

## How to make the Days for Girls Liners

This document provides an explanation of the liner, its purpose, and how to make it.

### Introduction:

The Days for Girls liner is made with a serger and a normal sewing machine. The serging steps **MUST** be done on a serger (also known as an overlocker in some areas).

- The **Serger Strip** method is an efficient way to make the **serger style of liner**. (A serger is a special machine used to overcast raw edges.) To make the serged liner you will need **BOTH** a serger and a normal sewing machine.
- The serged liner must not be made using the zigzag stitch or the overcast stitch of the normal sewing machine. We have found that liners made in this method are not durable.

**What is a liner?** What is the purpose of the liner in the Days for Girls washable menstruation kit?

The liner is the washable ‘pad’ and it is held in place by the shield. The shield snaps around the bottom of the pantie. The shield has pockets at the ends. The liner is tri-folded and tucked into the pockets which hold the liner in place. The shield is sized to allow for 1 or 2 or even 3 tri-folded liners to be inserted to provide the desired level of absorbency.



- a. Days for Girls uses a tri-fold style of liner which allows for effective washing and quick drying. The tri-fold liner is made in a shape which is not offensive to hang out in the sunshine (sunshine kills bacteria) – the shape is that of a washcloth rather than a ‘pad’.
- b. Liners are made with 100% cotton flannel. Two pieces of flannel are needed for each liner.
- c. **Use only 100% polyester thread.**
- d. It is best to use colorful fabrics for the liners; use medium to dark shades to disguise stains. If you have white, pale, and light-shades of flannel, it is best to dye them to a darker color before making the liners. Be cautious when selecting fabric. **Follow the guidelines as detailed in Section Four “Considerations for Selecting Appropriate Patterns and Colors of Fabric”.**
- e. The Days for Girls kit is designed to last three full years with proper care. Use appropriate materials and sew the liners carefully to ensure quality.

*The remainder of this document is organized as follows:*

☀ **Section One: the Serger-style Liner.**

Here you will find concepts, considerations and step-by-step sewing instructions for making liners using the Serger Strip method.

☀ **(obsolete) Section Two: the Turn & Topstitch Liner (nickname T&T, also known as the Stop Sign).**

The T&T liner was discontinued in March 2015. It has not been well-received in the field. Do not make the T&T liner anymore. If you have pieces already cut, sew them up and then switch to making the serged liner only.

Section Two has been removed from this document.

☀ **Section Three: Making the Postpartum liner.**

The postpartum liner is larger; details found in this section.

☀ **Section Four: Tips, Techniques, and Things to Know about making liners.**

These things are ‘good to know’!

## Section One. Explanation and Sewing instructions for the Serger-style Liner.



The serger-style of liner is pictured above. The liner is made with two pieces of flannel. One is narrower – called the Hot Spot – and one is larger, a square. Note the liner is pretty on both sides. It is important to sew the pieces “dull sides together” to hide the whitish back side as much as possible. If using a mix of solids and prints, place the solid against the back side of the print. Having colors/prints on both sides disguises stains on both sides of the liner – important when hanging out to dry.

### **Important considerations:**

1. The serger method of making liners is most efficient when done in strips. This strip process is explained below. You could also make liners ‘one at a time’. Use the method that is best for you to make a quality liner.
2. As noted, a serger overcasts the raw edges of the flannel. You may wonder why this cannot be done using the overcast or zigzag stitch on a regular sewing machine. The reason is, Days for Girls has been using the zigzag option for a long time and we have found that it just does not hold up; there is too much fraying. The same is true for edges cut with pinking shears. **The Days for Girls Kit is designed to last three full years and, to ensure this, zig zag and pinking on the liners is no longer allowed.**
3. What fabric is used to make liners? **100% cotton flannel. Flannel is the only fabric Days for Girls feels is appropriate for liners.** Medium to dark colors are best; both prints and solids may be used. See Section Four of this document for more guidelines regarding fabric selection.
4. What is the best length of yardage for this serger strip process? Please see Section Four for some ideas.
5. Let’s talk about the “cut size” of the fabric vs. the “finished size” of the liner. The serger is designed to cleanly cut an edge and overcast the edge at the same time. Thus, the “cut size” of the fabric must be a bit larger than the expected finished size of the liner. The amount of fabric trimmed off during serging varies according to the habit of the operator. Suggested widths are provided in this document, however, you will have to decide what works best for you. Be certain to measure the finished liner and ensure it is sized appropriately. Over time, the flannel liner will continue to shrink a bit as it is washed and dried; this is why it is so important that it is not made too small at the outset.

