

Taeliac's Fakimono + Kimono + Yukata Pattern

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This tutorial is probably not accurate for making Japanese kimono, but it works! This is what I personally do for every kimono-esque thing that I make, with modifications of course. The more you make things like this, the better you will get at identifying where you can make changes and to what effect. This is pattern drafting - you will be drawing this pattern right on the fabric, from scratch.

All of these pieces have 1/2" or 5/8" seam allowance built in. These do not have underarm slits in them, nor are they accurate for a true Japanese kimono or yukata. It is also unlined - if you want to line it, go for it! The back of the sleeves is not left open, either, due to ease of sewing and, of course, because it's not lined.

I do want to ask up front, however, that you not make these to sell - it took me about a year to come up with the pattern that works this well, and I really wanted to share it with everyone. So, I would appreciate it if this was for your personal use only. Please and thank you!

So, with this accuracy disclaimer in mind, let us begin!

Materials:

- * Kimono with yukata sleeves: about 3 yards
3' (sleeves) 1' (band) 5' (body) = 9' or 3 yards
- * Kimono with box sleeves: about 4 yards
6' (sleeves) 1' (band) 5' (body)
- * Sash: about 1 yard to 1.5 yards
- * Clear ruler (or some sort of ruler) - if you can have one shorter one and on longer one, it helps a lot
- * Pencil or chalk for marking
- * Scissors
- * Sewing machine & thread
- * Pins
- * Iron

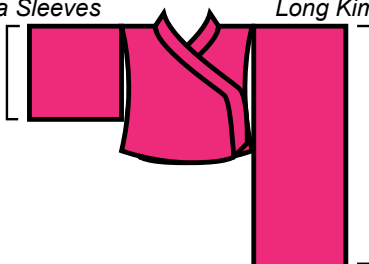
Fabric Choice

Start with a hunk of fabric, either about 3 yards long, or 4 yards long, depending on how you'd like the sleeves to be. I prefer 45" wide cotton fabric, just because it's available in every color under the sun and makes these calculations work almost perfectly with minimal cutting!

Sleeve Decision

Short Yukata Sleeves

about 20" -
22" long



Long Kimono Sleeves

any length
you'd like,
but usually
about 36"
long

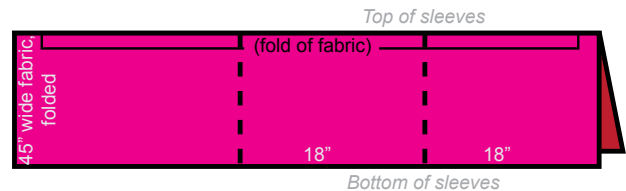
You now get to make a decision about the length of the sleeves you'd like on your top. You can either have a shorter, yukata sleeve length, or a longer, kimono sleeve length.

This does affect the way you cut the fabric. Now, let us get onto the cutting!

Step #1 : Sleeves

Yukata Sleeves

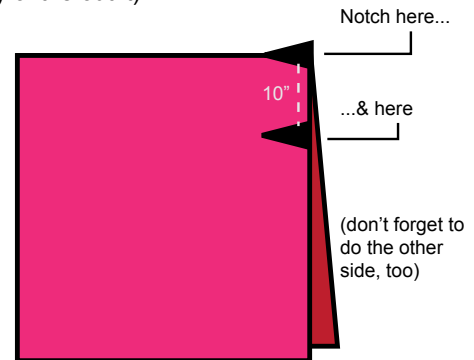
Measure how long you'd like your sleeves. I tend to do about 12" - 18" or so. Draw a line perpendicular to the fold of the fabric. Cut it off. This hunk of fabric is one sleeve (now, cut another one)



The fold of the fabric becomes the top of the sleeve (be sure that the fold is right in the middle of the fabric hunk - if it is not, fold it in half and press that fold in place).

Make a notch at the very middle (fold), and about 10" on both sides of the fold (this is where the sleeve will actually be sewn to the main body of the outfit).

