



# THE SEWING STUDIO

## INTRODUCTORY SEWING

Student Handouts

Instructor's email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructor's cell number: \_\_\_\_\_

Missing a class? Fill out this online form **beforehand**:  
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Welcome to The Sewing Studio's Introductory Sewing class! We're starting right from the beginning, so don't worry if you've never touched a sewing machine before. And if you've been sewing for a while, but without much guidance or without a strong technical focus, we're sure you'll notice your skills and your finished projects improve significantly.

Because we're covering a lot of material in this course, there will be a number of things for you to do at home between classes.\* (Don't worry, there's no test at the end.) In order to finish the projects on time and follow the outlined schedule, please keep on top of all homework.

Also, to see the best results from this class, we recommend that you skim through the notes before and after each class to get a firm understanding of what is to come and what has been covered. These notes are jam-packed with useful information, and because sewing has its own language, it's important to keep everything fresh in your mind as you learn. Keep your notes on-hand during class in case you want to jot down any information or tips your instructor shares with you.

Finally, any words you find in **bold** are defined in our glossary at the end of the handouts.

That's it!  
Ready?...



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## **First thing's first... How to be a good student**

Can you believe it? You're finally here at The Sewing Studio! And we're so glad you've joined us! Now, let's make this the best experience possible. After all, you're here to learn. Here are some tips we've put together to help you make the most of your time with us. Follow all of these rules (wow, look how mean we are, haha!), and not only will you have a completed skirt on your last day of class, you'll leave with a solid sewing foundation that you can then build on.

### **1. Show up on time.**

Your class starts exactly on time and each minute is jam-packed with learning. So be here! Then you won't miss an important lesson or demonstration, and you won't disrupt the instructor or other students.

### **2. Do your homework.**

Yup, you've got homework. We'll ask you to do some small things between classes such as purchasing supplies and cutting out fabric. We can't stress enough how important it is that you complete the homework as assigned. If you don't, you'll fall behind. It's that easy. Class is only 2 hours each week, so what you don't do at home, you might have to do in class. And then you'll be a full week behind every other student. What does that lead to? Everyone else will be happy and will have a finished skirt. You will be sad and will have no skirt. ☹

### **3. Come to all of your classes.**

Introductory Sewing is a very regimented program. We have taught thousands of students since 2004, and we continually refine the course so that not a single minute is wasted. If you miss a class, you'll fall behind. And then...remember? You = sad and skirtless.

### **4. Ask questions right away.**

Your instructors are always available to you, and so is everyone in the TSS head office. So you can reach us by email or phone with any questions at any time. Don't leave things to the last minute. If you're not sure of something, refer to these notes or just ask us! We know all of the answers and are happy to share them with you. ☺

### **5. Read these handouts.**

Everything in Introductory Sewing is in here. To be a gold-star student, read these notes before each class to prep, and after each class to review. Students who do that will have a firm grasp on everything covered. And they'll be happy. And they'll have a skirt. ☺

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\* You've got homework! After each week's lesson, you'll see a homework page detailing what to do for the next class. And at the back of these handouts, we've put a Shopping List (p. 33) in case you want to buy everything for the course all in one shot when you're at the fabric store.

## • Week One •

This week, we'll take a look at the sewing machine and some of the tools used in sewing. You'll learn various stitches and seam finishes and we'll talk about choosing a pattern and measuring yourself. And, of course, we'll have some time to sew!

### **THE SEWING MACHINE**

While sewing machines might look slightly different from one model to the next, they all have the same components in similar areas. Take a look at this diagram to familiarize yourself with the different knobs and features.



- 1: Spool pin and spool pin cover
- 2: Bobbin winder
- 3: Stitch width selector
- 4: Hand wheel (Always turn it toward you!)
- 5: Stitch-type selector
- 6: Stitch length selector (2.5 is your standard stitch length)
- 7: Stitch/pattern options (to be used with stitch-type selector)
- 8: Reverse button (for your backstitch)
- 9: On/off switch and power cord
- 10: Automatic needle up/down
- 11: Presser foot lift (it's the black lever hiding at the back of your machine)
- 12: Speed control
- 13: Take-up lever
- 14: Bobbin tension disk



A: Needle

B: Needle clamp

C: Presser foot

D: Feed dogs (they're hiding under the presser foot)

E: Throat plate (the whole metal plate)

F: Seam allowance guides (the lines with measurements)

G: Bobbin cover (the plastic cover)

#### WHEN YOU'RE DONE SEWING

- Reset all your machine's settings for a regular stitch. (Straight stitch, needle in the center position, standard stitch length.)
- Advance the hand wheel until your needle is completely down in the machine. (Remember, always turn your hand wheel toward you!)
- Lower the presser foot using the presser foot lift.
- Turn the light/power off.



## **SEWING SUPPLIES**

Here are the basic supplies you'll use when sewing. Highlighted are the supplies you need to have in your sewing kit for this course.

1: Notions - Those little extras when you sew such as buttons.

2: **Thread** (use all-purpose; cotton, polyester, or cotton/poly blend) - We're all about getting stuff on the cheap, but not thread... the cheap stuff will just break—not worth it!

3: **Stitch ripper / seam ripper** - This little guy will become your best friend. Use it to remove stitches and correct little boo-boos.

4: **Sewing gauge** - A small, hard ruler with a measurement guide/indicator.

5: **Flexible tape measure** - Because you can't wrap a ruler around your body.

6: Snips - Great for trimming threads.

7: Machine needles - Replacing bent or broken machine needles.

8: **Straight pins** - Use them to pin pattern pieces to fabric and fabric to fabric. The longer the better!

9: **Tailor's chalk /marking pencil** - These marking tools come in a variety of shapes, sizes, colours, and textures. After trying out a couple different types, you will find your favourite. And you may have to switch them up depending on your fabric type and colour.

10: **Fabric scissors** - Make sure your scissors have/will be used on fabric only!

11: **Pin cushion** - The tomato is the most common pin cushion (Why? We don't know!) There are also wrist and magnetic ones. And this cute cupcake one!

### **NOT PICTURED:**

- **Tracing paper** - Sandwich your fabric between this (there's chalk on one side) to make marks on the wrong side of your fabric.

- **Tracing wheel** - A pizza-cutter-esque tool used with tracing paper to transfer markings onto fabric.

- **Bobbin** - The mini spool-like thing that holds your lower thread.



## **SEWING A SEAM**

*Ready, set, sew!*

- Pin two pieces of fabric with their right sides together, aligning their **raw edges**.
- Place your pins perpendicular to the seam line with the pin heads on the same side as the fabric raw edge.
- Line up the fabric raw edge with the seam guide line for your standard seam allowance (5/8", 1.5 cm) marked on the sewing machine throat plate.
- Stitch from the top of the fabric all the way to the bottom at the standard **seam allowance: 5/8" (1.5 cm)**.
- Start and finish your seam with a **backstitch**.
- Trim your thread ends at the beginning and end of the stitch.

Note: If you were to ever find yourself in a sew-or-die situation and you were told to sew a seam without further instruction, you could safely assume that your torturer wanted you to sew with a standard stitch length (usually 2.5 out of 4) at 5/8" seam allowance (that's 1.5 cm for all you metric fans). Your torturer would probably also want you to press your seam flat and open, and finish the edges, which we will get to later.

Instructor tip: When you pin your fabric, always pin perpendicular to your planned stitch. This makes it easy to remove your pins, and you'll be less likely to sew over them (a very big no-no!). It also prevents fabric from getting bunched up under the pin, which causes puckers and pleats, a seamstress' worst nightmare!

### STANDARD STITCH LENGTH

- The standard stitch length (it is measured in millimeters) is about 2.5.
- You may need to slightly adjust your stitch length for special fabrics and use a slightly longer stitch length for very thick fabrics, and a slightly shorter stitch length for very thin fabrics.
- **Regular stitch** = standard stitch length, backstitch at both ends, 5/8" (1.5 cm) seam allowance.



