

Circular No. 362

1939

THE FOUNDATION PATTERN
MAE THOMPSON
Assistant Extension Clothing Specialist

THE FOUNDATION PATTERN

MAE THOMPSON

Assistant Extension Clothing Specialist

What is a Foundation Pattern?

A foundation pattern (sometimes called a master pattern, or a block pattern) is a simple pattern which fits the individual as perfectly as possible. It has all of the necessary darts and as few seam lines as possible.

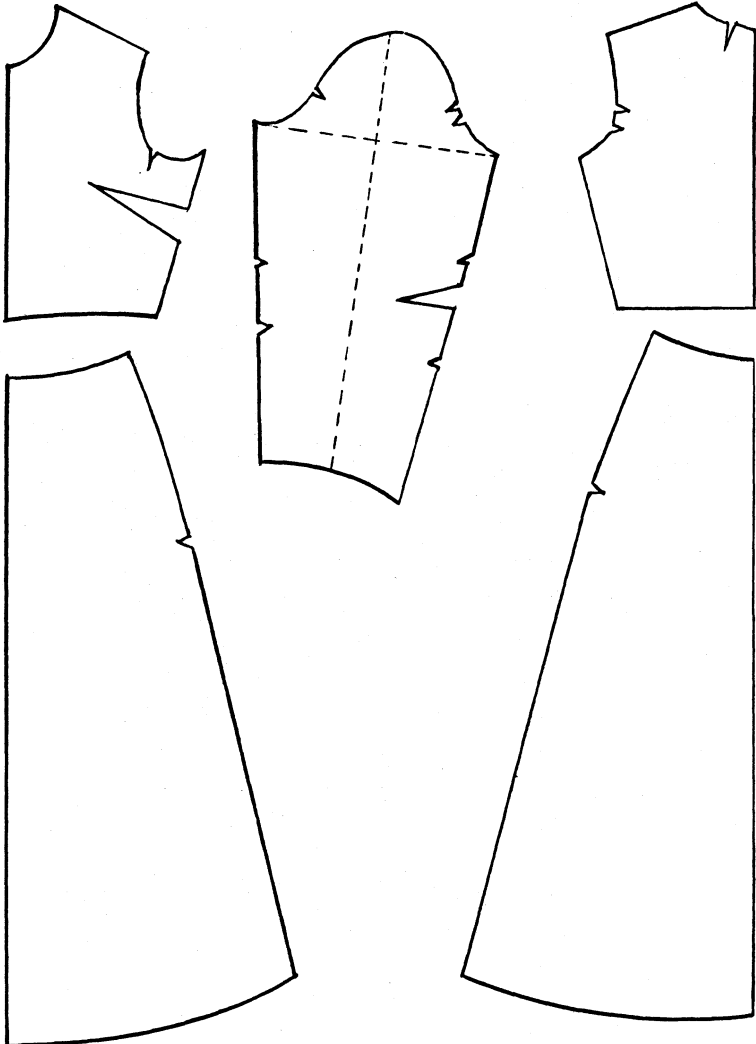


Fig. 1. A Typical Foundation Pattern

A foundation pattern that fits the individual can be used to make the simpler types of dresses. Also, when new commercial patterns are purchased, they can be easily and quickly checked with the foundation pattern for any necessary alterations.

Each season one ought to check the lines of the foundation pattern and keep them up to date with current styles. New lines, especially over hips in skirts, over shoulders in blouses, and around the waistline in the dress, are always to be looked for. **Change your old foundation pattern to be consistent with the mode, as well as with your figure and personality.**

HOW TO MAKE A FOUNDATION PATTERN

Supplies Needed:

1. Plain commercial pattern which has been previously altered according to instructions in Pattern Alteration Circular No. 327.
2. Unbleached muslin or inexpensive gingham—two dress lengths plus one long sleeve length. Select material with crosswise grain easily visible and of firm quality so that it will hold its shape. If gingham is used be sure it is a large check that is woven and not printed so the grain of the material can be more easily seen.
3. Pins.
4. Scissors.
5. Tapeline.
6. Needle, colored thread for basting and thimble.
7. Colored tailors chalk.
8. Yardstick.
9. Paste.
10. Extra paper for altering pattern. Old patterns may be used; however, a very light weight wrapping paper is more durable.

