

How to Make a Wiccan Robe (with or without hood)

So you're new to Paganism and you've decided to try Wicca. And you want to have some sweet robes to wear to a ritual, but you're not sure where to start.

Here's an inexpensive, easy-to-make Wiccan robe (adult sizes) that anybody can sew. If you are new to sewing, be sure to read ALL the directions before buying anything, and again before sewing your robe. I want your robe to come out looking nice, and that means knowing exactly what you're doing.

I personally recommend using natural-fiber, woven cloths for this (cotton, linen, *maybe* rayon/tencel). Not just for ecological reasons, but because polyester does not breathe. Polyester also melts if you have an accident with a candle, and that means it can melt to your skin and cause worse burns than if you had burning cotton against your skin. Don't. Use. Polyester.

If you use a printed fabric, make sure you keep careful track of the RIGHT side (the side with printing on it) and the WRONG side (the plain white side that doesn't look as nice) of the fabric. Unless you are specifically told to do otherwise, always sew with right sides TOGETHER.

The body is nice and loose and drapery on this robe, but the sleeves are short and a bit tighter because as cool as loose, flowing sleeves look—they dramatically increase the chances that you're going to knock something down. Like a lit candle. (This is also why your robe doesn't go all the way to the floor. Fire safety is important!)

Seam allowance is ½" unless otherwise stated. If you're using a sewing machine, remember to go slow, especially if you're new to it. If you're hand-sewing, you will need to use a lot more pins than if you're machine-sewing.

You will need:

2 to 2 ½ yards of medium-weight fabric, depending on your height (Quilting cotton works nicely; if your waist measurement is more than 40" be sure to buy fabric that is at least 60" wide. It tells you how wide the fabric is on the label that's at the end of the bolt.)

Fabric scissors (do not use them for anything but fabric; do not spend more than \$20 on a pair of scissors unless you're sure you're going to use them a lot)

Measuring tape (a friend is handy for this)

Thread that matches your fabric (or a contrasting color that looks nice, if you want your thread to show)

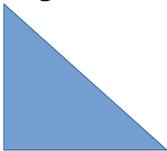
A place to stretch out and cut 2 ½ yards of fabric (a clean floor works if you don't have any tables big enough)

1 ½ yards of thick cording (like the kind used to hold back drapes) or a nice belt that fits

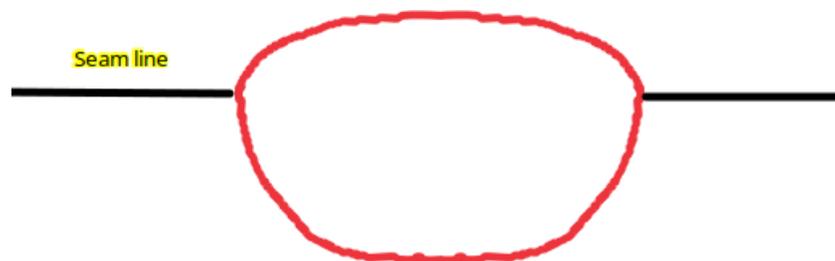
(optional) Wash-out fabric pencil or marker to label your pieces so you don't get them confused

Directions:

1. Pre-wash your fabric. **DO NOT SKIP THIS STEP.** You want to wash it under the same conditions you're going to launder the robe in the future. If you pre-wash, you get any shrinkage out of the way before you cut and sew your robe. Plus, a lot of fabrics use starch to make them look nice on the bolt, and you want to wash that off before you wear the robe.
2. Iron your fabric. You'll need to cut some raw thread edges off the ends of the fabric when you do this. This is perfectly normal, and any frayed fabric at the edges is taken into account in these directions.
3. Spread out the fabric nice and flat.
4. Trim off any frayed fabric. Folding the raw edge of the fabric down, then using your scissors to cut along the fold, can help you make sure that you're cutting straight. Another method is to pull out a single thread, then cut along the line formed by the missing thread.
5. Measure from your shoulder down to about mid-calf. Make a cut across the fabric (from selvage edge to selvage edge) that is that far down the fabric, plus an inch or two. (Again, folding or pulling a thread helps.)
6. Fold your body piece in half so that one selvage is along the other. Cut the fabric in half. (There is a method to my madness here.)
7. Using your remaining fabric, you're going to cut sleeves and a hood. Start by measuring from shoulder to elbow (measurement A) and then around the widest part of your flexed bicep (measurement B).
8. Cut two rectangles that are measurement A + 2 tall and measurement B + 3 wide. These will be your sleeves.
9. Cut a rectangle that is **AT LEAST 15"** tall and **30"** wide. This will be your hood. You want it big and spacious for that classic "hooded robe" look. If you don't want a hood, then get some bias binding that looks good with your fabric, and use that.
10. Cut four triangles that look like this by making 2 squares that are 4" wide, then cutting a straight line along the diagonal.



