



PART 2 - SEWING REFERENCE

How to Read Your Style Arc Pattern

Pattern markings, symbols and terms

NEED TO START AT THE BEGINNING?

For help choosing your size, printing your pattern and preparing your fabric, see **Part 1 - Your Guide to Style Arc Patterns.**

How to read your Style Arc Pattern

A beginner-friendly guide to the markings, symbols and lines used on Style Arc pattern pieces. Use this guide when printing, cutting and sewing so you know what each marking means and what to do next.

WHY THIS GUIDE EXISTS

Pattern markings are the instructions printed directly on your pattern pieces. They tell you where to cut, fold, sew, match, gather, place a zip or pocket, and how the piece should sit on the fabric. Once you know what the symbols mean, a sewing pattern becomes much easier to read.

THIS GUIDE IS YOUR STYLE ARC SEWING KEY

Keep it nearby whenever you work with a Style Arc pattern. Use it to check unfamiliar markings, symbols and lines, and to understand what to do at each stage of printing, cutting and sewing.

Before you begin

1. CHOOSE YOUR SIZE FIRST	On a multi-size pattern, find the colour assigned to your size in the size key printed on each pattern piece. Follow that same colour around the entire piece. Using a layered PDF? Hide the sizes you don't need before printing, keeping the base information and pattern markings visible. See Part 1 — Your Guide to Style Arc Patterns , page 7.
2. CHECK THE GRAINLINE	The straight-grain (SG)/grainline marking should run parallel to the fabric selvedge, with the grain running along the length of the fabric. Measure from each end of the grainline to the selvedge.
3. TRANSFER IMPORTANT MARKINGS	Transfer darts, pocket positions, pleats, tucks, button positions and other internal markings before removing the paper pattern from the fabric. Use tailor's chalk, an erasable fabric pen or tailor's tacks.
4. KEEP SNIPS SHALLOW	Notches can be marked with a small snip, but the snip must remain safely inside the seam allowance. Or you can use chalk/pen.
5. USE A FABRIC-SAFE MARKING TOOL	Tailor's chalk, a removable fabric pen or tailor's tacks are common options. Always test the marking tool on a scrap first.

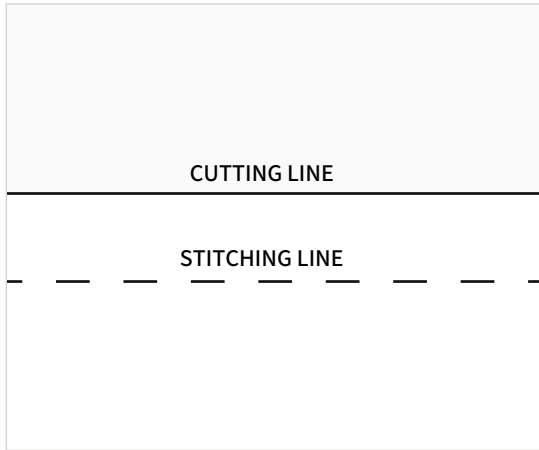
Common abbreviations

RSU / R.S.UP	Right side up	CB / C/BK	Centre back	NK	Neck
WSU / W.S.UP	Wrong side up	AH	Armhole	WB / W/B	Waistband
SA / S/ALL	Seam allowance	LIN	Lining	RST	Right sides together
CF / C/FR	Centre front	SS / S/S	Side seam	WST	Wrong sides together
SG	Straight grain				

Lines, scale & size

Start here. These markings tell you where to cut, where to sew and which size line to follow.

CUTTING & STITCHING LINES



WHAT IT MEANS

The solid outer line is the cutting line. The dashed inner line is the stitching line. The space between the cutting line and stitching line is the seam allowance.

WHAT TO DO

Cut on the solid line for your chosen size. Sew along the dashed stitching line.

GOOD TO KNOW

Style Arc seam allowances are included. They are generally 1 cm (3/8"), with 6 mm (1/4") used on selected areas such as necklines, unless otherwise stated. Always follow the seam allowance marked on your pattern pieces.

WATCH OUT

Do not cut along the dashed stitching line.

TEST SQUARE

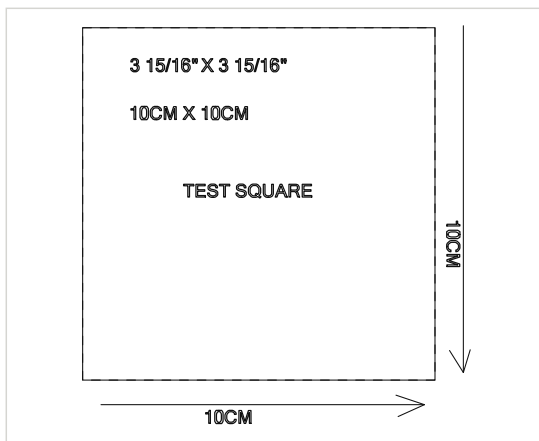


Illustration only — not actual size.

