



JENNY
RUSHMORE
OF
Cashmerette

Ahead of the Curve

Learn to fit and sew
amazing clothes
for your curves

Includes 5
downloadable
patterns in
sizes 16-36
(12-32 US)

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Photography by
Brooke Harwood

Hardie Grant
QUADRILLE





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**For Josephine,
the best thing
I've ever made.**

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Introduction

Welcome to *Ahead of the Curve*! In this book, you'll learn an amazing skill: to change your clothes to fit your body, rather than feeling you have to change your body to fit your clothes.

Learning to sew clothes is a wonderful thing, but learning to alter them to fit your body is life changing. Just think: you'll never have to try on ill-fitting clothes in badly lit changing rooms ever again! Discovering how to sew well-fitting clothes has the power to transform your wardrobe and your confidence – it changed my life, and I'm passionate about helping other sewists experience the same.

This book will take you through the most common pattern adjustments for curvy bodies, using five simple sewing patterns for you to practise on. We all have unique bodies, so even if you find a sewing pattern that's in your size, it's not uncommon that parts of it won't fit quite right. By comparing your trial garment to the photos in this book, you'll be able to diagnose the issues and learn how to fix them. Once you've got five fabulously fitting garments, the sky's the limit! You can hack and alter them to get different looks, and you'll have the skills to fit any other sewing patterns that you want to make.

Before we crack on, one important thing. This book is a body-positive zone. Anything to do with clothes and fitting can be an emotional minefield, but if there's one thing I can't emphasize enough to my sewing students, it's to remember that if something

doesn't fit you, it's the fault of the clothes, not your body. Your body is never the issue – the pattern is. Sleeve too tight? The sleeve is too small; your arm is entirely blameless! Waistband digging in? Let's give you the ease you need, not make you feel that your waist needs to change. Switching your mindset doesn't just make sewing easier – it makes life easier, too! Whatever your current relationship to your body, learning to make beautiful garments that give you confidence is a way to respect and care for it – and who wouldn't want that?

How to use this book

This book is designed to teach you how to make the pattern adjustments needed for your body (or anyone else you're sewing for), using a set of five basic sewing patterns for you to follow along.

PREPARATION

The first section, 'Preparation', covers all the crucial steps you need to take before you start diagnosing fit problems and fixing patterns. Learning how to take accurate measurements, pick your size and make a toile (muslin) are all essential if you're going to end up with a fantastic fit.

FITTING

Then, it's on to the second part, 'Fitting'. I'll take you through basic fitting adjustments, such as grading between sizes and lengthening or shortening patterns, and then it's on to Fit Clinics for different parts of your body, from the bust and shoulder to your back and lower half. In each Fit Clinic, there are 'before' photos to show you how to spot a fit issue, clear step-by-step instructions for how to make the required adjustment, and 'after' photos so you know what a great fit looks like. Dip into the sections you need, and before long, you'll be familiar with your typical adjustments, which will likely be the same on all the patterns you make.

PATTERNS

The third section has detailed instructions for sewing each of the five downloadable patterns, as well as recommended resources to continue your fitting journey. To download layered PDF files of the patterns, in A4/Letter format, or A0 format, go to www.cashmerette.com/AOTCdownloads and enter password "Curve".

LET'S GET FITTING!

My story

It's no exaggeration to say that my whole life changed when I learned to sew. I decided to teach myself to make my own clothes for two reasons.

First, I was frustrated by not being able to find clothes that fit me in shops. As a UK size 18/20 (US 14/16) with an H cup bust, even if I could find a brand that carried my size, it would never have clothes that fit my boobs, unless they were made of stretchy fabric or hugely oversized. Inevitably, that made me feel terrible about my body – even though I knew rationally that a UK size 18 (US 14) is average and that lots of people have big boobs, I still felt defeated by always having to reach for the back of the clothes rack or finding out yet again that they stopped just below my size.

The second reason was that even if I could find something that would cover my body, I usually didn't like it. Most plus-size clothing is made from cheap, synthetic fabrics and still leans in a 'tent-like' direction. I wanted the same high-quality, stylish clothes as my smaller friends – just in my size! I didn't want to be beholden to old-fashioned rules like 'no horizontal stripes' or 'no bright colours'. And I wanted to be able to express my personality, not be penned in by what a corporate buyer felt that plus-sizes 'should' wear.

Learning to sew changed everything!

My new skill opened up the boundless potential to make clothes I actually liked, in size 'me', boobs and all. However, it wasn't without challenges: I quickly learned that just as clothes in lots of shops didn't come in my size at the time, nor did most sewing patterns,

ending at a UK size 16/18 (US 12/14) and being drafted for a B cup, or a D at best.

As a result, I spent countless hours learning to adjust patterns so they would actually fit me – and eventually, I cracked it. The liberation of having a wardrobe of clothes that fit, in styles that I liked, was profound – not just on a practical level, but also on an emotional one. Suddenly I realized:

I didn't have to change my body to fit clothes – I could change clothes to fit my body.

Whether my body fit in someone else's clothes was no longer a test of my worth, because everything I made was now in my size! I felt so much more confident once I wore clothes that fit well and reflected my actual style and personality. I blogged about my journey and quickly had thousands of followers telling me that I wasn't alone: they, too, felt alienated by clothes in stores and by sewing patterns, and that they were invisible in the online sewing community.

So, in 2015, I launched Cashmerette, the first independent sewing pattern brand to come in UK sizes 16–32 (US 12–28) and cup sizes C–H, exclusively designed for curves. And, in 2021, we expanded to a size range of UK 4–36 (US 0–32). At Cashmerette, curvy sewists are celebrated and empowered, with garments that fit without extensive alterations. There was such an amazing response to the launch, and now sewists all around the world are making their own Cashmerette wardrobe – in most cases, with no Full Bust Adjustment required!

Since then, there's been a huge amount of progress in the plus-size sewing world, with increasing numbers of brands expanding into bigger sizes. It's fantastic that so many more sewists have a good starting point – but, as we all have unique bodies, for most of us, adjustments still have to be made to achieve a great fit. That's why I decided to write this book, as a body-positive reference guide for curvy sewists that will teach you how to take any pattern and adapt it to fit your body. I truly believe that learning to sew and fit your own clothes can be life changing – and I hope you discover that, too!





Tools

To alter and fit patterns, you need a selection of tools – but the good news is that, if you're a sewist, you probably already have most of them.

Pattern adjusting tools

- **Pencil or pen**

Look for a pencil or pen that's easily visible and doesn't smudge.

- **Paper scissors**

For cutting up the tracing paper as you're making adjustments. Use separate pairs of scissors for paper and fabric, as the paper tends to blunt them more quickly.

- **Sticky tape**

Sticky tape is used to join your adjusted pattern pieces as you're slicing and dicing them. The best option is tape that you can easily remove and re-stick on the paper, so that you don't have to always be right first time.

- **Tracing paper**

You'll need tracing paper that is semitransparent, so that you can see the pattern lines through the paper, and is reasonably strong, so that it won't immediately tear. You can buy tracing paper

specifically designed for sewists, or 'Swedish tracing paper', which is a bit thicker and often has grid marks on it for help doing alterations. Medical table paper is also popular, but beware: it's often narrow, so it won't work for a lot of plus-size sewing pattern pieces unless you tape together multiple pieces of paper.

- **Chalk or disappearing marker pen**

This tool is used to make markings such as dart legs or notches on your fabric before sewing.

Measuring tools

- **Tape measure**

I recommend a flexible fabric tape measure that is 2.5 or 3 metres (96 or 120 in.) long.

- **Straight ruler**

This is used for both measuring and drawing lines when you're making pattern adjustments. I love the transparent rulers used by quilters, which have a 3-mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ -in.) grid all over them – it makes it easy to see what you're doing and be accurate.

- **Curved ruler**

A curved ruler is needed for accurate grading between sizes and helps immensely when making any change to a curved area, such as an armhole or neckline. Look for a ruler that has a variety of curves on it, such as a French curve or a vary form (also known as variform) ruler.

Sewing tools

- **Sewing machine**

A basic sewing machine is all you need for fitting – as long as it can do a straight stitch (for woven fabrics) and a zigzag stitch (for knit fabrics), you're all good! You'll need thread and needles for your machine, too.

- **Fabric scissors or a rotary cutter and mat**

Everyone has their preferences for cutting fabric: I'm a devotee of using a rotary cutter and mat for fast and accurate results. However, even if you use a rotary cutter, you'll still need scissors for notches or tricky areas.

- **Pins and a hand sewing needle**

You'll need pins for sewing your toiles and a needle for small areas that need to be hand finished.

- **Safety pins**

Use safety pins for 'pinching out' folds of fabric on your toile when you're assessing the adjustments you'll need, without fear of being stabbed! Safety pins also make it easier to remove your toile without pins slipping out.

- **Seam ripper**

Every sewist needs a seam ripper by their side for sewing snafus – but when you're fitting, you'll also need it to remove sections of seams and to take apart your toile to transfer markings back to your pattern.

Pressing tools

- **Iron and ironing board**

Pressing is a crucial part of fitting: if your fabric is wrinkly or has deep folds, you're not going to get an accurate assessment of the fit from your toile.

- **Tailor's ham or rolled-up towel**

If you're curvy, that means your clothes should also be curvy – so pressing everything totally flat isn't going to work!

- **Press cloth**

A press cloth protects your fabric from the heat of the iron, avoiding scorching or iron marks.

Sew body confident

Although learning to sew and fit has enormous potential to help you feel good about your body, it's not always an easy journey. I want to help you feel at the very least neutral about your body when you're sewing, and hopefully even positive! Here are some tips that I use personally to help:

LOOK TO CURVY FASHION AND SEWING FOR YOUR INSPIRATION.

If you're constantly comparing yourself to smaller people you see in fashion magazines or online, change it up by following inspirational plus-size fashionistas and sewists. Check out the **Cashmerette (@cashmerette)** and the **Curvy Sewing Collective (@curvysewingcollective)** Instagram accounts for lots of ideas for people to follow, many of whom share their measurements in their bio so you can also find people who are the same size as you.

SEW GARMENTS THAT ALLOW FOR BODY FLUCTUATIONS.

Make garments that can adapt to your body, and you'll be able to wear them for much longer. For instance, wrap styles are fantastic for fluctuating waistlines, elastic-back waistbands are comfortable if you get larger or smaller, garments made from knit fabrics can stretch to accommodate variations in size, and you can also add larger seam allowances so that you can let your clothes in or out if your measurements change.

DON'T WAIT UNTIL YOUR BODY CHANGES – SEW THAT GORGEOUS FABRIC NOW.

Is there anything sadder than fabric you adore languishing unused in your stash? So many sewists put off using their precious fabric for a notional time in the future when their body has changed. What a waste of potential joy! Instead of waiting for something that may never happen, get the fit right on a pattern and use your best fabric now.

REFRAME YOUR LANGUAGE.

Remember: if something doesn't fit, your body is not the problem – the clothes are. Your legs aren't too short – the trouser legs are too long! Your boobs aren't too low – the bust apex needs to be lowered! You'll be amazed at how much reframing your perspective can help make you feel kinder and more generous towards your body and yourself.

CHAPTER 1

Great fit begins with great preparation! Learn how to take your own measurements, select the pattern size to start with, and make a speedy toile to perfect your fit.

preparation
preparation
preparation
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preparation
preparation

What is 'fitting'?

Learning how to sew your own clothes is exciting, but learning how to fit them to your body is a superpower! I never feel as confident as I do when I'm wearing a well-made, well-fitting garment – I know I look good, my body feels good in the garment, and, well, I'm just going to have a good day.

So, what is fitting, exactly? At its most basic, it's adjusting a sewing pattern so that the final garment looks and feels the way that you want it to on your body. Historically, there were a lot of rules about what good fit is – and if you want to go the traditional route, by all means do!

However, I think that the question of good fit is more personal – you have to decide for yourself which aspects are the most important and what you're going to focus your time and effort on. It can even change from garment to garment: for instance, in a formal dress that you're wearing to a wedding, your top priority might be a very sleek, close-fitting garment that looks great in photos, and you may be willing to be a little uncomfortable if you have to bend down to pick up something from the floor. On the other hand, if you're making a piece of loungewear, comfort may be key: perhaps you want to go really flowy and don't mind if there's a little bit of fabric folding above the bust. It might be heresy to old-school sewing teachers, but it's the reality of how most of us sew and wear clothes!

HERE ARE SOME CONSIDERATIONS:

- **What do you want it to look like?**

Typically, most people want to avoid clothing that's bunching, digging in, falling off or saggy. There are also proportions to consider – which do you prefer, and do you need to adjust the garment to achieve that?

- **How do you want to feel physically in the garment?**

Consider how your body feels in clothes – do you prefer to feel closely hugged or free to move around? Do you have sensory preferences that affect where you'd like seams to go for your comfort? Where do waistlines feel comfortable on you?

- **How should the garment fit for you to feel comfortable emotionally?**

Your comfort in the garment is really important, and that's different for every person. Think about where you want sleeves or hemlines to end, or the depth of a neckline: what makes you feel confident and secure?

- **How do you want to be able to move in the garment?**

Depending on your lifestyle, the way your body works and the garment type, there are different movements that you might want to be able to do in the clothing. For instance, you might need to be able to drive, bend down to pick up kids, play the violin, or be able to comfortably push your wheelchair; all of those considerations will affect how you need the garment to fit and function.



BEFORE YOU EMBARK ON YOUR FITTING JOURNEY, HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND:

- **It's both an art and a science**

While there are lots of fitting guidelines and techniques, learning to fit clothes well is both an art and a science. You'll need to learn the technical aspects, but lots of the decisions you make will be based on what feels and looks right to you for a specific garment. It's just like being an artist: you learn the classic methods first and then go freestyle. If you have to break the rules to get the result you want, who cares?! Feeling great in the finished garment is the only thing that matters.

- **It's iterative**

Learning to fit is a skill that you practise – and the more you do it, the better you get! The great news is that even a little bit of fitting ability – say, grading between sizes, or doing a Full Bust Adjustment – can make a huge improvement in the fit of your clothes, and small adjustments can make a big difference. Over time, you'll learn more about how to identify fit issues and solve them, and your fitting toolkit will expand and become more refined.

- **It's always changing**

Fitting isn't a 'once and done' activity. Lots of things can change the adjustments you need to make: maybe your body has changed shape, size or proportion; you might upgrade your underwear and discover curves have moved; or you try a new brand based on new proportions, so a different set of adjustments might be needed.

- **Try to relax**

Easier said than done, I know! Learning a new skill can be nerve-wracking, and even more so when it involves staying neutral about something – your body –that you may not have felt neutral about in the past. Remember that it's all about improvement: even just learning to grade between sizes will radically improve how your clothes fit and feel. You don't have to be an expert immediately, and you will have to be a little patient, but believe me: it's totally worth it.

All about measurements

Taking accurate measurements of your body is the essential first step in making well-fitting garments, but I'll be honest – it can be intimidating to have to begin by measuring and writing everything down in black and white.

Here's the truth: your measurements are simply a guide to help you sew amazing garments that make you feel fabulous. If you end up with a wonderfully fitting skirt that doesn't dig in, does it really matter what your waist measurement is? Your measurements are truly neutral, just information you're gathering for a specific purpose, like knowing how much flour to put in a cake.

Still struggling? One way to make measurements feel more abstract is to use the measurement unit you're not used to – so use centimetres if you usually use inches, or vice versa. I also recommend finding your 'body double' on Instagram, which can help give you a more objective perspective on what your measurements look like. Search for the hashtags #sewmysize and #measurementsmovement, and you'll see people giving their measurements in the format b122w101h127 (b48w40h50), which means bust 122 cm (48 in.), waist 101 cm (40 in.), hips 127 cm (50 in.). Knowing what measurements someone has can really open your mind, if you have a distorted perspective of yourself, and help you get an idea of what you'll look like in particular garments or outfits.

BEFORE YOU START:

- **Measure yourself often**

For most of us, our measurements change a lot over time, so I recommend regularly measuring yourself, ideally every time you make a garment.

- **Measure yourself in your bra and knickers – and wear the type of underwear you'll be wearing under the final garment**

Measuring over other clothes will give you an inaccurate result, so stripping down is a must! Wearing the same bra and knickers is critical, especially when it comes to measuring your bust. If you have larger breasts they tend to be pretty malleable, which means that, depending on what type of bra you're wearing, they can be a significantly different size, shape and height. So, when you measure, you need to make sure you're wearing the same type of bra that you plan to wear with the garment. If you are going to be wearing shapewear with the final garment, again, you need to wear it while measuring.

- **Take your waist, hip and thigh measurement standing and sitting**

All curvy people spread when we sit down – my waist and hips get 8–10 cm (3–4 in.) bigger! That's why a garment might feel comfortably snug when you're standing up but dig in as soon as you sit down. So you need to know both measurements, standing and sitting, before you decide what size to make. This is particularly important in woven garments with little [ease](#).

How to measure yourself

Ideally, you'd have a sewing buddy to help you measure, but that's not always possible. So, I'm going to show you how to measure yourself; the only thing you need is a full-length mirror and your

trusty tape measure. If you have restricted mobility, you'll probably need an extra pair of hands – you can show your measuring partner this guide or, if you are able to go to a local sewing group or fabric shop, someone may be willing to help.

MEASUREMENTS WORKSHEET

A downloadable version is available at:

cashmerette.com/measurements-worksheet

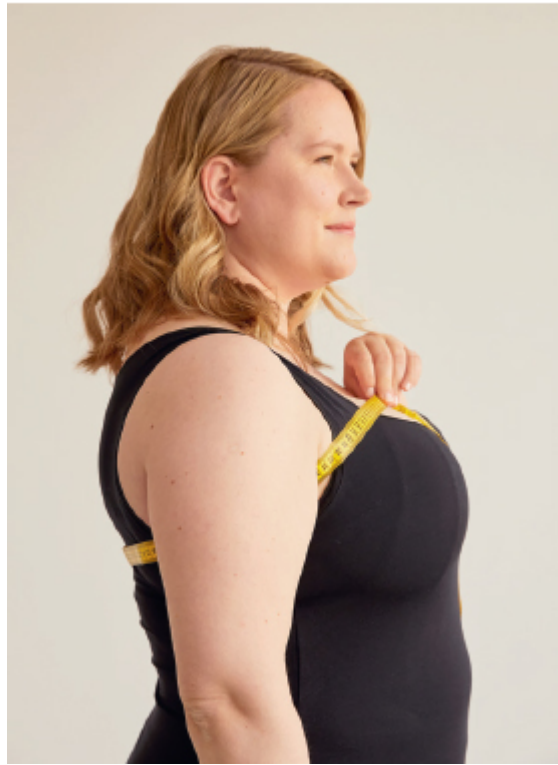
Bust

There are two key bust measurements: high bust and full bust. High bust is particularly important if you have a large bust and will be doing a [Full Bust Adjustment](#). Full bust is what most pattern companies are referring to in their tables when they say 'bust'.

HIGH BUST

Place the tape measure around your body and under your arms, bringing it up over the top of your bust; the tape will go up diagonally across the sides of your body. Measure with your arms down (elbows by your side). If you have high or top-heavy breasts, take this measurement without a bra on (but make sure you're wearing your bra for the full bust measurement).

HIGH BUST



FULL BUST

Place the tape measure around your body at the height of your bust apex (the part of your bust that sticks out the furthest), making sure it's parallel with the floor. Note, your apex isn't necessarily at nipple height, depending on your breast shape.

FULL BUST



Bicep

Knowing your bicep measurement can help you evaluate if a sleeve is going to fit.

Place the tape measure around your arm at armpit level, parallel to the ground. Put your arm down to your side (if you have very muscular biceps, you can also flex them to get them to their largest size), and measure. This one is tricky to do alone, so be patient and keep trying!



Waist

A very common question for curvy sewists is: where is my waist? Few people have a very clear dent in their body at waist height, and a lot of sewists assume it's at belly button level, which is often way too low. In addition, for some plus-size people, there's not really a 'narrowest part' to identify, as their shape goes out from directly under the bust. There's no magic right answer, but for most plus-size and curvy sewists, the best spot is fairly high, between the belly button and bra band (or if you do have a narrowest part, you can use that).

HIGHER WAIST



The good news is, ultimately it's up to you! The point you choose will have an impact on how the garment looks on your body, so it's a good idea to experiment with what you think looks best on your unique shape. Here's a comparison of what a higher and lower waistline on a garment look on me – I much prefer the higher waist! Ultimately, you can decide on where your waist is – you may just need to alter the garment accordingly to lower or raise a waistline.

LOWER WAIST



STANDING WAIST

Place the tape measure around your body at your waist height, parallel to the ground.

STANDING WAIST



SITTING WAIST

Start by measuring your standing waist, holding the tape measure firmly but not tightly between your fingers so that it can slide in a controlled way. Slowly sit down, keeping the tape at the same height on your body.

SITTING WAIST



Hip

Everyone has a unique hip shape, from straight and square (that's me!) to full at the top or lower down. When you measure your hip, pick the largest point around your torso.

STANDING HIP

Place the tape measure around your body at hip height, parallel to the ground.

STANDING HIP



SITTING HIP

Start by measuring your standing hip, holding the tape measure firmly but not tightly between your fingers so that it can slide in a controlled way. Slowly sit down, keeping the tape at the same height on your body.

SITTING HIP



Thigh

Your thigh measurement is important information for fitting trousers.

STANDING THIGH

Place the tape measure around the largest part of your thigh, parallel to the ground.

STANDING THIGH



SITTING THIGH

Start by measuring your standing thigh, holding the tape measure firmly but not tightly between your fingers so that it can slide in a controlled way. Slowly sit down, keeping the tape at the same height on your body.

SITTING THIGH



Picking your size

If you want to achieve a great fit in your garments, you need to start with the right size. Even though that seems like a pretty straightforward thing to figure out, it can be quite confusing. The good news is that if you start with the size closest to your body, you'll be able to reduce the number of adjustments necessary – and if you're really lucky, you may even find a pattern brand where you don't have to make any adjustments at all.

DID YOU KNOW?

Sewing pattern sizes are different to shop-bought clothing sizes.

New sewists are often confused – if not dismayed – when they first learn what size they are in a sewing pattern. You might wear a UK size 20 (US 16) in shop-bought clothes but then, according to a sewing pattern, you're a 26 (22) – what's that all about?! If you've been judging yourself by your clothes size for a long time (I did this for more years than I care to remember), it can be a really hard thing to hear.

The simple answer is that sewing pattern sizing uses a different system than ready-to-wear (RTW) clothes, and the most common difference is that your sewing pattern size will be bigger than your RTW size.

This reinforces the fact that numerical sizes really don't mean anything at all! They're just a guide, not a marker of value or your worth as a person. The only thing that's important is that the garment fits you – and as you're sewing it, there won't be a size label in it anyway.

There is another complication, which is that there's also variation in sizing between different sewing pattern brands.

That's the reason why you should ALWAYS use your measurements to pick what size to make, and never use your 'usual' RTW size.

You might think that the lack of standardization is terrible (I know I did when I first learned about it), but there's a hidden benefit: because there's so much variation in the sizes and body shapes that patterns are drafted for, it means that there's a bigger chance you'll find a brand that fits with minimal adjustments. If all patterns were for one shape and set of measurements, you'd either fit in all or none! Cashmerette patterns are designed specifically for women with a large bust (from cups C–H), for instance, whereas others are designed for sewists with larger hips or a straighter torso. You can learn more about what pattern brands are available in plus sizes, and what the measurements and cup sizes are, at [Cashmerette.com/PlusSizePatterns](https://cashmerette.com/PlusSizePatterns).

— DON'T AUTOMATICALLY SIZE UP

If you're used to garments not fitting you, it can be tempting to pick a size larger than the tables indicate just to be on the 'safe side'. Don't do it! I always recommend making the suggested size as your first toile, because you'll likely get the best fit through the shoulders and upper body, and you can always add more ease later where you want it (for instance, by making a waistline more roomy). Also, if your measurements put you between sizes, don't just pick the largest of the sizes – instead, grade between [sizes](#). The joy of sewing is that you get to custom fit.

Understanding pattern sizing tables and ease

Sewing patterns have two size tables: the **body measurements table** and the **finished garment measurements table**. They're both important when you're selecting which size to start with. These

tables are typically shown on the pattern envelope or website, and they're sometimes printed onto the pattern tissue. If there are no finished garment measurements available anywhere, beware – it may not be a high-quality pattern, and you'll need to measure the pattern pieces yourself.

BODY MEASUREMENT TABLE (BMT)

This table shows what size the designer recommends you make, based on the measurements you take of your body. Typically, this table has full bust, waist and hip, but depending on the brand and the garment, it may also include measurements such as high bust, bicep or thigh. Body measurement tables are the same across all patterns for a specific pattern brand.

Here's the body measurement table for all Cashmerette patterns, including those in this book. As you can see, if your measurements are 109 cm (43 in.) high bust, 119 cm (47 in.) full bust, 96 cm (38 in.) waist and 122 cm (48 in.) hip, you'd make the UK size 22 E/F (US 18 E/F); see more info on picking [cup sizes](#).

UK size	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US size	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU size	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
High bust	94 cm (37 in.)	99 cm (39 in.)	104 cm (41 in.)	109 cm (43 in.)	114 cm (45 in.)	119 cm (47 in.)	124 cm (49 in.)	130 cm (51 in.)	135 cm (53 in.)	140 cm (55 in.)	145 cm (57 in.)
Full bust											
C/D cup	102 cm (40 in.)	107 cm (42 in.)	112 cm (44 in.)	117 cm (46 in.)	122 cm (48 in.)	127 cm (50 in.)	132 cm (52 in.)	137 cm (54 in.)	142 cm (56 in.)	147 cm (58 in.)	152 cm (60 in.)
E/F cup	104 cm (41 in.)	109 cm (43 in.)	114 cm (45 in.)	119 cm (47 in.)	124 cm (49 in.)	130 cm (51 in.)	135 cm (53 in.)	140 cm (55 in.)	145 cm (57 in.)	150 cm (59 in.)	155 cm (61 in.)
G/H cup	107 cm (42 in.)	112 cm (44 in.)	117 cm (46 in.)	122 cm (48 in.)	127 cm (50 in.)	132 cm (52 in.)	137 cm (54 in.)	142 cm (56 in.)	147 cm (58 in.)	152 cm (60 in.)	157 cm (62 in.)
Waist	81 cm (32 in.)	86 cm (34 in.)	91 cm (36 in.)	96 cm (38 in.)	102 cm (40 in.)	107 cm (42 in.)	112 cm (44 in.)	117 cm (46 in.)	122 cm (48 in.)	127 cm (50 in.)	132 cm (52 in.)
Hip	107 cm (42 in.)	112 cm (44 in.)	117 cm (46 in.)	122 cm (48 in.)	127 cm (50 in.)	132 cm (52 in.)	137 cm (54 in.)	142 cm (56 in.)	147 cm (58 in.)	152 cm (60 in.)	157 cm (62 in.)

FINISHED GARMENT MEASUREMENTS TABLE (FGMT)

This table shows the measurements of the garment itself – for instance, if you took the t-shirt you'd just made and measured it with a tape measure.

Here's the finished garment measurement table for the [Kersoe Top](#). As you can see, if you made the UK size 22 E/F (US 18 E/F), the actual measurement across the bust is 124 cm (48⁷/₈ in.), waist is 118 cm (46³/₄ in.) and hip is 135 cm (53¹/₈ in.).

UK size		16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US size		12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU size		44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
Full bust	C/D cup	106 cm (41⅞ in.)	111 cm (43⅞ in.)	116 cm (45⅞ in.)	121 cm (47⅞ in.)	126 cm (49⅞ in.)	131 cm (51⅞ in.)	137 cm (53⅞ in.)	142 cm (55⅞ in.)	147 cm (57⅞ in.)	152 cm (59⅞ in.)	157 cm (61⅞ in.)
	E/F cup	109 cm (42⅞ in.)	114 cm (44⅞ in.)	119 cm (46⅞ in.)	124 cm (48⅞ in.)	129 cm (50⅞ in.)	134 cm (52⅞ in.)	139 cm (54⅞ in.)	144 cm (56⅞ in.)	149 cm (58⅞ in.)	154 cm (60⅞ in.)	159 cm (62⅞ in.)
	G/H cup	111 cm (43⅞ in.)	116 cm (45⅞ in.)	121 cm (47⅞ in.)	126 cm (49⅞ in.)	131 cm (51⅞ in.)	137 cm (53⅞ in.)	142 cm (55⅞ in.)	147 cm (57⅞ in.)	152 cm (59⅞ in.)	157 cm (61⅞ in.)	162 cm (63⅞ in.)
Waist		104 cm (40⅞ in.)	109 cm (42⅞ in.)	114 cm (44⅞ in.)	118 cm (46¾ in.)	124 cm (48¾ in.)	129 cm (50¾ in.)	134 cm (52¾ in.)	139 cm (54¾ in.)	144 cm (56¾ in.)	149 cm (58¾ in.)	154 cm (60¾ in.)
Hip		119 cm (47⅞ in.)	124 cm (49⅞ in.)	130 cm (51⅞ in.)	135 cm (53⅞ in.)	140 cm (55⅞ in.)	145 cm (57⅞ in.)	150 cm (59⅞ in.)	155 cm (61⅞ in.)	160 cm (63⅞ in.)	165 cm (65⅞ in.)	170 cm (67⅞ in.)
Back length		48 cm (19⅞ in.)	49 cm (19¾ in.)	49 cm (19⅞ in.)	49.5 cm (19½ in.)	50 cm (19⅞ in.)	50 cm (19¾ in.)	50 cm (19⅞ in.)	51 cm (20 in.)	51 cm (20⅞ in.)	51 cm (20¼ in.)	53 cm (20⅞ in.)



EASE

The difference between the size of a garment and the size of your body is called ease. You can calculate the ease by comparing the BMT (the size of your body) and the FGMT (the size of the garment) for a specific pattern size. It's common that a pattern will have different levels of ease at different parts of the body – for instance, a swingy t-shirt might stretch to your body at bust level (negative ease) but be flowy around the hips (positive ease).

Positive ease is when the garment is bigger than your body (which means the FGMT will be larger than the BMT). Woven (non-stretchy) garments usually have positive ease, and some knit garments do, too. A garment with tons of ease, such as a kaftan or a cocoon dress, will be very flowy and swishy. Some patterns have minimal to zero ease, such as a wiggle dress or a fitted pencil skirt, which will compress your body when you sit down or move around.

Negative ease is when the garment is smaller than your body (which means the FGMT will be smaller than the BMT). Garments with negative ease stretch to fit your body (a t-shirt or stretchy jeans, for example) or compress your body (like a corset). Don't be scared of negative ease! It doesn't automatically mean that the garment is going to be tight: in fact, a lot of knit patterns have a small amount of negative ease, which gives great shaping and fit, especially through the bust. Some patterns, such as a swimsuit or a leotard, are also intentionally tight, so that they adapt to you as you move around and don't fall off.

— A NOTE ON FABRIC CHOICES

When you're making a garment with positive ease, you have a bit of wiggle room to change the fabric that's recommended for it. For instance, if a positive ease pattern is designed for a woven fabric, you can use a knit instead (you might want to go down a size, but it will

work in theory). With garments with negative ease, however, you're more restricted: if a knit with a specific % of stretch is recommended, then you must use that, or it won't fit you.

How to pick your pattern size using the tables

To pick your size, compare your body measurements with both tables.

1. FIND YOUR HIGH BUST (IF AVAILABLE), BUST, WAIST AND HIP SIZES ON THE BMT

This shows you which size or sizes the designer recommends you make.

If you're making a woven garment with little ease, use your sitting waist and hip measurement to pick your size.

If you're making a knit garment, a stretch-woven or a garment with a lot of ease, use your standing waist and hip measurement to pick your size.

2. COMPARE THOSE SIZES WITH THE FGMT

There are three possibilities:

(a) You fit into one size in the BMT, and the FGMT looks good (the amount of ease is what you'd like): you have your size and you're good to go!

(b) You don't fit in one size in the BMT, but the FGMT gives you some wiggle room. If there's positive ease in a garment, you may fit in a smaller size without alterations. For instance, on the Honeybourne Dress pattern, if you have a 102-cm (40-in.) waist and a 137-cm (54-in.) hip, the BMT recommends a UK size 24 waist and a 28 hip (US 20 waist and 24 hip). However, when you look at the FGMT, you can see that the UK size 24 (US 20) hip

is 238 cm (93¾ in.) – which means you’d still be easily able to fit into the UK size 24 (US 20), even though your hips are bigger than the body measurement. Bear in mind that you will end up with less ease than intended, which will affect the shape and drape of the garment, but typically ‘using up’ a few inches of the ease is fine. Plus, this approach means that sometimes you can even fit in garments that don’t extend into your size because, even though you’re larger than the body measurement table, the FGMT shows that the final garment would actually fit you.

(c) You don’t fit in one size in the BMT and accounting for the FGMT won’t work. No fear! You’re going to be grading between sizes – something that most people have to do most of the time – which you can learn about in chapter 2.

Cup sizing

The average bra size is a D or DD cup, but the average sewing pattern is drafted for a B or C cup – no wonder it’s so hard to find patterns that fit! To get a great bust fit, you need to know what cup size a pattern is drafted for, whether you need to do a Full or Small Bust Adjustment, and if so, by how much. It’s not enough to just get the right bust circumference.

Someone with a 122-cm (48-in.) full bust measurement could have a small torso and a G cup, or a larger torso and a B cup – the circumference measurement might be the same, but the proportions and the fit of a garment would be totally different.

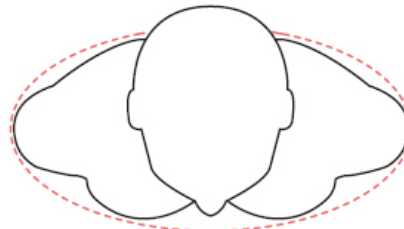
Just using the full bust measurement and ignoring the cup size leads to lots of fitting issues, including overly large shoulders, rising hemlines, gaping necklines and baggy armholes. This is probably the most common fitting issue for curvy sewists!

Some pattern brands come in multiple cup sizes, which can save you a lot of time and effort – Cashmerette patterns, for example, come in sizes C/D, E/F and G/H. However, most patterns are a single cup size,

and it's often not stated what it is. The default is a B, but sometimes it's a C or even a D. You can find out what brands draft for what cup sizes at [Cashmerette.com/PlusSizePatterns](https://www.cashmerette.com/PlusSizePatterns).

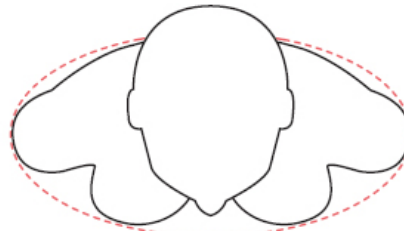
To make matters more complicated, this is another area where sewing sizing and RTW sizing is often different! There are two types of cup sizing: bra cup sizing and sewing cup sizing. That means that the bra size you wear may not correlate with the sewing pattern cup sizing. Cashmerette patterns are drafted to align with UK RTW bra cup sizing – so, for instance, if you wear an H cup bra, you'll likely be a G/H cup, although you should always use your measurements to choose your size as bra sizes are so variable. However, many sewing brands use the sewing pattern cup sizing system, which subtracts your full bust from your high bust:

LARGER TORSO + B CUP



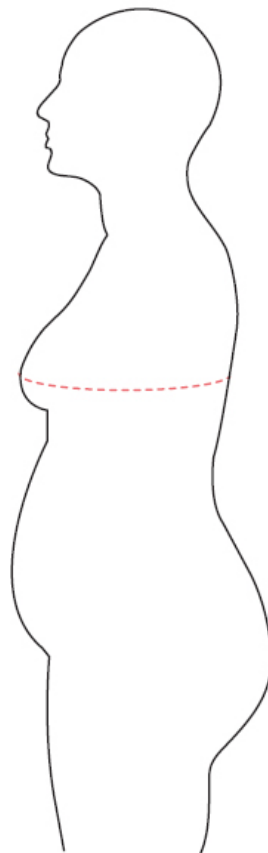
Red circle is 122 cm (48 in.)

SMALLER TORSO + G CUP

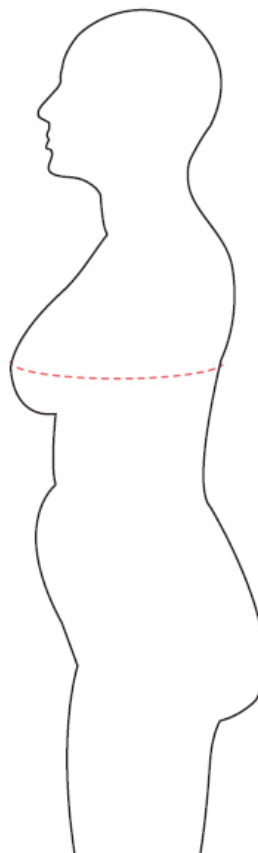


Red circle is 122 cm (48 in.)

**LARGER TORSO
+ B CUP**



**SMALLER TORSO
+ G CUP**



Red circles are 122 cm (48 in.)

SEWING CUP SIZES

Difference between high bust & full bust	2.5 cm (1 in.)	5 cm (2 in.)	7.5 cm (3 in.)	10 cm (4 in.)	12.5 cm (5 in.)
Sewing cup size	A	B	C	D	DD

How to pick your cup size

Due to all the variations in sizing, it's essential that you use your measurements to pick your cup size, not your usual bra size.

IN PATTERNS THAT HAVE A HIGH BUST MEASUREMENT

In Cashmerette patterns, and other companies that publish a high bust along with a full bust measurement, you can use those two measurements to pick the correct size. If your high bust is in one size and your full bust is in a larger size, you'll likely need to do a [Full Bust Adjustment](#); if your full bust is in a smaller size, you'll need to do a [Small Bust Adjustment](#).

IN PATTERNS THAT DO NOT HAVE A HIGH BUST MEASUREMENT

For these patterns, first try to find out which cup size they're drafted for, and whether it's bra cup or sewing cup sizing. If you cannot find that info, the best assumption is that it's drafted for a sewing B cup.

If you're the same cup size as the pattern, use your full bust measurement to compare with the bust BMT, and that's your size. Easy peasy!

If you're a larger cup size than the pattern, you'll need to do a [Full Bust Adjustment](#).

If you're a smaller cup size than the pattern, you'll need to do a [Small Bust Adjustment](#).

Making a test garment

There are various techniques used to fit sewing patterns, but the one I recommend is making a test garment, known as a toile (UK) or muslin (US). It's the only almost-foolproof way to know that you're going to get a good fit in your fashion fabric, and is well worth your time.

Types of toile

FITTING TOILE

The most basic type of toile is a 'fitting toile'. It's made out of an inexpensive fabric, and you've got no intention of wearing it as a final garment, so you're free to draw on it, cut parts or alter, without feeling as if you're sacrificing something precious. A fitting toile doesn't have all the finishing and notions included – so it's much faster to make than the final garment.

FITTING AND CONSTRUCTION TOILE

While a fitting toile can be very basic, you can also use your trial garment as an opportunity to practise new sewing techniques. If you're nervous about buttonholes, for example, then make them in the toile!

WEARABLE TOILE

Finally, some people like to make wearable toiles – they use a fabric they'd actually want to wear and try to make the toile as well as possible, finishing seam allowances and sewing all the steps. While this can seem like a great idea (no throwing away something you

sewed!), it can inhibit the fitting process if you're reluctant to make changes because you really want to wear the piece of clothing. That's why I generally don't recommend them, unless you're making a pattern from a company you already know fits you really well and you're confident it will need only minimal changes.

Fabric for toiles

Using the right fabric is essential when you're making a toile, because different types of fabric can create a totally different fit. Confusingly for US readers, the type of fabric known as 'muslin' is not always suitable for making your trial garment muslin!

Here are the critical points:

KNIT VS WOVEN

You must use the same fabric type in your toile as in your final garment – because knit and woven fabrics behave totally differently on the body. That means if you're making a jersey t-shirt, your toile must be in a similar knit fabric. Or, if you're making a non-stretch jacket, your toile must be in a similar non-stretch substrate.

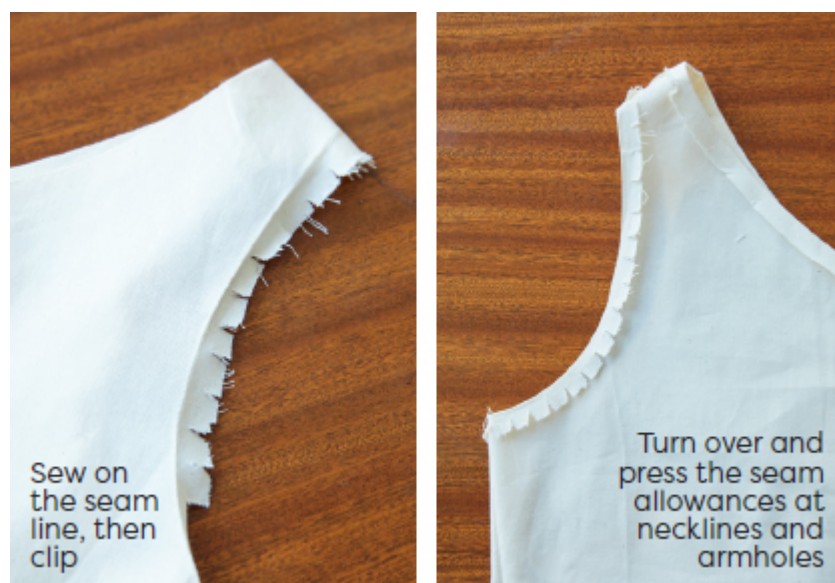
FABRIC WEIGHT

Your toile fabric should be a similar weight to the final garment fabric. It doesn't have to be the same substrate, though – for instance, if you're making a silk top, you could use an inexpensive polyester crepe de chine that is the same weight as your final silk.

DRAPE

Related to weight is the drape of the fabric – again, you want to match your toile fabric to the final one. If you're making a structured coat in a wool, you need to use a similarly stiff toile fabric. For a floaty rayon dress, you'll want a flowy option.

The biggest challenge with toile fabric is sourcing it at a decent price. For woven fabrics, it's sometimes possible to use old bedsheets or tablecloths from a charity shop (thrift store); alternatively, wait for online fabric store sales and buy up the cheapest wovens, regardless of whether or not you like the colour or print. Knits are trickier – sometimes it may be possible to salvage knit fabric from an old t-shirt or maxi dress, but typically you will have to buy them. Again, keep an eye out for sales and coupons, and stock up when you see them available.



What you do – and don't – need to do on a fitting toile

The key to making a toile is to sew all the parts that will affect fit but leave out anything that won't, saving you time and fabric. Here are the dos and don'ts:

DO

- Cut all your pattern pieces on grain.

- Use a long stitch length (around 3.5 mm) for fast sewing and easy seam-ripping.
- Staystitch necklines or other edges that are on the bias or rounded, using a 1–1.5-mm stitch.
- To gauge neckline and armhole fit on a garment with a lining or facings, either cut off the seam allowances on the toile or sew on the seam line, clip into the seam allowances and then press them over to the inside (see [photos](#)).
- Press as you go.
- Attach skirts to dresses, as the added weight affects fit.
- Attach sleeves so you can assess fit (plus, a sleeved armhole without a sleeve inserted will always look as if it's gaping, due to the ease required).
- Attach waistbands, because they significantly affect fit through the waist and pelvis.
- Add zips on fitted garments – or sew the seam up if you're able to wiggle into your toile.
- Press up hems to give you a sense of length, or just cut them off.

DON'T

- Finish seam allowances.
- Add facings or linings.
- Add interfacing (except for highly interfaced garments like jackets).
- Sew on buttons or buttonholes – use safety pins at the button markings instead.
- Add details such as sleeve plackets or pockets (if you want to check placement, mark them with a pen on your toile).

- Throw away your toile immediately after fitting it – keep it until you're finished with your final garment, so you can refer back to it if needed.

The process of making and altering toiles

These are the steps you'll go through when constructing your toile, and making fitting alterations.

1. Trace your pattern pieces in the size/sizes recommended by the [pattern](#).
2. Make any adjustments that you feel confident you'll need (there may be none at this stage). For instance, if the pattern is drafted for a B cup and you're an H cup, there's no point making it as is: you already know it won't fit! So you can do a [Full Bust Adjustment](#) immediately. Similarly, if you're 180 cm (6 feet) tall, you may already know you need to add length, so make that change for the first toile.
3. Cut and sew your first toile.
4. Identify fitting issues from the toile and make markings where needed. Check the fit at all key points (neck, shoulders, back, bust, arms, waist, hip, bum, legs) and assess what fit changes are needed; make sure you move around and sit down to fully assess how it fits when you move. Use a pen to make markings on the toile to note the size and placement of any adjustments you need; these will be reference points when you alter the pattern pieces. For instance, mark where your bust apex is if you need to change a dart height; place a mark where you want to narrow a shoulder; or draw on where you have pinned out a dart for a gaping armhole. If you've used any pins as you've tweaked the fit, you'll also want to mark where they are on the toile.
5. Transfer the markings on your toile to your pattern pieces. You can do this by taking measurements on the toile and transferring markings to your pattern pieces. Or, you can take the toile apart

and trace it onto a new piece of tracing paper to create new pattern pieces.

6. Make the necessary adjustments to the pattern pieces, using the markings you made as a reference point, and sew your second toile.
7. Repeat as needed!

I recommend keeping a notebook where you record the changes you made to the pattern (or write them on a piece of paper and slip it into the pattern envelope). At the time you make your toile, you're so immersed in the project that you think you'll remember – but you often won't! Once you've nailed the fit on a pattern, you can also copy the pattern pieces onto thicker paper or card to make a new 'master' pattern.

What order to make adjustments in

There are a few rules of thumb when it comes to making multiple adjustments on a single garment.

- **Begin at the top of the garment and work your way down**

Get the shoulder and bust fit right before you move on to arms, waist, hip or bum.

- **Do a Full Bust Adjustment (FBA) before you move/change darts or alter the armholes, back or waist**

The FBA automatically shortens and lowers the dart and adds circumference to the waist, so you may end up not needing to do another adjustment or having to do it differently than you initially thought. Similarly, if you need to do an SBA, do this first.

- **Don't change too many things at a time**

Each adjustment has a knock-on effect: for instance, changing the bust can significantly change the armhole, back and waist fit. You could spend time making multiple adjustments when, in fact, the FBA would have solved them in one! Although it can feel frustrating to have to make more than one toile, I highly recommend only making one adjustment per 'area'. For instance, addressing armhole gaping and doing a full bum adjustment in one toile would be fine, but I wouldn't recommend doing an FBA and a gaping armhole adjustment on a single toile because the FBA is going to affect the armhole.

Avoid the trap of over-fitting

Lastly, before you start your fitting adventure... try to relax and not fall into the trap of over-fitting. It's tempting to try to banish every fold or crease, but there are several considerations.

First, there are some styles of garment that, by design, cannot be fold free on curvy bodies, such as raglan sleeves, dolman sleeves or tops without darts. These styles come with draping and folding fabric, and there's no way to get rid of that without re-designing the garment.

Second, remember that you live in these clothes. You need to be able to move and be comfortable, and that means there has to be a bit of fabric (ease) to allow for that, and the fabric won't always fit totally flush or smooth against your body.

Finally, very, very few people notice minor fit issues. Spending hours staring at a toile in the mirror makes you hyper aware of every tiny problem, but I'll bet once you've made your final garment in fashion fabric, you'll forget all about what you even thought was an issue – and certainly no one else is going to notice.

Though it's easy to get obsessive about perfecting fit, as far as I'm concerned, if your clothes are comfortable and they fit you better than those you buy in a shop, then you're golden! One thing I like to

do is take photos to compare the fit of my toiles to my clothes from stores: the first time I made jeans, I had someone take a picture of my bum in the jeans I'd been wearing. Then, I made my own. Were they perfect? Absolutely not. But were they 1000 x better than what I'd been wearing for years? Yes indeed! And for me, that was good enough. Sewing your own clothes should make you feel good, and if you're finding that fitting is taking out the fun, then take a deep breath, relax and celebrate the fact you've made progress, rather than aiming for perfection.

Before You Start Fitting

Once you've made your toile and are ready to start fitting, save yourself unnecessary time and heartache by first reviewing this checklist. This is especially important if your toile immediately seems too big or small overall – it's likely that one of these checklist points explains why, and you'll save yourself hours wondering which fit adjustments you should be making!

- **Did you re-take your measurements at the beginning of the project?**

Your measurements can change more often than you think! Take your measurements before each project, and make sure you're wearing the same bra and underwear that you'll be wearing with the final garment. For more info, check out [chapter 1](#).

- **Did you choose the right size?**

Starting from the right size is essential to a good fit. Refer to [chapter 1](#).

- **Did you print and/or cut out the right size?**

If you're using a PDF pattern, even a tiny scaling error can cause significant issues. Make sure the test square is exactly the right size and review the printing instructions to make sure you assembled the pattern accurately. For all patterns, double-check you traced or cut on the right size lines.

- **Did you use the right kind of fabric?**

Remember that your toile fabric must match your final fabric in terms of stretch (i.e. whether it's stretchy or not, and the % and direction of stretch) and weight (lightweight, mid-weight etc.). see [more information](#).

- **Did you use the right seam allowance?**

Double-check the seam allowance – too small or big will affect the fit.

- **Did you add all the key parts to the toile that are necessary to assess fit?**

[Review the previous section](#), and make sure you included all the parts such as sleeves, skirts or waistbands, and trimmed-off seam allowances (or clipped and folded) where necessary.

CHAPTER 2

This chapter takes you through basic fitting adjustments, such as grading between sizes and lengthening or shortening patterns, and then we'll move on to Fit Clinics for different parts of your body, from the bust and shoulder to your back and lower half. Dip into the sections you need, and before long, you'll be familiar with your typical adjustments, which will likely be the same on all the patterns you make.

**fit
ings**

Basic adjustments

Let's start your fitting journey with two basic - but amazingly effective – adjustment techniques. If these are the only methods you use, you'll already have a way better fit than RTW, guaranteed!

Grading between sizes

Here's a little-known fact: very few people fit in a single sewing pattern size. In a Cashmerette poll, nearly 80% of sewists said they are a combination of different sizes! It makes sense, given that we're not made on a factory line – we all have different combinations of measurements and body proportions. The good news is that, as sewists, this is no problem – we can make the pattern in different sizes at different places, rather than having to just accommodate our largest part or squeeze into poorly fitting RTW.

This is the single most impactful fitting skill you can learn – it's easy, and it creates a radically improved fit.

This technique is called 'grading between sizes' (also sometimes called 'blending sizes') – effectively, you're doing connect-the-dots on the pattern to make your own custom pieces. You can easily grade between three to four sizes, and you can grade more than that as long as you are careful about the curved lines you're creating (more on that below). Sometimes it's possible to avoid having to grade between sizes at all by relying on ease (particularly at the waist or hip); read more about that in [Picking Your Size](#).

The theory is the same for all types of pattern: mark your sizes at the bust, waist and hip, and then join them with a smooth line that reflects the shape of your body. Where possible, try to mirror the shape of the existing seam line and make sure there are no sharp angles – everything should be a smooth line, whether it's curved or straight. When your line hits the edge of a piece (for example, at the waistline or hem), make sure the line you're drawing is at the same angle as the original line.

A lot of patterns have clear notches for the bust (sometimes that's the dart instead of a notch), waist and hip. However, not all do. In that case, you need to measure the pattern pieces and compare them to your body to mark your own notches before grading.

If you're grading between sizes, making a fitting toile is always a good idea, as it will confirm that your alteration worked and allow you to tweak the shape of the side seam if it isn't mirroring your body correctly (for instance, sometimes it won't reflect your hip shape and you will need to re-draw that area).

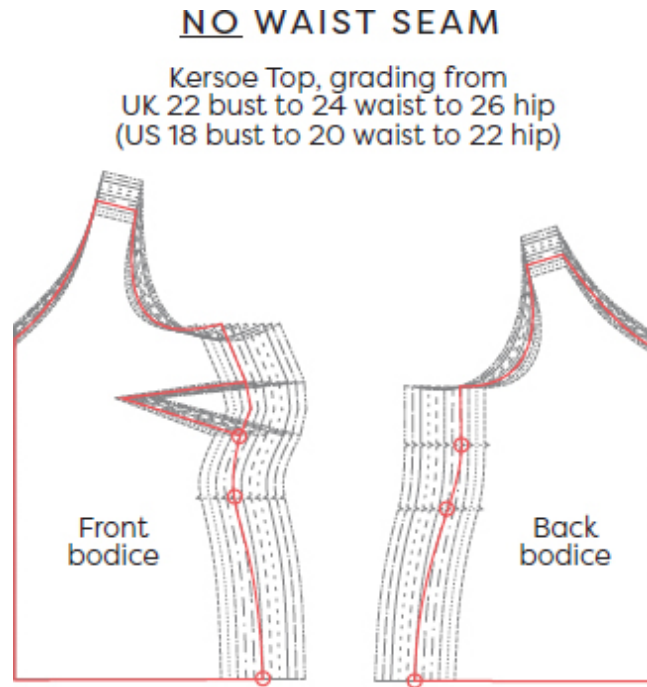
Once you've done this process on all your pattern pieces, you'll then be able to copy over the changes to facing or lining pieces.



GRADING BETWEEN SIZES ON A GARMENT WITH NO WAIST SEAM (WITH DARTS OR DART LESS)

This is the approach you'd take for the [Kersoe Top](#) or [Stanway T-shirt](#).

1. Mark the sizes you need at the bust (at the bottom of the dart on the front; at the bust-height notch on the back), waist notch and hip notch.
2. Using a curved ruler, join the lines.



GRADING BETWEEN SIZES ON A GARMENT WITH A WAIST SEAM (WITH DARTS OR DART LESS)

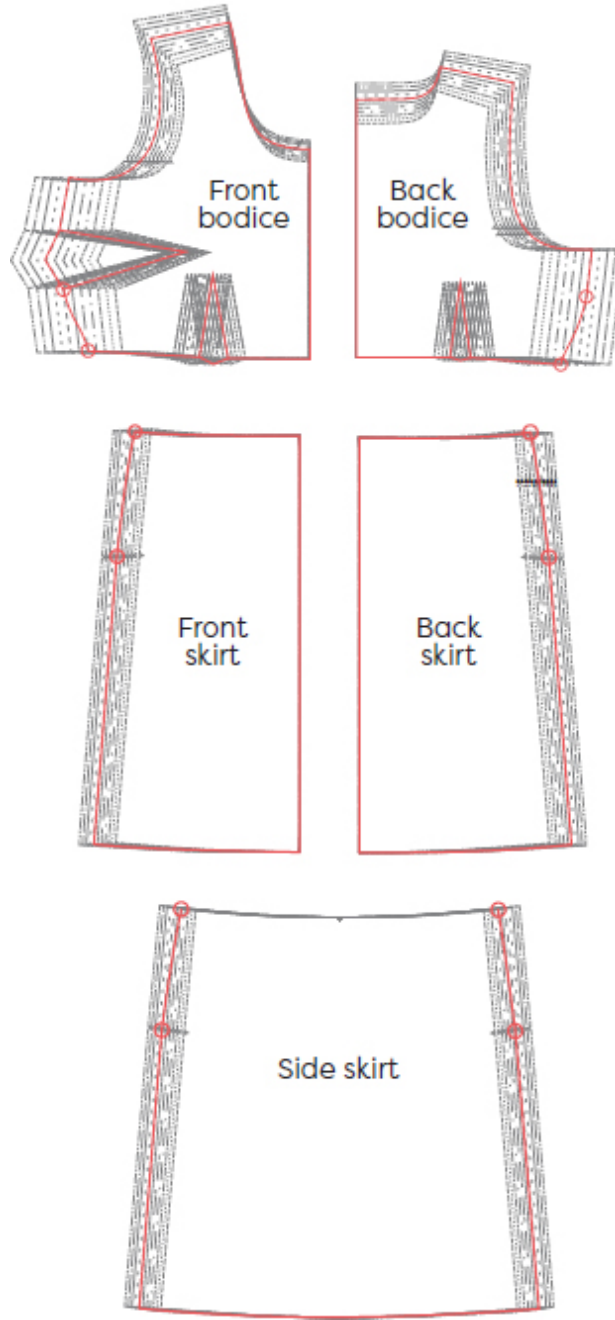
This is the approach you'd take for the [Honeybourne Dress](#).

1. Mark the sizes you need on the bodice at the bust (at the bottom of the dart on the front; at the bust-height notch on the back), at the waist and at the hip notch. For the waist dart, trace the dart size of the size you're making the waist (in the example shown here, the UK 24/US 20 dart).
2. Mark the sizes you need on the skirt pieces at the waist and hip notch.

3. Using a curved ruler, join the lines on the bodice pieces and the skirt pieces.

WAIST SEAM

Honeybourne Dress grading from
UK 28 bust to 24 waist to 28 hip
(US 24 bust to 20 waist to 24 hip)



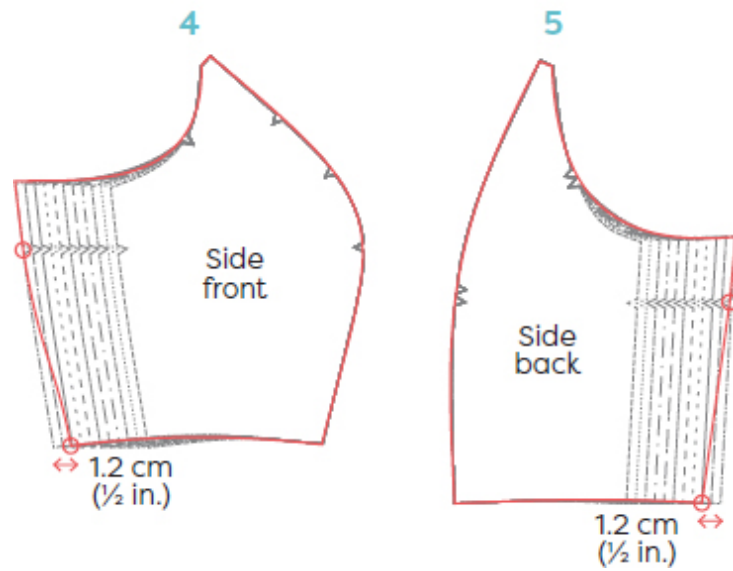
GRADING BETWEEN SIZES ON A GARMENT WITH PRINCESS SEAMS

This is the approach you'd take on the [Foxhill Dress](#).

