

Kimonos

Parts, Types, Patterns, and More!

NOT KIMONOS



Kimonos have multiple different layers to them.

The first layer is the **juban**.

This is basically the “underwear” to it all. The only things the person would normally wear here are underwear/panties/briefs and this.

Bras would not normally be worn, as the kimono sits better with a bust that is the same as the waist, or hips (basically, Kimonos are not meant to be curvy or flatter the figure).

This layer can be basically equated to a hospital gown. It’s main purpose is just to capture the sweat and oils from the body and prevent the actual Kimono from getting soiled.



Kimonos have multiple different layers to them.

The second layer is the **nagajuban**.

This helps to create the shape for the kimono to be put on. At this step, for any curvier person, measures would be taken to have everything “on the same plane”. This meaning, if your bust stuck out more than your waist, you would basically bind it in, using a thinner, informal type of obi. Try to get the bust as flat as possible, before proceeding with the kimono.

Sometimes nagajuban come with a Emonnuki, which helps get the perfect collar.



The third layer is the kimono itself.

The nagajuban should be slightly visible around the neck, protecting the collar of the kimono.

Kimonos themselves are usually made of silk, which makes them favorable in cooler weather.

The kimono itself stays in place by the obi. There are no buttons, zippers, or modern conveniences. No safety pins are involved either.

The kimono is meant to be too long. The kimono is folded up below the obi, with the fold visibly showing. This fold is called the ohashori. This is crucial for properly wearing a kimono.

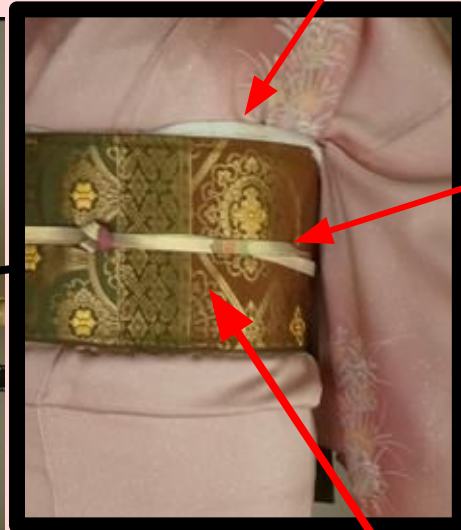


Parts of a Kimono

Obiage: helps hold the obi in place. Unmarried women may show alot. Married women will only show a sliver.

Nagajuban

Kimono



Obijime: usually about 4.9 feet long, ties around the obi, sometimes featuring an obidome, or decorative clip in the front.

Obi

Every Kimono has the same basic structure.
The main elements that DO change are:

- Sleeve Length
- Fabric Pattern
- An Additional Outer Layer
- Garment Length
- Silk vs. Cotton



Overview of Kimono Types

-Furisode

-Mofuku

-Komon

-Yukata

-Tomesode

-Houmongi

-Susohiki/Hikizuri

-Uchikake

-Iromuji

-Junihitoe

What do they mean?

Each kimono has a use and a proper time to wear them. For example, you would never wear a yukata in a wedding because it is a very informal and light kimono.

Next, I'll explain what each kimono means and when to wear it. Some kimonos are reserved for married or unmarried women. Others are used exclusively for certain celebrations or festivals, however there are a few kimonos that can be used daily or for everyday wear.

Most of these kimonos have similar layers, so the most important thing is the OUTER most layer. Most of the other layers are the same.

Junihitoe

Translates to “Twelve Layer Robe.” This is exclusively worn by the Empress and her court. This is one of the oldest forms of the kimono, and each layer has its own name. It’s the heaviest by far, with the weight adding up to almost 45 pounds.

Each layer also has a significant color, and features some aspects of the Hakama (men’s traditional wear).

Since the layers and color descriptions of the Junihitoe are extensive, I would recommend researching into it separately since it’s far different than any common kimono design.



Uchikake

An Uchikake is the same Kimono design demonstrated earlier, except there is an extra outer layer. This outer layer is usually made of all silk, and typically is white and red or an ornate design. The sleeves are very long, and the uchikake usually trails behind on the ground, like a train.

This kimono is exclusively for brides, typically worn at a shinto ceremony. The headdress (tsunokakushi) is sometimes worn with an all white or white and red Uchikake.

The Uchikake is worn over all layers of a kimono, and is closed by tying a sash.



Furisode

This kimono is still the same pattern explained at the very beginning, but this kimono has the longest sleeves of all, measuring in between 35 to 42 inches. The longer the sleeve, the fancier it is. This kimono is usually only worn by unmarried women, and typically features a very ornate design and colors.

It still features all the same elements (obi, obijime, obioge, etc.) and the person will also sometimes have Kanzashi (hairpiece featuring sown silk flowers). Kanzashi can be worn with any kimono, as long as it's appropriate.

You'll commonly see this kimono worn out in public, especially on Coming of Age day, as well as by unmarried women at weddings.



Susohiki/Hikizuri

The Hikizuri (also known as Susohiki) is still based on the kimono design explained in the beginning. Still having an obi, obijime, etc., the thing that distinguishes this one is a long train and long sleeves. This was also exclusively worn by traditional dancers and geisha.

Sometimes the train would be so long that it would have to be pulled up when walking, exposing the nagajuban and underside. Sometimes, women would have designs put on these, since they would hold them a lot when moving around.

These kimonos typically feature a design rather than a pattern, such as cranes, birds, dragons, etc.



Tomesode

The Tomesode has the same design as the structure mentioned in the beginning, but this kimono is designed more for the married woman and has shorter sleeves.

It comes in two varieties: all black, or all one color. Both can feature a design (not pattern) from the waist down (making it rather simple).

The design will also feature a family crest or token multiple times on the piece, usually around the shoulders.

The black Tomesode is almost exclusively worn by the mother of the bride at weddings.



Houmongi/Homongi

A Homongi (sometimes spelled Houmongi) again has exactly the same aspects as the kimono described at the beginning, and the only thing that makes this different is the pattern.

The pattern will reach up from the bottom, to the waist, and will usually continue on one side all the way up to the shoulders.

Homongi also translates to “visiting wear” so this would be appropriate when visiting, wearing to weddings as a guest, however this could also be worn everyday by married and unmarried women.



Mofuku

The one and only appropriate time to wear a Mofuku is in mourning. This is worn by family members and close friends only. The term is shared between the women's and men's garments for this occasion.

As you'll notice, every single piece of the garment is black, save for the nagajuban (which is almost always white) and the white tabi socks.

Five family crests or tokens will also usually adorn the top part of the kimono.



Iromuji

The Iromuji is incredibly similar to the Homongi. Instead of having a pattern reaching from the bottom up, this kimono is only one solid color (with the exception of the obi and accessories).

It can be worn in public, by married or unmarried women.

They are very popular to wear to tea ceremonies. The tea ceremony itself should be the beauty of the event, not a vibrant kimono, so a furisode might be seen as inappropriate at such a thing.



Komon

A Komon is one of the simplest kimonos. It's biggest difference from all the kimonos is that it is just a pattern, no design or print. The body and components are the same as described in the beginning, so the only real change is the kimono pattern itself.

Funny enough, Komon is the most common kimono you might see. Since it's not ornate, it's a lot more affordable for many people, and can be worn by married and unmarried women.

This kimono can be worn in public, and for most occasions that do not require fancier dress.



Yukata

And finally the Yukata! The yukata is probably one of the most different things here because “technically” it is not a kimono! Yukatas are made the exact same way as the kimono described in the beginning, HOWEVER they are not made of silk but cotton or a synthetic fabric.

You would still wear a nagajuban, and an obi, but you would NOT wear an obijime, obiage, or tabi socks. Yukatas are only for bare feet and geta (wooden shoes). Yukatas are also not lined, making them a lot lighter for hotter days.

Yukatas are only worn during warmer months, to festivals, fireworks, and mostly summertime events and holidays, by both married and unmarried women.



Most Formal

Junihitoe
Uchikake
Furisode
Susohiki/Hikizuri
Tomesode
Houmongi
Mofuku
Iromuji
Komon
Yukata

Most Informal

* Some kimonos are circumstantial. Some are worn exclusively for certain ceremonies and events.

Since most of the types of kimono mentioned have the same base, let's go over the construction of the base elements.

Depending on the fabric style you're going for, take care to pay attention to the grain and design of the fabric when cutting.

