E-383
08-06

Pattern Alteration

Upper Arm Sleeve Width

AgriLIFE EXTENSION
Texas A&M System

Extension Family Development
and Resource Management Specialists

Before attempting this alteration, review the Extension publications E-372, *Principles of Pattern Alteration*, and E-373, *Personal Measurement Chart*, for basic instructions.

Sleeves that are too tight in the upper arm will pull and bind because of a lack of fabric. You can see how they form horizontal wrinkles or pulls in Figure 1. Fitted sleeves that are too large in the upper arm are unbecoming and may form excess vertical folds (Fig. 2).

The Personal Measurement Chart (line 10) shows how much to alter.

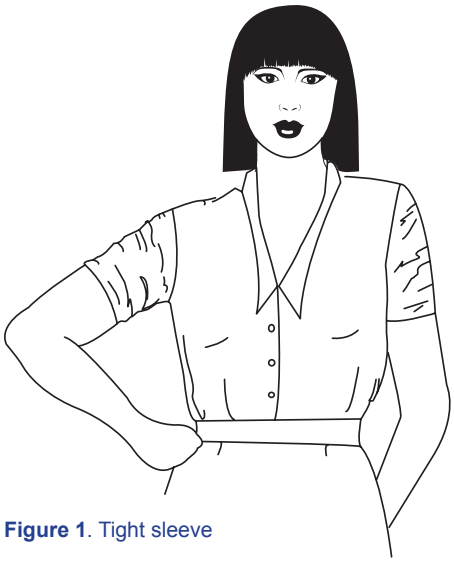

Figure 1. Tight sleeve

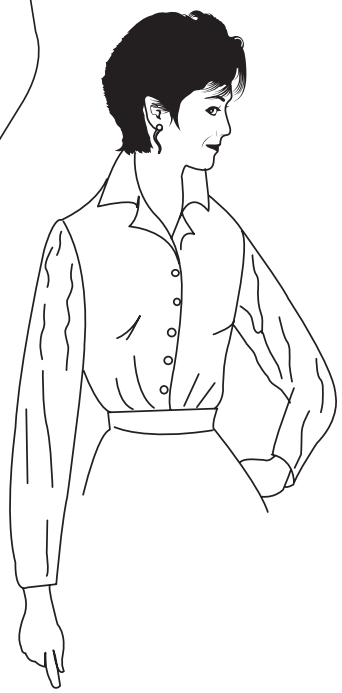

Figure 2. Loose sleeve

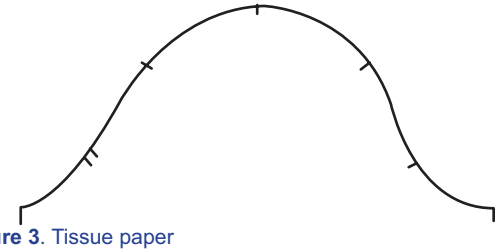

Figure 3. Tissue paper

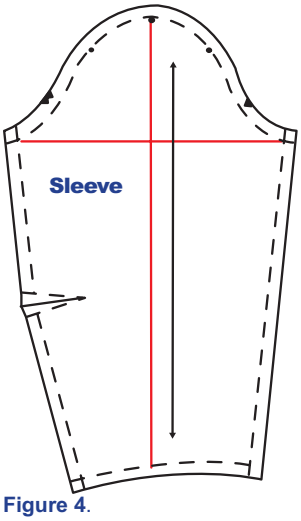

Figure 4.

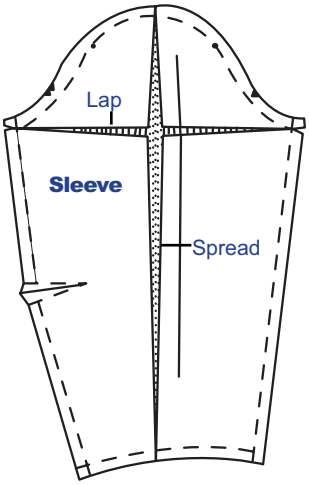

Figure 5.

