

# T-Shirts for Every Body



*This lesson will walk through the basics of making your own T-shirt for any size or any gender. T-shirt construction will take place entirely on an overlocker and teach the essential techniques and stitches for knit garment construction. Making garments isn't just about construction though-- you'll also get tips on how to make pre-made patterns work best for you.*

## SUPPLIES:

- T-Shirt pattern of choice
- Jersey knit fabric
- Ribbed knit fabric
- Swedish tracing paper
- Wonder Clips
- 28 mm rotary cutter
- Fusible hem tape
- Three spools of coordinating overlocker thread
- L 8 Series seam guide
- Coverstitch (CS) Lock tool
- L 890 Overlock/Coverstitch Combo Machine

## Preparation is Key

- Take the time to choose the appropriate t-shirt pattern for your preferred fit. Look for the size range available, the cup size it may be drafted for, and the fit (fitted, relaxed, A-line, maternity, etc.)
- Note aesthetic choices. Most t-shirt patterns come with interchangeable necklines, sleeves, or hems. You will likely get more use out of a pattern with versatile options.
- Note the finished garment measurements in your pattern booklet. Your pattern booklet should include a chart that details the finished measurements of the garment for each size. This can sometimes be a more helpful guide than the main size chart. It can also give you some guidance to whether or not your garment will need to be lengthened or shortened.
- Trace your pattern from the original pattern tissue on to Swedish (or other) tracing paper. Swedish tracing paper is soft, thick, and can be folded, crumpled, pressed, and even sewn. It is much more durable than pattern tissue. Tracing your size onto tracing paper will give you more robust pattern pieces to work with and retains the integrity of the original pattern if you need to use a different size later down the road.



# T-Shirts for Every Body

- Read the instructions! Before you cut anything, thoroughly read through your pattern's instruction booklet. If you're stumped by any of the techniques or language used, you can learn more about those before they can trip you up while in the middle of the project.
- Use a small rotary cutter to cut your fabric. A smaller 28 mm rotary cutter will be able to maneuver around curvy necklines and armholes much more smoothly than a standard cutter or scissors.

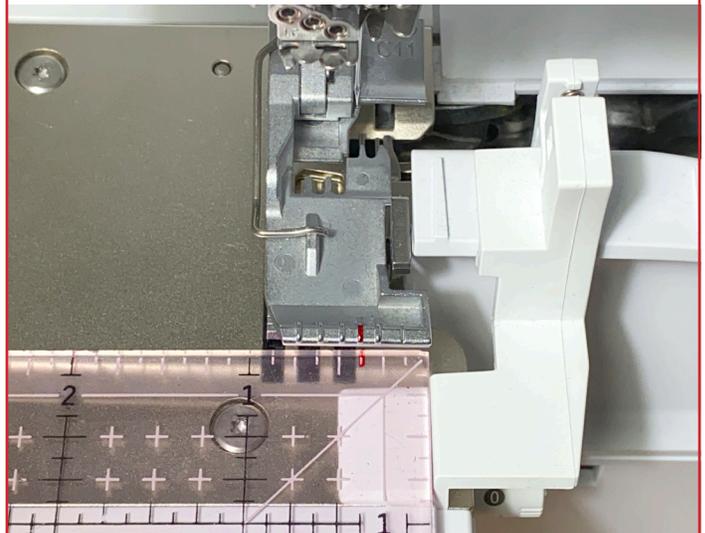


## Garment Construction

- You don't need your thread to match perfectly. Instead, keep just a couple of neutral colors on hand in a variety of values such as white, light grey, medium grey, and black. The value (lightness or darkness) of the thread is what helps it blend in.

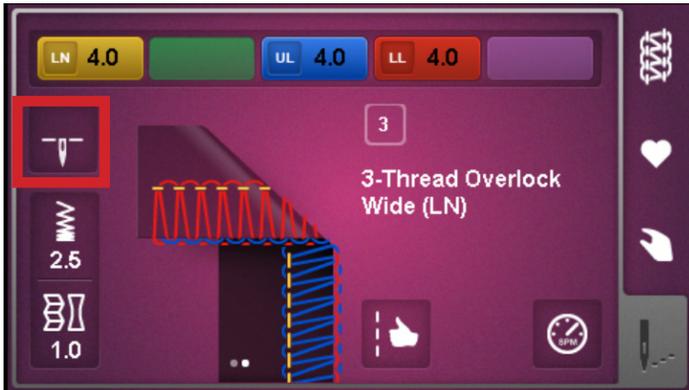


- Assemble your garment using a 3-thread overlock stitch. This stitch will be strong enough for regular wear and washing but is slightly less bulky than the 4-thread overlock stitch.
- Setup for precise seam allowances. Regardless of whether you use a wide overlock stitch (using the left needle) or a narrow one (using the right needle), use a seam guide with your overlocker to achieve precise results. Set your desired cutting width and then use a ruler to measure from your needle over to the right and set your seam guide.



- Use WonderClips instead of pins. Pins are an overlocker's worst enemy! If you have ever sewn over a pin and broken a needle on your regular sewing machine, imagine the damage that can be done with a blade involved. Instead, opt for WonderClips. They will slide or pop off from your fabric before they get stuck or damaged. Plus, they will never snag your fabric.
- Set your needle to stop down. Just like on your regular sewing machine, you can program your needle to stop down on the L 890. This can be particularly helpful when working with delicate pieces or in a small diameter sleeve.

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the needles will fall. This makes it easy to keep your stitching exactly where you want it.



## Professional Finishing Touches

- Use fusible hem tape to secure your hems before stitching. This prevents puckering and gives extra stability to the hem, creating a smoother and flatter coverstitch.
- Determine the best width of coverstitch for each detail. Narrow 3-thread coverstitches are the best choice when coverstitching over an already-sewn seam allowance, such as around a neckline. When both needles stitch through the seam allowance being sewn down, the result is a smoother stitch. A wide 3- or 4-thread coverstitch is best for wider, flatter hems.



- Always secure your threads. Stitches can unravel, especially on a garment that is well loved and worn. Take the time to secure your thread tails with a small knot, fray blocker, and/or by weaving tails into a seam.
- Give your projects thoughtful finishing touches like custom or woven tags. Add a tag to the nape of your t-shirt to show some humor or simply that your garment was crafted with love. These small details elevate your makes from “homemade” to “hand-crafted.”



- Use the needle markings on the presser foot for guidance. It can be tricky to see exactly where your needles are landing where they make contact with the fabric. The standard L 8 Series presser feet, the #C11 and #C13 both have small markings at the front to indicate where