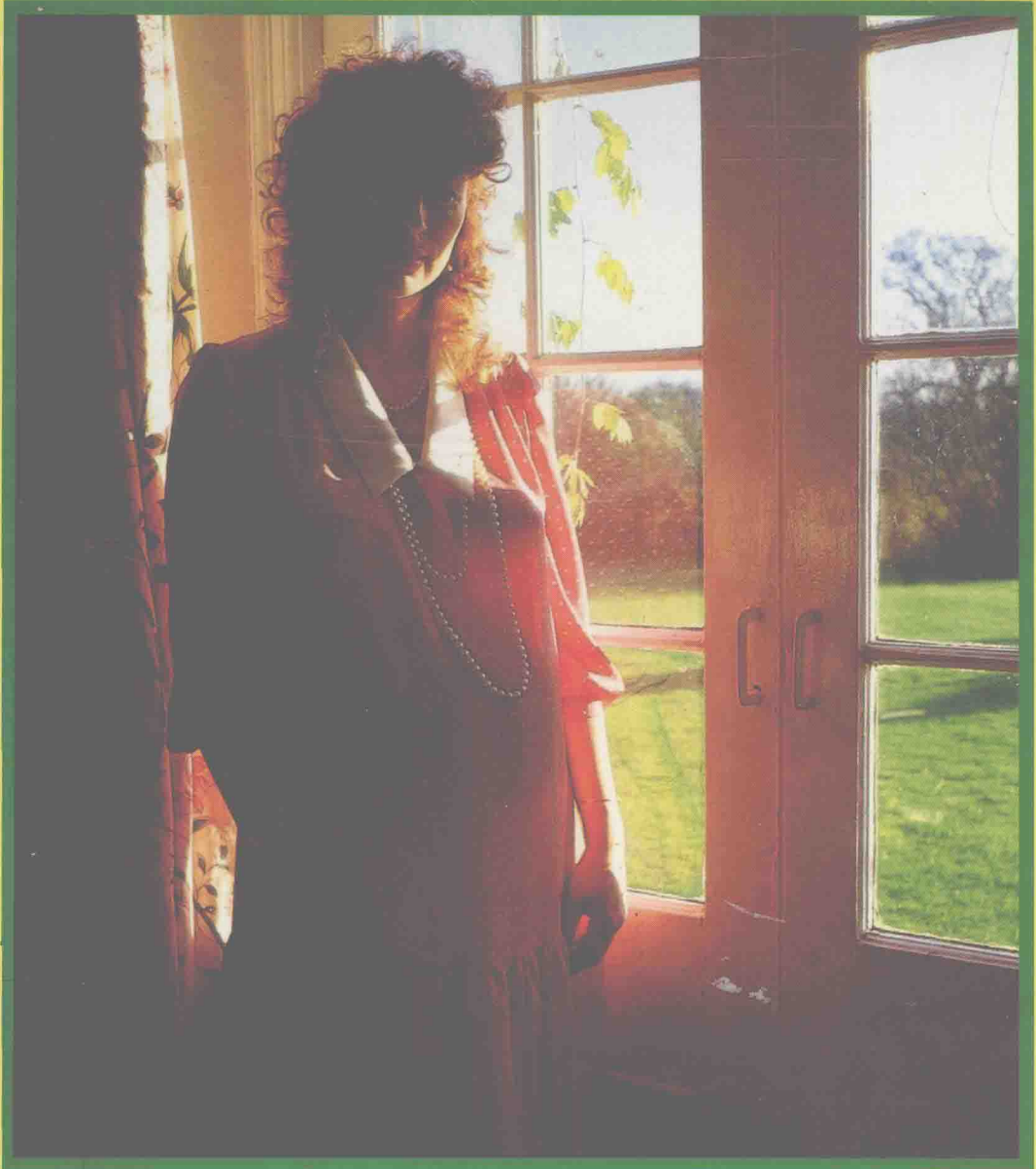


Patterns for Pregnancy



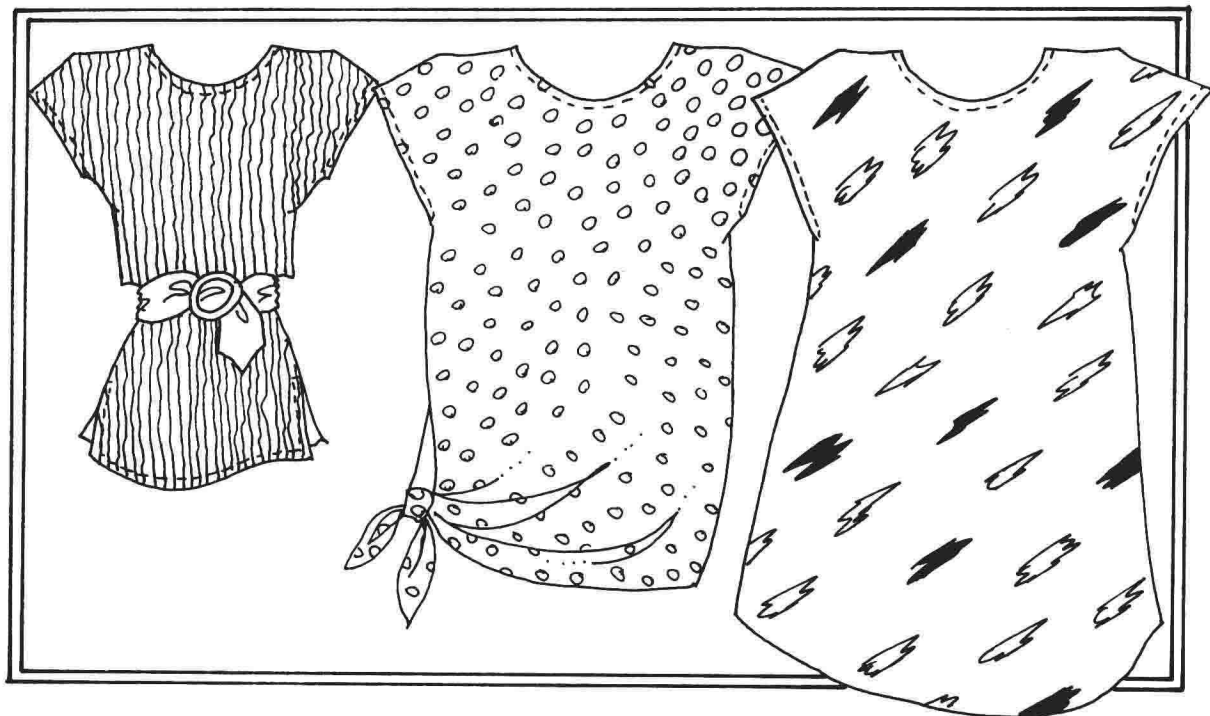
Belinda Musgrave

Patterns for Pregnancy

To my children

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Belinda Musgrave



B.T. Batsford Ltd London

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Introduction

Being pregnant is a very special nine months of a woman's life, when she is getting ready for the arrival of her baby. Her body shape changes drastically, so after the third month it is necessary to think about additional clothes which look attractive, feel comfortable and are not too tight over the bump. Women are often self-conscious about putting on the necessary weight, so it is extremely important to keep morale as high as possible by wearing attractive and flattering outfits.

After a quick look around the shops, you will soon realise that you must either pay a king's ransom for maternity clothes or patronise the very cheap end of the market and find yourself wearing identical outfits to every other mother-to-be. The best solution is to make a few outfits yourself. You can have fun selecting attractive fabrics and buying small, expensive trims and then sewing them together at a leisurely pace and at a fraction of the cost.

Patterns for Pregnancy is especially geared to women who have some experience of home dressmaking, no matter how limited, and therefore have commercial patterns which they have used before and like. The book illustrates several very simple methods of altering these patterns, of whatever size, into maternity shapes. By adapting everyday patterns, you can use styles which are right up-to-date, and need not be restricted to the traditional maternity patterns, and you can use them again, time after time, following the baby's arrival.

An introductory chapter on the importance of the design of maternity clothes is followed by tips on cutting out various fabrics, different methods of sewing the garments together and a chapter on individual decorative touches such as embroidery, appliqué, tucking and frills.

