
AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE OF TEXAS

EXTENSION SERVICE

T. O. WALTON, Director

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
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COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS

USE AND ALTERATION OF
COMMERCIAL PATTERNS

By

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HOME DRESSMAKING.

The foundation of a life is intelligent care of the body both as a working machine and an expression of beauty.

Proper clothing united to the needs of the body and enhancing its grace and beauty is one of the most important factors in this intelligent care that makes for the highest degree of efficiency and expression.

While age, climatic conditions, and occupations have their effect in the working out of the problems, nevertheless there are some general principles which underlie the solution whatever may be the conditions of daily life.

One of the most important things is to have clothes that fit. We should study the lines of our bodies and our garments should conform to these lines so that there may be perfect freedom of all the muscles and no constrictions at any part.

Measurements. To have well fitting clothes we must take our measurements very accurately.

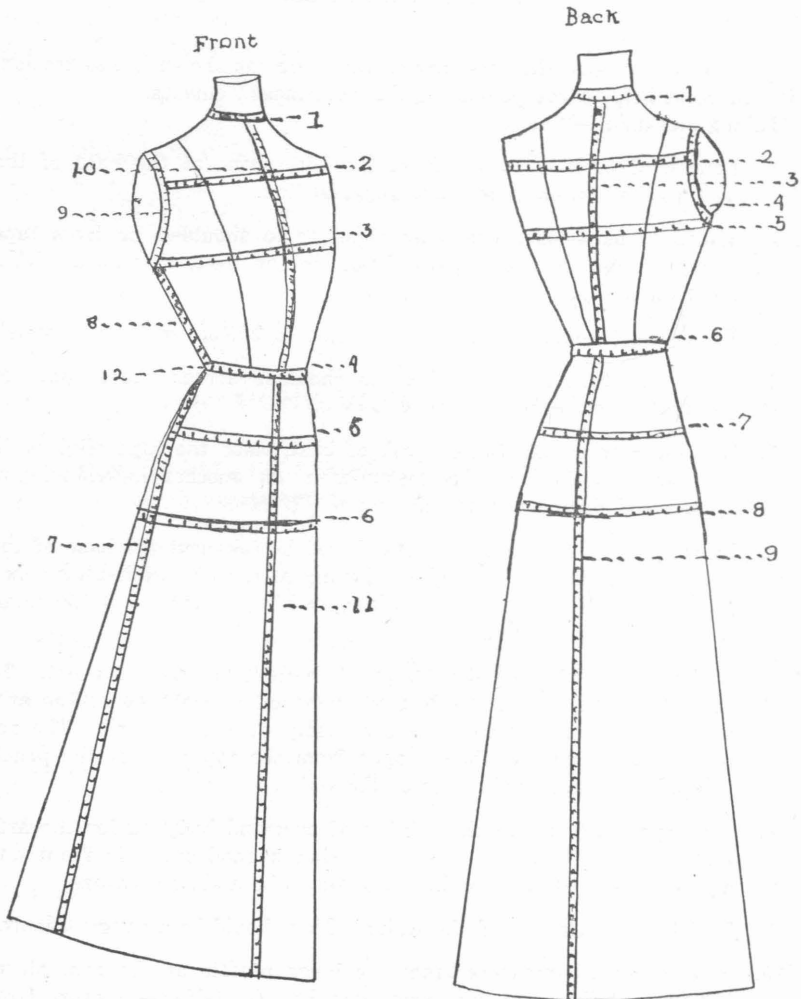
TAKING MEASURES.

Place a tape around the neck, arms, waist, etc., as shown in illustration. This will be of help to you in making accurate measurements.