You'll want to do it at 12" or so if you have larger arms - measure around your biceps if you are unsure. Be sure to have enough ease - add about 4" to that measurement, and divide in half to find out where to put your notches.

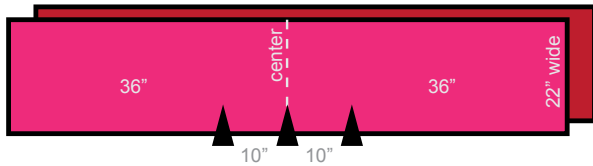


Long Kimono (furisode) Sleeves

Figure out how long down you want the box sleeves to be (from your wrist down). I usually do them about a yard (36") down. Now, take that number and double it (because you need a front and a back of the sleeve). Cut a hunk of fabric that length.



Now, on the edge that has the fold, cut it apart, so you have two pieces approximately 22" wide by your length (if you're using 45" wide fabric).



Find the middle of that piece, and make the notches like you would with the yukata sleeves - in the middle, and at 10" or so on both sides of the very middle.

Step #2 : Collar

Cut 2 strips of fabric either 4" or 5" wide (if you want an accent color on the inside of the band, cut that one a little wider). This does not necessarily need to be in the same fabric as the main body of the kimono, but if it is, it's easier just to cut it out now, while you're doing big rectangles, than to try to piece it in later, especially if you're not that experienced with laying out pattern pieces and whatnot.



Step #3 : Main Kimono Body

This is for a shirt length kimono (haori, if you want to be anal about it), but if you want yours longer, simply adjust the lengths. Longer will mean you'll have to take your hips into account, though, so be aware of this.

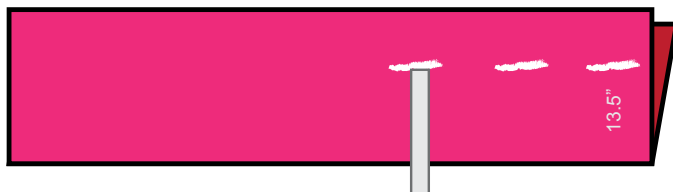
Math:

Measure the widest part of you (usually, for women, your bust). Round that number up to the nearest even number. Divide by four. Write that number down, and next to it, write down that number + 2 and circle it.

Ex: My bust is 45". So, rounded up is 46"
 Divided by four is 11.5"
 Plus 2 is **13.5"**

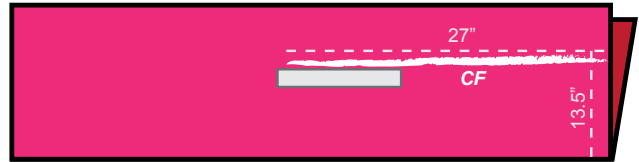
Use the straight cut edge of the fabric (where you took off the sleeves or neckband) as your starting place.

From the edge that is folded, take your tape measure and measure out that number that is circled. Mark it a couple of times to make a line later.



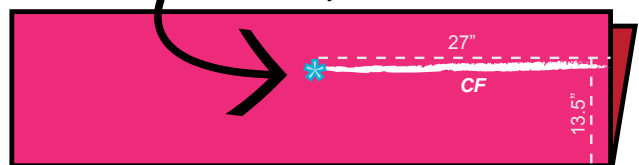
Now, figure out the length you'd like the kimono to be. I usually make them about 26" long or so. Add 1" for a seam allowance/hem at the bottom.

Make a line starting at the mark you created, going parallel to the fold, that length. Label this line as CF (Center Front), just so you can keep track of what is the front, and what is the back.

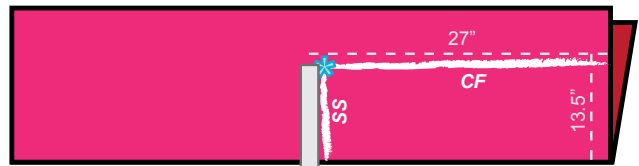


Make a mark at that point (for me, it was 27" up, and 13.5" in). I will use a star (*) as the mark, so I know it's important.