WHAT IT MEANS

The test square confirms that your PDF pattern has printed at the correct scale.

WHAT TO DO

Print the page containing the test square from your pattern file. Measure it both across and down, checking that it matches the dimensions printed on it exactly. Only print the remaining pattern pages once both measurements are correct.

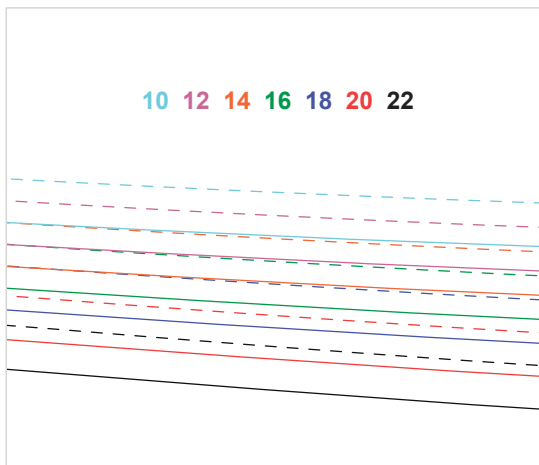
GOOD TO KNOW

Test-square sizes may vary between pattern files. Always use the measurements shown on your own pattern's test square, rather than the example in this guide.

WATCH OUT

Print at Actual Size or 100%. Do not use Fit, Shrink to Fit or other scaling settings.

MULTI-SIZE LINES



WHAT IT MEANS

A multi-size pattern contains cutting and stitching lines for several sizes on the same pattern piece.

WHAT TO DO

Find the colour assigned to your size in the size key printed on each pattern piece. Follow that same colour around the entire piece. At corners and curves, check that you are still following the correct size.

GOOD TO KNOW

Some pattern pieces, such as pockets, are shared across several sizes. For layered PDFs, hide the sizes you don't need before printing. Keep any sizes needed for blending, along with the base information and pattern markings. See **Part 1 — Your Guide to Style Arc Patterns**, page 7.

WATCH OUT

It is easy to move onto another size where the lines sit close together. Check your cutting line carefully before continuing.

Placing your pattern on fabric

These markings tell you how the pattern piece must sit on the fabric before you cut.

STRAIGHT GRAIN



WHAT IT MEANS

The straight-grain arrow (SG)/grainline shows how the pattern piece must sit in relation to the lengthwise fabric grain, parallel to the selvedge.

WHAT TO DO

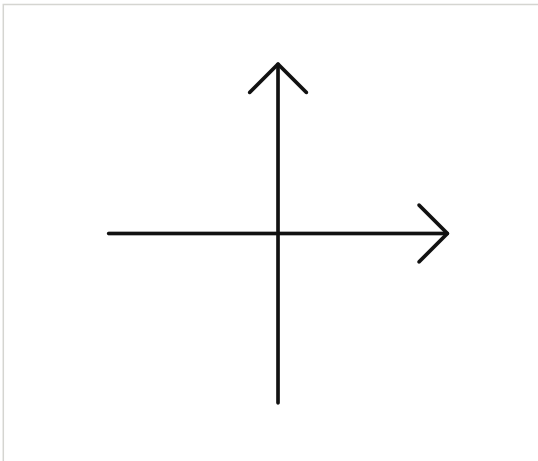
Place the grainline parallel to the selvedge. Measure from each end of the grainline to the selvedge and adjust the pattern until both measurements are equal.

GOOD TO KNOW

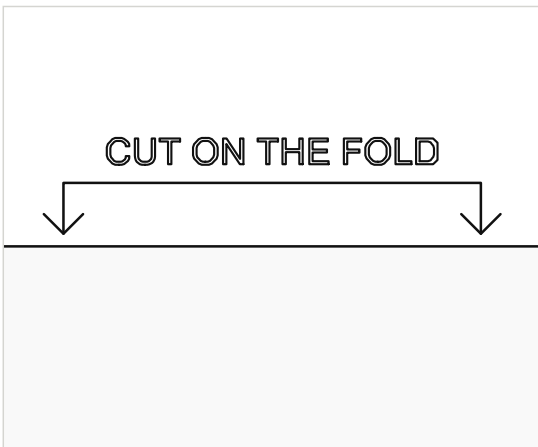
Once aligned, secure the pattern with pins or pattern weights.

WATCH OUT

Do not align the grainline by eye alone — measure with a tape measure. Some pieces have more than one grainline option, shown by separate grainline arrows, e.g. collars and cuffs.



CUT ON THE FOLD



WHAT IT MEANS

This marking means the indicated pattern edge sits directly on a folded edge of fabric.

WHAT TO DO

Fold the fabric as shown in the cutting layout - usually selvedge to selvedge, with right sides together (RST) or wrong sides together (WST) as directed. Place the edge marked 'cut on the fold' directly on the fabric fold, then cut around the other edges. You will have one symmetrical piece after cutting.

GOOD TO KNOW

Keep the pattern edge tight against the fold with no gap.

WATCH OUT

Do not cut through the fold or the piece will become two separate halves.

MAXIMUM STRETCH



WHAT IT MEANS

Used on knit patterns, this shows the direction in which the fabric needs its greatest stretch.

WHAT TO DO

Test the fabric in both directions and place the pattern so the maximum-stretch arrow follows the stretchiest direction.

GOOD TO KNOW

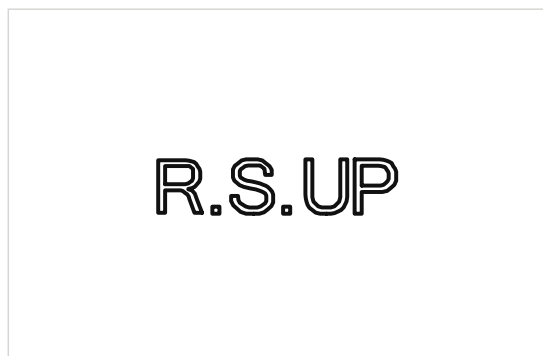
For most knit garments, this direction runs around the body.

WATCH OUT

Using the wrong stretch direction can affect fit and movement.

Maximum stretch is usually selvedge to selvedge, but it is important to check, as every fabric is different.

R.S.UP - RIGHT SIDE UP



WHAT IT MEANS

The pattern piece and fabric must be positioned with the right side up - the side that will show on the finished garment - facing upward.

WHAT TO DO

Check the face of the fabric before positioning the pattern piece.

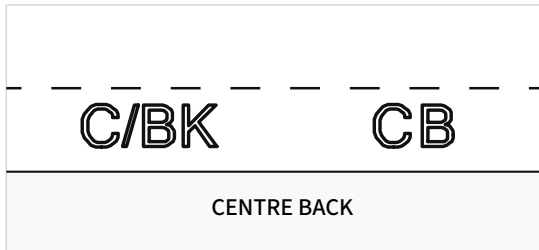
GOOD TO KNOW

If both sides of the fabric look similar, mark the wrong side of each cut fabric piece with removable chalk, a fabric pen or a pin.

Reference & shaping markings

These markings help you identify garment positions, match pieces and shape or adjust the pattern.

GARMENT REFERENCE LINES



WHAT IT MEANS

CF or C/FR identifies centre front, CB or C/BK identifies centre back and SS or S/S identifies the side seam.

WHAT TO DO

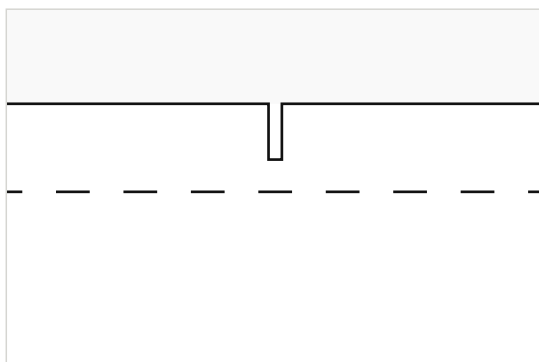
Use these as reference points when matching pieces, checking symmetry or aligning seams and openings.

GOOD TO KNOW

These are reference positions, not cutting lines.



NOTCHES



WHAT IT MEANS

Notches are small alignment marks showing which parts of two pattern pieces should meet.

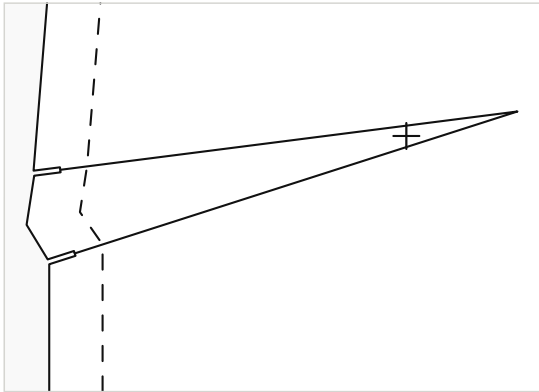
WHAT TO DO

Transfer each notch and match corresponding notches before sewing.

GOOD TO KNOW

Match and pin the notches first, then pin either side of them.

DART MARKING



WHAT IT MEANS

Darts take up excess fabric in a stitched fold to shape a flat piece around the body.

WHAT TO DO

Transfer the dart legs, notches and drill hole with tailor's chalk or an erasable fabric pen. Fold right sides together, match the legs and sew from the wide end towards the point.

GOOD TO KNOW

The + marks a drill hole positioned 2 cm (3/4") back from the dart point. Sew approximately 2 cm (3/4") beyond the drill hole towards the dart point, tapering smoothly to the end. Tie the thread tails rather than backstitching at the point.

LENGTHEN / SHORTEN LINE



WHAT IT MEANS

This is the recommended area for changing the length of a pattern piece while keeping the overall shape controlled.

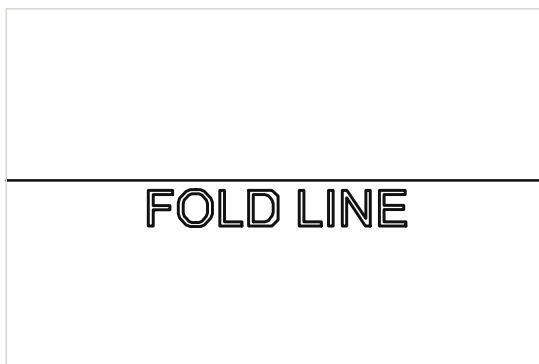
WHAT TO DO

Slash and spread to lengthen, or overlap to shorten. Keep the sections parallel, tape in place, then redraw the side seams and curves smoothly with a straight or curved ruler.

GOOD TO KNOW

Adjust all related pattern pieces by the same amount and true the joining seams.

FOLD LINE



WHAT IT MEANS

A fold line is an internal line marked on the pattern piece where fabric is folded rather than cut. It is commonly used on waistbands, neckbands, bands and cuffs.

WHAT TO DO

Transfer the line if needed, then fold and press along it as directed.

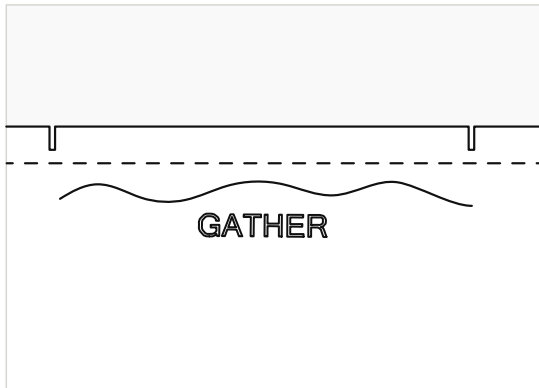
WATCH OUT

Do not cut along a fold line.

Construction cues

These markings tell you what action to take while sewing and help guide the order of construction.

GATHER



WHAT IT MEANS

A gather marking shows a section of fabric that needs to be drawn in so a longer edge fits a shorter edge.

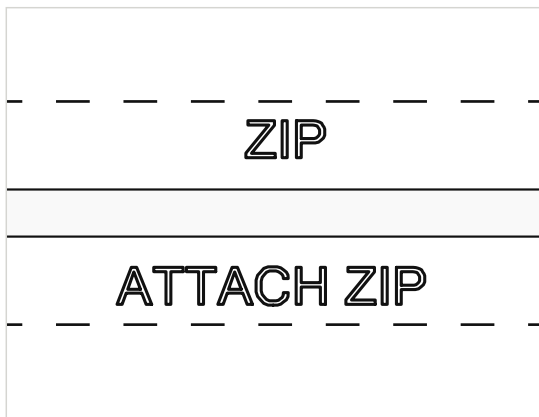
WHAT TO DO

Sew two rows of long gathering stitches between the marked notches, then pull the bobbin threads to distribute the fullness evenly.

GOOD TO KNOW

Set your sewing machine to its longest straight-stitch length. Two rows are easier to control than one.

ZIP / ATTACH ZIP



WHAT IT MEANS

This marking identifies the section of a seam where a zip is inserted.

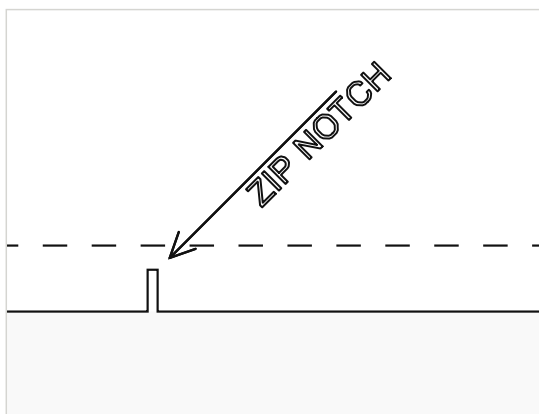
WHAT TO DO

Transfer the zip notches or stopping points and insert the specified zip as directed in the construction instructions.

GOOD TO KNOW

Invisible, fly and exposed zips use different construction methods.

ZIP NOTCH



WHAT IT MEANS

A zip notch marks a key position where the zip starts, stops or aligns with another construction point.

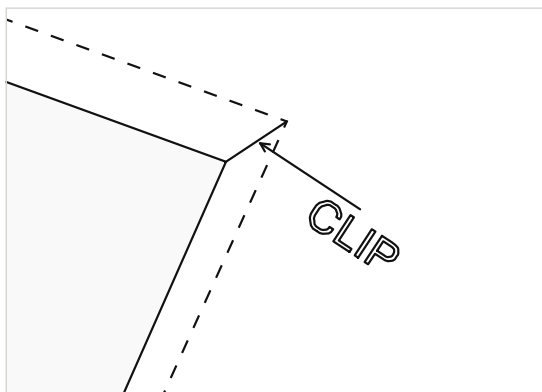
WHAT TO DO

Transfer the notch accurately and use it when positioning the zip.

GOOD TO KNOW

Match the corresponding marks on the zip and seam before sewing. Add a removable mark if the fabric frays easily.

CLIP



WHAT IT MEANS

A clip marking tells you to cut into the seam allowance so the fabric can open, turn or spread around a corner, V-shape or curve.

WHAT TO DO

Clip towards the marked point, stopping just short of the stitching line.

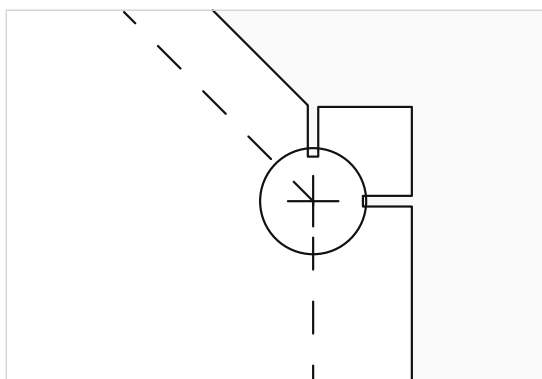
GOOD TO KNOW

Use sharp, small scissors and clip gradually.

WATCH OUT

Do not cut through the stitching line.

SEWING STOP MARK



WHAT IT MEANS

This mark identifies the exact point where a seam must stop or pivot, often at a V neckline or centre seam.

WHAT TO DO

Transfer the mark clearly and sew precisely to that point before completing the next construction step.

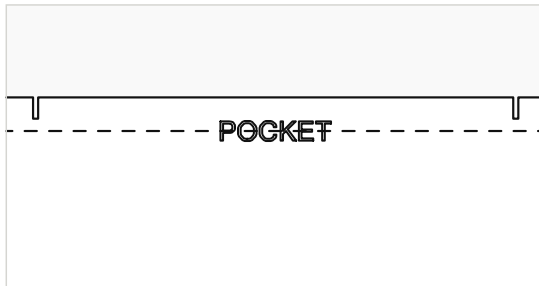
GOOD TO KNOW

Shorten your stitch length for the final few stitches near a sharp V.

Pockets & closures

These markings show where pockets and closures are positioned and aligned.

IN-SEAM POCKET



WHAT IT MEANS

Pocket notches on a side seam show where an in-seam pocket bag is attached.

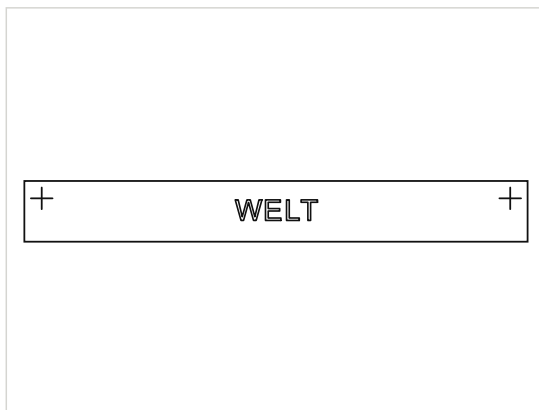
WHAT TO DO

Transfer the pocket notches to the garment and pocket pieces, then match and pin them before sewing.

GOOD TO KNOW

Check that pockets on both sides sit at the same height.

SINGLE WELT POCKET PLACEMENT



WHAT IT MEANS

The welt marking shows the precise position and length of the single welt pocket opening.

WHAT TO DO

Transfer the placement lines and end marks accurately before fusing and constructing the pocket.

