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PATTERNS

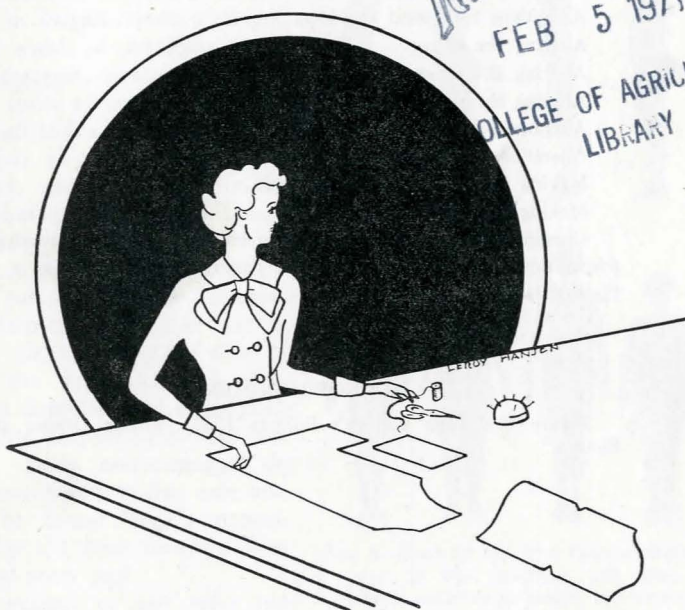
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Figure 1 is from Farmer's Bulletin 1530, "Fitting Dresses and Blouses."

Patterns and Their Use

Helen Rocke

IT IS the purpose of this circular to give information helpful for the home sewer in pattern selection, comparing measurements, and in the altering and use of patterns.

The careful choice of patterns will prevent some difficulties in fitting, and there are many good commercial patterns from which to choose. One make of pattern cannot, in general, be said to be superior to another in fit, but because different pattern manufacturers have used different foundation lines, some makes will fit some types of figures better than others.

Individual shapes and proportions of women vary to such an extent that not every woman who has a size 38 bust measure can use the same pattern without alteration and probable difficulties in fitting (Fig. 1). Common variations in figures having the same bust measure are differences in height, neck measure, slant and width of shoulders, waist and hip measure, position of waist line, and curve of armscye.

It is advisable to examine different kinds of patterns to find the one which conforms best to the individual shape or figure and most truly reflects present styles and fashions. Then it is necessary to know how the pattern company increases its measurements from one size to the next. In increasing the sizes of patterns the manufacturers often widen the shoulders and other parts in the same proportion as the bust measure. Body measurements do not necessarily follow this rule and it may be found that a pattern selected by the bust measure does not fit any other part.

The woman or girl who has had little experience in sewing cannot afford to cut without a good pattern as a guide. A simple pattern with good lines will give much satisfaction and is a desirable choice for a cotton wash dress. Other essentials are a design which will cut economically and will be comfortable and allow freedom for activity. The ease with which a garment

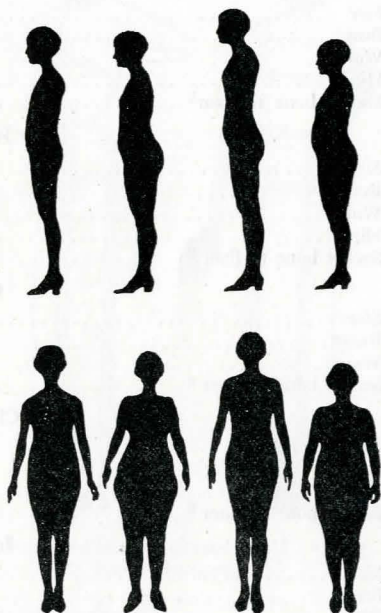


FIG. 1.—Each of the four figures requires size 38 bust measure, but there is much variation in height, hip measure, slant and width of shoulders, and position of the waist line.

made in a certain style may be ironed, with its original effect retained, is an important consideration in a design chosen for a wash dress. It is often true that a popular feature of a design is attractive until the dress has been laundered; then it is discovered that it is almost impossible to iron it and gain the original effect.