1. Design

Over the past few years there has been a complete revolution on the maternity wear scene. Mothers-to-be used to wear dull, dowdy colours in quite boring basic styles. It was regarded as a period of life which had to be endured, certainly not enjoyed. These days women's attitudes have changed; they have swapped their dowdy colours for vibrant hues and their basic styles for an exciting range of fashionable designs. It is a period of a woman's life when her skin glows, her hair shines and she looks beautiful, so it is only fitting that she should have attractive outfits which she enjoys wearing and feels comfortable in.

There are several advantages to making your own maternity clothes, the most important probably being the cost. For less than the price of a cheap outfit, you can design and make yourself a unique outfit using your own choice of fabrics and an expensive selection of trimmings. Never again will you be in the embarrassing situation of sitting in an ante-natal clinic wearing the identical dress to three or four other mothers-to-be. Cheap, off-the-peg outfits tend to be skimpy to keep within budget and they often become tight, uncomfortable and unsightly over the last few weeks. By making your own you will be able to include very fashionable style details, you can afford much more decorative detail and also ensure a perfect fit. A bit of gentle dressmaking can also be fun at this time when you certainly don't feel like embarking on energetic projects.

FIGURE TYPES

Are you tall and thin or short and plump? Have you got narrow shoulders or quite a large bust? The basic characteristics of your figure do not alter with pregnancy so you should stick to the rudimentary rules of styling for individual figure types and transfer them to maternity styles.

A very tall woman must select clothes which do not emphasise or exaggerate her height. For example, as vertical stripes tend to have this effect it would be wise to avoid them and perhaps replace them with more flattering diagonal stripes. Contrasting coloured separates, on the other hand, are ideal as they visually divide the body and so break up this illusion of height. A woman with this figure type would look most attractive in separates such as skirts and trousers with contrasting smocks or sweatshirts, slim skirts and blouson tops with hip sashes, or perhaps a dress which is made in a tiered style or one which is gathered in with a drawstring below the bump.

A shorter woman should do just the opposite. She must work hard to create and emphasise a vertical illusion of height, so blouson tops and contrasting sweatshirts would not really be flattering. Separates can be worn very successfully but they should be made of the same fabric or at least of fabrics of the same colour. All-in-one garments such as pinafores, dungarees and jumpsuits are ideal, and when dresses are selected they would be most flattering with vertical tucking or pleats. Do remember always to keep styling and accessories sleek, dainty and uncluttered.



◁ 1 *Contrasting separates for a tall woman, and a printed dress with vertical tucking for a short woman*

Necklines and sleeves are important areas to emphasise in maternity wear as necks and arms always remain 'slim' areas. A woman with a long, graceful neck should accentuate it by wearing large pussy-cat bows, high Edwardian-type collars, upturned shirt collars or frilly necklines. On the other hand, a shorter neck calls for simpler necklines and open-neck styling. Sailor collars are perfect, as are rever styles or shirt and mandarin collars left unbuttoned at the top. Frilly collars

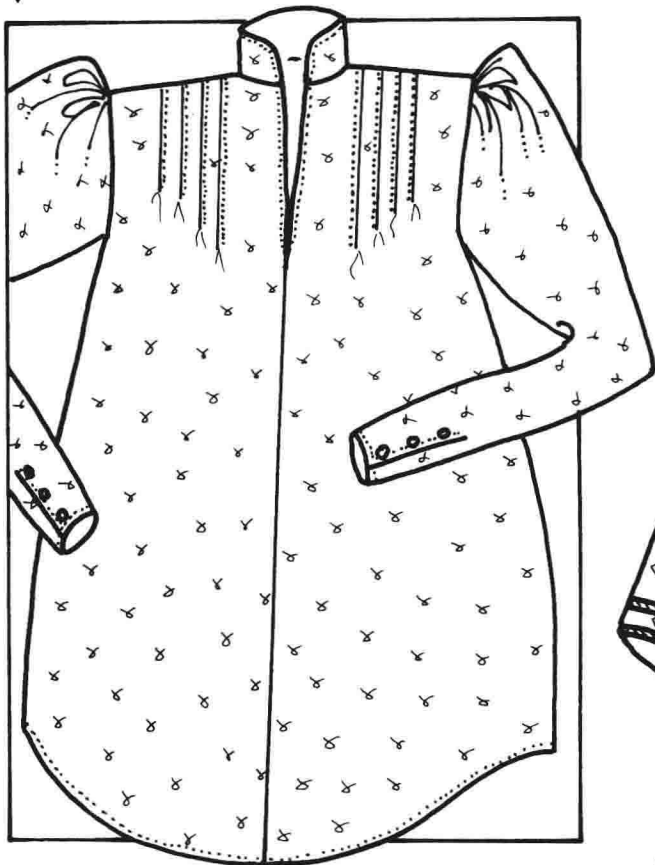
may be worn but must be kept dainty. Sleeves should be carefully considered as very large ones will tend to broaden a woman's silhouette, and that's the last thing she will want. Full sleeves may be worn and are indeed flattering, especially for a woman with slightly heavy upper arms, but they will be most successful if worn short or at $\frac{3}{4}$ -length so some of the arm is exposed. For long sleeves, either keep them slim fitting or gather the sleeve heads with the rest fitted on the principles of a leg-o-mutton style.

