CHAPTER IX

COMMERCIAL PATTERNS: PURCHASE AND USE

Commercial patterns are cut according to a series of average measurements. These cannot, of course, account for the irregularities of form as well as the drafted-to-individual-measure pattern, but as they are to be had for almost every conceivable garment, and in endless sizes, they have come into very general use. It is well, then, that those of us who make use of them shall learn to do so intelligently.

Buying Commercial Patterns.—Buy only those of standard makes, such as have clearly marked directions for using them. Buy waists according to the bust measure, and skirts by the hip measure. The bust measure should be taken around the fullest part of the bust, an easy measure, except for tight-fitted waists, for which a closer measure should be taken. The hip measure should be taken around the fullest part of the hip, from five to seven inches below the waist, over the bone in hip, an easy measure.

To Interpret Pattern.—Before opening pattern, see that the correct size has been sold to you. Read the directions very carefully; note especially the following points:

1. The number of pieces in the pattern; their type, lining or outside, or both.

2. Study guide chart, in order to become familiar with the parts of the pattern and shape of the pieces.

3. Note which parts are lining, which outside. Decide which you will need to use.

4. Open pattern; select parts you need, fold others and replace them in envelope.

5. Note seam allowance and how indicated; also hems.

6. Note what marks are used to indicate correct placing on the material.

7. Note the markings for tucks, plaits, trimmings.

8. Have the following measures taken, by which to test and alter your pattern before cutting in material:

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MEASURES FOR WAIST

Bust, around fullest part of bust, an easy measure for a shirt-waist, a close measure for a tight-fitted waist.

Length of back, from bone in shoulder to bottom of tape in waist (placed around waist to mark waist line).

Length of front, from hollow of neck to bottom of tape at waist.

Sleeve.—Length, inside length taken from muscle where arm joins body, to wrist bone.

Skirt.—Waist, around waist line, comfortably snug measure.

Hip, five to seven inches below waist, tape drawn straight around figure, easy measure.

Length, center front, hip, center back from bottom of tape at waist to floor.

Test Pattern.—All commercial patterns should first be tested by measuring patterns and comparing with the individual measure of the person, then making such corrections as are possible on the paper pattern. The pattern (except lining patterns) should then be cut in unbleached cloth or some inexpensive material to be sure that all lines are correct before cutting in the material itself. For this, follow the directions given for cutting and testing drafted patterns, being careful to remember that most commercial patterns allow for seams, in some parts indicated by perforations; in others, the allowance stated in the printed directions accompanying the pattern.

ALTERATION OF PATTERNS

Shirtwaist Pattern.—To Increase Bust Measure.—Draw a line straight down from the center of the shoulder, through the waist line on both pieces of the pattern. Cut through these lines and separate the pieces enough to give one-quarter of the whole amount needed on both back and front (Fig. 87A and B).

To Decrease Bust Measure.—Lay a fold extending from the center of the shoulder straight through the waist line on both pieces of the pattern, the fold to take up one-quarter of the entire amount the pattern needs to be decreased (Fig. 88).

To Lengthen Back and Front.—Cut through pattern about two inches above the waist line; separate the pieces enough to give the added length, being careful to straighten the underarm seam line
Fig. 87.—Alteration of waist patterns; A, B, increasing bust measure; C, increasing width of sleeve.

Fig. 88.—Alteration of waist patterns; A, B, decreasing bust measure; C, decreasing width of sleeve.

which is broken by the separation of the parts of the pattern (Fig. 89A and B).

To Shorten Back and Front.—Lay a fold through the pattern about two inches above the waist line on both back and front, the
Fig. 89.—Alteration of waist patterns; A, B, increasing length of front and back; C, increasing sleeve length.

Fig. 90.—Alteration of waist patterns; A, B, decreasing length of front and back; B, decreasing sleeve length.

fold taking up the extra length. Straighten the underarm seam line by turning edge of pattern back on itself (Fig. 90A and B).

When the figure is extremely long and full in the bust, it is
sometimes necessary to lengthen in two places, across the chest and back, as well as at the point above the waist line.

To Alter Sleeve.—Apply the same principle for making wider or narrower, longer or shorter, as has been suggested for the waist (Figs. 87C, 88C, 89C, 90C).

