

Jorunn's Big Book of War Garb Volume 1

Hakama for Swedes

OK, before the Anachro-narcs come for me, let me say right at the outset that these are wrong. I know they're wrong. But – and this is the important thing – they're easy. They go together quickly, they look right, and they won't give you nearly as many headaches. Don't try to enter them in an A&S competition, but they'll get you comfortably through Pennsic.

Another thing to note: I am not a small woman. When Akiley and I drew up this pattern, we designed it to fit and hang right on larger people. Ladies, if you're much below a Size 10 or 12, you'll probably want to reduce the width a bit, or you'll end up swimming in fabric. Guys, I don't know what the corresponding pants size would be, but certainly anything below a 30 inch waist, you'll want to reduce the volume.

You can make hakama from just about any fabric - plain cottons, fancier weaves or brocades, silks, whatever. The big concern is the weight, not the fabric content: light, fluttery fabrics won't hang right. Also, try not to choose a fabric that wrinkles too easily, or doesn't hold its shape well, or you'll spend all your time ironing your pleats or looking rumped. For Pennsic-weight hakama, my favorite is Kona cotton. It breathes, holds pleats well, doesn't wrinkle too badly, and washes like a dream. And it's light enough that you won't die in the Pennsic heat.

Note: All of these instructions are based on 45" wide fabric. If you're using a different width, adjust accordingly. 6-6 1/2 yards seems to be enough for most people. If you're very tall, get more. If you're much shorter than me (I claim to be 5'4") you can probably get away with less.

You Will Need:

Fabric

Thread

Tape Measure

Yardstick (not absolutely necessary, but it will make your life easier)

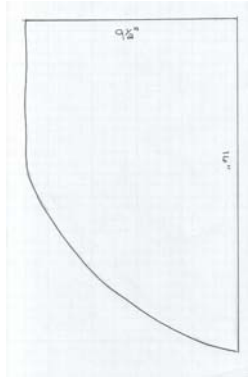
A good-sized piece of heavy-ish paper. A cut-open paper bag works fine.

Measuring & Pattern Adjusting:

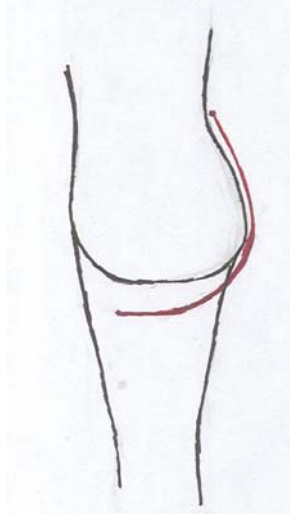
1. Waist. Don't measure too tightly, but you can be a bit snug with this. Keep in mind that these pants are going to be tied pretty tightly.
 - Subtract about 8 inches from this measurement
 - Divide this number in half. When the time comes, you will be pleating the back and front to these widths.

So, if your waist measures 40": minus 8 = 32. 32 divided by 2 is 16.
So the front and back of your hakama will each be pleated to 16".

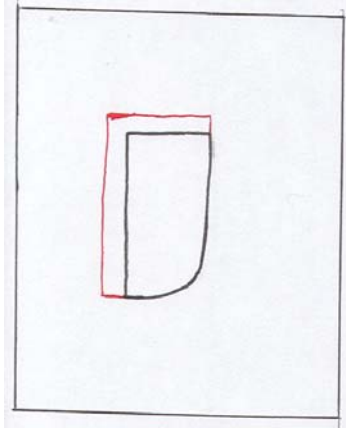
2. Measure from your waist to the floor. Add 4-6". This will be the length of your panels.
3. This is the only tricky bit: This piece is the cut-out for the butt-curve of the back 2 panels. This is also the part that will cause the people who make hakama properly to twitch. It would be best if they looked away about now.



Either print this out and enlarge it, or re-draw it on your paper, but don't cut it yet. You'll need to test the measurements first and see if you need to make any adjustments. The curve on my pattern measures about 21 inches. Take your tape measure and check this on yourself. Start at the center back of your waist and pull the measuring tape between your legs. Ideally, it should reach a point about 2-3" in front of the midpoint of your body, and be fairly loose. You don't want it tight, because it will make your hakama look funny, but you don't want the crotch down to your knees either. This is about the line you want:



Shorten, lengthen or widen the pattern to fit you correctly. Now it's safe to cut it out.