PATTERN SIZES

The United States Bureau of Standards has issued a set of proper measurements which are recommended as the basis upon which makers produce their patterns. These measurements follow:

Ladies									
Bust	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50
Waist	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44
Hip ¹	37	39	41	43	45	47½	50	53	56
Misses									
Size					14	16	18	20	
Bust					32	34	36	38	
Waist					27	28	30	32	
Hip ¹					35	37	39	41	
Socket bone to floor ²					52	54	
Juniors									
Size					13	15	17		
Bust					31	33	35		
Waist					26	27½	29		
Hip ¹					34	36	38		
Socket bone to floor ²					50	53	..		
Girls									
Size		6	8	10	12	14			
Breast		24	26	28	30	32			
Waist		24	25	26	26½	27			
Socket bone to floor ²		36	40	44	48	52			
Children									
Size		2	3	4	5	6			
Breast		21	22	23	23½	24			
Waist		22	22	23	23½	24			
Socket bone to floor ²		28	30	32	34	36			
Infants									
Size		½	1	2	3				
Breast		19	20	21	22				
Waist		19	20	21	22				
Socket bone to floor ²		21	24	28	30				
Boys									
Size		6	8	10	12	14	16		
Breast		24	26	28	30	32	34		
Neck		11	11½	12	12½	13½	14		
Waist		24	25	26	28	28	30		
Socket bone to floor ²		36	40	44	48	52	54		

¹ Hip measurement taken 7 inches below natural waist line.

² Socket bone is the uppermost thoracic vertebra at back of neck. The individual is measured while wearing shoes.

Little Boys

Size	1	2	3	4	5	6
Breast	20	21	22	23	23½	24
Waist	20	21	22	23	23½	24
Socket bone to floor ²	24	28	30	32	34	36

DETERMINING THE SIZE OF PATTERN TO BUY

The accurate way to determine the size of pattern to buy is to have one's measurements carefully taken, over good foundation garments and the type of underwear one expects to wear. The person being measured should stand erect with feet together, head up, and looking straight ahead, and preferably before a mirror so that the tape line may be observed to keep it exactly horizontal. Most measurements except the bust are taken with the tape drawn closely, but not tightly strained. The bust measure is taken with one or two fingers held under the tape to hold it snug.

The diagram (Fig. 2) shows the location of body measurements and the following directions are given for taking each:

1. Bust—place tape measure over fullest part of the bust and slightly higher in the back.

2. Waist—determine natural waist line by curving the thumb and forefinger and letting them rest around the side of the body where they will rest naturally in the curve.

3. Hip—measure 7 inches below waist line or over largest part of hip and take measurement, being careful not to let the tape measure slip up or down.

4. Neck—take snugly at base of neck.

5. Shoulder length—measure at right shoulder from neck to arm hole.

6. Width of chest—measure across chest 4¼ inches below neck.

7. Width of back—measure across back 5 inches below neck.

8. Center front—taken from center front of natural waist line to floor or length desired.

9. Length over hips—right or left—taken from natural waist line to floor.

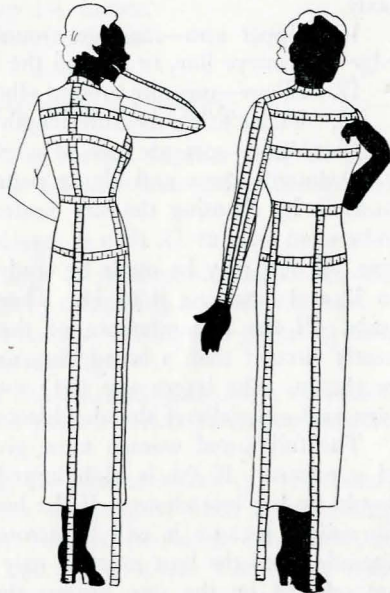


FIG. 2.—Positions of tape line for taking body measurements.

10. Full center back length—measure taken from the socket bone at back of neck to floor.

11. Center back—taken from socket bone at back of neck to natural waist line.

12. Front arm length—measure from highest point of shoulder to wrist.

13. Top arm length from shoulder to bend of elbow—this measurement is taken with arm extended at right angles and bent so that hand touches tip of ear.

