

# Kulmine

deliberately natural

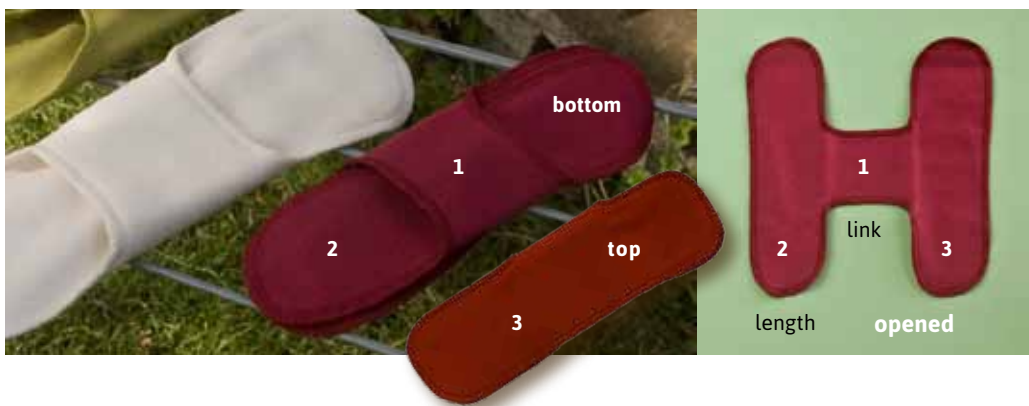
Stettiner Str. 5–6  
49088 Osnabrück Sonnenhügel  
Germany  
Tel.: +49 (0)541 33 25 99 36  
info@kulmine.de

## The washable pad with link – without button

Kulmine proudly presents our new popular cutting pattern *Hela* for use in non-profit projects, in order to enable women to actively create their own menstrual hygiene products. You can support our initiative by spreading the word, passing on the cutting pattern and raising awareness for cloth pads.

[www.kulmine.de/en](http://www.kulmine.de/en)

find more information about the problems of menstruation! Our ambitions! Detailed care instructions!



### *Hela's advantages*

- stays in place in almost any type and shape of underwear
- no buttons necessary, therefore reduced costs
- can be manufactured using one single cut
- easy manufacturing using a sewing machine or even by hand

### *Usage*

- **1** – the base (the short connecting middle part) is placed under your knickers
- **2+3** – the lengths are folded on to your knickers, so that they lie on top of each other
- if necessary the lower side can be folded to be on top
- can easily be combined with a pad (in a classical shape)

### *Washing instructions*

- wash directly after usage or
- rinse shortly, let it dry and wash with the next opportunity (soak before if needed)
- soak until the next load of washing (change water daily)
- 60° celsius gets rid of almost all germs
- pull into shape after washing and smooth it down

### *#menstruationmatters*

This idea was created for the Menstrual Hygiene Day on the 28th May. It's organized by the Berlin based NGO WASH United – international organisations are campaigning for the removal of taboos, education and alternatives. [www.wash-united.org](http://www.wash-united.org)

### *donatepads.org*

List of organisations who accept clothpads and distribute them locally to girls and women. Maybe foodbanks in your region would also like to hand out clothpads to those who need them – inquire about this option!

### **Instructions – page 2**

### **Sewing pattern – page 4**

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creativecommons.org**

*We look forward to receiving pictures and stories from initiatives and people using our cutting pattern to support women worldwide and to make menstruation easier for them.*

# Sewing instructions Hela

## You need:

- a *sewing machine*
- a *pen* or *French chalk* (we recommend using a frixion pen)
- a *rotary cutter* or *fabric shears*
- at least 5 *pins*
- sewing *thread* in a matching color
- cloth: *flannel* or *beaver cloth* is roughened cotton which makes for a very plush feeling. Lumberjack shirts, pyjamas and bed linens are often made of flannel. *Jersey* or other soft, absorbent natural materials can also be used for the outer layer. To achieve even better absorbency, try *molleton* or *terry cloth* (as is used in towels or bathrobes) as one or several intermediate layer(s). *PUL* is usually not necessary, especially when using good filling material. It may seem sensible to use an impermeable layer. However, everyday use has shown that this may lead to a sweaty feeling, compromise wearing comfort and even cause infections.

