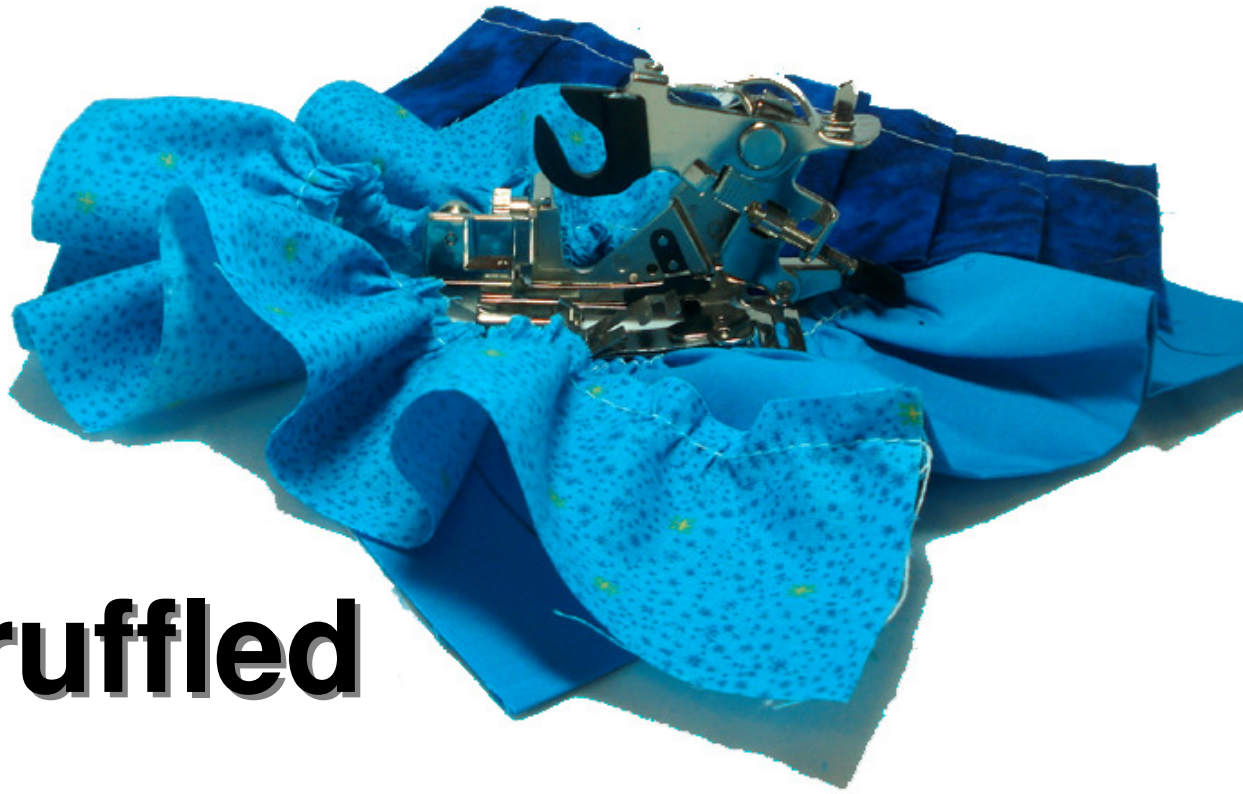


The Ruffler



...Unruffled

A Guide to Buying,
Optimizing, and Using
a Ruffler Attachment



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<http://www.dressydolly.com>

Introduction

Ruffles, ruffles everywhere! In both fashion and home décor, nothing adds femininity and flounce like a beautiful ruffle. The ruffle is an important element of custom boutique fashion. Little just girls love the “twirlability” of full, ruffled skirts. Ruffles also add cuteness and fun to everything from jeans to tops to socks. Ruffles aren’t that difficult to make by hand gathering, but they do take a great deal of time and patience. With a ruffler attachment, you can create perfect ruffles in a flash, allowing you to make the most of your precious sewing time .



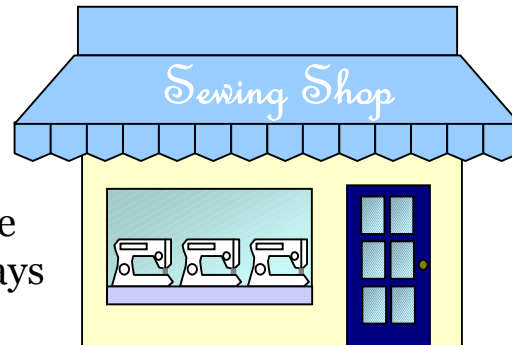
My first ruffler came with a leaflet containing very vague instructions for use. I tried to make sense of the tiny writing, but not being the patient type, decided to just start ruffling. It took me a little while to determine which end was up so I could actually get the contraption on the machine. Then I had to figure out how to get the fabric inserted properly. Finally, I was all set up and ready for miles of beautiful ruffles spill out before my very eyes. Alas, it was not meant to be, at least for that day. I spent the next three hours breaking needles, tangling thread, and ruining fabric. Needless to say, I was tearing my hair out and questioning my need to make ruffles anyway. After stepping away from the sewing machine and cooling off a bit, I turned to the internet for advice. To my dismay, there was not a whole lot of information to be found. There were a few short articles singing the praises of rufflers, but no specific information about settings, troubleshooting, etc. I did find a Victorian-era guide to using a ruffler, and it was actually very helpful (the technology hasn’t changed much over the last century). I also came upon many sewing forum posts with ruffler related questions/rants, and it was heartening to realize that I wasn’t alone in my frustration. The sewing community is by nature very sharing, so I found lots of advice and encouragement in these threads. When I finally got my ruffler up and ruffling, I was overjoyed! I now consider it an indispensable tool, and wouldn’t “Sew Boutique” with out it!

As a “how-too” eBook author, my goal is to provide every tip, trick, and tool I know of to make your project fun and successful. In my twirl skirt pattern, I mention the ruffler as a time-saving implement, but I don’t go into any detail on how to use it (as you can see, that is an book in itself). Now, I am not a sewing machine expert, but I have learned a lot about rufflers through research and trial-and-error. My hope is that this free guide will provide you with the information you need to purchase, optimize and ENJOY a ruffler attachment for your machine.

Purchasing a Ruffler

Places to buy Rufflers

Brick and Mortar Shop: Without a doubt, buying your ruffler from a local sewing machine dealer is your best option. You can actually take your machine into the store, have them select the right attachment, and give you a demonstration (it is like shoe shopping for your sewing machine)! I'm always a little shy about asking for help, but this is what they do, and they are more than happy to assist you.



If you can find a dealer that specializes in your brand of machine, that is even better. One small "heads up" - some of the high-end manufacturers (Janome, Bernina, and Viking, for example) have attachments that are made specifically to fit their machines. These attachments are quite pricey, and in many cases there are generic versions out there that will do the job just as well. Most generics run less than \$40, while the brand names can cost upwards of \$100. You might even want to do a little homework online before buying. Even if the brick and mortar shop is a bit more expensive, keep in mind that 1) you aren't paying shipping, and 2) you can get a demonstration, and hands-on support if you need it (priceless).

Online: There are many shops on the internet that sell sewing machine accessories, and there are incredible deals to be had on rufflers. The disadvantage is that you don't get to "try before you buy." Most vendors will accept returns, though. Before you buy, ask any and all questions you may have, and make sure you are comfortable with their return policy. eBay is also a good place to look for rufflers (again, ask questions before buying, and stick with sellers that will accept returns).

Types of Rufflers

Whether you are buying in a shop or online, your dealer should be able to take your make and model number and look up the ruffler that is right for your machine. Most rufflers are considered "generic" because they are made to fit a number of machines. They are classified by shank type - high, low and slant are the most common. Even if your machine has a unique shank type, chances are there is a generic ruffler made to fit it, or there may be an adapter that can make another shank type work. There are also industrial rufflers available for some machines. They are intended for heavy-duty work, and have a bit different design. For projects involving light to medium weight fabrics, the non-industrial version will work just fine, and will last many years if cared for properly.

Ruffler Anatomy

As I mentioned, most ruffler attachments have essentially the same working parts. The photos on the right are of my low-shank, screw-on ruffler. I've labeled the features that I will refer to in this guide.

Screw-on foot - attaches the ruffler to the presser bar on the sewing machine.

Fork arm - hooks on to the the needle clamp so that the up and down action of the machine moves the ruffler blade.

