

A Simple Way to Enlarge a Simple Pattern

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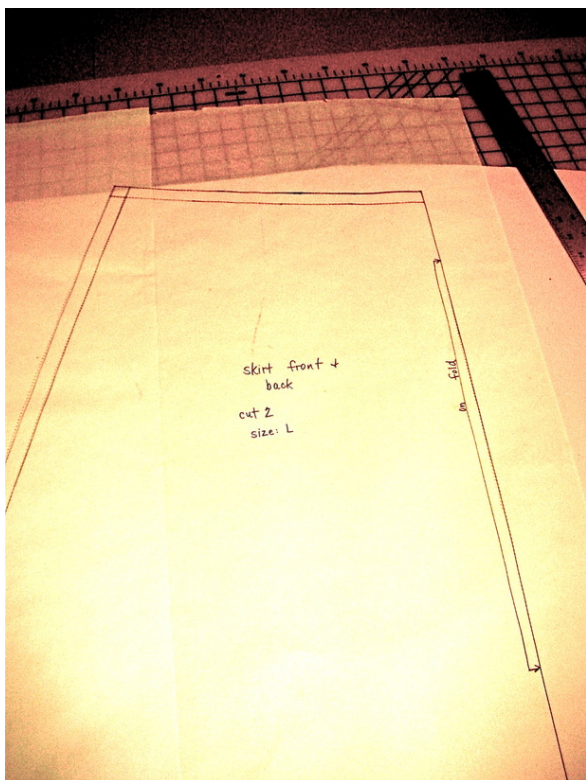
Recently, a beginning sewing student came to my class with a great first project â€” an easy, pull-on skirt with an A-line shape. Only problem was, she needed more room in the garment than the printed pattern would allow. Here's how we solved the problem.

Step 1 — The Pattern



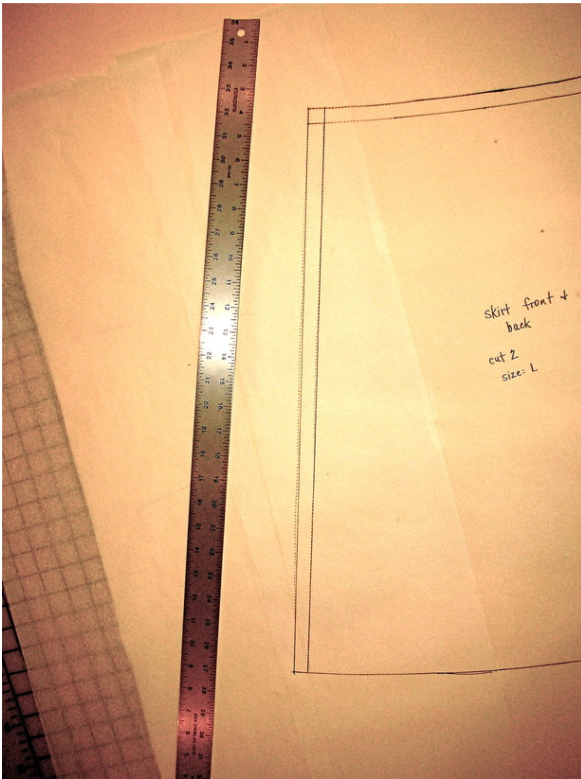
It doesn't get more basic than this. This pattern piece is for the skirt back and the front. I've drawn horizontal lines for the waist and the hip on the tissue. I compared my student's body measurements to the measurements on the pattern and determined she needed an additional 4" in the waist, and a little less than that in the hip.

Step 2 — Make a Copy of the Pattern



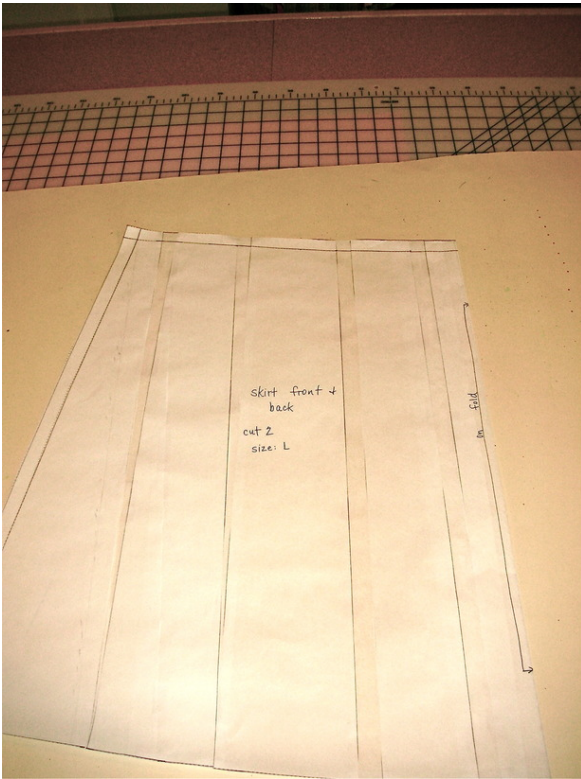
A lot of sewists like to copy their patterns before they begin alterations. Here I've copied the skirt piece onto pattern tissue, which is really just medical examination table paper. Use anything you can get your hands on, as long as it's nice and wide.

Step 3 — Adding to the Pattern



As I mentioned earlier, I knew I needed to give my student 4" more in the waist, and somewhat less than 4" in the hip, so her skirt would fit. Very simply, we needed to add 2" more in the front, and 2" more in the back. How would you solve this problem? It's tempting to just add to the side seams. But look at the way I've placed the yardstick in this photo. Can you see what would happen to the shape of the garment if we just added more fabric to the sides? The garment would be distorted. We'd get a funny shape on the sides, and a wider sweep of the hem, and this isn't what we wanted.

Step 4 — Distribute the Additional Room



The solution was to slash the copy of my pattern and distribute the additional ease in several places on the pattern. For example, my student needed more room in front, over the abdomen, and in the back as well. So I slashed the pattern completely, from the waist to the hem, in two places near the center front/center back (you need another large piece of paper when you do this step, by the way). Then I slashed in two more places near the side seams, but I didn't slash all the way through. I left a little "hinge" at the hemline. This way, the A-line shape of the skirt didn't become exaggerated, but we still got more room where we needed it at the waist and hip.

Step 5 — The Finished Skirt



It was exactly what she wanted!

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