

Charlotte Skirt Sewalong #5: Hemming (& we're done!)

<http://byhandlondon.com/2013/02/04/charlotte-skirt-sewalong-5-hemming-were-done/>

May 15, 2013

This is it guys. The last post in our [Charlotte skirt sewalong](#). The only thing stopping us from being sad it's all over is that now we get to plan the [Elisalex dress](#) sewalong...!





If you're needing a little last minute catch-up, or have just joined us, you can find all the previous sewalong posts listed below:

Today's final post will cover all things hem – making sure you get the right length, our three favourite hemming techniques and adding in an optional back split for added walkability...

We're desperate to see what you've made! If you'd like you and your Charlotte skirt to be featured in our round-up, please send us your high-res images to elisalex@byhandlondon.com, or share what you've made on our [Facebook page](#) and [Flickr pool](#). You can [tweet](#) and [instagram](#) us @byhandlondon using the hashtag #charlottesewalong. We will be posting the round-up this time next week, Monday 11th Feb, so you still have a week to finish your skirts!

Getting the right length

This is, of course, such a personal choice which will depend on your height just as much as your style. The pattern itself comes with extra added length so you can adapt it to suit you. Here are a few tips and pointers:

- If you have opted for the ruffle hem variation, or have decided against the back split, bear in mind that the Charlotte skirt is *very* fitted. It is wise to cut your skirt on or just above the knee; any longer and you will truly come to understand why they call these "wiggle" skirts!
- Try your skirt on and, looking in the mirror, mark with a pin where you want the hem.
- Take off your skirt and lay it flat on the table. Add an inch from where you marked the pin for your hemming allowance, and then mark your cutting line straight across using either tailors chalk or a row of pins. Use a tape measure to make sure you're not cutting it slightly higher on one side!
- Hack off the excess length!



Three ways to hem

There are obviously more than three ways to sew a hem – and each technique has its particular garment that it is best suited to. With the [Charlotte skirt](#) we are sewing a plain straight hem, meaning that the fabric to be hemmed is on the straight grain and has little or no fullness to ease in. It is important to remember to hem your [lining](#) a little shorter than the skirt's final hemline to avoid it showing through! The three techniques we suggest for hemming the Charlotte skirt are:

