

Applaud Gray Blossom Dress

Baby Lock serger expert Chris Tryon shares another unique project created with the [Applaud Creative Top Cover Stitch serger](#)! She used an existing pattern and modified certain steps based on her preferences. Intermediate to advanced sewists can follow her process below, while consulting the pattern.

Materials Needed:

[Baby Lock Applaud](#)

This [pattern](#) or similar

Applaud Instruction and Reference Guide that came with the machine

[Cord Guide Plate](#)

[Micro Insert Feet Kit](#)

Needles

Fabric, such as a gray cotton woven with stripes

Black organdy ribbon in two sizes, 9mm & 5mm

[Black 12wt. cotton thread](#) for the wipers

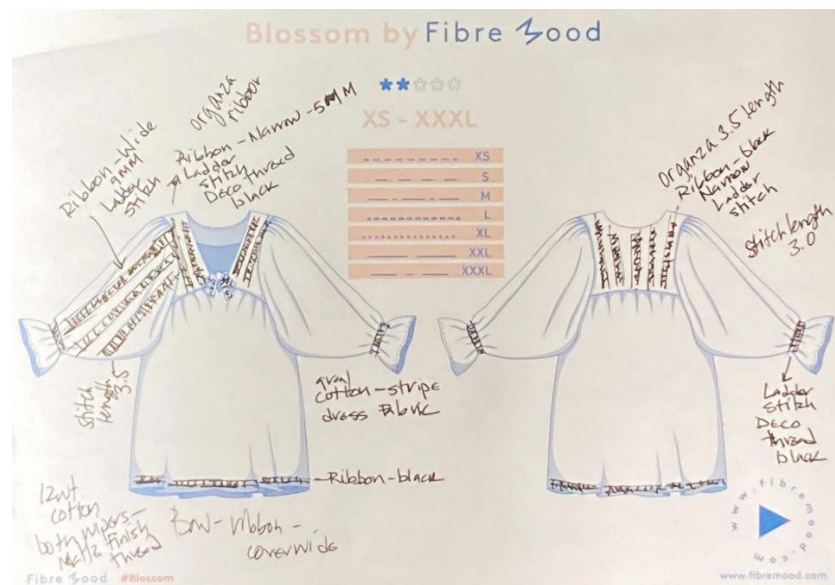
[Black overlock thread](#) for the needles and chain looper

[Decorative thread](#) (optional)

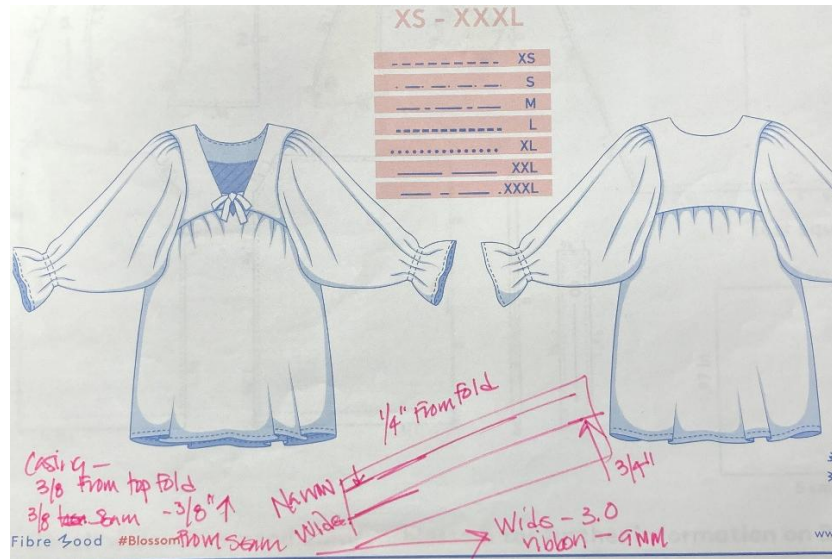
Elastic for sleeves, as noted in the pattern

