



GABBY'S FITTING SERIES

9. Gabby's Fitting Series – Pattern Blocks & “You Rule! Tools”

Edit

Stats



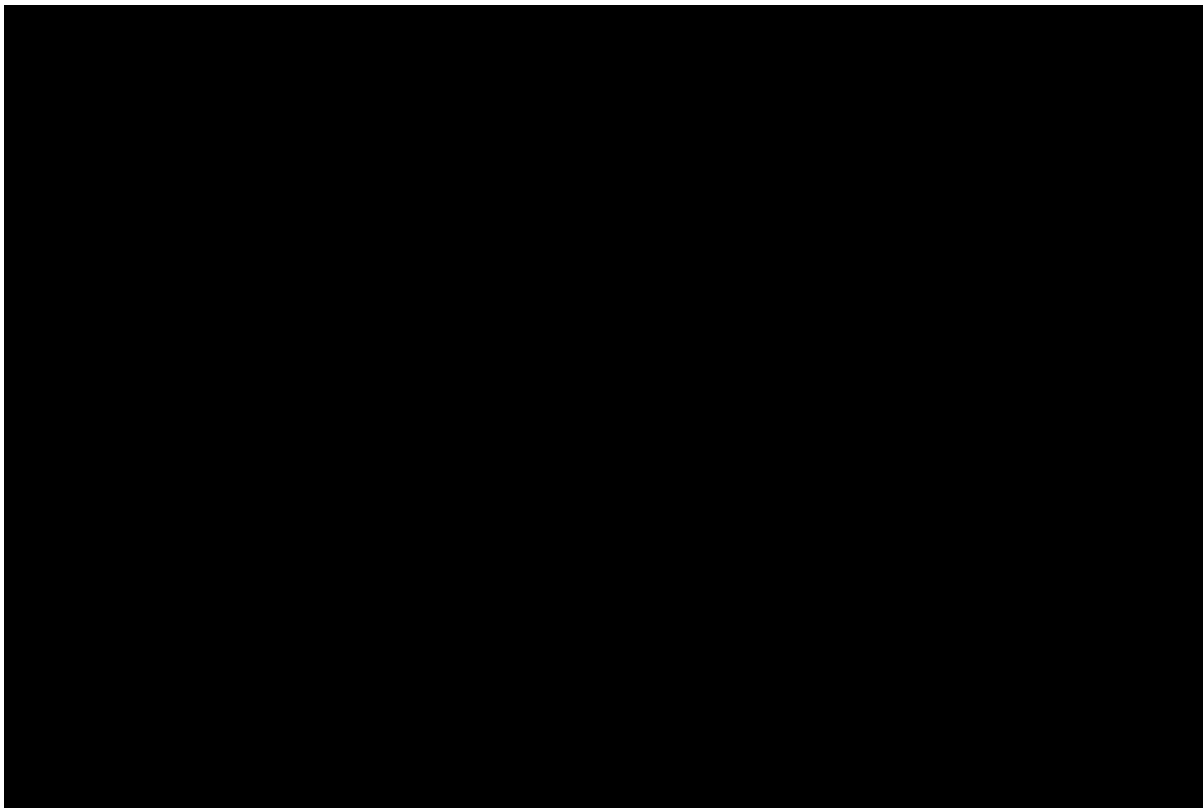
Hi, Sewcialists!

I'm back and by jove, I hope you have lots of tea! Now would be a good time to get some... I spent my break thinking about time-savers, but of course they need some explanation

Are there corrections that you make time after time after time, when fitting your makes? For example, do you always have to adjust a shoulder slope, or do a full bust adjustment?

If you answered yes, it sounds like you may be ready to create your own set of blocks.

First: Pick a pattern that you've already adjusted successfully and that you're super happy with. Great armhole? Great! Perfect neckline? Perfect. Your go-to tried-and-true? ***Boom*** That's the one you want.



