

Make a Superhero Cape!

What kid doesn't want to be a superhero and fly around town? Luckily dressing up as a hero for Halloween is easier than acquiring superhuman powers. Making a cape is easy, and you can get the fabric at any thrift store—try using an old sheet or even a women's skirt. Dye the fabric to get the shade you need. The tutorial is going to assume that you have a flat piece of fabric, and create a half-circle cape, but you can adapt it to fit your fabric too.



What You Need:

- Large piece of fabric in the color of your favorite superhero, long enough to reach from your superhero's neck to just under his knees
- Fabric scissors
- Measuring tape
- Chalk to mark the fabric
- Ribbon to tie the cape, or a shirt you want to sew the cape onto
- Sewing machine if you want to hem the cape

What to Do:

1. First, take your child's measurements. You will need to know the size of the neck opening and the length for the cape. Measure from your child's neckline to just under his knees for the length of the cape. Measure the circumference around the neck (loosely, since you don't want to strangle him). From there, find the radius of the neckline circle—just divide the circumference number by pi or 3.14, and you have your diameter. ($C=3.14r$). Half that amount and you have your radius.
2. You will want to draw out a half circle on your fabric for the neckline. The top flat section will be the neck and sides for the costume, while the circle shape at the bottom is the length. Lay out your fabric and smooth out any wrinkles. Find the center of the cape's top on the straight side of the fabric. Measure and mark out from this center point the radius that you measured before, so that you create a half-circle that will fit your superhero's neck.
3. Next, measure and mark another half circle for the bottom of the cape using the cape length measurement you made earlier. Measure from the neck line markings you just made, to make the next half circle shape.
4. Cut your fabric on your chalk markings. If you want to hem the edges, add a half-inch seam allowance so that your cape won't be too short.
5. Consider how you want to attach and hem the cape: Method 1- If you want to secure the cape to a superhero shirt, hem the neckline first by either turning it under and sewing, or using bias tape. Decide whether you would like to hem the edges that hang down as well. Then, have your child wear the shirt, and drape the cape over it, so that it hangs down in the back and slightly over the top of the shoulders. When you're satisfied it's sitting and draping from his shoulders properly, pin it in place. Then, have your child take off the shirt, sew it on right on the top of the shoulders, using thread that matches the shirt and cape color.
6. Method 2 – If you want the cape to be independent of a particular shirt or outfit, so it can be used when your superhero's a bit more grown up next year, you can secure it by tying the front shut. You can turn the hem under and sew it, while using some ribbon that your superhero can tie shut. Just cut two strips of ribbon five or six inches long. Tuck them under your hem as you sew it shut, to secure it in place. Another way to secure the cape is to use bias tape to sew around the hem, which you can find in any sewing shop. Cut a strip of bias tape about 10 inches longer than your neckline, and let the bias tape hang off either side of the neckline, and use it to tie the neckline shut.

7. The last step will be to hem the bottom of the cape. It isn't entirely necessary, but some fabrics will fray easily and hemming the bottom will help prevent unraveling.

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