11. Now that the cutting is (mostly) done, set aside any leftover bits of fabric to use for other projects later.
12. OK, time to sew. Line up the tops of your body pieces and sew them together. Yes, I know there's no hole for your neck yet. We're getting to that.
13. Measure around your neck. Divide that number by 4.
14. Fold your sewn-together body pieces in half lengthwise. Take your number from step 13, measure that far from the center, and mark on each side.
15. Unfold your body pieces and **VERY CAREFULLY** draw a shape like the one below. The front should be lower than the back, and there should be plenty of space to get your head through. You can fold the huge fabric rectangle in half lengthwise to make sure the left and right sides come out the same.

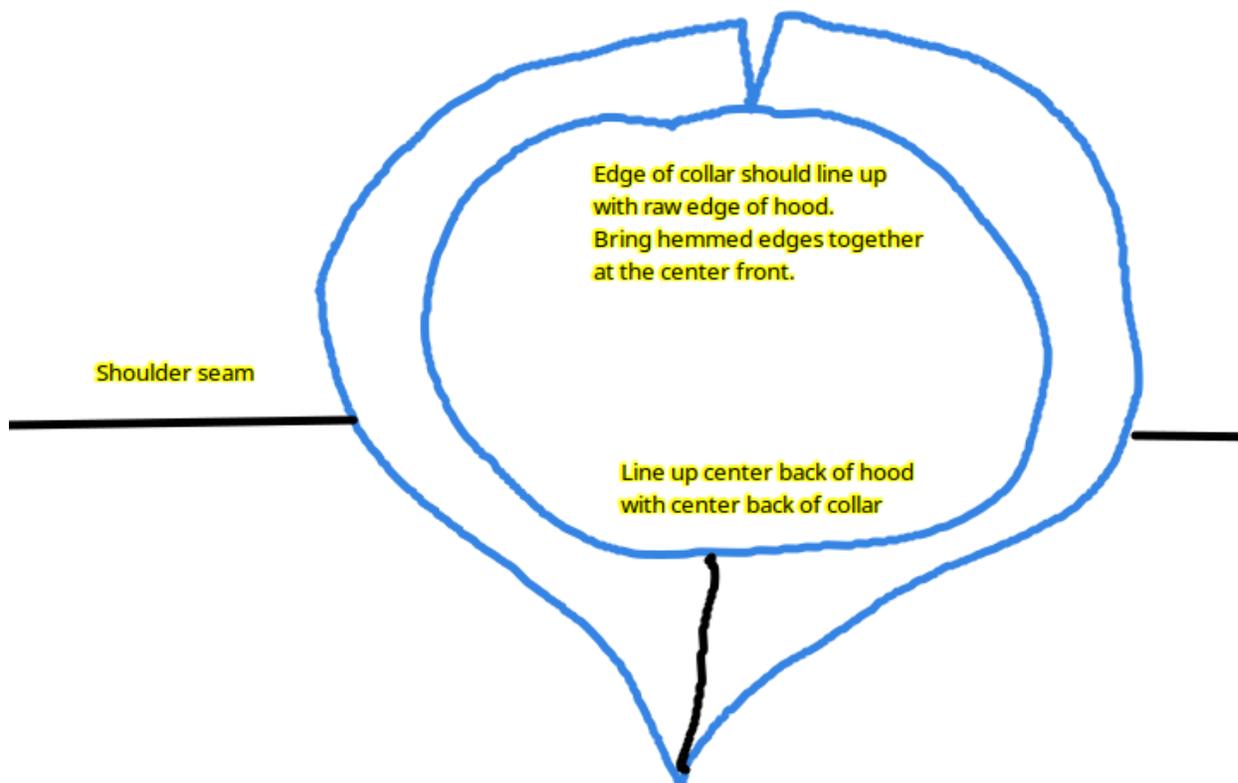


16. VERY CAREFULLY cut out your neck hole. Test it to make sure you can get your head through it. If you can't, carefully enlarge it a little bit at a time until you can.