## **PRESSING**

For those of you who iron by throwing your clothes in the dryer, it may come as a shock to you that ironing is a very important part of sewing. We call it pressing in the sewing world. Don't worry, it won't take you hours and we won't make you iron your bedsheets or anything. Pressing sets your stitches and flattens out your seam allowances, making your finished projects more polished and crisp. So make friends with your iron and the special pressing tools.

- Press each seam individually as you sew.
- First press seams flat, then press them open.



### **PRESSING TOOLS**

- 1: Iron - Find one that glides well, has a good weight, and an auto-shutoff for safety reasons.
- 2: Sleeve board - This looks like a small, double-sided ironing board and is used for pressing narrow areas such as sleeves.
- 3: Point presser and pouncer - This tool is for pressing seams and corners (using the flat edge and pointed tip) and for pounding stubborn and thick fabrics flat. And it's a great relief for those stress-filled days.
- 4: Pressing cloth - Use this between your fabric and iron for fabrics that can't handle the heat.
- 5: Sleeve roll - This is a smaller, more portable version of the sleeve board.
- 6: Ironing ham - Not a snack! It's for pressing curves in seams.
- 7: Point turner and creaser - These make your points pointy and your creases creasy. Also use it to hold down your fabric when pressing to prevent your fingers from getting steamed!
- 8: Spray bottle - Use this to dampen your pressing cloth, which will create added steam, resulting in a more intense press.

## **SEAM FINISHES**

Take a look at the seam allowances inside your clothing. Chances are, there is some type of 'finish' to the raw edge. Seam finishes aren't just to make your raw edges look pretty (though boy, do they ever!), they also prevent the raw edge from fraying over time. Here are three common seams finishes:

- **Serged seam** - A serged seam finish is done with a special machine called a serger or overlock machine. The serger cuts and finishes the raw edge at the same time.
  - Make sure there is a thread chain of about 4" (10 cm) already on the serger before you begin.
  - Without lifting the presser foot (the feed dogs on the serger come closer to you than they do on your sewing machine, so you don't need to lift it), push your fabric up to the front of the presser foot.
  - Align your raw edge with the very right of the throat plate. This will ensure that at least a little bit of your seam allowance is cut by the blade to keep your raw edge clean and the serger stitches on the seam allowance.
  - Serge your seam allowances individually, making sure the blade is trimming at least a small amount of the raw edge as you go.
  - When you're finished serging the seam allowance, continue to press the foot pedal until you have enough of a thread chain to leave a 4" (10 cm) tail on both your fabric and on the serger.
  - Cut the thread chain and exhale. You're done!

Note: Because there is no backstitch on the serger, you'll need to tie the thread chain in a knot to prevent the serge from unraveling when trimmed.

Instructor tip: When serging, go slowly! And make sure the bulk of your fabric is out of the way and you're only serging the seam allowance. While you're serging, the bulk of your fabric (that'll be your garment) will want to sneak up underneath the seam allowance if you're not paying attention. This could lead to major problems if the fabric gets caught. (Best-case scenario, the fabric will be serged to the seam allowance and you'll have to spend a long time taking out all those serger threads. Worst-case scenario, the blade will cut a huge hole in your garment. Yuck!) Keep one of your hands underneath your seam allowance at all times, and use your fingers to constantly push the bulk of your fabric out of the way so your garment doesn't get cut by the serger.



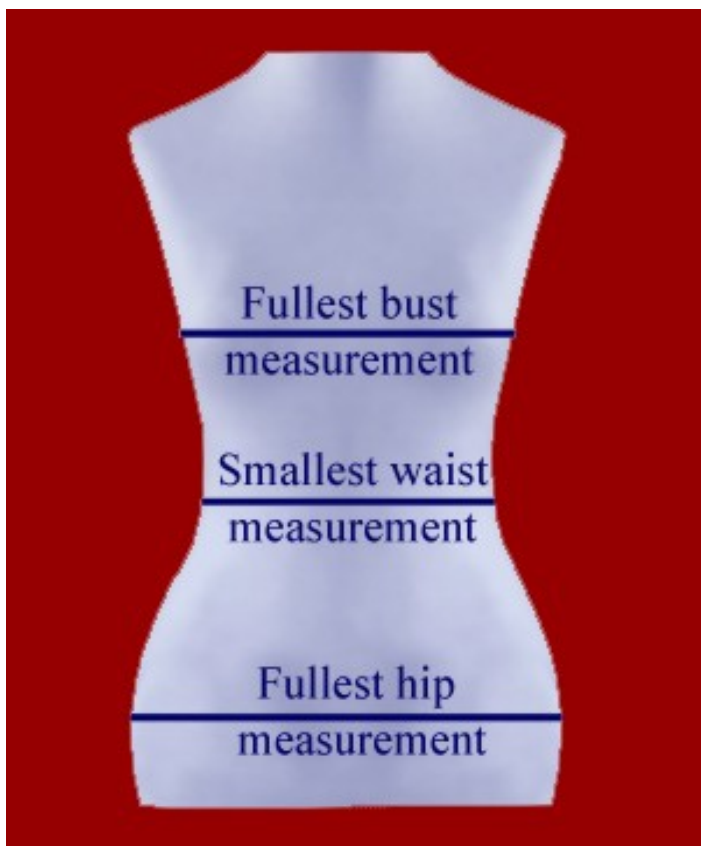


- **Overedge zigzag** - *This zigzag finish goes over the raw edge of the fabric. As you sew, the needle will go on the fabric then off the fabric, encasing the raw edge.*
  - Set your sewing machine to a zigzag stitch.
  - Set the machine's stitch width to its maximum.
  - Select a shorter stitch length than standard (to keep the stitches closer together, which will help prevent the raw edge from fraying).
  - Align the raw edge of the fabric so that you see it within the hole of your presser foot. This allows the zigzag stitch to go on the fabric then off the fabric, encasing the raw edge and preventing it from fraying.

- **Zigzag finish** - *A zigzag finish runs down the center of the seam allowance. You will have to cut the excess seam allowance away after the stitch is complete.*
  - Set your sewing machine to a zigzag stitch.
  - Set the machine's stitch width to its maximum.
  - Select a shorter stitch length than standard (to keep the stitches closer together, which will help prevent the raw edge from fraying).
  - Stitch down the center of the seam allowance (backstitching at both ends), lining up the left edge of your presser foot with the seam.
  - Trim the seam allowance close to the zigzag stitching. (Don't cut the stitches!)

What do you do when? So you've got all three seam finish methods down. But now what? Which method do you use and when? You'll evaluate each fabric and project separately. And always test it on a scrap piece of the fabric beforehand. Different fabrics will behave in different ways, so look for the method that's most suitable.

- Look at your resources. (If you own a serger, it's a great choice because it's much faster and neater.)
- Look at your fabric. (Always do a test first to see how your fabric behaves with the seam finish method in order to evaluate which one is most suitable.)
- Look at your time. (Do you have the time to trim down each seam allowance for a regular zigzag finish?)



## **MEASURING YOURSELF**

*It's here—the moment everyone dreads! Don't worry, it's not about the number, it's about the fit! Use your flexible tape measure to measure around your body at the three key measuring points for garment-making: bust, waist, hips. For the best results, use a mirror when measuring yourself or ask a friend to help. And make sure you're not measuring around a bulky sweater or full skirt. (Get close to your skin!)*

- Measure yourself taught, not tight.
- Keep the measuring tape parallel to the floor. (This is when the mirror comes in handy.)
- Measure your bust at the fullest part, your waist at the narrowest part (your natural waist—the one measured in the world of sewing—is where your body bends to the side), and your hips

around the fullest part (including the bum, hips, and all that good stuff).

- Write your measurements down. You'll need them when purchasing a pattern and when adjusting it to your size. And for each new project, re-measure—you never know!