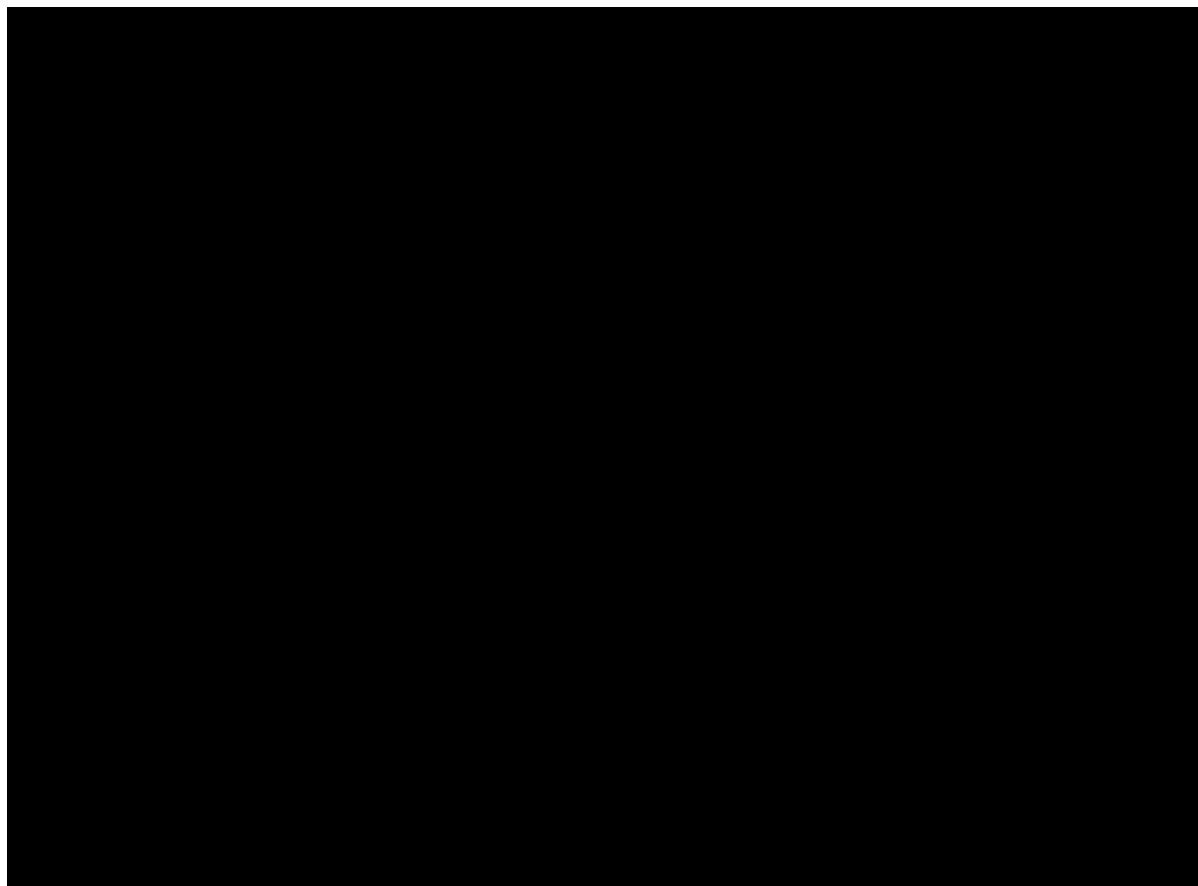


Sloper versus Block

Second: Trace it onto oak tag*, mark it, notch it, punch it, and hang it.

That's your new block! (Examples: Gabby's “Insert Pattern Name Here” Dress Block. Gabby's Long Sleeved Knit Turtleneck. Gabby's Leggings! You get the picture.)