Two persons work together. One is the model and the other does the fitting. The one to be fitted wears smooth, well-fitted foundation garments.

Working Plan:

Certain cutting rules are noted here which are probably familiar but which may not be a habit. The sooner one can follow these rules automatically, the sooner one will gain accuracy and speed.

1. Many times the crosswise grain of the material has been warped in finishing so that it does not run straight. It should be straightened out as much as possible before cutting out a garment. The ends are held by two people who pull it diagonally from one corner to the other as shown in fig. 2.

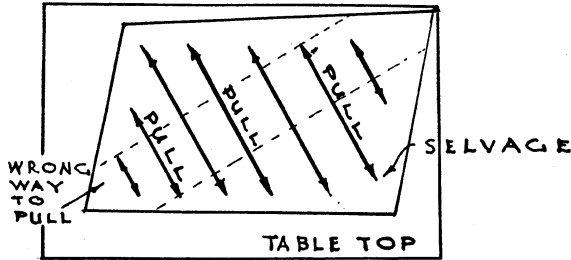


Fig. 2. Straightening the Material

2. When folding the material lengthwise to place a line of the pattern on a fold, measure the pattern at the widest part and fold the material that width plus the seam allowance. See figure 3.

3. Be sure the fold is straight; either fold on a stripe, if the stripe is woven, or measure from the selvedge.

4. Always lay the large end of the pattern toward the cut end of the cloth.

5. After laying the pattern on the material, always pin first that part of the pattern which cannot be moved. For example, if an edge is to be laid on a fold, pin that edge first; if a line within the pattern is to be laid on the straight of the material, pin that part first. Smooth out the pattern and pin at the edge. Use few pins, but these effectively. Two pins only are necessary down the straight edge of a pattern, one at the top and one at the bottom.

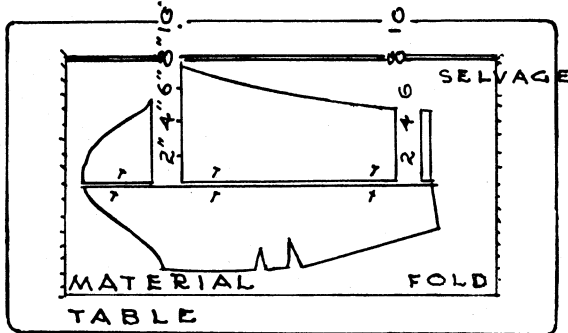


Fig. 3. Placing the Pattern

6. If the pattern does not have a heavy line indicating seam allowance, with the aid of a yardstick and pencil, mark along the line of perforations on each piece of pattern. From this line allow $\frac{5}{8}$ inch seam on curves and one inch seams on straight lines as shoulder, underarm and side seams in sleeves and skirts to allow for fitting.

7. Outline the stitching or seam lines and darts using colored chalk, then baste with colored thread. Mark notches in sleeve cap and armseye by basting a line two inches long at right angles to the seam line. Do not make back stitches, but use a knot and leave a long thread at the cutting edge as illustrated in Fig. 4. Baste a line through center front and center back of both blouse and skirt. Baste a line on lengthwise grain of sleeve and on the crosswise grain line at the base of the sleeve cap.

8. Baste as for any dress. Leave a placket 3 inches at left underarm seam of blouse and 5 inches at upper left of skirt. Cut a slash at center front of neck so blouse will slip over head easily. Pin a little underlap there on which to fasten the center fronts. Do not baste sleeve in armhole. The skirt may be pinned to bottom of blouse, but do not turn the top of skirt under, simply lap it on top of the blouse.

