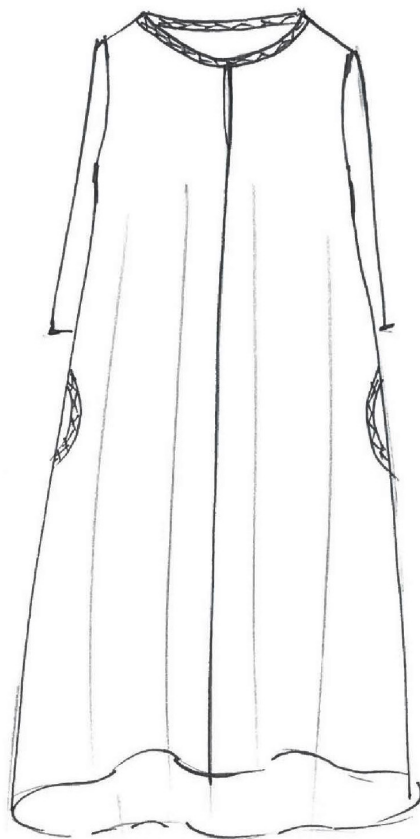




The School of Making



KEYHOLE DRESS INSTRUCTIONS

For use with *Alabama Stitch Book*, *Alabama Studio Style*, *Alabama Studio Sewing + Design*,
Alabama Studio Sewing Patterns, and *The Geometry of Hand-Sewing*

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KEYHOLE DRESS INSTRUCTIONS

1. BASTE NECKLINE, ARMHOLES, AND FRONT POCKET OPENINGS

To ensure that the neckline, armholes, and front pocket openings don't stretch while you're constructing your garment, use a single strand of all-purpose thread to baste around the neckline and curved edges of each piece.

2. ADD STENCILING AND/OR EMBROIDERY (OPTIONAL)

If you choose to stencil and/or embroider your project, add your design to the right side of the cut top-layer pieces, and let stenciled images dry thoroughly. Add embellishment as desired using The School of Making Book Series for inspiration. If you are adding beads, avoid beading in the 1/4" (6mm) seam allowance.

3. PREPARE FOR CONSTRUCTION

Choose whether you would like your garment to have inside or outside floating or felled seams (see The School of Making Book Series). Pin the fabric's wrong sides together for seams visible on the outside of the garment; pin with fabric's right sides together for seams that are finished on the inside of the garment.

When pinning knit seams for construction, it is important to follow a method we call "pinning the middle". With right sides together for inside seams and wrong sides together for outside seams, start by pinning the top of your seam, and follow by pinning the bottom of your seam. After pinning both top and bottom, place one pin in the middle, between the two initial pins. Continue by pinning in the middle of each set of pins, until your seam is securely pinned and ready to sew.

Unless otherwise noted, all of our garment patterns use a 1/4" (6mm) seam allowance.

4. SEW THE CENTER FRONT AND CENTER BACK SEAMS

See page 5 of this document for basic sewing instructions, or reference The School of Making Book Series for more in-depth instruction.

Thread your needle with button craft thread, "love your thread," and knot off. Using a straight stitch, sew the pinned pieces together, starting at the notch at the center front and stitching 1/4" (6mm) from the fabric's cut edges down to the bottom edge. Be sure to begin and end the seam by wrap-stitching its edges to secure them. Fell each seam by folding over the seam allowances to one side and topstitching them 1/8" (3mm) from the cut edges (down the center of the seam allowances), using a straight stitch and wrap-stitching the seam, clipping the notches before you fell the seam.

Repeat this process to sew the center-back seam, starting at the top edge and continuing to the bottom edge.

