

# Sewing & Garment Construction — Workbook

This workbook turns the course into hands-on practice. Each section maps to one course module and mixes drills, fill-in worksheets, and checklists you complete at the machine and the cutting table. Work through it in order, keeping your stitch tests, measurements, and project plans in one place so they are ready when you cut your fashion fabric.

## The Machine, Tools, and Your First Seams

Confirm your machine setup, build muscle memory for tension and straight seams, and verify your starter kit.

### Exercise: Tension and Stitch Calibration Drill

On a doubled scrap of your everyday cotton, sew several test seams while changing one setting at a time. Examine both sides of each sample, label it, and tape it into this workbook as your reference card.

- Sew a seam at top tension 4 and stitch length 2.5 mm. Do the threads lock in the middle of the fabric layers, or is one thread pulled to one side?

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- Loosen, then tighten the top tension by one number each way. Which direction fixes top thread showing as dots on the underside?

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- Sew at stitch lengths 2.0, 2.5, and 3.5 mm. Which length will you use for construction, and which for basting?

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- Deliberately leave the presser foot down while threading. What goes wrong on the underside, and what does that teach you?

### Exercise: Straight Lines, Pivots, and Curves

Print or draw lines on paper and on fabric scraps, then sew them following your seam guide. Focus your eyes on the guide line, not the needle.

- Sew three parallel straight lines exactly 1/2 inch apart. How consistent is your seam allowance edge to edge?

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- Sew a square, pivoting at each corner with the needle down. Are the corners sharp or rounded?

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- Sew a gentle outward curve and an inward curve. Where did you clip versus notch the allowance to make it lie flat?

### Checklist: Starter Kit and Machine Readiness

- Fabric shears reserved for fabric only, plus separate paper scissors
- Glass-head pins and a seam ripper within reach
- Schmetz universal needles 80/12 and 90/14 on hand
- Quality polyester thread (Gutermann or equivalent) wound onto a bobbin
- Iron and pressing surface set up beside the machine
- A labeled tension and stitch-length test scrap taped to the machine

## Patterns, Measurements, and Fabric Selection

Decode a pattern envelope, record accurate body measurements, choose your size, and plan fabric.

### Worksheet: Body Measurement and Size Selection Record

Measure snugly with the tape parallel to the floor, ideally with help. Record each measurement, then compare to your chosen pattern brand's size chart and finished garment measurements.

Full bust (inches/cm)

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Natural waist (inches/cm)

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Full hip (inches/cm)

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Back waist length (inches/cm)

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Pattern brand and pattern number

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Size from chart at bust / waist / hip

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Finished garment bust measurement

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Calculated ease at bust (finished minus body)

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Final size chosen (and any size blending)

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### Worksheet: Pattern Envelope Decode Sheet

Using the back of your pattern envelope, transcribe the key information so you buy the right fabric and notions in one trip.

Suggested fabrics listed

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Fabric width assumed (45 in or 60 in)

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Yardage required for my size

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Notions needed (zipper length, buttons, interfacing, elastic)

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View/version I am making

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Special markings to transfer (darts, dots, notches)

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## Checklist: Fabric Selection and Pre-Treatment

- Chosen a stable medium-weight woven appropriate for a beginner
- Confirmed fabric weight (GSM) suits the garment type
- Pre-washed and dried fabric the way I will launder the finished piece
- Pressed fabric flat and straightened the cut edge to grain
- Identified lengthwise grain, crosswise grain, and bias
- Aligned all pattern grainlines parallel to the selvage before cutting

## Core Construction Techniques and Seam Finishes

Practice darts, choose and execute seam finishes, and rehearse zipper and waistband insertion.

### Exercise: Dart Shaping and Pressing

Mark and sew several practice darts on scrap fabric, then press each over a tailor's ham (or a tightly rolled towel) to preserve the shape.

- Sew a dart and backstitch at the point. Then sew one where you stitch off the fold and tie off. Which point lies flat and which puckers?

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• Press one bust dart flat on the table and one over a ham. Which one keeps a rounded shape?

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• Which direction did you press the vertical (waist) dart, and which way the horizontal (bust) dart?

### Worksheet: Seam Finish Decision Sheet

For each fabric and garment in your plan, decide which seam finish you will use and why, then sew a labeled sample of each.

Fabric and weight

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Garment / project

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Chosen seam finish (zigzag / French / flat-felled / serged / bias-bound)

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Reason for this finish (fray level, visible interior, durability)

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Sample sewn and labeled (yes/no)

### Exercise: Zipper and Casing Rehearsal

Before inserting a zipper into a real garment, rehearse on scraps so the technique is familiar under stress.

- Insert a centered zipper into a basted seam. How even is your stitching distance from the teeth on both sides?

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• Make a simple elastic casing on a fabric tube and thread elastic with a safety pin. Did the elastic twist, and how could the casing prevent it?

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• If trying an invisible zipper, did using the invisible zipper foot in the coil groove hide the zip as intended?

### Checklist: Technique Readiness Before Project Three

- Can sew a smooth dart that tapers to nothing at the point
- Can finish a seam cleanly with at least two methods
- Can insert a centered zipper into a seam
- Can build and thread an elastic casing

[ ] Fuse interfacing where the pattern requires it (facings, waistbands, buttonholes)

## Three Wearable Projects from Start to Finish

Plan, build, and reflect on the tote, the elastic-waist skirt, and the darted woven top.

### Worksheet: Project Planner (one per project)

Fill out a copy of this planner before starting each of the three projects so cutting and notions are sorted in advance.

Project name (tote / skirt / top)

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Outer fabric and lining/contrast fabric

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Total yardage needed

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Notions (zipper length, elastic width, interfacing, thread)

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Seam allowance used (5/8 in or other)

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Seam finish selected

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Key risk to watch (e.g., grainline, dart points, zipper alignment)

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### Exercise: Build-and-Reflect Log

After completing each project, write a short reflection so each build informs the next. Honest notes here speed up your skill growth more than anything else.

- Tote: how square were your boxed corners, and did the enclosed lining hide every raw edge?
  - Skirt: did your elastic length feel comfortable, and how clean is your double-fold hem?
  - Top: did the muslin catch any fit issues at the bust dart, and did your facings stay rolled inside after understitching?
  - What one technique will you deliberately practice more before your next pattern?
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### Checklist: Finished-Garment Quality Check

- [ ] All pieces were cut on grain
- [ ] Darts taper smoothly and were pressed over a ham
- [ ] Every interior seam is finished and pressed
- [ ] Zipper lies flat and operates smoothly
- [ ] Neckline and armhole facings are understitched and hidden
- [ ] Hem is even, double-folded, and pressed
- [ ] Garment was tried on and fit confirmed before final hemming

## Your Action Plan

1. Set up a permanent sewing station with the machine and iron side by side, and make your labeled tension test scrap.
2. Complete the straight-line, pivot, and curve drills until your seam allowance is consistent.
3. Take and record your bust, waist, and hip measurements and choose a pattern size, ignoring ready-to-wear sizing.
4. Select a stable medium-weight woven, pre-wash and dry it, and press it square to grain.
5. Practice darts, two seam finishes, a centered zipper, and an elastic casing on scraps.
6. Cut and sew Project One, the lined tote, to lock in corners and enclosed linings.
7. Cut and sew Project Two, the elastic-waist skirt, practicing casings and double-fold hems.
8. Make a quick muslin of the woven top to confirm bust dart points and overall fit.
9. Cut your fashion fabric on grain and construct Project Three, the darted woven top with a zipper and facings.
10. Complete the finished-garment quality check and write your build-and-reflect notes to plan your next pattern.









