

WINIFRED ALDRICH

5TH EDITION

**metric pattern cutting
for women's wear**



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Metric Pattern Cutting for Women's Wear

Fifth edition

Winifred Aldrich



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One of the more difficult aspects of a designer's training is learning how to create patterns that make full use of the characteristics of individual fabrics. With an ever increasing range of fabrics available to the designer, an understanding of the relationship between fabric, form and pattern shape is now probably the most important skill a designer has to acquire.

This book discusses the factors that need to be taken into consideration and offers a unique and practical method for solving problems. Its approach to design and flat pattern cutting is based on the appraisal of the fabric (according to a scale of five for each of five fabric characteristics – weight, thickness, sheer, drape and stretch) and body shape. The book is lavishly illustrated and makes use of numerous practical examples.

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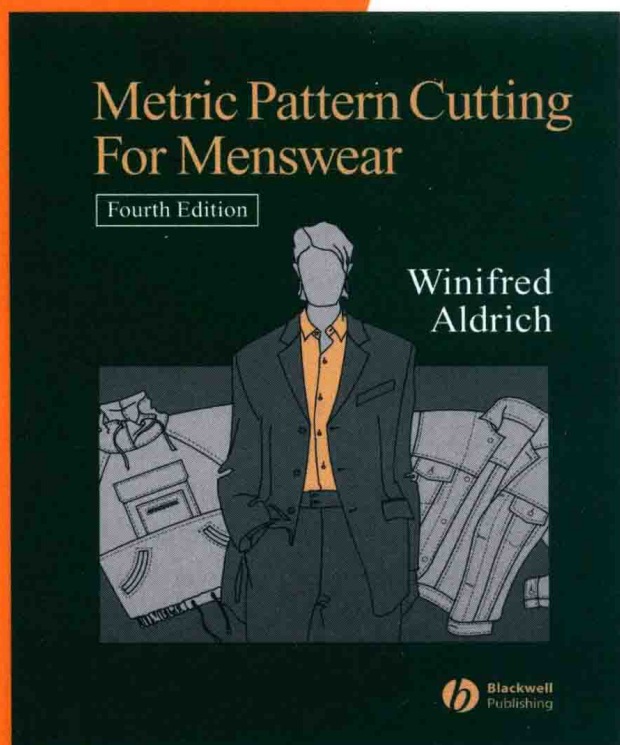
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Winifred Aldrich



Since the first edition was published in 1980, Metric Pattern Cutting for Menswear has become established as the standard work on this subject and has proved invaluable as both a textbook for students and a reference source for the practising designer.

In this fourth edition, the chapter on computer aided design has been rewritten and extended to reflect the growing importance of CAD to the industry and as a part of fashion and design courses. The rest of the book has been updated where necessary: in particular, new blocks for tailored shirts, new details on how to adapt men's blocks for women's wear, and a revision of sizing and labelling information.

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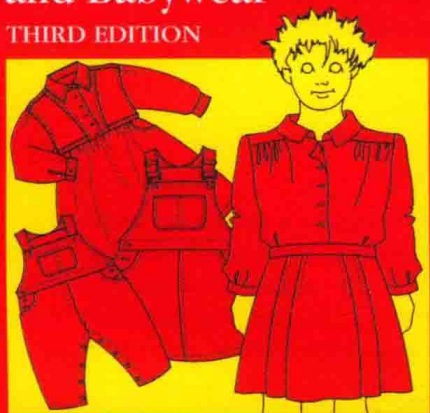
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This expanded and updated book on children's and babywear contains hundreds of stylish illustrations, clear, concise instructions and a new range of updated size charts. It is a companion volume to Metric Pattern Cutting and is essential for students who wish to specialise in the design, cutting and manufacture of clothes for children.

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Pattern Cutting for Women's Tailored Jackets

Classic and Contemporary

Winifred Aldrich

**PATTERN CUTTING FOR
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CLASSIC AND CONTEMPORARY



WINIFRED ALDRICH



This book has been written for students who have mastered the basic principles of pattern cutting and have become interested in cutting tailored garments. A large number of garments can claim to be 'tailored', and the term is often confusing; therefore, the book starts by explaining the history of cutting tailored clothes. It describes the evolution of the tailored jacket through the eighteenth and nineteenth century and defines the legacy that has been left for designers and cutters.

The book then demonstrates, by examples, the different approaches to cutting tailored garments today. The major practical part of the book is divided into three sections:

- Classic bespoke cutting
- Engineered cutting and manufacture
- 'Style' cutting variations.

Any student, who wishes to become a designer or cutter in one of these areas, will find this book valuable. The type of make-up or manufacture of garments is vastly different in each sector of the trade and this affects the cutting techniques to be used. It is important that students understand the possibilities and the limits of each sector before they select a career.

