



# The School of Making



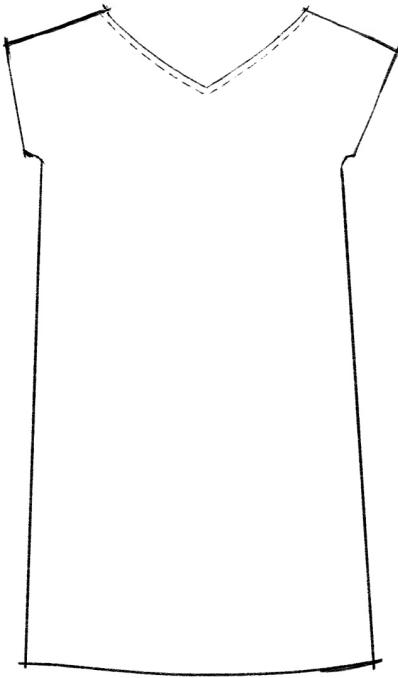
## DIY FRANCES DRESS INSTRUCTIONS

with top, t-shirt dress, and dress lengths

For use with DIY Frances Top/T-Shirt Dress/Dress Kit from The School of Making

## 1. ADD EMBROIDERY

If you choose to embroider your project, add this to the right side of the cut Frances Dress top-layer pieces. Add embellishment as desired, and complete all embellishment before constructing your garment. Refer to The School of Making Book Series for inspiration. If you're adding beading, avoid beading in 1/4" seam allowance.



## 2. BASTE NECKLINE

To ensure that the neckline on your cut-fabric pieces do not stretch while you construct the dress, use a single strand of all-purpose thread to baste the neckline edges of each cut piece.

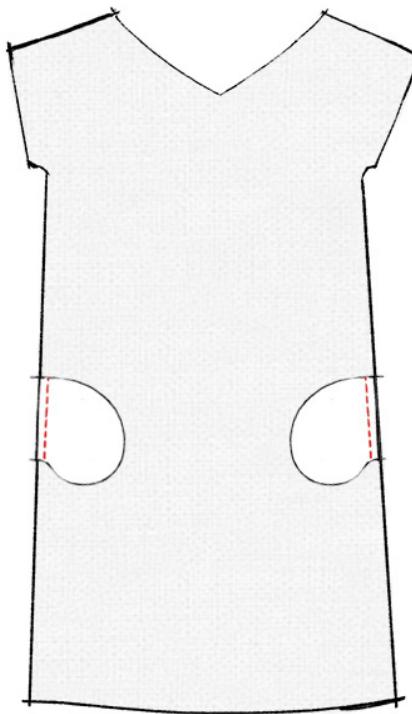
## 3. PREPARE FOR CONSTRUCTION

After completing any embellishment, align and pin the front and back of the dress together at the shoulders, with right sides together (or, with wrong sides together if you want the seams visible on the outside of the garment).

## 4. SEW SHOULDER SEAMS

Thread your needle, love your thread, and knot off. Using a straight stitch, sew the pinned pieces together at the shoulder, starting at the edge of the sleeve and stitching 1/4" from the fabric's cut edges across to the neckline.

Begin and end each seam by wrap-stitching its edges to secure them. Fell your seams, if desired, towards the back of your top or dress down the middle of your seam allowance.



## 5. ADD POCKETS (OPTIONAL)

If you are making a top, skip this step. The t-shirt dress and dress kits include an optional side-seam pocket. Deciding how high to insert the pockets in the side seam is a matter of personal preference. You will set this pocket in each side-seam panel and attach it before pinning the front panels to the back panels.

You will need four side-seam pockets from your pattern piece. Determine how high you want to position your pocket, and match the pocket height on both side seams on both the dress front and the dress back. Attach each side-seam pocket to the corresponding pattern piece, with right sides together and the straight edges aligned. Fold back each pocket and fell your seam to the front of the garment's front pattern piece and to the back of the back pattern piece. Once the pockets are attached to the front and back panels, you can continue on to the next step of sewing the side seams.

