

GABBY'S
FITTING SERIES

SEWCIALISTS

WITH TECHNICAL FASHION DESIGN
AND FIT SPECIALIST

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3. Gabby's Fitting Series — How to Measure Garments



March 25, 2019

4 Comments

Hi Sewcialists!

Happy Monday, and happy tea time — this is another long one. I hope my measurement chart was helpful for getting familiar with your bodies! This post has lots of hints and tips on how to review garments (makes, ready-to-wear, or vintage) and learn the numbers and shapes that work for you, as well as get an idea of revisions needed before you begin a project.

As a matter of fact, I've made you another chart! This one will help you catalogue measurements that you like, and get an idea of ones that you don't. This chart contains a list of major and optional points that you can use to measure both patterns and garments, and is linked below. I haven't called out any specific numbers, so feel free to mark US standard or metric as your heart desires.

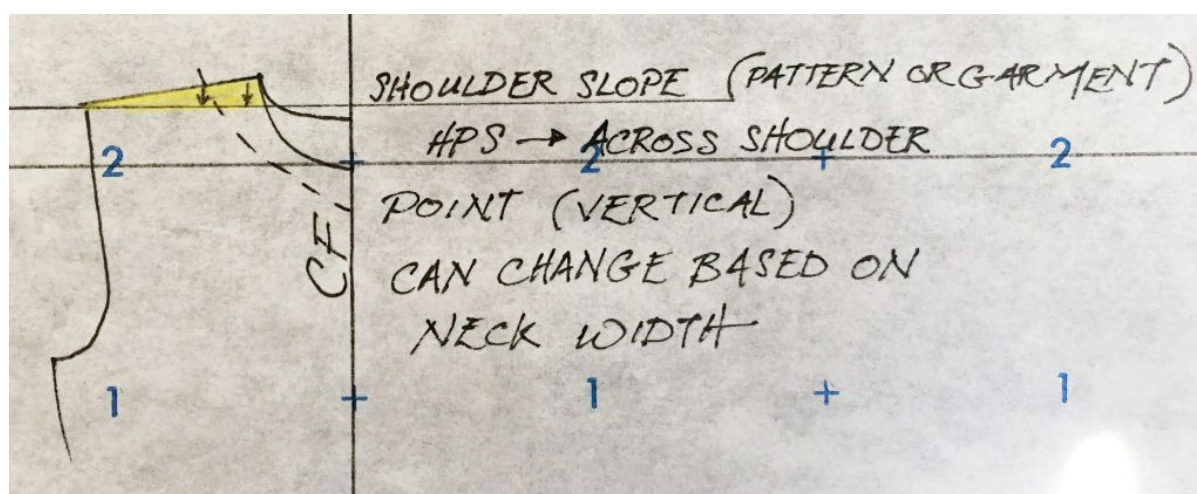
[Gabby's Basic Numbers Chart](#) [Download](#)

When measuring garments, you will always want to make sure your High Point Shoulder is placed properly. Frequently, they will feature a forward shoulder — this is used because a shoulder's muscle mass starts at the back and rolls over the top towards the front, so the back shoulder will require more length to make sure the shoulder seam sits at the center of the shoulder on your body. This amount will *typically* vary anywhere between 1/4" and 1", depending on the styling. This is true regardless of men's / women's drafting — men's may have an even further forward shoulder. However, you may find that men's custom tailored English and

Italian suiting has the opposite — the shoulder seam may start at the front neck and roll over the shoulder diagonally to meet the back armhole.

When checking a garment, lay it flat so the side seams and armholes are laying flat- match the underarm. Then, smooth the garment with your hand going up, and again down to the hem. This will show you if there is any forward shoulder on the garment.

Please note: if the neckline you are measuring is not a jewel neckline, you will need to know your shoulder slope measurement, and the neck width of the garment. See illustration...