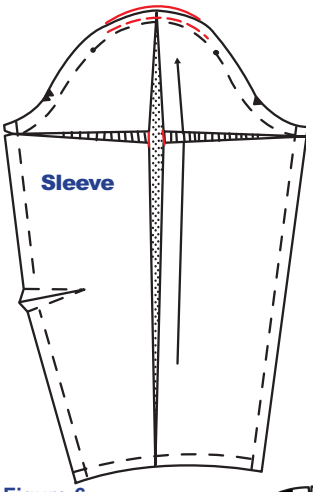

Figure 6.

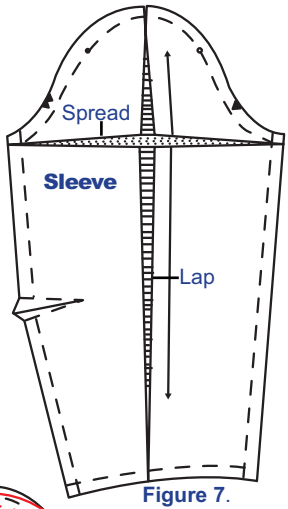

Figure 7.

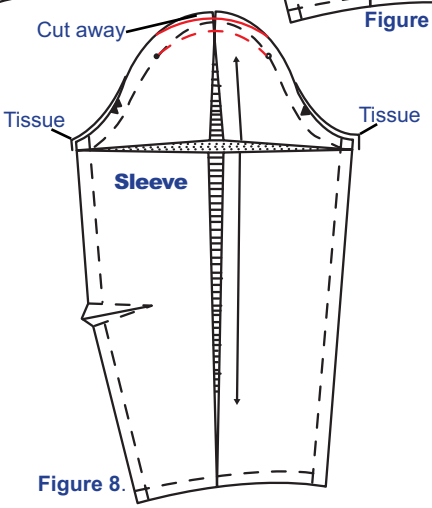

Figure 8.

Basic and raglan style garments

1. Trace the cutting line of the set-in sleeve cap on tissue paper, marking notches and large dots (Fig. 3).
2. Draw a vertical line in the center of a set-in or raglan sleeve from the seamline at the top of the cap to the bottom of the sleeve at the seam or hemline, parallel to the grainline. At the fullest part of the upper arm, draw a horizontal line at a right angle to the first line, connecting the side seams (Fig. 4).
3. Beginning where the lines cross, slash along lines *to, but not through*, the seamlines or to the hem fold line. For raglan styles with shoulder darts, slash through the center of the dart. Clip the seam or hem allowances at these points.

To increase:

1. Place tissue paper under the pattern and spread the amount you need along the vertical slash at the point where the horizontal slash crosses. The horizontal slash, clipped vertical seam and hem allowances will lap. Horizontally clipped seam allowances will spread. Shoulder darts in raglan styles may spread slightly (Fig. 5).
2. Since the set-in sleeve cap will be slightly lower, line up the pattern with the shape you traced in Step 1 on page one. Match the notches as closely as possible. Use the traced line for the sleeve cap cutting and seamlines only between the notches (Fig. 6).

To decrease:

1. Lap the amount you need along the vertical slash at the point where the horizontal slash crosses. The horizontal slash, clipped vertical seam and hem allowances will spread. Horizontally clipped seam allowances will lap. Shoulder darts in raglan styles may lap slightly (Fig. 7).
2. Since the set-in sleeve cap will be raised, realign the pattern with the shape you traced in Step 1 on page one. Match the notches as closely as possible. Use the traced line for the sleeve cap cutting and seamlines by tracing the original lines onto the pattern only between the notches. Cut away the excess pattern (Fig. 8).

To complete either alteration:

1. Tape the pattern in place.
2. Figure 9 guides you on redrawing the grainline by connecting both ends of the original arrow marked in Figure 4.

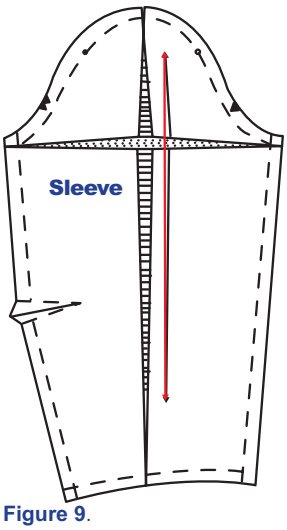

Figure 9.