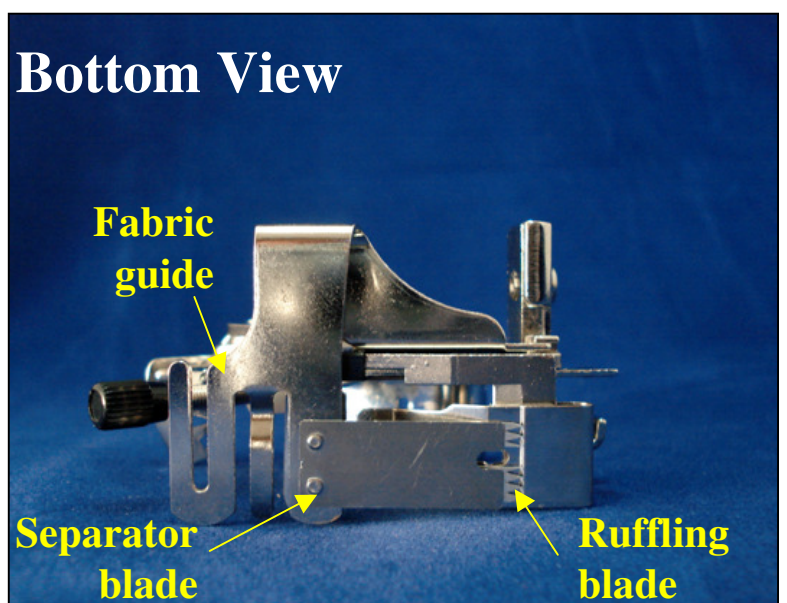
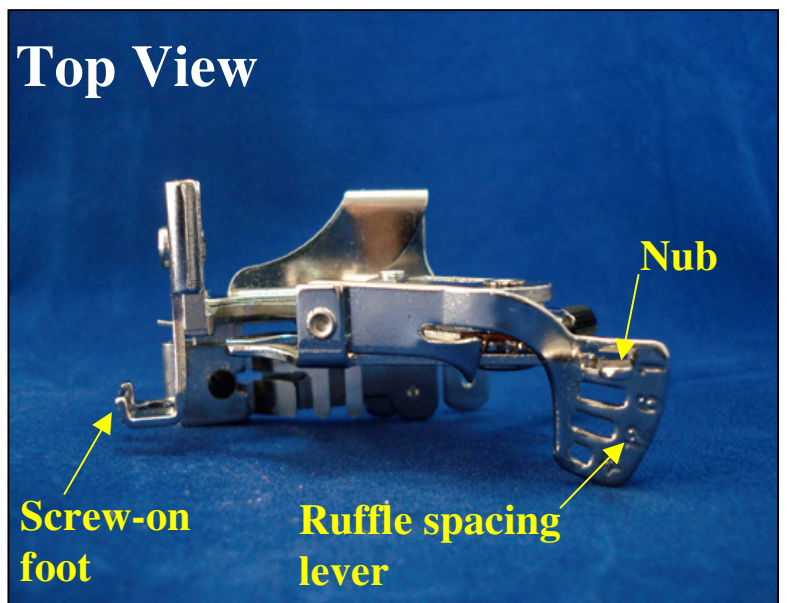
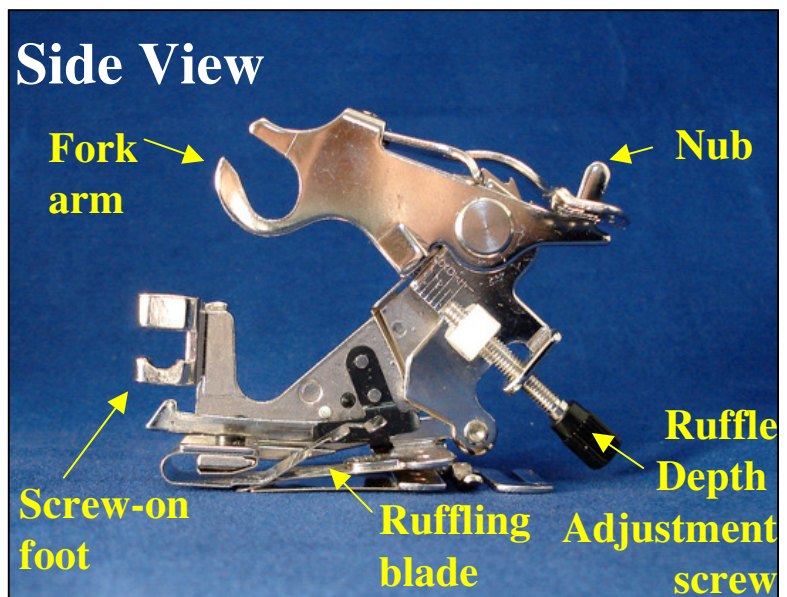
Ruffler depth adjustment screw/dial - seems to be the most variable part of the ruffler. It might be located on the top, back, or side of your ruffler, and it might be a plastic dial or a metal screw. Regardless, it controls the depth of your pleats.

Spacing Lever - attached to gears that "count" stitches and controls how often pleats are made. The **nub** can be positioned so that pleats are made every stitch (1), every 6 stitches (6), every 12 stitches (12), or not at all (☆).

Ruffling blade - thin blade with very sharp little teeth, tucks fabric under during stitching.

Separator blade - barrier between the fabric that is being ruffled and the feed dogs and, if applicable, the fabric that is being attached to the ruffle.

Fabric Guide - holds the fabric in place while feeding into the ruffler.

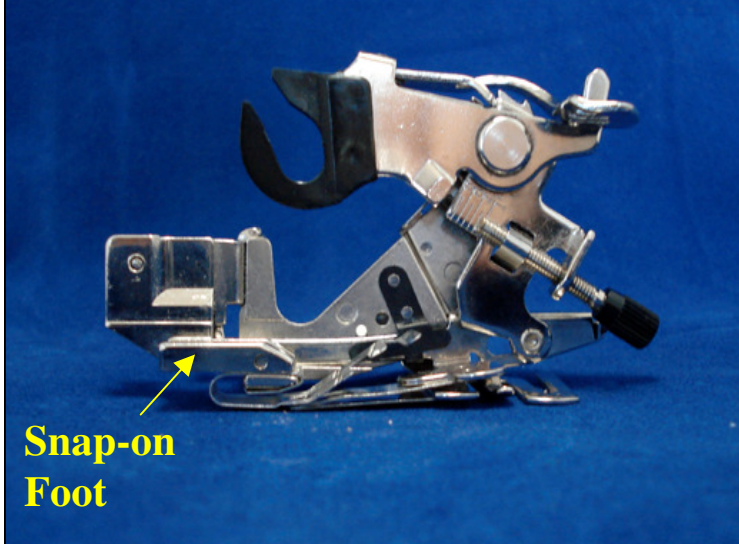


Here are a couple of pictures of my snap-on ruffler. As you can see, it is almost identical to the screw on model. There are a couple of differences I want to point out:

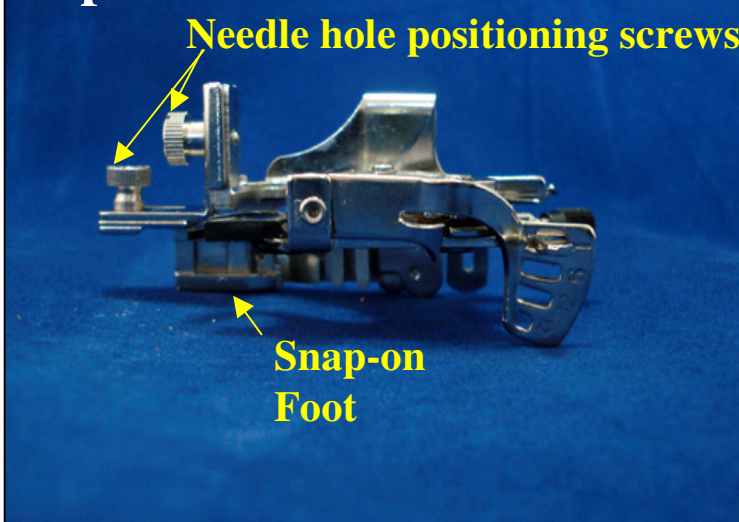
Snap-on foot - attaches the ruffler to the shank that is already screwed on to the presser bar.

Needle hole positioning screws - allow you to change the vertical and horizontal position of the opening that the needle goes through. This allows you to use different needle positions (as opposed to just center). It also gives you more control over the placement of the stitches in the newly-made ruffles. My newest sewing machine is a bit finicky, and the needle needs to be positioned just right or it will jam. It takes some trial and error, but this adjustable model will work with it, while the non-adjustable one will not. Unfortunately, the screws can become loose over time, and if the foot slides back and forth. This can cause a broken needle, or worse yet, bent ruffler blade teeth.

Side View



Top View



Pre-Ruffling Checklist

Once you get your attachment on your machine, you are going to want to ruffle away without interruption. Here are some things to check so that minimize the chances of mid-ruffle breakdowns:

- **Needle** - make sure the needle is appropriate for the fabric you are ruffling. Also, make sure that the needle clamp is screwed in **TIGHTLY**. The action of the ruffler can cause it to loosen, so it is a good idea to give it a twist with a screwdriver.
- **Thread** - Make sure you have a relatively full spool and bobbin, and the machine is properly threaded. Use high-quality polyester thread to reduce the chance of breakage.
- **Clean Machine** - the bobbin case should be relatively lint free.