14. Elbow to wrist—measure from elbow to wrist.

15. Armscye—measure from tip of shoulder around where arm joins body.

16. Upper arm—measure around upper arm on a level with lower edge of armscye line, or around the largest part of the upper arm.

17. Elbow—measure around elbow with arm bent.

18. Under arm—measure length from armpit to natural waist line.

19. Wrist—measure around wrist.

Ordinarily dress and blouse patterns are purchased according to bust measure by choosing the size nearest one's bust measure. If one is an in-between size, as 33, then it may be easier to use a 34 and decrease the size. A test may be made by studying the effect of tightening the tape to 32 and loosening it to 34. Then consider the general outline of the body. If the circumference of the body at the hip or bust is more nearly circular than a broad, flattened oval, the smaller size (32) should be chosen. The larger size (34) would be preferable for the broad, flat type and especially if the shoulders are wide.

The full-busted woman must give special consideration to the choice of a pattern. If she is high busted and measures 39 inches, a size 40 would be her best choice. If the bust is low, she may find size 38 more convenient because it will fit across chest, shoulders, and back without alteration and the bust measure may be easily increased. If skirt patterns are selected by the size nearest the hip measure, they may be easily altered to fit the waist if there is a slight difference in proportion.

A one-piece dress pattern may present a problem for the woman who is large in the hips in proportion to bust. It is probably better to buy the pattern by bust measure because the skirt pattern will be easier to alter unless the skirt design is complicated by the use of yoke, panels, or pleats.

Since one may vary in size from one season or one year to another, it may be well to check one's measurements each time a pattern is to be purchased.

A certain amount of ease needs to be provided in the measurement of the pattern as compared to body measurements. This amount may vary

each year with the current fashion, and because so many factors enter into the fitting problem it is well not to follow too closely definite measures given for amounts of ease. However, the following suggestions for minimum amounts of ease may be helpful:

1. Back shoulder seam eased on to front shoulder seam about one-half inch.
2. Ease through bust from 2 to 4 inches (making it possible to pinch up about an inch tuck on each side of blouse).
3. Ease across chest, $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch.
4. Ease across back $\frac{1}{2}$ inch.
5. Ease through hips (standing) 1 to 2 inches.
6. Ease through base of sleeve cap $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches.
7. Ease through elbow (arm not bent) 1 inch.
8. Ease through lower arm $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 inch.

INTERPRETATION OF THE PATTERN

Before using any pattern it is well to become familiar with all parts of the pattern. A logical method to follow when using commercial patterns is:

1. Read the directions on the envelope.
2. Become familiar with all markings as notches, crosses, circles, etc.
3. Identify each piece of the pattern by comparing with the diagram.
4. Select the pieces that are to be used in cutting the garment; then fold and replace the other pieces in the envelope.
5. Examine carefully the pieces to be used, noting the seam allowance, what perforations will help to place the pattern correctly, and the relation of one piece to another.
6. Test the pattern by comparing the measurements (a) with those taken from one's own body, (b) with those taken from a well-fitting garment, (c) with those from a pattern that has previously been fitted, or (d) by pinning the pattern together and trying it on. Probably a combination of these methods gives the best results. If the figure is slightly round shouldered, the shoulder of the back section of the pattern should be slightly longer (about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch) than the shoulder of the front section. If the pattern does not have this allowance, add this amount by laying a tiny lengthwise dart in the material through the center of the back shoulder before cutting. If necessary a similar amount may be added at the center back of the neck. This fullness gives needed room across the shoulder blades.
7. Alter the pattern (directions for altering are given in the next section).
8. Study the chart for placing the pattern on material.

ADAPTING THE PATTERN TO THE INDIVIDUAL

General Rules for Increasing or Decreasing Size

After the pattern has been tested it will be necessary to make any needed alterations before beginning to place the pattern on the material. The general rules for altering the length of patterns are as follows. Draw a straight line across the pattern at the place where it is to be lengthened. Slash the pattern and separate the desired amount:

To lengthen waist, slash between bust and waistline.