This is the very middle of the kimono.



This middle mark is also the shoulder seam - or, if you know anything about kimono, you know that they don't technically have a shoulder seam in the fabric! But, it is a very handy reference point. So, draw a line from the star to the folded edge of the fabric. Label this "SS" for "shoulder seam".



We're going to now draft the back, attached to the front.

Extend the CF line another length of your kimono (27" in my example). This is now the back of the kimono (from the * on down). Label this line CB (Center Back) just to be sure you keep track of what side is what.

Draw a line to the folded edge at that ending point, creating a big rectangle.

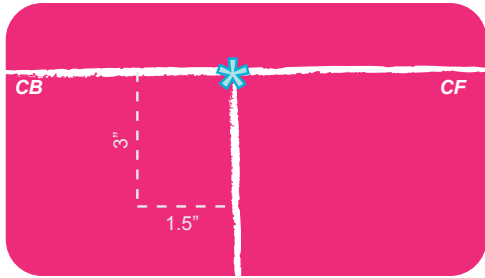


Well!

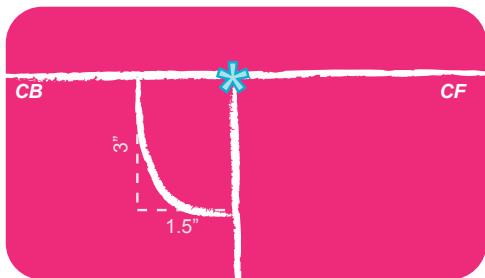
Your big rectangle is half way to becoming a kimono! Surprised? Don't worry! The rest of this isn't too difficult.

Now, we need to go on and make a place to put your neck in, and that characteristic overlap that kimono (even fake one's!) have...

So, for the neck opening, go to the SS. Take your ruler, and make a line parallel to SS, 1.5" down towards the back of the kimono. Now, from the (*), go in 3" the SS, and make a mark. Now, make a curve from this point to the one 1.5" down the SS.



Now, make a curve from this point to the one 1.5" down the SS.

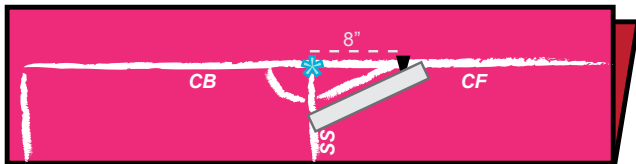


Now, go back to your (*) point, and take a look at the CF line. There is no overlap, and in fact, it doesn't look very kimono-ish at all! So, we need to make the overlap!

From the (*) point, we need to find how far down we want the actual overlap to occur. This can be a lot lower if you're, say, making a cosplay that needs your bust visible, or it can be a more natural kimono length. I usually choose to go about 8". Make a mark, 8" down from (*) on the CF line.



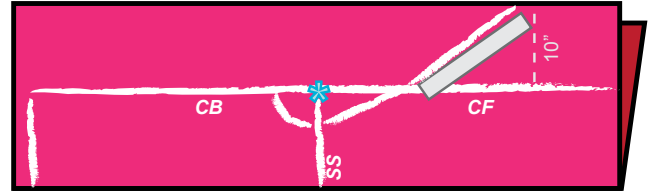
Go from your neckline curve that you just drafted on the back, and make a nice line from there, to this new mark down the CF.



For the actual overlap itself, remember that number you circled before?

Now, this is where it gets to be a little touchy, and you'll have to play around yourself, especially if you're a larger person like myself.

Take that number you've circled, and try to make a mark out from the CF that number.



If you run out of fabric, you have a few options:

* If it's only by a couple of inches (3" to maybe 5" or so, like my example), you can choose to end the kimono at the selvage edge of the fabric. This isn't a problem at all - don't forget, these aren't 100% accurate kimono, and they don't have to fit like Japanese kimono.

* If it's way too short, you're going to have to piece some fabric on to make it wider.