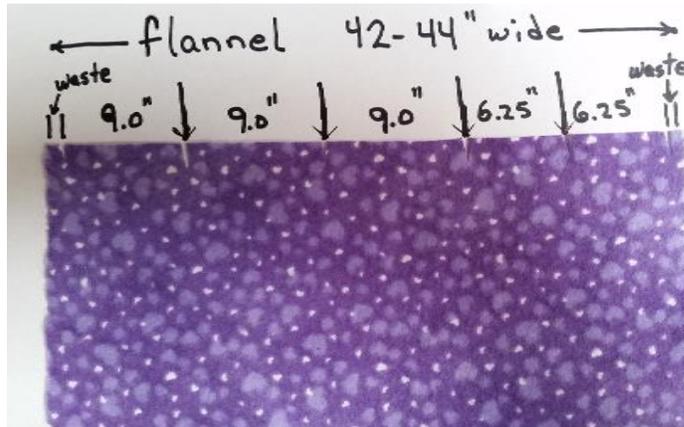
## Preparing the strips - size and methods:

Strips can be made by *cutting* or by *tearing*. Use these guidelines when deciding what will work best for you:

- a. If *cutting*: It is best to use a rotary cutter. It is important to measure accurately and cut precisely. The width of the strips depends on how much is trimmed during the serging process. If very little is trimmed while serging, cut the wide strip 8 ½ inches wide and the narrow strip 5 ¾ inches wide. After serging, the narrow strip should not be less than 5 ½ inches wide. The finished liner should not be smaller than 8 ¼ inches square. Cut the strips wider if necessary to ensure the proper finished size.
- b. If *tearing*: Using the tearing method is much faster than cutting, however, tearing stretches and weakens the edge of the flannel. When serging, this stretched edge must be fully trimmed off to ensure a clean cut and stable stitches. Thus, the width of the strips are wider when using the 'tearing' method. Measurements for tearing are given below.

**If you plan to use the tearing approach, here is a way to do it:**

1. Along the 44" end of the yardage, measure and clip the edge as follows: create three strips measuring 9.0 inches wide (22.9 cm), and two strips measuring 6 ¼ inches wide (15.9 cm); these widths assume you will cut off ¼ inch on each side when serging. There is usually enough width to clip & tear off the selvages (discard them).



2. Tear the flannel into strips beginning at each of the points where you made a cut
3. Pair up a wide strip with a narrow strip; this ensures the two strips are equal length and allows for less fabric waste later in the process. (Given we made 3 wide strips but only 2 narrow strips, there will be an unused wide strip. Set it aside; when a stack builds up, cut a series of narrow strips to pair up with all these unused wide ones.)

**Step-by-step instructions to make the liners using the Serger Strip method:**

1. Wash&dry the fabric; **do not use fabric softeners**. Press lightly if badly wrinkled.
2. Tear or cut the strips per instructions above; use the method that works best for you.
3. Serge both long sides of a narrow strip. **Use 100% polyester thread**. After serging, the narrow strip should be between 5 ½ - 5 ¾ inches wide (14.0 – 14.6cm).



4. Place the narrow strip down the center of a wide strip for the full length of the strips. **Be sure to position them “dull sides together”** (in sewing terms this is called “wrong sides together”) – this puts stain-busting color on both sides of the finished liner.