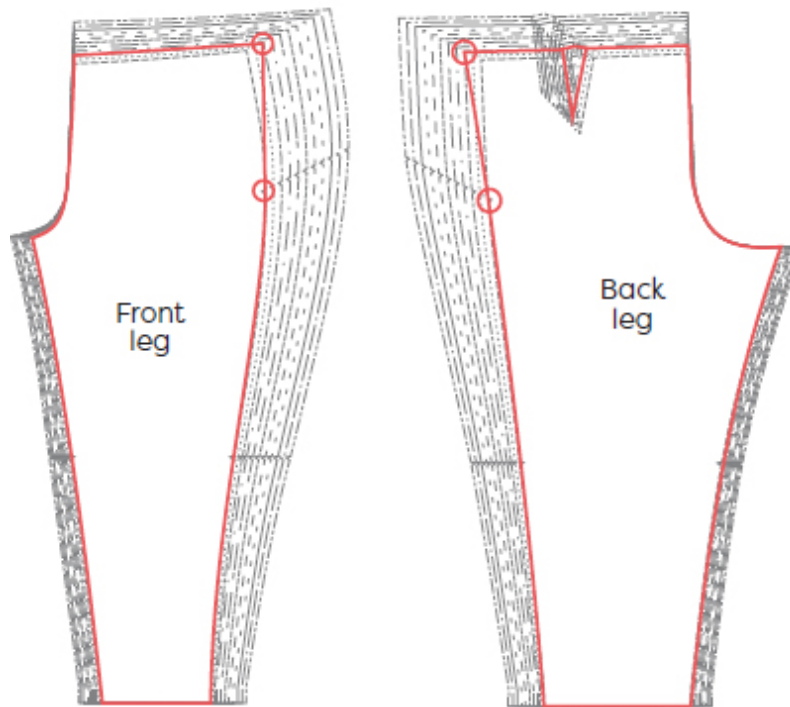
This type of grading is a bit trickier than others, due to the princess seams. We are going to grade at the side seams only, and not on the princess seam itself, to avoid altering the shape of the curve.

1. Calculate the difference between the size you'd be if you were all in one size, to the size you're grading to. So, for instance, if you're going from a UK 36 (US 32) bust to a UK 34 (US 30) waist, calculate the difference between a UK 36 (US 32) waist (as if you were in one size) and the UK 34 (US 30) waist size you actually need. In this case, that's 130 minus 125 cm (51¼ in. minus 49¼ in.) – a 5-cm (2-in.) difference.
2. Divide that number (5 cm/2 in.) by 4, as there are two side seams on the front and two side seams on the back. In this case, that's 1.2 cm (½ in.) per seam.
3. On the side front bodice piece at the waist, measure from the line you would use if you were all in one size, out or in by the amount you need to alter. In this case, we're going to go smaller by 1.2 cm (½ in.); if we were going from a UK 34 (US 30) bust to a UK 36 (US 32) waist, we'd measure bigger by 1.2 cm (½ in.).
4. Using a curved ruler, join the lines from the bust notch to the new waist marking.
5. Repeat this process with the side back bodice piece.
6. For the centre front, centre back and sleeve pieces, trace the size correlated to your bust size (in this case, UK 36/US 32).
7. For the skirt, follow the same steps for the side front and side back skirt pieces (in this case, reducing the width by 1.2 cm/½ in. at the side seams), so that the waist of the bodice matches the waist of the skirt.

Foxhill Dress grading from
UK 36 bust to 34 waist
(US 32 bust to 30 waist)



Magna Pants grading from
UK 20 waist to 16 hip
(US 16 waist to 12 hip)



GRADING BETWEEN SIZES ON TROUSERS

This is the approach you'll take for the [Magna Pants](#).

1. Mark the sizes you need on the front and back leg pieces at the waist and hip notch.
2. Using a curved ruler, join the lines on the leg pieces. For the waist dart, trace the dart for the size you're making at the waist.

Use the waistband size that correlates to your waist measurement.



Lengthening and shortening

Another easy fitting adjustment that makes a significant improvement to fit is lengthening and shortening (and it's great for altering the style of patterns, too). All sewing patterns have been designed for specific vertical proportions, and if your proportions are longer or shorter than the pattern was designed for, you may need to make adjustments.

However, it's not as simple as comparing your height: for instance, if a pattern is designed for a height of 167 cm (5 ft 6 in.) and you're 157 cm (5 ft 2 in.), you might assume that you'll definitely have to shorten it. In fact, you could have the same torso length as someone who's 167 cm (5 ft 6 in.) and have shorter legs, in which case the bodice might fit you as is, with no shortening required – see [illustration 2](#). Similarly, if you're 178 cm (5 ft 10 in.) tall, you could have very long legs and a short torso and have to shorten a bodice but lengthen a skirt significantly – see [illustration 3](#).

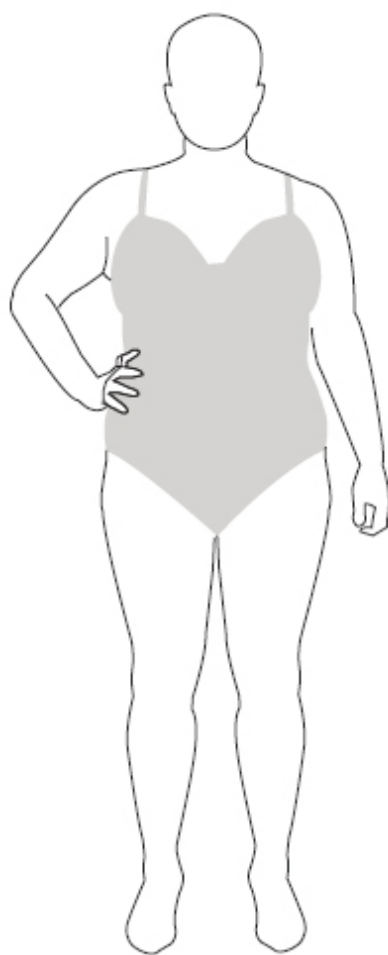
There are several ways to assess if you need to lengthen or shorten pattern pieces:

- [Make a toile to check.](#)
- Measure the length of the pattern pieces and compare them to your vertical length measurements.
- Refer to lengths given on the finished garment measurements. Cashmerette patterns give you the centre back length, which you can use to compare to your back length measurement.

The good news is that pattern companies usually draft for a consistent height and set of proportions, so once you know whether you need to shorten or lengthen patterns from a specific

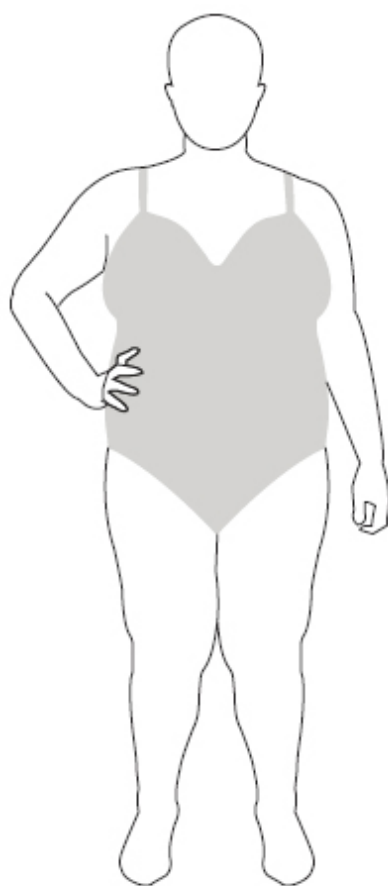
brand, you know that you'll always have to do that on all their patterns.

Most good-quality sewing patterns have 'lengthen/shorten here' lines on the key pattern pieces, which are located at points that maintain the shape of the pieces and avoid intersecting with features such as darts, if possible. If your pattern doesn't have them, you can mark them yourself: on a bodice, you want them to be below the darts or bust fullness if possible; on the lower half, place them across the pelvis, upper thigh and/or calf. Use these lines to make the adjustment you need. Although you might think it's easier to just alter at the hemline, that doesn't maintain the intended shape and proportions of the garment. If you need to lengthen or shorten by a significant amount, it's better to add or remove at multiple points and not all in one place.



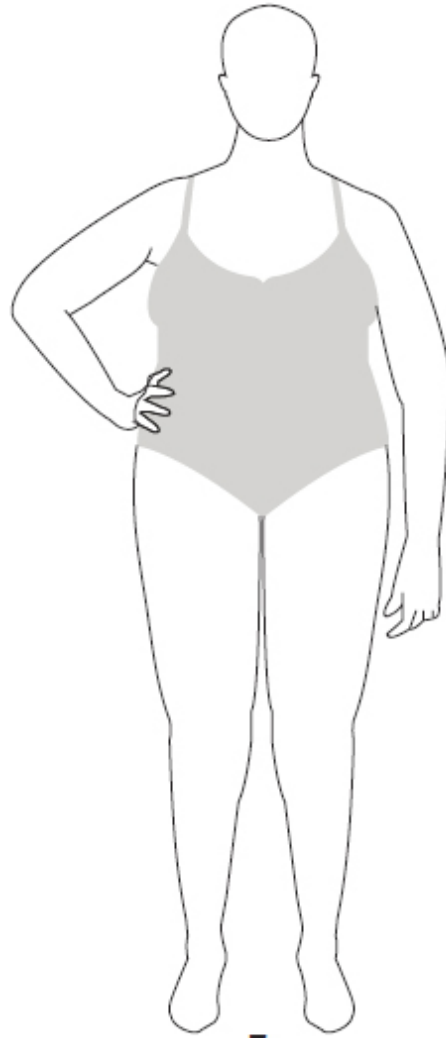
1.

167 cm (5 ft, 6 in.)
tall, average torso
and leg length



2.

157 cm
(5 ft, 2 in.) tall,
average torso
length, shorter
leg length



3.

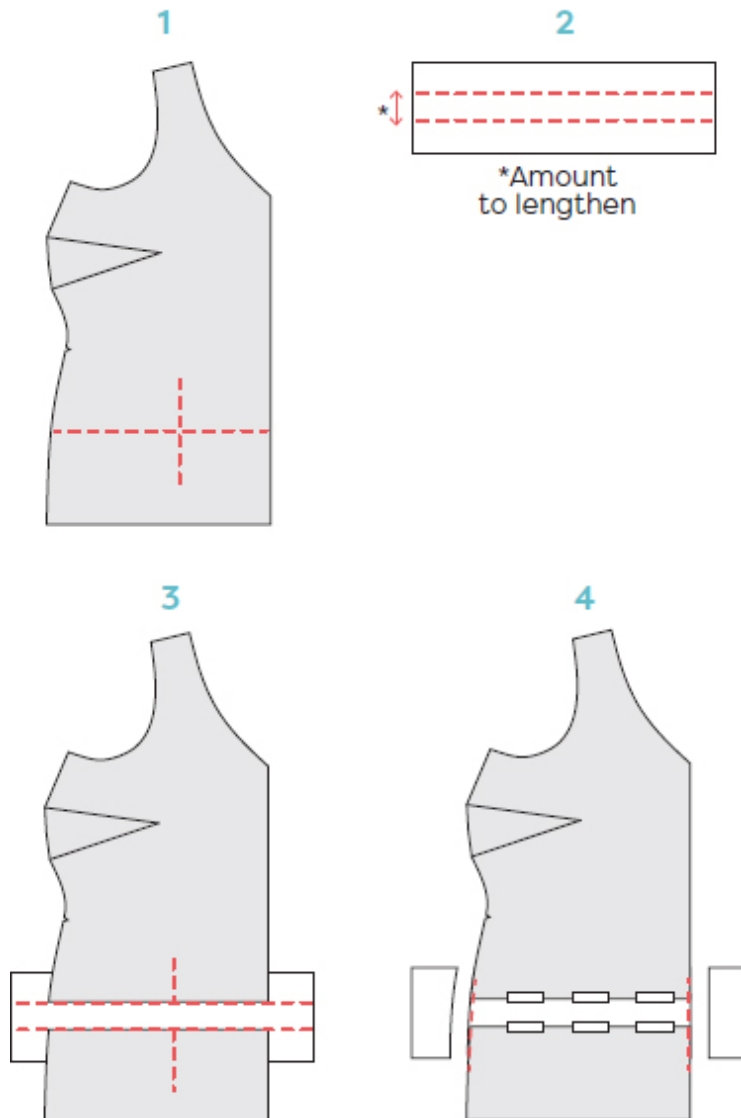
178 cm
(5 ft 10 in.)
tall, shorter
torso length,
longer leg
length

TO LENGTHEN

1. Draw a vertical line that intersects the lengthen/shorten line.
2. On a scrap piece of paper, draw two parallel lines that are the distance apart that you need to lengthen the pattern piece by.

3. Cut across the lengthen/shorten line on your pattern. Line up the two parts of the pattern with the lines you drew on the scrap paper. Use a ruler to make sure the vertical line you drew is aligned; if your pattern piece is on the fold or has a vertical edge, you can also do this at the edge of the piece.
4. Tape the pattern pieces to the scrap paper, and then re-draw the edges to join the upper and lower sections, smoothing them out as you go. Trim off the excess paper to create your new pattern piece.

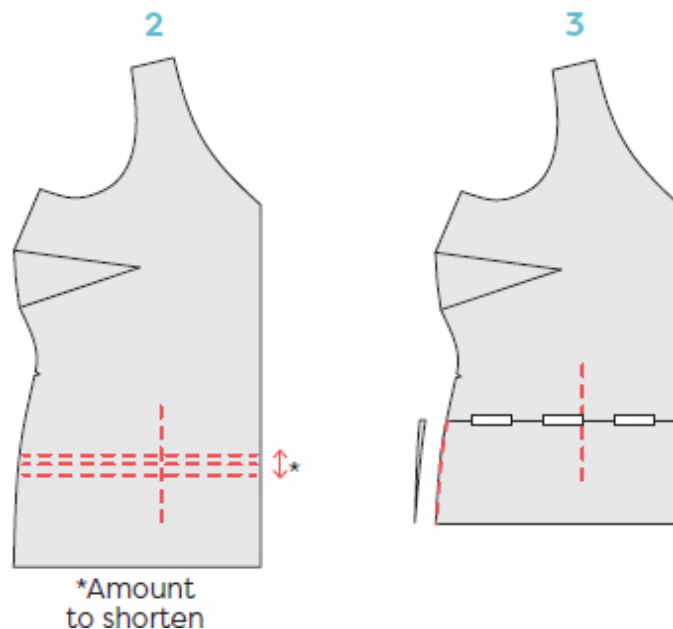
TO LENGTHEN



TO SHORTEN

1. Draw a vertical line that intersects the lengthen/shorten line (as shown in lengthening, [step 1](#)).
2. Draw two parallel lines that are the distance that you need to shorten the pattern piece by, evenly spaced above and below the lengthen/shorten line.
3. Cut the two parallel lines, get rid of the central strip of paper, and tape together the top and bottom sections, using a ruler to make sure the vertical line you drew is aligned. Smooth out the edge of the pattern piece and trim off any excess paper to create your pattern piece.

TO SHORTEN



Fitting if you use mobility aids

Perhaps the most freeing thing about sewing your own clothes is being able to specifically meet your needs, especially if they're not catered to by ready-to-wear clothes or sewing patterns. If you use mobility aids, adjusting patterns can transform the comfort and practicality of your wardrobe – all without sacrificing style.

If you use a wheelchair, crutches or another mobility aid, here are some considerations when it comes to fitting your clothes:

Accommodating your sitting measurements

If you're sitting, or alternating between standing and sitting, it's extra-important to make sure you use your sitting waist and hip measurements when you pick your starting size ([All about measurements](#)). Sewing with knit fabrics helps create garments that are comfortable when you are sitting down, but that doesn't mean you need to give up on woven fabrics – you simply need to use your seated measurements and consider incorporating features like back elastic waistbands that will adapt to the shape of your body as you move.

Another consideration is whether garments shift as you sit down – it's common for shoulders to push up or skirts to puff out. You can alter for that by raising the waistline (shortening the bodice – see the opposite) or reducing the fullness of a skirt.

Length

Depending on the type of mobility aid you use, length is a consideration – you don't want longer sleeves or flowy skirts to catch in wheels, for instance, or conversely to have garments that end up too short when you are seated. Making a toile will help, and make sure you wear it in all the different positions you'll find yourself in. Learn how to [lengthen and shorten garments](#).

Ease of movement

Many mobility aids require a lot of arm movement, so make sure that your sleeves and the back of the garment have enough ease for you to be able to easily move your arms in the way you need. You may need to do a [broad back adjustment](#) or a [full bicep adjustment](#) to create more space. Alternatively, you could consider styles that have a generous amount of ease at the back, such as gathering or a big box pleat.

FIT CLINIC:

Bust

Ah, boobs: they can be such a challenge to fit into RTW clothes or sewing patterns, and the fact they come in all sizes, shapes, heights and widths only increases the challenge. However, it's easier than you think to get a fantastic bust fit – and when you do, it'll transform the look and comfort of your garments.

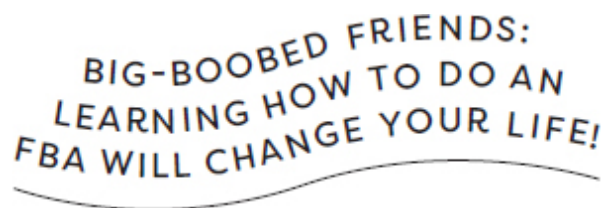
This chapter covers a whole array of bust adjustments, from Full Bust Adjustments and dart positioning to Small Bust Adjustments and the joy of dart rotation. Let's dive in!

Full Bust Adjustments (FBAs)

According to research done by the Curvy Sewing Collective, by far the most common pattern adjustment done by curvy sewists is the Full Bust Adjustment, or FBA.

Why's that? Well, the average bra cup size is a D or DD, but the average sewing pattern is drafted for a B or C cup – as a result, a large number of sewists need to make adjustments to the bust to fit. In fact, the Curvy Sewing Collective found that more curvy sewists are an H cup than a B cup! (B cups and smaller – of course, we love you too! We come in all shapes and sizes. Skip forward to Small Bust Adjustments, or [SBAs](#).)

You might think, well, if my bust measurement is included in the pattern measurements, why does it matter? The reason is, if you're larger than the cup size than the pattern is drafted for and you go by the recommended measurements, you're going to end up with a badly fitting garment that's way too big for you in the shoulders and upper body – a very common issue to have. A larger body with a smaller bust has very different proportions than a smaller body with a larger bust – even if the circumference around the body is the same. A lot of curvy sewists believe they have narrow shoulders, as patterns are always too wide on their shoulders, but often it's just the side effect of having made the wrong size, trying to fit their bust, and then everything else being way too big. Let's banish that issue once and for all!



How to tell if you need an FBA

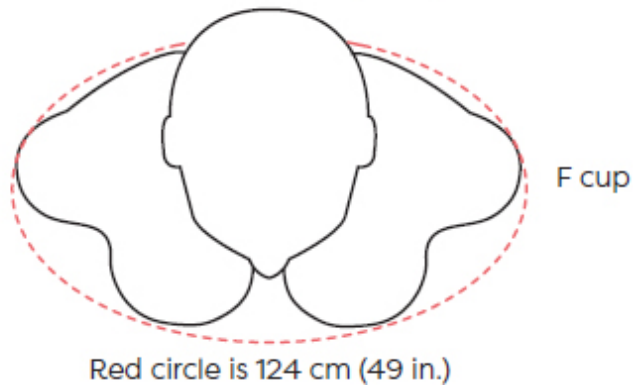
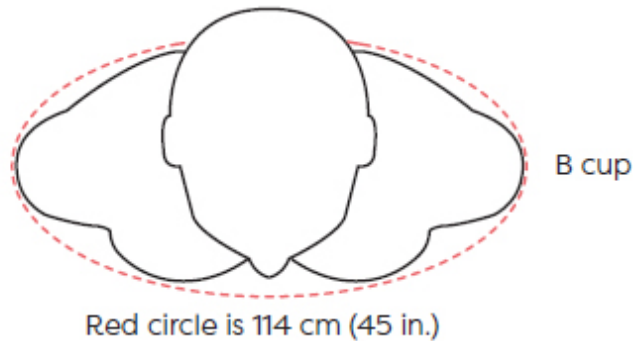
- If you know the cup size that the pattern is drafted for, and you're bigger than that (remember, sewing cup sizes aren't always the same as [bra sizes](#), though).
- If the pattern has both high bust and full bust measurements, and you're in a bigger size in the full bust than the high bust.
- If you're a D+ cup size and you're not making a specialist large cup size pattern like Cashmerette (most brands design for a B or C cup).
- If you make a toile and it's straining or tight at the bust, pulling forwards so that your bra shows at the armholes, pulling up at the centre front, and/or radiating lines out from your bust (later in this chapter, you'll see photos of what this looks like).

What does an FBA do?

- An FBA changes the front pieces of your pattern (there are no changes to the back, as your boob size doesn't affect your back!) to give you the room you need for your fuller bust. Depending on the type of FBA and garment, it may make a dart bigger or add a dart, and every FBA adds additional fabric at strategic points to make the pattern larger to accommodate your boobs.
- **It adds circumference** to stop the garment being tight and restricting your chest; having larger boobs means you measure bigger all the way around your body than someone with smaller boobs, if your torso is the same size – see [illustration 1](#).

- **It adds length** to stop the hem of your garment pulling up at the front. Having larger boobs means that the length of your front body from your shoulder to your waist is longer than someone with smaller boobs – see [illustration 2](#).

**1: LARGER BOOBS RESULT IN A
LARGER BODY CIRCUMFERENCE**



**2: LARGER BOOBS RESULT IN
MORE LENGTH TO YOUR BODY
FROM YOUR SHOULDER TO WAIST**





How to calculate the size of your FBA

When you do your FBA, you need to know how much horizontal room (circumference) to add (with the exception of the knit [FBA](#), which is covered separately). Depending on the type of measurements given by the pattern brand, there are two approaches:

IF YOUR PATTERN ONLY HAS FULL BUST MEASUREMENTS:

1. Use your high bust measurement to pick your size from the bust line in the Body Measurements Table. This approximates your full bust size if you were a B cup and should get you in the right size for your shoulders; that said, it's a rough estimate, so a fitting toile is important.
2. Calculate the difference between your full bust and high bust. This is the total amount you're going to add in circumference with your FBA if the pattern was drafted for a **B sewing cup**.

If the pattern was drafted for a **C sewing cup**, subtract 1 in. (2.5 cm) from the FBA needed.

If the pattern was drafted for a **D sewing cup**, subtract 2 in. (5 cm), and so on.

3. Divide that number by two to calculate the size of the adjustment you will do on your pattern piece (as pattern pieces reflect half the body).

Here is an example using a body measurements table for a B cup pattern:

Let's say you have:

- a high bust measurement of **112 cm (44 in.)**

and a full bust measurement of **122 cm (48 in)**

1. Use your high bust measurement to pick your starting size: so here it's a UK size 22 (US 18).
2. Your total FBA is your full bust minus your high bust:

$$122 - 112 \text{ cm (48 - 44 in.)}$$

$$= 10 \text{ cm (4 in.) total FBA.}$$

Note this this is the total amount to add in circumference if your pattern was drafted for a B sewing cup. If your pattern was drafted for a C cup, your FBA would be 2.5 cm (1 in.) smaller.

3. The adjustment will be 10 cm (4 in) divided by 2 = 5 cm (2 in.) on the pattern piece.

So, instead of a badly fitting UK size 26 (US 22), which is likely too big in the shoulders and upper body, you'll make a UK size 22 (US 18) with a 10-cm (4-in.) FBA, which will fit both your shoulders and your boobs.

Body measurements table

UK size	US size	EU size	Bust
14	10	42	93 cm (36½ in.)
16	12	44	97 cm (38 in.)
18	14	46	102 cm (40 in.)
20	16	48	107 cm (42 in.)
22	18	50	112 cm (44 in.)
24	20	52	117 cm (46 in.)
26	22	54	122 cm (48 in.)

IF YOUR PATTERN ALSO HAS HIGH BUST MEASUREMENTS:

1. Use your high bust measurement to pick your size from the high bust line in the Body Measurements Table.
2. Compare your full bust to the full bust line in the Body Measurements Table for the same size. If you're the same pattern size in high and full bust, there's no need for an FBA! If you're larger than the full bust measurement, then you will need an FBA.
3. Calculate the difference between your full bust and the largest full bust size shown (in the case of Cashmerette patterns, for the G/H cup size), and that's the amount you're going to add in circumference for your FBA.
4. Divide that number by two for how much adjustment you will do on your pattern piece (as pattern pieces reflect half the body).

Here is an example using the body measurements chart of Cashmerette patterns:

Let's say you have:

- a high bust measurement of **135 cm (53 in.)**

and a full bust measurement of **150 cm (59 in.)**

1. Compare your high bust measurement to the high bust line: so here it's a UK size 32 (US 28).
2. Compare your full bust measurement to the full bust line: it's 150 cm (59 in.), which is bigger than the largest option for UK size 32 (US 28): the size G/H is 147 cm/58 in. That means you need an FBA.
3. Your total FBA will be the difference between your full bust and the largest full bust available for your size:

$$150 - 147 \text{ cm (59 - 58 in.)}$$

$$= 3 \text{ cm (1 in.) total FBA.}$$

4. The pattern adjustment will be 3 cm (1 in.) divided by 2 = 1.5 cm (½ in.) FBA adjustment on the pattern piece.

So here, instead of making a UK size 34 (US 30) E/F which is likely to be too big in the shoulders and upper body, you'll make a UK size 32 (US 28) G/H with a 3-cm (1-in.) FBA, and you'll have a much better fit.

Body measurements table

UK size	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US size	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU size	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
High bust	94 cm (37 in.)	99 cm (39 in.)	104 cm (41 in.)	109 cm (43 in.)	114 cm (45 in.)	119 cm (47 in.)	124 cm (49 in.)	130 cm (51 in.)	135 cm (53 in.)	140 cm (55 in.)	145 cm (57 in.)
C/D cup	102 cm (40 in.)	107 cm (42 in.)	112 cm (44 in.)	117 cm (46 in.)	122 cm (48 in.)	127 cm (50 in.)	132 cm (52 in.)	137 cm (54 in.)	142 cm (56 in.)	147 cm (58 in.)	152 cm (60 in.)
Full bust											
E/F cup	104 cm (41 in.)	109 cm (43 in.)	114 cm (45 in.)	119 cm (47 in.)	124 cm (49 in.)	130 cm (51 in.)	135 cm (53 in.)	140 cm (55 in.)	145 cm (57 in.)	150 cm (59 in.)	155 cm (61 in.)
G/H cup	107 cm (42 in.)	112 cm (44 in.)	117 cm (46 in.)	122 cm (48 in.)	127 cm (50 in.)	132 cm (52 in.)	137 cm (54 in.)	142 cm (56 in.)	147 cm (58 in.)	152 cm (60 in.)	157 cm (62 in.)

Locating your bust apex

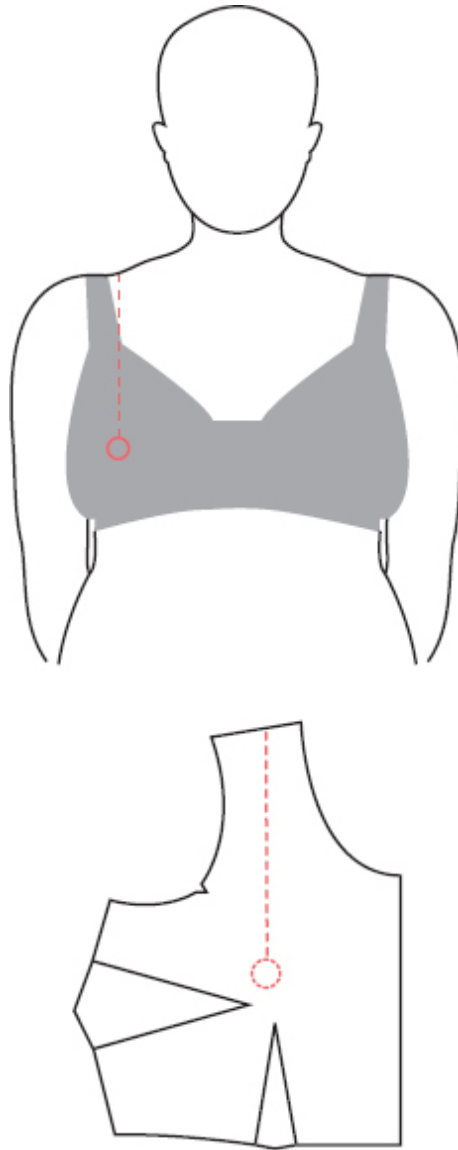
Your bust apex is the part of your boobs that sticks out the most – if you walked into a wall, the part that would hit the wall first. It's often referred to as where your nipples are, but for many (most?!) of us, that's not necessarily the case.

You need to be able to identify the location of two bust apexes in order to do bust adjustments: **the bust apex on the pattern** you're using and **your own bust apex**.

FINDING THE BUST APEX ON YOUR PATTERN

There are a number of approaches, depending on the design of the pattern.

- Sometimes the bust apex is marked with a circle on the pattern (this is more common on single-size patterns).
- If the pattern piece has a bust dart and a waist dart, draw a straight line through the centre of both of them: they will almost always intersect at the bust apex.
- If the pattern only has a bust dart, if you draw a straight line through the centre of it, the bust apex will usually be around 2.5 cm/1 in. (for B/C cup designed patterns) to 5 cm/2 in. (for D+ patterns) beyond the end of the dart.
- If the pattern has a princess seam, the bust apex will typically be on the side front piece at the point where it protrudes the most.
- If the pattern doesn't have darts, check to see if there is a bust-level notch at the side seam, which will at least tell you the height of the bust apex. If there's no information at all, you can use your own bust apex.



FINDING YOUR BUST APEX AND TRANSFERRING IT TO A PATTERN

Make sure you're wearing the same bra as you'll be wearing with the final garment, as different bras can alter the location of your bust apex significantly.

To find your bust apex, the best approach is to make a toile and mark your bust apex on it. Alternatively, you can place the pattern piece against your body (remembering the shoulder seam allowance) and mark it directly onto the pattern; however, this isn't super accurate as pattern tissue doesn't behave like fabric.

If you made a toile, measure straight down from the shoulder seam to the bust apex. Then transfer that distance to the pattern piece, as shown above.

Truing darts

Have you noticed that darts often have a little triangle sticking out at the side seam? That's called the dart extension. It's there so that, when you sew and press the darts, the fabric will reach the side seam and get sewn into the garment. When you're making an adjustment like an FBA or [rotating darts](#), you'll need to re-draw that part of the dart; this process is known as 'truing'.

1. To true a dart, first tape a piece of scrap paper behind the gap in your dart created by your adjustment.
2. Fold the pattern piece as if you were sewing the dart, bringing the two dart legs together and creasing the dart along the centre.
3. Then fold the dart up or down (depending on your preference), and press the whole pattern piece flat at the side with your fingers – it's like you've just sewn and pressed the dart.
4. Draw a line from the side seam at the bottom to the end of the top dart leg.
5. Cut off the excess paper at the side seam.
6. Once you open up the pattern piece, you'll find you've created an extension at the end of the dart (or it could be flat, or inverted if you're pressing up).

1



2



3



4



5



6



 FUN FACT

At Cashmerette we typically recommend pressing darts **up** (it helps make big boobs look lifted), so the dart extension may be a lot flatter than you're used to, or even inverted.

Darted and dartless FBA

HONEYBOURNE DRESS:

BEFORE



AFTER



This FBA technique works for garments that have darts, whether that's bust darts, waist darts or both. It also works for woven garments with no darts, with the option to add a dart if you want.

Signs you may need an FBA from your toile:

- It is tight over your boobs.
- You have folds of fabric at the armpit above your boobs.
- The front waistline / hem is hiking up.
- There are diagonal drag lines from your bust apex to the side seam (in less fitted garments).
- The armholes are being dragged forward by your boobs (or gaping open in a sleeveless garment).

BEFORE YOU START

[Calculate the size of your FBA.](#)

MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

1. Draw three lines on the front pattern piece:

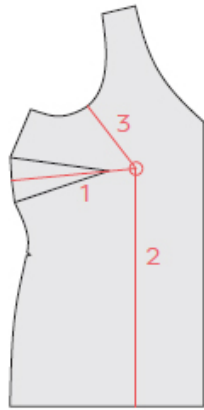
- Line 1 goes through the centre of the bust dart to the pattern's bust apex. (For patterns with no bust dart, draw a horizontal line from the bust apex across to the side seam.)
- Line 2 goes from the bust apex vertically down to the waist, parallel to the centre front. For most patterns that have waist darts, this line will go through the middle of the waist dart.
- Line 3 goes from the bust apex up diagonally to the armhole – it should meet the armhole about a third of the way along the armhole from the underarm, but the exact point isn't important.

On the right, you can see what those lines look like on a one bust dart pattern piece, a one waist dart pattern piece, a two-darted pattern piece and a dartless pattern piece.

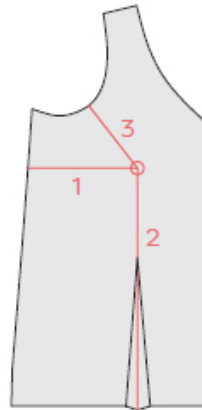
2. Mark the seam allowance at the top of line 3. Cut up line 2 to the bust apex, and continue cutting up line 3, stopping at the seam

allowance mark. Snip into the seam allowance from the other side, leaving a little hinge of paper.

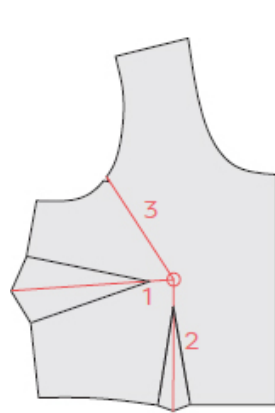
1



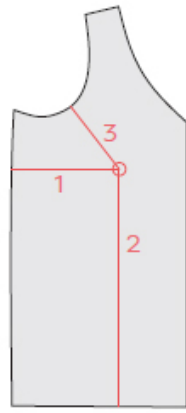
Pattern piece with one bust dart



Pattern piece with one waist dart

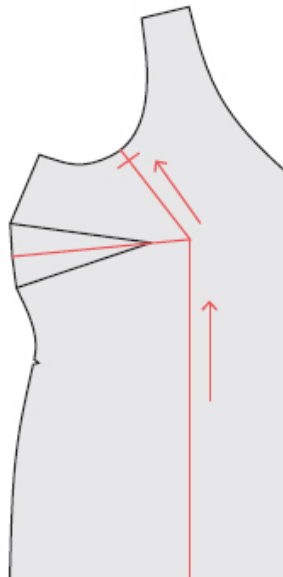


Pattern piece with one bust and one waist dart



Dartless garment

2

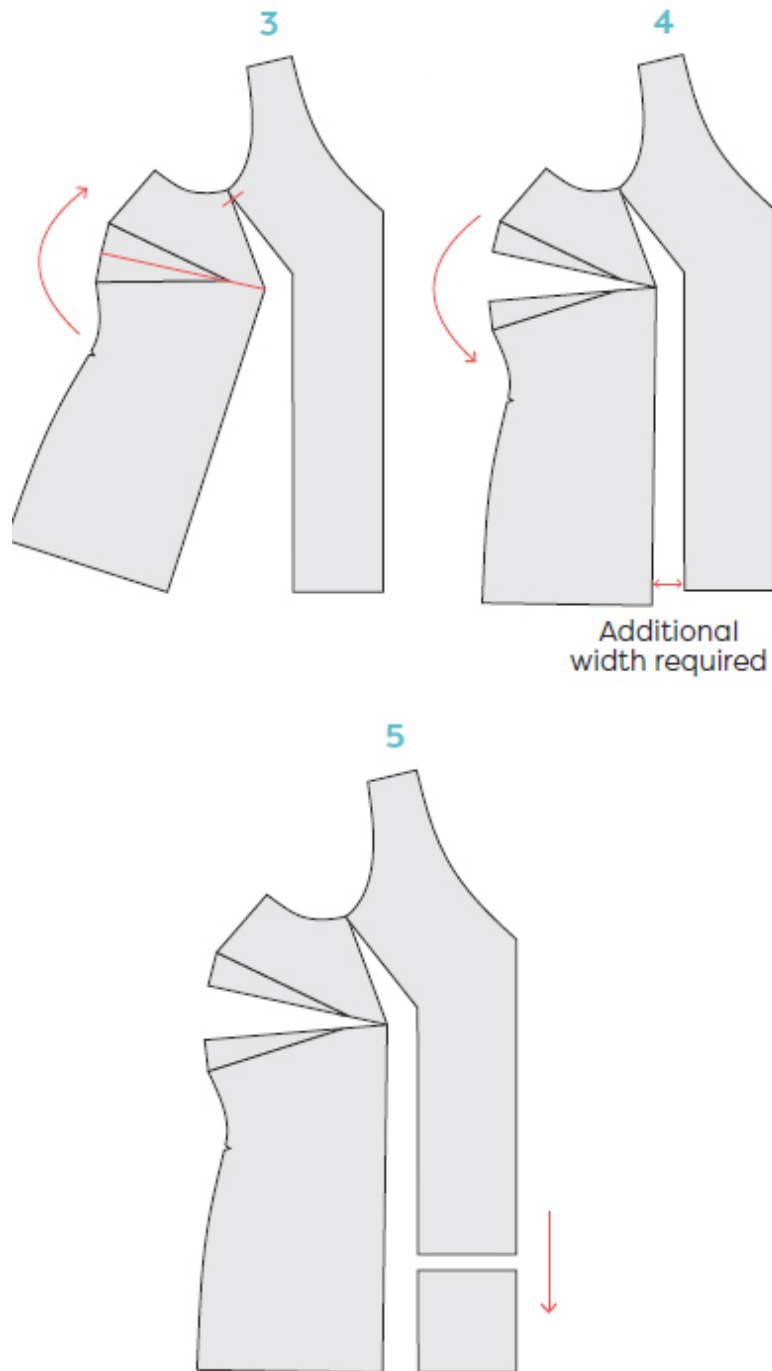


3. Keeping the hinge intact, swing the side section up and to the side.

 TIP

Don't worry if you accidentally cut through a hinge! Put a piece of sticky tape on it and re-cut into it to create a new hinge.

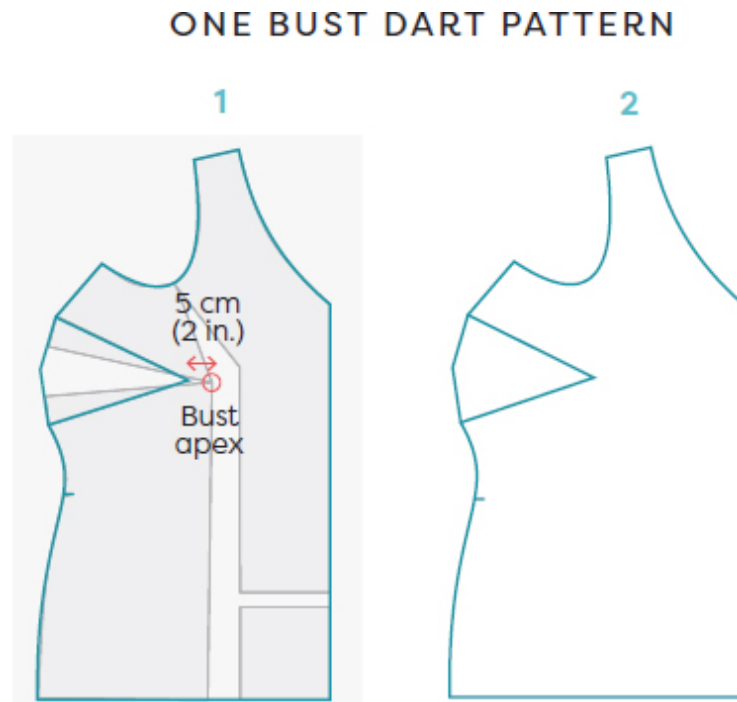
4. Cut line 1, starting at the side seam and leaving a small hinge at the bust apex. Carefully swing the bottom piece down, and then adjust the pieces so that the vertical gap that has opened up (see the arrow) has parallel sides and is the width you need to add for your FBA. You've now added the horizontal width you need, made the dart bigger so that it'll fit over your bust properly, and changed the armscye shape for more bra coverage. Secure the left-hand side parts of the pattern piece to your work surface with small tabs of tape.
5. Draw a horizontal line across the centre front piece, anywhere below the apex. Cut across and then slide the bottom part down so that it's in line with the side piece at the bottom. This adds the vertical length you need to cover your bust.



The next step is to trace the new shape onto tracing paper and re-draw the darts. There are slightly different approaches depending on the number and position of the darts:

FOR ONE BUST DART PATTERNS

1. To create the new bust dart, start at the side seam with the original dart legs, but end the dart 5 cm (2 in.) from the bust apex, which is now lower and closer to the side seam than it was before (this is good, as larger boobs are almost always lower and require shorter darts!).
2. True the **dart** extension.



Removing width at the waist and hip

This FBA has also added more width all the way down the front of the pattern piece. If you don't want or need that additional width, there are two approaches to remove it:

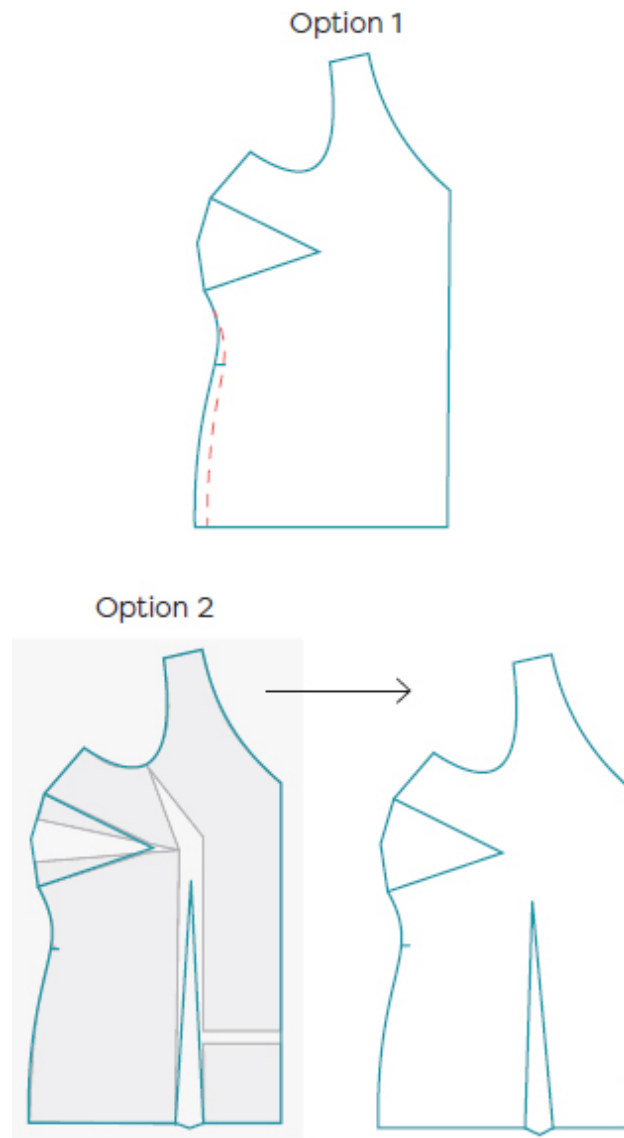
Option 1

Trim the additional width off at the side seam.

Option 2

Add a waist dart that is the width of the gap you added for the FBA in step 4. The classic approach is to end the waist dart 5 cm (2 in.)

below the height of the bust apex (below left). However, depending on how much you want to maintain the flowy look of a one-dart top, you may want to end the dart lower or create a diamond-shaped fish-eye dart; a toile is a great way to gauge.



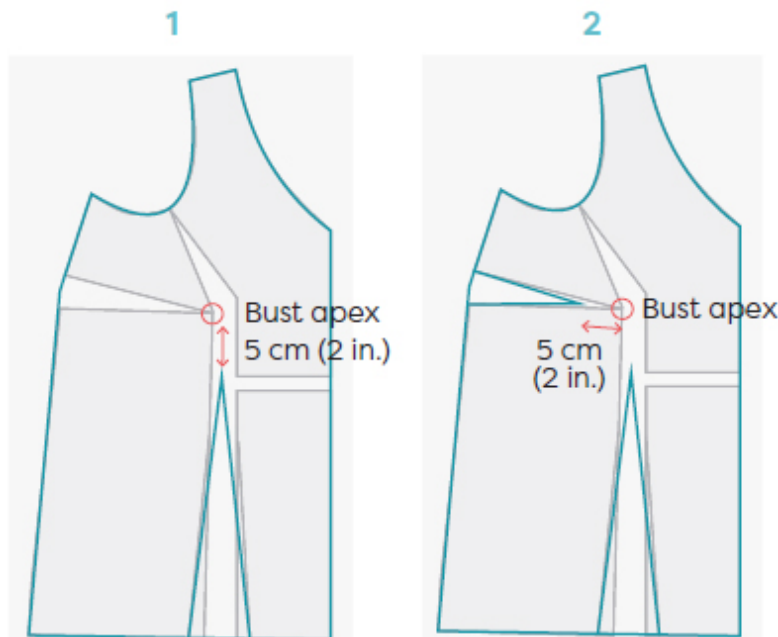
FOR ONE WAIST DART PATTERNS

1. To create the new waist dart, start at the original dart legs and finish the dart at least 5 cm (2 in.) below the height of the bust

apex and in the middle of the new opening. True the [dart extension](#).

2. This FBA has created a bust dart. Draw it in, starting the dart legs at the edges of the new opening and ending 5 cm (2 in.) from the bust apex. True the [dart extension](#). If you want to remove the [bust dart](#), for details of how to rotate it into the waist dart.

ONE WAIST DART PATTERN



TIP

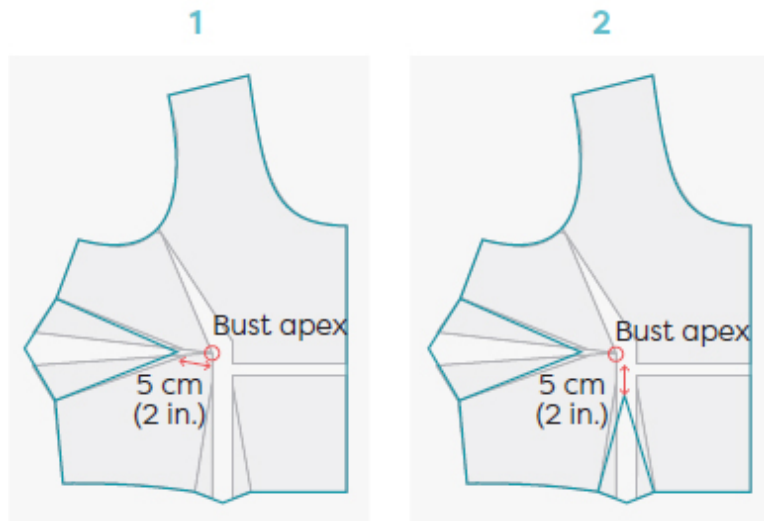
Patterns that only have a waist dart do not always provide a great fit if you have a large bust. Consider keeping the bust dart that is created by the FBA in order to achieve a more tailored fit for your body shape.

FOR TWO - DART PATTERNS

1. To create the new bust dart, start at the side seam with the original dart legs, but end the dart 5 cm (2 in.) from the bust apex. True the [dart extension](#).

2. To create the new waist dart, start at the original dart legs and finish the dart at least 5cm (2 in) below the height of the bust apex, if possible, but in the middle of the new opening.

TWO-DART PATTERN

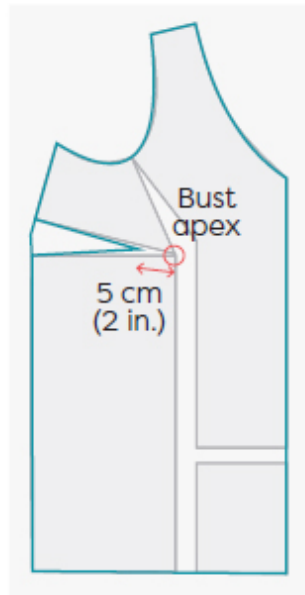


FOR DARTLESS PATTERNS

1. Begin by drawing in a bust dart (even if you want to remove it), starting the dart legs at the edges of the new opening and ending 5 cm (2 in.) from the bust apex. True the **dart** extension.
2. If you want to remove the dart, rotate it out to the **hem**. Note that this will result in a looser fit. If this is the bodice of a dress with a waist seam, you will then need to remove the extra width from the side seam to ensure the bodice matches the waistband or skirt.

DARTLESS PATTERN

1



YOUR FBA IS NOW COMPLETE!

Well done! You have added the horizontal and vertical space you need and changed the bust dart size and armhole shape for more coverage. The side seam will be the same length once the dart is sewn (because the extra length at the front side seam is contained within the dart, which is sewn shut), so you do not need to alter the back piece. If you have any facings or linings, adjust them now to match your new front piece.

Fine-tuning your bust dart fit

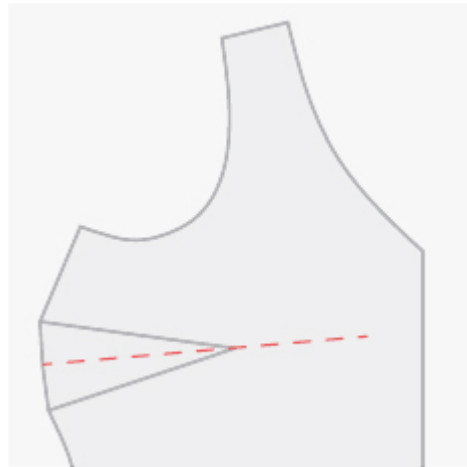
For a garment to fit well, it's really important that the bust dart is in the right position. If it's too high or too low, too long or too short, you'll end up with puckers, bunching and a shape that doesn't closely match your bust. Luckily, all these adjustments are easy to make!

Lengthening or shortening bust darts

Darts should end around 2.5 cm (1 in.) from your bust apex – the fullest point of your boobs – if you're a cup size A–C and around 5 cm (2 in.) from your bust apex if you're a cup size D+. If your bust dart is too long (getting too close to your apex), it will make the bust fit pointy, because there isn't enough fabric to go over the curve of your boobs, so it flattens them at the sides. If your bust dart is too short, there won't be enough shaping and you'll have loose fabric in the wrong places on your bust. Doing an FBA or an SBA automatically changes dart length (FBAs shorten them, SBAs lengthen them), so always do FBAs/SBAs before making any changes to the darts, as you might discover the work has already been done for you.

1. Draw a line through your bust dart, going through the middle of the dart legs, through the dart point, and extend it by 5 cm (2 in.) or so. This is your guideline.

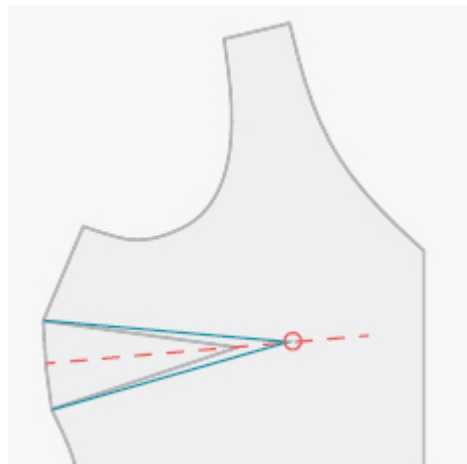
1



TO LENGTHEN THE DART

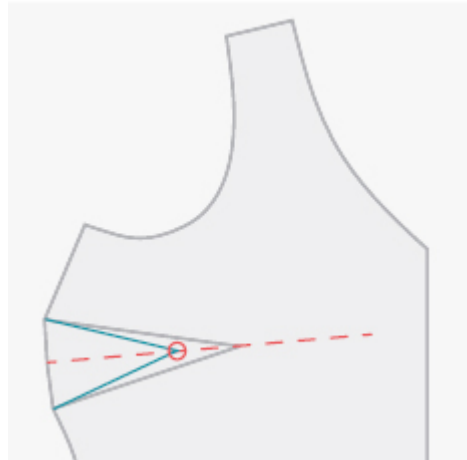
2. Draw your new dart point on the guideline. Re-draw the dart, starting at the original dart legs and ending at your new dart point.

2



TO SHORTEN THE DART

3. To shorten the dart, follow exactly the same process in the opposite direction.



Lowering or raising bust darts

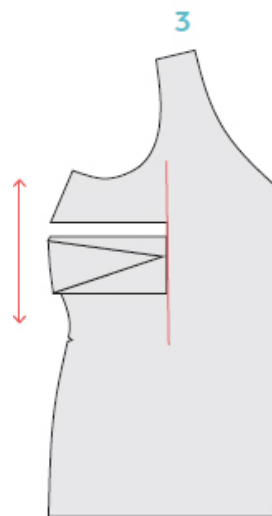
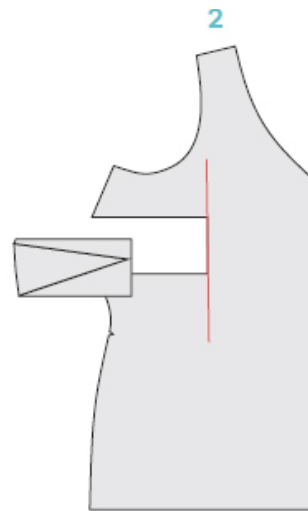
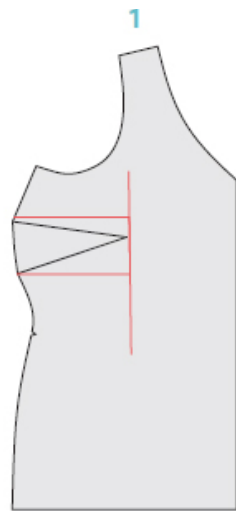
It's very common to have to lower (or raise) darts. I know this can feel emotional ('oh no! I've got saggy boobs!'), but in fact most people with bigger boobs also have lower boobs, because they simply have to take up more of our torso. Plus, gravity. Don't fret about it – rejoice in the fact that being a sewist means you can have the right height darts!

Darts should point directly at your bust apex. If they don't, you need to either raise or lower them. On your toile, mark your actual apex and then measure how much higher or lower the pattern apex needs to move to be in the right place: that's how much you need to move your dart. Make sure you're wearing the same bra with your toile that you're going to wear with the final garment – different bras can affect the height of your apex by several inches if you're full busted.

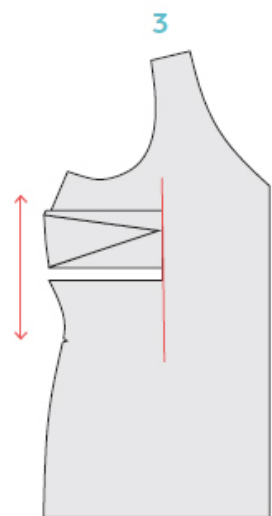
Once more, make sure you do your FBA before adjusting the dart height, because it automatically lowers the dart. Also, note that if you press your darts up (as we recommend), there is a limit to how much higher a dart can go before the dart uptake extends past the armhole. In this case, just press them down instead.

1. Draw a rectangular box around your bust dart and a long vertical line at the edge of the box, parallel to the centre front.

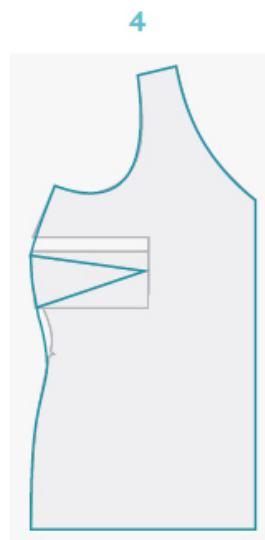
2. Cut the box out.
3. Slide the box up or down by the amount required, keeping the right-hand side of the box flush with the vertical line. Tape the box in place.
4. Trace the new pattern piece. The side seam will now be slightly jagged. As you trace, smooth out the side seam, which means you may have to add a little bit extra to the side seam (see underneath the dart in the example of lowering the dart) or chip off a little part (see underneath the dart in the example of raising the dart) – that's ok! Just make sure the full dart legs are still included (i.e. don't chip off or add to the dart itself).



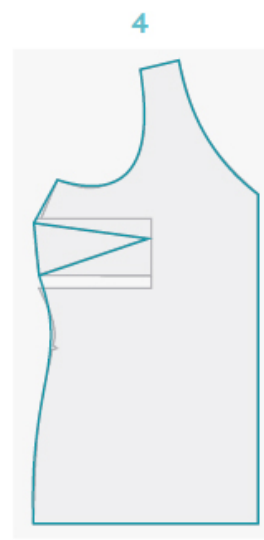
Lowering the dart



Raising the dart



Lowering the dart



Raising the dart

Princess seam FBA

FOXHILL DRESS:

BEFORE



AFTER



This FBA technique is for princess seamed garments, whether they have armhole or shoulder princess seams. It's a little more complex than a darted FBA – yes, you have to trace the same piece twice! – but a nicely fitted princess seam is a thing of beauty, so it's well worth your time.

Signs you may need an FBA from your toile:

- It is tight over your boobs.
- You have folds of fabric at the armpit above your boobs.
- The front waistline / hem is hiking up.
- There are diagonal drag lines from your bust apex to the side seam (in less fitted garments).
- The armholes are being dragged forward by your boobs (or gaping open in a sleeveless garment).

