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## How to Make a Pioneer Apron

Aprons are a vital part of a pioneer wardrobe: they protect your dress from grime, and can be pressed into service as needed for a towel, hot-pad, hanky, basket, or rain cover.

Most serviceable aprons were made in printed or patterned fabric; white aprons are very good for "better" use, but will also be used for dirty work, if the apron fabric is sturdy enough. Modern quilt-weight cottons work well for aprons, as does white "utility" muslin or "homespun" plaid. Historic aprons may be "half-aprons" (ending in a waistband, the style given here), or "pinner aprons", which have a front bib that is pinned to the dress front. Aprons can hook, button, or tie to close. The pattern given here has a gently fitted waist that can be buttoned or hooked at the back. Teen girls may wear aprons, or may wear more covering pinafore styles held over from younger girlhood.

The hardworking aprons worn for active work tend to be cut fairly long (to the knees, at least), and quite full, to cover most of the front of the dress. Your apron should not match your dress or other clothing items.

### Materials:

- 2 yards print fabric (washed, dried, and pressed)
- Thread to coordinate
- Basic sewing supplies (needles, scissors, pins, thimble)

### Prepare Apron Panels

Even both ends of your yardage by snipping into the selvedge and firmly ripping across the width (depending on how poorly the fabric counter clerk cut your fabric, this may take 2" off each end; this is fine!)

Once you have both ends evened, measure down one selvedge 3" and make a snip. Rip across. Set this strip aside for your waistband. Fold the fabric in half, matching the cut/ripped edges. At the fold, make a snip, and rip the yardage in half across the width, forming two apron panels of exactly the same length (no measuring needed!)

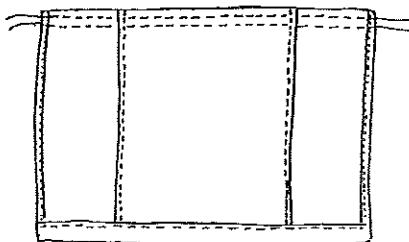
To avoid having a seam at the center front of your apron, fold one panel in half, matching the selvedge edges. Make a snip at the fold, and rip the panel in half vertically. These will be the side apron panels.

### Prepare Waistband

Measure comfortably around your waist (over your historic clothing if possible). Add 3" for overlaps and a finishing allowance. Trim your reserved 3" strip to this length. Press one long edge and both short ends to the wrong side about ¼".

### Seam, Hem & Gather

With right sides together, match the raw edge of each side panel to the selvedge edges of the front panel. Stitch with a ¼" seam allowance. Press the allowances toward the side panels. You do not need to further finish the seam allowance. You will have a finished (selvedge) edge at the ends of the apron; press it to the wrong side about ¼" and secure this narrow hem with a running stitch by hand or straight stitch by machine. Press the lower

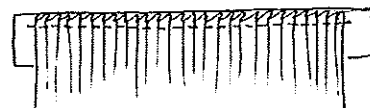


edge to the wrong side ¼", and again 1", to form the hem. Secure this hem with a small running or straight stitch. Work two rows of fairly even, small (½" long) running stitches by hand at the waist edge. Hand

gathering will be less bulky than machine gathering here. The stitching rows need not be precisely perfect—close is good enough.

### Attach Band

With right sides together, match the center point of the unpressed band edge to the center point of the apron front. Pin the apron edge ¼" from the short end of the band. Draw up and distribute the apron gathers evenly along the band. Pin as needed. Stitch with a ¼" seam allowance.



Press the allowances toward the band. Fold the free long edge and both short ends to the wrong side (you have previously pressed these, so it will be easy to do).

Fold the long edge in place to cover all seam allowances and raw edges. Secure along the short ends and waist seam with small running stitches or straight stitches by machine.



### Finishwork

Work a buttonhole on one side of the waistband, and stitch a small 4-hole button on the other end to fasten the apron.

### Additional Options

You may choose to purchase an extra half-yard of fabric to make a pinner bib, patch pockets for the front (very useful to hold things while walking!), and ties, if you prefer them to a button closure or need to make a more multi-sized apron.

For ties, rip two 2" wide strips, each about 24" long. Hem both long and one short end, and insert the free short end into the short ends of the band before you close it. You may place a small pleat in each tie to make it fit neatly within the band.

Whatever style you choose, you'll find your apron a vital item, key to keeping tidy and adding variety to a limited wardrobe.

### About the Author

*Elizabeth Stewart Clark is a 19th century dressmaking instructor and historic pattern designer. A member of the LDS Church, she is always interested in helping others more fully appreciate our pioneer heritage. Find more patterns, articles, and books related to living history and the 19th century at [www.elizabethstewartclark.com](http://www.elizabethstewartclark.com)*