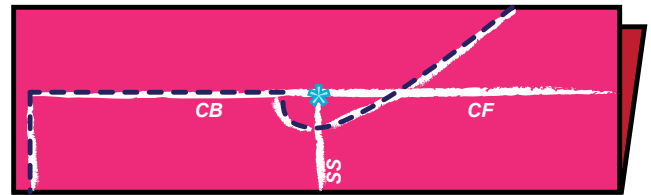
The easiest way at this point is to take a hunk of the fabric (maybe from the end of the stuff you bought, or even at this point, you could use some scrap fabric or paper to make the pattern, and you could then transfer this to the actual fabric once everything is all cut out & you can see where you can fit it), and lay it next to the fabric you're drafting on.

Give it a good 1" overlap (remember, though, that you put a 1" overlap, that's the seam allowance you'll need to stitch on to add the extension later).

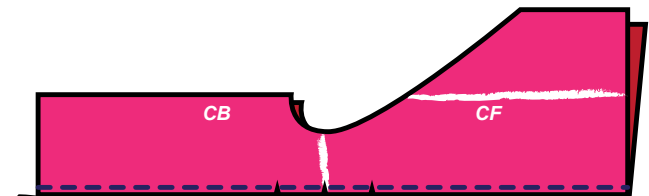
The shape of the rest of this extension is up to you, too. Usually, though, you want it to curve for a while, and then be straight down. Use your own judgement, my sketches are just roughly what I'd recommend them to look like.

Step #3.5 : Cutting

Time to start cutting! Now, you'll cut up that new extension line you just drafted, around the neck hole, and down the CB line. Once you hit the hem, cut that, too, until you have a separate hunk of fabric that is vaguely kimono shaped!



There are three important marks you need to make at this point. Make one mark at your SS, on the fold edge. This is the "official" place the shoulder seam should be. Now, make marks on either side of this the length that you determined earlier for the sleeves (remember that? About 10" on either side, or whatever you decided on).



Go to the folded edge (this will be the sleeve edge) and cut it apart there, all the way down the fold.

Step #4 : Sewing

This order was found through a lot of trial and error, but it is the most efficient way of sewing that I've come up with.

Neckband

Take the thin side (4" or 5") and sew it into one long band.

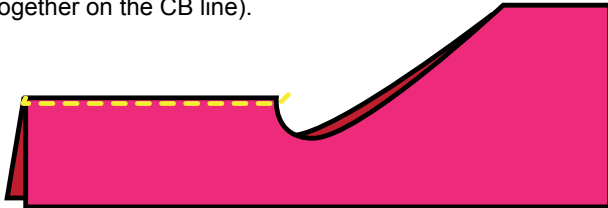


Now, press this seam open, and then press it into one long band, with the right side facing out.



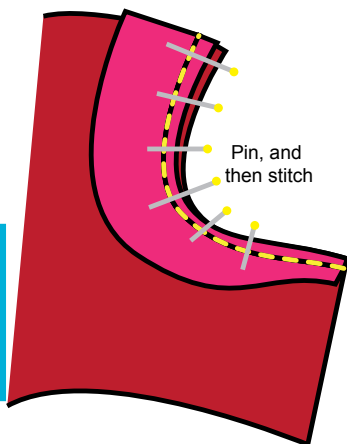
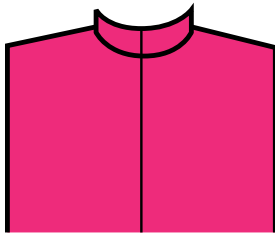
Main Kimono

Take your main kimono, and sew up the CB seam (sew them together on the CB line).



Now, match up the back seam in the neckband with the CB seam of the kimono (right sides together). Pin it there, and pin the collar into place down the whole of the kimono and the overlap. If you run out of neckband, don't worry! Simply fold the edges of the neckband in (to create a nice finished edge).

Sew the neckband to the kimono. If the neckband ended before the kimono, now you're going to want to go in and top stitch the rest of the kimono down where the band would have been. You will need to go back and clip the seam allowance around the neck curve especially.