1. Taking Measures—Waist:

1. Length of back—measure from the little bone at the base of the neck to the bottom of the tape at waist line.
2. Width of back—measure from shoulder to shoulder, or from tape to tape across the widest part of the back or about four inches down from the neck.
3. Front length—measure from collar line to bottom of tape at waist.
4. Chest—measure from shoulder to shoulder across widest part of chest usually $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches below neck.
5. Bust—measure over fullest part of bust, raise the tape slightly in the back. In taking this measurement on another individual you must stand behind the person.
6. Neck or collar—a close measure should be taken at the base of the neck. If you have too large an opening at the neck it is almost impossible to adjust the collar perfectly, while if the neck is too small it can easily be cut out.
7. Underarm—measure from armpit to bottom of tape at waist. To take this measure accurately place a pencil as close under the arm as possible and hold the measure firmly over the pencil. The required length will be the distance from the top edge of the pencil to the lower edge of the tape at the waist.
8. Armseye—measure at the joining of arm and body, under the arm and up over the shoulder bone, making a good curve in front and almost straight line at back. This should be a close measure.
9. Waist—measure around the waist. This should be a snug measure.
10. Sleeve—inside—measure from the large muscle at the arm pit to the bone at the wrist with arm straight. (Outside)—measure from top of shoulder over the elbow with arm bent to outside wrist bone.

The sleeve measurements are very important for nothing so quickly gives the undesirable "home-made" look as a badly fitting or too short sleeve. It is also very uncomfortable.



No. 1.

FRONT:

1. Neck.
2. Chest.
3. Bust.
4. Waist.
5. Under arm.
6. Armseye.
7. Front length of waist.
8. Hip at 4 1-2 in.
9. Hip at 9 in.
10. Back bust.
11. Waist.
12. Side length of skirt.

BACK:

1. Neck.
2. Width of back.
3. Length of back.
4. Armseye.
5. Back bust.
6. Waist.
7. Hip at 4 1-2 in.
8. Hip at 9 in.
9. Back length of skirt.

Skirt—

1. Waist—see 9 above.
2. Hip—take two measures—first one 5 inches below the waist and next 9 inches below the waist over the largest part of the hips—these should be loose measurements (see illustration).
3. Front length—measure from top of tape at waist to floor.
4. Side length—measure from top of tape at waist over the hips to the floor.
5. Back length—measure from top of tape at waist to floor.

Note—The back and side lengths of a skirt are usually one inch longer than the front.

Balance Point. This is very important in the making of patterns and in fitting. It is the point where the underarm seam should come. It is computed by taking $\frac{1}{4}$ of the waist measure and deducting $\frac{3}{4}$ in, viz: Waist measure 27 inches, $\frac{1}{4}$ of 27 = $6\frac{3}{4}$ in. — $\frac{3}{4}$ in = 6 in. Then 6 in. from center back is your balance point.

Fitting a Waist:

Waist: Pin together carefully down the front, put tape around the waist and adjust the gathers, have plain about 2 inches on each side of the balance point or the under arm seam.

Shoulder Seam: For a normal figure the shoulder seam should come 1 inch back of the top of the shoulder. If the person is round shouldered this line is placed still further back. The correct placing of the shoulder seam frequently means that more material must be taken up from either the front or back.

The waist at the neck and shoulders should be perfectly flat and smooth.

The under arm seam should start directly under the shoulder seam, continuing straight to the waist line, crossing the balance point. Take out any extra fullness there may be across the bust or back at the under-arm seam. The waist should be smooth and flat around the armseye and on either side of under arm seam.

If the armseye is too tight, slash material until armseye feels comfortable, then trim out making a smooth curve. The line at the armseye should slant out gradually as it approaches the shoulder seam. If there is too much fullness at the arm's eye toward the front or back so that it stands out just in front or back of the armpit, lay a small dart in the pattern taking out extra fullness.

COMMERCIAL PATTERNS.

Good commercial patterns can be purchased but as these are made according to a series of average measurements, most people need to make a few changes in them.

BUYING PATTERNS.