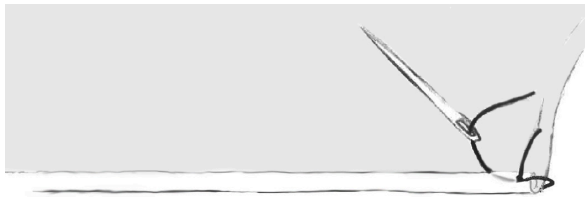
5. SEW KEYHOLE

Working with your front panels, you will now secure the keyhole opening with what we refer to as a ladder stitch. This stitch is also known as a blind stitch, hidden stitch, or slip stitch. Working above the felled seam, roll the edge of the panel under 1/8", then another 1/8" for a 1/4" (6mm) total. Gently place pins or clips to hold the rolled edge. Thread your needle with a single strand, love your thread, and knot off four or five times. You will start at the top of the keyhole and insert your needle from the front of rolled edge to the back, wrap stitching the top of the seam.

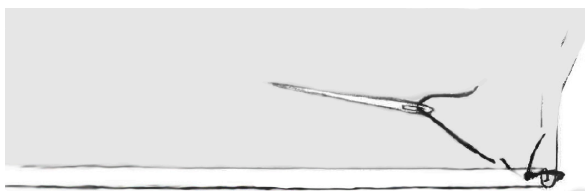


5. SEW THE KEYHOLE DETAIL (CONT'D)

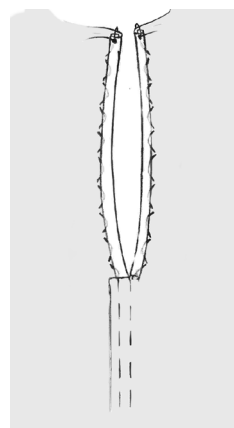
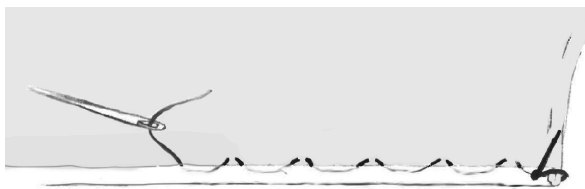
With your needle on the back of the fabric you will now stitch the seam. Insert your needle 1/8" (3mm) down through the rolled edge from the top, hiding your thread inside the roll.



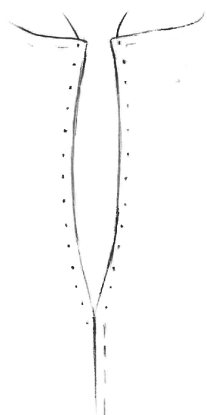
You will now catch a couple of strands of thread on the front of your garment, pulling your needle through gently. You do not want to pull this tightly, as that will accentuate the stitches you are trying to hide.



Repeat these steps, moving down the edge until you get to your felled seam at the Center Front. We recommend stitching between 1/8" (3mm) - 1/4" (6mm) between the blind stitches.



Back View of Finished Keyhole



Front View of Finished Keyhole

6. SEW SHOULDER SEAMS

Next, pin the shoulder seams with raw edges aligned and sew the seams, starting at the top edge of the armhole and stitching 1/4" (6mm) from the fabric's cut edges to the neckline. Begin and end each seam by wrap-stitching its edges across to secure them. Fell your seams, if desired, toward the back of your garment, down the middle of your seam allowance.

7. ADD SLEEVES (OPTIONAL)

Add sleeves by pinning your cut sleeves to the Keyhole Dress armholes with the right sides together for inside seams (or wrong sides together for outside seams) and matching the sleeve's edges with the edges of the front and back of the dress. Pin pieces together securely, working in excess fabric with pins. Use a straight stitch to attach sleeves and then fell the seams toward the sleeves, if desired.

8. ADD POCKETS

The Keyhole Dress has a scooped pocket on the front of the garment. Take your front pocket bag and align it along the edge of the scoop where the pocket bag starts. Pin or baste the front pocket bag to the front pocket opening, then you will apply binding over the opening, catching both the front and the front pocket bag. See step 10 for information on how to apply binding.