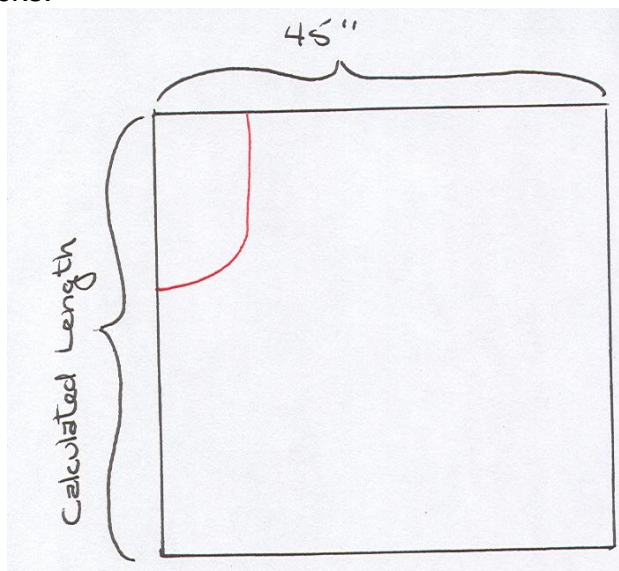


Cutting:

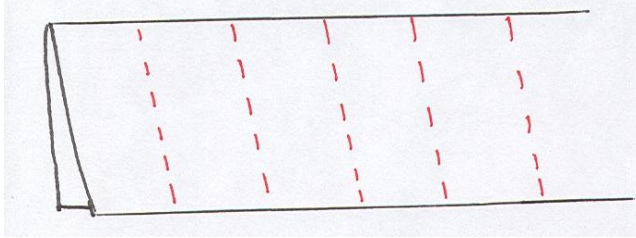
1. BEFORE CUTTING, WASH AND DRY YOUR FABRIC! Better to shrink it now than to have your completed pants shrink later!

Now, having washed and dried your fabric:

2. Cut 4 panels, 45" wide by the length you calculated before. Put 2 of them to the side. They will be your fronts.
3. Lay out the other two panels RIGHT SIDES TOGETHER. Place your butt-curve pattern in the corner (long side to the length of your panels, probably along the selvage) and cut around it. These will be your backs.



- Now you need to cut 5 strips to make the ties. This will be easier if you re-fold your fabric in half lengthwise. Measure down 4-5", mark the fabric, and cut straight across. Do this 4 more times.



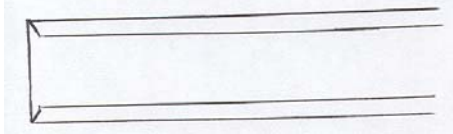
Note: If your waist is less than 36", you will probably only need 4 strips, rather than 5, but when in doubt, go longer. You can always cut them down later.

OK, you now have 2 fronts, 2 backs, and 5 tie sections.

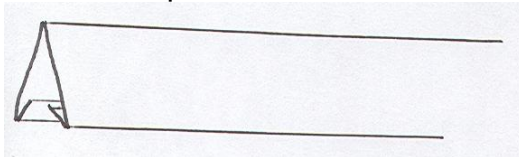
Sewing:

Ties:

- Right sides together, sew 2 of the sections together to make one long strip. Sew the other 3 sections into an even longer strip. Iron the seams flat.
- Turn the long edges of the strips in about $\frac{1}{2}$ " and iron flat.

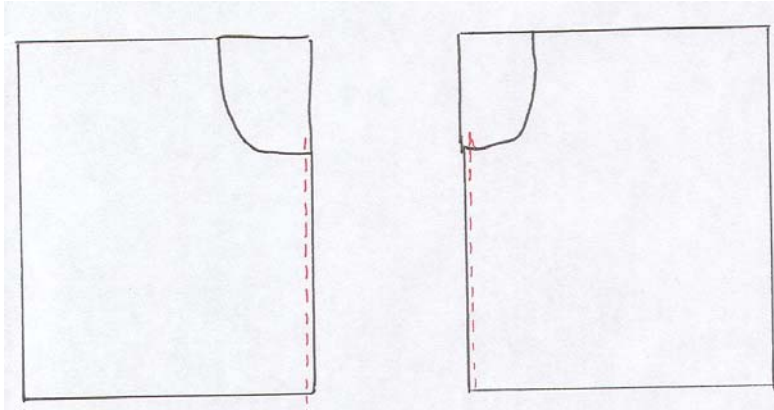


- Fold the strips in half lengthwise and iron flat. Think of it as creating two enormous pieces of double-fold bias tape.



