

Make it with Knit Lesson 4



## Make it with Knit Lesson 4

Master knit patterns and how to use a woven pattern with a knit fabric.

**Skill Level: All Skill Levels**

Created by: Designer Joi Mahon

### Supplies:

- Baby Lock Imagine Serger
- Various Knit fabric samples of your choice
- Knit Garment Pattern
- 4 spools serger thread
- Wonder clips
- Dress Form
- Oak Tag Pattern Paper (Bee Oak Tag paper on [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com))
- The class samples for Lesson 4 can be sewn on the Baby Lock Imagine, Ovation, Evolution, Enlighten, Imagine, Eclipse DX, Diana and Lauren

### Part 1 Select a Pattern

You have many options for choosing a knit pattern from commercial pattern companies such as McCall Pattern Company, Vogue, Butterick and Simplicity to numerous independent pattern lines. Many times, you can purchase the last seasons large pattern catalog at a discount rate, and these are handy to have on hand so you can study the

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styles available. The image on the pattern envelop and within the book or the pattern line are clues into how that garment will fit and look on your body.

- Look at the models being used for the line of pattern you are selecting. Do they reflect your body shape?
- Fashion Star patterns have younger girls and are marketed toward the tween age group.
- Women's clothing will often feature a more mature figure.
- Missy sizes often have models that are tall, slender and elongated.
- Independent pattern lines often are reflective of the designer such as thin designers who create pants patterns for their body types.
- Although pattern lines have a target audience and look know that any pattern can be modified to fit any body shape or size. (you can check out Joi's fitting classes for more on how to do that at [www.designerjoi.com](http://www.designerjoi.com))



Designer Joi McCall Pattern 7245

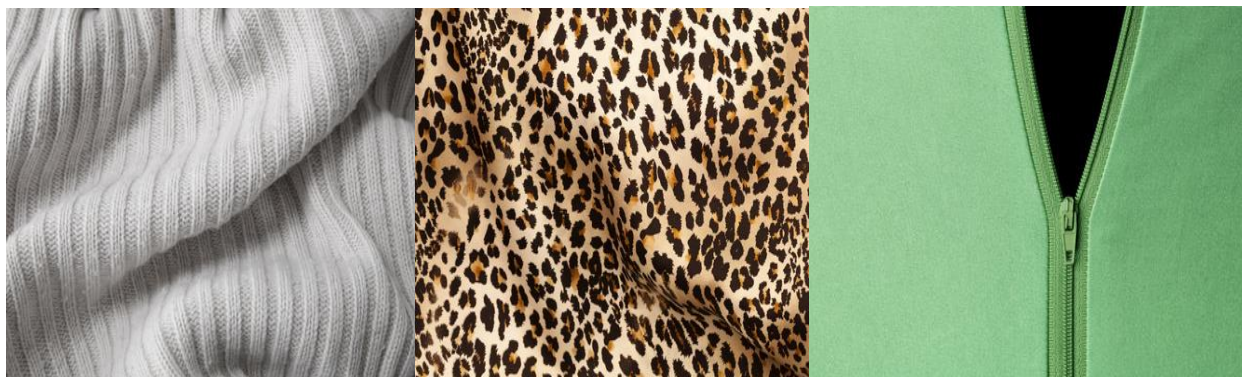
### The Knit Pattern

Knit patterns are cut smaller than patterns made for woven fabrics. This is because the stretch which will allow smaller pieces to go on over the body. The pattern envelope will have a stretch guide printed on the side to indicate how much the fabric should stretch to correspond to the pattern, and fabrics are labeled with degrees of stretch such as 20% or 30% stretch. The percentages are not as important as understanding the concept. A tactile approach where you determine if a fabric has a small, medium, or heavy degree of stretch is a good indicator of how well it will work with a given pattern. Simply take the fabric and feel it, stretch it, and even drape it on the body. How the fabric reacts is a good indicator of how it will sew in the pattern.