## no sewing machine?

If you don't own a sewing machine, you can hand sew, it is a little more time consuming, but nonetheless possible.

## upcycle!

Second hand materials contain almost no chemicals and will not shrink.

If you want to use new fabric, wash it before cutting the pattern.



**Fig. 1:** Print out the cutting pattern. Make sure to select „actual size“ in your printer settings in order to print the correct size. The *box* in the upper right corner of the pattern should have a size of 5x3 cm on your printed version. — Choose your preferred size and cut it out.

## Sewing pattern – page 4



**Fig. 2:** Choose your fabrics. In our example we used an old shirt and an old thick dish towel. The shirt is made of a nice, soft fabric and is perfect for the Hela's outer layer. The dish towel is the absorbent core, hereinafter referred to as the inner layer.

## colors

The wonderful thing about clothpads is, that you can use any colour for the outer layer you want – just how you may need it or what you have in hand.



Fig. 3

**Fig. 3:** Make a *fabric fold* and place the pattern with the straight edge at the fold. — *Fixate* the pattern using pins and draw around the pattern using the pen or chalk. — Remove the pattern and cut along your marks.

*drawing*

Alternatively, you can cut around the pinned-down paper pattern.



Fig. 4

**Fig. 4:** Make 3 cuttings, one using the inner layer fabric (here: dish towel) and two using the outer layer fabric (here: shirt).

*reducing layers*

If you fear your Hela might become too thick or stiff, you can leave out one outer layer.



Fig. 5

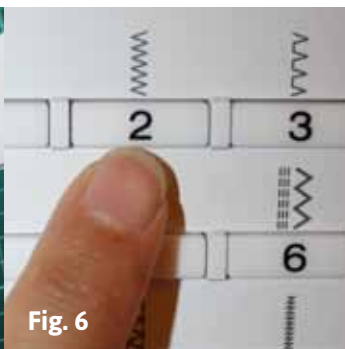


Fig. 6



Fig. 7

**Fig. 5:** Pin all layers of fabric together. First an outer layer, then the inner layer and lastly another outer layer. Make sure the nice side of the outer layer fabric faces outwards (in our case the outside of the shirt). This means, for the bottom layer the nice side should face downwards, and for the top layer it should face upwards. Try to pin the separate layers together as neatly as possible.

**Fig. 6:** Choose an appropriate stitch on your sewing machine. An overlock stitch or zigzag stitch are ideal. In our example, we used a zigzag stitch. — Set the zigzag stitch to medium or small. The smaller the stitching width, the neater the edge of your Hela will be.

**Fig. 7:** Place the pinned Hela under the presser foot. — Now begin sewing directly below the round part of the Hela. Close the stitch by sewing forwards a bit, and then sew backwards over the stitch. Pay attention, when using the zigzag stitch, that the machine is sewing into the fabric once and immediately afterwards into empty space. Sew completely around the Hela once, and then close the stitch again at the end, by sewing forwards and backwards again.

*clean edge*

Any unevenness that is still visible, for example a visible part of the inner layer at the edges, can be cut away now.

*the correct needle*

If you chose to use an elastic material like t-shirt jersey, it is best to use a special jersey-needle. This needle leaves very little to no holes in the fabric.

*Well done!*



## Hela by hand how to

On one of our workshop weekends we also created Hela pads and pantyliners. From discarded towels, T-shirts and shirts. Hand sewn, without machine. So nicely that Nina could hardly tell whether she liked the original Kulmines or the homemade ones.