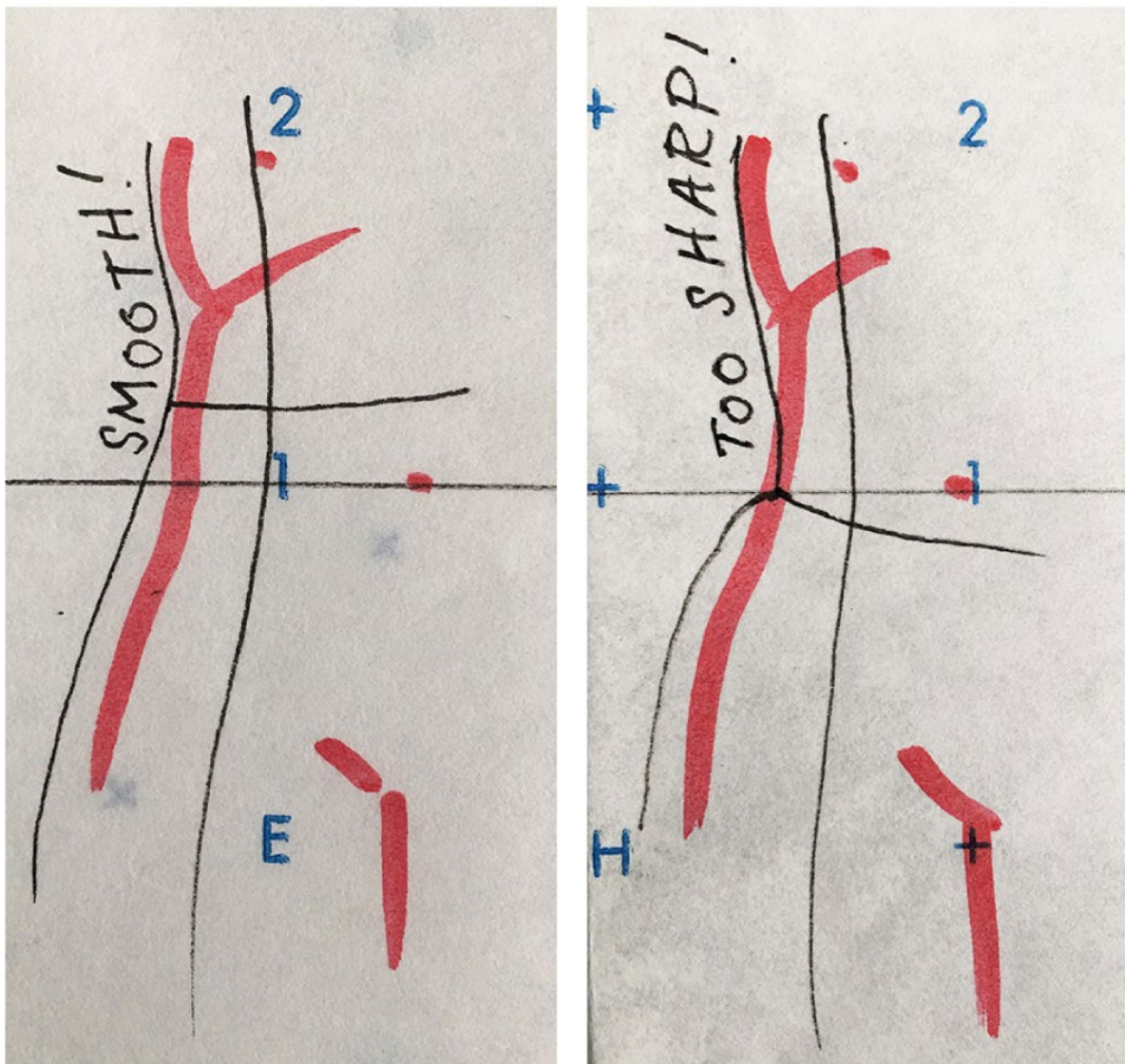
If your pieces are for a waisted garment, this will give you an idea of the shoulder to waist length — if you are full-busted, or if you have a long torso, you will immediately be able to tell if you need to add length to your pattern, by comparing this measurement to your body measurement.

I recommend checking the waist length measurement on some garments that fit you well and that you like, and making a note of the measurement ranges and what fabric they are in or for. I think it's a good idea to do this for most major points, that way when you are looking at patterns you can immediately tell if something will work or not.

For example, I'm 5'4" and some quarters, but I have a very full chest, short torso,

and long-ish legs for my total height— this means that empire seam placements are always on my bust rather than underneath, dresses that are 33"-34" long will always fit too short on me, and even though my total bust measures for a RTW size 10, my shoulders are a 6 / 8, so outerwear always requires adjustments. By knowing my body measurements, I can very easily tell what will work and what won't, based on garment and pattern measurements.

One thing to note: a typical trick in ready-to-wear world is to fit waisted garments so the waist seam or waist placement hits just slightly higher than the natural waist/narrowest point, so there's less of a sharp transition between waist shaping and hip shaping. This also allows for better ease of movement while walking, and lets the garment maintain its drape and swing without riding up on body as the leg/hip move. Here's what I mean:



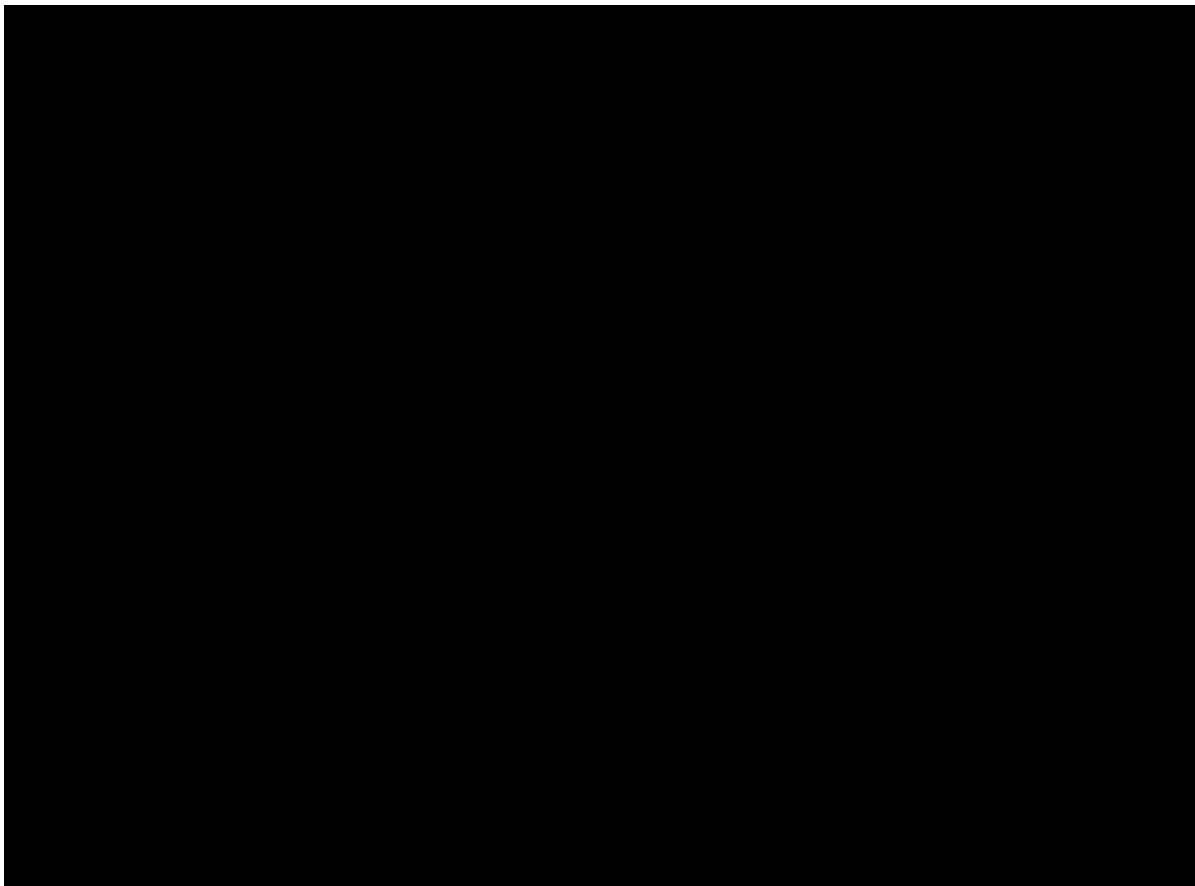
Example of waist transitions

Keep this in mind when you are looking at waist placements — there may be “tricks” built in that if you change, you won’t capture the same silhouette without knowing and adjusting for it. The good news is, you have your body measurements! So you can double check between your body and your garment, and see if that placement has been adjusted, and decide if you’d like to do the same thing or not.