Key



Inner Layer/Wrong Side of Fabric



Outer Layer/Right Side of Fabric

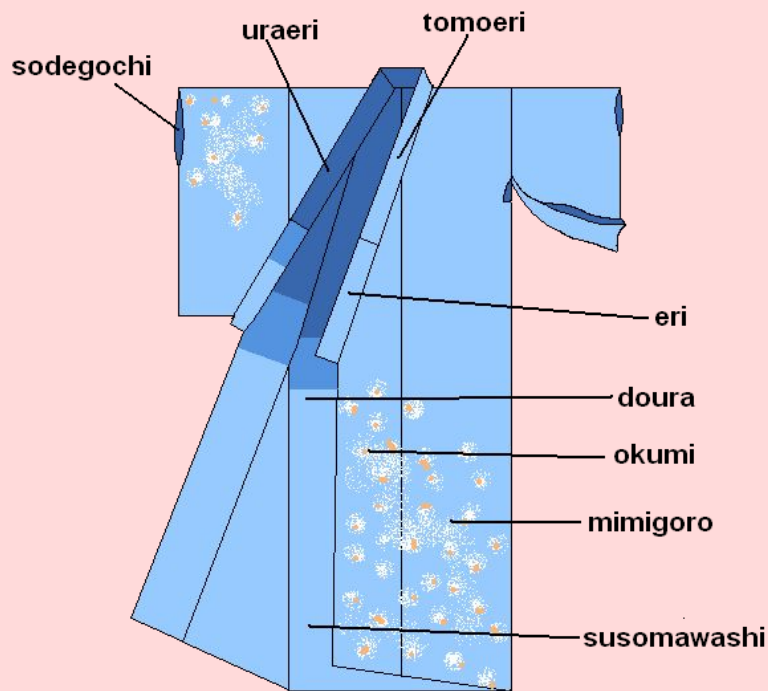
Front of Kimono

Each part of a Kimono has a name, as pictured here, but you'll generally notice that it's mainly just panels.

It can seem overwhelming, but the most important parts for your kimono fabric are the okumi and mimigoro. These are the panels that cover the front.

You can of course match the tomoeri and eri to your kimono fabric, but you are also free to make the another color if you wish.

The uraeri, दौर, susomawashi, and sodegochi are important if you plan on lining your kimono. This is a step you'd obviously skip if you were creating a yukata, but if you are using a thinner/opaque fabric for a KIMONO I highly recommend lining it.



Front

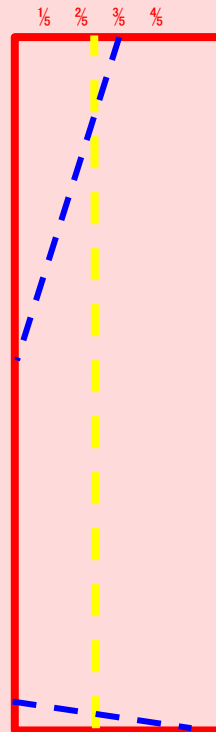
Front of Kimono

I find it easy to create a pattern for the front of the kimono by creating a large rectangle on tracing paper or muslin, with the dimensions being:

Height: your height + 12 inches

Width: $\frac{3}{8}$ your bust measurement (since the fabric will overlap)

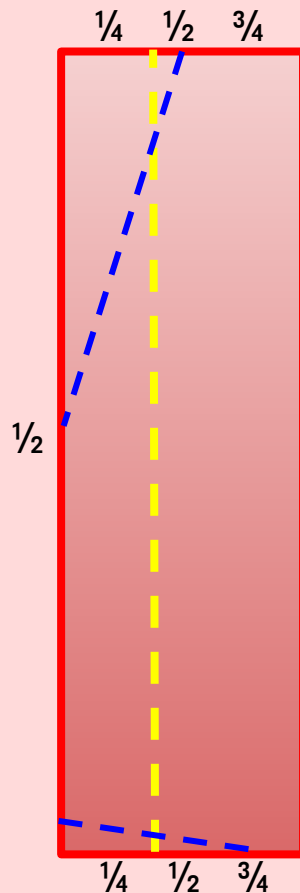
Once you have your rectangle, draw a line that's about $\frac{2}{5}$ in from the left. ($\frac{2}{5}$ being divide the width into fifths, not $\frac{2}{5}$ inch.)



Front of Kimono

Now that you have your rectangle, draw a diagonal line from the middle point of the width of the rectangle, down to the middle point of the height of the rectangle.

At the bottom, draw another diagonal line from $\frac{3}{4}$ of the width to about 3-4 inches of the height off the bottom. This will help prevent you from tripping over the front of your kimono.



Front of Kimono

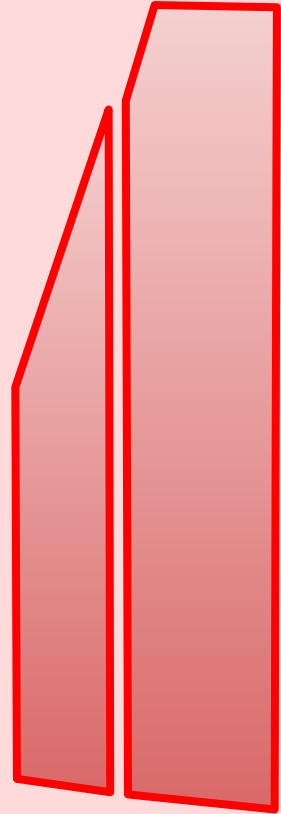
Now you are ready to cut your lines.

DON'T FORGET TO GIVE YOURSELF SEAM ALLOWANCE.

Once finished cutting, your pieces should look like this.

You've now completed the front!

You can now use this pattern to do the other side of your front, flipping the pattern over.

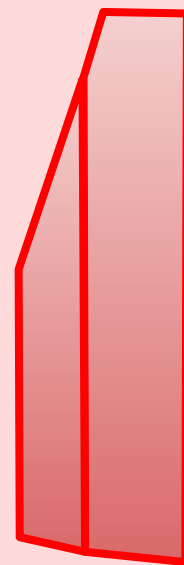
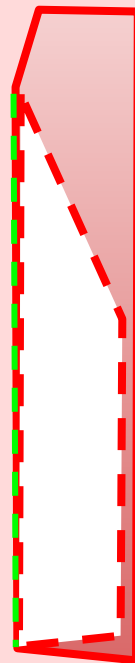


Front of Kimono

When ready to sew, pin both pieces together as pictured, with the outer layers facing each other.

Sew where green line is.

They will end up looking as the bottom picture.



Sleeves of Kimono

Sleeve Length is entirely up to you. Using your knowledge from the types of Kimonos discussed, I would suggest selecting the length that would be most appropriate for what you intend to wear your kimono to.

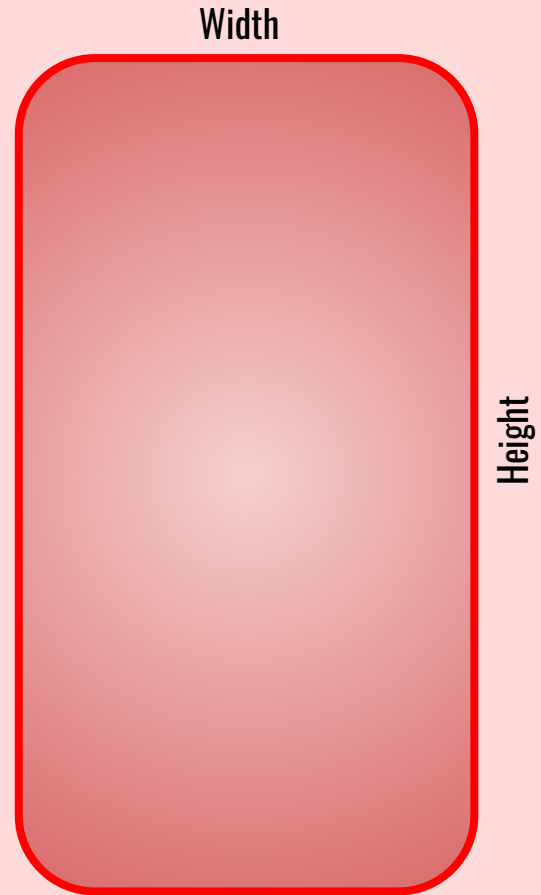
Remember, the longer the sleeve, the more elegant the affair!

You will want the height to be the length you desire, and the width will be the measurement from your shoulder to your wrist.

If you find this to be too long or short, adjust width to your preference.

A general kimono sleeve pattern will look something close to this.

Use tracing paper, muslin, or pattern paper first so that you can use it more than once.



