



*Pattern
Alteration*

Shoulder Length

AgriLIFE EXTENSION
Texas A&M System

Extension Family Development
and Resource Management Specialists

Before attempting these alterations, review Extension publications E-372, *Principles of Pattern Alteration*, and E-373, *Personal Measurement Chart*, for basic instructions. Refer to E-381, *Shoulder Slope*, to determine if the pattern should be adjusted for shoulder slope rather than shoulder length. To determine how much you need to alter, refer to line 8 on the Personal Measurement Chart. Make this alteration on front and back pattern pieces.

Basic Bodice

Wide or broad shoulders will cause the armhole seamline at the shoulder to pull inward. They will also cause the cap of set-in sleeves to pull and ride up. Sleeves will appear too short and not hang properly (Fig.1).

Narrow shoulders will cause the armhole seamline to extend over the top of the shoulder. Sleeves will appear too long and will not hang properly (Fig. 2).

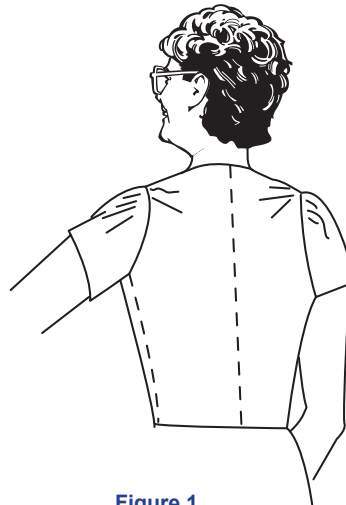


Figure 1.

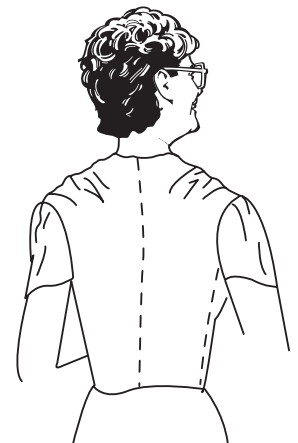
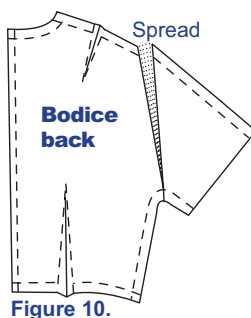
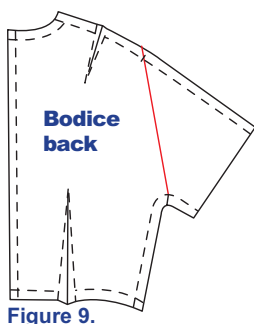
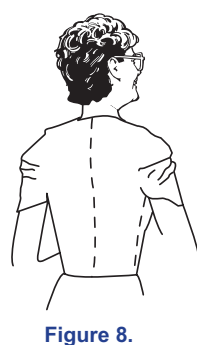
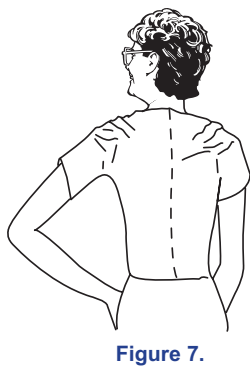
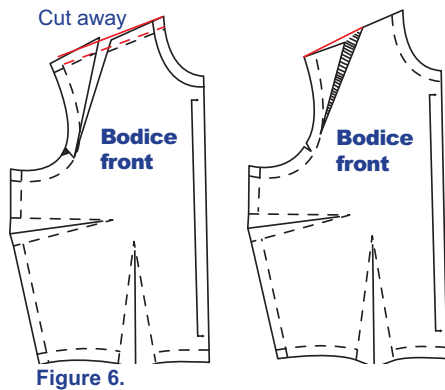
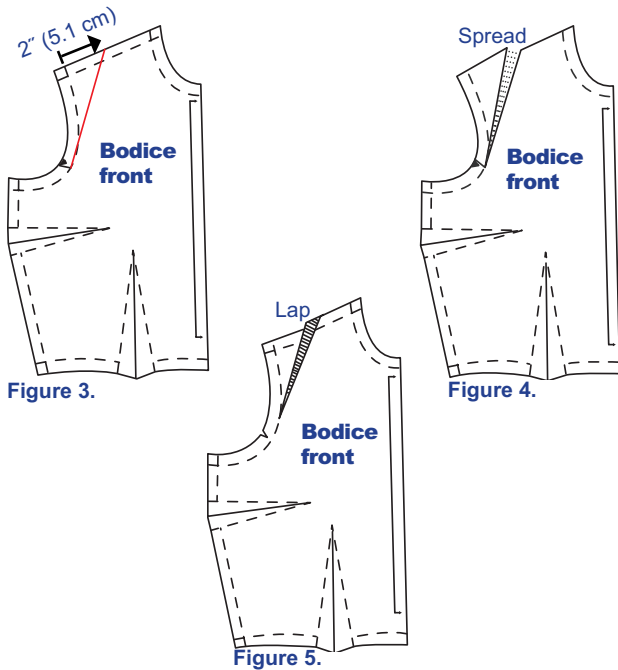


Figure 2.



