

## T-Shirt Designing – Which Kit to use? Dress Kit vs. Shirt Kit

### Which kit to use?

As you know each SFD kit has built in wearing ease and is designed initially for sewing with woven fabric. So when you're sewing a T-Shirt out of a knit fabric, which kit should you use? This is a question I am repeatedly asked and for good reason.

Again, as you are likely aware, the Dress Kit bodice has less ease, but it has the bust fitting dart, whereas the Shirt Kit gives you the dartless look, which is so often desired in your T-shirts, but it's got more chest circumference ease.

So which kit should you use and how do you deal with the pattern when sewing with a stretch knit?



Here are some guidelines and photos of actual examples of a T-shirt sewn for the same woman – one from the Dress Kit (with the dart) and one from the Shirt Kit – no dart. I wanted you to actually see the difference in how the shirt hung on the body and what you can expect from either pattern.



### Test the Knit for Stretch Factor

First, make sure you test the stretchiness of the knit. On page 6 of the Dress Instruction Book, you will see directions on how to do this. Once you have determined how much the knit stretches, you will have a reference for how to deal with your personal pattern.

Unless you like to wear your T-shirts 'skin-tight', you will likely want some ease in the garment. In my experience, if the fabric is either a Limited or Moderate stretch knit, then use your 'body blueprint' (sloper) as is. If the fabric is Very Stretchy, then you will definitely need to go down one series of measurement dots thereby reducing the amount of wearing ease given in the master patterns.

## Comparing 'Apples to Apples'

The fabric in this test is a cotton double-knit. With the 'stretch test', 10" (25.4 cm) comfortably stretched up to approximately 18" (45.7 cm), indicating that it was a Very Stretchy Knit. So that I was comparing 'apples to apples', I took both the Dress Kit bodice and Shirt Kit pattern down **only** one measurement dot.

Let's look at the result of how each fits.



## The Back View

The back of both T-Shirts looked much the same. But on closer inspection, which you can't see from the photos, there is considerably more fabric at

the underarm in the Shirt Kit T-Shirt. Plenty of ease – in fact, many of you would find this excessive for your expectation of how a T-shirt should fit.

### To Dart or Not...

I know many of you don't want to have darts in your T-Shirts, but even on Kelly's frame (35" bust circumference with a B-cup dart), you can see the difference in the hang of the T-Shirt. The Dress Kit T-shirt hangs level to her hips (parallel to the floor). The dartless Shirt Kit T-Shirt definitely hikes up. If you are quite small busted, then this likely isn't going to matter. But this is definitely something to consider if you are B or beyond in your bra cup size.

### How to Remove the dart from the Bodice Front pattern...

Now, for those of you who really would like the closer fit of the Dress Kit Bodice with its 2 1/2" (6.4 cm) bust ease...and who really don't want the dart...and who don't mind if there are a few wrinkles/drag lines around your bust, please click to this article - [T-Shirt Tactics - How to Remove the bust dart from the Bodice Front pattern](#). You'll get complete directions. With Sure-Fit Designs you'll always have choices to suit your personal preference.



### What happened to the ease?

The Dress bodice pattern (which is darted) offers 2 1/2" (6.3 cm) in the bust. When 1" (2.5 cm) was removed the resulting ease was 1 1/2" (3.8 cm), which in the double knit was just about the right amount.

The Shirt Kit pattern (which is undarted) has about 5" – 6" (12.7 - 15.2 cm) ease in the chest/bust area, ended up with about 4 1/2" (11.4 cm) ease. I'm sure many of you would likely want to take this down even further, perhaps

down 2 or even 3 dots, particularly when working with a very stretchy fabric.

Always remember that your finished 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 you have – 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.



Becky McKenzie...

Offers us an example of her T-Shirt drawn from the Dress Kit and sewn from an ITY knit fabric. Her design features a slightly lowered jewel neckline and the side-fitting bust dart was transferred to a lower side seam dart. She took her body blueprint down one measurement dot. In addition to this, she took the side seams and sleeves in an extra 1/4" (0.6 cm) which is the equivalent of another 1/2 dot down.

Becky is also wearing her first rendition of the **Yoga Pants** designed from [Pants that Mix 'n' Multiply](#).



Joy Bernhardt...

Joy is showing her 'Successful Slinky Knit Shirt'.

She has designed the pattern with the SFD Dress Kit, making sure she used her 'knit fabric' body blueprint that she'd already sized down to compensate for the stretch of the knit.

This T-Shirt design features a V-neck as well as a lower side seam (French) dart. Watch this video - [D.17 How to Perfect the Cutting Line After Moving the Dart](#) - to see this process of dart transfer.

Notice, that because this T-shirt is sewn from the Dress Kit (with a bust dart that fits her properly), it means the front of her T-shirt is hanging evenly at the hem level - yours will too.

To read Joy's post of this project, go to [Joyful Expressions](#).