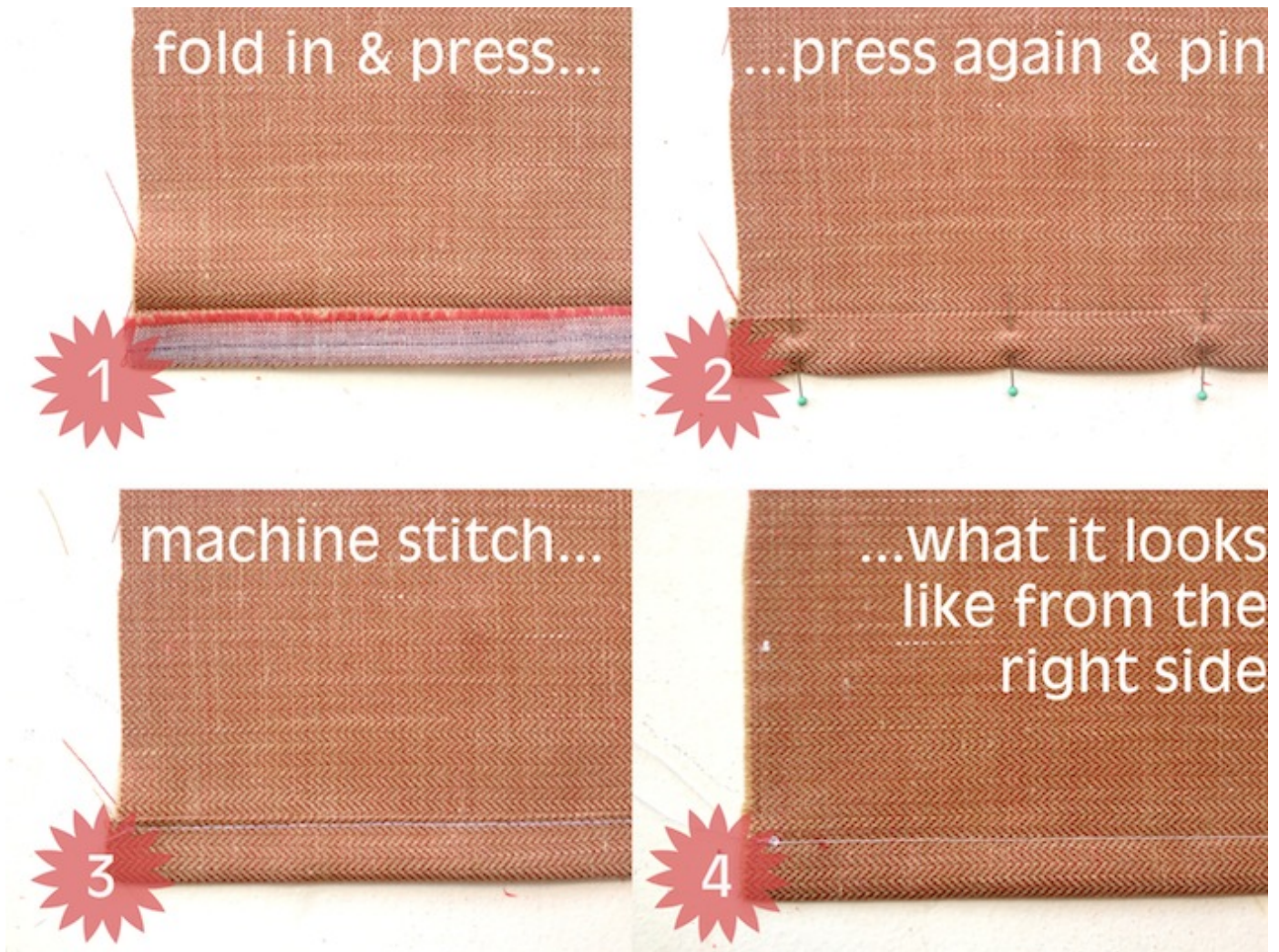
- a basic machine stitched hem (fastest and easiest as long as you don't mind the visible stitching. We used this method to hem the lining)
- a basic blind stitched hem (invisible from the right side)
- a tape faced hem (invisible from the right side *and* pretty on the inside)

Before you hem: if you are thinking of adding in a back split, you will need to unpick the centre back seam by about 4" before deciding on your hemming technique. Details on finishing the back split immediately follows these hemming techniques

Basic machine stitched hem:

- Fold and press the hemline in by half an inch (fig.1 below)
- Fold and press it in again by half an inch, thereby hiding the fraying raw edge. Pin into place (fig.2)
- Select a straight stitch, medium length, and machine stitch, keeping an even distance from the end of the skirt – use the notches on your machine to the right of the needle as a guide (fig.3)

- From the right side there will be a visible line of stitching at the hem (fig.4). You can either use thread in the same colour as your fabric so it is less noticeable, or choose a thread of a contrasting colour and maybe even a fancy decorative stitch.