In 2016 we provided the folding model Hela as a pattern for the Menstrual Health Day and wrote a freebook with sewing instructions. However, this description is for the sewing machine – and not everyone owns or has access to one. Since we have only one sewing machine in the makerspace where we organized the workshop anyway, I had planned to sew the Hela by hand and – according to our makerspace motto – from discarded fabrics and to pass on this idea.

For the pad I used a T-shirt and a terry towel. For the panty liners, a T-shirt in combination with a checkered cotton shirt was chosen for more dimensional stability. I sewed it together with embroidery thread, which we received in large quantities for the workshop. It is beautifully soft and smooth, makes a nice edge and hardly applies.

I like the fabrics and the yarn very much: you can find neat colour combinations and experiment with appealing combinations.

The two-coloured sides that are created in this way are a reason for me to make only two layers (instead of three as in the freebook). The other was my guess that the terry cloth holds particularly well in my underwear. This has been confirmed and I can imagine that the classic shape of pad also works great.

For a panty liner, one layer might be enough (that's double in the slip anyway), but I suspect that it's not sufficiently stable for all fabrics.

I hope you're getting along well with the manual. If you have any questions or ideas, just write an eMail: [info@kulmine.de](mailto:info@kulmine.de).

And of course we are looking forward to receiving photos of finished Helas from your hands!

### Tips for drawing

Double the fabric and lay the pattern with the bar flush with the folding edge.

Elastic fabric like thin T-shirts often can't be easily drawn with a line because it warps. One of the workshop participants had the right trick: use the pen to set points by pressing and rotating the pen.

### Tips for cutting out

If shirts have a bit wider sleeves, they are often enough to make a Hela out of them – then you don't have to cut the main parts (and use them for other stuff).

It is important to follow the pattern carefully and to cut a clean edge so that the pieces can be sewn together well and no protruding corners are formed.

### sewing together

I have not yet found out what the optimal thread length is – I have estimated 3 times the circumference, but it never went out completely towards the end (and I hadn't measured properly either; -).

A needle with a sharp tip but big needle eye is recommended.



The thinner version shows a little bit of a wrinkle when worn, as the fabrics have little inherent structure. But it is very pleasantly airy in the hotter temperatures and the possibility to fold a fresh side upwards is super pleasant.

When the first puncture, make sure that you leave enough loose ends so that you can knot it with the other end at the end. From then on, you prick from the front to the back and make sure that the thread from the previous stitch lies behind the needle (see picture). The resulting pattern can only be seen from the second puncture.

