

# Simple Blouse Tutorial

By Marianne Jeffrey

[Adventurousquilter.blogspot.com](http://Adventurousquilter.blogspot.com)



#simpleblousebyAQ

Two options!

- \* Curved neckline
- \* V neckline



Quick and easy to make!

# Fabric Requirements

This blouse tutorial has been written to suit any size; you take vital measurements and decide from several options offered. You will need up to:

## 2 yards of cotton fabric

It is highly recommended you use **cotton sateen** as it drapes well. However you could use **quilting cotton**. I have found that a high quality yet lighter & softer quilting cotton such as those manufactured by Art Gallery Fabrics or M & S Textiles Australia drape well for use in cotton clothing.

Harmony Art Organic Design has fabulous **organic cotton sateen**, you can buy it here:

<https://organiccottonplus.com/collections/prints-harmony-art>

Spoonflower also has a cotton sateen available in their range and offers a multitude delightful fabric designs by indie designers:

<https://www.spoonflower.com/>

**Rayon** is another fabric option that drapes well but be sure to wash and dry before making the blouse to preshrink!

**Lightweight linen** is also a great option or a **linen/rayon** blend!

In dressmaking it is common for sewists to make a “**wearable muslin**”

In simple terms a “muslin” involves making a ‘test’ garment from cheap fabric such as muslin to perfect the garment size, cut etc before using high quality fabrics for the final garment.

A “wearable muslin” is made from cheaper quality fabric than your final garment, so that it is a wearable piece of clothing once it is complete! If you choose to do this you can shop the clearance aisle of large retailers such as Joann, Hobby Lobby, Walmart, Spotlight etc to buy cheap yardage for your test garment. I used a floral fabric I bought for \$3 per yard at Hobby Lobby in the clearance section to make this initial

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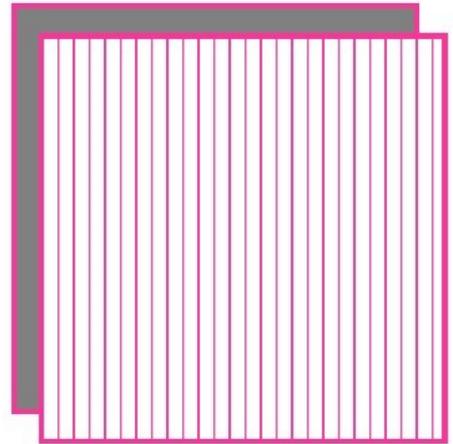
This tutorial uses French seams, you only need a simple straight stitch for most of the seams and a zig zag stitch to finish a few raw edges.

## How to sew a French seam!

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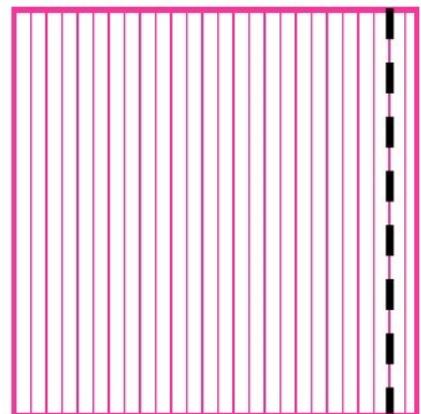
### Step 1

Place your two pieces of fabric right sides out.



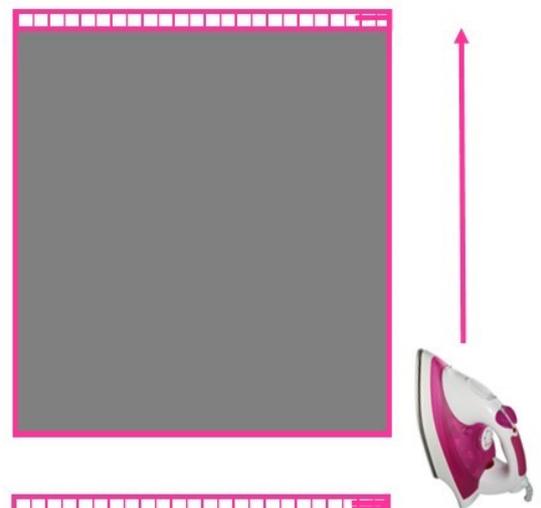
### Step 2

Stitch a 1/4" seam along the edge you wish to join.



### Step 3

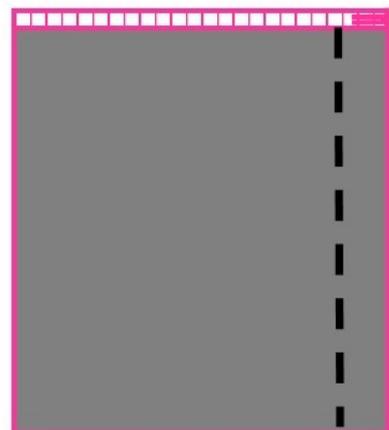
Turn the fabrics right side in and press the seam flat.



### Step 4

Stitch a 5/8" seam (or wider if you prefer) this completely envelopes the raw edges from the previous seam within a casing of fabric.

Press fabric open to complete the seam.



**NOTE:** French seams for the underarm curve will require an additional step to ensure the seam curves smoothly see [page 22](#) for those details.

# Measurement:

**Step 1:** Using a tape measure, measure the length from just above your clavicle near the neck to your hip bone this will determine the minimum length of your blouse:

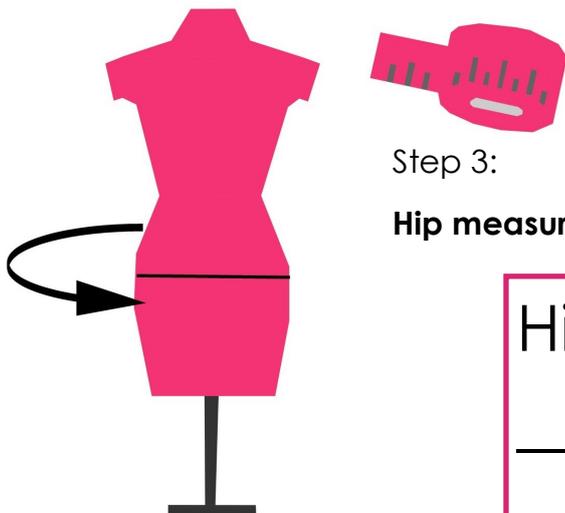


Length of blouse:

Measurement 1

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**Step 2:** Measure your hips **all the way around** this will determine the width of your blouse front and back:



Step 3:

**Hip measurement  $\div$  4 = min width blouse pattern piece at hip**

Hip  $\div$  4 :

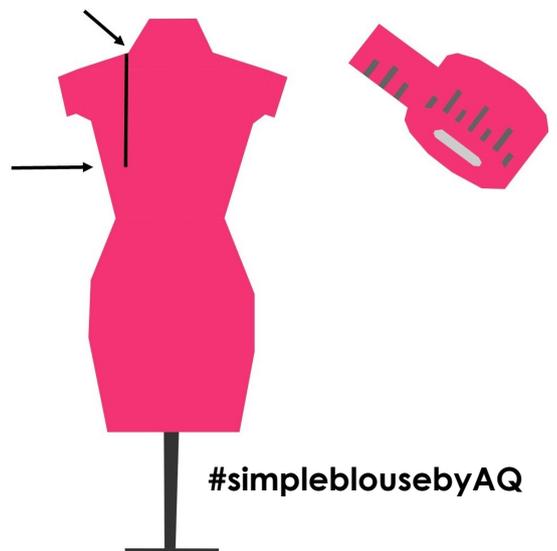
Measurement 2

Step 4:

Measure from just above your clavicle near the neck to your bottom rib.