2 *A high neckline flattering for a long neck, and a low neckline suitable for a short neck*



Sloping or narrow shoulders can easily be helped by tacking in a pair of shoulder pads; even a small pair makes a tremendous difference. Very broad shoulders, however, should be covered simply with the minimum of tucks, gathers or padding, as these will merely accentuate them.

3 Simple smock with leg-o-mutton type sleeves

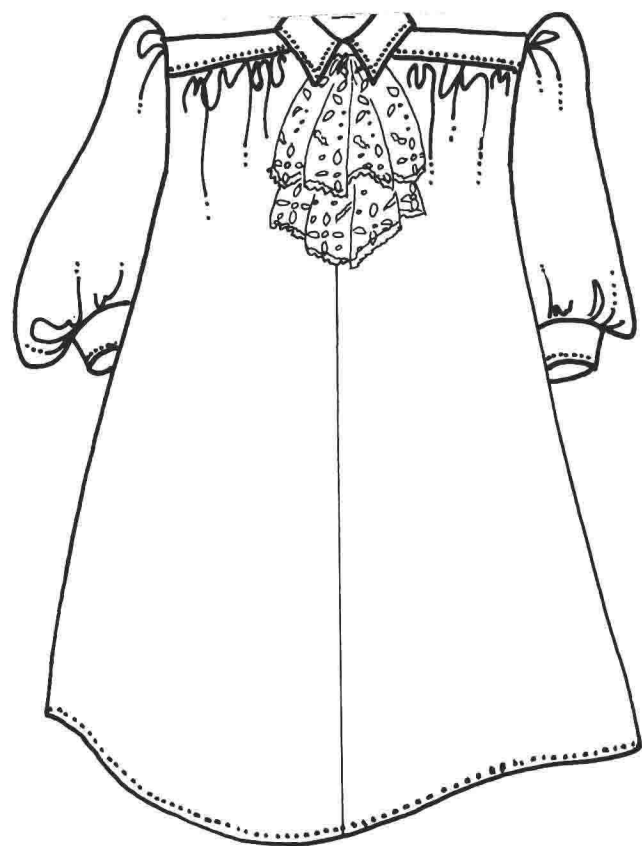


A large bust is best disguised by keeping styling as sleek and plain as possible over this area. Do not wear dresses or tops with lots of gathering from shoulder yokes; instead select outfits with long bodice tucks or high waisted styles, both of which release the necessary fullness only over the bump. Plain outfits with attractive contrasting collars are very successful as they draw the eye upwards to the face. Bodices with frills, rows of braid, fancy buttons and appliquéd yokes, which would be totally wrong over a large bust, are, on the other hand, ideal for a flat-chested mother-to-be.

