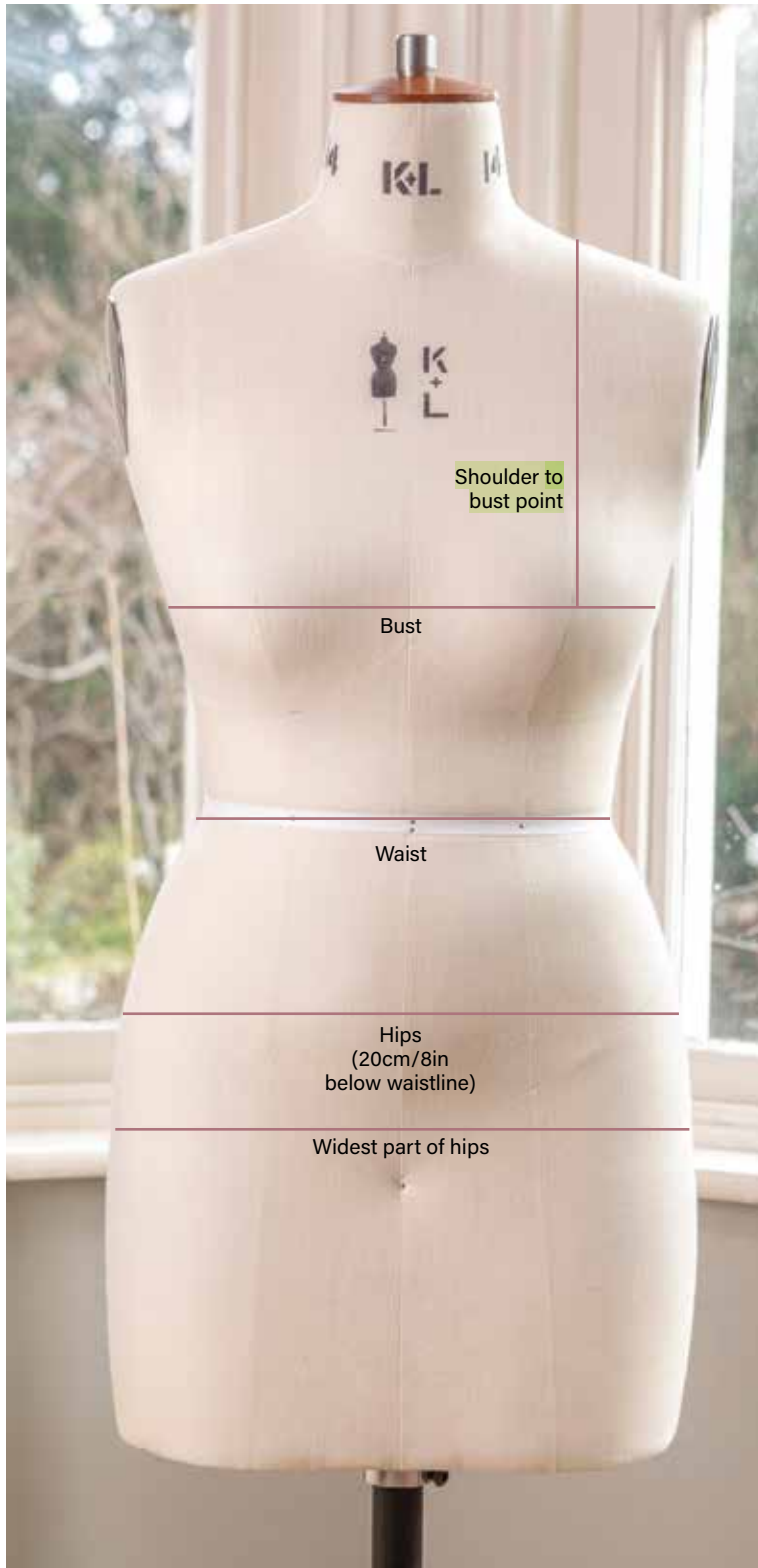


Key measurements

The main measurements you need are the bust, waist, hips and shoulder to bust point.



Bust The measurement around the fullest part of your bust. Keep the measuring tape straight over the bust and around the back. Make sure it does not slip off the bust.

Waist The measurement of the narrowest part of the body. Close your eyes and put your hands on your waist and this is usually the right spot. Otherwise, tie a piece of string or elastic around your waist or put on a narrow belt as this will work its way naturally to the narrowest part.

Hips The hip measurement is taken 20cm (8in) below the waist measurement.

Widest part of hips If your hips are wider below the 20cm (8in) hip mark, measure the widest part and also measure how far down that measurement sits.

Shoulder to bust point The measurement from the middle of the shoulder seam, down to the fullest part of the bust.

