



## News You Can Use

LivingSoft Subscriber Newsletter | Volume 1

Welcome to the first Livingsoft.com Newsletter! You'll find lots of information to help you be more successful with your Livingsoft purchase and new products. We'll be sending these out on a monthly basis so stay tuned.



### This Just In

We are proud and pleased to announce our latest Dress Shop addition, Illusions™: Patterns for Real People, designed by Kaaren Hoback, and released June 28, 2004.

Illusions, is a New Design Collection to Dress Shop 5, offering patterns which flatter the body, provide a gentle hint of waist shaping as well comfort and custom fit.

We're offering this revolutionary collection at \$129 with an introductory price of just \$99 until July 31.

Illusions includes 26 new and distinctive patterns, including 4 dresses, 4 skirts, 4 blouses, 3 jackets including a real side panel jacket!, 2 vests and 2 tunics, a real sweatshirt and a baseball shirt, as well as 5 nightwear designs.

It also offers two NEW levels of fit. The Casual fit level offers a bit more ease, true side darts and a little gentle waist shaping as well as the New Comfort fit level- with no waist shaping

There are new features and tools which include, options for vents, pleats, godets, front and back neck plackets and more. To read more about Illusions, log onto our web site at:

<http://www.livingsoft.com/Products/Illusions.htm>



### Dress Shop Tip of the Month

Would you like to understand how each individual measurement affects the shape of your pattern? How you can make your shoulder lines come a little farther out without changing the angle of the shoulder line? How to change your bodice so the shoulder seams are a little further forward? How to give yourself a longer front armhole depth without adding to the back armhole depth which is fine?

Here's a simple way you can begin to understand how the different measurements impact the pattern, what measurements you might have to change to achieve a certain result, and how changing one measurement will change another measurement.

The first thing you'll want to do is to select a standard size to work with. Try for example Women's Size 12. It doesn't matter which size you pick, really, even if you're far from a size 12. You're only looking at how the measurements interrelate. You can apply what you learn to your own patterns later.

Draft a set of slopers for this standard size, and print them in quarter scale. Write "original" on the pages. Now comes the interesting part. Change ONE measurement and then reprint your sloper patterns (if the measurement you changed is above the waist, only print your bodice front, back and sleeve, if the measurement you changed is below the waist only reprint your pant front and back).

Write on the printout the changed measurement (for instance, Shoulder Length +1"). Then take the new printout and overlay each page over the corresponding original, and see what has changed.

Each time you change a measurement, you'll see how that measurement affects the pattern. Some might surprise you. For instance, adding 1" to the Shoulder Length measurement will NOT extend your shoulder line at the end of your shoulder. Instead, it will extend the line at the neck, making your neck opening narrower. Notice also that the angle of the shoulder becomes less sloped, more squared. This is because you're trying to put a longer line into a space which is no taller than before (the full length measurement remained constant, as did all other measurements).

A lot of people might have thought that the shoulder length measurement controls how wide the shoulder seams travel down the edge of the shoulder, but the experiment you just tried demonstrated otherwise.

Let's try something else. Set the Shoulder Length back to the original number, and increase the Across Shoulder Front by 1". When you print (remembering to note the measurement change on the page) and overlay, you'll see that THIS change made the shoulder seams draft wider out on the body on the bodice front. But the shoulder angle is more sloped, and the neck opening is wider.

Experiment with every measurement. You'll see many results you expect, and others you didn't.

Now try changing multiple measurements at once. Add 1" to Across Shoulder Front and Across Shoulder Back, and Add 1" to the Shoulder Length. Print, overlay and compare. Evaluate the results.

Anyone who wants to be a professional Dress Shop measurer should understand the relationship between each individual measurement and the sloper patterns.

Beyond that, an understanding of how the measurements work together to create certain shapes and results is invaluable.

But even if you never intend to measure professionally, and you just want to have the capacity to measure and fit a family member or even occasionally test-fit your own sloper when your body changes, knowledge of how the measurements interrelate to shape the patterns is useful to know.



### Sewing Tip

You can shrink out all appearance of gathering in a sleeve cap using steam, when you're working with cotton, wool or linen, or a blend. (Though this appears related to natural fibers, the technique doesn't work for pure silk, because silk has a harder "finish.")

