

DCO FASHION



DIY GUIDE

HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN CLOTHING

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1. CLOTHING PATTERNS



DIY Clothing Patterns

Pattern making is based on what is called a basic block - sloper. You will likely only be interested in creating a basic sloper for your own unique body shape and measurements. Most pattern making textbooks recommend starting using a fitted bodice with a waist seam.

This basic block includes a waist and side dart in the bodice front as well as a waist and shoulder dart in the bodice back. From this basic block, you can vary necklines, sleeves, dart styles and more to create your own unique garments.

Video Tutorial-

dressclothingonline.com/how-to-make-clothing-patterns

2. HOW TO CREATE PATTERNS FROM EXISTING CLOTHING

DIY Patterns from Existing Clothing

There are a few different methods for making your pattern. A simple knit top can be copied by tracing directly on wax paper. The “pin-through” technique works well for duplicating garments with multiple elements, such as a jacket or blouse. With jeans, I find that tracing the various pieces on silk organza works well. For whatever method you choose, here are a few tips to help you to make a pattern from a piece of clothing, and you don’t have to take it apart to do it!

The original maker of the garment matched fabric weight and type with the design, so for the best result you should also. Stretch denim results in a different fit than regular denim, so if your original garment has stretch, then the copy should as well. Both the original blue and the copy in black are stretch denims, which let me maintain the close fitting style.

As you are making your pattern pieces, add the same type of markings you find on commercial patterns. For example, note the places where seams intersect, the end points for the collar as well as the buttonhole and pocket placements. Label all your pieces, and make sure you add the grain lines.

After you trace the various pieces on a pair of pants, use the flexible ruler to recreate the curve of the seams exactly. Lay the ruler on your pattern to verify your tracing and make adjustments.

You don't need to trace an entire jacket or blouse, so run a thread line along the centre back, creating pattern pieces you can use on the fold. It is a good idea to compare your finished pattern pieces to both sides of the garment to double check the dimensions, then make adjustments if any piece is slightly off.

First make all your pattern pieces, and then sew a muslin to test the accuracy of your pattern. If the garment you started with was not quite the right size, copy it, after which you can do the fitting adjustments on your muslin. Once you have the muslin fitting nicely, you can go back and make the adjustments for size on your pattern pieces.

Video Tutorial-

[dressclothingonline.com/patterns-from-existing-clothes](https://www.dressclothingonline.com/patterns-from-existing-clothes)

3. HAND SEWING TUTORIAL



This **DIY Guide** will cover the basics of **hand sewing**

Tools needed: threading the needle - knotting the thread - running stitch - basting stitch - backstitch - slipstitch - blanket stitch - whip stitch and finishing with knots.

Needles - You'll want to look for "sharps" for basic sewing. "Betweens" are used for quilting. "Embroidery" or "crewel" needles have larger eyes (an eye is the hole at the top of the needle) and are used with thicker threads, like upholstery or embroidery floss

Scissors - You'll want a good pair of shears (normally sold with names like "dressmaking shears") and a pair of pinking shears. Pinking shears have small triangular teeth that cut the fabric in a such a way that it lessens unraveling. Smaller embroidery scissors are also good for cutting threads

Pincushion & Pins - You'll pin most everything you sew to keep the fabrics from slipping. A pincushion keeps them neat and tidy

Measuring tape - For measuring

Marking pens - perfect for embroidery and using patterns

Seam Ripper - This will help you correct mistakes

Beeswax - Essential for hand sewing. When you run your thread over the beeswax, it gives the thread a nice coating that will keep it from tangling and make it stronger

Thimbles - These can be wood, leather or metal. They'll keep your fingers from getting sore and/or pricked

Thread or Floss - An all-purpose cotton thread is good for most things. However, there are many threads to choose from. You'll often pick thread based on your project - cotton fabric = cotton thread, silk = silk thread, etc. Floss is much thicker and normally comes in six-string strands. You'll use this for embroidery and finishing

Fabric - Might I recommend going to your local sewing store and buying some remnants to start off with? Remnants are small bits of fabric from the end of a fabric roll.