In purchasing patterns choose those which correspond to your bust and hip measures and of a type which suits your individual figure. Take the

bust measure over the fullest part of the bust and have it an easy measure. Take hip measure over the fullest part of the hips from 5 to 9 inches below the waist.

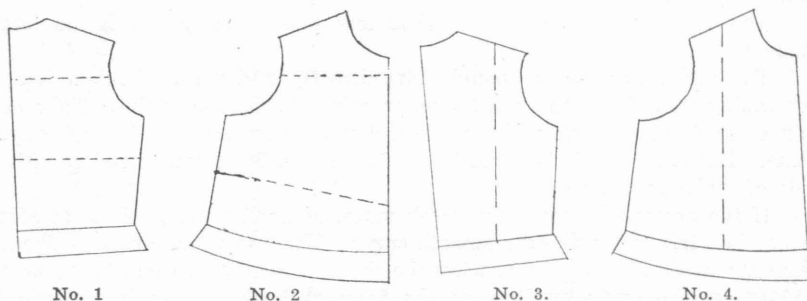
Before opening envelope, read directions very carefully and note the following points:

1. Symbols used for straight material.
Lengthwise fold.
Crosswise fold.
Seam allowance, also hems.
Darts or notches for joining.
Tucks, plaits, gathers, folds, yokes, pockets, etc.
2. Directions for cutting.
3. Directions for making.

After opening envelope:

1. Examine chart—notice unnumber of pieces.
2. Identify each piece and notice symbols on each.
3. Choose pieces to be used—fold others and return to envelope.
4. Testing or checking: Take an accurate set of your own measures and check entire pattern. Check length of back, length of front, width of back, width of front, under arm seam, shoulder, neck, etc. Check sleeve and skirt also.

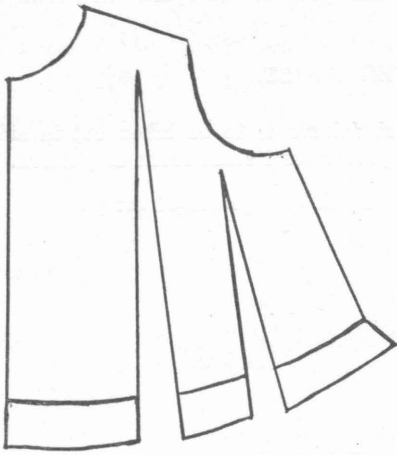
WAIST.



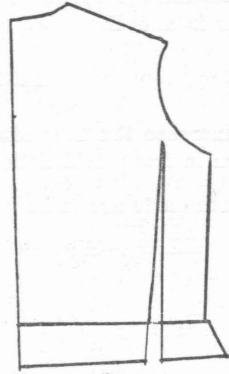
To shorten or lengthen waist fold or cut on dotted lines as shown in Ill 1 and 2.

To increase the bust measure: Draw a line straight down from the center of the shoulder, through the waist line, on both front and back pieces of the pattern. Cut through these lines. Separate the pieces of the front enough to give one-fourth of the whole amount needed. Do the same with the back piece. See Ill 3 and 4.

To decrease the bust measure: Lay a fold from the center of the shoulder through the waist line on both pieces of the pattern, taking up in each one-fourth the entire amount the pattern needs to be decreased. See Ill. 3 and 4.

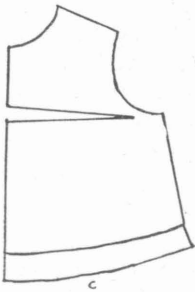


No. 5.



B
No. 6.

A. Alteration to increase bust measure without changing length of shoulder. Ill 5 and 6



C
No. 7.



D
No. 8.

