When sewing a knit pattern, I recommend you start by comparing your measurements to the pattern measurements and adjusting your pattern before you cut it out.

Account for things like how much or little ease you like in your garment, grade between sizes to get a good fit from bust to waist to hip, make small adjustments at the side seam or lengthen or shorten an area.

And when choosing your size, I recommend starting with your high bust measurement if you are above a C cup to get a better fit at the shoulders. You can find my process for all of that in the instructions for my basic knit garment patterns.

But sometimes, you find you need to make more in-depth changes to the pattern... because a great fit is what we are always after! Let’s take a look at some.

First... diagnose your fit by looking at the lines in your garment.

You have drag lines (tight lines in your garment)

vertical drag lines
you need more length

horizontal drag lines
you need more width

diagonal drag lines
you need both more length and more width

You have fold lines (loose folds in your garment)

vertical fold lines
you have too much width

horizontal fold lines
you have too much length

diagonal fold lines
you have both too much length and too much width

You have gaping at an opening (like the armhole or the neck)

The shaping in your garment is not right for your body - you need something similar to a dart or some reshaping at the edge.
How to fix some common fit issues

*Gaping at the Arm Hole*

*Reshape by folding a “dart” out of the armhole*

1. Draw a horizontal line from the bottom 1/3rd of the armhole horizontally across the pattern, connect that line to the neckline with an angled line.
2. Cut the horizontal line and the line to the neck opening, leaving a hinge (a tiny amount of the paper) at the neck opening.
3. Pivot the shoulder piece down, overlapping the bodice by the amount of your gaping. Redraw the armhole.
4. If this significantly shortened the armhole, you may need to redraw the sleeve cap to fit. (if it’s a small amount, you can simply ease the sleeve in)
   Also if the change has significantly changed the neckline, you may want to redraw it.

*Folds under the arm (usually showing slightly above the breast)*

*Lower the Armhole*

1. Draw a “square” around the armhole
2. Cut your “square” out and drop it down the amount you need to lower the armhole, overlapping the bodice pattern piece
3. Redraw the shoulder seam
   **note this changes the shoulder slope, check that against your own shoulders and adjust as needed.**
Draglines on upper or mid-back, possibly pulling at the back neck

**Rounded Back Adjustment**

**Adding length to the center back above the waist...**
1. Draw a “square” around the back neck opening
2. Cut your “square” out and raise it up the amount you need to increase your center back length
3. Redraw the shoulder seam

**Adding width to the center back by lengthening the back bodice shoulder seam...**
1. Draw a line from the midway point on the shoulder seam down to the approximately halfway point on the armhole. Draw a line from the armhole, approximately half way down, to the line you drew from the shoulder.
2. Cut the lines, leaving a hinge at the interior corner and pivot the piece towards the armhole. Opening up the shoulder seam the amount you need. Redraw the shoulder seam.
3. Ease the back shoulder seam into the front shoulder seam when sewing together.
4. If this significantly shortens the armhole, you may need to redraw the sleevecap for a better fit. (if it’s a small amount, you can simply ease the sleeve in)
Diagonal drag lines under the bust

Full Bust Adjustment

Diagonal drag lines under the bust are a good indication that you need to do a full bust adjustment on your knit bodice pattern.

Generally speaking knit garments do not have darts and are relying on the stretchiness of the fabric and some negative ease to smoothly stretch over the bust.

However if you are a C cup or over, or you like your knit garments to hang more loosely, you may want to do a full bust adjustment.

A FBA (full bust adjustment) on a knit garment can be done similarly to a FBA on a woven garment, except you’ll want to ease the “dart” into the side seam rather than sew it closed.

Again, in order to get a better fit at the shoulder, I would use your high bust measurement to choose your pattern size and then do a full bust adjustment.

Please note, neither of these methods are great for matching stripes as they both ease the extra fabric in at the side seam.

The simple way -
Only adding length and not width - if your bodice is already wide enough
1. Cut through the bust line (or the line where your bust line falls) and spread the pattern the amount you need - roughly 1/2” for every cup size over a B cup. (D cup? = 1”)
2. Ease the bust area (2-4 inches from arm hole point down) of the front piece into the back piece when sewing

Option 2, FBA - continued on next page..
Adding both length and width

1. Draw a bustline, draw a line from the bust apex (fullest part of your bust) to the lower portion of the armhole and down to the hem.

2. Cut the lines, leaving a hinge to pivot at the bust apex and at the armhole. Spread the bustline 1/2” for every cup over a B cup and spread the vertical bodice line (the one going to the hem) as wide as the amount you need to add in width.

3. As the front piece is now longer at the side seam than the back piece, ease the bust area (2-4 inches from arm hole point down) of the front piece into the back piece when sewing.

4. If you have widened the bust line by more than 1 1/4 inches, you might want to shift some of that to other places on the bodice. (more than 1 1/4” won’t ease well into the bust area on the side seam)

5. Cut a line from the shoulder and the neckline and cut through the hinge you left at the armhole. (see the difference between no. 4 and no. 5)

Shift 1/8-1/4” to the shoulder, armhole and to the neckline. When sewing together, ease these areas into the corresponding pieces (shoulder seam, neckband/binding, sleeve) and ease the bust area into the side seam.
**horizontal drag lines at the belly or butt area**

**Full Belly or Butt Adjustment**

If the t-shirt or dress is pulling (horizontal drag lines) at a full belly or butt, you’ll want to add a bit of ease the the center (front or back, respectively) of the garment. Just adding more fabric at the side seams, while effective, doesn’t give you the most flattering fit.

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**Full belly adjustment - adding ease at the center front**

1. Draw a horizontal line on the front bodice pattern piece where you want the extra room to begin. (I like just below the bust) Draw 3-5 lines from the hem to the line you drew
2. Cut the vertical lines and spread them apart the amount you want to add (keeping in mind that this is a quarter of your pattern) To avoid drafting a swing top or trapeze top, only add a few inches total. (so for 2 inches total, you’ll add 1/2 inch to this one pattern piece, a little over 1/8” per slash)
3. Redraw the hem  *If you also need some length, simply slash across the pattern, spread it open and add the amount of length you need to go over the body.*

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**Full Butt Adjustment - adding ease at the center back**

You do the full butt the same way, but on the back bodice piece and drawing the line at the waist line rather than the bust. *If you also need some length, simply slash across the pattern, spread it open and add the amount of length you need to go over the body.*
What about those fold lines, you say?

Some general rules

Generally speaking fold lines (meaning you have too much width or too much length) are a bit more straightforward to fix.

1. Can you simply cut a smaller size?
   (compare your measurements to the finished garment size and decide, if you need the larger size for something like wide shoulders, then consider no 2)

2. Grade your pattern from the area that fits well and grade down into smaller sizes where you have too much fabric.

3. Choosing a size that corresponds with your high bust and doing a FBA will help with vertical fold lines that come from a bodice that is too big below the bust.

4. For a small bust adjustment, you can use the tutorial here for a FBA and instead of spreading the pattern out, overlap it instead.

5. If you have too much length at your lower back, and fabric is pooling in your lower back, it could be a few things...

   - It could be that you need to do a FBA (very common)
   
   - It could be that you need more room at the hip/butt area to allow your garment to hang right - for a small amount this could just mean adding to your side seam at the hip area, for a larger amount this could mean a full butt or belly adjustment.

   - OR it could be that you need to take some length out of the lower back area With a dress pattern that has a waist seam you can easily take some out of the center back (while keeping the side seams the same), with a shirt or dress with no waist seam you’ll want to do the full bust or belly adjustment.