

How to: tie an unstitched sari

You will need: a mirror, safety pins, your shoes.

Before tying, or draping your sari, there are a few things you need to do to ensure you get the perfect look:

1. Identify which end of the sari will fall over your shoulder, known as the pallu. The other end will be the part of the sari that you tuck into your petticoat and wrap around your waist.
2. Find the fall of the sari; this is a cotton hem which goes at the bottom of the sari, and faces inwards, so should not be visible once the sari is on.

All Sari Hire saris have labels on the top at the starting end of the sari to help make this a little easier.

3. Put on your petticoat ensuring it is as tight as possible. Your petticoat has to carry the weight of your sari, so if this is not done properly, draping your sari and keeping it all in place may be difficult.
4. Put your shoes on before putting your petticoat on. This will ensure the length of your sari is perfect. If you know you'll need to remove your shoes during your event, we recommend tying your sari without your shoes to ensure the sari isn't too long.

Once you have your blouse, petticoat and shoes on, you're ready to start draping!

1. Begin by holding the sari from the starting end across the front of your body, with the very start of the material in your right hand. You want to get the length of the sari so that it just reaches the floor; any longer and you may trip over it, any shorter and the sari won't look right.
2. Once you've got it to the length you want it to, starting from your right hip, tuck the sari into your petticoat. The trick here is to tuck the material neatly into the petticoat to avoid bunching. If your petticoat isn't tight enough, you will feel the sari, and your petticoat, start to fall. Simply tighten your petticoat, and start again.
3. Wrap the sari around you one complete time, going anticlockwise, tucking the sari in neatly as you go and ensuring the length remains the same.
4. If you want your pallu to be pleated, do this now using the pleating hack below. Once you have done this, use a safety pin (or two) to keep it in place. If you want the pallu left to fall over your arm, it may be useful to pleat it whilst you complete the next steps.
5. Wrap the sari around you once more, but do not tuck it into your petticoat. Drape your pallu to your desired length. This is traditionally about level to your knee. Do not pin this to your shoulder just yet.
6. The section that currently hangs off the sari leading up to the pallu will form your pleats. Using the same technique as with your pallu, pleat your sari as many times as possible, starting from the end that is tucked into your petticoat.

You will need to ensure the pleats are all even, before securing with a safety pin and tucking into your petticoat, slightly left of your navel, so that they fall evenly to the same length as the rest of your sari. Your pleats should be in the same direction your sari is draped (i.e. to the left).

If you have any material that can't be made into a pleat, neatly tuck it into your petticoat on the right side, as this will be covered by the drape of your pallu. If the excess fabric is to the left of your pleats, carefully go under your finished pleats, gently pull the excess fabric and tuck it underneath the pleats.

7. Once you have arranged your pleats and adjusted your pallu, pin your pallu to your shoulder to secure it in place. Ensure you remove the pins from the end of the pallu, as this should move freely but will remain pleated.

Pleating hack:

Doing pleats can be tricky, we recommend checking out our YouTube guide if you haven't already, and practice as much as you can. You can use any long piece of fabric to practice; a blanket, a bedsheet, a scarf...anything!

1. Getting the perfect pleat is all in your hand. Start by making a puppet style shape with your right hand, with your thumb and three middle fingers touching, and your pinky finger sticking up.
2. Grab your fabric in your right hand, with your three fingers and thumb, keeping your pinky finger sticking up.
3. With your left hand holding the rest of the sari, guide your fabric towards your pinky. As soon as the sari gets to the pinky, bring your pinky finger down.
4. Bring the sari back on itself with your left hand, towards your thumb, keeping the top of your sari level as much as possible. Don't worry if it isn't perfect, we can perfect this later. At this point, your thumb should be touching your ring finger. As the sari reaches your thumb, carefully lift up your thumb, guide your sari to where your thumb was just placed, then drop your thumb back down to grab the sari.
5. Again, with your left hand, guide the sari back towards your pinky, lifting your pinky finger as the sari reaches it, then bringing it back down to pinch the sari. Guide the sari back to the thumb, and repeat the above steps until you've pleated all the fabric.
6. Once you've used all the fabric, keep your thumb pinching the ring finger and carefully let all your other fingers loose. You should now be holding your pleats between your thumb and ring finger.
7. With your left hand, grab the other end of your pleats and carefully shake them to ensure your pleats sit nicely all the way down your sari. If your pleats aren't quite level at the top, they won't sit level at the bottom, so carefully straighten them up from the top, ensuring you don't let any loose.
8. Once you have the pleats straight, you can pop a safety pin at the top of the pleats to keep them straight, and continue with your draping process.