Hand Sewing Basics

Threading the needle - When it comes to thread, more is better. Aim for cutting twice as much thread as you think you'll actually need. Taking one end of the thread between your thumb and forefinger, insert it through the eye of the needle. Then, bring the needle to the halfway point by bringing both ends of the thread together. Once there, secure the ends in a knot.

Pierce the needle through the wrong side of the fabric. That is, pierce it through the side that people won't be seeing. Pull it out and through, followed by the thread, all the way until it's stopped by the knot. If your knot goes through, simply make a bigger one.

Pierce the needle through the right side of the fabric. Close to where you pierced your material initially, push the needle back through to the wrong side. Pull the entire length of thread and keep pulling until you feel resistance.

Repeat the previous two steps. Always keeping close to your last stitch, pierce through the wrong side again. Pull all the thread out and voila - your second stitch. Continue doing this, making sure each stitch is the same length as the one before.

End by piercing the right side. You're finished! The needle and thread should now be on the wrong side, where you can finish 'er off with another

knot. Get it as close to your material as possible -- otherwise your stitches will move around and stretch out.

Practice a closer stitch. The basting stitch, as described above, is good for a start. However, the bigger the stitches, the more likely it is to tear or come out.

Start zig-zag stitching. This is a stitch that goes back and forth and is used when a straight stitch just won't do, like to reinforce buttonholes or in working with stretchable fabrics. It can also be used to temporarily join two pieces together at their edges. It looks just like a zigzag (hence the name) and comes in short, medium, and long stitch lengths, too.

Sew two pieces of fabric together. If you're upgrading to this step, put your fabric together so that their wrong sides face outwards (and their right sides are together). Line up the edges along which you want to join them. Sew in a line that follows the edges.

Patch a hole. Sewing a rip or tear isn't too difficult. Just pinch the edges of the hole together, towards the inside (the wrong side). Sew the edges together in a seam. Use a short stitch length (no space between the stitches) to keep it from breaking open.

Video Tutorial -

dressclothingonline.com/how-to-hand-sew

4. SEWING MACHINE TUTORIAL



This DIY Guide will cover the basics of machine sewing

The 3 basic types are:

A **mechanical sewing machine** is the most basic of all three, and often is the least expensive to purchase. Changing from one type of stitch to another (for example from a straight stitch to a zig-zag), as well as changing the stitch length and width, are all done by manually turning dials on the machine. Also bringing the needle to the “needle up” or “needle down” position is done by manually turning the hand wheel.

An **electronic sewing machine** is more of a “push button” operation for selecting stitches as well as their length and width. The needle in an electronic machine will automatically stop in either the “needle up” or the

“needle down” position when you stop stitching. (Mechanical/manual machines can stop in “up”, “down” or anywhere in between). Electronic machines have a push button to change the needle position. Most electronic machines do not have a built in memory, so the stitch type and size will need to be reset each time the machine is turned back on.

A **computerised machine** has a stitch memory that allows you to pick up where you left off on different projects. It also has a memory card (or stick, etc) that allows you to download stitches or embroidery designs from your computer, or the internet, and load them into your machine. A computerised machine can often be the most expensive to purchase of these three types of machines.

Learning to Sew -

Before you can begin to use your sewing machine, you will need to thread it properly, as well as thread and insert a bobbin.

Now that your machine is threaded and the bobbin is loaded correctly you are ready to begin sewing.

I suggest that you gather a few fabric scraps to practice with. This is the best way to get a feel of how your machine runs and how each different stitch looks.

Be sure the control pedal is placed flat on the floor and the cord is free of tangles.

Turn your machine on at the power switch. (If necessary see your owner's manual to locate the switch). Note: Some very old sewing machines do not have an on/off switch. They are operational as soon as they are plugged in to an electrical outlet.

Select Your Stitch Type -

The amount of stitches to choose from, depends on the type of machine you have. Some machines offer a small group of just the basic stitches; others have all the basic stitches plus many decorative stitches as well.

Your sewing machine's owner's manual will give you a description (and probably a drawing) of each available stitch. It will also give the correct settings for the length and width for each type of stitch. Keep it handy as a reference guide when you first start sewing. I strongly suggest you try out each stitch on scrap fabric. This will give you a much clearer idea of what each one looks like.