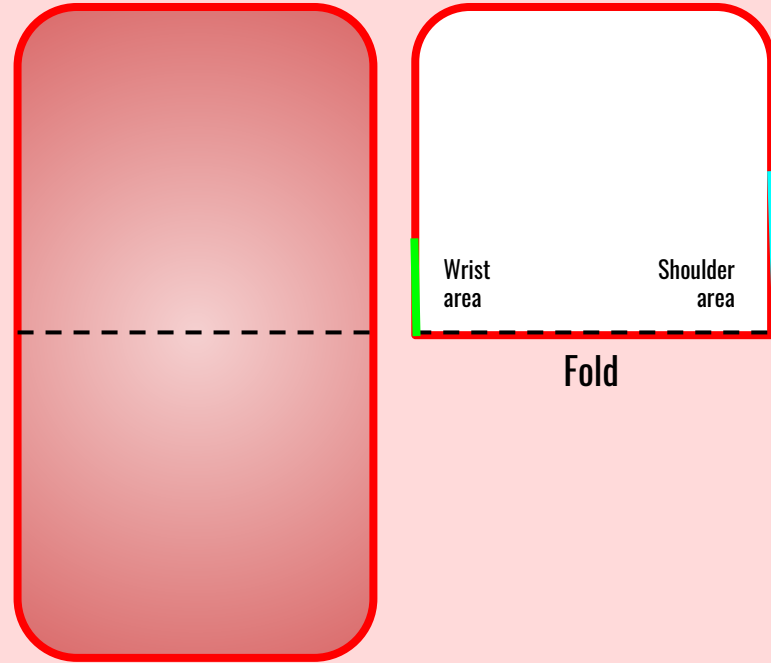
Sleeves of Kimono

Next, fold the sleeve in half, with the outer sides facing each other.

Depending on the size of your wrist, you'll want to give yourself enough room for your arm to fit out of your sleeve, and room to reach in your sleeve to store any items you'd like.

Gauge how much space you will need for that opening, and add 2-3 inches on the other side where your shoulder will rest. Mark off these areas. This will help you know where and where not to sew the sleeves together later on.

If you need to adjust the sizing, do so.



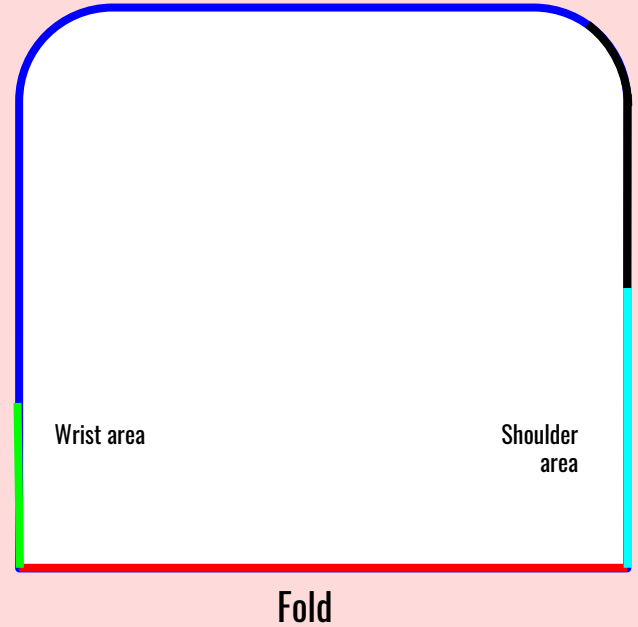
Sleeves of Kimono

Now you're ready to cut out your sleeve pattern.

DON'T FORGET TO GIVE YOURSELF SEAM ALLOWANCES.

Once you've cut out your fabric and folded it as demonstrated before, sew along the dark blue line.

Once you are done sewing, flip the sleeve inside out.

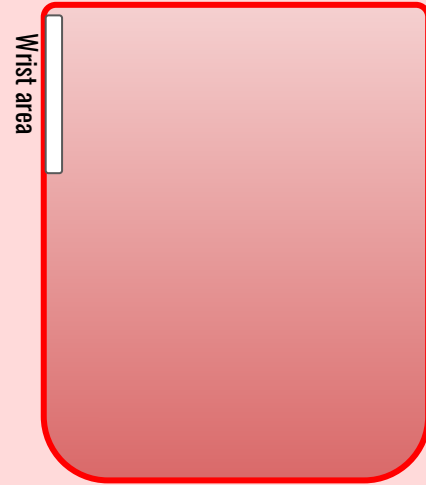


Sleeves of Kimono

Although not pictured, there will be a similar looking “Shoulder area” on the other side of the sleeve just like the “Wrist area.”

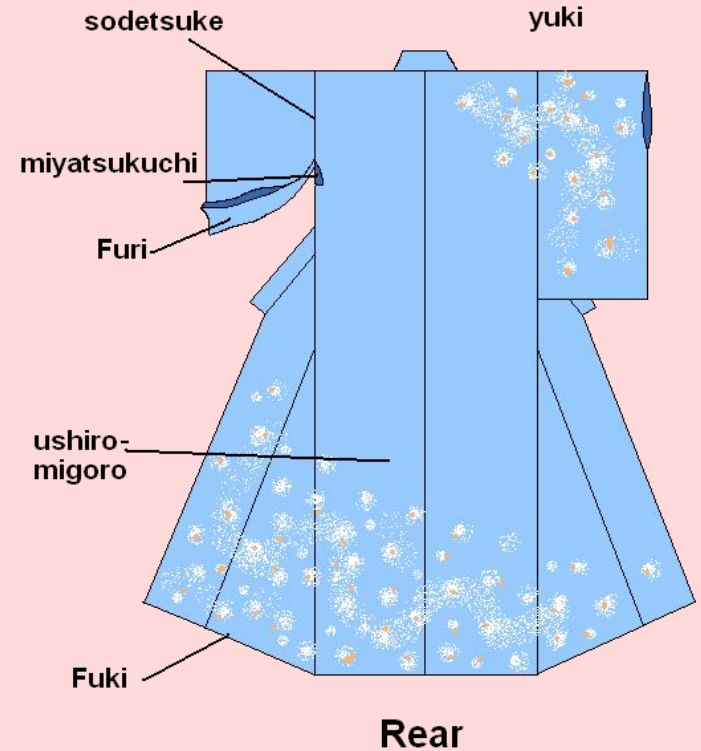
Duplicate this process for the other sleeve.

You’re done the sleeves!



Back of Kimono

Again, this can look complicated however we will mainly be focusing on the ushiro-migoro.

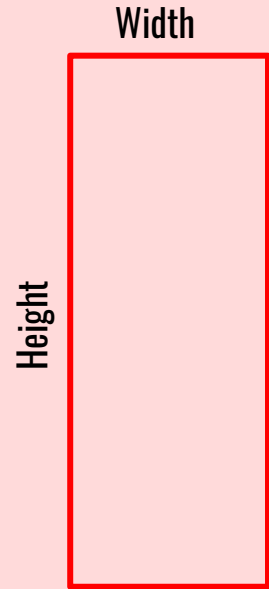


Back of Kimono

Just as before, I suggest making a rectangle pattern, with the dimensions being:

Width: $\frac{1}{4}$ your bust measurement

Height: your height + 12 inches (like the front)



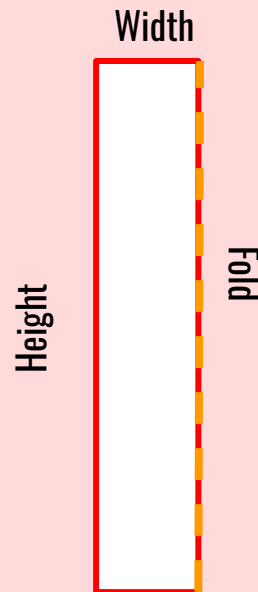
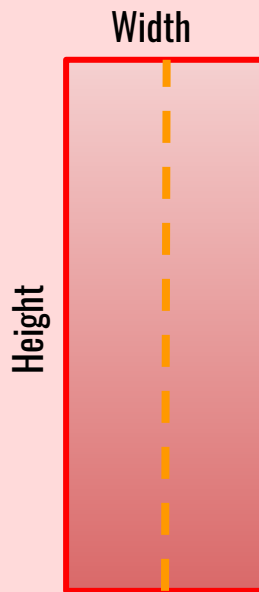
Back of Kimono

Then, cut the pattern in half on the orange line.

You are now ready to use the pattern to cut your fabric.

You'll want to cut your fabric on the fold, with the outer layers on the inside.

Then, cut the fold itself, creating two identical rectangular pieces.



