

Layout, Cutting, and Marking

LAYOUT

After purchasing fabric, pattern, notions, and preparing the fabric (on grain and preshrunk/washed), you are ready to do the pattern layout. A **layout** is a plan for the placement of pattern pieces on the fabric. (Figure 1)

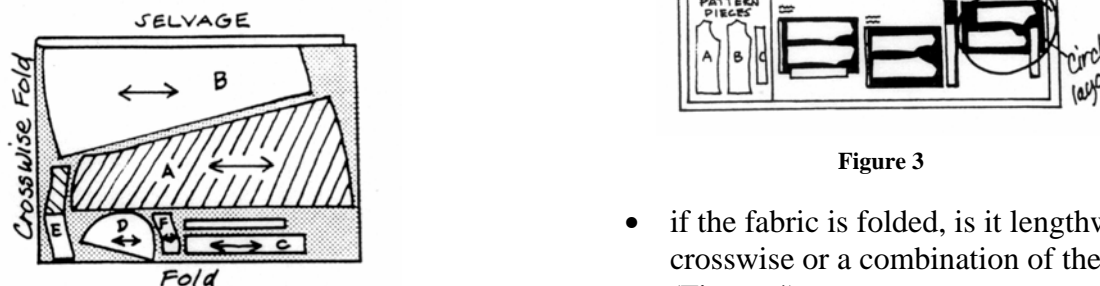


Figure 1

The pattern guide sheet will probably have several layout illustrations to study. These are based on pattern size, fabric width, and type of fabric (napped, one-way design, etc.). (Figure 2) It is often helpful to study and “play with” various layout situations. Sometimes a different layout will enable you to better utilize your fabric. However, do not depart from the suggested layout unless you fully understand layout design and realize that many fabrics need a specific (with nap) layout due to color shading or fabric design.

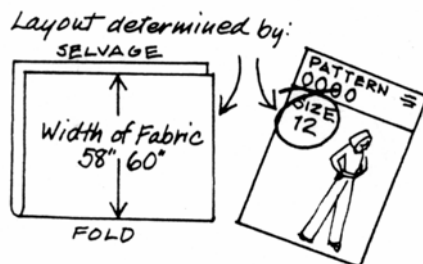


Figure 2

After deciding on a layout view for the pattern size and fabric width, circle it so it is easy to see. (Figure 3) Then, look carefully at the layout to find:

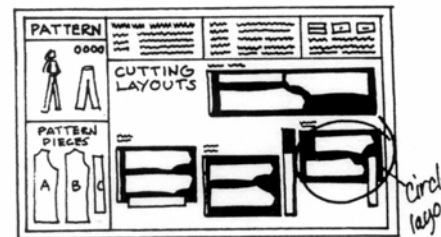


Figure 3

- if the fabric is folded, is it lengthwise or crosswise or a combination of the two. (Figure 4)

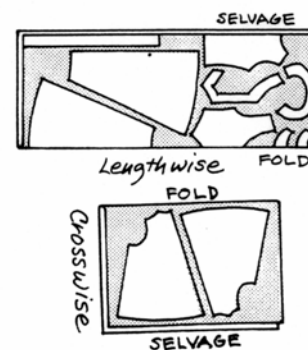


Figure 4

- which pattern pieces are to be used.
- which layout view is for special fabrics such as nap, one-way designs, or color shading (all pattern pieces **MUST** be turned in the same direction). (Figure 5)
- if the fabric is cut on single or double thickness. (Figure 5)

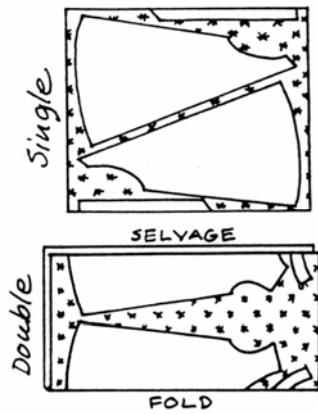


Figure 5

Preparing for Layout

1. When the selected layout view has you fold the fabric, fold it with right sides together. This will make marking easier. Place the fabric on a large cutting surface such as a cutting board, table, or cabinet counter-top.

After the pattern pieces you need have been selected, smooth the folds out by hand or lightly press. If there are pattern pieces for interfacing and/or lining, press them and put them aside.

