

# Pants



## Pants for all puppets

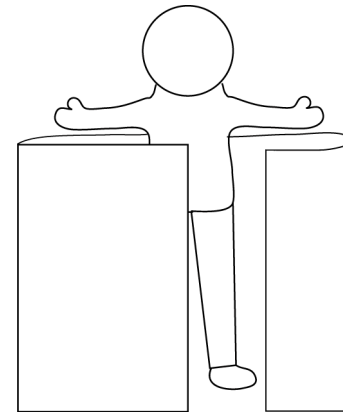
All puppets can wear pants! With the directions in this chapter, you can make pants for full-bodied marionettes and hand puppets, ventriloquist characters, even puppets that need an opening in the seat of their pants for your hand to go through. And you can make suspenders to make sure those pants stay in place during performances (see page 95). Even *legless* puppets can wear simple pants, overalls, or even lederhosen (page 96).

## What you need

- ✧ Fabric (enough to wrap around your puppet's body *twice*, covering at least an inch or two above its waist to an inch or two below its ankles)
- ✧ Matching thread
- ✧ Small fasteners (optional) like snaps, buttons, velcro, or hooks & eyes (see the chapter "Zippers, buttons, & more" for fastener information)

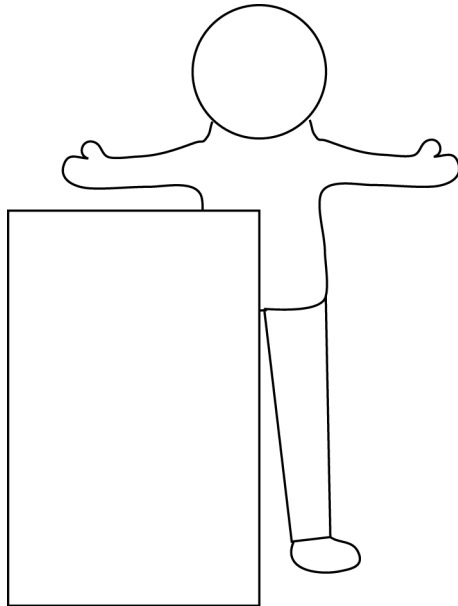
## Other uses for pants

By varying the length (and the fabric!) of the pants, you can make shorts, undergarments, even pajama bottoms. You can also vary the width of the legs to make tight pants, bellbottoms... even the baggy pants of the jester on the front cover.



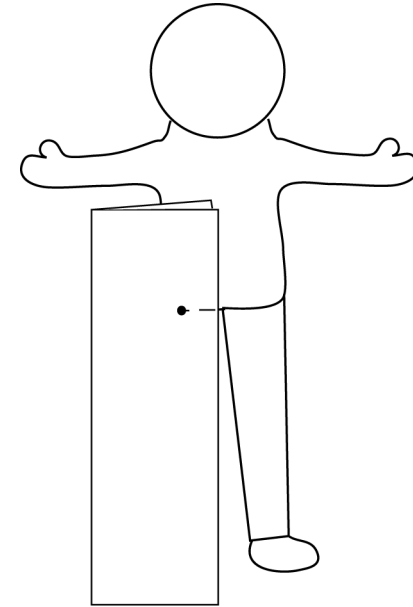
## Make the pant legs

1. Cut a rectangle wide enough to wrap comfortably around your puppet's leg. (The wider the rectangle, the baggier the pants will be.) The rectangle should extend from an inch or two above your puppet's waist to an inch or two below its ankles.

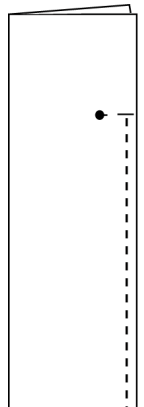


2. Cut another rectangle the same size as the first.
3. Fold one rectangle in half lengthwise right sides together.

4. Place the folded rectangle on your puppet's body. Put a pin through both layers of fabric (but not your puppet!) where your puppet's legs and body meet.



