

Shoes & accessories



Complete your costumes

Even after you've finished the main part of the costume, it may still need a few more pieces before it's complete. Whether you're looking for underclothes, shoes, belts, cummerbunds, ties, aprons, or accessories, you've come to the right chapter for completing your puppet costumes.

The great puppet cover-up

Since you never know just what might happen during a puppet performance, you need to make sure that everything you don't want the audience to see is well covered. Undergarments are as much a part of puppet costuming as the clothes that show. Besides maintaining modesty, you can also use undergarments to cover unsightly joints, unpainted limbs, and other imperfections.

You can make undergarments the same way you would a skirt or short pair of pants (as explained in their respective chapters), or you can use the simple recipe on the next page. Unless you want the undergarments to match the costume exactly, you can make them from a neutral fabric and reuse them for several different outfits. (Ginger Sweets, the marionette on the covers of this book, wears a simple white cotton & lace cover up with all her clothes.)

Dressed in the best...underwear?

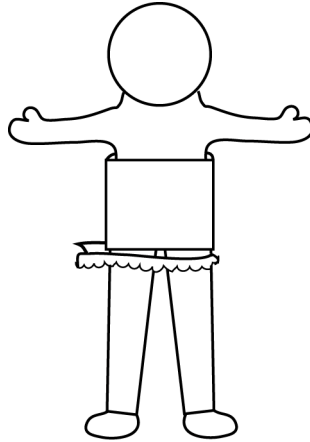
The dryer sheet underskirting for the Bo Peep (and Princess) outfits on the covers of this book was so extensive that I decided to cover the bodice with lace and turn it into an outfit of its own—the wedding gown on the inside back cover!

With an extra layer of sparkle and detachable sleeves (they button to the inside of the dress), it even became the Ginger Rogers dress on the outside back cover.

Most undergarments don't have to be that complicated (you can make extremely simple ones using the recipe on the next page), but it does go to show that even clothes that don't usually show are an important part of costuming.

To make a basic puppet cover-up:

1. Cut piece of fabric that's wide enough to wrap snugly but comfortably around your puppet's lower body plus 1/2", and tall enough to cover about half your puppet's torso.

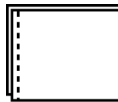


2. Cut a piece of lace, ribbon, or trim (for the bottom edge of the cover-up) that's long enough to wrap around your puppet's lower body plus 3-4".

3. Hem the top and bottom edges of the fabric using the technique from page 21.

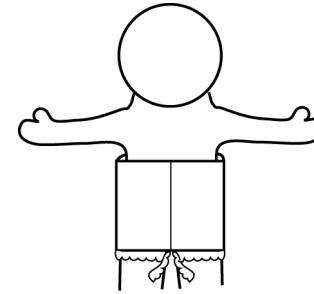


4. Fold the fabric in half widthwise right sides together and stitch the edge opposite the fold.

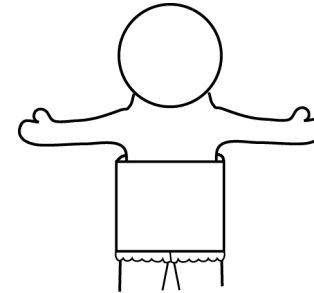


5. Turn the fabric right side out and place it over your puppet's lower torso so that the bottom of the fabric just barely covers the very top of your puppet's legs. Move the seam to the middle of your puppet's back.

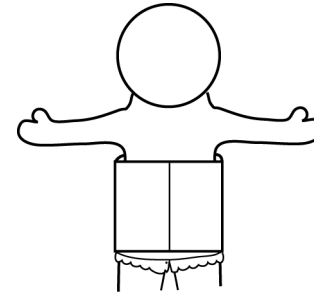
6. Wrap the piece of lace or ribbon around the bottom of the fabric and position it so there are equal amounts of extra lace or ribbon at the middle of your puppet's back.



7. For puppets who do NOT need an opening in the seat of their pants, stitch the lace to the fabric all the way around. Then pull the extra lace or ribbon in between your puppet's legs and hand stitch it to the lace or ribbon on the front.



For puppets who DO need an opening in the seat of their pants, stitch the lace to the front of the fabric (leaving the back side open). Then wrap the extra lace or ribbon in between your puppet's legs and hand stitch it to the lace or ribbon on the front. (For information on hand stitching, see page 25.)

