



Cinderella's sack dresses



What you need to start

This is the “little black dress” of puppet wardrobes, only better since you can make it any color or style you want. It’s also one of the easiest costumes to make. You don’t even need a pattern, but you will need:

- ✂ Fabric (enough to wrap around your puppet’s body with a few inches to spare, plus at least six inches more to make sleeves)
- ✂ Matching thread
- ✂ Lining material (same amount as fabric—this can be the same fabric, a light cotton, or even some inexpensive lace)
- ✂ Waistband (the same fabric, a contrasting one, or some wide ribbon or trim long enough to wrap around your puppet’s waist with a few inches to spare)
- ✂ Zipper (or the fastener of your choice)

How much fabric you need also depends on the length you want the dress, and on how full or tight you want it to be.

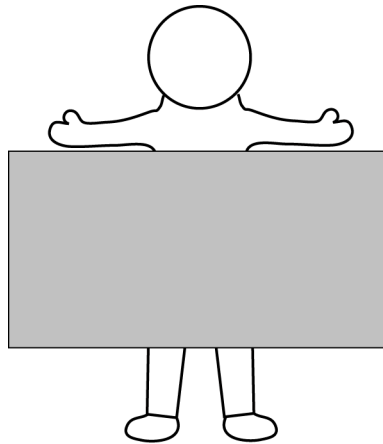
A style classique...

From the white dress she wore as an early starlet to her lavenderish outfit in the opening sequence of “The Muppet Show,” puppet diva Miss Piggy shows sack dresses can indeed be stylish.

From flapper girls and disco dresses to slinky gowns and simple bridal wear, sack dresses are great for just about any form-fitting style. As with most costumes, the fabric you choose will have the greatest impact on how the dress looks, but the length is important too.

Make the "sack"

1. Cut a rectangle from your chosen fabric that is wide enough to wrap around your puppet's body with a few inches to spare (the wider you make it, the baggier the dress will be), and long enough to reach from just under the puppet's arms to about three inches past where you want the bottom hem.

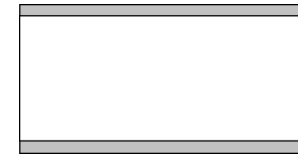


2. Cut another rectangle the same width but about two inches shorter to make the lining.

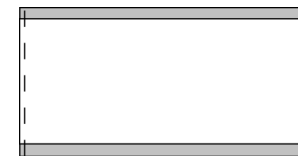
3. Place the fabric and lining rectangles right sides together, then stitch them together along the top and bottom (long) edges. It's okay for the dress fabric to bag out a little.



4. Reach inside and turn the material right side out like you would a pillowcase. Since the lining is shorter, the dress material will fold itself under a little bit (automatic hems!)



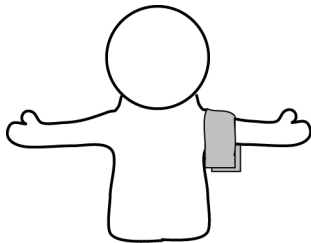
5. Baste the ends of the sack shut, making sure to catch both the dress fabric and the lining.



You can put a zipper (or other fastener) in the dress by following the instructions in the chapter "Zippers, buttons, & more."

Make the sleeves

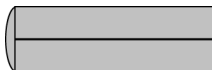
1. Cut two fabric rectangles (twice as wide as you want the sleeves plus half an inch) that are long enough to loop over your puppet's shoulder from an inch below the arm in front to an inch below the arm in back.



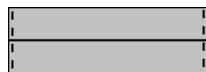
2. Fold each rectangle in half widthwise right sides together, then stitch the edge opposite the fold closed.



3. Turn both rectangles right side out (using the Nifty Safety Pin Trick), adjust them so that the seam is in the middle of the sleeve, and iron them flat.