Arm curve point:

Measurement 3



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# Pattern Drafting



# Draft your paper pattern!

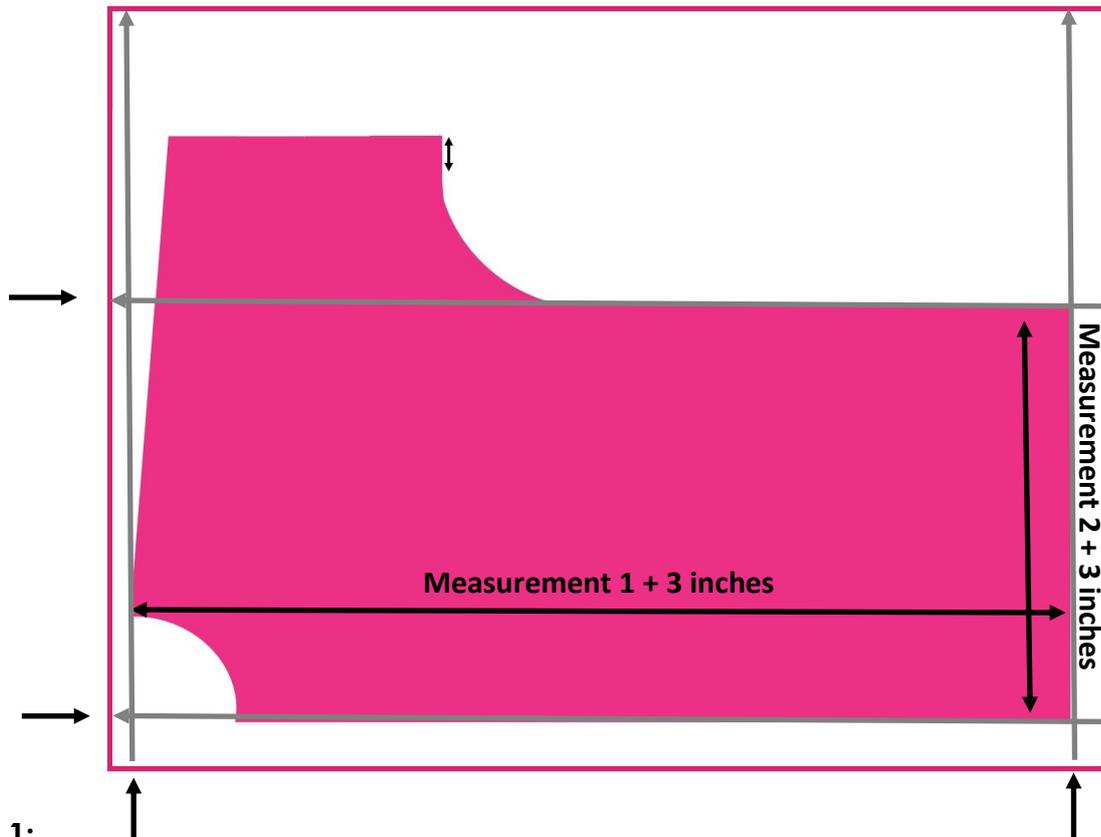
Adding seam, hem, and fit allowance:

It is important to add 1" seam allowance for our French seams. Additional width is also added to make the blouse fit easily and some additional length for hemming.

- Add 3 inches to measurement 2
- Add 3 inches to measurement 1



## Blouse **BACK** Curved Neck



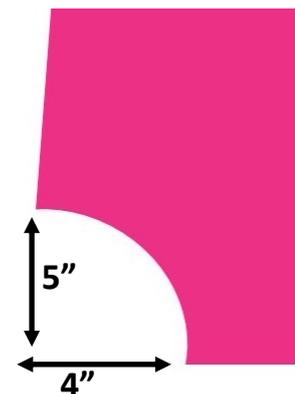
**Step 1:**

Draw a rectangle towards the bottom of your piece of paper that has the dimensions of measurement 1 and 2 with seam allowance added as detailed above.

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### **Step 2: Back neckline**

Freehand draw a curve that starts 5" from the bottom left corner and curves to a point 4" to the right of that corner.



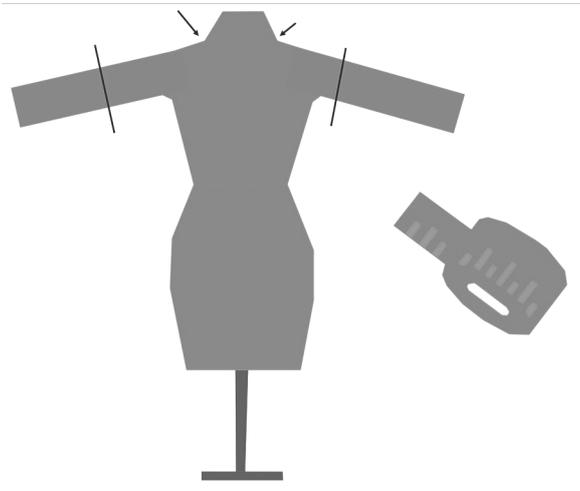
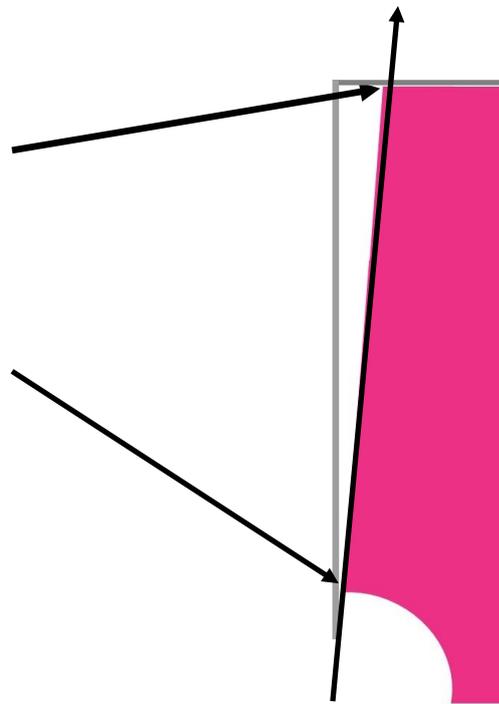
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### Step 3: Shoulder slope

**Point A** is 1" to the right of the edge of your rectangle drawn in step 1

Point B is at the edge of your rectangle where the curved neckline begins

Draw a line to connect the two points, this is the slope of your shoulder line.

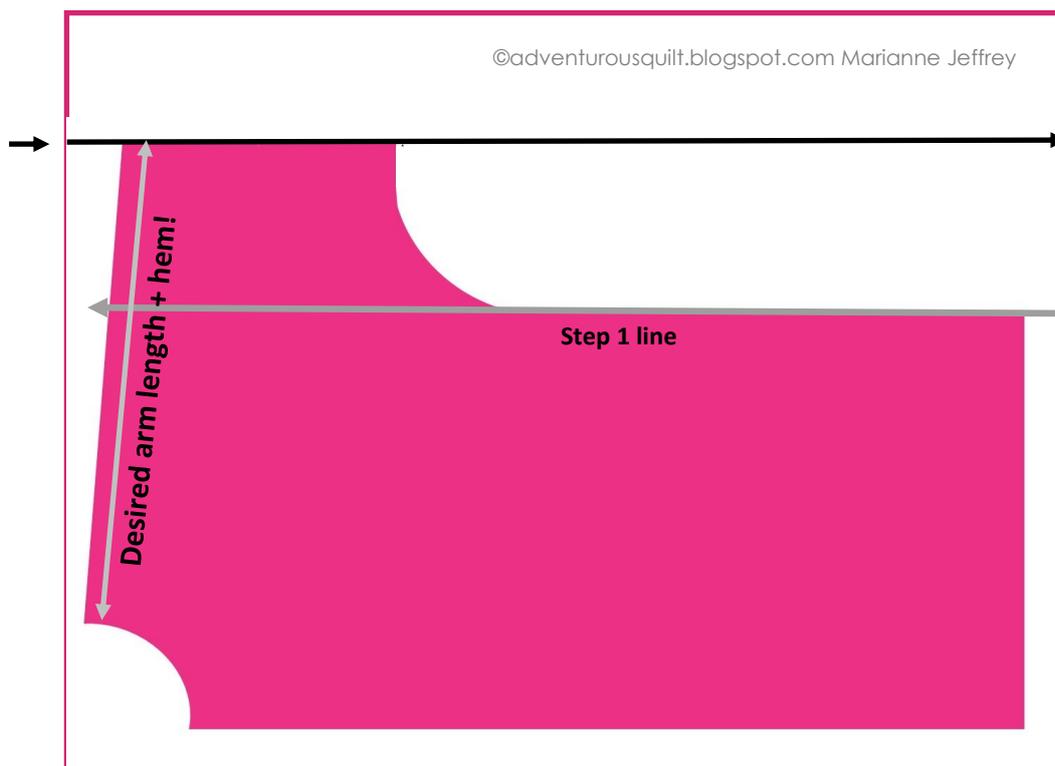


### Step 4: Arm Length

You can choose the length of your arms, from point B at the clavicle. Near the neck.

