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Making Clothes Fit

Anita Andrews
Extension Specialist in Clothing

Well-fitted clothes have a distinctive look which can not be achieved by clothes that do not fit. Even the simplest garment, well fitted, is more attractive than a better one which does not fit.

Fitting must be an individual problem, and in most cases, a garment which is made to fit one individual will not fit another as well as the one for which it was intended. This is one difficulty with ready-made garments. However, many people who approach the average are able to find clothes which require little or no altering. It is not these women who need to watch the fit of their clothes; it is the women who have difficulty who must be especially careful, for an irregularity in figure will only be more pronounced with ill-fitting clothes. These women will probably find it more satisfactory to make or to have their clothes made, for many times alterations on a ready made garment are not satisfactory. Fitting principles, however, are the same for altering a ready-made garment or fitting a garment cut at home.

Probably the most important point in making a good looking well-fitted dress is alteration of the pattern and care in cutting. A dress for which the pattern was altered correctly and which was cut so that the grain of the material falls right should give little or no trouble with fitting. However, some places which can not be checked on the pattern require fitting. Fitting means adjusting the garment until it sets well on the figure.

Points of a Well-fitting Garment

1. Size appears correct, no drawing or wrinkles:
2. Shoulder and underarm seams correctly placed.
3. Sleeves hanging without wrinkles or gathers at cap.
4. Skirt length correct for figure and fashion.

Basting in Fitting

Contrary to the opinion of many, fitting should be done from the right side. A garment which is fitted on the wrong side has the left side fitted to the right of the body. It is, however, necessary to do a little different type of basting when the fitting is done on the right side. One basting stitch to use is known as top basting. Top basting is used especially on shoulder seams and armsyes in fitting. The seam on the back shoulder line is folded under to make a correct line and laid on the front and the basting stitches taken about \( \frac{1}{8} \) of an inch from the edge. Top basting holds the seams of a garment straight and in well defined lines which insures greater accuracy in fitting.

When a garment is removed, slip basting is used on the seam so that it may be turned to the wrong side and stitched. Slip basting is a slip stitch done along the seam line.

Fitting A Garment After the First Basting

A well-fitted garment allows freedom of movement without being too large and is free from unnecessary wrinkles and folds. Large figures ap-
Fig. 1—Wrinkles in the back caused by round shoulders may be taken out by proper fitting.

Fig. 2—Square shoulders require deeper seams taken at neckline edge than is allowed on pattern to do away with wrinkles across the front.

Pear larger if garments are tight. It is better to make any garment too loose rather than too snug.

Fitting principles are very dependent on grain. A front or sleeve that has been cut off grain is hard to remedy. In some cases, if it is badly off grain, it cannot successfully be used. In general, the crosswise thread should run straight around the figure at the bust and hips. In a sleeve, the crosswise grain should run straight around the arm at the fullest part. A straight skirt that is joined to a waist should be hemmed on a thread. If, however, the skirt has any gore to it, the lower edge will not be on a thread.

In making the first basting, match notches marked on pattern, unless an alteration has changed these, so they will not fit. It is wise in this basting to baste on the seam allowance. Baste the garment together, but do not set in sleeves until after first fitting. In the fitting, check placement of shoulder line, side seam, armseye line and width.

Shoulder Line

Placement of the shoulder seam is very important. It should be a straight line from the highest part at the neck to one-half an inch back of the highest point on the tip of the shoulder. The seam in this position is not visible from either the front or the back when the garment is worn. The armseye seam should come just at the highest point on the shoulder. If the shoulder is too long, it makes the figure appear wide and makes the garment look too large. A ready-made garment with wide shoulders may be altered by ripping the seam and taking up extra fullness in front by small tucks on the shoulder seam. Tucks may also be taken in center back and the neck reshaped. Much more serious is the problem when the shoulders are too narrow. There is very little that can be done after a garment has been cut. The alteration should have been made in the pattern.

Round Shoulders.—The woman with rounded shoulders should place the shoulder line a little back of the normal position. This tends to make
her appear less round shouldered. All fitting for round shoulders can not be done on the shoulder line, however. Rip the side seams as well. Raise the back and ease the back shoulder seam to the front as much as possible. Cut out the underarm of the back as it was formerly.

**Square Shoulders.**—In fitting square shoulders, rip the seam and commence by making the shoulder seam as narrow as possible at the arm-ey edge and deepening the seam all the way to the neckline. A person with very square shoulders will always have trouble with ready-made garments. Most of them can be altered, however, by starting at the sleeve, and increasing the depth of seam to the neckline. This, of course, will raise the neckline.

**Sloping Shoulders.**—If the alteration has not been made sufficiently in the pattern there will be wrinkles in the front if the shoulders are very sloping. If there is an open neck, the wrinkles do not show so plainly. Let out the shoulder seam as much as possible at the neck and take a deeper seam at the armseye edge. By taking this seam deeper, the arm-hole will be made smaller. It should be snipped at right angles to the edge at underarm until former size is obtained. This problem is more difficult to remedy in ready-made garments. It necessitates removing the sleeve and taking a deeper seam on the shoulder line at the armseye edge and letting the seam out as much as possible at the neckline edge. The armseye will then have to be enlarged.

**The Underarm Seam**

The position of the underarm seam is important to the fit as well as the appearance of the dress. The seam should fall straight to the floor from the under arm.

In fitting on the underarm seam sometimes it is necessary to take a deeper seam on either the front or back in order to make a straight line. The figure with a protruding abdomen will find that the side seams are often swung to the front and the skirt hangs shorter in front. This may be remedied by a dart taken below the waist line on the seam line and extending both to the front and back. It should be taken up until the skirt hangs straight.