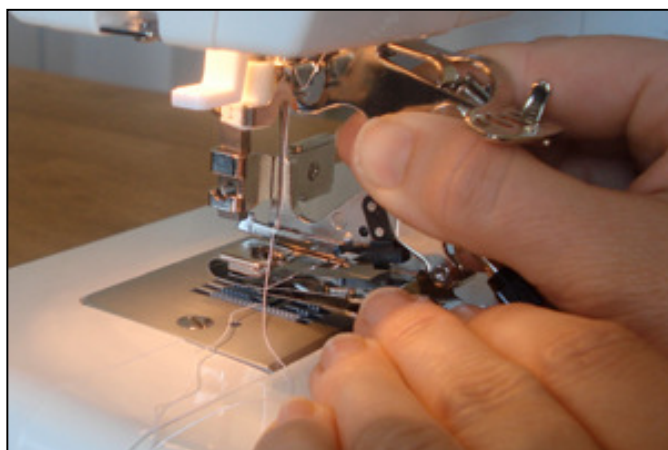
Attaching the Ruffler *with a screw-on foot*

Loosen the foot screw and remove the foot that is on the machine. Make sure your machine is threaded and your bobbin thread is pulled out before you attach the ruffler (the bulky ruffler can make these things difficult to do).

Hook the fork arm on to the needle clamp and align the foot with the screw hole in the presser bar. This make take a little maneuvering.

Replace the foot screw. If your ruffler has needle hole positioning screws, make it is adjusted so that the needle clears the opening (see the photo on the bottom of the next page).

Pull the thread through the needle opening and off to the side, just like you would do with a regular foot.



Attaching the Ruffler *with a snap-on foot*

Snap off the foot that is on the machine. Make sure your machine is threaded and your bobbin thread is pulled out before you attach the ruffler (the bulky ruffler can make these things difficult to do).



Start out with the spacing lever set to the ☆ so that the fork arm can move freely. Lift the presser foot lever as high as it will go. Hook the fork arm on to the needle clamp and align the foot with the shank.



Release the lever and snap the foot into place. Pull the thread through the needle opening and off to the side, just like you would do with a regular foot.



If your ruffler has needle hole positioning screws, make it is adjusted so that the needle clears the opening.



Inserting the Fabric

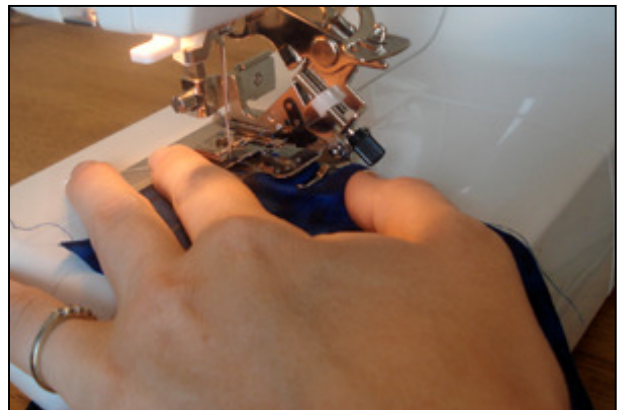
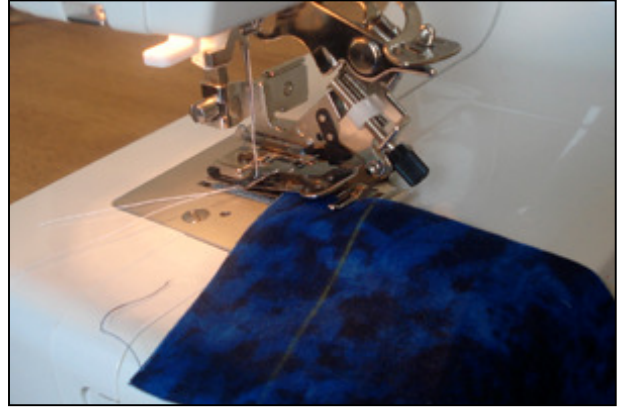
Getting the fabric into the ruffler can be tricky, especially with thinner fabrics. It is helpful to have a nice, crisp edge with no hanging strings. I find it helpful to press the fabric with a little spray starch beforehand.

Slide the fabric through the fabric guide first. I find it easiest to go in at an angle. Note: if you are working with pieced fabrics (as in a patchwork or stripwork skirt), make sure the seams pass easily through the fabric guide. If they tend to get hung up, just bypass the guide.

Push the top edge of the fabric into the ruffler, underneath the ruffling blade. Make sure the needle is in the up position. You will meet a little resistance when the fabric hits the teeth.

Push/pull the fabric beyond the teeth. Slowly guide it to your ruffling start point. If you miss your mark, start over. Never EVER pull the fabric towards you. This will bend the teeth and ruin your ruffler.

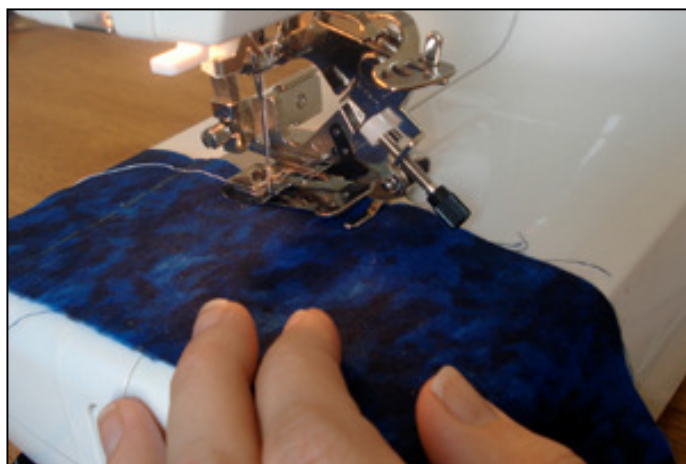
Pull your bobbin/needle threads back and out of the way. You are ready to ruffle!



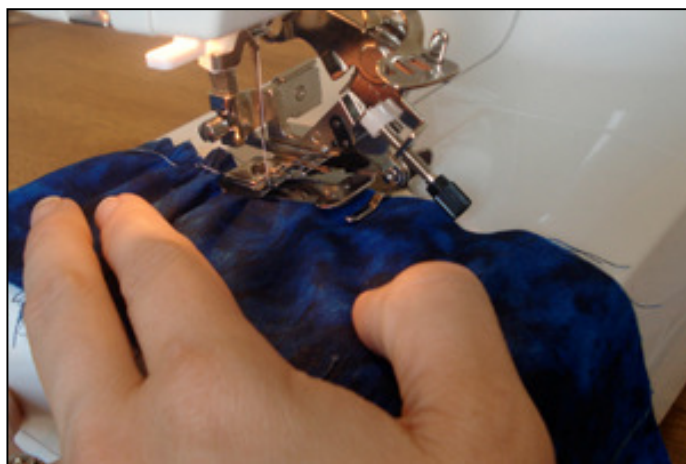
Getting to Know Your Ruffler

If you've never used a ruffler, the temptation is to stick some fabric in and crank out the ruffles. You need to ease into it, though. If you start out with the wrong combination of settings, you could end up with a bad jam!

The first thing you need to do is determine your ruffler's **minimum depth setting**. Set your machine's stitch length to 2.5 (or 2.4 if you have a digital machine that goes in increments of 0.2). Set the stitch spacing lever to position 1. Turn the depth adjustment screw all the way down to the absolute lowest setting (on mine, that means the tip of the screw is flush with the plastic piece that holds it).



Slowly start stitching. Depending on your ruffler you may or may not get ruffling. In most cases, you will just get straight stitching. Turn the screw in just a bit and make a few more stitches. You are looking to find the setting that gives you tiny, but even and consistent ruffles. If it is ruffling, but not every ruffle "catches," turn the setting up a bit more.



When you find the magic minimum depth setting, write it down (my ruffler doesn't have markings that low, so I recorded the number of exposed threads on the screw). Gently remove the fabric scrap by pulling back away from you and off to the left. You shouldn't get any resistance from the teeth if you are pulling the fabric off correctly. Cut the thread, and get ready to optimize!



Ruffling Factor

For most apparel and home décor projects, finished ruffles are $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{2}{3}$ the original fabric length. The **Ruffling Factor** is what I like to call the number that you get when you divide the length before ruffling by the length after ruffling. In my designs, I usually use a ruffling factor of 1.5 ($\frac{2}{3}$ the original length) for loose, relaxed ruffles, and a ruffling factor of 2 ($\frac{1}{2}$ the original length) for tighter, fluffier ruffles.

