

DOG DIAPER SUIT INSTRUCTIONS

1. BASIC IDEA AND GOALS:

The idea of the dog diaper suit is a full body suit for a dog designed to hold a sticky-bottom/adhesive-strip incontinence pad over private rear parts of a dog subject to leakage due to incontinence of bladder or bowels or seasonal spotting. The suit is designed to be unisex and easy to put on the dog. It is one piece, with fasteners at the top, front, and back, such that it cannot slip off the dog. To be put on, the dog is positioned over the suit; the sides are drawn up and fastened. A band is fastened across the dog's chest. And then a rear pants piece is drawn between the back legs and fastened across the dog's butt to the dog's hips just below the tail, forming a cloth panty or jock strap. Incontinence pads can be adhered to the suit in the appropriate place before the suit is put on. Suits are made to the measurements of the individual dog. The suit is washable, though with luck it will not need frequent washing since the pads themselves are waterproof and absorb soil.

2. SEWING LEVEL: EASY

a. By hand: If the suit is to be hand-sewn, it may be easiest to cut the shape of the whole suit out of one large piece of fabric. Then the only sewing needed is the attachment of Velcro fasteners (and finishing the edges of the fabric so the edges don't fray by rolling the edges and hemming them, or by adding binding around the edges).

b. By machine: The instructions below are for machine sewing. Sewing four or five pieces together by machine allows the seamstress to buy less total fabric (than buying enough to cut out the entire suit from one piece would), and strengthens the areas of the suit which will receive the most stress. I recommend machine assembly.

3. MATERIALS NEEDED:

- a. Washable fabric: 1 yard for sewing by machine (1.5 yards for sewing by hand).

The fabric should have some heft to it so it will hold up to machine washing and repeated use of Velcro closures. I made mine out of blue jean denim (old curtains, actually). Probably any medium or greater weight cotton would work.

- b. Sew-on Velcro. 1 yard, ¾ inch width (will be cut into smaller strips)
c. Thread

Fig 1. Top Outside of Suit



Fig 2. Inside of suit; diapers loaded



Fig 3. Starting to put on the suit

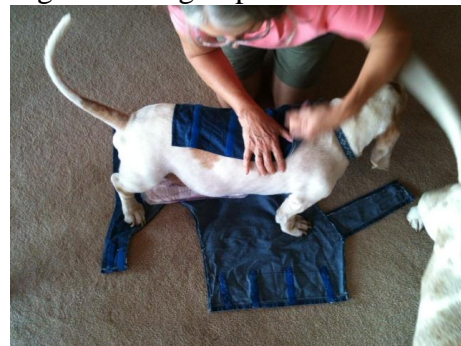


Fig 4. Fastening the torso section



4. DOG MEASUREMENTS NEEDED:

a. For the torso piece:

(1). Inches from the base of the dog's neck (top of back) to the base of the dog's tail (top of back) My hound's was about 17 inches.

(2). Inches from the backs of the dog's front legs to the fronts of the back legs (along the belly line front to back). My hound's was about 15 inches.

(3) Inches around the dog's widest part of torso, whether this is chest or belly, plus about three extra inches overlap. My hound's was 36 inches.

Torso piece: Imagine that you have laid a bath towel flat on the floor. It is almost rectangular—16 inches wide by 36 inches long, more or less. Now your hound stands over the top of the towel such that the length is sticking out on either side of him/her. You draw up the sides of the towel to meet on the dog's back (like a log carrier) and fasten them along the dog's back with Velcro enclosures. The dog is now standing in a towel tube. This is like a very very wide “belly band” that goes around the dog's ribcage and the dog's belly both. This is the first piece you are measuring.

b. For the chest band piece:

(1) Measure the inches from the dog's one shoulder across the dog's chest to the dog's other shoulder and add a few more inches to account for a slight downward angle when sewn and an overlap for fastening. My hound's measurement was 27.5 inches, later cut into two strips, one 13 inches and the other 14.5 inches.

(2) Now measure from one shoulder blade over the top of the dog's back to the other shoulder blade. This measurement will tell you where to attach the sides of the chest strap once you get to sewing. My hound's measurement was about 20 inches.

