

Evening Gown Hemming – 4 Methods to Success

Sew at Home

OnDemand Classes

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If you know your way around a sewing machine and/or serger and enjoy challenging yourself with unique fabrics, you are ready to hem evening gowns! This class was designed to give you the confidence and self-assurance that you can, indeed, hem an evening gown!

Skill Level: Intermediate/Advanced

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Supplies:

A good quality iron (I like Rowenta or Oliso)
 Sharp fabric shears (I like Gingher)
 Clover 5-in-1 Sliding Gauge Item # CL9506
 Clover Chalko Liner Item # CL4711
 Deluxe Hem Marker (not necessary needed for hemming dresses to floor-length) Item # DCHM2
 Straight or safety pins
 Sewing thread to match
 Smaller sewing machine needle (regular or knit depending on fabric)

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Supplies Needed For Each Hemming Method:

Hemming Method #1: Serger 3-Thread Overlock Narrow Rolled Hem

- Baby Lock Sewing Machine and Serger
- 3 spools of serger thread to match dress

Hemming Method #2: Serge, Flip, & Sew

- Baby Lock Sewing Machine and Serger
- 3 spools of serger thread to match
- Baby Lock Blind Hem Foot with Adjustable Guide Item # BLG-BSGF (make sure it's compatible with your machine)

Hemming Method #3: Skinny Rolled Hem (Sewing-Only)

- Baby Lock Sewing Machine
- Baby Lock Hemmer Foot Item # ESG-HF (make sure it's compatible with your machine)

Hemming Method #4: Blind Hem

- Baby Lock Sewing Machine and Serger
- Blind hem foot (typically comes with your Baby Lock sewing machine)

Recommended Hemming Methods for Fabric Types:

Hemming Method #1: Serger 3-Thread Overlock Narrow Rolled Hem

- If I can find serger thread that matches exactly, I like to use this method whenever I can. I have used regular sewing thread on my serger for this technique, as well! You just might have to use your serger spool caps with smaller spools. Satin, Chiffon, Taffeta, some Silks, Dupioni, and similar fabrics work really well! I'd probably recommend other methods for Organza and that really common stretchy sheer knit fabric (that looks like chiffon, but isn't). Tulle doesn't necessarily need to be stitched (often, it's just cut right off), but, I've seen it hemmed with a serger narrow rolled hem!

Hemming Method #2: Serge, Flip, & Sew

- This is my second favorite if I can't find an exact color match in serger thread. I've used this method with Satin, Chiffon, Taffeta, some Silks, Dupioni, Organza, and similar fabrics. That stretchy sheer knit fabric (that looks like chiffon) works best with this technique (just make sure to use a slim knit needle in your sewing machine).

Hemming Method #3: Skinny Rolled Hem (Sewing-Only)

- Thinner fabrics like Chiffon, Taffeta, Organza, Dupioni, and the like, tend to work better with this method. It can be done with fabrics like Satin, but, you may have to take your fabric out of the foot when stitching over thicker seams and then, re-insert your fabric into the foot once you've passed the seam. Stretchy fabrics don't play real well with this foot.

Hemming Method #4: Blind Hem

- I typically find the previous hemming methods in the original manufactured hem of the dress, but, you will see the blind hem from time to time. I've really only seen this implemented on thicker Satin fabrics when it comes to formal evening gowns.

Let's get hemming!!

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Marking Instructions:

1. Have the wearer stand on a hard surface; avoid carpet (we tend to sink into carpet a wee bit). Before pinning, make sure she is wearing the correct shoes that will be worn with the gown, standing with feet about shoulder-width apart, not slouching, nor looking down. Ensure that the dress is sitting in the right place on the body/torso. You can pin the layers together if the lining and outer layer are the same shape, but, if the outer layer is fuller than the lining layer(s), pin them separately. Also, keep in mind that stiffer fabrics tend to stand away from the body a bit, whereas, a flowy fabric would hang straight down.

2. **For floor-length gowns**, pin evenly at the ground as often as needed. Attempt to allow the fabric to sit as naturally as possible. Don't push the fabric in towards the feet or pull it too far away from the feet; just lay it right where it would fall, not pushed to the right or left of where it would naturally wear. Pin all the way around because, more than likely, you'll need to take more off in some areas and less in other areas. Because we are all built differently, with or without hips, hindquarters, or bellies, the dress hem raises and lowers based on the wearer's shape.



3. **For shorter gowns** (whether taking a short dress shorter or taking a long dress to short), use the Deluxe Hem Marker to make uniform, even chalk marks around the dress exactly where you want the dress hem to lay. Make sure to keep the Deluxe Hem Marker stand placement consistent where you set it in relation to the body/dress as you mark around the dress. If the person is unsure of the length that they want, you can always mark and cut the dress longer and if she wants it shorter, go from there. If the fabric stands away from the body, mark it where it lays; don't push it in towards the body (if you do, you may end up cutting it too short).