BEFORE YOU START

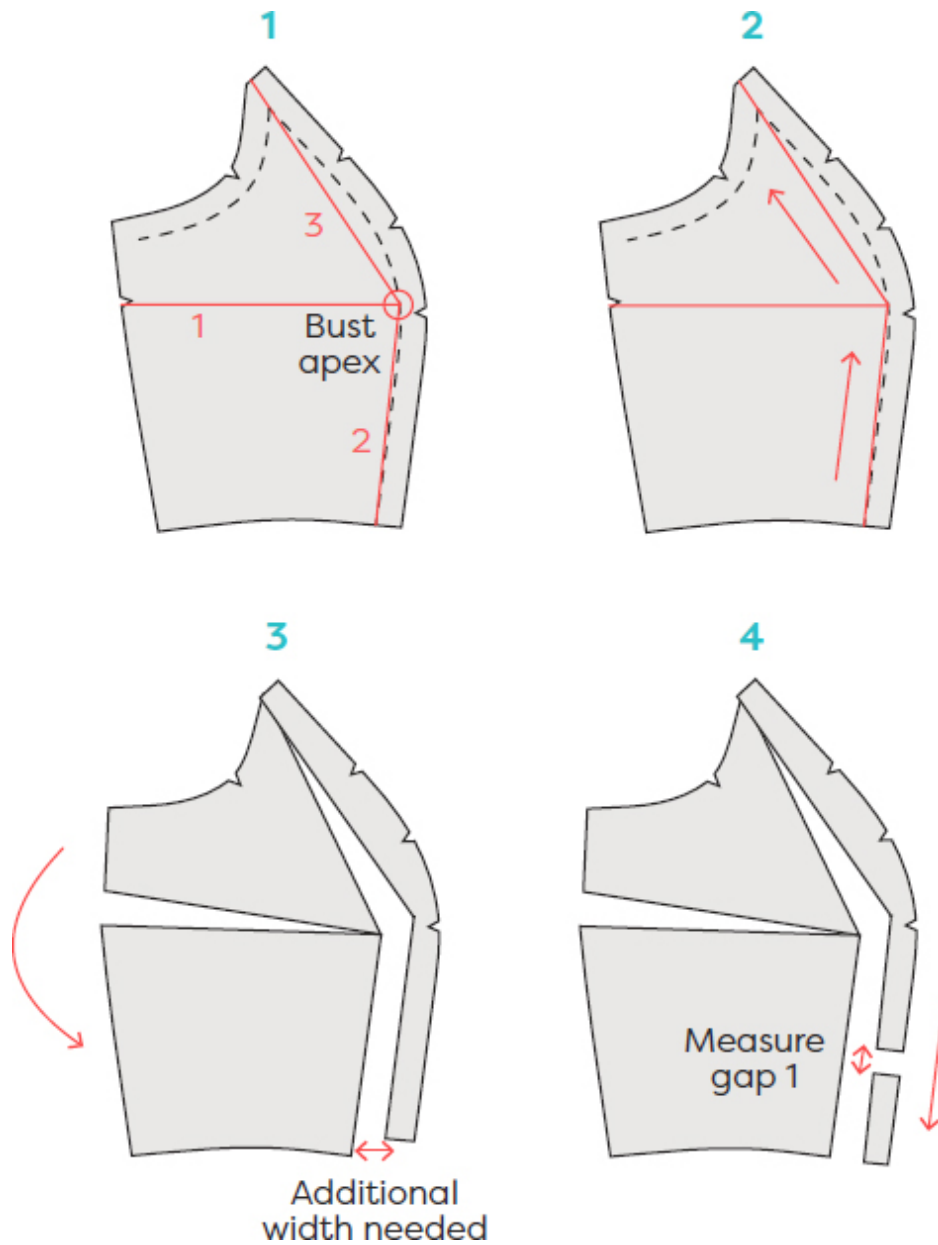
Calculate the size of your [FBA](#).

In a princess seam FBA, the additional width is added to the side front pattern piece; the centre front pattern piece is adjusted only for length, to match the side front piece.

MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

1. Starting with the side front pattern piece, draw on the seam allowance around the curved side and at the top of the armhole. Now, draw three lines.
 - Line 1 goes horizontally across at the height of the bust apex (which is at the part of the curve which is sticking furthest out).
 - Line 2 goes from the bust apex down to where the seam allowance meets the bottom of the piece.
 - Line 3 goes from the bust apex diagonally up to the top corner of the seam allowances.
2. Starting at the bottom, cut up line 2 to the bust apex. Continue cutting up line 3, stopping at the corner of the seam allowances. Snip into the seam allowance from the other side, leaving a small hinge.

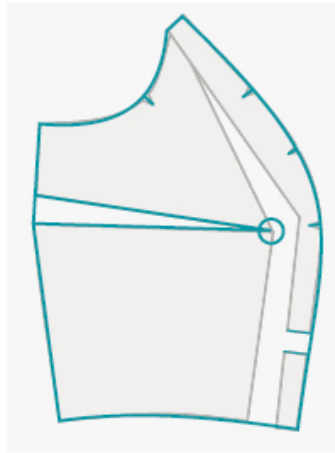
3. Cut line 1, starting at the side seam and leaving a small hinge at the end. Spread the side pieces down and out as shown, creating a vertical gap and a dart opening. Adjust the pieces so that the vertical gap has parallel sides and is the width you need to add for your FBA.
4. Draw a horizontal line across the narrow right-hand side piece, anywhere below the apex. Cut across and then slide the bottom section down so that it's in line with the side piece. This adds the vertical length you need to cover your bust. Measure the length of the vertical gap that's opened up; this is gap 1 (measure it along the seam allowance, not the edge of the pattern piece).



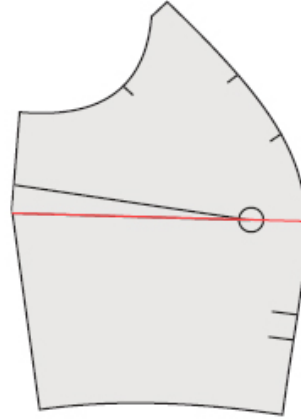
5. Trace the adjusted pattern piece, marking the notches, the dart that's been created (it's going away soon!), the new bust apex at the end of the dart and the top and bottom of gap 1. Cut out your new traced piece.
6. On the new piece, draw a line through the bottom dart leg and through the new apex to the edge of the pattern piece.

7. Cut this new line, starting at the side seam and ending at the bust apex. Then cut from the other side, ending just before the bust apex and creating a hinge. Swing the bottom piece up, bringing the dart legs together to close the dart. A small gap will appear at the edge of the pattern piece by the bust apex. Measure the vertical length of the gap at the seam allowance; this is gap 2.
8. Trace your final side pattern piece, making sure you mark all the notches, and smooth over the gaps created during the adjustment. Re-draw the grainline (extend the original bottom section of the grainline up).
9. Now we need to adjust the centre front piece to match the new side piece. Measure the distance from the bottom of the side piece to the bottom of gap 1, and the distance from the top of gap 1 to gap 2. Use these measurements to transfer the markings to the centre front piece, and then draw a horizontal line across the whole piece at these two levels.
10. Cut the centre front piece along the horizontal lines. Spread them out vertically by the same distance you measured on the side piece at gap 1 and gap 2, and tape them to your work surface or to a piece of paper, keeping the centre front vertically aligned.

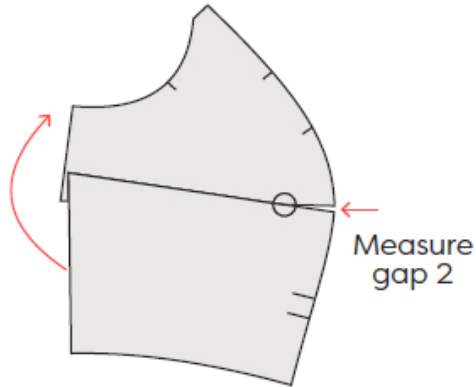
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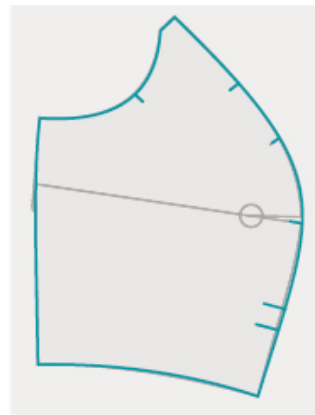
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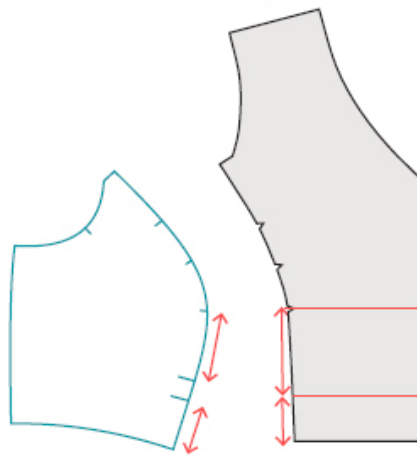
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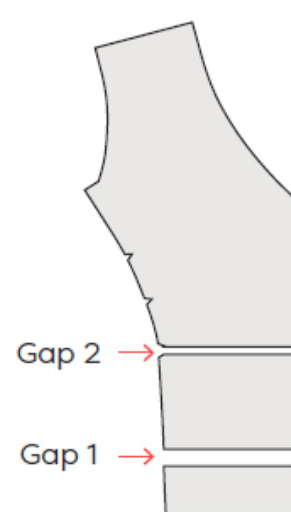
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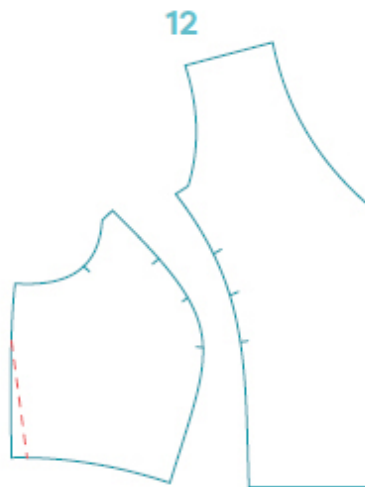
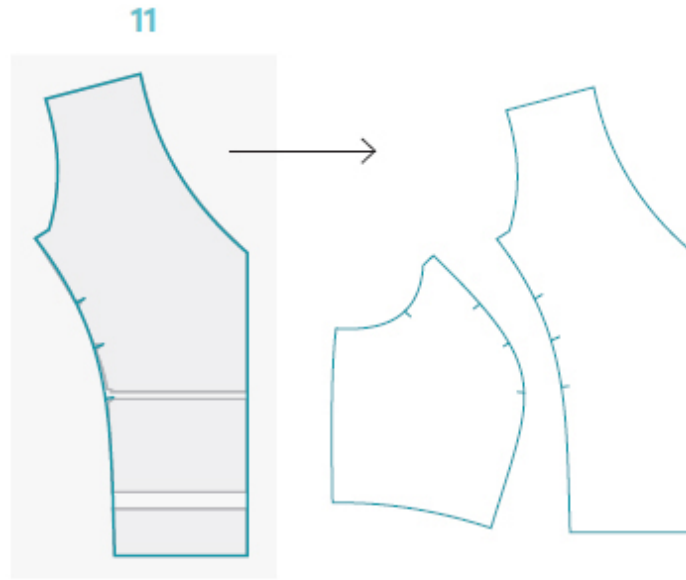
9



10



11. Trace your final centre front pattern piece.
12. This FBA has also added more width to the waist. If you don't want that extra room, simply trim the additional width off at the side seam.



IT'S A LOT OF TRACING, BUT ALL
YOUR HARD WORK WILL PAY OFF!

Curvy sewist in focus: Miranda

WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO START SEWING YOUR OWN CLOTHES?

While on maternity leave with my second child, I started obsessively watching DIY sewing videos on YouTube and my love affair with home sewing began. I was given a second-hand sewing machine and some accessories, and I started refashioning charity shop items and turning my old clothes into something new. In 2018 I discovered the online sewing community and began using PDF and paper patterns.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE?

Varied and casual! I like a lot of different styles and I like the freedom to go with the flow regarding my style. I love colour and printed fabric, and I accessorize most of my makes with trainers.

WHAT DO YOU FIND ARE THE MAIN BENEFITS OF SEWING YOUR CLOTHES?

Being able to make clothes to fit my own body and my mood is the best feeling. Sewing allows me to take an outfit from my mind and make it a reality; that's also a blessing. It can build confidence and boost self-esteem, not to mention that it's also a lot of fun!

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVOURITE TYPE OF CLOTHES TO MAKE?

I love making coats and basics. I like to sew things I'll get to wear often and that are satisfying to make, like T-shirts and simple woven tops, which are quick and enjoyable. A coat is a little more involved, but the satisfaction of bagging out a coat lining will never lose its thrill for me!

WHERE DO YOU FIND YOUR INSPIRATION?

I'm inspired by the online sewing community and Pinterest. I often go in search of a particular pattern on Instagram using hashtags, so that I can see a garment on different bodies or maybe with different fabric

choices. Pinterest often sends me down a rabbit hole, but it's a great place to find inspiration for anything you happen to be making.





Miranda, 43, is from the West Midlands. When she's

not working at a dental practice, she loves sewing
and posting her makes on Instagram at
@mirry_maker and on her blog, mirrymaker.com

Lowering or raising a princess seam curve

Princess seams have a lot of versatility when it comes to bust fitting, but in some ways they're harder to fit than darts, due to the curve. If you find that the curve of a princess seam isn't following the shape of your boobs, you'll need to adjust it. The most common need is to lower or raise the bust apex, where the most fullness is, but sometimes it needs more reshaping than that.

There are two approaches to fitting the princess seam curve:

Flat pattern alteration

This approach works best if the curve is generally an OK fit for your bust but just needs to be moved a little bit higher or lower.

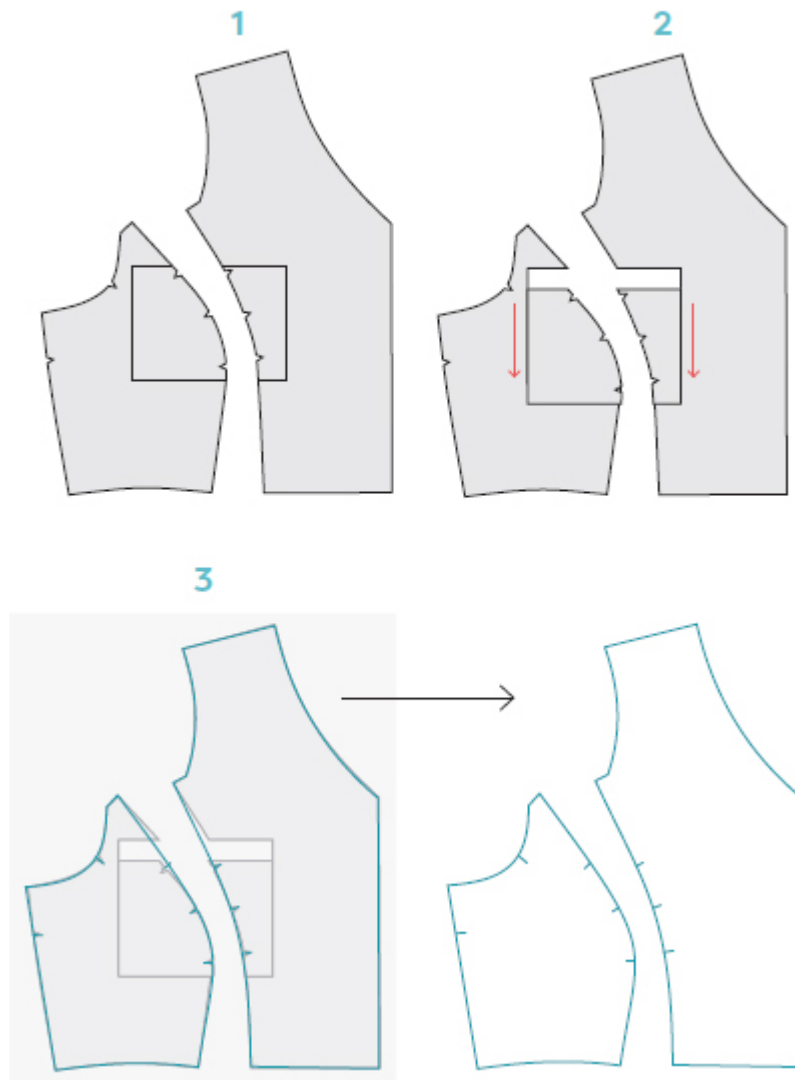
BEFORE YOU START

Put on your toile (with the pattern apex marked) and mark **your** bust apex. Measure the distance from the pattern apex to your bust apex and note whether you need to move the apex up or down (see more info on finding your [bust apex](#)).

TO LOWER THE BUST APEX

1. Line up the side and centre pattern pieces at the bottom edge. Draw a box around both pieces, enclosing the bust notches as shown.
2. Cut out the boxes. Slide the two pieces **down** by the amount needed, keeping the vertical edges aligned.
3. Moving the boxes means the curves are now jagged. As you trace the new pieces, smooth out the curves, which means you may have to add a little extra to the edge or chip off a little part. Make sure you trace all the notches, too.

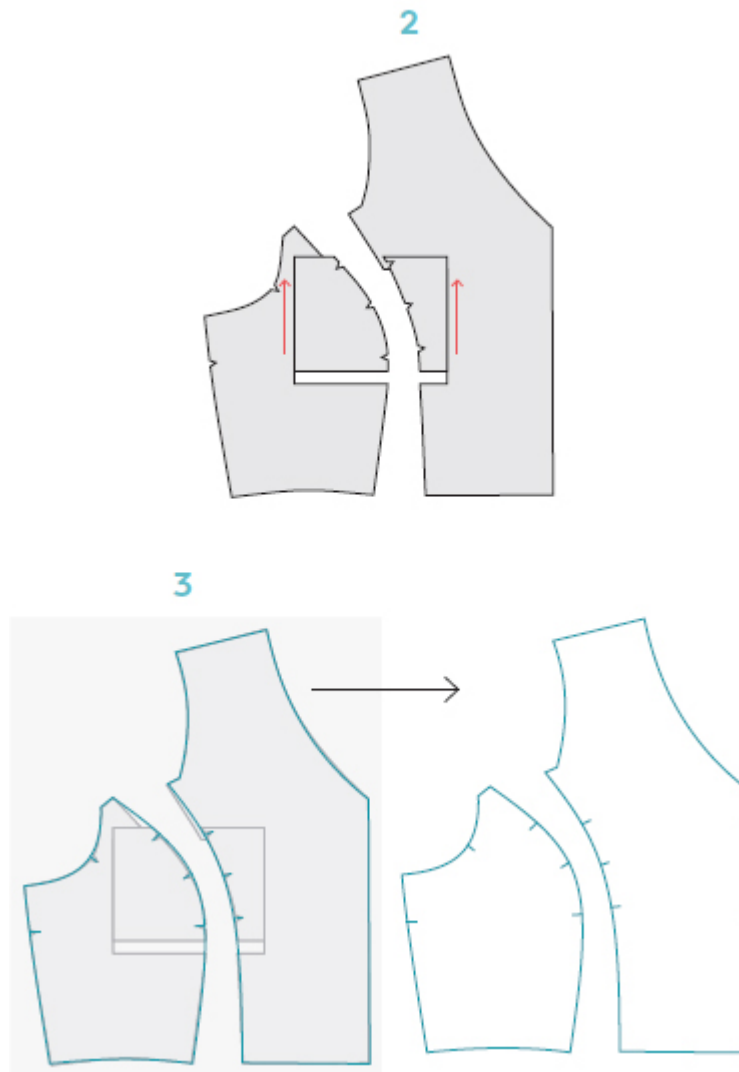
LOWERING THE BUST APEX



TO RAISE THE BUST APEX

The process is the same as for lowering the bust apex, but you need to slide the pieces **up** in step 2.

RAISING THE BUST APEX



Pinning your toile

If your bust shape is significantly different to the princess curve – for instance, maybe you have much more bottom-heavy or top-heavy boobs, or they're significantly higher or lower than the pattern –

then the fastest way to get a good result is to make adjustments directly on your toile.

1. Put on your toile and assess where the princess seam is too tight (where it's pulling) or where it's too loose (where there is excess fabric). Where the seam is too tight, carefully use a seam ripper to cut the stitches and allow the fabric to spread out as needed. Where the seam is too loose, use safety pins to pull in the seam to where it needs to be. Make sure you do the adjustments equally on both sides of the bodice so that they're even.
2. Once you have created a curve that matches your bust, use a pen to draw the new seam line directly onto the toile; make sure you're marking the seam line on both the side and the centre pieces.
3. Take the toile apart with your seam ripper. Draw the seamlines onto your side and centre pattern pieces as a reference point (i.e. remove the seam allowances) and then copy the new seamline curves from your toile onto the pieces (you may need to add extra paper). Now, draw new seam allowances on to follow your new curve, and you're done.

PINNING YOUR TOILE



FBA for knit garments without a dart

STANWAY T-SHIRT:

BEFORE



AFTER



This is the FBA technique to use with knit garments that don't have any darts. If your knit garment does have darts, use the [Darted FBA](#) approach.

Knits are a lot more forgiving for a larger bust, thanks to the stretch in the fabric. As a result, with knit FBAs it's possible to mostly add length, with a smaller amount of horizontal width added to create a 'boob bubble' at the side seam.

Signs you may need an FBA from your toile:

- It is tight over your boobs.
- You have folds of fabric at the armpit above your boobs.
- The front waistline / hem is hiking up.
- There are diagonal drag lines from your bust apex to the side seam.
- The armholes are being dragged forward by your boobs (or gaping open in a sleeveless garment).



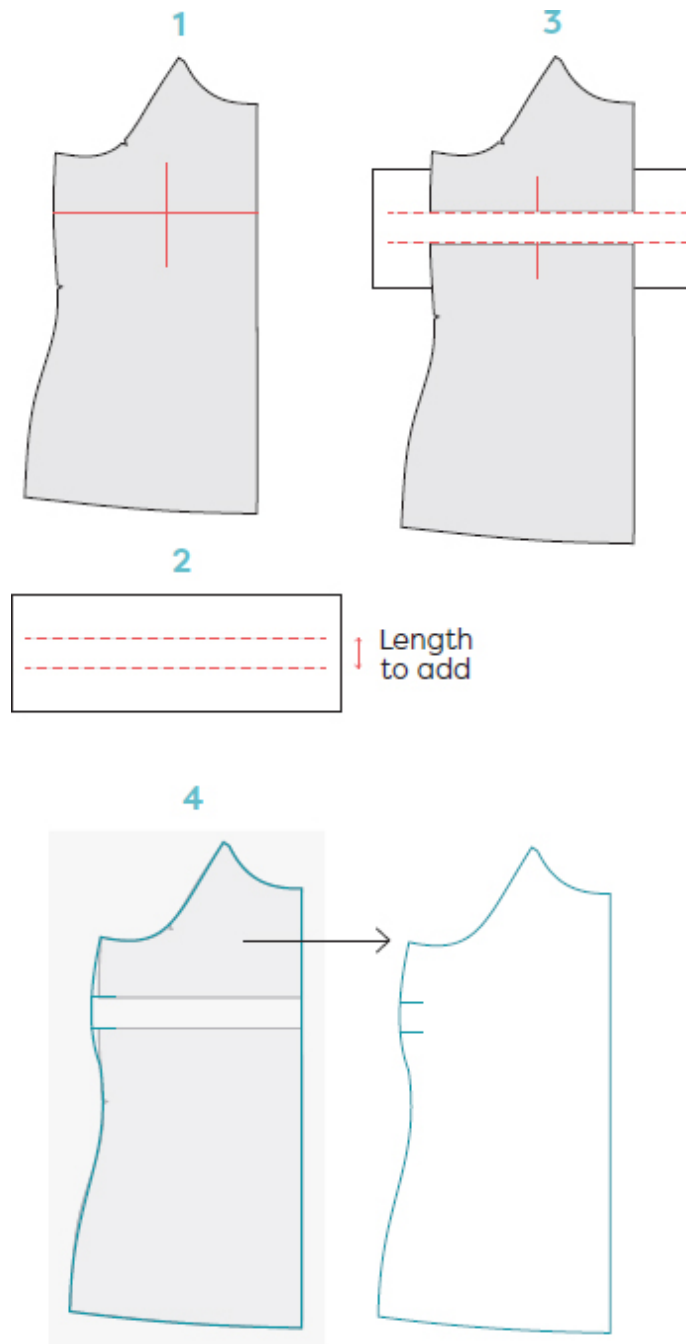
BEFORE YOU START

To calculate how much vertical length you need to add, make a toile and measure how much the front hem rides up. The horizontal

addition is more of an estimate: I add around 1–2 cm ($\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ in.) if you're a D+ cup size.

MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

1. Draw a horizontal line across the front pattern piece at the height of the bust apex. Draw a vertical line that intersects this line. Cut across the horizontal line to divide the pattern piece into two.
2. On a scrap piece of paper, draw two parallel lines that are the length you need to add.
3. Tape the pieces to the scrap paper, using a ruler to make sure the vertical line is aligned (if your pattern piece has a vertical edge, you can also do this at the edge).
4. Trace the new pattern piece, adding a slight curve at the side seam, starting at the armhole and ending an equal distance below the gap that's opened up. It should stick out around 1–2 cm ($\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ in.) from the side seam. Mark the top and bottom of the opening on the side seam.



SEWING A GARMENT AFTER A KNIT FBA

Unlike other types of FBAs, for a knit FBA you now have to sew the garment in a different way as you've lengthened the front piece. When sewing, ease the extra length in the front side seam into the back, which will create a gentle gather that won't be visible when you're wearing the garment.

1. Pin the front and back together at the side seam, starting at the hem and stopping at the bottom of the marked gap. Now pin downwards from the underarm, ending at the top notch. The front will have extra fabric between the notches.
2. Start sewing at the hem. When you reach the first notch, gently stretch the back so that the back side seam is the same length as the front side seam. Sew to the second notch. Then release the back piece and continue to sew regularly up to the armscye.

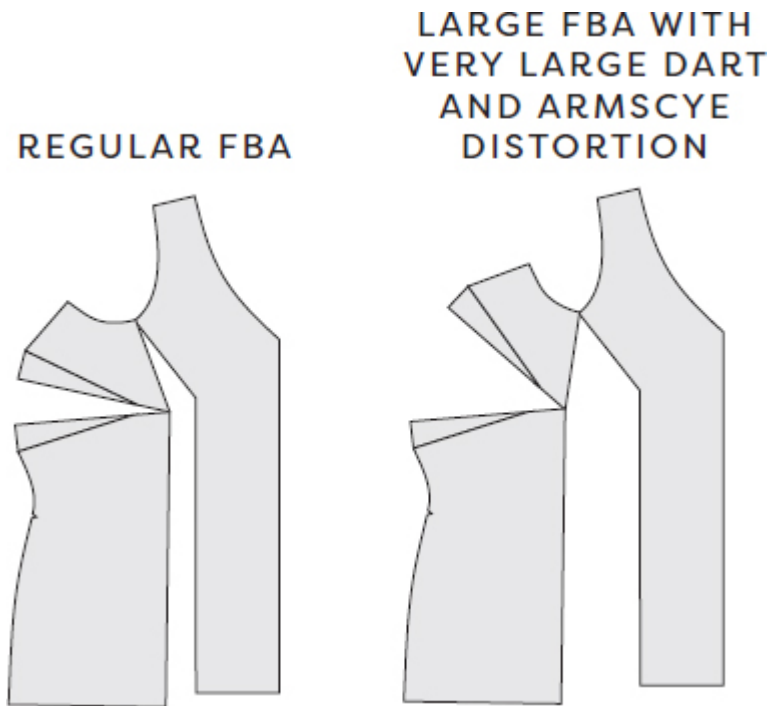
NO MORE SQUASHED BOOBS!

FBA troubleshooting

While most FBAs will give you a great result, if you have to do an FBA larger than around 5 cm (2 in.) per side, there can sometimes be further fitting issues. But don't worry – there are multiple approaches to getting a good fit, even for larger FBAs.

THE MOST COMMON ISSUES ARE :

- **Having a very big dart.** This can create a pointy fit (as there's not enough fabric at the side of your boob) and be hard to sew without a dimple at the end.
- **Armscye distortion.** Larger FBAs can distort the armscye shape so it's no longer a smooth curve. A bit of re-shaping is good, as it increases bra coverage, but too much is a problem.



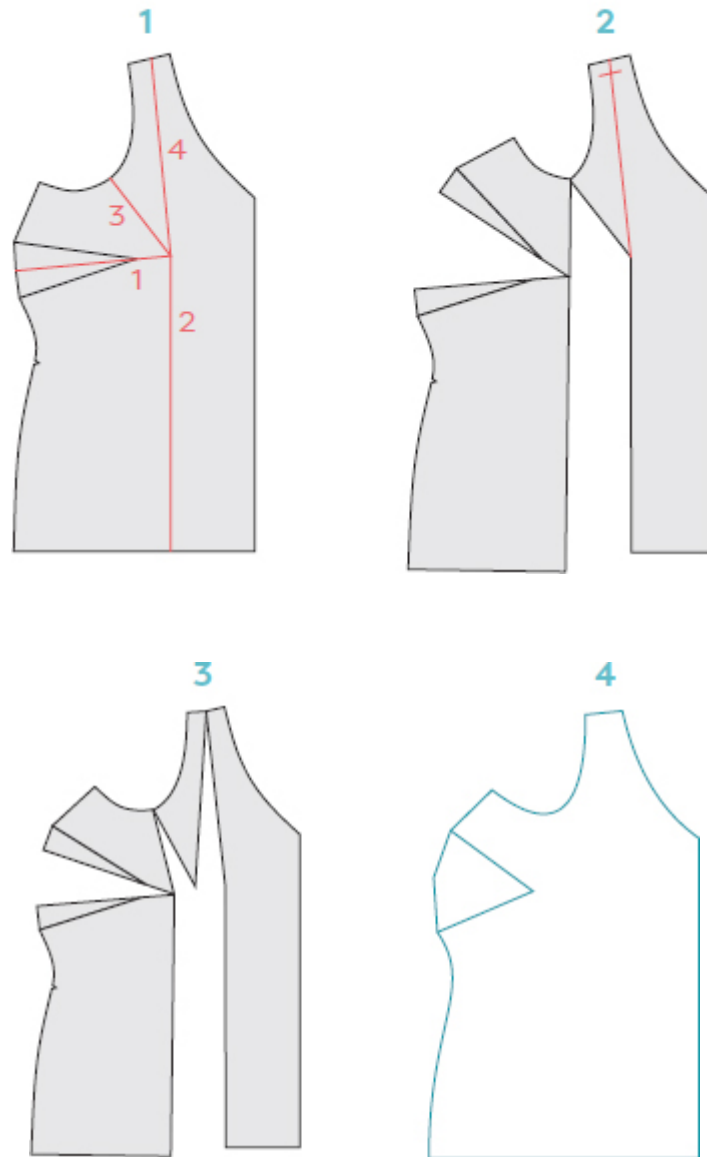
Big dart solution #1: FBA with expansion to the shoulder

This approach uses one more point of 'spread' to the FBA, allowing the bust dart to be smaller. Notably, it adds more fabric above the bust, so depending on your bust shape (especially if you're hollow chested) you may end up with too much fabric there, in which case this is not the best solution for you.

1. Follow the instructions for your FBA to draw in lines 1, 2 and 3. In addition, draw line 4 from the bust apex up to the shoulder.
2. Do the standard FBA, cutting and spreading at lines 1, 2 and 3.
3. Cut up line 4, starting at the bust apex and ending at the seam allowance for the shoulder. Cut into the seam allowance from the other side, creating a hinge. Spread the pattern open at line 4, re-adjusting all the pieces to make the vertical gap parallel and the width you need to add to the FBA.

4. Complete the rest of the FBA. Thanks to the fourth line, the bust dart is now smaller and the armhole is closer to its original shape.

FBA WITH EXPANSION TO THE SHOULDER



Big dart solution #2: Split and rotate darts

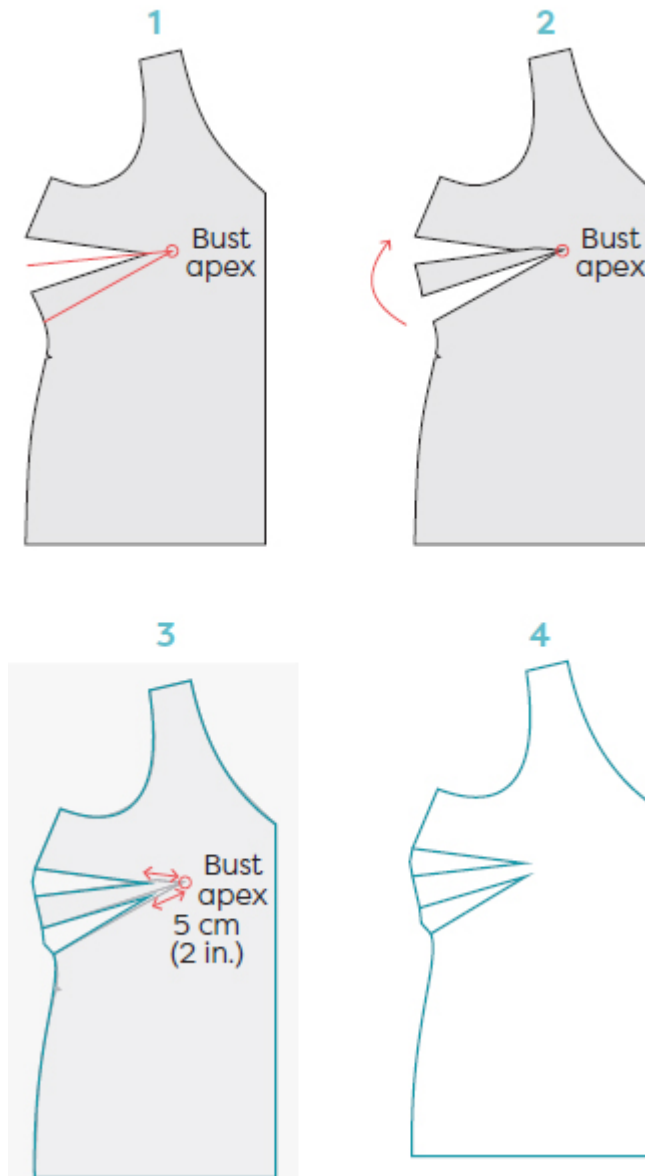
Another great option is to split a big bust dart into multiple smaller darts. You can either make it into two smaller bust darts or move the

second dart to any other location. This isn't just a fitting technique – it's also great for pattern hacking: you don't actually have to sew the second dart, you just have to close it up. What that means is you can change the dart into gathers, pleats, a tuck or anything else that brings the dart legs together, creating a totally new style that is also going to fit you well.

SPLITTING ONE BUST DART INTO TWO BUST DARTS

1. Draw a line through the middle of the dart legs, through the point of the dart, to the bust apex. Cut out the dart triangle. Draw a second line from the bust apex to below the first dart, where you want your second bust dart to be.
2. Cut up the second line, starting at the side seam and ending at the apex, leaving a small hinge. Swing the wedge of paper upwards to create two dart openings of equal width.
3. Trace the pattern piece. To draw the new darts, start the dart legs at the openings and end them 5 cm (2 in.) back from the bust apex (2.5 cm/1 in. if you are below a D cup).
4. True the [dart extensions](#).

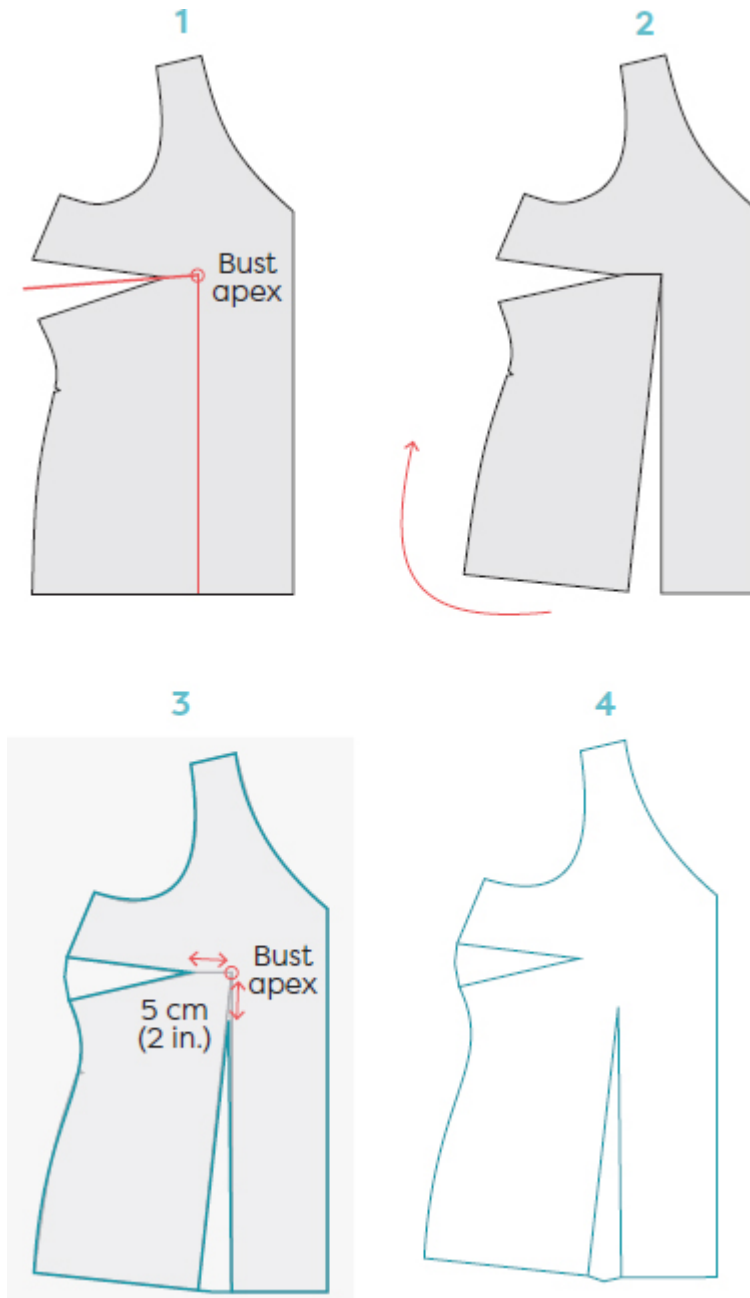
ONE BUST DART INTO TWO



SPLITTING ONE BUST DART INTO A BUST DART AND A WAIST DART

1. Draw a line through the middle of the dart legs, through the point of the dart, to the bust apex. Cut out the dart triangle. Draw a second line from the apex vertically down to the hem.
2. Cut up the second line, starting at the hem and ending at the apex, leaving a small hinge. Swing the wedge of paper round to create a waist dart and make the bust dart smaller.

3. Trace the pattern piece. To draw the new darts, start the dart legs at the openings and end them at least 5 cm (2 in.) back from the apex (2.5 cm/1 in. if you are below a D cup).
4. True the [dart extensions](#).



Move your darts wherever you want!

The technique is exactly the same, regardless of where you draw the second line – and you can even draw more lines and split it into more darts if you fancy. The possibilities are endless! Here are some ideas about where you can move your dart to. They will all give a slightly different fit, so don't forget to make a toile and test out your rotated darts before cutting into precious fabric.

MOVE YOUR DARTS WHEREVER YOU WANT



Re-drawing the armscye

If your armscye gets distorted so that it is no longer smooth, you can simply re-draw the armscye on your pattern piece. Is this the 'official' pattern drafting way? Nope! But that's complicated, and most of the time this approach works – and as far as I'm concerned, that means it's totally fine. This technique will add a little fabric to the front armpit area, so you definitely need to do another toile to check the armscye fit. If you're not happy with it, mark on the toile where you need the armscye to be and then transfer that to the pattern.

Simply use a curved ruler to re-draw a smooth curve – remember that the armhole will change shape when you sew the dart; we are just preventing any sharp angles in the armhole.

If you significantly change the length of the armhole when making this adjustment on a sleeved garment, you will then need to lengthen or shorten the sleeve cap accordingly.

RE-DRAWING THE ARMSCYE



How to handle FBAs on different types of garments

The classic FBA works well on tops and bodices that end at the waist and those that are sleeveless or have set-in sleeves. But what about other types of garment?

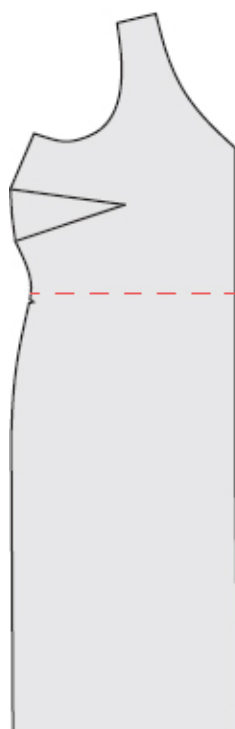
LONGER GARMENTS

This one is easy!

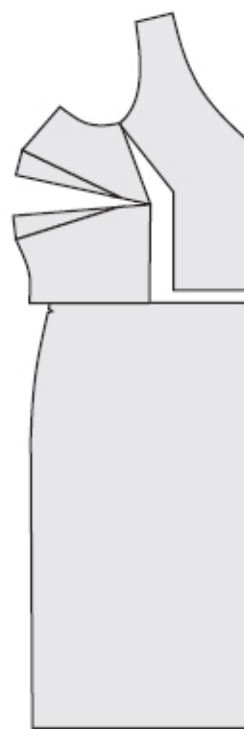
1. Cut the front pattern piece horizontally at waist level.
2. Do the FBA on the top section. The top section is now wider than the bottom.
3. Trace the pattern pieces, aligning the top and bottom at the centre front and evening up the side seam. Adjust the curve on the side seam of the back piece to match the new shape.

LONGER GARMENTS

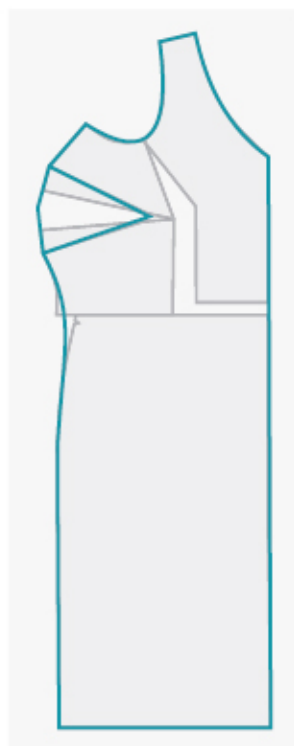
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2



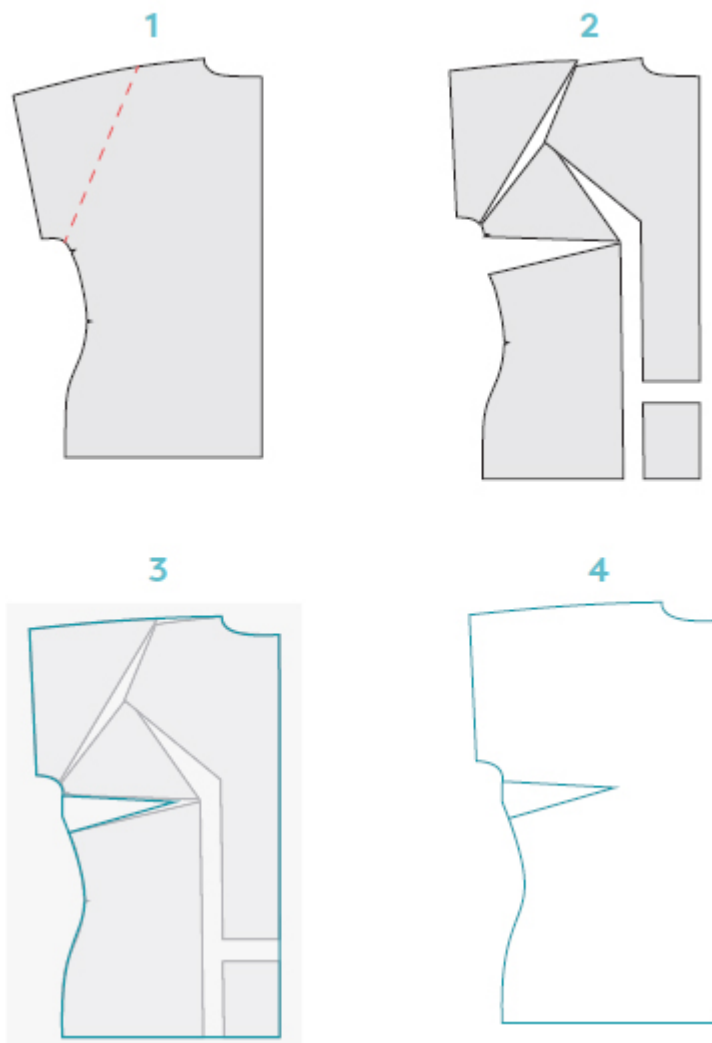
3



GARMENTS WITH DOLMAN SLEEVES

1. Cut off the sleeve at a diagonal angle from the armpit to the shoulder.
2. Do the FBA on the front part (treating the area where you cut the sleeve off as the armhole).
3. Place the sleeve back on the front – there will be a triangular gap between the sleeve and the front.
4. Trace the pattern piece, evening up the shoulder seam. (In this case, a dart was added, but it could be rotated out to the [hem](#).)

DOLMAN SLEEVES



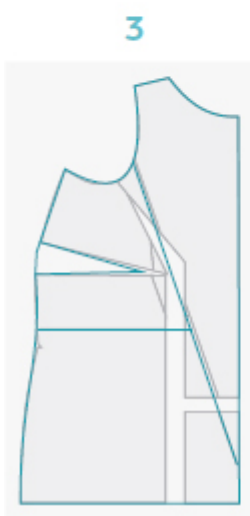
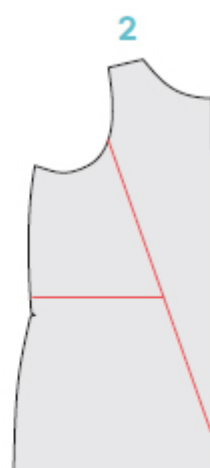
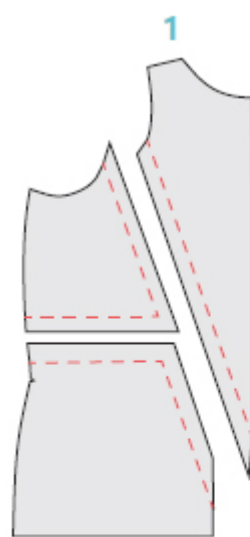
GARMENTS WITH LOTS OF BODICE SEAMS

There are garments that feature lots of seams on the bodice, whether that's to create a colour-blocking effect or different panels. Doing an FBA on such a garment can seem very complicated, but it's not as hard as you might imagine! This approach works as long as the seams are for style rather than fitting, which means that they join together flat – typically straight lines (such as a colour-blocked line above the bust) or curved lines not near the bust area (e.g. an S-shaped seam down the centre front) are seams that are for style only. If, however, the pieces join in a way that creates a 3D shape, which means they're being used to fit the garment to your body, this approach won't work.

In this example, the top has a deep V panel in the centre front and a waist seam.

1. Mark the seam allowances where the panels are sewn together and then cut them off.
2. Tape together the pieces as they will be sewn.
3. Do the FBA and trace. Re-draw the style lines. In this instance, a dart was added, which will improve the fit, but it can be removed through [rotation](#).
4. Divide the pieces up again and add the seam allowances back on.

BODICE SEAMS



Small Bust Adjustments (SBAs)

HONEYBOURNE DRESS:

BEFORE



AFTER



Not all curvy sewists have big boobs – we have an infinite variety of bodies! If you're smaller than a B or a C cup, then depending on the sewing pattern, you may need to do a Small Bust Adjustment (SBA). If you're making a garment from knit fabrics you may not need to, as you'll simply end up with less

negative ease. But in more fitted woven patterns, you'll want to do an SBA to get a good fit without a baggy bodice – because who wants that?

Signs you may need an SBA from your toile:

- There is excess saggy fabric around your boobs.
- The circumference of the garment is too big around the chest, even though it fits everywhere else.
- The waistline sags down in the front.

Other signs that you may need an SBA:

- You wear an A cup bra.
- You have a smaller cup size than the pattern you're working with.

What does an SBA do?

- An SBA changes the front pattern pieces to reduce the size around the bust. Depending on the garment, it may make a bust dart smaller or remove it altogether.
- An SBA removes both circumference and length from the front bodice. Without doing an SBA, you may find that a garment is too loose in the bust if it fits everywhere else – or if it fits nicely in the bust, it's too tight everywhere else.

How to calculate the size of the SBA

IF THE PATTERN HAS NO HIGH BUST MEASUREMENT

1. Take your high bust measurement and add 5 cm/2 in. (assuming it's a B cup pattern; add 7.5 cm/3 in. for a C cup, etc - see more

- on [cup sizing](#)). Use that number as your theoretical full bust measurement to pick your size from the Body Measurement Table.
2. Calculate the difference between the full bust of this size and your actual full bust measurement – this is the total size of the SBA.
 3. Divide by two for the size of the adjustment on the pattern piece (as the pattern piece represents half your body).

Here is an example using a body measurements table for a B cup pattern:

Let's say you have:

- a high bust measurement of **97 cm (38 in.)**

a full bust measurement of **99 cm (39 in.)**

1. Take your high bust measurement and add 5 cm (2 in.) to pick your base pattern size:
 $97 + 5 = 102 \text{ cm}$ ($38 + 2 = 40 \text{ in.}$).
This is a UK size 18 (US 14).
2. Your total SBA will be the UK size 18 (US 14) full bust measurement minus your actual full bust measurement:
 $102 - 99 \text{ cm} = 3 \text{ cm total SBA}$
($40 - 39 \text{ in.} = 1 \text{ in. total SBA}$).
3. The pattern adjustment will therefore be 3 cm (1 in.) divided by 2 – so a 1.5-cm ($\frac{1}{2}$ -in.) SBA adjustment on the UK size 18 (US 14) pattern piece.

Body measurements table

UK size	US size	EU size	Bust
14	10	42	93 cm (36½ in.)
16	12	44	97 cm (38 in.)
18	14	46	102 cm (40 in.)
20	16	48	107 cm (42 in.)
22	18	50	112 cm (44 in.)
24	20	52	117 cm (46 in.)
26	22	54	122 cm (48 in.)

IF THE PATTERN HAS A HIGH BUST MEASUREMENT

1. Use your high bust measurement to pick your size from the high bust line in the Body Measurements Table.
2. Compare your full bust to the full bust line for that size. If you're smaller than the full bust measurement, calculate the difference between your full bust and the size shown – that's the total amount you're going to remove in your SBA.
3. Divide that by 2 to calculate how much to alter the pattern piece.

Here is an example using our body measurements table for Cashmerette patterns, for someone who needs an SBA:

Let's say you have:

- a high bust measurement of **140 cm (55 in.)**

a full bust measurement of **142 cm (56 in.)**

1. Use your high bust measurement to pick your size, so here it's the UK size 34 (US 30).

2. Compare your full bust measurement to the full bust for the UK size 34 (US 30). The smallest size is 147 cm (58 in.), which is bigger than you need, which means you need an SBA. The total SBA is the difference between the full bust for your size and your actual full bust:

$$47 - 142 = 5 \text{ cm total SBA}$$

$$(58 - 56 = 2 \text{ in. total SBA}).$$

3. The pattern adjustment will therefore be 5 cm (2 in.) divided by 2 – so a 2.5-cm (1-in.) SBA adjustment on the UK size 34 (US 30) C/D Cup pattern piece.

Body measurements table

UK size	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US size	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU size	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
High bust	94 cm (37 in.)	99 cm (39 in.)	104 cm (41 in.)	109 cm (43 in.)	114 cm (45 in.)	119 cm (47 in.)	124 cm (49 in.)	130 cm (51 in.)	135 cm (53 in.)	140 cm (55 in.)	145 cm (57 in.)
C/D cup	102 cm (40 in.)	107 cm (42 in.)	112 cm (44 in.)	117 cm (46 in.)	122 cm (48 in.)	127 cm (50 in.)	132 cm (52 in.)	137 cm (54 in.)	142 cm (56 in.)	147 cm (58 in.)	152 cm (60 in.)
Full bust E/F cup	104 cm (41 in.)	109 cm (43 in.)	114 cm (45 in.)	119 cm (47 in.)	124 cm (49 in.)	130 cm (51 in.)	135 cm (53 in.)	140 cm (55 in.)	145 cm (57 in.)	150 cm (59 in.)	155 cm (61 in.)
G/H cup	107 cm (42 in.)	112 cm (44 in.)	117 cm (46 in.)	122 cm (48 in.)	127 cm (50 in.)	132 cm (52 in.)	137 cm (54 in.)	142 cm (56 in.)	147 cm (58 in.)	152 cm (60 in.)	157 cm (62 in.)

SBA on a darted or dartless bodice

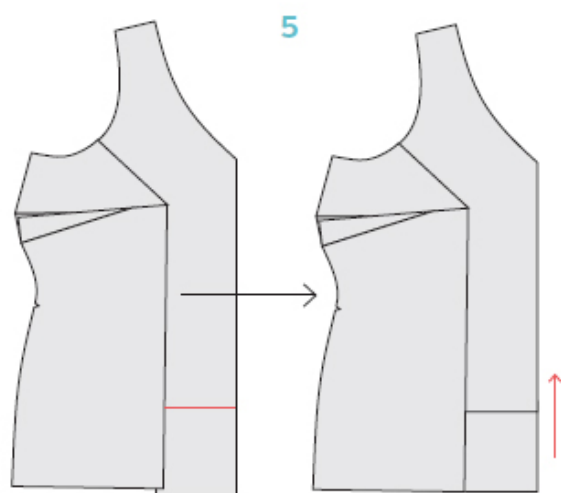
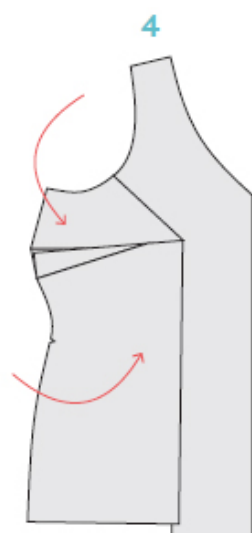
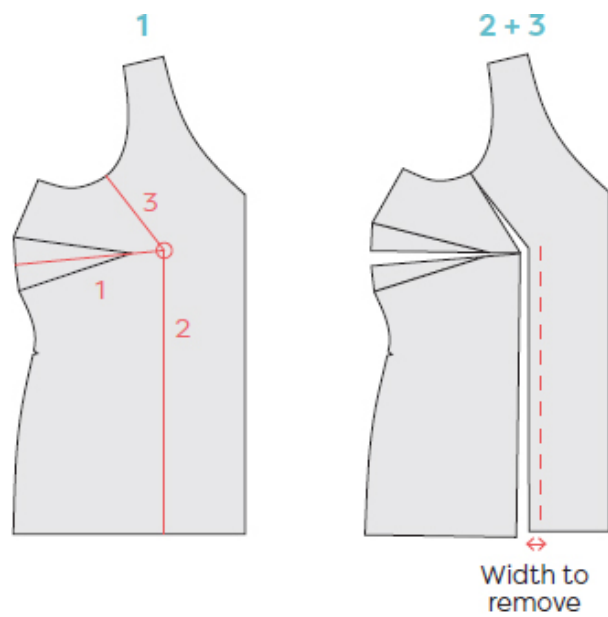
BEFORE YOU START

Calculate the size of your SBA.

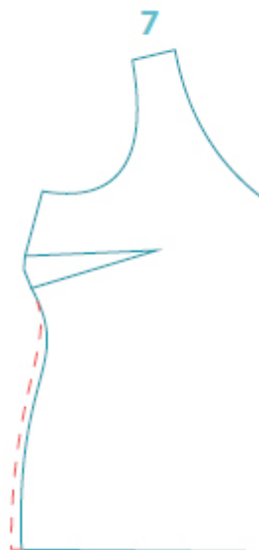
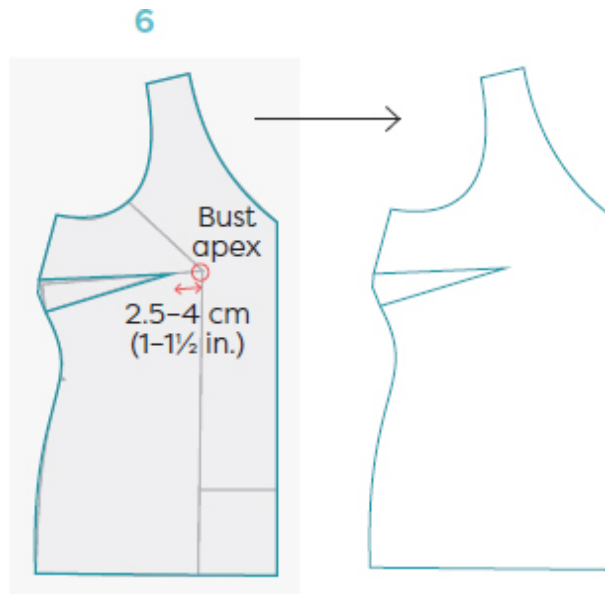
MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

1. Draw three lines on the front pattern piece, in the same way as for an **FBA**.

2. Draw a line parallel to the edge of the vertical line (on the other side of the dart), which is the distance you need to remove for the SBA
3. Cut up line 2 to the bust apex, and continue cutting up line 3, stopping at the seam allowance. Snip into the seam allowance from the other side, leaving a small hinge of paper. Now cut line 1, starting at the side seam and leaving a small hinge at the end.
4. Swing the bottom left section over and up, so that line 2 meets up with the new line you've drawn and the pieces lie flat. As you do this, the top left section will swing down and overlap the bottom section, reducing the size of the dart, if there is one.
5. Now we need to even up the hemline. Draw a horizontal line across the right-hand side, cut along it and then slide that section up until the hem is even.



6. Trace the new shape onto tracing paper. If you're doing this SBA on a dartless bodice, there will still be no dart, so skip this step! To create the new bust dart, start at the side seam with the original dart legs, and end the dart 2.5–4 cm (1–1½ in.) from the bust apex. True the **dart** extension.
7. This SBA has also reduced the size of the waist and hip. If you want to add more back, you can do that at the side seam.



If the SBA was done on a darted bodice and just made the dart smaller, then the side seam is the same length as before and no alteration is necessary to the front or back side seam.

If the SBA was on a darted bodice and not only closed up the dart but overlapped it further, or if it was done on a dartless bodice, then the front side seam is now shorter than it was before. As you still want that length at the side (just not in the centre where your boobs are), extend the bottom of the side seam until it matches the back side seam, and re-draw the hem as a gentle curve.

YOUR SBA IS NOW COMPLETE!

You have reduced the width and length of the piece and reduced and lengthened the bust dart. If you have any facings or linings, adjust them now to match your new front piece.