Pin, and then stitch

The area around the curve of the neck is the most difficult part to stitch, so take your time and be careful there to avoid puckers and pleats in the finished garment.

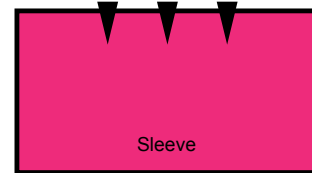
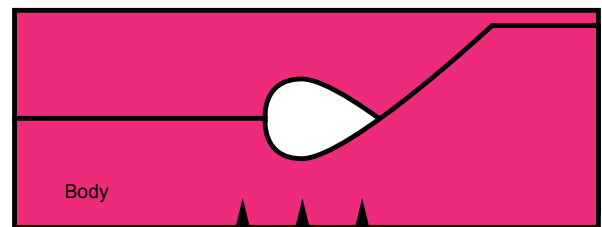
Go press - it's important to press after just about every time you've sewn, because kimono look best when they're crisp and pressed (if you didn't know - pressed costumes (or lack there of!) are one of my pet peeves!).

Sleeves

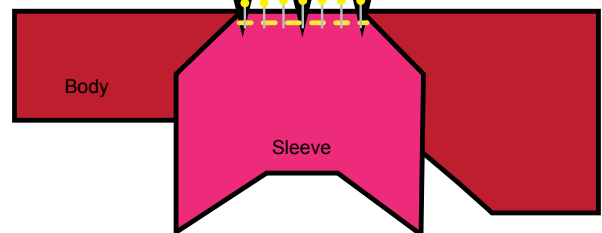
Now, we're going to put the sleeves on. I know, usually, you put the sleeves on later, but it is so much easier to do it this way, trust me!

It is easiest to do this if you have a bit of space to lay the kimono out flat on.

Find those notches you made on the sleeve edge, and the sleeves themselves. Grab a sleeve, and match the center notch on the sleeve with the shoulder notch on the kimono. Pin it. Now, pin in both directions until you hit the other marks. Sew between these two furthest notches. Put the other sleeve on in the same way. Press this seams open.



Pin and then stitch



You're almost done! What's coming up is probably the trickiest seam you'll do on this whole thing.

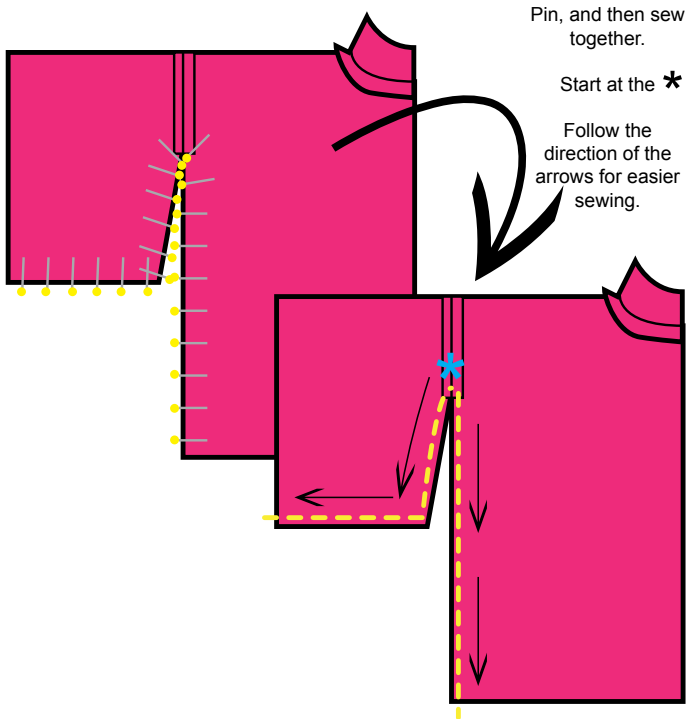
But, before we get there, I want you to do something. Hold up your kimono by the "shoulder seams", and take a look at it. Hold out the sleeves. I just want you to understand how this odd shape (when laying flat) becomes a kimono shape.

