

## Easy Breeches



Colonial pants worn by men and boys were called breeches. They stopped right under the knee and were held in place by buttons, drawstrings or buckles. The length and width varied by fashion throughout the decades in the 18th century. Breeches came into fashion as even shorter pants, stopping above the knee, in the 17th century and were still in fashion until the first half of the 19th century. In the first half of the 20th century, short pants similar to breeches were popular again but were then called knickerbockers and often worn by boys. Knickerbockers were a couple of inches longer than breeches.

Most breeches in the 18th century were made of linen or wool, but more expensive breeches were made of velvet or silk.

To make your own breeches easily without much sewing, you can hem cotton or woolen dress pants that fit you at the waist.



**You need:**

- Pants that fit at the waist (they can be too short or too long). The pants should be cotton or woolen dress pants. Black or brown works best. If you can't find used dress pants you can use plain cotton sweat pants or scrubs.
- Scissors or fabric cutter
- Two pieces of ribbon, cord or string, each 25 - 30" long
- Sewing needle and thread or sewing machine
- Measurement tape
- 1 Safety pin
- 6 or 8 shank buttons that are  $\frac{1}{2}$ " or  $\frac{5}{8}$ " in diameter and either brass, silver colored or wooden

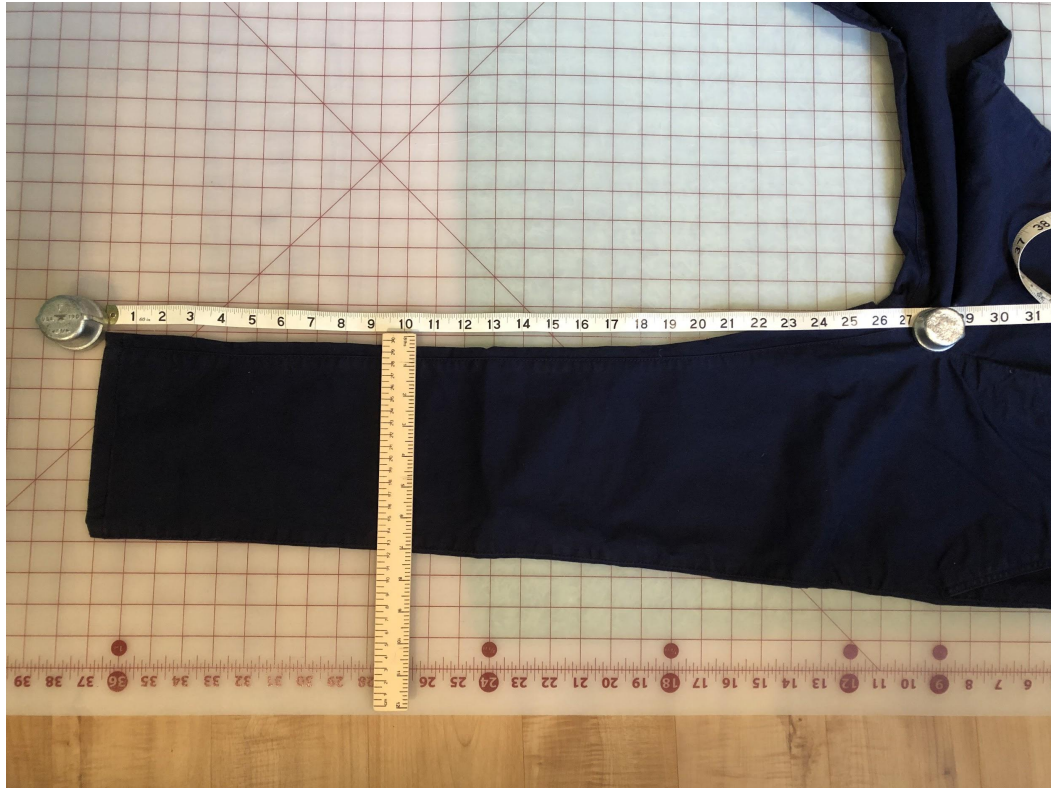
**Step 1: Cut the pants at the right length**

Cut the legs off at the correct length. To find the right length, put on the pants and sit with your legs at a right angle. Mark the fabric 3" under your knee cap. Cut at that length.

If the pants fit lengthwise, divide the inseam by 2 and add 3" and cut at that length.

The image below shows size 12 boy's dress pants with an inseam of 27". It was cut 10  $\frac{1}{2}$ " from the bottom. The calculation was:  $27" : 2 = 13 \frac{1}{2}"$  and  $13 \frac{1}{2}" - 3" = 10 \frac{1}{2}"$ .





Cut the other leg at the same length.

If your pants have back pockets or knee pockets attached, remove them using nail scissors or seam rippers.



## Step 2 Hemming at the knee

Turn the pants inside out. Fold over the knee hem 1" and fold again another 1".





Hem stitch all around but leave ½" open at the outer side. Repeat on the other knee hem.



### Step 3: Finish the Breeches

Insert a ribbon (ca 30" long) into the tube of the knee hem. Use a safety pin to thread the ribbon into the tube. Tie the ribbons to fit the knee.



Sew 4 buttons to each outer side seam up from the knee hem.



Done!