If you're making the Frances Dress with the gathered skirt option, you'll add the side seam pockets before sewing the side seams of the gathered skirt.

## 6. SEW SIDE SEAMS

Turn your top or dress wrong side out and pin together front and back at the side seams. Wrap-stitch your seams. Start stitching at the bottom edge of the hem and sew side and sleeve seams in one continuous pass. After stitching side/sleeve seam, fold seam allowances toward the back, and fell the seam.

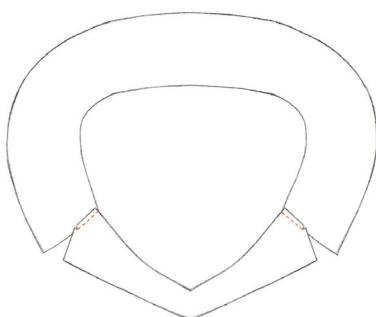
## 7. ADD GATHERED SKIRT (OPTIONAL)

Skip this step if you are making a top or t-shirt dress. Sew the side seams of your skirt and fell as desired. Using all-purpose thread, sew a gathering stitch (small straight stitch) across the skirt's top edge, and pull on the ends of the basting thread to gather the fabric.

Pin the gathered ruffle to the outside hem of your finished garment, overlapping the garment's bottom edge by  $3/4"$  and aligning the side seams. Both edges are left raw. Distribute and pin the gathers evenly around the hem of the bodice. Once you have pinned the gathered edge in place, baste it into place. Attach it permanently with the stretch or decorative stitch of your choice and remove the basting stitches.

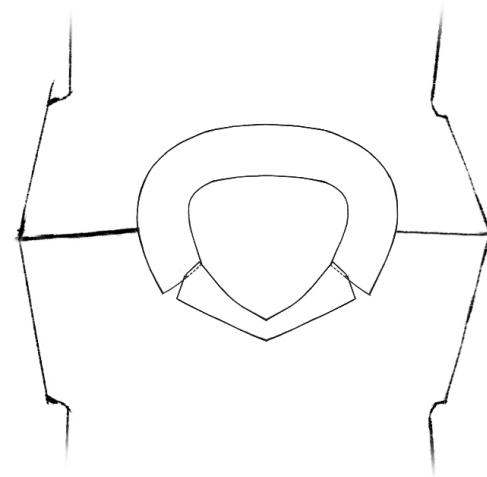
## 8. ADD COLLAR (OPTIONAL)

Following the diagram below, open out your back collar and front collar, and align the corners as shown with right sides together. Pin into place. Using a straight stitch and wrap stitching at the beginning and end of each seam, attach the front collar to the back collar. Repeat this for the second set.



## 8. ADD COLLAR (OPTIONAL—CONT'D)

With right sides together, sew both layers of the collar together using a straight stitch. You'll leave the inside edge of the collar open for now. Flip the collar right side out and top stitch  $1/8"$  away from the finished edge of the collar.

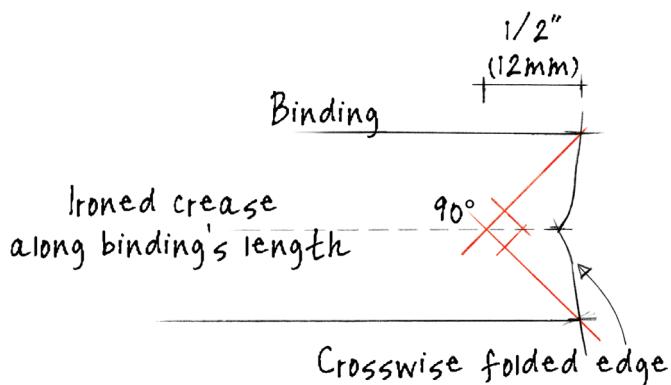


To attach your collar, pin the raw edge of the top side of your collar to the inside of your neckline, making sure to align center front and center back. Pin into place. Sew around the entire collar using a straight stitch. Fold the collar up creating a clean-finished edge on the inside of the neckline. Before finishing your collar, turn the raw edge of the bottom side of your collar under  $1/4"$  and sandwich the raw edge of the neckline inside the collar before pinning into place.