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Cutting Instructions:

1. I actually prefer to cut on a low carpet (not plush) because it helps grip the fabric and it doesn't slip as much as it does on a hard floor. Using the Chaco Liner, 5-in-1 Sliding Gauge, and sharp fabric shears, use the hemming method you'll be following discussed in each step below. For linings, sometimes (mostly with sheer dresses) I cut with the same measurements as the outer layer. However, if the lining is completely hidden, I just cut an even amount off the entire hem, using the largest measurement.
2. **Hemming Method #1: Serger 3-thread Overlock Narrow Hem** – **For floor-length dresses**, lay the dress hem on the ground in half, matching your side seams. Mark 3/8" below the marks and make a consistent curve to cut off. **For shorter dresses**, mark 3/8" below your Deluxe Hem Marker chalk marks all around the entire dress. Cut, leaving that 3/8" hem allowance.
3. **Hemming Method #2: Serge, Flip, & Sew** – **For floor-length dresses**, lay the dress on the ground in half, matching your side seams. Mark 3/8" below the marks and make a consistent curve to cut off. **For shorter dresses**, mark 3/8" below your Deluxe Hem Marker marks all around the entire dress. Cut, leaving that 3/8" hem allowance.
4. **Hemming Method #3: Skinny Rolled Hem (Sewing-Only)** - **For floor-length dresses**, lay the dress on the ground in half, matching your side seams. Mark 5/8" below the marks and make a consistent curve to cut off. **For shorter dresses**, mark 5/8" below your Deluxe Hem Marker marks all around the entire dress. Cut, leaving that 5/8" hem allowance.
5. **Hemming Method #4: Blind Hem** - **For floor-length dresses**, lay the dress on the ground in half, matching your side seams. Mark 1 1/4" below the marks and make a consistent curve to cut off. **For shorter dresses**, mark 1 1/4" below your Deluxe Hem Marker marks all around the entire dress. Cut, leaving that 1 1/4" hem allowance.

Serging and Sewing Instructions:

1. **Hemming Method #1: Serger 3-thread Overlock Narrow Hem** – Set your serger up according to your serger instructions for a 3-thread Overlock Narrow Hem stitch. Your Stitch Length should be around .75mm and your Stitch Width will be pretty small, as well. You shouldn't have to adjust your Differential Feed, unless your fabric is naturally gathering or stretching as you run it through the serger (then, you'd raise or lower the DF to reverse the gather/stretch effect). Practice on extra cut off fabric! I like to use this method on both the outer and lining fabrics. Don't cut any fabric off with your serger unless you're correcting inconsistencies or you planned it.



Evening Gown Hemming – 4 Methods to Success

2. **Hemming Method #2: Serge, Flip, & Sew** – Set your serger up for a 3-Thread Overlock Narrow (not rolled) stitch. Your Stitch Length will be 2.5-3mm and I like to use the widest Stitch Width. Serge all layers; don't cut any off with your serger unless you are correcting inconsistencies or you planned it. Practice this next part before using on your actual hem! Use a slim needle for the fabric you are using and the Blind Hem Foot with Guide to fold up and stitch your hem allowance. I like to use a 3.0mm stitch length with the needle in the center (or adjusted exactly where I need it). If you are having trouble turning the fabric up, press the tiny edge up with your iron before sewing.



3. **Hemming Method #3: Skinny Rolled Hem (Sewing-Only)** – Stitch a basting stitch a ½" up from your cut edge around the entire dress hem. Press that ½" up around the entire dress hem. Then, trim that allowance down to 1/8". Place your Hemmer Foot onto your sewing machine and practice with some extra fabric to get perfect placement for your needle so that it stitches that tiny rolled hem to get the desired look. I like to use a 3.0mm stitch length. Don't start on a seam. If your seams are too thick, remove the fabric from the Hemmer Foot to stitch over the seam, then, re-insert your fabric back into the foot after stitching the seam down. If your stitch missed the rolled edge in any areas, just press the hem down and run a straight stitch over it (no need to re-insert the fabric...unless it's a long line of stitching missed and you want to try again).



4. **Hemming Method #4: Blind Hem** – Press fabric up 1 ¼" around the entire hem. Serge your hem allowance with a 3-thread or 4-thread Overlock stitch to finish the raw edge. Pin if desired. Use your Blind Hem Foot on your sewing machine along with your Blind Hem Stitch selection to accomplish your blind hem. Follow blind hemming folding methods to get the stitched look intended.



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