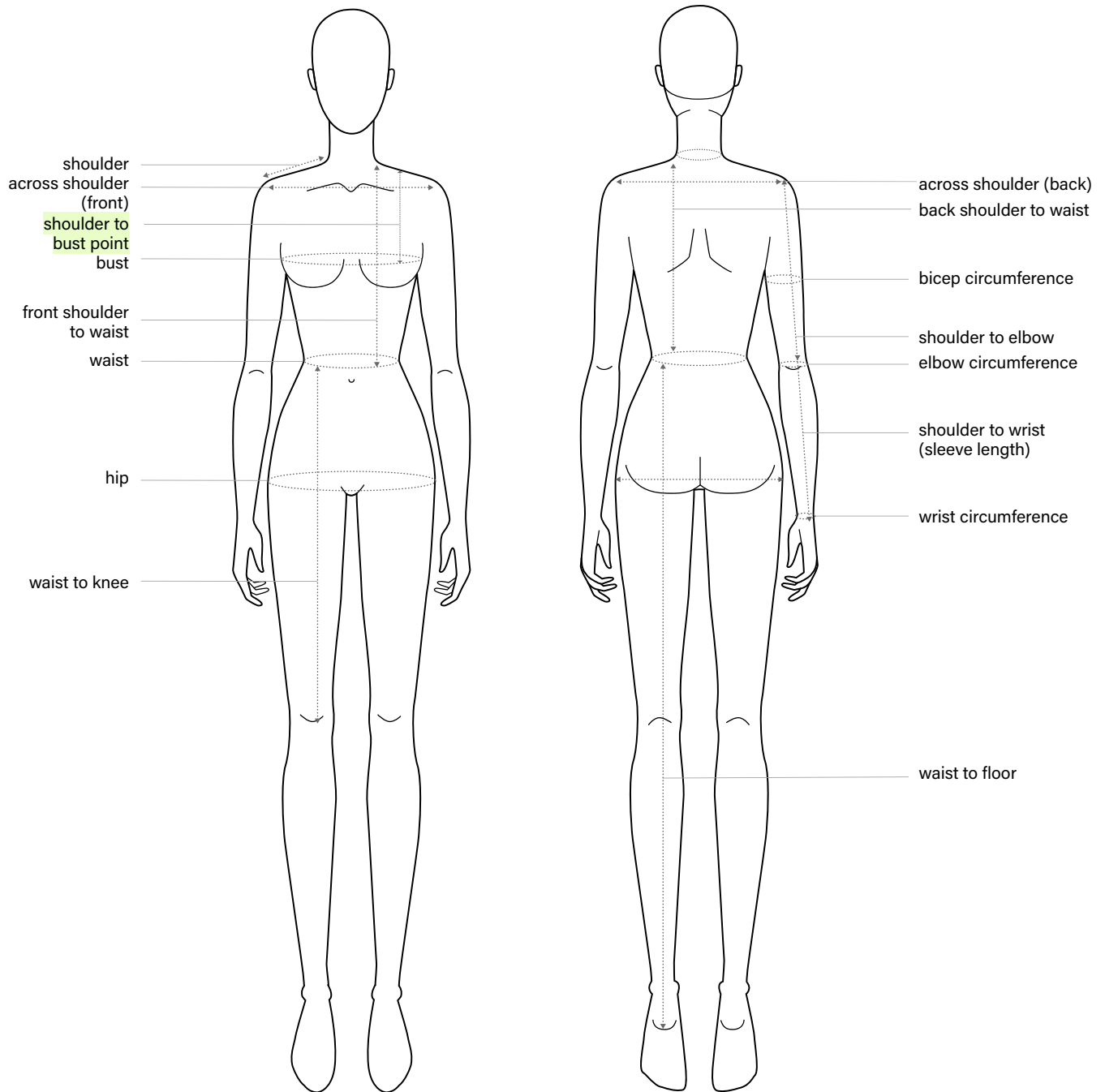


Sizing tips

- We need to accept what we are born with and learn to accentuate our best bits (and other bits too!) as this is what makes us unique.
- The key to it all is dressing for your shape and feeling good in what you wear, as you will then radiate confidence.
- Size is just a number. Make sure you work out your actual dress size from the chart and be true to yourself as you want your dresses to fit you.
- Be realistic with sizing as it is better to take in something that is too big than try to fit into something that is too small.

USEFUL EXTRA MEASUREMENTS

These measurements are useful to refer to when you have your pattern pieces in front of you. You won't need them when choosing your size pattern from my blocks, so if you want to keep it simple, stick with the bust, waist and hip measurements for now.



Noting your measurements

Fill in the blank table below with your own measurements. Measure in centimetres or inches, but not a combination of both!