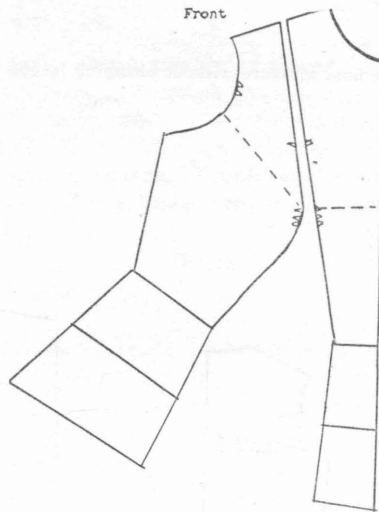
C. Alteration for large bust when extra length is needed.
D. Alteration for stoop shoulder.

Alteration for round shoulders. Slash pattern and spread as shown in diagrams D and E.

TIGHT FITTED WAIST.

To increase the bust size. If more fulness is to be taken out in side back than in front, fold little plaits in pattern and slash front of pattern.

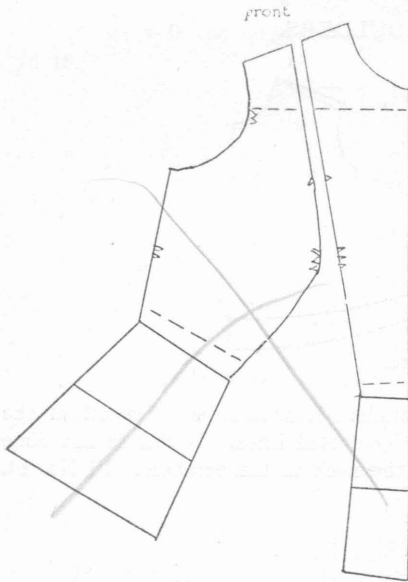
If both parts are to be made larger, slash both pieces of the pattern.



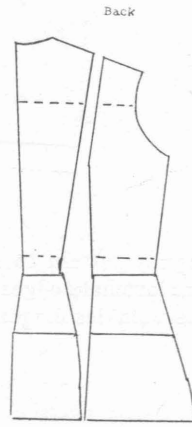
No. 9.

To increase bust size, slash on a dotted line and spread the necessary amount.

To decrease bust size, make a fold on dotted line.



No. 10.



No. 11.

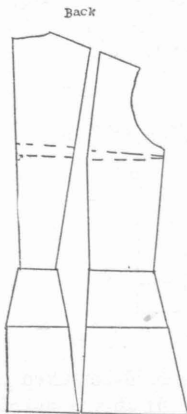
FRONT AND BACK

To shorten waist line, cut or fold on dotted lines and take out the necessary amount. Ill. 10 and 11.

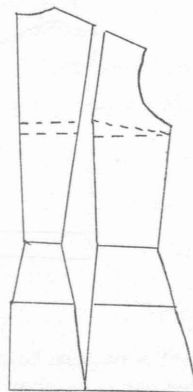
To lengthen waist line cut and spread instead of folding plaits.

To fit an over-erect figure fold pattern on dotted lines as shown in illustration No. 12.

To fit round shouldered figure, slash the pattern on dotted lines as shown in illustration No. 13 and spread the necessary amount needed.

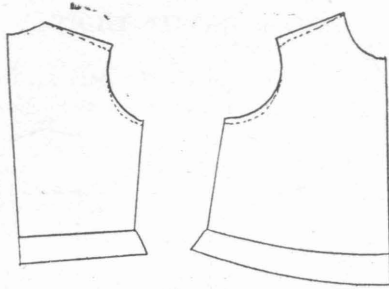


No. 12.



No. 13.

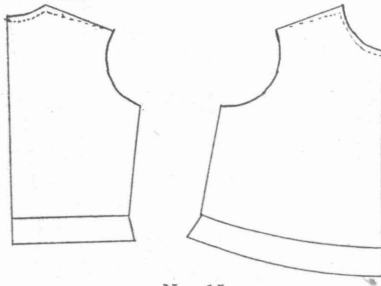
SLOPING SHOULDERS.



No. 14.

