

Simple 1860 Woman's Apron

Instructions:

Prepare the Apron Body

1. Buy 2 yards of cotton fabric in a 42" to 45" wide bolt. Wash and dry the fabric to take out the sizing and shrinkage. Press the fabric.
2. Make a snip a couple of inches from the top edge through the selvage edge. Tear the material across the bolt width. This will give you a straight top edge.
3. The length of an apron is half way between the knee and the ankle. Measure yourself to determine the length appropriate for you. Take this measurement and add 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". With this new number, measure down the selvage and make a snip. Tear the material across the bolt width. This is the main body of the apron.
4. The selvage edges are the sides of the apron. Since the selvage will not fray, no sewing is needed for the side of the apron unless there is writing on the selvage or it is a different color than the fabric field. In this case, fold the side outside in $\frac{1}{2}$ " and sew from top to bottom. Do this on both sides before hemming.
5. To hem the apron, measure from the torn edge $\frac{1}{2}$ ", turn it outside in and press it. Fold it one more time 1" and press. Hand or machine sew this edge.

Prepare the waistband and ties:

1. To make the waistband and ties, measure down the selvage 3 inches and tear. Do this 3 times – one for the waistband and two for the ties.
2. Measure from hip bone to hip bone. Add 2 inches. This is the length of your waistband. Cut one strip to this length. Measure $\frac{1}{2}$ " in from each short side and draw a faint line. Next, fold one of the long edges over $\frac{1}{2}$ " and press. Set this aside for further use.

3. Take a tie strip. Fold it in half lengthwise with the right side of the material on the inside. Using a ½” seam allowance, sew one short side and the long side. Turn right side out. Do the same for the other tie strip. Set these aside for further use.

Gather the Main Body of the Apron:

There are two basic ways to gather the apron. During the 1860's and a bit later, knife pleats were used. Some say that these pleats were named because a table knife was used to measure the fold or that the pleats were pressed to appear as sharp as a knife. Pulling up a gathering stitch or gauging was also used. Consult the 4-H sewing program or your sewing coach to learn these methods.*

1. When finished gathering the apron, adjust the gathering to fit along the length of the waistband between the two lines. Pin the raw edge of the waistband right-side to the raw edge of the right-side of the apron.
2. Using a ½” seam allowance, sew across the length of the waistband.
3. To attach the ties, pin the raw edge of the tie on the right side of the fabric of the waistband with the long seam of the tie along the seam of the waistband. The tie ends will be toward the middle of the apron. Do this with the other tie. Fold the waistband in half over the ties, matching the waistband seam and the folded edge of the waistband. This fold should be facing out. Pin the raw edges at the side again. Now using a ½” seam allowance, sew the short raw edges on either side closed. Adjust the seam size so that it is at the side of apron. Hint: Go over the stitches several times to insure they do not pull loose.
4. The waistband is inside out. Turn. The ties should come out to the side and the folded edge will be on the inside of the apron. Hand sew the waistband closed.

* Resource for making knife pleats: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqfFgJgiWkc>