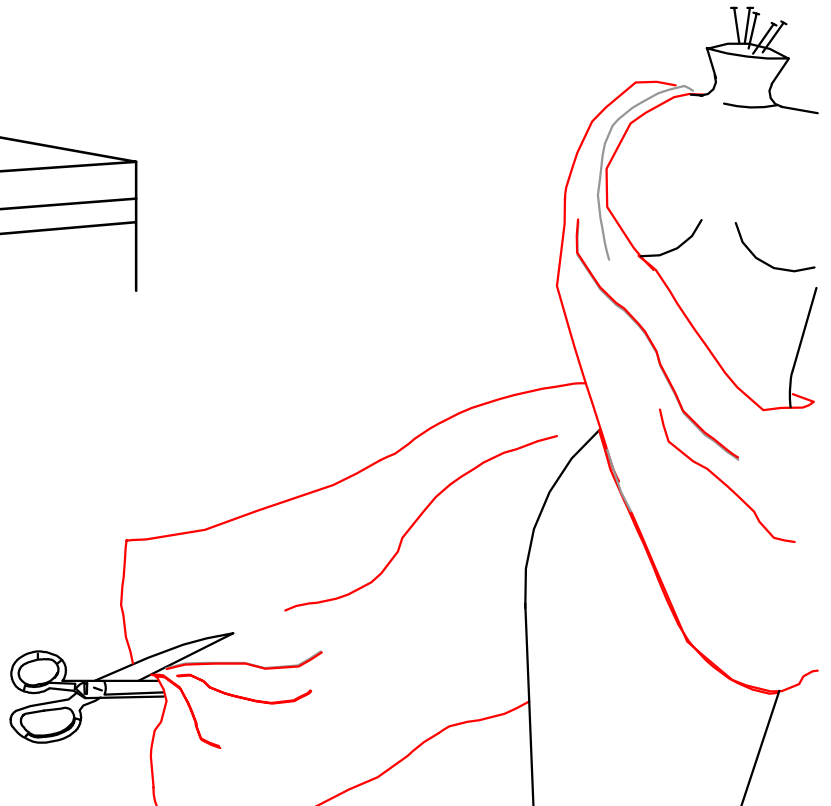
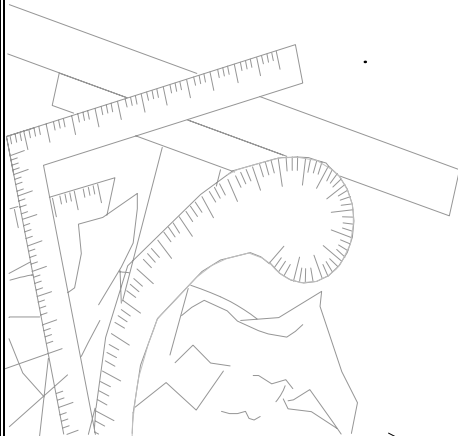
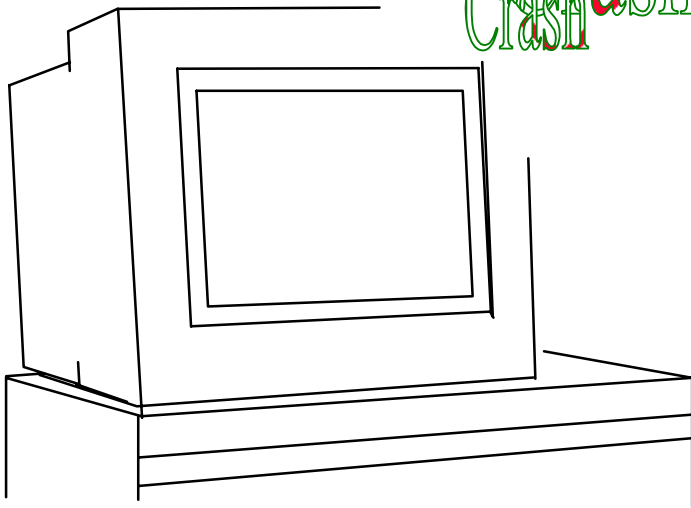


# Fashion Design and Personal Patternmaking

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Crash Course  
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## **C**onsider:

The subject of apparel is a necessary consideration to us all. It may be thought of as whimsical or fanciful when referred to as fashion, yet it is one in which each of us participates to some extent, in that each of us wears some. Have you ever felt compelled to take a serious look at fashion?

This Crash Course deals a brief description of two of the many aspects of fashion – design and patternmaking. It represents a preface to instructional tutorials for on-line learning. These tutorials are prepared to acknowledge recreational and entrepreneurial clothiers as recreational and entrepreneurial fashion designers and to further enable them as patternmakers as well.

