

Britches for Boys

T-shirt Makeover for Shorts

Use these simple instructions to make a T-shirt into comfortable knit shorts for boys in Africa—the shorts will become a prized possession. Please use a new or “like-new” T-shirt for this project. (There are restrictions in some countries regarding used clothing and import taxes.) Mail completed britches to Britches for Boys, c/o Nancy’s Notions®, 333 Beichl Ave., Beaver Dam WI 53916-0683, and we’ll ship the britches to their destination. For additional information, go to littledressesforafrica.org/blog/.

SUPPLIES:

- Adult sized T-shirt (Approximate sizes: Small T-shirt = size 4–6 shorts, Medium = size 8–10 shorts, and Large = size 12–14 shorts.)
- Rotary cutter, mat, and ruler
- Matching all-purpose thread
- 1 yd. drawcord elastic
- Stretch Needle, size 75/11
- Optional: Twin Stretch Needle, size 4.0 mm/75
- Optional: Seam sealant such as Fray Check™
- Optional: 1½ yd. cotton cording

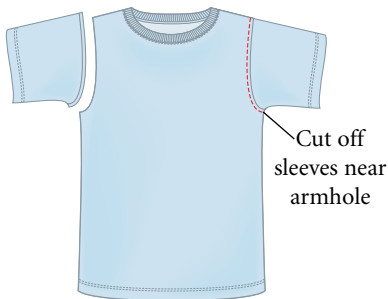
INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Prepare T-shirt.

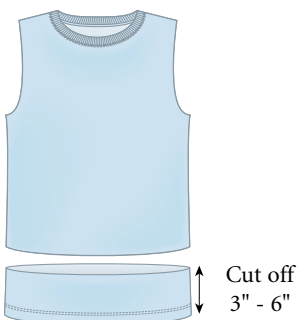
- Lay a T-shirt flat on a table in front of you with hem toward you and neck closest to the opposite side of the table.
- Lay sleeves flat and to each side of the shirt.

2. Cut leg pattern from the T-shirt.

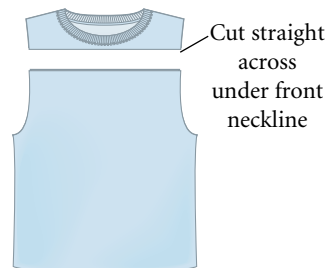
- Cut off both sleeves near armhole seams. These rounded cuts will become the crotch of the shorts.



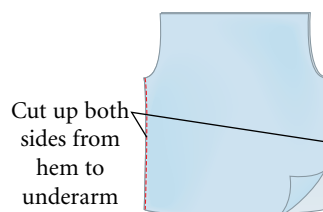
- Determine shorts length. Cut off 3"–6" from the bottom of the T-shirt, depending on shorts length.



- Cut a 2¼" band from the fabric trimmed off the bottom of the T-shirt and set aside. (waistband)
- Mark a straight line across pattern just under the front neckline ribbing, the same distance from each shoulder seam. Cut along this line through both layers of the T-shirt.



- Cut open each side from the hem to the underarm. These two pieces are the legs of the shorts.

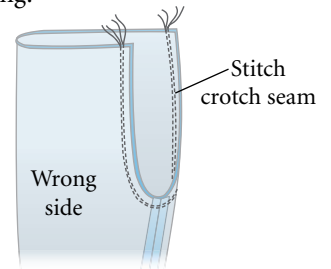
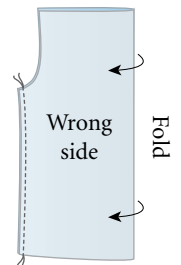


Note: This technique is especially good for shirts with logos as they will remain intact on the sides of the finished shorts.

3. Complete the shorts.

- Insert a Stretch Needle, size 75/11.

- Sew or serge each leg seam, right sides together, with a ¼" seam.
- Turn one leg right side out. Tuck the leg that is right side out inside the other leg, meeting right sides and matching leg seams and curved crotch area.
- Stitch or serge crotch area, using a ¼" seam. For added reinforcement, restitch the seam close to the original stitching.



4. Prepare the waistline.

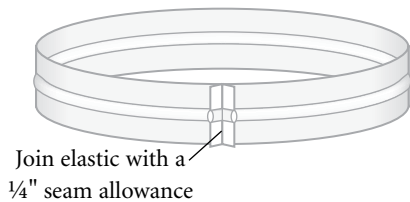
- Quarter mark waistline with pins or a fabric marking pen.
- Trim the length of the 2¼" wide waistband that was set aside.
 - Measure the waistline of the shorts and add ½" for seam allowances.
 - Trim waistband to the measured length.

- Stitch short ends of the new waistband; press seam open.
- Quarter waistband with pins or a fabric marking pen.
- Match waistband to waist, right sides together. Position seam at a side; stitch with a 1/4" seam. Press toward waistband.

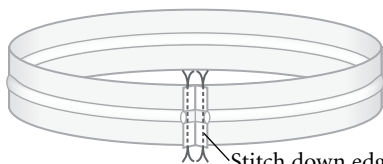
Note: If you prefer to make a corded waist instead of using drawcord elastic, eliminate steps 5–7. Simply leave an opening in the waistband seam for the cording and match that seam to the front of the shorts. Turn down and stitch waistband casing so that it measures about 1" from the seam to the fold, and stitch in the ditch of the seam. Trim excess waistband fabric and add cording through the opening in the seam.