SBA on a princess seam

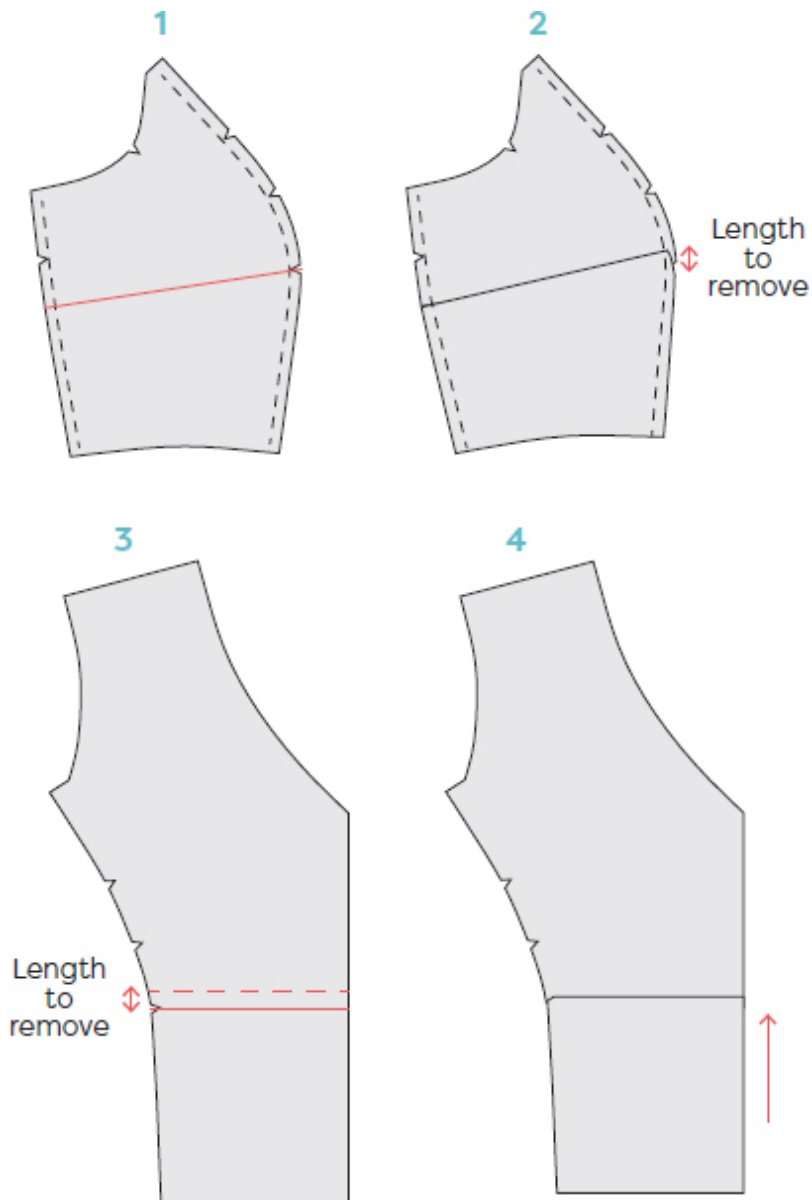
BEFORE YOU START

Calculate the amount of width you need to [remove](#). In addition, you need to calculate the length you need to remove. To do that, put on your toile and then pinch out and pin a horizontal line across the fullest point of your bust, removing the excess fabric. Measure the full depth of the fold – that is the amount you need to remove in length.

MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

1. On the side front piece, draw the seam allowance at the princess seam edge and at the side seam. Draw a line from the bust apex to the side seam at a slight angle, as shown.

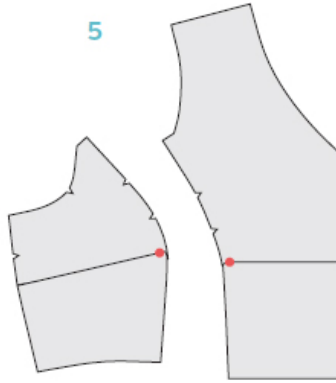
2. Cut down the line, starting at the apex and ending at the seam allowance. Snip into the seam allowance from the other side, leaving a small hinge. Overlap the top and bottom pieces so that they are overlapping at the bust curve seam allowance by the amount of length you need to remove.
3. On the centre front piece, draw a line horizontally across at the height of the bust apex (if there is no notch, measure up the same distance from the hem as on the side front piece). Now draw another line above that line, the distance that you need to remove in length.
4. Cut across the first line, dividing the piece into two. Overlap the two pieces, bringing the bottom piece to meet the second line, and tape the pieces together.



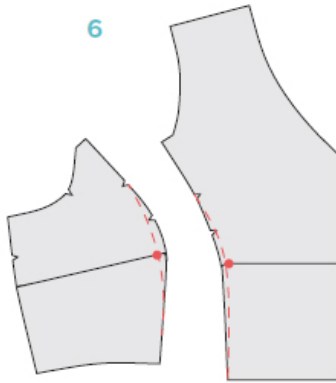
5. Divide the total width you need to remove in the SBA by 4 (for instance, if you're doing a 2-cm (1-in.) total SBA, divide by 4 to get 5 mm/¼ in.). Draw a mark that distance in from the bust apex (where the pieces now overlap) on the side front and centre front pieces.
6. Using a curved ruler, re-draw the curve on both pieces, connecting to the marks you just drew, as shown. Make sure the curves are still smooth.

7. Trace both pieces, making sure to re-mark the notches (and using the overlap as the bottom notch).

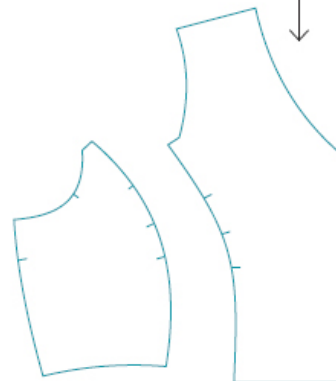
5



6



7



YOUR SBA IS DONE!

You have reduced the width and length of the piece and reshaped the bodice seams a little, but the side seam remains the same length, so no further adjustments to other pieces are required.

FIT CLINIC:

Shoulders and Neck

Achieving a fantastic fit through the shoulders and neck is one of the best ways to create a great-fitting garment. Subtle changes to match the location, shape and angle of the shoulders and neck can make a significant difference to how a garment looks and feels.

Shoulder adjustments are also incredibly common for plus-size sewists – but not for the reason you might imagine. Unfortunately, a lot of pattern brands aren't aware of how bodies change as they get bigger. As a result, they assume that as you go up a dress size your shoulders get bigger, your arms get longer – even that your head gets bigger! If you've encountered these types of patterns, you're very likely to have found that they have enormous shoulders – and not as some kind of 1980s fashion statement. As a result, doing narrow shoulder adjustments is something many of us need in many patterns. In addition, having a desk job, heavy boobs, sewing and, well, just life mean that many of

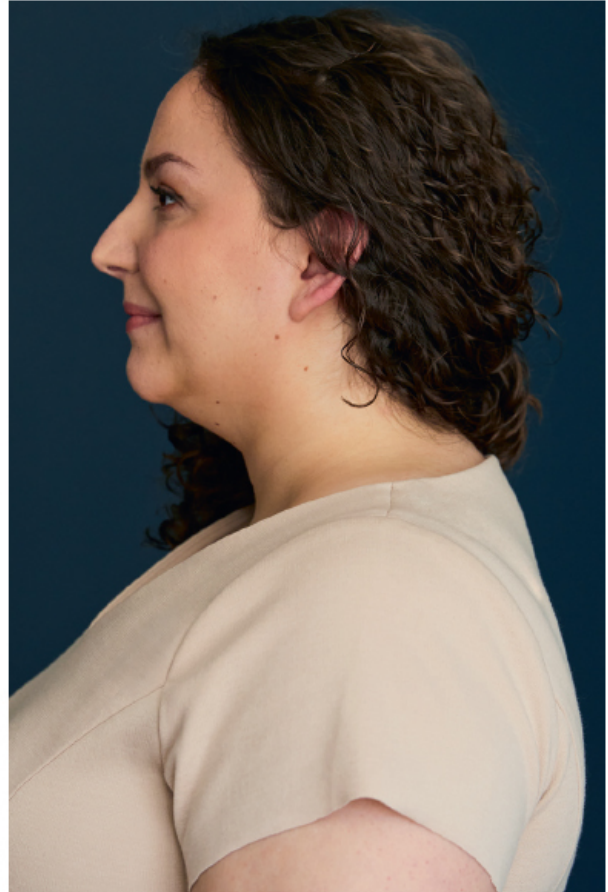
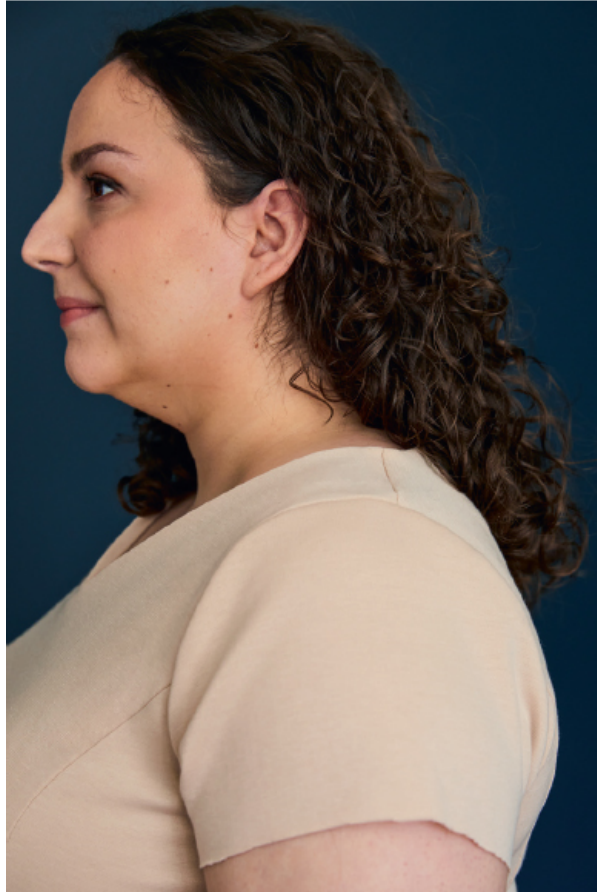
us have forward shoulders, which also require tweaking to fit in most patterns. Let's do this!

Forward shoulder adjustment

FOXHILL DRESS:

BEFORE

AFTER



It's very common to have 'forward shoulders', which means that they roll forwards on your body (slouching over a bit) rather than being totally upright. This adjustment moves the shoulder seam by transferring fabric from the front to the back pattern

piece, so that the seam sits on the top of your shoulder.

Signs you may need a forward shoulder adjustment from your toile:

- The shoulder seam is sitting behind the top of your shoulder – i.e. towards your back.
- The garment keeps slipping back as you wear it (the neckline rises up).
- There may also be gaping at the back neck.

MARK



BEFORE YOU START

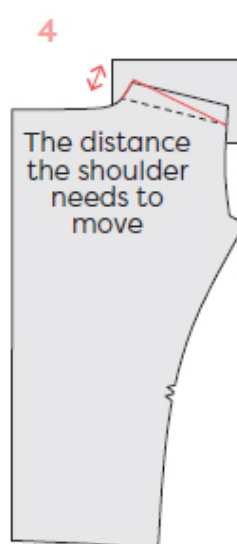
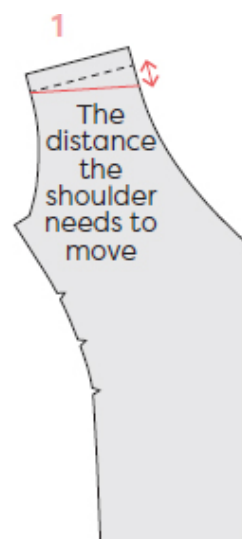
On your toile, mark where the shoulder seam should be positioned to be perfectly on top of your shoulder. There are typically two possibilities for how the garment is sitting on your shoulder: one end of the shoulder seam is in the right position but the other end is too far back, or the entire seam is too far back (that's what you can see in the example above). Note which type you have and the distance

the shoulder seam needs to move: it will be moved **down** on the front piece and **up** by the same amount on the back piece.

If only one edge needs to move

This example demonstrates the inner edge moving; take the same steps if the outer edge needs to move, simply moving the other end towards the back.

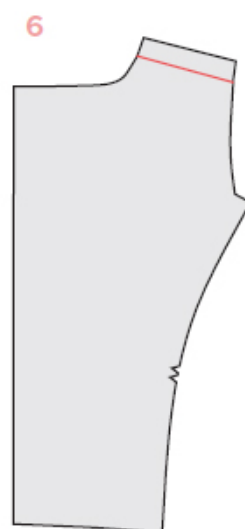
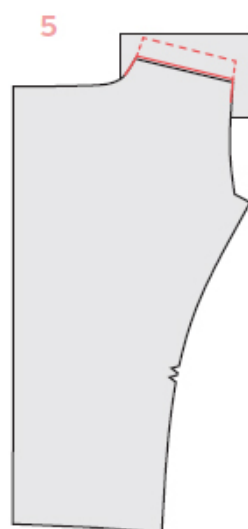
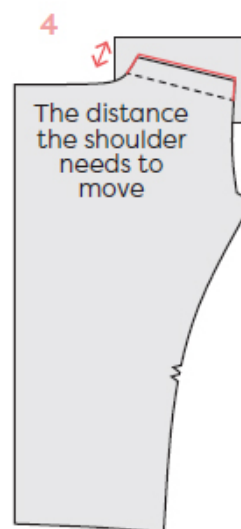
1. Starting with the front piece, draw on the seam allowance at the shoulder. Measure the distance the shoulder seam needs to move **down** at the neckline edge and make a mark. Draw a line from the edge of the seam allowance at the armscye edge to the mark; this is the new seam line.
2. Mark on the new seam allowance, above the seam line.
3. Cut off the excess paper above the seam allowance and you have your new front piece.
4. Now for the back piece. Tape a scrap of paper behind the back pattern piece. Draw on the seam allowance at the shoulder. Measure the distance the shoulder seam needs to move **up** at the neckline edge. Draw a line from the edge of the seam allowance at the armscye edge to the new location of the seam at the neckline edge.
5. Mark on the new seam allowance, above the seam line.
6. Trim the added piece of paper around the seam allowance and you're done.



If the entire shoulder seam is too far back

Follow the steps above, but draw the lines **parallel to the seam allowance**, at the distance the shoulder needs to move, rather than at an angle.

1. On the front piece, mark the distance the shoulder needs to move down.
2. Draw in the new seam allowance, above the seam line.
3. Trim off the excess above the seam allowance.
4. Tape paper behind the back pattern piece and mark the distance the shoulder needs to move up.
5. Mark on the new seam allowance.
6. Trim off the excess from the pattern piece.



NOW THE GARMENT IS SITTING IN THE
RIGHT PLACE ON YOUR SHOULDER!

Narrow or wide shoulder adjustment

The outer edge of a garment's shoulder (where it meets the sleeve) should be on the edge of your shoulder. If you have generous upper arms it can be hard to identify that spot, as it's often a soft curve; raise your arm until a dimple appears, and you should be able to feel the shoulder bone in the dip.

Narrow shoulder adjustment

HONEYBOURNE DRESS:

BEFORE

AFTER



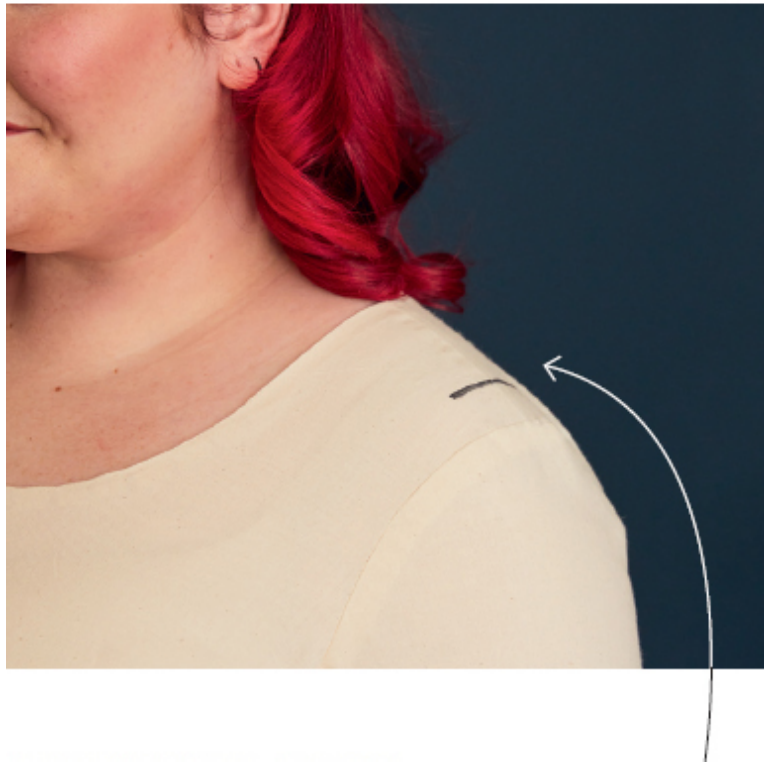
If the sleeve seam is falling off your shoulder, you'll need a narrow shoulder adjustment. Having the shoulder in the right spot will be way more comfortable, so it's worth getting it right!

Note that if the garment is narrow or wide all the way down your upper back, you should do a [narrow/wide back adjustment](#) instead.

Signs you may need a narrow shoulder adjustment from your toile:

- The edge of the garment shoulder goes beyond your shoulder and sticks out or goes down your arm.

MEASURE



BEFORE YOU START

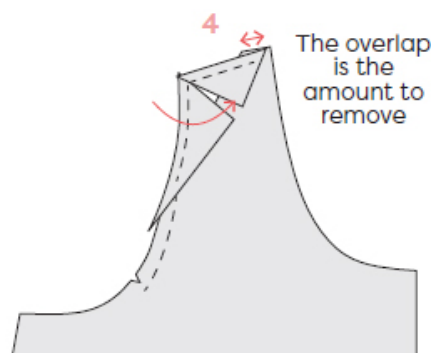
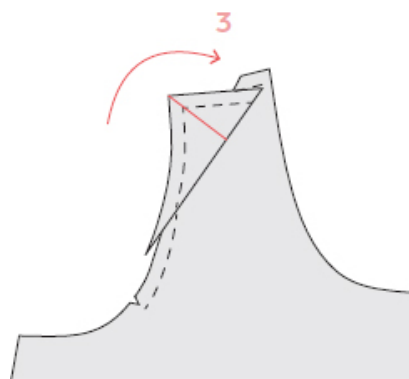
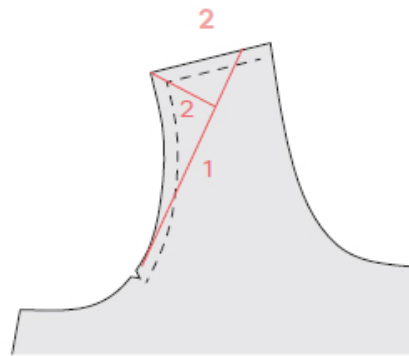
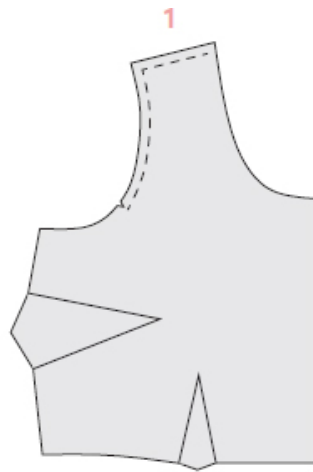
On your toile, mark where you want your shoulder to end. Measure how much to subtract from the shoulder seam.

MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

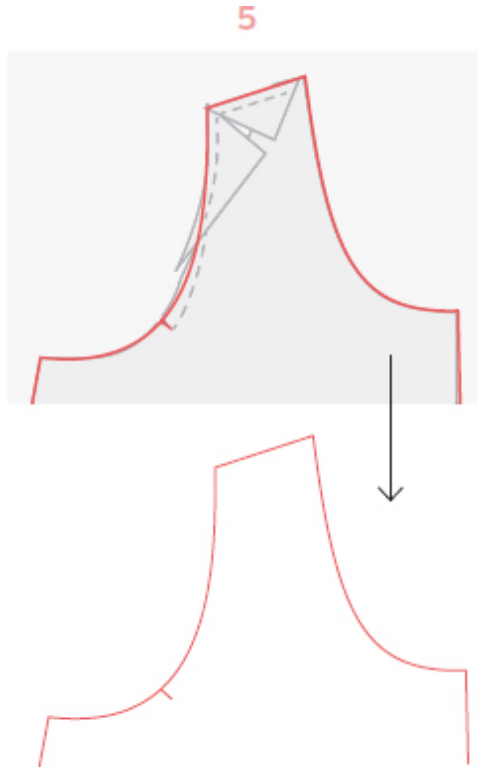
1. Draw in the seam allowance across the shoulder and upper part of the armscye on the front pattern piece.
2. Starting about a third of the way up the armscye, draw a diagonal line up to the shoulder, about a third of the way in from the neck. This is line 1. Draw a diagonal line down to line 1, through the corner of the outer shoulder and the seam allowance. This is line 2.
3. Cut along line 1, starting at the shoulder and ending at the armscye seam allowance. From the other side of the seam

allowance, snip to form a small hinge. Swing the large triangle over to the right.

4. Cut along line 2, starting at line 1 and ending at the corner of the seam allowance. Snip into the seam allowance from the other side to form a small hinge. Swing the upper triangle up, so that the shoulder seam is a straight line. Adjust the two pieces so that the amount that's overlapping at the shoulder seam allowance is the amount you need to subtract from the shoulder seam. Make sure all the pieces are flat and the hinges are intact.



5. Trace the new piece, smoothing out the armscye.
6. Make the same adjustment to the back piece. As the armscye length of the seam allowance hasn't been altered, you don't have to adjust the sleeve if the garment has one.



NOW THE GARMENT IS THE RIGHT
WIDTH FOR YOUR SHOULDERS

Wide shoulder adjustment

FOXHILL DRESS:

BEFORE

AFTER

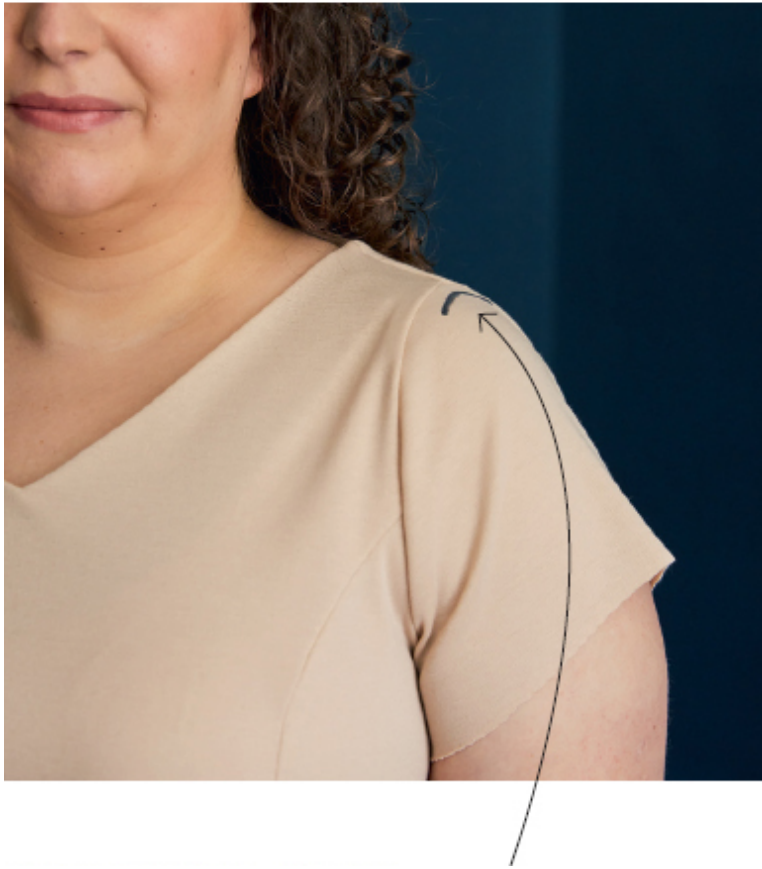


Conversely, you may find the shoulders of a garment are too small for you and are pulling in towards your neck. That requires a wide shoulder adjustment.

Signs you may need a wide shoulder adjustment from your toile:

- The edge of the garment shoulder is too near your neck and may be tight.

MEASURE



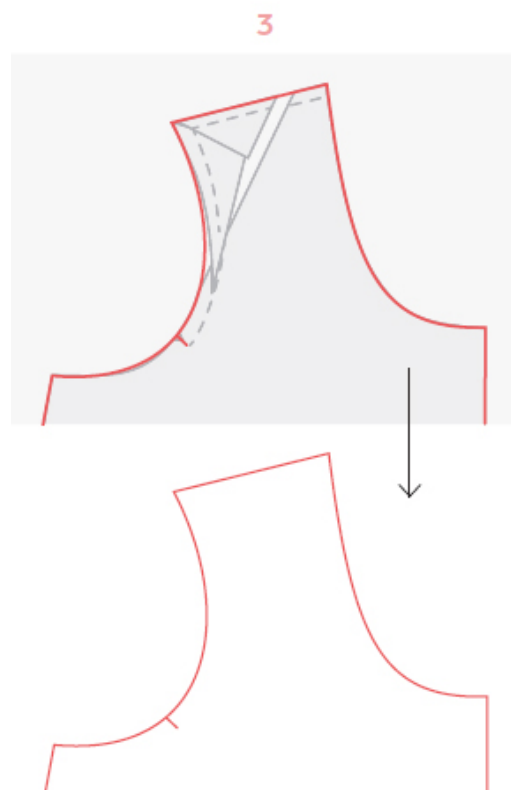
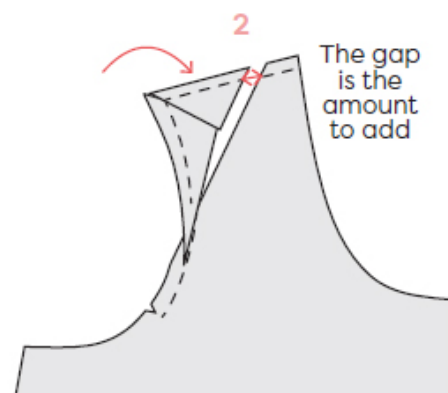
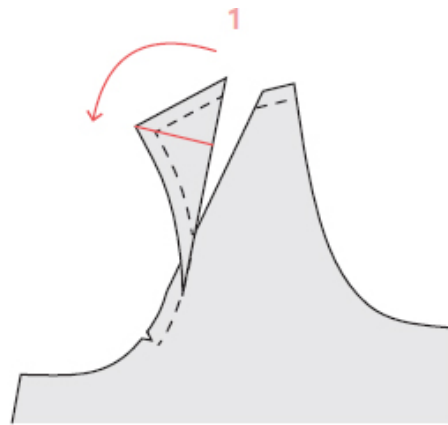
BEFORE YOU START

On your toile, mark where you want your shoulder to end. Measure the distance you need to add to the shoulder seam.

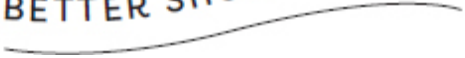
MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

1. Repeat steps 1, 2 and 3 of the narrow shoulder adjustment, but swing the large triangle to the left rather than to the right.
2. Cut along line 2, starting at line 1 and ending at the corner of the seam allowance. Snip into the seam allowance from the other side to form a small hinge. Swing the upper triangle down, so that the shoulder seam is a straight line. Adjust the two pieces so that the gap between the shoulder pieces (at the seam allowance) is the amount you need to add to the shoulder seam. Make sure all the pieces are flat and the hinges are intact.

3. Trace the new piece, smoothing out the armscye. Now make the same adjustment to the back piece.



NOW YOU'VE GOT A MUCH
BETTER SHOULDER FIT!



Sloping shoulder adjustment

KERSOE TANK:

BEFORE

AFTER



The shoulder slope of a garment should match the angle of your shoulder – but if it doesn't, it's an easy fix.

Signs you may need a sloping shoulder adjustment from your toile:

- The shoulder seam is sticking up above your shoulder at the outer edge.
- There may be gaping at the armhole on sleeveless garments.

PINCH



BEFORE YOU START

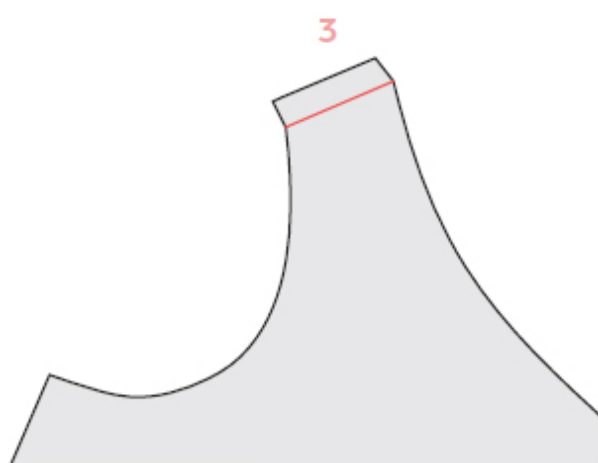
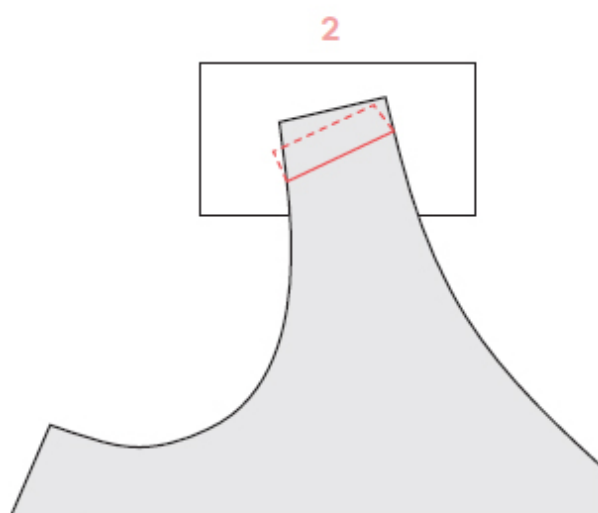
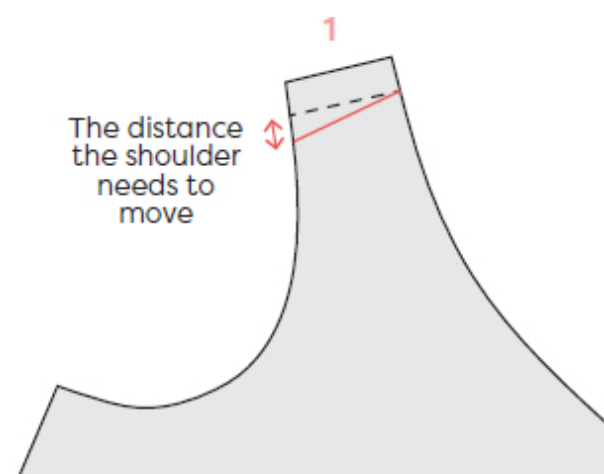
To calculate how much you need to adjust, pinch the outer edge of the garment shoulder until it fits the slope of your shoulder. Pin and measure the distance that you pinched at the outer edge.

MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

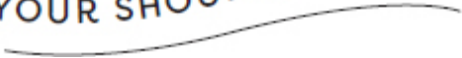
1. Starting with the front piece, draw on the seam allowance at the shoulder. Measure the distance the shoulder seam needs to move

down at the outer edge. Draw a line from the edge of the seam allowance at the inner edge to the new location of the seam at the outer edge.

2. Tape a piece of scrap paper behind the shoulder. Draw on the new seam allowance.
3. Trim off the excess paper.
4. Repeat the process with the back shoulder to match.



NOW THE GARMENT MATCHES
YOUR SHOULDER SLOPE!



Gaping neckline adjustment

KERSOE TOP:

BEFORE

AFTER



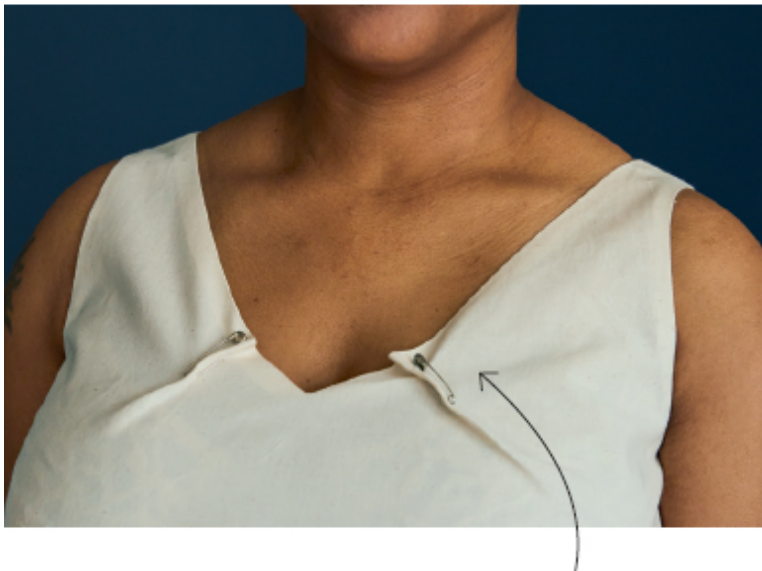
Gaping necklines are a common issue if the distance from your shoulder to your bust is a little shorter than the pattern is designed for or if you have a concave upper chest. Before you make an adjustment, check that the neckline didn't just stretch out during sewing – compare your toile to the original pattern piece and

make sure you staystitched the neckline. There are a number of different approaches to fixing a gaping neckline depending on the type of pattern, but the basic principle is that we are removing a wedge of fabric to shorten the seam.

How to tell if you need a gaping neckline adjustment from your toile:

- It's gaping open!

PINCH

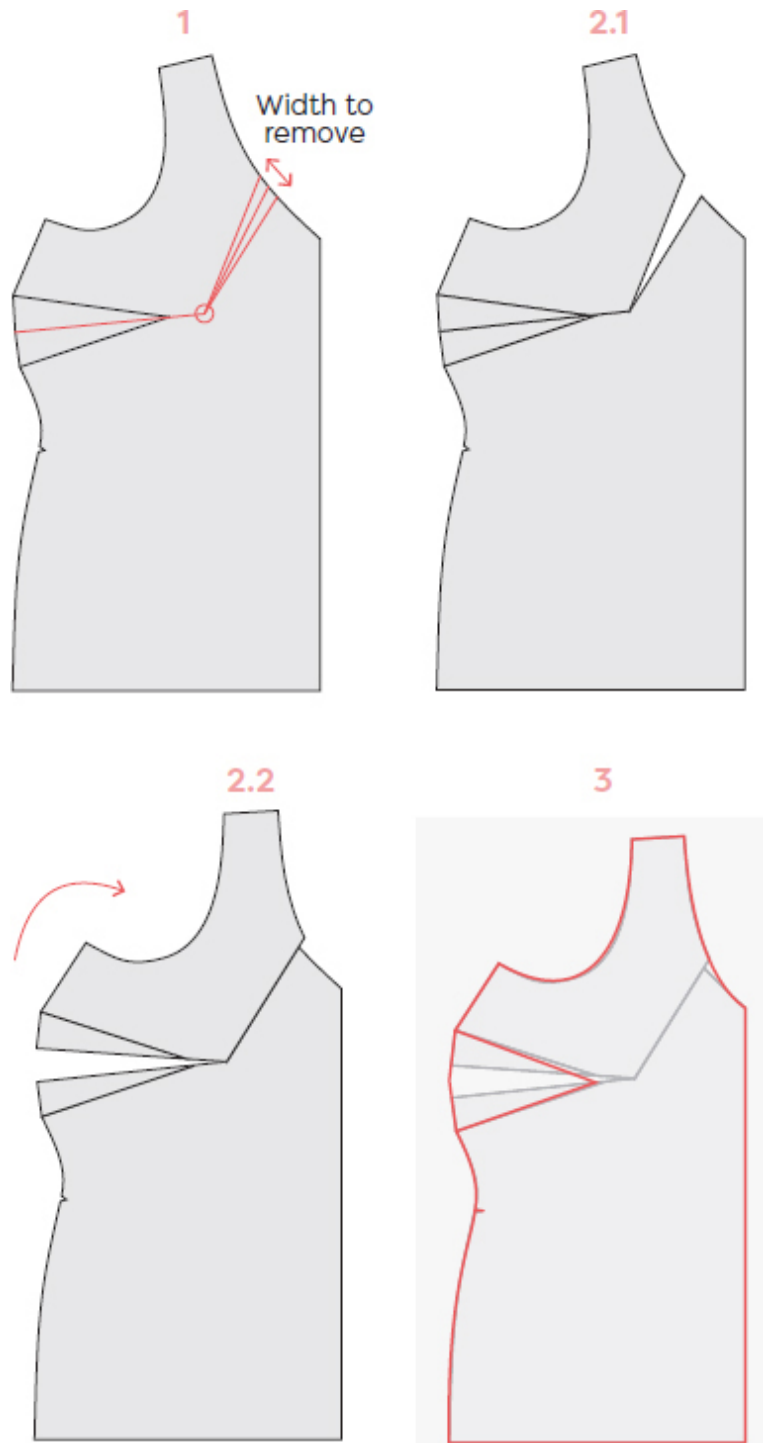


BEFORE YOU START

On your toile, pin the excess fabric into a dart evenly on each side of the neckline. Mark the darts on your toile and unpin. Measure the distance between the dart legs.

On a darted garment

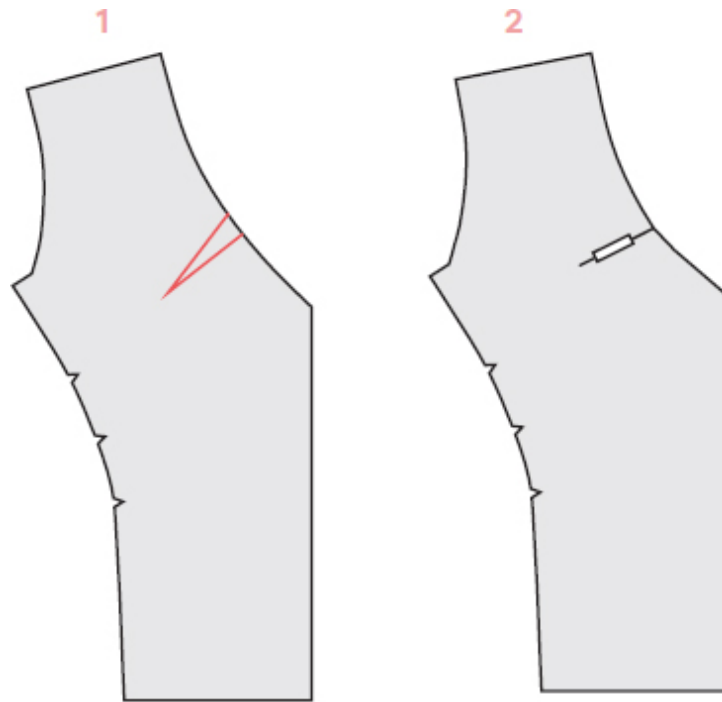
1. Draw a line through the centre of the bust dart to the bust apex on the front pattern piece. Draw a second line from the apex to the neckline. Now, draw a dart, with the legs the distance apart that you measured on the toile, ending at the bust apex.
2. Cut out the neckline dart. Cut along the line drawn through the bust dart, leaving a hinge at the bust apex (2.1). Swing the piece above the bust dart up and over to the right to close the neckline dart (2.2).
3. Trace the pattern piece, smoothing the neckline. Draw the new bust dart using the original dart legs. True the [dart](#) extension.



On a dartless garment (minor gaping)

1. Draw the dart from the toile onto the front pattern piece.

2. Fold the dart, creasing it down the centre and bringing the dart legs together. Flatten the pattern piece and tape the dart closed. The paper will not be perfectly flat, but that's OK! This works for most knits, and wovens with an adjustment up to 12 mm (1/2 in).



Curvy sewist in focus: Emily

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO START SEWING YOUR OWN CLOTHES?

I hated not being able to find the clothes I wanted to wear in my size. The ready-to-wear clothes I liked stopped at a UK size 14 or 16 (US 10 or 12), and the ones that came in my size seemed to have the ultimate goal of disguising my body shape. I've enjoyed crafts since I was a child, but it didn't occur to me to make my own clothes until I came across a sewing book and decided to give it a go.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE?

I love colourful and comfortable clothes, with a strong bias towards pink fabrics of all kinds. When I started sewing I focused on making '50s-style flared dresses, but over the years I've sewn all manner of skirts, tops, trousers, swimwear – and even bras! My favourite thing about sewing is that you don't have to follow trends and you can make yourself anything you dream up.

HOW HAS SEWING YOUR OWN CLOTHES AFFECTED YOUR BODY IMAGE?

When you go clothes shopping and nothing fits, it's hard to remember that it's the clothing brand that's at fault and not your body. Sewing is liberating for me because I can make myself clothes that fit, rather than trying to fit into clothes. While I've long believed in body positivity, learning to sew has been a way for me to put this into practice through making clothes that celebrate my body just the way it is.

WHAT'S THE ONE THING YOU WISH YOU'D KNOWN WHEN YOU STARTED SEWING?

That seam allowances are a rule, not a suggestion! But on a serious note, I wish I'd known what a supportive and friendly community I would be introduced to through sewing, some of whom have become 'real life' friends.





Emily, 30, lives in London and has been sewing for six years. She works in publishing and posts her fabulous makes on Instagram at **@notinator**.

FIT CLINIC:

Arms

Is there anything more annoying than a constraining sleeve or an armhole that's constantly gaping to show your bra to the world? Suffer no longer, as there are easy changes to make to your sewing patterns which banish these common problems once and for all.

Full bicep adjustment

HONEYBOURNE DRESS:

BEFORE

AFTER



Signs you may need a full bicep adjustment from your toile:

- It's really tight!

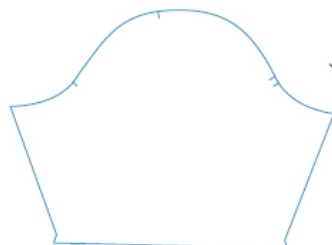
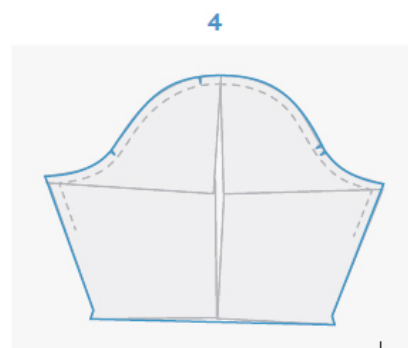
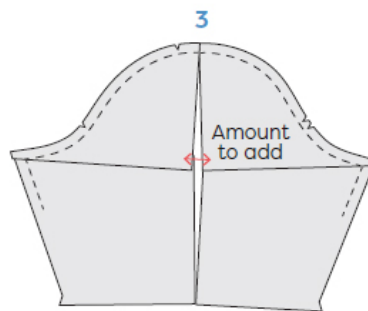
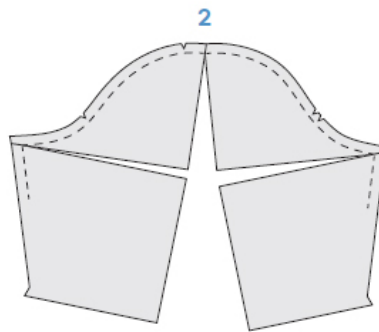
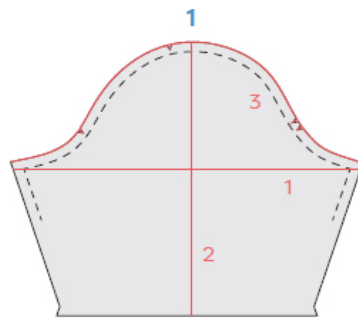
BEFORE YOU START

If the pattern provides bicep measurements in the Body Measurements or Finished Garment Measurement table, compare your bicep measurement to the table(s) to calculate how much you need to add. If bicep measurements aren't provided, measure the pattern piece at the armpit level (remembering to remove the seam allowances) to compare with your bicep measurement. You generally want at least 4–5 cm (1½–2 in.) of ease in a woven sleeve.

Full bicep adjustment for set-in sleeves (with a shoulder seam)

FOR AN ADJUSTMENT UPTO 2.5 CM (1 IN.)

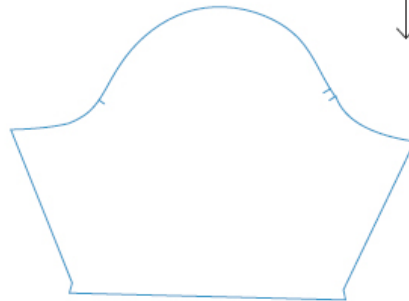
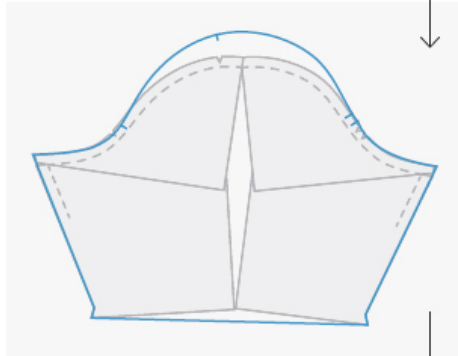
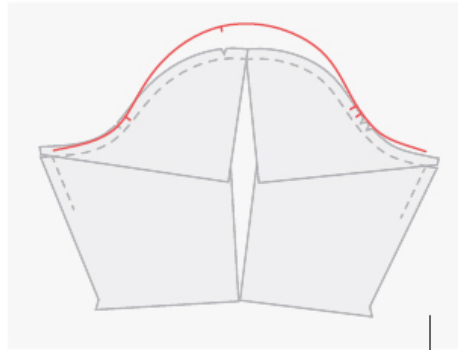
1. Mark the seam allowance around the upper part of the sleeve. Draw a line horizontally across the piece, joining the underarm points – this is line 1. Draw a second line vertically through the centre of the sleeve – this is line 2. If you're going to be [adjusting](#) by more than 2.5 cm/1 in., trace the top of the sleeve cap onto a separate piece of paper – this is line 3.
2. Cut up line 2 to the seam allowance and then snip into the seam allowance from the other side, leaving a small hinge. Now, starting at the centre, cut along both sides of line 1, ending at the seam allowances on each side, again snipping in from the other side and leaving a hinge.
3. Keeping the bottom edges together (use pins on a pinnable board or small pieces of tape to keep things in place), spread the outer points of the sleeve apart until the horizontal gap that opens up at the underarm level is the additional width you need for your bicep. The upper pieces will move down and overlap the lower pieces as this happens.
4. Trace the new pattern piece. Even out the bottom edge (which will add back the length that was lost in the adjustment). As the seam allowance length hasn't changed, you don't need to make any changes to the armhole on the bodice.



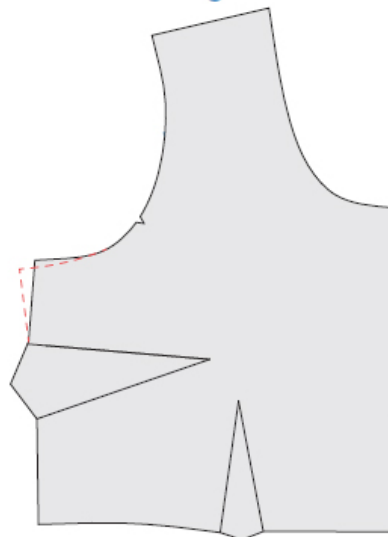
FOR AN ADJUSTMENT FROM 2.5 CM (1 IN.) TO 5 CM (2 IN)

1. [Follow steps 1–3.](#)
2. Place the paper on which you drew line 3 on the table, then your altered pattern piece on top, and then the tracing paper. Trace your new pattern piece, using line 3 as the main sleeve cap line, continuing to trace the extra part from your altered pattern piece as well. Even out the bottom edge.
3. In this adjustment, the length of the sleeve cap has been increased, so the armhole needs to be made bigger as well. At the seam allowance, measure the length of the old sleeve cap (line 3) and the new sleeve cap you've created, calculate the difference, and divide that by 2. On your front bodice piece, the armhole needs to be extended by that amount at the seam allowance. The best way to do this is to re-draw the bottom of the armhole to extend down and out. Repeat with the back bodice piece.

2



3



NOW YOUR ARMS ARE FREE TO MOVE!

If you need to add more than 6 cm (2½ in.) to your sleeves, this technique may not work so well. Instead, you can use a bigger size sleeve that fits you and trace the larger armhole onto your front and back pieces.

For instance, if your upper body fits a UK size 32 (US 28) and your arm fits a UK size 36 (US 32), you would trace the size 32/28 front and back bodice pieces, but follow the size 36/32 armhole lines and then insert the 36/32 sleeve. Make a toile, as you may find you need further adjustments to the shoulder, but this approach works well for many people!

Full bicep adjustment for raglan sleeves

STANWAY T-SHIRT:

BEFORE

AFTER



Doing a full bicep adjustment on a raglan sleeve takes a few more steps, but it's still worthwhile to liberate your arms to do their thing.

BEFORE YOU START

If the pattern provides bicep measurements in the Body Measurements or Finished Garment Measurement table, compare your bicep measurement to the table to calculate how much you need to add. If bicep measurements aren't provided, measure the

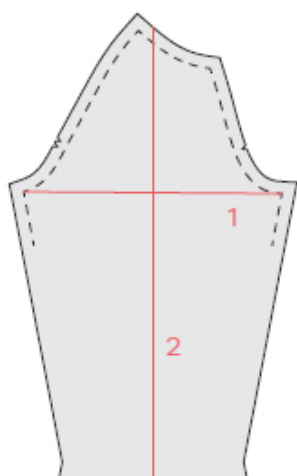
pattern piece at the armpit level (remembering to remove the seam allowances) to compare it to your own bicep measurement.

You need one more piece of information for this adjustment: on your toile, measure the distance from the sleeve at the neckline to your shoulder point.

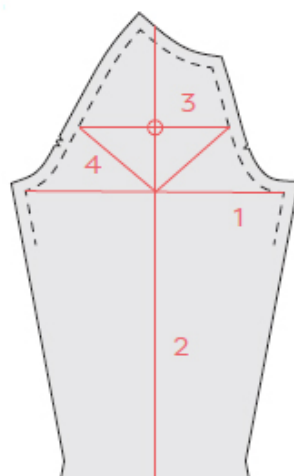
MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

1. Mark the seam allowance around the upper part of the sleeve pattern piece. Draw a line horizontally across, joining the underarm points – this is line 1. Draw a second line vertically through the centre of the sleeve – this is line 2.
2. Measure down line 2 the distance you measured on your toile from the neckline to your shoulder point. Draw another horizontal line across at this level – this is line 3. Now connect the outer edges of line 3 with the point where lines 1 and 2 intersect, forming a triangle (line 4).
3. Cut along line 2 to the intersection. Starting at the centre, cut each way along line 1, up to the seam allowance. Snip into the seam allowances from the other side, leaving a small hinge. Now cut up the two line 4s, starting in the centre and ending at the seam allowance and again snipping in from the other side to leave a hinge.
4. Keeping the bottom edges together (use pins on a pinnable board or small pieces of tape to keep things in place), spread the outer points of the sleeve apart until the horizontal gap at the underarm level is the additional width you need for your bicep. The triangular segments will move down and overlap the lower pieces as this happens.
5. Trace your new pattern piece. At the sleeve hem, join up the edges of the piece, which will add a little extra fabric to the bottom.

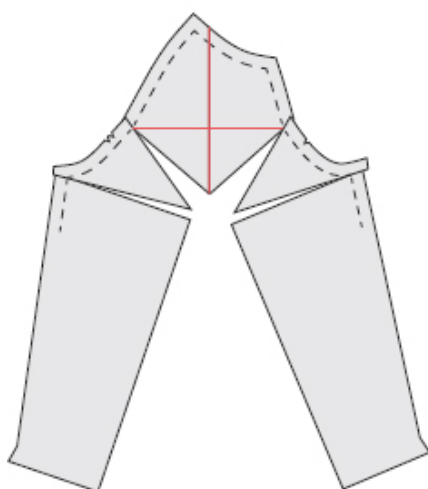
1



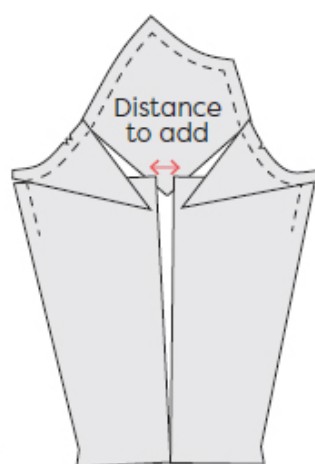
2



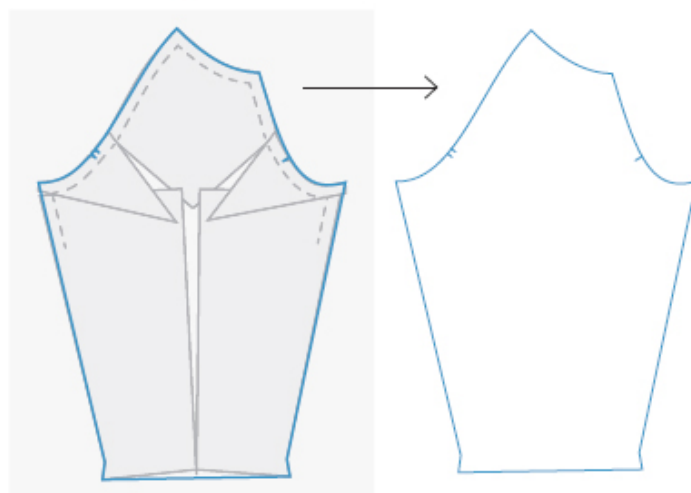
3



4



5



NO MORE TIGHT SLEEVES!

Gaping armscye adjustment

KERSOE TOP:

BEFORE

AFTER



If you're curvy, gaping armscyees that flash your bra are all too often a problem! Luckily it's easy to fix them. Gaping armscyees can be caused by a number of issues, but with a bit of detective work you can find the right adjustment to make.

Signs you may need a gaping armscye adjustment from your toile:

- The armscye has excess fabric that is creating gaping or folds.
- If it's fixed by pinching the outer shoulder seam, do a [sloping shoulder adjustment](#) instead.
- If it's gaping because it's being pulled forward by the bust, do an [FBA](#) instead.
- If neither of those things is true, then do the gaping armscye adjustment.

PINCH



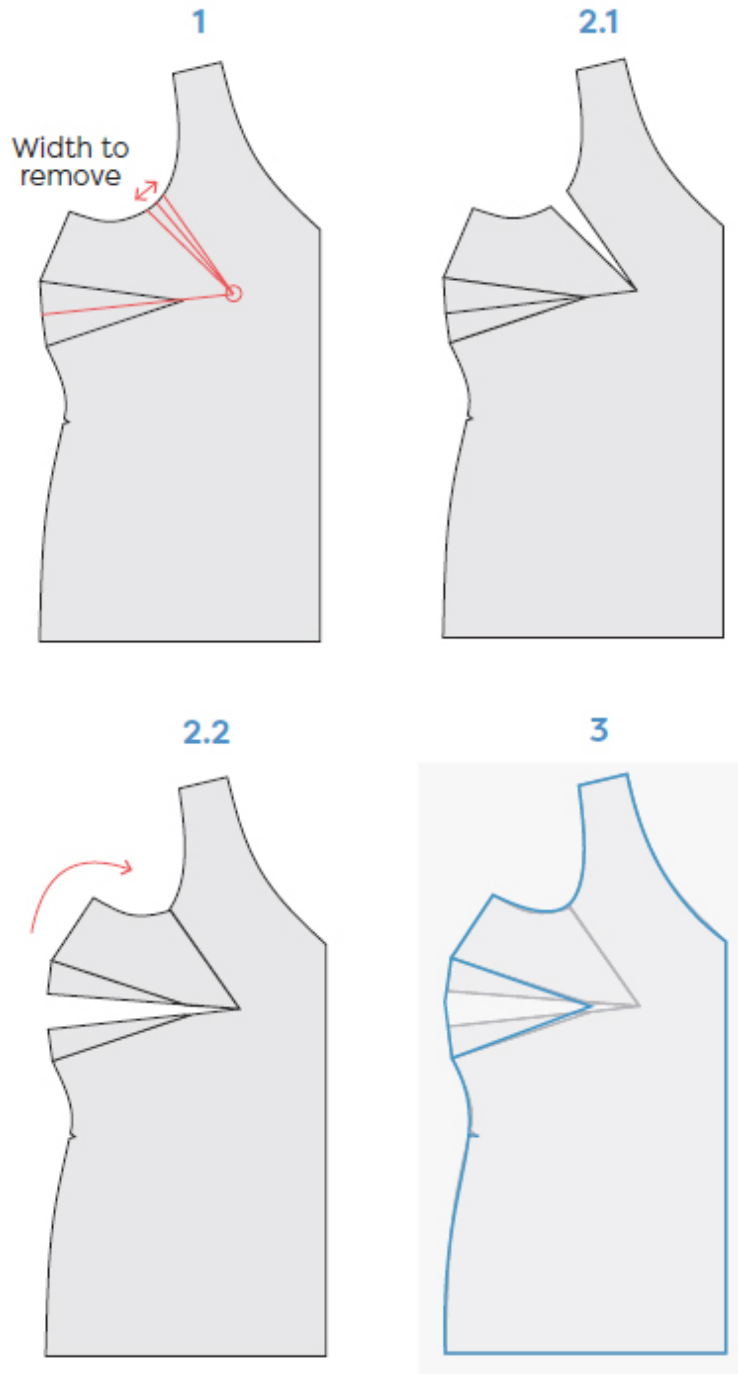
BEFORE YOU START

On your toile, pinch a dart out of the excess fabric so that the armscye is lying flat, and pin. Mark the dart on the toile, unpin and measure the distance between the dart legs. Measure the distance of the dart from the bottom of the armscye.

On a darted garment

1. Draw a line through the centre of the bust dart to the bust apex on the front pattern piece. Then draw a second line from the bust apex to the point on the toile where you drew the centre of the armscye dart. Now draw a dart with the legs the distance apart that you need to remove, ending at the bust apex.
2. Cut out the armscye dart. Cut the line through the bust dart, leaving a small hinge at the end (2.1). Swing the piece above the dart up and to the right to close the armscye dart (2.2).
3. Trace the piece, drawing in the new dart using the original dart legs. True the [dart](#) extension.

