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NDS

- BULLETIN 12A

And so

to Sew

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It's worth a little extra time and thought on preliminaries so that you can make and sew,

a perfectly fitting dress

You have a new length of fabric, scissors, pins, tape measure, needles, thread . . . all the sewing essentials you will need, and—very important—you have at last found a pattern style which you like and which you feel sure will be perfect for your fabric.

Already you can picture yourself wearing this dress—in fact, you can scarcely wait another minute to begin. You imagine yourself rushing home, pinning your pattern pieces with a few odd pins, cutting out and stitching sections rapidly together; and then . . . as if by magic—you will have a dress which fits you as perfectly as the one sketched so attractively in the pattern catalogue. It can be done—but a little time and thought must be spent in advance.

SIZE RIGHT

The size of pattern you buy is decided by bust measurement, in order to obtain a good fit over the shoulders which is so important to any garment. Check your own measurement first, and if it is between available pattern sizes, choose the larger, i.e. a 33" bust would use a size 34" pattern. Any further pattern measurements which do not correspond to your own are more easy to alter. In the case of a skirt, slacks, etc. the size will be determined by hip measurement.

Now that you have bought the pattern, you are eager to begin cutting the fabric; however, there are one or two very important things to be done first, which will save both time and temper later—and are all well worth the trouble.

STYLE RIGHT.

In almost all paper patterns a choice of style is given—a variation usually occurring in neckline or sleeve. There may be separate pattern pieces for these parts or they may be cut from the main pieces, following certain perforations or markings, depending on the make or style of the pattern you buy.

Decide at once which style you prefer and mark it clearly. Now, pencil round every corresponding pattern piece shown in the chart on the instruction sheet or envelope. Separate these pieces (which can be identified by letter or number) from the rest, and write the name boldly across each. Using differently coloured pencils mark the centre front and centre back, the lines to indicate "the straight of fabric" and the seam allowance. All darts, inside of pleats, tucks, hems, etc. should be shaded in. Pin any remaining pattern pieces together and put them safely in the envelope.

In the following pages we will explain all the preliminary steps which are necessary to achieve a perfectly fitting dress.

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To simplify cutting and making-up, allow

TIME FOR STUDY

Included with every pattern is a pattern instruction sheet. A short study of this will simplify the cutting and making up of any garment. Note the meanings of all perforations, markings and lettering. In the following paragraphs we explain more fully certain dressmaking terms which are often used on a pattern instruction sheet.

Seam Allowance : Always note size of seam allowance which is usually marked by perforations on the pattern. The SEAM ALLOWANCE means that you must stitch exactly that width from the edge when joining sections together. The width of seam allowance is often, but not always, identical in every part of one garment. Generous seams should be allowed for growing children (on the width and length of the pattern only) and also if the fabric frays readily. Sometimes the seam allowance is partly used in construction, e.g. certain placket openings. In this case a larger amount is allowed.

Hem Allowance : The width allowed for turning up to make a hem is called the HEM ALLOWANCE. This is usually indicated by a line of perforations. If, however, the hem allowance is not indicated on the pattern pieces in any way, mark it yourself with a pencilled line parallel to the edge, (after having checked skirt length). The usual width allowed for a hem is 2". In the case of fine, delicate fabrics, however, the perfect finish is with a very tiny hem. For growing children, a generous hem should always be allowed.

Waistline : It is very important that the waist length of your garment be exactly right for you. Unless the waistline has been designed to lie either above or below the natural waistline it should lie at the natural waist line. This can be found by tying a piece of string round the waist.

Selvedge : This is the name given to the woven edges of the fabric.

The Lengthwise or Warp Thread : This thread runs parallel to the selvedges of the fabric.

The Widthwise or Weft Thread : This thread is woven across the fabric from selvedge to selvedge.

Grain : The GRAIN is another word for the direction in which either the warp or weft threads lie.