Most garments are made with the lengthwise grain running vertically on the body. Place the pattern pieces on the fabric, positioning them on the grainline until all pattern pieces are on the fabric. Always start with the large pieces first. (Figure 6)

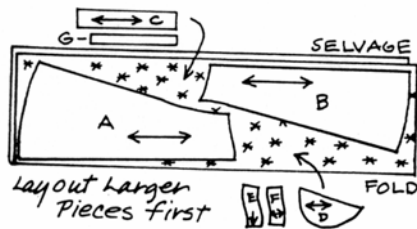


Figure 6

2. Patterns may be secured to the fabric by pinning or by weights. Actual "pattern weights" can be purchased, but some people use items they have available such as empty glasses, paper weights, or the

like. Some fabrics are easily marred and damaged by pins. These fabrics include Ultrasuede™, leather, and leather-like fabric.

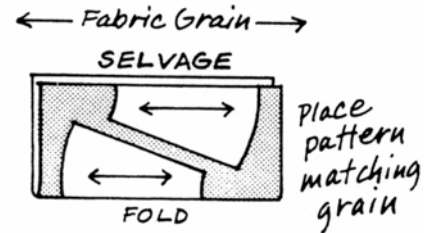


Figure 7

Place pattern pieces, matching grain by measuring and using pins to secure along the grainline arrow. (Figure 7) To do this correctly, position the pattern piece. Next, measure the distance from one end of the arrow to the selvage or to the folded edge. Move to the other end of the arrow and measure. The distance should be the same at both ends. Pin at each end of the arrows.

When pattern pieces are on the fold, be sure to place them *exactly* on the fold. (Figure 8) If a piece is to be cut on a single thickness, be sure to *flip the pattern over* to cut the second one. Otherwise, you can end up with two pieces for the same side. When cutting on double fabric, the pattern pieces may be laid right or wrong side up.

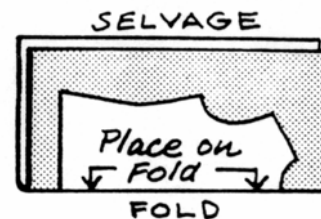


Figure 8

Some fabrics require a one-way layout. (Figure 9) This special layout is needed for napped or pile fabrics (such as corduroy, velvet, velveteen), one-way designs (such as flowers "growing" in only one direction), and some plaids. Knits and some woven fabrics exhibit a

color shading when the pattern direction is changed. When in doubt, it is advisable to use a one-way layout to avoid a potential problem. (Figure 9)

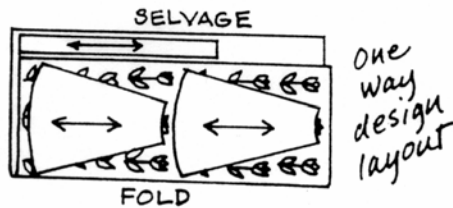


Figure 9

A one-way layout will direct you to lay all pattern pieces heading the same direction.

After all pattern pieces have been positioned grain perfect, complete the pinning process. Place the pins in the fabric with their points in toward the outer edge of the pattern. (Figure 9)

3. Pins should be perpendicular to the stitching lines and the cutting line. (Figure 10)

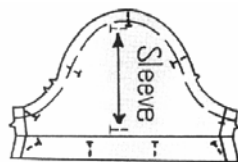


Figure 10

Place *only* enough pins to hold the pattern in place.

Putting too many pins in the pattern piece can actually cause you to cut the piece larger than is needed. However, be sure to pin at corners and along straight and curved edges.

Special Layouts

- All napped and knit fabrics require that pattern pieces be laid with their “tops” in the same direction (one-way or with nap layout).

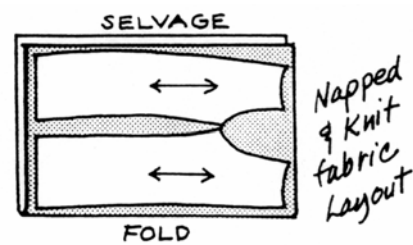


Figure 11

- Some fabrics are printed with one-way designs and need a “nap” layout.
- Check large designs since they may need matching, especially at center seams.
- Plaids and stripes require matching (at the seamline, not the cutting line) in both the lengthwise and crosswise directions, if possible.
- Uneven stripes and plaids require a one-way or “with nap” layout.