5. Take the folded rectangle off your puppet, and, beginning at the pin, stitch the edge opposite the fold closed. The area above the pin should remain open. Once you have finished stitching, you can remove the pin and turn the fabric right side out.
6. Repeat steps 4-5 for the other rectangle, and you've completed the pant legs!

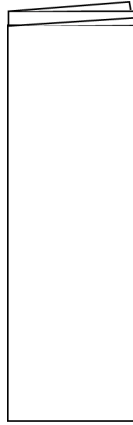


## Attach the pant legs together

To turn the pant legs into pants, you need to sew the top part of the two legs together.

1. Place the pant legs right sides together so that the unstitched areas lie on top of each other.
2. Stitch together the top section of the *inner layers only*, leaving the outer two layers unstitched.

You've completed the front of the pants! How you finish the back depends on your type of puppet. For puppets who do NOT need an opening in the seat of their pants, follow the directions under "Finish the back of the pants (no opening)." For puppets who do need an opening (like many hand puppets), SKIP the next section and go on to "Finish the back of the pants (with opening)."

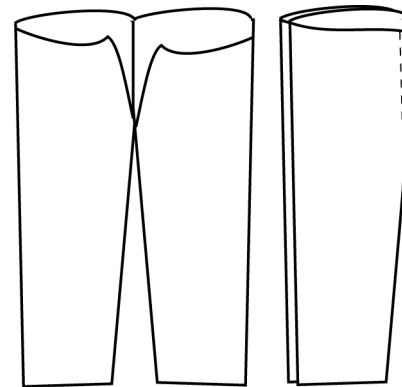


## Finish the back of the pants (no opening)

To get your puppet in and out of its pants more easily, you may want to insert a fastener. Fasteners are extremely useful for puppets whose waists are smaller than their hips (like many marionettes), but aren't really necessary for straight-bodied puppets (like many hand puppets).

If you want to insert a fastener in the back of the pants, now's the time to do so. See the chapter "Zippers, buttons, & more."

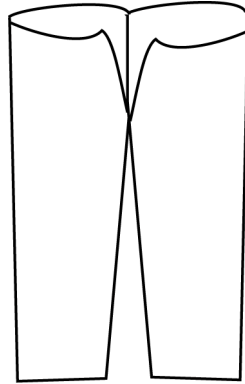
To finish the back of the pants without a fastener, turn the pants inside out, then stitch the back flaps right sides together. (This is easiest if you fold the pants in half, one leg on top of the other.)



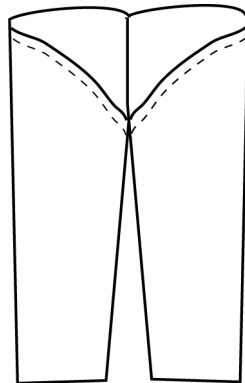
Now that you've got the back all sewn up, it's time to "Finish the ends of the pants" and "Fit the pants to your puppet."

### Finish the back of the pants (with opening)

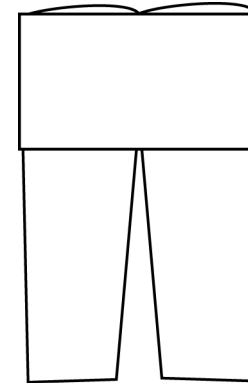
1. Once you have finished stitching the front of the pant legs together (as directed in “Attach the pant legs together”), unfold the pants and turn them over.



2. Fold the back flaps under and stitch along the folds.



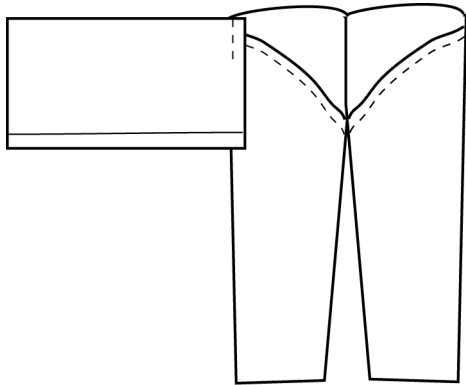
3. Cut a rectangle of fabric that's about an inch wider than the pants and long enough to cover the opening with an inch to spare.