KEY MEASUREMENTS

Bust

Waist

Hips

Shoulder to bust point

USEFUL EXTRA MEASUREMENTS

Front shoulder to waist

Back shoulder to waist

Shoulder

Across shoulder (front)

Across shoulder (back)

Shoulder to elbow

Shoulder to wrist
(sleeve length)

Elbow to wrist

Bicep circumference

Elbow circumference

Wrist circumference

Widest part of hips
(≥20cm/8in) below hipline
Waist to widest part of hips

Waist to knee

Waist to floor

Now you have your measurements, keep them safe, make a cup of tea and take your time reading the next section before you do anything else. This is where you will choose your pattern sizes.

How to make this dress

This dress consists of a crepe bodice with a high curved neckline (see page 94) and soft capped sleeves (page 110). The bodice is attached to a fitted skirt (page 122), which is in a contrasting floral cotton fabric. The floral collar (page 136) really pulls the look together to make a fun and vibrant dress. You could make the dress in a mediumweight black wool, to create a stylish little black dress.



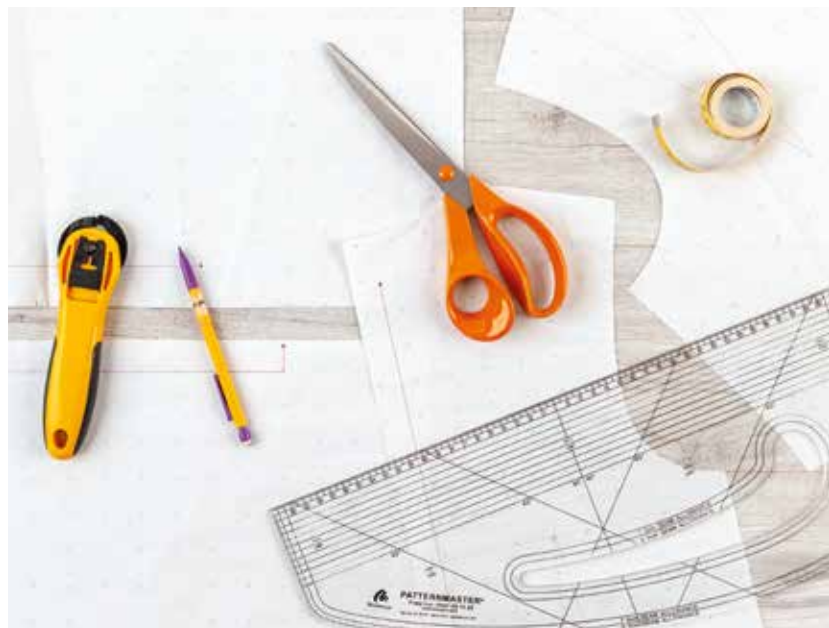
3 adjusting your blocks

You should now have your four block pattern pieces traced in the sizes you need.

When you have finished tracing off your chosen sizes, you will need to make some alterations to the blocks before making up your sample (toile).

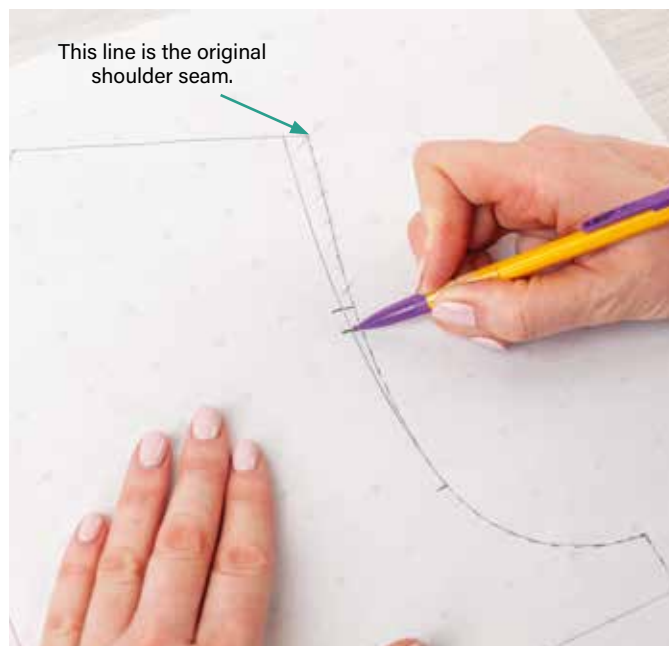
In this chapter, I show you how to get the sizing of your blocks as accurate as possible by altering your pattern pieces accordingly. Every millimetre counts so be as precise as you can when altering your patterns.

Please remember that you always need to make a sample (toile) in fabric to see exactly how the garment will fit on you.



