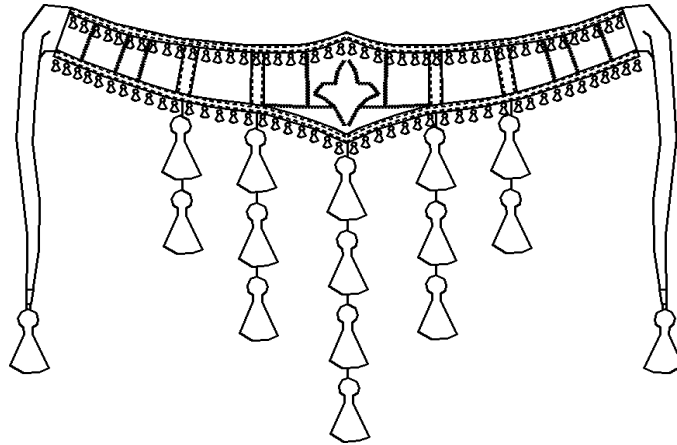


Tassel Dance Belts

These belts add great emphasis to movement and can be embellished in a variety of ways including with hand-made tassels.

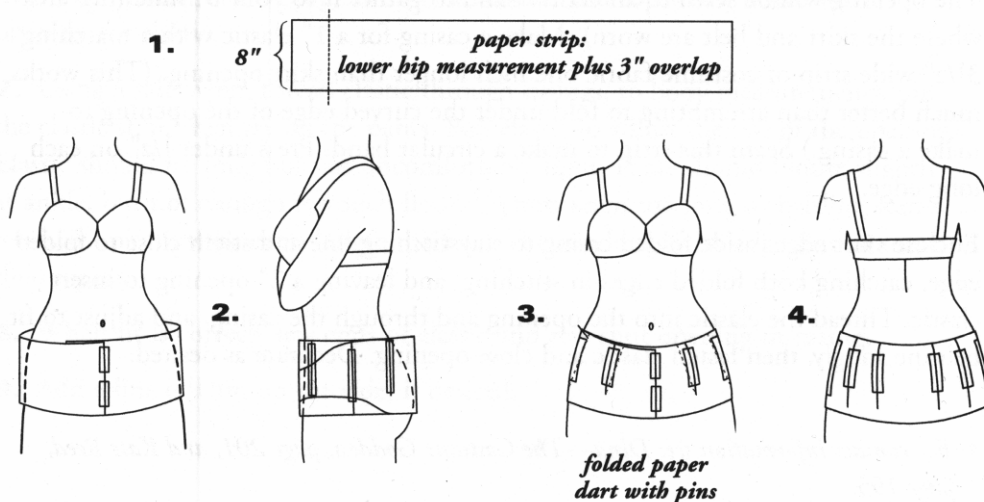


Supplies:

- 1/2- 1 yd. 45" wide decorative fabric (depending on hips)
- fusible interfacing
- cotton lining (it doesn't slide)
- 2 yds. wide ribbon or self-fabric ribbon for tie closure; a large clasp is also appropriate.
- Thread to match
- Trims: whatever you have on hand, ie. braids, fringe, tassels, jewelry, coins, sparkles...

Pattern Design*

1. Begin with a strip of pattern paper about 10 inches wide and the measurement of your lower hip plus 3 inches. Plain paper will do.
2. Wrap the strip around hips so the lower edge fits snugly around largest part of hip, then tape or pin shut, lining up vertical edges. Don't attempt to angle the edges. The belt is now cylindrical like a tuna fish can, and will gap at the top. The closure may be front, back, or side. Line up edge of paper where you prefer closure. Mark center front and center back lines. (line them up with navel and spine)

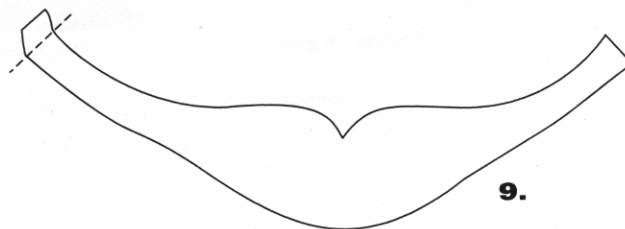
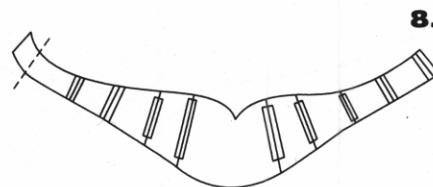
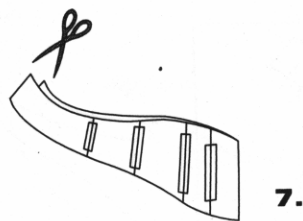


3. Make darts in belt to fit it to hip, beginning at sides. To dart, pinch out extra paper, crease flat, and tape or pin closed. No dart should be more than 1/2" wide folded (an inch total). Make more, smaller darts rather than a few large ones. This way, the shaping is evenly distributed to make a smooth curve.

4. Continue darting at front and back, making darts symmetrical. The back will probably need two darts on each side.

5. Now the paper pattern fits, but covers too much of your body. Mark the shape you want with a pencil. The bottom edge of belt should be cut an inch or two lower in the back so fringe dangles freely. Belt should curve up at sides and dip slightly at front. The top edge should be cut slightly lower in the front; it's more flattering. A notch in center top back edge is more flattering than a horizontal line, as well, but the design can be fine-tuned later.

6. Cut along this marked line, then try on belt again, making sure you like the shape. Ask your friend to provide feedback.



7. When the shape pleases you, fold the belt pattern in half (at center back line, if closure is at front), making sure darts and edges are symmetrical. If not, make adjustments. One side will have a 3" overlap. Leave this to make future enlargements if necessary.

8. The finished belt pattern, folded and taped can be placed on a new strip of paper and cut out again. The darts and seams have been eliminated, converted to a curved shape that conforms to your individual contours. A narrow hip figure will have a slightly curved pattern; a "hippy" figure will have a more curved pattern.

9. The basic pattern can be copied and variations made in the shape.

*taken from The Belly Dance Book by Tazz Richards, 2000 (p.134-5)

Assembly:

All sewing is done with 1/2" seam allowances

Using your pattern piece, cut one shape of your decorative fabric and one of your lining adding a half inch seam allowance to all edges on both pieces

Cut one layer of fusible interfacing without seam allowance

Fuse interfacing to decorative fabric

With right sides together, sew ribbon ties to opening edge of belt unless you are using a clasp

At this point you should apply all decorations to your belt that are not directly on an edge; use your imagination: couching, embroidery, sequins, mirrors, rhinestones, jewelry, coins, fringe.

When belt is decorated, carefully tuck all decorations to the inside

With right sides together sew belt to lining along top edge and bottom edge leaving ribbon edges free.

Turn right side out through openings and gently press into place

Slip stitch ends shut

Apply clasp, if used

Finish sewing on any edge trimmings and add tassels

Enjoy dancing with your new belt!