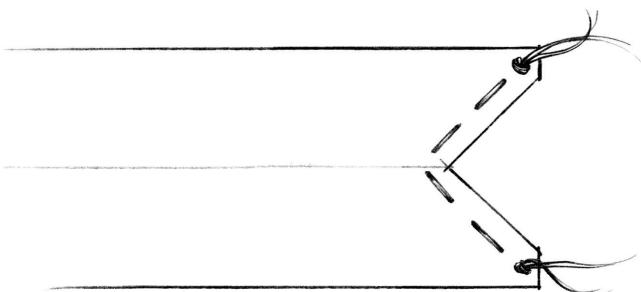
Finish your collar by sewing around the entire collar and neckline using a straight stitch  $1/8"$  away from the folded, finished edge of the collar.

## 9. BIND NECKLINE

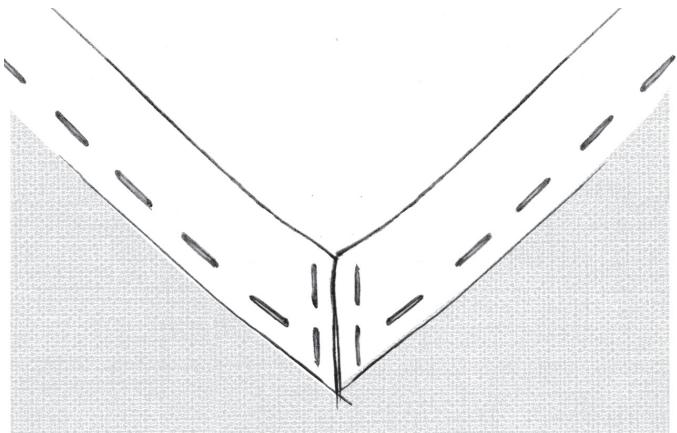
If you choose not to use the optional collar, you'll bind your neckline using cross-grain rib binding. Use a rotary cutter, cutting mat, and large plastic ruler to cut a 1 1/4"-wide strip of leftover fabric across the grain to use for binding the neckline. Use your iron to press each binding strip in half lengthwise, with the wrong sides together, being careful not to stretch the fabric while pressing it. To bind the neckline, you will first make a miter at the mid-point of the binding before applying the binding to the neckline.



Open the pressed binding flat, the fold it in half crosswise, with right sides together and the short edges aligned. Starting at one edge of the binding, stitch to the fold line and then back to the other edge, sewing a 90-degree V-shape whose point is 1/2" from the binding's folded edge, and knotting off at the other edge.



Clip the excess fabric from the V-shape, leaving 1/4" seam allowance.



## 9. BIND NECKLINE—CONT'D

Turn the binding right side out; re-fold it with wrong sides together; and place the mitered V at the neckline's center-front V, folding the strip along the fold line and over the neckline's raw edge. Start basting the binding in place with all-purpose thread, encasing the neckline's raw edge inside the binding (note that the binding's raw edges will show). You will remove this basting thread at the end of the binding process. Add a new binding strip, as needed, as you work around the neckline's edge to the center back, overlapping the short raw edges of the existing and new binding strips by 1/2".

When you reach the center-back point, overlap the binding's short raw edges by about 1/2" to finish the binding, and trim away any excess binding. To permanently sew the binding in place, use the stretch stitch of your choice to sew through all layers down the middle of the binding.

After permanently sewing the neckline binding in place with a stretch stitch, remove or simply break the basting stitches (encased inside the binding) by pulling gently to snap the thread. If some of the basting stitches remain embedded in the binding, leave them in place since the thread is broken and the remaining stitches will not restrict the fabric's stretch.