Once your binding has been applied, match the back pocket bag to the front and use a straight stitch to sew the pocket bags to each other along the curved side, 1/4" (6mm) from the edges. This will create a full pocket bag on the front of your garment.

9. SEW SIDE SEAMS

Pin the constructed front and back panels together at the side seams, with right sides together, and follow the instructions in step 1 for sewing the panels together, careful to not catch the pocket opening. Fell your seams, if desired,

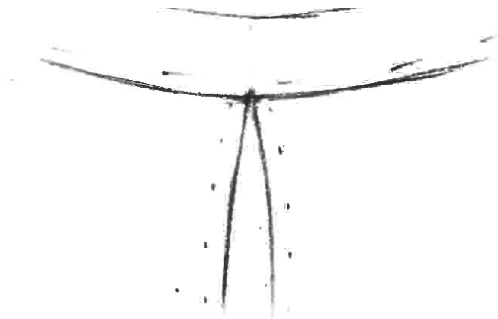


towards the back of your garment down the middle of your seam allowance.

10. BIND NECKLINE AND ARMHOLES

Use a rotary cutter, cutting mat, and plastic ruler to cut 1 1/4"-wide strips of leftover fabric across the grain to use for binding the neckline and armholes. Attaching binding will be easier if you cut one continuous piece—for example, cut one neckline binding strip that's long enough to go around the entire neckline. You will need approximately 30" if constructing a dress with sleeves, or approximately 60" if constructing a sleeveless dress.

For the neckline, you will first pin or baste the center front edges of the keyhole together. They will "kiss" at the top, and the binding will be sewn over the opening in a continuous strip.



Use an iron to press each cut binding strip in half lengthwise, with wrong sides together, being careful not to stretch the fabric as you press it. Start at the Keyhole Dress's center-back neckline and encase the neckline's raw edge inside your folded binding, pinning or basting the binding in place as you work. At the center-back point, overlap your binding's raw edges by 1/2" (12mm) to finish, trimming away any excess binding. Using the stretch stitch of your choice (see page 6), sew through all layers and down the middle of the binding. Repeat this process to finish the other front pocket opening. Remove or simply break the neckline and armhole basting stitches by pulling gently on one end of the thread. If some basting stitches are embedded

in the binding, it is fine to leave them in place since the thread is broken and the stitches will not restrict the fabric's stretch.

For the front pocket opening, starting at the side seam, encase the front pocket's raw edge inside of the folded binding, and baste the binding in place. Continue the binding's raw edges to the side seams at the top and bottom, trimming any excess binding. Using the stretch stitch of your choice (see page 6), sew through all layers and down the middle of the binding. Repeat this process to finish the other front pocket opening. Remove or simply break basting stitches by pulling gently on one end of the thread. If some basting stitches are embedded in the binding, it is fine to leave them in place since the thread is broken and the stitches will not restrict the fabric's stretch.

(Optional) If you choose to make your garment sleeveless follow this step for the armhole binding. For the armholes, starting at the side seam, encase the armhole's raw edge inside of the folded binding, and baste the binding in place. Overlap the binding's raw edges at the side seam by about 1/2" (12mm), trimming any excess binding. Using the stretch stitch of your choice (see page 6), sew through all layers and down the middle of the binding. Repeat this process to finish the other armhole. Remove or simply break the armhole basting stitches by pulling gently on one end of the thread. If some basting stitches are embedded in the binding, it is fine to leave them in place since the thread is broken and the stitches will not restrict the fabric's stretch.



BASIC SEWING INSTRUCTIONS

Provided below are notes on our basic construction and sewing techniques. For more thorough instructions on stenciling, embellishment, and construction, reference The School of Making Book Series, shown on page 7.

