DIY WALKING CAPE INSTRUCTIONS

with three pocket variations

For use with DIY Walking Cape Kit from The School of Making

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1. ADD EMBROIDERY (OPTIONAL)
If you choose to stencil and/or embroider your project, add this to the right side of the cut Walking Cape top-layer pieces, and let stenciled images dry thoroughly before proceeding. Add embellishment, as desired. Use one of our Alabama Studio Series books for inspiration. If you’re adding beading, avoid beading in 1/4” seam allowance.

2. CONSTRUCT COLLAR
To create the Walking Cape collar, pin the two collar pieces right sides together around the three outside edges, leaving the portion of the collar that attaches to the body of the cape open. Thread your needle, love your thread, and knot off. Using a straight stitch, sew the pinned edges together, starting at one corner of the collar and stitching 1/4” from the fabric’s cut edges around the three outside edges of the collar. Be sure to begin and end the seam by wrap-stitching (see page 5 of this document) its edges to secure them.

Turn the collar right side out and press. You may choose to topstitch the collar 1/8” from the edge of the three finished sides using a straight stitch and wrap-stitching the seam.

3. PREPARE FOR CONSTRUCTION
After completing the collar, lay out your top layer with the right side facing up. Center the raw edge of your collar with the center of the inside edge of the cape. Pin the collar in place. Lay your bottom layer on top of the top layer and collar with the right side facing up, sandwiching the collar between the two layers. Pin all layers of the cape together along the center front and inside edge of the cape.

When pinning knit seams for construction, it is important to follow a method we call “pinning the middle”. Start by pinning the beginning of your seam, and follow by pinning the end of your seam. Then place one pin in the middle, between the two initial pins. Continue by pinning in the middle of each set of pins until your seam is securely pinned and ready to sew.

4. SEW FRONT SEAM
Thread your needle, love your thread, and knot off. Using a straight stitch, sew the pinned pieces together, starting at one corner of the center front and stitching 1/4” from the fabric’s cut edges across to the opposite corner. Be sure to begin and end the seam by wrap-stitching (see page 5 of this document) its edges to secure them.

Turn the cape right side out. Topstitch the seam 1/8” from the finished edge of the seam using a straight stitch and wrap-stitching the seam.

5. CONSTRUCT WALKING CAPE POCKET
Use a rotary cutter, cutting mat, and plastic ruler to cut 1 1/4”-wide strips of leftover fabric across the grain to use for binding the pockets. You will need two strips, approximately 8.5” each. 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 construct a double-layer pocket, lay two cut pocket pieces on top of each other with right sides facing up. Start at one of the top corners and encase the pocket’s top edge inside your folded binding, basting the binding in place as you work. Trim away any excess binding.

Use the stitch of your choice (see our Alabama Studio Book Series) to sew through all layers and down the middle of the binding. Remove or break basting stitches by pulling gently on one end of the thread. It is fine to leave any basting stitches that may be embedded in the binding. Repeat this process for the second pocket.

6. PLACE AND ATTACH POCKETS
Lay your cape out flat with the outside layer facing up. Add pockets by pinning your pocket to the outside layer and placing it 4” from the center front, approximately 5” from the bottom raw edge, and approximately 6” from the outside raw edge.
Pin pocket in place, and stitch 1/4” from the edge of the pocket, leaving the edges raw. Wrap-stitch the beginning and end of the seam. Repeat this process for the second pocket.

Alternately, you may choose to attach the pockets to the inside of the cape using the same placement instructions listed above.

7. ATTACH SNAP
With the cape laid in front of you face up, place the male half of the snap on the right side of the outer layer of the cape, positioning it 1/4” from the finished center front edge and approximately 7” beneath the collar, or approximately 10” above the bottom raw edge. Attach the snap using a doubled strand of Button Craft thread, stitching around the snap twice.

Open the left side of the cape. Place the female half of the snap on the bottom layer of the left side of the cape, positioning it 1/4” from the finished center front edge and approximately 7” beneath the collar, or approximately 10” above the bottom raw edge. Attach the snap using a doubled strand of Button Craft thread, stitching around the snap twice.
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 6.

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 them 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 needles 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.
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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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