JEAN SKIRT INSTRUCTION SHEET

Sew, what's up?

My niece Chaz is in the middle of a denim fashion crisis. She wants a new jean skirt, but those can be very expensive to buy. I show her how to convert a pair of old jeans she’s stashed away in her closet into a beautiful new skirt she can deck out any way she likes.

Here’s what you'll need:

1. Pair of old jeans that still fit at the waist
2. Chalk
3. Tape Measure
4. Sewing ruler
5. Pins
6. Scissors
7. Wrapping Paper
8. Pencil
9. Sewing machine
10. Thread, bobbin in thread that matches of compliments your denim design
11. Embellishments, as desired

Before you begin, a few notes:

You probably have a few pairs of old jeans in your closet right now, just sitting there waiting to see the light of day again. You can even revitalize a pair that’s completely out of fashion or full of holes. Re-using cast-off materials from a thrift shop or the back of your closet fulfills one of Jane's biggest rules to “Re-use, Recycle, Renew!”

Chaz chose a metallic thread to use on her jean skirt because it was part of her design to make the stitching stand out. You can get really creative with your stitching – like using an embroidery machine or a serger or making hand stitches – or just try to match the thread the manufacturer used on the original pair of jeans.

At the end of this instruction sheet, you will find all kinds of cool tips on how to make your old jeans seem new again. Now is the time to be your own designer!
First, put on that old pair of jeans:

1. Drop your arms by your side. See where the tip of your index finger hits the jean? This is a very flattering length for most people, so you won’t want to make your cut line above that point. Chaz wanted a boot length skirt, so we marked a point below her knee with the chalk. You only need to mark one side of the jeans.

2. Now, take the jeans off and get ready to mark your cuts.

3. Lay the jeans out flat and measure from the bottom of the jeans up to the chalk mark. On the other side of the jean leg, measure up the same length and make another mark. Take your sewing ruler and line up the marks on opposite sides of the leg, draw a straight line across the leg with the chalk.

4. Using the same measurement (ours was 17 ½”), mark the other leg. These are your cut lines.

5. Cut the bottom part of each leg off along your magic chalk line and set the two pieces aside. These will become your insert pieces.

6. Turn the top half of the jeans inside out, and cut away the entire center leg seam. Cut straight across the ½” manufacturer seam. When you turn the jean right side out again, it should look like the picture below on the right.
7. Lay the jeans out flat on a table. See how the area right below the zipper pooches up? Carefully rip that seam open, by cutting the thread with the seam ripper and then gently pulling the seam apart, stopping at the zipper.

8. Once the seam is open, you can make the two pieces lay flat across the front by placing one piece naturally under the other. See the difference, below?

**Now we’re going to make a pattern:**

9. Pin down the two flaps of fabric you just made out of the ripped zipper seam.

10. Cut out a piece of wrapping paper and place it in between the front of the skirt and the back. With a pencil, mark on the wrapping paper where the opening is.

   **Tip:** Don’t worry about making straight lines yet, we’ll use a ruler for that.

11. On the bottom edge, sketch out a fashionable curve instead of a straight line.

12. Label the top of your pattern – TOP – and then label the entire pattern – FRONT PANEL.

13. Take the pattern out from between the fabric. Now you can use your ruler to make two straight edges of the triangle, from the top then down each side, leaving the curved line at the bottom of the triangle.
14. Now add a ½’ seam allowance to the sides of the pattern, using your ruler.

15. Cut out the pattern piece.

Tip: Check to make sure your pattern piece fits into the gap in the front panel of your skirt by sliding it between the front and back fabric of the skirt. Notice where the seam allowance sits under the fabric in the picture below, on the right.

Now, let’s make this skirt happen!:

16. Take a leg piece and turn it inside out. There will be two seams, one on each side of the piece. You can cut either one of these sides to create your insert fabric. Cut straight along the manufacturer’s seam allowance, then spread the fabric out flat.

17. Pin your pattern piece to the fabric, placing the point of your pattern at the top of the fabric seam. You can fold your pattern piece in half to find the center point and mark it on the fabric.

18. Pin the pattern to the fabric all around the edge, laying your pins parallel to the edges of the pattern so you can cut all around the edge of the pattern.

19. Cut out your pattern piece.

20. Repeat the entire pattern process with the back side of the skirt – from step 7 through step 19, but label your pattern piece – BACK PANEL!
Note: When you have your two triangles cut out, leave the pattern piece attached so you can tell them apart when you start to sew. Another way to tell? The back piece will be a bit wider than the front piece because of the way the jeans fit your body – slightly bigger in the back!

21. Take the pins out of your front panel piece and put the pattern aside.

22. Slide the FRONT PANEL under the front of the skirt.

23. Lift up the front part of your skirt, take your ruler and measure ½” seam allowance from the edge of the top of the skirt. Replace the top of the skirt.

Tip: It’s easy to mistakenly pin the bottom layer of the skirt to the panel piece and the top layer of the skirt. To prevent this from happening, slide your ruler between the top and bottom layers of the skirt. When your pin hits the ruler, you’ll know when to angle it back up through the fabric.

24. Now, pin all around your front panel piece – pins about 1” apart, like a railroad track so your machine needle will sew right over them without breaking.

Tip: To make sure the center seam of the pattern is centered on the skirt, take your ruler and line it up with the center zipper line.
Ready to Sew and So!

1. To begin your stitch, place your needle ½” down the seam, then put the presser foot down. Backstitch back over that first ½” and then move the fabric forward, maintaining a consistent seam allowance. Sew just shy of the curve and take your foot off the pedal.

2. Manually stitch the last few stitches up to the curve so you can control the stitching by turning the hand crank.

3. Now, to make the turn up the other angle, leave the needle in the fabric and raise the presser foot. Turn your fabric along the new angle, then flip the presser foot down again. Sew around the curve, following the original manufacturer’s seam.

4. When you’ve reached the end of the seam, backstitch over the last ½”. This will close your seam and ensure the seam won’t come out. Pull the last thread and bobbin thread out and cut. Cut the threads at the beginning of the seam, too.

5. Now, go back and stitch up the second original seam to close off the stitch.

6. Pull and cut your threads, then stitch up the other edge of the panel. You can leave the edges raw so they will fray in the wash naturally, or you can add another seam all the way around to lock down the edges.

7. Repeat the process – steps 1 through step 6 in this section with the back panel.
Sew Cool Tips of the Day:

- To add a designer effect to your jeans, use a stencil with permanent fabric dye or fabric markers. I found a great piece of antique quilted fabric as a yard sale to use as the insert pieces – you don’t have to just use the extra denim from your jeans!

- Cut your jeans to a Capri length and embellish with ribbons, rickrack, sequins, whatever captures your fancy!

- Cut up the center of both legs, add rivets and lace up with cording.

- Get creative with patches and pockets, cut-out swatches of lace and other wild prints to jazz up your pockets.

- Just about any style you see in stores can be made for much less at home. Plus, you’ll be the only one wearing your unique denim fashions! Design it, sew it, make it your own!

Sew You Later, Jane

Did you know you could order DVDs of your favorite Jane’s Sew and So episodes online?

Visit www.janessewandso.com and click on the ORDER DVDS button to make your secure purchase through PayPal. While you’re there, sign up for our mailing list and receive our monthly newsletter and Tell us about the projects you’ve completed.

You can sew along with the show, pause it, rewind it, and upload it to your computer or iPhone. Most of us benefit from multiple methods of learning, so watching the DVD while following along with the written instructions will make mastering the techniques in the show “sew” much easier.

Have a slumber party with your friends. Share your favorite projects with your family, school group or scout troop! It’s Sew Easy!