

Fabric Choice: Wovens vs. Knits vs. Woven/Stretch

Woven Fabric

Each Sure-Fit Designs kit has built in wearing ease and is designed initially for sewing with woven fabric. When working with knit/stretch fabric, you may or may not want to reduce your finished pattern's circumferences. It is all going to depend on how stretchy the fabric is and your personal preference on how tight you like your clothes to fit.

Testing the stretchiness of the fabric – You should always test how stretchy the fabric is. On page 6 – Dress Instruction Book – you will see directions on how to do this. Once you have determined how much the fabric stretches, then you will know how to deal with your personal pattern.



Knit/Stretch Fabric

Generally, you will still want a little ease in the garment even with knit fabrics (this of course will depend on the style of the garment and how stretchy the fabric is). In my experience, if the fabric is either a Limited or sometimes a Moderate stretch knit, then use your 'body blueprint' (sloper) as is. However, with some Moderate stretch fabrics, depending on their rebound/recovery, you will want to size down one series of measurement dots. If the fabric is Very Stretchy, then you will definitely need to size down one if not two or three series of measurement dots thereby reducing the amount of wearing ease given in the master patterns. Even with that, the pattern still may need to be sized down even more. It will all depend on the amount of rebound/recovery the piece has and your personal wearing preference. Unfortunately, there are no hard and fast rules, since every fabric will perform differently and feel different on your body.

I recommend basting all (vertical) seams then try the garment on. Evaluate how it feels for you. Take it in evenly on all vertical seams if desired.

When sewing with a stretch fabric, there is a sleeve pattern to be used exclusively with stretch/knit fabric. This is found in the Dress Kit.

Woven fabric with a little stretch (often Lycra)

In the last few years, we've seen many woven fabrics with a small percentage of Lycra (4 – 6%) that's woven into the fabric. How does this affect working with the SFD patterns? The answer to this has some variables. You really never know how much the fabric is going to stretch or maintain its shape once worn – particularly while sitting. We get 'knees' in our pants even with woven fabric. We hope this won't happen with the woven/stretch fabric – it really will depend on the quality of the fabric and how much it is going to give when worn.

Whether you size down or not will be dependent on how tight you like to wear your clothes - in other words - the amount of wearing ease you prefer, and how that fabric is going to give and perform when sewn. Consequently, there is no hard and fast rule as to what to do in terms of sizing down, as all fabrics that stretch have these variables.

My general advice would be to initially leave your pattern as is. Do not size down. Then before final construction details, if it's pants you're sewing, you can always do a sit-down test to see how they feel. Now's the time to take some out of the hip area if you need it. Then sew the waistband in place making sure that you've stabilized the waistband first so that it doesn't stretch out of proportion.



Let's take a quick look at the ease that is offered in each of the pattern kits. The [Dress](#) bodice pattern (which is darted) offers 2 ½" (6.3 cm) in the bust and 1" (2.5 cm) in the waist. The Dress Kit skirt pattern has 3" (7.6 cm) of ease in the hip area.

The [Pants](#) pattern gives ¼" - ½" (0.6 – 3.8 cm) ease in the waist and 2" (5.1 cm) ease in the hip area.

The (Uni-Sex) [Shirt Kit](#) pattern (which is undarted) has about 5" – 6" (12.7 - 15.2 cm) ease in the chest/bust area.

Always remember that wearing ease is always personal preference. Some like 'em tight others like loose fitting clothing. The SFD gives a minimal amount of ease which you can increase or decrease as you personally want to. But your personal preference is going to be determined by your bone structure, body fat (the more fat – the more ease you'll likely need and want), muscle tone, and personal preference.

There's no hard and fast rule for final ease amounts particularly when sewing with stretchy knit fabric or with stretch-woven fabrics.

You'll want to watch this video on How to Test the Stretch of a Knit Fabric. [Click Here](#)