

The Importance of Ease and Measurements and Presenting Christine Jonson's "Perfect Sizing" Worksheet

"This will revolutionize sewing!" is what I keep hearing every time I present my "Perfect Sizing" Worksheet at a workshop. I am so excited to offer this formula to help you make good decisions when pairing pattern size and fabric. After years of offering my tissue pattern measurements, stretch guides and countless articles and advice on this subject I finally put it all together to come up with my "Perfect Sizing" Worksheet. It has taken years of experience and months of tweaking to get it ready. Let me explain my concept.

The difference between your body measurements and your garment is one thing, but add the stretch of your fabric into the equation and things change. Determining the qualities of your fabric adds to the mix as well. Thinking about these factors independently is important but combining them as a tool is, well, useful!

Knowing the maximum stretch of a finished garment made with your chosen fabric, in your selected size, will give you the information needed to decide if that size will be the right size for the fit you want to achieve before you even purchase or cut into the fabric! A four-inch swatch is all you need to make your decision.

After taking your body measurements, choosing your pattern, finding the tissue pattern measurements and determining the percentage of stretch in your fabric, you are ready to do the math! The resulting answer is the "would be" maximum stretch and ease of the finished garment made up in that fabric and that size. Once you have those numbers, you can make a determination if you need to use that size or to plug in the tissue pattern measurements of the next size up or down and decide if those numbers will give you the desired fit. The final evaluation step will help refine your choice based on the numbers. The characteristics of your fabric will work with the ease measurements and give your garment either a closer fit or a looser fit.

A simple example would be if your average hip measurement is 42" and your chosen pant pattern in the size closest to a 42" hip allows 1/2" of ease at the hip and your fabric has 0% stretch then it is obvious you need to use a larger size. You would not be able to sit down! However, if your fabric offers 25% stretch you would find in doing the math that your finished garment would stretch to 53" at the hip and give you 11" inches of total hip ease. Then that size seems perfect. Furthermore, if after evaluating your fabrics' characteristics you decide that the fabric's weave will "grow" adding even more ease after wearing you may want to use a smaller size pattern.

This same thought process should be used for the bust and waist as well. Keep in mind which area of the garment will be the most difficult to adjust and come closest to that measurement, then adjust the other. An example of this would be choosing the best size pattern using the hip measurement instead of the waist measurement for a pair of pants. Adjusting the waist will be easier and only affects the waistline whereas altering the hip can affect not only the hip but the crotch as well.

Some garments will require measuring the bust, waist and hips and doing the math. Wherever you need to check ease you need to do the math!

Print extra copies and keep a notebook full of your worksheets. Be sure to attach a fabric swatch for future reference. This "Perfect Sizing" Worksheet notebook will become an invaluable tool for pairing pattern and fabric. Have fun and sew more!

Christine Jonson's "Perfect Sizing" Worksheet

STEP 1 – Take your **Body** Measurements:

High Bust _____

Bust _____

Waist _____

Hips – Standing _____

Hips – Sitting _____

Average Hip Measurement

(Standing + Sitting) ÷ 2 = _____
average

STEP 2 – Choose your Pattern:

Name _____

Number _____

STEP 3 – **Tissue Pattern Measurements** (TPM):

Compare your measurements from Step 1 to the TPM chart. Choose a size based on your average hip measurement for pants and skirts. Use your high bust measurement for jackets, dresses and tops. Fill in those measurements here:

Size _____

Bust _____

Waist _____

Hips _____

STEP 4 – Choose your Fabric:

Fabric _____

Content _____

Care _____

STEP 5 – Determine Stretch of Fabric using Elongation Ruler (see jacket flap):

_____ % Cross Grain Stretch

STEP 6 – Calculate Maximum Stretch of Garment:

Bust _____ + (_____ x _____ %) = _____

Waist _____ + (_____ x _____ %) = _____

Hips _____ + (_____ x _____ %) = _____
TPM TPM Stretch Max. Stretch

STEP 7 – Calculate the Ease of Garment:

Subtract measurements from Step 1 (**Body** measurements) from measurements in Step 6 (maximum stretch of garment)

Bust _____ - _____ = _____

Waist _____ - _____ = _____

Avg. Hip _____ - _____ = _____

(continued on next page)

Christine Jonson Patterns

www.cjpatterns.com

Staple Fabric Swatch Here AFTER You Check For % of Stretch

STEP 8 – Evaluate:

FABRIC

- Knit
- Knit w/LYCRA®
- Woven
- Woven w/LYCRA®

STRETCH

- Really Stretchy
- Pretty Stretchy
- Sort of Stretchy
- Not Very Stretchy
- No Stretch

HAND

- Soft with Drape
- Stable with Drape
- Soft with No Drape
- Stable with No Drape

RECOVERY

- Snappy
- Good
- Soft
- Poor

WEAVE

- Tight
- Loose
- Will Loosen with Wearing (i.e. Linen)

Compile Fabric Characteristics:

Fabric _____

Hand _____

Stretch _____

Recovery _____

Weave _____

DEFINITIONS OF EASE

Wearing Ease – The extra amount of fabric needed beyond actual body measurements. It is the *additional minimum* inches added in order to sit and move.

General Wearing Ease Guidelines:

Bust – 3-6 inches Hips – 2-3 inches

Design Ease – To understand the designer's intended design ease, *calculate the difference* between the **Body** Measurement Chart [back of pattern envelope] and flat *Tissue Pattern Measurements* (TPM) [inside on guide sheet]. **Read all the information supplied in your pattern**, including garment description, illustrations and pattern sheet details.

Negative Ease – When proper fit is achieved by the pattern measurements being smaller than your body measurements. It can be anywhere from one to five inches smaller depending on the stretch and recovery of your fabric.

Final Analysis – If the pattern does not have enough wearing ease, the fabric needs to stretch.

If the fabric does not have enough stretch, the pattern must have enough ease.

NOTES:

Using your High Bust measurement to choose a size will allow the neckline, shoulders and armholes to fit properly. You may still need a Full Bust adjustment.

If the pattern that you are using does not supply the TPM, you **must** take the necessary measurements yourself.

Step 6 Help: Determine calculations within () first, then add to TPM.