



Pattern
Alteration

Prominent Posture Problems

AgriLIFE EXTENSION

Texas A&M System

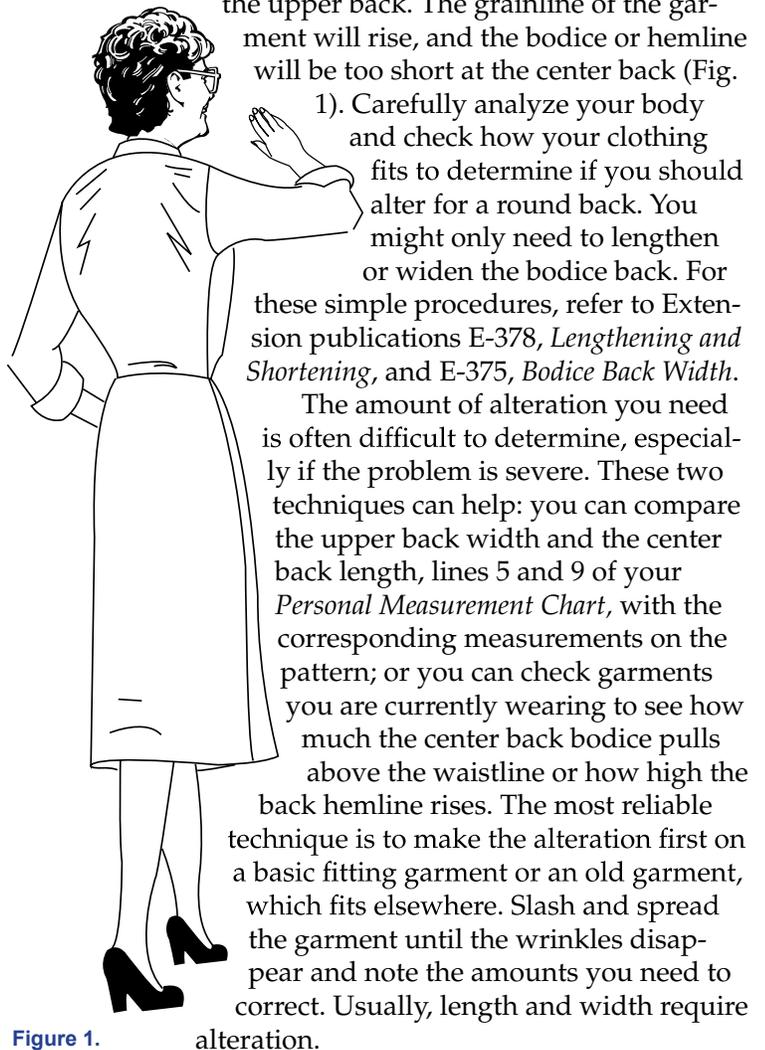
Extension Family Development
and Resource Management Specialists

Before attempting alterations for prominent posture problems, review Extension publications E-372, *Principles of Pattern Alteration*, and E-373, *Personal Measurement Chart*, for basic instructions.

Round Back

Round back is characterized by a rounded upper back and shoulder area. Another posture problem, hollow chest, often accompanies round back. (See E-376, *Hollow Chest*.)

A round back causes clothing to pull diagonally across the upper back. The grainline of the garment will rise, and the bodice or hemline will be too short at the center back (Fig. 1).



The amount of alteration you need is often difficult to determine, especially if the problem is severe. These two techniques can help: you can compare the upper back width and the center back length, lines 5 and 9 of your *Personal Measurement Chart*, with the corresponding measurements on the pattern; or you can check garments you are currently wearing to see how much the center back bodice pulls above the waistline or how high the back hemline rises. The most reliable technique is to make the alteration first on a basic fitting garment or an old garment, which fits elsewhere. Slash and spread the garment until the wrinkles disappear and note the amounts you need to correct. Usually, length and width require alteration.

Figure 1.