**Editors Note: Oak tag is a type of very light card, also called tag board or manila (like manila folders!)*

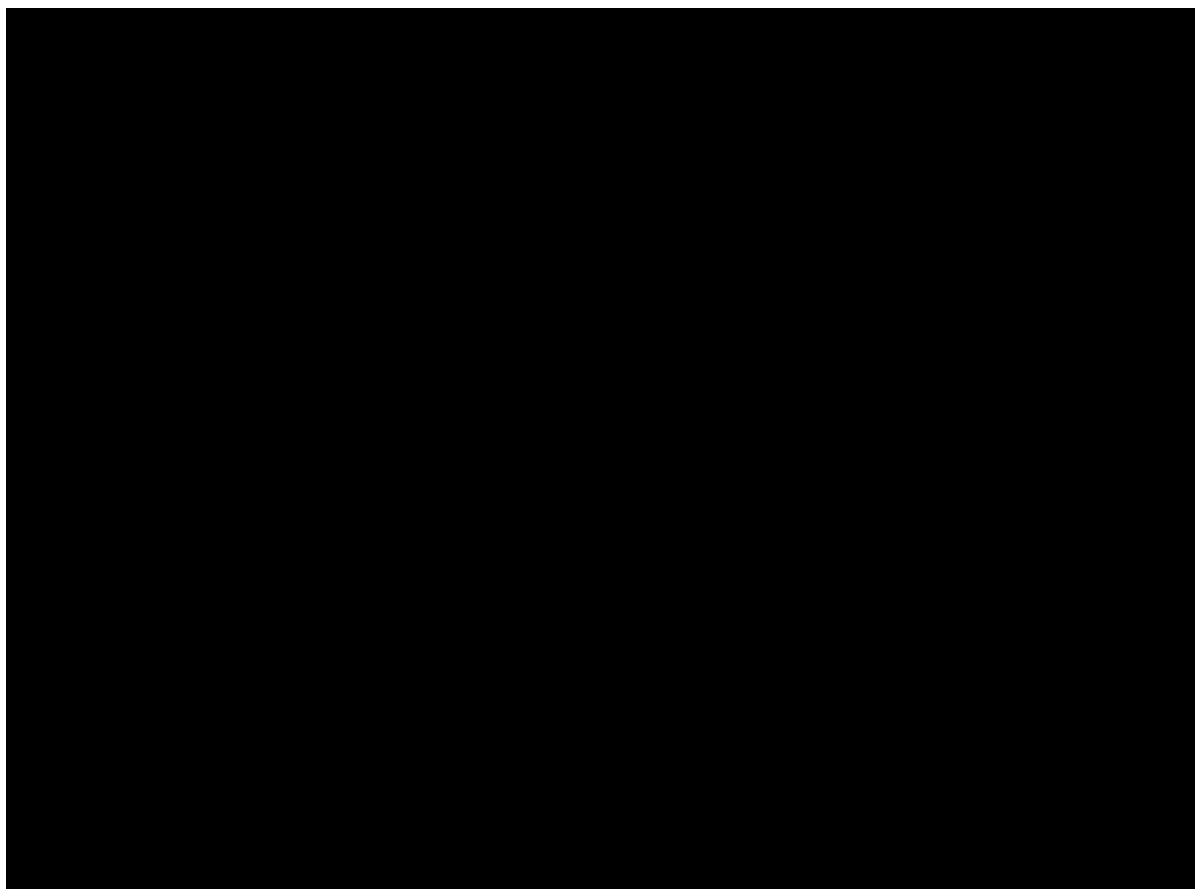


Block Supplies

Third: Hang it in your project space, and use it as reference whenever you start a new similar style. Similar = equivalent silhouette and fabric type.

Doesn't have to be exact, but you wouldn't use a set-in sleeve armhole to look at a raglan style, for example, or a french terry jogger leg shape to a

denim bootcut leg.