## **PATTERN BOOKS**

*Pattern books (or pattern catalogues) can be found at some fabric stores. They feature pages upon pages of commercial sewing patterns, grouped into categories such as dresses, skirts, jackets, men's, home, etc. There are several different companies that make patterns, and they'll each have their own book. Please choose a pattern only from one of the companies we recommend: Butterick, Simplicity, McCall's, Vogue.*

- Flip through a pattern book at a fabric store when looking for a garment to make. (We recommend Butterick, Simplicity, McCall's, Vogue.)
- Once you've found a pattern you like, make a note of the style number and also the company name.
- You'll find a body measurement chart at the back of the catalogue to help determine which size you'll need to buy. Buy your appropriate size according to this chart. Keep in mind, it's much different than the size you normally buy from a store.
- Patterns can be browsed and purchased online as well: Butterick ([mccall.com](http://mccall.com)), Simplicity ([simplicity.com](http://simplicity.com)), McCall's ([mccall.com](http://mccall.com)), Vogue ([mccall.com](http://mccall.com)).

**Butterick**

**Simplicity**

**McCALL'S**

**VOGUE**

Please note: Each pattern company has a different sizing chart. So while your measurements stay the same (but keep in mind, they may change over time!), the size pattern you require will vary from one company to the next. Always check the company's sizing chart to determine what size pattern to buy.

I'M A SIZE WHAAAAT?????

Ok, take a deep breath. Yes, the pattern size you need to buy is probably 3 to 5 sizes bigger than what you would normally buy in a store. In the 90s, a certain American clothing store started the trend known as vanity sizing. That's when sizes like 0 and 00 started to emerge. (Did you really think those sizes were real?) You may not like the size that you are in sewing patterns, but luckily, you only need to think about it until the fabric is cut out. Then, once your garment is sewn, the size will not matter since there are no tags (woo hoo!) and it will be custom-fit to perfectly flatter your every curve.

#### A NOTE ON PATTERNS

We recommend you use only Butterick, Simplicity, McCall's, or Vogue. There are other pattern companies out there (as well as some independents), and while their styles may be great, the patterns themselves are often more challenging for a beginner to work with. For your first garment, choose something simple to make: a very plain skirt with minimal detailing (no pockets, no belt loops, no lining, no pleating, etc.). After you've sewn a few basic, simple, easy-to-read patterns (from the companies we've mentioned above, remember?!), the sewing world will be your oyster and you'll then be able to choose and sew any pattern you'd like.

#### **Where-to-Buy**

You can find patterns, fabric, and sewing supplies at Fabricland (get a membership for discounts) as well as at some Zellers and Wal-Mart locations (but call ahead to see if they have a fabric/sewing section). Or, try any of the stores in the Fashion District on Queen Street, west of Spadina.

We have some fabric options available to you at the studio for purchase for the drawstring bag and zippered pouch projects. And if you're looking to buy a sewing machine, we can get you the ones we work on in-studio (Janome Sewist 625E) for almost 50% off retail since we're a school.



## **HOMEWORK for Week 2** \*

1. Measure yourself and write down your measurements.
2. Buy a skirt pattern and bring it to class. Remember, the size you need will be significantly larger than the size you normally buy in stores. Sewing sizes have nothing to do with store-bought clothing sizes. Your skirt must be simple (no extra, fancy details), and must have a zipper and a waistband (a piece of horizontal fabric above the skirt). If you find a pattern and you're not sure if it's suitable for your skill level, email the company name and style number to your instructor or to the TSS head office. We'll be able to tell you if it's a suitable pattern for you for this course.

Need help at the fabric store? Check out our super helpful **Student Guide: Surviving a Fabric Store** on page 34.

**IF YOU WANT TO GET AHEAD**, buy your materials for your drawstring bag and your zippered pouch. Read #1 in "Homework for Week 3" and #3 in "Homework for Week 4" for the specifics.

\* This is your first homework assignment. See? It's not that bad! (But it *will* get harder.) Now, remember what we said about falling behind? Don't do it! Stay on track, do your homework, and you'll be well on your way to a custom skirt. ☺ If you don't do your homework... you'll be sad!! ☹



## • Week Two •

This week, we'll look at the pattern and its contents, and we'll build on the sewing skills you started developing last week. We'll discuss fabric fundamentals, and by the end of class, you will have an understanding of the pattern and its elements, and you'll be able to determine how much fabric to buy. You'll learn about zippers, interfacing, and choosing thread, and you'll also learn more stitches.

### THE PATTERN ENVELOPE

#### FRONT

- Company name
- Style/pattern number
- Pattern size
- Garment views

#### BACK

- Company name
- Style/pattern number
- Front & back view (technical drawings)
- Garment description
- Suggested/recommended fabrics
- Body measurement and size chart
- Metric vs. imperial measurements
- Notions
- With or without **nap**



6041 7 PIECES/PREZAS		SIX SIZES IN ONE										PATRON SIX TAILLES / PATRON SEIS TALLAS									
Métrages et instructions de couture en Français à l'intérieur de l'enveloppe.		Sizes	8	10	12	14	16	18													
		European Size	34	36	38	40	42	44													
		Bust	31½	32½	34	36	38	40													
		Waist	24	25	25½	28	30	32													
		Hips	33½	34½	36	38	40	42													
		Back-neck to waist	15½	16	16½	16½	16½	17													
		A, C, E	45***	3½	3½	3½	3½	3½	3½	Y6											
		60***	2½	2½	2½	2½	2½	2½													
		B, D, F	45***	1½	1½	2	2½	2½	2½	Y6											
		60***	1½	1½	1½	1½	1½	1½													
		GARMENT MEASUREMENTS A, C, E length 38 38 38 38 38 38 38 in B, D, F length 22 22 22 22 22 22 22 *																			
		SUGGESTED FABRICS Crepe, Linen and Linen Blends, Lightweight Wool and Wool Blends, Sueded Silks/Rays, Laundered Cottons, Chambray, Poplin, Denim, Crêpe De Chine, Crêpe Satin, Synthetic Suede. Allow extra fabric for matching plaids or stripes.																			
		REQUIREMENTS Thread, one ½" button, A, B, two 1" D-rings, 1½ yd. of 1" wide grosgrain ribbon, C, D, 3½ yd. of 1" wide grosgrain ribbon, E, F, 2" length of 2" wide Velcro®, 1½ yd. of 1" wide grosgrain ribbon.																			
		TISSUS SUGGERES Crêpe, Toile de lin et tissus similaires, Laine et lainage légers, Soies/Rayons suédés, Cotons lavés, Chambray, Popeline fine, Denim, Crêpe De Chine, Crêpe de Satin, Suede Synthétique. Prévoyez davantage de tissu pour raccorder les écossais ou rayures.																			
		TELAS SUGERIDAS Crêpe, Tela de lino y tejidos similares, Lana y mezclas de lanas ligeras, Sedas/Rayones apamandados, Algodones lavados, Chambray, Popelina fina, Dini, Crêpe De China, Crêpe de Satin, Genuza Sintética. Se necesita hilo extra para costar cuadros o rayas.																			
		MERCERIA Fil, un botón de 1,3cm, A, B, dos hebillas en forma de D de 2,5cm, 1,50m de cinta de gorgorán de 2,5cm de ancho, C, D, 3,5m de cinta de gorgorán de 2,5cm de ancho, E, F, 5cm de Velcro® de 5cm de ancho, 1,50m de cinta de gorgorán de 2,5cm de ancho.																			