Back of Kimono

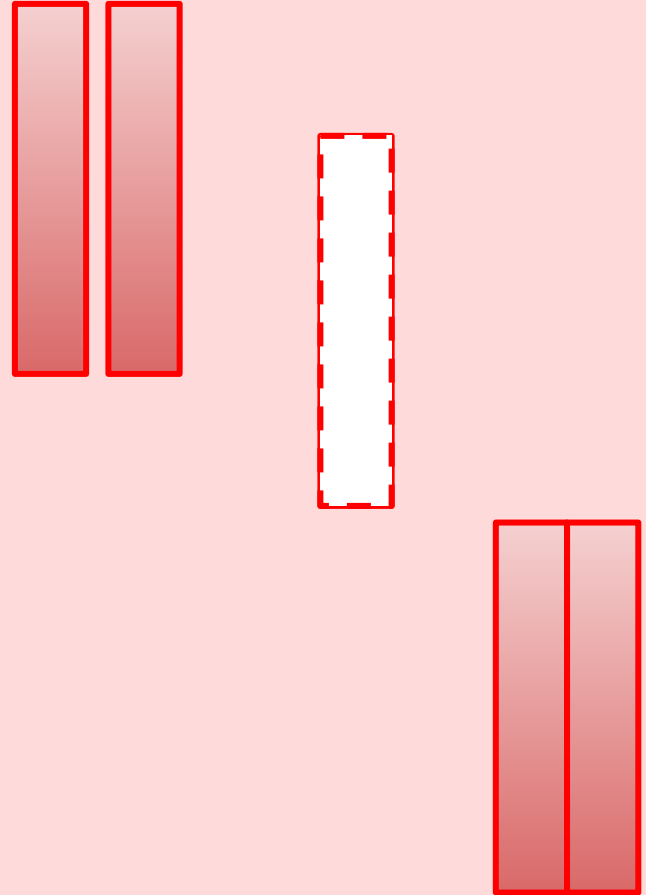
Your pieces should look like the image to the right.

From here, sew your pieces together.

You'll want to sew them together, with the outer layers facing each other.

Your finished result should look like the bottom right.

You've now completed the back!



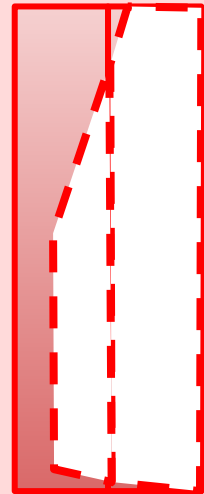
Finished Parts

Now that the back, front, and sleeves are complete, let's put them together!

First, you'll want to attach the front parts to the back part at the top.

When sewing them together, make sure the outer layers are facing each other.

Repeat for the other front panel, but on the other side this time.

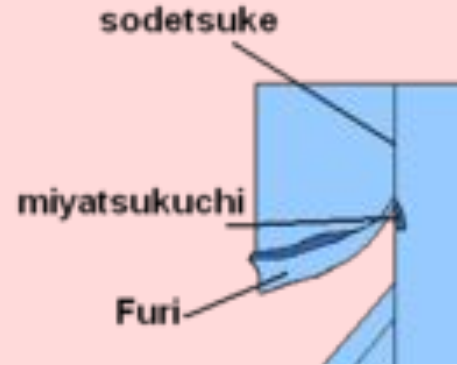


Attaching Front to Back

When laid down, it should look something like this once you've finished sewing the front to the back.

Now we can add the sleeves. In kimonos, traditionally there is a miyatsukuchi. This helps make the garment a bit more breathable, since kimonos can be very warm.

You won't want to sew the entire sleeve to the kimono, just the parts I'll describe.

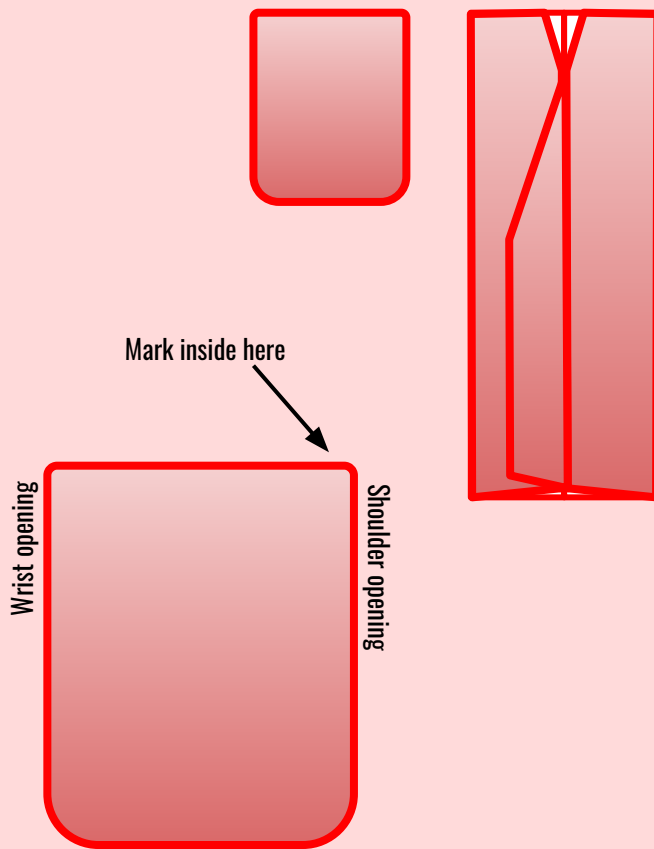


Adding Sleeves

You will be attaching the side with the SHOULDER opening to the kimono, NOT THE WRIST opening.

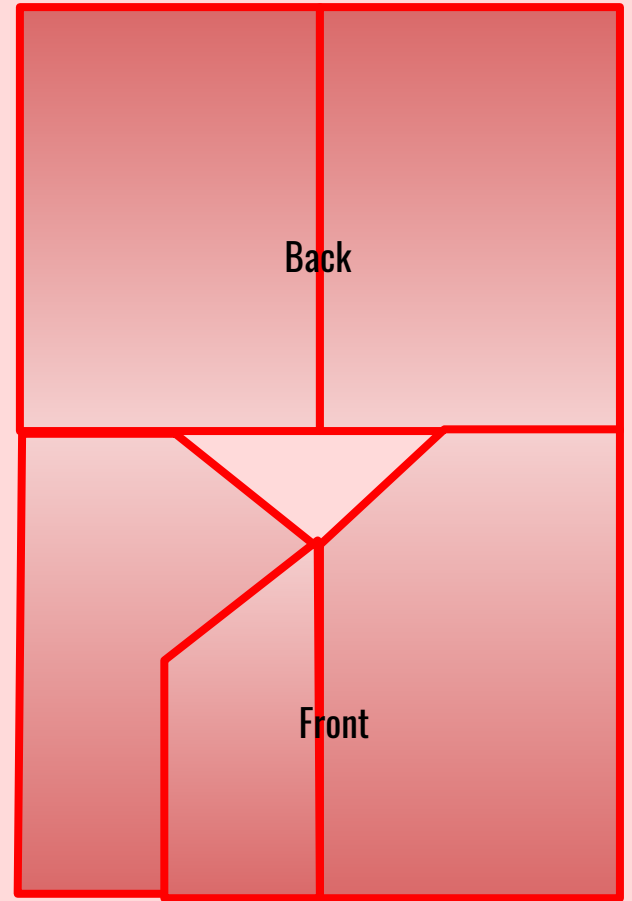
You will be attaching it to the top of the kimono, with half on the front piece and half on the back piece.

I'd recommend marking inside of the shoulder opening, where the top of the sleeve is.



Adding Sleeves

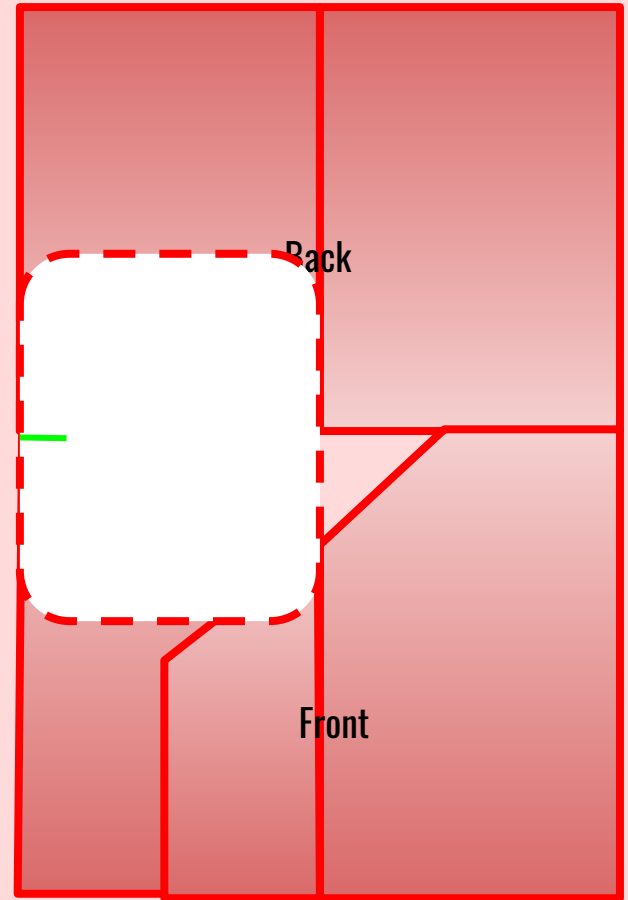
First, start with laying down the connected pieces (the front and the back).