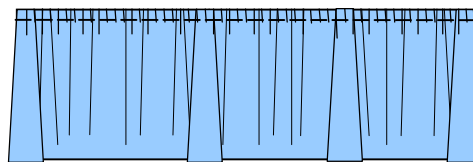
The ruffling factor is dependent on stitch length, ruffle depth, and ruffle spacing. For the looser ruffles, the most natural-looking gathers are tiny and evenly distributed. To achieve this, you should gather with every stitch, so set the ruffle spacing lever at 1 (one variable down, two to go ☺). The gathers should be nice and tiny, so you want to keep your ruffle depth setting low as low as possible.

For tighter ruffles, you will need to increase the depth setting. The gathers will be more “pleat-like,” but will still be nice and natural looking because they will be closer together.

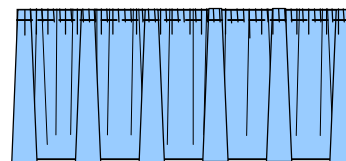
By varying the stitch length, you have the ability to fine tune your ruffling. A longer stitch will give you looser, longer ruffles, while a shorter stitch will give you tighter, shorter ruffles. You don't want to make your stitches too small, however. Your machine is more likely to get stuck, and teeny stitches are hard to remove. I recommend keeping the stitch length above 2.



Ruffling Factor = 0



Ruffling Factor = 1.5

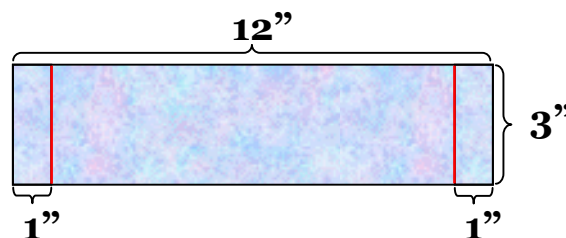


Ruffling Factor = 2

Testing Your Ruffler

Test ruffle strips of fabric to pinpoint the exact settings needed for a given ruffling factor. On page 27, I've included a Ruffler Optimization Worksheet for ruffling factors of 1.5 and 2.

For this test, you will need to cut strips of fabric that are 3" wide by 12" long. Draw lines 1" from each end as show in the illustration above. Start out with about 10 strips - you can make more if you need them. *Note:* different weight fabrics ruffle differently. Your test fabric should be reflective of the fabric type you use most.



Testing the depth settings

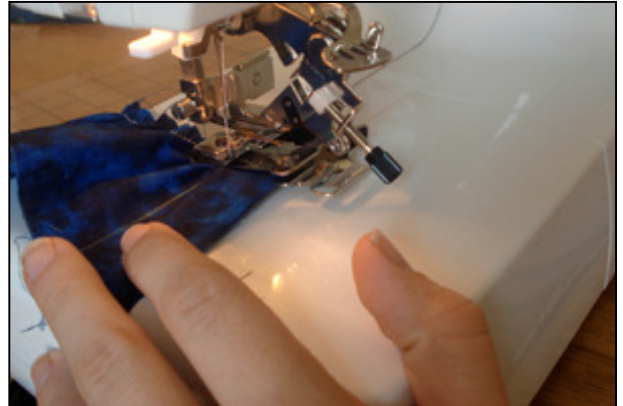
Start out with your machine's stitch length set to 2.5 and the ruffler's spacing lever at position 1. Set the ruffler's depth adjustment to the minimum depth setting (page10). Insert the strip into the ruffler as described on page 9. Pull the strip through to the first line, and lower the needle into the line.



Begin ruffling. Keep the speed slow and even (if your machine has a speed control mechanism, turn it down to a medium-low setting). Let the ruffler do the work - no need to push or pull.



When you come to the second line, stop and switch the spacing lever to the ☆ (no ruffling).



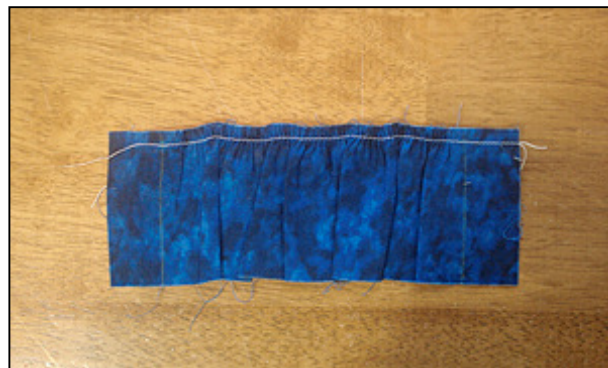
Stitch the rest of the way off the strip. (the stitching keeps the ruffles from sliding about, giving you a much more accurate measurement).



The ruffled strips have a tendency to curl around into a “smile.”

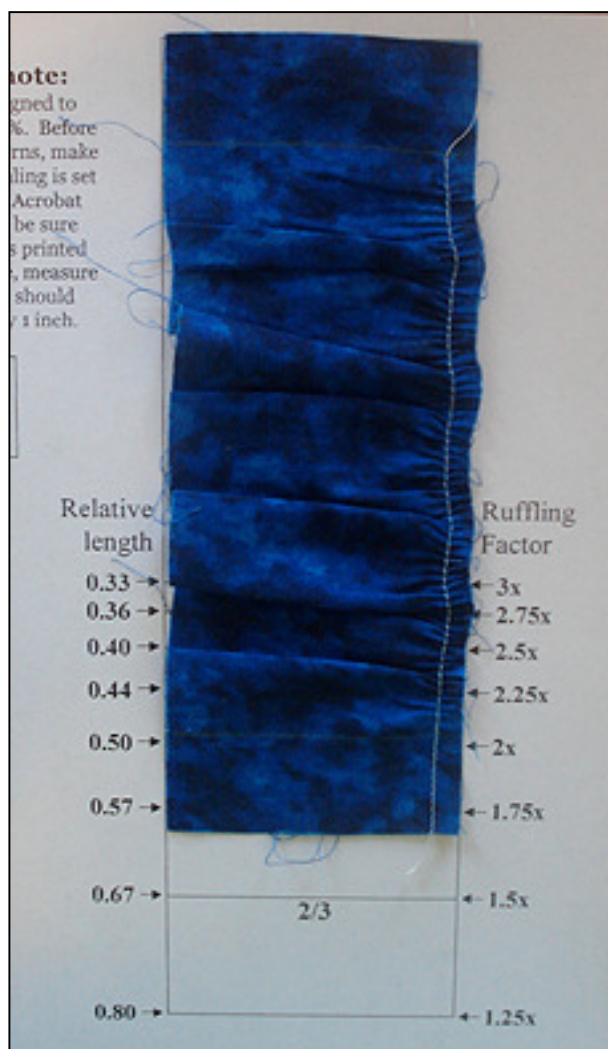


For easier measuring, press the strip with an iron so that the ruffled edge is relatively straight, and the short edges run parallel to each other. In other words, the ruffled strip should be as close to rectangular as possible. Don't worry about smashing the ruffles.



Place the ruffled strip on the gauge. Align the top edge of the strip with the top edge of the gauge. Make note of where the bottom of the strip hits on the gauge.

The photo on the right shows the results I get with my stitch length at 2.5 and my ruffler set to the minimum ruffling depth. The ruffling factor is between 1.5 and 1.75. Your results will probably be similar at this setting.



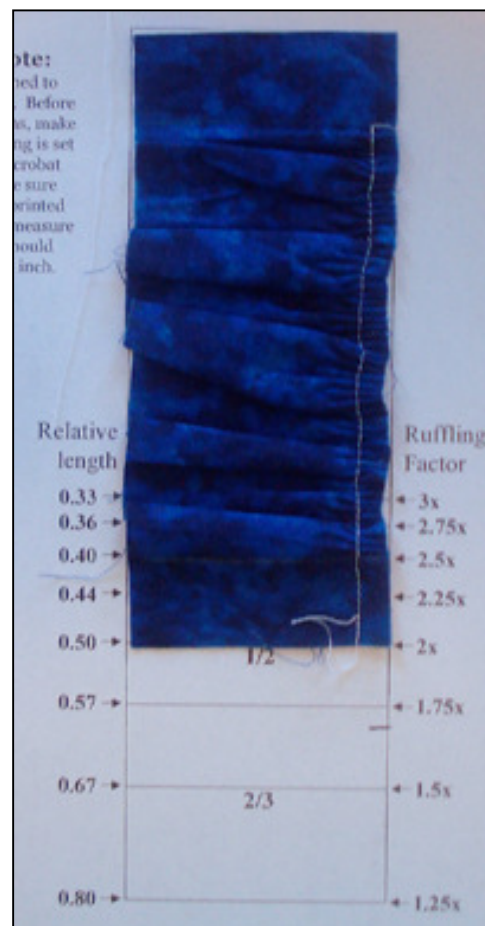
Next, keeping the stitch length and ruffle spacing the same, slightly increase the ruffler's depth setting.

Make note of the setting on your worksheet (as I mentioned, I count screw threads since there are no markings that low).

Ruffle a test strip as describe on page 11. Press, place on the gauge, and record the position.