Fabric marking tool of your choice

While hunting for the ideal pattern for my next project, I came across [Blossom by Fibre Mood](#). When the Baby Lock Applaud came along, it was the perfect match. My first step was to determine what techniques/embellishments I want to use on this dress. I printed a couple of copies of the pattern front cover and started drawing on the graphic. I noted what details I wanted to add, and where, along with notes and a design plan. From there, I figured out fabric, thread, trims, and anything else that came to mind. With the introduction of the [micro insert feet](#) for the Applaud, I just had to use the [taping micro insert foot](#). You can watch my [SEWED video here](#) to learn more about this kit.

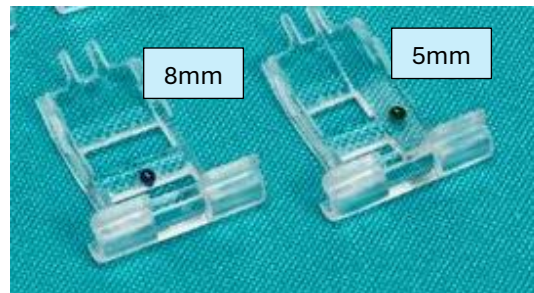


Details and placement added to the bodice and sleeves to create the stripe design with the [8mm & 5mm Taping Micro Insert Foot](#).



Details for the hem using the 8mm Taping Micro Insert Foot along with a chain stitch detail.

I rushed off to my stash of fabric, thread, and notions to find the perfect materials for the vision swimming in my head! I found a lovely gray cotton woven with a subtle woven stripe pattern, a black organdy ribbon in two sizes, 9mm & 5mm, black 12wt. cotton thread for the wipers and black overlock thread for the needles and chain looper.



The selected fabric, threads, and ribbon with my technique inspiration drawn on the dress featuring the 8mm & 5mm Taping Insert feet.

First, I cut out the **pattern pieces; sleeve, bodice front and back, facing, skirt front and back and the ties.**

Then I focused on the embellishment, texture, and details needed for the bodice front and back, sleeves and skirt. When I work on projects like this, I prefer to do all the fun stuff first, then I construct it and execute any minor touch-ups.

I used my leftover fabric for testing techniques, determining how to handle the fabric, and how to align the ribbon and yarn while stitching. This step is where my decorative thread and stitch length

are finalized. I suggest testing out new techniques before you start your final draft, too. I make a lot of notes and always pin my test samples to my design boards for future reference.

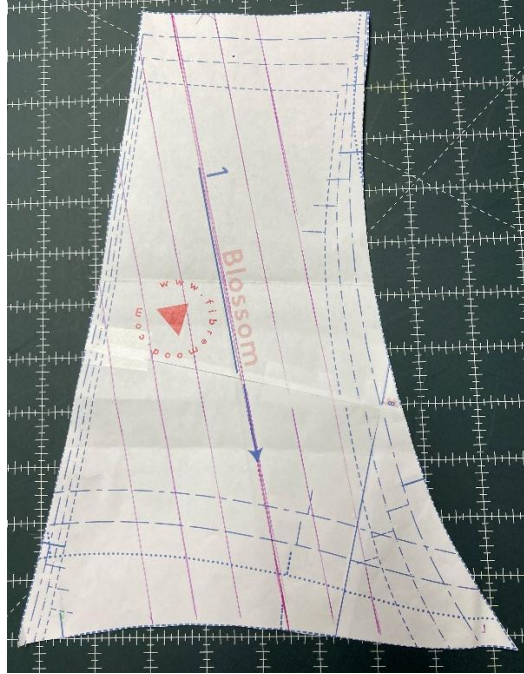


Wipers threaded with 12wt. thread with overlock thread in the C1/C2 needles and chain looper and my test stitch sample.