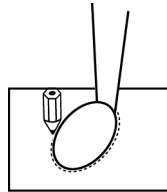


Now that's a great puppet cover-up!

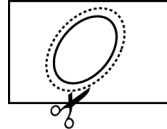
Soft shoes

These soft shoes have three main pieces—the sole, the part that wraps around the foot, and the top (optional). If your puppet has rather flat feet (1 1/2") or less, you can actually forgo the wrap-around part and just stitch the top to the bottom. (Right sides together!)

1. Trace around your puppet's foot on a piece of paper. Make sure to hold your pencil perpendicular to the paper—otherwise, the tracing could end up too small.



2. Add 1/4" to the tracing all the way around (for seam allowance) then cut out the paper.



3. Using the tracing as a pattern, cut out a piece of fabric for the sole of the shoe.

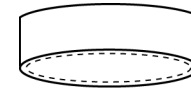
4. Cut a rectangle of fabric that's just over twice as tall as your puppet's foot and long enough to wrap completely around it with 1/2" to spare.



5. Fold the fabric in half lengthwise *wrong sides together* and stitch along the bottom edge.



6. Pin the stitched edge of the fabric rectangle to the bottom of the shoe, right sides together. Then stitch them together, removing the pins as you go.



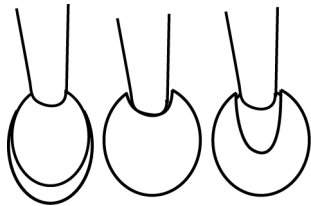
7. Stitch the ends of the fabric together, then turn the shoe right side out.



For open top shoes (like the yellow ones that appear on every cover of this book), that's all you need to do. Take a peek at the next page if you want to add straps or laces. And yes (to let the other shoe drop), you can make a second shoe the same way.

If you want to add a top to the shoe:

1. Cut a piece of fabric to the size and shape of the top of your puppet's shoe (you can practice on a paper towel first if you like), leaving an open space around your puppet's ankle for its foot to get in and out. Make sure the fabric is 1/4" bigger all the way around than you actually want it. For dress shoes, you can cut the fabric in a sort of U-shape.



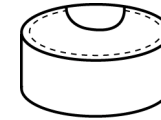
2. Cut a second piece of fabric identical to the first.
3. Place the two pieces of fabric right sides together and stitch along the top edge.



4. Turn the fabric right side out and iron it flat. Then stitch along the outer edge.



5. Pin the fabric and the shoe right sides together. Then stitch them together around the edge, removing the pins as you go.



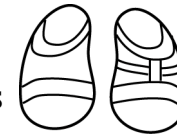
Variations & embellishments

To finish the shoes, you can make laces or straps using ribbon or strips of fabric sewn according to the

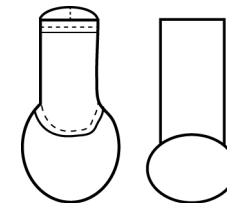


“Belts & headbands” directions on page 113. You can make very small buttonholes in the shoes by following the directions on page 33, but I recommend just sewing the embellishments to the shoe (see page 25 for hand stitching techniques).

If you want to make sandals, you can attach straps to a base made from felt (or another stiff, non-raveling fabric) that's just a little larger than your puppet's foot.



For boots, cut a rectangle of fabric that's wide enough to wrap around your puppet's lower leg and stitch it (right sides together) to the opening of the shoe. Then turn the boot inside out, stitch the back closed (right sides together), and hem the top using the directions on page 21.



Socks & stockings

I don't usually make socks or stockings for puppets since human ones work so well. You can usually find baby or doll socks that suit your puppet, and the large array of nylon sizes stretches to fit just about anything. If you can't find footwear that's just right, you can trim down ready made stockings.

Belts & headbands

You can also use this simple technique to make straps, hat bands, garters, suspenders, shoelaces, cummerbunds, and (as shown in the next two sections) ties.

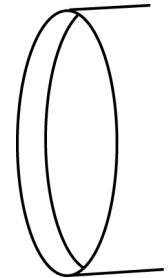
1. Cut a piece of fabric long enough to wrap around your puppet's waist (or head or whatever) with about an inch to spare. The fabric should be twice as wide as you want the finished band plus 1/2".
2. Fold the fabric in half lengthwise right sides together and stitch along the edge opposite the fold.



3. Turn the fabric right side out using the "Nifty safety pin trick" from page 29 and position the seam in the middle of the back of the band.