Repeat these steps until the you get to a depth setting that gives a ruffling factor that is at or just above 2. Don't worry about getting it exactly on the mark - we will be fine-tuning in the next step.

If you do happen to get it right on the mark - congrats! You've already found your settings for ruffling to a factor of 2!



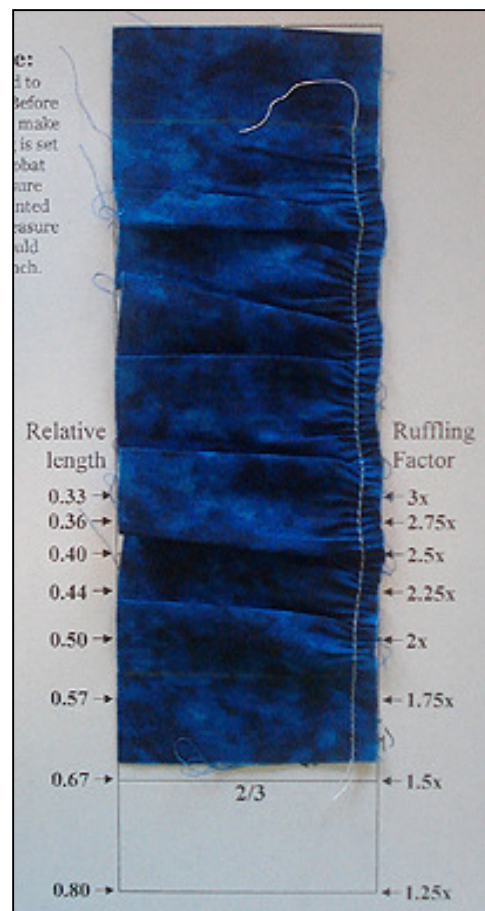
Determining the stitch length settings

Now turn your depth adjustment back down to the minimum ruffling setting. We are going to increase the stitch length in small increments to find the settings for a ruffling factor of 1.5.

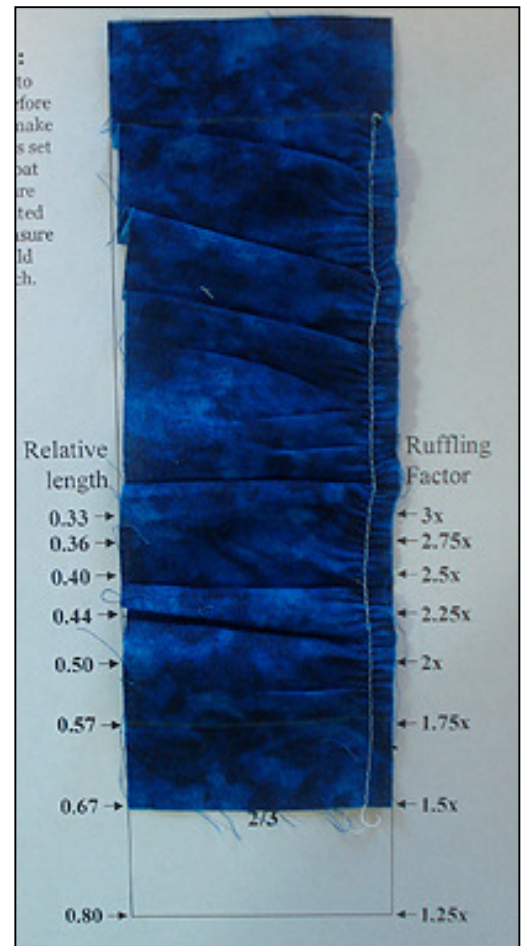
Turn the stitch length up to 2.75 (if you have a digital machine, round up to 2.8). Ruffle a test strip, check it on the gauge, and record the results. If you hit the 1.5 mark - hooray!

If you passed the mark, back the stitch length down to an in-between setting.

If you aren't quite there yet (as shown in my results to the right), turn the stitch length up to 3 and try again.



Repeat this process until you find the setting that gives you a ruffling factor of 1.5. Write the settings down on the worksheet or some other safe place for safe keeping (I have a little note card that I keep in my box of feet/attachments).



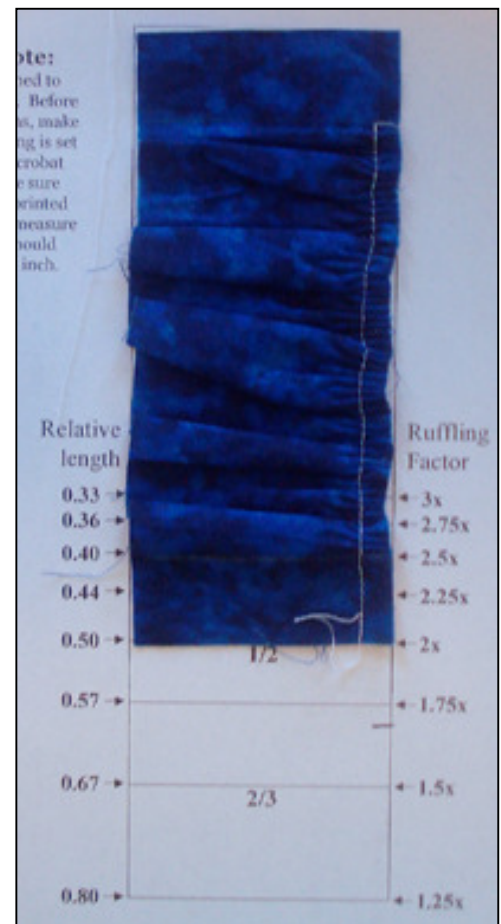
If you didn't hit the factor 2 mark on the first round of testing, now is the time to get there by increasing the stitch length.

Adjust the ruffler depth to the setting that gave you a ruffling factor that was just above 2 at the 2.5 stitch setting.

Turn the stitch length up to 2.75 (if you have a digital machine, round up to 2.8). Ruffle a test strip, check it on the gauge, and record the results. If you hit the 2 mark - yipee!

If you passed the mark, back the stitch length down to an in-between setting.

If you aren't quite there yet, turn the stitch length up to 3 and try again. Repeat this process until you find the setting that gives you a ruffling factor of 2.



If you wish to further optimize your ruffler, you can test strips to find the settings for other ruffling factors on the gauge. The process is the same - start out with a stitch length of 2.5, use the depth setting adjustment to get you just above that factor, and fine-tune with the stitch length. **Note:** When working with a different weight fabric, it is a good idea to run some test strips and adjust your settings appropriately.

Ruffling Calculations

Now you know how to find the settings that you need to ruffle to a specific factor, but how do you find out what that factor is?

If you don't already know the length of the piece you are going to ruffle, measure it to get your length before ruffling. To find out what your length after ruffling should be, measure the piece of fabric to which you are going to attach the ruffle. Divide the length before ruffling by the length after ruffling to get your ruffling factor.

In the example on the right, the skirt piece will need to be gathered to a factor of 1.5, and the ruffle strip will need to be gathered to a factor of 2.

But what if your factor doesn't work out to a perfect 1.5 or 2? No problem! One option is to optimize the ruffler to the needed factor as described above. If the factor you are after isn't included on the ruffler optimization gauge, use the Ruffling/Pleating ruler on page 29. If your factor isn't on there, you can add it. Just divide **10** by your **ruffling factor**, then add **2**. This will give you the length that the mark should be from the top of the ruler. The example on the right shows the placement for a factor of 2.3.

Another option is to gather a bit tighter than the desired factor, and use the "wiggle-room" technique on page 20.



20" around

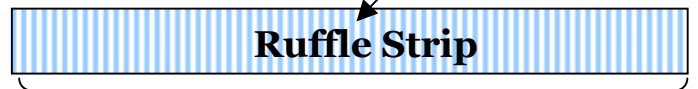
Required Ruffling Factor:
 $30 \div 20 = 1.5$



Skirt Piece

30" across

Required Ruffling Factor:
 $60 \div 30 = 2$



Ruffle Strip

60" across

Relative length	Ruffling/Pleating Ruler	Ruffling Factor
0.200		5.00 x
0.225		4.44 x
0.250		4.00 x
0.275		3.64 x
0.300		3.33 x
0.325		3.08 x
0.350		2.86 x
0.375		2.67 x
0.400		2.50 x
0.425		2.35 x
0.450		2.22 x
0.475		2.11 x
0.500		2.00 x
0.525		1.91 x
0.550		1.81 x
0.575		1.73 x
0.600		1.67 x
0.625		1.60 x
0.650		1.54 x
0.675		1.48 x
0.700		1.43 x
0.725		1.38 x
0.750		1.33 x
0.775		1.29 x
0.800		1.25 x