To adapt a pattern to sloping shoulders it should be taken off at the shoulder and armhole edges as shown by dotted lines. If this is not done there will be wrinkles diagonally from the neck to the armhole. Ill No. 14.

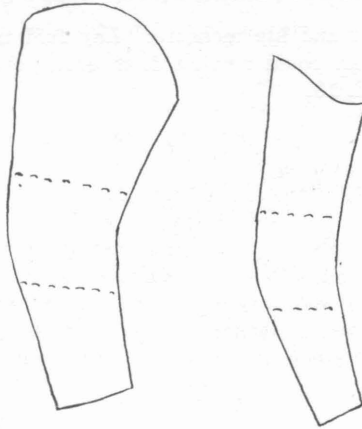
SQUARE SHOULDERS.



No. 15.

To adapt a pattern to a square shoulder, it should be taken off at neck and shoulder edges as shown by the dotted lines. If this is not done, there will be crosswise wrinkles in the front of the waist just below the collar. Ill. No. 15.

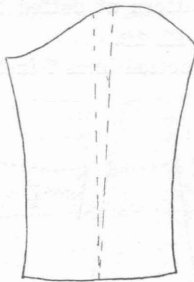
If sleeve is too long or too short, treat it the same way as for waist.
Ill 16.



No. 16.

- a. 2 in. below elbow.
- b. 3 in. below elbow.

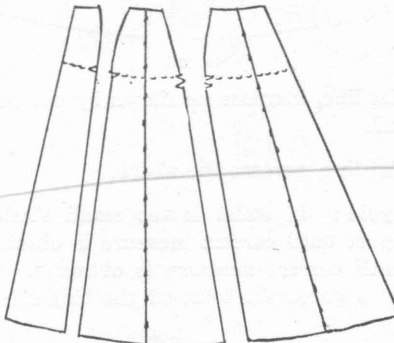
To lengthen or shorten sleeve, cut or fold on dotted lines. Ill. 16.



No. 17.

To add or take out fullness, fold or cut on dotted lines. Ill 17.

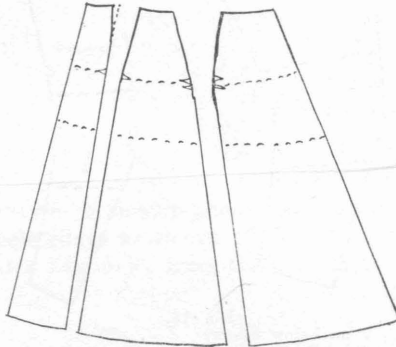
ALTERATIONS OF GORED SKIRT PATTERNS.



No. 18.

To increase waist and hip measure: Cut lengthwise through the center of each side gore and separate the pieces sufficiently to give in all one-half of the necessary amount, adding equally to each gore. Ill. 18.

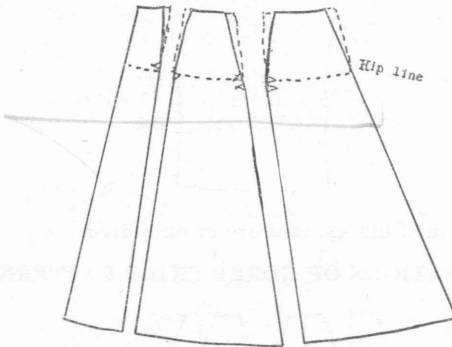
To decrease waist and hip measure: Lay fold through the center of each side gore—take an equal amount from each gore, in all one-half the necessary amount. Ill. 18.



No. 19.

To lengthen skirt cut pattern at dotted lines 7 inches below hip, and spread the desired amount. Ill. 19.

To shorten skirt fold on dotted lines 7 inches below hip line. Ill. 19.



No. 20.

To increase waist line, increase as shown by dotted lines, from hip line to waist line. Ill. 20.

To decrease waist line, reverse the above.

To alter skirt yoke: If waist is too small slash pattern in several places and spread apart until correct measure is obtained. If waist is too large, lap sleeves until correct measure is obtained. To take out fulness around the bottom of a gored skirt cut off the bias side of the gore.