Adding Sleeves

Then, lay the sleeve over the pieces. The mark from earlier that signifies the top of the sleeve should be where the seam between the front and back connect.

Make sure that the outer layers are facing each other.

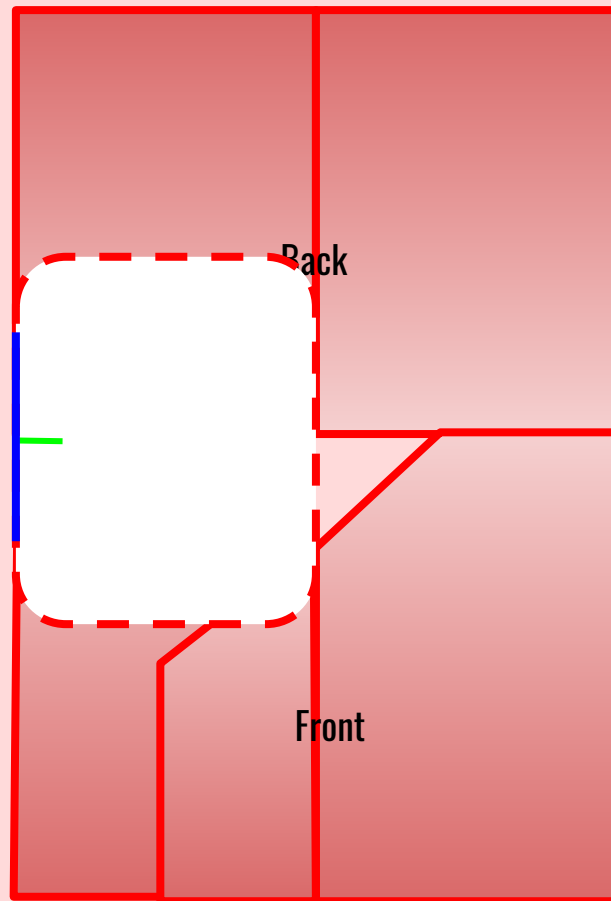


Adding Sleeves

Sew on the blue line. You won't want to sew the entire sleeve on, since the miyatsukuchi, or the opening around the armpit, helps the garment breathe.

Sew it on leaving about two inches from the seam connecting the sleeve.

Duplicate this process on the other side for the other sleeve.

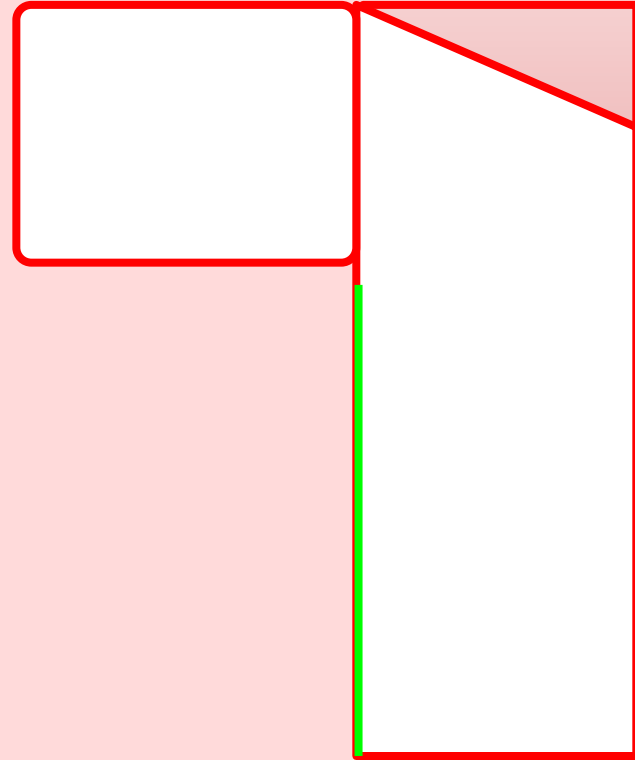


Attaching Front to Back

Once sewing the sleeve is done, sew the front to the back on the green line, from about 1 inch under the sleeve (again, leaving that space for the miyatsukichi).

Make sure that the outer layers are facing each other.

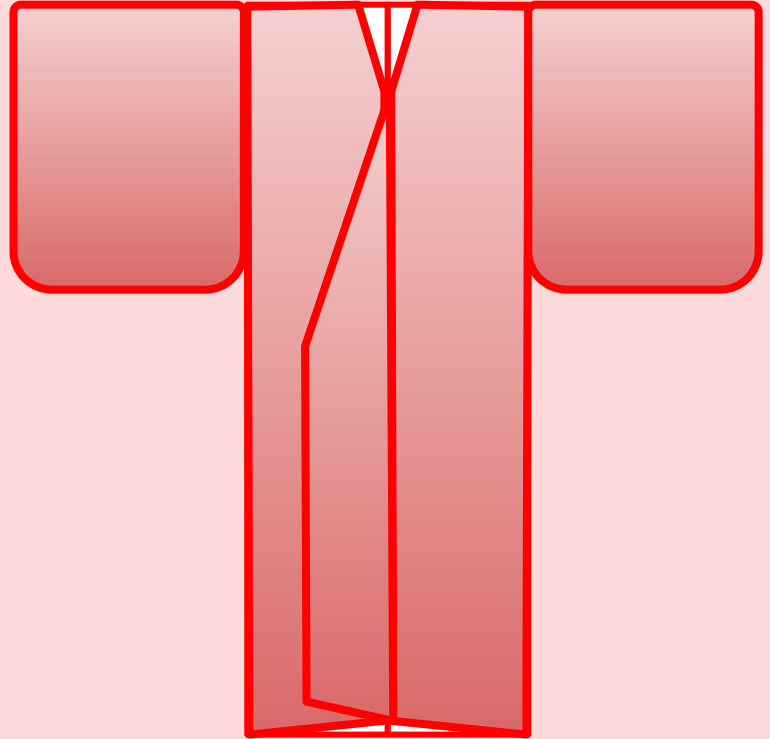
Duplicate this process on the other side.



Attaching Front to Back

Flip the garment inside out, so that the outer layer is all visible. It should look something like the image on the right.

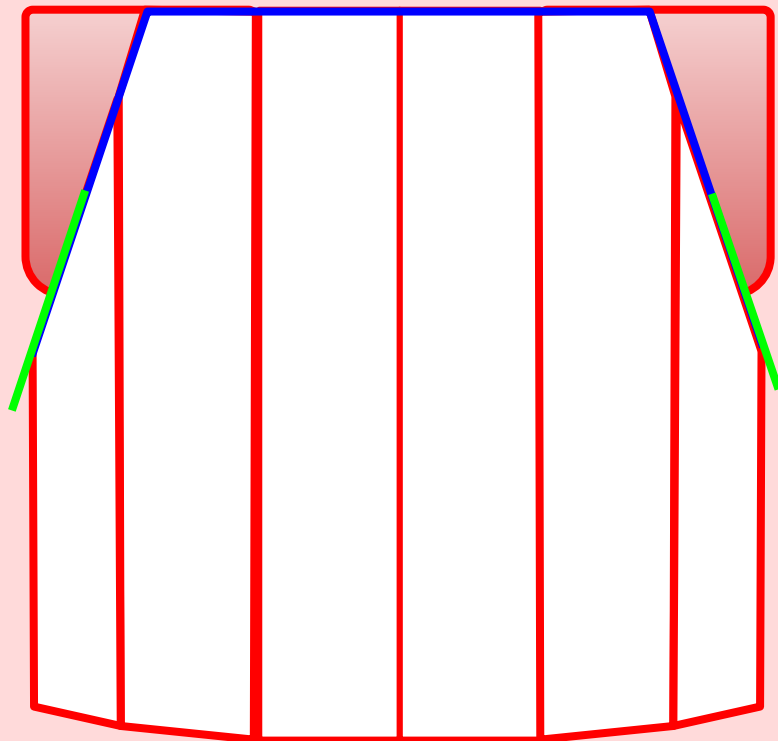
If you plan on lining your garment, repeat this process now without flipping the garment inside out.



