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# How To Use, Adapt, And Design Sewing Patterns: From Store-bought Patterns To Drafting Your Own: A Complete Guide To Fashion Sewing With Confidence



## Synopsis

An accomplished fashion designer shows women who make their own garments how to improve on store-bought sewing patterns by adjusting the clothing item's length and other details to reflect personal taste and create a custom fit. The book's opening chapters present an illustrated guide to the tools, equipment, and fabrics needed for making garments, while also serving as a miniature textbook to teach basic sewing techniques. Chapters that follow offer detailed instruction in adapting and altering a store-bought pattern to suit individual tastes. Alterations include adding flare, and modifying the shapes of bodices, arm holes, neck lines, sleeves, and skirts. The book's concluding chapters instruct on designing one's own patterns from scratch. Author Lee Hollahan demonstrates to her readers that once they understand how to adapt a store-bought pattern, they are well on their way to custom designing their own wardrobe. More than 500 instructive illustrations.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Let me first say that I've read many sewing foundation books, and skimmed my fair share at the local bookstores. Secondly, this is the first review I've ever written for despite buying everything from curling irons to pooper scoopers from this site. I'm telling you this in order to convey my absolute adoration of this book. I borrowed it from the library a couple months ago and had to buy it after reading it. Most of the youth-targeted books out there (ahem Built by Wendy, Design-it-yourself clothes, etc) give you patterns for clothes that I consider dowdy and granola, and there's not a super amount of versatility in the offerings. This book shows you how to take existing patterns and

customize fit and aesthetics (increasing or moving bust darts, adding collars, adjusting sleeves, etc) before you start cutting fabric. It also shows you how to create your own patterns from scratch, from these doohickeys called pattern blocks. I didn't even know pattern blocks existed, but after reading about how they allow you to make customizable, perfectly-fitting clothes, I now believe they are the key to my happiness. I assume that there are no other reviews because this book is new (2010), but SERIOUSLY, BUY THIS BOOK! And overlook my excessive parentheses!!!

I've been sewing for years and bought this book for the "how to design patterns" information. I already know how to use and adapt patterns, but I read through those sections anyway. I was impressed by how clear and thorough the instructions are. This book explains what you need to know about sewing garments from patterns and then how to adapt those patterns to give you a better fit, information I've had to work out through trial-and-error (and many many hours). It even includes instructions on printing out patterns and assembling the pages, for those patterns that you can download from online. I couldn't help but think how much easier it might have been if I'd had this book when I was first learning to sew. If you want to sew clothing, get this book. "How to use patterns" will give you a great start. And once you've made something, you're going to want to learn how to make the pattern fit you better, so "how to adapt patterns" will be of great use to you as well.

In high school I had a phase where I wanted to sew- anything and everything. I took home ec, but we didn't do anything more exciting than potholders and a bag that came pre-cut in a kit. My mom, a woman who was amazing at everything, including sewing (she made the wedding dress, jacket, and flower girl getup for a friend's wedding) was more than happy to help me, but her years of experience, short-cuts and handy tips made it difficult for me to learn some of the basics and I struggled to make a lot of things, eventually giving up because I didn't really know what I was doing and nothing came out how I wanted. As a 20-something who is trying to get back into sewing, I was browsing the local bookstore and found this- the book I wish I had in high school. It explains everything in a way that doesn't assume you know a lot about sewing but is still engaging even when you are reading about something you already are familiar with. I found it incredibly helpful as someone who already knew a lot of the basics. I read it cover to cover and have it by my sewing table as a handy reference. The pictures are clear, and there are a lot of them! I am finding this to be an indispensable reference as I get back into sewing, and I know I will be using it again and again as I get into more challenging patterns and eventually want to design my own clothes.

I like the colorful visual presentation of the book. It's loaded with just about everything you need to learn how to sew garments, I would consider this a good reference book for alteration techniques, and for those who already have experience sewing but are new to making clothes, even if they prefer to stick with store-bought patterns forever. Even a veteran seamstress (or seamster) may pick up something new. Like many others, I bought this book primarily for design, so that's what I will review here. The design part of the book covers elementary techniques, such as shaping with darts, converting darts to seams, and using slash and spread. Besides the positives the other reviews already described, I do have a few complaints about this book though. First, the alteration techniques basically destroy your pattern and seems sort of wasteful to me - I hate to have to buy the same pattern again if my measurements change, especially since I prefer classic styles with a twist. (Nancy Zieman has a book that demonstrates an alternate method that doesn't render your pattern obsolete after one use). Second, there is no instruction on drafting your own blocks directly from your own measurements; instead it contains several pages of various sized sets of standard pattern blocks that I would still have to alter anyway before I could design with them. Third, even though the author included pattern blocks, there are no blocks for pants, which is annoying because I find pants need to be altered more often than anything else, plus, they are a staple in my wardrobe.

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