

# MAKING A JEANS PATTERN

Several of my customers asked me if I would consider writing a book about making a jeans pattern. I did not plan to write such a book. However, I had a few pages of my own notes. I realized that I could expand my notes into a leaflet or a booklet. Somehow, my notes turned into a 230-page book. My thinking was that I might just as well do a good job and include everything that I would like to see in a book written by someone else.

*Making a Jeans Pattern* is a sequel to my first book, *European Cut*. You need to have the first book to work on the second book. The Jeans book is about making a sewing pattern for classic jeans made from woven denim. The instructions can be used for a fabric with a little stretch, but they are not intended for a very stretchable fabric.

To make a custom sewing pattern, you must first plan your design and then implement that design by developing a sewing pattern. Finally, you will use test your pattern by sewing a pair of jeans.

*Making a Jeans Pattern* has three illustrated chapters.

The illustrations are grey and black. Both inches and centimeters are used throughout the book.

## **Chapter I – PATTERNMAKING BASICS**

Designing requires planning the garment. Planning requires both knowledge of basic patternmaking procedures and making choices regarding the shape of the pattern pieces.

There are two basic patternmaking procedures that you are already familiar with from working on my *European Cut*.

The first procedure is necessary when your design requires adjusting the length of the darts. To fit your intended design, darts can be slightly shortened or elongated. This adjustment requires moving the darts points higher or lower and then temporarily closing the darts to true and blend the edges. You are already familiar with these procedures from working on Chapter 8 of my *European Cut*.

The second procedure is necessary when you decide which method to use to get rid of the darts. Yes, you will get rid of the darts you just adjusted in length because the jeans pattern is based on a dartless sloper. You can hide the darts, eliminate, or omit them, but you must get rid of them.

There are other patternmaking procedures that require you to make choices regarding lowering your jeans waistline and determining the depth of your waistband and yoke. Those choices are tied to the length of your darts and the method you choose to get rid of them.

To help you with your choices I created six *Tables* and two *Cheat Sheets*. There is also one *Design Plan Cheat Sheet* that will help you create a quick overview of your design plan.

Once you have a design plan, you can proceed with the conversion steps.

## **Chapter II – CONVERTING STEPS**

Start the conversion steps by tracing a copy of your *European Cut* pant sloper. This copy will become your *development copy*. From this copy you will make (develop) your sewing pattern for jeans.

The steps in this chapter include drafting the waistline, waistband, yoke, or band-yoke, tapering the jeans inseams and outseams, drafting pockets, and fly extensions for a zipper.

There are 22 converting steps in my book (although some of them are optional), and the last step has 11 substeps. Please, do not worry. Most of the converting steps are fast and easy. You might not need to perform all converting procedures, but you should always check the accuracy of your work. If you requested my free three PDF files about converting a pant sloper into a tapered-leg pants, you are familiar with most of the steps. Here, I just expanded the information.

The finishing steps include balancing the stitchlines, adding hem and seam allowances, transferring the matchpoints into the notches, and finally balancing the cutlines.

Some drafting procedures, such as establishing matchpoints and precision points on the stitchlines, and then transferring most of them as notches to the cutlines, might be new to some of my readers. These are not difficult things to learn, but I would advise my readers to do the first drafting at a slow pace.

These procedures must be done in drafting almost every sewing pattern, not just in drafting jeans. Learning those procedures is very beneficial for any sewist who wants to learn about proper patternmaking.

For example, in balancing the cutlines, it is often necessary to true the corners of the pattern according to the pressing directions required by the sewing steps. You must know in which direction you will press each seam in your jeans, therefore, plan ahead. In my book, I tried many other corners according to the pressing directions. I wanted my customers to see how and when and why these procedures are done.

To make these instructions easier to follow I included two summaries: the *Short List of Sewing Steps with Pressing Directions*, and the *Balancing Cutlines Step-by-Step List*.

I noticed that older commercial patterns were drafted well, but many newer patterns have shortcuts. I think I can understand why; such patterns look easier to sew and “cleaner” than patterns with tiny triangles sticking out. But those little protrusions are the clear signs of good patternmaking. I have an older pattern by Donna Karan (DKNY), #2372 by Vogue Patterns, in which the slanted hip pocket in the front has such a protrusion on the side. This is a well drafted pocket with the corner trued according to the pressing directions.

## **Chapter III – SEWING SEQUENCE**

Originally, I planned only for simple sewing steps without any illustrations. Then, I decided to make sure that my instructions are very detailed. My sister and all my friends, sewists or not, urged me to add the corresponding drawings. As a result, the illustrated instructions are long and very detailed. Now I

think that this whole chapter might be an overkill! And depending on the level of your sewing knowledge, you might not even need these steps. But the instructions are there and in the correct sequence for these readers who want them.

All seams in jeans are graded and pressed together in one direction. There are two different basic grading techniques you will use. Use Grading Tip #1 or Grading Tip #2, depending on whether the seam is being hidden, enclosed, or exposed on the wrong side of the garment.

You can start by sewing either the jeans back or the front first and then sew them together. I prefer to sew the jeans back first.

There are two methods of topstitching jeans. Method 1 (that's the one I prefer) allows you to topstitch the inseams and flatten the under the crotch curve. Method 2 allows you to topstitch the outseams. Method 2 is featured in the Bonus Section on page 219.

In Method 1 of the sewing sequence, the center back seam is pressed toward the right pant back and the center front seam underneath the zipper is pressed toward the right pant front. These two seams will be finished (edgestitched and topstitched) using the *mock flat-fell* technique. The zipper is attached to the fly extension of the left pant front, and the topstitching is done on the right pant front (this is the traditional zipper placement for ladies' pants.) The seams on the inner legs (the inseams) are pressed toward the pant front and finished using the *mock flat-fell* technique. The side seams on the outer legs (the outseams) are pressed toward the pant back but cannot be finished the same way as the inseams, because the inseams are already finished and in the way.

Some jeans feature the *mock flat-fell* technique on the outseams, but not on the inseams. If you would rather edgestitch and topstitch the outseams, instead of the inseams, use Method 2. Some jeans instructions feature the *classic flat-fell* technique instead of the *mock flat-fell* technique. My book does not discuss the classic technique.

## **BONUS SECTION**

There are five Notes that experienced sewists do not need but less experienced sewists may find helpful. Note 2 features Method 2 for edgestitching and topstitching the outseams. Note 3 explains how to place pattern pieces on denim, on interfacing fabric, and on lining fabric to cut them out.

**Final Note:** Overall, I am pleased with my material, even though this is not a pretty book. This is a workhorse of a book; it is loaded with technical details and with abundant but simple hand-drawn illustrations. I feel that you will read my instructions once or twice and then you will only need to flip the pages because you will remember what to do next.

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