Kimono style garments

Divide the amount of alteration you need equally between the front and back pattern pieces. *Alter the front and back pattern pieces*.

1. Measure from the neckline along the shoulder seamline to the largest part of the upper arm.
2. At this point, draw a line at a right angle to the seamline 2 inches (5.1 cm) into the pattern.
3. From the bottom of this line, draw a straight line across the pattern to the seamline at the bottom of the sleeve.
4. Cut the pattern apart from the shoulder cutting line *to, but not through*, the hem or seamline. Clip the seam or hem allowance at this point. For a large increase or decrease, especially in short sleeves, the pattern may also need to be adjusted at the hemline (Fig.10).

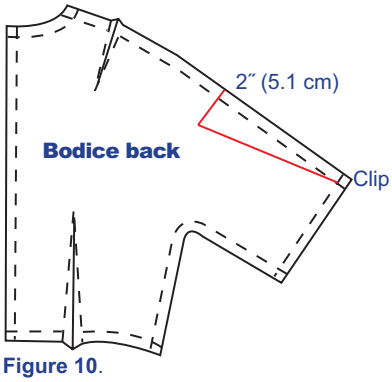

Figure 10.

To increase:

Place tissue under the pattern and move the top sleeve section up one-half the amount you need at the 2-inch (5.1 cm) point that you marked on the pattern in Figure 10. The seam or hem allowance will lap (Fig.11).

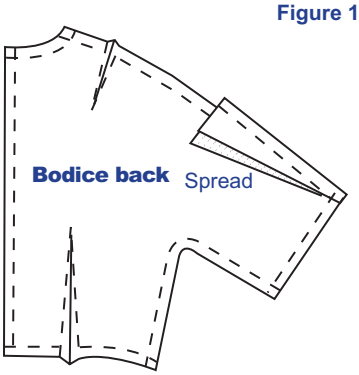

Figure 11.

To decrease:

Move the top sleeve section down one-half the amount you need, overlapping the pattern at the 2-inch (5.1 cm) point (Fig. 10). The seam or hem allowance will spread (Fig. 12).

To complete either alteration:

1. Tape the pattern in place.
2. Redraw the sleeve cutting and seamlines. Do not change the shoulder slope (Fig. 13).

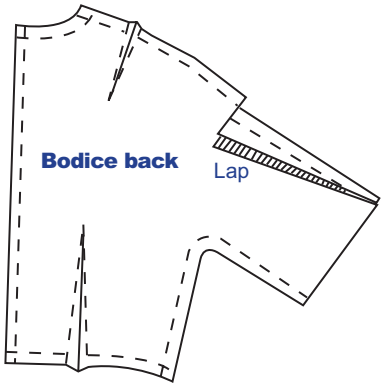

Figure 12.

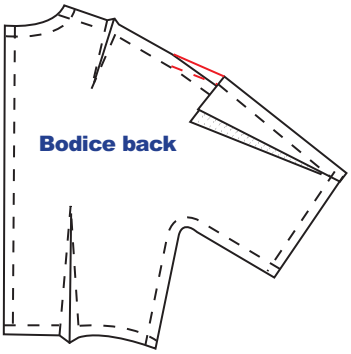

Figure 13a.

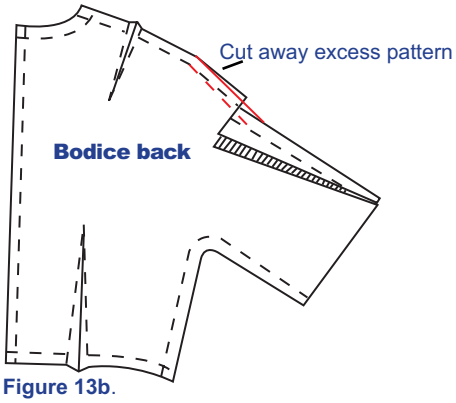

Figure 13b.

Becky Saunders wrote the original manuscript for this publication.

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