

CLEAR ELASTIC GATHERING DIRECTIONS

I think one of the most asked questions is how I gather with clear elastic. It has changed the way I sew. NEVER ever ever use basting threads again. Nope clear elastic is the only way to go. You'll never have to mess with pulling threads or scratching your head about ruffle ratios to make gathers. You'll get PERFECT gathers that are exactly the right length ... EVERY time!!

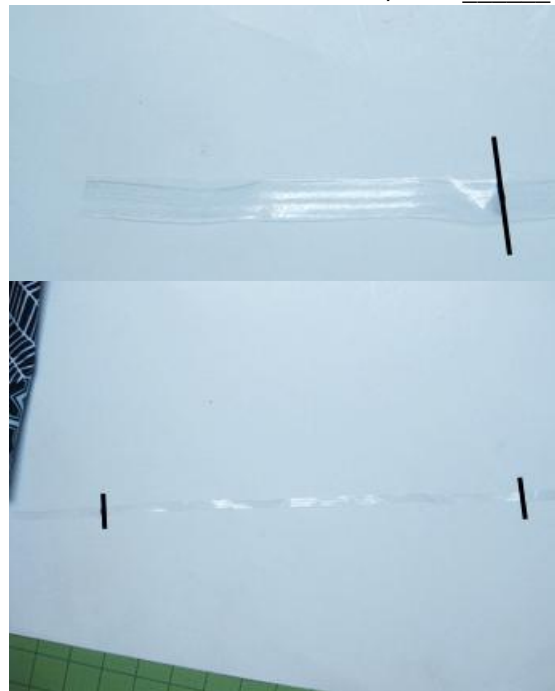
Here are my complete instructions for making gathers EASILY with clear elastic.

- With nimble fingers you can also stitch into a serged seam
- For a gentle gather, just start sewing and stretch as you go.
- For a firm gather, or when sewing thick fabrics, pre-stretch the elastic several times, then sew in and stretch as you go. Pre-stretching allows you to pull the elastic out farther, resulting in a tighter gather.

MATERIALS clear elastic (I prefer 1/4" but you could definitely use 3/8" as well), ballpoint pen
NOTIONS thread

REQUIRED TOOLS scissors, straight pins, ruler or tape measure, basic sewing machine

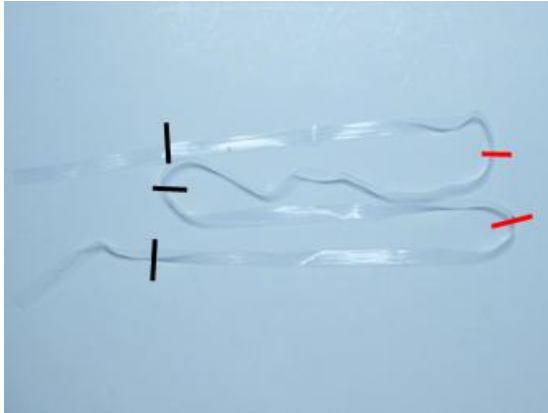
1. Measure the edge that you will be adding the ruffle to, this is the finished width that the ruffle needs to be after gathering. _____ (Example 12")
2. Divide that number by 2 = _____ (Example 12 divided by 2 = 6")
3. Divide that number by 4 = _____ (Example 12 divided by 4 = 3")



$$\begin{array}{ll} .125 = 1/8 & .375 = 3/8 \\ .625 = 5/8 & .875 = 7/8 \end{array}$$

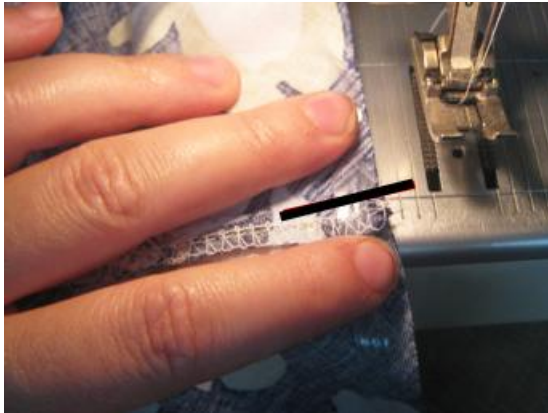
4. MARK your first mark about 2-3 inches away from the end of the clear elastic. A regular ballpoint pen will be fine.

