

The Learning Circle

By Loren Woerpel, Noc Bay Publishing, Inc.

MEN'S APRONS

Two piece aprons, front and back, are used here in the Lake States without exceptions. They are common in many other tribal designs throughout North America as well. Swimming trunks or shorts are worn under the aprons. Sometimes leather is used but the expense of leather makes cloth a more commonly used item for the dancers. Many options are available for outline patterns and decorations. The designs and methods shown here are the most common and work well. Generally use standard sewing methods.

Materials needed:

1/2 yard of cloth, either 60 inches or 45 inches long

1/2 yard of backing cloth, commonly cotton, plain color or calico patterns.

15 pieces of 5 foot lengths of craft yarn for belt.

Needle and thread, color to match the cloth and any ribbon colors needed to be sewn.

Assortment of decorative items in your design, such as fringe, seed beads, conchos, shell discs, and ribbon.

Steps:

1. Make a pattern of the apron panel and try it on your waist to get a fit. For example if your waist is 30 to 34 inches, your panels should be 16 inches wide. If your waist is 34 to 38 inches your panel should be 18 inches wide. The length should be about knee length from the waist. Adjust from there to your liking. Always add 2 inches to the length for the belt hem.

2. Plan to first sew all of the decorative items on the face of the front and back panels. Note that dancers wearing bustles do not often use decorative items on the back panel, but they do match the edging trim to the front panel.

3. If fringe is to be used, sew it into place on the back side of the panels after sewing a hem on that edge.

4. After all of the panel decorations are sewn on, cut a lining panel to the same dimension as your front and back panels. The lining is usually of light cotton material, either solid color or a calico pattern. Stitch this lining on the back side of your cloth panels.

5. The sewn edges can be covered by a ribbon sewn all around the apron panels. Instead of ribbon, these edges can also be turned as a hem and sewn with a whip stitch on the back side of the panel. If you are sewing up an edge that has fringe added, you need to hem the lining separately before sewing the edge down to cover the fringe on the back side.

6. Use the craft yarn pieces to braid the belt. Tie one end of the yarn pieces in an overhand knot. Sort the 15 strands of yarn into three groups of five strands. Braid one long belt.

7. Place the belt on the top inside edge of both panels. Turn over the top edge making a large hem. Sew in place.

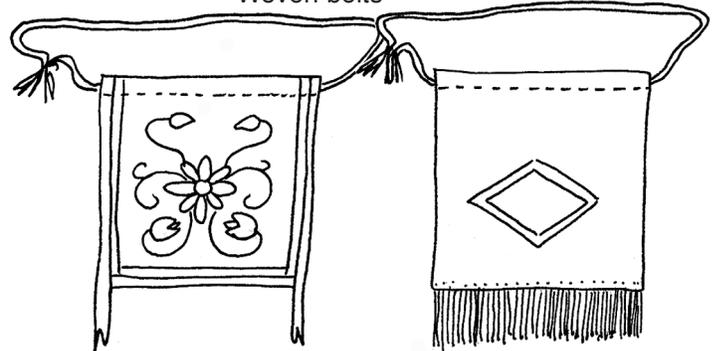


Beading on wool cloth



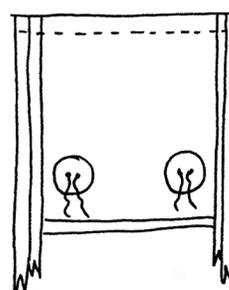
Ribbon work with leather fringe

Woven belts

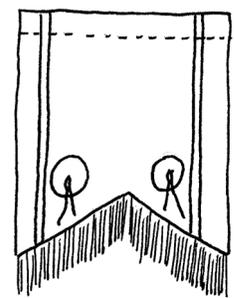


Beaded design with ribbon fringe

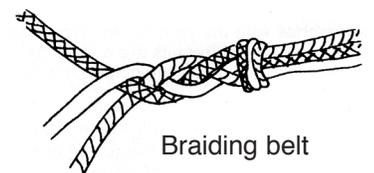
Ribbon design with Chainette fringe



Combination of design with conchos, shell discs or beaded rosettes



Finished braid



Braiding belt