

How To Fit a Standard Sewing Pattern

by Lindsey Marsh of Sew to Grow

Using the Bondi Top Pattern available at:
www.sewtogrow.com.au/shop

Introduction:

- We are going to be working on the Bondi Top pattern which is a simple box top but can be made in multiple variations to include sleeves or extending it into a dress making it the perfect transitional season piece for your wardrobe.
 - Each step is designed to help you achieve a better fit when making a standard pattern because no one is a standard size and we each have our own individual shape that should be celebrated and is part of the reason we choose to make our own clothing. This is something I'm so passionate about and excited to share with you today.
 - So let's gather up our supplies and get started
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Supplies:

- You will need a Measuring Tape, Marking chalk or pen, scissors, French curve and straight edge ruler, Flat Head Pins, and a Pen to take notes with.
 - You will also need your pattern, about Two yards of light weight non-fusible interfacing also known as pattern ease or Tru-Grid, and Enough yardage of calico, Muslin, an old sheet, solid fabric for your mock up.
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Measuring:

- **UPPER BUST:** First we are going to start with the upper bust. This is more of a true indication of what size you are through the chest and shoulders. Most patterns are drafted for someone that is a B or C cup size and typically when we choose our pattern size we pick based on our bust only to have the neck gape or the shoulders far to big.
 - To measure the upper bust you are going to go around the back, straight under the underarms and up on top of the chest like I have here. Make sure you are relaxed and breathing because this will effect the measurements.
- **BUST :** Next, we are going to measure around the fullest part of your chest, also known as the apex. I would suggest that when you measure you are wearing a properly fitting bra, or the bra you plan to wear under the garment you are

making. There can be a significant difference between a sports bra that you may wear under a shirt or a padded strapless bra you may wear under a dress to an even. So measure with the bra you intend on wearing for your project.

- Start by going around the back, about where your bra strap would be and then come around the side of your chest and hold the tap in the front. Don't pull too tight or leave any ease. It should be just snug. Record your measurement.
- **WAIST:** Now we need to measure your waist. Now this is your natural waist, and not where you think your waist is or where you want it to be or around your tummy. Your waist is where you naturally bend at the bottom of your rib cage. If you cant find your waist from the front or side you can always find it from the back. Where your spine curves it comes into this inner most divot and then starts going back out again. So at that inner most point is your waist and then you can use a L with your fingers to find your waist at the side. Some people even like to use a piece of elastic tied so that you can find your waist by yourself.
- Once you find your waist go around and make sure the tape is in the right spot. Don't suck it in, because it wont do you any benefit if your clothes are too tight. Just relax and record your measurement.
- **HIPS:** Finally, we are going to take your Hip Measurements. The Hip measurement is the largest measurement of the lower half of your body. So some us carry the weight to the front, some the back and I carry my weight in my hips. We are going to take three measurements and then take the largest of those three. Start with the high Hip. This is going to go around the top part of your bum and capture if you have any tummy in the front. Then we are going to scoot down the the middle of the bum and across the front like i'm doing here. Next, slide the tape measure down the the lower part of the bum and this will capture the top part of your thighs. You can write these three measurements down and then pick the largest to choose your sizing from.

Picking Your size and Showing tracing chart.

- Print out the measurement chart provided.
- Write in your size into the spaces provided. This will be different with every pattern company but this gives you an idea of how to go about doing it.
- You may have noticed I haven't taken into account lengths. This is something you can look at now and compare your measurements to the pattern pieces, but for today's project we are just going to focus on the circumferences.

Tracing the Pattern:

- Start by laying out your non-fusible Light weight interfacing. You can use Pattern Ease or any sort of tracing interfacing.
 - I like to use this because it drapes and acts a lot like fabric. This means I can baste it together to make quick mock ups to test a sleeve or bodice, and I can also make my alterations right it and then zig zag it down to make the alteration permanent.
 - I also never cut into my original pattern because once you use it you loose it, and you may want to use it again later to make one for a friend, you may have changed sizes, or you could have even picked the wrong size to begin with.
- Start by pinning your tracing interfacing onto your pattern with flat head pins. Just a few is all thats needed.
- Now we are going to use a pen to mark our sizes in the corners. Its easy to get confused with all the lines, I like to do it this way so that I don't get my lines mixed up.
- Mark your size for the neck and shoulders, out to a what ever size you are in the chest, then your size for the waist area and out to your hip measurement.
- Next we are going to take our french curve and trace our lines.
 - A french curve is the tool that is used in drafting and grading patterns. So its the tool that you will need for tracing your lines and being able to easily blend between sizes. You can also use french curves to change neck lines, alter your sleeves, and change just about anything on your pattern. They really are an essential tool if your a dressmaker. Here I have a large one for straight lines and blending the hip curve, and a more compact one that is easier to use for the upper half of my pattern.
- Let's start easy by tracing all the straight lines. Next, Im going to draw in my grain line and shorten/lengthen line
- Now lets move on to tracing around my pattern. Start at the neck. Line up the french curve the best you can, trace, move the ruler and continue tracing. Now go out for the shoulder. Keep going under the arm and down to the waist.
- Once you get to the waist we are going to blend into your hip measurement.
 - Start by placing your ruler on the size you are for the waist and match up the line, pivot out to your size in the hip. You can pivot out or in to the different sizes.

- Draw the line and if you end up getting a point here then go ahead and blend it smooth.
- Keep going around the bottom edge of the hem.

Cutting out the Pattern:

- Next we are going to make a muslin. You can use any solid cheap fabric for this part. The idea is to quickly make up a test garment to test the fit. I know some may feel this is a waste of time, but isn't it more a waste of your time to sew something up, have it not fit and never wear it again?
- Also, make sure if you are making a mockup in fabric similar to what your final garment will be made out of. If the pattern calls for knit make a mock up in a knit and the same for a woven.
- When cutting, make sure you keep your scissors close to the table and make long fluid cuts.

Marking and sewing pleat:

- Transfer any and all markings from your original pattern onto your mockup
- Follow along with the steps of your pattern to create the mockup starting with step one to make and sew the pleat.
- Fold marks in towards the center, pin, and baste into place.
- After its basted we are going to continue onto the next step attaching the back to the back yoke. For the rest of sewing your mockup you are going to use a long stitch so that you can clip it and rip it apart easily if you make a mistake. You are also going to follow along with the exact seam allowance recommended in the pattern. In this case it will be 3/8"
- Pin and sew along the back.
- Finish your garment by sewing shoulder seams and side seams.
- After you finish, try on your test garment. See if there are any adjustments that need to be made. Does the neck need to be brought in? Is it too tight or too loose anywhere? Once you decided what adjustments need making, transfer them back onto your tracing interfacing.

Once all your changes are made, you are now ready to start making your garment that has been perfectly fitted just for you. I hope that these few tips and tricks that I

showed you today will help you on your sewing journey to making a handmade wardrobe.

Enjoy and Happy Sewing.