4 Smock with a very low yokeline suitable for a large bust

5 Lots of gathers and a lace frou-frou for a small bustline ▷





PERSONALITY

A flamboyant, outgoing woman can really go to town when selecting maternity outfits. She will want brilliant colours and dramatic styles because these express her personality and they are what she is used to wearing. Lots of gathering, masses of tucks, large sleeves, swirly printed fabrics, dramatic eye-catching collars, and then glittering fabrics and chunky jewellery for the evening. It is important not to try to change one's basic style of dress during these months and to feel as comfortable, normal and relaxed as possible. A flamboyant woman would, therefore, look as ridiculous as she would feel in a soft pink, pin spot dress with a neat Peter Pan collar. She may even find that she already owns outfits such as a flowing djellabah or a kaftan which she enjoys wearing and will easily cover her bump.

The woman who constantly updates her wardrobe to keep up with every new trend will find this book especially useful as she will have awful problems buying fashionable maternity clothes. She will be able to buy fabrics and trimmings which are bang up-to-date and make herself outfits imitating the very latest boutique ideas.

Very romantic women also seem to let their personalities dictate when selecting clothes. Without thinking they always seem to choose pastel colours, pretty fabrics, demure or romantic styles, frills, pin-tucks and feminine trims.

COLOUR AND FABRICS

The choice of colour, as discussed above, is a direct reflection of your personality; having selected a certain colour, you find that it plays a vital role in affecting your mood.

On a brilliant sunny day you automatically feel like wearing a bright outfit; a dull brown suit would be quite wrong. On a dreary wet cold day a grey dress can make you feel as cold and miserable as the weather itself, but if you must wear this dress do remember to cheer it up with a bright cardigan or a colourful scarf or some shiny costume jewellery. During winter months, dark colours are usually worn as these are warmer colours, but, as with the dreary grey dress, do add colourful blouses and jerseys, hats, scarves, jewellery and tights as these will cheer up both your outfit and you.

Dull-surfaced fabrics are more suited to maternity outfits, as they absorb light, giving a slimmer effect. Shiny fabrics, on the other hand, which reflect light and emphasise curves would be perfect for blouses and shirts worn under dungarees or pinafores as they would draw the eye away from the tummy.

It is advisable to choose washable fabrics for maternity outfits; as they are worn for such a short period it would be a shame to have them constantly at a dry-cleaners. Also, do not select very heavyweight fabrics, even for winter pregnancies, as you will probably find these far too hot to wear as most women seem to have inbuilt warmth over these months.



6 The same dungaree pattern made in a cotton print for summer and in corduroy for winter

SEASONS

A nine-month pregnancy will span three or four seasons, so it is important to select your wardrobe with the relevant seasons in mind. During the first three months most women continue to wear their everyday clothes, perhaps releasing a tight button or two around the waist. New clothes will be necessary for the fourth month as you will begin to look pregnant and not want to wear clothes which are at all restricting around the waistline. If your fourth month falls in the spring, you will want a spring and summer wardrobe with lots of lightweight fabrics in bright colours and summery styles. An autumn and winter pregnancy would suggest deeper, warmer colours and use of heavier fabrics such as brushed cotton, needlecord, denim or medium-weight jersey fabrics.

If your pregnancy spans winter and spring or summer and autumn your wardrobe will be more difficult to organise as you could have extremes of climate. Separates would be very useful garments as would pinafores and dungarees because, depending on the weather, you could add blouses or jerseys, a waistcoat, a cardigan or even a casual, unstructured jacket to suit your temperature.

In the following chapter a varied range of garments have been included which are suitable to span all seasons of the year. Obviously, several of the garments, such as the basic trousers, could be used for any season depending on the selected fabric. Cotton drill would make a lovely pair of summer trousers while the same pattern made in needlecord or gaberdine would suit the cooler seasons.

LIFESTYLE

Having considered basic figure types, personality, colour and seasons, it is next vital to think about your lifestyle whilst planning a maternity wardrobe. It would be silly to get carried away selecting outfits which are totally irrelevant to your life. If you are a working mother-to-be, you should obviously include a few smart outfits. A plain, dark-coloured pinafore and perhaps a pair of tailored pin-striped dungarees could be useful basic outfits. You could chop and change their appearance with tailored shirts or frilly blouses, bow ties or bright scarves, polo-necks or T-shirts

and still look very smart and efficient. A working mother-to-be will obviously need a few casual outfits for weekends and for when she stops working, but not as many as a woman who is expecting her second or third baby and who is at home far more of the time. This mother-to-be will need a casual, comfortable, more practical set of clothes such as a pair of jeans or trousers, a basic pinafore, a wrap-around skirt and a selection of complementary tops, T-shirts or jerseys. All the garments should be easily machine-washable as this expectant mother will be constantly hugged, cuddled and touched by her other toddlers with muddy boots and sticky jam-covered fingers. She must also have some special outfits for entertaining, dining out and parties.