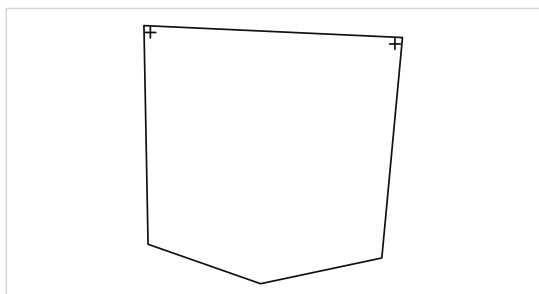
GOOD TO KNOW

Accuracy matters more than speed. Mark the rectangle clearly before you begin.

WATCH OUT

Do not cut the opening until the construction instructions tell you to.

PATCH POCKET PLACEMENT



WHAT IT MEANS

The placement outline shows where a patch pocket sits on the garment.

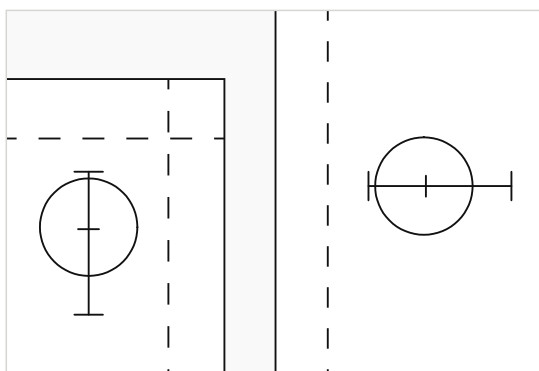
WHAT TO DO

Transfer enough of the guide to position the finished pocket accurately, then align and stitch as directed.

GOOD TO KNOW

Check paired pockets are level before sewing.

BUTTON / BUTTONHOLE



WHAT IT MEANS

These markings show the placement and orientation of the buttonhole, and the matching position of the button.

WHAT TO DO

Transfer the positions accurately to the fabric. Sew the buttonhole in the direction shown on the pattern, then sew the button so the closure sits correctly.

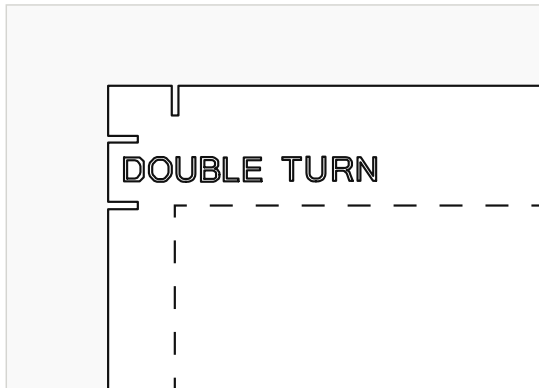
GOOD TO KNOW

Test the buttonhole on a scrap with the same interfacing and layers. Sew the button slightly towards the top of a vertical buttonhole, or slightly off-centre towards the finished edge of the garment for a horizontal buttonhole.

Edges & finishes

These markings tell you how a raw edge or finished edge is treated during construction.

DOUBLE TURN



WHAT IT MEANS

A double turn means the raw edge is folded in once and then folded again so the raw edge is enclosed.

WHAT TO DO

Fold by the amount shown in the construction notes or marked on the pattern. Press, fold again and press before stitching the hem or edge in place.

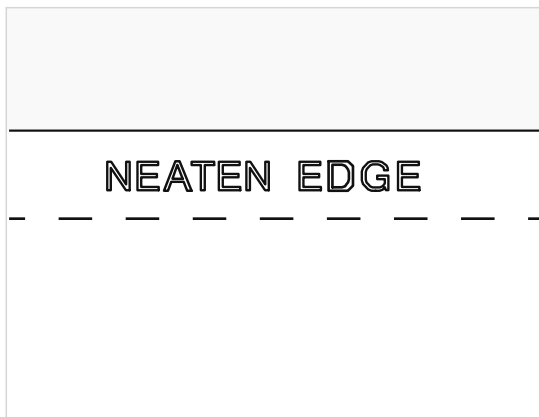
GOOD TO KNOW

Pressing each fold separately gives a cleaner result than trying to make both folds at once.

WATCH OUT

Keep the finished fold depth even all the way around.

NEATEN EDGE



WHAT IT MEANS

This tells you to finish a raw edge so it does not fray or look unfinished.

WHAT TO DO

Use the finish that suits the garment and fabric - overlock/serge, zigzag, binding or a double-turned edge - as directed in the construction notes.

GOOD TO KNOW

Test the finish on a scrap first if the fabric is lightweight, loosely woven or prone to stretching.

WATCH OUT

Avoid adding a bulky edge finish where the seam will later be enclosed unless the construction notes require it.

