Taking Accurate Measurements

For most of your fitting, you'll need to take five width measurements and two length measurements, in addition to the front width measurement. (Pant measurements are slightly different; see page 91, "Measuring Your Figure," for details.) If you are buying a smaller size than you have in the past or if you are new to sewing, take all seven measurements. If your pattern size has not changed, consider measuring only the areas that you know are too tight, too loose, too long, or too short.

Earlier I recommended taking the front width measurement with the buddy system; use the same team approach for these measurements.

Note from Nancy: When taking measurements, don't worry about fractions less than ½". Our measurements fluctuate. (Just remember what an extra piece of chocolate cake can do to the fit of your waistband.) Always measure to the closest ½" and don't get hung up on differences of ¼" or less!

At the end of this book is a Personal Fitting Chart on page 141. Using the guidelines below, record your measurements on the chart as you and your sewing buddy measure your figure. Keep this book in your sewing room for quick reference. (Feel free to photocopy the fitting chart to use when fitting garments for friends and family.)

Bust

Measure around the fullest part of the bust, keeping the tape measure parallel to the floor. Measure to the closest ½".

When taking width measurements, place a thumb or a finger underneath the tape measure to prevent the
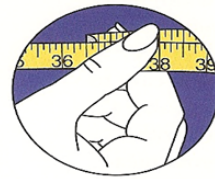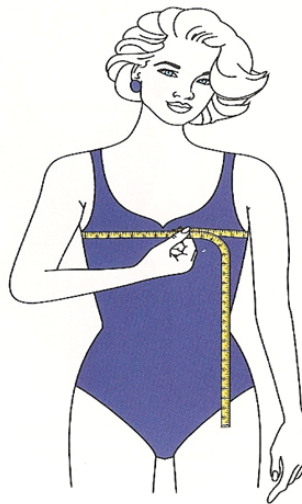

Diagram A: Place thumb or finger beneath tape measure when taking bust measurement.

Diagram B: When you bend to side, deepest wrinkle is your waist.

Diagram C: Measure to closest ½".

measurement from being taken too tightly (*Diagram A*).

Waist

Bend to the side; the deepest resulting wrinkle is your waist (*Diagram B*). Stand straight again and measure around your waist, keeping the tape measure parallel to the floor. Place a thumb or a finger under the tape measure to prevent the measurement from being taken too tightly. Measure to the closest ½" (*Diagram C*).

Hip

Measure the fullest part of the hip, keeping the tape measure parallel to the floor and a finger underneath the tape to make sure it is not too tight. Measure to the closest ½" (*Diagram D*).

Take a second measurement—the hip length—measuring the distance between the waist and the hip. This measurement will let you mark hip placement, allowing you to add or to subtract from the pattern at your actual hip (*Diagram E*).

<u>Note from Nancy:</u> At the same time that I measure the width around my hip, I simply pick up the loose end of the tape measure to find the distance between my waist and hip.
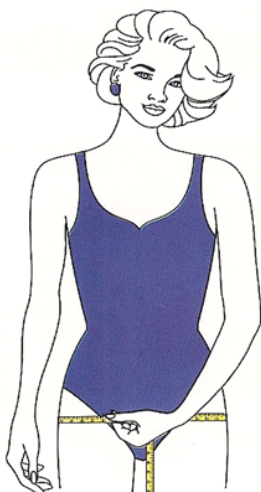
Back Waist Length

Measure from the base of your neck to your waist. Find the base of your neck by bending your head forward until the prominent bone at the base of the neck is easily felt. Straighten your neck and measure from that bone down your back to the waist (*Diagram F*).
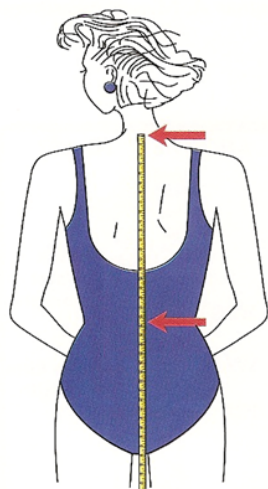
Back Width

Measure from one side to the other across the back, directly above the back arm creases (*Diagram G*).
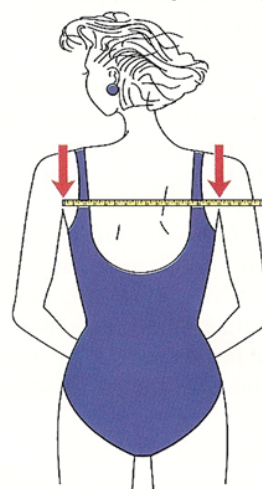
Sleeve Length

Feel for the knob at the end of your shoulder and keep a finger there. Depending on your body, it may help to raise your elbow as high as your shoulder. Place your hand on your hip; measuring with your arm bent builds in ease for your sleeve. Measure from the shoulder knob over the elbow to your wrist bone (*Diagram H*).
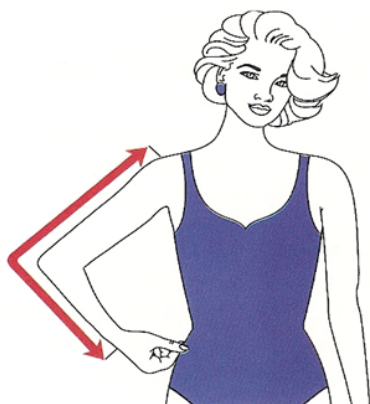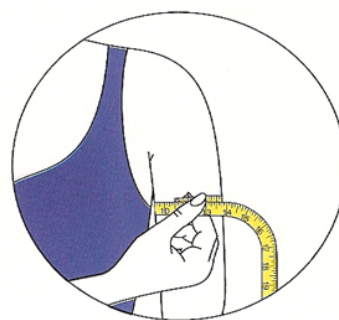
Upper Arm Width

Measure the fullest part of your arm between the shoulder and the elbow, with a thumb or a finger underneath the tape measure to make sure it is not too tight. Measure to the closest ½" (*Diagram I*).

Diagram D: Measure hip width.

Diagram E: Use free end of tape measure to check hipline length.

Diagram F: Measure back length from neck to waist.

Diagram G: Measure across back above arm creases.

Diagram H: Measure sleeve length from shoulder to wrist with arm bent.

Diagram I: Measure upper arm.