

Gathering Tutorial

Gathering, or drawing fabric up on a thread in puckers with even stitches, is a nice way to provide a rich, full look. It is easy to do and is a technique often used in sewing, for example, in sewing ruffles and skirts.

First, make sure that the fabric to be gathered is sewn together in a circle or that the two sides are already hemmed. The bottom side of the ruffle or skirt should also be finished either with a hem or fold. You will be gathering the top, raw or unfinished, edge of the fabric (Note: most of the pictures you see in this tutorial are of an unfinished scrap piece of fabric for example purposes only). Gathering does not have to be done with matching thread, as it will not be seen in the final sewn garment or product. To gather with a straight stitch, use a long basting stitch (I increase my stitch length to 4), and sew about $\frac{1}{4}$ " away from the edge of the fabric to be gathered. If you are working with a heavier fabric or with more than one layer of fabric, you may wish to have two rows of basting stitches.



Make sure to leave long thread ends and if you are working with fabric in a circle (such as a pant or skirt ruffle) overlap the beginning stitches slightly. Pull one of the top threads carefully to gather the fabric.



Make sure that the fabric is gathered to the correct length and that the gathers are evenly spaced all the way around as much as possible before pinning the ruffle to the garment.



Pin the raw edge of the ruffle or skirt to the raw edge of the garment wrong sides together and adjust the gathers evenly as needed. Sew around the ruffle/garment edge using matching thread with a longer seam allowance than the original basting stitches so that those stitches will not be seen on the outside of the completed garment. This picture shows a folded ruffle already gathered and stitched onto one leg of capri pants.



Press the ruffle or skirt down. Notice the seam allowance is longer than the original basting stitches so that none of those stitches are seen on the outside of the final garment.



Here are the gathered ruffles, finished and ironed down.

