THE PERFECT FIT GUIDE

SIX ESSENTIAL STEPS TO GETTING THE RIGHT FIT

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FITTING SUCCESS STARTS HERE

You started sewing with lots of enthusiasm and an idyllic dream of a beautiful, high quality wardrobe that you could wear with pride. You were excited about creating your own unique clothing, satisfying your amazing creativity and having the ability to customize the fit.

It even worked for a while... but then...you hit a bit of a roadblock.

Getting the right fit became a bit more challenging. You turned to the Internet to find the solutions. You bought the recommended fitting books and classes, implementing all the techniques that made sense to you, but it's still not perfect!

I absolutely know how frustrating it can be to put money, time and effort, into a sewing project, and end up with a garment you can't even wear.

If frustration is what you're feeling and you're starting to doubt your abilities, don't! You absolutely can achieve a great fit; you just need some guidance and a step by step process that will help get you there.

That is the goal of this guide: to kick your fitting skills up a notch and give you the steps you need to follow to get a great fit.

I am going to introduce you to the six steps you need to implement in order to ensure your sewing projects will no longer end up in "the bin".

Step One:	**Take Your Body Measurements and Choose Your Size**
Step Two:	**Measure the Pattern and Determine the Wearing Ease**
Step Three:	**Make Your Initial Pattern Adjustments**
Step Four:	**Cut and Mark Your First Sample**
Step Five:	**Fit Your Sample**
Step Six:	**Adjust and Refine the Pattern**

Mastering these six steps will ultimately save you money, time, and loads of frustration, not to mention that beautiful piece of fabric you've been saving for just the right project. You'll definitely be adding some mad fitting skills to your sewing basket.

Are you ready? Let's get started.

[Oh, I should tell you, this guide is best used with sewing patterns designed for woven fabrics, but the principles inside will also work with knits as long as you're aware that your knit pattern might have negative ease.]

STEP ONE

TAKE YOUR BODY MEASUREMENTS AND CHOOSE YOUR SIZE

Body measurements are the starting point of all sewing patterns. Before a pattern is developed the designer will choose a base size and a body type for their chosen customer. Those body measurements are then used to create a basic block or sloper that is in turn used to develop the garment design. Once the garment is developed in the base size to the satisfaction of the designer, it will be graded into smaller and larger sizes.

Have you noticed **your body measurements** haven't been taken into account? Your personal body measurements are the key to your fitting success so it's no surprise that the very first step to a great fit is to record your current body measurements.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Make sure your wearing your favourite underwear, your best bra and undies. You want the most accurate measurements, this means getting as close to your skin as possible. If you're a bit shy a tank top and leggings over your favourite underwear works really well.

Stand with your feet about hip width apart and stay relaxed. Consider your posture, if you stand too erect or slouch too much your measurements will be off. Tie an elastic around your waist and another around your hip, make sure they are level with the floor. These will aid in taking the length measurements.

As you measure, keep the tape measure taut and parallel to the floor for horizontal or girth measurements; vertical or length measurements will be taken perpendicular to the floor.

TAKE YOUR BODY MEASUREMENTS

To make things super easy for you I've included **The Pattern Measurment Worksheet** right here inside this document (it's at the end)! The worksheet is going to give you a space to record all of your body measurements and tell you exactly which measurements you'll need to take and exactly how to take them.

If you're measuring yourself, it will be a bit of a challenge but you can do it! Just stand in front of a mirror and do your best. Measure each point three times (or more) and choose the measurement that comes up twice. If you're still unsure of how to take your measurements, I have a free video tutorial showing you how to do that! It's called **HOW TO MEASURE YOURSELF** and you'll find it in "tutorials" at inhousepatternsstudio.com.

CHOOSE YOUR PATTERN SIZE

Once you have your body measurents recorded you're ready to choose your pattern size. You're going to choose a size that is closest to you personal body measurements. For jackets, tops and dresses use your bust and high bust girth measurements. For skirts and pants, you'll use your hip girth measurment.

But before you finalize your choice, I want you to watch two free video tutorials that will help you make the wisest choice. They are called **FOUR THINGS THAT WILL GET YOU TO A BETTER FIT FASTER** and **HOW PATTERNS WORK.** Those videos will walk you through how I chose my pattern size by comparing my body measurements and my cup size to the sewing pattern size chart. They are a must watch!