To lengthen skirt, slash between hips and hem.

To lengthen sleeve, slash between elbow and top of sleeve and between elbow and wrist.

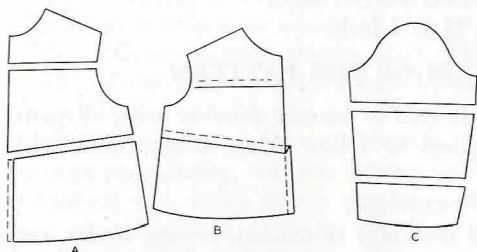


FIG. 3—General method of altering the length of a pattern: (A) To lengthen—slash and separate the pattern the desired amount. (B) To shorten, lay a tuck or fold to take up extra length. (C) Altering a sleeve pattern.

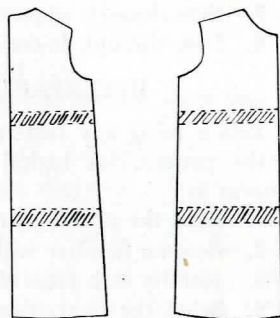


FIG. 4—Method of altering the length of a one-piece dress pattern.

The general method to decrease the size of the pattern (either width or length) is to pin a pleat or tuck half as wide as the amount of decrease at the points mentioned above (Figs. 3 and 4).

Whenever a pattern is slashed and separated or decreased in size by folding in a tuck, a slight jog in the seam line is formed. This will need to be corrected before any cutting of the material is done. Such a jog is more evident on curved or very diagonal lines; thus when crossing the armscye line it will be easier to keep the alteration crossing where the armscye is straight rather than deeply curved.

If the individual figure varies to any great extent from the average figure, it may be advisable to make a foundation pattern of muslin or other inexpensive material rather than to alter the paper pattern. It is easier to pin extra material to the edge of a cloth pattern or to slash and insert extra pieces of material if needed. The foundation pattern after being fitted and altered may be ripped apart and used to cut a new paper pattern.

Increasing Bust Measure Without Increasing Width of Shoulder

If only a small amount is needed, make a slash in the pattern in line with the center of the shoulder, beginning at the lower edge of the pattern, and cut to within $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of the shoulder line. Then spread the pattern to give the additional width needed (Fig. 5A). This alteration may require a slight change in the shoulder line as indicated by the dotted line.

If the bust is quite full, extra length will be needed also, and this is provided by making a slash in the pattern at the fullest part of the bust, straight across from the center of the front to the first slash, and then diagonally to within $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of the armseye. The pattern may then be spread to give the additional length needed (Fig. 5B).

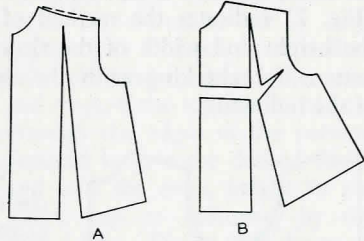


FIG. 5.—Increasing the bust measure without changing the shoulder.

Alterations for Round Shoulders

If extra length is needed all the way across the back, slash straight across the back section of the pattern from the middle of the armseye and separate the pattern to give the needed length. The armseye line is corrected as indicated, and it is usually advisable to add some extra length at the neck line also (Fig. 6B).

If more length is needed only in the center back, two methods may be used. On a line with the center of the armseye, slash across the back to within $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of the armseye. Spread the pattern to give the necessary length and correct the center back line from the slash to the bottom of the pattern as indicated in Figure 6A. The other method is shown in Figure 6C. Make a slash in line with the center of the shoulder beginning at the lower edge of the pattern and cutting to within $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of the shoulder. Make another slash at the fullest part of the back straight across from the center of the back to the first slash and then diagonally to within $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of the armseye. Spread the pattern to give the additional length and width across the shoulders.

