



Creating Garment Patterns From Your Closet with Annie Smith

Everyone thinks that it's so much less expensive to buy their clothes nowadays - but when you can't find what you want in the fabrics you want, and they don't fit properly - you want to try your hand at making your own clothes again.

We stopped making clothes when our bodies changed and deeply discounted clothing became readily available.

Let's make some garments that you will really enjoy wearing and that are affordable.

For creating a pattern from a ready-to-wear item:

Choose an item in your closet that fits perfectly -- that's the key -- they already have to fit! That way, you won't have any adjusting or fitting problems.

****Please don't choose jeans or pants that need to have a front zipper -- those can be problematic. A garment that is really detailed, like a classic jacket would also be tough as a first project. And, please don't choose something that you're hoping to make fit -- neither of us will end up being happy.****

Example of garments to choose: a dress, top/shirt or blouse or tunic, a skirt or simple pair of pants.

*you can send me a photo of what you'd like to choose and I'll give you my feedback.

Also, please don't choose something that is a knit of any kind for this first garment.

Something woven is best for your first foray into cloning ready to wear.

For taking measurements

You want to wear clothes that don't have any bulk to get accurate measurements, like tights or leggings and a well-fitting t-shirt. You'll also want to wear the best fitting bra that you own. If you don't like how your bra supports you, take the time to go to a bra store (I recommend SOMA or Victoria's Secret) to get measured and fitted for a new bra. Wearing the correct supporting foundation is key to well-fitting clothes. I recommend going to a Bra store rather than a department store because they are trained to take correct measurements and consult proper fit with you. Don't just try on the bra and look at what you look like in it. Put your top back on and see what you look like in the clothes that you wear. Sometimes a bra that looks odd on you will be the perfect foundation and give you the look that you need to be wearing.

Fabric that you'll want for the class:

- 5 yards of cheap muslin (or if you have several yards of fabric that you just don't like and don't think you'll ever want to use for something else)
- Fabric for the garment that we will duplicate from your closet (if you need help knowing how much you'll need, just send me an email)
- 1 ½ yards of lightweight fusible non-woven interfacing
- Thread to match your fabric, including thread for any top-stitching you might do

Notions you'll need for the all projects:**

- Paper for tracing your garment into a pattern. I prefer inexpensive rolls of paper such as Butcher Paper (found at Costco Business Centers or Sam's Club - about \$29 and will last you *forever* or the MALA paper roll found in the Kids section of Ikea - \$5) You can use Swedish Tracing "paper" (this is either blank or has red dots on it. It's the consistency of lightweight interfacing and it's more expensive than paper.)
- Basic sewing kit (scissors for paper, scissors for fabric, ball head pins, seam ripper, etc.)
- A notebook and pen for taking notes. You'll be taking a lot of notes for your particular project.
- Dritz Foldable Superboard for a cutting surface. These can be found at JoAnn stores in the sewing notions, and I'll bet you can get it for 50% off. They are usually around \$20 MSRP. This board is necessary.
- A Flexible Curve Design Ruler - this is a ruler that will allow you to make smooth curves. This is optional but is a great tool. This isn't expensive (under \$10) and can be found online and at most art and craft stores, in the Art section, not sewing also a French Curve ruler - also optional. .

You'll also need a sewing machine in good working condition. If you have a

*serger/overlocker, you'll want to use both machines.

*You don't need to have a serger to make beautiful clothes.

You'll use an iron and an ironing board.

You'll need your sewing machine accessories and the machine manual(s), so you don't have to go looking for them during class.

**You may also need additional notions that are used on your chosen garment (buttons, zipper, etc.).

I will send a kit to you of items for the class about one week prior to the class. The kit is \$25.

The items in the kit include:

- a special tape measure and an additional tape measure
- My favorite pencil
- a black Sharpie

A sewing machine needle and some other fun and useful things.

If you have any questions, please email me at annie@anniesmith.net.

I have some recommendations for fabrics and finding fabric for clothing.

I use a lot of quilting cotton for garments. They're not only beautiful, they wear well and they're easy to sew. Batiks are a nice choice.

Fabric manufacturers like Art Gallery, Moda and Robert Kaufman offer different substrates like linen, rayon, knits and denims designs by quilting fabric designers. Several quilt shops carry rayon Batiks, and the substrates mentioned, so it would be worth checking out the fabrics at your local quilt shop.

Here is a list of links for online shops that carry garment fabrics:

<https://stylemakerfabrics.com> My favorite garment fabric site.

<https://sewsetup.com> My local quilt shop that carries beautiful quilting cottons, Ruby Star Society, linen, knits and rayon.

<https://hartsfabric.com> This store has the best selections of cottons, linen, voile, rayons, and a variety of knits like bamboo. Great service.

<https://stonemountainfabric.com> This is the most dangerous store where I shop. They have gorgeous fabrics for garment making.

<https://www.fabricworm.com> They have beautiful organic fabrics by Birch designers.

<https://www.stylishfabric.com> Also a great online source for garment fabrics.

Fine Fabrics is in Norcross, GA. They don't have an online store, but their store is amazing and I shop there every time I'm in the area. 6218 Dawson Blvd. is closed on Sunday. PLEASE NOTE: They moved recently to a different, larger location. Call them at (678) 894-2067 to find out what their new address is.

They actually have several locations.

Mulberry Silks in Carrboro, NC.

There's also Freeman's Creative in Raleigh, NC

And Village Fabric Shop in Winston-Salem, NC <https://www.villagefabricshop.com/>