## BASIC SEWING INSTRUCTIONS

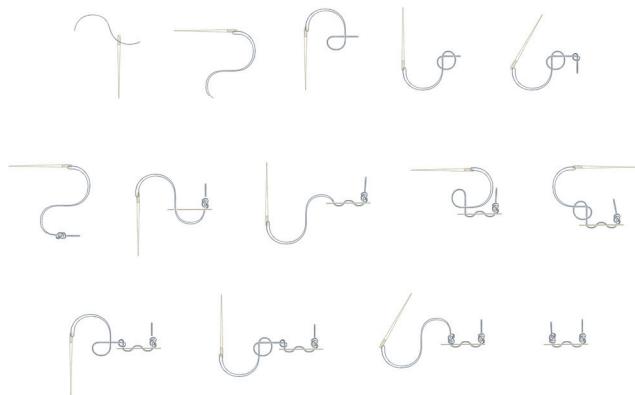
Provided below are notes on our basic construction and sewing techniques. For more thorough instructions on stenciling, embellishment, and construction, reference one of the books from The School of Making Book Series, shown on page 7.

### LOVE YOUR THREAD

To love your thread, cut a piece twice as long as the distance from your fingers to your elbow. Thread your needle, pulling the thread through the needle until the two ends of the thread are the same length. Hold the doubled thread between your thumb and index finger, and run your fingers along it from the needle to the end of the loose tails. Repeat this several times to release the tension in the thread, and then double-knot your thread.

### KNOTTING OFF

After bringing the needle up through the fabric, make a loop with the thread, then pull your needle through that loop, using your forefinger or thumb to nudge the knot into place, flush with your fabric. Then repeat this process to make a double knot. After making the second knot, cut the thread, leaving 1/2" tail.



### KNOTTING OFF (CONT'D)

In hand-sewing, your knot anchors and holds your entire seam. One important design decision we make when starting any project is how to handle the knots. There are two options: knots that show on the project's right side (outside) and knots that show on the wrong side (inside). Either of these knots can be used throughout an entire project.

### STRETCH + NON-STRETCH STITCHES

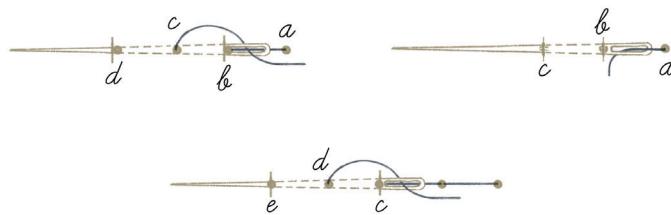
We use three categories of stitches in our work: stitches that do not stretch, for construction, reverse appliqué, and other embellishments; stitches that do stretch, for sewing necklines, armholes, and other areas in a project that require "give"; and stitches that are purely decorative, for embellishment. Following are examples of non-stretch and stretch:

#### NON-STRETCH STITCH

**STRAIGHT (OR RUNNING) STITCH:** Bring needle up at A, go back down at B, and come up at C, making stitches and spaces between the same length (about 1/8" to 1/4" long).

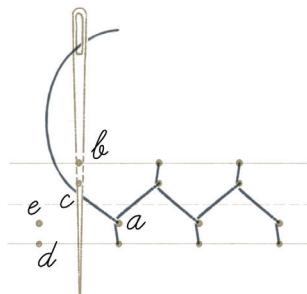


**BACKSTITCH:** Bring needle up at A, go back down at B, and come up at C. Then insert needle just ahead of B, and come up at D. Next insert needle just ahead of C, and come up at E. Continue this overall pattern.

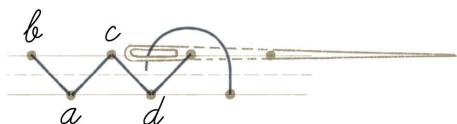


## STRETCH STITCH

CRETAN STITCH: Bring needle up at A, go down at B, and come back up at C, making a downward vertical stitch while bringing needle over thread. Insert needle again at D, and come back up at E, making an upward vertical stitch while bringing needle over thread. Continue to repeat stitch pattern.

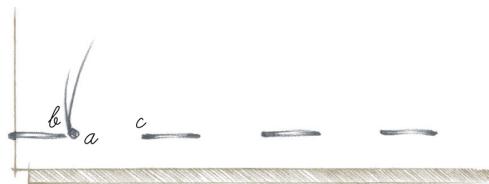


ZIGZAG STITCH: Bring needle up at A, go down at B, and come back up at C. Insert needle again at A, and come back up at D. Insert needle again at C, and come back up at E. Continue to repeat stitch pattern.