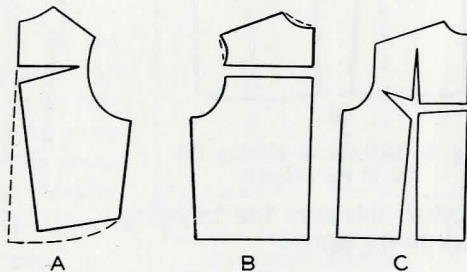


FIG. 6.—Three methods of altering a pattern for round shoulders.

Altering the Sleeve

Many difficulties in fitting sleeves arise if the sleeve cap is not long and wide enough for the individual arm. The required height of the cap is determined by fastening the tape line horizontally around the arm just under the armpit and then measuring from this line to the highest point on the armseye. This is ordinarily about $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The illustration (Fig. 7) indicates the method of measuring the height and width of the sleeve cap on a pattern for checking with the measurement of the individual.

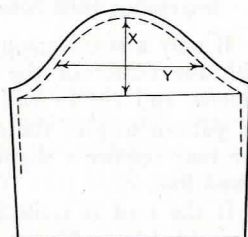


FIG. 7—Measuring a sleeve pattern for height and width of cap; x = height of cap; y = width of cap.

Altering the Size of the Armseye

When the height of the sleeve cap is changed the armseye needs to be altered accordingly. Figure 8 illustrates two methods which may be used. The dotted line in Figure 8A indicates how the armseye may be deepened. Figure 8B illustrates how the armseye may be deepened by slashing the pattern straight across from the center of the armseye, or it may be short-

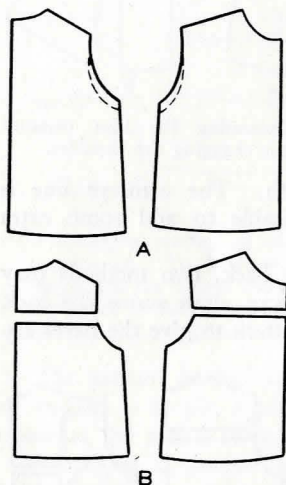


FIG. 8—Methods of altering the size of the armseye.

ened on this same line by laying a tuck in the pattern.

Altering the Sleeve Cap

Figure 9A shows a method of increasing the height and width of a sleeve cap. The dotted lines indicate changes which will be necessary in the seam lines. The dark line through the center of the pattern shows the change in size. The

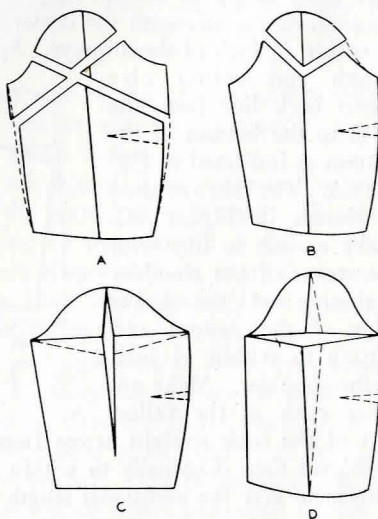


FIG. 9—Altering the height and width of the sleeve cap.

cap may be made narrower and shorter by laying folds on the same lines where the pattern is slashed. Figure 9B indicates a method of increasing the height of the cap. Figures 9C and 9D each show alterations which accomplish two results and neither should be used unless both results are desired. Figure 9C is a method used when it is necessary to make the sleeve cap shorter and wider. Figure 9D increases the height and decreases the width of the cap.

Alterations for Larger Arms

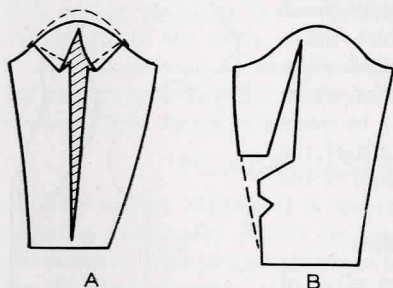


FIG. 10—Alterations for larger arms.

Figure 10A indicates how to make an alteration for a large upper arm. The pattern is slashed from the center toward the wrist and toward the top but is not cut through the edges of the pattern. Separate to give the desired width and add the extra height to the sleeve cap as indicated by the dotted line. Figure 10B shows an alteration for an arm which is large at the elbow.

