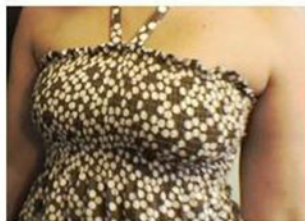


[1] Shirring is rows of elastic thread that are done to shape and decorate parts of garments, for example the yoke of a dress or the top of a full skirt.

It can be used instead of darts.

It works better on soft fabrics.

The best effects are gained from using fabric that is cut on the cross/bias, as this is the natural stretch of the fabric that will give the best effect.



[2] Use a good quality elastic thread

Hand wind it on to the bobbin without pulling or stretching the elastic.

Make the stitch length longer than normal (3.5—4).

For a top-loading bobbin, the thread must go through the thread-guide notch (orange arrow). This gives the tension (avoids squiggles on the back of the fabric).

Test the tension first. What you want is to, after sewing a section of shirring, have the fabric stretch back to its original width without sliding along the shirring.

If the stitches come out too tight (which they might do for lightweight fabrics like voile), you can loosen the bobbin screw slightly—just a 1/4 or 1/2 turn.



[3]

Practice on a piece of scrap fabric from the fabric you are using.

Work out how far apart you want the rows to get the desired effect.

This enables you to check that it is going to give the right effect, gather the right amount etc.

Your fabric will need to be about twice the desired final width before you start shirring.

Now do the real thing...it could be a good idea to mark the lines with a ruler and chalk first.

Sew a straight line (lock your first stitch). Have the fabric right side up so the elastic thread is on the inside of the garment.

Lift up the presser foot and needle, make a loop of elastic thread on the edge of the fabric by starting sewing again on the side that you finished on last time (sew the side seams or whatever to make sure the elastic is secure before you cut these loops off).

OR make sure you leave long ends that can be easily tied off. Forward and reverse several times to make sure the elastic is anchored - otherwise it can unravel easily. It is actually easier to shirr around a finished garment than to sew seams after shirring.

Once all the rows are sewn, give both sides a good iron with lots of steam. This helps gather the shirring even more.

If shirring around a neckline or on a sleeve, starting about 1/2 or 1 cm away from the edge will give a ruffle look finish.