STEP TWO

MEASURE THE PATTERN AND DETERMINE THE WEARING EASE

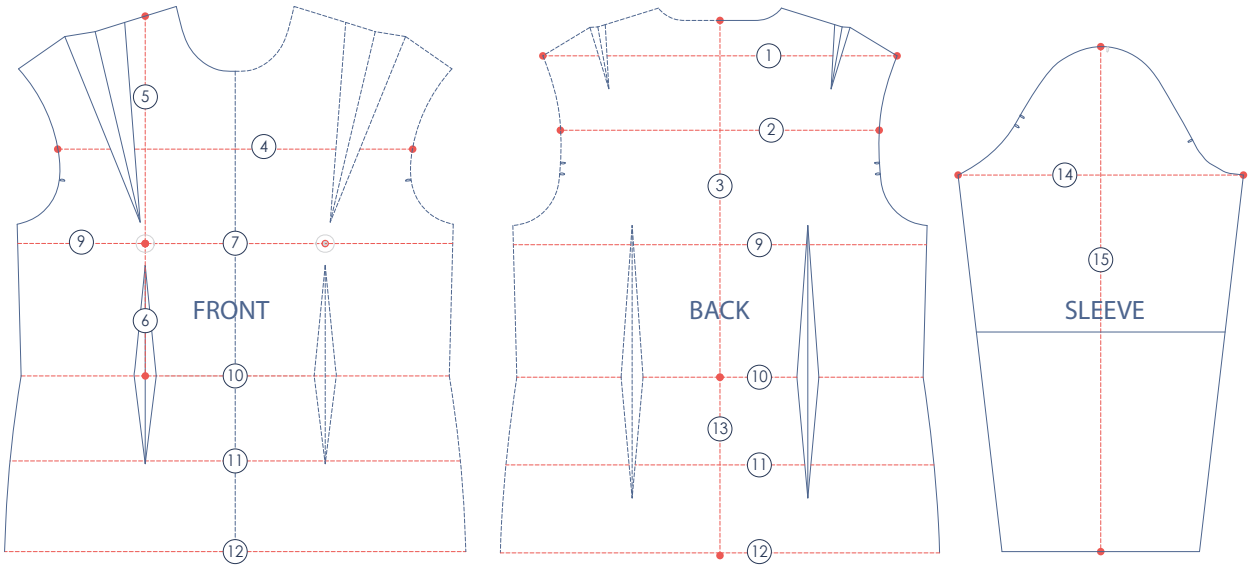
HOW TO TAKE PATTERN MEASUREMENTS

Keep you body measurements handy, you will be taking the same measurements on the pattern that you did on your body so that you can compare them. Knowing the pattern measurements now will give you the opportunity to make a few pattern adjustments before you cut any fabric at all.

Before you begin, draw in the seam lines (stitching lines) of the pattern. You don't want to include the seam allowances or dart intakes in your measurements.

Take care and be as accurate as possible. Remember, you want to measure the girth or circumference of the pattern to be sure you're making accurate comparisons in the next step. Record the pattern measurements directly on the pattern. Follow the diagram below for a little guidance.

Measurement point ⑧ is used only to determining the bust cup size. It doesn't relate to the pattern well enough to be considered at this point. (Patterns are drafted by bust girth not high bust girth.)



DETERMINE THE WEARING EASE

This step is super easy, takes just a few minutes and reveals really important information about the pattern and how it will fit. After you've measured the pattern, you can easily determine the amount of ease it will have for you. The wearing ease tells you exactly how much bigger (or smaller) the pattern is compared to your personal body measurements. Use this formula to determine the amount of wearing ease in the pattern:

PATTERN MEASUREMENT - BODY MEASUREMENT = EASE

That's it! Now go ahead and find the ease/difference on each of the measurement points of your pattern. Record the ease amounts in the pattern measurement worksheet and next to your pattern measurements for easy reference.

STEP THREE

MAKE INITIAL PATTERN ADJUSTMENTS

Now take what you learned from all that measuring and make some simple pattern adjustments. Don't over complicate things at this point, you just want to get the pattern to reflect your personal body measurements including the required ease for movement and style. Keep it simple for these initial pattern adjustments.

ADJUST LENGTH FIRST

Compare all the length measurements first:

- Center Back Neck to Waist
- Shoulder to Bust Point
- Shoulder to Waist
- Hip Depth
- Sleeve Length

Shorten or lengthen the pattern according to your personal body measurements. This will put the position of the Bust, Waist, and Hip on the pattern in line with those on your body. There is no ease required for length in a bodice for the measurement points we are addressing in this example, so compare and adjust the measurements directly.