A NOTE ABOUT EDGE FINISHES

The marking tells you that the edge needs attention; the construction instructions tell you which finish is appropriate for that style and fabric. Beginners should follow the construction rather than choosing a finish from the symbol alone.

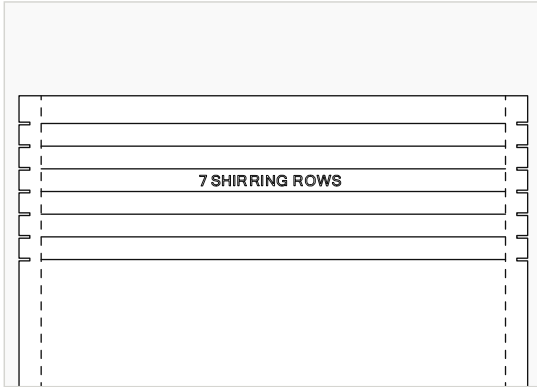
GOOD TO KNOW

A clean edge finish helps prevent fraying and gives the inside of the garment a professional finish.

Pleats, tucks & special details

These markings appear on more detailed projects and help control folds, surface details and special finishes.

SHIRRING ROWS



WHAT IT MEANS

Parallel shirring lines show where rows of elastic shirring are sewn with elastic thread in the bobbin.

WHAT TO DO

Sew along each notched or marked row, keeping the rows evenly spaced and following the pattern instructions.

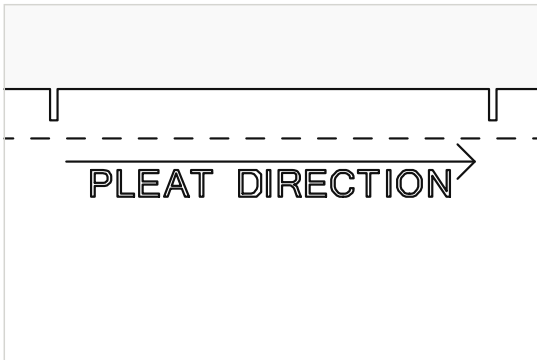
GOOD TO KNOW

Test the elastic thread, stitch length and tension on a scrap first.

WATCH OUT

Different machines handle elastic thread differently.

PLEAT DIRECTION



WHAT IT MEANS

Pleat arrows show which direction the fabric is folded so the pleat sits correctly on the garment.

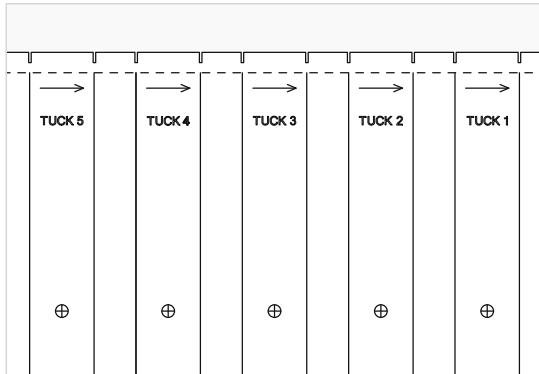
WHAT TO DO

Transfer all pleat marks. With the right side up, bring the indicated notches together and fold in the direction of the arrow.

GOOD TO KNOW

Press only when the instructions tell you to - some pleats are intended to remain soft.

TUCKS



WHAT IT MEANS

Tuck markings show a series of narrow folds stitched to create controlled shaping or a decorative detail.

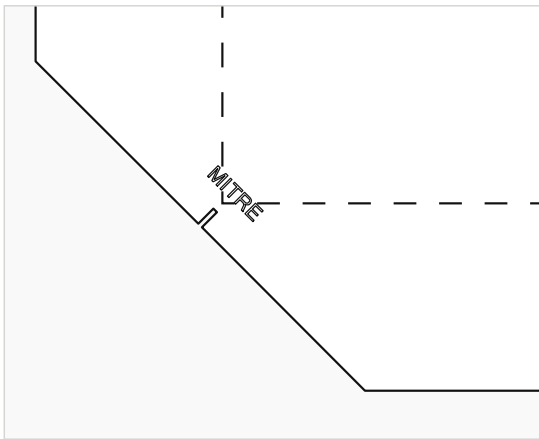
WHAT TO DO

Transfer the tuck lines and centre marks carefully. Fold and stitch each tuck in the direction shown, keeping the rows parallel.

GOOD TO KNOW

For equal-width tucks, check the first finished tuck and use it as a reference for the remaining rows. Follow the individual markings on your pattern.

MITRED CORNER



WHAT IT MEANS

A mitred corner creates a neat diagonal join where two folded or faced edges meet, reducing bulk at the corner.

