

# Introduction to Sewing Patterns

Many beginners can be daunted at the prospect of choosing and using a sewing pattern, but by starting with a simple pattern and garment and getting used to the terminology and skills used, you will find you can quickly move on to any commercial sewing pattern you like! Here are some tips to help you unravel the mysteries that lay behind your sewing pattern:

**Size:** the best way to choose the correct size of sewing pattern is to take all the measurements of whomever you are making the garment for, write them down, and take these notes with you to the fabric store. Most sewing patterns actually fit a range of sizes, and you simply cut out the size you need.

**Difficulty:** most sewing patterns will note the degree of difficulty. If you have not sewn much before or have not used sewing patterns much, be sure to get one that is rated as easy. Slowly work your way up to more difficult projects.

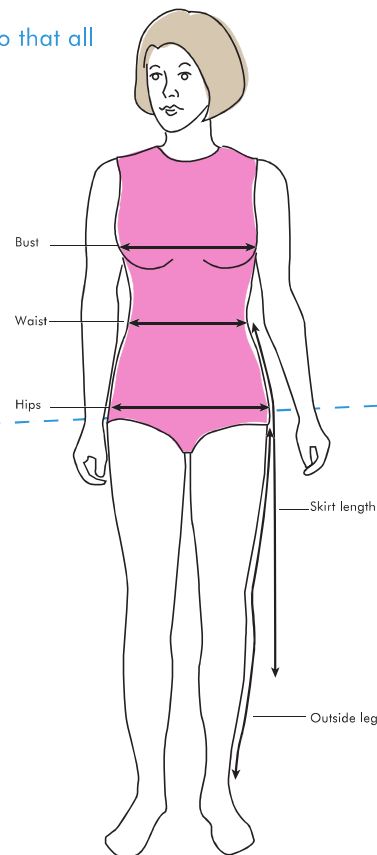
**Other 'ingredients':** once you have chosen a sewing pattern (and it can be a good idea to browse through pattern books to find one), read the back of the package to find out how much fabric you need and whether or not you need other notions like elastic and buttons. Many patterns are printed in the US and use yards. 1 yards= 0.9144 meters

**Different patterns:** not only can each sewing pattern be made to fit a variety of different sized people, but each sewing pattern also generally has a few different versions (i.e. one pattern could be for both shorts or pants). Read the instructions to find out which pieces of the pattern you need, and separate them from the rest.

**Iron:** take an iron on low heat and iron out your sewing pattern so that all of the pieces are nice and smooth.

**Pre-read:** just as with a recipe, it is a good idea to completely read through the pattern instruction sheet before you start working, rather than only reading it as you go. You can save yourself a lot of headaches by understanding the instructions before you start!

**Pattern instruction sheet:** this is a very important tool. It will tell you how to lay out your sewing pattern pieces and more. Look at the diagrams. Take note of special symbols — see over.



## My measurements:

Bust

Waist

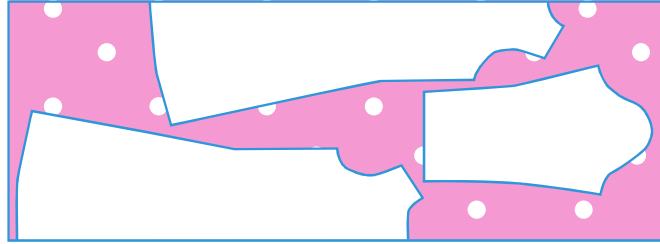
Hip

Outside Leg

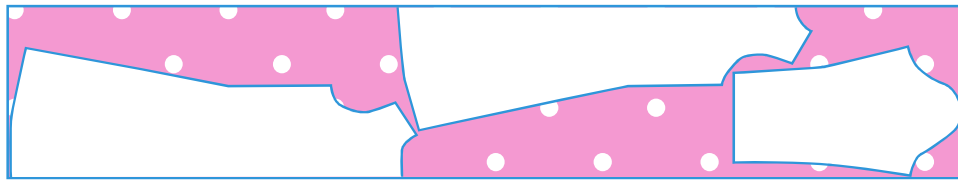
Skirt Length

## Planning a Pattern

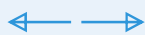
The instruction sheet that comes with your pattern has suggested layouts for pinning the pieces to the fabric. Make sure you understand the shadings on the layout that indicate which way to lay the right and wrong sides, linings, interfacings etc. Then lay out the fabric doubled with wrong sides together, unless instructed otherwise, and arrange the pieces on it as indicated. Make sure they all fit before you pin and cut.



**Layouts for different widths.** Above is a layout for 45in ( 115cm wide fabric). This layout is for the same pattern pieces laid out on a 36 in ( 90cm) wide fabric as shown below.

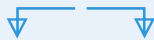


## Pattern Symbols



**Grain Line**

Place on straight grain of fabric parallel to selvage (remember, the selvage is the the finished edge of the fabric that runs down both sides.)



**Fold Line**

Place solid line on the fold of the fabric.



**Centre Line**

Centre marking of the front or back of garment.



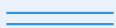
**Notches and Dots**

Locator marks for matching up points on fabric.



**Cutting Line**

Heavy solid line for cutting out the pattern and fabric.



**Adjustment Line**

Double lines for lengthening or shortening the garment.



**Dart Line**

Short, broken lines indicate edges to be joined by stitching.