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EC436 Using your Dress Form

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E. C.
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Using Your Dress Form

In addition to fitting new garments which you are making, your dress form should help you in the following ways:

- Refitting ready-mades
- Remodeling garments
- Adjusting collars, belts, pockets, or trimmings
- Marking hems
- Lining or relining jackets and coats
- Making and fitting slips

Check Size and Shape of Form

It may be helpful to try a good fitting dress on the form and observe how it fits in comparison with the way it fits you. A dress which opens down the front will be easiest to use.

Attach shoulder pads as usually worn to dress form.

Making the Form More Usable

After your dress form has been shellacked and mounted it may be made more usable by adding a covering and marking the fitting lines.

A knitted shirt, knitted fabric, or a muslin waist snugly fitted may be used as covering. A drawstring or two rows of gathering stitches in the lower edge of the knitted material will help to fit it to the form. Fasten the covering securely so it will not slip out of place. Such a covering helps to keep the garment which is being fitted in place, and also forms a foundation to which a pattern or garment may be pinned.

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics
University of Nebraska College of Agriculture, and the United States
Department of Agriculture cooperating, W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln.

Marking the Seam or Fitting Lines

Use narrow black tape, crayon, or pencil to mark on the form the lines shown here. These guides for taking measurements may help you in locating and placing the lines.

NECK - Locate neck line by placing tape around the base of the neck where the neck joins the shoulder. Allow tape to pass just above the large bone at base of neck and across the center of the pit at the front of neck.

BUST - Pass tape around the figure over fullest part of bust in front and raising it to the tip of shoulder blades in the back. The line across the back is parallel to the floor.

HIP - Locate the largest part of the hips, which is usually 7 to 10 inches below the waist. Line should be parallel to the floor.

ARMHOLE - Place tape over top of arm at the high point of shoulder. Tape should be parallel to center front and back as far down as the chest line, then curve gradually to the underarm.

SHOULDER - This line extends from the highest point of the shoulder at the base of the neck to the highest point of the shoulder at armhole.

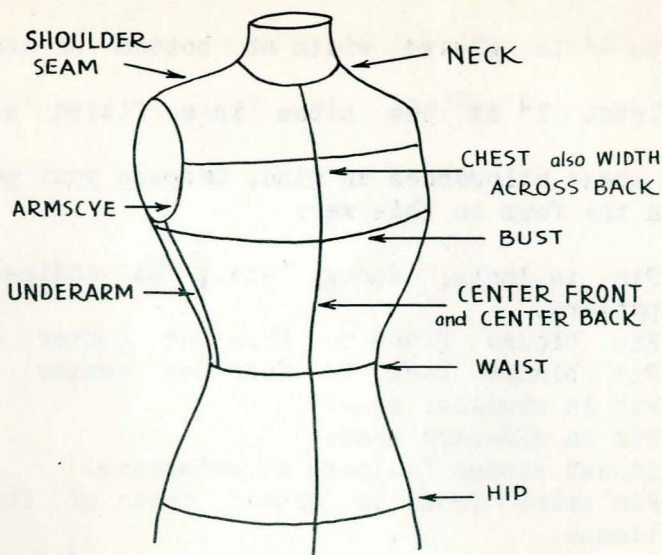
CENTER FRONT - Place tape directly in front from center neckline to hip line, bisecting the figure.

CENTER BACK - Place tape from center of neck line to hip line, bisecting the figure.

UNDERARM - Drop a line from the lower part of the armhole to the waist. This line should appear to be a continuation of the shoulder line.

CHEST - 6" down from shoulder seam at neck line, place a straight line from armhole to armhole.

WIDTH ACROSS BACK AT SHOULDER BLADES - 7" down from shoulder seam at neckline. Measure from armhole to armhole.



Check Your Pattern on the Dress Form

As you prepare to check your pattern on the dress form, keep in mind that all patterns allow a certain amount for ease in addition to the seam allowance. The amount of fullness needed for ease depends on the kind of material and style of the dress -- thin, sheer fabrics need more fullness than heavy tailored ones; soft, dressy styles more than straight, slim styles. Some muscular figures require a greater allowance of ease for comfort than do others. Most patterns allow the following amount of ease:

4" through the bust -- 2" or more across the front and about 2" in the back.

About $\frac{1}{2}$ " in the chest width.

From $\frac{1}{2}$ " to 1" in back width across shoulder blades.

At least $\frac{1}{2}$ " in all blouse length measurements.

About 2" at hips for a plain skirt -- 1" in front, 1" in back. Some fullness can be fitted out later if there is too much.

$\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " in sleeve cap length to allow for shoulder pads, if pattern calls for them.

3" to 4" in sleeve width at bottom of armhole.

At least 1" at the elbow in a fitted sleeve.

With these allowances in mind, prepare your pattern and try on the form in this way:

1. Pin in darts, tucks, etc., as indicated on pattern.
2. Pin blouse front to form at center front.
3. Pin blouse back to form at center back.
4. Pin in shoulder seam.
5. Pin in underarm seam.
6. Adjust blouse fullness at waistline.
7. Pin skirt front to center front of form and blouse.
8. Pin skirt back to center back of form and blouse.
9. Pin skirt side seam.
10. Check the fit and make any needed alterations in the pattern before cutting out the dress.

Make a Test Dress to Try Out the Form

A dress form is rigid and does not allow for body movements. For this reason you may have difficulty in getting a dress over the shoulders, especially if you have broad shoulders, or if sleeve caps have been built into the form. For fitting on a form it is better to leave the blouse open at one or both underarm seams. Be careful not to fit too snugly on the form or the dress will be uncomfortable.