Follow these steps to make your alterations:

1. Measure in 2 inches (5.1 cm) from the armhole seamline along the shoulder seamline. Mark this point and draw a diagonal line from there to the notch at the armhole seamline.
2. Slash the line *to, but not through*, the armhole seamline. Clip the armhole seam allowance at the notch to the seamline (Fig. 3).

To lengthen:

Place tissue paper under the pattern and spread the armhole section by the amount you need. The clipped seam allowance will lap (Fig. 4).

To shorten:

Move the armhole section inward, lapping the amount you need. The clipped seam allowance will spread (Fig. 5).

To complete either alteration:

1. Tape the pattern in place.
2. Redraw the shoulder cutting and seamlines by connecting the points where the cutting lines cross and the seamlines cross (Fig. 6).

Kimono Style Garments

Wide or broad shoulders will cause the sleeve to bind. To accommodate the width you need, the sleeve might ride inward. This causes extra vertical folds of fabric at the shoulder. The curve of the shoulder seam is too short for the shape of the body. Consequently, the sleeve might appear too short and hang poorly (Fig. 7).

Narrow shoulders will cause bagginess in the upper sleeve. The curve of the shoulder seam is too long for the shape of the body, so the sleeve might appear too long and hang poorly (Fig. 8). Follow these steps:

1. Draw a diagonal line from the mark at the shoulder seamline that indicates the end of the shoulder to the highest part of the underarm seamline. If the end of the shoulder is not marked on the pattern, find this point by measuring from the base of the neck along the shoulder seamline. Pin the dart closed.
2. Slash this line beginning at the shoulder cutting line *to, but not through*, the underarm seamline. Clip the underarm seam allowance at that point (Fig. 9).

To lengthen:

Place tissue paper under the pattern and spread the sleeve section by the amount you need. The clipped seam allowance will lap (Fig. 10).

To shorten:

Move the sleeve section in, lapping the amount you need. The clipped seam allowance will spread (Fig.11).

To complete either alteration:

1. Tape the pattern in place.
2. Redraw the shoulder cutting and seamlines to form smooth lines to the original shape. Use a middle point between the break in the shoulder cutting and seamlines as a guide to redraw the lines. You might need to make a slight adjustment in sewing the seamline (Fig.12).

Raglan Style Garments

Fitting problems with broad or narrow shoulders will look similar to kimono style garments. Follow these steps:

1. On the sleeve pattern, measure 3 inches (7.6 cm) from the base of the neck at the seamline along the shoulder seam. You measure in 2 inches (5.1 cm) from the end of the shoulder if the shoulder point is marked on the pattern (Fig. 13a). For patterns with a top shoulder dart, mark a point midway along the length of the dart. Draw a horizontal line across the pattern at this point (Fig. 13b).
2. Match notches to align the sleeve and bodice seamlines. Mark the point on the bodice seamline where the horizontal line on the sleeve crosses.
3. From this point, draw a vertical line on the bodice that is parallel to the lengthwise grainline and is the length of the armhole. Connect this vertical line to the underarm seamline with a horizontal line, clipping the underarm seam allowance at that point (Fig.14).

To lengthen:

1. Cut the sleeve apart along the horizontal line.
2. Place tissue paper under the sleeve and spread the pattern by the amount you need. Keep the cut edges parallel (Fig.15).

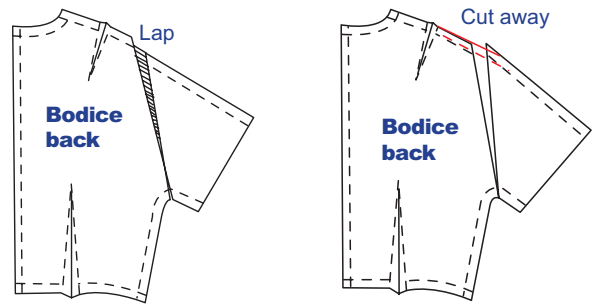


Figure 11.

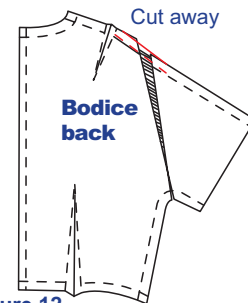


Figure 12.

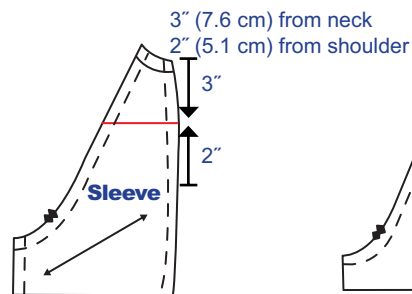


Figure 13a.