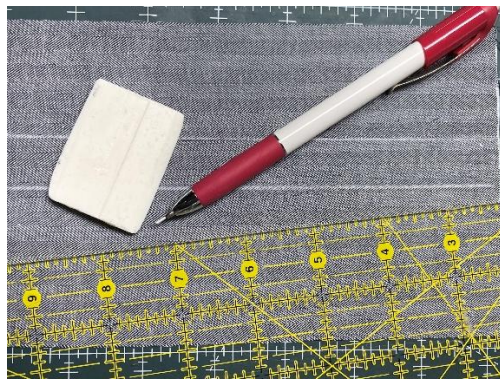
My design board filled with stitch and techniques samples.

The fabric I used was pretty stable, but I decided to use spray starch on the bodice pieces, front and back. You could use a woven fusible stabilizer or a knit stabilizer on these pieces instead. Using an erasable pen or pencil (mechanical) I marked **six lines $\frac{3}{4}$ " apart** on the bodice front pattern piece.



Bodice front placement markings.

This is a great way to see the position of the marked lines and make sure it's the look I want. With the line placement set, the next step was to mark the fabric with a fabric marking tool. I used a mechanical chalk tool because I like as fine of a marking as possible.

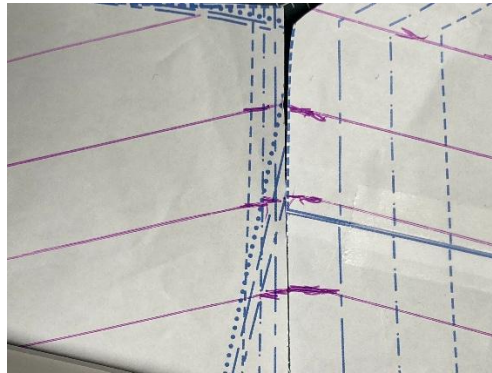


Marking bodice front pieces using the bodice placement lines the pattern piece. Marking tools used were a chalk mechanical pencil and disappearing (wax) chalk marker.

I followed the same steps to mark the back bodice. Because I had to piece my back bodice, I ended up having to place the wider ribbon on the seam and ended the **narrow ribbon technique 1½" from the wider ribbon**. This was one of those “make it work” moments. Before marking the fabric on the back bodice piece, I made sure that the markings at the shoulder were aligned.



Back bodice pattern piece marked.

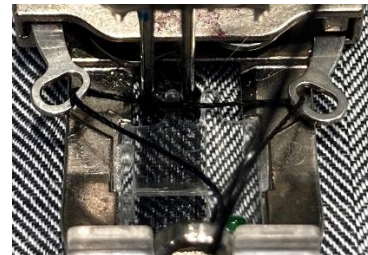


Bodice front and back pattern pieces aligned shoulder seam to ensure alignment is correct. Alignment of stitching on shoulder seam.



Once the alignment was correct, the back bodice piece was marked using the same marking tool as the front bodice pieces.

I set up my machine, made sure the **5mm left Taping Micro Insert** was in position, added 12wt. cotton thread in both the left and right wiper, threaded the C1 & C2 needles, threaded the chain looper and set my **stitch length to 3.5**. I liked the longer length because the stitch looked like small pearls! Then, I was able to guide the ribbon through the **Taping Micro Insert foot**. If you need some guidance, check out the [Baby Lock website to view instructions](#) on how to use this insert set and watch a quick video on exchanging the micro insert feet.



5mm Taping Micro Insert in position on the combination foot with the ribbon place in the first guide, then the second with the final step testing the ribbon position with the C1 & C2 needles.

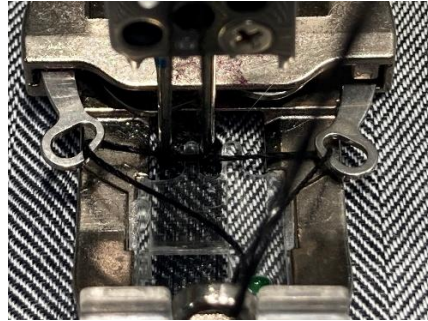


The stitch sample, all looks good and next is the bodice pieces.