Note about stitch length -

Very large stitches create a weaker seam than medium or smaller stitches. (But also remember that smaller stitches are more difficult to remove if you make a mistake). Experiment with different stitch lengths on some

scrap fabric. Stitches that are too small can draw up the fabric so that it is difficult for the seam to lay flat. Ones that are too big can show gaps when the seam is stressed. Play around with different settings. Soon you will develop a feel for what is the best length for your project.

In addition to regular stitches, most machines will also have stretch stitches for knit fabric.

A knit fabric (for example tee shirt fabric) has more stretch to it than woven fabric. Therefore the stitches will need to stretch with the fabric as well.

The straight stitch will probably be your most often used stitch when you first learn how to sew. (It is also the one most often used in the projects on this website).

Your sewing machine works by continuously moving the needle in an up and down motion through the fabric. The top thread is joined with the bobbin thread to create the stitches.

Remember - Before you start any new line of stitching, make sure the needle is in the UP, or highest, position. This will insure that the thread is not pulled out of the needle as you start to sew.

If you forget and the thread pulls out - don't stress. It's a very common mistake that beginners make. It's annoying but no big deal. Just raise the needle to the highest point and re-thread it.

To raise the needle and thread take up lever-turn the hand wheel towards you (or press the needle up/down button if your machine has one)

Your next step is to place your fabric under the presser foot and line it up with the seam allowance markings on the metal plate. Your sewing pattern will tell you how wide your seam allowance needs to be. The fabric should also line up under the needle at the spot you want to begin the stitching. Lower the presser foot lever to hold the fabric in place.

Lowering the presser foot holds your fabric in the correct position AND it also engages the tension on the thread. This tension allows the correct amount of thread to be pulled off the spool as you stitch.

If you accidentally forget to lower the presser foot and begin to sew, you will soon have a big tangled mess of thread stitched into your fabric.

Begin sewing by gently stepping on the foot pedal to start the machine. Practice this to see how different pressure on the pedal will increase or decrease the speed of the sewing machine. Go slow in the beginning until you get used to the feel of the machine.

You do not need to push the fabric through the machine. It automatically moves along by the feed dogs under the fabric. You can, however, gently guide the fabric as it stitches, so that the right side edge stays lined up with your seam allowance marking on the metal plate. This will insure nice even seam allowances.

When you are first learning how to use a sewing machine, it is best to keep it moving on the slower side till you get more used to it. You will also notice that when sewing a curved section it is easier to control the fabric at a slower speed.

When you come to the end of your line of stitching, raise the needle to the “up” (highest) position. Cut the thread (top thread and bobbin thread) with either scissors or the thread cutter, if available, on the side of the machine.

Two Ways to Lock in Stitches

Sometimes it will be necessary to “lock in” your stitches at the beginning or end of a seam. This will insure that the first or last few stitches do not loosen up through wear and tear.

If you have an electronic machine, chances are you have a lock stitch button. Press this button before you start your line of stitching, and the machine will automatically stitch in the same spot for several stitches before moving on to the rest of the seam. If you want to lock the stitch at the end of a seam, press the lock stitch button before you raise the presser

foot, and press the foot pedal. The sewing machine will repeat a few stitches in the same spot to lock them in.

If you have a mechanical machine (or your electronic machine does not have a lock stitch button) you can reinforce the seam at the beginning and end using your back stitch button or lever.

Your sewing machine will move the fabric in reverse when you hold down your back stitch button or lever. This can be handy to stitch over the same area to reinforce or lock in the stitches. Practice on some scrap fabric until you get used to this feature.

Video Tutorial-

dressclothingonline.com/how-to-use-a-sewing-machine

5. PLEATED SKIRTS AND DRESSES



DIY Pleated Skirts and Dresses

To sew a pleat, begin by marking your fabric. Precise marking will help you get crisp, even pleats. For each pleat, you'll have three marks: two fold lines and a placement line. When sewing a box pleat, I find it's easiest to make my marks on the wrong side of the fabric.

Working on the wrong side of your fabric, fold one of the fold lines in toward the placement line and pin in place. Repeat with the other fold line. Machine baste across the top of the pleat to secure. Press. Depending on the construction of your garment, you can either leave the pleat as is, or topstitch the pleat.

Video Tutorial-

dressclothingonline.com/pleated-skirts-and-dresses

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