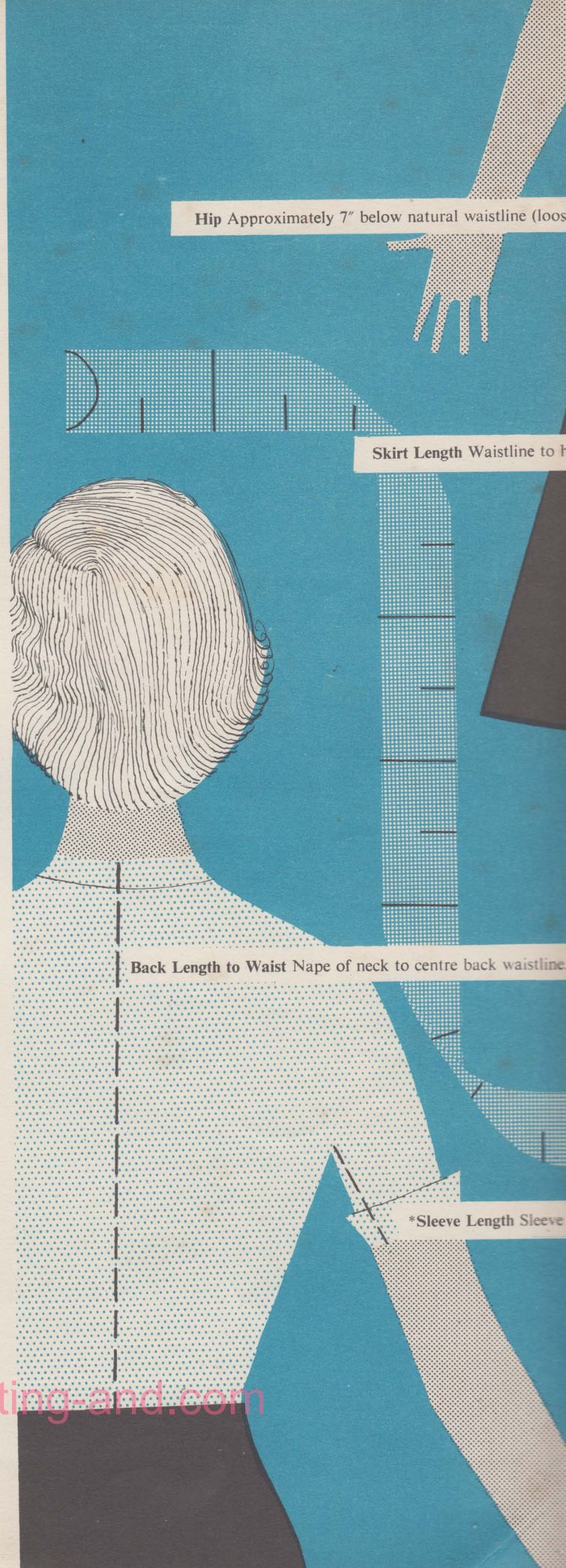
True Bias : The TRUE BIAS is obtained by folding the fabric so that the weft threads lie parallel to the warp threads.

The Straight of the Fabric : This is the most important mark on the pattern pieces and must always lie along a straight thread (the grain) of the fabric or the finished garment will not hang correctly.

The Fold of the Fabric : This is also a very important mark on the pattern pieces. An edge which is marked in this way must always lie along a fold of the fabric. This fold will be on the straight grain of the fabric unless otherwise stated. Mark these FOLD edges boldly with coloured pencil to avoid any possible mistake when cutting out.

Nap : You will often see either 'WITH NAP' or 'WITHOUT NAP' written above cutting layouts. The NAP is the pile of a fabric such as velvet. When this kind of fabric is used, the pattern pieces must all lie facing in the same direction, otherwise, when complete, the garment will be shadowed light and dark in patches. The same cutting layout would be used for 'one way' patterned fabrics.

Printed Patterns : Some paper patterns have all signs printed instead of perforated. It will be noticed in this case that there is a cutting line as well as a seam allowance line.



KNOW YOUR SIZE

line at centre back.

*Shoulder Length Shoulder seam from neck line to sleeve seam.

Front Length to Waist Shoulder bone to centre front waistline.

Bust Round fullest part (loosely).

Waist Round natural waistline.

m, from under-arm to end of sleeve.

Any alterations to the pattern pieces which are really necessary must be made **BEFORE** cutting. This will simplify the fitting of your garment later on and also reduce the chance of any major mistakes. To make these alterations, take measurements as illustrated.

*Measurements can be taken from a dress which fits you well.