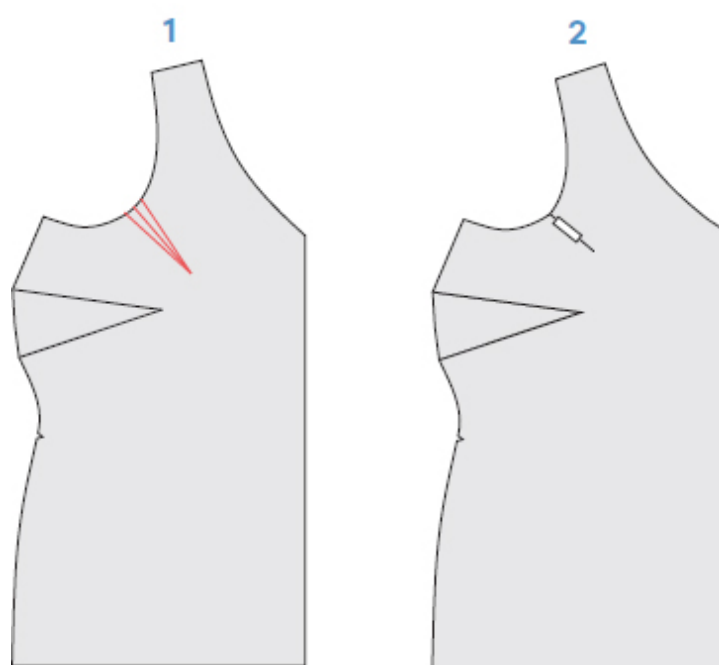
DARTED



On a dartless garment

The [gaping neckline](#) cheat approach also works for armholes!

DARTLESS



NO MORE BRA FLASHING!

Curvy sewist in focus: Dibs

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO START SEWING YOUR OWN CLOTHES?

I have always wanted to sew my own clothes. My mum used to make dresses for me when I was younger, and she used to make me trace out the *Burda* patterns from the magazines.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN BENEFITS OF SEWING YOUR OWN CLOTHES?

I get to sew exactly what I want for my body shape and it helps me maintain my sanity.

HOW HAS SEWING YOUR OWN CLOTHES AFFECTED YOUR BODY IMAGE?

I was fortunate enough that I grew up in an environment where I was encouraged to love my body the way it is. When I lived in Cameroon (where I was born), no one made fun of people who were curvy. If anything, curves are celebrated.

The only thing I have noticed with sewing my own clothes is that, rather than try on a million things in the shops to find one that fits, I simply make something for myself. When I try something on and it doesn't fit, I never ever blame my body for not being perfect enough for the piece of clothing. I simply change the style or sew my own version, which accommodates my body. I am my own personal couturière.

WHAT'S THE ONE THING YOU WISH YOU'D KNOWN WHEN YOU STARTED SEWING?

Fitting is key. You can have all the amazing sewing skills, but if you don't fit yourself properly, then you have just wasted days creating a masterpiece that does not look amazing on you because the fit is off.





Dibs, 40, lives in Northampton, and in addition to

being a business analyst, she runs a popular online fabric store with amazing designer finds, called Selvedge and Bolts. You can find her on Instagram at **@dibsandthemachine** and **@selvedgeandbolts**, and her website is selvedgeandbolts.com.

FIT CLINIC:

Back

You might not see the back of your garments very often, but for a good fit, not to mention comfort when you're moving around, it's important to get your clothes fitting well even in places you can't see!

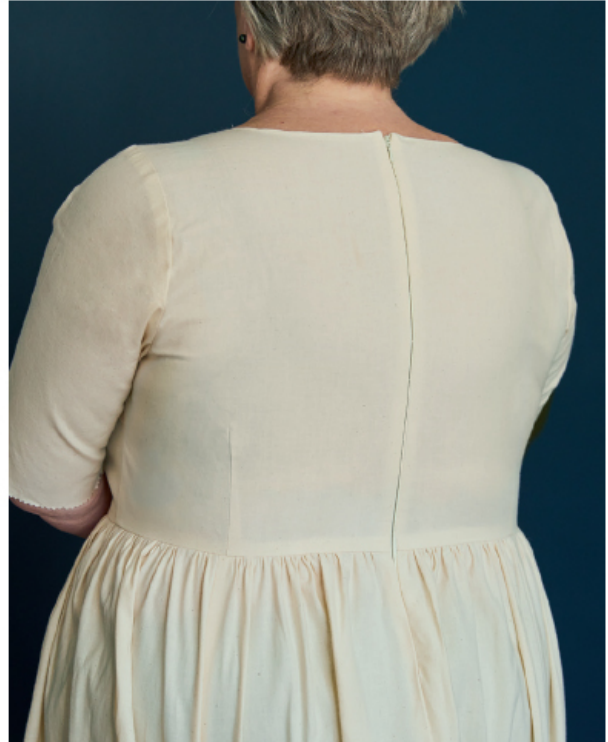
Swayback adjustment

HONEYBOURNE DRESS:

BEFORE



AFTER



Do you end up with bunched-up fabric in your lower back during the day? You're far from being the only one. A pool of excess fabric can occur if your back is particularly curved or your back length is shorter than the pattern – in which case, a swayback adjustment is for you.

- This adjustment works best on patterns with a **centre back seam**, as it creates a curve that goes into the small of your back.

- On patterns **without a centre back seam**, if you want the best-fitting result, the best bet is to add a centre back seam. Just add a seam allowance and cut two pieces, rather than one on the fold.

Signs you may need a swayback adjustment from your toile:

- There is excess fabric at your lower back, which is loose (not tight).
- If the garment is tight over your bum and riding up, causing the excess fabric to pool in your lower back, then you may need to alter the fit for your bum instead to correct the issue: consider grading up a size at the hip or doing a [full bum adjustment](#).

PINCH



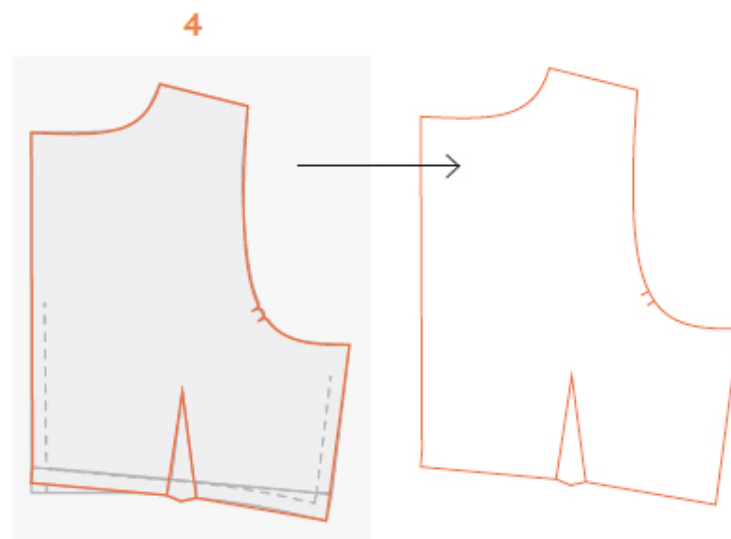
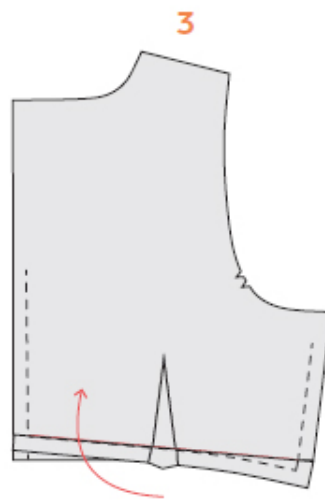
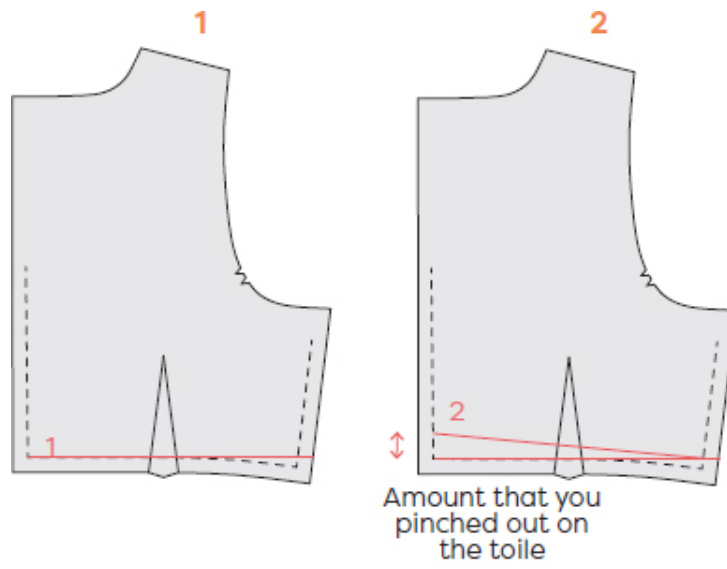
BEFORE YOU START

To assess how much you need to adjust your pattern, try on your toile and then pin out the excess fabric in a wedge, with the largest amount pinched in the centre of your back, going out to nothing at the side seams (forming a diamond shape). This is a tricky one to do

alone – I tend to pinch the fabric, look in the mirror, take the garment off and safety pin it, try it on again and repeat until I've got it right. Mark where you pinched on your toile, then measure how much fabric you pinched out at the centre back – that's the amount you need to remove from the centre back.

On patterns with a waist seam

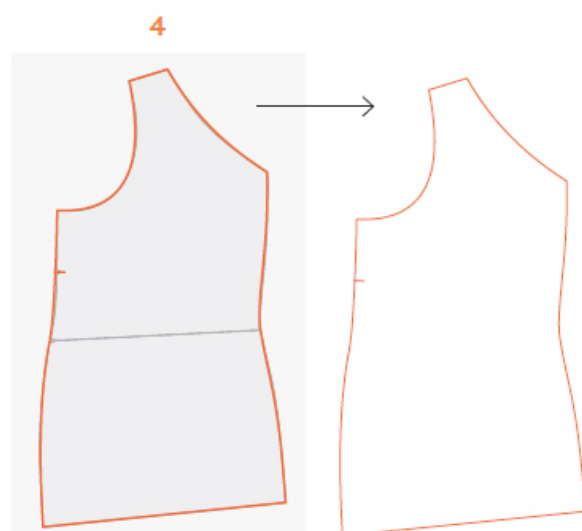
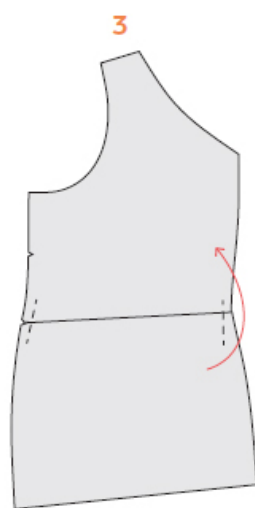
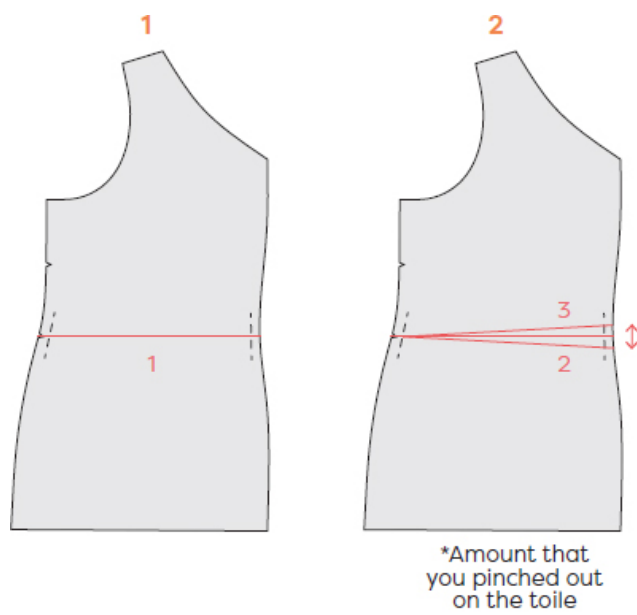
1. Draw the seam allowance around the bottom edges of the back bodice pattern piece. Draw a line (line 1) horizontally across the waistline, from the corner of the seam allowances at the centre back to the side seam.
2. Make a mark above line 1 on the centre back seam that is the amount that you need to remove (the distance you pinched on your toile). Connect that mark to line 1 at the seam allowance of the side seam (line 2).
3. Cut along line 1, starting at the centre back and ending at the side seam allowance. Snip into the seam allowance from the other side, creating a hinge. Swing the bottom piece up until it meets line 2.
4. Trace the pattern piece, following the original hemline of the piece you swung up, and redraw any dart legs to that they are straight.



If the excess fabric is equally distributed above and below the waist seam, you can adjust the bottom pattern piece, too, in a mirror image of what you did for the bodice, with half of the fabric to be removed above the waist and half below the waist.

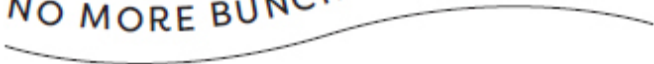
On patterns without a waist seam

1. Draw a line across the back bodice pattern piece at waist level (line 1). Draw on the seam allowance at each end of this line.
2. Mark the distance you need to remove at the centre back seam, centring it around line 1 so that half the distance is above and half is below the line. Join up those marks with line 1 at the seam allowance at the side seam. These are lines 2 and 3.
3. Cut along line 2 from the centre back, ending at the seam allowance of the side seam. Cut into the seam allowance from the other side, creating a small hinge. Swing the bottom piece up, so that line 2 meets line 3.
4. Trace your pattern piece, smoothing out the new curve at the centre back.



Note: the Kersoe Top, shown here, already has a small swayback adjustment built in, which is why an extra adjustment makes it look extra curvy!

NO MORE BUNCHING-UP FABRIC!

A thin, dark, wavy line that starts with a slight dip on the left, rises to a gentle peak in the center, and then dips slightly on the right, creating a smooth, undulating curve.

Broad or narrow back adjustment

Broad back adjustment

HONEYBOURNE DRESS:

BEFORE



AFTER



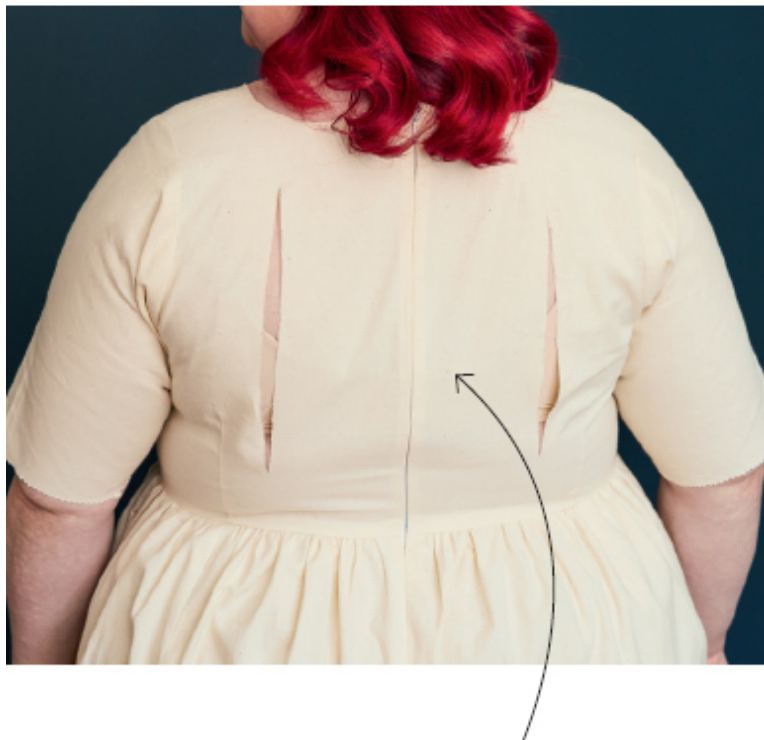
If you've got a broad back compared to your front, it might be tempting to make a different size for the

back and front. That's not a great idea, however, because the seams won't match up and it's unlikely to fit well. It's much better to do a broad back adjustment – and it's not hard!

Signs you may need a broad back adjustment from your toile:

- The back feels tight, but the front doesn't.
- The fabric is straining at the back armscye.
- The armscyees are being pulled towards the centre of your back.

SLICE

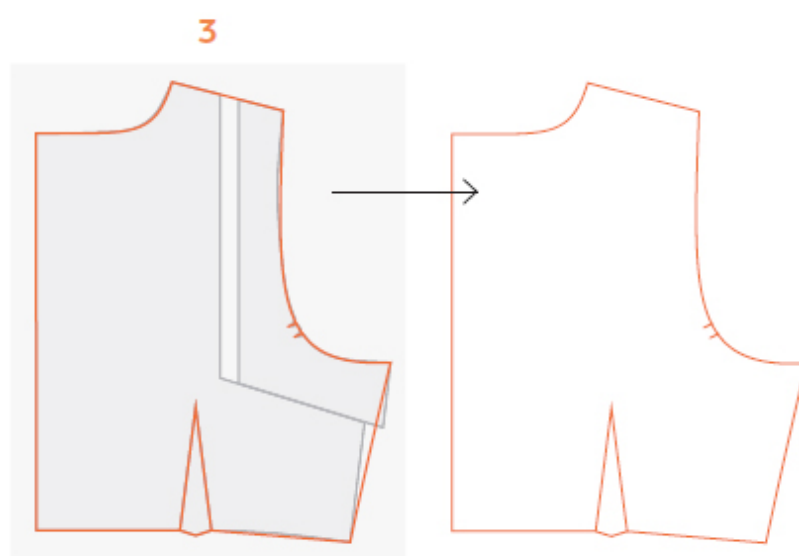
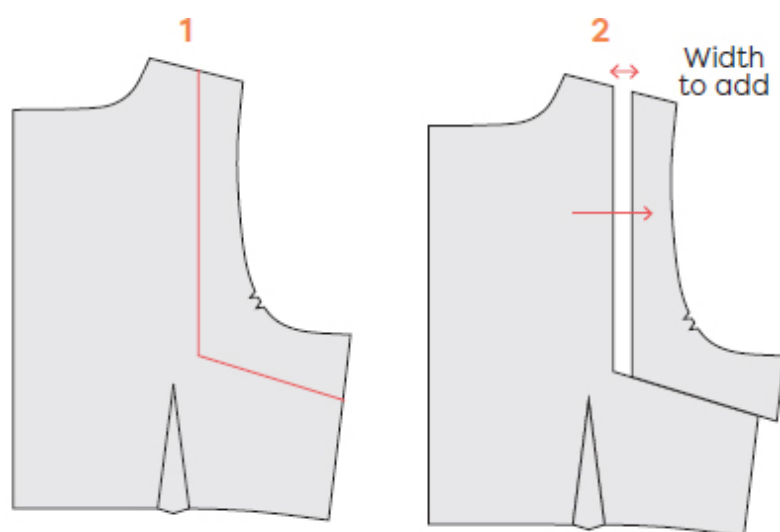


BEFORE YOU START

To assess how much you need to add, make a vertical slash down each side of the back of your toile. Measure how much the slash spreads open for you to be comfortable and no longer find the back tight. This is tricky to do by yourself, so an alternative is to add 1.2–2.5 cm (½–1 in.), make a toile and assess whether you need more.

MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

1. On the back bodice pattern piece, draw a vertical line down from the middle of the shoulder to just below the level of the underarm. Then continue the line diagonally over to the side seam, roughly 5 cm (2 in.) below the underarm.
2. Cut this line to separate the piece into two. Spread the smaller piece away from the main piece until the vertical gap created is the width of the amount you need to add to the back, keeping the lower edge aligned.
3. Trace your pattern piece, evening out the pieces at the side seam, which will add a bit of additional width.
4. The armscye is the same shape as before, so there's no need to change the sleeve. The back shoulder is now wider than the front shoulder: you can either adjust the front shoulder to be wider, too, or you can add a small dart at the back shoulder that is the width of the gap you opened up (and about 5 cm/2 in. long); this brings the shoulders back in line but keeps the added width at the upper back where you need it.



YOUR GARMENT SHOULD NOW FIT
COMFORTABLY ACROSS YOUR SHOULDERS

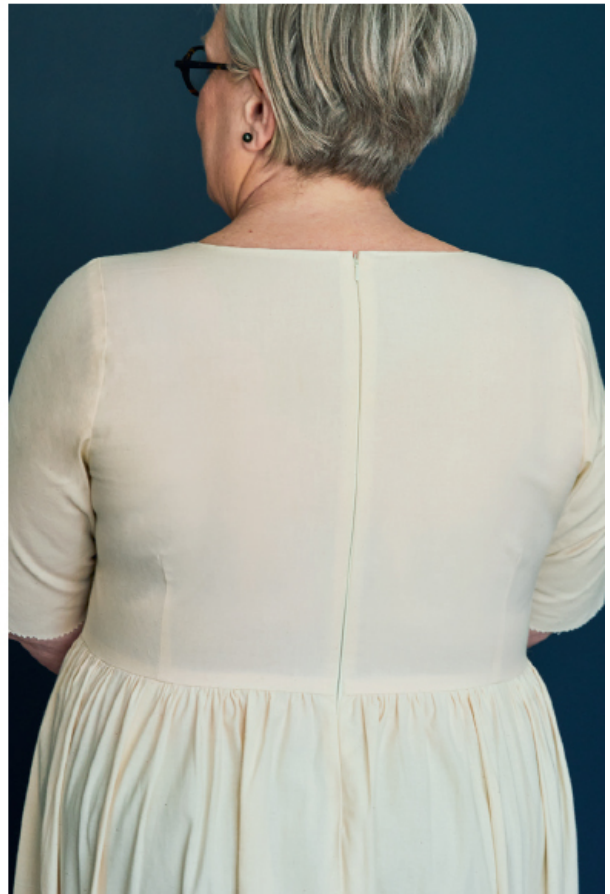
A decorative wavy line that spans the width of the text above it, consisting of a single continuous wave.

Narrow back adjustment

HONEYBOURNE DRESS:

BEFORE

AFTER



Another possibility is that your upper back is narrower than the pattern is designed for. You guessed it: you need a narrow back adjustment.

Signs you may need a narrow back adjustment from your toile:

- There is excess fabric at the back: this may be around the armholes, or there may be vertical folds of fabric down the back.
- It looks loose and droopy at the back but fits well at the front.
- The armholes are sticking too far out from your body at the back.

PIN



BEFORE YOU START

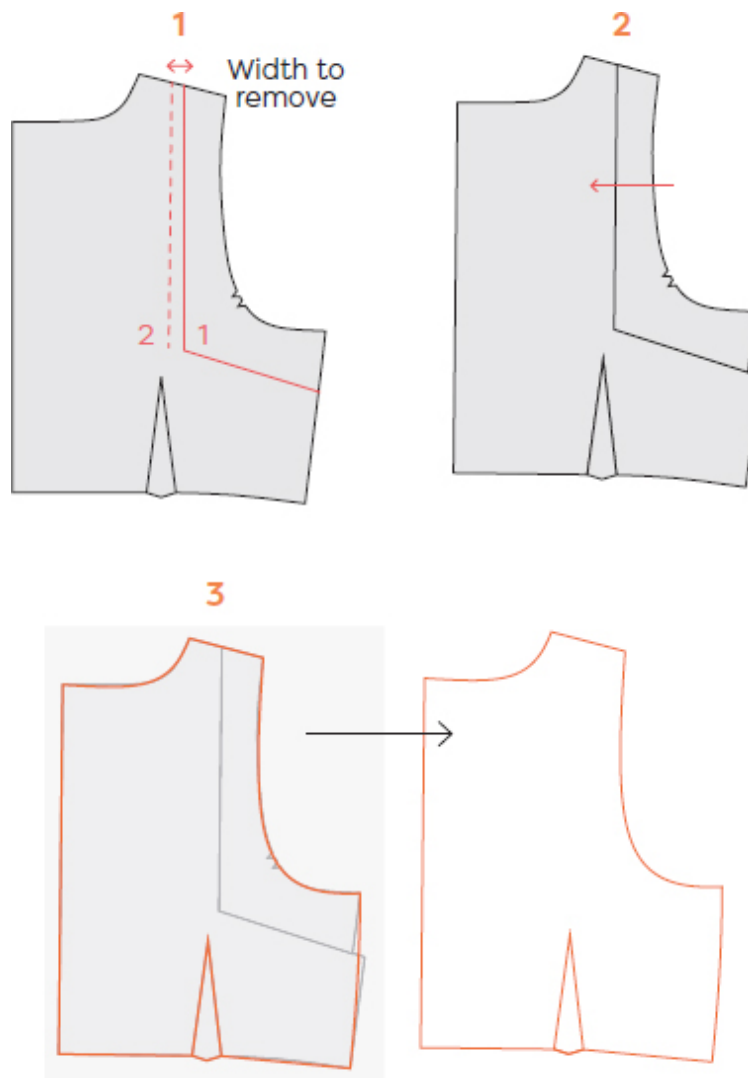
To assess how much you need to narrow the pattern by, pin out folds of fabric with safety pins in two vertical lines down your shoulder blades, until it feels the right width. Mark one fold and then measure how much fabric you pinched out.

MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

1. On the back bodice pattern piece, draw a vertical line down from the middle of the shoulder to just below the level of the underarm. Then continue the line diagonally over to the side seam, roughly 5

cm (2 in.) below the underarm – this is line 1. Draw a second vertical line parallel to the first one, the distance away that you need to remove – this is line 2.

2. Cut line 1, separating the pattern piece into two pieces. Slide the smaller piece to overlap the main piece and meet line 2, keeping the lower edge aligned.
3. Trace your pattern piece, evening out the side seam.



The back shoulder is now slightly narrower than the front shoulder: you can either adjust the front shoulder to be narrower or add a

small dart or tuck to the front shoulder to make them even.

NOW YOUR GARMENT FITS MUCH BETTER

A decorative wavy line graphic consisting of a single, smooth, undulating curve that spans the width of the text above it.

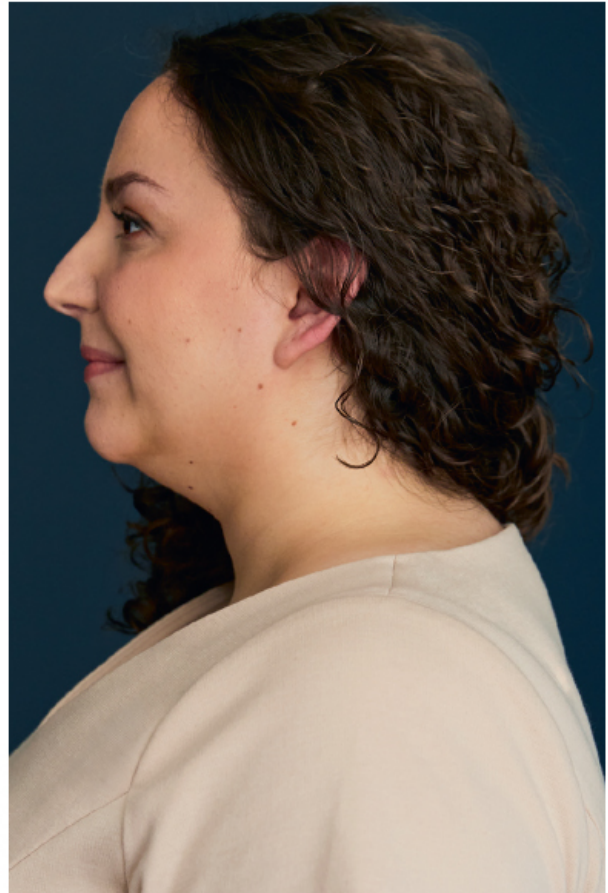
Rounded upper back adjustment

FOXHILL DRESS:

BEFORE



AFTER



A rounded upper back – historically called a ‘dowager’s hump’, but let’s move right on by that one, people! – is really common these days thanks to all the time we spend sitting at computers or on our

phones. I most definitely have one! Luckily it's an easy fix on your garments – you just need to add more length to the upper back, and a bit of a curve.

Signs you may need a rounded upper back adjustment from your toile:

- The back neckline is sticking out from the back of your neck.
- Sometimes, it can cause the neckline to slide too far up on the front, choking you.

BEFORE YOU START:

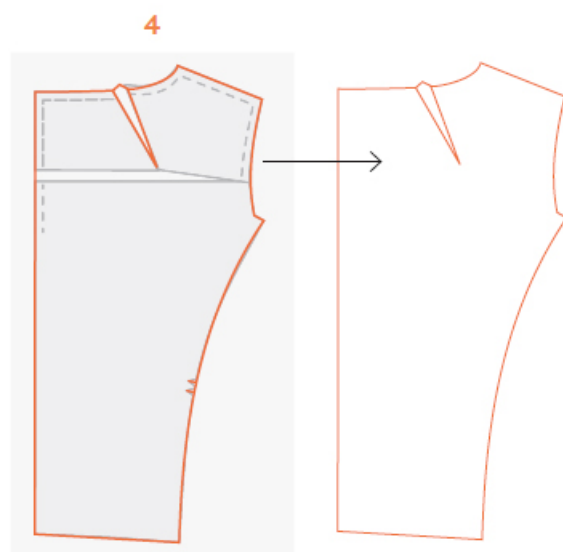
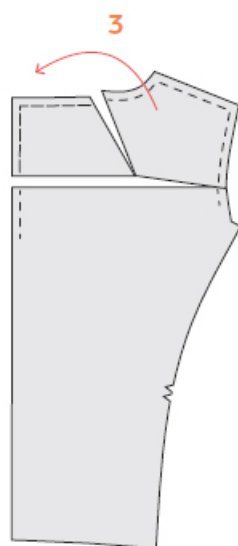
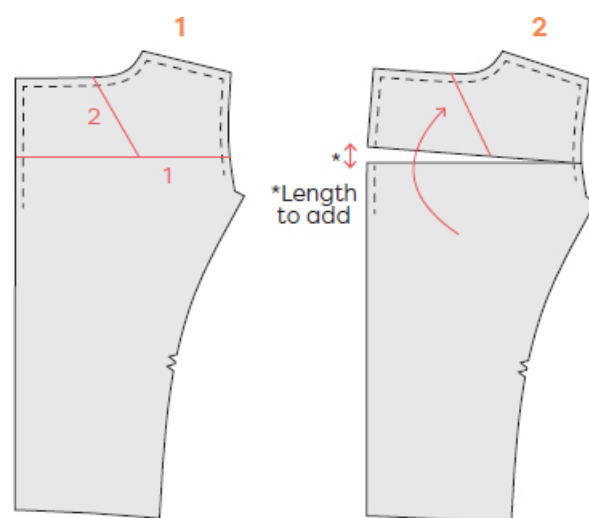
To calculate how much additional length you need, measure the length of your back from where the neckline should sit to your waist. Now measure the pattern piece down the back and compare the numbers: the difference is what you need to add.

MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

1. Mark the seam allowance around the upper part of the back pattern piece. Draw a horizontal line across the piece 8–10 cm (3–4 in.) down from the centre back, so that it goes through the upper armscye; this is line 1. Now, draw a line diagonally from the back neckline down to this line (the exact angle isn't important); this is line 2.
2. Cut along line 1, starting at the centre back and ending at the armscye seam allowance. Cut into the seam allowance from the other side to form a small hinge. Swing the upper piece up, creating a gap at the centre back that is the length you need to add.
3. Cut down line 2, starting at the neckline and ending just before cut line 1, to form a small hinge. Swing the pieces open so that the

centre back is aligned again and the horizontal gap (at line 1) has parallel sides. As you do this, a dart will open up at the neckline.

4. Trace the pattern piece, adding a dart at the neckline where the opening has been created.



This adjustment has added a dart at the back neckline to create more of a curve to match your body. However, if you're making a knit pattern and would rather not have a sewn dart, you can 'fold out' the dart on your pattern piece: pinch the dart as if it was sewn and smoosh it flat – although it's not going to function exactly like a dart, the knit fabric will compensate for that and you'll still achieve a good result.

NO MORE NECKLINE GAPING HERE!



Curvy sewist in focus: Corrie

WHY DID YOU START SEWING YOUR OWN CLOTHES?

I was inspired to start sewing when I saw that the clothes I loved were becoming very expensive, and I wanted more control over where my clothes were coming from. I loved the ethos of Sonja Philip: simple shapes that can be tweaked according to style and taste. The engineering of clothes is fascinating, and the alchemy of turning flat fabric into a 3-D form sat well with my love of puzzles and being a designer.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE?

I've always loved fashion and clothes, and I never wanted to look the same as anyone else. My style has always been based on interesting silhouettes – I love classic shapes with a twist. My style has become even more individual since learning to sew, as being able to choose fabric and patterns has allowed me to experiment.

HOW HAS SEWING YOUR OWN CLOTHES IMPACTED YOUR LIFE?

I have a large chest and I'm a UK size 18 (US 14) – but often an 18 won't fit because of my chest, which has made buying clothes in shops very difficult. Now that I can make choices about my clothes based on my own sewing skills, it's such a buzz! What a powerful thing to do – to accept your body, your measurements, and dress accordingly. We all wear clothes every day, and I wish more people sewed, because it affords you the most amazing confidence boost. I'm also so glad that the #sewover50 campaign on Instagram is driving activism for age diversity in sewing.

WHAT'S THE ONE THING YOU WISH YOU'D KNOWN WHEN YOU STARTED SEWING?

I wish I'd known more about fabric choices and to not be afraid of any pattern. I'm a pretty confident woman, but even I was wary – now I know I can make and wear anything!





Corrie, 53, from South Wales, is a ceramicist and

teacher. She shares her wonderful ceramics and sewing on Instagram at **@ceramic67**.

FIT CLINIC:

Lower half

Fitting your lower half (particularly trousers) has a reputation for being difficult, and I'm not going to lie to you – sometimes it is a bit challenging! However, there are several common – and easy – adjustments that make a huge difference, so it's worth summoning up your courage and giving them a go. In this chapter, I'll be using the [Magna Pants](#) to illustrate the techniques, but you'd use exactly the same methods for many of these adjustments on a skirt or the bottom half of a dress.

Full tummy adjustment

MAGNA PANTS:

BEFORE



AFTER



I'm the proud owner of a squishy tum – and if you are, too, you may sometimes need to do a full tummy adjustment. That said, I'd always recommend making a toile first to see if you need one – depending on the type and drafting of the garment, it may be unnecessary. Much like a [full bust adjustment](#), a full tummy adjustment adds both length and width to the garment where you need it.

Signs you may need a full tummy adjustment from your toile:

- The garment is tight across your tummy, with fabric pulling and pooling under your tummy, and/or there are diagonal lines from your tummy out to the side seams.
- The waistline is pulling down in the centre into a 'V'.
- The tops of the side seams are pulling forwards.

CUT



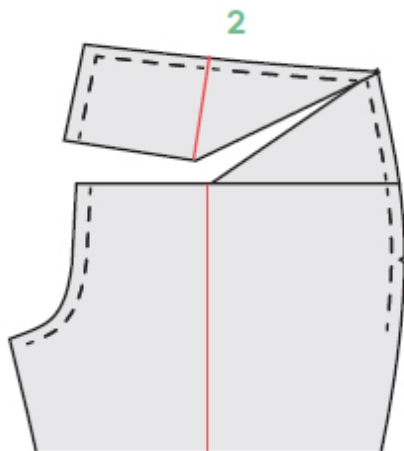
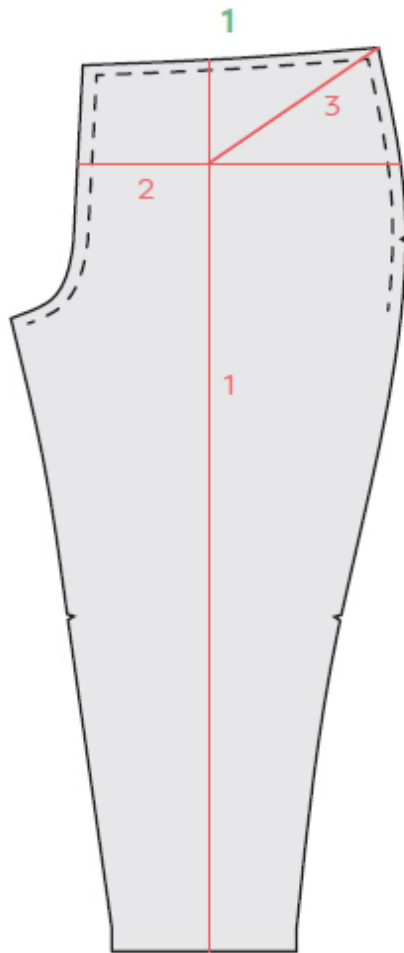
BEFORE YOU START

- To calculate how much you need to add in circumference, use a seam ripper to undo the front centre seam over your tummy (if there isn't a seam, cut down the centre front). Now pull the side seams so that they're straight and perpendicular to the floor. Measure the gap that opens up at the front at the widest point. To calculate how much you're going to add to your pattern piece, take that number, and then divide it by 2. This is measurement 1.
- Measure how far down from the top of the leg that the widest part of the front gap is. This is measurement 2.

- To calculate the vertical amount that you need, measure how far down the front waistline is dipping from where it should be (sitting evenly and parallel to the floor). This is measurement 3.

Full tummy adjustment on trousers

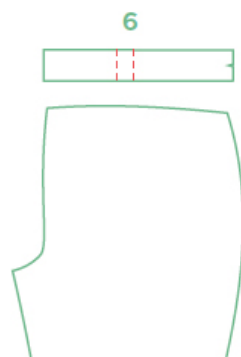
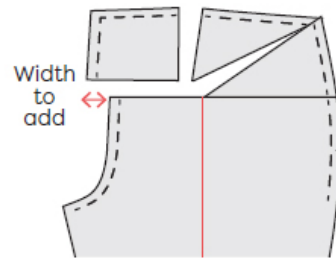
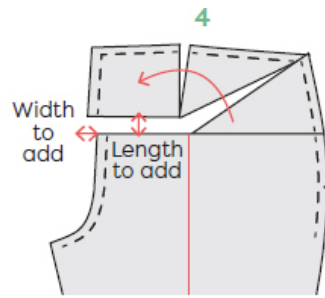
1. Draw on the seam allowance around the top of the front leg pattern piece. Draw a line vertically down the front leg, dividing it in half (at the hem) – this is line 1. Draw a second line horizontally across the leg at the height of the fullest part of your tummy (use measurement 2) – this is line 2. Finally, draw a line from where these lines intersect, diagonally up to the outer edge of the waist – this is line 3.
2. Starting at the centre front, cut along line 2 and up line 3 until you reach the seam allowance. Clip into the seam allowance from the other side to form a small hinge.
3. Cut down line 1 from the waist to just before line 2, leaving a small hinge.



4. Spread the pieces apart, as shown, so that the horizontal gap that opens up has parallel sides; the gap should be the length of

measurement 3. As you move the pieces, a small triangle will open up at the top and the upper part of the crotch will jut out past the lower part. Measure the gap between the two crotch pieces to see if it is the same as the horizontal space you need to add (measurement 1). If it is (as shown top right), great! If it's not (as shown bottom right), break the dart hinge and move the piece over until the gap is the right size (bottom right), making sure that the horizontal gap still has parallel sides.

5. Trace your pattern piece. At the top, gently smooth over the gap – it will become a little curved. At the centre front, follow the new top piece down and then gently curve it back into the centre front seam.
6. This adjustment has also added width to the waist. If you want to keep that additional width, you'll also have to adjust your waistband by the same amount.
7. If you don't want additional width at the waist, draw in a dart where the triangular gap has opened up and sew it closed before constructing your garment.



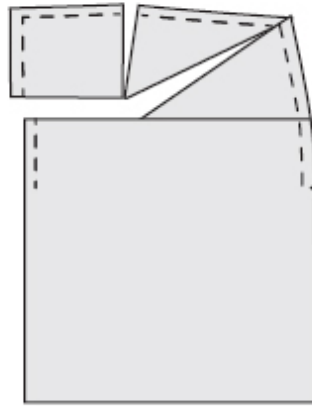
AND NOW WE HAVE A HAPPIER TUM
AND BETTER-FITTING TROUSERS.



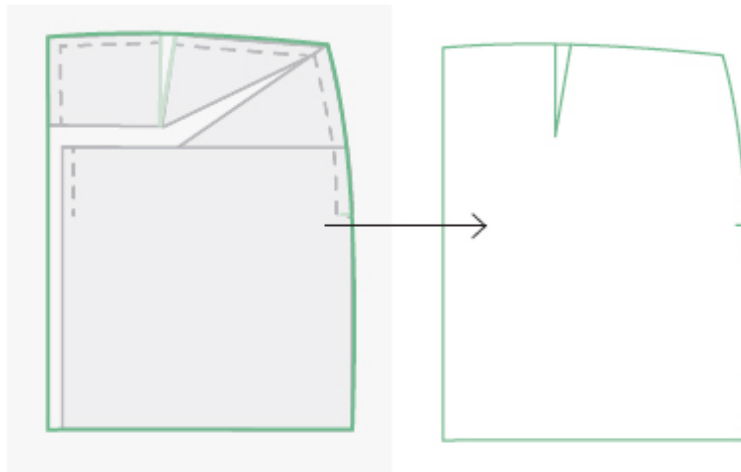
Full tummy adjustment on a skirt

To do this adjustment on a skirt or the bottom half of a dress, the process is the same as for trousers, but using the centre front edge as the crotch seam. Follow steps 1–4 of the full tummy adjustment on trousers and then at step 5, when tracing the pattern, simply continue the upper centre front piece all the way down to the hem; this will give you a little extra room all the way down and prevent the skirt from cupping under your tummy.

5



6



Fitting different tummy shapes

There are lots of different tummy shapes, and depending on which one you have, you may find certain adjustments work best for you. Here are a few common types:

'D' tummy

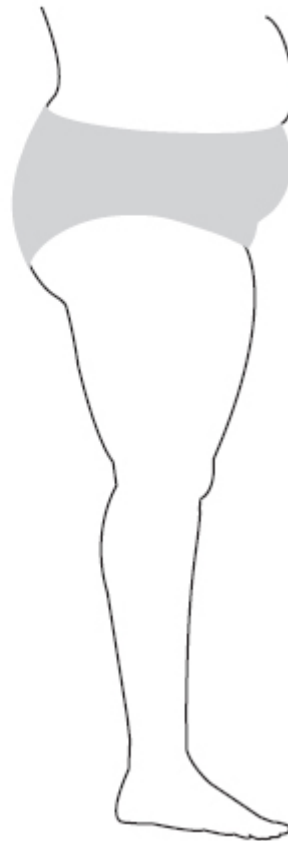
This is a smooth, rounded tummy that looks like a capital 'D' from the side.

It's common to need a full tummy adjustment for this type of tummy, and you should make sure you're adding the additional width at the largest point of your tummy curve.

'D' TUMMY



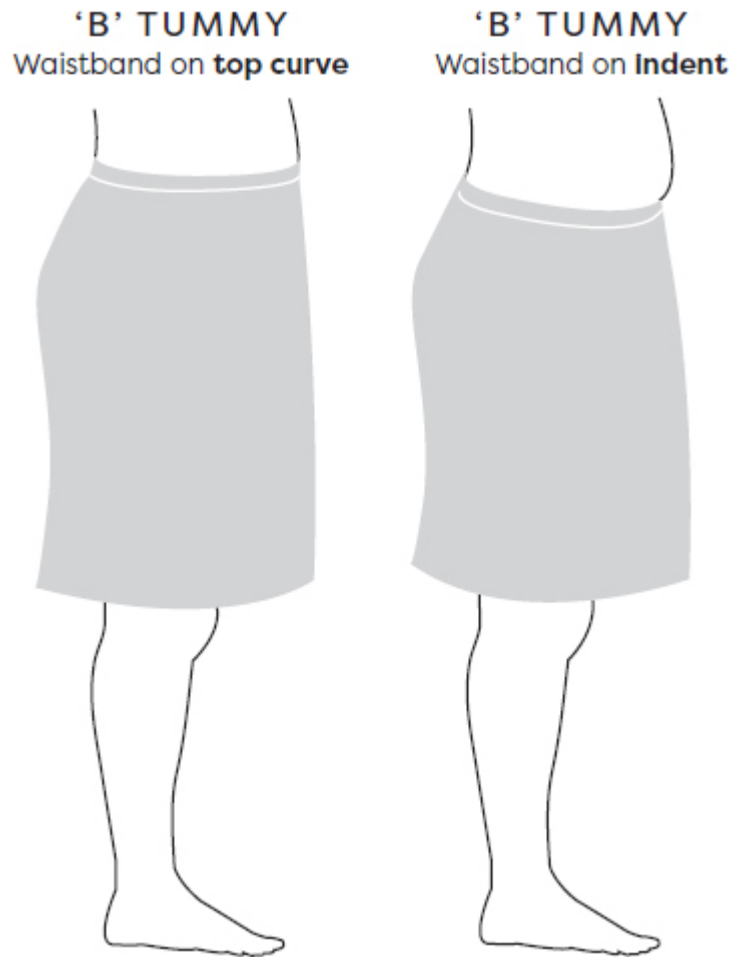
'B' TUMMY



'B' tummy

This is mine! It has two curves with an indent in the middle, which looks a bit like a capital 'B' from the side.

My top tip for this type of tummy is to fit your waistbands to sit on the top curve, rather than in the indent. When you measure and wear waistbands in the indent, it tends to make the top curve 'spill over' and it can cut in when you sit down. By wearing your waistbands on the higher curve you eliminate those issues, and it has a much smoother look. To achieve this, measure your waist on the top curve. (Don't fret if the measurement is longer – who cares, so long as your skirt looks amazing?!)



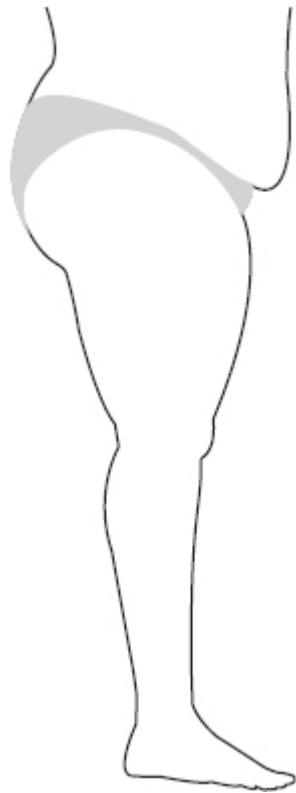
'Apron' tummy

This type of tummy can be shaped like a D or B, but the lower part drops down to form a fold, sometimes below your crotch.

Measure around the fullest part of your tummy when you're taking your hip measurement to make sure you'll have enough circumference in the garment (the exception is if you're planning to wear the garment under the tummy fold).

The fitting goal with this type of tummy is to fix tightness caused by fabric cupping underneath the tummy. You'll want to do a full tummy adjustment (1) with line 2 lower down to match the fullest point of your tummy. Extending the crotch in the front (2) and back (3) out further may also help get a comfortable fit.

APRON TUMMY

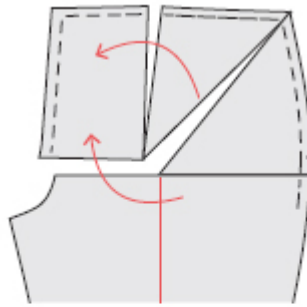


Fitting a full waist

The easiest way to fit for a larger waist is to [grade between sizes](#). There are a few things to remember:

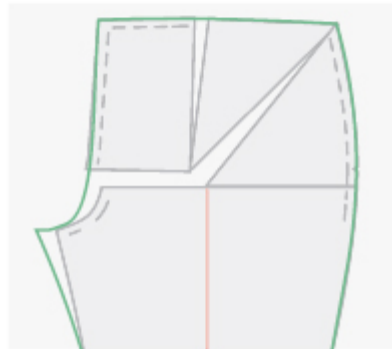
- If you're making a garment with a top and a bottom, you'll need to adjust both pieces – and a waistband if there is one.
- If you're making a fitted or woven garment without much ease, make sure you take your waist measurement sitting down; you'll likely have a bigger measurement when you're sitting, and you want to make sure you can do that!
- If the garment has waist darts, one simple option is simply to not sew those darts or make them smaller.
- Elastic is a full waist's best friend! You might have negative associations with elastic waists, but they can be chic and barely visible if they're done well – especially if you only use elastic at the back like on the [Magna Pants](#) or Cashmerette Calder Pants & Shorts. Knit garments also have a bit of 'give' that can make them much more comfortable.

1



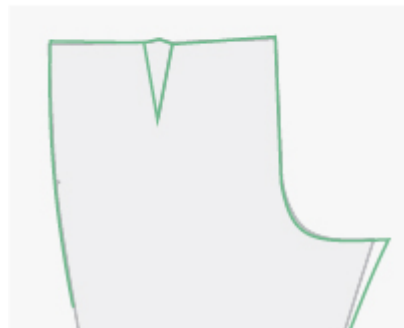
Horizontal line 2 is lower to match fullest point of tummy

2



Front: Extending the crotch

3



Back: Extending the crotch

Crotch curve adjustments

The crotch curve can be one of the trickiest areas to fit. While working out which adjustment to make can be a challenge at first, the good news is that even small adjustments can make a huge difference. Be prepared to make a few toiles and you too can conquer the crotch curve!

Lengthen crotch adjustment

Who wants a crotch that's straining at the seams? No-one, that's who! Let's fix it.

MAGNA PANTS:

BEFORE



AFTER

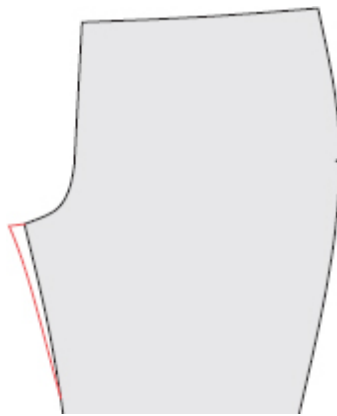


Signs you may need a lengthen crotch adjustment from your toile:

- A 'smile' forms in the fabric across your crotch, with draglines going up towards your hips.
- It feels tight across your front crotch.

MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

1. Extend the crotch on the front leg pattern piece out by 3–6 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$ in.) at a time, and curve back down in a smooth line to join the inner thigh.



A MUCH MORE COMFORTABLE CROTCH!

'Camel toe' adjustment

This one can be a bit embarrassing, but what better than sewing to help you get rid of camel toe once and for all?

MAGNA PANTS:

BEFORE



AFTER

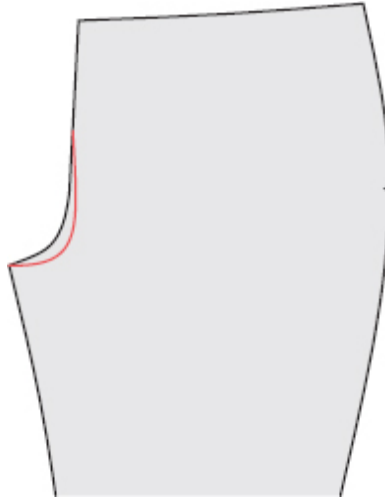


Signs you may need a camel toe adjustment from your toile:

- The centre front crotch is pulling up into your body and digging into the pubic area.
- There may be vertical drag lines.
- Sometimes this also creates tightness at the upper thigh.

MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

1. 'Scoop out' the front curve, which adds space to go over your pubic area. Start with 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) and scoop out more if needed.



TIP: For this adjustment, you can machine baste the new crotch line on your toile and keep trying it on for fit, seam ripping and re-sewing the crotch until you have a good fit. This will save you a lot of time making new toiles! Note that if you need a significant adjustment, it also reduces the circumference of the trousers and you may need to compensate by adding width at the side seams.

GET RID OF THAT CAMEL TOE FOR GOOD!

‘Back wedgie’ adjustment

Another very common fit issue is the wedgie, where your bum is eating up the fabric, making the trousers really uncomfortable.

MAGNA PANTS:

BEFORE

AFTER

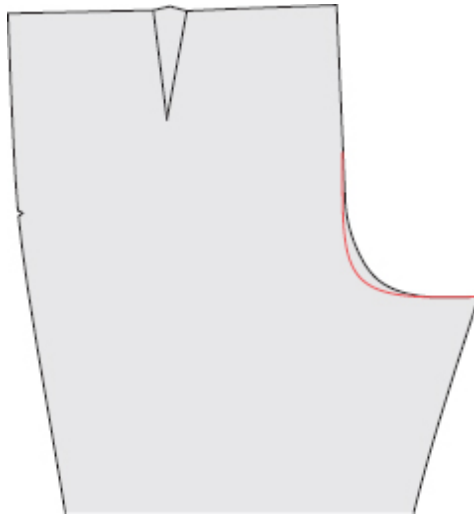


Signs you may need a back wedgie adjustment from your toile:

- The centre back crotch is pulling up into your body and cutting into your bum.
- There are horizontal drag lines under your bum.

MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

1. 'Scoop out' the back curve, adding more space to accommodate your bum. Start with 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) and scoop out more if needed.



TIP: As with the camel toe adjustment, you can machine baste the new curve repeatedly until it fits well. If you make a significant adjustment, you may need to add back width at the side seams.

NO MORE TRYING TO SUBTLY ADJUST
YOUR TROUSERS IN PUBLIC!

Full bum adjustment

MAGNA PANTS:

BEFORE

AFTER



Are you the owner of a gorgeous full bum? Lucky you! Alas, not all patterns allow for a bodacious bottom, so here's how you can make the adjustment – a.k.a. 'the other FBA'! Just as with the boobs FBA, you'll need to add length and width to the pattern.

Signs you may need a full bum adjustment from your toile:

- The garment is tight across your bum which may also make the garment tight over your stomach).
- There are radiating draglines going from your bum out to the side seams.
- The side seam is pulling towards the back.
- The back of your waistband is pulling down and may be gaping (especially if you have a rounder bum).

UNPICK



MEASURE



BEFORE YOU START

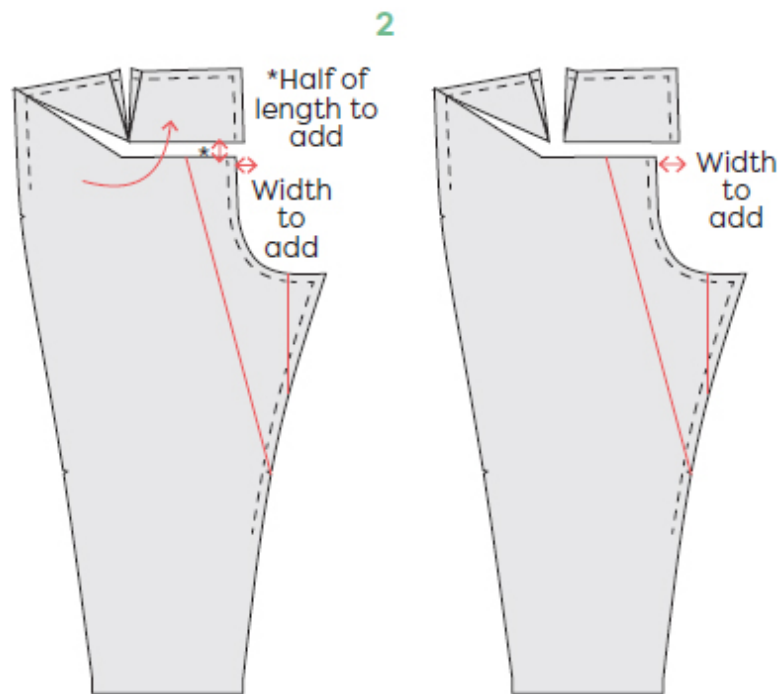
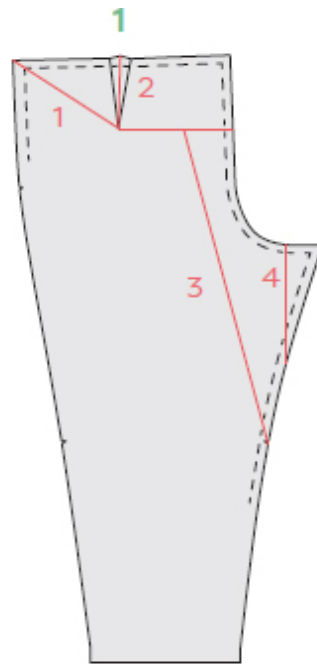
1. To calculate how much you need to add horizontally, use a seam ripper to undo the side seams from just below the waist to your upper thigh. The seams will spread apart – measure that distance,

which is the amount of horizontal room you'll need to add in your adjustment. Divide that number by 2. This is measurement 1.

2. To calculate how much you need to add vertically, measure how far down the back waistband is pulling down from where it should be (level all around your waist). This is measurement 2.