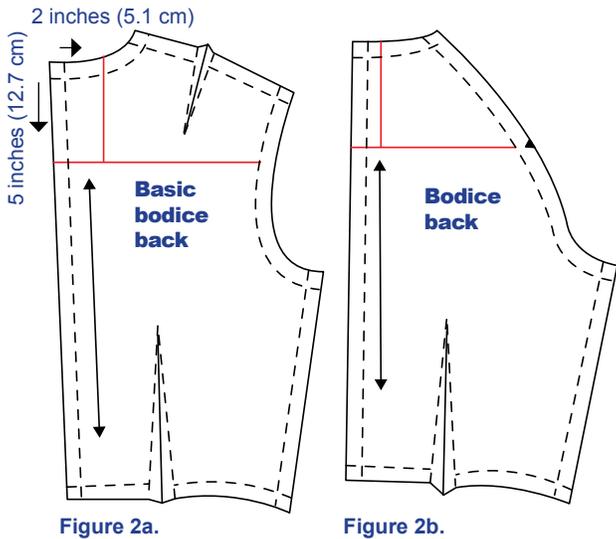


Figure 2a.

Figure 2b.

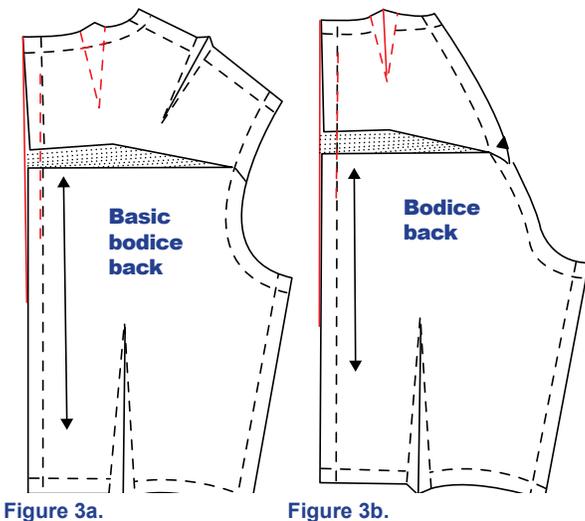


Figure 3a.

Figure 3b.

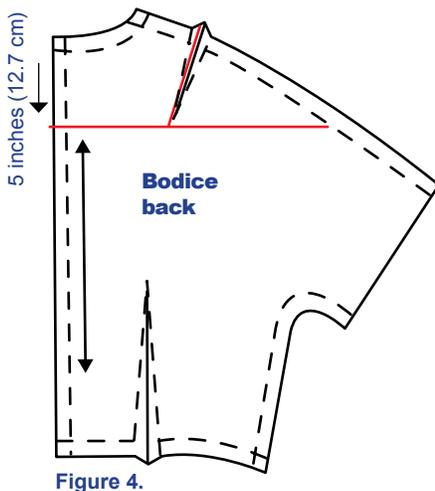


Figure 4.

Determine the location of the alteration by measuring the body from the base of the neck at the center back to the point of the greatest curve. Alter the pattern at the same point.

Basic bodice and bodice with raglan sleeve

1. Measure down the center back seamline from the neck seamline to the point where you need the alteration (generally approximately 5 inches, or 12.7 cm). Draw a horizontal line across the pattern at a right angle to the lengthwise grainline or the center back. (*Note:* When measuring, allow for a lowered neckline if the neckline is not at the base of the neck.)
2. Draw a vertical line from the middle of the neckline or approximately 2 inches (5.1 cm) from the center back to the horizontal line, angling slightly from the center back. This line will become a dart (Figs. 2a and 2b).
3. Slash along the horizontal line from the center back *to, but not through*, the armhole or raglan seamline. Clip the seam allowance at that point.
4. From the neckline cutting line, slash along the vertical line *to, but not through*, the horizontal line.
5. With tissue paper under the pattern, spread the horizontal slash by the amount you need at the center back, tapering toward the armhole or raglan seamline. Keep the center back as straight as possible. The vertical slash will spread to become a dart. Tape the pattern in place.
6. Draw in the neck dart. If the dart is too wide, divide it into two darts. For design purposes, the shoulder dart can be converted to ease. Redraw the center back seam and cutting lines or foldline. Redraw the grainline arrow if necessary (Figs. 3a and 3b).

