



7. Gabby's Fitting Series — Fitting Tools



April 22, 2019 | 5 Comments

Hi Sewcialists!

No videos this week, but lots of tips for fitting. Now that you've seen a fitting in action, you may be wondering what you need to successfully fit garments on your own. Here are some items, skills, people, and questions I recommend for a productive fit session.

The number one fit tool you'll need, and the most important, is an open mind. It's crucial to be able to look at yourself, your make, the shape of the garment, and whether or not you actually like it, in an objective fashion. Of course, all your styling decisions will be subjective, but in order to make the best fit choices you'll want to separate from your emotional side for a bit and let yourself truly evaluate your make on your body. Don't worry if you don't know how to fix something — there's always google

For example, if you're really attached to that amazing fabric you purchased, but aren't really loving the silhouette you chose, and yet you feel invested because you spent so much time printing / taping / cutting the pattern... your fitting is the perfect time to decide if you want to simply make some styling revisions, or if you want to scrap it and start over with a different pattern altogether. If something isn't working for you, definitely don't be afraid to make changes. This is about making garments that make you happy and feel confident.

The next thing you'll need is what I like to call a Fit Kit! Mine is a canvas pencil bag that holds all of my actual fitting tools: a container of safety pins of various sizes, fabric scissors, tape measures, tailor's wax chalk, some sharpies or regular wooden lead or colored pencils, and any other random accoutrements you might regularly use. (An extra button to check placements? Alligator clips if you use leather or hard-to-pin fabrics?) I like to keep all of my fitting items together, that way I can just grab and go. I started doing this when my work day began including more than one fitting — I've spent several days in a row running from one fitting to the next, so it is much easier to have a handy grab-and-go. Easy to stash, too! Some people like a toolbox for this purpose. Whatever works for you.



Fit Kit

A note — make sure the safety pins you are using are good quality, and sharp. You can buy them in bulk online from places like Steinlauf and Stoller, or even Amazon. I do not recommend getting a cheap mixed pack of different sizes — the ones that come in plastic cases — because most often, the metal is too soft, so when you're pinning the pin will bend. (And, as always, don't use straight pins when you are fitting on a real person — I don't want you to stab or get stabbed!)

Then, make sure you have a mirror — ideally, a floor-length mirror, but if you need to cobble this together it's fine. You really just want to be able to see your whole body when you are evaluating your makes, so you can

move around, see how it drapes, and style it (see previous post). If you're fitting on your own, you'll want to make sure you can take some photos of yourself in the mirror — front, back, and sides — I do back photos with the front-facing camera on my phone, in the mirror

I'll print out my pictures, and keep them with my pattern / cutter's must* / etc., along with my fit notes, so I have a record if I want to remake it in a different fabric in the future. (What I did, what I like about it, and what I would change for next time).



Here's how I've photographed a top I'm currently working on. I take side photos with my arms raised, so I can check the balance of my side seams,

and if it has a sleeve I'll take a second set with my arm down, so I can check the sleeve setting and rotation.


*A cutter's must is a sheet that explains what's included in a pattern — what pieces, how many to cut and in what, how much yardage you'll need of what fabrics, and what your sewing instructions are. I use them when I make my own patterns, or make enough changes to an existing pattern that an outside list is helpful. They're typically used when you are working on production runs — this will be sent with the pattern and a sew-by sample (for the factory to see how you want it constructed), and any notes will be made on it for reference.

American Steel Knife, Inc.
Cutting Tools & Pattern Makers
1125 Broadway
New York, N. Y. 10010
Tel. (212) 255-3627

CUTTERS MUST

SAREA as 2950-A
-7-8

Compare this Ticket with Material, Patterns and Cutting Ticket

Style	081-E	NS	YARDAGES
Sample In	4-14 DRESS	SAND CREPE	
PATTERN		TAFFETA LINING - 44"	
2	FRONT Center Top	Dress length -	
2	FRONT Side Top	Bottom Hem - 1"	
1	Right FR. Facing -	Maccos	
1	Left FR. Lower Facing -	Right FR. Buttons	
2	BACK Top	1/4" S.A. - all garment,	
2	Sleeves	Except 1/4" neckline,	
2	Pocket Flaps	Facings	
1	FRONT SKIRT	1 1/2" overlap ON C. FRONT	
2	BACK SKIRT	NO TOP STITCHES	
Taffeta LINING		REMARKS	
1	FRONT Center LINING	STITCH	
2	FRONT Side LINING	Send w/ SAMPLE	
2	BACK LINING		
		BATH (9) 2 1/2 # 5261 Gold DORSIL S. PADS (2) CMP OUT BIAS: 30-172-20MM LOOPS: OUT PLEATING: STITCHING: ELASTIC: SIZE AMT: MEASURE 3/4 5/8 7/8 9/10 11/12 13/14 OTHER: Hanging Tape 2 X 30" (1) ZIPPER D.T.M CHAIN LOOPS: HANGER: BAG: COVER:	
Fus. p-186 1 Right FR. Facing 1 Left FR. Lower Facing 2 Pocket Flaps LININGS PERKOLINE AB 1 FRONT neck Facing 2 BACK neck Facing			

Here's an example of a cutter's must that's been filled out — thanks, google!

I do like fitting with another person, ideally someone judgement-free that you trust. They will be able to help you take your photos, pin hard-to-reach spots, and give you style input. If you don't have someone with you to fit, it can be immensely helpful to get feedback from a friend if you show them your photos afterwards. Which brings me to my next item...