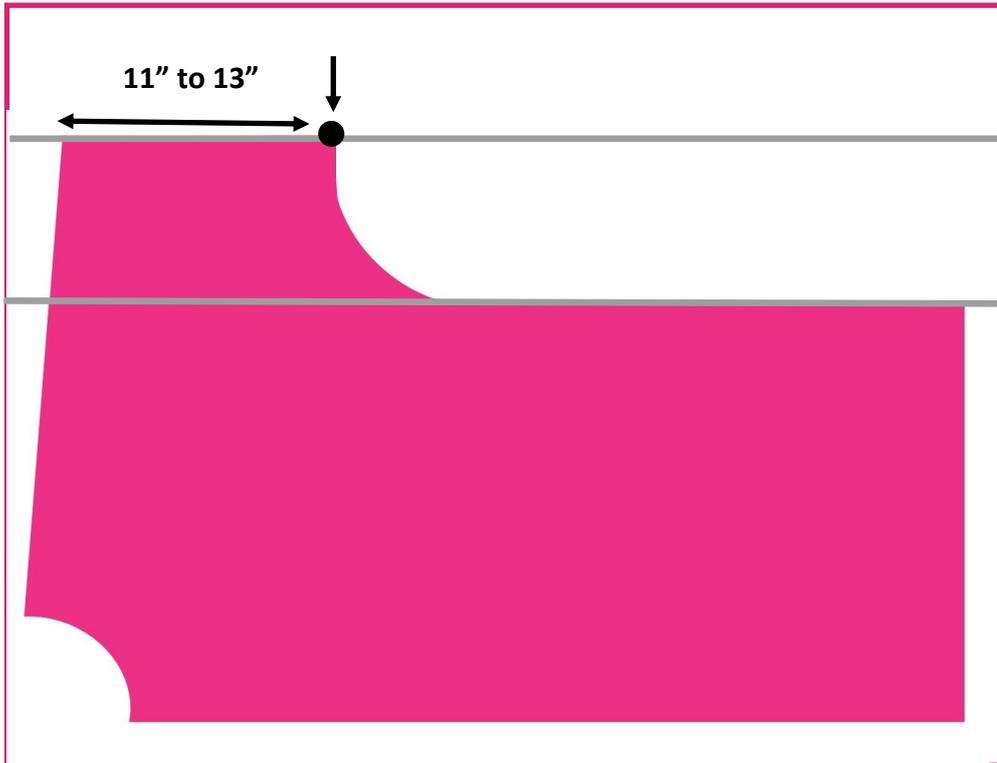
I personally prefer 13" from point B but have made the blouse with longer sleeves as well. You can add up to 3" in length as desired.

**Step 5: Arm Length** — Draw a line parallel to the line that is the top of your rectangle (drawn in step 1) and is your desired arm length (remember that will be hemmed later) from point B along the shoulder slope line.



### Step 6:

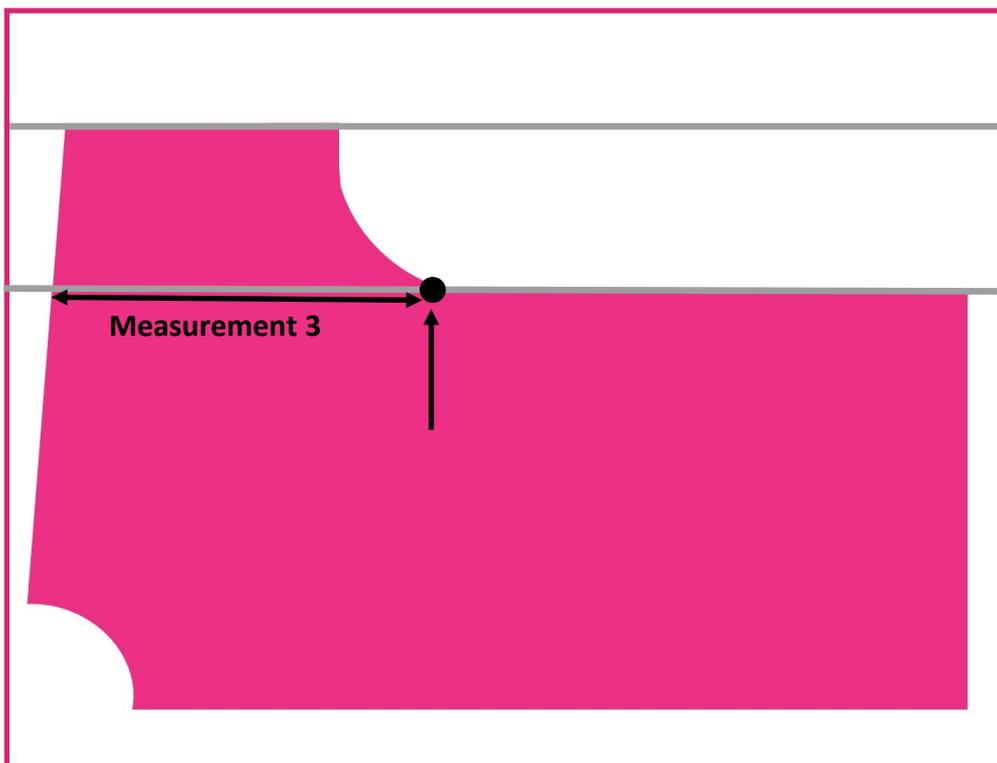
If you are slender your sleeves will be narrower than mine, I have 13" wide sleeves, try 11" to begin with if you are slender. Mark a point your desired arm depth from the sleeve end of the shoulder slope.



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### Step 7:

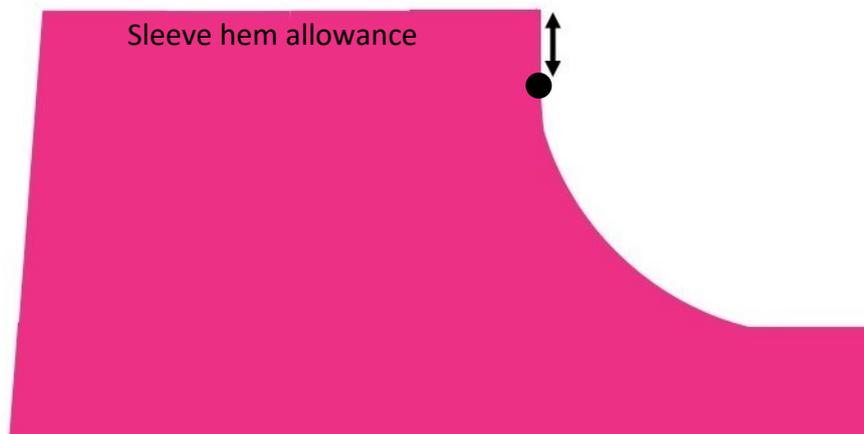
Mark a point **measurement 3** to the right of the shoulder slope as shown in this diagram.