WHAT TO DO

Transfer the mitre mark and follow the instructions for your pattern. Fold and stitch on the diagonal, trim as directed, then turn out and press.

GOOD TO KNOW

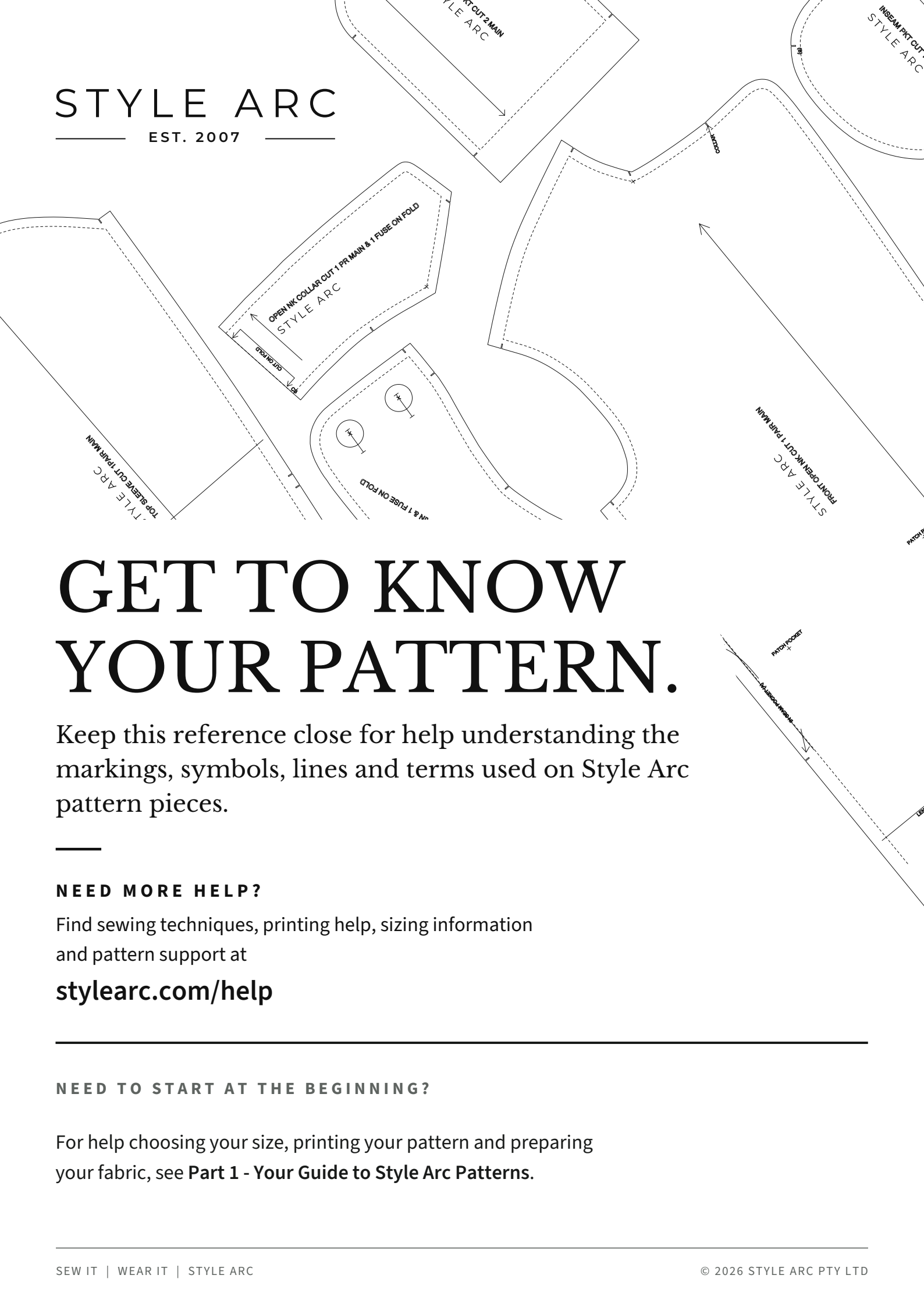
Mark the diagonal stitching line before sewing if you are new to mitres.

WATCH OUT

Do not trim until you are satisfied the mitre is sewn correctly.

NEED MORE HELP?

If you have a question about these instructions, or you can see a marking on your pattern that is not explained here, please contact us at stylearc.com/contact.



STYLE ARC

EST. 2007

GET TO KNOW YOUR PATTERN.

Keep this reference close for help understanding the markings, symbols, lines and terms used on Style Arc pattern pieces.

NEED MORE HELP?

Find sewing techniques, printing help, sizing information and pattern support at

stylearc.com/help

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