Legs:

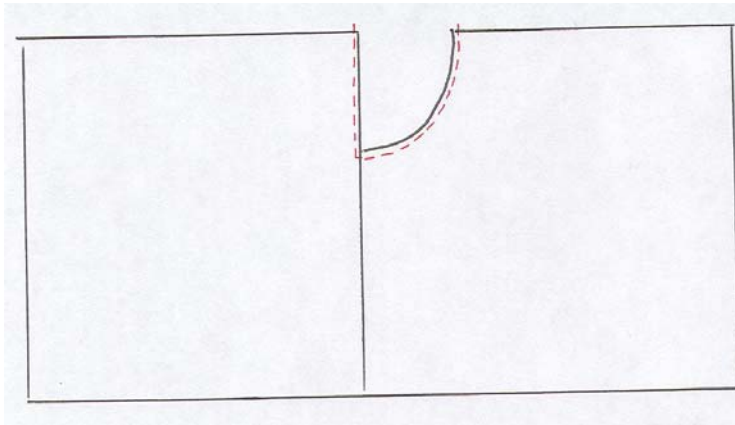
- Lay the front and back panels out right sides together, so they look like this:



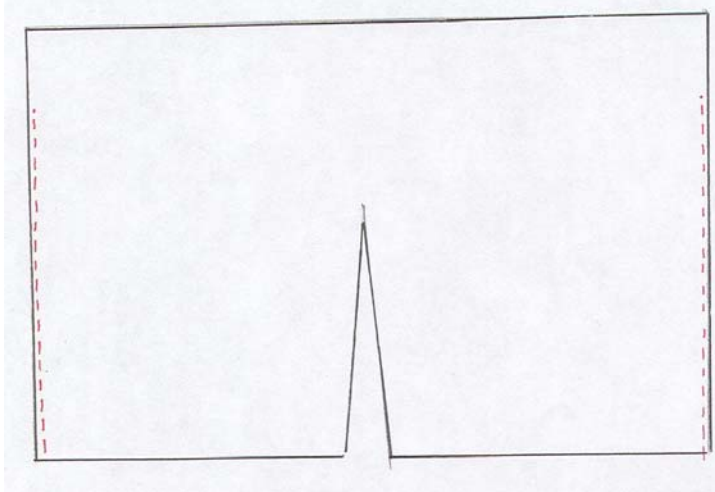
NOTE: Make sure you end up with 2 mirror-image pieces. Otherwise you'll make 2 of the same leg, which works less well than you might think.

Pin down the short edge from the end of the curve to the bottom, and sew. Iron the seams flat.

2. Open these pieces up and match them up, right sides together. Sew up the crotch seam. Iron the seam flat.



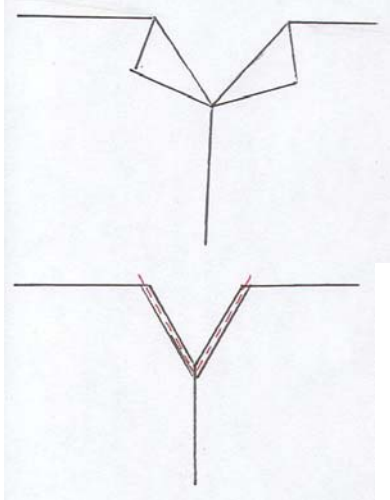
3. Right sides together, sew up the outside seams, stopping about 6-7" below the top.



This step can be a bit confusing just because of the sheer volume of fabric. I find it helpful to match up and temporarily pin together the center front and center back seams. Once I know where the centers are, finding the outside edges is easy. The backs will be slightly narrower than the fronts. That's OK.

Iron the seams flat.

4. Now for the open section at the top of each seam. Take the upper corners and fold them down at a 45-60 degree angle. Iron flat. Trim off excess, fold the raw edge under again, iron flat and sew down.



Pleating:

This is the part that always scares people, but it really isn't that hard.

Note: I tend to do my pleating by eye. If you want to measure everything carefully, go for it. Your pants will be nicer than mine. But with this volume

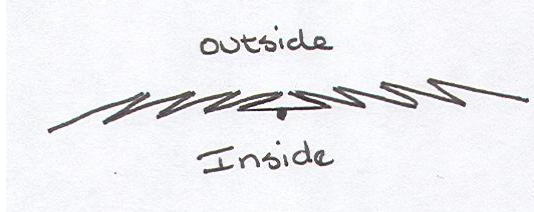
of fabric, if the pleats aren't perfectly even and symmetrical, no one will ever see it. They should be close, but it's ok if they're not exact.

The technique I'm giving you here is one I came up with after swearing loudly and at great length at a pair of hakama a few years ago. I find that it makes things a lot easier for me. But if you find a method that works better for you, do it.

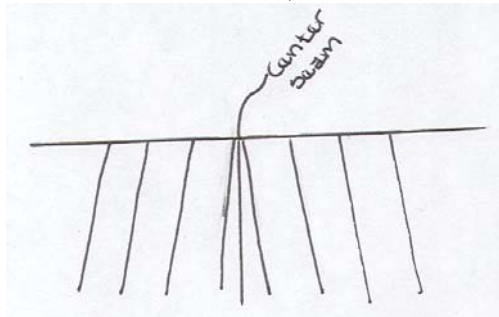
Front:

Remember: the front is flat, the back is curved.

