

SEW VERAVENUS
“A modern make on vintage style”
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Cut to cling: A slim bias slip -lace trimmed or plain



Instructions

The pattern: It is a good idea to mirror the 1/2 front and back pattern pieces onto new paper to make full pattern pieces. The reason for this is simple- cutting bias is easier and more accurate as a single layer. If the slip pieces are cut without the true bias running down the centre of the front and back it is quite likely that your slip will not hang true and will twist around you as you wear it.

Cutting out: You'll need roughly 2 -3 metres of fabric for a knee length slip. It depends on the width of your fabric and which size and if you want to make it longer. When you have made the full pattern laying it out on a table or floor and measuring around it is the surest way to work out how much fabric you'll need

If your fabric is flimsy cutting out using the paper sandwich method, either 'full sandwich' or 'open top' will help enormously. I've described how to do this in my [French Knicker tutorial](#) so won't repeat it here. That pdf contains lots more sewing info on applying lace, pin hemming etc. which you may find useful in your slip sewing as well.

I wash and iron my fabric before cutting out. It is better that fabric shrinks before sewing than after. Even if your fabric is a synthetic washing will remove any stiffeners and generally make it softer to feel. I hear you crying" but it's so much easier to cut out a firm or stiff (to the extent that I even read somewhere about starching silks to make them easier to cut!!) The whole point of working fabric on the bias is the soft drapey feel of the fabric and how can you try something on half way through making it if it is like a piece of paper? Honestly, I don't go out of my way to make things harder than necessary for either you or myself but not sure about stiffening silk; just try the paper sandwich cutting method first.

However you do choose to go about the cutting out don't rush, take your time, be accurate. I sew almost every day... you probably don't and understandably want this project finished as quickly as possible. But a slip that twists around your hips and seams that hang badly isn't going to make you happy. Some things just take the time they take.

So now if you've done the cutting out, had a cup of tea/ coffee/cocktail to recover you're ready to sew.



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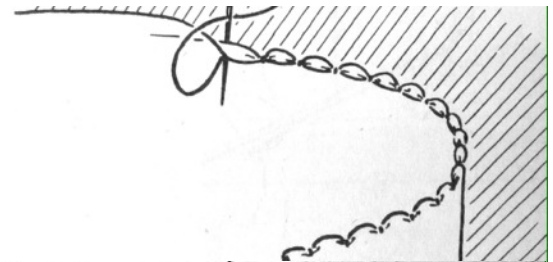
Take the two bust sections and add lace insets now if you want to. The trick is keeping the lace along the straight grains of the fabric. If your lace and fabric are sturdy enough sew the lace on with a tiny zigzag stitch and cut the fabric away behind. If the lace or fabric is fragile just apply it on top with a straight stitch. There are lines on the pattern pieces showing where I sewed my lace on. The fragile vintage lace on the pink fabric, a thin satin chiffon (a devil to work with and I won't be do that again soon!) is only applied on top and the cream, a fairly heavy silk has been cut away behind.



- Next finish the top edges of the bust pieces. I did mine by pin hemming and adding lace. Lace can alternatively be laid flat on top, straight stitched in place along the edge to hold it and then zigzagged over that. Best to do some tests on fabric scraps before you commit to trimming the actual slip pieces. Unless you are using a very wide lace, 5cm or more i wouldn't worry about cutting the bust pieces back to compensate for the width addition either. And if you don't know what I meant by that then you can forget I even mentioned it.



•The slip doesn't have to have lace added at all. The edges could simply machine pin hemmed or finished by hand with a plain rolled edge or a decorative shell hem like this one.



Shell Hem (Ill. 73). Used for a finish on fine lingerie. Turn the $\frac{1}{8}$ inch hem as you work. Take two stitches to secure each shell and slide the thread under edge between the shells for about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. The distance between shells will depend on the fineness of your garment.



•If you intend any lace insertion on the slip body front as well, now before attaching the bust pieces, is the time to do it. Again, keep the lace running along the straight grain of your slip fabric. The lace bow was appliquéd as an experiment - I wasn't sure if it would distort the bias fabric too much but it worked pretty well. How I did the bow appliqué is in my post from [August 10, 2012](http://August10.2012) if you'd like to look that up. Keeping any lace additions rather high on the front piece is best I think as the slip wont be stretching much in the front of your diaphragm.

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- Run two rows of gathering stitches between the notches, pull the gathering in to match the notches on the front piece and with right sides facing in sew together. I rarely sew this as a french seam as it can get a bit lumpy with the gathering. To finish the seam inside you can stitch a second time a few mm away and hand overcast the edge or even use a strip of self bias binding to finish the raw edges. (In the image I'm using a fine nylon binding specifically for bra making but I like it for things like this too as its very fine.) You could certainly try a french seam but I've noticed on vintage slips and nighties that even when they do have french seaming on other seams they often don't on under-bust gathered seams. However you do it press the seam allowance down into the slip body.
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- Next is finishing across the top of the back slip. The measurements I've given stretch the edge a little beyond what the paper actually measures. I find this helps to bring the waist in for a smoother fit. Personally I am always irritated when slim cut bias garments hang away at my lower back and waist rather than fitting in close. Finish the edge with the same method you used on the front bust edges, lace and all.
 - Sides seams now. These I do as french seams including the lace edging at the top. A long time ago one of the best pattern cutters and machinists whom I've ever worked with and who had worked at Versace in the 60s and 70s shared her method with me for sewing bias seams. It goes like this: On the first right sides out run tighten the tension a little, use a 2-2.5 size stitch and just let the fabric feed through without stretching it. Trim the seam allowance small and press it over to one side. Then wrong sides out sew the second run but this time loosen the tension back to normal and make the stitches size 3. When the seam of the hip area is feeding through stretch the fabric a little sideways.... below that where the skirt will hang free stretch it a little up and down. Press the finished french seam together first and then finally to towards the back of the slip. And I've sewn my bias seams like that for going on 30 years now. Using a new needle that is the proper size for your fabric and having the upper and lower tensions of your machine perfectly balanced is important too. I'm amazed when hear someone say they haven't changed the needle for months or had their sewing machine tuned in years. I change my needle with every new thing I sew and have my industrial machine tuned twice a year. What a difference that makes!!
 - Getting back on track- the hemming. As it is all bias letting the slip hang overnight on a dummy or even on a hanger is a good idea though really I haven't found hugely critical in slip making so far (seems to make more difference in a full dress or a skirt) Marking the hem to be level on a dummy is ideal... or a dressmaking buddy doing it for you is great. If you have to do it on your own, it is not impossible. Wearing the slip stand straight, no twisting and look at yourself in the mirror from the front, and with the help of a hand mirror from the sides and back. By eye gauge where it needs levelling. Take the slip off and with a strongly contrasting colour thread hand sew large running stitches along the level line you eyed up. Try the slip on again and check the basted line is level. Correct again if necessary and finally cut off as needed. Machine or hand roll the hem. This gets easier with practise
 - About lace on the hem: I don't tend to sew lace on full bias hems... it just seems to cause me more aggravation than anything. That's not at all to say don't do it but the only advice I can give is baste first to check it's not pulling the hem in or stretching it out too much.
 - Straps are last. They can be straight grain or bias rouleaux ones or use bought ribbons.

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The pattern can be made longer for a lovely bias nightgown too.

The finished tie measurements are : two front ties 53cm long x 6cm wide (21" x 2 1/2") and for the two back ties : 70cm long x 6cm wide (27 1/2 "x 2 1/2") Add seam allowance to those measurements.

The centre edges of the bust sections are pin hemmed and from the strap point around the back I used a self bias binding to finish the top edge.