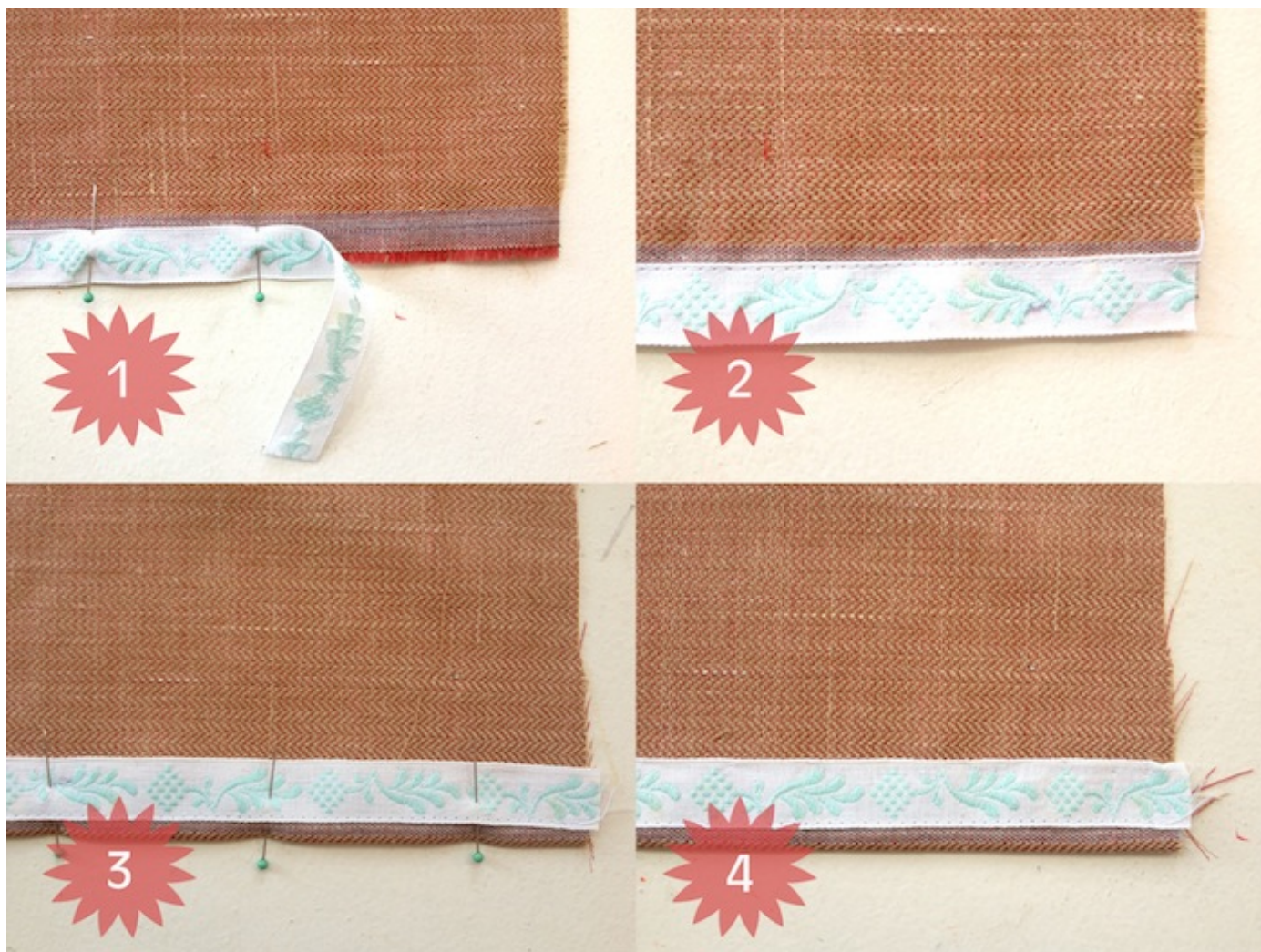
Basic blind stitched hem:

- Press the hemline in twice, as above.
- Blind stitch, as shown [here](#) (fig.1 below)
- From the right side your hem will be invisible (fig.2)



Tape faced hem (the prettiest one!):

- Cut a length of decorative trimming tape such as Petersham ribbon, lace tape, bias binding etc and pin it right side facing you to the right side of your skirt's hemline (fig.1 below). You want the tape to fall just below the skirt's raw edge so that when you turn it in to stitch it, the raw edge will be completely hidden.
- Machine stitch the tape to the hem (fig.2)
- Fold and press the taped hem in, and pin into place (fig.3)
- Blind stitch the tape to the skirt (fig.4). From the right side the hem will be invisible, and from the inside the hem will be hidden by the tape. Perfect!