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- Light Stretch: Fabrics like sweater knits or even jersey can have little to moderate stretch
- Medium Stretch: This might describe printed fashion knits, slinky knits, and jerseys
- Heavy Stretch: Spandex is a great example of a fabric with the ultimate amount of stretch

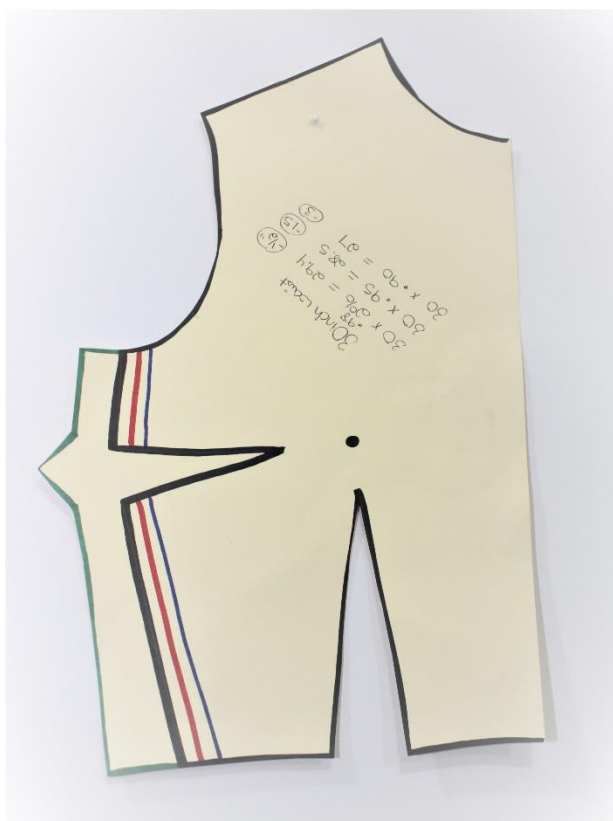
Use stretch to your advantage. Areas like necklines, and armholes need to be able to stretch and then recover to the natural shape.



## Formula for Stretch: Converting a Woven to a Stretch Pattern

The greatest amount of fabric stretch goes around the body horizontally. As stretch increases patterns are cut smaller to balance this out. To convert a woven pattern for use with a stretch fabric, the circumference must be reduced. Vertical lengths do not need to stretch to the same degree unless you are creating a leotard or something that wraps all around the bodice so you don't have to worry about making too many if any changes vertically. There is an easy Designer Joi modified rule for converting a pattern.

Before we learn the reduction rule let's look at an example of a pattern with different cutting lines for different stretch fabrics. This is  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a bodice sloper meant to be cut on the fold.



- The black dot is the apex or bust point
- This pattern includes a bust and waist dart
- The black line is the edge of the pattern. This would hug the body and have no ease built in.
- The green line indicates extra added for a blouse or jacket pattern that has extra ease for movement. This can be increased or decreased in the fitting of a woven garment.
- The red and blue lines indicate cutting lines for a knit garment. Since the fabric will have stretch it is now cut smaller.

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## THE FORMULA

*These examples illustrate taking a woven pattern that fits the body without excess ease or seam allowance and making a reduction.*

- *You can add seam allowance and additional ease after the adjustment.*
- *The more fabric stretch the bigger the reduction.*
- *It is ok to round.*

***Small to minimal stretch fabrics reduce pattern by 2%***

***Medium stretch fabrics reduce pattern by 5%***

***High stretch fabrics reduce pattern by 10%***

### Option A: $\text{Body Measurement} - \text{Reduction Percentage} = \text{Pattern Measurement}$

Example: *If you have a 30-inch waist and a fabric with small stretch you will reduce the pattern by 2%. Take a calculator and plug in:*

$$30 - 2\% = 29.4$$

The pattern needs to measure 29.4 inches rather than 30 inches for small stretch. If you round that is  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch reduction total on the waist.

