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Upcycle Your Jeans to Maternity Jeans



Expecting a bundle of joy and need some roomier jeans around the tummy area? This is a great little hack to turn a regular pair of jeans into maternity jeans to get you through those 9 months and beyond! Use your current jeans, or perhaps some that are a little bit too big (pre-pregnancy), or some you've purchased from a resell shop. I do recommend a size up from your pre-pregnancy size so that there is a little room to grow.

Skill Level: Intermediate

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Supplies:

- Baby Lock Serger and Sewing Machine (or just a sewing machine)
- Pair of regular jeans (size up or two recommended)
- 3" Black Elastic (enough to go around your waist plus a little)
- ¼ yd. Navy colored Jersey Knit Fabric
- 4 Spools Madeira Aerofil Serger Thread that matches the Jersey Knit Fabric (if using a serger)
- Sewing Thread that matches the Jersey Knit Fabric
- Ballpoint or Stretch Sewing Machine Needle
- Highly recommended accessory: Teflon Foot (for sewing and serging)
- Optional use: Overcasting Foot (comes with most Baby Lock Machines)
- Fabric marking pen/chalk
- Optional: Wonder Clips (see step 14)

Notes:

The Jeans: Make sure to assess the jeans you are about to cut up. Most importantly, if you are new to sewing or uncertain about cutting your jeans, perhaps consider practicing on an older or cheap pair of jeans before cutting into your favorites! You should feel confident before updating those to maternity! Often times, we use some maternity clothes way past baby's birth, as we're losing the baby weight. So, the way I see it is I get to still wear some of my favorite jeans for about 2 years (honestly, after I tried on my first pair of elastic waistband jeans, I asked myself why every pair of jeans isn't just made with an elastic waistband)!

Other things to assess before using a pair of jeans to convert to maternity:

- Try on the jeans and mark underneath the waistband where your belly starts to curve outward (where you'd like the elastic waistband to start). Also, mark in the back, as well, where you'd like the waistband to hit.
- Take them off and see where any bulk might cause you problems. There are two ways that you could stitch the waistband on with this tutorial – create a seam or overlap the waistband with the cut and finished edge of the jeans (less bulky).
- Assess if there is any hardware that would need to be removed (or cause issues (like holes in the wrong places) if removed)



The Waistband Attachment: There are two ways that the waistband can be applied. You can create a right-sides-together seam with the waistband and upper cut jean edge. Or, you can overlap the waistband on top of the upper cut edge of your jeans (less bulky). Both can be done if you only have a sewing machine, but the serger is helpful (and might look better) for the second option. Another thing to keep in mind with the first option: when creating a seam,

it can be bulky in areas like side/center seams (even when worn). You might prefer the first option because you don't want the lower edge of the waistband exposed. I prefer the second option (which, I did with my sewing machine and serger) because it lays flatter around the hips because there is no extra waistband seam to add bulk.

Here is the right-sides-together seam (outside and inside).



Here is the overlapped edges waistband attachment (outside and inside).



The Teflon Foot: This foot is so helpful on the Serger and Sewing machine! It helps the fabric glide under the foot more smoothly. I recommend using on both from the very start of this project.

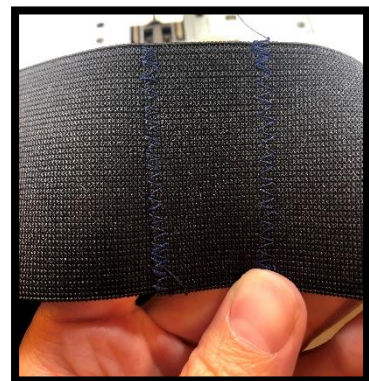
Instructions:

1. Wrap the elastic around and under your belly (where the waistband would sit). Pull it just slightly to whatever feels comfortable and cut it with a 1" of extra for overlap seam allowance. It needs to have a little pull (not too tight though) to help hold your pants up.
2. Cut the Jersey Knit Fabric (with the stretch-iest part going around your waistband) at 6.5" x the same length as your elastic.



3. Overlap the ends of the elastic 1" and zig-zag over the raw edges to create a continuous waistband. This allows the elastic to lay nice and flat within the knit fabric casing.

