

Sew In Brighton's Pre Course or Project Pattern & Fabric/trims Buying Guide

Name:

Pattern:

- **You'll need:** Tape measure, this checklist & pen, at least £30 cash (if high street shopping) or your credit card to buy fabric, pattern and notions (you might only spend £15 though - it depends on your taste in fabric and the pattern you choose!)
- **Measure yourself** and fill in this first table at home or at the shop

My measurements	Inches (use if your pattern is in inches for the English instructions)	Cm (some indie patterns use cm now)
TOPS & DRESSES: My High Bust measurement – used for choosing right pattern size - see image below		
TOPS & DRESSES: My Bust/chest (horizontal at nipple height)		
TOPS, TROUSERS & DRESSES: My Waist (horizontal , narrowest part)		
TROUSERS & DRESSES: My Hip (horizontal , widest part round bottom – check is not wider on upper thigh height – use that measure if it is)		
ALL GARMENTS: My height: If you are over 5 foot 6", have long legs , or like wearing your garments longer than is shown on the pattern envelope of the style you want to make, buy an extra 25-50cm of fabric		

How to measure your high bust, bust, waist and hips:



(photo credits – By Hand London – they make great patterns, check them out!)

- **Choose a pattern you like from the books in the shop or online. If this is your first time making a garment, keep it simple** – minimal seams and dart and pleats. No side pockets ideally. It takes approx. 5 x 2.5-hour classes to make a very simple skirt or top if you've not made clothes before. If you've made a few garments before you may manage a dress in 5 classes. The cutting out pattern, tissue-fitting it and then cutting out in fabric and marking it up ready to sew usually takes 2 classes for simple garments, up to 3 for dresses or trousers.
- **If you're new to dressmaking go for a pattern that suggests being made in non-stretch fabrics** as they are simpler to work with and teach you more about fitting. Look at the fabric suggestions on the envelope: If you are new to clothes making go for cottons, lightweight denim, twill, drill etc, avoid chiffon, viscose, crepey or floaty slippery fabrics this first time as they can be trickier to cut out and to sew.

- **About sizing ranges:** Pattern envelopes will contain patterns for multiple sizes, often a split range e.g. either 6-14 or 16-22, or all the sizes might be on one pattern e.g. 8-22. For patterns with a split size range you'll want to buy the closest size range to your measurements (read on..).

- **Which size range pattern envelope to buy?** A list of pattern sizes and the body measurements that each size pattern fits is usually printed on the envelope flap or back. If you're buying your patterns online and they don't show this, if you Google the pattern brand and name/number then view all images, there's usually an image of it on another site you can use. Unfortunately, Burda patterns have the size guide inside on the tissue! Bit of a pain as you'll need to very carefully open it up, or you may find it online, or use their standard [size guide here](#).

Look at your own measurements above then use them to choose your pattern size range:

- **For tops, dresses and jackets:** Take your high bust measurement and compare it to the measures on the pattern for your BUST. Choose the closest bust size to your high bust and that's your pattern size. This may sound strange not to just use the bust measurement, but by using the high bust measurement you are buying the right size pattern for your torso/shoulders, not your boobs! In class, if you are C cup+ we may need to help you let out the bust, this is called a Full Bust Adjustment and allows the garment to fit your bust but not be huge on your shoulders.

Example: if your high bust is 32 inches, and on the pattern its states size 10 bust is 32.5 inches and size 8 is 31.5 inches you can choose size 8 or 10 pattern and buy the smaller pattern range. If it's a jersey garment go for 8

- **For trousers:** Buy the right pattern size for your HIP

n.b – if you are between sizes, we generally say drop down a size, but if you know you like your clothes roomy, go up a size

- **How much fabric to buy:** Buy enough fabric for the *largest size you are in any body part* plus extra length for the things to consider listed below. So, we are now ignoring the pattern size you chose for the high bust – for fabric buying you want the *maximum* amount you'll need!