START AT THE TOP OF THE BODY

- **Using your shoulder to bust point measurement, lower, or lift the bust line accordingly.** The end of the darts should sit 2cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in) away from your bust line. Simply lower or lift the ends of the darts (marked with a cross on the patterns) and redraw the dart legs/lines without changing the width of the dart at your shoulder or waistline.
- **Check the shoulder measurement.** If you have narrow shoulders, you might want to take off anything from 5mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in) to 1.5cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in) from the outside shoulder. Just make sure the armhole remains exactly the same length:
- **Don't worry about adjusting the neckline yet:** it is useful to fit the sample (toile) with a high neck, so that your blocks fit your basic body. We can then alter the necklines later to accommodate the different design options (see pages 92–103).



ALTERING YOUR SHOULDER SEAMS

Start simple with the shoulder alterations (see overleaf). Pin the Front Bodice dart closed on the pattern piece to lay it flat. Draw the new stitch line in red pen.



1 The shoulder seam lines should remain straight. Take the same amount off the front and back shoulder seams.



2 Draw in a new seam allowance 1cm (3/8in) from the red line. Any excess is marked in blue dashes and then cut off the pattern piece.

Important note

Mark in **blue** areas to be cut off (excess).

Mark as **red lines** new stitch lines.

Mark your shoulder point

If you altered your shoulder line, draw the new stitch line on your pattern piece. Keeping the gentle curve, graduate down to meet the original armhole stitch line. Draw a new seam allowance and cut off any excess.

ALTERING THE CENTRE FRONT

When you remove the pins on the centre-front alteration, you will have drawn a 'V' on your sample. However, the centre-front pattern is cut on the fold, so only mark half of the width of the measurement on the centre-front neckline. Then, draw a straight line down to meet the original centre-front seam edge at the waistline.

As this pattern piece will be cut on the fold, the line must be straight and no seam allowance is needed. Just cut off the excess.



Sample with shoulder, armhole and centre-front alterations lines drawn on.



Pattern piece with new stitch lines drawn in red pen. A new seam allowance is drawn in and the excess marked in blue ready to be cut off.



Excess is cut off. Pattern alteration is complete.

ALTERING THE WAISTLINE



You may find that the alteration line of the waistline is a bit uneven when unpinned. Just level it out as best as you can, mirroring the opposite side.



1 Pin the waist dart closed. Then, place your bodice pattern piece onto the seam and draw in your new stitch line in red pen.



2 Join the Front and Back Bodice patterns at the side seam with a pin, making sure the stitch lines sit exactly on top of each other. When drawing your new stitch line, make sure the waistline is a smooth continuous line.

3 Draw in your new seam allowance and mark the excess ready to cut off.

Note: This alteration may affect the way that the darts line up to the skirt darts. If you need to take more than 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) off, go to page 54 and take out the unwanted length in the body of the pattern rather than the hem.

As shown on page 54, the two lines drawn don't need to be parallel, meaning you can take more out of the centre back than the side seam for example. Just make sure that your front and back side seams still match.



The completed alteration with the excess cut off.

ALLOWING FOR A ZIP OPENING

Whether your zip will be in the centre back or the side seam, make sure you have a 1.5cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in) seam allowance to allow for your zip. You can reduce the seam allowance to exactly 1cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in) for a concealed zip, once you perfect the fit. Your pattern alteration is complete.

FULL-BUST ALTERATION (FBA)

Your sample should be a good fit across your bust if you have worked with the correct measurements. You can alter the bodice to fit around your bust, whatever size you are.

However, if it feels a little tight across the bust line and fits well everywhere else, you can try a Full Bust Alteration. This alteration will make the bodice front wider and longer to accommodate a fuller bust, without having to change the rest of the bodice.

Firstly, you must move your shoulder dart to the side seam.



1 Trace around your Front Bodice without seam allowance.

2 Draw a line down the centre of the shoulder dart and extend that line by 2cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in) so it meets the actual bust point.

3 Draw a straight line from the side seam to the bust point. Then cut along that exact line to meet the bust point.



4 Close the shoulder dart and pin in place. Your shoulder dart will now have moved to become a side dart.

Making the alteration



1 Retrace your Front Bodice with your new dart positions. Cut out your new pattern piece without seam allowances.

2 Draw a straight line from the bust point to the armhole.

3 Cut up the centre of the waist dart to the bust point and continue along to the armhole, keeping the armhole attached by a few millimetres.



4 Cut up the centre of the side dart to the bust point, but again, keep the pattern attached at the bust point.

5 Rearrange the cut-up pieces of your Front Bodice to add fullness at the bust point as in the photo, depending on how much you need to add. Start with 1.25cm ($\frac{1}{2}$ in).