17. Time for the hood or neck facing, depending on which one you wanted. **If you're not making a hood, skip to step 22.** Start by folding the hood rectangle in half lengthwise and sewing across the top. You should now have something that looks like a hood.
18. Hem the hood by folding in about ¼" of the sides, pressing, then folding up another ½" and pressing again. Pin if necessary, then sew down your folded hem.

Sew here



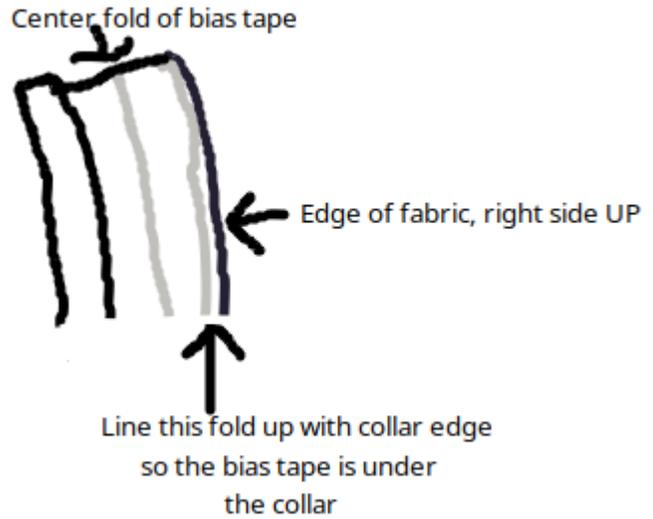
19. Make big, hand-sewn stitches in a contrasting color along the bottom of your hood. Leave the ends of the threads sticking out a good long way. These will be gathering stitches.
20. Line up the center back of your hood with the center back of the neck, and pin. Line up the ends of the hood with the center front, and pin. Pull the ends of your gathering threads so that the bottom of the hood starts to gather up into little folds. Even out the folds as best you can, and pin the bottom edge of the hood around the neckline. Sew it into place.



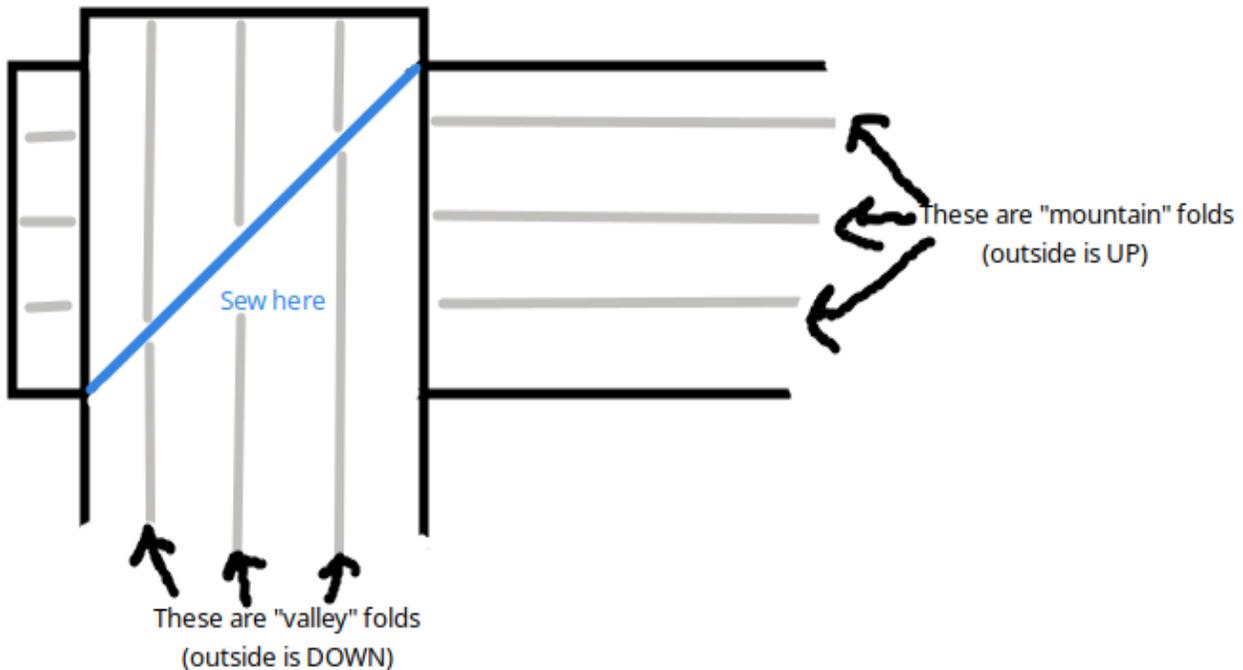
21. Pull out the gathering stitches, since you don't need them anymore.

