

How to Estimate Fabric Yardage

Calculation:

Waist-to-floor (skirt length) x 3	_____
+ Estimated length of train	_____
+ 15 cm (6”) for hem & seam allowance	_____
+ Bodice	_____
+ Sleeves	_____
+ Trim	_____
Total	_____

The skirt typically requires the largest amount of fabric. Take your measurement from the front waist to the floor, over any understructures. This is the length. To cover a crinoline with a circumference of 274 cm (108”), you will need three lengths. Even if the crinoline is larger, this amount is usually sufficient: most skirts will be gored, and it is very common to piece the outer corners of the gores.

If your dress has a train, add the estimated length of the train. Usually, 0.5 metres should be enough unless you have a very long train.

Next, add 8 cm (3”) for the hem, 5 cm (2”) for draping, and 1 cm (½”) for seam allowance. Allow an additional 1 cm (½”) as a margin for error.

Add the length of the bodice (you should be able to get this measurement from the basic block and corset pattern). Between 0.5 and 0.75 metres is usually plenty.

For full-length sleeves, estimate 1 metre of fabric. This may be more than necessary, but sleeves are often shaped or have fullness, which requires more fabric. No extra fabric is needed for short sleeves as they can usually be cut from off-cuts.

Lastly comes the great unknown. Bias binding and self-trim can take up a lot of fabric, so you may want to consider up to 2 metres of fabric for trim.