4. Tuck the ends of the fabric inside the band (to keep them from raveling) and iron the whole thing flat.



5. Stitch the ends of the band shut.



Depending on what you want to use the band for, you may want to stitch the ends of the band together, tie them together, attach them to an outfit, or add velcro, buttons, or snaps for easy opening and closing.

Bow ties

To make a true bow tie, all you need is a band of fabric long enough to wrap around your puppet's neck with about 6 inches to spare (which you can make by following the directions in the previous section). Just tie it on in approved bow tie fashion and your puppet is ready to go!

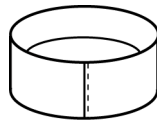
If you're not so handy with knots, you can make a pin-on bow tie:

1. Make a band (by following the directions in the previous section) from a piece of fabric that's about 6-9" long and 3-5" wide (depending on the size of your puppet and how large you want the tie).

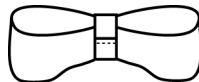


2. Make a second band from a piece of fabric that's about 2-2 1/2" wide and 4" long.

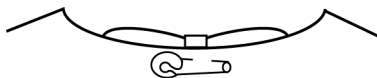
3. Sew the ends of the first band together, forming a loop.



4. Wrap the second band around the middle of the loop, pulling it tightly. Then sew the ends of the second band together and trim off the extra fabric.



5. Arrange the fabric on the front of the tie and attach the tie to your puppet's shirt with a large safety pin. (By putting the pin on the inside, it won't show.)

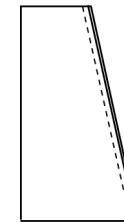


Neck ties

1. Cut a strip of fabric that's wider on one end and narrower on the other. It needs to be about twice as wide as you want the finished tie plus 1/2".

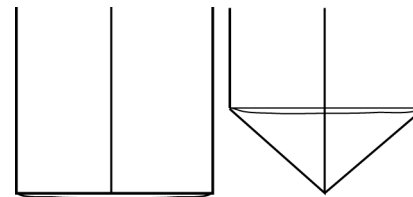


2. Fold the fabric in half lengthwise right sides together and stitch along the edge opposite the fold.



3. Turn the tie right side out using the "Nifty safety pin trick" from page 29.

4. Fold the wide end of the fabric into a point and iron it flat. To keep the point in place, you can either hand stitch the fabric together (see page 25) or use an iron-on product called "Stitch Witchery" available in most fabric stores.

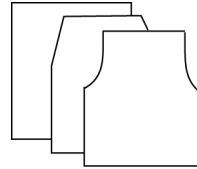


5. Finish the narrow end of the tie in the same way, and you're set!

Aprons

What would a Flying French maid outfit be without a fluffy white apron?

1. Cut a rectangle of fabric that's 1/2" larger on each side than you want the finished apron. If you like, you can trim the fabric into shape.

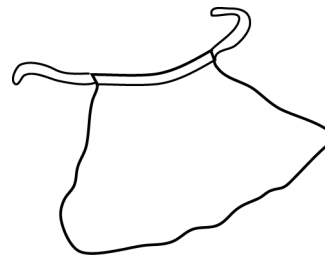


2. Hem all four edges of the fabric using the technique from page 21.



3. Make fabric straps for the apron (by following the directions on page 113), or use pieces of lace or ribbon.
4. Stitch the straps to the apron right sides together.

For a ruffled apron, you can leave the top edge unhemmed and gather it using the technique from page 22. Finish the gathered edge by sewing it (right sides together!) to a strap (page 113) or a piece of ribbon or trim.



Scarves and handkerchiefs

All you need for a scarf or a handkerchief is a rectangle of fabric. Just finish the edges (using the technique from page 21) with very small hems. Some machines have a special roller foot for this—if yours doesn't, just fold the edges of the fabric extra tightly.

Accoutrements

Your puppet's accessories are as much a part of its character as everything else it wears. Boas, jewelry, flowers, feathers, sequin and bead embellishments, or even baskets of fruit could be just what your puppet's costume needs for a finishing touch. (Imagine Carmen Miranda without a fruit hat, or a cheerleader without pom poms!)

When choosing accessories, consider how each item will look when viewed from a distance as well as close up (depending on your stage setup). Small details may not be visible from the audience's point of view, while highly contrastive accessories may draw too much attention.

No matter what kinds of ornaments you decide to use, make sure all your puppet's accoutrements are securely attached before performing!