

Bloomers

This article shows you how to make bloomers to your own measurements.

The bloomers can be whatever length you want and this version has an elasticated waist. Only four measurements are needed, and you should be able to make them with around 1.5m (1½ yds) of 150cm (60") wide fabric and a piece of 25mm (1") elastic as long as your waist. The amount of trim depends on your imagination, and how much you want to gather the lace.

You will need:

- large sheet of paper
- measuring tape
- something with a right angle
- metre/yard stick
- sharp, hard pencil
- calculator (perhaps)
- compasses/curves

Measurements:

- waist
- hip
- body rise
- inside leg to desired length

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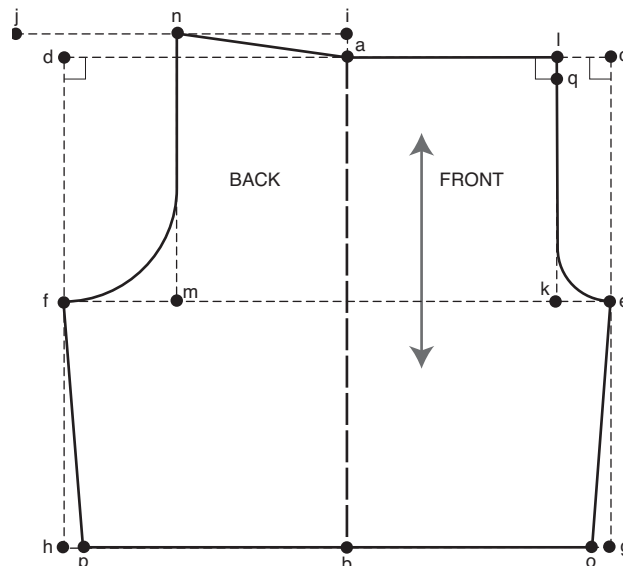
Measuring

To measure your body rise, tie a string around your natural waist and sit on a hard stool. Get a friend to measure the vertical distance from the string to the top of the stool. The top of these bloomers come to your natural waist. If you would prefer it lower, either subtract the difference from your body rise, or wear a pair of briefs or trousers that sit where you like, and measure from the top of those to the stool.

When deciding on your desired length, remember that bloomers tend to ride up about 5cm (2") with wear.

The Pattern

fig. 1



Note: the dotted lines meet each other at right angles (90°).

a-b: body rise + desired length; square across at both ends.

a-c: $\frac{3}{8}$ hip; square down to **g**.

a-d: $\frac{3}{8}$ hip + 5cm (2"); square down to **h**.

c-e, d-f: body rise - width of elastic; draw a line between **e** and **f**.

a-i: 3cm (1¼"); square across to **j**.

e-k: 7cm (2¾"); square up from **k** to **l**.

f-m: $\frac{1}{8}$ hip + 3cm (1¼"); square up from **m** to **n**, meeting the line **i-j** at a right angle.

Draw in smooth curves as shown, using compasses if necessary, to make the lines **e-l** and **f-n**. Draw a line between **a** and **n**.

g-o, h-p: 2.5cm (1"); draw lines **e-o** and **f-p**.

If your posterior is generously proportioned, put in point **q**, 3cm (1¼") below **l** and draw a line connecting **a** and **q**.

Mark your pattern with the symbol shown. The straight double-headed arrow shows the direction the piece is to be placed on the fabric, and should be parallel to **a-b**.

To make waistband pattern:

Measure the line **l-n**. Multiply by 2 to get the length. The depth should be twice that of your elastic.

Seam allowances:

Add 1.5cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ ") to the side seams, and 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ ") to the waistline, and round off the angle on the waistline, while you are at it. The curved lines **e-l** and **f-n** should also only have a 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ ") seam allowance. If you are adding lace or other trim to the hems, only 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ ") is needed, otherwise add at least 3cm ($1\frac{1}{4}$ "). The waistband should have 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ ") on the long edges, and 1.5cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ ") at the ends.

✿ Cutting Out ✿

Figure 2 shows how to place your pattern pieces on your fabric, which has been folded in two widthways. The waistband has been folded in half and cut on the fold of the fabric. This layout only works with plain cottons and other fabrics with no direction to them. Allow more fabric to match patterns etc.

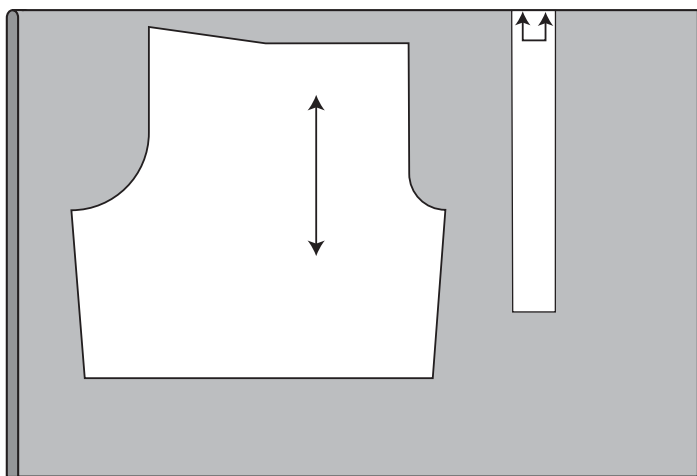


fig. 2

✿ Making Up in Brief ✿

(see any dressmaking book for full details)

Cut out your fabric pieces as shown above, and mark the front and back of the garment. If your fabric does not have an obvious wrong and right side, put big crosses on the "wrong" side of your pieces so you can tell which is which! Mark the position of the leg elastic.

With the right sides together, pin and sew the inside leg seams (lines **e-o** and **f-p** on the pattern) so that you end up with two tubes. Bloomers make a good overlocker/serger project, but if you are using a conventional sewing machine, zigzag over the raw edges of the seams after you have sewn them or use an enclosed type of seam. Stitch on the leg elastic, or a channel for it (the latter is more comfortable; the former is quicker), and hem the bottoms, adding any lace you want.

Stitch together the crotch seam, front to front, and back to back. This is easier if you put one leg of the bloomers inside the other, right sides together, as shown in figure 3. The shaded area with the crosses on represents the wrong side of the fabric.

Fold your waistband along the centre lengthways, with wrong sides together, and press. Press another fold, also wrong sides together, along one edge the depth of your seam allowance (i.e. along the stitching line). With wrong sides together, pin the long side of the waistband (the one *without* the pressed edge) to the waist of the bloomers and stitch them together. Fold over, and hand stitch the pressed fold to the line of stitching you just made, using a slip stitch. Leave a gap of 5cm (2") or so. Put a piece of elastic around your waist and stretch it so it feels tight but comfortable. Cut a length a couple of centimetres (or an inch) longer than that. Attach a large safety pin to one end of your elastic and thread it through the waistband (and the channels in the legs if you chose to add them), remembering to keep hold of the other end. Sew the ends of your elastic together and slip stitch the gap closed. Hem and trim to taste.

fig. 3