After my ribbon test was a success, it was time to add the decorative technique to the bodice pieces! I placed the fabric under the presser foot, positioning the marked line between the C1 and C2 needle, which aligns the C1 needle on the left side of the ribbon, and the C2 needle on the right side of the ribbon.



Marking on fabric with C1 needle aligned with the left side of the ribbon.



Ribbon left on ribbon reel for stitching.

I stitched over each of the marked lines on each bodice front and the bodice back. When using ribbon, I try to leave it on the ribbon reel rather than cutting the needed pieces.

With both front bodice front pieces completed, it was time to work on the back bodice piece. Following the same steps, I stitched the narrow ribbon on each of the marked lines on the back bodice piece, except for the center back.

To complete the center back, I **removed the 5mm insert and added on the 8mm insert foot**. Then I moved the **C2 needle to the C3 position, with the stitch length at 3.5**. I positioned the **9mm organdy ribbon in the 8mm insert foot**, then centered the ribbon over the center back, and stitched.

Quick tip: there are times when I load the ribbon/tape in the insert first and then insert it into the combination foot. This does require pulling the stitches off the needle plate. Simply raise the presser foot and pull slack on the needle threads and pull, gently, on the thread chain.



Ribbon in 8mm insert.



8mm Taping insert in position on the combination foot.



Marking on fabric centered between the C1 & C3 needles.

With each of the bodice pieces completed and the decorative details added, I was ready to press each piece. Before I did this, I tested my iron setting to ensure that the ribbon was able to handle my selected heat setting. Once pressed the bodice pieces were set aside, and it was onto the next piece of the garment!

For the sleeve I wanted to create a bolder stripe pattern on the fabric using a wider organdy ribbon and the **8mm Taping Insert foot**. Because of all the stitching and ribbon, I felt that my fabric needed a little body for strength. I decided to add spray starch to each sleeve piece, making sure that the fabric was dry before marking the fabric and stitching. Next, I marked the center of each sleeve from the shoulder to the hem. The next **marking I made was 1 ¾" from the center marking** on both sides. I continue to place a **marking 1 ¾"** from the previous marking across the sleeve piece. I ended up with 19 markings on the sleeve.



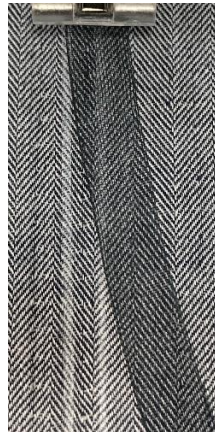
Finished sleeve with ribbon technique.

For my sanity, I did add **another marked line, ½"** to the left of each marked line, and aligned the C1 needle and edge of the ribbon with this marking. I found it hard to see the marking under the ribbon and was getting tired of removing stitches! I positioned the fabric under the presser foot with the marking on the fabric centered between the needles and the left marking aligned with the C1 needle and the edge of the ribbon. I stitched the ribbon to the fabric on each of the marked lines, resisting the urge to pull on the ribbon. Once the needle catches the ribbon the guides on the insert will keep the ribbon in place while stitching! All that you may have to do is remove the ribbon from

the spool or prevent the ribbon from becoming tangled or knotted. With both sleeves completed I pressed them, front and back, and set them aside.



Marked line centered
between C1 & C3 needles.



Additional marking 1/8"
from first marking.



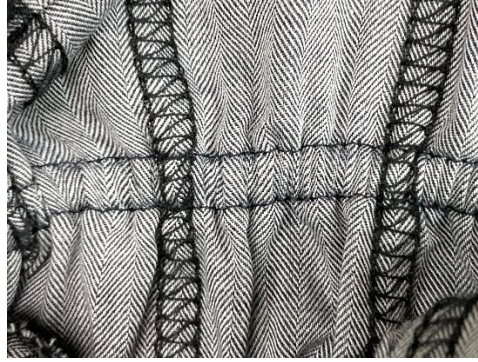
8mm Taping insert with organdy ribbon.