The mother-to-be with a hectic, evening social life need not spend a fortune on her clothes. She could make herself a very plain, basic, black dress then use all the old tricks such as adding large detachable collars or yokes, colourful draped shawls, rows of wide ribbon, decorative buttons or even adding a shiny open jacket, to create the illusion of several outfits with hardly any expense.

GENERAL HINTS

Do remember when designing maternity clothes to make sure that you keep the necessary extra fullness exactly where you need it – over the bump! Emphasise all your slim areas such as arms, legs, neck and shoulders, as these help create a slimmer illusion. Do not make dresses with yards of flowing gathers from front yokes, back yokes and sleeve heads as you may end up looking like a ship in full sail.

If you usually wear very high heeled shoes and boots with rather long hemlines, do remember that mothers-to-be should wear flatter heels and therefore need shorter hemlines. To ensure a level maternity hemline the front should be dipped approximately 5-7.5cm (2-3in) lower than the back.

Remember to plan your hospital stay. Hospitals are always exceedingly hot places so it is nice to have two or three cool cotton nighties and a summerweight dressing-gown, even if it is in the depths of winter. If you are making simple cotton nighties, do include a long front opening as this is useful for breast-feeding.

2. Pattern Making

When beginning to organise a wardrobe for pregnancy it is often difficult to know where to start. If you begin by making one very basic item, like a simple top, you will then want a skirt or pair of co-ordinating trousers (or perhaps both) to go with it. These will spark off other ideas and, before you know it, you will have a lovely range of garments.

During pregnancy it is not only the tummy that grows – the whole body fills out slightly and so clothes need to be a size larger than usual. Ready-made maternity clothes and maternity patterns have taken this into account and the extra fullness has been included, but in order to make your own patterns for pregnancy these extra amounts must be added to your everyday commercial patterns. On average, the basic alterations are as follows.

increase bust circumference by 5cm (2in)

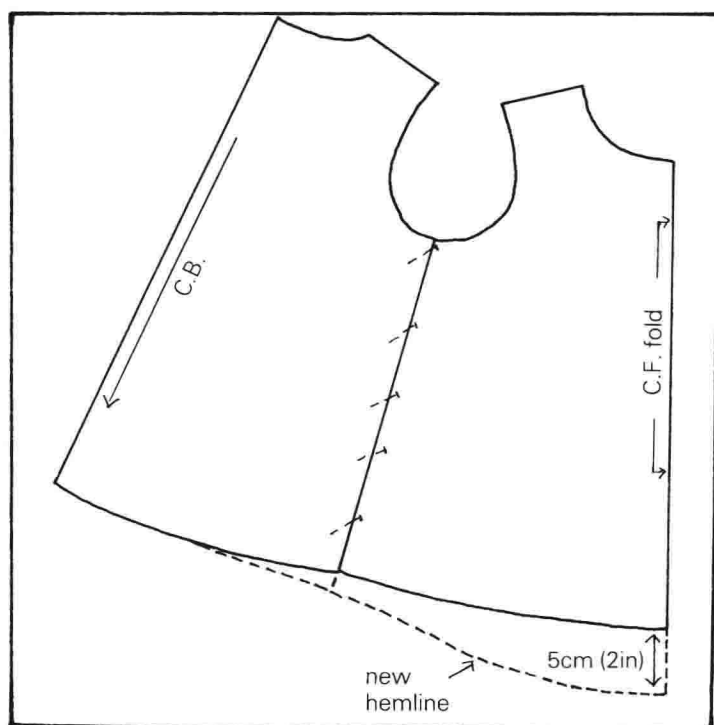
increase waist by 20-30cm (8-12in)