Required Ruffling Factor = 2.3

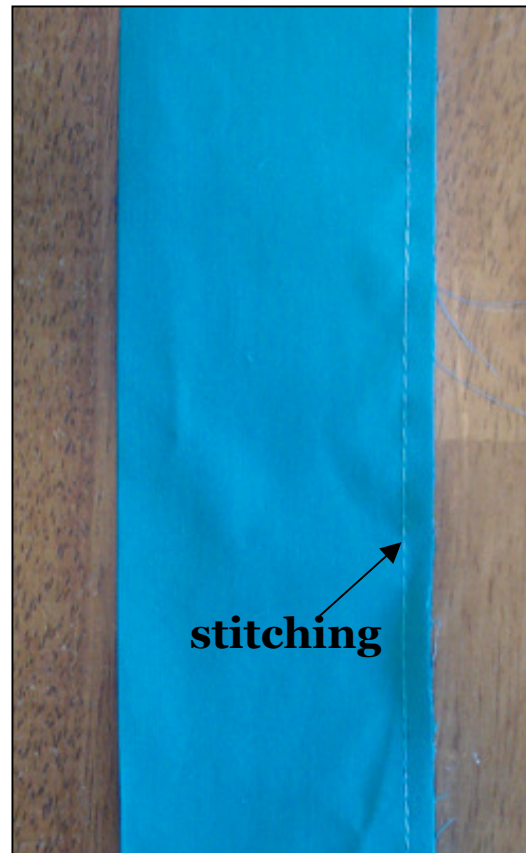
$10 \div 2.3 = 4.35$

$4.35 + 2 = 6.35$

2.3 x

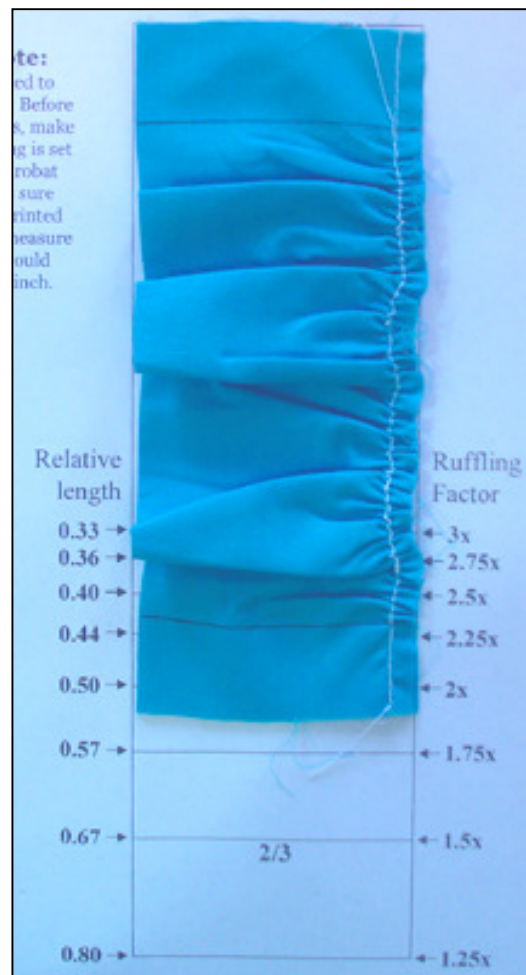
Ruffling Double Thicknesses

In many of my designs, I use double thickness ruffles. They are made from strips of fabric that are folded in half lengthwise, right sides facing in. I love the way they hang - they add a bit more fullness than a single thickness, and they are so neat and professional looking. Also, they don't need to be hemmed, which is a time-saving bonus.



Double thicknesses can be gathered on a ruffler. The trick is to baste stitch the two layers together at or very close the position where the ruffler will be stitching. This prevents slip-sliding of fabric during the ruffling process.

The double thickness ruffles tend to gather a bit looser than the single thickness ruffles, so you will need to use a higher depth setting. I recommend optimizing with some double-thickness test strips.



Pleats

The ruffler can also make beautifully crisp, evenly-spaced pleats. Pleated strips make a wonderful trim, and are a great way to finish off a project. You can optimize your ruffler for pleating, just like you did for gathering. I suggest taking an approach that is a bit opposite, though.

Start out with the sewing machine set to the highest stitch length. Set the ruffler's spacing lever at position 6, and turn the depth adjustment to the highest setting. Pleat a test strip and take a look at it. If you like the look of the pleats at this setting (I know I do ☺), place the strip on the Ruffling/Pleating Ruler (page29) and use it to find the ruffling factor.



If you want to make smaller pleats, decrease the depth setting and try again. If you want to make pleats that are closer together, decrease the stitch length. If you want to make pleats that are further apart, increase the stitch length. And if you want pleats that are MUCH further apart, you can set the spacing lever so that pleats are made every 12 stitches.

Just play around, and find settings that make pleats to your liking. Record these settings, along with the resulting ruffling factors.

To determine how much fabric to pleat for a project, measure the piece that you are going to be trimming. Multiply that number by the ruffling factor. Always add in a couple extra inches, just to be on the safe side.

Relative length	Ruffling Factor
0.200	+5.00 x
0.225	+4.44 x
0.250	+4.00 x
0.275	+3.64 x
0.300	+3.33 x
0.325	+3.08 x
0.350	+2.86 x
0.375	+2.67 x
0.400	+2.50 x
0.425	+2.35 x
0.450	+2.22 x
0.475	+2.11 x
0.500	+2.00 x
0.525	+1.91 x
0.550	+1.81 x
0.575	+1.73 x
0.600	+1.67 x
0.625	+1.60 x
0.650	+1.54 x
0.675	+1.48 x
0.700	+1.43 x
0.725	+1.38 x
0.750	+1.33 x
0.775	+1.29 x
0.800	+1.25 x

Attaching a Ruffle

Machine gathered ruffles are much easier to attach than hand gathered ruffles. The edges are nice and flat, and line right up with the fabric. I've found that I use a lot less pins when I am attaching a machine gathered ruffle as opposed to a hand-gathered one.

I like to set my ruffles in place with zig-zag stitching. The ruffle stays in place better this way (and it finished the edges). I remove the pins, and then I straight stitch just below the row of stitching that the ruffler made. This way, the ruffler stitching is hidden inside the seam allowance, and there is no need to remove the threads.

Note: My ruffler stitches just under 1/4" from the edge. This works out perfectly, because my patterns call for a 1/4" seam allowance. If your ruffler makes stitches at a position that is beyond your seam allowance, you will need to remove the threads with a seam ripper. You can also increase the seam allowance - just remember to increase the size of your pieces accordingly.



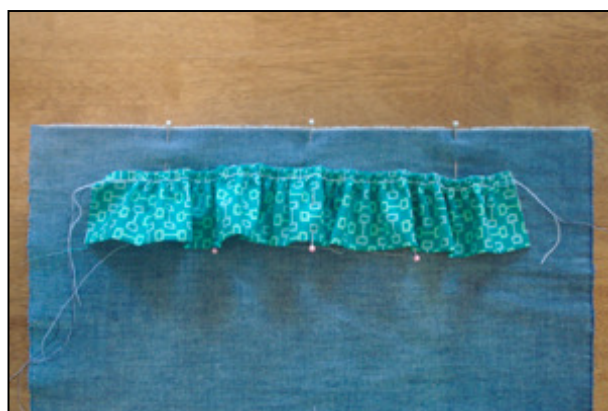
“Wiggle-Room”

I'll admit it - I haven't optimized my ruffler for every single factor. As I mentioned, I mostly use factors of 1.5 and 2. Sometimes, though, I need to ruffle to a different factor, but I just don't want to take the time to do the math and optimize the ruffler.

One option is to hand gather, but once you get accustomed to your ruffler, hand gathering seems so tedious! I have a little technique that is a happy medium between the hand and machine gathering.

Basically, I mark the mid-points and quarter points of both the fabrics. Then I set my needle thread tension to **medium-low**. On my machine, a setting of 3 works well. Then I proceed to “over-ruffle” the fabric. I leave long thread tails at both ends, so I can stretch out the ruffles to the desired length. I match the midpoints first, then I work the ruffle's quarter points out so that they match up with the other fabric. Then I match the ends, and evenly distribute the gathers.

This technique works well for attaching to looped pieces to looped pieces (like skirts to bodices). It also works great for very light gathering.



One-Step Gathering and Attaching

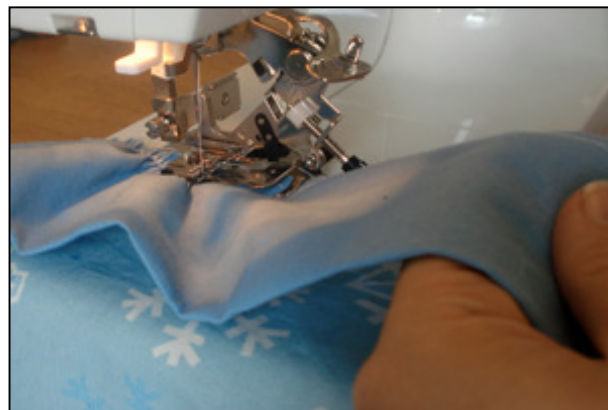
Your ruffler can actually attach your ruffle as it gathers - what a timesaver! To be on the safe side, cut the ruffle strip a few inches too long. You don't want to come up short!