Bodice with kimono sleeve

1. Draw a horizontal line across the upper back where you need the alteration or about 5 inches (12.7 cm) from the neck seamline. The line should be at a right angle to the center back. Then draw a line through the middle of the shoulder dart to the horizontal line (Fig. 4). If there is no shoulder dart, draw a vertical line from the shoulder approximately 2 inches (5.1 cm) from the neckline to the horizontal line.
2. Cut the horizontal line *to, but not through*, the shoulder seamline. Clip the seam allowance at that point.
3. Slash the dart *to, but not through*, the horizontal line.

4. With tissue paper under the pattern, spread the horizontal slash by the amount you need at the center back, tapering it toward the shoulder seamline. Keep the center back as straight as possible. The vertical slash will spread, widening the existing dart or forming a new shoulder dart. Tape the pattern in place.
5. Redraw the shoulder and center back seam and cutting lines or the center back foldline. Draw in or redraw dart lines (Fig. 5).

Bodice with yoke

1. Place the yoke and bodice back pattern pieces together at the seamlines and measure down from the neckline seamline approximately 5 inches (12.7 cm). At this point, draw a horizontal line across the pattern from the center back to the armhole at a right angle to the lengthwise grainline or center back (Fig. 6). If the yoke is longer than 5 inches, you can make the alteration on the yoke rather than the bodice back.

To do this, repeat the following 2-9 steps for each pattern piece (e.g., spread the yoke the needed length and make the corresponding width alteration on the bodice back):

2. Separate the pattern pieces.
3. Beginning at the center back, slash the horizontal line *to, but not through*, the armhole seamline. Clip the armhole seam allowance at that point.
4. With tissue paper under the bodice pattern, spread the length you need at the center back and taper it toward the armhole seamline. Tape the pattern in place.
5. Redraw the center back seam and cutting lines or foldline, keeping the lines straight and smooth. This adds a small amount of width to the bodice back (Fig. 7).
6. On the yoke pattern piece, draw a vertical line the length of the yoke approximately 1 inch (2.5 cm) from the center back.
7. Beginning at the bottom of the yoke, slash the line *to, but not through*, the neck seamline. Clip the neckline seam allowance at that point.
8. With tissue paper under the pattern, spread the slash the width you have added to the bodice back pattern, tapering it toward the neck seamline. Tape the pattern in place.
9. Redraw the yoke seam and cutting lines at the bottom of the pattern piece, keeping the original shape straight or curved (Fig. 7).

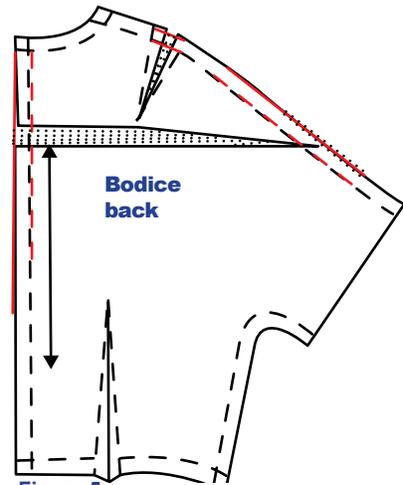


Figure 5.

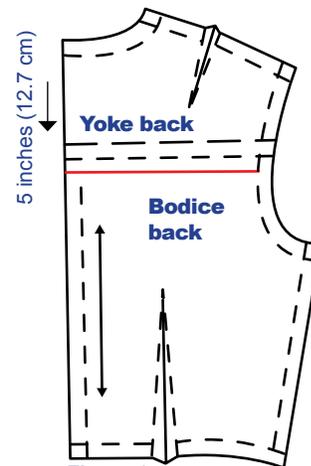


Figure 6.

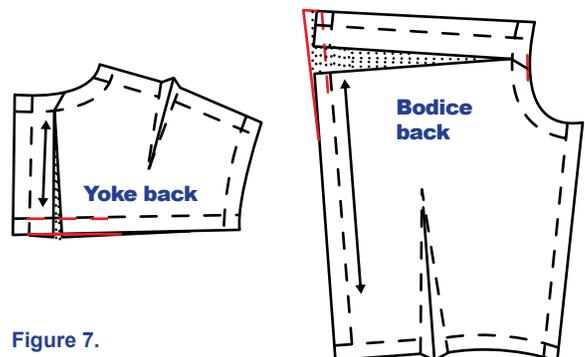


Figure 7.



