the skirt, pin it down and sew it into place.

As with the front, zig-zag stitch both edges and fold the flap upwards, ironing it flat and sewing it down with a line of straight stitch running a couple of millimetres away from the join.

*Join the front and back of your skirt.*



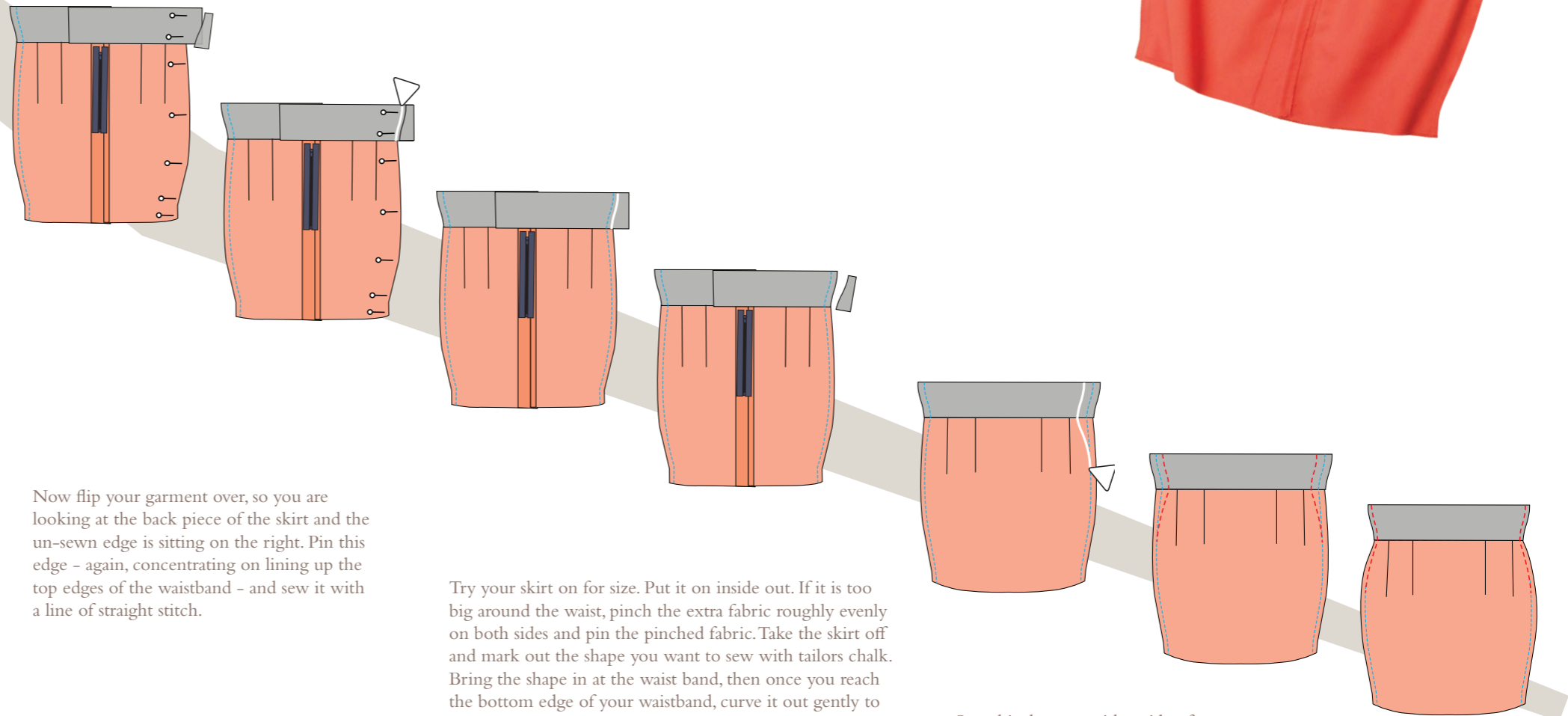
You now have a complete front and a complete back piece and can join the two together. Lay your back piece out with the right side facing upwards towards you. Lay your front piece on top of it with the right side facing down.

Concentrate on just the right side of your skirt. You need to align the pieces as accurately as you can at the top edge of the waistband. Pin the two pieces together down the right side and sew along the pinned edge with straight stitch.