After taking your own measurements, take these same measurements on the corresponding pattern pieces, taking care to measure within the seam allowance. By comparing these measurements, you will discover the amounts to be added to, or subtracted from, each pattern piece—that is, if any alteration is necessary. Do this by filling in the chart overleaf.

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	Bust	Waist	Hip	Front Length to Waist	Back Length to Waist	Skirt Length	Sleeve Length	Shoulder Length
Your Measurement	*	*	*					
Pattern Measurement	+2"	+1"	+2"					
Amount to be added								
** Divide by	4	4	4	Add entire amount	Add entire amount	Add entire amount	Add entire amount	Add entire amount
Add								

* This will give necessary ease and any excess can be removed in fitting.

** Due to the fact that an equal amount must be added to each side of the back and the front (4).

Be wary of making any part of a pattern piece smaller unless you are absolutely certain that it is necessary. On bias pieces particularly, an extra amount is allowed and the finished style will be affected if this is changed.

PATTERN ALTERATIONS

Alterations can be made as follows :

Bust : If your bust measurement is slightly larger than one of the standard sizes add to side seams of bodice back and bodice front, commencing at under-arm and joining to correct waist measurement with straight lines. (A)

Waist : Add in same way, joining to correct bust and hip measurements. (B)

Hip : Add in same way, joining to correct waist measurement. (C)

Front Bodice Lengthening :

On dress with seam at normal waistline, add along lower edge of bodice front, shaping to meet correct back length at the side seams. If dress has no seam at normal waistline, cut the pattern at right angles to centre front, (halfway between waistline and armhole) and open to required amount ; keep in position with a strip of paper pinned behind. (D).

Back Bodice Lengthening :

Alter as for Front Bodice Lengthening. (D).

Skirt Lengthening :

Cut pattern midway between hipline and hem and insert required width as for bodice. (E).

Sleeve Lengthening :

Add by cutting pattern straight across (halfway between armhole and elbow, and between elbow and wrist) ; opening to required amount and keeping in position with pinned paper strips. Add length to a short sleeve along lower edge. (F).

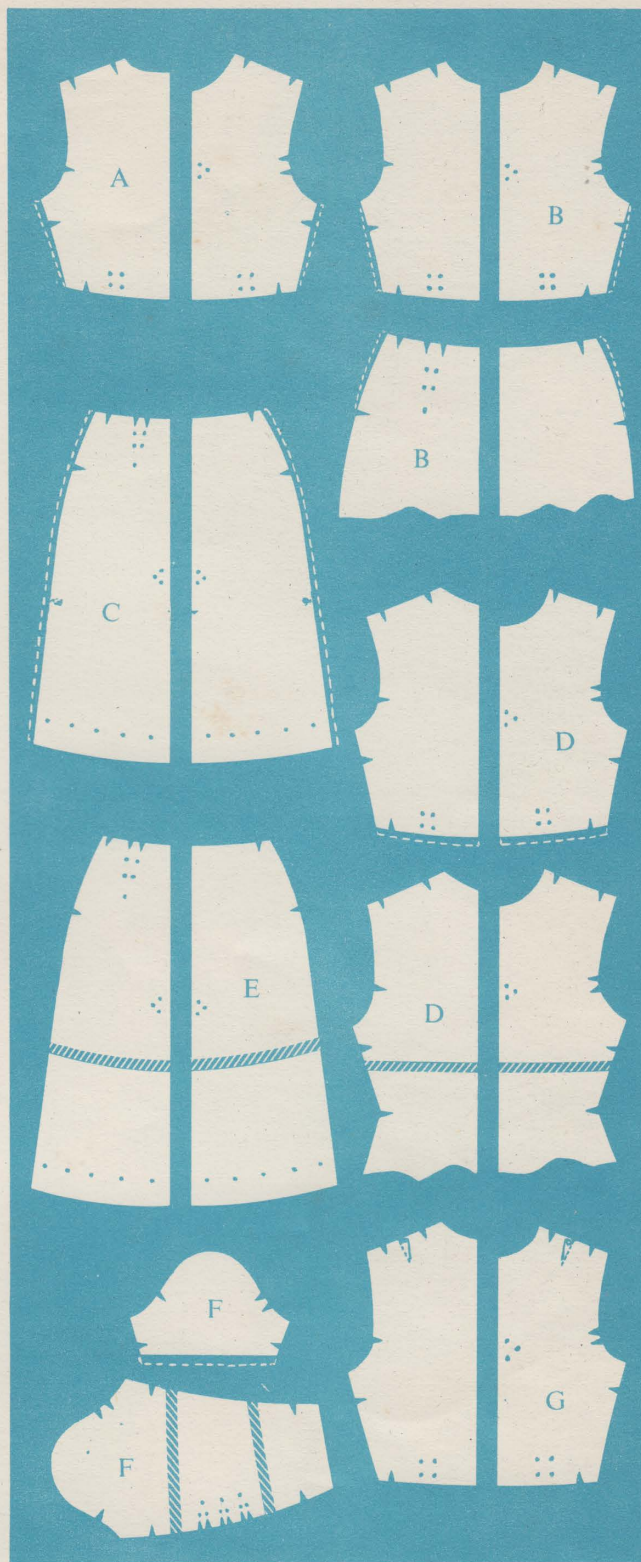
Similarly pattern pieces can be made smaller by folding in, instead of cutting open, at the same part ; or by shortening instead of lengthening at an edge.

