

How to Make a Ruffled Ladies Blouse

by Pamela Fay

You'll need:

- T-shirt, large or extra-large
- Heavy duty thread
- Elastic thread
- Scissors
- Tailor's chalk
- Dressmaker pins
- 1 yard ¼-inch elastic
- Sewing machine

Blouses are challenging to sew even for the most experienced seamstresses. The material can be flimsy and difficult to work with if you don't have a sewing machine with a serger. You may be tempted to buy all your blouses. But, when they are adorned with fancy ruffles and embellishments, they can be very expensive. It's easy to create your own casual, but elegant, ruffled blouse starting with a plain, oversized T-shirt.

Step 1: Select a plain crew neck T-shirt made of soft cotton interlock. If the T-shirt is new, machine wash and dry it to shrink it. After laundering, the shirt should be oversized and hang to the hips.

Step 2: Cut off the hem to create the blouse shell. Mark two lines along the circumference of the bottom of the blouse each 3-inches wide. Cut two loops; cut each loop along one seam to form long strips. Shirr the bottom of the blouse by sewing six lines of machine stitching ¼-inch apart using elastic thread in the bobbin and heavy duty thread in the machine.

Step 3: Fold the blouse in half along the center line with the back right side touching the back left. Pin along the center line so that the material does not shift.

Step 4: Mark a dot with tailor's chalk on the center front approximately 3-inches down from the bottom of the front collar band. Mark a dot on the top of one shoulder 2-inches from where the shoulder seam meets the armhole seam.

Step 5: Lay the pinned blouse on a flat surface with the shoulder dot facing up. Draw a new neckline on the blouse with tailor's chalk connecting the dot on the shoulder with the dot on the center front. Pin along the line through all four layers of fabric. Turn the blouse over and using the pins as a guide, draw the neckline on the other side.

Step 6: Unpin the blouse. Turn the blouse over and mark a line along the back connecting the shoulder dots on either side. Cut along the marked line front and back removing the collar band entirely and creating a wide v-neckline.

Step 7: Sew the two strips together. Stitch with a machine baste $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from one edge. Pull the bobbin thread to create soft gathers.

Step 8: Pin the ruffle along the neckline with the stitched edge closest to the cut edge of the neckline. Cut off the excess ruffle.

Step 9: Cut a slit through one layer of the inside sleeve hem. Cut two pieces of elastic to loosely fit your upper arm. The slack will be used to attach one end to the other. Hook a safety pin through one end of the elastic. Thread the elastic through the hem. Overlap the ends by $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch; pin and sew.

Resources

Generation T: 120 New Ways to Transform a T-Shirt; Megan Nicolay; 2006