ADJUST GIRTH SECOND

Compare all of the width and girth measurements second:

- Shoulder Point to Shoulder Point
- Across Back
- Across Front
- Bust Point to Bust Point
- Bust Girth
- Waist Girth
- High Hip Girth
- Hip Girth
- Bicep Girth

Before you start your width and girth adjustments, I want you to consider the style of your pattern and how much ease is required to maintain the style and still get the fit you want. In order to assess the fit of your pattern, you'll need to add some standard ease to your body measurements.

Use this formula: Body Measurement + Ease = Desired Fit

These are my go to minimum ease amounts but you may find you need more or less depending on your comfort level and the requirements for the style you're working with.

STANDARD EASE FOR WOVEN NON-STRETCH FABRICS

	VERY FITTED TOP/DRESS	TOP/DRESS	EASY FIT TOPS/DRESS	PANT/SKIRT	TAILORED JACKET	COAT
BUST GIRTH	0 - 1 1/2" 0 - 3.8 CM	1 1/2 - 2" 3.8 - 5 CM	3 - 6" 7.5 - 15 CM		2 - 4" 5 - 10 CM	4 - 6" 10-15 CM
WAIST GIRTH	1/2 - 1" 1.3-2.5 CM	1 - 1 1/2" 2.5 - 3.8 CM	3 - 6" 7.5 - 15 CM	1-1 1/2" 2.5 - 3.8 CM	2 - 4" 5 - 10 CM	4 - 6" 10 - 15 CM
HIGH HIP/HIP GIRTH	1 - 2" 2.5 - 5 CM	2 - 2 1/2" 5 - 7 CM	3"+ 7.5 CM+	2 - 2 1/2" 5 - 7 CM	2 - 4" 5 - 10 CM	4"+ 10 CM+
BICEP GIRTH	1 - 1 1/2" 25 - 3.8 CM	1 1/2 - 2" 3.8 - 5 CM	2"+ 5 CM+		2 - 2 1/2" 5 - 7 CM	2 1/2"+ 6 CM+
ACROSS FRONT/BACK/ SHOULDER TO SHOULDER	0 - 1/4" 0 - 0.6 CM	0 - 1/2" 0-1.3 CM	1/2 - 1" 1.3 - 2.5 CM		1/2 - 3/4" 1.3 - 2 CM	3/4 - 1" 2 - 2.5 CM

Once you've determined the ease requirements needed to satisfy the styling and the fit, go ahead and make those width and girth pattern adjustments keeping your **desired fit** in mind.

STEP FOUR

CUT AND MARK THE FIRST MUSLIN

Ok, so you've got your initial pattern adjustments done. You've kept it simple and your ready for the next step. Get your muslin (or similar) fabric out and let's see what this garment is actually going to look like and what else needs to be done to get the fit just right!

BEFORE CUTTING

Do a quick check of the pattern to make sure the joining seam lines are the same length. In the fashion industry, we call this "walking the pattern". As you're walking those seams, check that the notches are matching as well, you won't regret this later, I promise!

Press the fabric you are using for your muslin. You want the fabric pressed neatly to make cutting easier and more accurate.

Don't bother cutting out collars, set in sleeves (you will need to cut raglan or kimono sleeves of course), facings, linings or other details at this point. You just want to assess the body fit for now. Sometimes you'll find you need changes that affect these other parts, so it's easiest to start with the main parts only. Once you've mastered the fit of the body you can move on to sleeves, collars and other parts.

Lay your pattern on the muslin (or similar) following the grainlines and if your pattern doesn't include seam allowances make sure you add them on your muslin fabric before you cut.

AFTER CUTTING

When you've cut the main fabric pieces out, it's time to transfer the pattern markings (notches, etc.) and fitting lines to the muslin. Now, don't skip this step:

Mark these fitting lines on the right side (outside) of the fabric all the way around the body:

- Across Chest Line Front and Back
- Bust Points
- Bust Line
- Waist Line
- Hip Line
- Center Front Line
- Center Back Line
- Neckline Seam
- Armhole Seams
- Hemlines

STITCH UP THE MUSLIN

Carefully and accurately stitch up the muslin. Poor sewing can sometimes look like a fitting problem, don't go down that rabbit hole, you won't like it at all!

No need to finish seams, but it's a good idea to press up the hem allowances. This helps with assessing the finished length and also gives the hem a bit more stability.

Be sure to give the whole muslin a fresh, crisp press. It's really difficult to recognize fitting issues amongst a whole bunch of wrinkles. Trust me on this. Take the time to do this; it will save you time later.

STEP FIVE

FIT THE MUSLIN

ASSESSING THE FIT

I'm going to admit something here. This process is a whole lot easier if you can enlist a friend to help with this stage. But that being said, it's not impossible to do it on your own. It's just a bit harder and sometimes you'll need to contort your body a bit to get at those hard to reach places. Just set yourself up in front of a full length mirror and give it a go! Stand with your feet about hip width apart and relax.

