

# Find your Fit

## What is ease in your garment pattern?



If your new to garment sewing, then you might not understand the term "ease". Simply put **Ease** is the amount of "space" (extra fabric) in a garment beyond the body measurements; If you made a garment to your exact body measurements it would be skin tight and you would not be able to move, sit down etc. So lets talk about the two types of ease...

### Wearing Ease:

Wearing ease is the minimum amount of extra space you will need to be able to actually move, sit or bend in your garment. It is the number of inches/centimeters added to body measurements to make you be able to have normal body movements in that garment. Normally it is the measurement for a close fitting garment.

**Loose recommendations... Bust area** – Add 2 to 4 inches to the bust measurement. The larger the bust and body size the more ease to factor in. **Waist area** – Add ½ to 1 ½ inches to allow for turning around, bending and raising arms. **Hip area** – Add 2 to 4 inches, again, the larger the body size or the less give in the fabric, the more ease you might need.

### Design Ease:

Design ease is any extra space that is purposely added to a garment by the designer to achieve a certain look, or drape. How much or how little is added will determine the silhouette of a garment; whether it will be close-fitting, fitted, semi-fitted, loose-fitting or very loose-fitting and is often added in addition to wearing ease.

### Ease Allowance Chart

	Bust	Waist	Hip
<b>Wearing Ease</b>	Dresses / Tops		Skirts / Pants
1. Close Fitting Garment	0 - 2 ½" (0 - 7.3cm)	1" (2.5cm)	0 - 1 ½" (0 - 4.8cm)
<b>Design Ease</b>			
1. Fitted - Semi-fitted	3" - 5" (7.6cm - 12.7cm)	1" - 2" (2.5cm - 5cm)	2" - 4" (5cm - 10.2cm)
2. Loose Fitting	5 ½" - 8" (13cm - 20.3cm)	2" - 6" (5cm - 15.2cm)	4 ½" - 6" (10.5cm - 15.2cm)
3. Very Loose Fitting	Over 8" (over 20.3cm)	Over 6" (over 15.2cm)	Over 6" (over 15.2cm)

So.... what can we do with that information. Before sewing a garment, **you can measure your pattern** to determine the amount of ease it has. Which when compared with your own body measurements will allow you to choose the right pattern size ... yay.. Of course I will always recommend you to make a muslin first ... just to make sure of fit!

So to measure your pattern, make sure you measure from seam to seam excluding seam allowances and space for pleats, tucks, or darts. Compare your actual body measurements to the total circumference measurement of the pattern. The difference is the actual amount of wearing or design ease the pattern has. With this information, you can double check your pattern's ease allowance, then refine its fit to fit your needs, figure shape and lifestyle.

## What is ease in your garment pattern?

And the last thing we need to take into account is the fabric that is being used. If it is tightly woven like a thick denim and has little give, you would allow a little more ease. While a fabric that has a little more give you could get away with less ease.

Okay so hopefully that is now as clear as mud!

Lets have a look at one of my patterns and look at the ease. Lets start off with a simple pattern with only two pieces and no darts etc.... [my a-line skirt.](#)

### My a-line skirt:

When looking at the garment the yoke is fitted but note that it sits about 1" below your natural waist. (yes mine does sit 1" just below my belly button) But its a gentle a-line means that it skims over the hips.

NOTE: you will measure your pattern pieces on the full multi sized templates you receive in your pattern. ie. prior to tracing out your pattern pieces. It is always good to have your body measurements already taken as this makes the process quicker.

Lets look at the patterns pieces and how you measure them. Remember we are doing this so that you can find the finished garment size at the key areas and then determine the amount of ease compared to your own body measurements.

### The Yoke:

Using the back sizing table on the instructions as a guide and my own measurements, take the **yoke** piece and measure. I am using the size M pieces.... The yoke measurement is 9 1/2" ..... as the yoke is on the fold and the front and back are the same, you will need to times by 4... now remember to take away the seam allowance (2" - there is 4 x 1/2" seams) ..... therefore.....  $9 \frac{1}{2} \times 4 = 38$  ;  $38 - 2 = 36$  .....

Therefore the measurement of the **finished size M yoke** will be approximately 36" ....

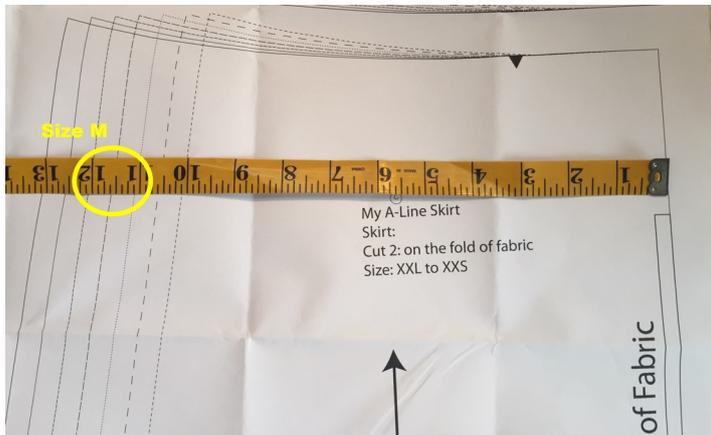
So when you measure your own waist make sure you measure about 1" below your natural waist. For example: my "waist" measurement is 35" and the **finished** yoke measurement is 36"... therefore the pattern size M will give me 1" of ease... I used a lightweight denim which does have some give, so when we look at the 'Ease Allowance Chart' above it is exactly what we need.



# What is ease in your garment pattern?

## The Hip:

We will use the hip measurement as this is normally the largest measurement needed for a skirt piece to fit properly. For the Hip measurement take the **main skirt piece**, again I am using a size M, and measure 2 1/2" down from the top of the pattern piece. (remember we have to know where the garment will fit on your body but I have worked this out for you). As the main skirt piece is on the fold and the front and back are the same you need to times by 4... now remember to take away the seam allowance (2" - there is 4 x 1/2" seams) .....  $11\frac{1}{2}'' \times 4 = 46''$ ;  $46'' - 2'' = 44''$  ..... therefore the measurement of the **finished size M skirt piece** will be approximately 44".



So when you measure your own hips make sure you measure normally the widest part of your backside. For example: my hip measurement is 42" and the **finished** main skirt measurement is 44"... therefore the pattern size M will give me 2" of ease... which when we look at the 'Ease Allowance Chart' above it is exactly what we need, as I want the skirt to skim over my backside and not cling. And as this is an A-line skirt it will continue to gently flow over my thighs, this is why we wear a-lines.

So from the measurement of ease on our pattern pieces, we can see that choosing the Size M garment will fit my body measurements nicely.

So I really hope this helps with your garment making. It is really about the pattern pieces that allow you to choose your correct garment size.... The back sizing tables are a starting point. Learning about ease will also help you with adding more ease to a pattern to ensure a fabulous fit!

Happy Sewing

*Janeene Scott*  
PASSIONATELY SEWN DESIGNS