### INSIDE THE PATTERN

#### INSTRUCTION SHEET

- Company name
  - Style/pattern number
  - Page number
  - Illustrated garment views (technical drawings)
  - Illustrated pattern pieces with a list of the pieces to use for each garment (If not shown here, you'll find the list of pieces you need with the suggested cutting layouts.)
  - Body measurement chart
  - General cutting instructions/tips
  - Terms and definitions
  - Cutting layouts
  - Sewing directions
- PATTERN PIECES (can be ironed with low heat and no steam)
- Style number
  - Universal symbols:
    - Grain line (if there is no grain line, there will be a fold bracket)
    - **Notches**
    - **Dart** (broken line and dots in a "V" or diamond)
    - Dots, squares, and triangles

## **STITCHES**

- **Staystitch** — done through a single thickness of fabric
  - Short stitch length (1.5 on our machines)
  - Backstitch at both ends
  - Sew at a 4/8" (1 cm) seam allowance
- **Baste** — done through a single thickness of fabric
  - Longest stitch length (4 on our machines)
  - No backstitch (leave your thread ends long)
  - Sew at a 4/8" (1 cm) seam allowance
- **Topstitch**
  - Regular stitch on the fabric right side (backstitch at both ends)
  - Line up the side of your presser foot with the seam, and follow that seam as a guide
- **Edgestitch**
  - Regular stitch on the fabric right side (backstitch at both ends)
  - Stitch very close to the seam, about 1/16" (2 mm) away
  - Eyeball-it to keep your edgestitch straight. Try looking at the needle and keeping the distance between the needle and seam the same. Or look at where the seam hits the presser foot and keep that same alignment
- **Gather**
  - Baste your fabric, leaving your thread ends long at both ends
  - Hold onto one individual thread on one end of the fabric, and push the fabric gently across that thread, causing it to gather.
  - Push gently—so you don't break the thread—while moving the gathers down the fabric

## **INTERFACING**

*This fabric-like gauze-ish stuff is used to give stability and body to your garment where needed (such as in the waistband, collar, and cuffs). Choose a drape and flexibility similar to your garment fabric: lightweight, medium weight, heavyweight.*

- Woven vs. non-woven: Woven **interfacing** has lengthwise and crosswise grains, so all appropriate pattern pieces must be aligned properly according to their grainline. Non-woven interfacing is the stuff that looks like gauze. You can put pattern pieces on non-woven interfacing any which way (up and down, side to side, at an angle, doesn't matter).
- Fusible vs. sew-in: Fusible interfacing is glued in place with an iron. The glue is identifiable by its bumpiness or its sheen. Sew-in interfacing must be basted into place.
- Cut interfacing ½" (1 cm) smaller than the pattern piece around all the edges to reduce the bulk in your seams. Fuse or baste your interfacing to the wrong side of the appropriate garment pieces.

**The easiest, most fuss-free interfacing to use is fusible non-woven.**

## **FABRIC FUNDAMENTALS**

*Before you cut your fabric for any project, make sure to prepare it according to the instructions below. This is one of the most important parts of sewing. If you don't prepare your fabric properly, your garment will distort, just like that shirt you love where the seams twist around to the front of your body.*

### ELEMENTS OF FABRIC

- Right side/wrong side
- **Selvage:** The edges at the top and bottom of the fabric that won't fray any more
- **Grain:** Lengthwise grain runs parallel to the selvage, crosswise grain runs perpendicular to the stitch
- **Bias:** Any angle on the fabric; 45 degrees is called the "true bias"

### PREPARE YOUR FABRIC FOR EVERY PROJECT

1. Pre-treat your fabric. (Wash and dry it as you plan to wash and dry your finished garment.)
2. Check the fabric right side for flaws, then mark them on the fabric wrong side with a marking pencil or a pin.
3. Make your fabric "on grain" (when lengthwise and crosswise grains are at right angles) by following one of the following methods:

- Cut into the selvage, then tear the fabric. Once you've done that, pull a single crosswise thread from selvage to selvage to ensure that the tear has gone along the entire crosswise grain. If the thread stops short, move over and cut into the selvage again, this time farther away from the fabric edge.

- Cut into the selvage, hold one crosswise thread, and push the fabric across that thread as if you're gathering the fabric. Push the fabric from one selvage to the other, then cut along the line that's been formed.

- Cut along a visible crosswise grain. If the fabric has a prominent crosswise grain, or a woven—NOT printed—linear design along the crosswise grain (such as a woven plaid), cut the fabric along that line.

- For fabric that won't go on-grain with one of the above methods, rely on your eye to examining the fabric's drape. Match the selvages together, and while holding the fabric in the air, shift one selvage over until the fabric drapes straight up and down without any waves or distortion along the bottom fold.

(If the fabric is still "off grain", pull the fabric firmly and stretch it across the bias. Then, try one of the above methods again.)

4. Fold the fabric right sides together, matching the selvages.

## **ZIPPERS**

- A regular zipper (shown in red) has teeth on the right side and a sturdy pull-tab.
- A separating zipper (shown in navy) detaches at the bottom and unzips into two pieces—like on a jacket.
- An invisible zipper (shown in baby blue) has its teeth on the wrong side, a more delicate pull-tab, and disappears into a seam.



## **CHOOSING THREAD**

- Choose all-purpose thread in cotton, polyester, or a cotton/poly blend. (Try Gutermann or Mettler.)
- Pick one that “disappears” in your fabric by laying a single thread across your fabric.

## **HOMEWORK for Week 3 \***

1. Purchase your drawstring bag supplies (we have kits for sale at the studio with everything you need cut to size):

- Fabric — Ask for ½ yd (1/2 m) and you'll have plenty for both the drawstring bag AND the zippered pouch. Choose a fabric that's similar to the fabric we used at the studio for our sewing samples. Pick a fabric that's soft and lightweight, and isn't slippery nor stretchy. A printed cotton works well, as does a lightweight denim or a flannelette or a linen blend.
- Ribbon or a thin, lightweight cord — 1.5 yd (1.5 m)
- Thread — Black, white, or a thread that matches or contrasts your fabric.

2. Cut out the fabric for your drawstring bag (if you are not purchasing one of our pre-cut kits). Pre-treat your fabric—wash and dry it as you plan to wash and dry your drawstring bag once it's complete—and make the fabric on-grain (see Fabric Fundamentals if you forget how). Cut your fabric 12" (30 cm) across by 19" (48 cm) "on the fold". That means the 19" (48 cm) is measured up from the fold of the fabric, so when you open it, the piece will be 12" (30 cm) by 38" (96 cm).

3. Purchase your skirt fabric and notions. Follow the suggested fabrics on the pattern envelope, and use the chart on the back to determine how much fabric to purchase. Also pick up the zipper (make sure it's a regular zipper!), thread, and interfacing (if required). Bring your fabric to class next week to show your instructor.

4. Cut out the appropriate pattern tissue pieces for your garment (just the tissue, not the fabric!). Read the pattern instructions to see which pieces you need for the skirt you're making, and cut them out leaving extra tissue margin around each piece (like this pic).



**IF YOU WANT TO GET AHEAD**, buy your materials for your zippered pouch while you're at the store. Read #3 in "Homework for Week 4" for the specifics.

**ARE YOU BEHIND?** Ahhh! Get to it! If you haven't yet measured yourself or bought your pattern (that was your homework from last week), what are you waiting for? No excuses allowed in this sewing course! We want you to finish that skirt and stay on track. Make sure you do your homework for last week **and** this week. Stat!

\* If you come to class next week without your drawstring bag fabric cut out (see #2 above), you'll be behind. You will likely not finish your drawstring bag project while everyone else does, and you'll start your descent into the sewing netherworld. See? Not fun. Do your homework!

## • Week Three •

*This week we'll complete our first project! Now you'll have something to show off. We'll also show you how to lay out your pattern pieces and pin them onto your fabric.*

### **DRAWSTRING BAG**

- Turn under both narrow ends of the fabric 2.5" (6 cm) to the wrong side of the fabric. Press.
- Within that 2.5" (6 cm), turn under a standard seam allowance (5/8" or 1/5 cm). Press. (These two presses will leave creases in the fabric that we'll use later.)
- Fold the bag in half, right sides together, matching both narrow ends at the top, and unfolding the pressed edges completely.
- With the pressed edges opened up (unfolded), measure 4" (10 cm) from the top of the bag, and draw a mark on both sides of the fabric.
- Leaving a little space for breathing room, lay the ribbon/cord **ABOVE** that 4" (10 cm) mark. Then draw a second mark **ABOVE** the ribbon/cord. You'll probably have your second mark 3.25" (8cm) from the top of the bag.
- Pin then sew both sides of the drawstring bag from the very top to the very bottom (with the pressed edges opened up and unfolded), leaving a space between the two marks for the ribbon/cord to pass through. You'll backstitch above the top mark and below the bottom mark. When finished, you'll have two complete stitches on each side of the bag. One that goes from the top of the bag to the top of the hole (backstitch at both ends), and one that goes from the bottom of the hole to the bottom fold of the bag (backstitch at both ends).
- Clip the raw edge at the bottom fold of the bag to the seam.
- Press the seams flat then open.
- Finish the side seams.
- Refold the original pressed edges, ensuring your seam allowances stay pressed open.
- Edgestitch the casing (all the way around the bag) underneath the drawstring hole.
- Topstitch the casing above the drawstring hole.
- Cut your ribbon/cord in 1/2 and thread one piece all the way around, coming in and out the same hole. Thread the other piece all the way around, coming in and out the other hole.