Chest piece: Imagine a strap going across the dog's chest joining the two sides of the front of the torso tube, the way most doggie coats are fashioned. The strap will be cut into two pieces. Each piece will be joined to the shoulder of the torso tube. The straps will overlap at the center of the dog's chest and fasten there with Velcro.

c. For the panty/jock strap piece: You are now measuring for a “Y” shaped piece of fabric, (with the opening at the top of the Y filled in) which will look sort of like a flat fabric martini glass shape. The stem of the Y will go between the dog's back legs and the “V” top of the “Y” will go across the dog's butt

Fig 5. Torso section fastened



Fig 6. Fastening the front

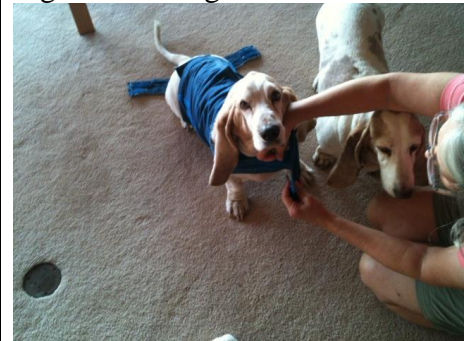


Fig 7. Fastening the back

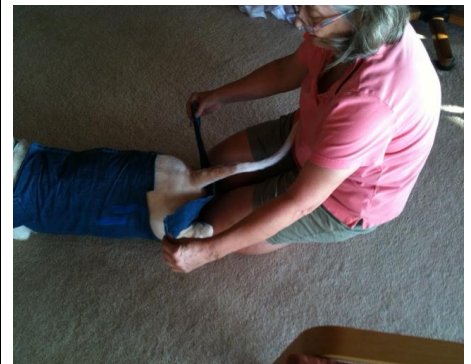


Fig 8. All set !!!



from one hip to the other. When this piece is assembled, pulled up and joined at the hips, it will complete a sort of sleeveless panty in the rear of the suit.

- (1) Measure the inches from just in front of the fronts of the dog's back legs along its belly line (basically from the dog's belly button), back between the back legs and then up its rump to just below the dog's tail. This is the measurement for the stem of the Y. My hound's measurement was 10 inches.
- (2) Now measure the distance across the dog's butt from one hip to the other hip, straight across just under the tail. This is the measurement of the top of the crossbar that joins the tube sides in the back. My hound's was 23 inches.
- (3) Finally, measure the distance between the hind legs, side to side, across the male dog's equipment or female dog's lower belly. This will tell you how wide to make the stem of the Y. My (male) dog's measurement was about 5 inches.

5. CUTTING THE PIECES:

I suggest making a pattern by cutting newspapers to the measurements you have taken and then using the newspaper pattern as a guide to cutting the fabric (although that's not really what I did—I just whacked away). If you are planning to cut the fabric as one piece rather than as four or five pieces, I'd definitely suggest making a pattern out of newspaper, making your pattern in pieces first, and then scotch taping the pieces together to make one overall pattern.

- a. Torso piece—A rectangular-ish piece—see the pictures. Imagine the “towel” image again. The length of the towel/rectangle is the measurement from around the torso of the dog. The two widths at the ends of the towel are the measurement from the neck to tail. And the middle of the towel width is the measurement from the front legs to the back legs along the belly line. So the actual shape of the rectangle won't be exactly a rectangle depending on how your dog is shaped. Or it might be. I also angled my “rectangle” just a bit so it looks like a rectangle swaying in the wind, but that's up to you. Won't make a huge difference. Don't remember why I did that—I think it fit my hound better that way when I tried it on him.
- b. Chest pieces—Use the chest measurement. Cut a piece that length by 3.5 inches wide. Then cut the strap into two pieces with one piece a little longer than the other for the overlap (if you want the piece to join on the chest like mine—you could

Fig 9. Belly view



also leave it as one strap that joins on the shoulder; up to you).

c. Panty/jock strap/ martini glass shaped piece.

You can cut this piece either all as one piece or cut it as two pieces and sew them together. Hmm. Let's do it as two pieces and sew them together into one piece before assembling the suit.

(1) Piece that joins one hip to the other hip just under the dog's tail across the dog's butt. You have this measurement. Cut a strip that long and make it 3 inches wide. That's the rim of the martini glass.

(2) Piece that is the V of the martini glass and the stem of the glass as well (Y).

This piece is going to be V/triangle shaped (so it's not really martini glass shape, I guess—wide champagne flute shape?).

Make the piece wide at the top, a few inches on each side less wide than the butt strap. The top of my V piece is 13 inches, 5 inches in on both sides from the ends of the longer cross-the-butt strap (which on my suit is 23 inches). See picture. (This is because the sides of the cross-the-butt strap are going to wrap around the dog's hips and we want the leg holes that are formed to be sleeveless rather than having little cap sleeves.)