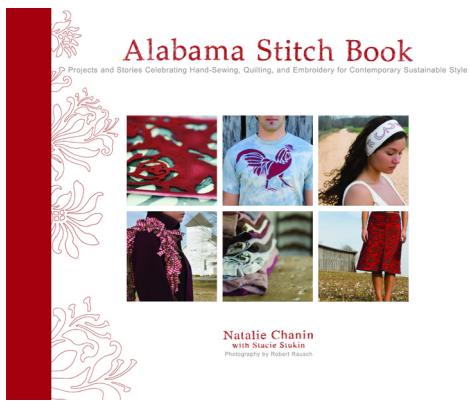


## SEAMS

To start a seam, make a double knot, and insert the needle at point A. Wrap your thread around side of the fabric to the front, insert the needle back in at B, then come up at C, and stitch the seam. Also wrap-stitch the end of your seam before knotting off.

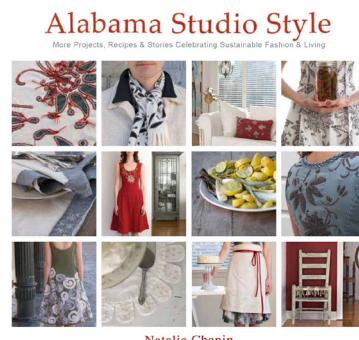


## THE SCHOOL OF MAKING BOOK SERIES AT A GLANCE



### Alabama Stitch Book

*Alabama Stitch Book* is a collection of stitching, beading, and embroidery instructions, stories, and projects from Alabama Chanin. Projects include our best-selling Corset, Swing Skirt, "boa" scarf, bandana, and more.



### Alabama Studio Style

*Alabama Studio Style* expands upon the stitching, stenciling, and beading techniques introduced in *Alabama Stitch Book* and introduces twenty new clothing and home decor projects. This book also includes recipes and stories.



### Alabama Studio Sewing + Design

An encyclopedic compilation of techniques used to create the Alabama Chanin line of organic cotton clothing. Included are dresses, skirts, tops, and accessories.



### Alabama Studio Sewing Patterns

*Alabama Studio Sewing Patterns* explores fit, patternmaking, and how to create a garment to fit your unique shape. It includes three new patterns with several variations as well as previous open-sourced patterns on a disc at the back of the book.



### The Geometry of Hand-Sewing

*The Geometry of Hand-Sewing: A Romance in Stitches and Embroidery from Alabama Chanin and The School of Making* by Natalie Chanin is a comprehensive guide to hand-stitching and embroidery. This book focuses solely on the stitches themselves, taking embroidery stitches and breaking them down into different geometric grid systems that make learning even seemingly elaborate stitches as easy as child's play.

## TERMS OF USE

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## ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF MAKING

Alabama Chanin as a concept and a company began as a DIY enterprise. Workshop programming was a natural outgrowth of the emerging DIY initiative growing around us. Our experiences showed us that face-to-face and hand-to-hand contact helped our customers better understand the what, why, and how of our making processes and the importance of an organic supply chain. And our business continued to grow. DIY offerings expanded, our workshop offerings became more diverse, and our Journal content added additional DIY instruction, stories, and ideas.

Educational programming is one of the fastest growing and most exciting aspects of our business model. So, as the opportunities to educate our team and our customers began to multiply, we realized that we should create a specific home for this knowledge.

To fully embrace our growing model, we have developed an overseeing body that will direct and innovate learning initiatives and educational programs: The School of Making. All of our current and developing educational and training initiatives fall under the umbrella of The School of Making. This arm of the Alabama Chanin Family of Businesses oversees DIY and workshop programming, format, and content; it acts as a researching body for new subjects and new ways of disseminating information. Our hope is that The School of Making can be an active voice in our local community, our state, and the making community, at large.

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[theschoolofmaking.alabamachanin.com](http://theschoolofmaking.alabamachanin.com)

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