Small Stretch  $30 - 2\% = 29.4$

Pattern Reduction of  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch

Medium Stretch  $30 - 5\% = 29.5$

Pattern reduction of  $1 \frac{1}{2}$  inches

High Stretch  $30 - 10\% = 27$

Pattern reduction of 3 inches

### Option 2: $\text{Body Measurement} \times \text{Total Pattern Percentage} = \text{Pattern Measurement}$

*Small Stretch Pattern = 98%*

*Medium Stretch Pattern = 95%*

*High Stretch Pattern = 90%*

Examples: Using the 30-inch waist measurement multiply the pattern percentage.

Small Stretch  $30 \times .98 = 29.4$

Pattern Reduction of  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch

Medium Stretch  $30 \times .95 = 28.8$

Pattern Reduction of  $1 \frac{1}{2}$  inches

High Stretch  $30 \times .90 = 27$

Pattern Reduction of 3 inches



## Where to take the reduction.

Note that any changes to the pattern would be done to each side or all seams depending on how you apply the change. For, example if you need to reduce the width by one inch total across the front of the pattern only then, you would remove  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch on both side seams for a total of one inch. If you have taken a total waist circumference than you would reduce all seams by the amount that will total  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch.

### Tips:

- Consider your body and level of fit. If you like looser fitting garments than take less of a reduction on the pattern.
- Consider the placement of your reductions. If you are wide across the front and narrow across the back, you may take your entire reduction off the back to match the scale of your body and allow for more fullness across the front as an option.
- Most knit garments have minimal seams and tailoring so keep it simple.
- Evaluate the fabric. If the fabric has minimal stretch, you will not want to reduce for a high stretch fabric like spandex so be conservative.
- If you are not sure you can always make a fit sample and then pin fit out excess in the seams when testing the design. Then you can make your changes on the pattern.
- An overall good rule is the 5% rule. Unless you have a very tight heavy knit that really does not stretch much than the middle amount of 5% is a good place to start.
- Knit fabrics that are bulky and heavy used on sweaters and coats can be treated like a woven.

## Part 2 Pattern Reduction on Your Serger

Using the guidelines marked on the front of your serger, you can reduce a pattern by simply trimming away excess when serging. Since the serger does trim away excess you should only do this on simple garments with few seams until you are confident in reducing a pattern with this method.

- Measure the marking on your serger to determine how much it will remove when positioning your fabric edge with that line.
- For example, if the first line removes about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " than you are actually removing  $\frac{1}{2}$ " when serging a seam because you are removing the  $\frac{1}{4}$ " from two pieces of fabric.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ " is equal to a 2% reduction.
- Be careful to measure how much you need to remove total around the garment.
- On a skirt, you may be able to remove everything from a center back seam for example
- On a shirt, you may need to divide up the amount you are reducing the pattern against all seams.
- Take care not to over reduce on all seams. Reductions are distributed evenly around the garment so the amount on any one seam is only a portion of the reduction.

### Part 3 Fit Samples

The joy of sewing and wearing knits is that they are easier to fit on the body, but just because it goes around the body does not mean it fits well. Fit samples allow you to save time in the long run because you have tested the fit so you can sew start to finish in the fashion fabric. Here are some knit fitting tips:

1. Don't over fit knits. Use simple seams with minimal tailoring
2. It is smart to still add some fitting elements like darts and seams especially around larger curves. This reduces bulk and allows garments fit look polished.
3. Wonder Clips are a great tool for fitting a knit and testing how much to take in a seam.
4. Darts can be added even if a pattern does not originate with a dart. Make a fit sample and contour excess fabric around the bust area for example.
5. Once you have tested the fit and made changes place chalk markings or pins in the fit sample.
6. Take the fit sample off the body and polish up your changes. Now you are ready for sewing success start to finish on the garment.



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For other exciting projects like this one, visit our websites at [www.babylock.com](http://www.babylock.com) or [www.totallystitchin.net](http://www.totallystitchin.net).

To find out more about Designer Joi check her out at [www.designerjoi.com](http://www.designerjoi.com) and all her social media channels.



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