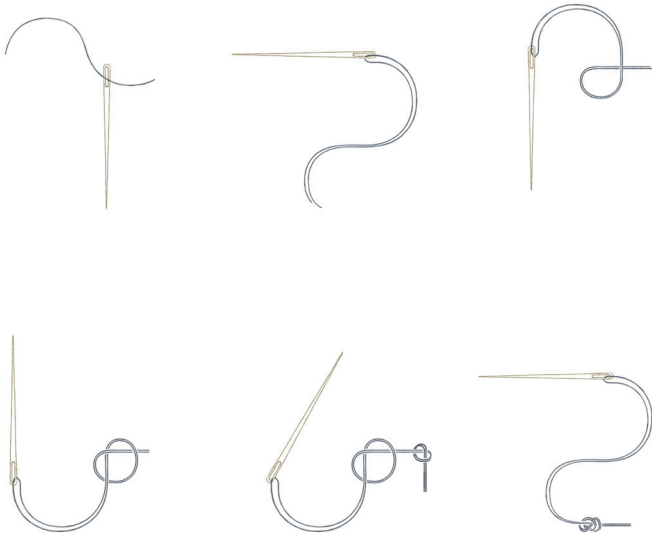
LOVE YOUR THREAD

To love your thread, cut a piece twice as long as the distance from your fingertips to your elbow. Thread your needle, pulling the thread through the needle until the two ends of the thread are the same length.

Hold the doubled thread between your thumb and index finger, and run your fingers along it from the needle to the end of the loose tails. Repeat this several times to release the tension in the thread, and then double-knot your thread.

KNOTTING OFF

After loving your thread, make a loop with the thread, then pull your needle through that loop, using your forefinger or thumb to nudge the knot in place, flush with the fabric. Then repeat this process to make a double knot. After making a second knot, cut the thread, leaving a 1/2" (12mm) tail.



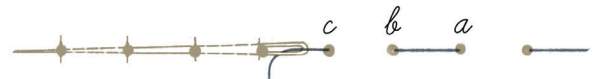
In hand-sewing, your knot anchors and holds your entire seam. One important design decision we make when starting any project is how to handle the knots. There are two options: knots that show on the project's right side (outside) and knots that show on the wrong side (inside). Either of these knots can be used throughout an entire project.

STRETCH AND NON-STRETCH STITCHES

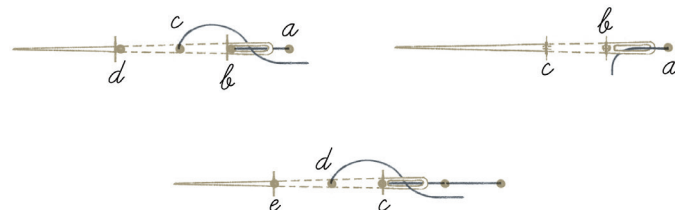
We use three categories of stitches in our work: stitches that do not stretch, for construction, reverse appliqué, and other embellishments; stitches that do stretch, for sewing necklines, armholes, and other areas in a project that require "give"; and stitches that are purely decorative, for embellishment. Following are examples of non-stretch and stretch:

NON-STRETCH STITCH

STRAIGHT (RUNNING) STITCH: Bring needle up at A, go back down at B, and come up at C, making stitches and spaces between them the same length (about 1/8" (3mm) to 1/4" (6mm) long).

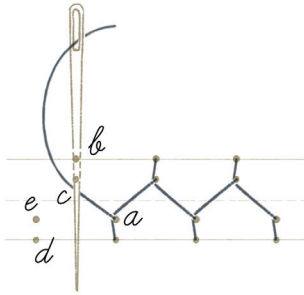


BACKSTITCH: Bring needle up to A, go back down at B, and come up at C. Then insert needle just ahead of B, and come up at D. Next insert needle just ahead of C, and come up at E. Continue this overall pattern.