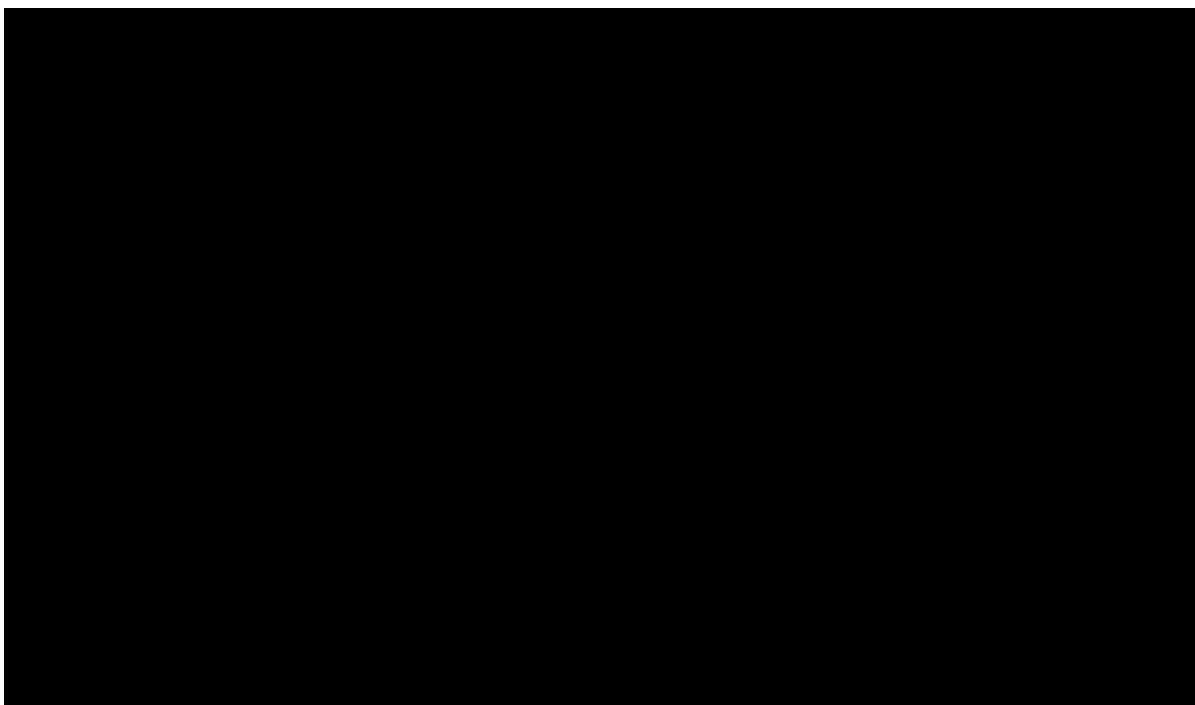
And a last note, skirts. I highly recommend taking both CF and CB measurements for any skirts that you are working with — a good skirt will always be longer at the CB to allow for bottom fullness and to ensure the hem hangs evenly, if you aren’t doing a custom hem with a hem ruler. This number will vary depending on the fit block, as well as the fabric — it’s a good idea to track this, so you can get an

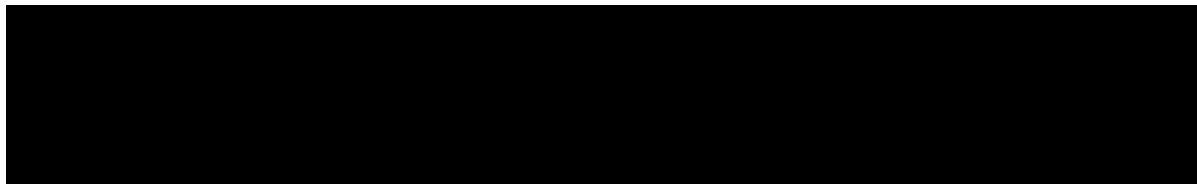
idea of what numbers work for you in various silhouettes.

And now for the good stuff — let's see it in action!

