

Spring Ruffles



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sewing connection



Ruffles Are Back

It is finally spring and that means the cherry blossoms, apple trees, and bluebells are blooming and the robins are bobbing. Spring means ruffles have returned as well. Make them removable with hidden snaps, velcro, or buttons, and you don't have to pitch that recent purchase or replace that much loved jacket. Perfect for the office or a party depending on how girly-girl you feel. Let's look at some of the styles.

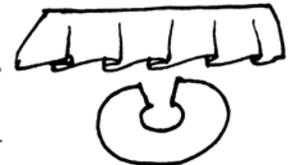


Circular - Use any pattern circular piece

This circular darling is popular because of the use of sheer fabrics. Chiffon (poly or silk), sheer cottons, as well as many silky type fabrics easily drape into soft ruffles. The inner circular raw edge is sewn into a seam or merely topstitched in place on a fabric, to be covered afterwards with other ruffles or a binding. That inner edge can be gathered for a full ruffle, circular pieces being seamed together to extend it.



straight cut



circular cut

The outer edge can be a serger rolled hem or a tiny rolled hem done on a sewing machine. Seen both ways in ready-to-wear, the decision depends on your equipment, expertise, and personal preference. If this is easily raveled fabric, leave it raw and fringe it. A fringe on the bias is fuller because both warp and filling yarns add up to twice the amount.



Double Circular Ruffle

Top layer narrower, both hemmed and stitched on neckline before applying facing.



Cascade



Start stitching at the bottom and in separate little lines, stitch toward the top each time the ruffle switches directions.



Or on a larger scale

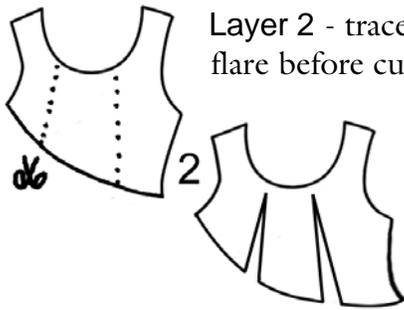


Or several diagonal criss-crosses

Each preceding instruction starts at the bottom so the next row covers the stitching lines as the ruffles progress upward.

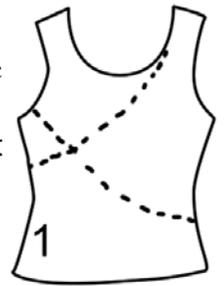
Flares

Some lovely garments sport slightly flared ruffles, in fact, that's all they really are. Make these by tracing parts of your pattern on another paper, for a layered effect.

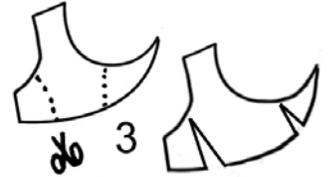


Layer 2 - trace an abbreviated top, then slash and spread the paper to add flare before cutting out its fabric

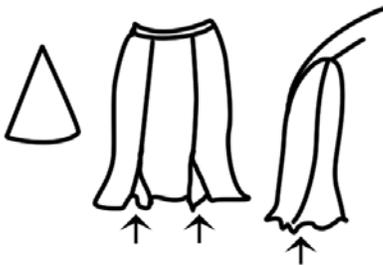
Layer 1 - all of it



Layer 3 - more abbreviated for the top layer.



Hem lower edges, staystitch all layers together at sides, armscye, and neckline. Made in three shades of sheer fabric, very pretty.

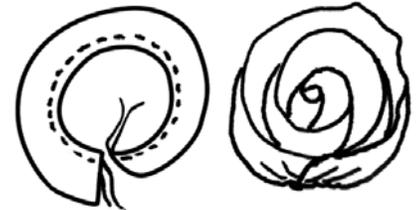


Do the same idea on a skirt or dress as it makes attractive flares. Try it on a paneled skirt or 2-piece sleeve with an inset godet on every seam.



Complete the circle . . .

Make a circular ruffle into a blooming flower. Hem or fringe the outer edge, run a gathering stitch on the inner edge. Gather up somewhat and roll into a flower, hand stitching the gathered edge to a base.