Block Example

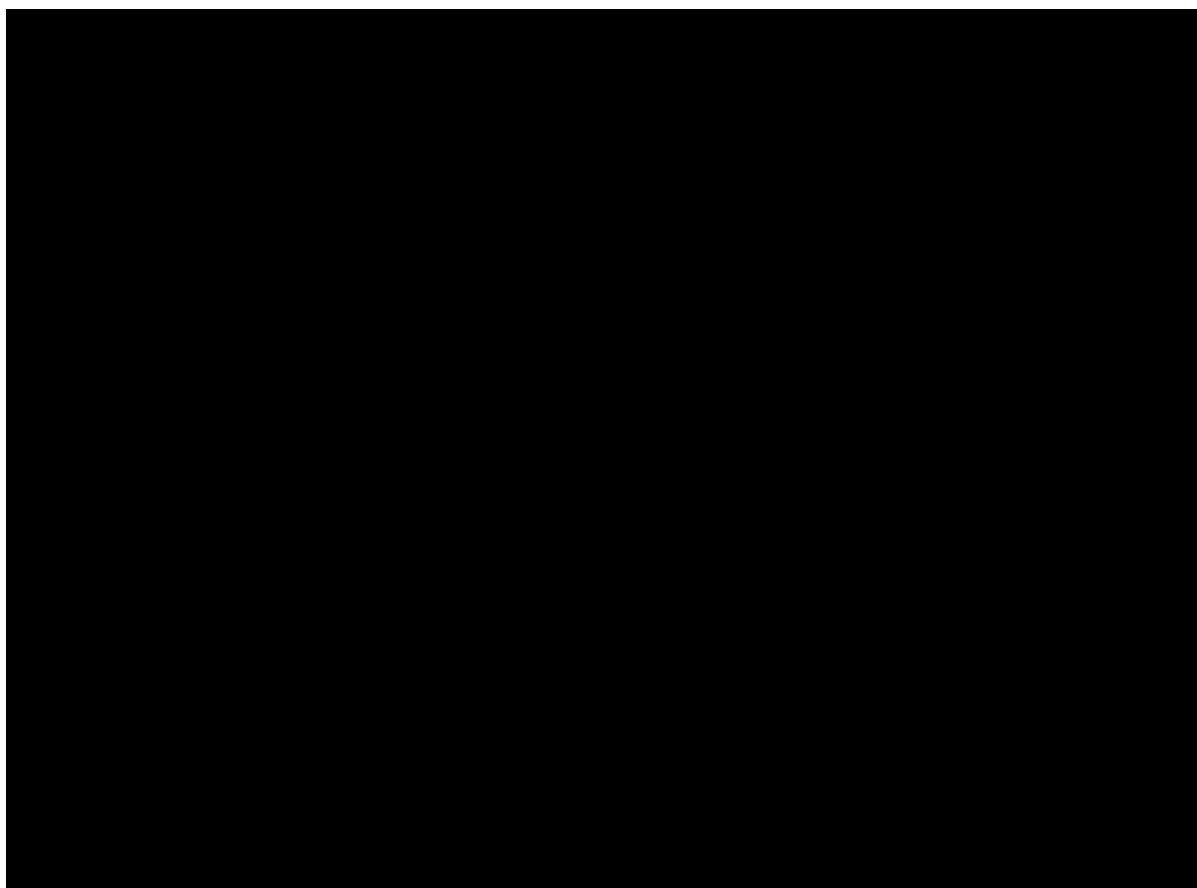
Tips for choosing a good block: Select simple styles that allow for adjustments. Also, choose styles that you've already fit—the point is, you've made muslins and pattern corrections, and you don't want to have to make them over and over again. Do you have a good basic woven blouse that fits you well? Then, you have a starting bodice block to add different sleeves, collars, pockets, etc. Additionally, if you frequently need to make the same adjustments, and you have something that already reflects those changes, it doesn't make sense to keep having to adjust over and over again—why not trace off whatever already works?

Keep in mind that your blocks should reflect your fabric—a knit tee shirt block that has been built to utilize a lot of stretch would not be a good starting point for a woven dress. However, if you have a woven dress

block, you can use that to create any number of other woven dresses as well as tops.

*A note for denim, specifically for bottoms: Fabric content can really affect your fit, especially at the curve of your rises where you use the bias stretch of the fabric. Make sure to test these—you may want a couple different top blocks for different content/washes if you make a lot of jeans. (100% cotton, indigo rinse; 99% cotton/1% elastane, grey overdyed; etc.)