Here, in order, is what you need to look for:

1. The CF (center front) and CB (center back) lines are centered on your body.

2. The side seams appear straight and perpendicular to the floor.

3. The Armhole Depth is approximately 3/4" (2 cm) below the base of your armpit.

4. The Bust Line position is level with the floor and at the same level as your bust.

5. The Waist Line position is level with the floor and at the same level as your waist.

6. The Hip Line position is level with the floor and at the same level as your hip.

7. The Hem Line position is flattering on you.

8. If the base of the Armhole or the Bust, Waist and Hip Lines are in the correct position and level with the floor, move on to the next steps. If not, this means you'll need to make length adjustments to your pattern. Excess length issues present themselves as soft horizontal folds in the fabric. Inadequate length issues will present themselves as tight vertical pulls in the fabric. Pin the muslin until these lines are level and in the correct position. If pinning isn't possible, make note of the adjustment needed on the muslin. Begin your adjustments from the top down.

9. The Neckline is lying flat and snug against the neck.

10. The Shoulder Width is adequate; the seam lines at the shoulder reaches your shoulder point with about 1/4" (6mm) ease.

11. There is adequate ease in the Bust, Waist, Hip and hem. (You can move, sit and breathe!)

12. If all of the above points are working well, that's just awesome! You can move on to the next step. If not, this means you'll need to make width and girth adjustments to your pattern. Excess width and girth issues will present themselves as soft vertical fold in the fabric. If the muslin is too tight, you will see tight horizontal pulling across the areas that are too small. Pin areas that are too big, release areas that are too tight, make notes of the adjustment needed on the muslin.

13. The styling suits you perfectly. If not, this is the time to decide on neckline shape and depth, skirt flare or other details you would like to change on the garment. Be a bit conservative at first, it's much easier to move forward than go backward with styling changes.

STEP SIX

ADJUST AND REFINE THE PATTERN

Well, you've certainly come a long way, no point in stopping now!
With your freshly fitted muslin in hand (along with all the notes you made) you can now transfer the fitting adjustments from your muslin to your pattern. The trick here is to make your pattern adjustments in the same order and following the same procedure you used while fitting the muslin.

MAKE LENGTH ADJUSTMENTS FIRST
MAKE WIDTH AND GIRTH ADJUSTMENTS SECOND
MAKE STYLING AND DESIGN ADJUSTMENTS LAST

TIPS FOR ADJUSTING PATTERNS

1. Work from the seam lines of the pattern not the cutting lines. This is really important.
2. Make the pattern adjustment in the same place as the muslin. This will reflect your changes most accurately.
3. Keep your pattern corrections based on a grid - parallel and or perpendicular to CF and CB. This keeps your pattern from getting distorted.
4. The pattern must remain flat, even after the adjustment. A flat pattern means your correction has been done correctly.
5. Blend seams using rulers and curves for smooth flattering lines on the garment. Good pattern making tools are a great investment. I can't live without my C-Thru grid ruler.
6. Redraw grainline arrows. Keep them parallel to the CF and CB line and perpendicular to the Hip line for most garments. Sleeve grainlines always extend perpendicular to the bicep line.
7. Once all of the main pieces of the pattern have been altered you may find other pieces of the pattern have been affected by the adjustments you've made. If you're not sure which ones, simply work through the refining steps below and they will very quickly become apparent.

TIPS FOR REFINING PATTERNS

1. True the darts. Make sure the dart legs are the same length and confirm the shape of the dart roof.
2. Walk the pattern. Seams that will sew together must be the same length (with a few exceptions) so walk the pattern along the stitching line not the cutting line.
3. Check those notch positions. While walking the pattern check to make sure the notches are also matching, adjust them if you need to.
4. Check seam allowance widths. Make sure seam allowances on joining seams are the same width.

Pat yourself on the back ...you've done it!

You're ready to cut out a new muslin to re-fit the body with the sleeves, collar and other important details. If you're feeling fearless, you could start your sewing project in the "real" fabric but I'm a bit of a perfectionist so I would opt to test the fit in muslin again (back to step 5 for me!) because in all the years that I worked in the fashion industry, we reviewed three fitting samples for every style we produced!

Spending some extra time getting a great fit really makes the sewing part super easy and way more enjoyable! Your big win is a garment that fits and all the compliments that go with it!

IT DOESN'T STOP HERE

Just in case your still struggling:

Fitting is a skill.