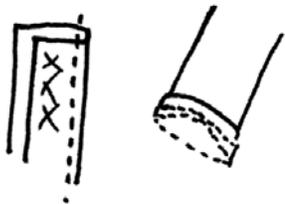


Bias Cut

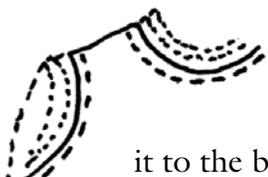
Bias is always softer and drapier than straight cut. In addition, it does not ravel drastically as straight cut does, so frequently is left with raw edges. Simply run a gathering stitch - or maybe easier with two lines of gathering through the center lengthwise. Pull up the gathering threads and stitch one (if wide) or the front of a shell. This works especially well with chiffons. If heavier and /or crisper (dupioni, cotton), hem edges before gathering (gather more sparingly) and stitching to the base fabric. Sparsely gathered cotton ruffles also attach nicely in seams.



several if narrower, down



Cut a bias strip perhaps $1\frac{1}{4}$ " wide, fold not quite in half (top layer shorter) and stitch fold either over or under the edge of a shell neckline and armscye, jacket edges or whatever. Do not gather up to a ruffle - just leave straight. Seen on a lot of RTW.

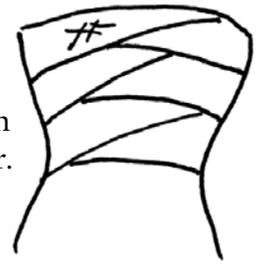


In yarn shops narrow ($\frac{1}{4}$ " - $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide) bias stripping is sold like other balls of yarn which has an almost canvas quality. What this is good for is not actually ruffling, but using to go in curves and circles, couching it to the base fabric. In ready-to-wear, it is frequently seen as flower-like designs.





Very often, whether heavier fabric cut into a bias jacket collar folded at outer edge, or sheer chiffon folded in half and two raw edges stitched to base fabric, this is not precisely a ruffle, but curves very nicely around circular areas because of the flexible bias cut. An example of my collared suit ends in a rolled-up flower. Overlapping rows of folded sheer curved bias strips produce a beautiful formal. Again, apply them by stitching the lowest strip first, then overlapping as you move upward - like shingling the roof of a house.

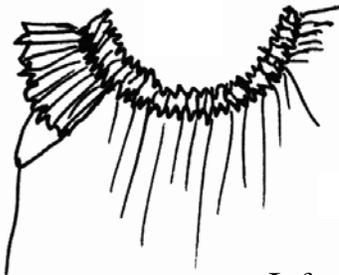
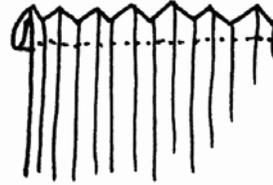


Straight Cuts



Pre-pleated fabric is obviously cut on the straight. Use crosscuts of this for all sorts of ruffled treatments. For example, 2" strips hemmed on one edge, stitched to a backing fabric on the other raw edge would produce a beautiful ruffled front. Start on the outside and progress to center, overlapping raw with hemmed edges.

From a crisp fabric, cut strips 3 feet long to create a stand-up neck ruffle that continues down the front. I am picturing this in dupioni that I pre-pleat myself on the ironing board. Hem first, then pin each pleat to the board while pressing crisply with steam.



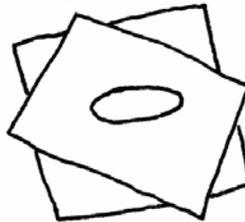
Left: A hemmed-first neckline that produces a pleated front and pleated ruffles for cap sleeves.

Right: A cotton voile printed shirt with double ruffles at sleeve ends looks great with jeans.



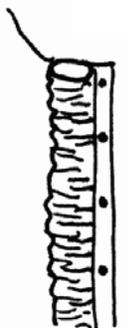
Left: A gorgeous and very pricey dress with alternating pleats and straight cut ruffles all intermingled around the neckline. You can do that easily.

Right: Two square-cut and hemmed pieces, set askew. When worn, the outer edges fall softly like leaves.



Tubular Treatments

How about a tube for a ruffled effect? Cut a single 4" wide strip, straight or bias depending on fabric quality, and stuff with a bit of fiberfill. Scrunch it up with a gathering stitch after folding it over, and stitch it down the front opening.



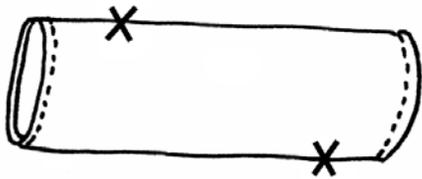
Use a handful of very thin tubes in the center of a ruffled flower.



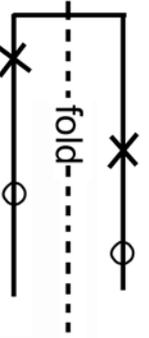
More Tubes?



