

CHAPTER 4

Buy the Right Size

Fitting is easier if you start with the right size pattern, yet many people buy the wrong size. Patterns are made for the average B-cup bra size. If you are a DD and buy according to your bust measurement, your pattern will be too large in the neck and shoulder area. See the illustration on page 23.

We take only the absolutely NECESSARY measurements. For example, we don't measure back length because it generally tells us little. It may tell you that you are a Petite or Half-size, but you are better off learning how to alter a Misses' size pattern and having thousands of designs from which to choose. You don't have to settle for the more limited selection in special sizes.

The rest of this chapter will tell you how to arrive at your correct size(s). See page 27 for size chart comparisons so you can fill in this size chart.

My Sizes:

Top Size: _____

Bust Cup Size: _____

Bottom Size:

Fitted Skirt: _____

Full Skirt: _____

Pant: _____

Rules for Measuring

- ◆ Measure over the underwear you plan to wear with your garment. The bra style you wear is important because your bust fullness and position can change with different bras.
- ◆ Measure, making sure your fingers are not under the tape. This is a snug, SKIN measurement.

NOTE: You may want to measure with and without panty hose to see if your measurements change.

Dresses and Tops

Measure the Bust

In the early 1970s, instead of measuring the bust to determine size, we started taking TWO measurements, the high bust and the full bust. If the full bust was 2" larger than the high bust, we used the high bust measurement as if it was the full bust measurement. But in our classes we were only using the high bust, because it worked! When we first wrote this book, we recommended taking both measurements, but now, seven years later, we are taking a bold step and suggesting you need to take only the high bust measurement to determine your size and get the proper fit in the neck and shoulder area. Yes, you will need to alter for a full bust, fuller hips, and possibly a broad back, but the pattern tissue and tissue-fitting will help you see which adjustments you need to make.

We've found historic precedence for our approach. In an 1873 publication for James McCall's Bazaar Glove-Fitting Patterns, the following instructions were given for measuring Ladies' patterns:

"Ladies' patterns...should be selected according to the bust measure. Pass a tape-measure around the bust just under the arms. Draw it one inch tighter than the dress is to fit. The number of inches then ascertained is the size of the bust."



Where did the term "bust" originate? The word was applied to head, shoulder, and chest sculptures in 1691. Perhaps James McCall was measuring the bottom edge of a sculpture bust, though eventually the word came to mean bosom.



Measure snugly. Place the tape above the bust in front and under the shoulder blades in back, where your bra normally sits.

If you are between sizes, go to the smaller size, because patterns have enough ease to cover you up to the next size.