Alteration for Larger Hips and Narrow Shoulders

Slash the pattern from the lower edge to within an inch or two of the armhole and spread the necessary amount at the hip.

If the pattern is too wide at the shoulder the width may be decreased by making a dart in the pattern about two inches long and by taking up the extra width. Make the dart as short as possible so that the width below the shoulder does not become narrower (Fig. 11).

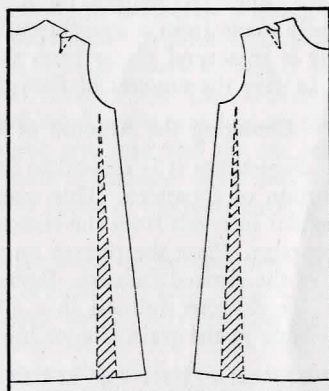


FIG. 11.—Alteration for larger hips and narrow shoulders.

Making and Altering Collar Patterns

For a flat collar, use the pattern of a blouse or dress which fits well. Pin the front and back of the pattern together along the seam line of the shoulder and lay the pattern flat on a piece of paper. Trace the neck line of the collar, following the neck line of the dress (Fig. 12). Draw or shape the outer edge of the collar as desired. Mark the back edge of the collar "center back" so that it cannot be confused with the front. This kind of collar has a curved neck line and will lie perfectly flat.

A well fitting pattern for a flat collar may be altered to make a collar which rolls slightly. This is accomplished by folding narrow darts about one-eighth inch wide at the outer edge of the collar, running to nothing at the inner edge. The darts are placed at the points where one wishes the collar to roll. It may be at the back and sides or all around. The neck line of this collar will also be curved but not so much as that of a flat collar.

A pattern for a standing collar which fits snugly to the neck may be made from a straight piece of paper. Pin the paper to the neck line of the dress and shape it to the neck with small darts. This will make a pattern which has a curved inner edge as well as a curved outer edge.

A pattern for a narrow standing collar which stands slightly away from the neck may be made from a straight piece of paper the length of the neck line plus the width of the seams and of the lap for fastening.

Making and Altering Cuff Patterns

A straight cuff is usually a straight piece of material while a flare cuff usually has a curved wrist line. A pattern for a flare cuff may be easily made from a straight cuff pattern by slashing it in several places from the top toward the wrist line and spreading it to give the amount of flare desired.

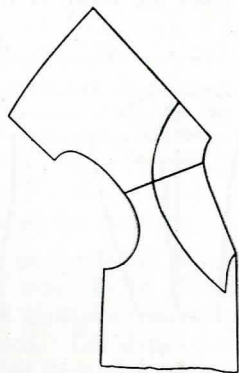


FIG. 12.—Cutting a pattern for a flat collar.

Changing the Amount of Fullness in Circular Parts of a Pattern

Sometimes it is desired to increase the amount of fullness in a circular portion of a pattern. This may be done by slashing the pattern at fairly regular intervals from the bottom to within about one-eighth inch from the top edge. Place the pattern on a large piece of paper and spread slashes to give the desired fullness. Fasten in place and cut the new pattern.

To decrease fullness in a circular pattern, pin out darts running from nothing at the waist line or hip line to the desired depth at the hem.

PREPARATION OF MATERIAL BEFORE PLACING PATTERN

1. If there is any doubt about the amount of shrinkage in a wash material it may be well to test it before cutting. This is done by taking a small piece preferably about 2 inches by 2 inches, placing it on a piece of paper, carefully measuring and marking the size, and noting the cross-wise and lengthwise threads of the material. Then wash and press this sample as one would the garment and compare with the original measurements and outline to determine if there is noticeable shrinkage in either direction. If so, it is more satisfactory to shrink the material than to try to allow for shrinkage in the cutting and fitting.

2. It is best to cut a tight selvage from wash material.
3. Press out prominent wrinkles.
4. Straighten ends of material by tearing, or by pulling a thread and trimming.
5. Check the crosswise grain by laying the material flat on a large table. If the two crosswise ends are at right angles to the selvage, the grain is in good condition. If, when placed on the table with lengthwise edge along the side of the table, the torn end is not even with the end of the table, the short corner should be pulled on the bias until it is made even. Pull on the true bias in the direction of the short corner, throughout the full length of the cloth.
6. Chalk may be used to indicate the direction of the nap, or for indicating the wrong side when there is difficulty in distinguishing between the right and wrong sides.