Now measure down from the top of the V piece (the length from your measurement chart which went from under the dog's tail to between his/her legs. At that point make a mark, and mark the width that was the measurement between your dog's back legs. Make a line in chalk there because you'll need to find that place again when you are sewing. So you now have a trapezoid, not a triangle, right? You can keep on drawing the V to a point, and you'll sew the point as overlap onto the bottom of the torso tube.

Don't worry that the V and the cross strap are now quite a bit longer than the measurement you took—you'll fix that when sewing.

OR, you could just cut the martini/champagne flute shape as one piece, eyeballing it. That's what I did.

6. SEWING THE SUIT TOGETHER

- a. Finish the edges of the pieces before assembling the suit.

I finished the raw edges of the pieces so they wouldn't fray just by ironing them in and running a straight stitch around each piece. Like hemming. Then I just had to topstitch the pieces together rather than running seams.

- b. The torso piece.

The torso piece is pretty much finished the way it is except for the Velcro closures. Fold the rectangular torso piece so the short ends of the rectangle overlap one another, making a tube, and mark the edges of the pieces (with pins) where you want to stick on the Velcro closures. The fuzzy parts of the Velcro closure go on the "right"/top side of the piece that will be underneath the overlap. The catchy parts go on the "under/wrong/bottom" side of the piece that will overlap the other. The Velcro pieces need to match positions, of course, in order to stick to one another. A drooler taught me an essential trick. Make the fuzzy under piece strips of Velcro long (6 inches) and sew these strips onto your piece perpendicular to the edge. That way you can make some parts of the tube narrower and others wider when you put it on your hound. I put four Velcro closures across the back of my tube (less likely to pull apart). See picture.

- d. Attaching the chest pieces.

If you have your hound handy, put the torso piece on him/her and Velcro it shut. Then it is easy to find the shoulders without measuring. If you are making the suit for someone else, use the measurement given that is the distance across the shoulders to determine where to attach the ends of the chest piece straps. Remember, the Velcro attaches along the back and there is an overlap when you are measuring.

I angled the chest straps downward a little so they would meet on my hound's breastbone. A little angle is good. Straight across is okay but may cut it close under the dog's neck. Too much angle is bad as it will join too low. I topstitched the ends of the chest straps to each shoulder at the appropriate place.

Once you have sewn the straps on the torso piece (front of the tube), it is time to attach Velcro closures which will close the chest band. Overlap the straps at the front of the dog and put Velcro closures there. Use the same trick as you did on the torso piece, with longer fuzzy underneath closures

perpendicular to the edge, so you can make the chest strap as tight as you need.

- e. Attaching the martini glass/champagne flute/ panty/ jock strap piece.

(1) First you will need to make this once piece if you cut it as two pieces.

Center and overlap the top (widest part) of the V piece with the butt strap and run a straight stitch across them, joining them—now you have the martini glass/ wide champagne flute shape all together.

(2) Now go down to where you made the chalk mark towards the bottom of the V (the distance between the dog's back legs. Topstitch the V to the bottom of the torso tube at that place.

(3) If you have your hound handy, this is another place for a try on. Put the hound in the torso tube and Velcro it closed. Pull the chest straps around his/her chest and Velcro them together. The martini glass shape should now be hanging down from the bottom of the tube in the back. Draw it between your dog's back legs and up towards its tail. There should be a Y arm sticking out to the each side of your dog's rump under its tail. Draw each arm around the dog's butt on each side and mark where on each hip you want the Velcro attachment which will hold that piece in place. Then attach the Velcro enclosures using the same trick that you've already learned. (fuzzy pieces on the hips).

If you are making the suit for someone else and don't have the dog handy, probably you should just run a Velcro strip perpendicular to the back edge of the tube for maybe 6 inches or so in toward the front of the tube, slightly angled, such that it lines up with the pace that the shoulder straps are attached in the front.

7. USING THE SUIT

I have been using "Poise" incontinence pads with adhesive strips in my hound's suit. I use two pads side by side and overlap them a little to prevent leakage. I line them up where the end of my dog's penis is.

We are also struggling with diarrhea this week with this same dog due to a medication change. Twice he has had "the squirts" and both times his mess has stayed in the back of the suit panty. Tonight I

am going to put a Poise pad in the rump of the suit as well.
Basically, just stick the pads wherever a problem is anticipated.
We have used this diaper suit for a week now with no failures. It hasn't been tried on a female dog yet, but I see no reason why it shouldn't work fine, given the coverage.

Good luck. Pictures follow, with Bo proudly modeling. My husband says Bo looks very dapper in his denim suit.