The pattern instructions called for an elastic casing on the inside of the sleeve. Wanting a little more impact, I decided to place the casing on the right side of the sleeve and use a contrasting black fabric. Using the pattern piece, I cut out the casing piece and **pressed the fabric edges (lengthwise) under using 3/8" seam allowance as in the pattern**. Then using the **wide top cover stitch, 12wt. thread in both wipers, stitch length of 3.5**. I stitched on the right side of each casing piece making sure to center the stitch.



Top Cover stitch on the casing fabric.

Following the pattern instructions, I positioned the casing on the sleeve and stitched in place using a **straight stitch**. To hide the stitching, I placed it on the outside of the **wide top cover stitch**. After completing this step, I inserted the elastic and then stitched inside of the seam allowance on both sides to secure the elastic in position.



Inside of sleeve showing the stitching that secured the casing to the sleeve.

It was finally time for construction! Following the pattern instructions, I stitched together the skirt pieces front and back using the suggested seam allowance. When working with indie patterns, the **seam allowance is typically $\frac{3}{8}$ "**. There are two stitch types I use, **4-thread overlock** or a **3-thread overlock narrow** to finish the fabric edges and then use a straight stitch and press the seam open.



4-thread overlock seam pressed to one side.



3-thread overlock narrow to finish fabric edges, straight stitch seam with seam pressed open.

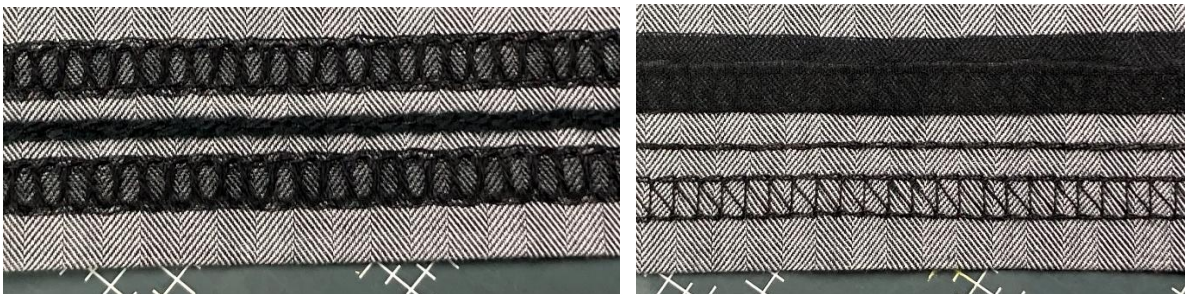
The 4-thread overlock was the seam of choice for the skirt. I choose this because my fabric could handle the weight of this seam type, which helps the skirt hang nicely. Before moving onto the actual seam, I always mark a fabric piece the seam allowance, **in this case $\frac{3}{8}$ "**, and position the fabric under the presser foot aligning the marking with the O1 needle and looking at the position of the fabric edge. Then I stitch, watching carefully to make sure the fabric edge is where it should be.



Marked seam allowance, $\frac{3}{8}$ ", and alignment with O1 Needle. Position of fabric edge on side door and needle plate.

This is where I go off script from the pattern instructions. My preference is to hem the skirt and then stitch the bodice and skirt together. Because of the specialty techniques that I am stitching on the hem, the less fabric or bulk the better. The **hem was pressed in place, 1 ½"**. After pressing the hem in place, I basted the hem in place rather than using pins or double-sided fusible stay tape.