So, if your hips are size 18, your waist 16, your bust 14 and your high bust size 10 – buy the fabric stated for the size 18 in the width fabric you are buying (read on). A full summary of what to consider before choosing your fabric length:

- **WIDTH** If your fabric is on a roll that's 45" wide you'll need more length than if it's 60" wide, to fit all the pattern pieces on it. The envelope will tell you how much to buy depending on roll width. The width of your chosen cloth will be stated on the tag on the fabric.
- **PRINT**
 - If it's a one way print you need to check that the way it's laid up for cutting isn't based on the pattern pieces being in such a way that your print ends up on it's side! This is partly why we do a pre course trip, so if you are on your own perhaps don't buy a one-way print – choose a plain cloth or an all over print.
 - Also you may need to **pattern match** if the print is a repeat that needs to be matched at side seam – buy an extra 50cm-1m to allow for this
- **NAP** The nap is the pile on a velvet or corduroy, but also refers to the one-way print. If your fabric is cord, velvet or one way print, all the pieces need to be same way up when laid out for cutting out. Some patterns have the options for fabric quantities for pattern pieces laid up 'with nap' and 'without nap', so choose the right option for your fabric length to buy
- **SIZES** If your measurements are between sizes on the pattern e.g., size 14 top and 12 bottom, buy enough fabric for the larger size
- **HEIGHT/WANT IT LONGER?** Most patterns are made for average height people (for women, usually 5'6") unless otherwise stated. If you know you have longer than average legs or body, or want to wear your garment longer than shown on the pattern envelope, buy more fabric
- **BUY EXTRA FOR SHRINKAGE** Always buy an extra 10% for shrinkage when you pre-wash. In addition, get 25cm extra fabric just in case you cut something wrong and need to recut. You can always make yourself a matching purse with the leftover fabric!
- **WASHING** Ask the shop assistant for **washing instructions** for your fabric if it's not printed on the tag on the roll. Pre-wash and iron your fabric before cutting out the garment from it

Buying checklist – do you have all these if stated on envelope? Ask a shop assistant or your tutor if not sure. Once you have them all, go to the till to pay

Pattern in correct size range	
Correct type of fabric calculated for the right width of your fabric at the length for largest size you fit (see above)	
Interfacing if stated on envelope (get fusible non-woven interfacing unless otherwise stated)	
Lining, zip: correct type & length , although you can shorten plastic zips if needed so err on the long side. Also, if you have a small waist and big hips in comparison, get a zip an inch longer than stated, it will be much easier to get the dress, trousers or skirt on!	
Hooks and eyes, elastic or any other 'notions' stated on the back of the envelope relevant to the 'style' you are going to make e.g. A, B etc	
Thread that matches your fabric in colour – use a good quality polyester or cotton sewing thread from brands like Coats, Moon or Gutermann, ordinary thickness. 100m is usually enough for an small garment but buy 2 if unsure. Steer clear of unbranded cheap stuff that's usually in a bargain basket by the till (can break or is super fluffy and mucks up your machine) and don't get thick topstitch/buttonhole thread for your main garment sewing, although you'll need it for jeans topstitching	
Extra thread (x3) for overlocking raw edges if you want a perfect colour match – we have black & white + a few other colours to use	

- **To do between shopping trip and 1st class**

Wash your fabric at the temperature you plan to wash your finished garment, so the fabric does any shrinking before you make your garment!

- **Bring to class**

- This sheet of info
- Your fabric, washed & ironed (iron from wrong side)
- All stuff you bought at the shopping trip
- 50p for a bobbin if you are using one of our machines, so you can take your leftover bobbin thread away on it at the end of the course if any left over

Need a hand making your garment? We teach fitting of **patterns and fitting and construction of garments** in our regular sewing and dressmaking classes and often are running a specific garment making course. We can also teach you to use a sewing machine as a **total beginner** – check our main course and class menu at www.sewinbrighton.co.uk/viewclasses

