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## Lingerie Sewing: The Barrett Bralette with Madalynne Intimates

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### Chapter 1 - Lingerie Sewing: The Barret Bralette

#### Overview

(light music) - Hi, my name is Maddie Flanigan, I am the owner of Madalynne Intimates. I'm based in Philadelphia and I offer both ready made and DIY lingerie. I also host monthly workshops on how to make bras. Today we'll be making the Barrett bralette, which is a great project for both new and experienced sewists. If you're new to the world of bra making, it'll get you familiar with stretch fabrics, elastics. And if you are more experienced, you'll love how quickly it comes together. What a particularly like about the Barrett, is that it's available in sizes extra small through 3XL. In addition to being a great and fun sewing project, the Barrett bralette also is an everyday wardrobe staple that you can wear underneath oversized tops and dresses as part of your outfit. Because life's too short for boring undies. (light music)

#### Materials

- Now let's talk about the supplies that you'll need to make the Barrett Bralette. You'll need to print out your PDF which contains sewing instructions as well as your pattern pieces. For the main fabric, you'll wanna use a stretch lace, a stretch mesh, or another stretch fabric that has 30 to 40% stretch. This pattern was developed with a stretch percentage of 30 to 40%. For your lining fabric, you'll wanna use a stretch mesh. Or if you're a larger size, you might consider using a power knit which has more support. You'll need three types of elastic to make the Barrett Bralette. The first is a strap elastic, which depending on your size, you'll use a different width. For the extra small through the large, you're gonna use a 3/8 of an inch shoulder strap elastic. And for the extra large through three XL, you'll use a 3/4 inch wide strap elastic. It just provides more support. For the center front neckline, the underarm, and the top of the back band, you will be using a picot plush elastic that's 3/8 of an inch wide. For the bottom of the band, you'll be using a 3/4 of an inch wide or more elastic. For this tutorial, we'll be using a fun floral wide elastic. You'll also need pins. You don't need any special pins to sew the Barrett Bralette. One of my favorite tools are these duck-billed applique scissors. What this allows you to do is that when you're trimming the fabric after attaching the elastic, it allows you to get super close to trim the fabric. You'll also need paper scissors to cut out your pattern. For thread you wanna use a hundred percent polyester thread, not a cotton thread. Polyester thread has a little bit of give, and since you're using stretch fabrics, it is better to use this. You'll also need a temporary spray adhesive. My favorite brand and type is the Odif's 505. It doesn't gum up on your needles, it wears off after a couple days, and it isn't super messy. For needles, you will need a ballpoint or a Microtex needle. It really depends on your fabric. I suggest to try out a couple different needles and whichever doesn't produce skipped stitches, use that. You'll also need a rotary cutter. It comes in three different widths, 18 millimeter, 28 millimeter, and 45 millimeter. I like using the 28 millimeter the best. And last are rings and sliders. So your rings and your sliders should match the width of your strap elastic. So if you're using 3/8 of an inch strap elastic, you'll need at least 3/8 of an inch wide rings and sliders. If you're using 3/4 an inch elastic, you'll need at least 3/4 an inch wide rings and sliders. We'll also need snips for clipping our thread tails, a clear ruler, and a soft tape measure. You don't need a special sewing machine. All you need is one with a straight stitch and a zigzag stitch. Also, you don't need to prewash your fabrics.

