



Table Treatments: Tablecloths

7.130

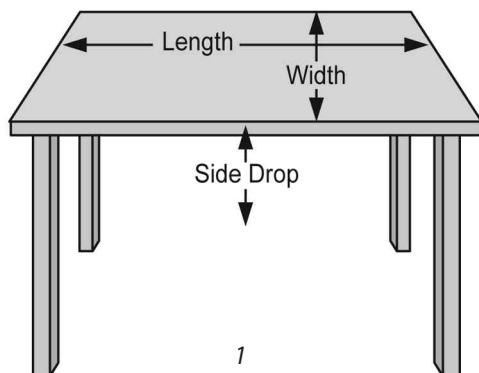
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Custom table treatments can be made with nearly any fabric and trim. When selecting materials, view the tablecloth or place mat as a blank artist's canvas, and don't be afraid to be creative with a variety of sewing techniques. Prior to choosing fabrics and trims, consider how the table treatment will be used and whether your materials are durable enough to endure daily use and washings. If the table treatment will be merely decorative and seldom need cleaning, then you have more options. Keep in mind the recommended care of the fabric and the manufacturer's suggestions for pretreating or shrinking.

Round and rectangular tablecloths will be covered in this guideline. See Guideline 7.135 for information on making napkins and place mats.

Measuring for Rectangular Table Treatments

To create a tablecloth for a square or rectangular table, begin by measuring the width and length of the tabletop (1).



Next decide the desired "drop" for the cloth. The drop is how far down from the tabletop the tablecloth will hang (1). Although, you can choose any drop length you prefer, common drop lengths are: to the arms of the chairs, to the top of the chair seat or all the way to the floor.

Next decide your hem allowance. See "Hem Finishes" at the end of this guideline.

To find the width of the tablecloth, add together the tabletop width plus twice the drop measurement and twice the hem allowance. If the table is 36" wide, the desired drop is 15" and your hem allowance is 1" then: $36" + [15" \times 2] + [1" \times 2] = 68"$.

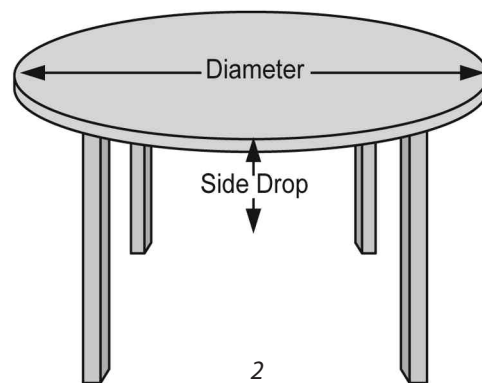
Use the same formula to find the cut length of the tablecloth. Add together the

tabletop length plus twice the drop measurement and twice the hem allowance.

Tip: Prevent the corners of a long, rectangular cloth from dragging on the floor by raising the "drop" length a few inches up from the floor.

Measuring for Round Tables

Measure the diameter of the tabletop through the center of the table from edge to edge (2). Divide this number in half to find the table's radius.

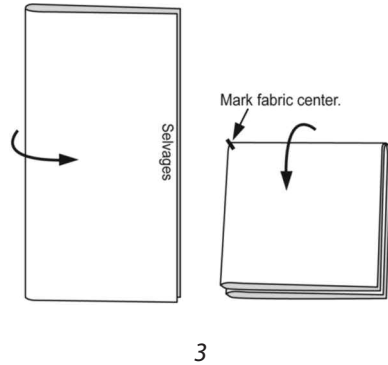


Determine the drop, see "Measuring for Rectangular Table Treatments" at left.

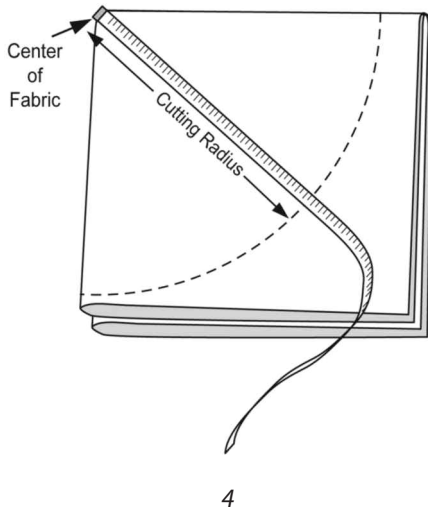
To determine the tablecloth's cutting measurement, add together the tabletop radius plus the drop measurement and the hem allowance. If the table is 36" across, the desired drop is 15" and the hem allowance is 1", then: $18" + 15" + 1" = 34"$.

Easy Cutting for Round Cloths

Fold the fabric in half lengthwise (matching the selvages) and in half again (matching the cut edges (3)). Use a safety pin or a piece of tape to mark the fold that is in the center of the fabric.



Position one end of a tape measure at the marked corner fold. Using the tape measure like a compass, measure and mark the cutting radius every few inches, creating a pie shaped cutting line (4). Cut through all four layers of fabric along the marked line.

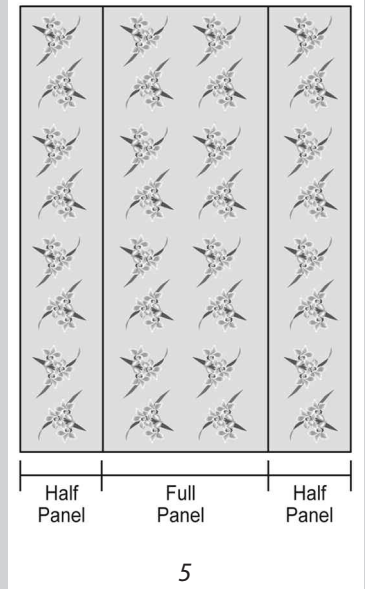


Hem Finishes

For topstitched hems on tablecloths, first determine the finished width of the hem. Choose a narrow hem of 1/2" to 2" on lightweight fabrics or curved edges and a wider hem of 2" to 4" on heavier fabrics or straight edges. For a professional looking hem, fold up the finished-hem width, and press it in place. Fold up and press the finished-hem width again, and stitch through all layers of fabric close to the inside fold. Miter the corners if desired. See Guideline 8.215 for information on mitering corners. ▀

Piecing Panels

If the cut width of a rectangular or square tablecloth exceeds the fabric's width, piece together several panels of fabric before cutting the cloth to size. This holds true for the cutting diameter of a round tablecloth also. Cut two or more panels as needed, each a few inches longer than the cutting length, and stitch them together. To give a balanced look when two panels are needed, split one panel in half lengthwise and stitch it to each side of a whole center panel (5). When three panels are needed, stitch three whole panels together. If the fabric has an obvious one-way design or a nap finish (such as velvet or satin), be sure to stitch the panels together with all the designs or nap headed in the same direction (see Guideline 4.120 for information on napped fabrics).



Also, printed fabrics, especially large prints, are specifically designed so the motifs can be matched exactly at the panel's side edges, giving the appearance of one continuous panel. Often, you will need to purchase additional fabric to allow the panels to be shifted up or down when matching (6). For best results, measure the length of the print repeat and purchase one additional repeat for each panel needed.