## Step 8: Armpit Curve

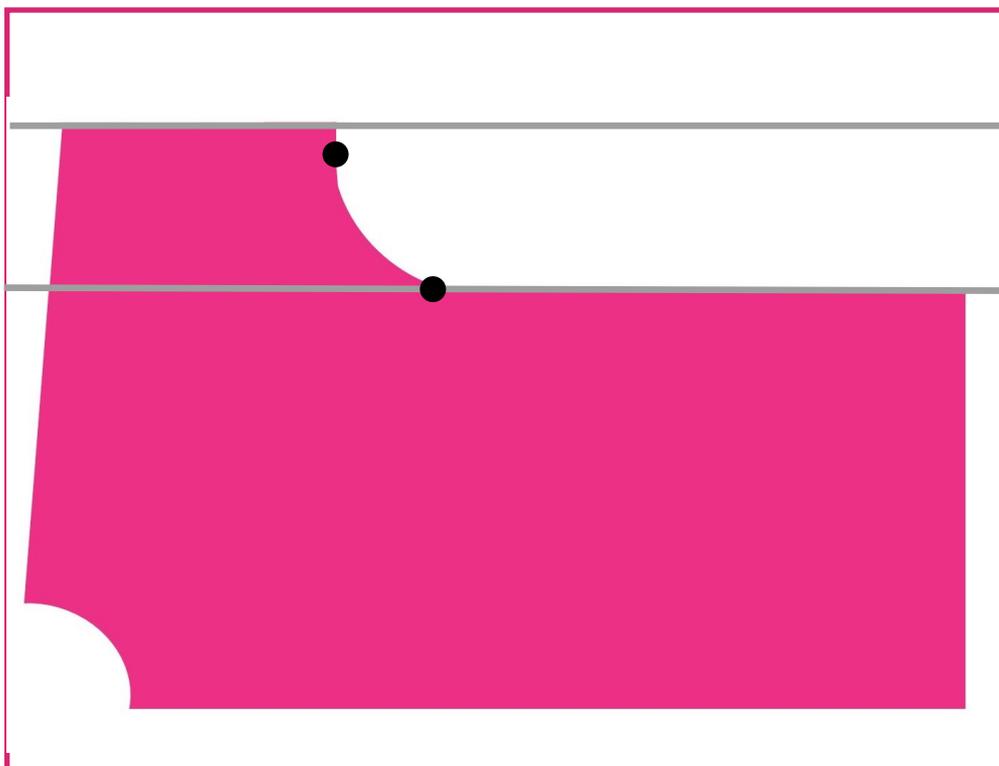
The most important thing to remember when drafting your sleeves is...

The last 1.5" of sleeve under the arm must be straight NOT curved. This makes hemming the sleeve easy later. Mark that 1.5" point.



## Step 9:

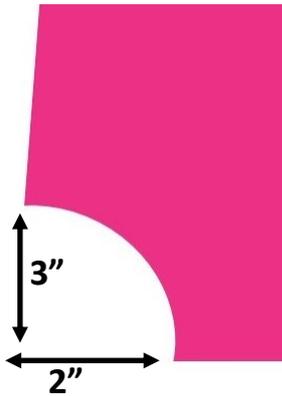
Freehand draw a curve from your marked underarm point to the where the straight line for the sleeve hem stops.



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**You have drafted the back of your blouse!**

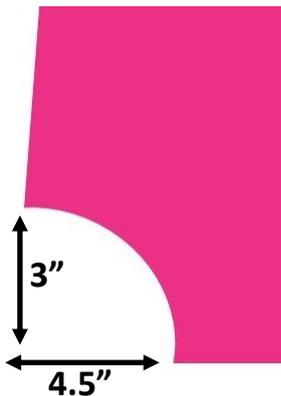
# Blouse **BACK** for V Neck



The process for drafting a back for the V neck blouse is the same as the process for drafting the curved neckline back but the dimensions of the curve points change as shown in this diagram.

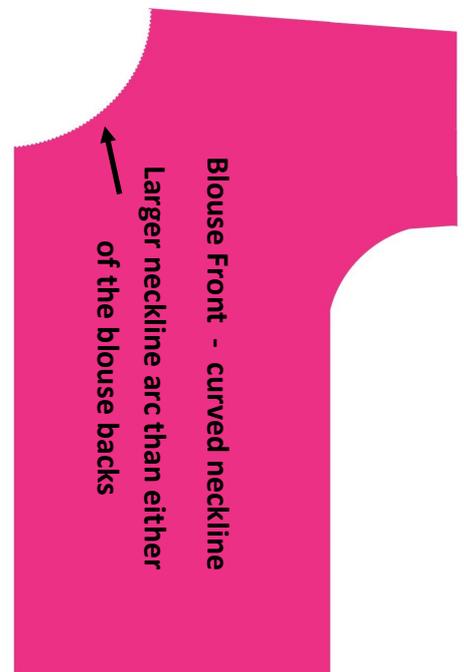
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# Blouse **FRONT** for Curved Neckline



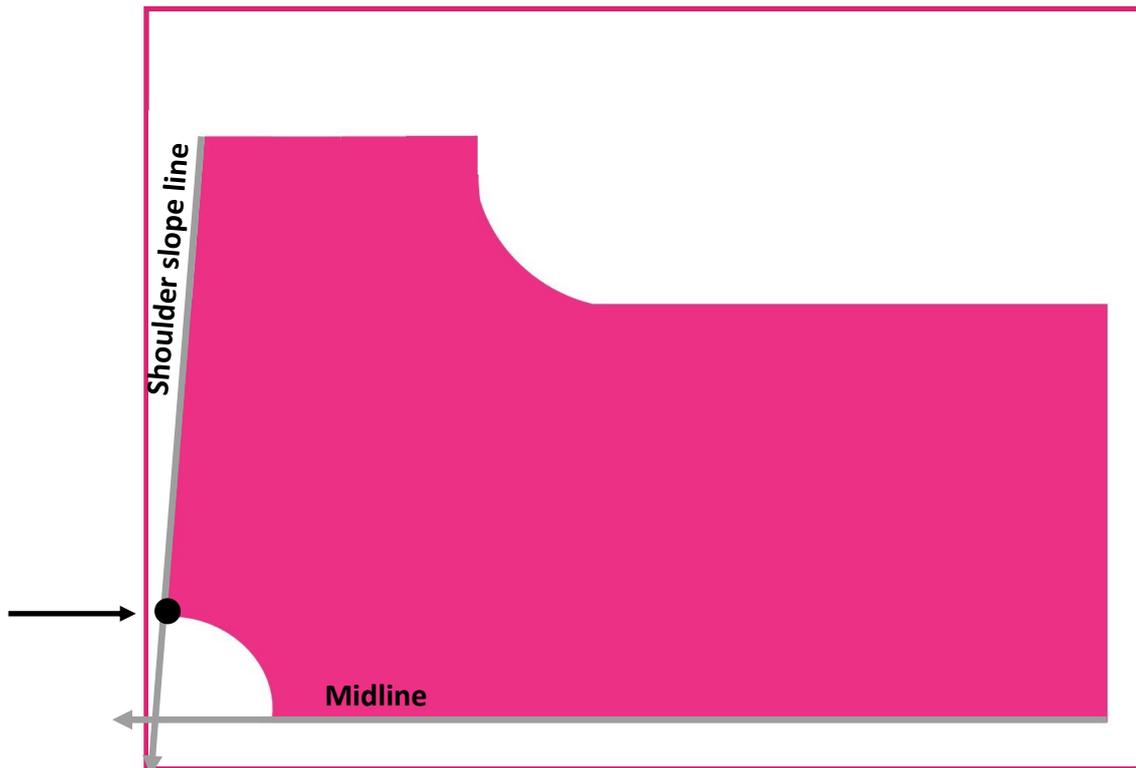
The process for drafting a front for the curved neckline blouse is the same as the process for drafting the curved neckline back but the dimensions of the curve points change as shown in this diagram.

You can simply trace around your blouse back and **ONLY** make changes at the neckline.



