

WORKSHOP: "PATTERNS FROM EXISTING GARMENTS"



Summary: After learning how to read patterns and understand the sizing and symbols in a previous workshop, we will create our own pattern from an existing favourite garment using wide paper, foam underlay, pins and drawing materials.

Materials and Equipment:

wide paper for patterns
straight pins with plastic ball tops
thimble
hem gauge
pin cushion
paper scissors
empty work surface
masking tape
instructions/ideas sheet

favourite garment
short and long rulers
pencil, eraser, sharpener
measuring tape
transfer paper
tracing wheel
protractor
water soluble fabric marker
optional: permanent marker

Class Plan: Creating a Pattern from an Existing Garment

1. Choose a piece of clothing or item that you already have but would like to recreate. It may be almost worn out, damaged, the wrong colour or no longer available.
2. Lay down your surface protection, either thick industrial felt or a layer of thick foam. The foam ideally can be salvaged from packaging in the community.
3. Lay out a piece of wide pattern paper on your foam/felt that is large enough for the first section of the garment you will work on.



4. Lay your garment out on top of your pattern paper. Smooth out one section of the garment at a time so it lays as flat as possible.



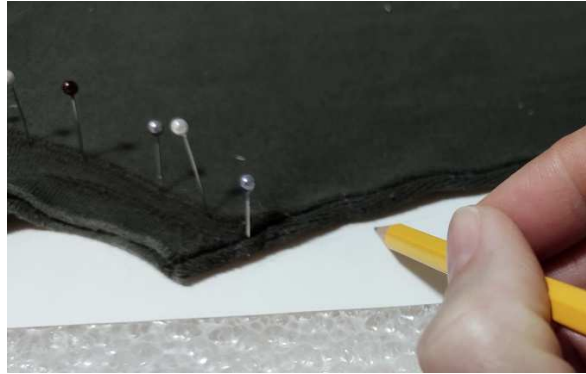
- a. Position it on your paper so there is enough paper space around the edges to add any needed seam allowances.
 - b. Position it to get the most out of your paper, so don't put it right in the middle of a large sheet.
5. Using pins with plastic balls on the top if available push the pins straight down through the garment and paper, stopping part way into the foam/felt protective layer. This marks the outline of the pattern piece with pin holes in the paper. Do not push pins through anywhere else.



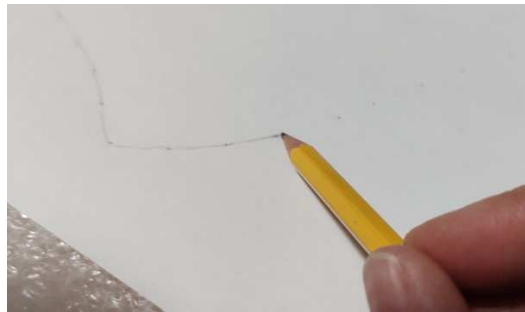
- a. Grasp the metal part of the pin to push it through to avoid wearing out your fingertips pushing on pins, or try a thimble if needed.
6. Using plastic ball pins, transfer any needed markings on the garment section piece the same way.
 - a. If there is a pocket, marking the outline will show where it is to be positioned on the pattern piece.



7. Draw in the edges of the garment piece where the seams are at the edge instead of using pins.



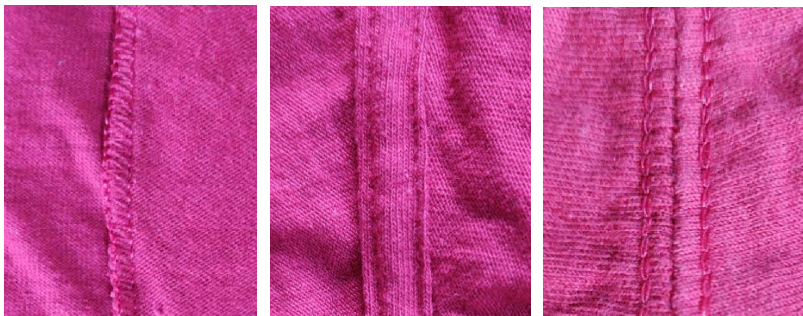
8. Draw your pattern piece:
- Remove your pins and garment from the paper/foam.
 - Draw in the lines for your pattern piece with a pencil.



- Draw in the lines for any added markings and label them e.g. "Pocket Placement".

9. Add seam allowances and notes on seam types:

- Examine the seams of each edge of your garment section to determine what type of seam it is.



- Measure any seam allowance for each seam on the garment piece. Measure this distance out on your pattern piece and draw a new line. Adding a note for the seam allowance amount is also helpful.
10. Check that your pattern piece is symmetrical if it should be. For example, the front of a t-shirt would likely be the same on the left and right sides. Fold your pattern piece in half down the centre and compare the sides. If they aren't the same, trace the folded pattern on folded paper and draw a new line averaging the two sides. Cut out the new pattern.

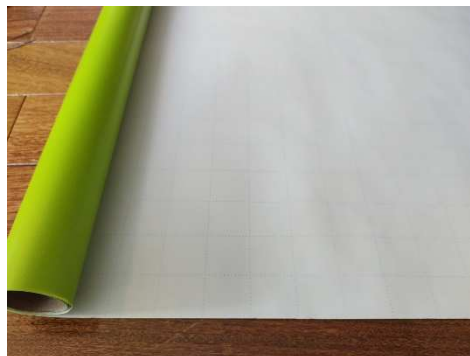
11. When you make pattern pieces that adjoin, check that the seams are the same length or that the different can be eased in like a sleeve cap. The side seam of the garment front should be the same length as the side seam for the back piece to which it will be stitched.
12. For garment sections that cannot be laid completely flat:
 - a. Option 1: Check if the garment section is symmetrical and can be folded exactly in half with both sides the same. Create the pattern piece based on half and mark the fold edge on the pattern "Place on fold".
 - b. Option 2: Mark a line across the garment section you are working on and a matching line on your pattern paper. Create the first part of the pattern piece on one side of the line. Then reposition the garment matching the garment and pattern lines and create the other half of the pattern piece.
13. For garments with darts or pleats, create one side and lower edge of the pattern piece and one side of the dart. Keeping a pin in the tip of the dart and just the pins across the bottom of the garment, move the garment over the width of the dart. Then pin along the other edge of the dart and garment piece to complete the pattern piece.
14. For garments with elastic, transfer one side edge of your garment piece and the bottom to your pattern paper with pin holes. Stretch your elastic to the full width and mark this width as the beginning of the other side of your pattern piece. Unpin the first edge, keeping the pins along the bottom in place. Pivot your garment over to the beginning of the other side and pin mark that edge in place.
15. Make the small pattern pieces for items like rib knit for necklines and pockets.



16. Label each pattern piece for how many need to be cut out and the straight of the grain of the fabric.
17. Cut out all your paper pattern pieces and store them in an envelope to keep them together.

Useful Information/Adaptations/Variations:

- Some types of wrapping papers are thick and have a 1" grid printed on the back. This is a great substitute if you don't have a large wide roll of paper for making patterns, and it is a great way to repurpose things.



- If the garment you are working on is old or damaged and you no longer plan to wear it, you could take it apart and spread each garment section out individually.

Trouble Shooting:

- Grasp the metal part of the pin to push it through to avoid wearing out your fingertips pushing on pins, or try a thimble if needed.
- If you arrive at the edge of your paper and still need to add seam allowances, tap extra paper to the edge as needed.



- If the garment you are working on is stretchy be careful not to distort the fabric as you transfer markings. Lay it flat focusing on one section at a time.