ALTERATIONS FOR IRREGULAR FIGURES.

For the woman whose hip and abdomen push forward as she stands, a tuck $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch deep will need to be taken in the back of the first gore of pattern and carried to nothing beyond the center of the gore. This prevents the skirt from pushing forward at the bottom. Do not lift back to correct this, as it pulls all the skirt seams out of place.

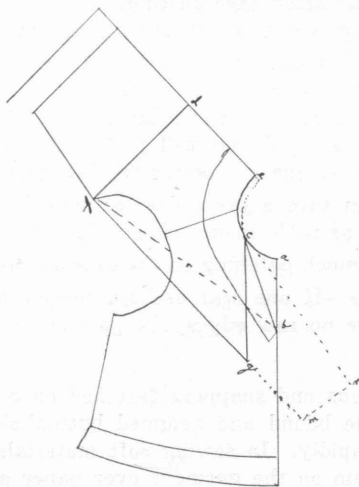
COLLARS.

The fit of a collar around the neck is very important, by cutting your own collars from your patterns you are sure of a good fit. To do this, pin the front and back together as shown in illustration 21. Mark down center front the depth you want collar, about 5 inches, a and b. Draw line c to b. For the rest of the collar shape as desired as shown by round collar illustration.

SAILOR COLLAR.

Measure down the back the desired depth of collar, usually 7 inches, d to e; then straight across the back the desired width of collar from d to f. Measure from f to b dotted line. Take this length and place rule at right angles at f and apply this measure then connect f, g.

To make the roll collar, which so many sailor collars have, raise a $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch curve to c. See dotted line e c in illustration. If this collar is for a closed middy, leave the part g, m, n, c, on and you will have no piecing to do and no piece to put on in the front.



No. 21.

SUGGESTIONS FOR EQUIPMENT TO MAKE SEWING EASIER.

1. Sewing machine. Purchase the best the purse will permit. It will prove economy in the long run.
2. Use machine attachments.
3. Dress form.
4. Good fitting patterns.
5. Tracing wheel.
6. Iron and pressing board.
7. Sharp shears.
8. Tape measure and yard stick.
9. Plenty of pins.
10. Tracing board. To make tracing board, take a piece of beaver board about 15 inches wide and 40 inches long, or skirt length. Cover board with a paste made from a ball of carpenter's blue chalk and water. After spreading this paste over the board, cover with cheese cloth, lapping edges on under side and pasting them down.

Use of Tracing Board: This board is especially helpful to one when working with woolen materials. For instance, if you are cutting a skirt, take a piece of crayon and mark around the edge of pattern, then take tracing wheel and trace edge of pattern. When you take your material up you have it marked on both sides which saves a great deal of time.

FEW SUGGESTIONS FOR SHORT CUTS IN SEWING.

1. Tracing: Use tailor's crayon for tracing on woolen or silk.
2. For tracing on cotton use a tracing wheel.
3. By pinning, one can often save basting.
4. Pressing: Pressing is a very important short cut in sewing.
 - a. If patterns and materials are wrinkled, press before using.
 - b. Press second turn of a French seam.
 - c. Press first and second turn of a hem.
 - d. Press as you sew and you will find that a great deal of time is saved and you will have a better looking garment when finished.
5. Darning. One can save a great deal of time by darning on the machine such things as table linens, sheets, hose, etc.
6. Patching: Do as much patching on the machine as possible.
7. Finishing: Seams—If one will use the proper kind of seam on the garment and leave no raw edges, the garment will have a much better appearance.

One can buy buttons and snappers fastened on a tape. These can be sewed on rapidly. The bound and hemmed buttonholes can be bought in strips and sewed on rapidly. In sewing soft materials which slip, such as lace, silk, etc., sew them on the garment over paper and you will have no trouble.