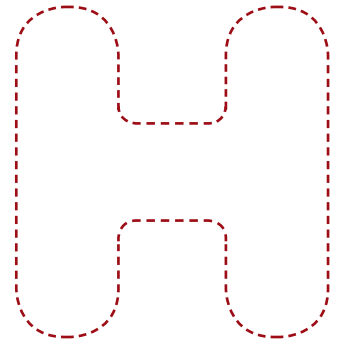
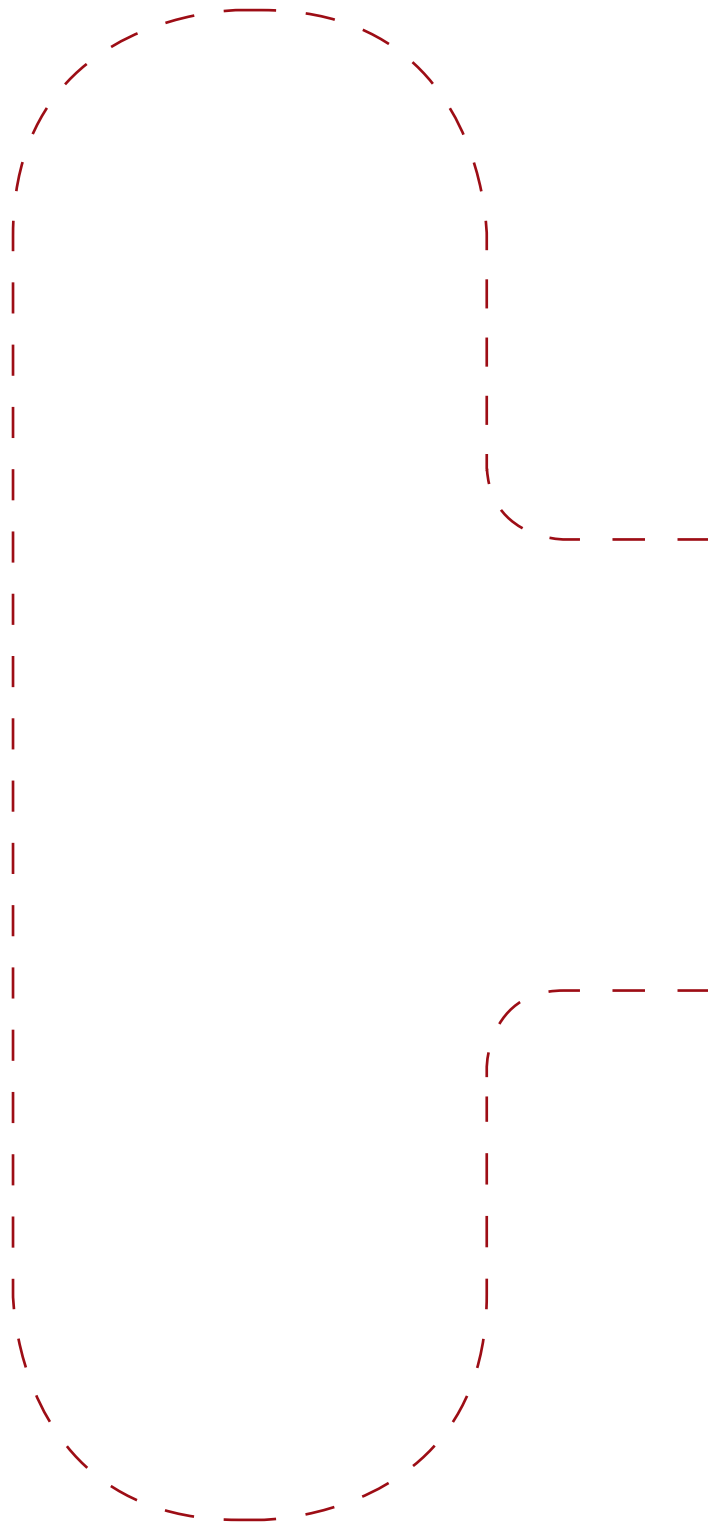
The thread should not be tightened too tightly so that the edge retains the same circumference as the lining – otherwise the result will arch a little, especially in the round areas and with thinner fabric. You can see a little bit of it on the checkered Hela.

At the end of the process, the two ends are shot with a double knot, or more precisely the cross knot. For the cross knot, after the first knot, place the thread pointing backwards behind the other end and then close the knot as usual. It then forms two symmetrically interlocking loops.

I used about two hours to finish one pad/pantyliner.