Alteration of Gored Skirt Patterns.—To Increase Waist and Hip Measure.—Cut lengthwise through the centre of each side gore and separate the pieces sufficiently to give in all, one-half the amount necessary, adding equally to each gore (Figs. 91C, 92A).

To Decrease Waist and Hip Measure.—Lay a fold lengthwise through the centre of each side gore, take an equal amount from each gore, in all one-half the necessary amount (Fig. 91D).

To Increase Waist Measure.—Add a portion of the entire amount to each gore at the top, the most over the hip. Draw new lines from these points to the hip line (Fig. 92B).

To Decrease Waist Measure.—Reverse the above. Draw new lines, continuing to hip line (Fig. 93B).

To Increase Hip Measure.—Add to each gore at hip line (greatest amount over hip), enough in all to correct the measure. Redraft line from hip to waist, and hip to bottom (Fig. 92C).

To Decrease Hip Measure.—Reverse above. Necessary to redraft line from hip to waist and hip to bottom (Fig. 93A).

To Lengthen Pattern.—Cut pieces of pattern across about twelve inches below waist line, separate the pieces sufficiently to give the required length, allowing the same on each (Fig. 91A).

To Shorten Pattern.—Reverse of above. Lay fold at same point, to shorten length, unless a great deal has to be taken up, in which case some could be taken from the bottom (Fig. 91B).

To Alter Yoke Pattern.—If the waist measure is too small, slash pattern at waist line and spread apart until correct waist measure is obtained. Lap slashes if the waist is too large.

Alterations for Irregular Figures.—The commercial pattern is based on the lines of a normal erect figure. Certain alterations in the pattern for those who do not stand erect will save a good deal of fitting and possible dissatisfaction. For the woman whose hips and abdomen push forward as she stands, a tuck one-eighth to one-quarter inch deep will need to be taken in the back of the first gore of the pattern, and carried to nothing beyond the center of the gore. This will throw fulness into the front side of the gore, which pre-
Fig. 91.—Alteration of skirt patterns: A, increasing length of skirt; B, decreasing length of skirt; C, increasing waist and hip measure; also width at bottom; D, decreasing waist and hip measure; also width at bottom.
Fig. 92—Alteration of skirt patterns: A, increasing waist and hip without increasing width at bottom; B, increasing waist measure; C, increasing hip measure.
vents the whole skirt pushing forward, at the bottom, as it otherwise would. When this fault of posture is very marked, it will be necessary to add to the top of the front gore and top of the first side gore, sloping to less at the back of the gore; add the same amount to the top of the second side gore at the front, and slope to nothing at the back. The waist measure would also need to be increased.

An excess of flesh, or over-development of muscles on the hips, will cause a skirt, otherwise correct, to hang badly. To correct this,

lay a tuck one-eighth to one-quarter inch deep and six to eight inches below the waist in the back of the second side gore, sloping it to nothing beyond the center of the gore.

**Tight-fitted Waist Pattern.**—This should be tested as carefully as the shirtwaist pattern. The principles applied to alterations in shirtwaists will also apply to this type of waist. In testing the bust measure, be careful to keep within the seam lines. A neces-
sary increase or decrease of the bust measure can usually be taken care of in the seams, instead of by enlarging the pattern, as there are more seams which permit this.

To Lengthen Waist.—If only a small amount needs to be added to the length, cut the pieces of the pattern about two inches above the waist line, and separate them sufficiently to give the necessary amount. If the figure is very long from the shoulder to the bust, it may also be necessary to cut the front, side front, back and side back pattern across the widest part of the back and front, and separate the pieces for additional length.

To Shorten Waist.—Fold a tuck in the pieces of the pattern, to reduce the length.

To Alter Sleeve.—Treat in the same manner as you would the shirtwaist sleeve, both above and below the elbow, if necessary, to lengthen or shorten. The width of the sleeve may be taken care of in the seams, unless a great deal of difference occurs. If the latter, follow directions for same alteration in shirtwaist sleeve.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS

1. What is the advantage of using a commercial pattern?
2. How would you interpret a commercial pattern?
3. How would you alter a waist pattern that measured too small in the bust? A sleeve that was too short?
4. How would you change a gored skirt pattern measuring thirty-six inches at the hip, for a person measuring forty inches at hip? If the same pattern were too long, how would you correct it?
5. At what part of the waist pattern would you fold it to decrease the length? Where fold skirt pattern for the same alterations?