### Choosing size and cutting

- Now we're gonna find your size. To do this, you're gonna take a soft tape measure and you're gonna measure around the fullest part of your bust. You wanna make sure that the tape measure is level all the way around and that you're not measuring the overbust or the underbust. The dress form measured approximately 34 1/2, so we could be a medium or a large. I suggest sizing up if you're in between sizes so I'm gonna cut a size large. Let's look at the pattern pieces. Before you start cutting, you wanna make sure that your test square measures two by two so that you printed out your pattern at 100% scale. You want your pattern to fit. For the Barrett Bralette, this is a side cup, there is a back band, and there's a center front cup. The center front cup has two pattern pieces, one for an extra small through a large and another for an extra large through 3XL. Now that you've cut out your patterns, you may have noticed a line with an arrow on it that says direction of greatest stretch. In normal garment sewing, which I mean shirts, T-shirts, jackets, you have what's called a grain line and this is used to indicate the direction of the fabric that stretches the least and in most cases, patterns or fabric are cut according to this line. In lingerie though, and in bra making, you wanna think in terms of direction of greatest stretch. Generally speaking, you want the direction of greatest stretch to go around the body in the back and then up and down in the front of the bra and this is really just to add stability. You may be wondering how to find the direction of greatest stretch. There really isn't an exact science. You're gonna take your fabric and you are going to stretch it in one direction and stretch it in the other direction. You wanna make sure that when you stretch it, you're slightly inside the fabric versus right on the edge. One will stretch more than the other and the one that stretches more obviously is the direction of greatest stretch. You'll wanna do this with your main fabric and your lining fabric. Cutting fine fabrics such as stretch mesh and stretch lace can be difficult. To make it easier, I use a temporary spray adhesive such as 505 to spray bast the main fabric and the lining fabric prior to cutting. Then I cut out the pattern pieces and treat them as one. For the Barrett Bralette, you wanna spray bast the main fabric and the lining fabric for the center front cup and the back band. But for the side cup, you're gonna leave the main fabric and the lining fabric not glued or spray basted. What I really like about the Barrett Bralette is that all the seams are encased so you don't need an overlock, you don't need to zig-zag stitch the seam allowances. And by not fusing these together at this step, it will allow us to encase the seams. This might seem confusing now, but once we get to sewing it'll make a lot more sense. Here you can see that the center front cups and the back band are fused together and the side cup, the main fabric and the lining fabric are cut separately, not spray basted together.

### Sewing cups

- Now comes the fun part, sewing. The first step is to sew the center front seam. We're going to place right sides together of the center front cups. Then you're gonna mark with a pin a quarter of an inch from the top and a quarter of an inch from the bottom. At my workshops I say that perfection's overrated, but you want to be as close to perfect as possible at this step. Just checking it with... Quarter of an inch from the top. And a quarter of an inch from the bottom. You're gonna sew with a straight stitch, and start a quarter from the top, go all the way down, and you're gonna turn it around a quarter from the bottom and sew back to where you started. We're starting and stopping a quarter from the top and the bottom, which will give us room to attach the elastic in the next steps. You want to make sure that when you turn around and go in the opposite direction that you go over your original stitches. You won't be back stitching because you'll be sewing this seam twice. Also I'm using a contrast thread so you can see my stitching, but your thread should match

your lining. Now we're gonna sew the side cups to the center front cups, and here you're gonna see why we glued the main fabric and the lining fabric of the center front together and not the main fabric and the lining fabric of the side cup. With right sides together place the main fabric of the side cup and the center front and pin along the vertical cup seam. Once the main fabric of the side cup is pinned to the main fabric and the lining fabric of the center front cup, you're gonna flip it over and then you're gonna pin the lining. You're gonna pin through all layers. Once all layers are pinned you're gonna sew with a straight stitch a quarter of an inch away from the edge from the top to the bottom. Make sure that you back stitch at the beginning and the end. Clip your threads. And then you're gonna turn right side out. So that the seam allowances are encased in the bra. Repeat the same steps to sew the center front cups and the side cups together on the other side. Now comes an aesthetic decision. You can top stitch the vertical seam down with a zigzag stitch, or you cannot. It's really a personal preference. Zigzag stitch does have a sportier look, I'm not gonna do it because I'm using a contrasting thread. After attaching the vertical seams you're going to attach the back band to the cups at the side seams. We're going to attach the same that we attached the vertical seams on the cups. So you want to place the right side of the side cup to the right side of the back band. Pin it. And then you're gonna place the lining fabrics together. And re-pin it. You're gonna sew this using a straight stitch, and you're gonna back stitch at the beginning and the end. You're gonna repeat this step to sew the other side seam. Once we've sewn the center front seam, the vertical seam on the cups, and the side seam, it really comes together and starts looking like a bra.