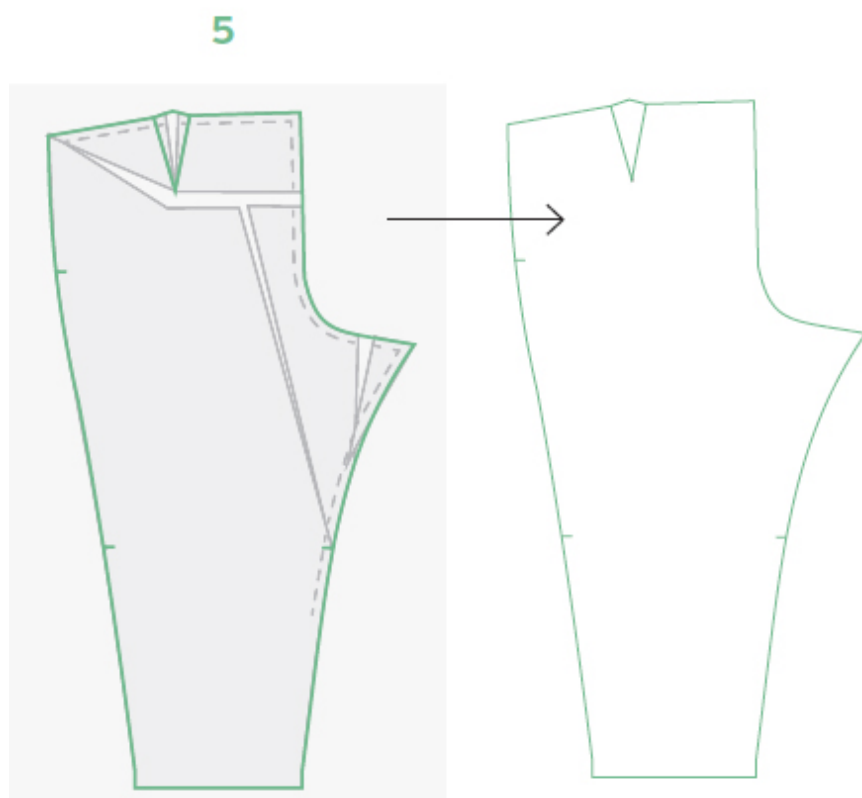
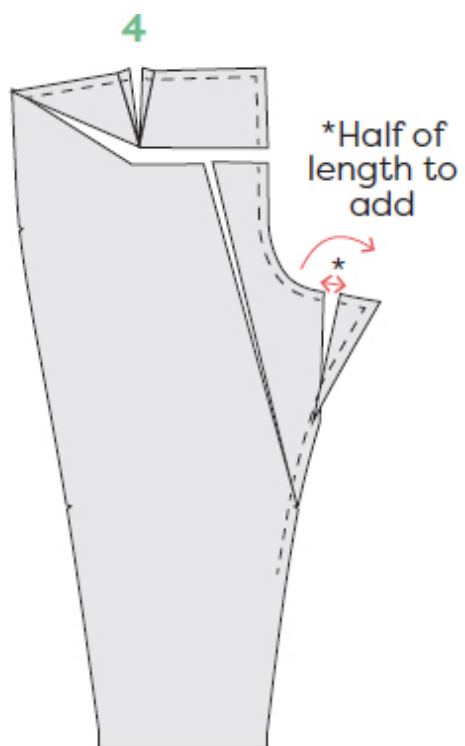
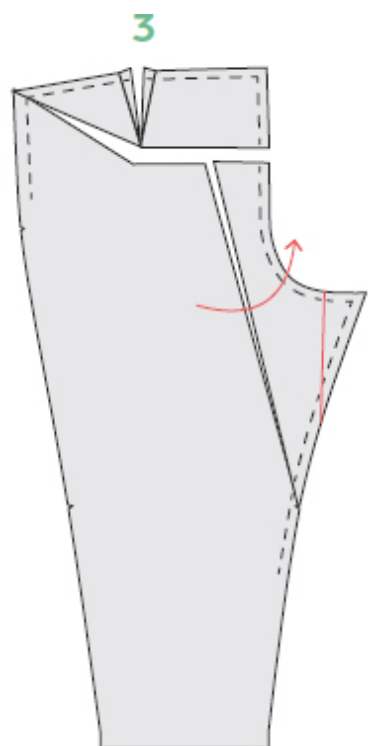
Full bum adjustment on trousers

1. Mark the seam allowance around the edge of the back pattern piece, as shown. Draw a line from the outer top corner of the waist to the dart point, and then horizontally across to the crotch – this is line 1. (If you don't have a dart, go down to approximately one-third of the way down the crotch.) Draw through the centre of the dart – this is line 2. (If you don't have a dart, draw straight up to the waistband from the corner in line 1.) Draw a line from the knee up diagonally to meet line 1, as shown – this is line 3. Draw a vertical line down through the bottom of the crotch curve, as shown – this is line 4.
2. Starting at the crotch, cut through line 1, across and up to the top corner, stopping at the seam allowance. Snip through the seam allowance on the other side to form a small hinge. Now, cut down line 2, stopping just before line 1 to form a hinge. Swing the upper pieces up, creating a horizontal gap with parallel sides – make this gap **half** the length you want to add (half of measurement 2). As you do this, the dart will open up, creating a vertical gap. The upper part of the crotch will now jut out past the lower part – this should be the width you want to add (measurement 1). If you need to add more width, you can snip through the dart hinge and slide the piece over until it has the width required.



3. Cut down line 3, starting at the top and ending at the seam allowance. Snip into the seam allowance from the other side, forming a small hinge. Swing the piece over so that the crotch is lined up again.

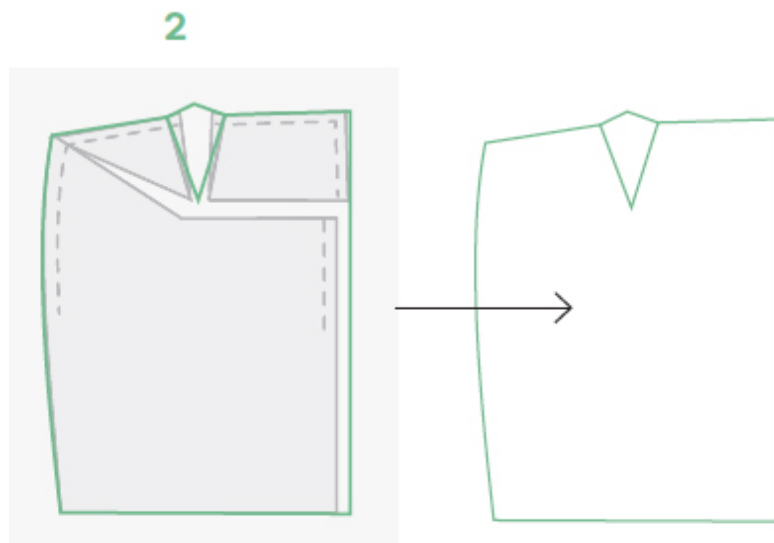
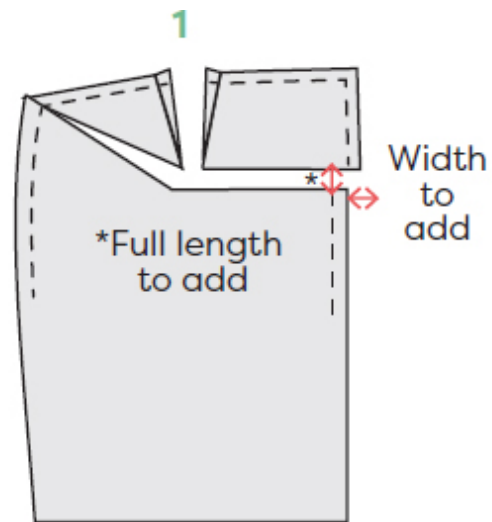
4. Cut down line 4, starting at the top and ending at the seam allowance. Snip into the seam allowance from the other side, forming a small hinge. Swing the piece over, creating a gap that is **half** the length you want to add (half of measurement 2).
5. Trace your new pattern piece and redraw the dart using the original dart legs. If the pattern didn't have a dart, draw one in the width of the gap that opened up, ending at the end of line 2.



Full bum adjustment on a skirt

To do a full bum adjustment on a skirt (or the bottom half of a dress) it's a similar but slightly simpler technique than with trousers.

1. Follow steps 1 and 2 of the full bum adjustment on trousers, but not drawing Lines 3 and 4): when you create your horizontal gap it should be the **full** amount of length you want to add (not half).
2. Trace your pattern piece, going straight down at the centre back. This will add width all the way down the back of the piece. If the back skirt is on the fold and you'd like it to come back in under your bum, then gently curve the centre back line below the level of your bum.



BEHOLD YOUR MAGNIFICENT BOTTOM!

Flat bum adjustment

MAGNA PANTS:

BEFORE

AFTER

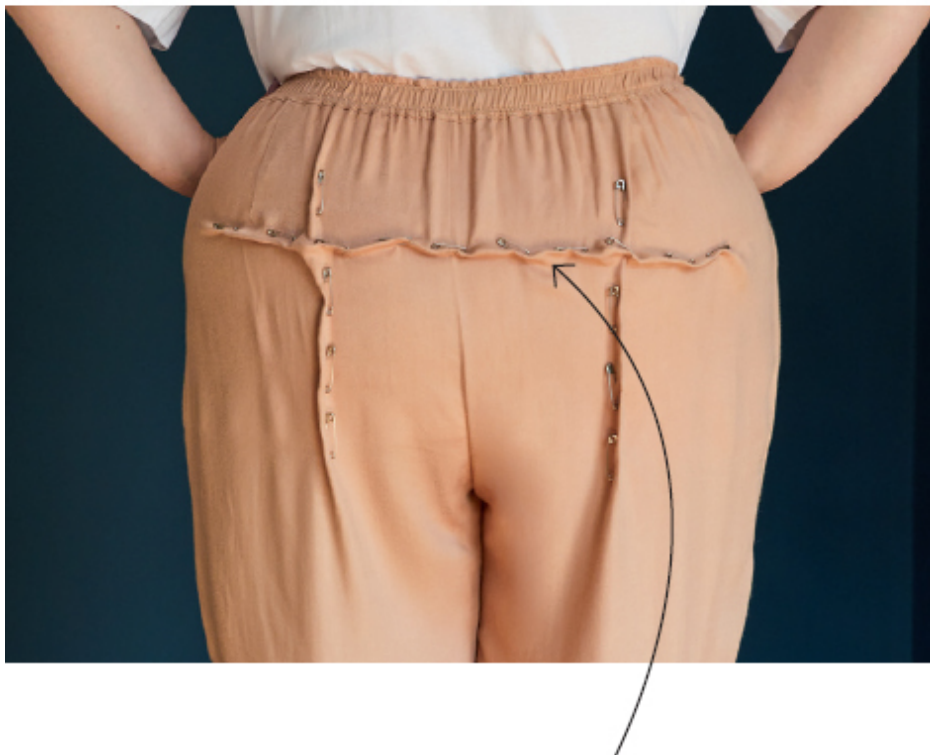


Now for flat bums – that's the club I'm a member of!
Too much length and width in the back of trousers
will create extra fabric that doesn't look great, so let's
fix that.

Signs you may need a flat bum adjustment from your toile:

- There is baggy fabric underneath your bum.
- There are draglines going diagonally up from your inseam to your hips.

PIN



BEFORE YOU START

To calculate how much you need to remove in your flat bum adjustment, the best option is to use safety pins to pinch out folds of fabric until it fits well. Pin a fold horizontally across the area with the baggiest fabric, and then pin two folds vertically through the middle of each side of your bum. Once you have the right amount pinned out, measure the horizontal fold (this is the length to remove, and

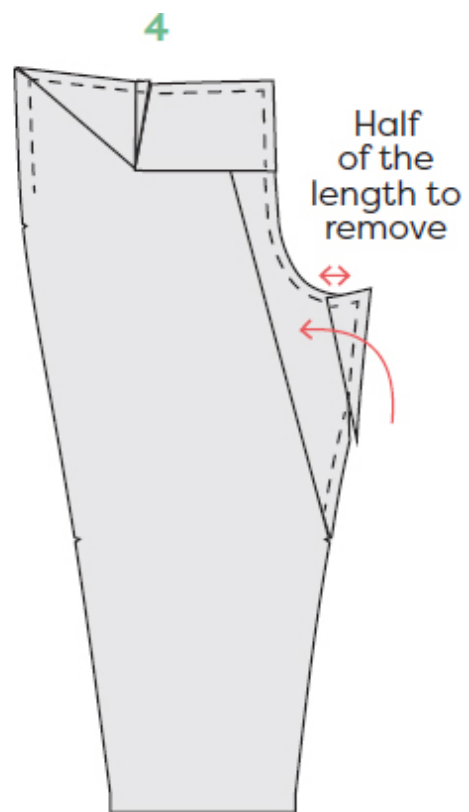
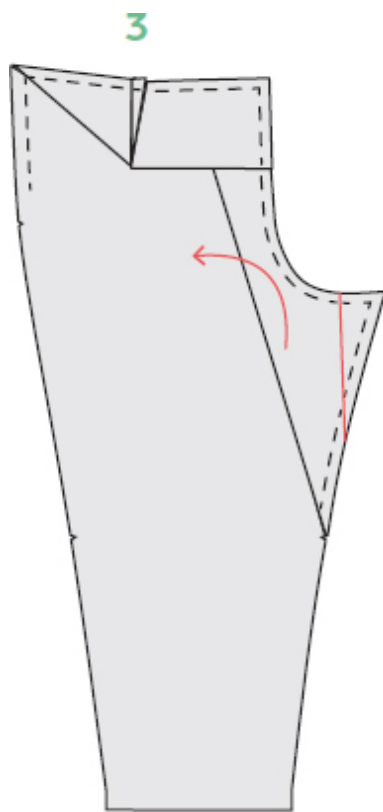
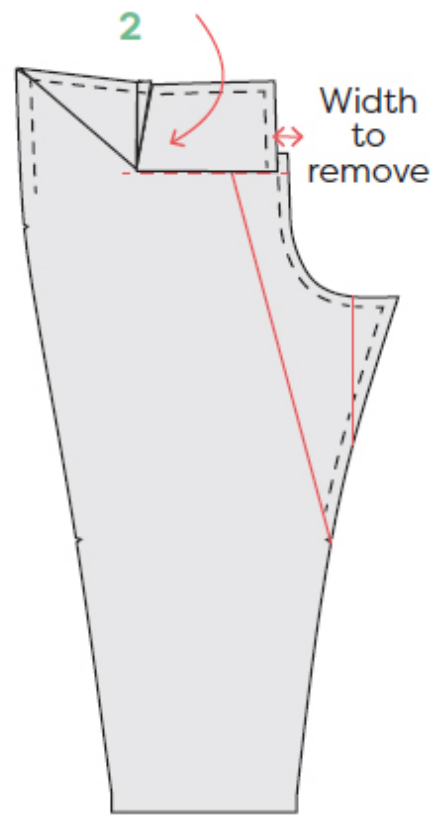
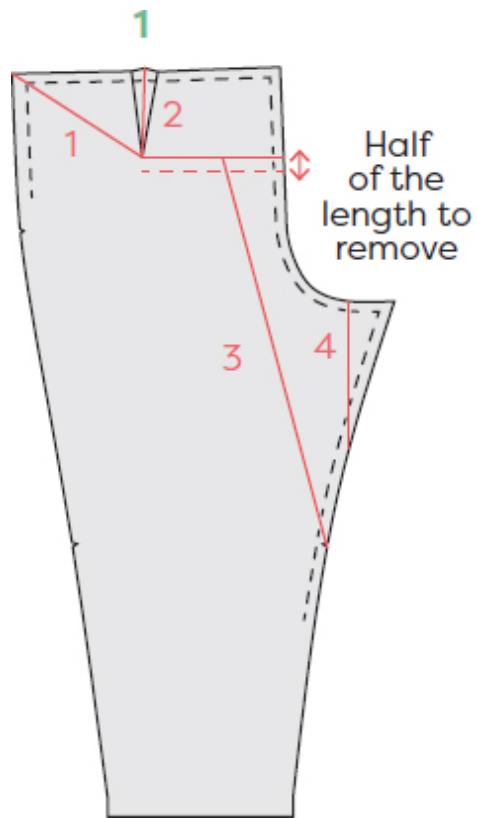
measurement 1) and one of the vertical folds (this is the width to remove, and measurement 2).

Flat bum adjustment on trousers

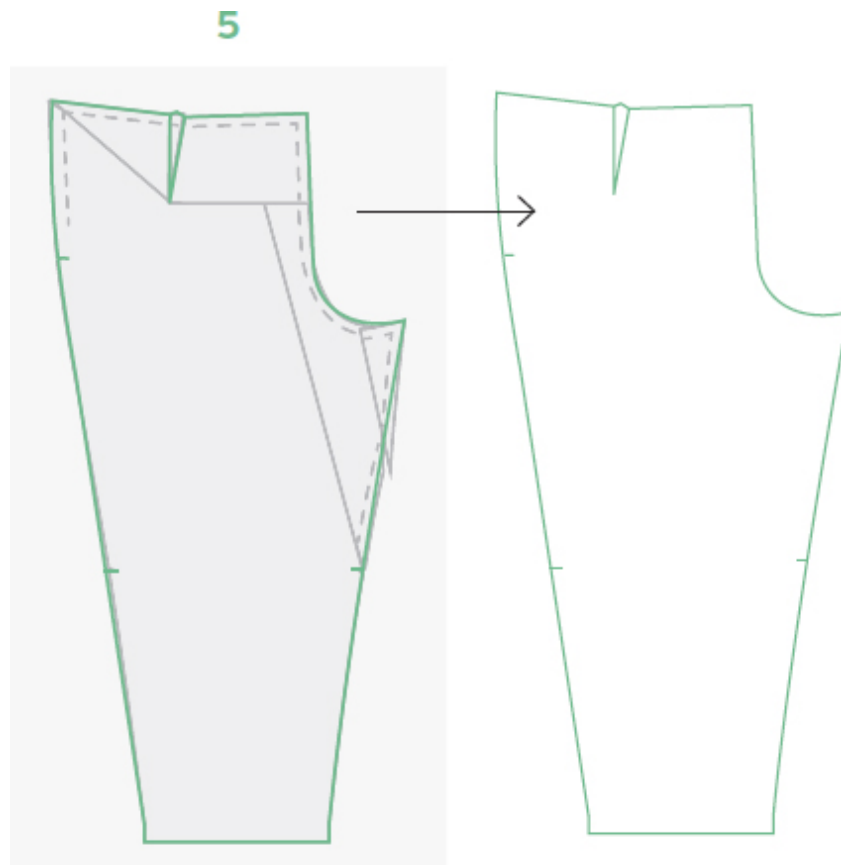
1. Draw the four lines in the same way as for the [full bum adjustment](#).

Draw a parallel line below the horizontal part of line 1, which is **half** the length you need to remove (half of measurement 1).

2. Starting at the crotch, cut through line 1, across and up to the top corner, stopping at the seam allowance. Snip through the seam allowance on the other side to form a small hinge. Cut down line 2, ending just before you reach line 1, to form a small hinge. Swing the top right-hand piece down to meet the parallel line and over to the left to create a gap in the crotch seam, which is the width you need to remove (measurement 2).
3. Cut down line 3, starting at the top and ending at the seam allowance. Snip into the seam allowance from the other side, forming a small hinge. Swing the piece in so that the crotch pieces are lined up again.
4. Cut down line 4, starting at the top and ending at the seam allowance. Snip into the seam allowance from the other side, forming a small hinge. Swing the piece over, overlapping it by **half** the length you want to add. This reduces a little at the thigh as well – if you don't want that, you can skip this step and reduce the full length required in step 3.



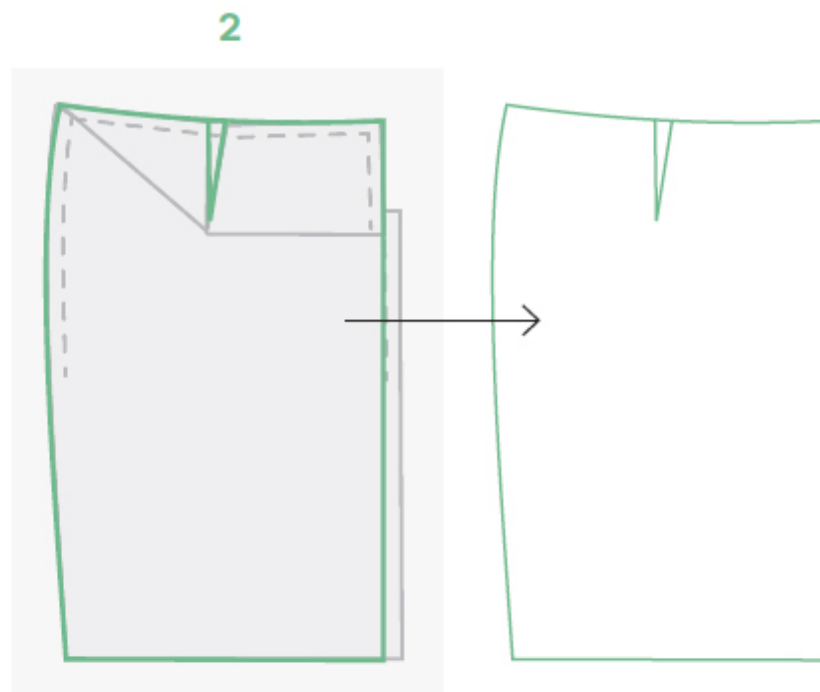
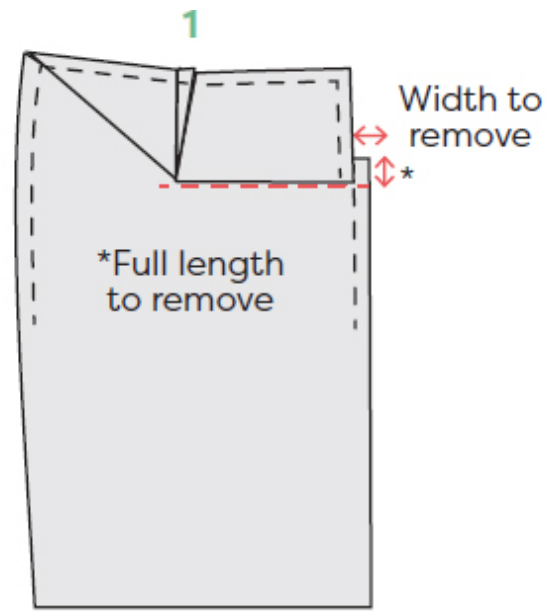
5. Trace your new pattern piece with the smaller dart.



Flat bum adjustment on a skirt

To do this adjustment on skirts or the bottom half of a dress, it's a similar but simpler technique than for trousers.

1. Follow steps 1 and 2 of the flat bum adjustment on trousers, but not drawing lines 3 and 4; when you mark the parallel line below line 1, it should be the **full** length you want to remove (not half).
2. Trace your pattern piece, going straight down from the upper piece at the centre back. This will remove the width all the way down the skirt back.



NO MORE BAGGY BUM,
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

Full thigh adjustment

MAGNA PANTS:

BEFORE

AFTER



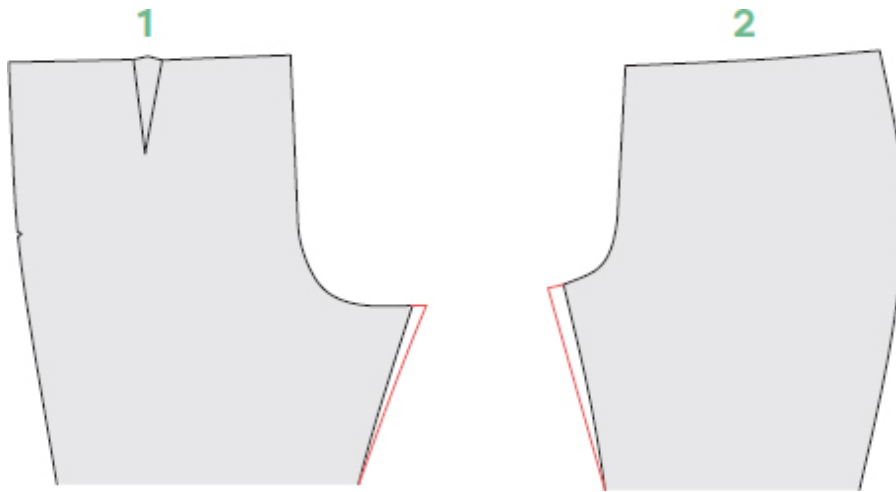
If you have full thighs, you may find that trousers dig in, especially when you sit down – but there's a simple adjustment to add fabric where you need it.

Signs you may need a full thigh adjustment from your toile:

- It feels tight across the upper thigh.
- There are diagonal wrinkles at the back leg pointing to your crotch.

MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

1. On the back leg, draw a line extending past the back crotch point by about 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) and blend it back into the inner leg seam.
2. Now draw the same line on the front leg, in the same way.



Try on your toile to see if they now fit – if not, keep adding increments of around 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) until you have a comfortable fit.

MORE BREATHING ROOM
FOR YOUR THIGHS

Thin thigh adjustment

MAGNA PANTS:

BEFORE



AFTER



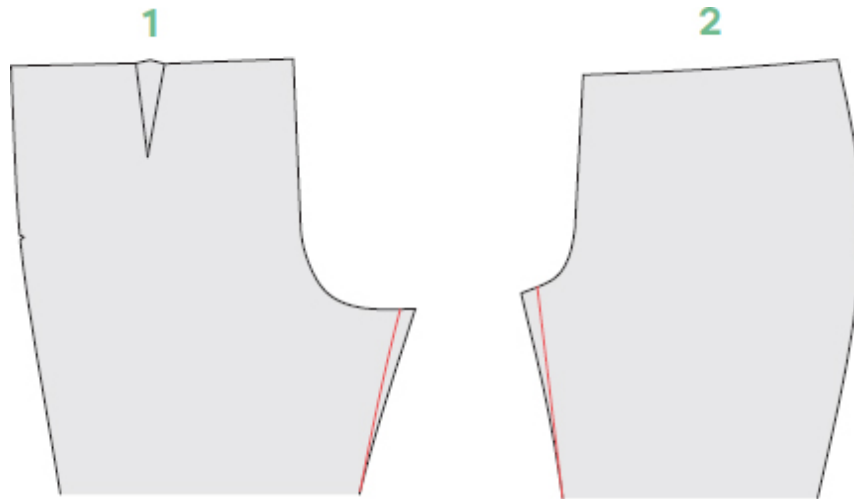
If you've got thin thighs, you need to do the opposite: get rid of the extra fabric.

How to tell if you need a thin thigh adjustment from your toile:

- There are vertical drag lines (wrinkles) at the back, going down from your crotch.

MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

1. Draw a line starting 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) in from the back crotch point and blend it back out to the inner leg seam.
2. Now draw the same line on the front leg, in the same way.



Try on your toile to see if they now fit – if not, keep adding increments of around 6mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) until you have a comfortable fit.

AND NOW YOU HAVE A
MUCH BETTER THIGH FIT.

Full calf adjustment

MAGNA PANTS:

BEFORE



AFTER



Overly tight calves on trousers can really ruin your day! Luckily, it's an easy fix.

Signs you may need a full calf adjustment from your toile:

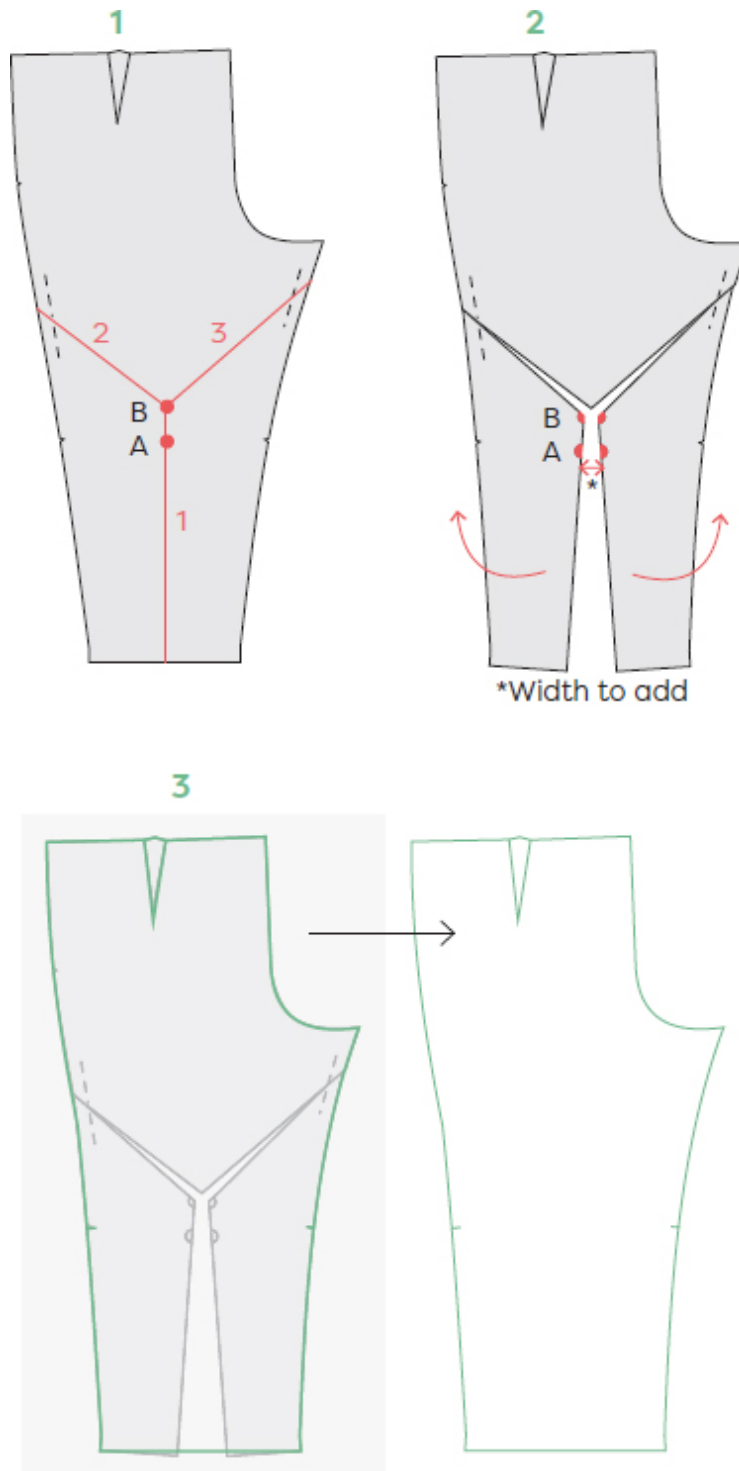
- The legs feel too tight around your calves.
- The legs are bunching up under your knees.

BEFORE YOU START:

To calculate how much you need to add to the calves, you can either measure your own calves and measure the pattern piece at the height of the calf and compare (remember, you might want some ease if they're not stretch or skin-tight trousers) or you can cut open the toile vertically down your calves to the hem and see how much it needs to spread to feel comfortable. Mark the fullest point of your calf on the toile.

MAKE YOUR ADJUSTMENT

1. On the back leg pattern piece, mark the height of the fullest point of your calf (transfer the measurement from your toile) – this is mark A.
 - Now, make another mark 5 cm (2 in.) above that – this is mark B.
 - Draw a line vertically down from mark B to the hem – this is line 1.
 - Draw a line diagonally from mark B up to the side seam, roughly halfway down the side seam – this is line 2.
 - Draw another line diagonally up from mark B up to the inner leg, about 5 cm (2 in.) down from the crotch – this is line 3.
 - Mark the seam allowance at the end of lines 2 and 3.
2. Cut up line 1 to mark B. Now, cut up line 2, starting at mark B and ending at the seam allowance. Snip into the seam allowance from the other side, creating a small hinge. Repeat this by cutting up line 3 and creating a hinge. Spread the two bottom pieces apart, creating a horizontal gap at mark A that is the amount of width you need to add to fit your calf.
3. Trace your pattern piece, evening out the hem at the bottom so it is straight again.



This alteration also adds to the hem. If you don't want extra width there, you can taper in the side seams below the fullest point of your calf.

NO MORE ANNOYING TIGHTNESS!



Finessing your hip, thigh and leg curve

Our bodies are all unique, which means that they come in an infinite number of shapes and sizes – and this becomes particularly clear when you're fitting your pelvis and legs! The height and shape of your hips, thighs and calves can significantly affect fit – some people have a high bum 'ledge', many have a double curve on their hip, or perhaps you are widest at your upper thigh.

Trying to do flat pattern adjustments to match your shape can be quite tricky, but luckily there's an easier approach to matching your curves. I recommend that you do this shaping alteration after you do any of the above adjustments, which add or remove volume.

How to re-shape your pattern

1. Turn your toile inside out and, on one side, safety pin the side seam and inner leg seam of the leg until it fits your hip and thigh curves well. (Remember to check that you can sit down – don't fit it too tight!) If the toile is tight in places, seam rip a section and let the seam spread out.
2. Try on the toile and compare the pinned leg to the original. If it's not there yet, do some more pinning until you're happy with the new fit.
3. Mark where the safety pins are with a pen on the front and back of your toile so that you have the curve clearly marked. If you have seam ripped a section, measure how wide the seams have spread out and how long the opening is, and make a note of that.

4. Take out the safety pins and, using a seam ripper, undo all the seams of the toile so that you now have un-sewn leg pieces.
5. Transfer the new seamline curves from your toile to your pattern pieces. The easiest way to do this is to trace from the toile to the pattern piece using tracing paper. Place the original pattern piece on top of the toile, lining up the top and bottom of the pattern piece with the toile, and then place a new piece of tracing paper on top of those two layers. Then, re-draw the whole pattern piece, tracing the new curves at the side seam and in-seam from the toile. If you seam ripped a section, add on the extra room that you measured from your toile.
6. Add seam allowances back on at the sides of the pattern piece, parallel to the new lines you've drawn.

Curvy sewist in focus: Andii

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO START SEWING YOUR OWN CLOTHES?

The short answer is I was fat and poor! I've always been really interested in fashion, even as a really young child I was 'designing' outfits for Barbies, drawing tour outfits for when I was going to be a pop star (bless my child self!) and customizing clothing to my mother's horror! I got more alternative as I grew into my teenage years, and as a single-parent household with no money, we couldn't afford the coolest band shirts and goth outfits I was dreaming of – if they even existed in my size to begin with!

So for my 14th birthday, my mum bought me a used Singer sewing machine and some fabric, and I sat down and tried to sew a skirt. I didn't know you had to lower the foot, I was that uninitiated! I then did a fashion course from age 14–16, art and fashion throughout college, and ultimately a design degree.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE?

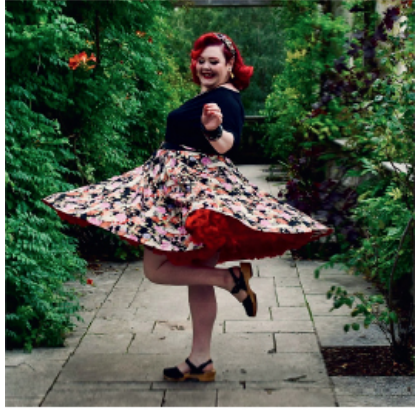
Vintage with an edge, I'd say! I'm flitting between a '50s style, a '60s style and a bit of a grown-up emo style these days, although the majority of my sewing is generally geared towards a '50s pin-up style.

HOW HAS SEWING YOUR OWN CLOTHES IMPACTED YOUR LIFE?

I'm very aware of myself, my body and its shape due to sewing. I know what does and doesn't suit me simply because I've made clothes to fit me for a long time now. But it's also opened a world of creative sewists, bloggers and friends that are the most inspiring and wonderful people around.

Sewing has also taught me the value of clothing — I know the skill, the time and the effort that goes into clothing from start to finish. And I

appreciate clothing much more than ever before.





Andii, 30, lives in North London and is a

professional 'Handbag Peddler', managing a shop and working as a brand ambassador for a novelty handbag company. She's been sewing for 15 years and showcases her fantastic retro style on Instagram **@MelodyMae** and on her blog, MelodyMae.co.uk

CHAPTER 3

This chapter has detailed instructions for sewing each of the five downloadable patterns included with the book. Once you've got five fabulously fitting garments, the sky's the limit! You can hack and alter them to get different looks, and you'll have the skills to fit any other sewing patterns that you want to make. Find your size using the measurement [tables](#).

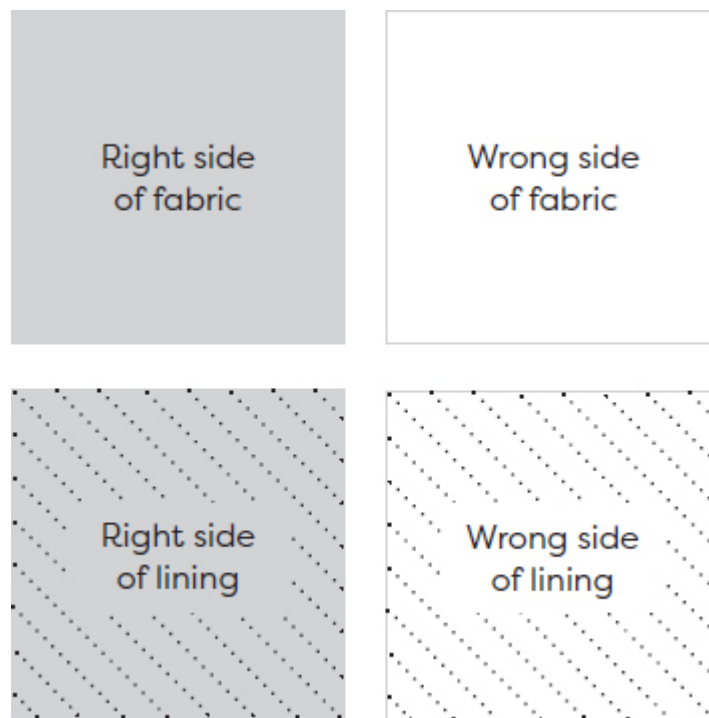
patterns

General sewing guidelines

The following guidelines apply to all the patterns in this book. Make sure you read them carefully before you start your toiles.

Fabric key

In the sewing illustrations, different shadings are used to denote the different sides of the main fabric and lining (where used).



Picking your size

Refer to the body measurements [table](#); the finished garment measurements are given with each pattern.

Fabric cutting

For the most efficient use of fabric, use a single layer of fabric to cut your pattern pieces. When the pattern piece says 'cut on fold', simply flip the piece over to cut the second half. The cutting layouts show how to use the least amount of fabric, assuming the fabric is directional (i.e. it has a pattern with an 'up' and 'down', or a nap). If your fabric is solid or non-directional, you may be able to use less fabric.

Seam allowances

WOVEN FABRIC PATTERNS (KERSOE TOP, MAGNA PANTS, HONEY BOURNE DRESS)

- **Seam allowance:** A 12-mm (½-in.) seam allowance is included in the pattern pieces.
- **Sewing machines:** Sew all seams on a regular sewing machine using a straight 2.5 mm long stitch.
- **Finishing seam allowances:** On a sewing machine, sew a second line 3 mm (⅛ in.) from the seam and trim the seam allowance down to 1.5 mm (1/16 in.) next to the stitching. On an overlocker (serger), use a narrow 3-thread overlock stitch and overlock as close as possible to the stitching line after sewing on a sewing machine. Alternatively, techniques like French seams or Hong Kong binding can be used. Seam allowances are finished together (i.e. as one piece) unless specified.

KNIT FABRIC PATTERNS (STAN WAY T-SHIRT, FOX HILL DRESS)

- **Seam allowance:** A 1-cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ -in.) seam allowance is included in the pattern pieces.
- **Sewing machines:** Sew all seams on a regular sewing machine, using a 2.5 mm length/0.5 mm width zigzag stitch with a ballpoint or stretch needle, or on an overlocker (serger). Hems can be sewn on a sewing machine using a zigzag stitch or twin needle, or on a coverstitch machine.
- **Finishing seam allowances:** If you are using an overlocker (serger), seam allowances will be finished as you sew. If you are using a sewing machine, check whether your knit fabric frays. If it doesn't, there's no need to finish the seams; if it does, sew a second row of zigzag stitching within your seam allowance (securing the two together) and trim close to the edge to finish. Seam allowances are finished together (i.e. as one piece) unless specified.

Pressing

- Test the temperature of the iron first and use a press cloth to avoid causing a shine on your fabric.
- Lightly press each seam after it is sewn, from the wrong side and then from the right side of the fabric, using an up-and-down motion. Then press the seam open or to one side, following the step-by-step instructions.

Transferring notches and markings

- Use scissors to snip a small 3-mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ -in.) cut on your fabric to indicate the notches, including marking the centre front and centre back points for pieces cut on the fold.
- Use chalk to mark darts on your pattern pieces.

Construction glossary

EDGE STITCHING

Sewing very close to the edge of the fabric (i.e. 1.5 mm/1/16 in.).

LINING

The inner layer of your garment, not visible from the outside.

SHELL

The outer layer of your garment, made from the fashion fabric.

STAYSTITCHING

A line of short (1.5 mm) stitches close to the edge of the fabric (6 mm/1/4 in.) to prevent it from stretching out during sewing. Mostly used for curved and bias edges.

TOPSTITCHING

Sewing from the right side of the garment to secure layers together, such as the edge of a hem.

UNDERSTITCHING

Sewing the lining to the seam allowance underneath at the edge of the seam line.

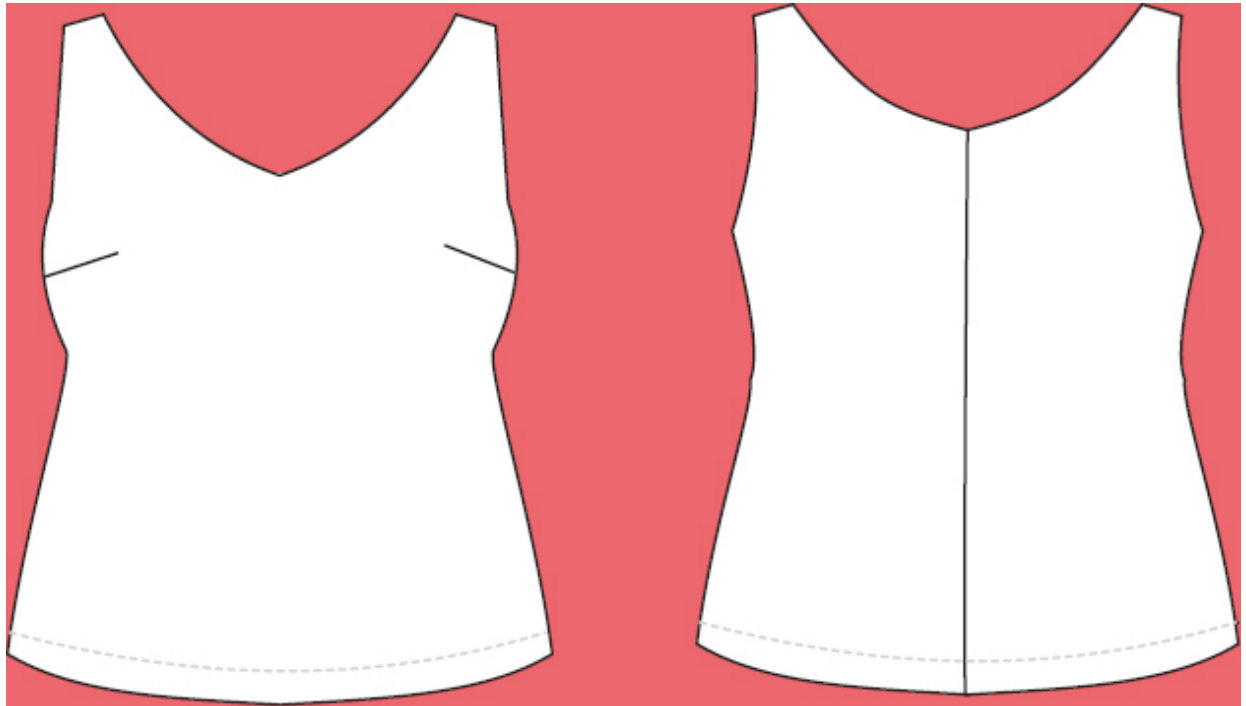
Kersoe Top





Kersoe Top

SEWING LEVEL: BEGINNER



This chic and simple V-neck woven top is a wardrobe staple that looks great with jeans or tucked into a skirt. Make it from woven fabrics such as cotton lawn, rayon or linen, and enjoy the clean finish created by the half-lining, which ends below the bust. Bust darts and a centre back seam give you lots of opportunities to perfect the fit.

Finished garment measurements

CENTIMETRES

UK		16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US		12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU		44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
Full bust	C/D cup	106	111	117	122	127	132	137	142	147	152	157
	E/F cup	109	114	119	124	129	134	139	144	150	155	160
	G/H cup	111	117	122	127	132	137	142	147	152	157	162
Waist		104	109	114	119	124	129	134	139	144	149	154
Hip		120	125	130	135	140	145	150	155	160	165	170
Back length		49	49	49	50	50	50	50	51	51	51	52

INCHES

UK		16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US		12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU		44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
Full bust	C/D cup	41 ¹ / ₈	43 ³ / ₈	45 ⁵ / ₈	47 ⁷ / ₈	49 ¹ / ₂	51 ¹ / ₈	53 ³ / ₈	55 ⁵ / ₈	57 ⁷ / ₈	59 ¹ / ₂	61 ¹ / ₈
	E/F cup	42 ¹ / ₈	44 ³ / ₈	46 ⁵ / ₈	48 ⁷ / ₈	50 ¹ / ₂	52 ¹ / ₈	54 ³ / ₈	56 ⁵ / ₈	58 ⁷ / ₈	60 ¹ / ₂	62 ¹ / ₈
	G/H cup	43 ¹ / ₈	45 ³ / ₈	47 ⁵ / ₈	49 ⁷ / ₈	51 ¹ / ₂	53 ³ / ₈	55 ⁵ / ₈	57 ⁷ / ₈	59 ¹ / ₂	61 ³ / ₈	63 ⁵ / ₈
Waist		40 ⁷ / ₈	42 ¹ / ₈	44 ³ / ₈	46 ⁵ / ₈	48 ⁷ / ₈	50 ¹ / ₂	52 ³ / ₈	54 ⁵ / ₈	56 ⁷ / ₈	58 ¹ / ₂	60 ³ / ₈
Hip		47 ¹ / ₈	49 ³ / ₈	51 ⁵ / ₈	53 ⁷ / ₈	55 ¹ / ₂	57 ³ / ₈	59 ⁵ / ₈	61 ⁷ / ₈	63 ¹ / ₂	65 ³ / ₈	67 ⁵ / ₈
Back length		19 ¹ / ₈	19 ³ / ₈	19 ⁵ / ₈	19 ⁷ / ₈	19 ¹ / ₂	19 ³ / ₈	19 ⁵ / ₈	20	20 ¹ / ₈	20 ³ / ₈	20 ⁵ / ₈

Fabric requirements

METRES

UK	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
115-cm fabric	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	3	3	3	3	3	3
140-cm fabric	2	2	2	2	2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2

YARDS

UK	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
45-in. fabric	3	3	3	3	3	3¼	3¼	3¼	3¼	3¼	3¼
55-in. fabric	2⅞	2⅞	2⅞	2⅞	2⅞	2⅞	2⅞	2⅞	2⅞	2⅞	2⅞

You will need

RECOMMENDED FABRIC

- **Shell:** Light- to mid-weight woven fabric, such as cotton lawn, linen or rayon
- **Lining:** Lightweight woven fabric (can be the same as the shell fabric).

NOTIONS

- Thread
- Universal needle

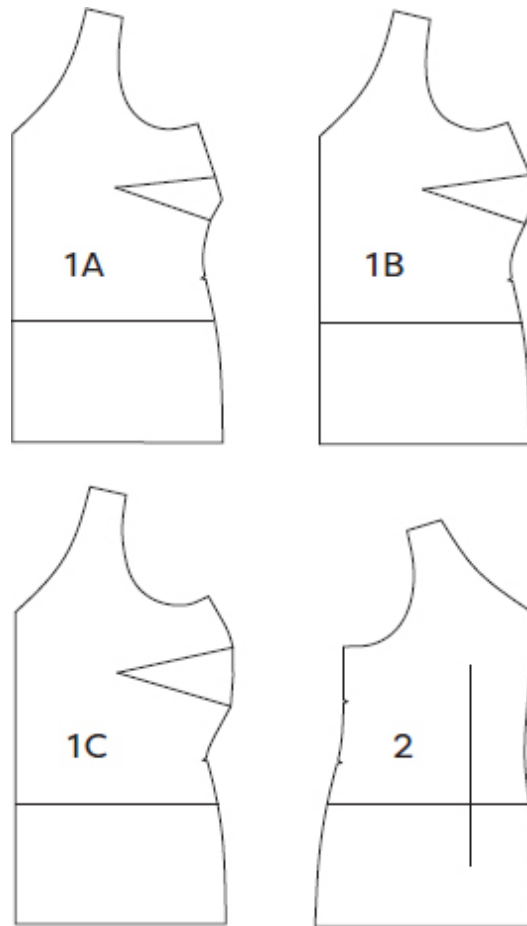
Pattern inventory

1A: Front, C/D cup (cut 1 full piece for shell and 1 cropped piece at line for lining, which will be 1L)

1B: Front, E/F cup (cut 1 full piece for shell and 1 cropped piece at line for lining, which will be 1L)

1C: Front, G/H cup (cut 1 full piece for shell and 1 cropped piece at line for lining, which will be 1L)

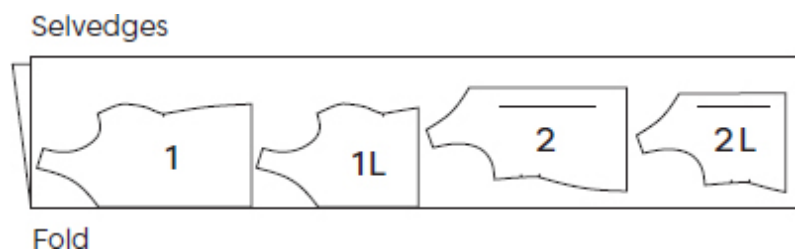
2: Back (cut 2 full pieces for shell and 2 cropped pieces at line for lining, which will be 2L)



Fabric cutting layouts

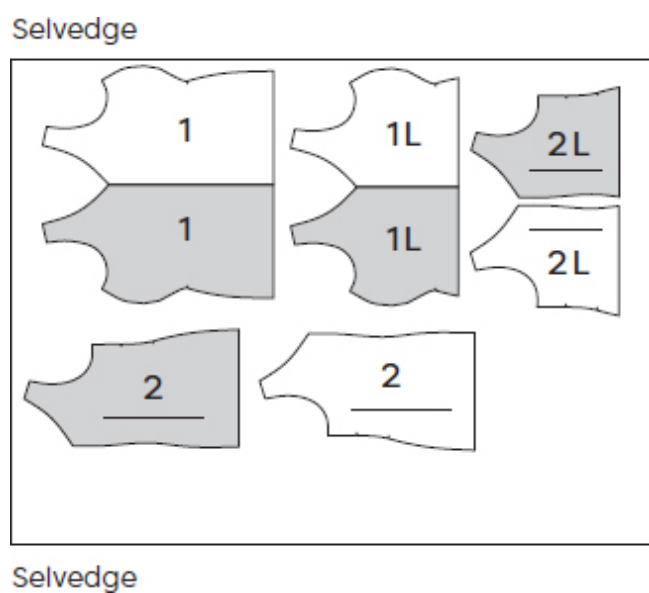
SIZES: ALL SIZES

FABRIC WIDTH: 115 CM (45 IN)



SIZES : UK 16–24 (US 12–20)

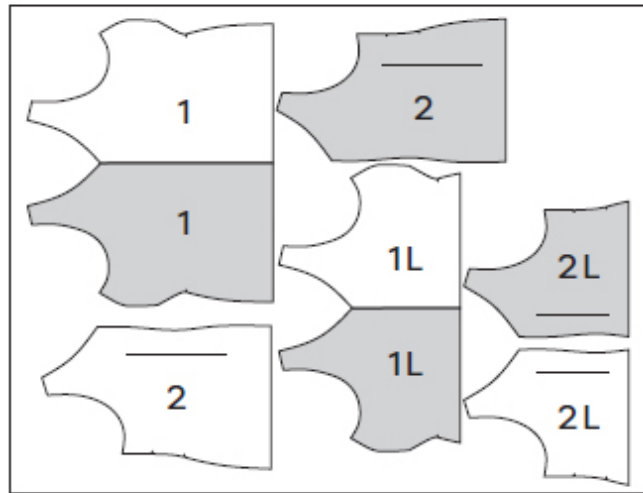
FABRIC WIDTH: 140CM (55 IN)



SIZES : UK 26–36 (US 22–32)

FABRIC WIDTH: 140 CM (55 IN)

Selvedge



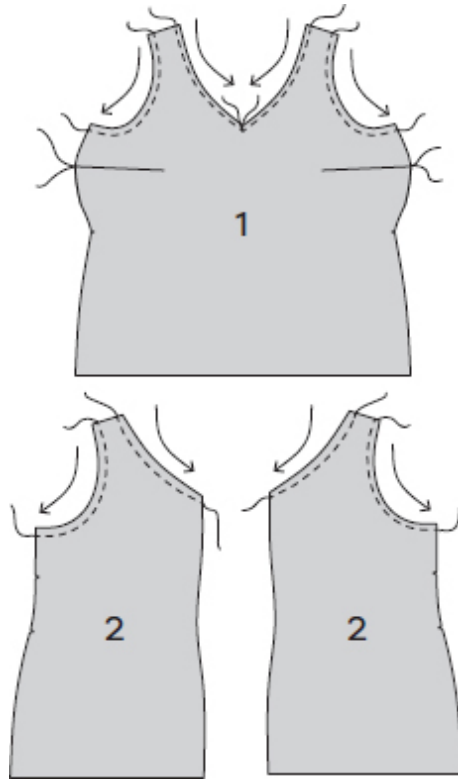
Selvedge

Making the Kersoe Top

For your fitting toile, follow steps 1–5, skipping the lining and using the quicker construction method where indicated.

For your final garment, follow step 1 and then steps 6–15, which set out the full instructions for a clean-finished lining. (Don't want a lining? Follow the toile instructions instead and finish the neckline and armholes with bias tape.)

1. Staystitch the **front (1 A/B/C)** and **back (2)** necklines and armholes 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) from the edge, stitching in the directions shown. This is essential to stop the bias edges from stretching out. Sew the darts in the **front (1 A/B/C)**. Press the darts up. (They can be pressed down if you prefer.) When pressing up, a small amount will extend past the side seam – trim this off.



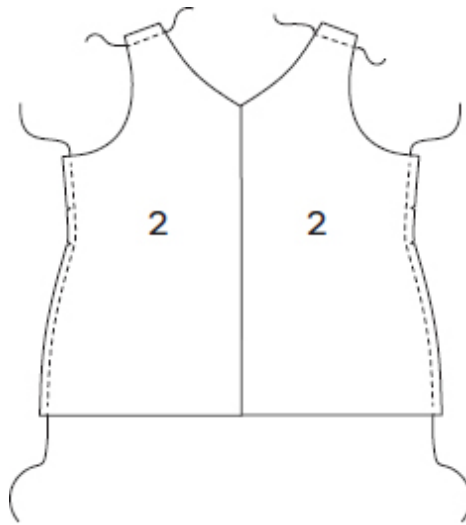
IF YOU ARE SEWING THE FINAL GARMENT, **SKIP TO STEP 6 NOW.**

2. Sew the **backs (2)** together at the centre back, right sides together.

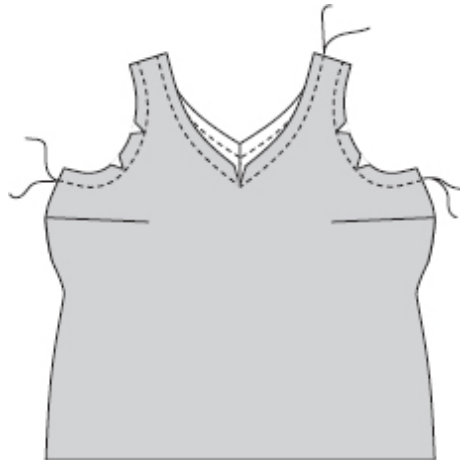


3. With right sides together, matching the notches, sew the **back (2)** to the front (**1 A/B/C**), at the shoulders and side seams. Press

the seams open.



4. Sew around the neckline and armholes with a 12-mm (½-in.) seam allowance. Clip into the curves and the front and back 'V', then fold the seam allowances to the inside of the top and press.



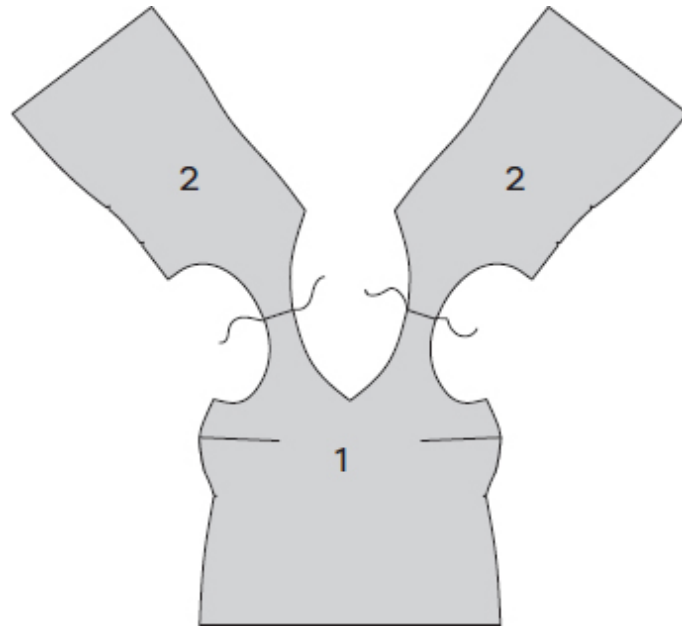
5. Turn right side out and press. You're ready to try on your toile!

CONTINUE SEWING YOUR FINAL GARMENT

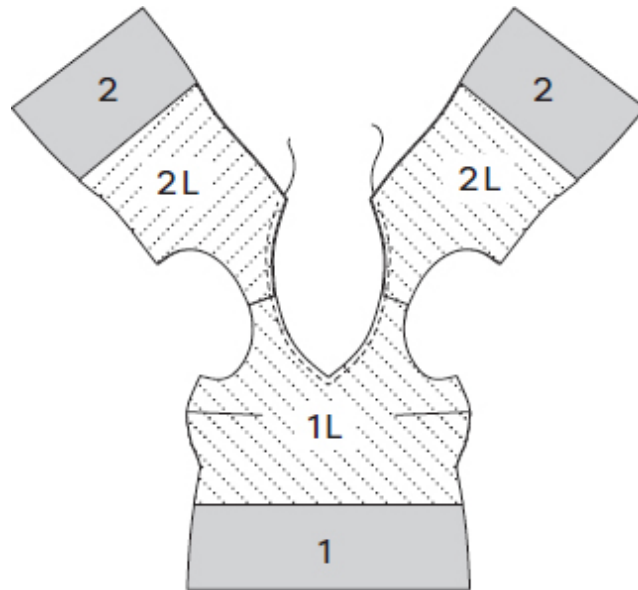
6. Cut a sliver (around 1.5 mm/1/16 in.) from the neckline and armholes of the **front lining (1L)** and **back lining (2L)** pieces.

Then repeat step 1 with the lining pieces.

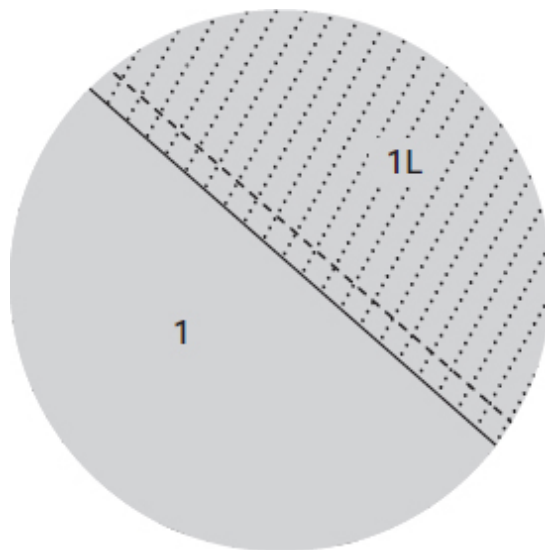
7. Sew one **back (2)** to the **front (1 A/B/C)** at the shoulder, right sides together. Finish the seam allowances and press towards the back. Repeat with the second **back (2)**.