22. If you're just making a plain collar, then you'll need bias binding. **If you made a hood, then skip to step 27.** Trim the edge of the bias binding so it's nice and straight. Open up the center fold.

23. Pin the binding to the back of the neckline, about 2-3" from the end, as shown. (Note that the main piece is right side UP.) Starting just after the pin, and stretching the binding nice and tight as you go, sew it to the neckline. (If you don't stretch the binding, it'll look funny.) **Go slow** and make sure that the binding and your neckline stay lined up the whole time. This means adjusting every inch or so if you're on a machine. **Stop** when there are about 3-4" of neckline left. You should be in the back again.



24. Completely unfold the ends of the bias binding and place them so that they look like the diagram. Sew along the line, then trim off the excess so there's about 1/4" of seam allowance.



25. Sew the last bit of binding down in the back.

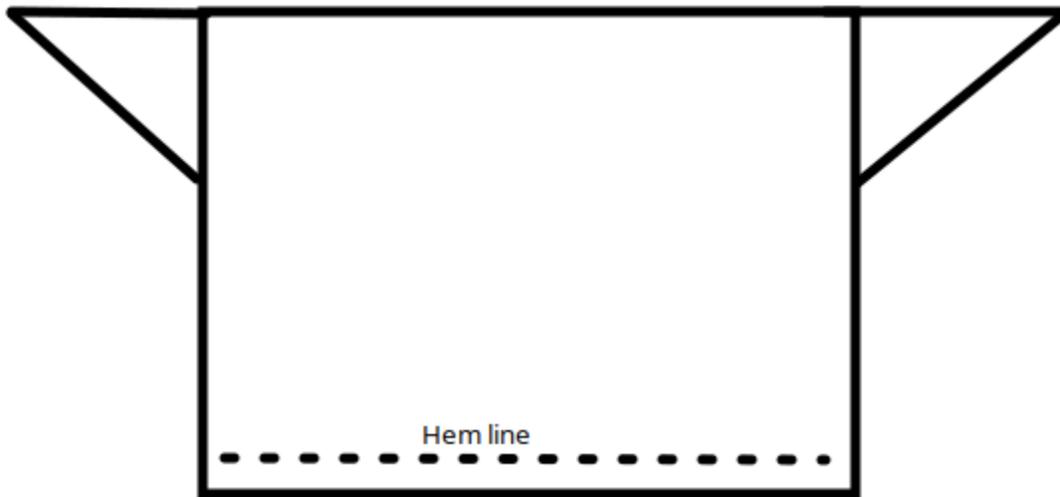
26. Re-fold your binding and sew it down to the right side of your neckline. Congratulations; the hardest part is over!

27. It's time for sleeves! Double-check that your sleeves are turned the right way (they should be a bit wider than they are long, unless you have VERY thin arms), then hem the end of each sleeve by folding up about 1/4" of the sleeve, pressing, then folding up another 1/2" and pressing that. Pin if necessary, then sew down your folded hem.