Place the fabric to be gathered into the ruffler first - the guide will hold it in place. Make sure the right side is facing down.

Then, slide the other piece underneath the ruffler so that it is in between the separator plate and the feed dogs on the machine. The right side should be facing up. Align the right edges with the edges of the ruffle strip.

Slowly begin to ruffle. Stay focused on the edges so that they don't get out of alignment.

Trim away any excess ruffle strip, finish the raw edges, and you are all set!



One-Step Gathering and Attaching II

You can also attach ruffles to the outside of a piece. There is an additional, opposite facing guide right beside the fabric guide. Place the fabric that is not going to be gathered into that guide, and slide it underneath the ruffler so that it is in between the separator plate and the feed dogs on the machine. Make sure the right side is facing up.

Then, slide the piece to be ruffled into the ruffler in the usual fashion. The right side of it should also be facing up.

Slowly begin to ruffle. Feed the pieces into the ruffler, holding them in a little bit of a criss-cross so that they stay in their guides.

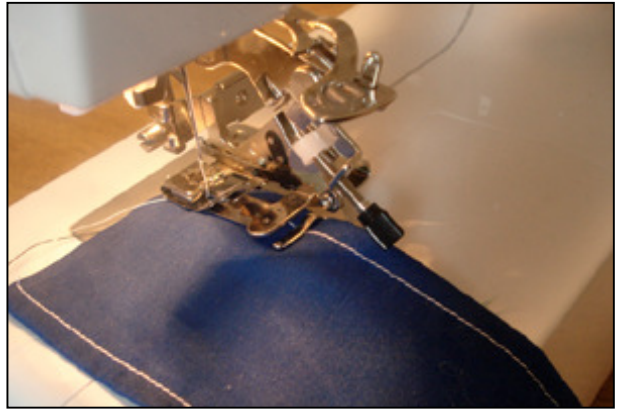
Trim away any excess ruffle strip. Note: I used my serger to edge finish the strips before ruffling. You could substitute a tiny hem, zig-zag stitching, or even cut the strip on the bias and leave the edges raw.



Ruffles and Ribbons

The ruffler also has a guide for feeding ribbon in through the top, so that it gets stitched into place on top of the ruffled fabric.

Insert the fabric into the ruffler.



Feed the ribbon into the top guide and slide it so that goes over the ruffling blade and underneath the base of the guide.



Slowly begin to ruffle. Feed the pieces into the ruffler, making sure they stay in their guides.



This technique is great for making ready-to-use trim!



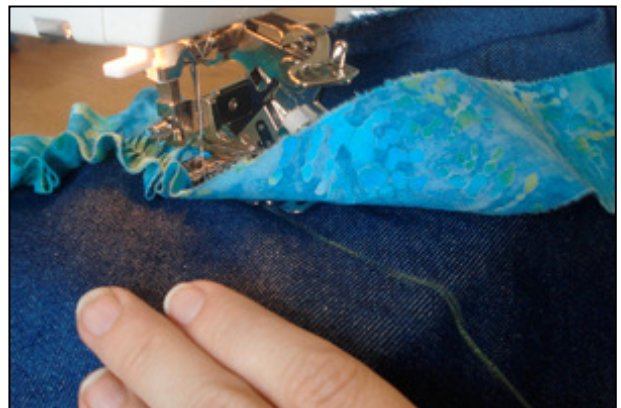
Embellishing with the Ruffler

Strips of fabric can be gathered in the center and attached to fabric, giving a fun “Euro” style embellishment. Edge finish the strip prior to ruffling. You can also leave the edges raw - cut the strips on the bias to minimize fraying.

If you wish, draw a placement line on your base fabric. Place it underneath the ruffler so that it is in between the separator plate and the feed dogs on the machine. Then, slide the piece to be ruffled into the ruffler in the usual fashion, but don't use the fabric guide, and have the piece positioned so that the stitching will be in the center. (Note: you can create a guide line in the center of the strip by folding it lengthwise and giving it a quick press prior to ruffling).

Ruffle along, feeding the base fabric through and “steering” as needed.

What a great way to add pizzazz to a project!



Other Materials

I've already mentioned that the ruffler can be used with light to medium weight fabrics. It also works with VERY light fabrics like chiffon and tulle, things that are not fun at all to gather by hand because of the sheer yardage involved (pardon the pun ☺). Gorgeous tutus, petticoats, and even pettiskirts can be whipped up so much faster with a ruffler.

The ruffler can be used on other interesting materials as well:

Ribbon - Pleat ribbon for an eye-catching, inexpensive trim. Or, gather it in the center as shown on page 24 for a fun Euro-style embellishment.

Lace - Turn flat fold lace into a beautiful ruffle. Add a pretty ribbon (page 23), and you've got a ready-to-use trim.

Paper - how neat would this be for scrapbooking or gift wrapping? Soft papers can be pleated/gathered. A word of caution - do not attempt with thick papers like cardstock - you could ruin your blade. Rag paper, tissue paper, and even newspaper can be ruffled, however.

Note: If the paper is too stiff, the blade won't "grab" the paper. Stiff paper can be made to have a fabric-like quality by crumpling, kneading and pressing it.



The Dedicated Ruffler

If you think you are going to making lots and lots of ruffled items, consider setting up a sewing machine especially for ruffling. It is so nice to not have to take the attachment on and off , or worry about changing the machine's settings each time. A sewing machine doesn't need to be fancy or expensive to make great ruffles. In fact, my \$79 discount store model does a much better job than my pricey new machine! Used machines can be found in thrift stores and in the classifieds. You might even have an old hand-me-down machine collecting dust in the attic. Clean it up, test it out, and get a ruffler for it!

Troubleshooting

Once you are up and running with a ruffler that is a good fit for your machine, you shouldn't have too many problems. If you do encounter a jam or a snag, just take your time removing the fabric and/or the mess of threads. As I mentioned, the teeth bend easily, and a pull in the wrong direction can doom your ruffler to the junkyard. In the box below, I have listed some common problems and their solutions. First and foremost, make sure your machine is threaded properly and all the settings are correct for using the ruffler (I can't tell you how many times I have wrongly cursed my ruffler for an "adjustment" my toddler made to my machine)!

The needle pops out during ruffling	Tighten the needle clamp with a screwdriver. If the problem persists, you may need to purchase a specialized needle clamp attachment screw.
The needle breaks	Make sure you are using a needle that is appropriate for your fabric. Check the needle position setting on the sewing machine. On adjustable rufflers, make sure that the needle opening is aligned properly.
The thread jams on the first few ruffles, with a tight tangle of thread or The ruffler ruffles just fine, but there is a stringy mess on the back side of the stitching	Hold on to your thread ends when starting the stitch so that they don't get pulled down into the bobbin housing. Make sure you don't have strings hanging off your raw edges - this can cause tangles as well. Also, check your needle thread tension - if it is set too low, you will get tangles. If your bobbin thread tension is adjustable, check that setting as well (mine adjusts with a little screw on the bobbin case). For rufflers with an adjustable needle opening, check the vertical position. Moving it forward or backward might resolve the problem.
The ruffler is not feeding evenly	Check the teeth on the ruffler blade and make sure they aren't bent. If a tooth is bent, carefully straighten it out with pliers.
The ruffler has become very loud and squeaky	Use a few drops of sewing machine oil in the "hinges" of the ruffler's moving parts. Ruffle a length of scrap fabric to remove excess oil.

Ruffler Optimization Worksheet

1) Minimum Ruffling Setting (*Stitch Length* set at 2.5): _____

2) *Ruffling Factor* at different *Depth Settings*

(*Stitch Length* set at 2.5):

	Depth Setting	Ruffling Factor
Strip 1	___ Minimum ___	between _____
Strip 2	_____	between _____
Strip 3	_____	between _____
Strip 4	_____	between _____
Strip 5	_____	between _____

3) *Stitch Length/Depth Setting* combo for a *Ruffling Factor* of 1.5x (use a *Depth Setting* that gave a *Ruffling Factor* between 1.5x and 1.75x):

	Stitch Length	Depth Setting
Strip 1	2.75	_____
Strip 2	3.0	_____
Strip 3	3.25	_____
Strip 4	3.5	_____
Strip 5	3.75	_____

Use additional strips to narrow down stitch length, if necessary.

Stitch Length/Depth Setting for Ruffling Factor of 1.5 _____/_____

4) *Stitch Length/Depth Setting* combo for a *Ruffling Factor* of 2 x (use the *Depth Setting* that gave a *Ruffling Factor* just above 2 x _____):

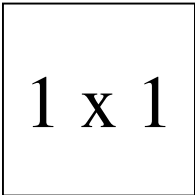
	Stitch Length	Depth Setting
Strip 1	2.75	_____
Strip 2	3.0	_____
Strip 3	3.25	_____
Strip 4	3.5	_____
Strip 5	3.75	_____

Use additional strips to narrow down stitch length, if necessary.