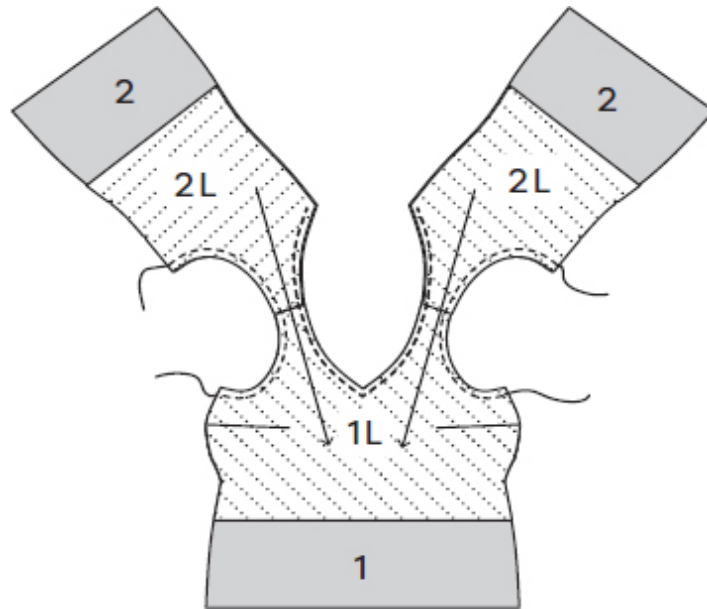
8. Repeat step 7 with the **front lining (1L)** and **back lining (2L)** pieces.
9. Place the lining on top of the shell, right sides together, as shown. Sew around the neckline, keeping the needle down and pivoting at the 'V'. Trim the seam allowance to 6 mm (¼ in.) and clip into the seam allowance at the 'V'.



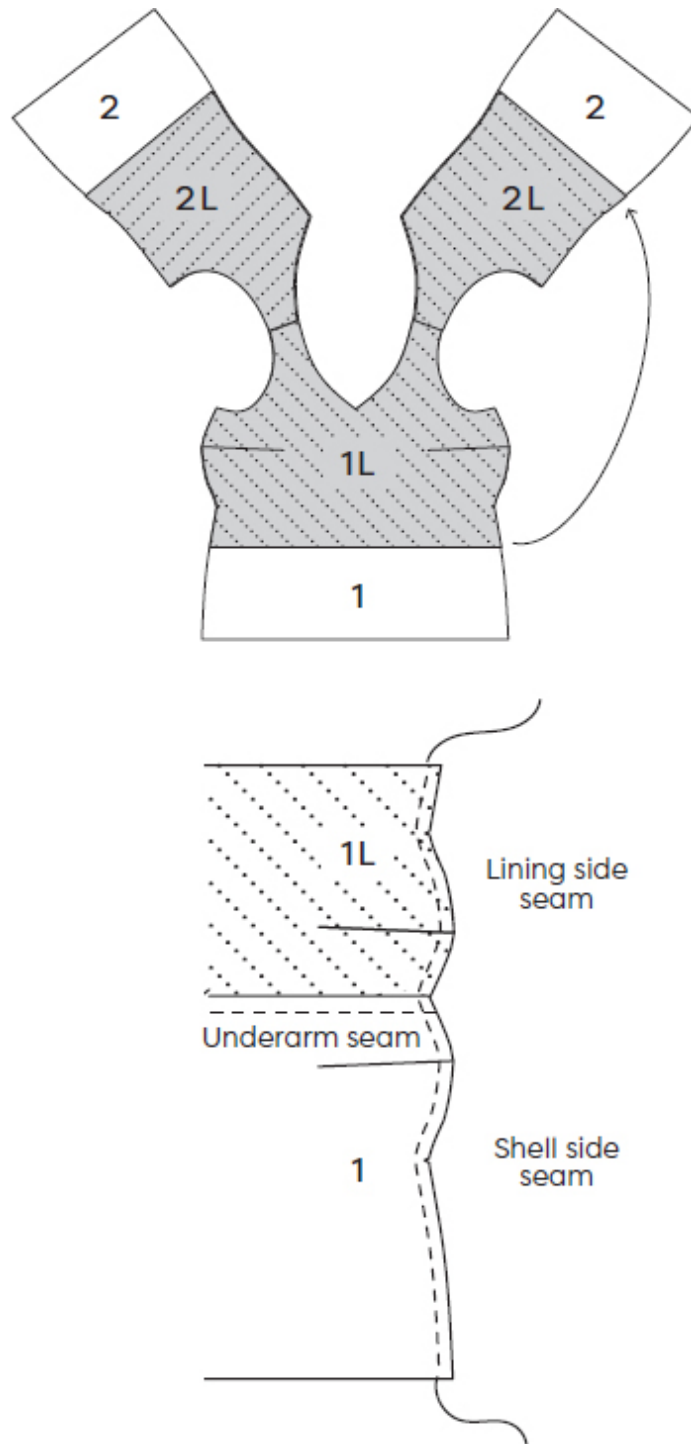
10. Flip the lining over the seam allowance into the neck opening and understitch the lining to the seam allowance 1.5 mm (1/16 in.) from the edge.



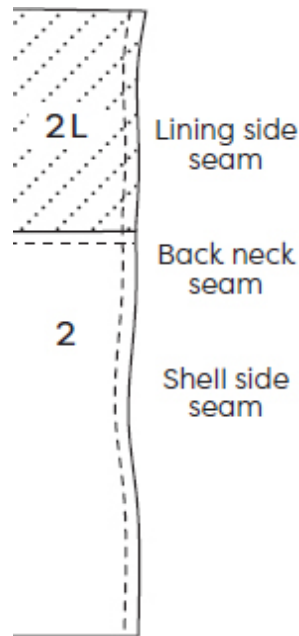
11. Turn the lining back over so that it's right sides together with the shell. Sew around the armholes. Clip into the seam allowances around the curve. Turn the top right side out by gently pushing the back pieces through the hole inside each shoulder, as indicated by the arrows. Press.



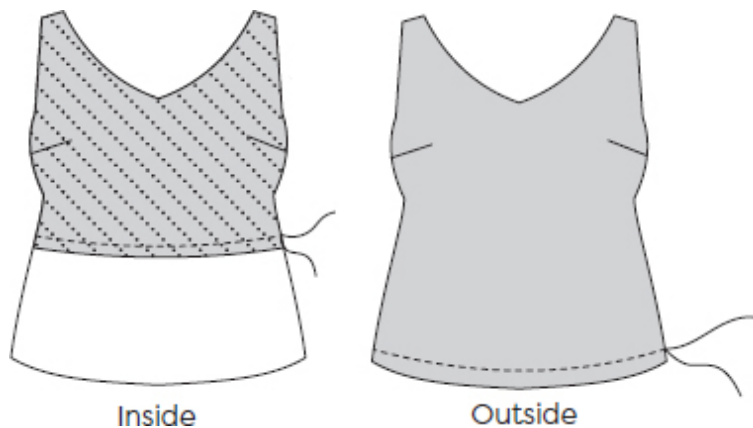
12. Pin the front to the back at one side seam, flipping up the lining and matching the notches. The underarm seams will meet, the shell side seams will be right sides together, and the lining side seams will be right sides together. Sew, finish the seam allowances and press towards the back. Repeat with the second side seam.



13. Repeat step 12 using the same technique with the centre back seam, finishing and pressing the seam allowance to one side.



14. Hem the lining by folding the hem to the wrong side by 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) and again by 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) and topstitching from the right side of the lining.
15. Turn the top right side out and press. Fold the hem up to the wrong side by 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) and then by 2 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in.). Press, then topstitch the hem from the right side.



YOUR KERSOE TOP IS DONE!

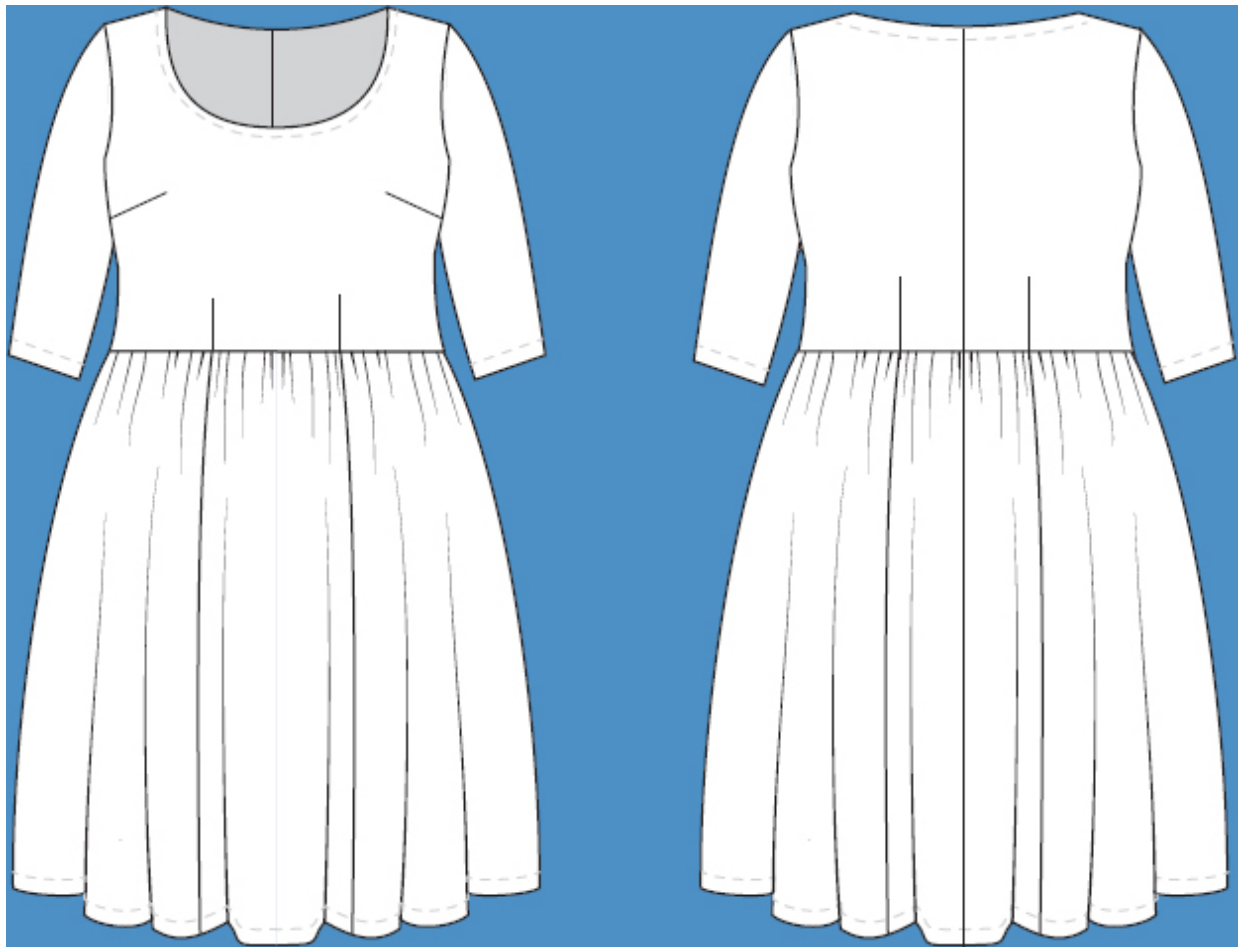
Honeybourne Dress





Honeybourne dress

SEWING LEVEL: ADVANCED BEGINNER



This classic darted woven dress is so versatile: make it from a cotton lawn or rayon for a breezy summer day dress, or amp up the glam with silk noil or satin for a party showstopper. The panelled gathered skirt

has just enough oomph for volume without bulk, and the pretty elbow-length sleeves give an elegant touch.

Finished garment measurements

CENTIMETRES

UK		16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US		12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU		44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
Full bust	C/D cup	106	111	116	121	126	131	137	142	147	152	157
	E/F cup	109	114	119	124	129	134	139	144	149	154	160
	G/H cup	111	116	121	126	131	137	142	147	152	157	162
Waist		89	94	99	104	109	114	119	124	130	135	140
Hip		218	223	228	233	238	243	248	253	258	263	268
Bicep		36	38	41	43	46	48	51	53	56	58	61
Back length		98	99	100	100	101	102	102	103	104	104	105

INCHES

UK		16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US		12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU		44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
Full bust	C/D cup	41¼	43¼	45¼	47¼	49¼	51¼	53¼	55¼	57¼	59¼	61¼
	E/F cup	42¼	44¼	46¼	48¼	50¼	52¼	54¼	56¼	58¼	60¼	62¼
	G/H cup	43¼	45¼	47¼	49¼	51¼	53¼	55¼	57¼	59¼	61¼	63¼
Waist		35	37	39	41	43	45	47	49	51	53	55
Hip		85¼	87¼	89¼	91¼	93¼	95¼	97¼	99¼	101¼	103¼	105¼
Bicep		14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Back length		38¼	39	39¼	39½	39¾	40	40¼	40½	40¾	41	41¼

Fabric requirements

METRES

UK	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
115-cm fabric	3.8	3.8	3.8	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3
140-cm fabric	2.8	2.8	2.8	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6

YARDS

UK	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
45-in. fabric	4	4	4	5½	5½	5½	5½	5¼	5¼	5¼	5¼
55-in. fabric	3	3	3	3½	3½	3½	4	4	4	4	4

You will need

RECOMMENDED FABRIC

- Light- to mid-weight woven fabric, such as cotton lawn, silk, jacquard, chambray, linen or rayon.

NOTIONS

- Thread
- Universal needle
- 55–60-cm (22–24-in.) invisible zip (zipper)
- Invisible or regular zip (zipper) foot

Pattern inventory

1A – Front bodice, C/D cup

1B – Front bodice, E/F cup

1C – Front bodice, G/H cup

2 – Back bodice

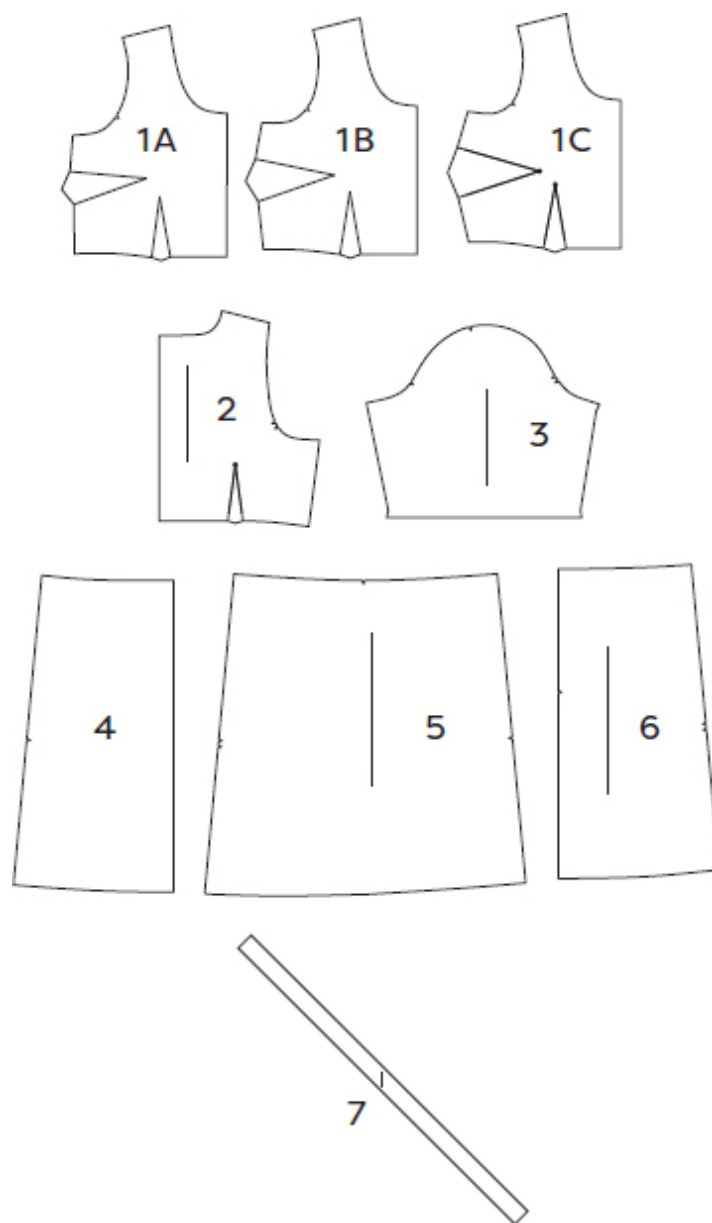
3 – Sleeve

4 – Front skirt

5 – Side skirt

6 – Back skirt

7 – Neck facing

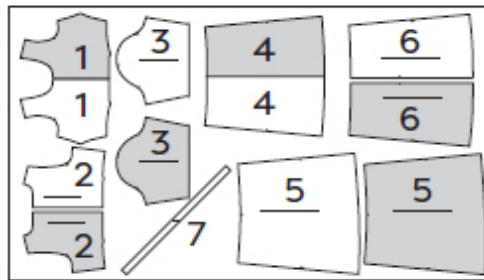


Fabric cutting layouts

SIZES: UK 16–20 (US 12–16)

FABRIC WIDTH: 150 CM (60 IN.)

Selvedge

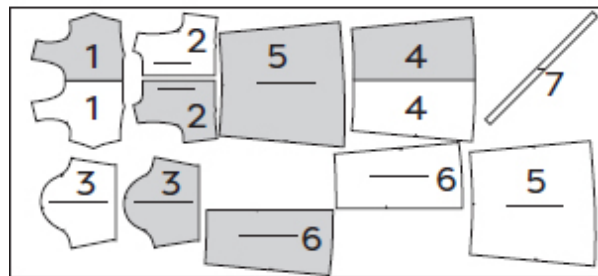


Selvedge

SIZES: UK 22–28 (US 18–24)

FABRIC WIDTH: 150 CM (60 IN.)

Selvedge

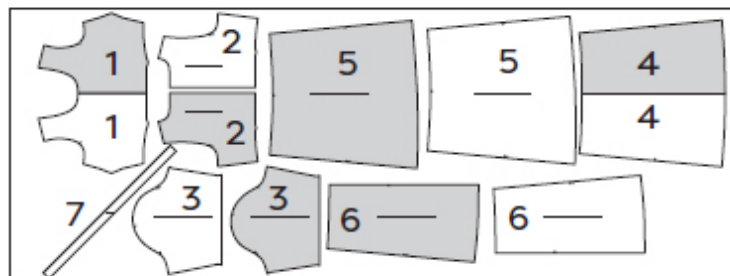


Selvedge

SIZES: UK 30–36 (US 26–32)

FABRIC WIDTH: 150 CM (60 IN.)

Selvedge

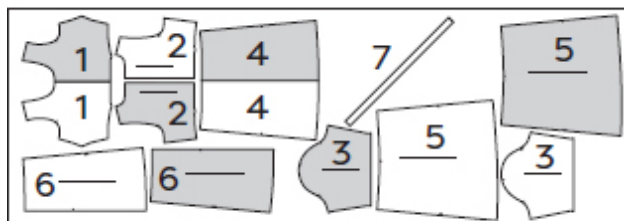


Selvedge

SIZES: UK 16–20 (US 12–16)

FABRIC WIDTH: 115 CM (45 IN.)

Selvedge

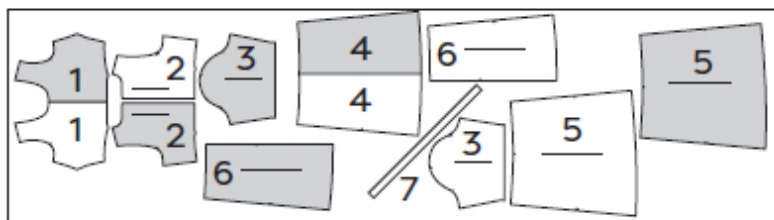


Selvedge

SIZES: UK 22–28 (US 18–24)

FABRIC WIDTH: 115 CM (45 IN.)

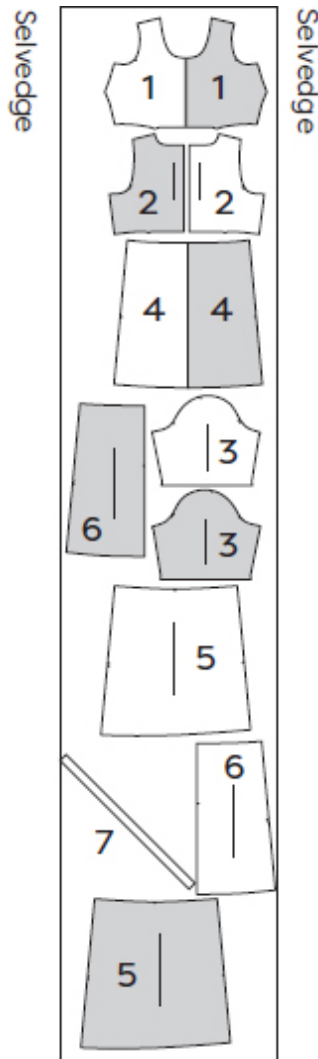
Selvedge



Selvedge

SIZES: UK 30–36 (US 26–32)

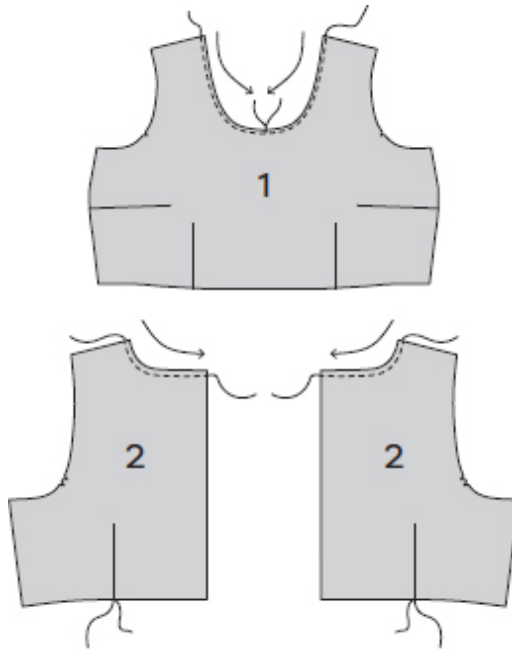
FABRIC WIDTH: 115 CM (45 IN.)



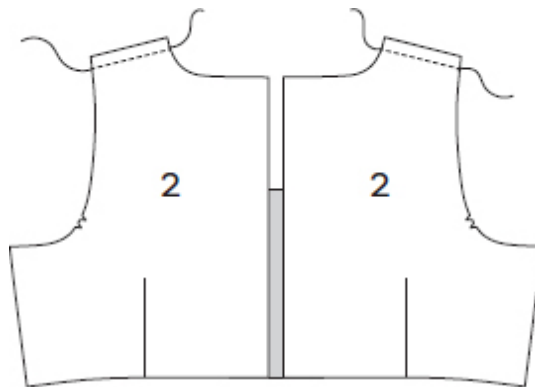
Making the Honeybourne Dress

For the toile, you can omit the neckline facing (steps 14 and 15) and skip the hemming steps (just press the hems up). Depending on your proportions (if you have a low bust: waist ratio), you may be able to skip the zip and just sew the back seam shut.

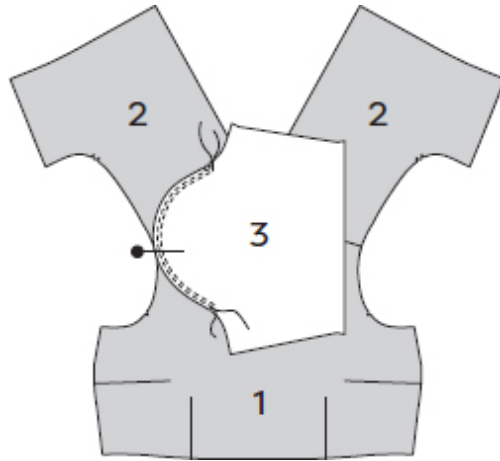
1. Staystitch the neckline of the **front (1 A/B/C)** and **back (2)** pieces in the direction shown and sew the darts. Press the waist darts towards the centre and the bust darts up (note, they can be pressed down if you prefer. When pressing up, a small amount will extend past the side seam – trim this off.)



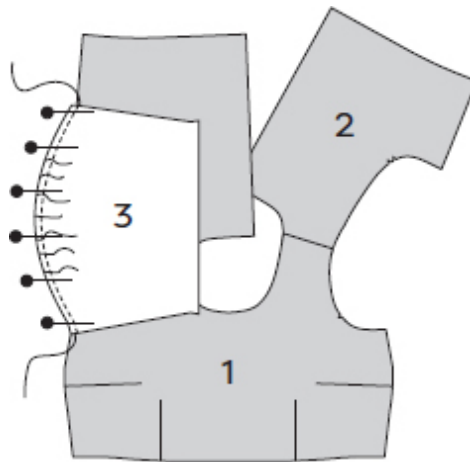
2. With right sides together, sew the **back (2)** pieces to the **front (1 A/B/C)** at the shoulder seams. Finish the seam allowances and press towards the back.



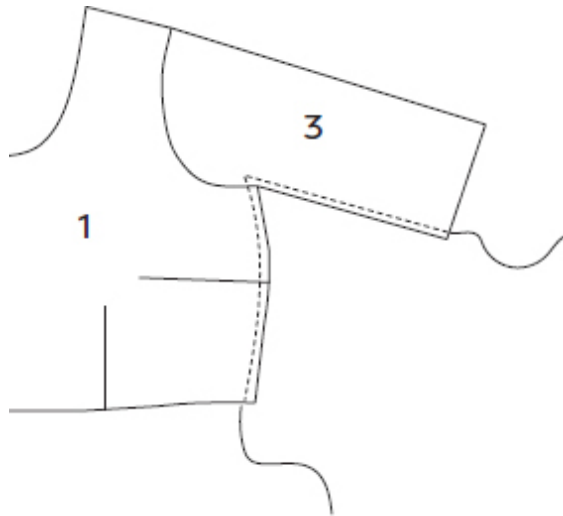
3. Sew two lines of machine basting stitches (4 mm/1/8 in. long) on the **sleeve (3)** cap, **within the seam allowance** between the notches.
4. Place the **sleeve (3)** on the bodice, right sides together, matching the shoulder seam with the top notch on the **sleeve (3)**. Pin at the notch.



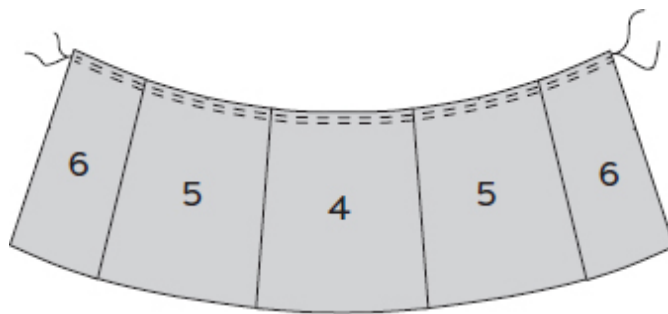
5. Pin the rest of the sleeve cap to the armhole, matching the notches and pulling on the basting stitches to gently gather the sleeve cap to fit the armhole. Sew the **sleeve (3)** to the armhole with the sleeve side down. Remove the basting stitches, finish the seam allowances and press the seam towards the sleeve.



6. Repeat steps 3–5 with the second sleeve.
7. Fold the bodice in half with right sides together. Sew the side seam from the waist to the end of the sleeve. Finish the seam allowances and press towards the back. Repeat with the second side seam.



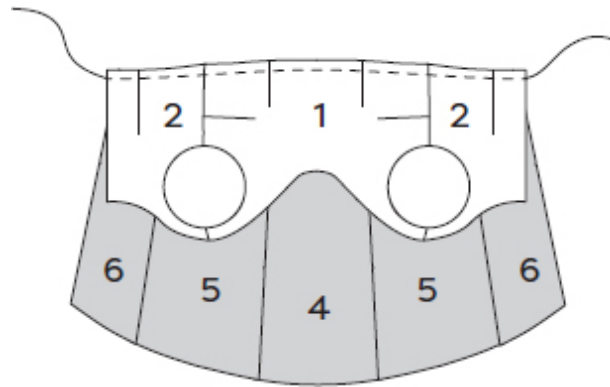
8. Sew the **side skirts (5)** to either side of the **front skirt (4)**, right sides together and matching the notches. Sew the **back skirts (6)** to either side of the **side skirts (5)** in the same way. Finish all seam allowances and press towards the centre.
9. Sew two lines of machine basting stitches along the top of the skirt using a long (4–5-mm) stitch within the seam allowance.



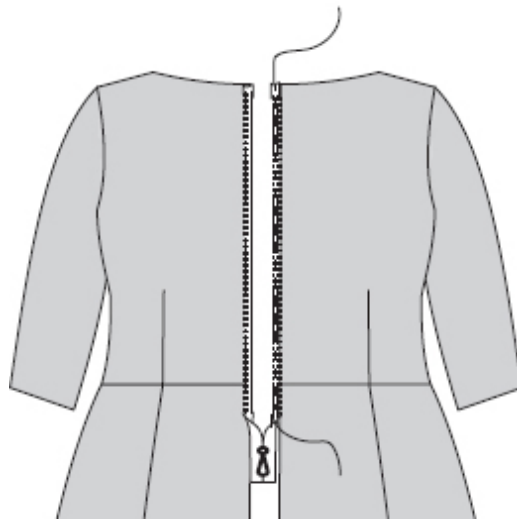
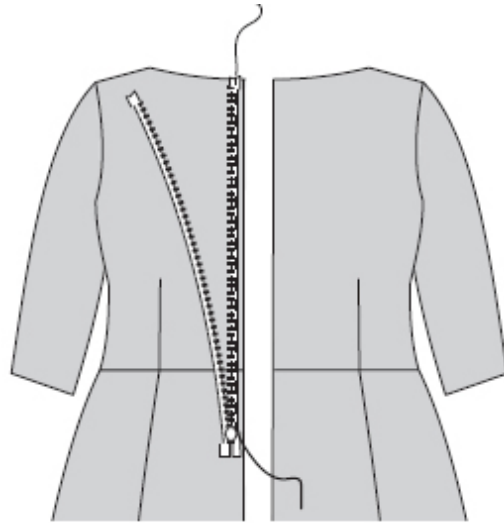
10. Line up the top of the skirt with the bottom of the bodice and gently pull on the basting stitches to gather the skirt to the same length. Match the skirt seams to the bodice darts (the bodice side seams will match with the notches on the **side skirt (5)**). Pin.



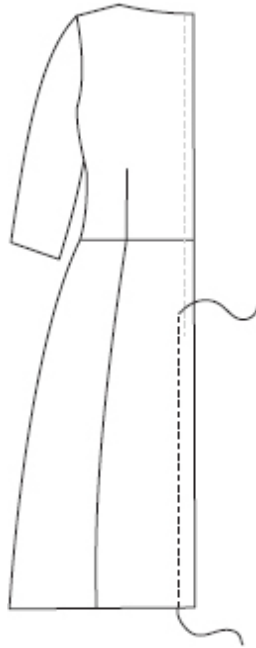
- l1. With right sides together, sew the skirt to the bodice. Finish the seam allowances and press the seam up.



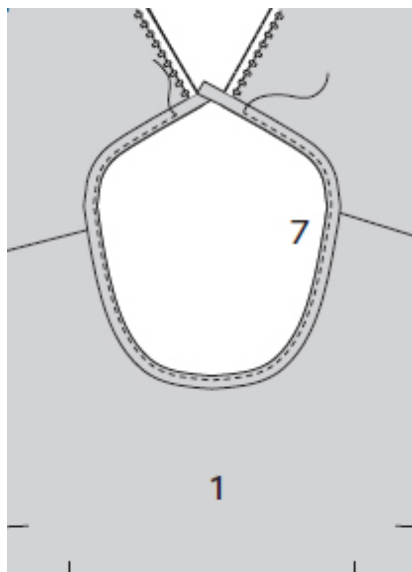
- l2. Finish the seam allowances on each side of the back opening separately. Pin the open invisible zip (zipper) on the dress, right sides together, with the zip teeth facing left and 1.5 cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in.) from the edge of the opening, and the top zip teeth 1.2 cm ($\frac{1}{2}$ in.) from the top edge. Sew the left-hand side of the zip, using a regular zip or invisible zip foot and stitching as close to the teeth as possible. Flip the zip over and pin the right-hand side of the zip to the right-hand side of the back of the dress; check that it zips correctly and isn't twisted. Sew the right-hand side of the zip.



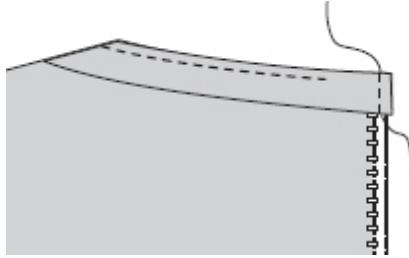
13. Close the zip and turn the dress inside out. Pin the back pieces from the bottom of the zip to the hem. Sew the seam, starting just above where the zip stitching ends, and press the seam allowances open. Turn the dress right side out and open the zip.



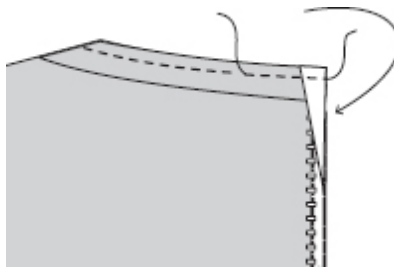
14. Fold the **neck facing (7)** in half, wrong sides together, and press.
15. Pin the **neck facing (7)** to the neckline, with right sides together and the raw edges matching the neckline. Sew at a $\frac{1}{4}$ -in. (6 mm) seam allowance, stopping 2.5 cm (1 in.) from each end; the facing will extend slightly past the end of the neckline.



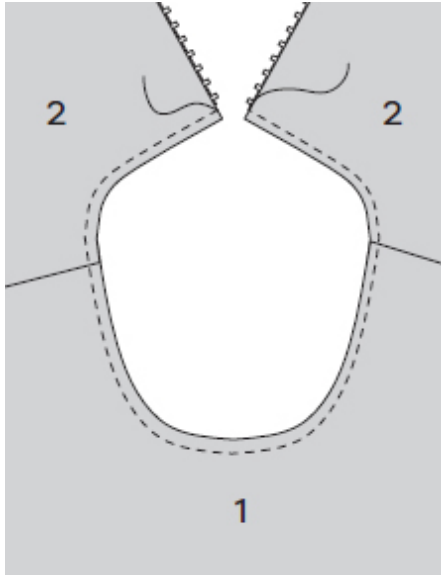
16. Sew the end of the facing to the zip tape just to the right of the zip teeth, using a zip foot.



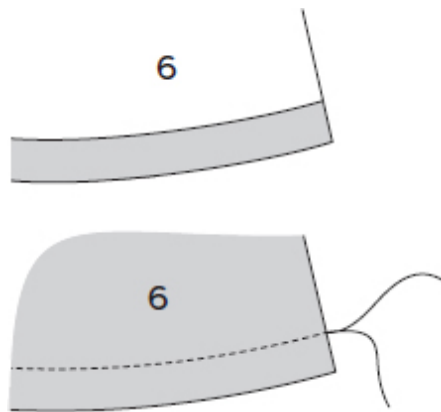
17. Fold the top of the zip over to the left, then sew the remaining 2.5 cm (1 in.) of the facing to the dress at the neckline, sewing across the fold at the top of the zip. Trim off the corner and trim the seam allowance down to 3 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in.).



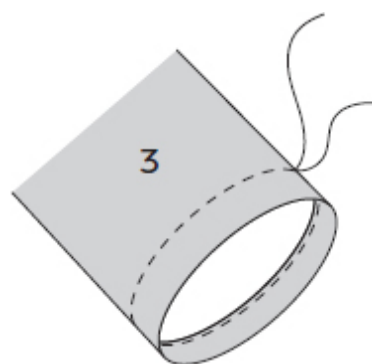
18. Repeat steps 16–17 with the second side.
19. Flip the facing to the inside of the dress, gently turning out the corners with a point turner. Press. Edge stitch the facing from the right side.



20. Fold up the edge of the skirt hem by 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) and press. Fold up another 2 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in.) and press. Edge stitch the hem from the right side.



21. Fold up the edge of the sleeve by 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) and press. Fold up another 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) and press. Edge stitch from the right side. Repeat with the second sleeve.



YOUR HONEYBOURNE DRESS IS DONE!

Stanway T-shirt





Stanway T-shirt

SEWING LEVEL: BEGINNER



Perfect your casual sporty look with a well-fitting Stanway T-shirt! This fitted T-shirt has raglan shoulder seams and a classic T-shirt neckband.

Finished garment measurements

CENTIMETRES

UK		16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US		12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU		44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
Full bust	C/D cup	97	102	107	112	117	122	127	132	137	142	147
	E/F cup	99	104	109	114	119	124	130	135	140	145	150
	G/H cup	102	107	112	117	122	127	132	137	142	147	152
Waist		95	100	105	110	115	120	125	130	136	141	146
Hip		108	113	118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158
Bicep		32	34	37	39	42	44	46	49	51	54	56
Back length		62	63	64	65	66	67	67	68	69	70	71

INCHES

UK		16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US		12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU		44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
Full bust	C/D cup	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58
	E/F cup	39	41	43	45	47	49	51	53	55	57	59
	G/H cup	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60
Waist		37⅞	39⅞	41⅞	43⅞	45⅞	47⅞	49⅞	51⅞	53⅞	55⅞	57⅞
Hip		42⅞	44⅞	46⅞	48⅞	50⅞	52⅞	54⅞	56⅞	58⅞	60⅞	62⅞
Bicep		12½	13½	14⅝	15⅝	16⅝	17¼	18¼	19¼	20⅝	21⅝	22⅝
Back length		24½	24⅞	25⅞	25½	25⅞	26¼	26½	26⅞	27¼	27⅞	27⅞

Fabric requirements

METRES

UK	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
115-cm fabric	1.6	1.6	1.6	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1
140-cm fabric	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8

YARDS

UK	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
45-in. fabric	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	2 $\frac{3}{8}$	2 $\frac{3}{8}$	2 $\frac{3}{8}$	2 $\frac{3}{8}$	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	3 $\frac{1}{4}$	3 $\frac{1}{4}$
55-in. fabric	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{4}$	2 $\frac{1}{8}$	2 $\frac{1}{8}$	2 $\frac{1}{8}$	2 $\frac{1}{8}$

You will need

RECOMMENDED FABRIC

- Light- to mid-weight knit fabric such as jersey or ITY, with at least 25% stretch

NOTIONS

- Thread
- Ballpoint or jersey needle

Pattern inventory

1A – Front, C/D cup

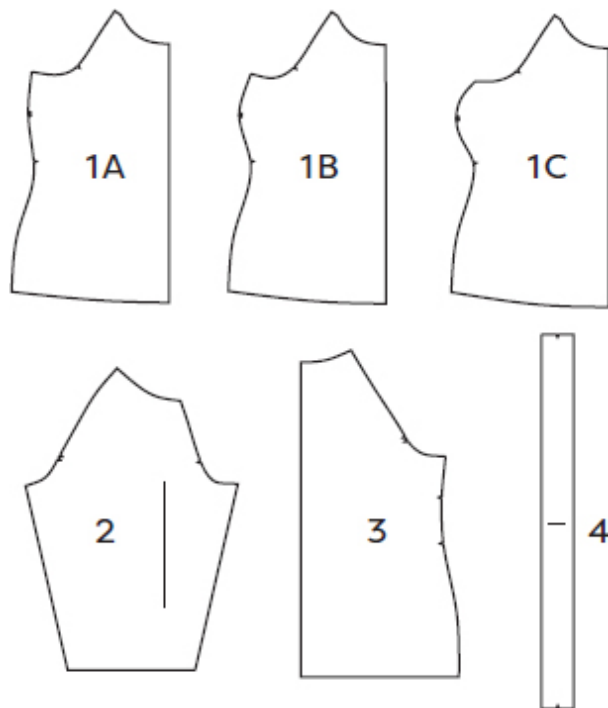
1B – Front, E/F cup

1C – Front, G/H cup

2 – Sleeve

3 – Back

4 – Neckband

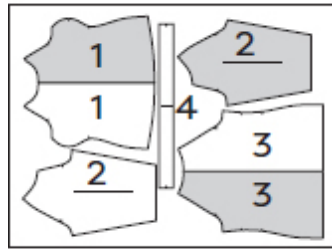


Fabric cutting layouts

SIZES : UK 16–20 (US 12–16)

FABRIC WIDTH: 115 CM (45 IN.)

Selvedge

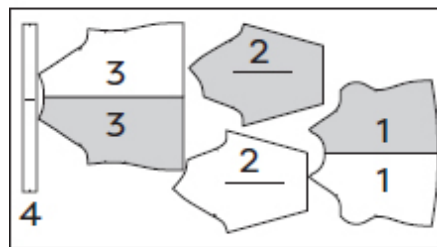


Selvedge

SIZES : UK 22–28 (US 18–24)

FABRIC WIDTH: 115 CM (45 IN.)

Selvedge



Selvedge

SIZES : UK 30–36 (US 26–32)

FABRIC WIDTH: 115 CM (45 IN.)

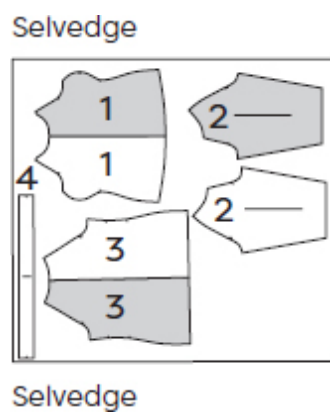
Selvedge



Selvedge

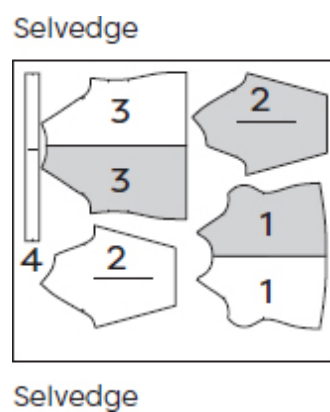
SIZES : UK 16–20 (US 12–16)

FABRIC WIDTH: 150 CM (60 IN.)



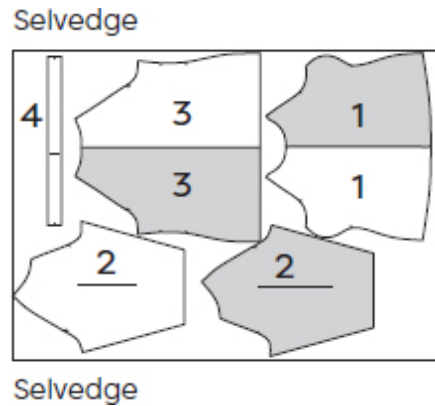
SIZES : UK 22–28 (US 18–24)

FABRIC WIDTH: 150 CM (60 IN.)



SIZES : UK 30–36 (US 26–32)

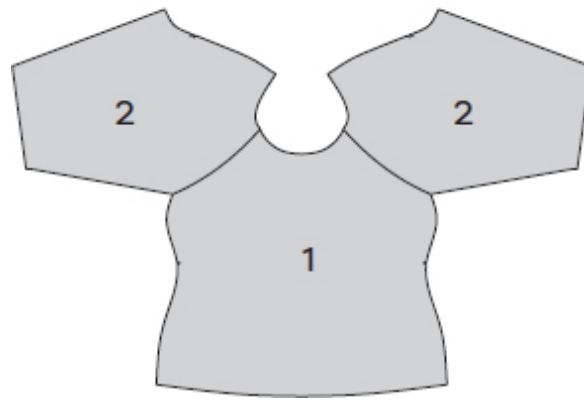
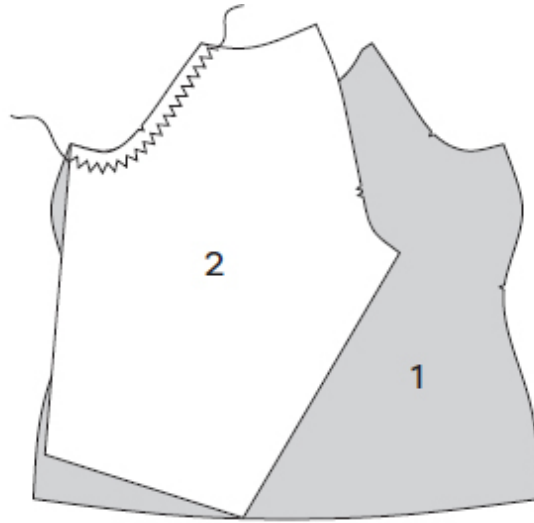
FABRIC WIDTH: 150 CM (60 IN.)



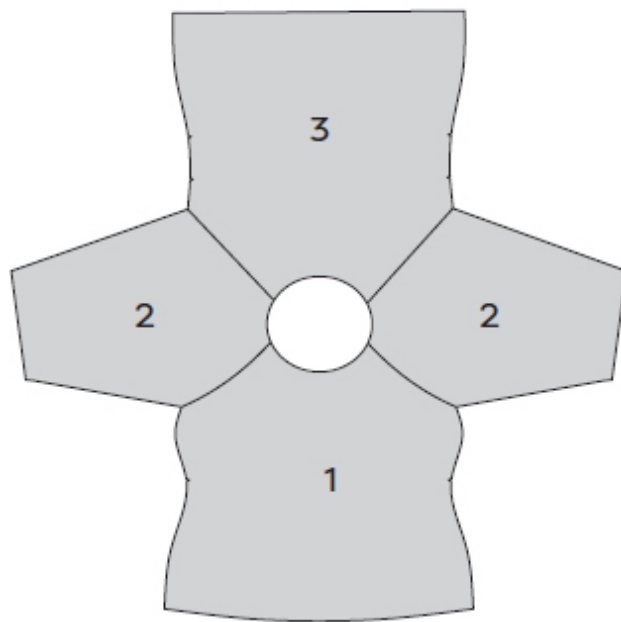
Making the Stanway T-shirt

For your toile, you can skip the hemming steps – just press up the hems instead.

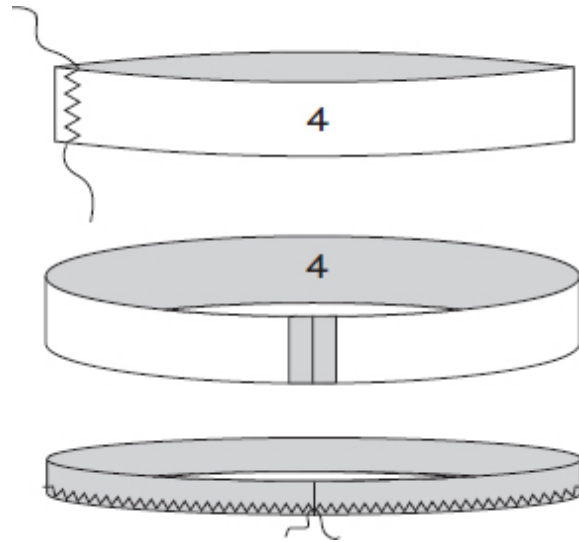
1. Sew the **sleeve (2)** to the **front (1 A/B/C)** at the armscye, right sides together, matching the single notches. Finish the seam allowances and press towards the sleeve. Repeat with the second **sleeve (2)**.



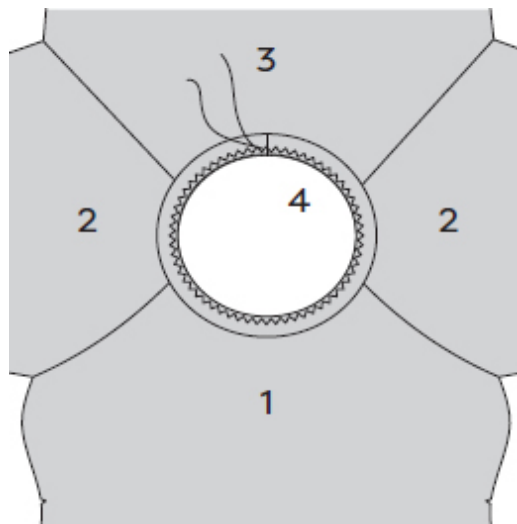
2. Sew the **back (3)** to the **sleeve (2)** at the armscye, right sides together, matching the double notches. Finish the seam allowances and press towards the sleeve. Repeat with the other side of the back and the second sleeve.



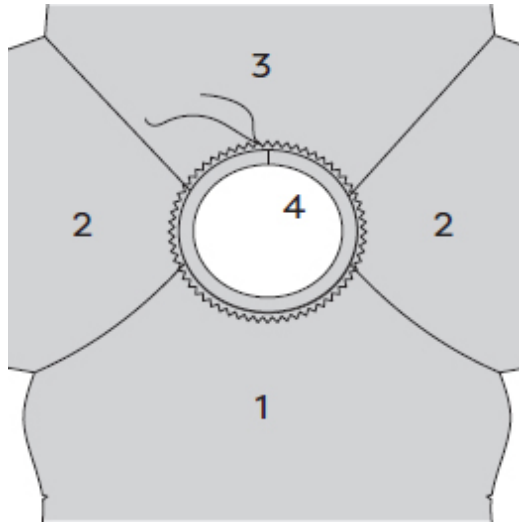
3. Fold the **neckband (4)** in half lengthways, right sides together, and sew across the short end to form a loop. Press the seam allowances open. Fold the neckband loop in half widthways, wrong sides together, and press. Optional: tack (baste) the open edges closed.



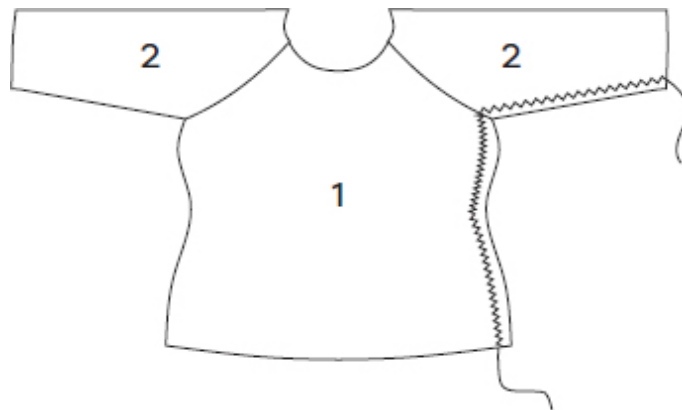
4. Pin the **neckband (4)** to the neck opening, with raw edges aligned. Align the neckband seam to the centre back and match the notches with the sleeve seams. Sew at a 6-mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ -in.) seam allowance, gently stretching the neckband between each pin to fit. Finish the seam allowance.



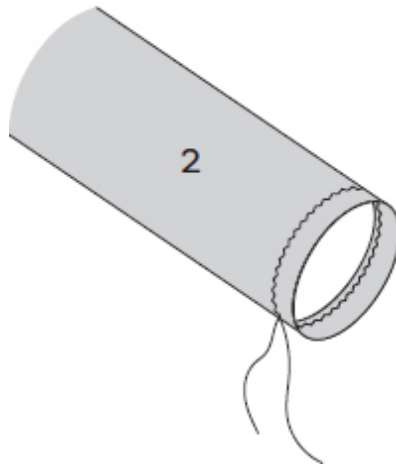
5. Flip the neckband over and press (the seam allowance will now be inside the T-shirt). On the right side of the bodice, sew around the neckline just outside the neckband seam, securing the seam allowance underneath.



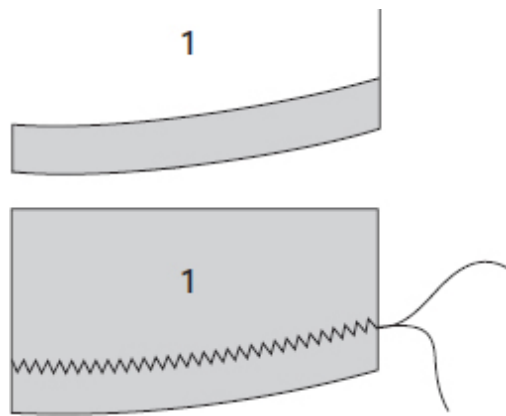
6. Fold the T-shirt in half, right sides together, matching the notches and underarm seams. Sew from the hem to the end of the sleeve, pivoting at the underarm. Finish the seam allowance and press towards the back. Repeat on the second side.



7. Turn the sleeve hem under by 2.5 cm (1 in.) and press. From the right side, sew around the edge of the hem.



8. Turn the hem up by 4 cm (1½ in.) and press. Topstitch the hem from the right side.



YOUR STANWAY T-SHIRT IS DONE!

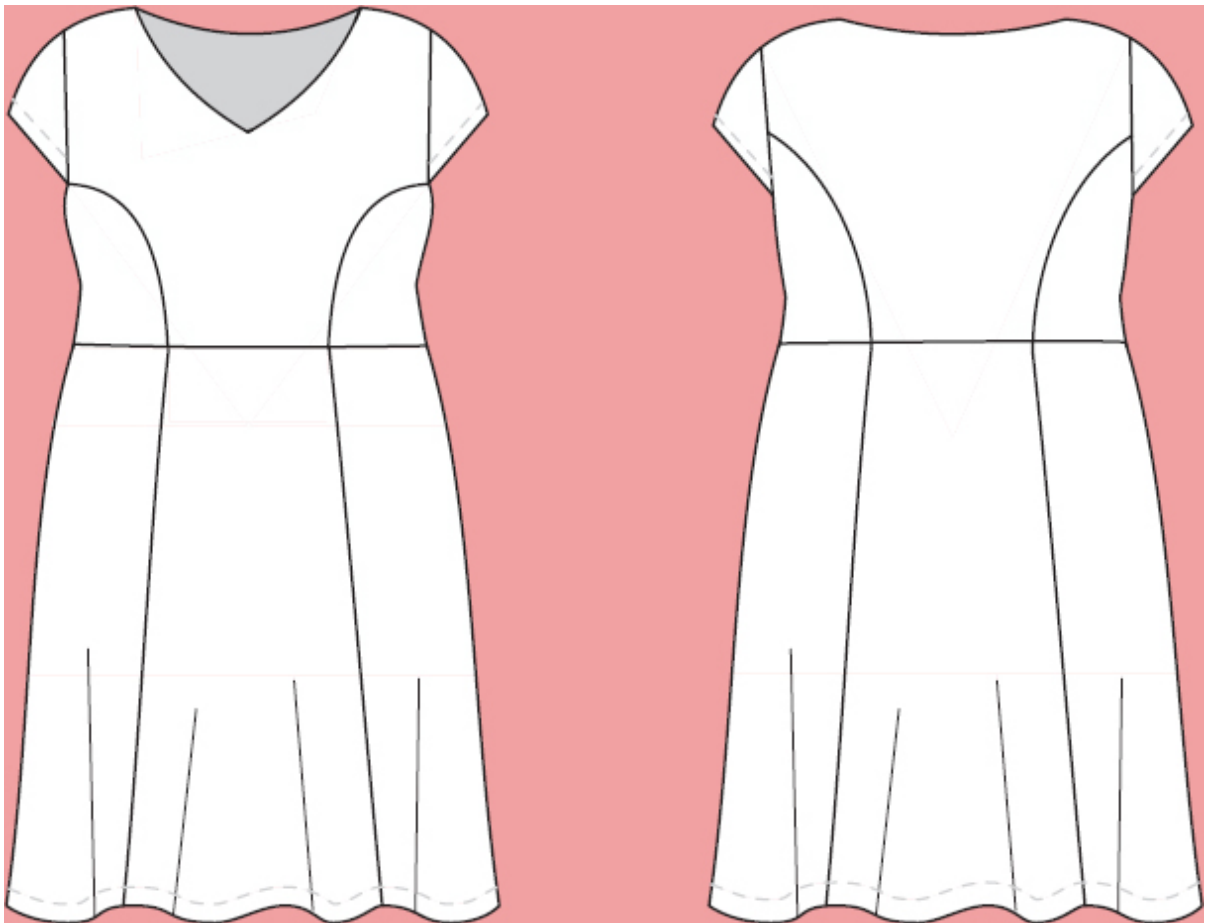
Foxhill Dress





Foxhill Dress

SEWING LEVEL: BEGINNER



Master comfortable style with this ponte dress featuring a princess-seamed bodice, a faced V neckline, short sleeves and a swishy gored skirt.

Finished garment measurements

CENTIMETRES

UK		16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US		12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU		44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
Full bust	C/D cup	88	93	98	104	109	114	119	124	129	134	139
	E/F cup	91	96	101	106	111	116	121	126	131	137	142
	G/H cup	93	98	104	109	114	119	124	129	134	139	144
Waist		79	84	90	95	100	105	110	115	120	125	130
Hip		118	123	128	133	138	143	148	153	158	164	169
Bicep		100	100	101	102	102	103	104	104	105	105	106
Back length		30	32	35	37	39	42	44	47	50	52	54

INCHES

UK		16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US		12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU		44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
Full bust	C/D cup	34¾	36¾	38¾	40¾	42¾	44¾	46¾	48¾	50¾	52¾	54¾
	E/F cup	35¾	37¾	39¾	41¾	43¾	45¾	47¾	49¾	51¾	53¾	55¾
	G/H cup	36¾	38¾	40¾	42¾	44¾	46¾	48¾	50¾	52¾	54¾	56¾
Waist		31¼	33¼	35¼	37¼	39¼	41¼	43¼	45¼	47¼	49¼	51¼
Hip		46⅝	48⅝	50⅝	52⅝	54⅝	56⅝	58⅝	60⅝	62⅝	64⅝	66⅝
Bicep		39¼	39½	39¾	40	40¼	40½	40¾	41	41¼	41½	41¾
Back length		11⅞	12⅞	13⅞	14⅞	15½	16½	17½	18½	19½	20⅞	21⅞

Fabric requirements

METRES

UK	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
115-cm fabric	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4
140-cm fabric	2	2	2	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6

YARDS

UK	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
45-in. fabric	2¾	2¾	2¾	3⅝	3⅝	3⅝	3⅝	3½	3½	3½	3½
55-in. fabric	2¼	2¼	2¼	2¾	2¾	2¾	2¾	2⅞	2⅞	2⅞	2⅞

INTERFACING

- (115 cm/45 in. wide), all sizes: 30 cm/³/₈ yard

You will need

RECOMMENDED FABRIC

- Mid-weight ponte knit, or lightweight scuba/neoprene, with at least 40% stretch. (Note, if your fabric is heavier, use a lighter knit for the neck facing.)

INTERFACING

- Lightweight woven fusible interfacing.