I then added two rows of ribbon and wide top cover using the 12 wt. cotton thread in both wipers, the same stitch technique as I did on sleeves. For the folded edge, I measured **in $\frac{3}{8}$ " and marked a line the length of the fabric**. Next, I added an **$\frac{1}{8}$ " marking on the left (close to the fold)**. Using the same measurements, I marked a stitching line at the top of the hem. Using the 8mm Taping Insert, I stitched the ribbon on the marked lines and following the instructions in the **Applaud Instruction and Reference Guide pages 63-65, Hemming in the Round**. I overlapped the stitching and ribbon about a **$\frac{1}{2}$ "-1"**, trimmed the ribbon close to the stitching, and brought my wiper and needle threads to the back following the instructions.

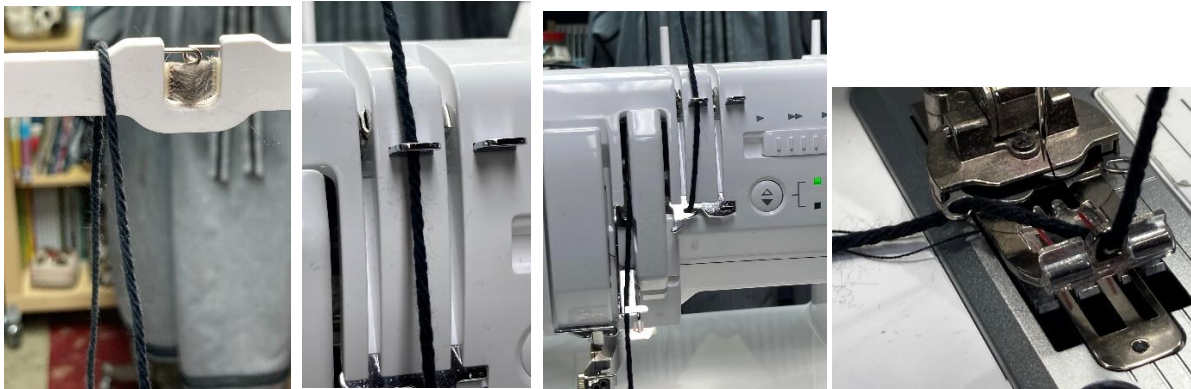


Two rows of top cover stitch, cover wide, using the 8mm Taping Insert foot creating the hem technique. On the back of the hem I added a fine knit stay tape to cover the hem edge and stitching.

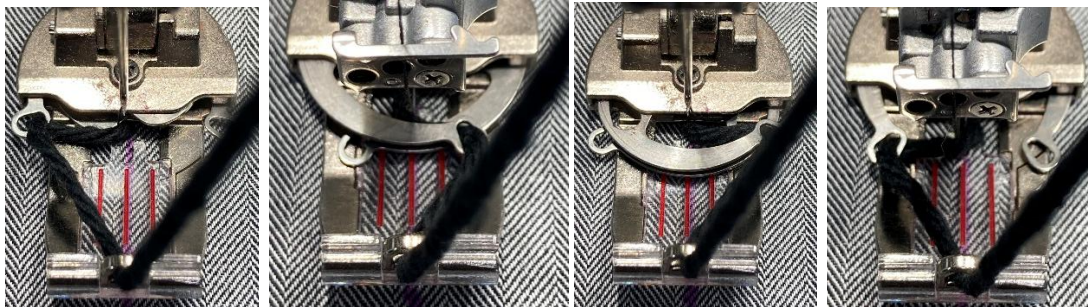
After stitching and looking at the hem, I felt it needed something. The space was calling for the **chain stitch with a decorative thread in the wiper**. I found the perfect yarn, a cotton 2.5oz. I set up the machine for a **chain stitch, C2 needle position with overlock thread in both the chain needle and looper**. I threaded the **yarn in the left wiper**.



Chain stitch C2 needle position with overlock thread in both the needle and chain looper. Yarn was placed on thread strand with several yards removed from the yarn ball.



I draped the yarn over the thread antenna and placed it in the bypass guide, and in the next two guides, before placing in the guide at the toe of the combination foot, and then the left wiper.