5. Next, MARK measurement from Step 1.
 CUT the elastic 2-3 inches past your last mark.



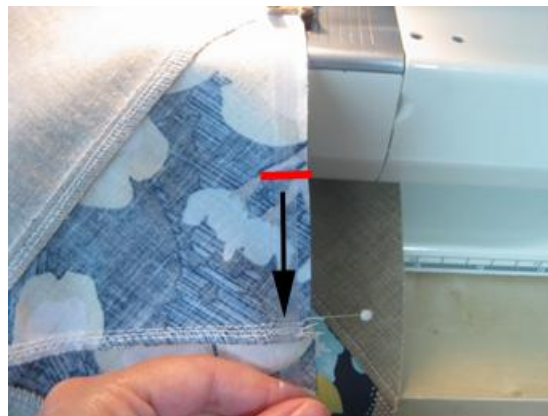
6. MARK the measurement from Step 2 (shown in BLACK in the middle), and again the measurements from Step 3 (shown in RED on the right).

7. MARK the edge that the ruffle will be attaching to into quarters.



8. Starting at the SIDE seam, align your first mark with the side seam on the WRONG side of the top edge that you are gathering. BACKSTITCH to reinforce seam.

STITCH elastic into place. A zigzag stitch is recommended for optimal stretchiness. [My settings: length: 3, width: 3]



9. You'll need to S-T-R-E-T-C-H the elastic so the marks align with the marks along the top edge of the ruffle.

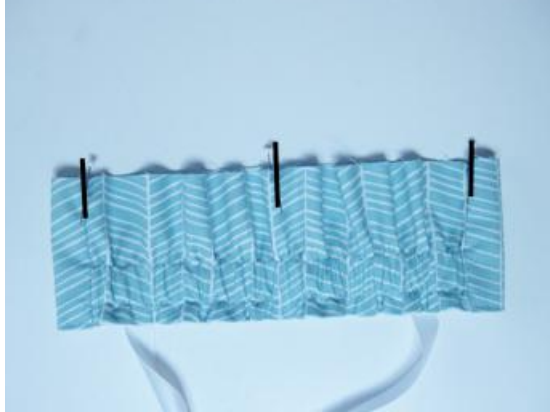
*NOTE: You *NEED* to gently stretch the elastic behind the presser foot of your machine as well so the feed dogs can grab the fabric and sew. [Not shown in the picture, because my other hand was holding the camera!!]*



The top picture shows the red mark and the arrow is showing where the mark needs to stretch to. The picture to the left shows the elastic after it is stretched.

Continue stretching and stitching the elastic around the entire length of the ruffle.

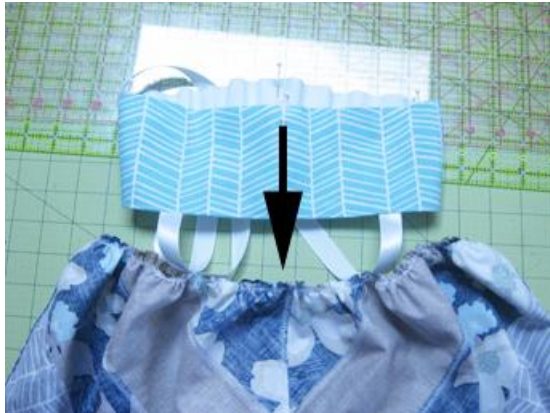
If it is a loop continue until you end where you started, if it is not a loop continue until the opposite side of the ruffle from where you started.



ATTACHING THE RUFFLE

10. Mark the bottom of the edge that the ruffle is being attached to into quarters.

**Take note that the side seams are not directly on the sides in this example ... SORRY!



11. Slip the edge that the ruffle is being attached to INSIDE the ruffle (shown with a bodice and skirting in the picture). MATCH the quarter marks and pin into place.



12. STITCH the edge that the ruffle is being attached to and the ruffle together using the seam allowance called for from the sewing pattern that you are using. Backstitch to reinforce seam.