### Attaching elastic

- A few basics about picot elastic before we start sewing it. There is a right and a wrong side. So, on the finish garment, you always want the fuzzy side to be against your body. The other side, the non-plush side, is the wrong side. Also, there is a picot edge. And on the finished garment, the picot edge will always be peeking out. To attach the elastic to the center front neck line into the cutout, you're going to place the elastic wrong side down, so that the picot edge is facing in and the flat edge is against the flat edge of the fabric. You're gonna start with a straight stitch, switch to a zigzag stitch, and end with a straight stitch. I don't pin the elastic as I'm sewing, but if you feel more comfortable, by all means, you can. I'm gonna start with a little bit of a tail of the elastic extending passed the edge, and I'm gonna start with a straight stitch. And essentially, you want your straight stitch to be right on top of that picot edge. Start sewing about a half of an inch. Back stitch back to where you started. Then sew again. Then you're gonna switch to a zigzag stitch. Zigzag stitch length and width vary, but, essentially, you don't want the stitch to exceed half the width of the elastic. Another question that I get is, do you stretch elastic when sewing? I don't. I set most of my elastic flat. About a half of an inch before you get to the center front seam. You're gonna switch back to a straight stitch. You may have to adjust your needle position, so that you get right on the picot. You sew right to the edge or to where that vertical seam is, and then you back stitch. As you can see here, I start with a straight stitch, I switched to a zigzag, and then I end with a straight stitch. And essentially, you want the straight stitch to meet with the center front seam. You're going to attach the elastic to the other neckline and to the center front cut out in the same way. You're gonna attach the elastic at the other neckline in the same manner, but you're going to start at the center front seam and sew up to the strap point. I'm gonna switch from a straight stitch to a zigzag stitch, and then I'm gonna adjust the stitch width and the stitch length. And now you're gonna attach the elastic at the center front cutout in the same way as the front neckline. So, once you've sewn the elastic at the front neckline and the center front cutout, you are going to flip it to the

wrong side, and you're gonna sew with another zigzag pass. So, for the first pass, we sew the zigzag close to the picot edge. Now for this pass, we're gonna sew a zigzag, but on the opposite side, on the flat edge. At the center front, you're going to crisscross the elastic so that they overlap. And you're gonna sew that second pass of zigzag on the neckline in one swoop. So, from one side down to the center front to the other side. Don't worry about trimming it at this point, we'll do it after we sew the second pass. When sewing the second zigzag, you don't have to start with a straight stitch at the beginning or the end. You can sew the entire elastic with zigzag stitch. Once you get to the center front, you are going to pivot and then sew all the way up to the other strap point. Once you've sewn the second pass, you can then trim the elastic so that it form a V at the center front. The last place to attach the picot elastic is at the underarm and the top of the back band. One of the most common errors I get at my workshops is that students want to attach the elastic at the strap points and overlap them. But, you want to attach the elastic so that the flat edge of the elastic aligns with the flat edge of the fabric, so that when you turn it, there's room for you to turn the elastic and for it to fit really nicely. This will allow you to attach the rings at the next step. So, I'll start sewing with a straight stitch about a half of an inch. Then I'll back stitch to where I began, and I'll go forwards, and switch to a zigzag stitch. Another question that I get a lot is, should you stitch the elastic once sewing. In normal garments, and by that, I mean shorts, dresses, tops, there what's called ease. So, the garment actually measures more than your body. But in lingerie and in swim wear, there's what's called negative ease. So, the garment actually measures less than your body. So, my theory is that, why would you stretch it so that the garment would be any smaller? For all the elastics on the beret, I set it flat, meaning I don't stretch it. But a half of an inch before I end, I'm gonna switch back to a straight stitch, move my needle position so that it's right over the picot edge, and then sew to the other strap point. Back stitch. Once you sew the first pass, you're gonna flip the elastic to the wrong side, and then sew the second pass. Then you'll wanna trim your elastics at the strap points. The picot elastic has been sewn, so now we're gonna move on to the bottom band elastic. You're gonna lay the bralette flat. You're gonna lay your bottom band elastic, flip it back on itself, and mark with a pin, so that the width of the bottom band elastic matches the bottom of the bralette. I could give you measurement such as a size small cuts 14 inches or size medium cut, 16 inches, but we've done a lot of sewing at this point. So, you could have sewn more at one point, sewn less at the other point, and that bottom band elastic wouldn't match the width of your bralette. So, I like to measure this out at this point. So, once you've marked with a pin, you're gonna sew this with a straight stitch. Then you're going to trim it to approximately quarter of an inch. And now we can pin it to the bottom of the bralette. I like to align the seam on the bottom band elastic with the side seam and with the seam allowances facing the back. You're going to pin the elastic to the bottom of the bralette so that they're overlapping a quarter of an inch. At the center front, you wanna make sure that that center front cut out lies flat. Then you're gonna attach the bottom band to the bralette using a zigzag stitch. But at the start and the end, you're gonna use a straight stitch for about a half of an inch. But a half an inch before the end, I'll switch back to a straight stitch. The picot elastic is sewn, the bottom band elastic is sewn, and now all we have left to do is make and attach the straps.