1. On your ironing board, mark with pins the width that you calculated the hakama should be way back in Step 1 of the measuring (16" in the example I gave). Also mark the center point. Right side up, pin the center front seam to the ironing board at the center mark. Pin the ends to the other marks. This way you know how wide the front has to be when you're done, and you have the center marked as a reference.
2. Begin pleating. The two center pleats should just about meet in the front. Then just space them out from there. Most people end up with 4 or 5 pleats on each side. These will be fairly deep, and will probably overlap a bit. That's ok. Pin the pleats to the ironing board as you go, and don't be surprised if you have to un-pin and re-pleat a few times. I always do. Try to make the outside folds of the pleats as evenly-spaced as possible. It doesn't matter what it looks like on the inside. Viewed from above, your pleats should look roughly like this:



Viewed from the front, it should look roughly like this:

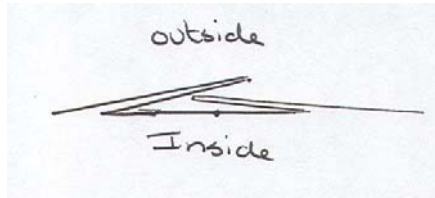


3. CAREFULLY begin to pull the hakama loose from the ironing board, re-pinning as you go to hold everything together. Run a line of stitching about 1/2" from the edge to hold everything in place. Go slowly when

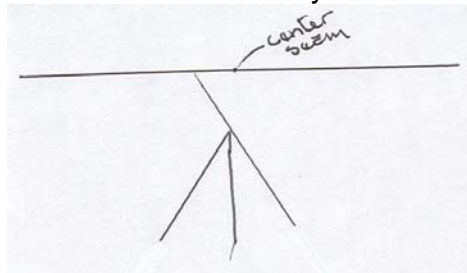
you do this, and make sure the pleats don't accidentally get folded under while you sew.

Back:

1. Begin by pinning the back to the ironing board at the sides and center just as you did the front, right side up.
2. The back is pleated differently than the front. Instead of a series of smaller pleats, the back has 2 very deep pleats that cross over at the center. From above it should look roughly like this:



The outside folds of both pleats should go about 1½-2 inches over the center line (a bit more or less is fine). I always cross the right side over the left, because that's how it was done on the model I worked from the first time, but I honestly don't know if it matters or not. Keep playing with it until it looks right. Again, you'll probably have to un-pin and re-pleat a few times. When you're done, it should look like this:



3. Again, carefully lift from the ironing board and re-pin as you go. Run a line of stitching about ½" from the top to hold your pleats in place.
4. Now is probably a good time to do a quick test fit. Remember, there should be a gap of a few inches on each side. Too big or too small a gap means you'll need to re-pleat a bit wider or narrower. Sorry. If everything seems to fit ok, it's time to move on to the next step:

Attaching the Ties:

The front ties will wrap around your back and tie in the front. The back ties just come forward and tie in the front. So:

1. Mark the center point of the longest tie. Match that point to the center front seam of the hakama. Tuck the hakama inside the tie deeply enough to cover the line of stitching holding the pleats (about $\frac{3}{4}$ -1"), and pin in place. Continue pinning out to the ends of the ties, and sew everything together.
2. Do exactly the same thing for the back: match the center point of the tie to the center back seam, pin the whole thing together, and sew.
3. Put on your hakama. Tie the front first, then the back. Check the length of your ties. They need to be long enough for you to tie a secure bow, so your pants don't fall down, but you don't want them stupidly long either. If your ties are too long, cut them off where you want them. Fold over the ends of the ties to hide the raw edges, and sew.

To measure the hem:

1. Put on the hakama (it's probably easiest to do this at the same time that you are checking the length of your ties). Have someone mark the hakama where they hit the floor (mark with pins, chalk, pencil, whatever is easiest). Be very nice to the person doing the marking, or you'll end up with one leg six inches shorter than the other. This line will probably end up being a little uneven. That's ok. People have curves, and this is slash-and-burn sewing, not precision engineering. It doesn't need to be perfect; it just needs to be close. You can even it out as you trim off the excess.
2. Take off the hakama. Cut the excess off the bottom. How much you cut off depends on where you want the hakama to fall: if you want them to touch the ground, cut about 1-1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " below the marked line. If you want them a bit above the ground, cut about $\frac{1}{2}$ " below the marked line.
3. Turn the hakama inside out. Fold the hem up about $\frac{1}{2}$ " and iron. Then fold it over another $\frac{1}{2}$ ", iron, and pin. Do the same for the other leg. Sew the hems.

CONGRATULATIONS! You have achieved pants.