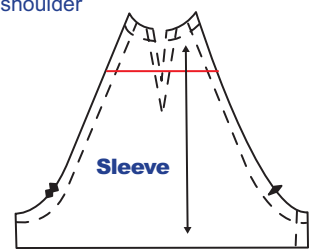


Figure 13b.

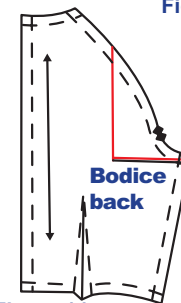


Figure 14.

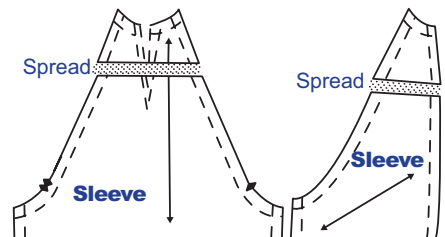


Figure 15.

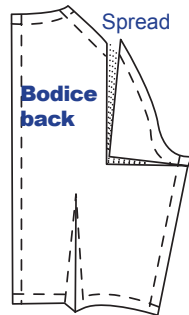


Figure 16.

- Place tissue paper under the bodice. Move the arm-hole section out at the seamline by the amount you need. The clipped underarm seam allowance will lap (Fig. 16).

To shorten:

- Fold the sleeve along the horizontal line, forming a tuck to decrease the amount you need (Fig.17).
- On the bodice, move the underarm section in, lapping the amount you need at the seamline. The clipped underarm seam allowance will spread (Fig.18).

To complete either alteration:

Redraw the cutting and seamlines on the sleeve and bodice sections (Fig. 19).

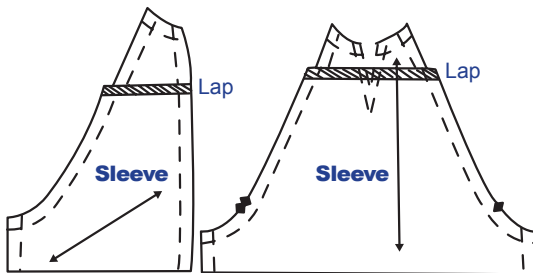


Figure 17.

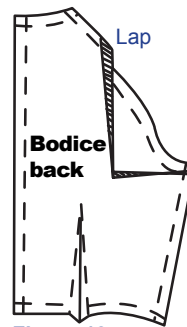


Figure 18.

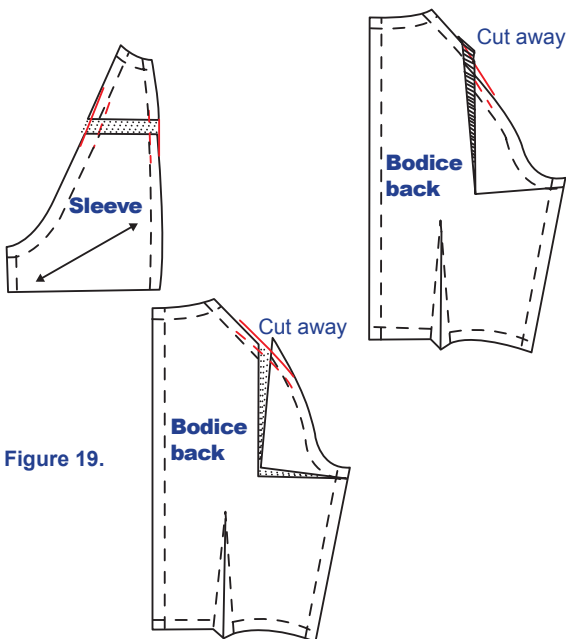
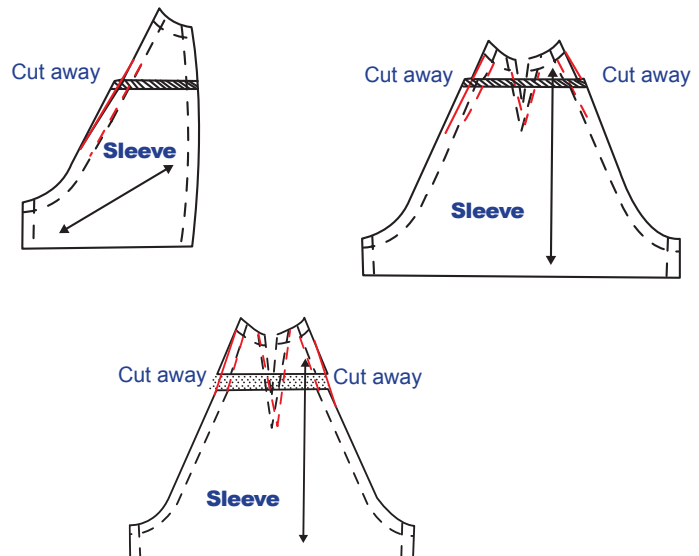


Figure 19.



Becky Saunders wrote the original manuscript for this publication.

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, Acts of Congress of May 8, 1914, as amended, and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. Zerle L. Carpenter, Director, Texas Cooperative Extension, The Texas A&M University System.