



Oh-so Playful Playsuit

Summer's here and, in the first of his special projects for Singer, Matt Chapple, winner of the 2015 Great British Sewing Bee, celebrates by making a brand spanking new summer outfit.

... no not for himself or wife Gemma but for his daughter Evie.

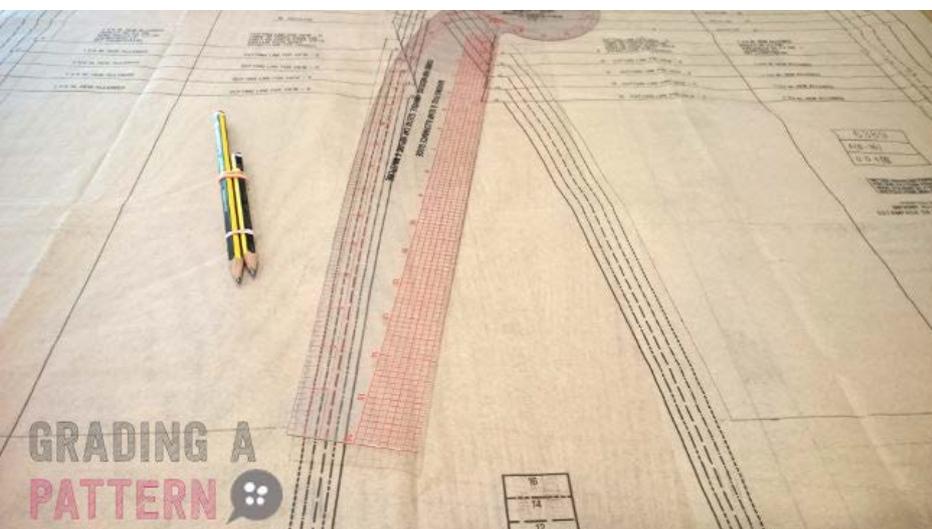
It's called the oh-so playful playsuit and Matt is using a Singer 7470.

Don't forget, you can also visit Matt's blog at - www.sewwhatsnew.co.uk

Over to you, Matt...

Playsuits and jumpsuits are being worn everywhere at the moment, especially as we come into festival season.

I used a commercial pattern for this one, the New Look #6389 Tweens easy to be precise, what I liked about it was the range of playsuit variations, including skirts, shorts and trouser options. Evie's now six so I didn't want anything too babyish for her, but the age range on this pattern is 8 to 16, so even though it was the right style, I chose to grade the pattern down to make it suitable for her age. It's simple enough to do.



At key points around the pattern I checked the differences with a ruler between the ages 12, 10 and 8 and carried on the downward graduation, marking it out in pencil. I found the difference for some of the seams was exactly one standard pencils width, so using some trusty loom bands (I knew they'd come in handy sometime) I joined a couple of pencils together and traced along the lines, creating a new size in my pattern as I went.



I opted for playsuit option D, consisting of shorts and cami-style top. The pattern itself is made up of shorts front and back, a little tab for holding them up, top part front and back, and some little shoulder bow straps, plus some 1/4" elastic for gathers.

Any lightweight cotton or linen is perfect for this playsuit.

If you choose a distributed design it saves pattern matching, I did exactly that with ours, it looks like it's full of tiny little sweets, which made Evie smile.



Once the paper pattern is cut out, I move on to the fabric, this is really pretty quick to do, as there are not too many pieces. I recommend cutting out all the notches now as this helps to identify the sections later. They do look fairly similar once cut out, so if you want to, now's the time to give them a little chalk mark to remind you.



With right sides together and a 5/8" seam allowance I begin by joining the front and back top sections. I've not got an overlocker, so throughout this make whenever I've joined a seam to stop them fraying I choose to finish them with a zig-zag stitch and then trim back close to the stitch line. I'm using the Singer Confidence and on this machine it's the first zig-zag stitch option.



STITCHING
THE FOLDED
SHOULDER
STRAPS

The shoulder straps are folded in half, right sides together, sewn, trimmed back, then turned through.