#### Assembling and attaching straps

- We've made it this far and we just have one step to go, which is to make and attach the strap elastics. For this class, I'll be using a 3/8 of an inch strap elastic and rings and sliders, and that's because I made a size large. If you're making a size extra small through large, you'll want to use the

same width. If you're making an extra large through a three XL, you'll want to use a 3/4 an inch wide strap elastic and rings and sliders. This is another place where the spray adhesive comes in very handy. To make your strap elastic, you are going to measure 18 inches and cut two strips of strap elastic that are 18 inches. Then you're gonna use the spray adhesive and spray just a dab on the end. Then you're gonna weave it up through the slider, down the center bar, and give it a good press. You want it to be about 3/4 of an inch away from the fold, 3/4 to an inch. Then you're gonna sew a straight stitch from the beginning to the end and then back again. You may have to adjust your needle position so that you can get close to the hardware. So I'm gonna move my needle position all the way to the right so I can get really close to the metal. I'm also gonna reduce the stitch length so that it's more like a bar tack rather than a regular stitch. This also makes it a little bit more sturdy. Sew forwards. Sew backwards all the way to the end, and then sew forwards again. Trim your threads. Before we attach it to the bra, we're going to sew the rings at the strap points. Just like you did with the strap elastic, you're gonna spray a little dab on the wrong side. You're gonna weave the ring through. Fold back 1/2 of an inch, and then sew a straight stitch as close to the metal or hardware as possible. The reason I'm using the spray adhesive is that if I try to use pins here and then sew it, it can pucker, it can move, so this allows me to press it in place and to make my sewing a lot easier. Again, I'm on a straight stitch. I've moved the needle position all the way to the right so it's close to the metal. I've reduced my stitch length so it resembles a bar tack. And I sew forwards and then backwards and then forwards again just so it's really secure. Trim your threads. You can also trim the elastic so it's nice and clean. Then you're gonna weave your strap elastic back to front, up through the slider, down again, and then we're gonna attach it to the bra. How far away from the center back you sew your straps depend on your size. For a size large, it's going to be six inches. So what I like to do is fold your bra in half, align the side seams, and then mark with pins three inches away from the fold. Make sure that your straps aren't twisted. Place the strap elastic underneath the top of the back band so that they overlap the width of the elastic. Then you're gonna sew a straight stitch across the width of the strap elastic. (sewing machine beeps) Then you'll use the same steps to make and attach the straps on the other side, and then you'll be finished with the bra. And there you have it, you've made your Barrett Bralette. It's an everyday, really versatile piece that lends itself to mixing and matching fabrics and trims. You may have some fabric in your stash that you can use, but I also offer a variety of kits on my website, [www.madalynne.com](http://www.madalynne.com). So thank you again for taking this class. And if you make a Barrett Bralette, upload your photos to the class gallery or to Instagram and tag @mmadalynne and @creativebug because life's too short for boring undies.