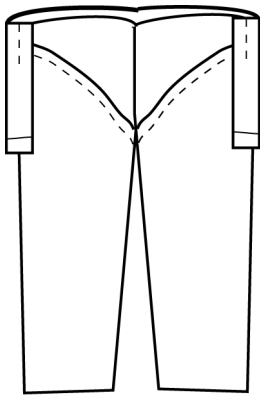
4. Turn the bottom and side edges of this piece of fabric under 1/4", iron them flat if needed, and turn them under another 1/4". Then stitch along the edges.



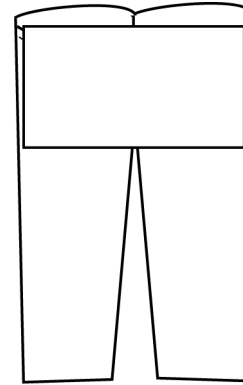
5. Place the fabric right side down against the back of the pants, close to the edge. Stitch the top of the fabric to the pants.



6. Wrap the fabric rectangle around the front of the pants (this may squish the pants a bit, but that's okay). Place the edge of the fabric (right side down) on the edge of the back of the pants and stitch.



7. Flip the rectangle over so it covers the opening in the back of the pants.

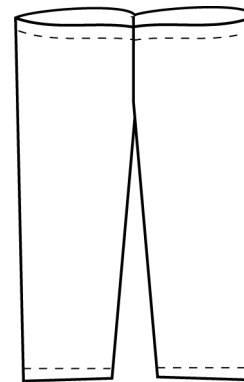


You now have a covered opening you can get your hand through to work your puppet!

### Finish the ends of the pants

If you sew as accurately as I do, you may need to even off the top of the pants with a scissors first.

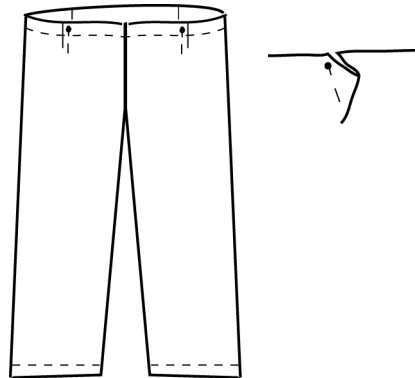
1. Hem the top of the pants.  
(See page 21 for instructions.)
2. Do the same for the bottom of each pant leg.



## Fit the pants to your puppet

Once you've "finished" the pants, you may need to adjust them here and there to fit them to your puppet. Maybe the hips are too wide or the waist needs slimming. You can fix this by putting "tucks" in the waist.

1. Turn the pants inside out and put them on your puppet. Pinch the fabric to form a small triangle (a tuck), and put a pin through the fabric. See how this makes the pants tighter? Add more tucks around the pants as evenly spread as possible.

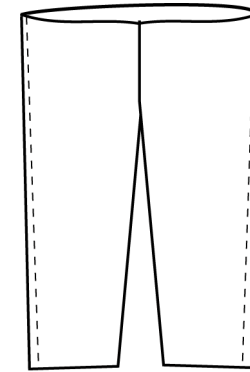


2. Remove the pants from your puppet and stitch along the inner edge of each tuck.

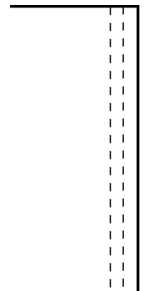


That's it! Once you turn the pants right side out, the tuck won't really show.

To make the legs of the pants less baggy, you can turn the pants *inside out* and stitch along the outer edges of the legs.



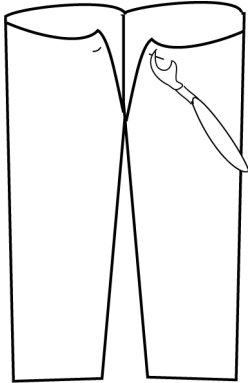
For even more drastic adjustments, you may need to turn the pants inside out and restitch some (or all) of the seams further inward. Just remember that a little goes a long way. Try stitching just a little bit further in than the original seam, then try the pants on your puppet again.