5. Using the regular sewing machine with a straight stitch, stitch the narrow strip to the wide strip. Stitch near the edge, directly over the serged stitches; this will further secure the edge of the narrow strip. Use a medium stitch length (avoid small stitches).
6. Cut the strips into 9” pieces (22.8 cm).
7. Serge-finish each liner using one of these methods:
  - If rounding the corners - Serge around each square, rounding at the corners. Secure the start & stop point with a few stitches on the regular sewing machine.
  - If rounding the corners - Serge the outer edge and slightly serge over the start point and then gently move off edge of fabric. Pull, trim and dot with Fray Check.
  - If square corners - pause serger at very edge of corner and turn fabric. At last corner serge off the edge. Pull, trim and dot with Fray Check.
  - If serging in ‘chain method’ ( a technique used by quilters), dot each corner with Fray Check before or after cutting the chain into individual liners
  - If square corners - leave tails of thread before cutting the serger threads. Use a crochet hook and weave the tails back through the serged seam

**The liner is now finished. Measure it.** The preferred finished size of the standard liner is 8 ½ x 8 ½ inches (21.6 x 21.6 cm); it should not be smaller than 8 ¼ x 8 ¼ inches (21 x 21 cm). If necessary, make adjustments to ensure proper finished size as you make more liners.

*Picture of shield with liner tucked into pockets:*



*Picture of a liner unfolded and two partly folded (hotspot is showing on top):  
These liners show the rounded corners.*



*Picture of three liners all folded in tri-fold fashion:*



*A serger:*



Section Two. Explanation and Sewing instructions for the Turn & Topstitch Liner (T&T). Other nicknames for the T&T liner are: ‘stop sign liner’ and ‘octagon liner’.

This section deleted. The T&T liner is discontinued. Please do not make it.

Section Three. Making the Postpartum liner.

***Measurements for the postpartum liner:***

Days for Girls offers a kit for Postpartum use. See the website for more information, [www.daysforgirls.org](http://www.daysforgirls.org).

The postpartum liner is made using **the serger method**. The postpartum liner is larger, thus the strips must be cut wider. The preferred finished sizes for the postpartum liner are as follows: the large piece is 12 x 11 inches (30.5 x 28 cm), and the hot spot is 12 x 8½ inches (30.5 x 22 cm). Cut the strips appropriately to accommodate your serging habits and to ensure the finished size is correct. (Slightly smaller is okay too, for example, 11 ¾ x 10 ¾ overall.) Note: the postpartum shield is also larger; shield instructions are available on the website.

**Follow the instructions for making the Serged Liner (Section Two), taking care to use the sizes and widths as noted in above paragraph.**

## Section Four. Tips, Techniques and Things to Know when making liners.

### ***Considerations for selecting appropriate patterns and colors of fabric:***

- a. Fabric used for liners must be 100% cotton flannel
- b. Medium to dark colors are best to disguise stains; pretty & bright prints are best
- c. When washing/drying flannel, do not use fabric softeners or dryer sheets (these decrease absorbency)
- d. Avoid white and light colors (if donated, dye them to stain-busting bright colors)
- e. Do not use prints with people, animals, snakes, reptiles, dragons, war-theme, camouflage, glam, and other culture-specific topics. The best prints are floral and geometrics.
- f. Buy the best quality you can afford; a tightly woven flannel is better than a loose weave.
- g. Liners can be made with both sides matching, a mix of solids and prints, or contrasting patterns. It’s up to you! Remember: medium to dark colors are best.

### ***When making the Serged Liner, you can use any length of fabric that works for you.***

Using lengths longer than 2 ½ yards (2.3 meters) may be too long to comfortably wash in home washers/dryers and may ball up and wrinkle too much in the laundering process.

Another length which works well is 40”, when washed it generally shrinks to 38” which is an efficient length for doing the strips, allowing a little extra for variances when lining up the strips. This is a better length if you have limited space to work in.

Remember that you will be cutting the strips into 9 inch pieces at the end of the process (just prior to the final serge around the liner). Thus, after washing, it is advantageous to have a length in a multiple of 9 inches, plus a bit more to allow some flexibility when attaching the narrow strip to the wide strip.

### ***Number of liners included in each kit:***

Current as of May 2015, Days for Girls includes 8 liners in each standard kit, and 10 liners in each postpartum kit.

***THANK YOU for sewing liners for Days for Girls. Every liner you make helps to give a girl her days back. Health. Education. Dignity.***