### **IDENTIFYING THE FABRIC RIGHT SIDE**

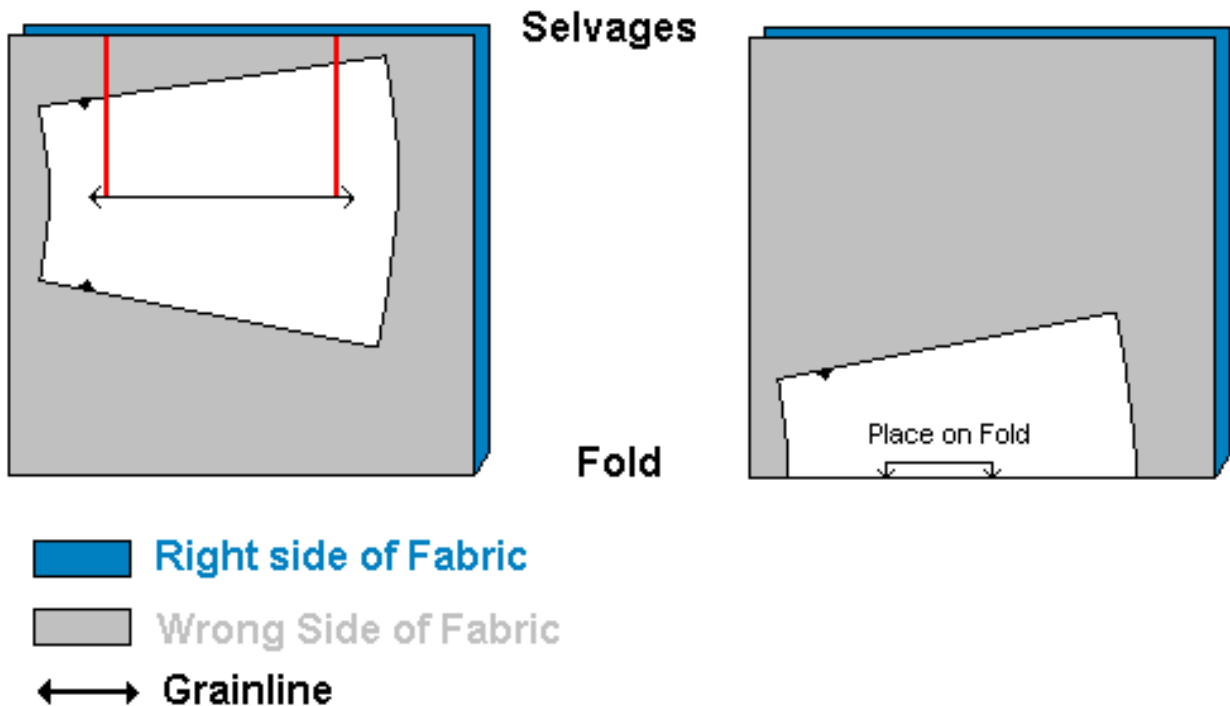
- Look at the fabric texture or colour saturation to help identify the fabric right side.
- The selvage may have writing, coloured squares, or a smooth surface on the right side.



## **ALIGNING AND PINNING PATTERN PIECES**

- Prepare your fabric and make it on-grain by following the steps outlined in Fabric Fundamentals in Week Two. (Pre-treat it, make it on-grain, and match your selvages together and right sides together.)
- Position all necessary garment tissue pieces on your fabric according to the grainline marked on the pattern pieces.
  - If there is a grainline (see below left), make the grainline parallel to the selvage. To do that, first pin one end of the grainline to the fabric, then measure the distance from the grainline to the selvage. Next, pivot the tissue piece on that pin until the other end of the grainline is at the same distance from the selvage. Once it is, pin the other end of the grainline in place.
  - If there is a fold bracket (see below right), place the pattern piece directly on the fold of the fabric.

### **Two Possible Layouts**



- Make sure you conserve fabric, aligning pieces close to each other and close to the edge of the fabric.
- Position all of your tissue pieces in place before you pin them to make sure everything fits onto your fabric.
- Once everything is laid out, secure all appropriate pattern pieces with pins. Smooth out your tissue pieces as you pin around the outer edges, keeping your pins inside your cutting lines at all times, and going through all thicknesses of tissue and fabric.

- Check that you've got the right tissue pieces. (Some waistbands have separate pieces for various sizes, rather than combining them.)
- Check how many times each piece is to be cut. When you cut through both thicknesses of your fabric, you'll end up with two pieces that are mirror images of each other. If the pattern says "Cut 2" (which is standard), when you cut around all four sides, you'll have two pieces. So if it says "Cut 4", you'll need to cut it out once, then move the piece over and cut it out again. So make sure you'll have room to do that. Similarly, "Cut 1 on fold" means when you cut around the three sides, the fold will open up to reveal one large piece. If it says "Cut 2 on fold" you'll have to cut, then move the tissue piece and cut again.

NOTE: The way we've explained laying out your pattern pieces above (as illustrated in the "Two Possible Layouts" diagram) is the correct way. You now don't have to worry about those "suggested layout" diagrams that are in commercial patterns. Those are merely suggestions, and they are certainly not the absolute only way. We often discourage people from even looking at those, since they're usually quite difficult to read and understand, and very difficult to translate to your fabric. All you need to know is **make your grainline parallel to the selvage, and put the fold brackets on the fold!**

#### TO MAKE A PATTERN LARGER OR SMALLER

You can easily increase or decrease your pattern by one or two sizes. Anything more than that may require a different shape to the pattern pieces themselves, so you'll need to buy the pattern that's closer to your size.

- Use your sewing gauge to measure the distance between the two largest sizes, and transfer that measurement outside your pattern piece to make the pattern one size bigger.
- Measure the distance between the two smallest sizes, and transfer that measurement *inside* your pattern piece to make the pattern one size smaller.

#### TO ADJUST YOUR PATTERN FOR MULTIPLE SIZES

- Figure out what size waist you are and what size hips you are according to the pattern's sizing chart.
- Measure on your body the distance between your waist and your hips, and transfer that measurement onto your pattern pieces so that you know at what point you need to cut for your hip measurement. This measurement will only need to be transferred onto the front, back and side (if applicable) pieces.
- On the pattern pieces, draw a new cutting line from your waist size (at the waist) to your hip size (at the marking you transferred for your hips).
- Cut the pattern pieces along the new cutting line. Remember to cut your waistband pieces to the size of your waist measurement.

## **HOMEWORK for Week 4 \***

1. Prep your skirt fabric according to Fabric Fundamentals (Week 2). Pre-treat it, put it on-grain, put your selvages together and right sides together.

2. Align and pin your pattern tissue pieces to your fabric. Once they're pinned in place, fold up your fabric carefully (pins and all) and bring it to class for your instructor to approve. Keep in mind, this will take a long time! Set aside a couple of hours to do this.

3. Purchase your zippered pouch supplies (we have kits for sale at the studio with everything you need cut to size):

- Fabric — You can use leftovers from your drawstring bag, or purchase ¼ yd (25 cm) of lightweight fabric. Again, no stretch, no slipperiness.
- 7" zipper (18 cm) — Make sure it's a regular zipper, with its zipper teeth on the same side as the pull.
- Thread — Black, white, or a thread that matches or contrasts your fabric.