Notes! It's so helpful for me to take actual physical notes of my changes, rather than mental, in case I forget. As discussed in the last post, I really don't like to make more than five major fit corrections per muslin. I never want to overcorrect: it not only will cause frustration, but it can muddy the whole style and fit of the muslin and make you not want to wear it. I like to write down all of my notes, then prioritize them in order of level of egregiousness — afterwards, I can make a checklist for adjusting my pattern, and it's so much easier to keep track of everything. And again: *top five* fit corrections. Don't go over the top; sometimes one balance correction will fix more than one problem you might be seeing.

Lastly: Questions! Here are things I like to ask myself as I fit, and as I start figuring out what the critical corrections I need to make are. I like to work in order of fit problems first, and then look at the garment for aesthetics.

- How does this feel? Am I wearing it, or is it wearing me? Do I feel comfortable? Confident? This is the first thing I ask myself; if I really feel uncomfortable, I'll assess if I want to continue or not.
- Can I move around comfortably? Where is it inhibiting movement?
- For tops: Can I hug someone? Can I reach the top shelf? Does the bust align with mine? Does the shoulder lay comfortably on my own, and does the back neck sit nicely? Is the sleeve too short? Too tight? If this

is a tank or strappy top, do the strap points line up with my apex, or are they too narrow?

- For bottoms: Can I sit comfortably? Is the back gapping? Is the front crotch cutting? Is the leg too tight? Where are my draglines? How are the rises? Too high? Too low?
- For functional items — do the functional parts actually function? Hood up? Cuffs rolled? Drawcords tied?
- Would this feel good in my real fabric? Should I add any length in case of shrinkage? Should I reduce any length because of stretch growth?
- Do the lengths look good on me? Does everything look proportionate? Am I happy with the shapes, heights, and placements of cuffs, collars, and pockets? How's the neckline shape visual? Too high? Too low?

If you have a certain set of items you work through, and in a certain order, and consistently do it the same way every time, it will make tasks that can feel like a time-eater (fitting & muslins, for sure), into tasks that soon are effortless, and actually enjoyable. Formulas. Who knew?

Questions? @ me in the comments!

xo Gabby

Gabby is a technical fashion designer, fit specialist, and prolific googler. She lives in Denver, raises tiny littles, reads, embroiders, makes, experiments, fails, learns, tries again. See her on instagram @ladygrift.

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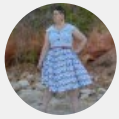
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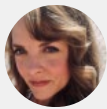
APRIL 24, 2019 AT 1:32 AM (EDIT)



Recently I've been taking photos with my timer on my phone – I prop the phone on something at about the height of my belly button and use the 2 second timer to take a photo so I can stand straight and normally, or with arms up to the side. I find that really is helping me with shoulder and bust fit, two things I have struggled with, because I can see more range of movement than just in the mirror with one arm up in that specific angle.

It does take some practice to get useful photos this way though. It's important that the phone isn't too low or it will distort the image – it should be about the height you would hold it to take a photo in the mirror. I find I can open one drawer on my chest of drawers and prop it on the ledge there. That also means it's fairly vertical – if it's at an angle it will give a distorted image too!

Reply

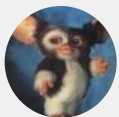


Gabby Brown

APRIL 25, 2019 AT 2:55 PM (EDIT)

Yes! This is an excellent idea. Thanks for sharing! One of my best purchases was a mini-tripod on amazon- it has bendy legs, so I can pop the phone in and then scrunch the legs around whatever thing is at the height I need. I haven't used a timer- definitely trying your tip

Reply



chloe_deadlycraft

MAY 8, 2019 AT 9:19 AM (EDIT)

Ok – belated fitting question from me! I am not the same waist size as hip size in most patterns (if I sew the size for my waist, the hip area is way too big).

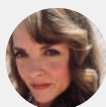
Is it “better” to cut a size based on my waist and take in the hips, or cut to my hips and do a full tummy adjustment. I guess the benefit of the former is a quicker adjustment, but with the latter I can choose to adjust for my front waist and back waist separately.

Any ideas? I often find they are way too large whatever I do – it's like they expect my hips to be bigger to hold them up, so even when adjusted to my measurements I end up sizing down after by taking in the sides heaps

I hope that makes sense!

Chloe

Reply



Gabby Brown

MAY 8, 2019 AT 11:28 AM (EDIT)

definitely makes sense! ok, so here is what i would do in a couple of scenarios:

1. knit or woven dress / skirt- keep the waist, and adjust hips based on the style, if needed
2. knit pant- cut to waist and adjust hip (then you can maintain the stretch ratio of the waist at your new hip measurement, and use the easier correction on the more forgiving fabric type)
3. woven pant- cut to hip and adjust waist (then you can adjust front at the sides, and the back at the sides and rise, and use the more custom

correction on the fabric type that will need the most cajoling, and is more fit critical to get right)

in all scenarios, if this is something that happens on every pattern, it would be well worth your time to make an oak tag top block from something that you've already adjusted and fits you really well. then you can use your hard copy of your fit block (one for knits, one for wovens), and trace that off onto whatever pattern you're using. you'll probably still have to make a few adjustments based on styling, but this would save you so much time from having to make those corrections over and over again.

you can get oak tag on amazon if you want a roll, or you can even use office file folders and cut/tape them.

aaaaand you've just given me an idea for a post

hope this helps!!
xo gabby

Reply



chloe_deadlycraft

MAY 8, 2019 AT 4:17 PM (EDIT)

This is perfect – thank you! I love the logic of separating knit from woven pants on this, makes total sense

Reply

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