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Fifth edition

Winifred Aldrich



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Introduction

Revised edition 2008 This fifth edition of the original book remains true to its original concept, which offered a range of good basic blocks, an introduction to the basic principles of pattern cutting and gave a few examples of their application into garments. The principal aim was to give students confidence in their ability to develop a unique style of pattern cutting and to offer tutors a starting point from which they could extend their students' knowledge.

The new inclusions offered in the 2004 edition remain. These responded to the way fabrics and fashion have changed the cut and sizing of garments in different manufacturing processes. The great expansion of casual wear, in jersey or stretch fabrics, has led to the expansion of *flat cutting* with no darting to create the shape. The 2004 edition devoted a whole section to this type of cutting and the section has been extended in this edition. However, students have to understand how to create shape through cutting alone, in fact, *form cutting*, and therefore the first section of the book still covers this technique.

The major difference in this new edition is the *introduction of colour*. This will help students to recognize the different coded sections in the book. The addition of colour offers a major improvement to the updated chapter on computer-aided design (CAD). This now offers to first year design and clothing students a good introduction to the technology.

The size charts have been revised in order to respond to changes in body sizing, co-ordination with European size charts and to the ways that clothes are marketed to different sectors of the population. As many of the stores selling High-street fashion are attracting younger 'early teen' customers, the size chart for this market sector has been extended down to a size 6.

The book remains written for beginners, students who are starting practical pattern cutting as part of

fashion degree or diploma courses or for students in upper schools who are studying advanced dress and textile subjects. Chapter 13 deals specifically with drafting the block for individual figures. This will be useful for women who make clothes for themselves, in order to create and develop their own individual style, or women who find mass produced clothes an uneasy fit.

Some garment patterns, particularly in couture design, are constructed by draping on the dress stand. However, pattern cutting from blocks or adaptation of existing patterns is now widely used by the dress trade because of its accuracy of sizing and the speed with which ranges can be developed. Pattern cutting by this method is a means of achieving a shape around the body so that, although the body and therefore the body blocks remain constant, there is no limit to the ideas that can be followed through into workable designs. However, the designer must always be conscious that the body is a form. This can be difficult when one has to relate flat pieces of paper to a design that is basically sculptural when it is completed. In addition, the form will move and this must be exploited in the cut of the garment. A moving shape is more visually exciting than a still form, but there are practical problems to be considered in allowing for this movement. The system of pattern cutting offered in this book attempts to make the student more fully aware of designing round the figure rather than seeing it as a body that possesses only a front view.

Pattern cutting should be used in conjunction with a dress stand. This means that as the design evolves, proportion and line can be checked and corrected. Pattern cutting can achieve a shape quickly, but more complicated styles should be made up into a muslin or calico toile so that the result can be assessed on a form or a moving figure.

Pattern cutting and design

Pattern cutting by adapting shapes from block patterns can be traced back to the middle of the nineteenth century. As the craft developed the basic rules evolved, but rules can be broken or changed if this comes from new creative directions. This concept of design has been responsible for the most exciting changes in shape and cut during the last century. Poiret, Vionnet and Chanel, sensitive to social and aesthetic influences, 'promoted the body' after it had been enclosed in structures for a century. Although their interpretations differed, they were the innovators of soft, easy fitting clothes. Today, the changing social attitudes of many women have changed their attitudes to fashion; they buy clothes to satisfy themselves and they are not prepared to be restricted to a dictated line for a season or by an outdated image of femininity.

Marrying design to fashion is a difficult process; it can be overwhelmed by bizarre effects created by some stylists in the fashion media. They have produced alternative images to the classic stylised fashion page by their eclectic choice of garments and their role has become increasingly important because of the power they have to begin or influence major trends.

Designing at the level of couture or small designer collections is very different from that of designing for a mass market. Garments created for an individual client give a designer more freedom. The cost factor becomes less important and this allows the original idea to be carried through. Interesting fabrics that are difficult to handle can be used, and their surface qualities emphasised by decorative techniques. The 'cut' of the garment is usually determined by draping on the stand, where the intricacies of the cut can be developed. Designing for individual clients allows the personality of the wearer to be fused with the original idea. The rise of celebrity in the music industry and the media has developed a new, exciting market for some top designers; it is a means by which they can promote their designs and their name. Most major designers also create 'designer collections' which are produced by manufacturing processes but the high price of the garments allows the 'signature' of their cut to remain and limited runs of specially printed or woven fabrics to be used.

The most limiting factors in designing for mass production are price and the production processes. Clothes also have to have 'hanger appeal'; that is, people will be tempted to try them on or buy them for their look alone. Often dresses that look sensational on a moving body can look limp and featureless on a clothes rail. There are two types of successful designers in the mass production fashion trade. The first group is employed by 'production-led' manufacturers; these designers can develop current fashion shapes but recognise that fabric

economy and repeat making-up methods are the priority. The second group is employed by 'design-led' manufacturers; they are able to produce original ideas and experiment with new fabrics and production processes.

There are some basic elements of design that affect or may limit a designer in any field.