The fashion (AKA apparel) industry is enormous and involves applications from many disciplines, each of which is worthy of study in itself. This minute sample of a huge industry that is glamorous only from a distance can assist those interested to enhance creativity and productivity while having fun with fashion.

Hopefully, this quick overview will help to unravel some of the mystery of fashion in terms of design and patternmaking. It addresses fashion from an either recreational or entrepreneurial perspective, intended for classroom or self-instructional use.

Fashion design is a creative art form using the medium of fabrics and finishes to produce garments and accessories. Patternmaking on the other hand involves mathematics, using geometry to solve the problem of shaping 2 dimensional fabric into the 3 dimensional garments of the fashion world.

# Fashion Design

Good design exhibits some very basic principles whether expressed as interiors, landscape, fashion or other art form. In any specific art form, some elements of design are more prevalent than others. This quick look at fashion design will identify three elements to consider and three principles to follow when planning a garment, an outfit or a wardrobe. It provides a very brief introductory overview of design as applied to fashion, for personal satisfaction. Perhaps it can provide you with just enough of a hint to know if you would like to explore this topic further.

Recreational seamstresses and seamsters are already making design decisions with every sewing project. Some understanding of the design process helps fashion artists to identify reasons why some finished projects are more successful or satisfying than others are. Identifying a problem is the first step in solving it or avoiding repeat.

## Elements of Design

Characteristics that you can experience with one or more of the senses identify elements of design. In fashion, elements that you can see and feel include colour, texture and line of the fabric and of the garment itself.

### Colour

In choosing a fabric colour, you select pigmentation, hue and intensity. The most elementary colour system is based on the Prang colour wheel that relates to pure as well as combinations of red, blue and yellow pigments.

The colour wheel is usually presented in a full hue, rather than a tint or shade. At a most elementary level, a tint results from the addition of white, a shade from the addition of black, and intensity reduces in proportion

with the addition of water; i.e., the more water, the less intense.

A typical colour wheel displays pure colours, neither tinted nor shaded, at full intensity.

### Texture

Some words describing opposite textures include smooth or rough, slippery or sticky, fine or course, tight or loose.

The "hand" of a fabric relates to texture and describes the draping quality when you lift the fabric over the back of your hand. Typical descriptors vary from soft and delicate to firm and course.

### Line

The lines of a garment can be described with words such as hard and angular - straight and jagged or soft and round - curved and smooth. They can refer to a garment silhouette or to the pattern on a printed fabric.

The straighter the lines of a garment, the harder or more sophisticated it seems. Conversely, the rounder the curves, the softer or more relaxed it seems.

## Principles of Design

Consider these as the philosophy of fashion. What does it take to make a design chic, to give it panache? Will this combination be flamboyant or flat? There must be some guidelines.

### Harmony and Contrast

Think of harmony in the context of music. Imagine if you will, an orchestra playing a relaxing melody with a soothing, smooth sound of violins. Now, imagine trumpets and drums breaking in with quick, sharp notes then fading back to sweet violins.

Though the musical notes may have been in the same key making them musically harmonious, the strong element of contrast and surprise is surely the most compelling. So

too, elements such as colour might be compatible (harmonious) yet benefit from the addition of some sharp contrast.

Picture for example, an outfit in black, white and grey (monochromatic neutrals), with the contrast of a red scarf. Would it not be the red scarf breaking the monotony of neutral colours that captures the eye?

This eye-capturing feature of red becomes a Centre of Interest as well. If you have personal figure features that you prefer to minimise, don't make them the centre of interest. Using the same combination of colours and wanting to minimise your waist consider wearing a red scarf around your neck rather than a red belt around your waist.

## Proportion **and** Balance

One of the easiest ways to consider proportion and balance is to visualise a teeter-totter. A child and an adult can both ride on the same teeter-totter if they position themselves appropriately, with the adult closer to the centre and the child closer to the end.

In design terms, the major or visually heavier elements should be positioned closer to the centre of interest, with the minor or visually lighter elements positioned further away to achieve balance.

The visual weight of any portion of a room or garden or garment can often be felt instinctively. When this doesn't come spontaneously, perhaps it is out of balance. Try assigning a prominence or intensity value to each element, enabling you to *mathematically* calculate the balance.

## Form and Function

The form of a garment includes both elements and principles of design. Form should follow (be suitable for) its function (intended purpose). For example, a pleated wool skirt and a silk chiffon gown are vastly

different in both form and function. The wool skirt is rigid, austere and practical while the gown is more fluid, sociable and elegant.

Consider also that two T-shirts or A-line skirts may be the same shape (or "form") whether made from silk and satin or corduroy, but they are most likely to have very different functions. Similarly, two grad dresses may be intended for the same function but be entirely different in form.