# Blouse Front V neck

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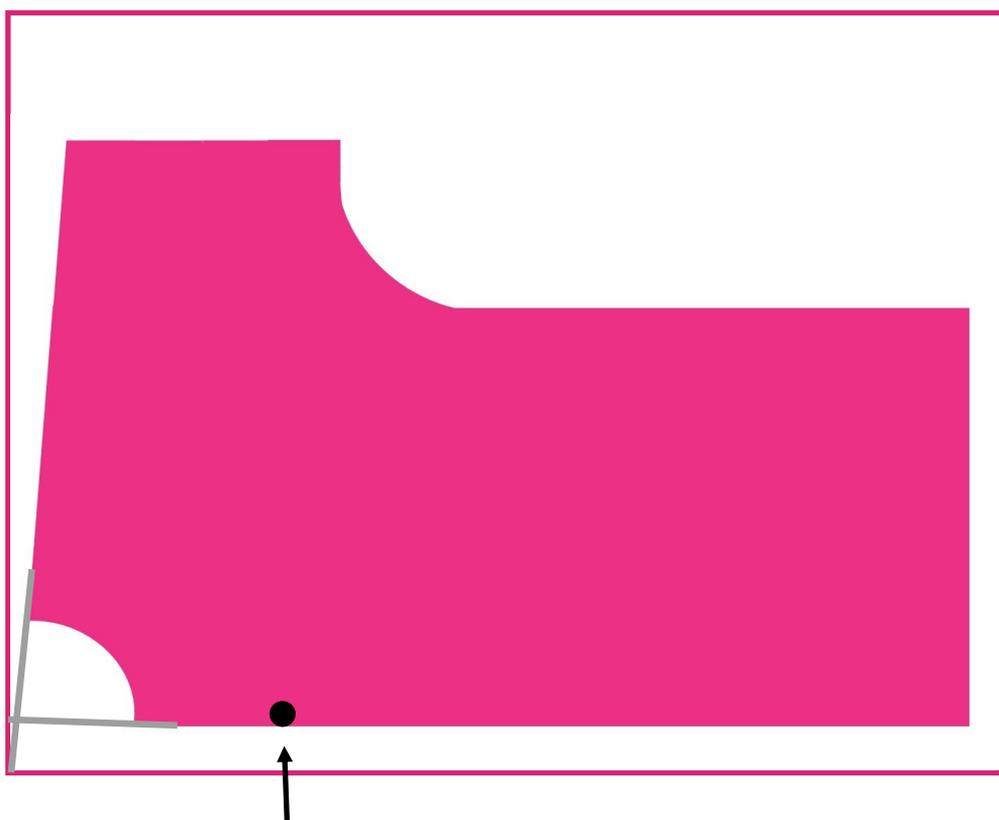


## Step 1:

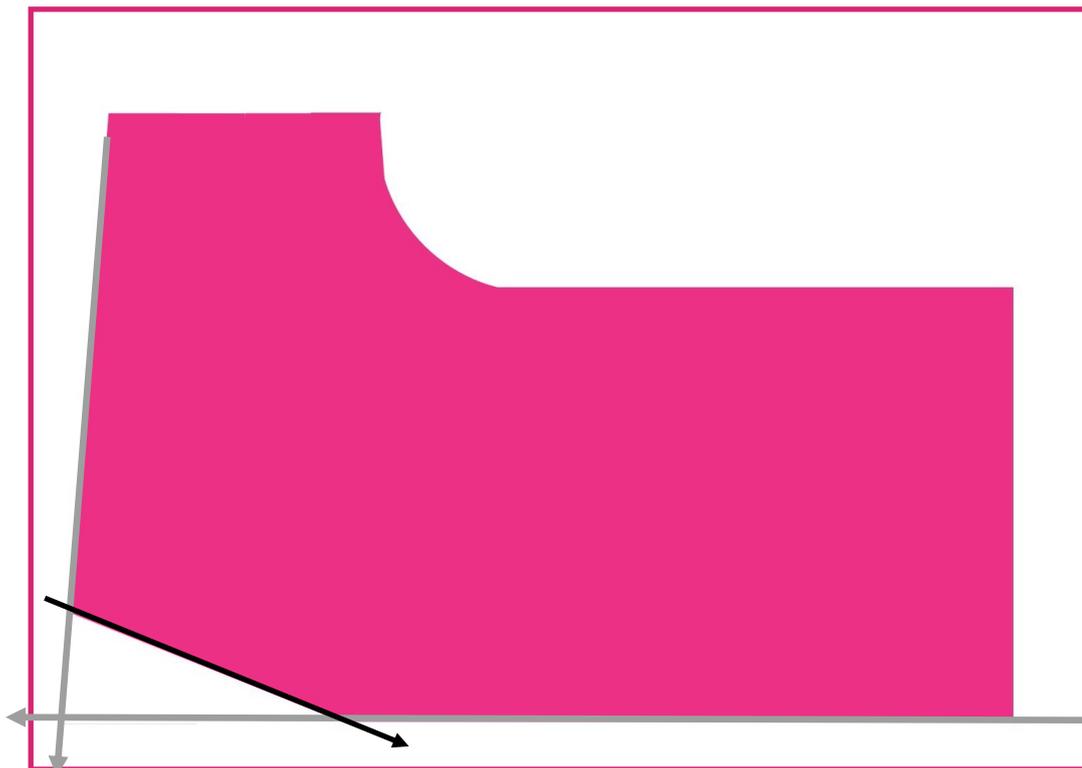
On a new piece of paper, trace around your shirt back **except the curved back neckline**. When tracing simply continue the shoulder slope line and the midline as shown until they intersect.

Mark the point 3" from that intersection as shown above.

Mark a point 10" from that intersection as shown below.



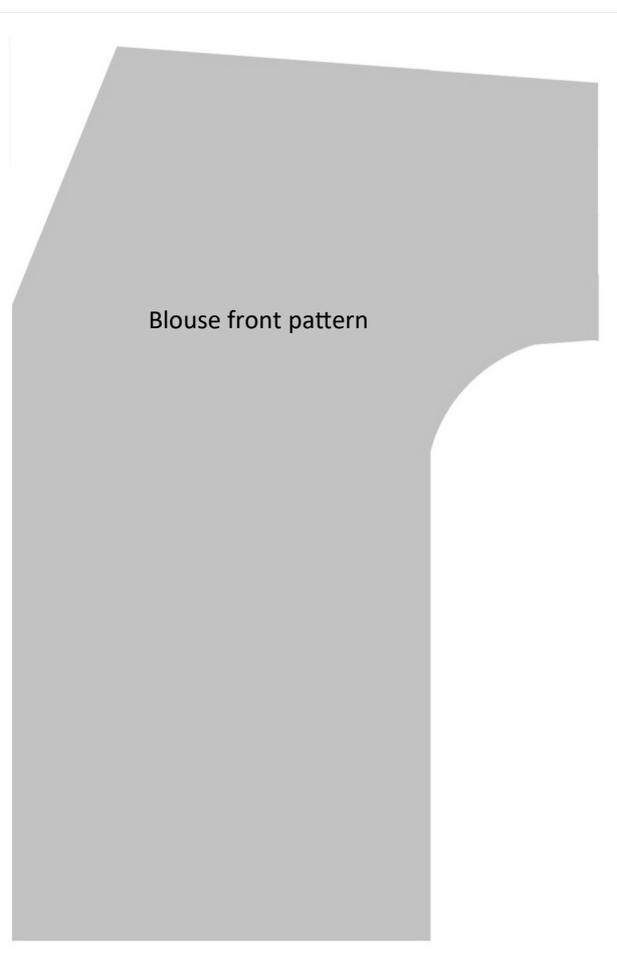
# Blouse Front V Neck



## Step 2:

Draw a line connecting those 2 points.  
That line is the V neckline.