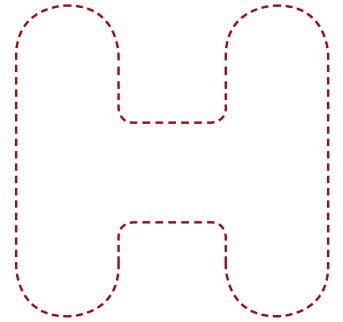
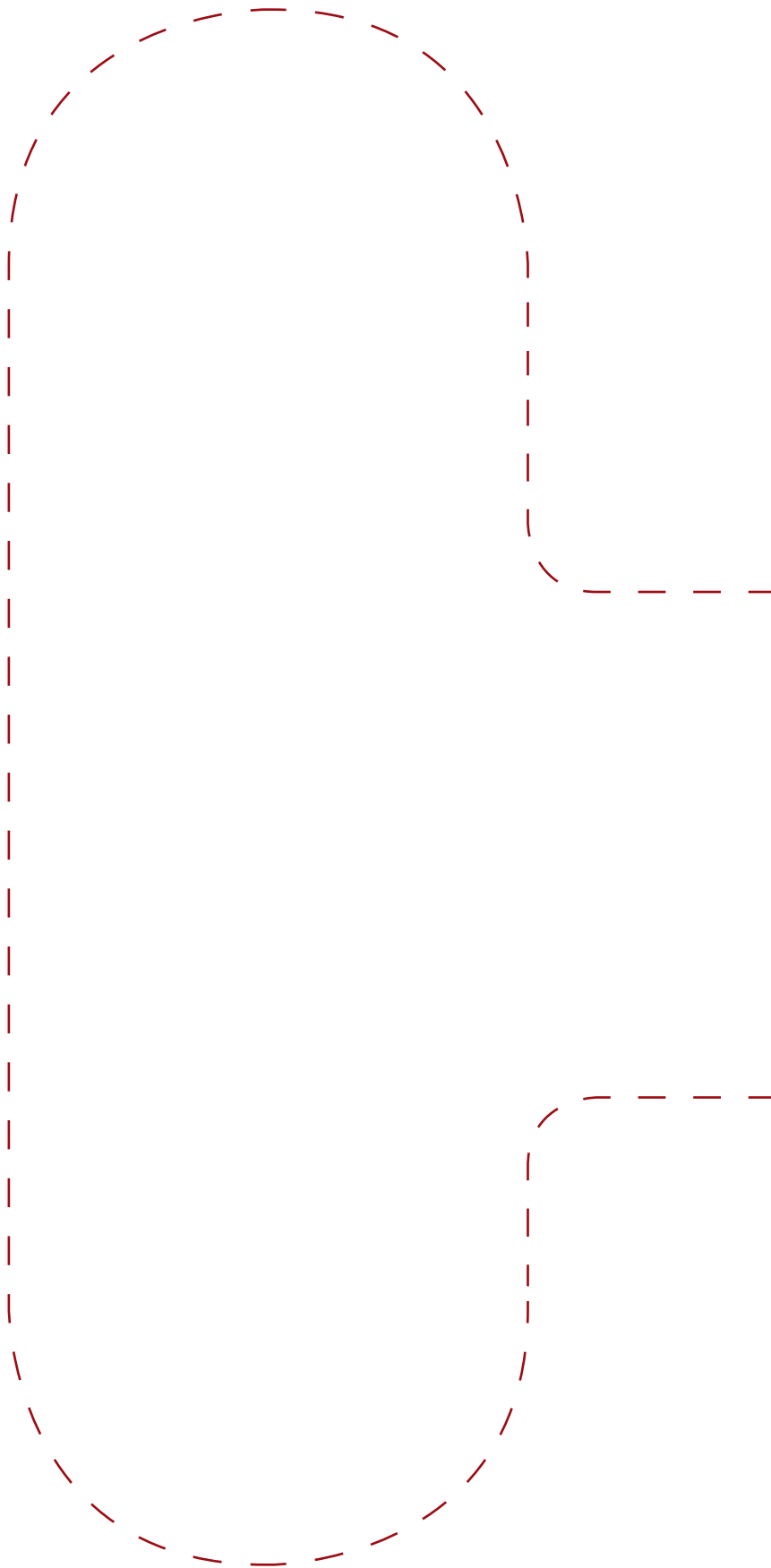
There is no testing in the washing machine yet, I hope the embroidery thread will not shrink at hot temperatures.