Figure 8.

Upper Curvature of the Spine

This posture problem, which is also known as Dowager's Hump, often accompanies rounded back and shoulders. It is characterized by a hump at the base of the neck and causes clothing to wrinkle around the hump and across the upper back (Fig. 8).

Use the same methods described for the round back alteration to determine how much you need to alter for upper curvature of the spine. Allow for additional width across the upper back just below the base of the neck.

To alter, *first follow the directions for altering bodice patterns for round back*. Then complete the following steps:

1. Draw a vertical line through the center of the neckline dart and to the waistline seamline. On one-piece garments, continue the line horizontally to the center back. If the bodice has no neckline dart, draw a vertical line from the neckline (approximately 2 inches in from the center back) to the waistline (Figs. 9a, 9b and 9c).
2. Slash along the vertical line *to, but not through*, the waistline seamline. On one-piece garments, continue to slash horizontally to the center back seamline or foldline. Clip seam allowances at the end of the slash.
3. With tissue paper under the pattern, spread the slash vertically one-half the total width you need. Tape the pattern in place.
4. Redraw the neckline dart(s) and shorten them for proper fit. If the bodice has no neckline dart(s), draw in a dart that equals the width you have added at the neckline to maintain the original curve. If you need a lot of width for a severe hump, divide the total amount between two or more darts for better fit. Convert slight increases to ease.
5. Redraw the seam and cutting lines or foldlines. Add tissue paper to smooth lines (Figs. 10a, 10b, 10c, 10d and 10e).

2 inches (5.1 cm)

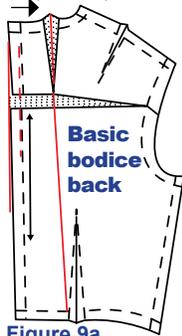


Figure 9a.

2 inches (5.1 cm)

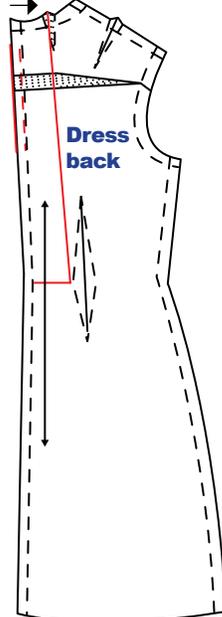


Figure 9b.

2 inches (5.1 cm)

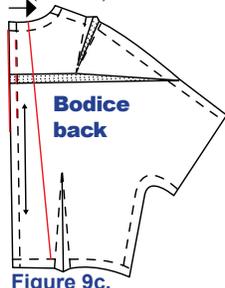


Figure 9c.

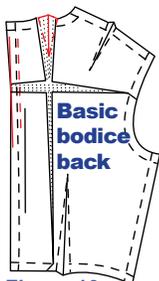


Figure 10a.

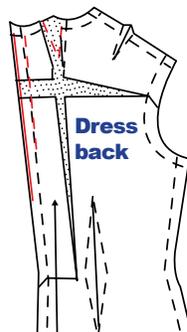


Figure 10b.

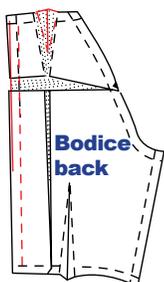


Figure 10c.

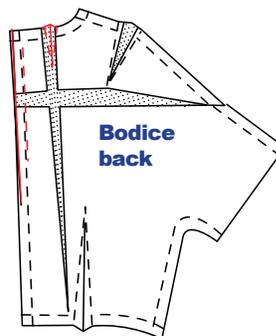


Figure 10d.

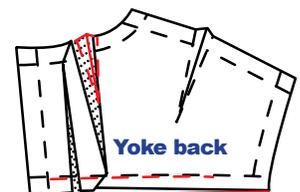


Figure 10e.

Beverly Rhoades wrote the original manuscript for this publication.

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