Cut out your front blouse pattern.  
It should look like this:



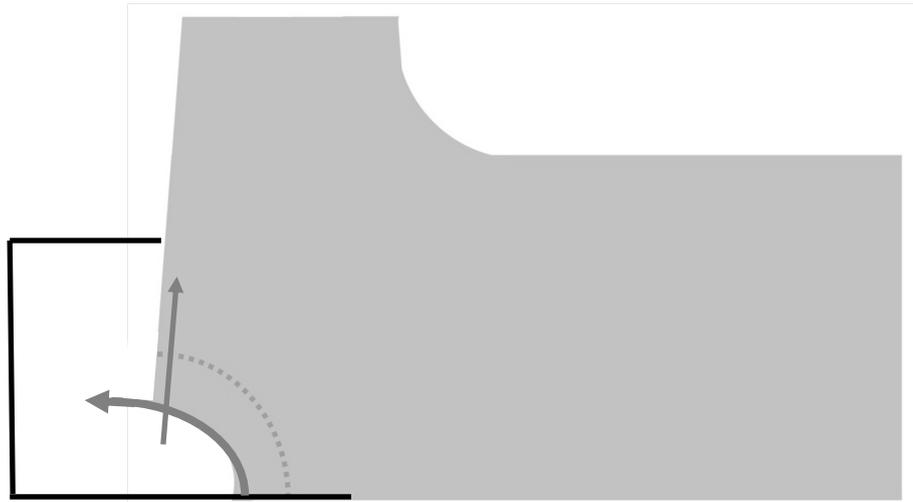
# Drafting a pattern for your neckline facing:

The facing fabric is exactly the same as the 2 inches surrounding the neckline of your blouse front or back, with 5/8" seam allowance less because the facing doesn't use a French seam.

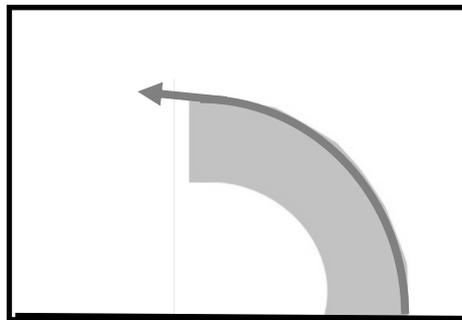


Place a piece of paper under your blouse back pattern and trace the curve of the neckline

Draw a line parallel to the shoulder line but 5/8" inside it. Lift the blouse pattern slightly to do this.

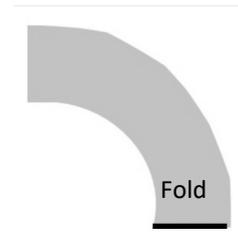


Remove the blouse back and draw a curved line 2" above the existing curved line to create a 2" curved strip that will be the back facing pattern.



Cut out your facing pattern!

And mark which end is the fold line end as shown



This facing pattern is for the fabric that you can see on the inside of the blouse neckline in this image, it allows our neckline to be a neat, tidy finish, free of raw edges.

I add a clothing tag to my rear facing made from selvedge so I can remember the fabric line/designer.



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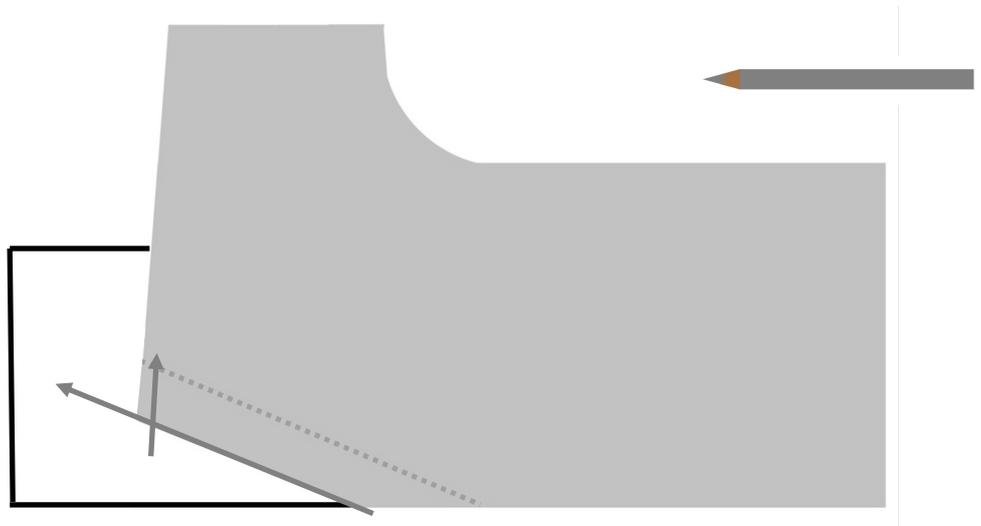


# Drafting a pattern for your V neckline FRONT facing:

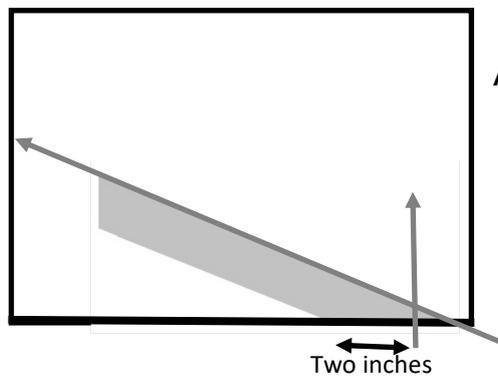
The facing fabric is exactly the same as the 2 inches surrounding the neckline of your blouse front or back, with 5/8" seam allowance less because the facing doesn't use a French seam.

Place a piece of paper under your blouse front and trace the V line of the neckline.

Draw a line parallel to the shoulder line but 5/8" inside it. Lift the blouse pattern slightly to do this.



Remove the blouse front and draw a line 2" above the existing line to create a 2" wide strip back facing pattern. Mark a line 2" to the left of the V point so that the facing doesn't have an excess of fabric below the V.



**Cut out your facing pattern!**  
And mark which end is the fold line end as shown



**Ensure the line you draft for the shoulder seam edge of the facing is parallel to the shoulder line!**



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Tip: If you are running out of fabric by the time you cut this facing and can't place it on the fold... you can cut two separate pieces and put a seam at the bottom of the V but you would need to add 1/4 inch seam allowance at the V as shown here:



# Cutting Fabric

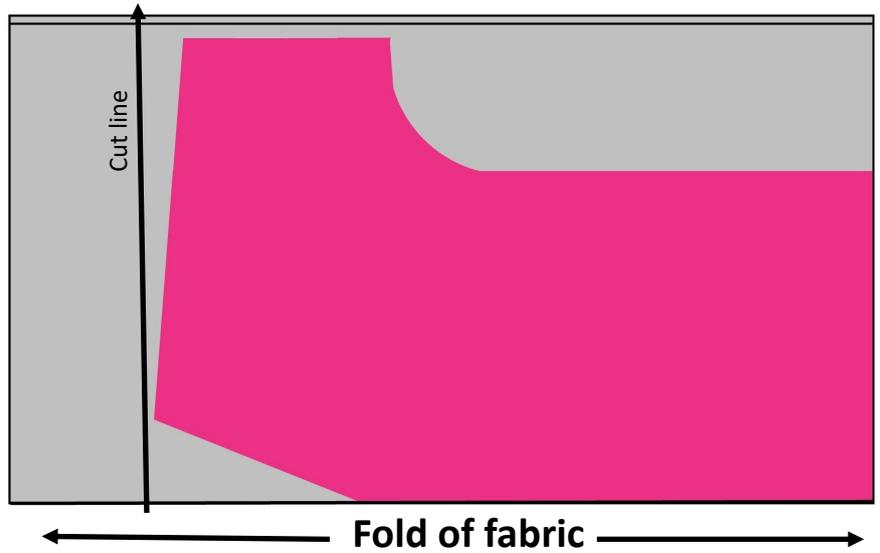
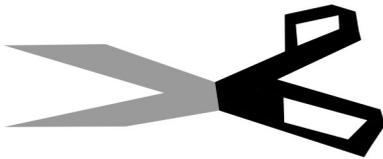