Tomoeri and Eri

Now it's time to make the Tomoeri and Eri, or the collar. You are more than welcome to change the fabric color or pattern for the Tomoeri and Eri, or even just one, but you're also welcome to keep it the same.

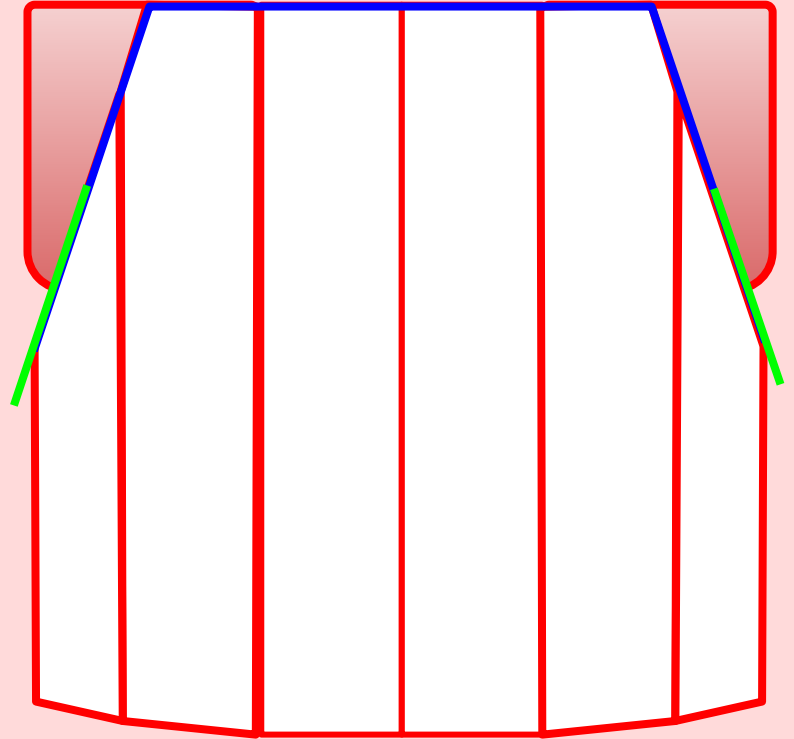
I recommend opening the kimono up, and measuring along the colored lines. The Tomoeri's measurement is the blue line, and the Eri is the green line. You can always make these longer, and cut them to length later.



Tomoeeri and Eri

You'll notice that the Eri goes a bit off the okumi (the smaller front panel). This is because you'll be sewing these bits together, hence losing a bit of the length there.

Don't forget to record the measurements of the lines. We'll be using them on the next slide.

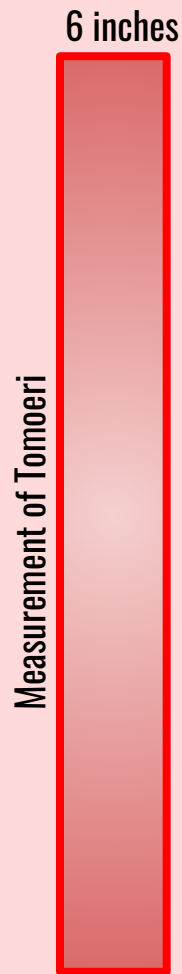


Tomoeri and Eri

Using those measurements, you're ready to make your Tomoeri and Eri pattern.

Typically the width of the Tomoeri is only 6 inches (which will be folded in half later).

At this point, you're ready to cut out your fabric with these patterns.



Tomoeeri and Eri

Next, lay the Eri over the Tomoeeri, with the outer layers facing each other. You'll want to do this as well for the other side. Sew along the green line, attaching the Tomoeeri and Eri.



Tomoeri and Eri

Your tomoeri and eri should now look this. Now we're ready to fold the tomoeri in half.

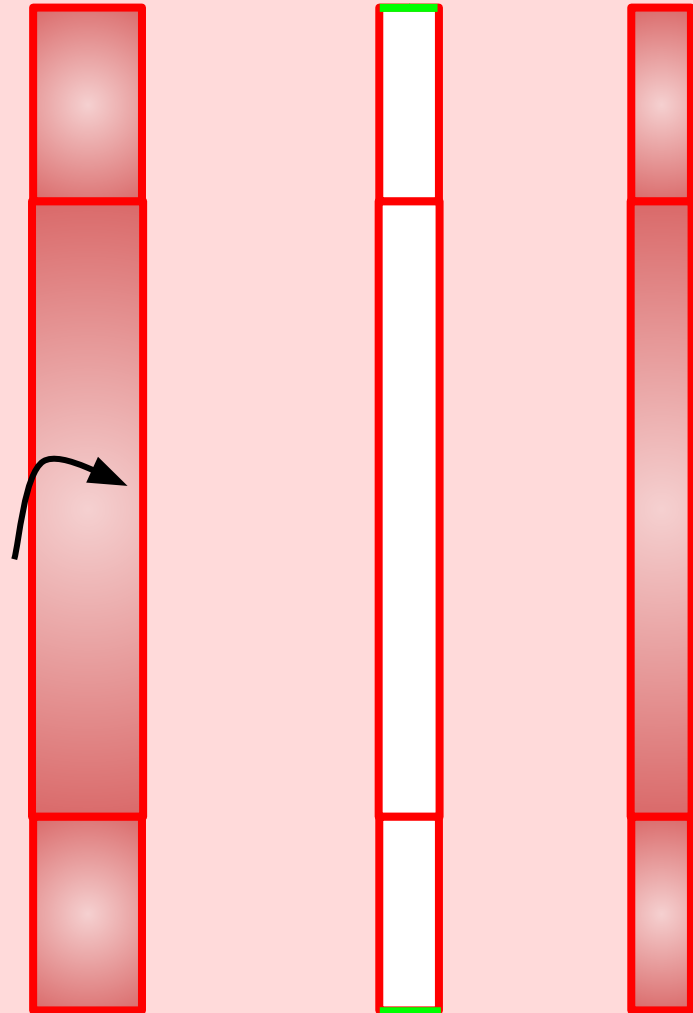


Tomoeiri and Eri

Fold the tomoeiri and eri in half, with the outer layers facing each other.

Sew along the green lines, closing off the ends of the eri.

Once you flip your tomoeiri and eri inside out, it should look like the image on the far right.

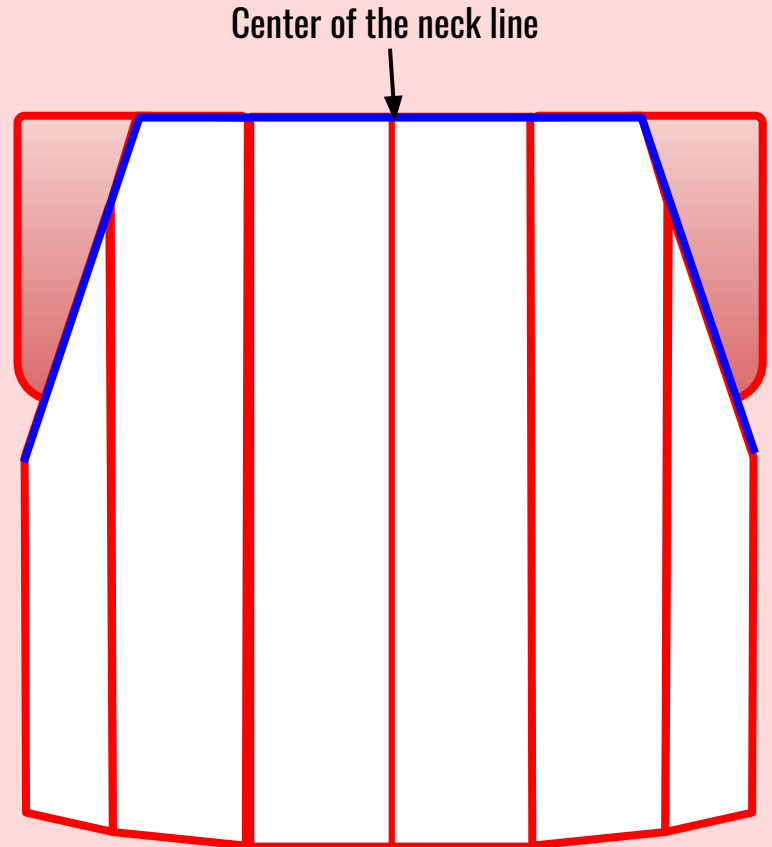


Attaching Tomoeri to Kimono

Mark the middle of your tomoeri.