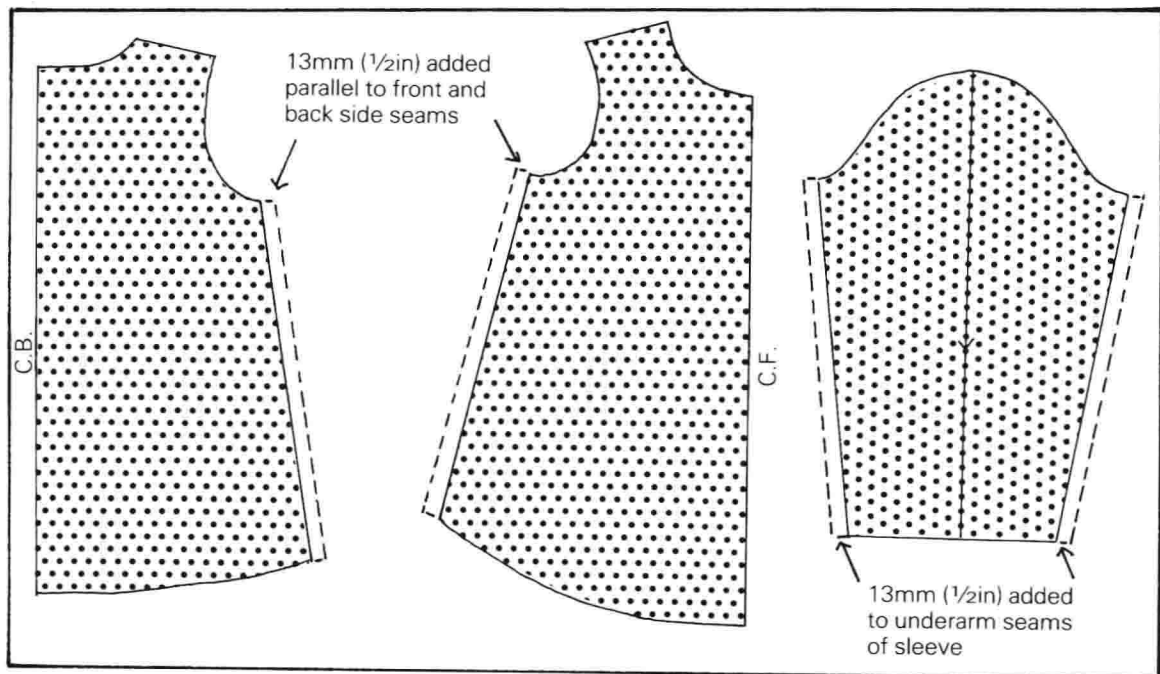
front hemline dipped by 5-7.5cm (2-3in)

To increase the bust measurement, 13mm ($\frac{1}{2}$ in) is added parallel to front and back side seams. The same amount must also be added to the underarm seam of sleeves to make them correspond with the enlarged bodice.

The waistline will expand on average 20-30cm (8-12in), so this must be added to the pattern with most of this fullness over the tummy.

As your bump protrudes it will lift the front hemline, so this must be lengthened by about 5-7.5cm (2-3in) to make it appear level. This extra length will not really be necessary before the fifth or sixth month, so it is a good idea to incorporate it in the hem to begin with. When the extra length is needed it is a simple adjustment to let down the front hem. Cheap, off-the-peg garments often have straight hemlines which curve upwards and look dreadful in advanced pregnancy, so when making your own clothes it is well worth the extra trouble of dipping the hemline.

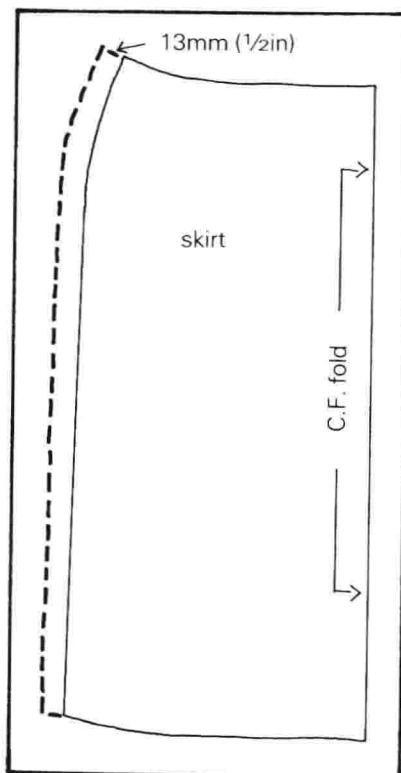




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7 13mm ($\frac{1}{2}$ in) added to the pattern to make it a size larger