**Fitting The Bust**

Fitting the figure with a large bust when sufficient alteration was not made in the pattern requires some darts and possibly a little recutting. There will be wrinkles below the bust which must be removed. If the pattern has allowed for a shoulder dart, but no underarm dart, rip the underarm and shoulder seam and baste in a dart at the bust

![Fig. 3—Alteration for protruding abdomen.](image)
线。将它缩小到无。后背将太长，需要重新切割。将图案在后背处降低同样的距离，重新切割。

如果衣服允许在胸部线处有褶皱，可以再取另一个褶皱，或者使原来的褶皱更深，直到衣服挂直且无皱纹。

如果衣服有过多的褶皱，需要考虑衣服是为平均胸部设计的，如果身材比平均胸部更扁平。这样，衣服在胸部以下会紧贴。如果有胸部褶皱，让其完全打开，然后裁剪掉下边缘的多余长度。如果有在肩部的褶皱，让其完全打开，直到衣服在肩部处挂直。保持原始的褶皱线，将多余的材料延展到肩袖线。肩袖线需要重新切割，以恢复原始形状。

肩袖线

肩袖线是检查衣服合体的下一个重要点。肩袖线对于合体的袖子应该从肩部缝线直线下垂。当从前方观看时，两条线应该平行。后背的肩袖线也应平行。

肩袖线不应该绑住。不同类型的袖子需要不同形状和尺寸的肩袖线。衬衫袖子的肩部可能更宽，稍微超过肩部的尖端。袖子比合体的袖子更宽，不会像合体的袖子那样合身。为了使肩袖线更大，沿袖下边缘剪切，小心不要剪得太深。有时，肩部或腋下缝线可能需要打开，以提供足够的空间。

如果肩袖线太大，通常可以通过在肩部和腋下缝线上取更深的缝线来修复。如果肩袖线在后背处被剪切为曲线而不是直线，没有补救办法，除非长度足够长，可以将其提高并重新切割。

装袖

没有袖子应该装进去，除非肩袖线已经检查过，确保在前、后两侧下垂时平行。商用图案中匹配肩袖线并不总是成功的。如果做任何改变，标记将不能遵循。

有几个原则适用于放置任何袖子。

大多数连衣裙的袖子现在会下垂，使得袖子在肩部和腋下缝线上相等。将袖子的接缝放置在肩部和腋下缝线上，确保在前、后两侧下垂时平行。

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the underarm seam. The back of the sleeve will be the longest side of the cap. Determine the highest point of the sleeve. This is the portion of the cap of the sleeve that is on the straight of the material. Pin this to the highest point of the armseye line which is about one-half inch in front of shoulder seam. Then locate quarter points and ease it in above these quarter points. A well-fitted sleeve on an average person should have no fullness under the arm. There should not be bulges or gathers in the upper arm. This fullness is necessary to make the sleeve fit smoothly.

A sleeve may be easily set into place on the figure by pinning it in at the highest point, and raising it until the grain of material is running correctly. The crosswise grain of the material in the sleeve across the fullest part of upperarm should run parallel with the crosswise grain in the blouse.

To baste the sleeve in the garment after these quarter points are located, work on the wrong side of the garment. Pin in the sleeve putting in pins at right angles to the sleeve edge. The sleeve side of the seam should be held toward the worker as the sleeve is basted in. This will allow the worker to move the fullness into place with the thumb and finger of the left hand.

A well-fitted sleeve will allow freedom of movement so that it is possible to place either hand on the opposite shoulder without discomfort.

Some faults which may occur:

1. If the sleeve is too short in the cap, wrinkles will result. This may be remedied by recutting sleeve, making cap slightly longer providing the sleeve is still wide enough.
2. If the cap is too narrow, the sleeve will draw across the arm. The sleeve should be at least two inches wider than the arm to give comfort.
3. If the fullness for the elbow is not correctly placed, the sleeve will draw. Place fullness so that the elbow will fall into it.

Fig. 5—Alteration for the flat bust may require slight recutting but the figure appears more normal.

Neckline and Collar

A collar cut by the pattern will not fit the neckline of a dress which has had any alteration on the shoulder line. If the back of the dress has been raised the neckline will no doubt be too high and will draw. The correct line should be determined and marked with a row of pins and
then the edges clipped down to this mark. If any great change was made, it is advisable to re-cut the neckline by the pattern.

It is usually best not to cut the collar until all alterations on the garment have been made. If the neckline was re-cut by the pattern, the original collar should fit. In case a collar of different style is desired and is to be cut for a dress that has been altered, use dress for neckline shape, instead of pattern in cutting inside line of collar. This will then take care of any alteration made. If the collar is plain, it may be possible to place it to the neck and cut off any extra length at the lower end.

**Hanging the Skirt**

The skirt can not be hung until the dress is about complete. Sleeves should be in, and all seams well pressed. It is more difficult to hang a skirt by oneself, but it may be done quite successfully. There is a handy little device which marks a line on the dress for you, or a row of pins may be put in at the level of a table, and the length of the skirt measured from there. If the garment is cut to have the lower edge on the grain of the material, first decide upon the length desired, see that the edge is turned on a thread, and if the length is uneven, correct it by raising or lowering at the dart on the hip, under the arm, or at the shoulder. If the underarm seam is gored at all, the line of the hem would not be on a thread of the material; therefore it could be corrected at the lower edge.

For seam and hem finishes see South Dakota Circular No. 297, Successful Finishes.
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