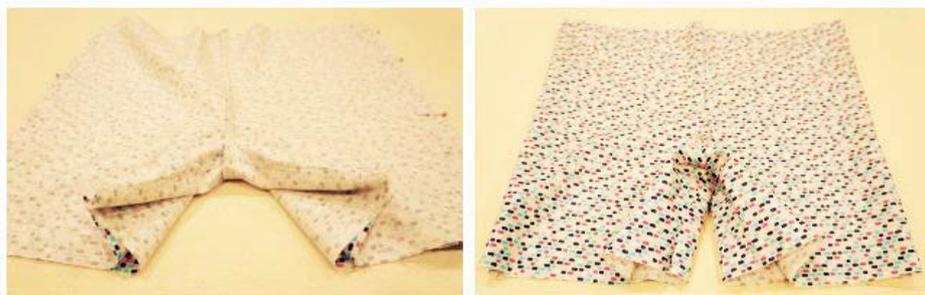
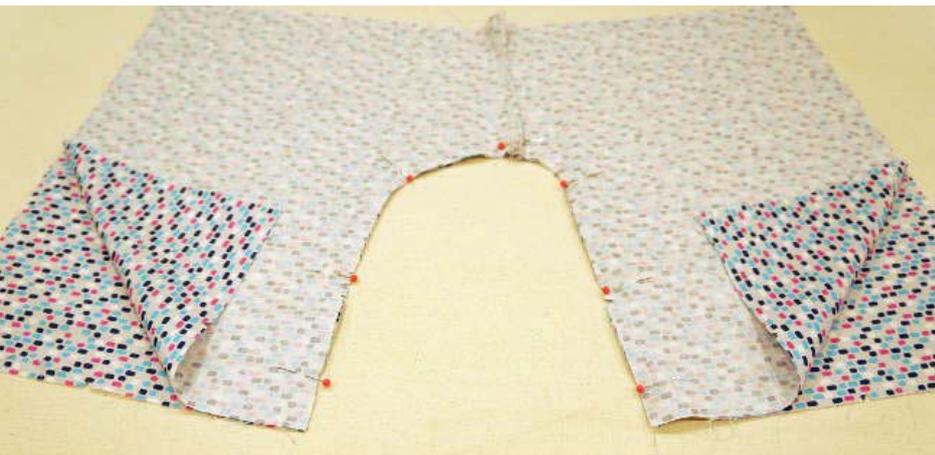
These are pinned, what looks like upside down to the right side of the top parts front and back, so that the raw edges align, they're then stitched in place close to the edge.



THREADING ELASTIC STEPS...

The top raw edge is turned into a casing for the elastic by pressing it down 5/8" and then under itself again by 1/4" this is edge-stitched almost all the way round except for an inch or so. A really handy tip here was using a little Wonderweb or fusible interfacing to hold the side seams down flat ready for the next stage, threading the elastic through.

I'm sure there are lots of nifty gadgets to help with this step, but I find for passing elastic through a channel the easiest method is safety pinning one end and carefully working it through in a series of gathering movements. Once it's all the way through the two ends are secured with a couple of rows of stitching and the last bit of the casing is stitched closed.



THE CENTRE SEAM OF THE SHORTS



STRETCHY ELASTIC WAISTLINE

Next up are the shorts, this is where those notches come in handy, I'd say when it comes to trousers or shorts, if you're in any doubt whether you're joining the correct seams, pin them and check before committing to stitch as it's surprisingly easy to get them muddled. I take one front and one back part and join them at the inner leg seam; I then do the same again with the other two pieces.

I then take the two now joined sections pin together the centre front and back seams and stitch, this is then restitched for a little reinforcement.

The curve can be clipped into if you'd like to release it a bit.

Now I take the front and back sections matching the notches and join the side seams.

The playsuit top and shorts are joined at the waistline by taking the shorts the right way out and slipping these into the inside out top, ensuring the side seams and notches are evenly matched.

This gets stitched with a slightly generous 5/8" seam.

The outfit is then turned completely inside out, the waist seam allowance is pressed up and then stitched again just below its raw edge, almost all the way around. This makes a channel for the elastic to be passed through, joined and closed, much like the earlier top edge.



The hems of the shorts are super simple, they're just pressed up to the inside a 1/4" and topstitched. Then to round it off I make up a pair of tabs to give a nice gather. These are stitched in place on the insides of the outer leg seam.



I bring the tab to the outside so it creates that gather and then stitch in place with a sweet little button, by going through the leg outer and all tab layers.

It was a really fun make and super simple to do. To mix it up a bit, you could always go for the top half in one style and the bottom half in another, for example the halter neck with shorts, or the full-length leg with the cami top. In fact I may try that next.

So what do you say, do you have a little lady in your life who could do with an on-trend summer playsuit? If you do, please share your results...

Until then it's bye from Me, my Singer and Evie x