kinship handwork

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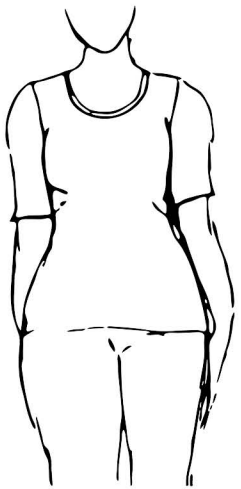
~ Sewing a Wardrobe ~
Knit T-Shirt



with Tina Bury

Terms

Selvedge – The edge of the fabric that is used to make the fabric. Normally, you don't want to use this edge in your sewing. This is more obvious in woven fabrics than in knit fabrics.

Right Side of Fabric – On a jersey knit fabric this is the side that is comprised of knit stitches or neat columns of "V"s. If you fabric is printed, the side with the printing is the right side.

Wrong Side of Fabric – On a jersey knit fabric this is the side that is comprised of purl stitches or rows of tiny bumps.

Seam Allowance – The amount of fabric that is on the inside of the seam. Generally 5/8 of an inch on most patterns. We're using 1/2 inch for this pattern. {The body of your garment is on one side, the seam is sewn and the fabric left on the other side is the seam allowance.}

Seams – The stitches that hold a garment together

Grainline - Running parallel to the selvedge edge. Garments that are cut off grain won't hang right on the body. They'll twist.

Cross Grain - Running perpendicular to the slevedge edge. Knits usually have more stretch on the cross grain, unless they have 2 (or sometimes called 4) way stretch.

Knit Fabric– Fabric that is made using interlocking loops, much like hand knitting, to create a fabric that is stretchy and generally does not fray. Some common types of knit fabric - jersey, interlock, performance/spandex, sweater knit, waffle knit, ribbed, fleece, french terry.

Woven Fabric – Fabric that is made on a loom with a warp and a weft. The threads/yarns are woven back and forth to create a sturdy fabric. Woven fabrics are very stable and do not inheritly stretch. Woven fabrics can be stretchy if they have had elastane or some similar substance woven into the fabric or if they are cut on the bias.

Resources

Fabric, thread and notions.

Locally

- Joann Fabrics
- Hobby Lobby - I do not recommend using their threads, needles and notions as I find them to be subpar

Internet - (I recommend ordering a swatch first)

- Organiccottonplus.com - Organic fabric, natural dyes
- Stonemountainfabric.com - curated collection of fabric
- Makermountainfabrics.com - curated collection of fabric
- Merchantandmills.com - curated collection of fabric and patterns and several books
- thefabricstoreonline.com - Merino Wool Jersey
- fabric.com - a wide variety of fabrics

Tutorials, patterns.

- Purlsoho.com - patterns, tutorials,
- Seamwork.com - online magazine, garment sewing patterns and tutorials
- Craftsy.com - online classes for sewing and making in general
- Creativebug.com - online classes for sewing and making in general
- Indiesews.com - a collection of fashion patterns from independent designers

Links.

Free Online Class on Craftsy.com on sewing machine basics
https://www.craftsy.com/sewing/classes/sew-ready-machine-basics/35762

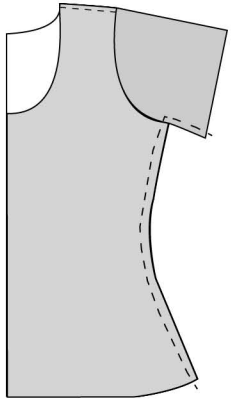
Sewing Machine Repair (& Babylock Sales) - Local

Petoskey Sewing Center - Sewing Machine Repair Service
1323 Spring Street Spring Street, Petoskey (231) 753-2525

5. Sew the Side Seams

With the right sides of the fabric together, match the underarm seams and pin. Pin the sleeve edges together and pin the shirt hem edges together. Pin between as desired.

Sew the seams, with a stretch stitch, on both sides of the shirt.

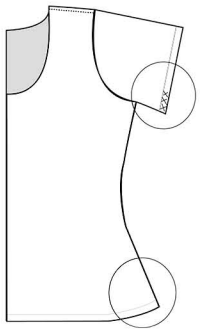


6. Finishing the Hem and the Arm Hem

If desired, finish the sleeve hem and the shirt hem.

If using wonder tape : Apply wonder tape to the wrong side of the hem edge. Fold the hem under 1" and stick down, easing the edge if necessary. (this helps the fabric to stay smooth and not become wavy)

Fold the hem under 1 inch and stitch down with a stretch stitch of your choice, using either a single needle or a twin needle.