4. Cut out the fabric for your zippered pouch (if you are not purchasing one of our pre-cut kits). Pre-treat your fabric—wash and dry it as you plan to wash and dry your zippered pouch once it's complete—and make the fabric on-grain (see Fabric Fundamentals if you forget how). Cut two rectangles, each 11" (28 cm) across by 7" (18 cm) high. Remember, when your fabric is folded right sides together and selvages together, you'll automatically cut two rectangles at once.

**ARE YOU BEHIND?** Brace yourself. We're going to be honest. You're going to have a very busy week catching up. VERY! Go back, read, and do each of the homework sections, and get in gear. It's not too late! But get completely caught up this week... or you = sad.

\* This week, your homework is going to take some time. Prepping your skirt fabric and aligning and pinning your pattern pieces is likely going to take you a couple of hours.

## • Week Four •

*Take a deep breath... its zipper week. Zippers, while sometimes tricky, are an important part of getting into and out of your skirt. This week we will focus on your zippered pouch so that you have another little project to show off to all your friends. If you had any trouble laying out your pattern pieces this past week, please ask your instructor for help... we don't bite, we swear!*

### **ZIPPERED POUCH**

- Finish the raw edges of all four sides of both rectangles of fabric.
- On the long side (11", 28 cm) of one rectangle, center your zipper, then mark the position of your zipper top stop and bottom stop (those little metal things).
- Pin your two pieces of fabric together (right sides together), and stitch from the top of the fabric to where the mark is that indicates the top stop. Backstitch.
- Change your machine settings to a baste stitch, and baste to just below the mark on your fabric that indicates the bottom stop.
- Change your machine settings back to a regular stitch, and backstitch to the bottom stop mark. Then continue sewing the remainder of the seam, backstitching at the very end.
- Press your seam flat then open.
- Place the zipper right side down (teeth down) over the seam allowance, aligning the zipper teeth with the center of the seam.
- Pin one side of the zipper tape to the seam allowances only.
- Switch to a zipper foot.
- Baste the zipper tape to the seam allowance from the very top of the tape to the very bottom of the tape.
- Pin the other side of the zipper tape to the other seam allowance, and baste, first switching your zipper foot to the other side.
- Flip your fabric over so you see the right side. Find the zipper bottom stop by feeling for it, and make a small chalk mark just below it.
- On the right side of the fabric, starting on one side of the top of the zipper, topstitch approximately 3/8" (1 cm) away from the seam. At your chalk mark, stop and pivot your fabric, sew across the seam to about 3/8" (1 cm) to the other side. Pivot again and finish the other side of the seam, again approximately 3/8" (1 cm) away from the seam.
- Remove your baste stitches to reveal the zipper teeth.
- Open your zipper, then sew the final three sides of the pouch together (right sides together), pivoting at the corners.

### **CUTTING PATTERN PIECES**

- Cut the fabric along the pattern piece cutting lines.
- Where there is only one line, cut along that line. Where there are multiple lines, cut along the line indicated for your size.
- Adjust for your size when appropriate.
- Keep the pattern tissue pieces attached to the fabric even after the garment pieces have been cut.

### **MARKING YOUR FABRIC**

Transfer the markings from your pattern tissue directly to your fabric. Make sure the fabric wrong sides are clearly marked, and also transfer the pattern piece number onto the fabric.

#### **TOOLS**

- tracing paper and tracing wheel
- tailor's chalk or a marking pen

#### **MARKS TO TRANSFER**

- notches
- darts
- dots, squares, and triangles

## **HOMEWORK for Week 5\***

- Cut and mark your skirt fabric. Leave your tissue pieces pinned to your fabric, and hold on to all of your extra fabric bits. Make sure you transfer all of your pattern markings from the tissue onto your fabric. You'll come to class next week ready to sew! This will take some time, just like pinning your pattern pieces did. So set aside an hour or two to cut and mark your skirt.

- Bring in all remaining notions for your skirt. Have you picked up everything for your skirt? Regular zipper, thread, interfacing? You'll need all of this next week, so make sure you've got it.

**ARE YOU BEHIND?** Uh oh. Really? You are? ☹ Let's get serious. You're kind of a little bit screwed right now if you haven't yet shown your instructor your tissue pieces pinned in place on your fabric. Every time you don't do your homework, you end up taking class time to do it, which puts you behind the curriculum and behind the rest of the students. Do your best to catch up asap. Read and do all of the homework including this week's. Remember... Skipping homework = sad, skirtless you. ☹

\* You deserve a pat on the back for keeping on top of your homework! You're almost there... A custom skirt is within reach! Cutting and marking your fabric will likely take an hour or two, so set some time aside for it.



## • Week Five •

*YAY... you've made it this far and now its time to get right to it. This week we start our skirts. Go ahead and set up your sewing machine with the appropriate thread for your skirt. By the end of today, you will know how to sew darts and apply interfacing. You might also leave with a good portion of your skirt done.*

### **DARTS**

No, we are not going on a field-trip to the local pub! These darts (unlike the sharp pointy ones your throw) help shape the fabric so that the garment drapes nicely around our curves. Darts look like little seams, usually at your bust or at the top of your skirt. You may not have any in your skirt, but pay attention anyway. You will run into a dart of this variety at some point in your garment-making.

- Transfer appropriate dots and lines from the pattern tissue to your fabric.
- Fold and pin the dart, right sides together, matching markings (dots and stitch lines).
- Stitch from the wide end to the point (backstitching at the wide end).
- Taper the stitch line gradually and evenly to the point (at the fold of the fabric), stitching off the edge of the fabric and leaving the thread ends long.
- Tie the thread ends together, using a pin to guide the knot to the dart point. Trim the thread to 1/4" (0.5 cm).
- Press the darts flat, then in the direction indicated on the garment pattern (usually to the center).

### **INTERFACING**

As we mentioned before, interfacing gives shape and body to fabric. With your skirt, you will most likely find it in the waistband.

- Cut the interfacing slightly smaller than the pattern piece, about 1/2" (1 cm) smaller around all four sides.
- Attach the interfacing to the wrong side of the appropriate waistband piece(s) by fusing it with the iron or basting it in place.
- Re-transfer any necessary pattern tissue markings to the interfacing.

## **HOMEWORK for Week 6** •

- Take a breather!! No more homework!! Yippee!!!

**IF YOU WANT TO GET AHEAD**, and if you have a machine at home, you're more than welcome to do some work on your skirt. But you don't need to! You'll still finish everything by the end of the last class, provided you've kept on top of your homework up until this point. (And as long as you haven't been slacking off in class, haha!)

• Congrats! You've kept up with everything, and as a reward... no homework! You deserve a spa day or a shopping splurge. That should be your homework this week! No, really! 😊

- **Week Six** •

*This week (and until the end of the course), we'll continue working on our skirts. We'll do some demos here and there, and the rest of the time you'll sew, sew, sew!*

- **Week Seven** •

*We'll keep sewing our skirts this week. Sew, sew, sew!*

- **Week Eight** •

*This week, we're finishing up your skirt! You did it!!!*

### **HEMS**

#### **SLIPSTITCH**

- Press your garment along the finished hemline.
- Trim the raw edge to a 5/8" (1.5 cm) seam allowance.
- Fold the seam allowance in half so the raw edge is tucked within the hem.
- Press again.
- Working from right to left with the fold of the hem facing you, bring a threaded and knotted needle up through the fold of the fabric. Take a stitch into the garment directly opposite the point where the thread came out, catching only one or two threads. Bring the needle back into the fold of the fabric, and slide it along through the fold about 1/2 – 3/4". Continue sliding through the fold, then picking up a few threads.