NOTIONS

- Thread
- Ballpoint or jersey needle

Pattern inventory

1 – Centre front bodice

2A – Side front bodice, C/D cup

2B – Side front bodice, E/F cup

2C – Side front bodice, G/H cup

3 – Centre back bodice

4 – Side back bodice

5 – Front facing

6 – Back facing

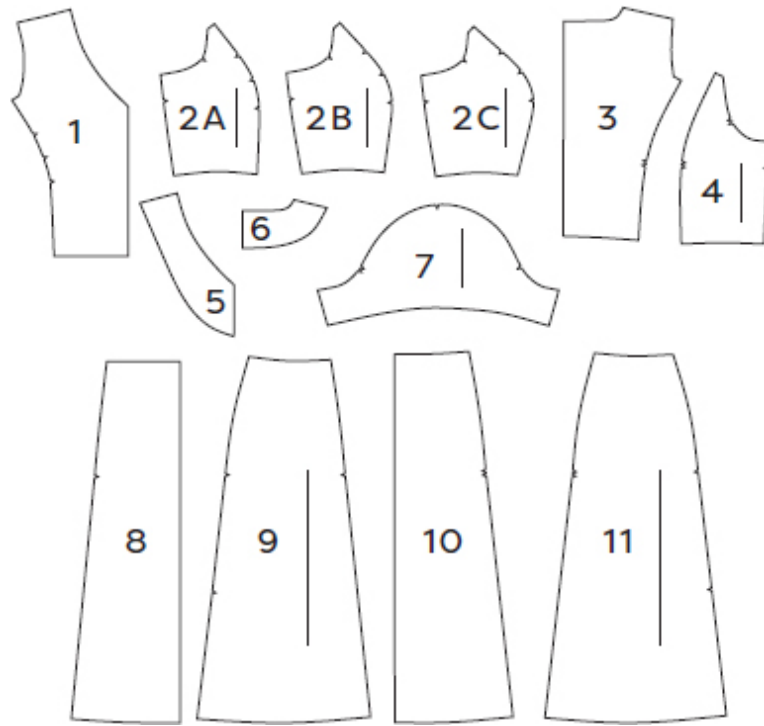
7 – Sleeve

8 – Centre front skirt

9 – Side front skirt

10 – Centre back skirt

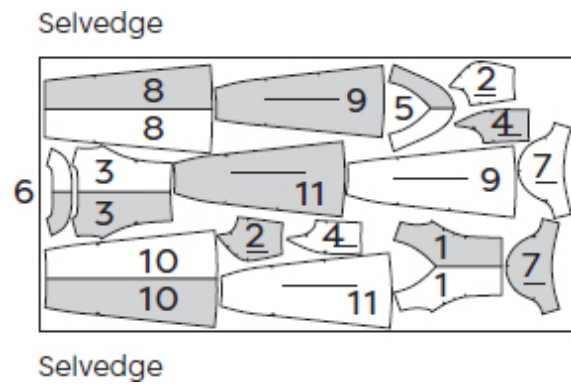
11 – Side back skirt



Fabric cutting layouts

SIZES: UK 16–20 (US 12–16)

FABRIC WIDTH: 115 CM (45 IN.)



SIZES: UK 22–28 (US 18–24)

FABRIC WIDTH: 115 CM (45 IN.)

Selvedge

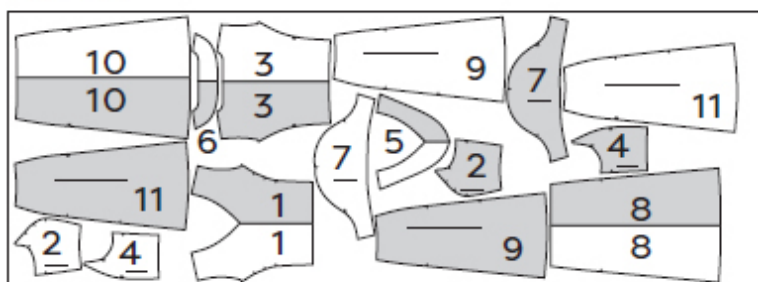


Selvedge

SIZES UK 30–36 (US 26–32)

FABRIC WIDTH: 115 CM (45 IN.)

Selvedge

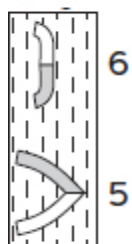


Selvedge

ALL SIZES: INTERFACING

CUTTING LAYOUT

Selvedge

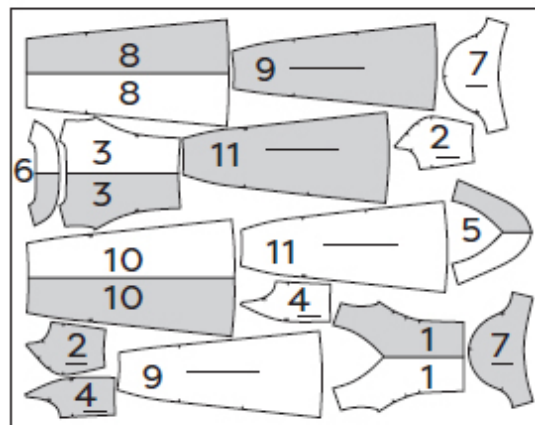


Selvedge

SIZES: UK 16–20 (US 12–16)

FABRIC WIDTH: 150 CM (60 IN.)

Selvedge

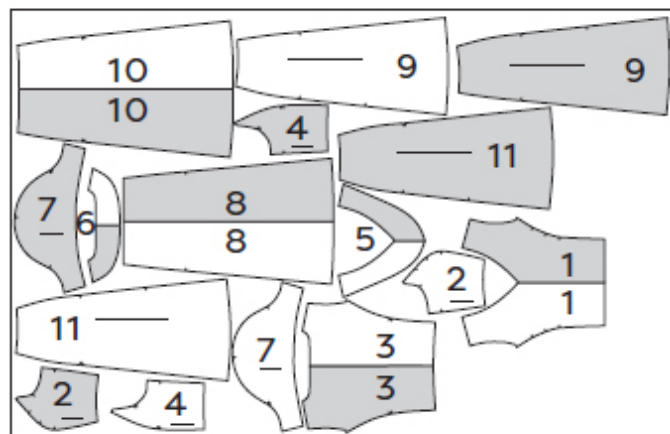


Selvedge

SIZES: UK 22–28 (US 18–24)

FABRIC WIDTH: 150 CM (60 IN.)

Selvedge

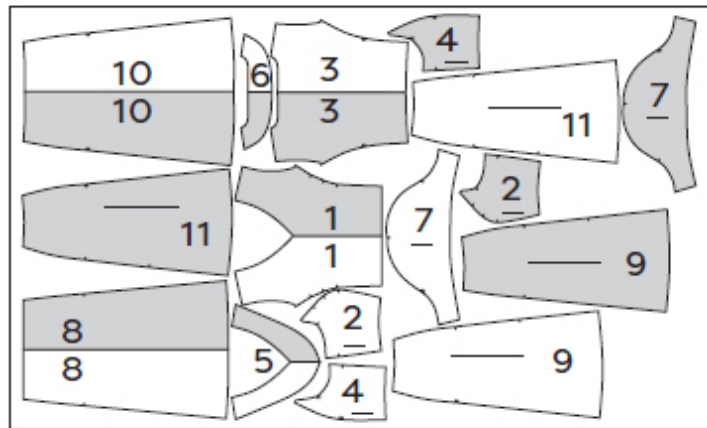


Selvedge

SIZES: UK 30–36 (US 26–32)

FABRIC WIDTH: 150 CM (60 IN.)

Selvedge

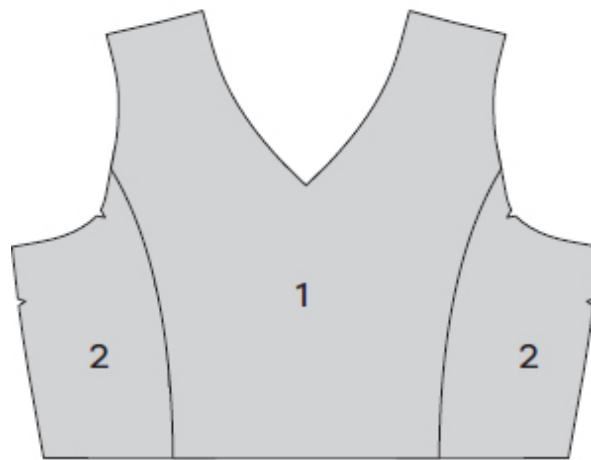


Selvedge

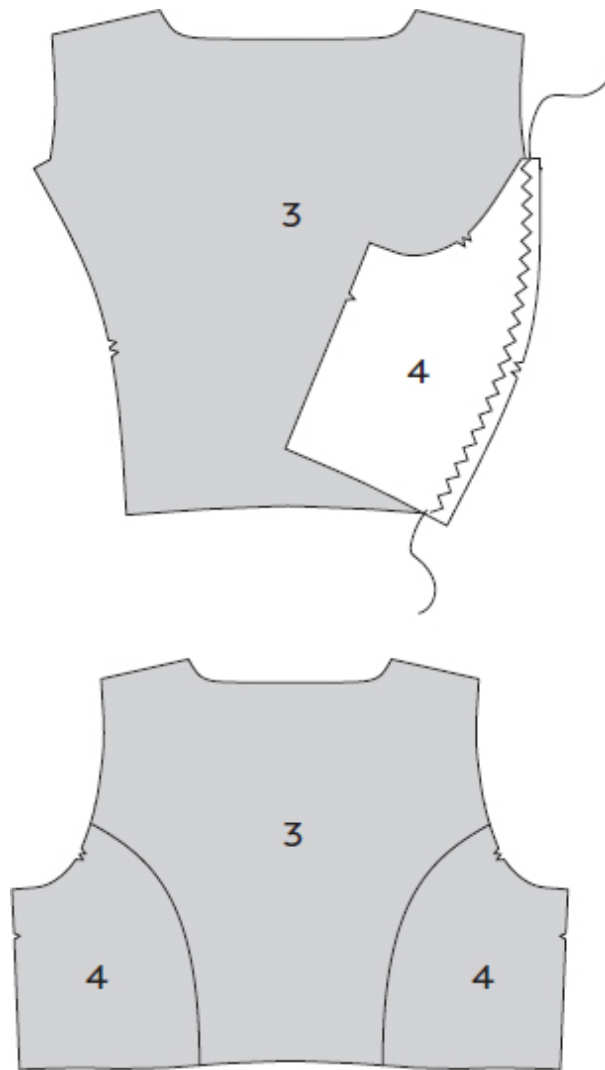
Making the Foxhill Dress

For your toile, you can skip the neckline facing (steps 5–7), but you should either trim the neckline seam allowance off or sew a 1-cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ -in.) seam, snip into the seam allowance, and press it over to the inside. You can also skip hemming and simply press up the hems.

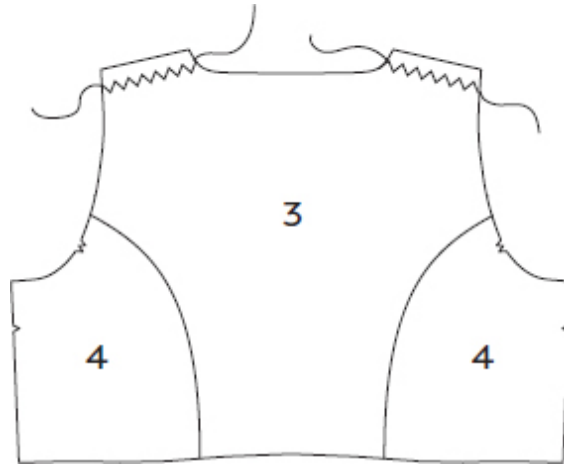
1. Pin the **side front bodice (2 A/B/C)** to the **centre front bodice (1)**, right sides together, matching the notches. Sew, finish the seam allowance and press towards the centre over a tailor's ham or a rolled-up towel. Repeat with the second **side front bodice (2 A/B/C)**.



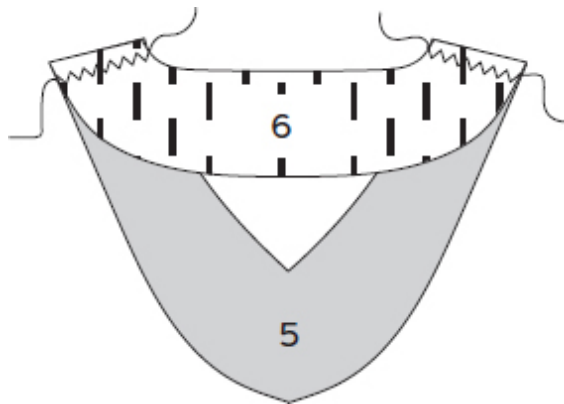
2. Pin the **side back bodice (4)** to the **centre back bodice (3)**, right sides together, matching the notches. Sew, finish the seam allowance and press towards the centre over a tailor's ham or a rolled-up towel. Repeat with the **second side back bodice (4)**.



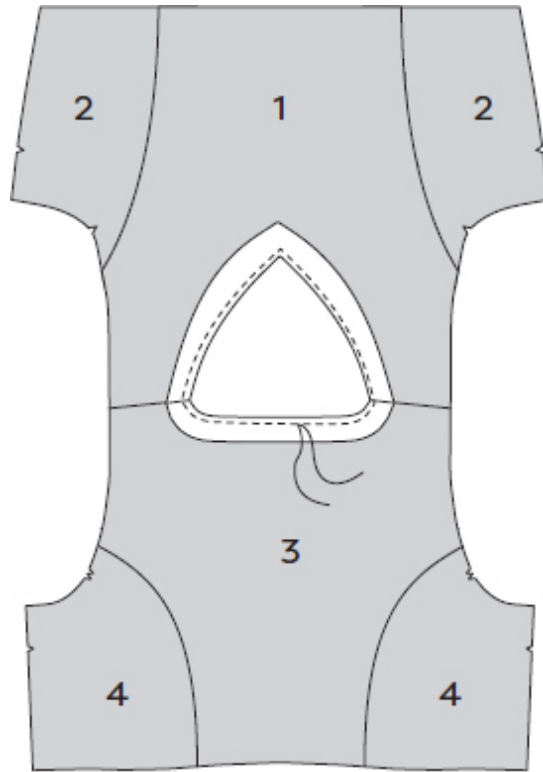
3. Pin the assembled front to the assembled back at the shoulders, right sides together. Sew, finish the seam allowances and press towards the back.



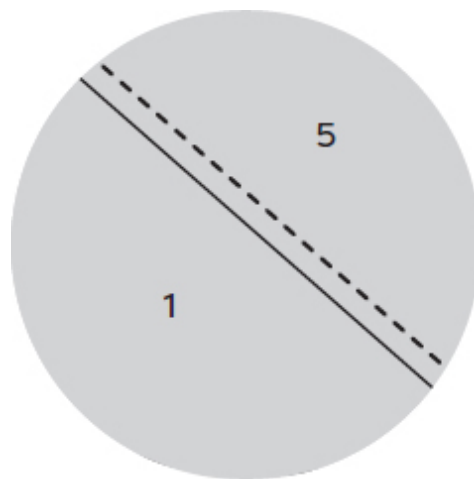
4. Apply fusible interfacing to the wrong side of the **front facing (5)** and **back facing (6)**, following the manufacturer's instructions (note that the interfacing is not shown in the rest of the instructions for clarity). Optional: finish the outer edge and short edges of facings using an overlocker (serger) or zigzag stitch.
5. Pin the **front facing (5)** to the **back facing (6)** at the short ends, right sides together. Stitch, then press the seams open.



6. Pin the facing to the bodice neckline, right sides together, matching the shoulder seams and around the neckline edge. Sew, using a straight stitch, pivoting at the 'V', and then press. Trim the seam allowance down to 6 mm (1/4 in.) and snip into the 'V', up to but not through the stitching.

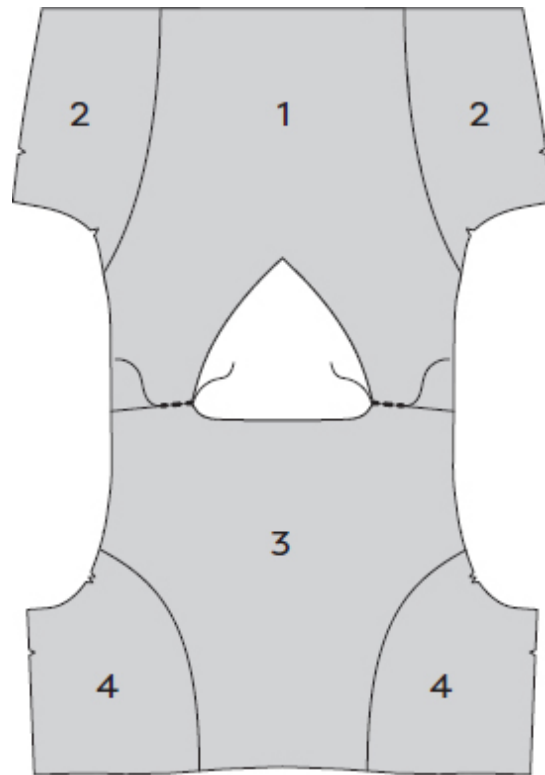


7. Flip the facing over the seam allowance (into the neck opening). From the right side, understitch the facing to the seam allowance underneath, about 3 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in.) from the seam.

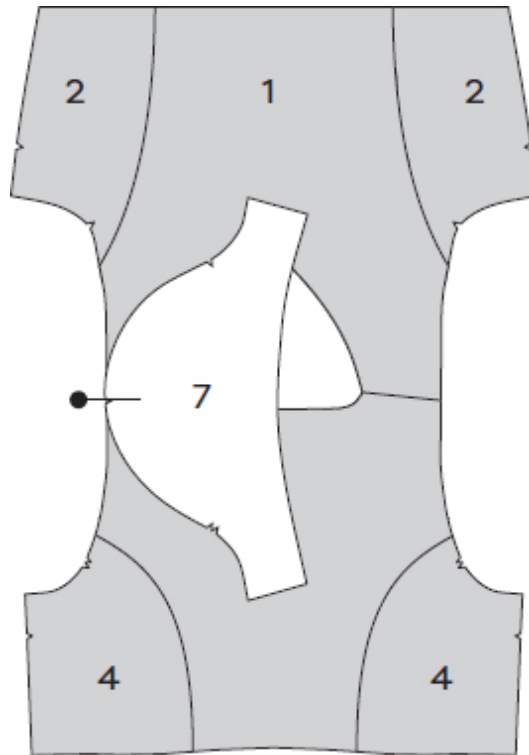


8. Flip the facing to the inside of the bodice and press. 'Stitch in the ditch' at the shoulder seams: in other words, sew in the valley of

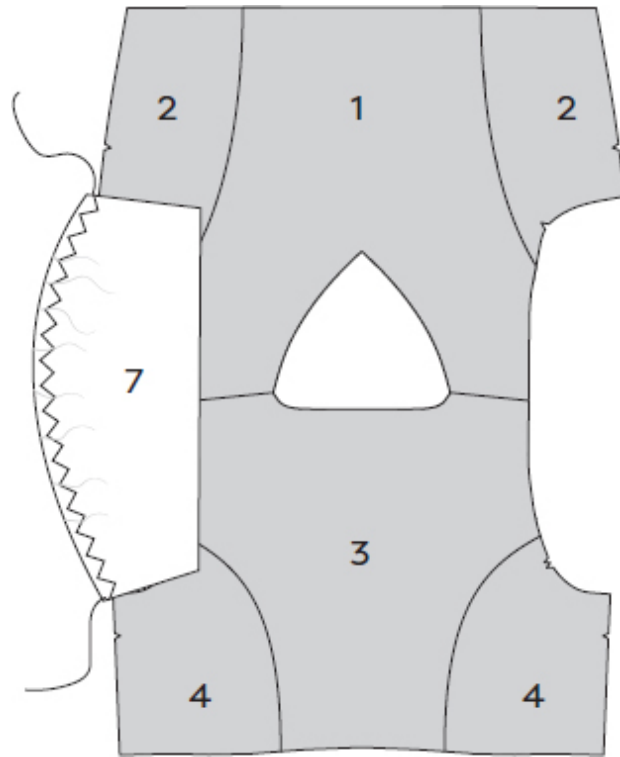
the existing shoulder seam, using a straight stitch, to secure the facing to the shoulders.



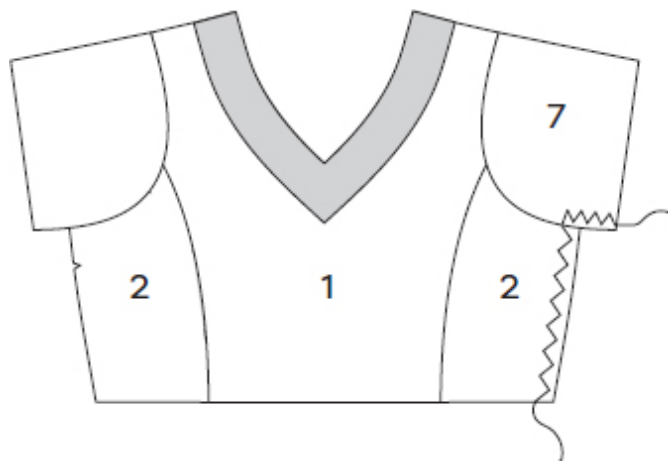
9. Lay one **sleeve (7)** on top of the bodice, right sides together, matching the shoulder notch on the sleeve with the shoulder seam, and pin in place.



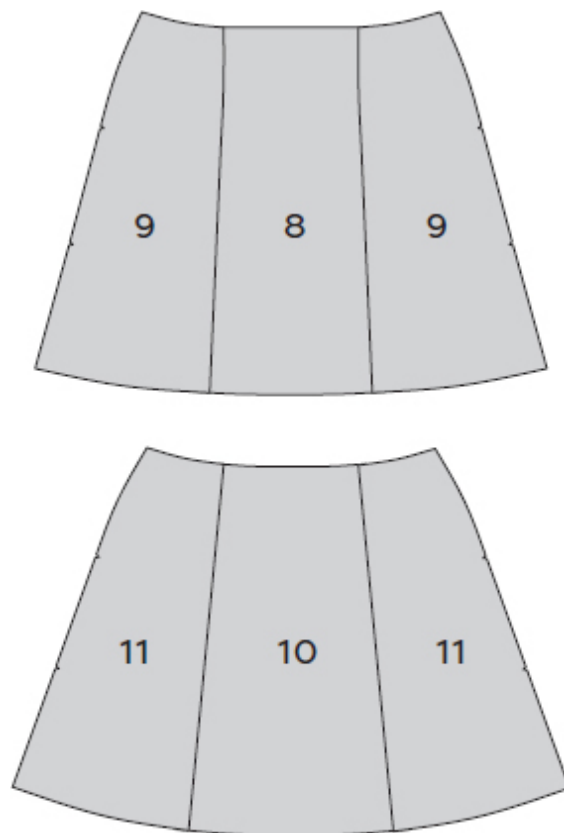
10. Match the remaining notches on the bodice with the sleeve and pin the rest of the sleeve to the armscye. Sew, finish the seam allowance and press the seam towards the sleeve.



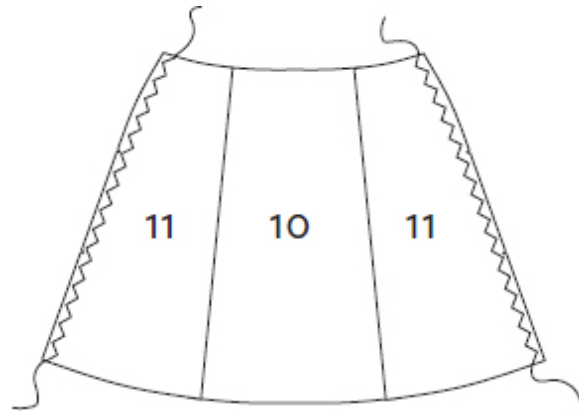
- l1. Repeat with the second **sleeve (7)**.
- l2. Fold the top in half, with right sides together. Sew the side seam from the hem to the end of the sleeve, pivoting at the underarm. Finish the seam allowance and press the seam towards the back. Repeat with the second side.



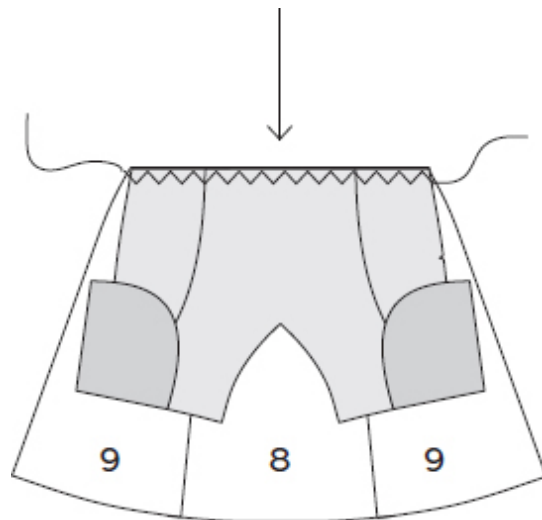
13. Sew the **side front skirt (9)** to the **centre front skirt (8)**, right sides together, matching the notches. Finish the seam allowance and press the seam towards the centre. Repeat with the second **side front skirt (9)**.
14. Sew the **side back skirt (11)** to the **centre back skirt (10)**, right sides together, matching the notches. Finish the seam allowance and press the seam towards the centre. Repeat with the second **side back skirt (11)**.



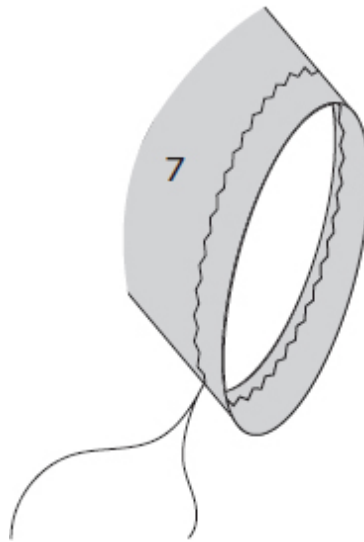
15. Pin the front skirt to the back skirt at the side seams. Sew, finish the seam allowances and press the seams towards the back.



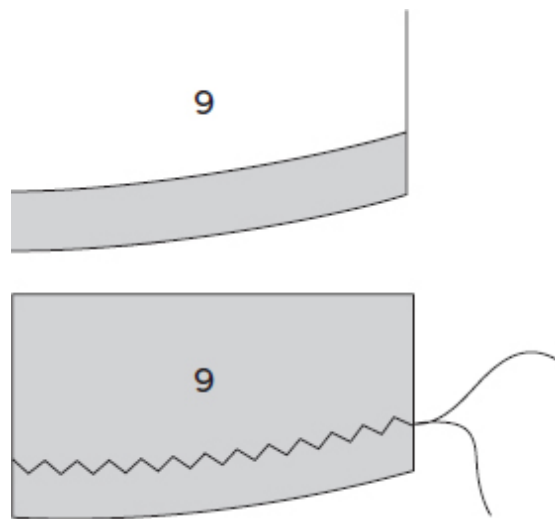
16. Place the bodice inside the skirt, right sides together. Pin, matching the princess seams and side seams (make sure the front of the bodice is facing the front of the skirt). Sew around the waistline. Finish the seam allowance and press the seam down.



17. Fold up the edge of the sleeve by 1.5 cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in.) and press. Topstitch from the right side. Repeat with the second sleeve.



18. Fold up the hem by 2.5 cm (1 in.) and press. Topstitch the hem from the right side.



YOUR FOXHILL DRESS IS DONE!

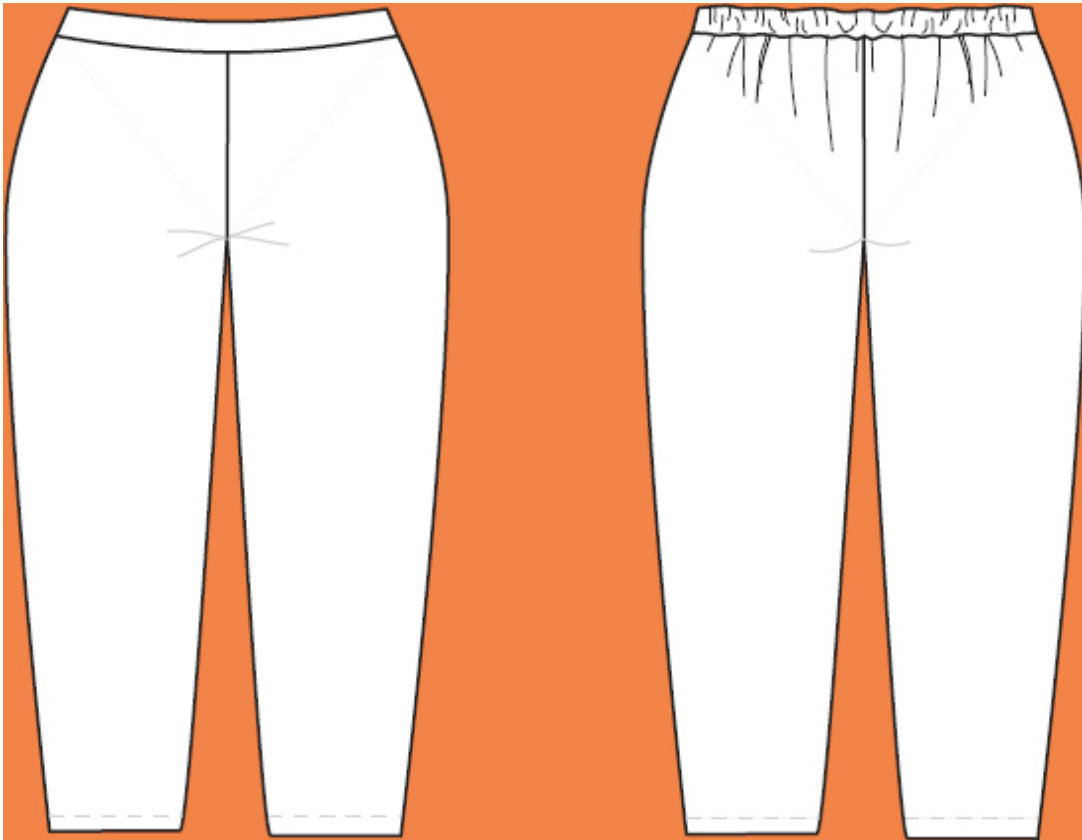
Magna Pants





Magna Pants

SEWING LEVEL: ADVANCED BEGINNER



These comfy, woven slim-leg trousers (pants) have an elasticated back, back darts and an optional side seam zip. Use a flowy rayon or linen to make refined casual trousers you'll never want to take off.

NOTE

If you're making the same size at the waist and hip, or if you're grading between sizes to make the waist larger than the hip (e.g. a UK size 22 hip and 24 waist/US size 18 hip and 20 waist), then you don't need to insert the invisible zip. If you're grading between sizes to make the waist smaller than the hip (e.g. a UK size 22 hip and 18 waist /US 18 hip and size 14 waist), then you do need the invisible zip – otherwise you won't be able to get them on!

Finished garment measurements

CENTIMETRES

UK	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
Waist (stretched)	100	105	110	116	121	126	131	136	141	146	151
Hip	114	119	124	129	134	139	144	150	155	160	165
Inseam length	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69	69

INCHES

UK	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
Waist (stretched)	39½	41½	43½	45½	47½	49½	51½	53½	55½	57½	59½
Hip	44⅞	46⅞	48⅞	50⅞	52⅞	54⅞	56⅞	58⅞	60⅞	62⅞	64⅞
Inseam length	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27

Fabric requirements

METRES

UK	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
115-cm fabric	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3
140-cm fabric	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6

YARDS

UK	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36
US	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32
EU	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60	62	64
45-in. fabric	2¼	2¼	2¼	2½	2½	2½	2½	3¼	3¼	3¼	3¼
55-in. fabric	2½	2½	2½	2¾	2¾	2¾	2¾	2⅞	2⅞	2⅞	2⅞

You will need

RECOMMENDED FABRIC

- Light- to mid-weight woven fabrics with drape, such as polyester twill, Tencel, or linen

INTERFACING

- Light- to mid-weight fusible interfacing

NOTIONS

- **For UK sizes 16–26 (US 12–22):**
45 cm (15 in.) elastic 2.5 cm (1 in.) wide
- **For UK sizes 28–36 (US 24–32):**
56 cm (22 in.) elastic 2.5 cm (1 in.) wide
- 18–25-cm (7–10-in.) invisible zip (optional)
- Thread

- Universal needle

Pattern inventory

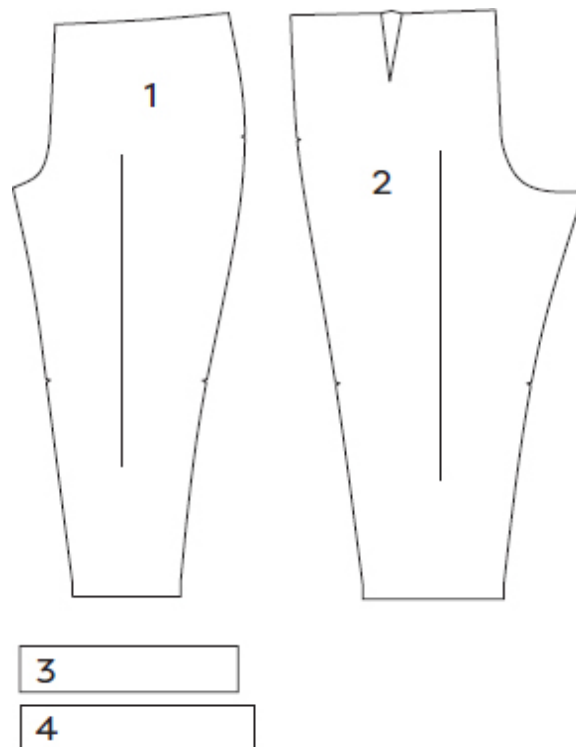
1 – Front leg

2 – Back leg

3 – Front waistband

4 – Back waistband

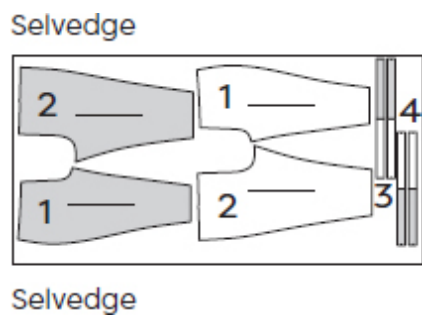
(Elastic guide not shown)



Fabric cutting layouts

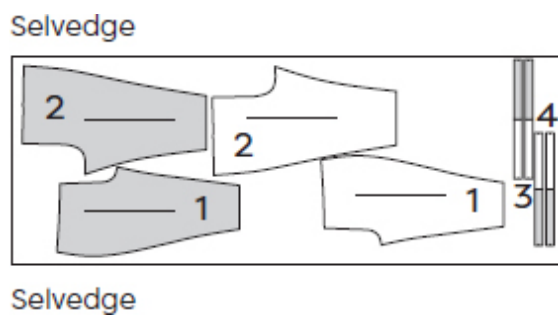
SIZES : UK 16–28 (US 12–24)

FABRIC WIDTH: 115 CM (45 IN)



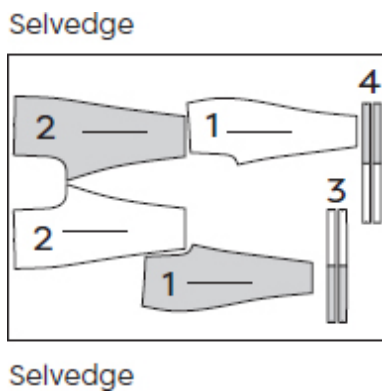
SIZES : UK 30–36 (US 26–32)

FABRIC WIDTH: 115 CM (45 IN.)



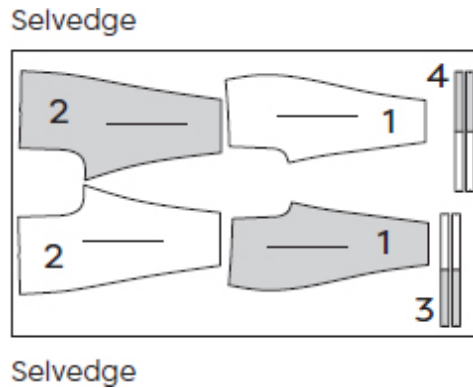
SIZES : UK 16–20 (US 12–16)

FABRIC WIDTH: 140 CM (55 IN.)



SIZES : UK 22–36 (US 18–32)

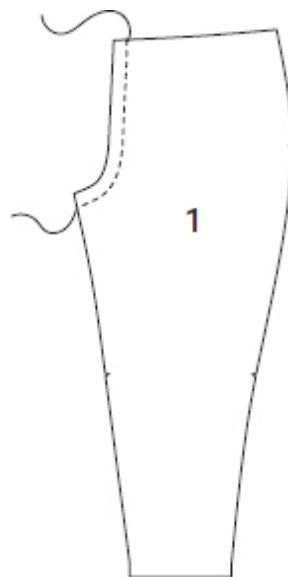
FABRIC WIDTH: 140 CM (55 IN.)



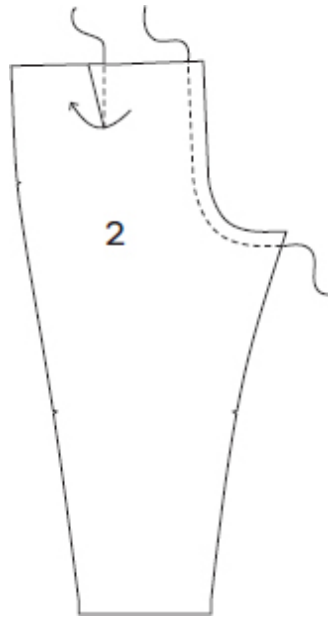
Making the Magna Pants

For your Magna Pants toile, you can skip the invisible zip (unless you're grading between sizes where the waist is smaller than the hip), sewing down the waistband inside the pants, and hemming.

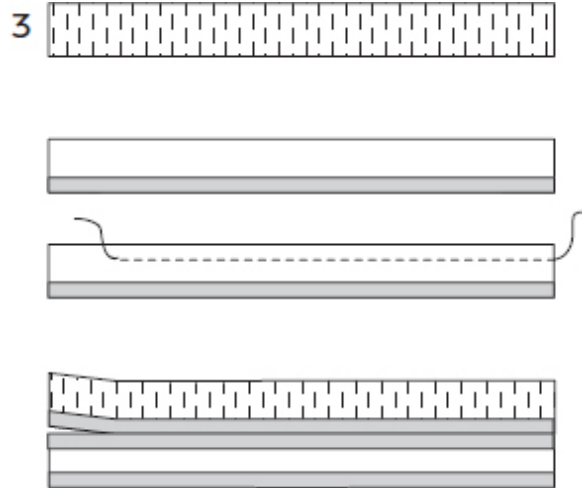
1. Sew the **front legs (1)** together at the crotch seam, right sides together. Finish the seam allowance and press to one side.



2. Sew the darts in the **back leg (2)** pieces and press towards the centre back. Sew the **back legs (2)** together at the crotch seam, right sides together. Finish the seam allowance and press to the side.



3. Interface the wrong side of one of the **front waistbands (3)**, following the manufacturer's instructions. On the second **front waistband (3)**, turn one long side to the wrong side by 1.2 cm (½ in.) and press. Pin the two front waistbands (3) right sides together and sew, stopping around 5 cm (2 in.) from the left end as shown if you are using an invisible zip. If you are not using a zip, sew all the way to the end. Press the waistband open, pressing the seam allowances apart all the way to the end of the waistband.



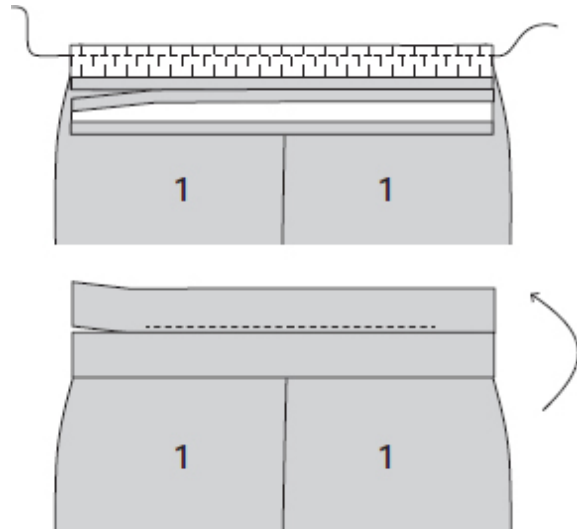
4. From the right side, understitch the non-interfaced side to the seam allowance underneath, starting and stopping 5 cm (2 in.) from each end as shown.



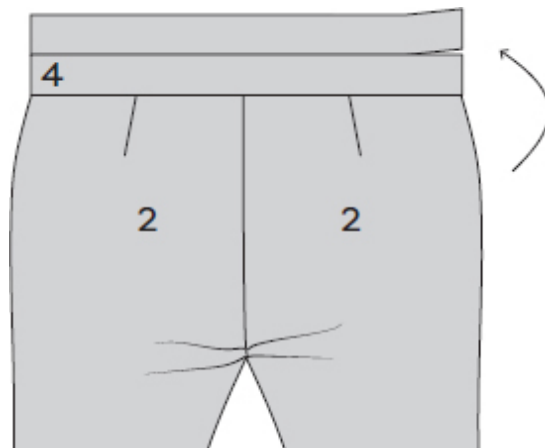
5. Repeat step 3 for the **two back waistbands (4)**. (Note: the back waistband is not interfaced.)



6. Pin the constructed front waistband to the front legs, right sides together, with the interfaced waistband at the top. Sew, then flip the waistband up and press the seam allowance up towards the waistband.

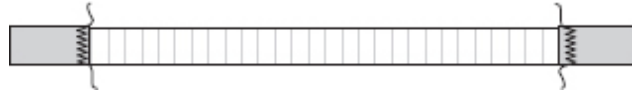


7. Repeat step 6 with the constructed back waistband and the back legs, making sure that the opening in the waistband is on the right-hand side, as shown (if you are using an invisible zip).

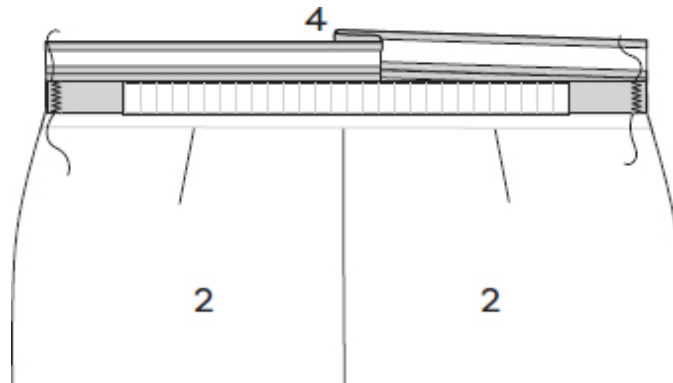


The waistband that's attached to the legs is now called the **outer** waistband and the waistband that is not yet directly attached to the legs is called the **inner** waistband.

8. Cut two small pieces of fabric measuring 4 x 2.5 cm (1½ x 1 in.); if your fabric frays, finish the longer edges. Cut elastic to the length shown on the elastic guide. Using a zigzag stitch, sew the tabs on top of either end of the elastic, overlapping each tab on top of the elastic by 1.2 cm (½ in.).

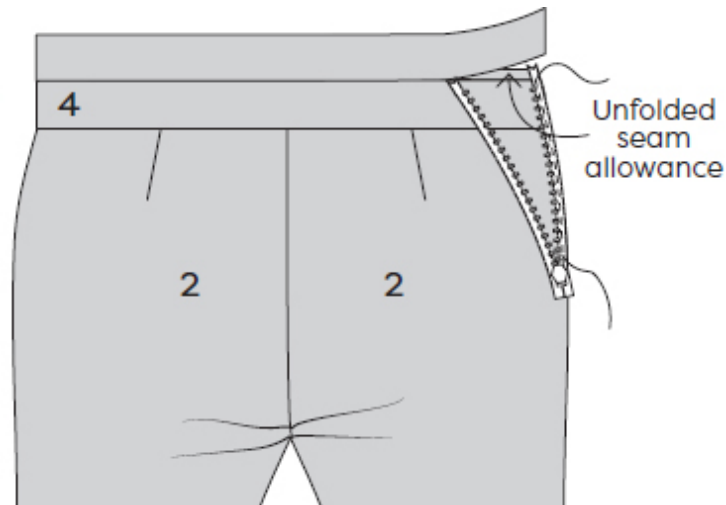


9. Pin one tab to the inside of the back outer waistband piece, aligning the short end of the tab with the edge of the outer waistband seam allowance as shown (flip out the seam allowances that have been pressed under). Sew the tab to the waistband at a 6-mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ -in.) seam allowance. Repeat with the second tab; note that the elastic and tabs will be significantly shorter than the waistband.

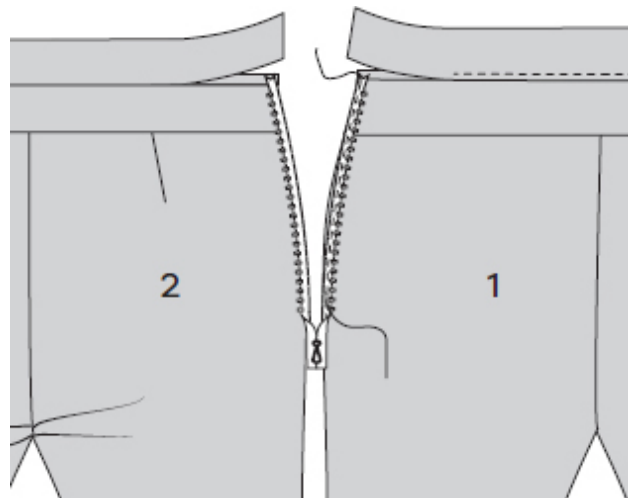


IF YOU ARE **NOT USING A ZIP**, SKIP TO **STEP 16**.

10. Finish the side seams on the front and back legs separately. Flip up the seam allowance where the two waistbands are joined, towards the inner waistband. Pin the open invisible zip on the right-hand side of the back legs, right sides together, with the zip teeth facing left and 1.5 cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in.) from the edge, and the top zip teeth just below the fold in the seam allowance on the outer waistband. Sew the left-hand side of the zip, using a zip or invisible zip foot and stitching as close to the teeth as possible, starting at the fold of the seam allowance. Make sure the seam allowance is flipped up as you are sewing so that it does not get caught in the stitching line.

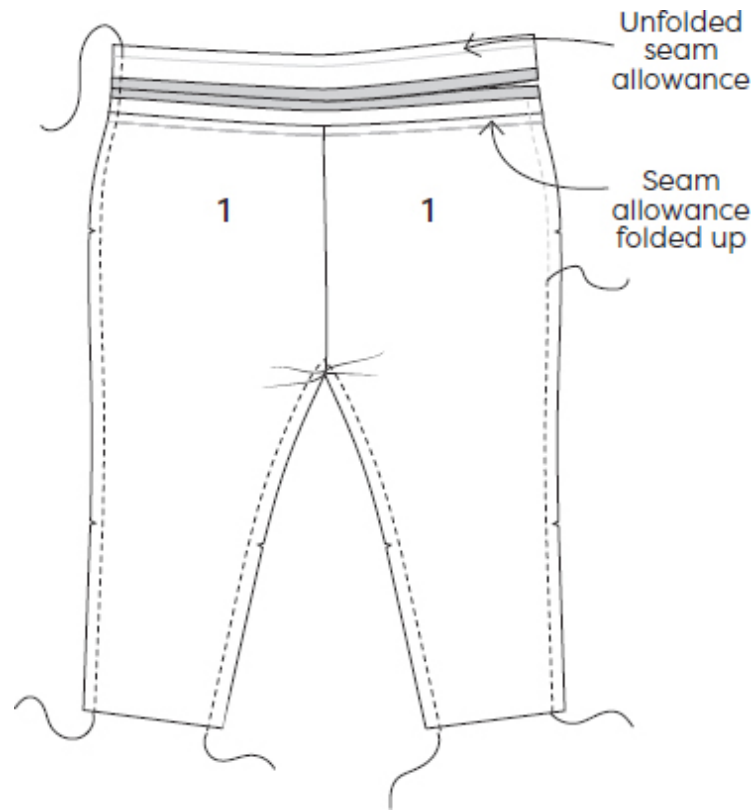


- l1. Flip the zip over and pin the right-hand side of the zip to the left-hand side of the front legs in the same way as you did in step 9, but with the zip teeth facing right. Test that it zips correctly and isn't twisted. Sew the right-hand side of the zip.

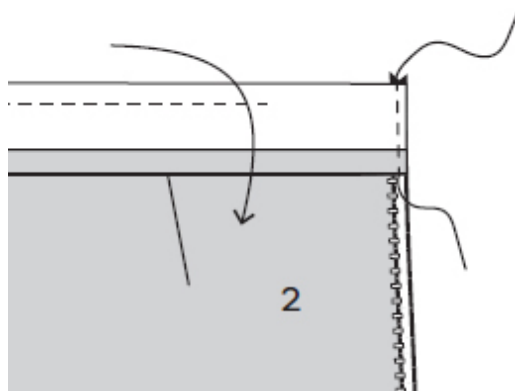


- l2. Close the zip and pin the front and back legs right sides together at the side seams and inseam, with the seam allowance on the inner waistband unfolded. On the side with the zip, sew the rest of the side seam to the hem, starting just above where the zip stitching ends, and press the seam allowances open. Sew the other side seam from the top of the inner waistband to the hem

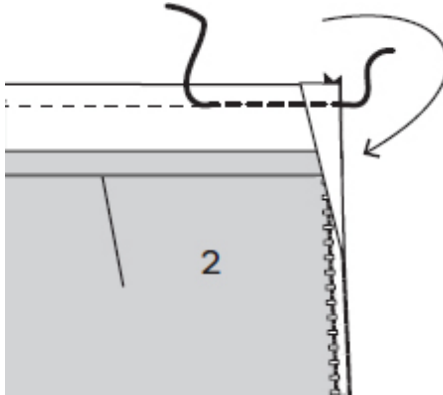
and press the seam allowances open. Sew the inseam, finish the seam allowances and press towards the back.



13. Turn the pants right side out. Flip the inner waistband out and over the outer waistband so that they are right sides together. Flip up the waistband seam allowance as shown. Sew the end of the inner waistband to the zip tape, just to the right of the zip teeth, using a zip foot.



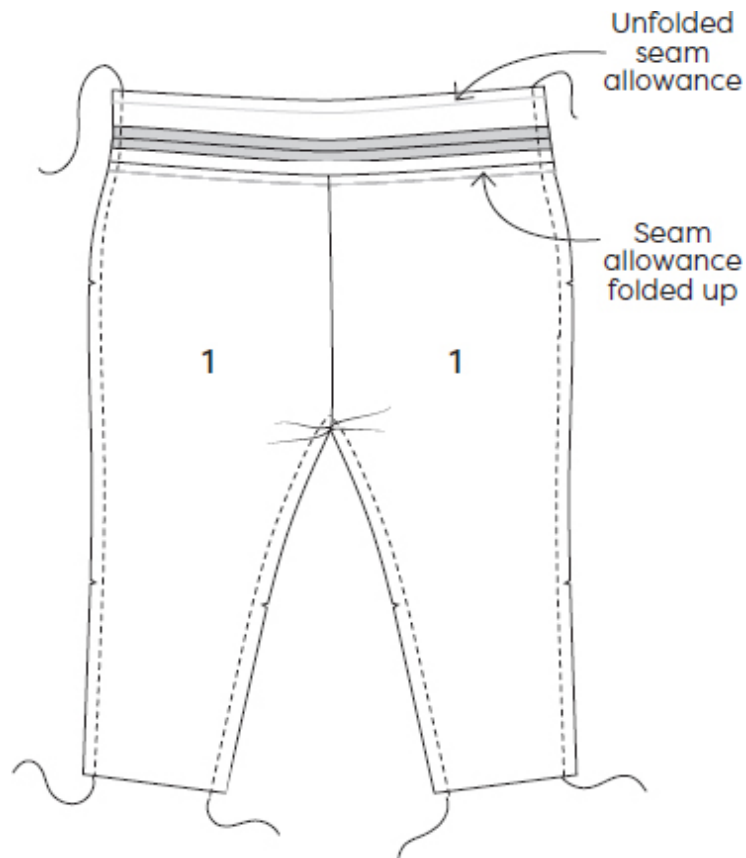
14. At the top of the zip, fold the vertical edge of the waistband over to the right side so that you can feel the zip teeth inside the edge of the fold. Sew the remaining 5 cm (2 in.) of the waistband (along the fold you previously pressed), sewing across the fold at the top of the zip. Trim off the corner and trim the seam allowance down to 3 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in.).



15. Repeat steps 12 and 13 with the second side of the zip.
Continue to [step 17](#).

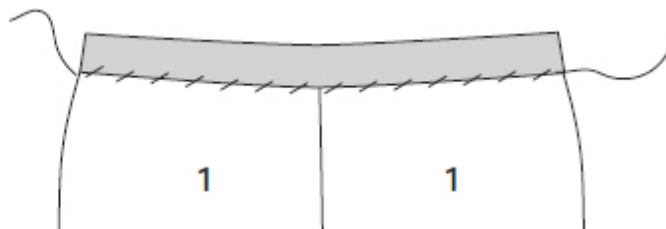
IF YOU ARE **NOT INSERTING A ZIP**:

16. Pin the front and back legs right sides together at the side seams and inseam, with the seam allowance on the inner waistband unfolded. Sew both side seams, starting at the top of the inner waistband and ending at the hem. Finish the seam allowances and press towards the back. Sew the inseam, finish the seam allowances and press towards the back.

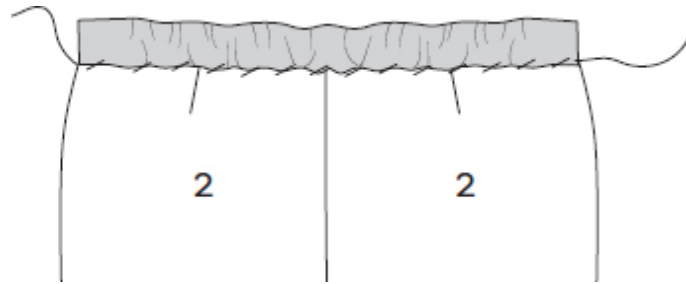


ALL VERSIONS:

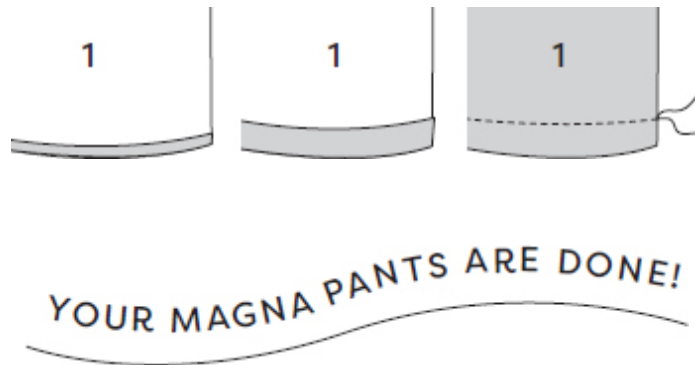
17. Fold the inner waistband to the inside of the pants and press. If you are using a zip, gently push out the top corners of the waistband to a sharp point, using a point turner or a knitting needle. Secure the edge of the front waistband to the pants by either hand stitching or by 'stitching in the ditch' from the right side (sewing in the valley of the previously sewn seam).



18. Secure the edge of the back waistband to the pants, again using hand stitching or 'stitching in the ditch'. As the elastic is shorter than the waistband, the easiest approach is to work in sections, smoothing the fabric over the elastic and sewing, before sliding the fabric along the elastic until there is another flat section to sew. Alternatively, you can pull the elastic taut and stitch the entire seam 'in the ditch' from the right side.



19. Fold the leg hem to the wrong side by 1.2 cm (1/2 in.) and press. Fold another 2 cm (3/4 in.) to the wrong side and press. Topstitch the hem from the right side. Repeat with the second leg.





Further resources

I hope this book has made you a confident fitter – but one book can never cover every possible topic and question. Here are some of my other favourite resources for plus-size sewing and fitting.

Online workshops

FITTING FOR CURVES: PATTERN ADJUSTMENTS FOR THE UPPER BODY

In this online video class, I take you through 16 pattern alterations, showing you examples of the fit before and after changes, and explaining how to troubleshoot if you run into problems. If you learn best by watching a live demonstration, this is a great option for you! You can watch and re-watch the classes at your own pace from home, and I'll even answer your personal fit questions. Go to [Cashmerette.com/fittingworkshop](https://www.cashmerette.com/fittingworkshop) to learn more.

CRAFTSY.COM

This subscription website has thousands of online video workshops, including many on fitting, with specialized fit classes on topics such as knits, underwear and trousers (pants). My class, 'Full Bust Adjustment For Any Pattern', goes into lots of detail on different types of FBA and other bust adjustments. Go to [Cashmerette.com/Craftsy](https://www.cashmerette.com/Craftsy) to learn more about my FBA class and others.

Online resources

CASHMERETTE

The Cashmerette website features dozens of sewing patterns in cup sizes C–H, together with lots of tutorials, blog posts and more. You can also find us on Facebook and Instagram at **@cashmerette**.

Cashmerette.com

CURVY SEWING COLLECTIVE

The Curvy Sewing Collective is the leading website for everything related to plus-size sewing. It has a wealth of information on plus-size patterns, tutorials and inspiration, and there's a really active Facebook group where you can get advice and support from other curvy sewists.

Curvysewingcollective.com

YOUTUBE

There are lots of free sewing and fitting tutorial videos available on YouTube, which can be particularly helpful if you need to visualize a new technique. My favourite channels include **Alexandra Morgan (of In-House Patterns)**, **ThriftyStitcher (Claire-Louise Hardie)** and **Threads Sewing**.

Youtube.com

INSTAGRAM

This platform has become the main online community for sewists, and once you learn to navigate it, it has endless inspiration! The best way to find plus-size sewing resources is to follow accounts like Cashmerette and the Curvy Sewing Collective, which regularly re-post from other curvy sewists who you can then follow. Also follow hashtags such as **#CurvySewing**, **#CSCMakes** and **#PlusSizeSewing** to get more follower ideas.

Patterns

There are now lots of pattern brands that have extended into plus sizes, which has been a fantastic development over the past few years! You can find a round-up of pattern brands, including what size they go up to and what cup size they draft for, by going to [**Cashmerette.com/PlusSizePatterns**](https://www.cashmerette.com/PlusSizePatterns).

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Production Controller Katie Jarvis

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