Britches for Boys
T-shirt Makeover for Shorts

Use these simple instructions to make a T-shirt into comfortable knit shorts for boys in Africa—the shorts will become a prized possession. Please use a new or “like-new” T-shirt for this project. (There are restrictions in some countries regarding used clothing and import taxes.) Mail completed britches to Britches for Boys, c/o Nancy’s Notions®, 333 Beichl Ave., Beaver Dam WI 53916-0683, and we’ll ship the britches to their destination. For additional information, go to littledressesforafrica.org/blog/.

Supplies:

- Adult sized T-shirt (Approximate sizes: Small T-shirt = size 4–6 shorts, Medium = size 8–10 shorts, and Large = size 12–14 shorts.)
- Rotary cutter, mat, and ruler
- Matching all-purpose thread
- 1 yd. drawcord elastic
- Stretch Needle, size 75/11
- Optional: Twin Stretch Needle, size 4.0 mm/75
- Optional: Seam sealant such as Fray Check™
- Optional: 1½ yd. cotton cording

Instructions:

1. Prepare T-shirt.
   - Lay a T-shirt flat on a table in front of you with hem toward you and neck closest to the opposite side of the table.
   - Lay sleeves flat and to each side of the shirt.

2. Cut leg pattern from the T-shirt.
   - Cut off both sleeves near armpit seams. These rounded cuts will become the crotch of the shorts.
   - Determine shorts length. Cut off 3”–6” from the bottom of the T-shirt, depending on shorts length.

3. Complete the shorts.
   - Cut a 2¼” band from the fabric trimmed off the bottom of the T-shirt and set aside. (waistband)
   - Mark a straight line across pattern just under the front neckline ribbing, the same distance from each shoulder seam. Cut along this line through both layers of the T-shirt.
   - Cut open each side from the hem to the underarm. These two pieces are the legs of the shorts.

4. Prepare the waistline.
   - Quarter mark waistline with pins or a fabric marking pen.
   - Trim the length of the 2¼” wide waistband that was set aside.
     - Measure the waistline of the shorts and add ½” for seam allowances.
     - Trim waistband to the measured length.

Note: This technique is especially good for shirts with logos as they will remain intact on the sides of the finished shorts.
• Stitch short ends of the new waistband; press seam open.
• Quarter waistband with pins or a fabric marking pen.
• Match waistband to waist, right sides together. Position seam at a side; stitch with a ¼” seam. Press toward waistband.

Note: If you prefer to make a corded waist instead of using drawcord elastic, eliminate steps 5–7. Simply leave an opening in the waistband seam for the cording and match that seam to the front of the shorts. Turn down and stitch waistband casing so that it measures about 1” from the seam to the fold, and stitch in the ditch of the seam. Trim excess waistband fabric and add cording through the opening in the seam.

5. Prepare the drawcord elastic.
• Cut the elastic 4”–6” smaller than the waistline measurement of the shorts.
• Join short ends of the elastic with a ¼” seam allowance.

Join elastic with a ¼” seam allowance
Open seam. If desired, stitch down edges of the seams.

Stitch down edges of seam allowance
• Quarter-mark the elastic with pins or a fabric marking pen, using the seam as one of the quarter marks.

Quarter-mark the elastic

6. Attach the elastic.
• Meet right side of the elastic to right side of the garment, positioning elastic seam at the center back of the waistline.
• Match quarter marks of elastic and garment. Pin.

7. Complete the draw cords.
• Pull up cords through middle of the elastic at center front.

Pull up cord

Note: To make sure the waistline seam is covered on the wrong side, you may want to baste the elastic in place from the wrong side first.


Project Design: Modified instructions provided by The Lutheran Quilting Group, Necedah WI
Editors: Diane Dhein and Pat Hahn
Illustrations: Natalie Nguyen and Laure Noe