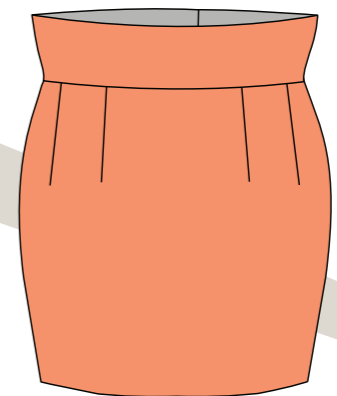
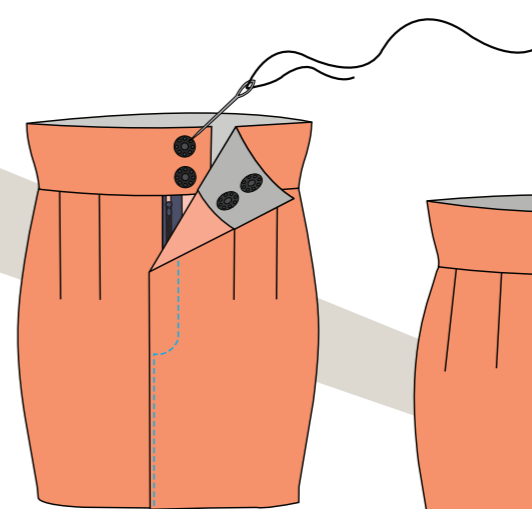
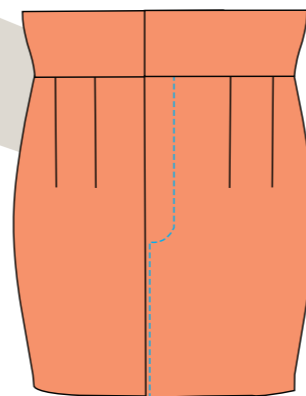
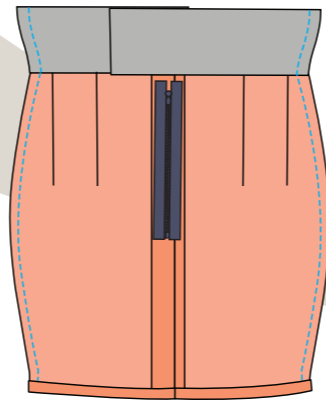
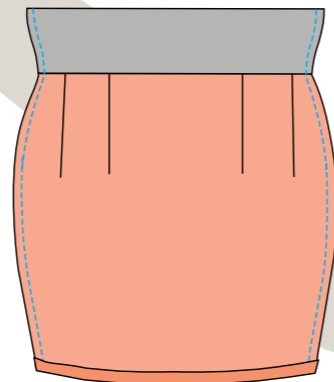
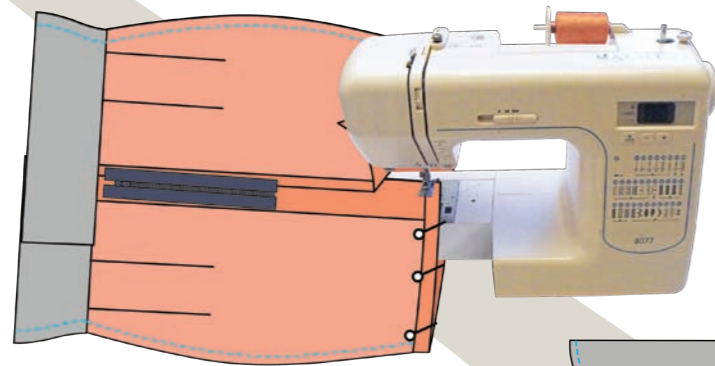
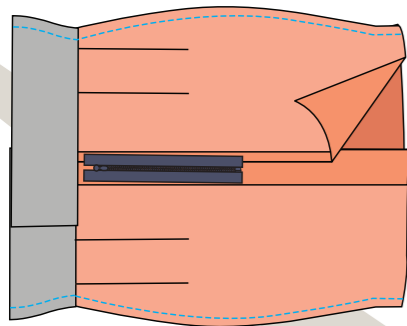
Now flip your garment over, so you are looking at the back piece of the skirt and the un-sewn edge is sitting on the right. Pin this edge - again, concentrating on lining up the top edges of the waistband - and sew it with a line of straight stitch.

Try your skirt on for size. Put it on inside out. If it is too big around the waist, pinch the extra fabric roughly evenly on both sides and pin the pinched fabric. Take the skirt off and mark out the shape you want to sew with tailors chalk. Bring the shape in at the waist band, then once you reach the bottom edge of your waistband, curve it out gently to meet your original line of stitching

Sew this shape on either side of your skirt to make it smaller.



*Hem the bottom edge of your skirt.*



Turn to the bottom edge of your skirt. Run all the way along this raw bottom edge with zig-zag stitch.

Now, with the skirt inside out, turn up about 1.5cm of fabric all the way around the bottom edge and sew it down. Iron this hemmed edge.

Hand sew a couple of press studs to the overlapping flaps of your waistband to hold the fly flap closed. You could also use a hook and eye, or even a real button hole if you like

You have made a tulip skirt :)