Tip: Before sewing, safety pin the 1" overlap and try on the waistband of elastic to ensure proper fit!



4. Next, fold the jersey knit casing in half lengthwise. Stitch a 1/2" seam allowance with a straight stitch to create a continuous waistband. I like to stitch over this seam twice for extra reinforcement! Press the seam allowance open.



5. Now, fold the jersey knit waistband over the elastic to encase it. Make sure that the fit each other pretty well. Because there is give in both pieces, you do have some flexibility.
6. Baste around the lower edge through all 3 layers to hold the layers together. I highly recommend using the Teflon foot on your sewing machine for this step. I offset my elastic overlap “seam” from the center back seam of the jersey knit for less bulk. This basting stitch line will be broken and removed later.
7. **If you have a serger**, set it up for a 4-thread Overlock Stitch and serge the lower edge. As you serge, skim off any extra fabric edges so that the fabric is even with the elastic (really try not to cut into the elastic with the serger blade). Set waistband aside.
8. **If you do not have a serger**, trim off extra fabric with scissors so that the jersey knit fabric is even with the elastic edge. Take your time to make it look nice and even. If you are creating a seam with the waistband, you can leave the raw edge until later. (See the Notes section for more information on The Waistband Attachment). If you are overlapping the elastic with the top edge of the jeans, use a wide zig-zag stitch around the lower edge of the waistband, as closely to the raw edge as you can get (if not even dropping the right “zag” just off the raw edge (creating an overcasting stitch). You can try your Overcasting Foot with this step, but you may find that your Teflon foot moves the fabric through more smoothly. Keep in mind that this stitch will be an exposed stitch and there will be another zig-zag stitch over the top of it to apply it to the jeans.
9. It’s almost time to cut the jeans waistband off. It’s not a bad idea to try your jeans on again and slip the waistband on so you can visually see how you want them to look. Change any marks on the jeans if you need to – just don’t forget you need a ¼” seam allowance.



10. Once you like the marks you've made, take them off, zip the zipper closed, stitch the zipper fabric closed, stitching along the edge shown below. Make sure you will not stitch on the metal zipper teeth.



11. Stop about an inch shy of where you will be cutting the top edge off. Open up the top edge and nip in between the zipper teeth and top flap. Finish stitching the edge down.



12. The underside should look similar to below. Stitch rip and nip out about $\frac{3}{4}$ " or more of the zipper on both sides so that it won't cause you any problems along the top edge when stitching the waistband in place.



13. Stitch along the “J” stitchline on the jeans front to stitch the flap on the back closed and enclose the zipper.



14. Mark your cut line around the entire waistband or, if you are comfortable with folding them in half at the center front and back, you can just mark the top side. I folded in half and clipped them in place with Wonder Clips. First, I cut the belt loops out of the way and then, cut the waistband off through both layers. Or, you can cut around the entire top edge if you don't want to fold them in half.



15. If you are overlapping the top edge of the denim, overlock around the top raw edge of the denim with your serger or with your sewing machine to finish the edge.
16. **If you are creating a seam with the waistband**, don't worry about finishing the edge just yet. However, it is a good idea to place a staystitch $\frac{1}{4}$ " down around the top edge of the jeans for stability. Quarter the elastic at the sides, center front, and back and match them right sides together with the top edge of your jeans. Use a zig-zag stitch (6mm width, 1.8mm length) or a 4-thread Overlock stitch (with the widest width) to create about a $\frac{1}{4}$ " to $\frac{3}{8}$ " seam. If you zig-zag a seam, finish the seam allowance with an overcasting stitch that will stretch.

17. **If you are overlapping the waistband with the top edge of the jeans**, quarter off the waistband, overlap the waistband about a ½” total with the waistband on top, aligning side seams and center front and back with your jeans. Use a wide zig-zag (6mm width, 1.8mm length) stitch to stitch the waistband onto the top edge of the denim.



18. Lastly, stitch a straight stitch perpendicular to the waistband at the side seams and center front and back to keep the elastic from rolling in the waistband. You'll be glad you did after washing!



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