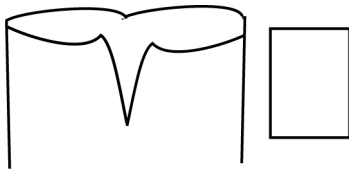
To make the pants wider, you can add extra fabric at the seam in the back.

To widen pants with no opening in the back:

1. Remove the stitches in the top section of the back of the pants with a seam ripper.



2. Cut a rectangle of fabric that's wide enough to extend the pants sufficiently plus 1/2", and long enough to cover the opening in the pants plus 1/2".



3. Hem the top edge of the rectangle by folding it under 1/4" and ironing it flat. Fold the edge under another 1/4" and stitch along the edge.



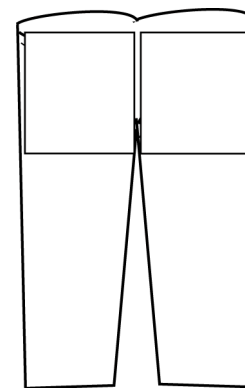
4. Turn the pants inside out and place the rectangle on top of the opened seam (right sides together!). Stitch it to the edges of the pants on both sides, then trim off any extra fabric.



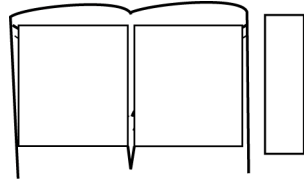
5. Turn the pants right side out and try them on your puppet again! (They should fit better this time.)

To widen pants with an opening, all you really need to widen is the opening's cover. You can either remove the cover and replace it with a wider one, or you can add a strip of fabric to the existing one.

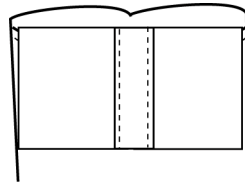
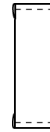
1. To add a strip of fabric to the existing cover, cut the cover in half down the middle.



2. Cut a piece of fabric wide enough to extend the pants sufficiently, and as tall as the cover plus 1/2".



3. Hem the top and bottom edges of the fabric.
4. Turn the pants inside out and place the fabric right sides together against the cut edges of the pants cover. Then stitch them together along the edges.



5. Turn the pants right side out and try them on your puppet again. (They should fit better this time!)

### Keep those pants up

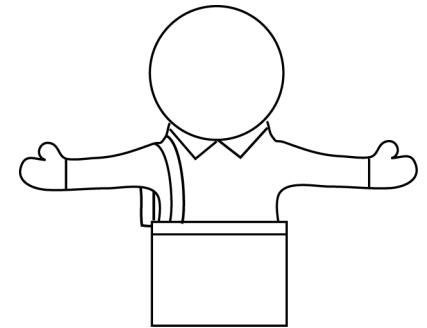
Once you've made such beautiful pants, you want to make sure they stay on your puppet. Hand puppets, in particular, tend to have flat, waistless figures that allow the pants to slide off way too easily.

Since belts don't work well for puppets (especially those that don't have waists to start with), I recommend the classic pants keeper-upper, suspenders.

These suspenders can go under your puppet's shirt (where they won't show) or they can go on the outside. Make sure to choose a light color (like white) if you don't want them to show. You can sew the suspenders to the pants or attach them with safety pins.

You can make the suspenders out of ribbon, or you can make them out of fabric:

1. Cut two pieces of fabric long enough to wrap over your puppet's shoulder from the front of the pants to the back of the pants plus 1/2". They should be twice as wide as you want the finished suspenders plus 1/2".

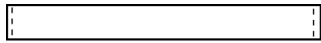


2. Fold each piece of fabric in half lengthwise right sides together and stitch the edge opposite the fold.



## Pants

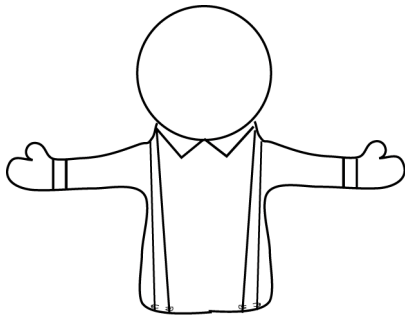
3. Turn the fabric right side out using the “Nifty safety pin trick” from page 29, and iron it flat.
4. Tuck the ends of the fabric inside the suspender (so you won’t have any loose ends to ravel), then iron and stitch the ends flat.



