

Twelve Panel Gowns Based on a Duct Tape Pattern

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Based on the handout “Cotehardie Pattern and Layout for Ladies” by HG Mari Alexander

What you’ll need:

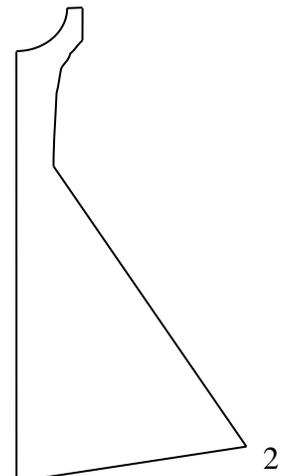
- ❖ A sacrificial t-shirt that is close-fitting and has a high neck
- ❖ **Light** coloured duct tape
- ❖ A dark sharpie
- ❖ Scissors. Not fabric shears, scissors.
- ❖ Newspaper or some other big pieces of paper. Old maps are great.
- ❖ Some \$1 yard throw away fabric to make a mock-up out of, you’ll need plenty of this, that’s why you get the cheap stuff
- ❖ About 8 yards of fabric for the gown
 - Linen, wool, or silk is best, the next best is brocades, linen blends, and wool blends. Avoid using quilting cotton if at all possible.
 - If you’re short and/or skinny you’ll use less, if you’re not you’ll use more
 - If you want it striped and/or parti-coloured, you’ll need to proportion your fabric accordingly
- ❖ About six yards of fabric for the under dress
 - The best fabric to use here is linen, if that is unavailable, linen blend should be used. If you need to save money, use cotton for the gown and linen or linen blend for the under dress. It needs to support you!

Women

Creating your pattern:

1. READ THROUGH THIS ENTIRE HANDOUT BEFORE YOU BEGIN DOING ANYTHING
2. Make as many design choices as possible. I.e. where the gown will close and whether it will lace or button up. Keep your decisions in mind when making your pattern, for example, if you want buttons in the front, you’ll need extra fabric on one side to put the buttons on.
3. Find a good buddy.
4. Take off all torso support garments (your bra, et c.) and put on your sacrificial t-shirt. You can do this in the bathroom.
5. Get your buddy to duct tape you into your shirt (from here on, the “you” in these directions refers to them)
 - a. Start by anchoring the shirt at the waist, run the tape around and around until you get a band reaching from just under the bust to their waist. To get all the way up under there, your subject will need to reach into her shirt and lift them out of the way, she’ll want to make sure the nipples are in generally the same place on each side (not one forward or one to the side or anything).
 - b. Run a strip down the spine.
 - c. Begin “sculpting the bust”
 - i. Run strips from the strip at the spine to under the bust, your subject should be starting to look like one of those Cretan snake goddesses.
 - ii. Work from the outside in

- iii. Make sure your subject's bust is even and rounded, do not lift one breast above the other, or squish one flat.
 - d. Continue taping until the t-shirt is covered from neckline to the hips and shoulder to shoulder
 - i. You want to make sure you get high up under the arm.
- 6. Start drawing the lines on the duct tape form
 - a. Start with a line down the front middle and the back middle
 - b. Your second lines should be the one dividing the front and back under the arm pit
 - c. Your third lines should be in the front, starting high in the arm (about three to four inches down from the ridge of the shoulder along the crease where the arm joins the torso)
 - d. Your fourth seam should split the difference between the seam you've just drawn and the side seam.
 - e. Your fifth seam should follow the line of the shoulder blade and down to the waist.
 - f. Your sixth seam should split the difference between the seam you've just drawn and the side seam.
 - g. The easiest way to do the seams is to imagine a princess seam dress and place the seams in ways similar to the princess seams.
 - h. Draw the arm holes tighter than seems like a good idea.
 - i. Draw a line where you want the fitted part of the dress to end, it should be parallel to the ground
 - j. **IMPORTANT:** Mark the pattern with notches and label the pieces before you cut the pattern free. It's a real pain to try and puzzle it back together when you've got it all pulled apart.
- 7. Measure from the last line you drew, the one that marked the bottom of the fitted torso to the ground in the front, back, and sides. If you want a train, now is the time to decide how long.
- 8. Cut the pattern off, it is usually best to cut along the back seam.
- 9. Cut out each piece.
- 10. Optional: Transfer the duct tape and t-shirt pattern to paper, making the duct tape/t-shirt pattern as flat as possible against the paper. Trace around the original pattern carefully, and plan to go back and smooth out some of the knobby bits. Add a seam allowance all the way around! Transfer this paper pattern to your \$1/yard fabric spacing your pieces out to account for skirt.
- 11. If you want to skip step seven, just repeat the instructions above with your \$1/yard fabric, skipping the transfer bit, remember to keep the spacing well apart so you can add a skirt.
- 12. On the \$1/yard fabric, at the bottom of each pattern piece, start adding the skirt (if you're unsure about how much space to leave, do one piece at a time, adding the skirt as you go).
 - a. When adding the skirt, the trick to getting the best drape is to make the line from the front of the pattern piece perpendicular to the ground and the line from the back of the pattern angled, as shown to right. Use the measurements you took during fitting to determine how

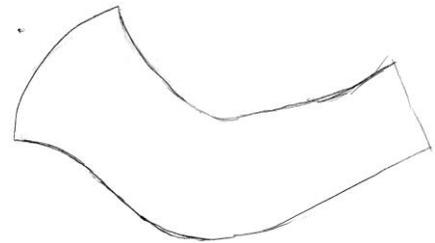


long to make the skirt. And remember, longer is better than shorter!