CUTTING

Standards

A well-cut item:

- should be accurate and even throughout.
- has notches cut out away from pattern.
- has smooth edges—no pinking shears.

Consider and/or follow these general suggestions when cutting fabric:

- Use sharp scissors, shears, or rotary cutter.
- When using scissors or shears make long smooth cuts. (Figure 12)

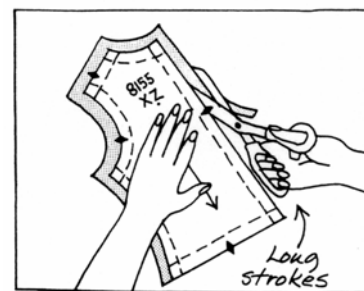


Figure 12

- If using a rotary cutter, use a ruler on all straight lines.
- *Never* use pinking or scalloping shears for cutting out a garment.
- Accurately cut on the pattern cutting line.
- Hold the pattern flat with one hand

as you cut with the other. (Figure 12) Do not lift fabric off the table or cutting surface while cutting.

- Cut notches out. (Figure 13)

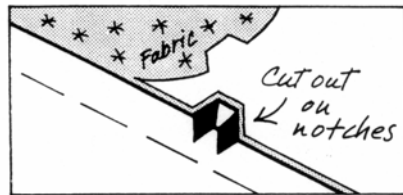


Figure 13

- Trace seam lines on fusible interfacing before cutting out. Cut just outside this marking, so there will be no need to trim the seam allowance later. (Figure 14)

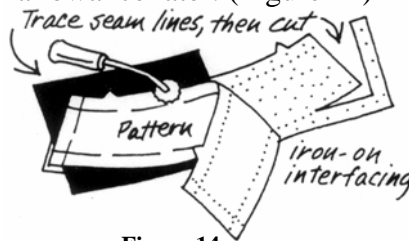


Figure 14

- Cut several garments at one time while you have the cutting board out.
- Cut everything needed for your project at one time – fabric, interfacing, and lining.
- Place a rubber band on your ruler or sewing gauge for exact measurement when measuring. (Figure 15)

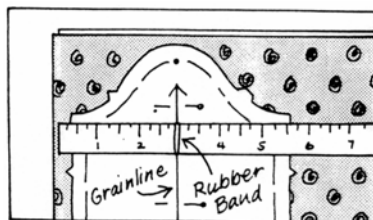


Figure 15

- You can cut more accurately when using shears with long blades making long cuts—or, use a rotary cutter with a ruler on straight lines.

MARKING

Standards

A well-marked item:

- will have markings appropriate for the fabric. Select a type and substance that will not damage the fabric and can be removed easily after construction.
- shows only on the wrong side of fabric, or does not damage or compromise the appearance on the right side after construction is complete .
- has distinctive, accurate marks to aid in the sewing process.

Accurate marking throughout garment construction is extremely important. This process begins with marking pattern symbols. *How and where* you mark the garment will aid you in putting the garment together.

Marking should be done as soon as the garment sections have been cut and before the pattern pieces have been removed. Pattern symbols to be marked include **darts, pleats, tucks, and matching circles**. Beginners should also mark seam lines. In some situations, marking a seamline is important to even the most experienced sewer.

There are several methods of marking fabric. The method selected depends on the fabric, your skill, and the construction situation. No one method is suitable for all fabrics. It is not uncommon to use more than one method in a single garment.

Always test the marking method on a fabric scrap before using it. Some methods can damage delicate fabrics. Other may encourage layers of fabric to shift so you will not have the same markings on all layers.

With some methods, you may “lose” the marking before you have the garment assembled. Consider the following as you select a marking method.

- *Tracing wheel and dressmaker's tracing paper* is suitable *only* for firmly woven fabrics. It is especially good for woven linings and interfacing. (Figure 16)

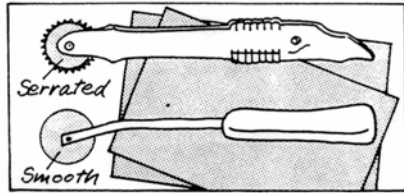


Figure 16

It is *not appropriate* for:

- Sheers or light colors as marking may show through to the right side.
 - Knits or stretch fabrics as marking will not be accurate because of the stretchiness of the fabric.
 - Woolens may be too thick for tracing to transfer well.
 - Silk/silk-like or napped fabrics because the “teeth” from the wheel may pick or mar the fabric. You may be able to use a smooth wheel. Always test before using.
- *Tailor's tacks* take a lot of time but are the best choice for delicate fabrics. Tailor's tacks are used to mark circles on high quality fabrics and fabrics that are loosely constructed. To make:
 1. Use a hand needle with double thread (unknotted).
 2. At each circle (dot on pattern) take a stitch through both fabric layers forming a 1-inch loop, leaving about 2 inches of thread at the beginning and at the end. (Figure 17)

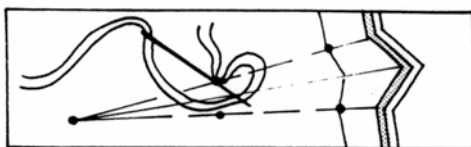


Figure 17

3. Gently pull off the pattern piece, being careful not to disturb loops.
4. Pull the two fabric layers apart.
5. Clip the thread between the two layers of

fabric, so each layer has a marking. (Figure 18)



Figure 18

Tailor's tacks are *NOT* a suitable marking method for fabrics that are damaged by pin holes.

- *Pin marking* is faster, but you must be very accurate and careful not to “lose” the pins. On some fabrics the pins will pull through or cause damage to the fabric.

Pins can be used for marking provided they are accurately inserted. This method is usually for the more accomplished sewer. However, it is not a suitable method for some fabrics. This method is *not appropriate* when:

- The fabric shows pin holes or markings.
- The fabric is delicate and easily damaged.
- The fabric is loosely woven or knitted. Pins can slip “through” it easily.
- The pattern requires lines to be marked.

Directions for how to pin mark:

1. Insert pins into all circle markings on the pattern. (Figure 19)

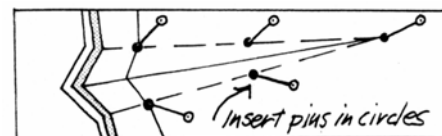


Figure 19

2. Turn garment piece over and insert another pin where the first pin is. This marks both garment pieces when pattern has been cut on double-thickness.
3. Unpin pattern pieces from the fabric and *gently* pull pin heads through the paper

pattern. (Figure 20)

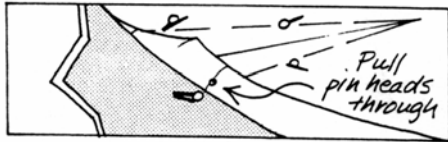


Figure 20

4. Pull garment sections apart. (Figure 21)
Insert pins into fabric while staystitching, or immediately fold to form dart, matching pins.



Figure 21

- *Tailor's Chalk, Dressmaker's Pencils, Soap Slivers*

Tailor's chalk, dressmaker's pencils, and soap slivers are primarily used for marking widths, such as hems and seams since they only mark one layer at a time. Each of these easily rubs off, so be careful. Some individuals combine one or more of these methods with pins, marking at the pin marking and then removing the pin. Soap slivers can be used in place of tailor's chalk or dressmaker's pencil.

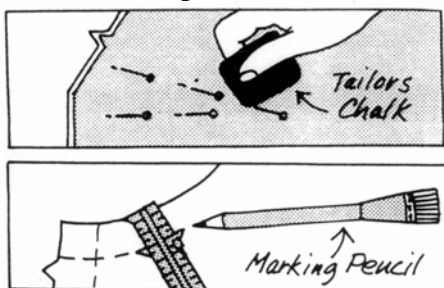


Figure 21

- *Marking pens* should be washable. Read the package directions *carefully* since some markings disappear after a few hours. Pens are used the same way as tailor's chalk, marking pencils and soap slivers. Fabric-marking pens may or may not wash out and are only as accurate as you are. Soap slivers are ideal, especially for washable fabrics.

SUMMARY

Careful attention to your pattern layout, cutting, and marking will ensure:

- a garment that is on grain,
- the "same" color or shading for all garment pieces, and
- a balanced design throughout.

General Rules for Success:

- *Always* test on a scrap of the fabric you plan to use.
- Select dressmaker's tracing paper as close to the color of your fabric as possible.
- Be sure to mark only on the wrong side of the fabric.
- Mark only the underlining material, when underlining a garment.

Remember: *No one method is suitable for all fabrics. Select the one most suited for your fabric, skill and construction situation.*

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