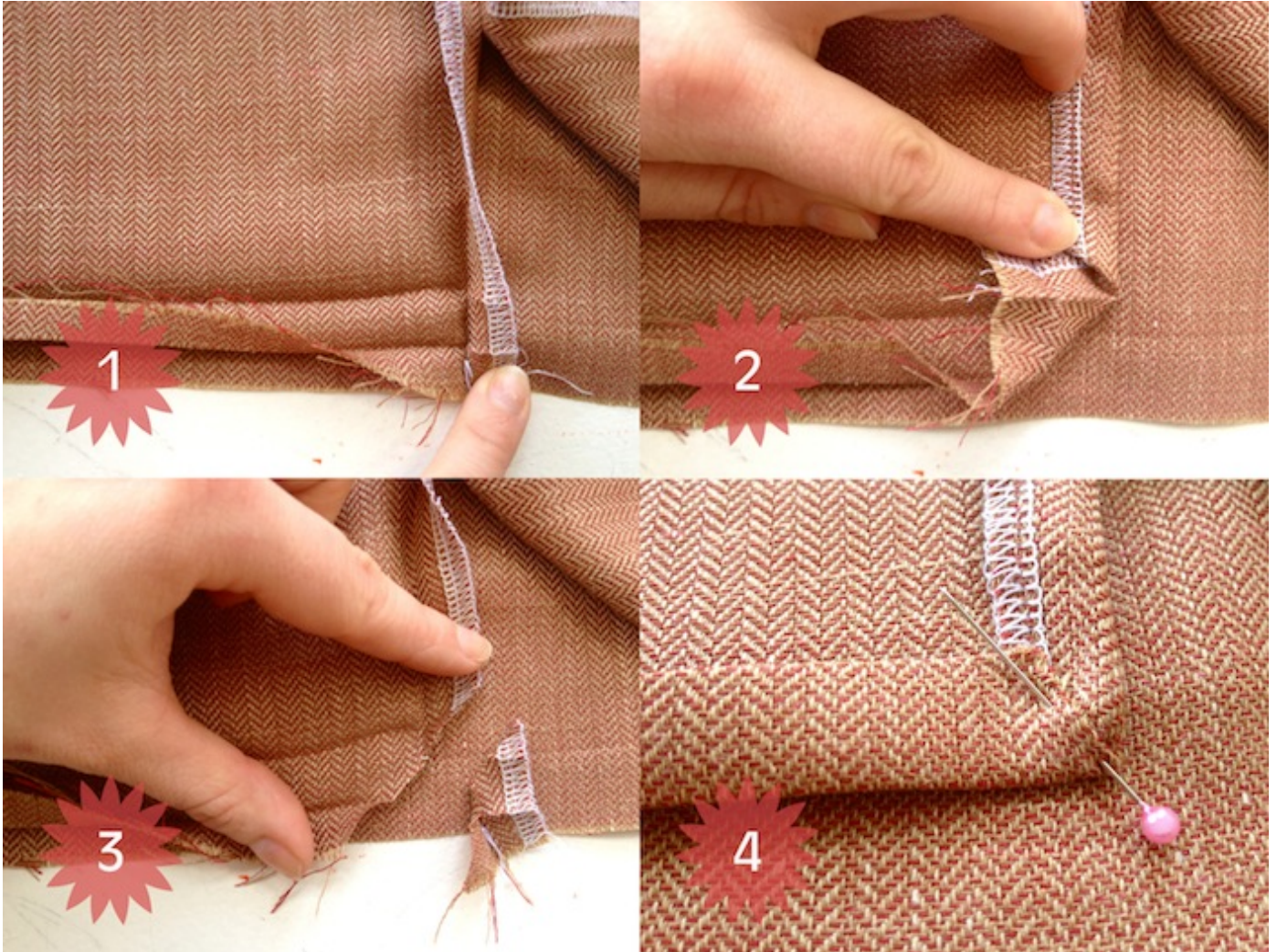


The back split

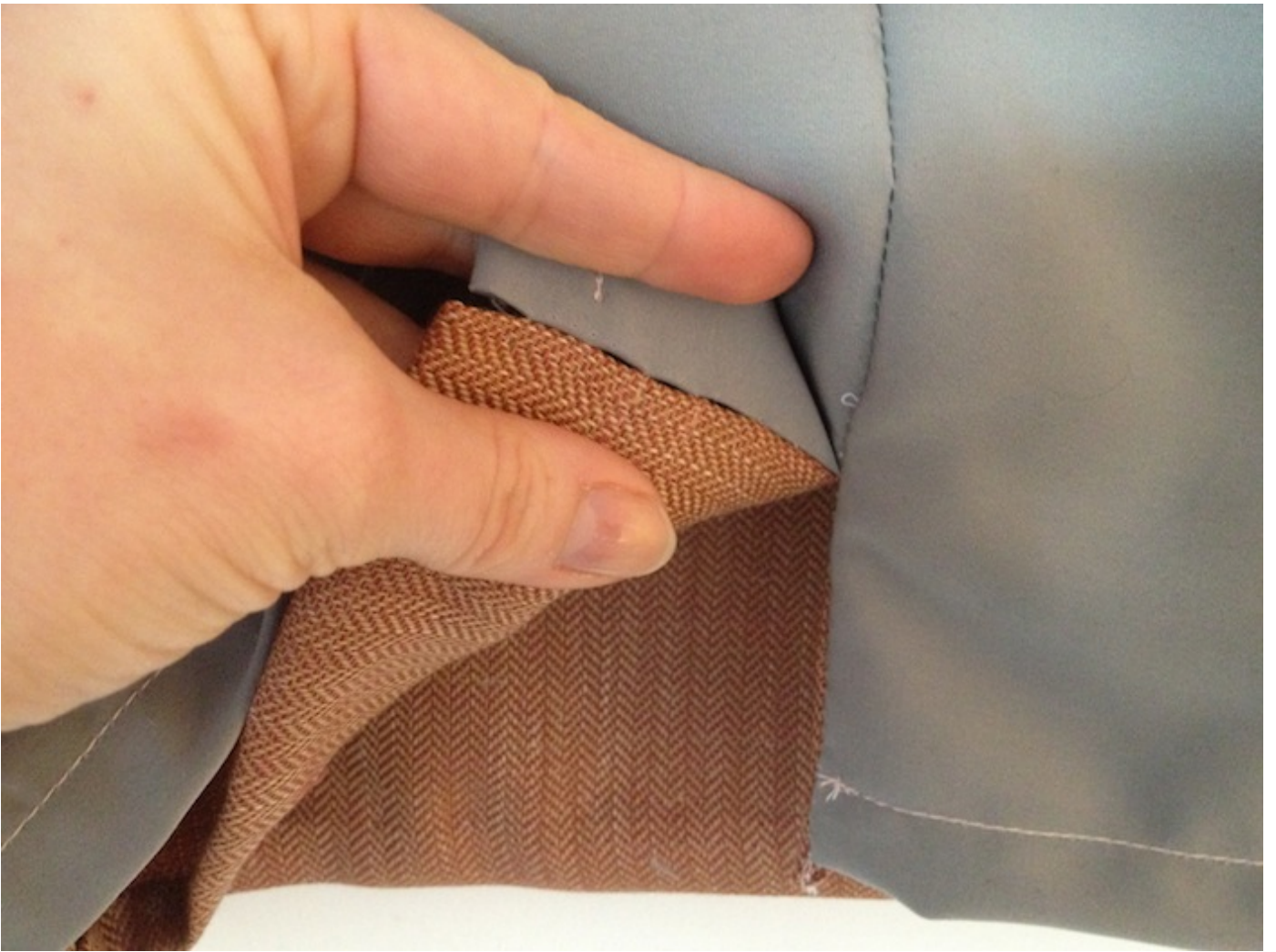
To make the [Charlotte skirt](#), which is snug and form fitting by design, more wearable on a daily basis, adding a simple back split will give your legs a little more room for stepping out. To get a perfect right angle at the corners of your back split we use a technique called Mitering. This a folding method that eliminates bulk and hides raw edges, leaving you with a perfect corner.

- Unpick the centre back seam by about 4" (this will equate to a 3" split once hemmed, so just unpick more if you want a longer split). Reinforce the point where the stitching on the centre back seam finished by stitching and back stitching a few times
- If you have chosen to hem by machine stitching or blind stitching, fold and press the hemline in twice, and press the edge of the back split and open it all out so you can clearly see the fold lines, as shown below, fig.1
- If you have chosen to tape face your hem, follow steps 1 & 2 of tape facing and then fold and press your hem in once. Press the edge of the back seam and open out.

- Fold the corner inwards diagonally across the point at which the pressed folds meet and press (fig.2)
- Trim the corner about 10mm from the diagonal fold (fig.3)
- Now first fold in the diagonal fold, then fold the back split edge over it and lastly fold up the hemline. It should all meet up a perfectly unbulky and neat miter (fig.4). Pin the miter and hem as desired.



To keep things really neat, we blind stitched the back split of the lining to the back split of the shell...



And here she is! Front and back and inside out...



And we're done! We really hope you've enjoyed sewing along with us, we've had a blast and absolutely cannot wait to see what youz lot have made!





For now, over and out.

x Elisalex, Charlotte & Victoria

UPDATE ALERT!

Remember [Elisalex's NYE party Charlotte skirt](#)? It was short, it was sexy and we have just updated [Sewalong #3: Peplums & ruffles!](#) showing you exactly how we did it. It's not too late...