For *Narrow Shoulders*, reduce shoulder length by taking in short identical darts at back and front, to required amount. (G).

PATTERN LAYOUT

Different pattern layouts for different widths of fabric, different sizes or styles which can be used from the same pattern, are usually included on pattern instruction sheets. Find the one which refers to your own width of fabric and chosen style and pencil clearly round it. These layouts have been worked out by experts and should be followed very closely.

Note—that when both sides of a garment are identical, a pattern piece is usually given for only ONE side. You will see on the pattern layout that the two pieces are cut either by placing the pattern piece on double fabric, or by cutting two single pieces, the second one being indicated by dotted lines. (In this latter case, make certain that the second piece is cut correctly to give a right hand and a left hand side).



PREPARATION FOR CUTTING

Straightening the fabric

Before you purchase fabric examine it carefully to see that the weft threads are at right angles to the selvedge. If the fabric is patterned, check that the pattern has been printed accurately and in position. This latter is very important in the case of checks and spots.

Make certain that the ends of your fabric are perfectly straight. To do this, pull out the first widthwise thread which extends

right across the fabric from selvedge to selvedge, and then cut along this line.

Shrink your fabric if this is necessary. (See Bulletin No. 7A.) Press out all creases from both fabric and pattern pieces.

Layout for Cutting

Following your marked pattern layout very carefully, place and securely pin every pattern piece on the fabric, using *steel pins*. Check that all 'straight of fabric' and 'fold' marks on the pattern pieces are lying correctly. If striped or checked fabric is used, the pattern pieces may have to be laid out differently on the fabric in order to have the stripes or checks matching at the seams. A separate cutting layout is often given for this.

Do not select checked fabric until you have had some experience of cutting. Refer to Bulletin No. 9A for notes on the cutting of checked fabric.

CUTTING THE CLOTH

Now is the time to make certain that all sewing essentials—especially your cutting shears—are close at hand. You can at last begin cutting out. Cut with long, clean strokes to give a smooth edge.

Transfer all pattern markings other than 'straight of fabric' and 'fold' to each cut section before removing any pattern pieces. The best method of doing this is by Tailor Tacking, using a differently coloured thread for each separate mark. NEVER CUT OUT NOTCHES—either mark their positions with coloured thread or cut notches outward instead of inward.

Study and then follow the sewing directions on the instruction sheet, step by step. DO NOT MISS ANY STAGE in your eagerness, to see the dress complete. To obtain that professional finish press frequently throughout. A little extra time spent on the small, seemingly unimportant details of dressmaking will make all the difference to the final appearance of your dress.

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2a Two Collars and Cuffs.



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9a Shorts and Skirt.



10a Woollen Dress.



11a Pyjamas and Nightdress.



12a Reading a Paper Pattern and Sewing Terms.

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Sewing Bulletins Nos. 1-12 contain all the necessary information for the construction of a wide variety of garments—and will provide useful reference for your sewing. Here is a list of the different techniques and processes :