A good way to remove the ease/gathering from a sleeve is to put in your double row of gathering stitches between the front and back notches, and pull the basting threads to gather just enough to exactly match the armhole (using your fingers to arrange the gathers evenly). Then place the sleeve cap over end of a sleeve board and use your iron to apply shots of steam to the sleeve. You can shape the cap with the palm of your hand, and use the point of the iron to eliminate the gathers. Then you're ready to sew in the sleeve.

Many people prefer to actually sew the sleeve cap in before shrinking out the gathers. You still place the sleeve over the end of the sleeve board (the end of a regular ironing board is wider and not as easy to use for this purpose, but if you don't have a sleeve board it will work) and apply shots of steam and shape and mold the sleeve cap with your hand and the tip of your iron. The benefit of sewing the sleeve in the garment first is that you won't inadvertently shrink out more ease than you should from the sleeve cap, and then have to work a little harder to sew it into the armhole.



## Q&A

### **What's the difference in fit between Dress Shop Quickfit, Advanced, and Pro?**

Dress Shop 5 QuickFit includes standard sizes for women and misses, plus our QuickFit pattern adjustment system, plus the option to draft and fit to 24 custom body measurements.

Dress Shop 5 Advanced includes everything that is in QuickFit, plus the option to draft and fit to 57 custom body measurements.

Dress Shop 5 Pro includes everything that is in QuickFit and Advanced, plus standard sizes for men, boys, girls, and small children. DS5 Pro also includes options in the Layout Tool for laying out plaids, stripes, and border prints. And finally, DS5 Pro includes a special option in the Crotch Tool for micro-tuning the shape of crotch curves.

### **I have measured myself repeatedly and yet my test garments don't fit. What can I do?**

Even with as many measurements as we take in Dress Shop (our most rigorous measurement system takes 57 body measurements), we still don't measure all the lumps, bumps and curves that you might have on your body. And we make some assumptions about the way you're shaped, which are not going to be true in all cases.

Take "D." She has a very rounded bosom, more so than most. Not just big you understand. Her shape is more globular than conical. If you measure her 1" below or above her bust points, she's the same measurement as she is when you measure directly across with her bust points.

When D tries on her fitting bodice sloper, it isn't going to close across her chest. Maybe not even close. And yet, we can measure her over and over, and the measurements look accurate. The reason the bodice is too small is that the program is assuming a somewhat tapered shape where her widest place is across her bust and she is narrower

above and below. It is her width just above and below (widths which are not measured) which are making it impossible for her to fit into the bodice.

What's the solution? D should increase her "real" front bust measurement as much as she needs to, to enable her to pin the garment closed along the seam allowance (a very close fit but not so tight it is squishing her, even a little).

To see how much to increase the measurement prior to making the next test sloper, vertical slashes can be cut into the bodice across the bust area about 3" high. Then D should be able to pin the bodice closed, and we can measure how much the slashes gape open to see how much width will need to be added.

Interestingly, when the test bodice is made up which has the padded measurement, the bodice may fit very well, even though the bodice width actually measures wider across her bodice width than her full bust measurement.

If your problem isn't in the top but the bottom, the same principle can apply to the fitted pant sloper. Dress Shop requires measurements at the waist, the abdomen, the hip and crotch length. "N" might have all her measurements accurate at the points they were measured, but she might have an abdomen that doesn't have much of a curve apex, but is the same width an inch above and below the high point of her ab curve. In that case, as the pants are tapering from the waist measurement, her test pants might be way too tight in the tummy area. Vertical slashes in the pant sloper at abdomen level will enable N to see how much extra width she needs in this measurement (which could be in the front or the back, slashing in front and back and seeing which slashes gape will pinpoint whether front, back, or both measurements need to be added to).

Once you determine a set of measurements that give you a good fitting set of test garments, you should be able to use those same measurements (including the adjustments for your unique shape) to draft all your other garments in Dress Shop. And that's where the fun begins!

## **LivingSoft Links**

Do you want to join our online community, where information on the use of Livingsoft software, user groups, and help resources is available? It's easy and it's free. Just use the "Livingsoft Community" link on our home page at [www.livingsoft.com](http://www.livingsoft.com)

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