Percentage of Stretch – How far the knit fabric stretches. This helps to determine if your fabric will be successful with your pattern. Many knit patterns are made to fit the body with negative ease, meaning the garment is smaller than your body (think leggings). If the fabric you choose doesn't have at least as much stretch as the pattern calls for, your finished garment won't fit.

To figure out the percentage of stretch… measure the width of your fabric when stretched to it's maximum divided by the width of your fabric when unstretched and then subtract 1.

For example if you take 10 inches of fabric in your hand and you can stretch it to 16 inches, then you have 60% stretch in your fabric. (16/10)-1=60%

Recovery – How well your fabric comes back to it's original shape once stretched. Optimally we are looking for knit fabrics that have good recovery so that they don't stretch out of shape. We've all had those t-shirts that become more and more baggy as you wear them – poor recovery is to blame. A small amount of spandex or elastane in the garment helps with recovery.

Ease - The difference between your body measurement and the measurement of the garment.

Negative ease - the garment is smaller than your body (used with knits), most common at the bust and waist.
Positive Ease - the garment is larger than your body.
Design Ease - the amount of ease that the pattern designer intended for the look of the garment.

Bias - A 45 degree angle to the grain. When a woven fabric is cut on the bias it has some stretch and drapes differently than when cut on grain. There is no advantage to cutting knit fabrics on the Bias.

Matching weights - The rule of thumb when choosing thread, fabric and needles - match the weights. As an example... choose a heavy thread and thick needle for heavy fabric like denim.

Materials Used

All-purpose Polyester Thread
Made with a polyester core and polished cotton exterior allowing it to more easily glide through fabric. I prefer Gutterman brand thread. Invest in quality thread; poor quality thread will not last and will cause issues with your machine.

Word of caution: thread weakens as it ages, vintage thread is never a good idea in a garment or sewing project that will get use.

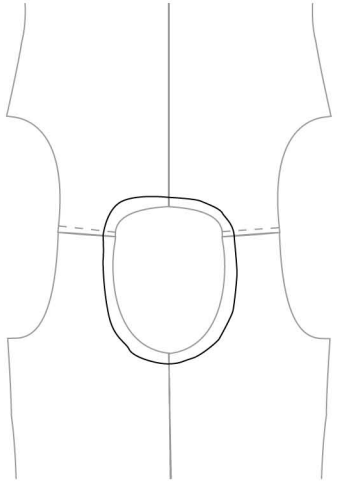
Needles
For jersey fabric we'll be using a ball point or jersey needle in a medium size. Change your needle after every 8 hours of sewing. A dull needle will give you all sorts of headaches.

Fabric
We are using knit Jersey fabric. Any knit fabric with at least 25% stretch on the crossgrain would work in this pattern. Meaning that if you take 10 inches of fabric in your hand, along the crossgrain, it should stretch fairly easily to 12.5 inches.

Clear Plastic Elastic
Used to give structure and strength to the shoulder seam. I do this with all knit garments I make. The shoulder seam carries all of the weigth of the garment. You can also use regular elastic or twill tape...but I like the stretch you get with elastic.

Wonder Tape
Used to give stability to the hems. Knit hems can sometimes get wavy, wonder tape helps to eliminate that. Wonder tape washes out, allowing your knit to still stretch.

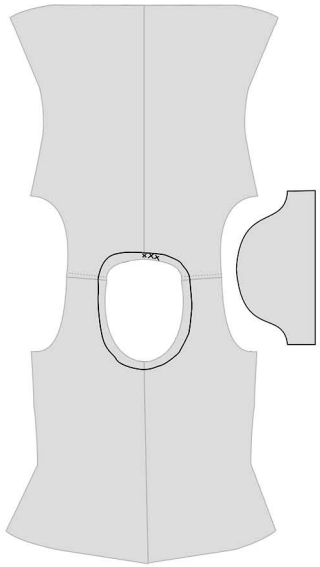
Pattern and Pattern Drafting Paper
I use medical exam paper for tracing and for drafting patterns.



3. Sew the Neckband
Fold the neckband in half lengthwise and place pins marking the band into quarters. Beginning in the middle of the back neck, pin it to the right side of the neck edge with the folded edge away from the neck hole. Place the pins marking band into quarters equidistant around the neck opening.
Using a stretch Stitch of your choice, sew the binding to the neck edge. As you sew, apply a little tension on the binding to ensure that it doesn't gap. Check often to ensure that the all three raw edges are being sewn.

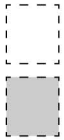
If desire, flip the band up and top stitch on the right side, catching the seam allowances in the back.

4. Sew the sleeves to the Body
Begin by folding the sleeve in half and marking the middle spot. With the right sides of the fabric facing, pin the sleeve to the sleeve hole on the body of the garment. Pin that middle spot to the shoulder seam and then pin the sleeve edges and the side seam together. If desired, work the fabric between with pins, stretching as needed.