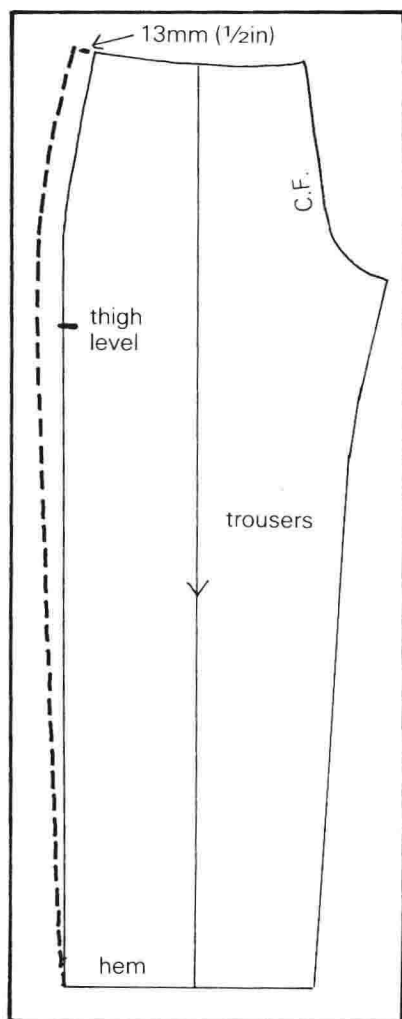
◁ 8 C.F. extended by 5cm (2in) to allow for the protrusion of the tummy



Skirt patterns are made a size larger by adding 13mm ($\frac{1}{2}$ in) parallel to the back and front side seams before beginning to adjust the waistline which is raised to sit comfortably above the tummy.

9 13mm ($\frac{1}{2}$ in) added parallel to sides of skirt to make the pattern a size larger. ▷

Trouser patterns are also made a size larger; 13mm (1/2in) is added parallel to front and back side seams from the waist to thigh level, then gradually tapered in to the original hemline to give a smooth side seam. The waistline is then raised to sit above the tummy.



10 13mm (1/2in) added to trousers from waist to thigh level then tapered to hem to make pattern a size larger

The styles illustrated in this chapter have been selected from commercial pattern books to show the different methods of altering everyday commercial patterns into maternity shapes by adding fullness exactly where it is needed. Each pattern book has an endless number of blouse styles to choose from. They all look different, but the differences are principally because of the variety of collars, cuffs, pockets, sleeve lengths, etc. being used. If you ignore the collars, cuffs, pockets, sleeve lengths, etc. and look only at the body shape, you will find there are only a small variety of these body shapes. In fact, in each section of a typical pattern book, there are probably only three or four basic body shapes.

This chapter shows you how to adapt *only* the basic body shape of a commercial pattern into a maternity shape, because, after all, it is only the shape of the body which changes during pregnancy. Your arms and wrists and neck do not significantly change and so there is no need to alter the sleeves, cuffs and collars; these parts of the commercial pattern can be used in their original form with your new body shape.

Many of these patterns can be easily altered to suit cold or warm seasons, merely depending on the fabric selected; for example, the trousers could be made either in burgundy corduroy for winter and worn with a jersey, or in buttercup yellow poplin and worn with a stripy T-shirt for summer. The skirts could be made in fabrics of different weights depending on the season, as could the nighties and several of the tops and dresses.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

C.F.	centre front
C.B.	centre back
R.S.	right side
W.S.	wrong side
S.A.	seam allowance
R.S.U.	right side upwards (often used when the left and right sides of the pattern are different and therefore must be made individually).

For all patterns, metric and imperial measurements are given. Follow *either* set, but not a mixture of both, because they are not interchangeable.