

FIT CLINIC

EPISODE 2



USING A MUSLIN TO ACHIEVE YOUR PERFECT FIT

Hi, patrons! Welcome to the second episode in our Fit Clinic series. We're learning so much during our time together! I hope these videos are showing you that achieving a custom fit is worth the time and effort it takes. You've got this!

xoxo, *Gertie*

THE FIVE-PART FITTING PROCESS

As we discussed in Episode One, we follow a standard process for fitting here at Charm Patterns:

1. Select a size based on body measurements
2. Make any initial fit changes to the paper pattern
3. Sew a muslin
4. Try on the muslin and diagnose any fit issues
5. Transfer those changes back to the paper pattern

In this month's video, we're going to cover steps 3–5. This can be a challenging part of the process, but we're here to make it manageable for you. Making a muslin is always worth the time it takes to achieve the perfect fit, and you'll have a customized pattern you can use again and again!

Remember that steps 3–5 may have to be repeated a few times in order to achieve a truly custom fit.

SUPPLIES FOR SEWING AND TESTING A MUSLIN

In addition to the supplies in the handout for Episode One of the Fit Clinic, you'll need:

- Muslin fabric (or other fabric that is comparable to your project's recommended fabrics)
We source our muslin from [Vogue Fabrics](#), but any medium weight unbleached cotton fabric will do.
- Straight pins or safety pins
You'll use these to make pattern adjustments on your muslin while wearing it.
- A full-length mirror
A mirror is essential for fitting yourself or even having someone else fit your muslin on you.
- A notepad
Take notes as you're fitting so that you don't lose track of changes you need to make.
- A felt tip marker
Mark changes directly on your muslin with a felt tip pen or marker.

CUTTING AND SEWING A MUSLIN

A muslin lets you test the fit of the pattern on your unique body before cutting into expensive fabric! Muslin is a woven unbleached cotton fabric but also refers to the test garment itself. You'll want to make any initial changes to your pattern (like those we discussed in Episode One) and then use the muslin to both test those changes and see any other adjustments you'd like to make.

It's essential to use a fabric that's comparable to the recommended fabric. This is particularly important when you are making a muslin out of a knit fabric—in that case, you'll want to think about the recommended stretch percentage and look for a test fabric with the same stretch percentage. Because it's just a muslin, consider shopping for test knits in your fabric store's bargain bin—it doesn't have to be a fabric you love.

A muslin can be “quick and dirty” or may need to be as complex as the finished garment. (Muslins for things like swimsuits and jeans can be as involved as making the garment itself!) The important thing is to gain all the information you need. Typically, a muslin will skip some of the finishing work and will follow these guidelines:

- Baste seams together using a long machine stitch.
- Don't bother with facings, but apply interfacing to stabilize the fabric where needed.
- If you're making a dress with a full skirt, consider testing just the bodice.
- DO place a zipper in the garment if it will change the fit or when you're fitting yourself without a helper. Use a long zipper and leave a tail even if you're just testing a bodice (so you're able to get the bodice over your head).
- Staystitch any edges that will be finished (necklines, sleeve hems, etc.) and press under seam allowances to see finished lengths.
- For a button-front garment, mark the center front of the garment and the buttonhole placement so you can pin it closed exactly as it will be worn.

FITTING A MUSLIN

Best practices for fitting a muslin on yourself (or someone else!):

- Stand with neutral posture. Don't slouch or pop your hip or stand super-erect.
- Wear whatever undergarments you intend to wear with the garment.
- Once you have the garment on and are observing it in the mirror, pause to take it all in. Make sure that the garment is sitting level and centered on your body before considering adjustments.
- When you make adjustments, use the mirror. Don't look down at yourself while pinning or marking, if possible, as that can change the fit of the muslin.
- Don't panic if it isn't perfect! You're here to gather information and you are learning the skills to make the adjustments needed. Remember that it's a process.

When assessing your muslin, check each of these areas:

- Shoulders
- Bust
- Bodice Length
- Armhole and sleeve
- Back
- Hip curve (for slim-fitting skirts)

ADDRESSING FIT ISSUES ON YOURSELF (OR ON SOMEONE ELSE!)

Topics we cover in Episode Two (watch the video to see these changes in action!):

- Adjusting a shoulder
- Lengthening/shortening darts
- Moving dart position, including the apex
- Swayback adjustment
- Taking in hips

TRANSFERRING FIT ADJUSTMENTS TO THE PATTERN

Once you've made changes to your muslin, you'll need to transfer all of your changes back to your paper pattern. This way you'll have an updated pattern to use to cut your next muslin (if needed) or to make your custom-fitted garment.

- Transfer any adjustments back to the paper pattern.
- Use a pencil and ruler to make markings, or use a new color to avoid confusion when making several adjustments.
- Record any changes in your sewing notebook or on the pattern itself, and be sure to include the date! You'll thank yourself if you ever make the pattern again.
- Double-check your adjustments on all affected pattern pieces! Remember the Snowball Effect from Episode One. You should walk all your pattern pieces to ensure they will match when sewing.

We hope you've loved this episode of our Fit Clinic series!

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