This is where you'll attach the tomoeri to the center of the neckline of the kimono.

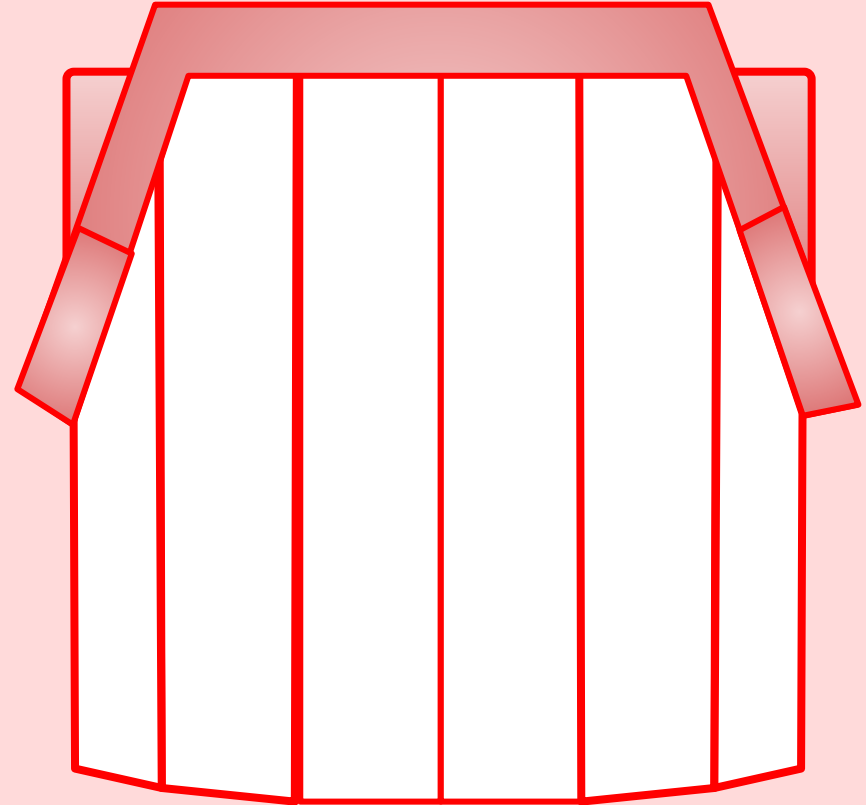
Sew the tomoeri to the OUTER layer of the kimono along the neckline, that way the seam in on the INSIDE of the kimono and hidden, not the outside.



Attaching Tomoeri to Kimono

Your attached Tomoeri and Eri should now look like this, WITH THE SEAM VISIBLE if the kimono is opened.

If it's too long, you can always make the Eri shorter (which is why we attached it to the kimono from the center, rather than the ends).



Finished Kimono

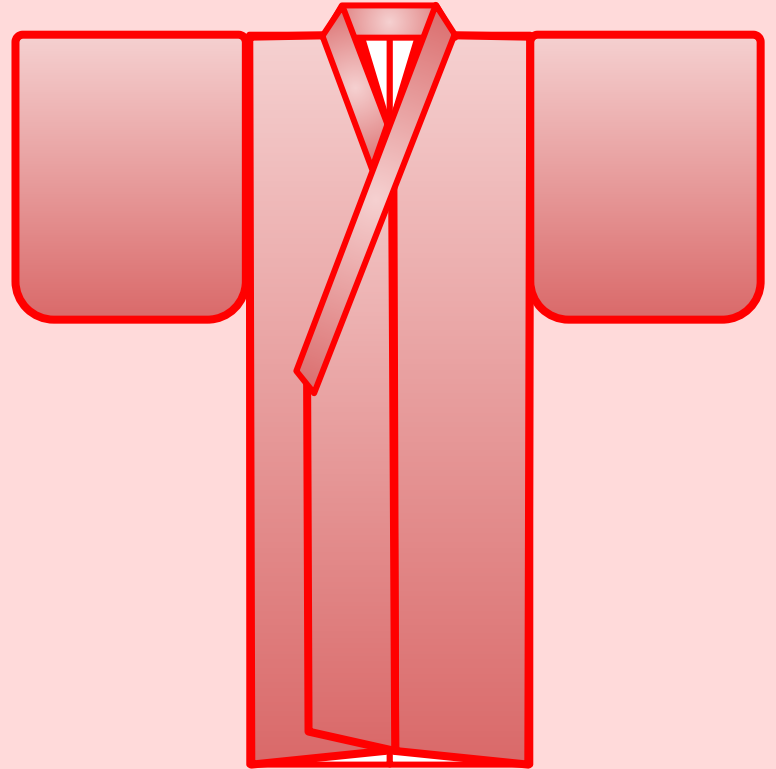
At this point, you're done the kimono itself!

The other elements I'll focus on are:

-Obi

-Obiage

An Obijime is usually purchased already made, since it's essentially an elegant rope with tassels, which is easier enough to procure.



Creating an Obi

The first thing you'll want to do is select your fabric. This is very very important because the obi is traditionally will compliment the kimono. Consider your color selection and designs carefully.

Some obis are designed to be bold, others neutral.

Here's some examples of various obi.

You will also want your fabric to be stiff, to be able to act like a corset.



Creating an Obi

To create your obi pattern, you'll once again want to create a rectangle. This obi will need to be long enough to wrap around yourself and tie, so for an average waist ranging from 25 inches to 50 inches, you'll want your obi to be about 11 ½ feet (yes, you read that right). You can adjust the length if you need to based on your waist, but this is the average for that range.

All obi styles average at 12 inches in width, so 24 inches would be a good measurement to use (since we will be folding it).



Creating an Obi

You are now ready to cut out your fabric.

At this time, I recommend finding a stiff fabric (not necessarily the fabric you want to use on the outside) to put on the inside. This is a cheaper way to create the sturdiness needed for an obi.

Use this pattern on your obi fabric, and thick fabric. If your obi fabric is thick enough, great! You won't need a thick fabric to fill it then.

LEAVE ROOM FOR SEAM ALLOWANCES WHEN CUTTING.

2 foot

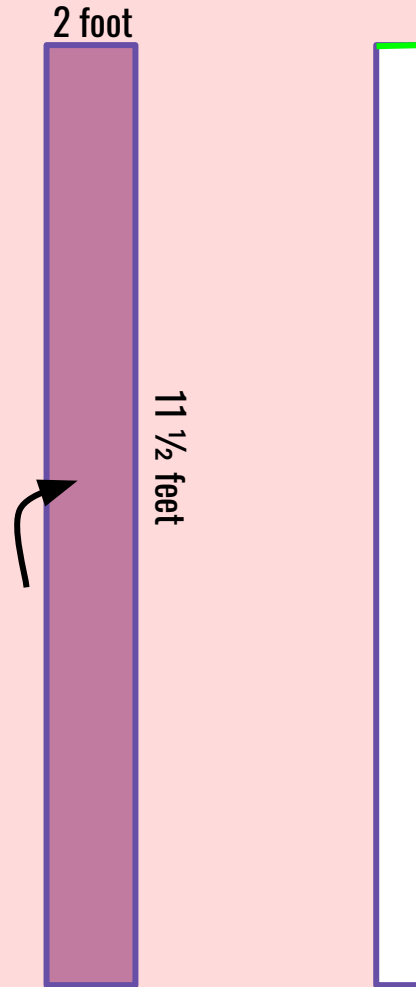


11 1/2 feet

Creating an Obi

With BOTH layers, fold the obi in half longwise. Make sure the outer layer is facing each other.

Sew along the green line. If you are sowing through the thicker layer as well, make sure you have a durable needle in your machine, as well as a proper bobbin tension otherwise it might start skipping stitches.



Creating an Obi

Flip the obi inside out, so that the outer layer is once again on the outside. Really make sure to get those corners when flipping inside out, since this will come in handy when tying your obi.