## Hela Mini

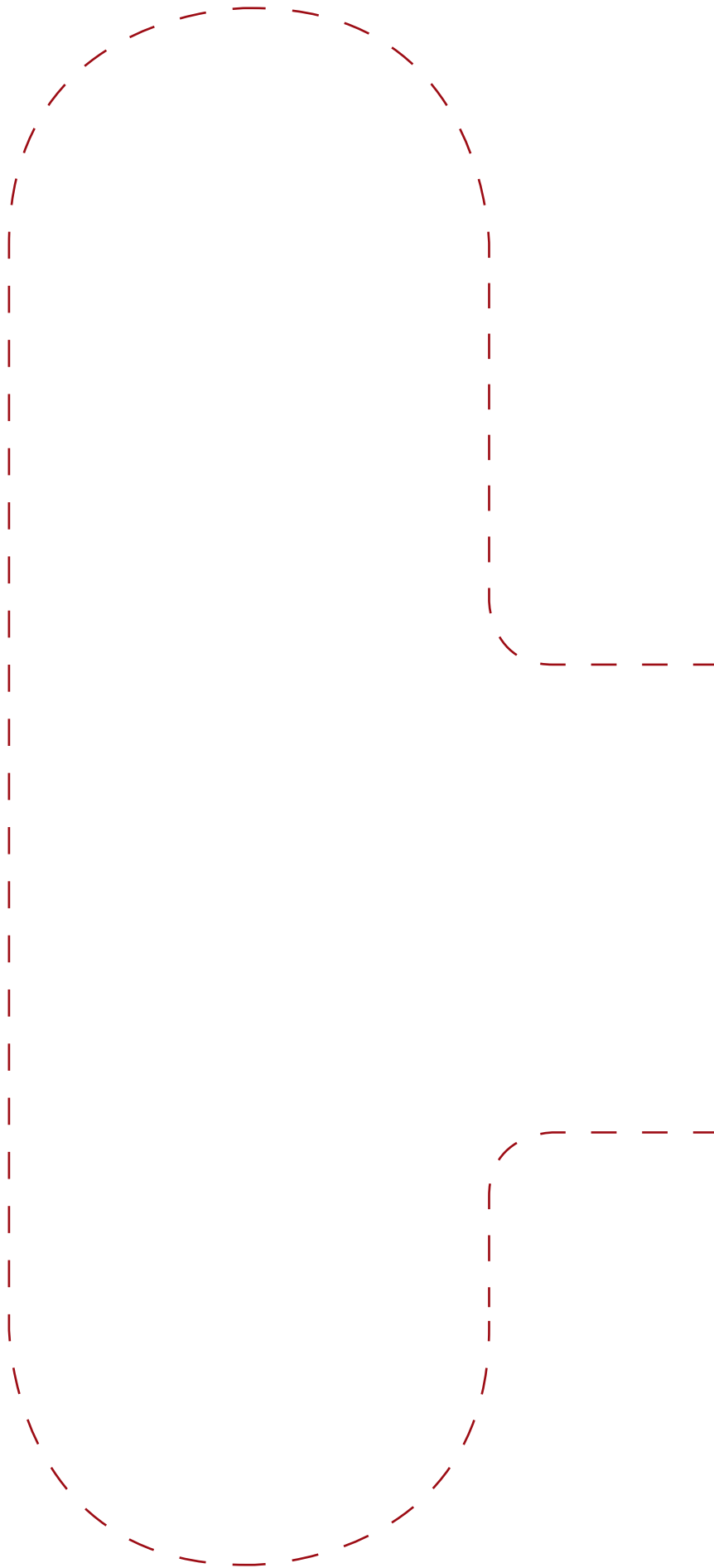


fabric fold

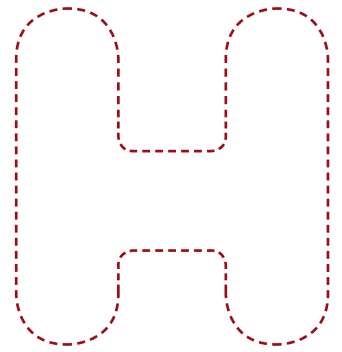
## Hela Midi



fabric fold



## Hela Maxi



fabric fold