#### **TOPSTITCH**

- Press your garment along the finished hemline.
- Trim the raw edge to a 5/8" (1.5 cm) seam allowance.
- Fold the seam allowance in half so the raw edge is tucked within the hem.
- Press again.
- Topstitch your hem from the right side of the fabric.

Now that the course is over, your post-TSS-class homework is to start many more projects and spread the love of sewing! ☺

We hope you enjoyed taking this course as much as we've enjoyed teaching you. Please be sure to stay in touch! We'd love to hear what you're up to, whether through Facebook or Twitter or by email or phone.

Thanks for joining us! And **congratulations** on your completed custom skirt!

*Happy Sewing!*

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## • Definitions •

**Backstitch** - a few stitches taken in reverse to secure a line of stitching

**Baste** - a method of temporarily joining fabric using long machine (or hand) stitches, which are easily removed (Long stitch length; no backstitch; 4/8" (1.3 cm) seam allowance.)

**Bias** - a diagonal line across the fabric (True bias = a 45-degree angle to the selvage)

**Crosswise grain** – see grain

**Dart** – a stitch that shapes a flat piece of fabric to fit body contours (Darts are formed from triangular shapes marked on the pattern. They consist of dots to align the fabric and stitching lines.)

**Edgestitch** - a regular stitch done on the fabric right side, through seam allowance(s), close to the edge (about 1/8" (approx. 3mm) from the edge)

**Facing** - the piece of fabric inside a garment opening (like a sleeve, neck, or waist opening) where the fabric right side is touching the skin

**Fuse** - glue

**Fusible interfacing** - a non-woven fabric with heat-activated fusing on one side (Used to stiffen or strengthen fabrics.)

**Gather** – the process of drawing a given amount of fabric into a predetermined, smaller area, along a stitch line, to create soft, even folds (To gather: baste stitch, hold one thread end, push the fabric.)

**Grain** - the direction in which the fabric threads run  
Woven fabrics consist of lengthwise threads parallel to the selvage (the **lengthwise grain**) and intersecting crosswise threads (the **crosswise grain**). When these threads cross each other at perfect right angles, the fabric is "on-grain". Once your fabric is on-grain", lay out pattern pieces with the marked grain line on the pattern piece following the lengthwise grain of the fabric. (i.e. Align the pattern's labeled grain line so it is parallel to the selvage.)

**Interfacing** - a specific fabric sewn between the layers of a garment to help it hold its structure (Interfacing is available as sew-in and fusible.)

**Lengthwise grain** – see grain

**Nap** - a one-way direction of texture or pattern in a fabric (Any fabric with nap looks different when held up or down, such as velvet and one-way designs.)

**Notches** - diamond-shaped marks on a pattern that, when transferred to fabric, dictate where to match the garment pieces when sewing

**Pivot** - move the fabric around (between a line of stitching) with the machine needle down and the presser foot up

**Raw edge** - the cut edge of a garment piece that may fray or unravel if left unfinished

**Regular stitch** - standard stitch length, backstitch both ends, 5/8" (1.5cm) seam allowance

**Seam allowance** - the area of fabric between the seam stitching and the cut edge (standard: 5/8" or 1.5 cm)

**Selvage** - the narrow, tightly woven border of the fabric, which runs along both lengthwise sides of the fabric and is unable to fray

**Staystitch** - short stitches done inside the seam allowance through a single thickness of fabric (before construction), to stabilize curved or slanted edges (Short stitch length, backstitch both ends, 4/8" (1.3 cm) from the fabric edge.)

**Stitch-in-the-ditch** - a stitch in the seam on the right side of a garment that catches a facing piece of fabric on the other side

**Tailor's chalk** - a chalk pencil or chip used to mark fabrics (It's also called a marking pen or marking pencil.)

**Topstitch** - a line of stitching (decorative or functional) done on the right side of the fabric 3/8" (1cm) from the fabric edge



## • Shopping list •

Want to see everything you need to buy for this course together in one section? Here it is...

□ A skirt pattern Remember, the size you need will be significantly larger than the size you normally buy in stores. Sewing sizes have nothing to do with store-bought clothing sizes. Your skirt must be simple (no extra, fancy details), and must have a zipper and a waistband (a piece of horizontal fabric above the skirt). If you find a pattern and you're not sure if it's suitable for your skill level, email the company name and style number to your instructor or to the TSS head office. We'll be able to tell you if it's a suitable pattern for you for this course.

**This is from Homework for Week 2.**

□ Your drawstring bag supplies (**we have kits for sale** at the studio with everything you need cut to size):

- Fabric — Ask for ½ yd (1/2 m) and you'll have plenty for both the drawstring bag AND the zippered pouch. Choose a fabric that's similar to the fabric we used at the studio for our sewing samples. Pick a fabric that's soft and lightweight, and isn't slippery nor stretchy. A printed cotton works well, as does a lightweight denim or a flannelette or a linen blend.
- Ribbon or a thin, lightweight cord — 1.5 yd (1.5 m)
- Thread — Black, white, or a thread that matches or contrasts your fabric.

**This is from Homework for Week 3.**

□ Your skirt fabric and notions. Follow the suggested fabrics on the pattern envelope, and use the chart on the back to determine how much fabric to purchase. Also pick up the notions outlined on your pattern including a 7" (18 cm) zipper (make sure it's a regular zipper!), matching thread, and interfacing (if required).

**This is from Homework for Week 3.**

□ Your zippered pouch supplies (**we have kits for sale** at the studio with everything you need cut to size):

- Fabric — You can use leftovers from your drawstring bag, or purchase ¼ yd (25 cm) of lightweight fabric. Again, no stretch, no slipperiness.
- 7" zipper (18 cm) — Make sure it's a regular zipper, with its zipper teeth on the same side as the pull.
- Thread — Black, white, or a thread that matches or contrasts your fabric.

**This is from Homework for Week 4.**



THE SEWING STUDIO

# Surviving a Fabric Store

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By taking things one step a time when heading to the fabric store, you'll feel more comfortable picking the right pattern, fabric, notions, and anything else you might need for your first garment!

## Step One

Find your pattern. (You will need your body measurements for this.)

### *Pattern Books*

Fit is not the only challenge when getting a pattern, trying to navigate your way through the pattern books can be tricky too! Pattern books are divided by type of garment. They will be displayed in sections (e.g. skirts, jackets, etc).

1. Go the fabric store with your body measurements.
2. Find the area in the store where you can browse through pattern books. Usually, they are on the counter or on a side table by the cash register.
3. Browse through one of the following pattern books:
  - Butterick
  - Simplicity
  - McCall's
  - Vogue

**NOTE: As a beginner, you should avoid Burda patterns (they are quite difficult to work) as well as patterns downloaded from the internet. Also, avoid patterns made specifically for knit (stretch) fabrics.**

4. Once you find the style you like, write down the company name and the garment style number. Tell the store clerk, and let them know what size you need. **REMEMBER** – Your pattern size is MUCH larger than the size clothes you buy at the store. You can find your size by checking the *measurement chart*\* in the back of the pattern book. (Keep in mind, each company's measurement chart is different.)
5. The clerk will let you review your patterns. Sometimes, they will let you take only the pattern envelope while you browse the store with it to select your fabric. Just make sure you get the correct pattern when you are ready to purchase. (Check that the style number on both the pattern envelope and the pattern instructions inside are the same.)

**\*Measurement chart:** This will be found at the back of the pattern book. You will find several different measurement charts, so make sure you read the description above the chart, which describes the body type that that specific chart is made for. Below is a sample measurement chart. **DO NOT BUY YOUR SIZE ACCORDING TO OUR EXAMPLE!** Use this chart like a multiplication table, and refer to your body measurements to find your size. The pattern you buy will include a range of sizes (e.g. 4 – 12, 8 – 18, etc.), so choose a pattern that includes the sizes you need.