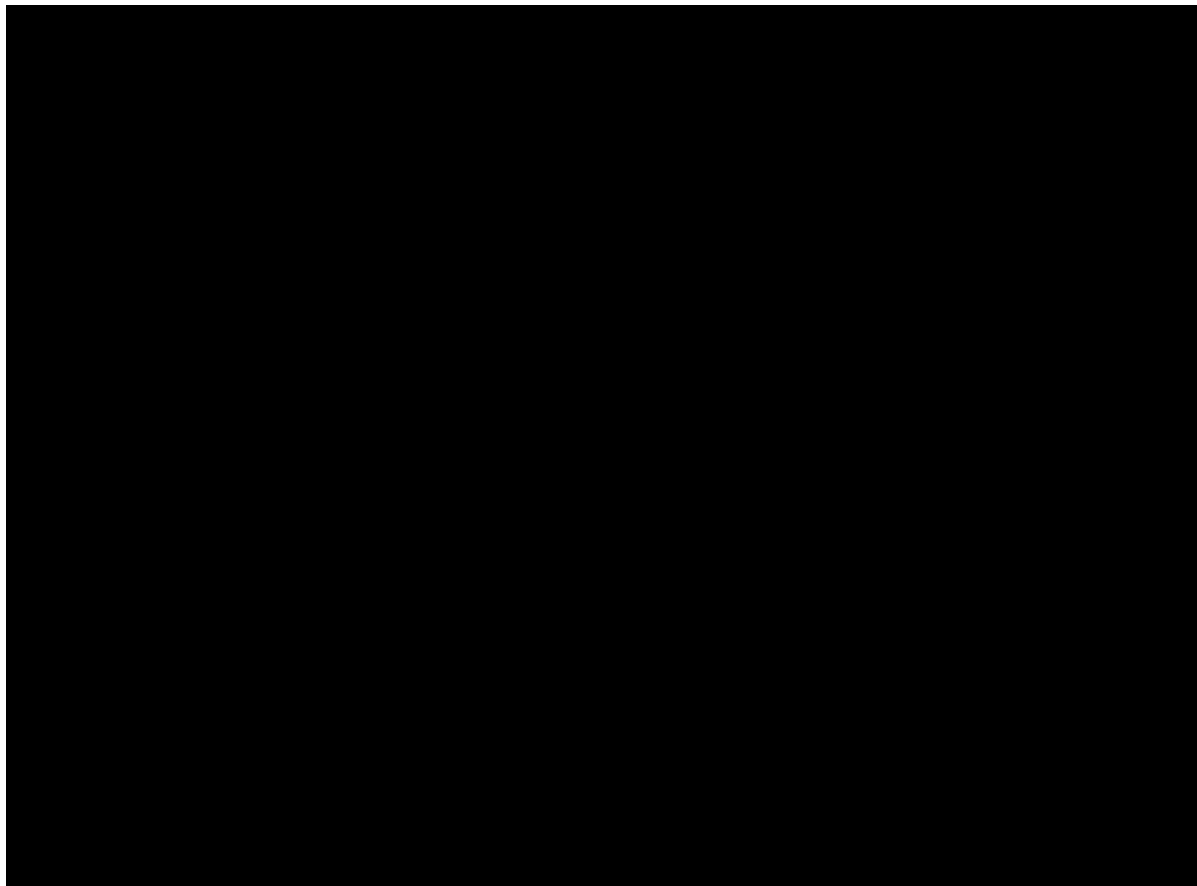


Little Boy's Tee





Men's Denim



Women's Dress

Please don't hesitate to comment if you want further clarification on any of this. It is a major mind-meal, with a lot to chew on. Happy eating! Next week: patterns...

xo Gabby

Gabby is a technical fashion designer, fit specialist, and prolific googler. She lives in Denver, raises tiny littles, reads, embroiders, makes, experiments, fails, learns, tries again. See her on instagram @ladygrift.

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4 Comments



K-Line

MARCH 25, 2019 AT 8:07 AM (EDIT)

This series is truly terrific. Thank you for taking the time and considerable effort to help home sewists like me.

Reply



Constance

MARCH 25, 2019 AT 9:35 AM (EDIT)

Awesome series. Thanks.

Reply



Dara

MARCH 25, 2019 AT 9:41 AM (EDIT)

Thank you !

Reply



Sue

MARCH 25, 2019 AT 10:32 AM (EDIT)

Wonderfully helpful series! Thank you.

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