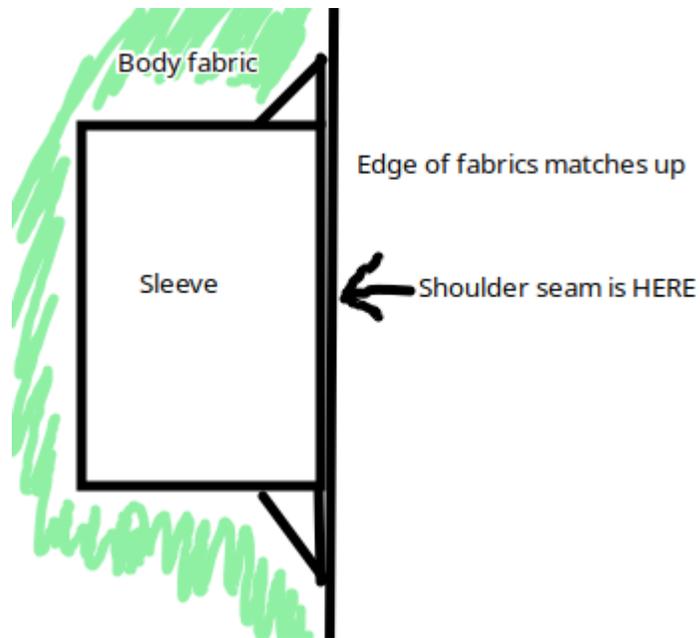
Sew here



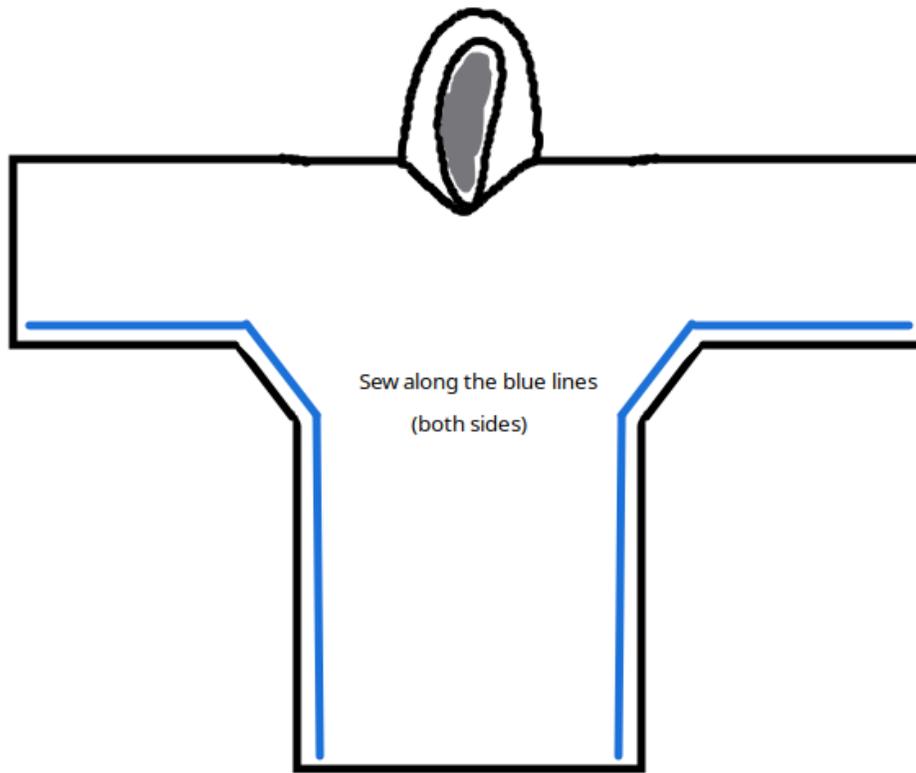
28. Remember the gusset? Sew one gusset to the shoulder end of each side of the sleeves, right sides together. Your result should look like this.



29. Center the sleeve pieces around the shoulder seam. Then sew them down, right sides together, as shown. The gussets should also get sewn to the body.



30. Side seams time! You will want to fold along the shoulder seam so that the robe is inside-out. Then sew along the sides of each sleeve, down the gusset, and down the sides of the robe, as shown. You're almost done!



31. Hem the bottom edge of the robe, the same way you hemmed the hood and sleeves. You now have a finished robe for all your ritual needs. Enjoy!