Colour and pattern These are the most dominant features in a fashion trend. Each season a colour theme emerges, occasionally spontaneously, sometimes influenced by top designers. However, most mass retailers rely on the style and colour predictions of the major forecasting agencies. New technologies now offer a revolution in printed textiles. Instead of all-over repeat designs, unrepeating patterns and new scales of pattern can be achieved, thus offering new concepts in which decoration is integral to the whole design.

Fabric quality New technologies have also expanded the range of fabrics available to a designer. The aesthetic qualities of a fabric are often the inspiration which initiates a design. However, in creating a new shape a designer has to consider five crucial fabric qualities which could realize or destroy it. These are: *weight, thickness, shear, drape* and *stretch*. Whilst large companies have testing procedures that can determine technical measures, the designer often has to make instant judgements and therefore has to be able to estimate the qualities of a fabric and idealise the final effect.

Shape Whilst recognising the crucial role that fabric choice plays in the realisation of design, its success rests with the quality of the pattern cutting. The domination of stretch fabrics in the mass market have meant an expansion of simple *flat pattern cutting* techniques which rely on the stretch in the fabric to create the body shape. But stretch fabrics can be married with *form cutting* to give quite different effects. Bias cutting adds to the drape quality of fabrics, and the use of layers can affect the weight and thickness of the design. *Form cutting* of close fitting garments in fabrics without sheer or drape, such as stiff silks, requires great skill.

Line The interpretation of line and cut is the most complex part of a designer's work. Once a fashion shape becomes established, the variations in cut to achieve it are infinite. The designers must use their skills to produce a range that will translate the latest fashion across a range of sizes.

Garment sampling

Garment samples are prototype garments that are made up so that the designer can check and refine both the pattern and the construction of the garment.

In the early stages of the process a dress stand will be used, but final decisions are usually taken when a live model wears the garment. It is at this stage that the other major design decisions, *colour* and *pattern*, *fabric quality*, *shape* and *line* can finally be assessed.

It should be noted that at the present time much discussion has been taking place in the fashion press about the unreality of some designers using size 6 or size 8 models to display clothes, when the average size for women is approximately size 14.

Fabrics

Designers have to acquire a deep understanding of the qualities of fabrics. Many designers specialise in designing a particular product, for example lingerie or sportswear. This means that they have to understand the basic properties of fabrics and testing procedures and be assured that the fabric will perform well for their particular product.

The designer has to become familiar with the types of woven and knitted structure of fabric. Knowledge of the basic source of fabrics and how this affects the enormous number of finishes that can be applied to fabrics has to be acquired. However, the most important qualities that a designer must consider when creating a design are: *weight, thickness, drape, stretch* and *shear* (the amount the fibres distort

in the warp and weft). These qualities will affect quite dramatically how a pattern will be cut and how the final shape will be realised. A list of fabrics is shown below that is categorised into the different fabric weights. Weight and thickness are generally closely linked, but some thick pile fabrics constructed with man-made fibres can be deceptively light. Shear and drape are also often closely linked – these qualities allow the cutting of soft body skimming shapes. Today, the popularity of stretch fabrics, both woven and knitted, has been the most influential factor in cutting for mass produced garments. In the edited list of fabrics below, knitted fabrics are listed in all columns because of the huge variety in different weights.

Light-med.	Medium	Med.-heavy	Heavy
Afgalaine	Alpaca	Bedford cord	Astrakhan
Angora	Bagheera	Bouclé	Beaver
Bengaline	Barathea	Broadcloth	Double
Cashmere	Bark crêpe	Burlap	Duffle
Chino	Brocade	Camel hair	Felt
Chintz	Butcher	Canvas	Fur fabric
Ciré	Calico	Chenille	Knitted fabric
Crepon	Cavalry twill	Cheviot	Loden cloth
Dupion	Cloqué	Corduroy	Melton
Faille	Coutil	Donegal tweed	Plush
Foulard	Covert	Drill	Quilted
Gingham	Crêpe	Duck	
Homespun	Damask	Dungaree	
Honan	Denim	Duvetyn	
Knitted fabric	Doeskin	Flannel	
Lamé	Façonne velvet	Fleece	
Matelasse	Gabardine	Flock	
Mohair	Grenadine	Fustian	
Moiré	Grosgrain	Harris tweed	
Ottoman	Haircord	Honeycomb	
Panama	Hopsack	Intarsia	
Percale	Jacquard	Knitted fabric	
Piqué	Jean	Llama fabric	
Sateen	Knitted fabric	Moleskin	
Satin	Panne velvet	Tapestry	
Shantung	Repp	Ticking	
Sharkskin	Sailcloth	Tweed	
Slipper satin	Saxony	Velour	
Surah	Serge	Venetian	
Taffeta	Suitings	Vicuna fabric	
Tricot	Tartan	Whipcord	
Tussore	Velvet	Worsted	
	Velveteen		