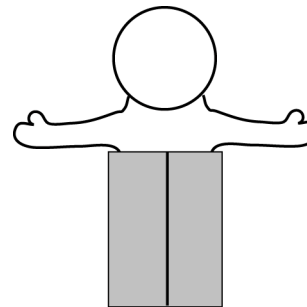


4. Baste the ends of each sleeve closed.

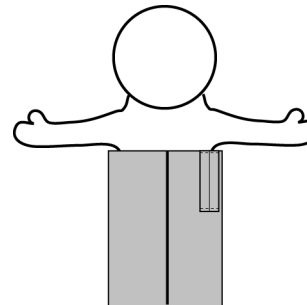


Attach the sleeves

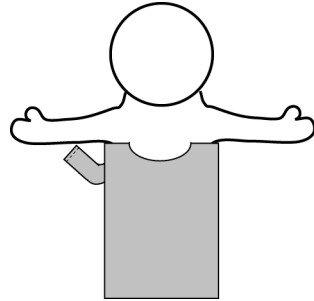
1. Slide your puppet into the dress so that the top is just below your puppet's arms. Line up the zipper (or other fastener) with the middle of the puppet's back, and smooth the extra fabric to the front of the dress. (This may be easier if you pin the dress to the puppet first to hold it in place.)



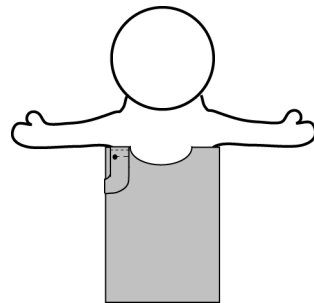
2. Place one of the sleeves on the back of the dress with the seam facing up. Match up one of the basted edges with the top of the dress, and pin the sleeve close to the edge of your puppet's body.



3. Loop the loose end of the sleeve under the puppet's arm to the front of the sack.

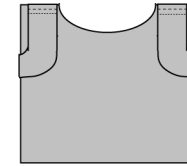


4. Keeping the extra sack fabric smoothed out of the way, match up the basted edge of the sleeve with the top edge of the sack front, pinning it close to the edge of your puppet's body.



5. Pin the other sleeve to the other side of the sack in the same way. Most of the extra sack material should end up in a pile between the two sleeves.

6. Carefully remove the dress from your puppet, then stitch both sleeves to the sack in front and in back just a hair below the basting line.

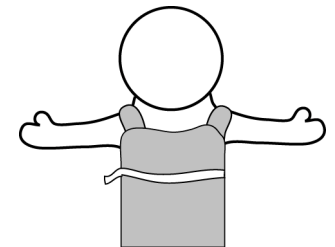


Turn the sleeves right side up. (Starting to look like a dress, isn't it?)

Make the waistband

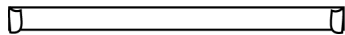
The waistband is what really pulls this dress together. You can make one using the same technique you used to make the sleeves (page 74), or you can use a ribbon or piece of lace trim. In any case, the waistband should be long enough to wrap around your puppet's waist with just about an inch to spare.

For hand puppets (especially those that don't have legs), you may want to put the waistband higher up.

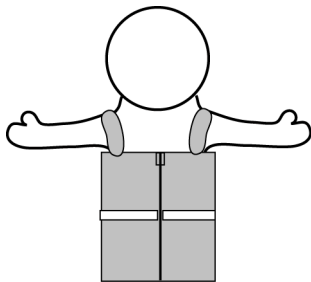


Attach the waistband

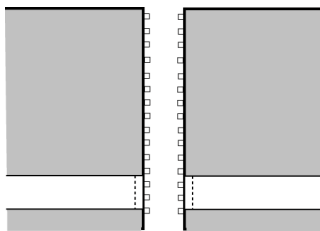
1. With the wrong side of the waistband facing up, fold the short ends of the waistband over a quarter of an inch and iron them flat.



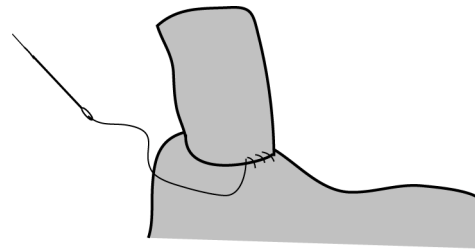
2. Wrap the waistband snugly around the dress at the height you want the puppet's waist (this should be a little higher for legless puppets) so that the ends are lined up with, but not overlapping, the zipper.



3. Unzip the zipper and stitch the waistband to the sack.



4. Arrange the extra material on the front of the dress until you get it the way you like. You may need to stitch it to the waistband and sleeves here and there to hold it in place. (This will be easiest if you stitch only the inner layers whenever possible. For information on hand stitching, please see pages 25-28.)



Congratulations!

You've finished the sack dress!
(Give yourself a hand.)

Variations & tips

By making the sack dress very short, you can use it as a dress top or shirt.