*Misses' patterns are designed for a developed figure; about 5'5" to 5'6" without shoes.*

*Misses' Petites patterns are designed for the shorter figure; about 5'2" to 5'3" without shoes.*

SIZE	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
Bust	29 ½	30 ½	31 ½	32 ½	34	36	38	40	42
Chest	27 ½	28 ½	29 ½	30 ½	32	34	36	38	40
Waist	22	23	24	25	26 ½	28	30	32	34
Hip	31 ½	32 ½	33 ½	34 ½	36	38	40	42	44
Back Waist Length	15 ¼	15 ½	15 ¾	16	16 ¼	17	17 ¼	17 ½	17 ¾

Examples:

In **red**: 28" waist and 38" hip = pattern size 14.

In **green**: 26 ½" waist and 40" hip = you need to get a pattern with both sizes 12 & 16. (Your instructor will show you how to customize your pattern in class.)

## Step Two

Select fabric for your chosen pattern. (Bring your pattern envelope with you.)

### *Selecting your fabric*

Here are a few tips for finding the right fabric for your selected pattern. You'll be in fabric heaven in no time!

1. Use the recommended fabric choices listed on the back of the pattern envelope as a guide when looking for fabric. You can choose a recommended fabric or a fabric with similar drape and properties. Avoid stretchy and slippery fabrics.
2. Fabric at the store will be sorted by type. E.g. silks, cottons, wools, etc.
3. Make note of whether the width of the fabric you're purchasing is 45" (125 cm) or 60" (150 cm). You'll find that measurement on the end of the fabric bolt. The fabric width will affect the amount of fabric you need to purchase. Check the back of the pattern envelope, which will tell you how much fabric to buy according to your size, the style you chose (skirt A, B, C, D, etc.), AND the fabric width.
4. Once you find your fabric of choice, try this test before purchasing it: Drape the fabric against yourself to get an idea of what it is going to look like once it's a skirt. Fabric might look great on the bolt, but it might not be the perfect match for your body. It also might not drape the way you want it to. (Will it fall flat and heavy? That may be what you want. Will it stick out? That may be what you want.) This quick test will save you time, dollars, and a second trip to the fabric store!
5. Check the right side of the fabric for flaws (snags, stains, etc.) and make sure it is useable. **REMEMBER** – you can find the right side of the fabric by checking the *selvage*\*.
6. Phew! Now, you can finally take your bolt of fabric over to the cutting table.

\***Selvage**: The finished edge of the fabric. Fabric is usually rolled up on the bolt right sides together, but not always. Feel for the tiny bumps in the selvage, which will be raised on the wrong side of the fabric and smooth on the right side.

## Step Three

Get your fabric cut.

*Let's get it cut. Snip, snip!*

Cutting your fabric isn't as scary as it might seem. Follow these steps for a smooth fabric-snipping experience.

1. Tell the clerk at the cutting table the amount of fabric you need. Double-check the width of fabric, then look at the back of the pattern envelope to find out the amount based on the fabric width, your size, and the skirt style you chose (A, B, C, D, etc.). **REMEMBER** — also consider the *nap*\* of the fabric.
2. The clerk might cut the amount you need, or they might snip through the selvage and rip the fabric across to the other end. If the ripped method is used, your fabric will be on-grain, but it will need to be put on-grain again after you pre-treat it.

**\*Nap:** Fabric with pile or a one-way print. Some examples of fabric with pile are velvet and corduroy. And fabrics with a one-way print/pattern will need to all be running in the same direction. Because of this, your pattern might request more fabric, so be sure to follow the instructions on the back of the pattern envelope to get the correct amount.

Here's a quick test to check if your fabric will require the "with nap" layout:

- With your hand, brush the fabric one way. Then, brush it the other way right next to the first trial, and see if your fabric looks the same when brushed in both directions. If not, you've got a nap-er on your hands!

## Step Four

Buy the notions. (Those are all of the garment extras that are needed aside from your fabric.)

*Selecting your notions*

Now that you've found the fabric for your skirt, hunting down the notions will be a breeze. Just grab your pattern envelope and venture off into the depths of the notions wall! You will find a list of required notions on the back of your pattern envelope. Common notions may include (depending on pattern):

### **Thread:**

Thread is available in various colours, thicknesses, types (e.g. polyester, cotton, and blends such as cotton-poly, etc.).

**What to buy:** Determine the type of thread you need according to your fabric. To pick the right colour of thread, unravel the thread end off the spool and place it across your fabric. You want the thread to blend/disappear into the fabric. If your fabric is multicoloured or printed in a few different colours, you can choose the dominant colour. You may want a contrast thread for edgestitching and topstitching, depending on your taste.

**Where it's found:** Thread is found either on the wall or in a common area in the fabric store. It is sorted by company name, type, or colour. Some stores might have spools of thread in bins on the floor. Usually, the lower quality threads are dumped into these bins for a quick sale. **DO NOT** purchase discount threads. They guarantee a headache when sewing!

### **Zippers:**

Zippers are available in different colours, materials (e.g. plastic/metal teeth), lengths and types (e.g. regular, invisible, separating, etc.).

**What to buy:** Purchase the length indicated on your pattern. And choose a REGULAR zipper, which is the type we'll be sewing in this course. Find a colour similar to your fabric. Or stick with no-fail black or white.

**Where it's found:** You can find zippers on the wall and/or in bins/drawers (depending on fabric store). Either way, zippers will all be hanging out together sorted by type, length, and colour.

### **Twill Tape:**

Twill tape resembles a thin, flat shoelace. It is used to reinforce a seam and prevent stretching. Twill tape is available in different widths and colours.

**What to buy:** Note the width (1/4", 1/2", etc.) and amount required for your pattern.

**Where it's found:** You can purchase twill tape in packages or by yard/metre. If you are buying the twill tape pre-packaged, make sure you are getting the right amount by reading the package.

### **Hook & Eye:**

Hooks & eyes are two small metal pieces that interlock and are used for closures on garments. The hook slides in through the eye to create a closure.

**What to buy:** Hooks & eyes usually come pre-packaged in a box of 20 or more. There are different sizes you can purchase. Choose the size that is suitable for your skirt style and fabric choice.

**Where it's found:** You can find hooks & eyes in small packages near the other notions. Some fabric stores will sell them individually and place them in a small bag for you.

### **Interfacing:**

Interfacing is used to give part of a garment more body and fullness (e.g. waistbands, collars, etc.). Interfacing can be woven or non-woven, fusible or non-fusible (sew-in), and it comes in different weights, just like fabric.

#### **What to buy:**

- Woven or non-woven: Woven interfacing has lengthwise and crosswise grains just like fabric, and non-woven interfacing looks like a gauze or a dryer sheet and has no grain.
- Fusible or sew-in: Sew-in must be basted into place. Fusible is glued in place with an iron and a damp pressing cloth. Fusible will have some sort of sheen or bumps on it.
- Lightweight/medium-weight/heavy-weight: choose the drape, weight, and flexibility similar to your fabric (not stiffer!)

**Where it's found:** Interfacing can be purchased pre-packaged or by the yard/metre.

**Optional notions** (depending on your skirt's design): Your pattern could have other notions that you may choose to purchase. Some optional notions include, but are not limited to: buttons, lace, and trim. With lace or trim, if the pattern calls for it and you don't want to add it, you don't have to! As long as a notion is decorative and not functional, you may omit it. Looking at the image on the front of your pattern envelope will let you know if it is a visual detail.

## **Now you've survived a fabric store! See? Piece of cake!**

## Checklist

Bring this checklist with you to the fabric store to avoid forgetting anything, and add comments or extras in the notes section under each item.

**NOTE:** This is a list of general items needed to create a garment. Disregard anything that doesn't apply to your particular pattern.

**REMEMBER:** Avoid stretchy fabrics, patterns made specifically for knit fabrics, and Burda patterns. We're not joking. Any one of those things will make your first project a pain! While at the store, grab anything else you might be missing: pins, chalk, tracing paper/wheel, measuring tape, seam ripper, hand sewing needles, etc.

### Happy shopping!

Pattern

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Fabric

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Thread

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Interfacing

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Zipper

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Twill tape

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Hook & eye

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Optional notions (lace, buttons, etc.)

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

General Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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