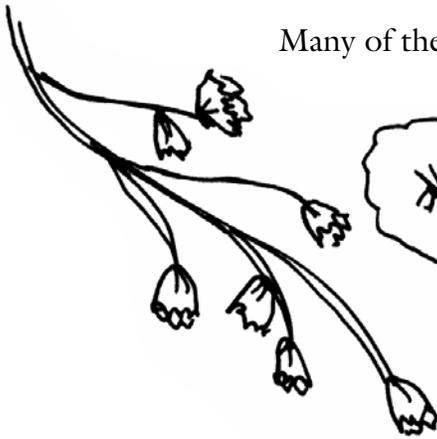
This finish for knit necklines is a tube pulled off grain. Fold in center and pin X to X, 0 to 0 before staystitching to the neck. It will pull diagonal wrinkles for a classic look.



Cut a rectangle on the bias about 14" high and 18" long in something silky. Hem each end after stitching a seam at the bottom so it forms a big tube. Fasten the two Xs on the neckline of a dress or shell so it forms a twist, a ruffle of sorts, ends draping down.



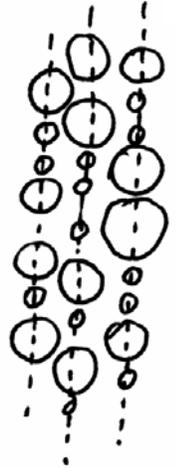
Feathers, Circles, Leaves, Flowers



Many of these shapes - sometimes with finished edges, many times raw - are seen clustered in huge groups almost producing an effect of ruffles. Bare edged dots of various sizes can be lovely on a chiffon shell or skirt.



This 2" circle scrunched in the center and stitched to a branch makes a lovely 3-D floral bouquet.

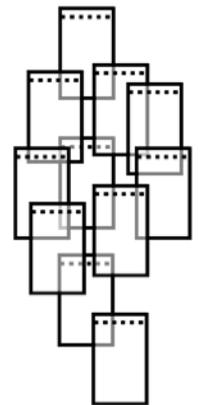
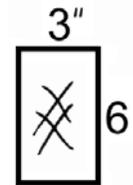


In graduating sizes, short at the neckline and larger as they go lower, wavy ruffled overlapping shapes are the epitome of femininity. Great on a blouse or shell neckline that peeks out of your jacket.



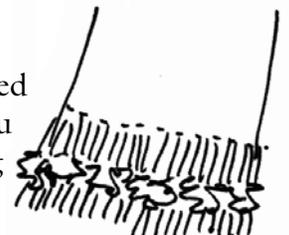
Cut raggedy leaves from chiffon and cluster at jacket edges. Make Surround an old wool jacket from your closet, updating it for a new life.

A whole succession of bias-cut sheer rectangles, maybe in an ombréd color effect tumble down an expensive dress front. Start at the bottom, overlapping as you proceed upward



Simple flower shapes can be similarly grouped, stitched in place with beads at centers.

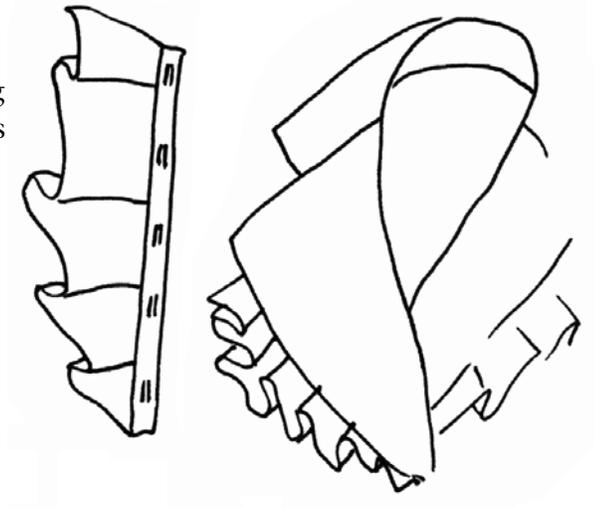
Mix a row of any of these little shapes between two rows of raveled fabric at sleeve ends or other interesting locations. Endless what you can do with so many of the above ideas. Consider recycling existing garments wherever appropriate.



Now back to the most important question - will these last forever? All fashion has a limited shelf life. Fashion cycles do come around faster than they used to, but who wants to store all of these garments? If you are making a garment you want to remain in fashion as long as possible, consider detachables.

Detachables

Sew these ruffles to bands with buttonholes. Sew the matching buttons inside a suit jacket neckline. Button it under a generous



Check out Sewing Connection Series 9 for more work on ruffles and flourishes, Series 13 for more detachables, Series 5 demonstrates a lovely draped neckline, and other download-able classes for designer details.