Sew the seams together.
Repeat for the other arm.

Sewing Instructions



Right Side of the fabric

Wrong Side of the fabric

All seams have a 1/2 inch seam allowance and a 1 inch hem and sleeve allowance. There is 1/4 inch seam allowance at the neck.

1. Cut out your pattern

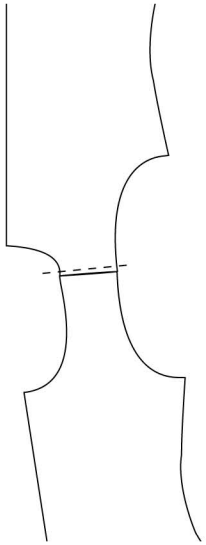
After tracing and adjusting the pattern to your shape, cut out a front and a back piece, two arms and a neckband (1 1/2" wide by the length of your neck opening (minus 10%).

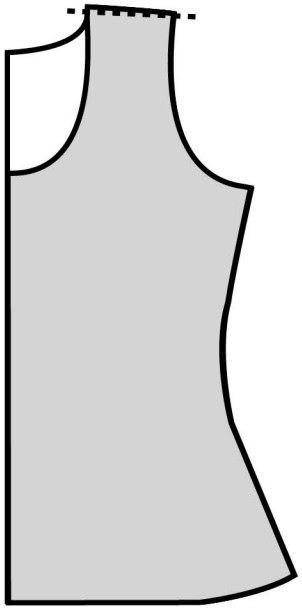
2. Sew the shoulder seams

Match the shoulder seams of the front and back bodice with right sides facing. Pin a length of clear elastic into the seam, towards the back.

Using a stretch stitch, sew the shoulder seams together.

Flip the t-shirt right side out and top stitch the shoulder seam down with the seam allowance to the back of the shirt. (This adds strength to a seam that carries the weight of the garment.)





Tools Needed

Sewing Machine
Any machine capable of doing a zigzag stitch

Scissors
Paper scissors and fabric shears. NEVER interchange the two!

Ruler
I prefer a 2" x 18" clear plastic drafting ruler designed for quilting or sewing. The clear plastic allows you to easily see what you are working on and to measure lines more quickly and accurately.

Tailor's Chalk
Used to trace your pattern onto your fabric prior to cutting.

Flexible Fabric Tape Measure
For measuring your body

Pins
I don't use any special pins while working with knits, although they make ballpoint pins. However, I do make sure the pins aren't overly large.

Seam Ripper
An unfortunate and very necessary tool for effectively removing a seam.

Felt Tipped Pen
Used to trace your pattern onto your paper. It's gentle enough to not rip the paper and dark enough to be seen.

Choosing Your Size

Your Measurements:

_____ Bust/Chest
(around the largest part of your bust/chest)

_____ Waist (around your natural waist)

_____ Hip (around where you like your t-shirt hem to fall)

_____ Sleeve Length

_____ Shirt Length

_____ Bicep

1. Begin by choosing one of the two styles

The **ladies' design** is designed to be fitted and to nip in at the waist.

The **unisex design** is designed to be relaxed and doesn't have shaping in the waist. The shoulders are a bit broader as well.

2. Decide on a size

After taking your measurements and deciding on a style, choose the size that most closely fits your chest/bust, we will adjust the other measurements to get a fit that more closely fits your body and how you like to wear clothing.

If you prefer your shirts to be snug, choose a **garment size** that is 1-2 inches larger or exactly at your measurements. If you like a looser fit, choose a **garment size** that is 3-5 inches larger than your measurements.

Sizing Chart

Ladies Design

Body Measurements

	XS	S	M	L	XL	XXL
Bust	33-34	35-36	37-38 1/2	40-42	44-46	48-50
Waist	25-26	27-28	29-30 1/2	32-34	36-38	40-42
Hip	35-36	37-38	39-40 1/2	42-44	46-50	52-54

Garment Size

	XS	S	M	L	XL	XXL
Bust	32	35	38	41	44	48
Waist	28	30	33	36	39	43
Hip	40	42	45	48	51	55
Shirt Length	24 1/2	25	25 1/2	26	26 1/2	27

Unisex Design

Body Measurements

	XS	S	M	L	XL	XXL
Chest	30-32	34-36	38-40	42-44	46-48	50-52
Waist	24-26	28-30	32-34	36-38	40-42	44-46

Garment Size

	XS	S	M	L	XL	XXL
Chest	37	41	45	49	53	57
Waist	37	41	45	49	53	57
Shirt Length	24 1/2	25 1/4	26	26 3/4	27 1/4	28