

How to Sew the Brisa Tank Top

Free Pattern From Edelweiss Patterns

Machine Settings Cheat Sheet

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Free download at edelweisspatterns.com

Free through May 29, 2026 only

Machine Settings Cheat Sheet

Set these before cutting a single piece of fabric.

Needle Type

Ballpoint or Jersey needle

Size 75/11 for lightweight jersey.

Size 80/12 for cotton spandex — the most common choice.

Stitch Type

Narrow zigzag OR stretch stitch

Zigzag: 1.5 mm width, 2.5 mm length.

Lightning bolt stitch if available on your machine.

Stitch Length

2.0 to 2.5 mm

Shorter than woven-fabric default.

Longer stitch = wavy seams on knit.

Presser Foot Pressure

Reduce if fabric tunnels

Some machines have a dial.

A walking foot helps on thick knit layers.

Thread

Polyester thread

Polyester stretches slightly with the fabric.

Do not use 100% cotton thread on knit seams.

3-ITEM PRE-CHECK BEFORE YOU SEW

- Install a fresh ballpoint needle.
- Set stitch to narrow zigzag or stretch stitch.
- Sew a 4-inch test seam on a scrap. Tug it. Thread snaps? Fix before cutting.

Fabric and Cutting Guide

Pre-wash before cutting. No exceptions.

RECOMMENDED FABRICS

BEST FOR BEGINNERS

Cotton Spandex Jersey

Stable, easy to press, minimal stretch distortion during cutting.

RECOMMENDED

Jersey Knit (cotton/poly blend)

Lightweight and cool in summer. Widely available at most fabric stores.

INTERMEDIATE

ITY Knit

Drapey and fluid. Harder to cut accurately. Not ideal for first knit project.

DO NOT USE

Woven Fabric

No stretch. The Brisa Tank Top is drafted for stretch fabric only.

YARDAGE AND STRETCH REQUIREMENTS

Yardage (most sizes): 1.5 to 2 yards at 58 to 60 inches wide

Minimum stretch: 50% crosswise stretch required

Stretch test: Hold 4 inches of fabric. Stretch to 6 inches = 50% stretch.

CUTTING TIPS FOR KNIT FABRIC

- Use a rotary cutter and self-healing mat for clean edges on stretch fabric.
- Place the lengthwise stretch (around the body) on the crossgrain.
- Use pattern weights instead of pins to hold printed paper in place.
- Cut a single layer at a time if the fabric shifts when folded.
- Do not stretch the fabric on the table while cutting. Let it lie flat.

SIZING NOTE FOR FULLER BUSTS

Select your size by your HIGH BUST measurement, not your full bust.

If your full bust is 2+ inches larger than your high bust, check the pattern ease chart or size up one size in the bodice before cutting.

Step-by-Step Construction Sequence

Complete the machine prep on page 2 before starting any seam.

1 Assemble and Cut the Pattern

Tape pages at trim marks. Use pattern weights on printed paper.
Cut with a rotary cutter for clean, accurate edges on stretch fabric.

2 Sew the Shoulder Seams

Use stretch stitch. Press each seam with steam and a pressing cloth.
Do not defer pressing. Press before moving to the next step.

3 Attach the Neckline Binding

Cut binding strip slightly shorter than the neckline opening.
Stretch the binding gently as you sew. Do not stretch the neckline.
Press flat after sewing.

4 Sew the Side Seams

Sew from hem to underarm on both sides.
Press seams to one side or open per pattern instructions.

5 Attach the Armhole Binding

Same method as neckline binding.
Let the feed dogs move the fabric. Guide lightly; do not drag.

6 Sew the Hem

Fold hem allowance up and press.
Twin needle: two-row stretch hem in one pass.
No twin needle: narrow zigzag also finishes cleanly and retains stretch.

PRESSING RULE: Press every seam before crossing it with another seam.

Pressing is construction, not finishing. Do not defer it to the end.
Use a pressing cloth on knit fabric to avoid iron shine.

Troubleshooting Quick Reference

Every problem below has a one-sentence fix.

Skipped Stitches

Fix: Change to a ballpoint or jersey needle (size 75/11 or 80/12).

Also re-thread the machine from scratch before trying anything else.

Wavy or Rippled Seam

Fix: Shorten the stitch length (try 2.0 mm) or reduce presser foot pressure.

Test on a scrap. A straight stitch on knit will always ripple.

Stretched-Out Neckline

Fix: You pulled the fabric. Let the feed dogs move it and guide lightly.

Pin binding at 4 equidistant points before sewing to distribute evenly.

Seam Breaks When Pulled

Fix: You used a straight stitch. Switch to zigzag or stretch stitch.

Re-sew the seam. A straight stitch has no stretch and will pop.

Hem Tunneling or Puckering

Fix: Stitch length is too long. Reduce to 2.0 to 2.5 mm.

If using a twin needle, check that both threads are tensioned equally.

Fabric Shifts While Cutting

Fix: Add more pattern weights. Cut a single layer rather than folded.

A rotary cutter gives more control than scissors on stretch fabric.

Garment Shrank After Washing

Fix: The fabric was not pre-washed before cutting.

Always pre-wash and dry fabric exactly as you would the finished garment.