Let's Cut and Sew with the Grainline: Clothing Leaflet 2

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Smart Styling and a Professional Appearance in Clothes require correct use of the fabric grain by Designer, Cutter, and Fitter. There are no secret formulas or methods that will conceal a badly cut garment.

The grain of cloth tends to seek its true position. Garments cut or pulled off grain will wrinkle and hang badly in wearing.

Identify Grain in Materials. Mark it on the Pattern. Mark it on Basic Parts of the Garment for Fitting.

Lengthwise and crosswise threads are the grain of the fabric. Warp grain lines are the lengthwise threads, parallel to the selvage. Filling threads are the crosswise ones, at right angles to the warp or selvage.

Grain of Fabric is Important - Correct use of grain lines makes many phases of construction easier. The plainest or most elaborate fabrics show in the finished garment whether or not they have been cut on the exact grain. The finished garment will not fit well, hang correctly, look smart, or keep its shape unless cut and sewed on the correct grain.

Pocket “on grain”  Pocket “off grain”
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PREPARE YOUR FABRIC AND YOUR PATTERN

Fabric is woven with lengthwise and crosswise threads at right angles to each other, but it may be pulled out of shape in finishing processes at the factory.

Before the pattern is placed on the fabric, the fabric should be straightened so the lengthwise threads and selvages are parallel and at right angles to the crosswise threads. Straighten cut end of material by clipping selvages, then

Tear if it does not affect weave (A), or
Pull a thread or two so that the fabric may be cut on the exact crosswise thread (B).

If fabric thus prepared does not form right angles when placed flat or folded, short ends should be pulled (C).

If pulling does not straighten it fabric may be dampened and pressed so that grain will form right angles (D).

Fold fabric with right side in before placing pattern for cutting.
Use the layout charts that come with your pattern as a guide in placing pattern on fabric.

It is easier to get a pattern placed on the straight of the material if the grainline marking on pattern is the full length of the pattern. Use a pencil and yardstick to mark through the perforations and extend the line.

Place pattern on fabric and measure from grainline to selvage in several places. If all check the same number of inches the pattern is straight on the grain.
Pin pattern along grainline first, then along edges, placing pins at right angles to edge of pattern. The directions for cutting are shown on the last page.
MARK CONSTRUCTION LINES

Dressmaker's tracing paper, a tracing wheel and ruler help to mark accurately.

Place first sheet of tracing side of paper up next to fabric under area to be marked.

Place second sheet of tracing paper tracing side down under pattern area to be marked.

With a ruler and tracing wheel connect perforations indicating construction. Use a crosswise marking at end of darts. On some fabrics it helps in fitting to have crosswise and lengthwise grain marked on sleeves and on front and back pieces.

STAYLINE TO PREVENT STRETCHING AND TO HOLD GRAIN IN CORRECT POSITION

Staylining means stitching with matching thread near the seamline. Stayline the off grain edges of each piece of your garment to hold grain in correct position while garment is being put together.

Handle fabric gently to prevent stretching and pulling. Keep pieces folded as much as possible to prevent mussing and wrinkling.

The direction for staylining is determined by the grain of fabric. To determine direction of all staylines, run finger along cut edge to see if fabric is stretched or held in place. Staylines are stitched in the direction to keep grain from stretching. Directions for stayline stitching are shown on next page.

(Information and illustrations adapted from Clothing Construction Methods developed by Edna Bryte Bishop - Courtesy J. C. Penny Co., Inc.)
CUT, STAYLINE, STITCH SEAMS AND PRESS--WITH THE GRAIN

Stayline as indicated by arrows, for control of grain.

Stitch seams in the right direction as indicated by arrows, to keep grain perfect. Pressing during construction should follow the direction of stitching.