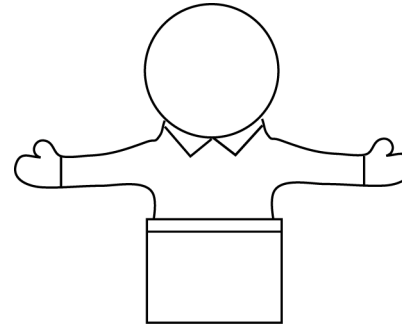
5. Make a second suspender the same way.

## Pants for legless puppets

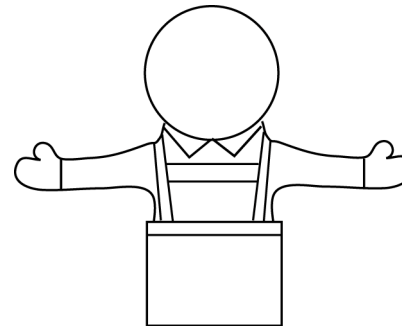
Why put pants on a legless puppet? Puppets without legs (like many hand puppets) often need the illusion of legs, and they also need more shape in their costumes. Pants can do both! You actually don’t need real pants, just their appearance. This can be as easy as making suspenders (as described in the previous section) and safety pinning them to your puppet’s shirt.



For a more sophisticated legless look, you can wrap a piece of fabric around your puppet’s lower body. Just hem the top fabric to give it a nice, finished edge. (See page 21 for instructions.) You can even add suspenders, if you like.

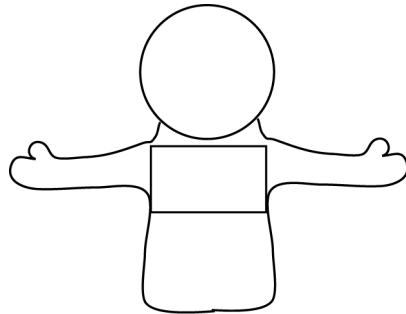


By adding an extra piece of fabric between suspenders, you can even make lederhosen! Just use the same basic recipe as for the suspenders themselves (page 95) only shorter. Then sew the fabric to the suspenders right sides together.

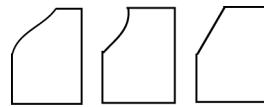


You can even turn your puppet's pants into overalls by adding a top:

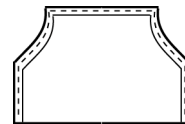
1. Cut a piece of fabric about as wide as your puppet's chest and as tall as you want the overall bib plus 1".



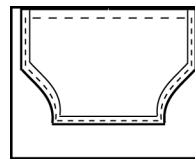
2. Fold the fabric in half widthwise. Trim the edge opposite the fold to the shape of your choice. (Remember to leave 1/2" extra for hem allowance.)



3. Unfold the fabric and hem the top and side edges. (See page 21 for hemming instructions.)



4. Place the overall bib and the pants right sides together, lining up the lower edge of the overalls with the waist of the pants. Then stitch them together.

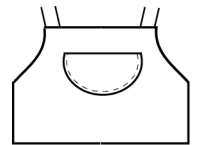


5. Make the straps according to the suspender directions on page 95. You can sew them to the overalls right sides together, or you can use a fastener like snaps, buttons, or velcro. (See the chapter "Zippers, buttons, & more" for directions.)

If you want to add a pocket, cut a piece of fabric to the right shape and size, hem the top edge, and fold all the other edges under 1/4". (You may need to snip the edge here and there to get it to turn.)



Iron the edges firmly, then place the pocket on the overall bib and stitch around all the edges except the top. (Since these stitches show, make sure to use thread that matches the fabric.)



And the overalls are finished!