# Laying out pattern & cutting your fabric:

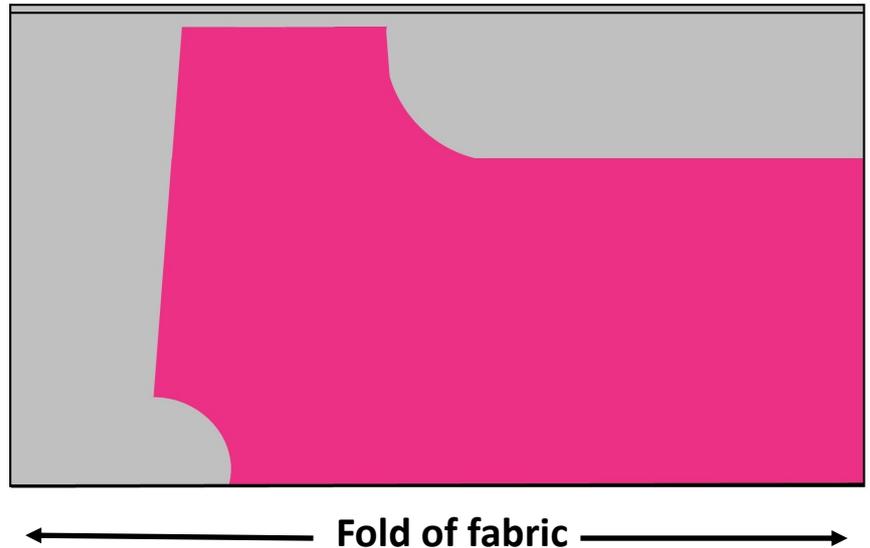
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## Option 1: V neckline

Place the blouse front pattern along the fold of the fabric, pin in place trim away excess yardage to be used for blouse back then cut out your blouse front.



Place the blouse back pattern along the fold of the remaining fabric, pin in place and cut out your blouse back.

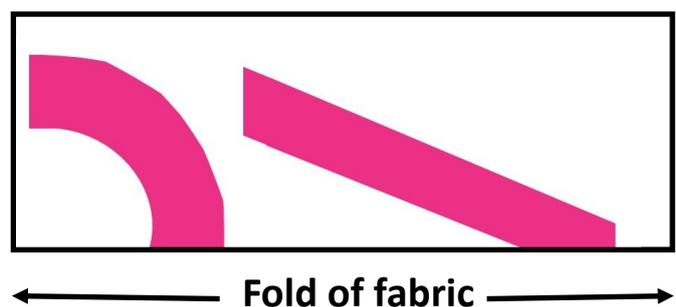


Like this!



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Use the remaining fabric to cut out your facings. ensure they are placed on the fold of the fabric:



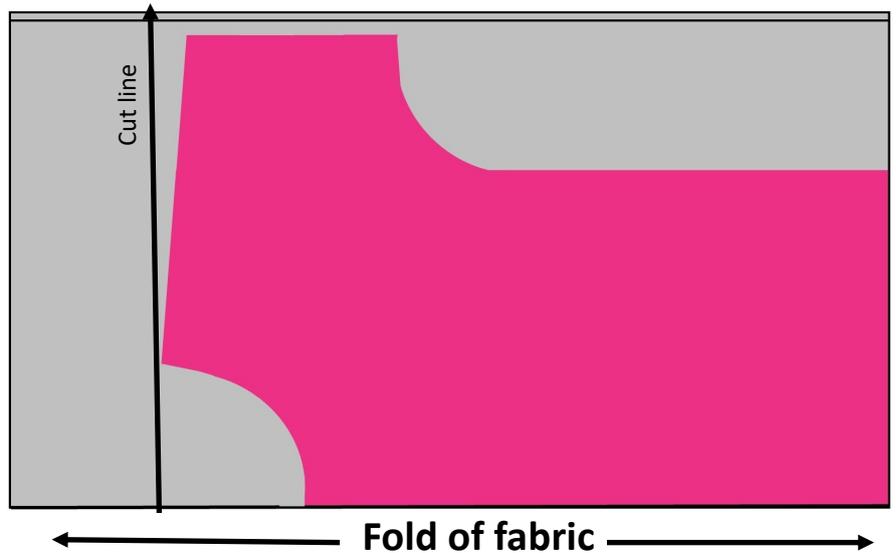
If you are low on fabric, see the tip at the bottom of page 14!

# Laying out pattern & cutting your fabric:

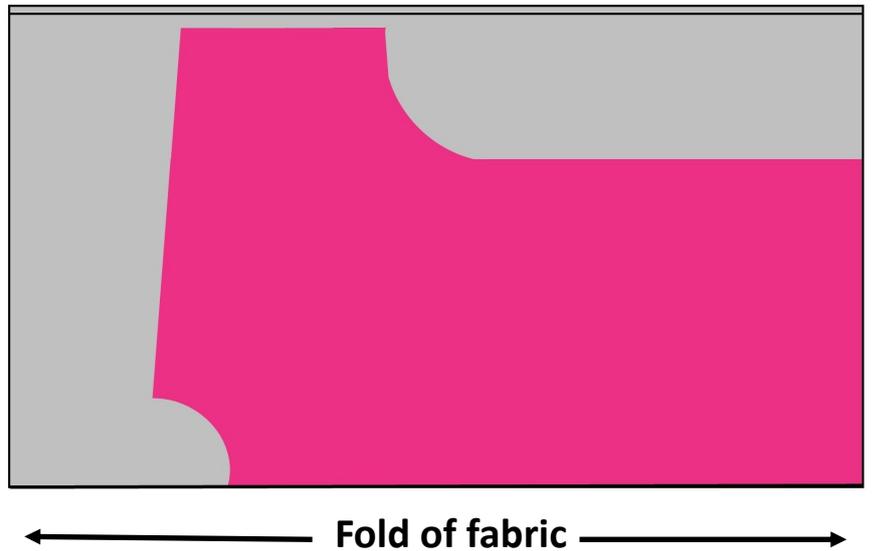
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## Option 1: **curved neckline**

Place the blouse front pattern along the fold of the fabric, pin in place, trim away excess yardage to be used for blouse back then and cut out your blouse front.



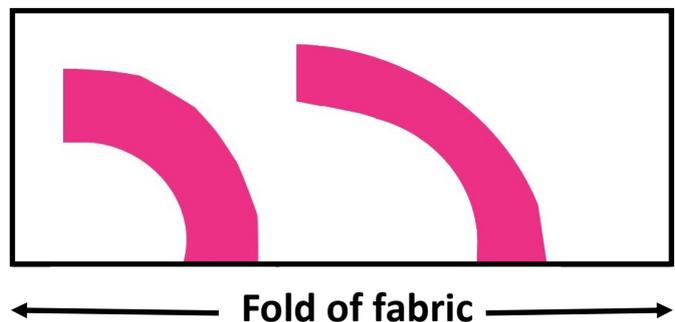
Place the blouse back pattern along the fold of the remaining fabric, pin in place and cut out your blouse front.



Like this!



Use the remaining fabric to cut your facings from ensure they are placed on the fold of the fabric:



If you are low on fabric this facing can be cut from a different fabric in a coordinating color as it will only be on the inside of your blouse!

# Blouse

# Construction



# Constructing your facing!

Once you have cut your facings out (on the fold of the fabric) unfold them, they should look like this:



Using a 1/4 seam, sew the facings right sides together at the shoulder line. Zig zag the edge of the seam allowance to prevent fraying.

Using a zig zag stitch or serger, overcast all the way around the outer edge of the facing to prevent fraying.

I use a zig zag stitch with a length of 1.6 and a width of 2 on my Brother sewing machine.

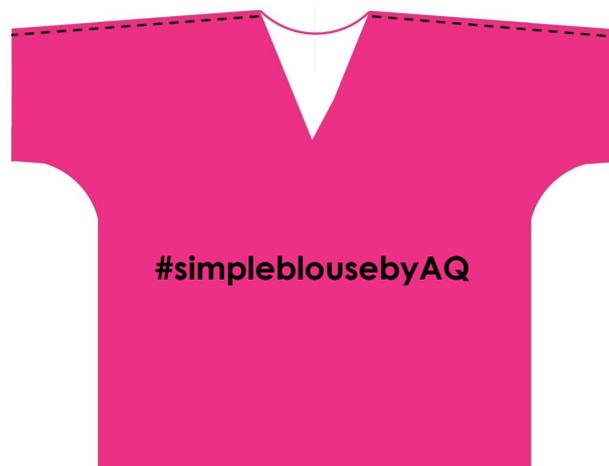


## Attaching your facing!

In this example I use the V neckline which is the hardest to attach. The process is the same for the curved neckline except it is easier because there is no V point.