5. Prepare the drawcord elastic.

- Cut the elastic 4"–6" smaller than the waistline measurement of the shorts.
- Join short ends of the elastic with a 1/4" seam allowance.

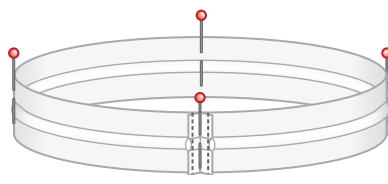


Open seam. If desired, stitch down edges of the seams.



Stitch down edges of seam allowance

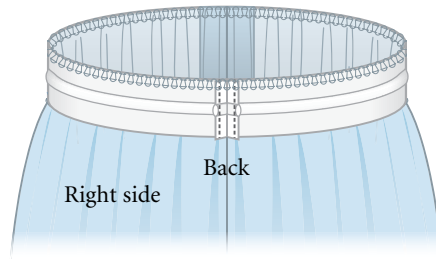
- Quarter-mark the elastic with pins or a fabric marking pen, using the seam as one of the quarter marks.



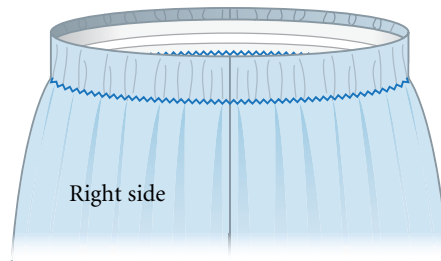
6. Attach the elastic.

- Meet right side of the elastic to right side of the garment, positioning elastic seam at the center back of the waistline.
- Match quarter marks of elastic and garment. Pin.

- Stitch or serge the upper edge of the elastic to the cut edge of the waistband, removing pins as you come to them and stretching elastic to fit. If you're serging, be careful not to trim the elastic.



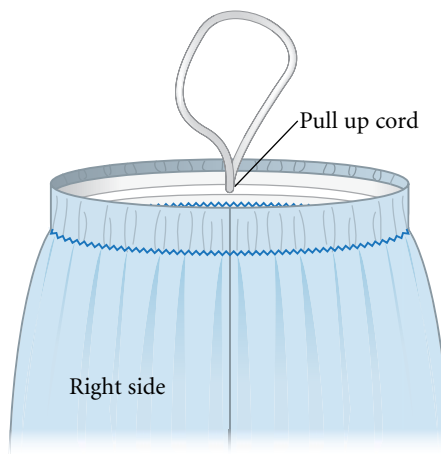
- Fold the elastic to the wrong side of the waistband. Pin at side and center seams. Use a sewing machine to zigzag the lower edge of elastic to the garment, using a 4.0 length and a 4.0 width, stretching the elastic to fit. Stitch from the right side of the garment to keep stitching just above the waistline seam. As an option, use a straight stitch. Stretch elastic and stitch in the ditch from the right side of the waistband.



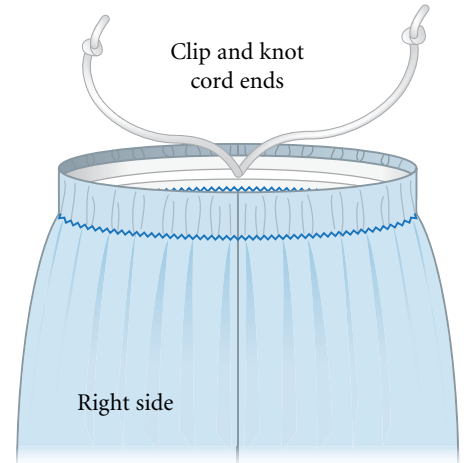
Note: To make sure the waistline seam is covered on the wrong side, you may want to baste the elastic in place from the wrong side first.

7. Complete the draw cords.

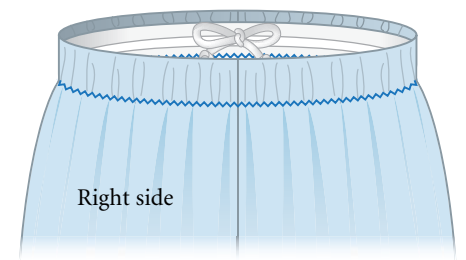
- Pull up cords through middle of the elastic at center front.



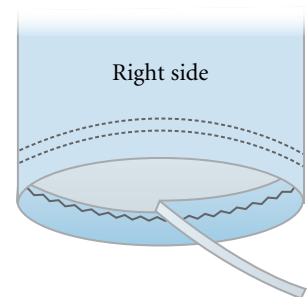
- Clip the cords and knot the end of each cord. Optional: Apply seam sealant to cord ends.



- When wearing the garment, pull up the cords to fit. Tie ends for a comfy, adjustable waistline finish. Cords tie on the inside of the shorts.



8. Hem shorts using your favorite method. A Twin Stretch Needle makes a great hem on knits. Fold up the hem and stitch from the right side, following your machine manual instructions for twin needle stitching. Trim excess hem allowance.



Project Design: Modified instructions provided by The Lutheran Quilting Group, Necedah WI
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