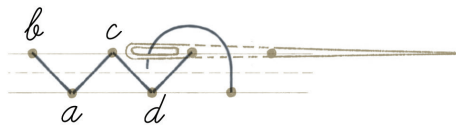


STRETCH STITCH

CRETAN STITCH: Bring needle up at A, go down at B, and come back up at C, making a downward vertical stitch while bringing needle over thread. Insert needle again at D, and come back up at E, making an upward vertical stitch while bringing needle over thread. Continue to repeat stitch pattern.



ZIGZAG STITCH: Bring needle up at A, go down at B, and come back up at C. Insert needle again at A, and come back up at D. Insert needle again at C, and come back up at E. Continue to repeat stitch pattern.



SEAMS

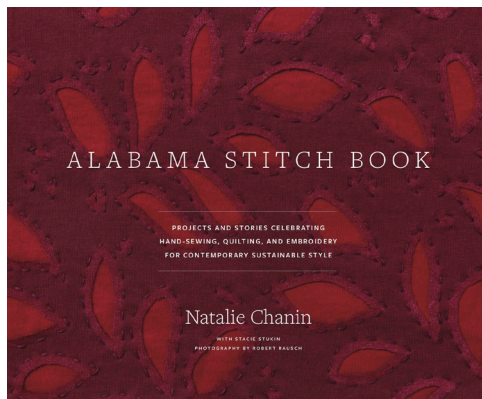
To start a seam, make a double knot, and insert the needle at point A. Wrap your thread around side of the fabric to the front, insert the needle on the side of the fabric to the front, insert the needle back in at B, then come up at C, and stitch the seam. Also wrap-stitch the end of your seam before knotting off.



NOTES



THE SCHOOL OF MAKING BOOK SERIES AT A GLANCE



Alabama Stitch Book

Alabama Stitch Book is a collection of stitching, beading, and embroidery instructions, stories, and projects from Alabama Chanin. Projects include our best-selling Corset, Swing Skirt, “boa” scarf, bandana, and more.



Alabama Studio Style

Alabama Studio Style expands upon the stitching, stenciling, and beading techniques introduced in *Alabama Stitch Book* and introduces twenty new clothing and home decor projects. This book also includes recipes and stories.



Alabama Studio Sewing + Design

An encyclopedic compilation of techniques used to create the Alabama Chanin line of organic cotton clothing. Included are dresses, skirts, tops, and accessories.



Alabama Studio Sewing Patterns

Alabama Studio Sewing Patterns explores fit, patternmaking, and how to create a garment to fit your unique shape. It includes three new patterns with several variations as well as previous open-sourced patterns on a disc at the back of the book.



The Geometry of Hand-Sewing

The Geometry of Hand-Sewing: A Romance in Stitches and Embroidery from Alabama Chanin and The School of Making by Natalie Chanin is a comprehensive guide to hand-stitching and embroidery. This book focuses solely on the stitches themselves, taking embroidery stitches and breaking them down into different geometric grid systems that make learning even seemingly elaborate stitches as easy as child's play.



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ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF MAKING

Alabama Chanin as a concept and a company began as a DIY enterprise. Workshop programming was a natural outgrowth of the emerging DIY initiative growing around us. Our experiences showed us that face-to-face and hand-to-hand contact helped our customers better understand the what, why, and how of our making processes and the importance of an organic supply chain. Our business continued to grow. DIY offerings expanded, our workshop offerings became more diverse, and our Journal content added additional DIY instruction, stories, and ideas.

Educational programming is one of the fastest growing and most exciting aspects of our business model. So, as the opportunities to educate our team and our customers began to multiply, we realized that we should create a specific home for this knowledge.

To fully embrace our growing model, we have developed an overseeing body that will direct and innovate learning initiatives and educational programs: The School of Making. All of our current and developing educational and training initiatives fall under the umbrella of The School of Making which oversees DIY and workshop programming, format, and content; it acts as a researching body for new subjects and new ways of disseminating information. Our hope is that The School of Making can be an active voice in our local community, our state, and the making community, at large.

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theschoolofmaking.alabamachanin.com

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