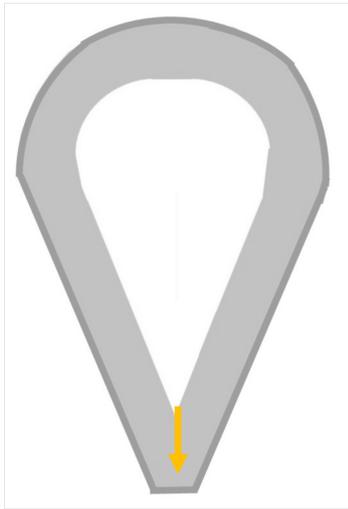
Place the blouse front and blouse back together **RIGHT SIDES OUT** and pin along shoulder.

Using a 1/4 seam sew the blouse back and blouse front together at the shoulder line.



You have completed step 2 of the French seams for the shoulder.

**Refer to page 3 and follow the steps to complete these French seams.**



Using tailors chalk mark a straight line on the **wrong sides** of the facing, downwards from the V at the center as shown, this line is where you will pivot your sewing machine when sewing the facing on!

Pin the facing right sides together to the outside of the blouse neckline. They should perfectly align at shoulder seams, V point and curve of the neckline!

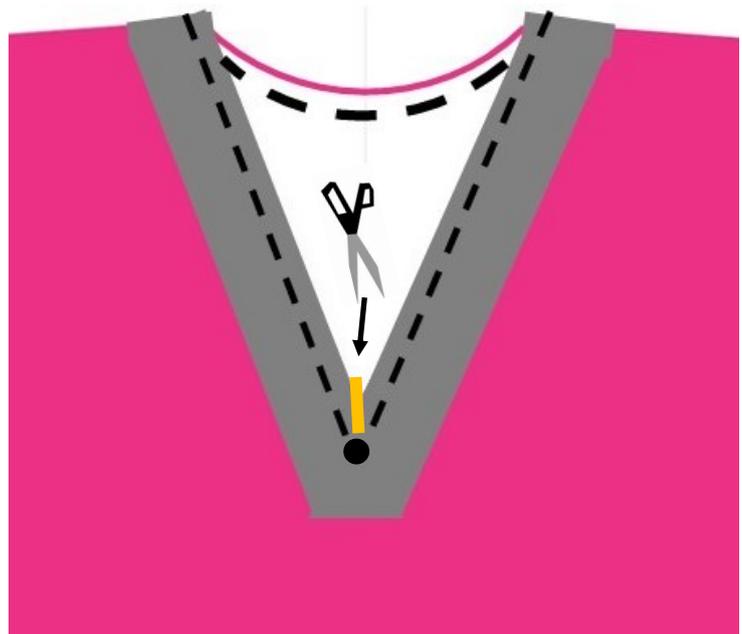
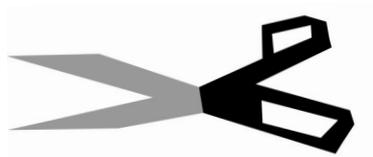


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Sew the facing on to the blouse with a 1/4" seam allowance all the way around the neckline. This is why we sew the side seams last, it makes it easier to open out the blouse and manoeuvre around the neckline !

**Be sure to pivot EXACTLY on the chalk marked line at the V point!**

Using SHARP scissors snip a line from the V towards to stitching line but take care NOT to cut the stitching line!



Turn the blouse inside out.

Using tailor's chalk mark a line down from the V again to mark your pivot point.



Press the facing flat towards to inside of the blouse and pin into place, then topstitch the facing into place, the seam allowance should be approximately 5/8" from the edge so that the seam completely encapsulates the raw edges of the previous seam.



# Your neckline is complete!!!!

The process is the same for adding facing

for the curved neckline

except it is **EASIER** because

there is no V point!



# Underarm — Curved French Seam!

I use a French seam under the arms but because of the curve, I have devised a unique method that will minimize fabric fraying and ensure you get many years use out of your blouse.



Right sides out.

Pin the blouse front to the blouse back along both sides.

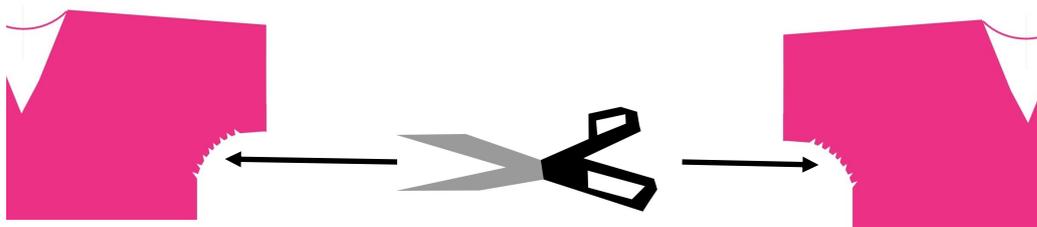
Stitch a 1/4" seam along both side seams.

Then follow steps 3 to 5 from page 3 to complete the French seam.



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Using SHARP scissors snip from the edge of the French seam casing in towards the curved line of stitching. These snips should be 1/2" apart. DO NOT snip the stitching line!



## My method for fray prevention:

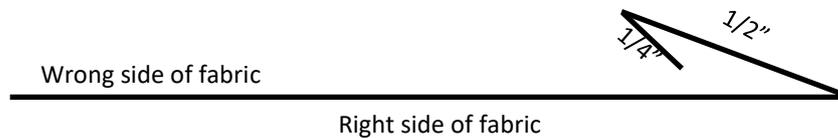
You have snipped the French seam casing to allow the armpit to curve without puckering, now **slightly straighten the curve** and stitch a line along the outer edge of the casing with a stitch length of 1, this reinforces the casing and ensures minimal fraying.



# Hemming

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Both sleeves and the bottom of the blouse must be hemmed before the blouse is complete!



Simple machine sewn hem:

Fold over and press 1/4" of fabric.

Fold over again this time 1/2"

Press flat and stitch along the edge of the hem casing to secure it to the blouse.

This method ensures that the raw edge of the fabric is completely enveloped in the hem.



## Your blouse is complete!

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Try to adjust for your own variations!

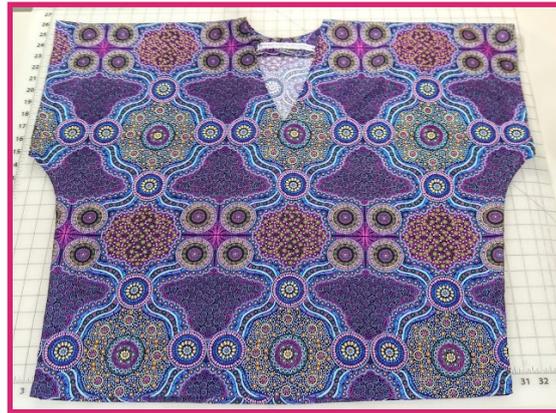
- Depth of neck line scoop
- Length of blouse
- Arm length
- Add embellishment
- Different fabric types

# Why do I love this pattern?

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**It is quick to make!**

I can make one in about 90 minutes!



It lays perfectly flat for easy ironing!

Uses less than 2 yards of fabric!

It can look totally different when the fabric is changed!



When made in cotton sateen it flows well and doesn't feel baggy!

## Glossary

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**Wearable Muslin** - a prototype garment often made from cheap fabric but still nice enough to wear.

**Facing** - A fabric piece used to create a finished edge on a garment, mirroring the edge it is sewn to and creating an enclosed edge. Typically used for necklines, edges with closures, or armholes. (<https://www.mybluprint.com/article/sewing-glossary> July 2020)

**French seam** - a type of seam that encloses all raw edges within a casing to prevent fraying.