13. SEAM FINISH the raw edge.



14. PRESS the seam allowance up towards the top of the edge that you attached the ruffle to. Turn RIGHT side out.

15. TOPSTITCH 1/8" above the seam line, making sure to catch the seam allowance underneath.

[Pictures were shown using the Happy Herringbone Dress ... available in my shop.](#)

You can find other tutorials using clear elastic to create gathers [HERE](#):

[Stretchy Ruffle Directions](#)

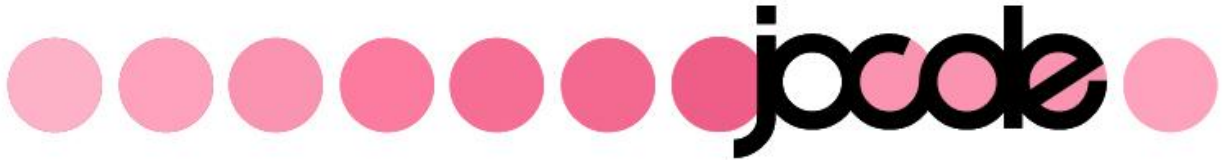
[Ruffle Directions \(4 Ways\)](#)

WHERE TO BUY:

You can find clear elastic in your local sewing shop (sometimes called swimwear elastic).

[I also sell it at Jocole.com](#)





CLEAR ELASTIC GATHERS – QUICK GUIDE

This quick guide is included for those who wish to print out the instructions without having to waste ink on all the pictures.

MATERIALS clear elastic (I prefer 1/4" but you could definitely use 3/8" as well), ballpoint pen
NOTIONS thread
REQUIRED TOOLS scissors, straight pins, ruler or tape measure, basic sewing machine

1. Measure the edge that you will be adding the ruffle to, this is the finished width that the ruffle needs to be after gathering. _____ (Example 12")
2. Divide that number by 2 = _____ (Example 12 divided by 2 = 6")
3. Divide that number by 4 = _____ (Example 12 divided by 4 = 3")
 .125 = 1/8 .375 = 3/8 .625 = 5/8 .875 = 7/8
4. MARK your first mark about 2-3 inches away from the end of the clear elastic. A regular ballpoint pen will be fine.
5. Next, MARK measurement from Step 1. CUT the elastic 2-3 inches past your last mark.
6. MARK the measurement from Step 2, and again the measurements from Step 3.
7. MARK the edge that the ruffle will be attaching to into quarters.
8. Starting at the SIDE seam, align your first mark with the side seam on the WRONG side of the top edge that you are gathering. BACKSTITCH to reinforce seam. STITCH elastic into place. A zigzag stitch is recommended for optimal stretchiness.
 [My settings: length: 3, width: 3]
9. You'll need to S-T-R-E-T-C-H the elastic so the marks align with the marks along the top edge of the ruffle.
 NOTE: You *NEED* to gently stretch the elastic behind the presser foot of your machine as well so the feed dogs can grab the fabric and sew.
 Continue stretching and stitching the elastic around the entire length of the ruffle.
 If it is a loop continue until you end where you started, if it is not a loop continue until the opposite side of the ruffle from where you started.
10. Mark the bottom of the edge that the ruffle is being attached to into quarters.
11. Slip the edge that the ruffle is being attached to INSIDE the ruffle. MATCH the quarter marks and pin into place.
12. STITCH the edge that the ruffle is being attached to and the ruffle together using the seam allowance called for from the sewing pattern that you are using. Backstitch to reinforce seam.
13. SEAM FINISH the raw edge.
14. PRESS the seam allowance up towards the top of the edge that you attached the ruffle to. Turn RIGHT side out.
15. TOPSTITCH 1/8" above the seam line, making sure to catch the seam allowance underneath.

Here are some other GREAT patterns with ruffles to try out your new gathering technique ... these are just a few.

You can find even more at Jocole.com



[Bouncing Bubble Skirt](#)



[Double Layer Ruffle Skirt](#)



[Triple Ruffle T-Shirt Dress](#)



[Mega Ruffle Pants](#)