Understanding how this works is actually really important for sewing in general, and I just want to draw your attention to it. You should do this with anything your sewing - stop and take a second to look at it, until you go "ah! I see how this works!".

Your sewing will improve exponentially if you do this! You could even throw it over your shoulders and take a look at it, if you want!

Start pinning from what will become the under arm. Having this line up is more important than anything else, so your kimono lays right. Anything else can be cut off or adjusted.

Pin from the under arm, down the inside of the sleeve, and then down the bottom of the sleeve. Going the other direction, pin the side seam down. You'll have to move the seam allowance from where the sleeve was sewn in place around a bit - flip it one way and then the other to get at the seam allowance. This is normal :D



Clip the excess fabric at the under arm seam away, and be sure it's a solid seam (that there isn't an opening or something odd like that). If there is, just sew it up - there is very little you could do wrong here, so don't worry! You just want to be sure it's a closed seam, with the seam allowance clipped enough that it doesn't pucker oddly when you're wearing it.

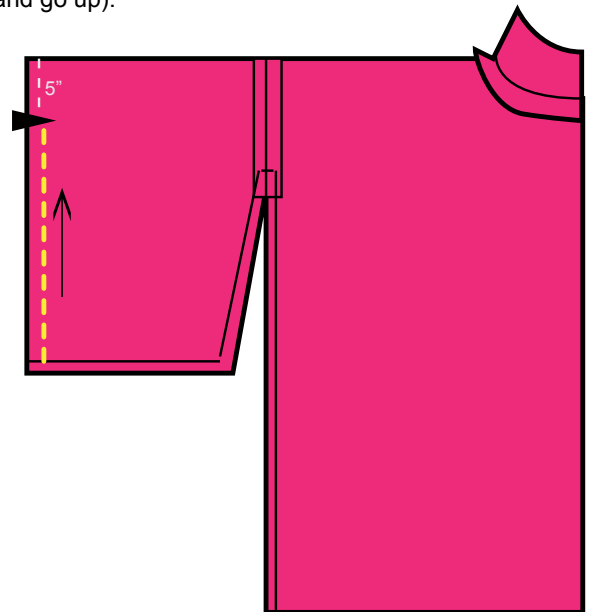
**Turn it inside out! Try it on!
You have a kimono, basically!**

Insert a picture of a happy person wearing a kimono here...
...eventually.

Now, you have an option to close up the front of the sleeve and just leave an opening for your hands.

If you want to do this, you need to turn it back inside-out, and lay it flat on a table. Start pinning from the bottom of the sleeve up. I usually leave an opening about 10" total for the hand, so 5" on both sides. Pin up and up and up, until you have your desired opening left.

Now, sew this closed (it's best to start from the bottom of the sleeve and go up).

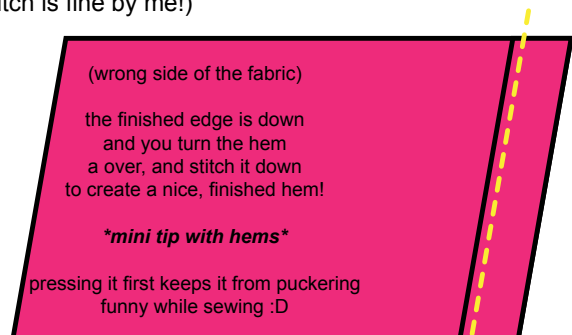


Step #5 : Finishing

All you have left to do is hemming, basically. Grab your iron, and get ready.

Turn the bottom edge of the kimono up approximately 1". Now, if you have the back slightly longer or shorter than the front, you're not alone. It happens to me all the time. Simply "even it out" by cutting it so that the bottom in the front and the back are pretty much the same length. Now, turn the bottom edge up, and press it flat.