It takes time and often trial and error to really get really good at it. Don't expect to be a pro after just a few projects. Consider every project an opportunity to master your fitting skills. If you're feeling frustrated, take a step back, breathe...even sleep on it...the answers will come to you.

Don't give up.

The six steps presented here are a starting point. They outline the strategies for fitting any project in a thoughtful, methodical way. Hopefully I've presented them in a way that you find useful, but I know, you will have more questions and need more detailed information...believe me, I know. I'll be working on more guides, tutorials, and online workshops to help you master the techniques in each of the steps, so keep and eye out for those.

For the time being, visit my website, **inhousepatternsstudio.com**. You'll find lots of great tutorials on fitting that will give you even greater insight into the fitting process and demonstrate, on video, some of the principles I've shared here. Stop by and share a comment or ask a question, I'd love to hear from you!

Fitting success really doesn't stop here! For more detail and a little help with interpretting this guide watch the Fitting Fundamentals video series here: https://www.inhousepatternsstudio.com/blog, I'll see you there!

Alexandra

The Pattern Measurement Worksheet

PATTERN	DATE	NAME

	POINT OF MEASURE	YOUR BODY MEASUREMENTS	PATTERN MEASURMENTS	PATTERN EASE	STANDARD MINIMUM EASE	DESIRED EASE	DESIRED PATTERN MEASUREMENT	PATTERN ADJUSTMENT NEEDED
1	SHOULDER POINT TO SHOULDER POINT				1/2" (1.3 CM)			
2	ACROSS BACK				1/2" (1.3 CM)			
3	CENTER BACK NECK TO WAIST				0			
4	ACROSS FRONT				1/2" (1.3 CM)			
5	SHOULDER TO BUST POINT				0			
6	SHOULDER TO WAIST				0			
7	BUST POINT TO BUSTPOINT				0			
8	HIGH BUST GIRTH				2" (5 CM)			
9	BUST GIRTH				2" (5 CM)			
	CUP SIZE				/			
10	WAIST GIRTH				2" (5 CM)			
11	HIGH HIP GIRTH				2" (5 CM)			
12	HIP GIRTH				2" (5 CM)			
13	HIP DEPTH				0			
14	BICEP GIRTH				2" (5 CM)			
15	SLEEVE LENGTH				1/2" (1.3 CM)			

The Pattern Measurement Worksheet

	POINT OF MEASURE	HOW TO MEASURE
1	SHOULDER POINT TO SHOULDER POINT	Measure from shoulder point to shoulder point at the back.
2	ACROSS BACK	Measure across the upper back at mid-armhole level appoximately 5" (12.7 CM) down from CB neck. Keep the measuring tape level with the floor.
3	CENTER BACK NECK TO WAIST	Measure from CB neck to the waist level. Keep the measuring tape perpendicular to the floor.
4	ACROSS FRONT	Measure across the top chest at mid-armhole level appoximately 3" (7.6 CM) down from CF neck. Keep the measuring tape level with the floor.
5	SHOULDER TO BUST POINT	Measure from the shoulder line to the bust point. Keep the measuring tape parallel to CF and perpendicular to the floor.
6	SHOULDER TO WAIST	Measure from the shoulder line, over the bust point, to the waist line. Keep the measuring tape parallel to CF and perpendicular to the floor.
7	BUST POINT TO BUSTPOINT	Measure from bust point to bust point. Keep the measuring tape level to the floor.
8	HIGH BUST GIRTH	Measure around the body at the base of the armhole and above the bustline. The measuring tape will not be level for this measurement.
9	BUST GIRTH	Measure around the body and across the bust points. Keep the measuring tape level with the floor.
	CUP SIZE	Calculate: High Bust Girth - Bust Girth = Cup Size 1" (2.5 cm) = A Cup, 2" (5 cm) = B Cup, 3" (7.6 cm) = C Cup, 4" (10 cm) = D Cup
10	WAIST GIRTH	Measure around the body at the narrowest part of the waist. Keep the measuring tape level with the floor.
11	HIGH HIP GIRTH	Measure around the body midway between the waist and hip. Keep the measuring tape level with the floor.
12	HIP GIRTH	Measure around the body at the fullest part of the hip. Keep the measuring tape level with the floor.
13	HIP DEPTH	Measure from the waist to the hip at CB. Keep the measuring tape level with the floor.
14	BICEP GIRTH	Measure around the arm at bicep level - approximately 1" (2.5 cm) from the base of the armhole.
15	SLEEVE LENGTH	Measure from the shoulder point to the elbow to the wrist with the arm slightly bent.