13. Cut out your mock up and sew it together, leaving one side open so you can put it on the person you're fitting. You'll want to take medium-length stitches so they can be picked apart later.
14. Fit the mock up, either basting or pinning as you go. Use a marker to preserve any changes.
15. Determine which side fits better and mark it.
16. Take the mock up off and pick it apart, throw away the unmarked side.
17. Pick apart your new pattern, trimming away where you need to based on your alterations.
18. You're done making your pattern!

Sewing it all together

1. Cut out the twelve pieces (the six pattern pieces times two so you have enough to go all the way around!) out of the fabric you've chosen for under dress
2. Sew the twelve pieces together, leaving a gap in one of the side seams to be a lacing spot so your person can get in and out on their own.
3. Cut the neckline extra wide so that it doesn't poke out from under the gown.
4. Turn the under dress inside out and have your person put it on, pin it closed.
5. Start fitting the under dress. It is absolutely necessary that the under dress fit *very* closely, it will be doing all the support work so you can use nice, lightweight fabric for the gown.
6. Once the under dress has been well fitted take the side pins out and start sewing the alterations closed.
7. Finish the hem, neckline, arm hole, and side opening. Do the lacing holes by hand or by machine, **DO NOT USE METAL GROMMETS, THEY WILL EAT YOUR FABRIC.**
8. Cut your pattern pieces out of your gown fabric. Take as many deep breaths as necessary.
9. Repeat the process above to put together the gown, making the neckline slightly smaller so the under dress doesn't show.
10. The sleeves.
 - a. The sleeves are put together in two pieces, one seam should run around the outside of the arm, along the point of the elbow, the inner seam is more dependent on how the sleeve fits most comfortably.
 - b. The sleeve pieces should look sort of like at right. Cut them out of your throw away fabric and cut them *very big*.
 - c. Pin the two sides together and begin pinning to the dress, you don't want the fit to be perfectly sleek, make sure as you go that there is plenty of room for the garb-ee to move around and, in the words of HG Mari, "throw that shot." There will be puckers and excess fabric, if people complain tell them it's period.
 - d. Fit the length of the sleeve, making sure it is both comfortable and attractive as you go. Trimming off the excess as necessary. If you want button sleeves, include extra fabric along the outer seam of the forearm, or line them and add a "tab" to put the buttons on.
 - e. Cut the sleeves out of your gown fabric and sew the two pieces together.
 - f. Attach, carefully, to the body.
11. Finish all raw edges.



12. Add lacing or button holes.

Men

The male version of this outfit can take two forms, the very tight fitted version that was worn by the young jackdaws, and a looser long gown that was worn by serious men of business and begins to smudge the line between a cotehardie and a houppalonde. For both the start is the same as for the women, though it is less imperative that the latter version be so closely fitted. The fitted version almost universally closes up the front with buttons and is often decorated with dagged hems and elaborate sleeves. The looser version is more plain, but is still closed up the front, sometimes it is shown over the tighter counterpart. Because there is less support required by the male garment, few panels can be used, though fewer than four is not recommended. The ideal fabrics for the tighter male version is wool, linen, or silk, while wool or heavy velvet is recommended for the looser. For obvious reasons, the tightly fitted male cotehardie requires significantly less fabric than either the loosely fitted or female versions.

Decorating

Decorations can be done with embroidery, appliqué, or paint. Gowns of this style were often (probably) decorated with heraldic designs, either scattered across the field or in full gown designs. They can also be decorated more simply and worn under looser gowns, houppalondes (a contemporary of the 12-panel), or sideless surcotes. Look through fourteenth century artwork for inspiration!

Accessories

- ❖ Tippetts
 - Bands that go around the arm and then drop behind, cut a big L, the short leg being long enough to go around the bicep and the long end as long as you like, usually about to the knee.
- ❖ Cauls
 - Decorated ear-muffs
- ❖ Crispinettes
 - Tubes attached to a fillet.
 - For info on how to make these hats, go to www.virtue.to
- ❖ Fillet
 - A small band of metal or a short band of fabric plopped on the head can be an easier way to complete the look
- ❖ Hip belts
 - A belt, typically of plaques though leather or velvet can also be used, that sits at the hips and is worn without a long tail.
- ❖ Heraldic Mantle
 - A thin cloak showing off your heraldry in big, bold designs
- ❖ Hosen
 - The appropriate accompaniment for the men, tight hose that include soles, go crazy with the colors!
- ❖ Hoods

- For both men and women hoods were a great way to keep the neck and chest warm. Make them of wool, dagg the edges, and make the lirapipe so long you might sit on it

Websites of interest

- ❖ Virtue Ventures
 - <http://www.virtue.to>
 - Fabulous information from Mistress Cynthia du Pré Argent
- ❖ Cotehardies from Greenland Gowns by Dame Helen
 - <http://www.damehelen.com/cotes/index.html>
 - great information on the origin of this pattern
- ❖ Heraldic Display: Women's Heraldic Frocks by Lady Sabine du Bourbonnais
 - http://www.sca.org.au/st_florians/university/library/articles-howtos/heraldry/HeraldicFrocksS.htm
 - Some formatting issues, but tons of great pictures
- ❖ Cotehardies: Cutting and Fitting the Grand Aissiette by Ken Nye
 - http://thescholarsgarret.com/artifact/article_aissiette.html
 - A different method of fitting sleeves. Slightly complicated.
- ❖ La Cotte Simple by Tasha Kelly McGann
 - <http://www.cottesimple.com/>
 - A different way to put together the dress and sleeves, very complete and well researched.