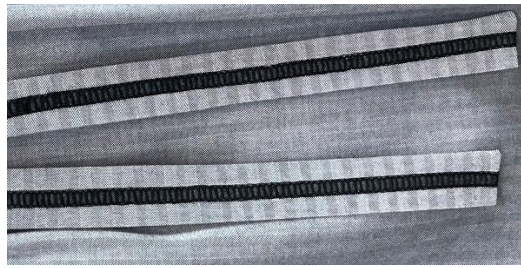
Wiper movement to create the stitch; (1) open, (2) partially closed, (3) closed, (4) partially open



Stitch for the hem; Top Cover Chain Stitch – stitch length of 3.0 using the cotton yarn.

For the dress's ties, I added the **top cover stitch, cover wide** using the 8mm Taping insert and wider ribbon, placing the ribbon in the center of the tie. To help, I marked the center of each ribbon

piece and marked an additional line an 1/8" to the left to align the C1 needle, basically following the same steps that I used on to stitch the ribbon on the sleeves.



Ribbon application added to the ties.

With that completed, I constructed the ties, pressed, turned and pressed them.

The bodice was next. Following the pattern instructions, I constructed this part of the dress, including positioning and adding the ties.



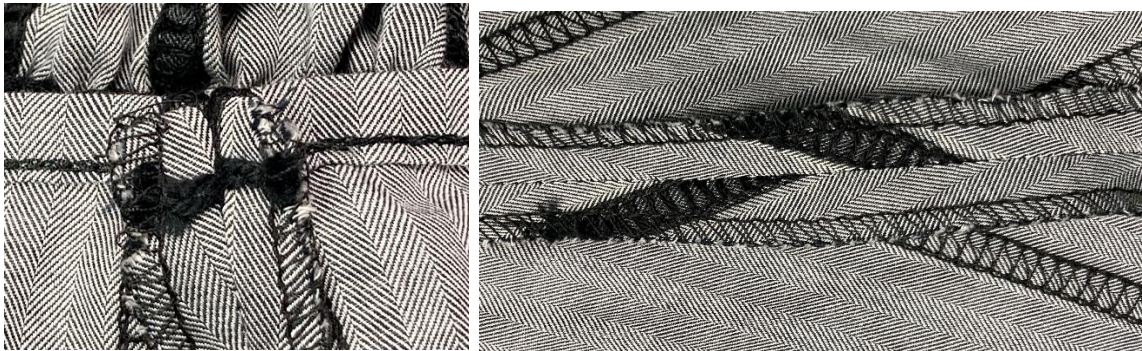
Tie added to the bodice and the completed look.

Next was the sleeve. First, I added gathering stitching on the sleeve cap. Rather than hem the sleeve after constructing, I chose to hem the sleeve first. Using the suggested hem depth, I pressed the **hem, 1", and again for a double fold and a 1/2" hem**. Rather than using a straight stitch, I decided to use the **chain stitch** with a cotton yarn in the left wiper, same stitch technique as the skirt hem. With a **3.0 stitch length**, I stitched the hem in place. With the sleeve hem completed, it was time to stitch the sleeve seam.



Right side and wrong side of sleeve hem.

At this point, I could attach the bodice to the skirt. From here, I carefully followed the instructions, especially because of the gathering on the skirt. Next, I moved on to constructing the sleeve seam. Because I decided to press this seam open, I did use a **3-thread narrow** to finish the fabric edge before stitching the sleeve together.



Sleeve seaming – at sleeve hem and sleeve body.

Finally, I attached the sleeve to the bodice and skirt. With a final press, my dress was done!!! I was so happy with the result.

Over the years I have found I most enjoy an experimental process, just having fun with fabric, threads, ribbons, accessories, and attachments. Complete freedom while boosting my confidence and fine-tuning my skill set! With the introduction of the [Applaud](#), [Micro Insert Feet](#), [Cord Guide Plate](#), and all the compatible serger attachments, I discovered another joyful creative process!