

FITTING: AIDE MEMOIRE

When a toile/test garment is ready for fitting, try to keep to these rules:

- the centre front and centre back should be clearly marked.
- the toile fabric must be pre-shrunk before cut and make.
- if there are fastenings, these should be applied in order to assess the suitability in size and quality (however, in most cases using dress pins to fasten the garment is acceptable).
- the garment should be made up using machine stitch, not with pins.
- it is acceptable to draw pockets by pen onto a toile to save time, but it's best to try out the construction method of a complicated pocket.
- other small details can also be drawn on if they are basic or classic, e.g. top stitching.
- try not to cut the toile right away unless you are absolutely sure. If there is excess fabric, always try to pin it up (or pin away).
- there should be someone to take notes.
- the toile should be tried on more than one model in order to justify a more realistic fit, unless it is made to measure.

Step-by-step guide to fitting:

1. Look at the 'frame' of the garment i.e. the length and width.
2. Length: look from the front, back and side to see whether the garment needs to be lengthened or shortened. Check front is same length as back.
3. Width: check that the garment isn't too big or too small? Is there too much or too little tolerance?
4. Look at the CF and CB lines: they should hang visually vertical. If not, this may be affected by different shoulder slant on a real person. Another possibility is the actual cutting out of paper pattern or fabric is asymmetrical. Finally, this could be due the garment being cut on an 'off-grain' angle on the fabric.
5. Neckline width: check for shoulder neck points standing too close or too far from both sides of the neck. In case of gaping at CF or CB, a small amount can be taken out from CB neckline vertically down the garment to zero. The same can be done for front CF neckline. The actual outline of the neckline should be according to sketch and working drawing.
6. Shoulder line: does it go too far to front or to the back? The length could be adjusted easily but this will be related directly to crown height of sleeve.
7. Armhole: does it feel restricted when moving arms upwards and forwards? Making it deeper or shallower is fairly straightforward but check how the sleeve is affected.
8. Side seam: if this is not hanging vertically, it is very easy to move the side seam by cutting and pasting the actual side seam on the paper pattern.
9. Darts: are bust darts too big (too much suppression)? A too large bust dart would create too much excess room for the body. You could let out the dart by opening the sewn dart and letting the garment lay flatter on the body. When darts are too small (not enough suppression), the garment will appear to be taut – an extra dart would need to be placed, then this extra dart could be transferred or combined to an existing dart during the flat pattern cutting process. For the rest of the darts at the back, the process is much simpler and you can just take in or let out the darts as appropriate.
10. Other details: anything that has no direct relation to the fit of the garment should be discussed with the designer.