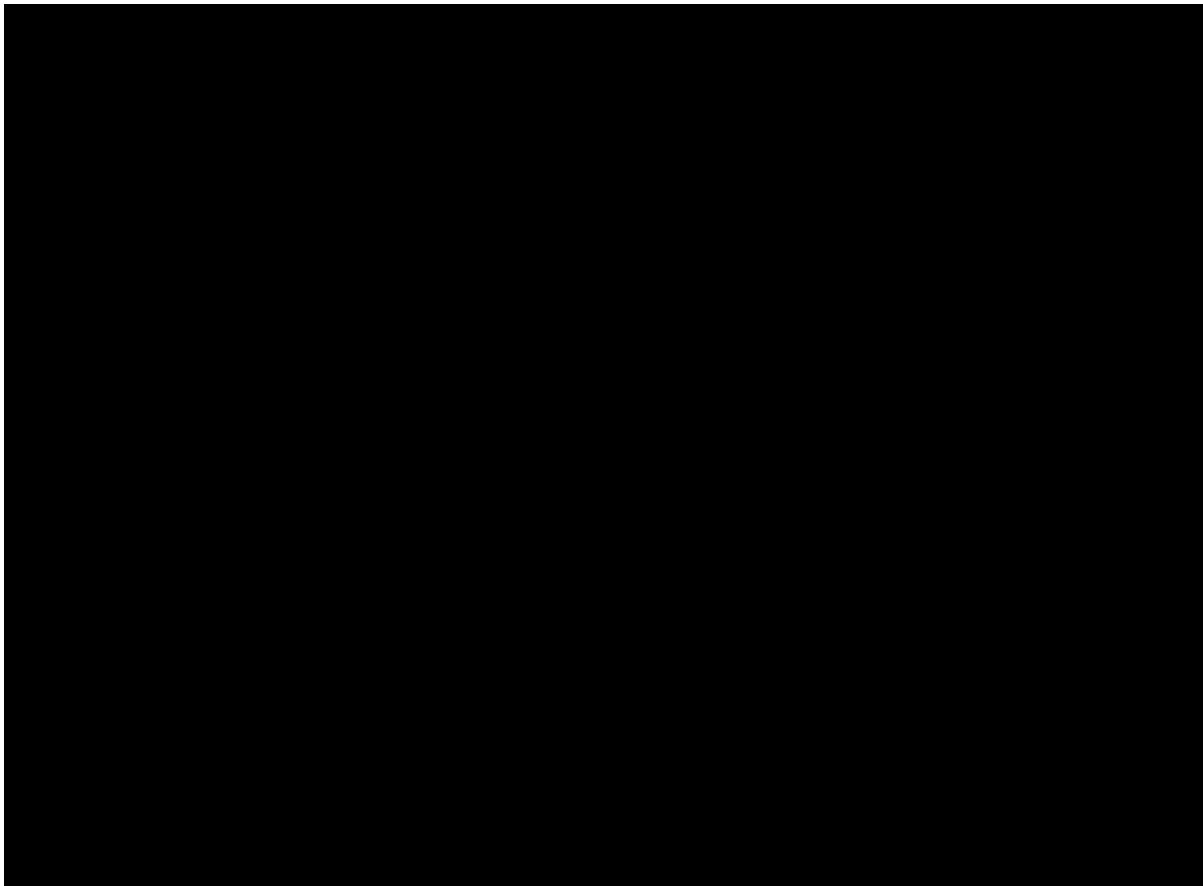
Alternately, you may wish to reference only certain aspects of your favorite style. Perhaps you adjusted a pocket size and placement, and you want to use it on future styles. It's time to create a Rule Tool!



What is a Rule Tool, You ask? Let's find out!



Rule Tool Supplies: Acetate, different colored sharpies, paper scissors, regular rulers, and the pattern or shape you want to trace.



Trace your pattern / shape, mark placements or measurements, add seam

allowances and ruler markings. Notch as your heart desires.

Rule Tools follow the same concept—if you have a really great knit V neck shape, trace it onto oak tag/acetate, and you can use it to add that neckline onto whatever tee you want, as long as the stretch ratio/content is similar. Use it in places where a ruler might be more helpful than a full block, like shoulder slopes, necklines, and armholes. You can do these with or without seam allowances—whatever is easiest for you. If you do add seam allowances, notch them so you'll always remember what you used.

I've used grafix™ acetate to create my Rule Tools, but you can use any kind of clear plastic that you want, or stick with the oak tag. The benefit of doing this with clear plastic instead of using oak tag is that you can see through it and line things up more precisely. Theoretically, you could also make these using layers of fusible and sheer fabrics, but you would need to take care when tracing unless you are using them as actual pattern pieces.

My video example shows a very basic neck and shoulder slope Rule Tool. I would use this to overlay on top of a pattern and see how much I might need to adjust my pattern to follow my actual measurements. Then, I could swap overlays and trace the adjustment directly on the pattern piece. You could use a clear pocket Rule Tool to match your plaid and stripe placements exactly, or make sure your bias angle is right on.