PLACING PATTERN ON MATERIAL

The correct placing of a pattern on material has much to do with securing satisfactory results in sewing. Unless a pattern is placed on the material with proper reference to the lengthwise and crosswise threads the finished garment will not be perfectly balanced, will twist to one side, and will not hold its shape when laundered.

It is important to examine any fabric carefully to determine whether it has a right and wrong side. If the sides are different as in printed material, piqué, some crepes, and many other fabrics, it is necessary to watch the placing of the pattern so that right and left sections will have the right side out when the garment is made. Sleeves need to be watched so that there will be a sleeve and a cuff for the right arm and also for the left. Waists or dresses with a surplice closing have a definite right and left side, as do garments with diagonal piecings or pleats or circular flares only on one side.

The pattern or design of the material also needs to be observed carefully. Plaids may have an up and down or a right and left. Stripes may also have a right and left. Floral designs often run in only one direction. Some materials have a flat nap which causes an up and down, which may be determined by brushing the hand over the surface of the cloth. The smooth way is the "down" of the material and all pieces of the pattern should be placed so that the lower ends of the pattern are placed the down way. Panné velvet and broadcloth are examples of such material. Velvet and some velveteens have a raised nap and on such material, pattern pieces are laid all in one direction and so the nap will run upward, because the color is richer, deeper, and darker.

Study the placing chart with the pattern which shows the correct layout for material of the width being used. If such a chart is not available the following suggestions will help: For any type or kind of garment several rules in cutting need to be carefully observed. If disregarded the garment may be difficult or impossible to fit.

1. First of all, keep the pattern straight with both the warp and woof threads of the material and have both free from wrinkles and creases. For example when cutting a sleeve the lengthwise pattern markings must be kept straight with the lengthwise threads of the material, and the under-arm seam points at the armhole must fall on the same crosswise threads of the fabric. If the material is folded lengthwise or crosswise, folds must be exactly parallel or at right angles with the selvages. The temptation is sometimes great to swing the pattern even a half inch off center in order not to piece a small corner. This is fatal to the appearance of the finished garment and cannot be remedied without recutting.

2. Do not cut any pieces until all have been placed in order to be sure there is enough material.

3. Place the largest pieces of the pattern first and fit smaller ones in later. Do not spend time pinning the pieces until you are sure of their best location.

4. Place wider ends of the largest pieces at the cut ends of the cloth.

5. Use a tape measure to make sure that the lengthwise grain lines on the pattern are the same distance from the selvege.

6. After all pieces are placed correctly, use pins or weights to hold them in place while cutting. Fine, sharp, clean pins make the work easier.

7. Pin first along the straight edge, or on the straight line which indicates the lengthwise grain. Then smooth the pattern crosswise and pin near the corners but not so close to the edge as to cause puckers in the pattern and cloth along the cutting edges. Pins do not pucker cloth so readily if placed at right angles to cutting edges.

8. Long, even strokes with sharp scissors and holding the left hand down on the pattern close to the cutting edge help to make cutting easy and more certain.

9. Perforations and notches are marked after all pieces are cut. Cutting notches outward and using tailor's chalk, tailor's tacks, basting thread, or pins are all helpful in marking. Notches which will not be used immediately as in armhole and sleeve may be marked by a line of tiny bastings about two inches long at right angles to the notches. Do not use back stitches in making these markings.

10. Mark the center front, center back of blouse, skirt, yokes, and the horizontal grain at the base of the sleeve cap with a line of uneven basting.

11. Cut as nearly as possible all bindings, facings, straps and belts before beginning to sew.

12. When using a pattern with many perforations and notches needed in construction, or when using a pattern with construction directions printed on it and not on a separate direction sheet, it is better not to remove the pattern from the cut cloth until one is ready to sew on that particular piece.