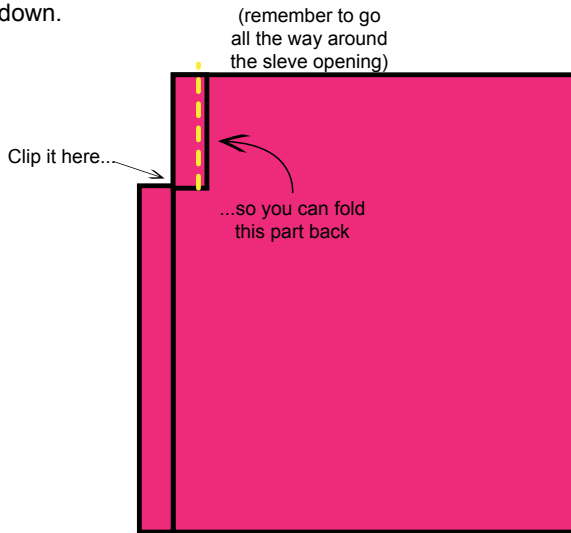
Stitch this hem down (you can be fancy-pants and do it by hand, or a blind hem if you really want, but a generic straight stitch is fine by me!)



For the sleeve, even if you close it up, it's the same basic procedure. With the sleeve inside-out, you'll have to clip to the stitch line where your hand opening goes (so you can fold back the seam allowance). You don't need to do this if you left the sleeve open down the front.

Fold the seam allowance in, and press it. Stitching it can be a little tricky if it's a small area, but as usual, if you mess up, you have your handy seam ripper. Taking the main part of your machine bed off and just using the arm can make this so much easier (check your manual of how to do this - it varies from model to model).

Stitch it down.



Another option for all of this could be to use Stitch Witchery or some other fusible hem tape (follow the directions on the package, but I still recommend pressing it first before putting that in the seam).

Step #6 : Sash

Okay, so I lied. You'll still need some sort of sash for this to work.

Grab your fabric, or a contrast of fabric. You can either use my pretied obi tutorial for making the bow and whatnot, or just make a regular sash to tie it up with.

To make a regular sash, cut two or three widths of fabric 8"-10" long - your final sash will be about half this length wide, so if you want a really wide one, you may want to do 14" or so (so your final sash will be about 6" wide), or if you want a regular tie, try 10" (your finished sash will be about 4" wide).

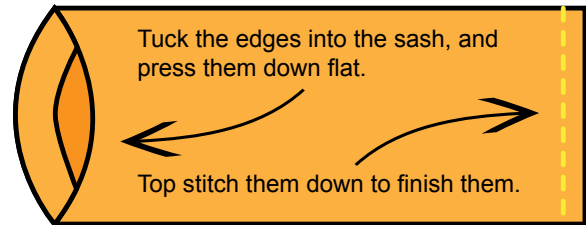
Sew them together, to create one really long sash. Press those seams open.



Putting right sides together, sew the whole thing into a really long tube. I usually recommend starting in the middle - this is to prevent the fabric from twisting as much as possible.



Turn it right-side-out, and press it flat.



You are DONE!

Hooray! You have a kimono top!

It's really not that complicated - again, I really wanted to make this tutorial as clear as possible, so I tried to illustrate every step you need.

After a bit of practice, these become really easy, and the design can be easily modified into just about anything you can think up that involves a kimono-like style! You can make a ton of cosplays from this combined with hakama, and a ton of really neat clothes!

As you get more advanced, here are some things to consider trying:

- * Adding darts into it to give it a better fit in the waist
- * Having a different shape for the hem, such as points
- * Varying the sleeve shape and length
- * Lining it
- * Insetting lace or other fabric in the sleeves, shoulders, collar, etc.
- * Making a cute skirt or pair of pants to go with it
- * Making a pretied obi bow to go with this instead of just a sash
- * Adding decorative stitching, painting, or buttons
- * Making more than one layer (like how about three or four)
- * Make a kimono-style dress
- * Using fabric other than cottons for effect

I very much hope that this helped you out! Please let me know of any pieces you make with this tutorial - that is why I make them! If you're on DeviantArt, please be sure to note me or leave a comment!

~ Samantha Lemieux (a.k.a. Taeliac)
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