



## Moishe's Little Dog Vest

Little dogs are best walked on harness because their small size means it is easy to accidentally injure their neck when a leash is hooked to a conventional collar. And harnesses fit best underneath any clothing the dog may be wearing. Due to the surface area to mass ratio, small dogs are more likely to be cold and need clothing than large dogs. But most dog clothing patterns do not accommodate a harness latch loop. This pattern is specifically sized for dogs that are around 12" from neck to base of tail (give or take a few inches), and contains instructions for creating a slot to accommodate a harness hook-up. The pattern is currently drafted for a male dog. If you would like greater coverage for a female dog, you can lengthen both main pattern pieces. It is snug at the belly line so that a male dog does not urinate into the vest, but if your dog is more portly than Moishe-mello, you may wish to lay the belly pattern a quarter inch away from the fold line to expand the girth. I sew the entire thing on my serger with the exception of the slot for the leash.

## Materials

- 12" of 60" wide polar fleece
- scraps of cotton knit ribbing (an 1/8<sup>th</sup> of a yard is plenty)
- thread to match

## Instructions

All seams are ¼".

1. The current placement of the slot on the pattern accommodates a "Choke Free" harness ([www.chokefree.com](http://www.chokefree.com) - no affiliation on my part), which is a very simple harness that has a loop that sits high on the withers. Other harnesses attach to the lead elsewhere on the body. So your first step is to make sure the slot is in a position that works well for your dog's harness.
  - a. Trace off the top pattern for the vest onto your sewing tracing paper.
  - b. Put the harness on the dog.
  - c. Pen in hand, hold the pattern piece along the midline of the dog and note the location of the leash attachment loop on the pattern. Also note the orientation (vertical or horizontal).
2. Cut the vest top and bottom out of polar fleece. Cut everything else out of ribbing.
3. Make the slot. The slot is made using the first half of the same technique used to make a bound buttonhole.
  - a. Lay the slot facing over the markings for the slot on the vest top piece, right sides together (RST). Make sure the slot facing fabric is oriented so that it stretches around the body, regardless of the orientation of the slot.
  - b. Mark the rectangle size of the slot on the facing, either using a fabric pencil or using pins to note the dimensions.



- c. Sew a rectangle the size of the slot.
- d. Using a thread ripper, embroidery snips or being extremely careful with your sewing shears, cut a slit parallel to the longest dimension of the rectangle. DO NOT CUT ALL THE WAY TO THE ENDS. Make sure you cut through both layers.

- e. Extend the slit until you are  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch away from either short side rectangle seam. At each end, you are going to cut on both diagonals so that you make a 'Y' shape. Cut up to but not through the corner stitches of your rectangle. Be careful!



- f. Stuff the slot facing fabric through the hole you made and flatten it out on the wrong side of the vest top fabric. You should now have a neat rectangular hole. Pin the facing fabric on all 4 sides flattened so that you have a nice crisp edge around the hole.

- g. With the polar fleece side up, edge stitch around the hole.



- h. With the polar fleece side down, stitch a rectangle around the perimeter of the slot facing so that it lies flat and away from the hole. Knit fabric does not ravel, so you do not need (nor want) to finish the edges. Trim any fabric that is overhanging more than a little bit from this larger rectangle.

4. Sew the shoulder seams between the top and bottom vest pieces, RST.

5. Attach the neckband.

- a. Fold the neckband piece in half so that two short sides of the rectangle line up. Sew the short ends of the rectangle together.
- b. Fold the neckband (now a tube) over itself so that the two long raw edges are lined up together and the seam is hidden inside.
- c. Using the neckband seam as one quadrant point, find the 4 quadrants of the neckband and mark with pins.

d. Lay the joined vest pieces on a flat surface so that the two shoulder seams are lying one on top of the other and mark vest center top (CT) and center bottom (CB) with a pin. Now align the CB and CT pins with each other and mark the two side quadrants. Note that the halfway point between CT and CB is NOT the shoulder seam.

e. Turn the vest inside out. Place the neckband tube INSIDE the neckhole (so that it is up against the right side of the fleece). With the neckband seam at CB, pin the neckband quadrants to the vest quadrant marked spots.



f. Sew the neckband seam. You will have to stretch the neckband as you go – use the quadrant pins to guide you so that the neckband is stretched evenly. If you are using a serger you must be especially careful to remove the pins as you go!

6. Sew the side seams, armpit to waistline, RST.

7. Attach the legbands. Legbands are done exactly the same way the neckband was done.

a. Fold a legband piece in half so that the two short sides of the rectangle line up. Sew the short ends of the rectangle together. Repeat for other legband.

b. Fold each legband (now a tube) over itself so that the two long raw edges are lined up together and the seam is hidden inside.

c. Using the legband seam as one quadrant point, find the 4 quadrants of the legband and mark with pins.

d. As with the neckline, you will now divide the armhole into 4 even quadrants and mark with pins. Note that just as with the neckband, the two seams that break up the armhole do NOT evenly bisect the circle.

e. Turn the vest inside out. Place the legband tube INSIDE the leghole (so that it is up against the right side of the fleece). With the legband seam at the inside most mark on the fleece, pin the legband quadrants to the vest quadrant marked spots.

f. Sew the legband seam. You will have to stretch the legband as you go – use the quadrant pins to guide you so that the legband is stretched evenly. Don't forget to remove the pins!

g. Repeat the process for the other leg.

8. Hem the vest. I hem about a  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch hem, but you may wish to try it on your dog to determine a good length. Be aware that too short is better than too long on male dogs. Also note that there is a curvature to the hem at both top and bottom so you will need to pin it thoroughly in order to maintain the intended shape of the hemline. If you are having trouble it may be necessary to snip the hem a bit to accommodate the necessary stretch at the curves.

The vest is done! Pop it on over the harness and take your dog for a walk!