Your obi should now look something like this:

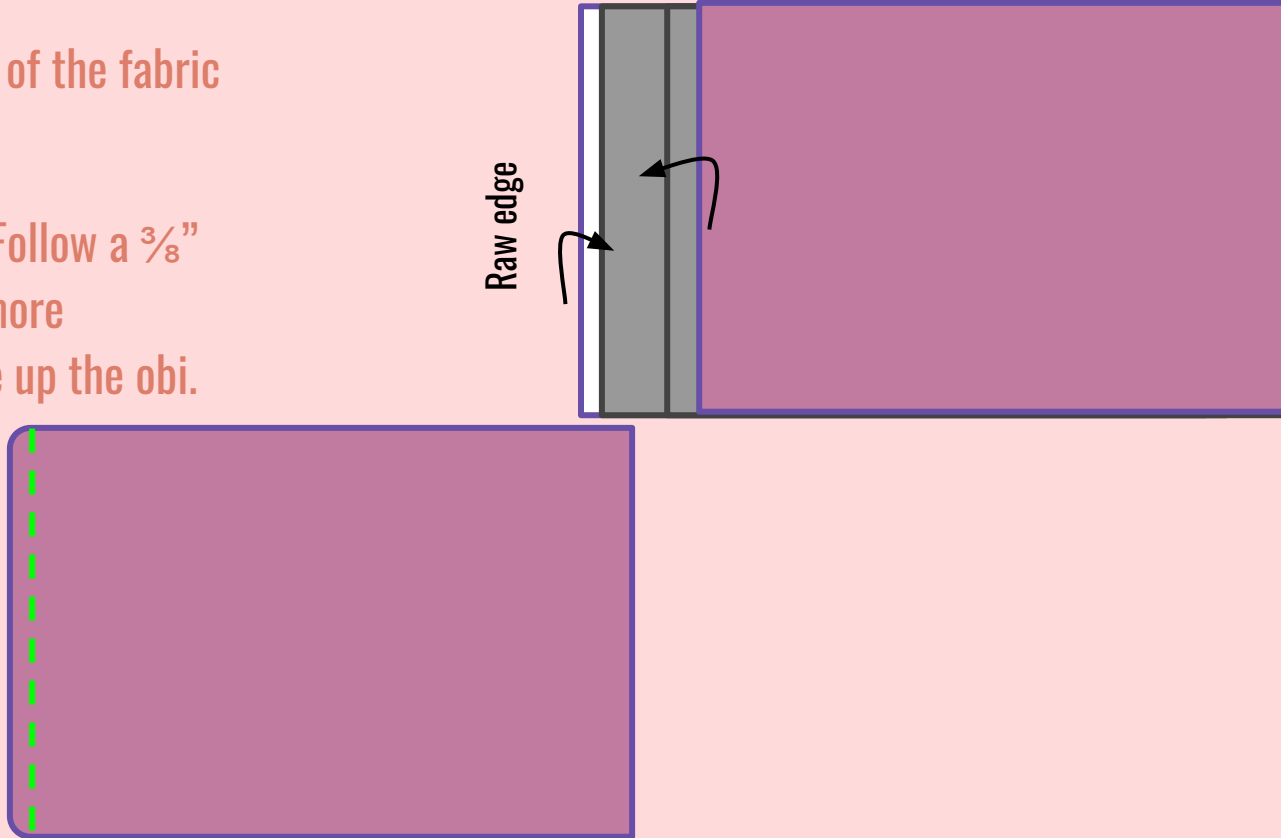


 = thick fabric

Creating an Obi

For the raw edge, fold each side of the fabric inwards, about an inch.

Then, sew along the green line. Follow a $\frac{3}{8}$ " or $\frac{5}{8}$ " seam, whichever you're more comfortable with. This will close up the obi.



Finished Obi

You've now finished your obi!

Now, we'll focus on the obiage.



Creating an Obiage

An obiage is incredibly similar to creating an obi, however the biggest difference is the length and material.

You'll want a soft flowing material, since it is meant to accentuate your obi.

Again, consider a color that will go with your kimono. Obiages tend to be a bit more tame than obis, with being very subtle colors that blend in with the kimono or obi.

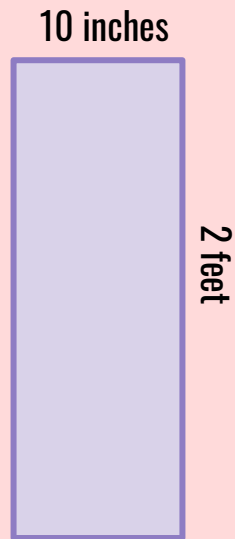
You'll also want a fabric where you can use both sides. The Obiage is intended to be reversible.



Creating an Obiage

Once again, you'll start your pattern by creating a rectangle.

Your width this time can be 10 inches, and height will be closer to 2 feet (adjust to what would be better for you).



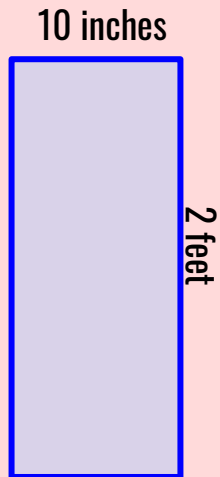
Creating an Obiage

You're now ready to cut out your obiage.

Sewing the obiage is simple, since you don't need to connect it with everything.

It may seem intimidating, but you will sew rolled hems all around the Obiage, to finish the edge.

Sew rolled hems along the blue line.



Finished Obiage

You've now finished your obiage!



Now, I'll show the base of dressing in a kimono.

Since there are over 10 different ways to tie an obi, and different meanings to them, I encourage you to look into the different types of obi ties that pertain to the style or event you're going for/to. The obi we created should fit almost all styles.

Putting on the Obi

Again, there are so many ways to put on an obi, that I'd recommend searching into which one is most appropriate for your event, and which kimono type it goes best with.

The obi we created should fit just about every style.

Ever wonder how the collar is so perfect?

The collar to the kimono and the nagajuban can be tricky, but thankfully there are things to help us along the way! The collar SHOULD NOT be sitting right on the neck, but should be pulled away from the back of the neck.

The trick is having a nagajuban with an Emonnuki! This is something that helps with the collar! It is already sewn in, and ties around the front, while also pulling down the collar in the back, so that the shape is perfect!



Putting on the Kimono

When putting on the kimono, you will want to overlap the right side with the left. This is crucial because doing the opposite is only done on corpses, unless this is intentional for cosplay (maybe a zombie, shinigami, etc.)



Correct!

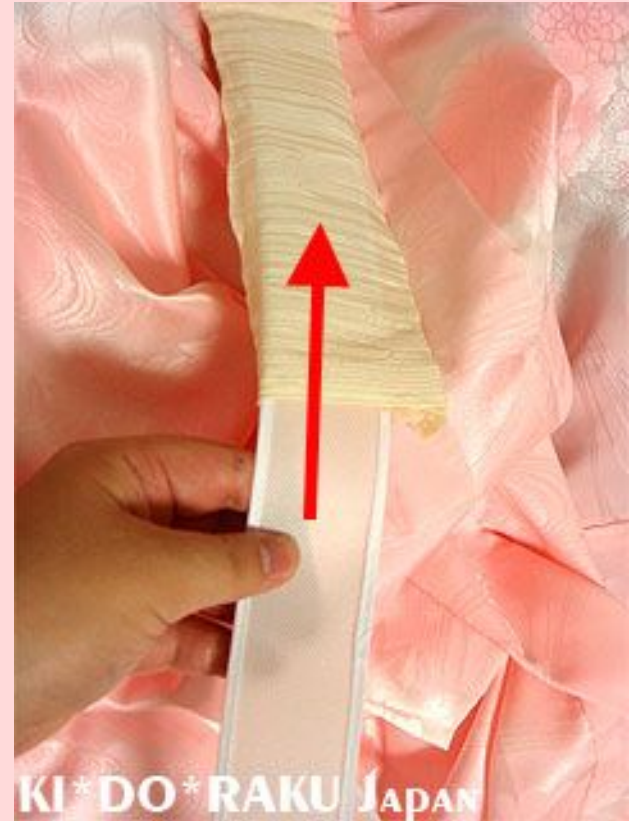


Wrong!

Ever wonder how the collar is so perfect?

Another thing that helps with the collar is a Erishin! This is basically a collar stiffener. This normally slips right into the eri, or collar, of the nagajuban.

Ever wondered why the collar was never fully sewn shut? Now you know!



Kimono Accessories

After putting on the Obi, you'll put on the Obiage. Again, there are many types of putting on an obiage that go with the Obi, so you'll want to look into that while searching an Obi style.

Lastly, you would put on your Obijime and Obidome, if necessary.

Kimono Accessories

Other Kimono accessories include an Obi-ita, which is a thin piece of cardboard, covered in cloth, that helps stiffen the obi. Like the obijime, this is typically something you'd purchase, as there is not a lot of public information about it's proper construction.

Kimono Accessories

One other Kimono accessory is the Obimakura, which is a type of pillow that helps support the Obi in the back. This is where the Obi would be tied, and is typically only used in styles that require it.

When researching Obi tie styles, look for if a Obimakura will be required or not.

This again is something that would be purchased, since it's construction isn't always publically available.

And that's about it!

Again, I wouldn't "swear" by this guide, as this is just research that I've personally learned or looked for. If you have any questions, suggestions, or corrections, please feel free to hit me up!