# Patternmaking

## Fit (Cut)

**CADTERNS** Ready-to-Style™ Slopers can be created with default amounts of ease calculated automatically or custom amounts entered by you. Default amounts appear automatically and are based on your inputs of both height and circumference measurements as well as your choice of Close or Gentle fit (AKA cut).

## Style

Flat Patternmaking techniques can be applied to transform a aReady-to-Style sloper into a Ready-to-Cut™ pattern for a fashionable ready-to-wear garment. Apply these techniques manually at the worktable using traditional slash and spread methods with drafting tools, scissors and tape or digitally at the computer using a CAD (Computer-Aided Drafting) program.

## Finish

Finishing details may be either functional or decorative, or both. Think of them as dividing into "have-to's" and "want-to's" or both.

## Functional **Finish**

Functional details, such as seam allowances, closures and edge finishings (have-

to's) are finishing steps without which a pattern or the resulting garment is incomplete. Finishing details may or may not affect the shape of pattern pieces. For greatest number of options, these details should be considered early in the patternmaking process, even if they are to be added at the end.

**Seam Allowances** Not every garment requires seam allowances as part of the pattern in order for it to be ready to cut. If required, they should be added after styling is complete and the pattern is in its final shape.

A typical seam allowance width of .5 cm (or 5/8") can be added to all outside edges for standard finish on woven fabric. For a garment to be constructed from a fabric that doesn't ravel or run, such as many non-woven fabrics such as woollen knits or felt, seam allowances can be narrower. Similarly, seam allowance width may be appropriately adjusted for other fabrics, finishes or equipment used.

**Openings** Zippers, buttons and buttonholes or other fasteners can also be called **Closures**. These address the way a garment is done up and undone to put it on and take it off. Fastening options include hooks and eyes, Velcro, snaps, and others,

**Edge Finishes** Most garments require all edges to be surged, hemmed or faced in order to preserve shape and structure. A hem may be simply a fold in the fabric, concealing and protecting the cut edge. Shaped edges such as collarless necklines, sleeveless armholes and shaped hemlines need facings. Facings are typically cut from the same fabric in the same shape as the edge being finished. It is normally the same width throughout - typically about 6 cm (2 1/2") and is sewn with right sides together, then flattened, edge-stitched and pressed toward the inside of the garment.

## Decorative **Finish**

Decorative finishes (want-to's) are embellishment that, though unnecessary, may enhance the garment. These finishes may even be the detail that identifies the distinction of your own personal, *Signature* flair.

Decorative finishes can be incorporated with functional ones or alternatively, can be totally without function. Non-functional embellishments can be drawn on the pattern for the purpose of marking placement, then applied to the surface of the completed garment.

Though a surface embellishment such as appliqué or beadwork can be added to a completed garment, some finishing details ought to be applied to the fabric before pattern pieces are positioned or cut. This includes finishes such as special texturing, quilting, trapunto, double needle pin tucking and others. Be sure to test a sample of any finish that could modify size or shape of pattern pieces.

Decorative details may be applied to some or all of the garment.

## Design with Style

Though design and style have separate definitions, they are by no means mutually exclusive. Consideration of principles and elements of design applies to every part of your fashion statement. They apply to any segment from choice and placement of an accessory to the garment itself or to an entire outfit.

Patternmaking can likewise be applied to many more patterns than to just the first slopers. Further styling of a Ready-to-Cut pattern evolves it further. Using the same styled sloper repeatedly or applying a corresponding modification to other garment slopers can potentially lead to your own distinctive cut and your own style.

## **Conclusion**

This quick look at Fashion Design and Patternmaking provides little detail as it is intended to whet your appetite only. It can help you to know if you would like to further explore this subject either professionally or recreationally.

If your interest lies in professional pursuit of either fashion design or patternmaking or both, you should investigate fashion arts colleges and courses. Most post-secondary institutions address considerably more details of fashion related study.

If your interest is recreational or entrepreneurial, you should keep an eye on this **CADTERNS** Website as it gradually increases the scope and range of patternmaking tutorials available here. Anyone who is proficient at sewing and would like to learn how to make the patterns for her or his own styles is at the *perfect* place to get started. If you enjoy or have talent in either of these areas but not both, why not try to meet someone with similar or compatible interests and talents at the [RecreationalFashionDesigners@groups.msn.com](mailto:RecreationalFashionDesigners@groups.msn.com) group.

To explore your interest in Design and/or Patternmaking further, check this Website often. We'll keep you posted on lessons, as they become available on-line. They are available free of charge to anyone with a current license and support contract and to anyone else for a modest fee.

Keep smiling, keep styling personal patterns just for you by that talented designer - **YOU!**