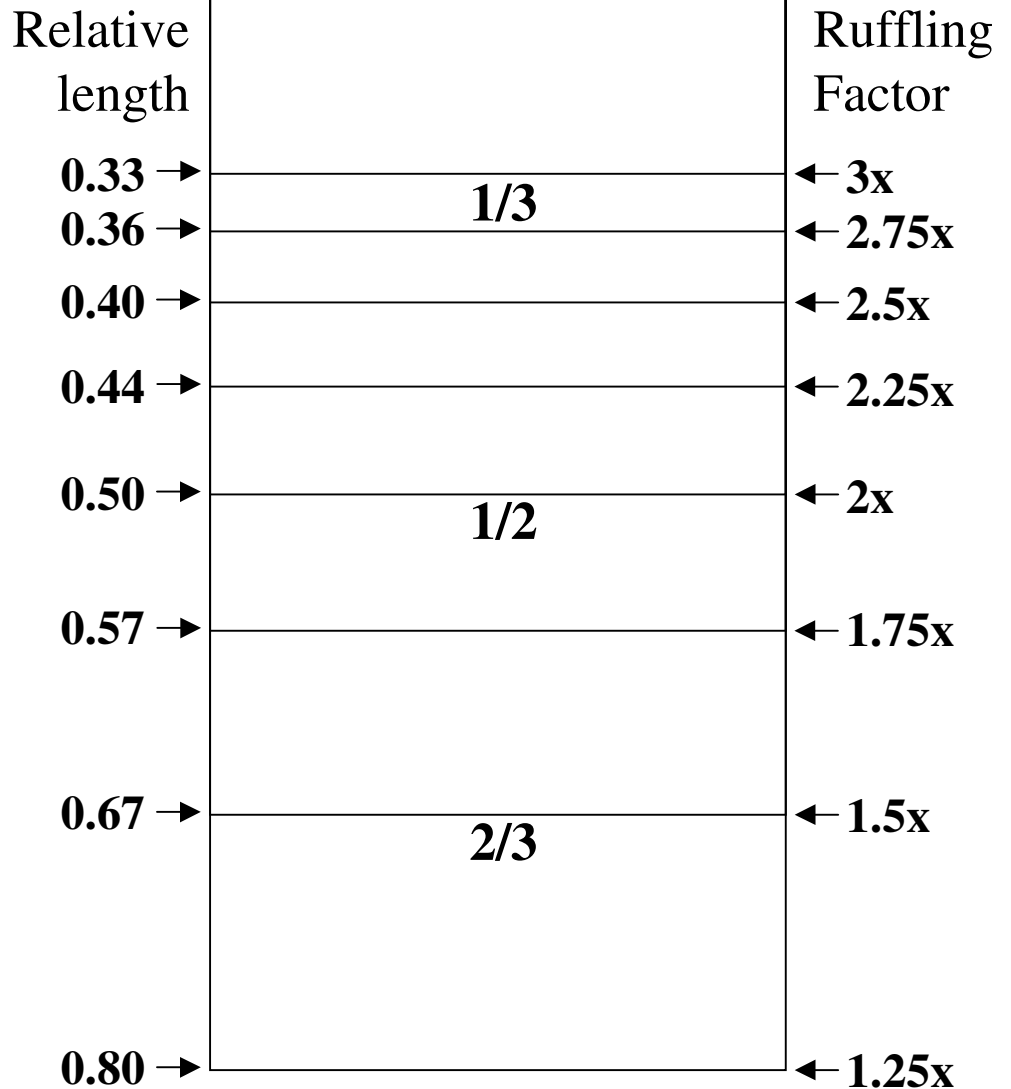
Stitch Length/Depth Setting for Ruffling Factor of 2 _____/_____

Important note:

This gauge is designed to be printed at 100%. Before printing, make sure that page scaling is set to none in Adobe Acrobat print window. To be sure that your gauge printed at the correct size, measure the box below. It should measure 1 inch by 1 inch.

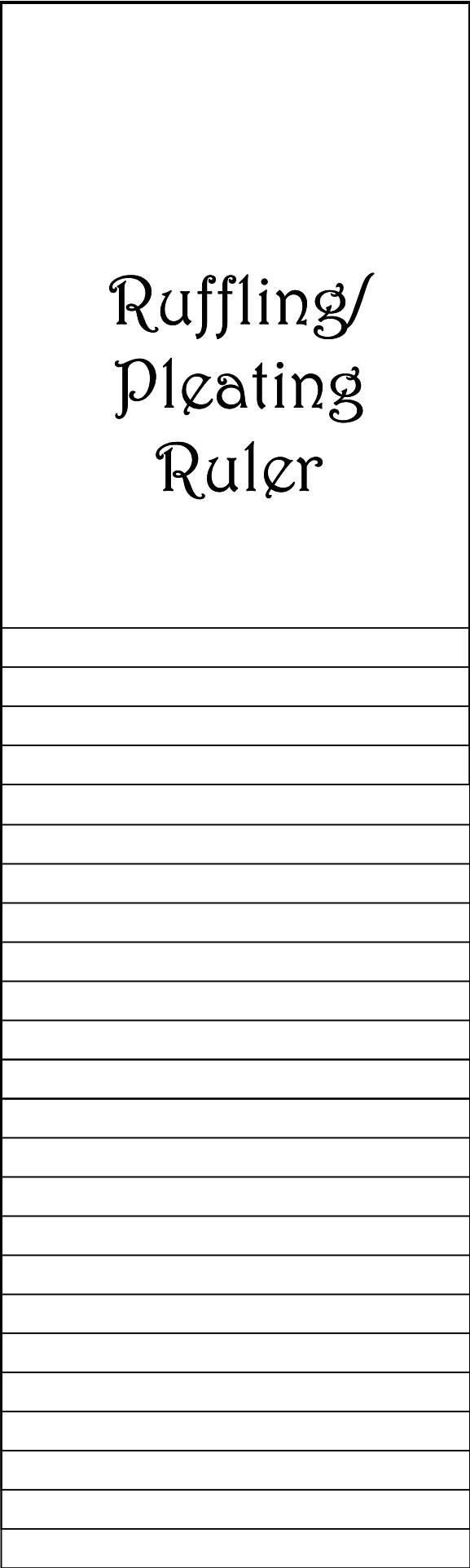
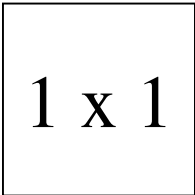


Ruffler Optimization Gauge



Important note:

This ruler is designed to be printed at 100%. Before printing, make sure that page scaling is set to none in Adobe Acrobat print window. To be sure that your ruler printed at the correct size, measure the box below. It should measure 1 inch by 1 inch.



Relative length

Ruffling Factor

0.200 →	← 5.00 x
0.225 →	← 4.44 x
0.250 →	← 4.00 x
0.275 →	← 3.64 x
0.300 →	← 3.33 x
0.325 →	← 3.08 x
0.350 →	← 2.86 x
0.375 →	← 2.67 x
0.400 →	← 2.50 x
0.425 →	← 2.35 x
0.450 →	← 2.22 x
0.475 →	← 2.11 x
0.500 →	← 2.00 x
0.525 →	← 1.91 x
0.550 →	← 1.81 x
0.575 →	← 1.73 x
0.600 →	← 1.67 x
0.625 →	← 1.60 x
0.650 →	← 1.54 x
0.675 →	← 1.48 x
0.700 →	← 1.43 x
0.725 →	← 1.38 x
0.750 →	← 1.33 x
0.775 →	← 1.29 x
0.800 →	← 1.25 x

You Can Make This!

SewBoutique4Dolly and me!!!

Portrait Peasant Tops/Dresses
Patterns and Instructions
Girls' sizes 6m - 8y, Dolls' sizes 15"-18"



Are you raring to ruffle? You can find fantastic ideas and inspiration at <http://www.youcanmakethis.com> !

With hundreds of eBooks to choose from, you are sure to find a project that is just right for you!

My SewBoutique4Dolly line of patterns can be found by going to "Shop by Author" and selecting **CarlaC Dolly Designs**. My offerings include very "ruffy" styles such as a peasant top/dress, a stripwork jumper, and a super-fluffy twirl skirt.

SewBoutique4Dolly and me!!!

Stripwork Jumper
Patterns and Instructions
Girls' sizes 1-8 and Dolls' sizes 15" - 18"



SewBoutique4Dolly and me!!!

Embellished Patchwork Twirl Skirts
Patterns and Instructions
Girls' sizes 2T - 8 and Dolls' sizes 15" - 18"



To see the ruffler in action, please visit [youcanmakethis.com](http://www.youcanmakethis.com) and check out Episode 2 of YCMT-TV!