You'll also want to make a note somewhere on the ruler of the measurement range it services—for example, if I have a woven set-in sleeve armhole for a close fitting shirt, I'll note what the bust circumference and shoulder width are on the ruler, so I know what range that armhole shape will work for. Really good raglan line shape? I'll make a note of what kind of neckline it goes with, the bust circumference, and how far down from the HPS (high point shoulder) to place it.

Another example—an accessory set. Collars, collar stands, pockets, cuffs, and yokes. Interchangeable. Could be cool, right?

You can use your blocks & Rule Tools to check shapes, to trace off armholes, and to copy corrections. You can also use them to evaluate pattern shapes. Establishing a set of blocks would be immensely helpful if, for example, you always have to grade between sizes. Your blocks would already have your body shaping and sway back adjustments made, no need to cut/pin/draft/measure/tape/sweat ***every*single*time*!**

And that, my friends, is the nicest time-saver I know. Let me know if you make any of the above. I would love to know how things go, and I am always happy to help with any questions you may have.

xo Gabby

P.S.: You can find oak tag on a roll on Amazon, American Sewing Supply, etc. You can also use manilla file folders, or really, anything that is harder paper than pattern paper. You basically just want something hardy that will stand up to being traced off a zillion times. grafix™ acetate is also available on Amazon or in any art supply store, and it comes in different sizes and thicknesses.

P.P.S.: You'll need to use Sharpies on the acetate, or else the ink will smudge all over the place!

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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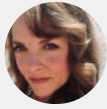


Cat

JUNE 5, 2019 AT 11:11 PM (EDIT)

This is great – thanks so much for this, and the rest of the series! It's been incredibly helpful!

Reply



Gabby Brown

JUNE 11, 2019 AT 3:42 PM (EDIT)

Great, I'm happy to hear this! Thanks for reading

Reply



Katrina

JUNE 6, 2019 AT 4:49 PM (EDIT)

Greatest idea ever! I have occasionally tried comparing a block to a new pattern, but I couldn't decide which one to put on top, and I would have to keep switching them to see. This solves the problem. Maybe I will make a Crotch Curve Rule Tool!

Reply



Gabby Brown

JUNE 7, 2019 AT 12:28 PM (EDIT)

yay thanks!! try it out and let me know what you think! thanks for reading

Reply

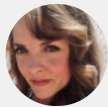
Dea



JULY 9, 2019 AT 10:30 AM (EDIT)

Thanks for all the info! Can you tell me what weight of grafix acetate you use?

Reply



Gabby Brown

JULY 10, 2019 AT 12:25 PM (EDIT)

Thanks for reading! The acetate I have on hand is .003, however it is pretty lightweight now that I've had a chance to work with it more. If I make some more tools, I'll probably look for something a bit sturdier. In reality, any kind of semi-rigid clear plastic sheeting will work, as long as you have a way to cut it cleanly

Reply



15. Dear Gabby: Picking a Pattern Size — Help! — Sewcialists

SEPTEMBER 11, 2019 AT 7:00 AM (EDIT)

[...] pattern, et, voila! ... Oh, and don't get me started on the benefits of making yourself a block library... [...]

Reply



17. Dear Gabby: Making a Bodice Sloper — Help! — Sewcialists

OCTOBER 14, 2019 AT 7:04 AM (EDIT)

[...] Then, why create blocks? Maybe you've made the perfect pattern hack to a

Wiksten shift, and everything about it fits you perfectly — minimal draglines, length is great, sleeve length and opening proportion is on point! You'd want to take your hacked pattern, memorialize it in block form, and then you can use that to create endless shift iterations with no drama. You've already perfected the big money items, so you can trust that your creations will all come from an excellent starting point. [...]

Reply



27. Dear Gabby: The Great Shoulder Adjustment Digest —Part 1 – Sewcialists

OCTOBER 12, 2020 AT 6:53 AM (EDIT)

[...] that we have our shoulder slope measurement, you can use this to create a tool to help you check this on patterns, or simply keep this measurement in mind to measure patterns [...]

Reply

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