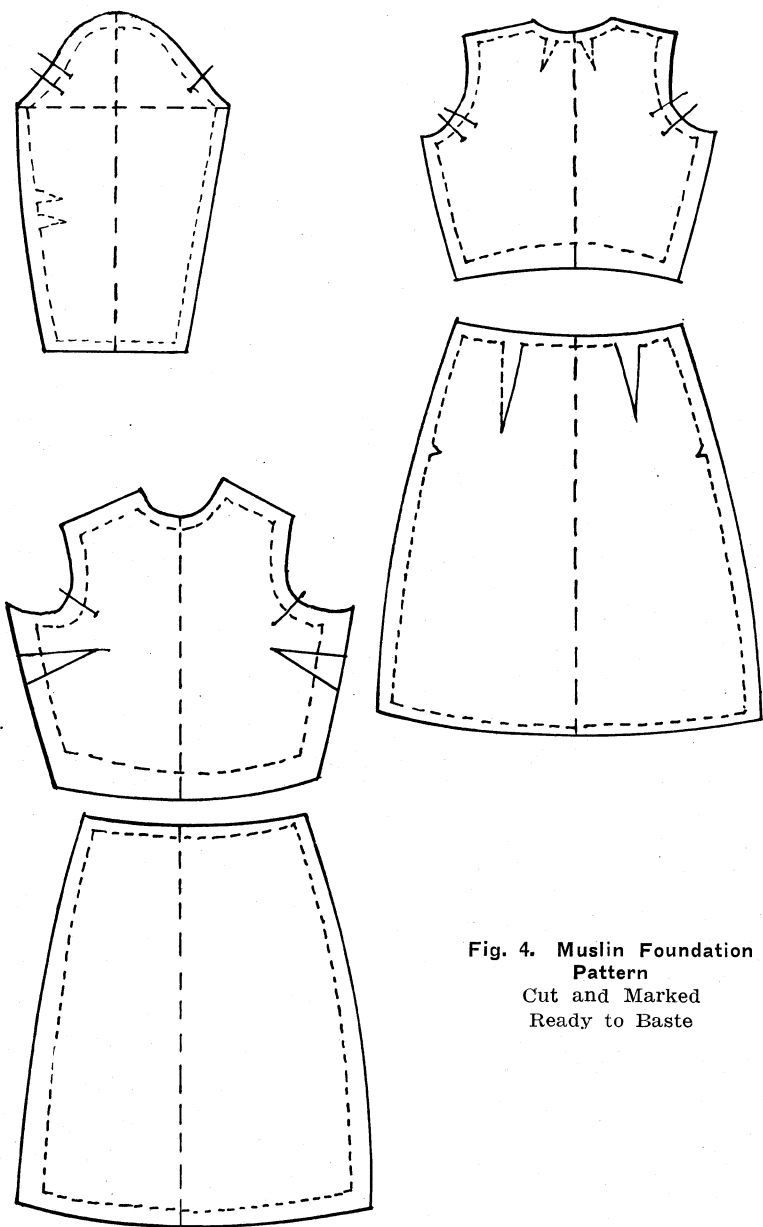
9. Since this is practice material only, do not be afraid to make alterations; slash and piece, tuck and dart, pin and re-pin seams and darts until the garment really fits.

10. Mark on muslin the fullest point of bust, point of elbow, fullest point of hips in back of skirt, corrected high (normal) neckline, normal armseye, corrected notches in armseye and sleeve cap, the point in the sleeve which joins the shoulder seam, corrected wrist line, corrected waist line and the evened walking length of skirt.

11. Correct your original paper pattern. If many changes have been made, use a pencil to outline all new lines on the muslin garment. Rip apart carefully, straighten grain perfectly and make a fresh paper copy.

If few changes have been made, transfer these to your original pattern, pasting on new pieces of paper where garment was let out, or cutting off where the garment was tightened.

12. Copy corrected pattern on any tough paper. Be sure an accurate seam allowance has been kept throughout, $\frac{5}{8}$ inch on curved seams and 1 inch on straight lines. Mark notches and grain line in ink on both sides of the pattern. Cut out the fundamental dart in each piece.



**Fig. 4. Muslin Foundation
Pattern**
Cut and Marked
Ready to Baste

13. Save the muslin or gingham garment to try on again in locating new necklines, yoke lines, etc., or to be used in cutting trial collars, cuffs, etc.

This pattern should be fitted from time to time to note any changes in the figure.

Bibliography

Practical Dress Design, Mabel D. Erwin

Pattern and Dress Design, Eddy and Wiley

**PUBLICATION OF THE EXTENSION SERVICE
OKLAHOMA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL COLLEGE
Stillwater, Oklahoma**

ERNEST E. SCHOLL, Director

State of Oklahoma Cooperating With the United States Department of Agriculture in Extension work in Agriculture and Home Economics, County Agent Work. Distributed in Furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914.