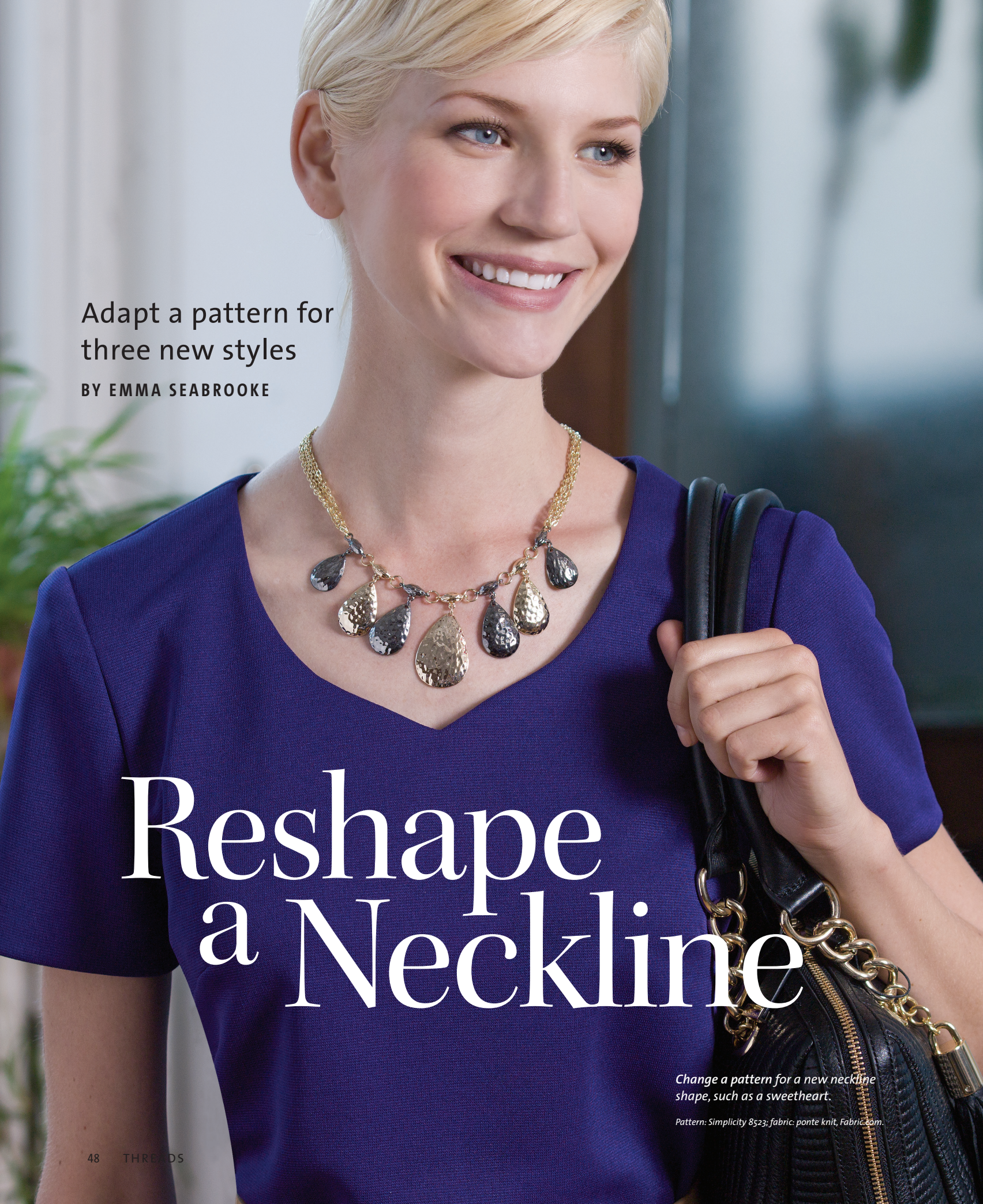




Adapt a pattern for
three new styles

BY EMMA SEABROOKE

Reshape a Neckline

*Change a pattern for a new neckline
shape, such as a sweetheart.*

Pattern: Simplicity 8523; fabric: ponte knit, Fabric.com.

If the neckline on a pattern you've chosen to work with doesn't suit you—whether your concern is figure flattery or style—don't despair. There's no need to search for a different pattern, because you can alter the one you have to create any neckline shape you prefer.

Do you find a jewel neckline boring or unflattering? Then simply change it to a V or sweetheart neckline. Or lower it and add volume and shaping with pleats, or use darts to draw the eye upward. I'll show you how to alter a basic jewel-neck pattern for these different necklines.

You can use a fitting sloper or pattern block as a master pattern for these alterations, or start with any semifitted, jewel-neck top or dress pattern that fits you well. The alterations explained here can be used on patterns intended for knits or wovens.

Make a copy by tracing your chosen master pattern, and work with the copy to preserve the original for future uses.

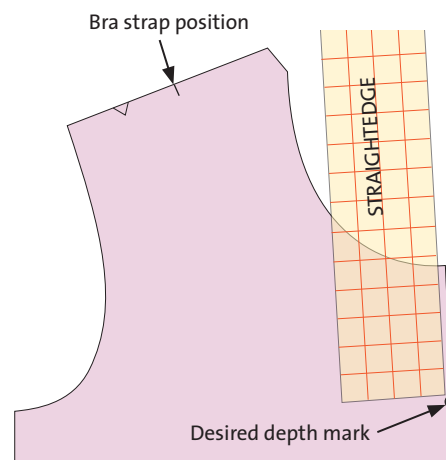
These neckline alteration methods are also ideal if you're designing your own patterns from a basic block or sloper. Learning to make these simple neckline changes gives you the skills and confidence to explore more complex shapes and treatments in your pattern work. For tips on finishing the necklines, see the bottom of page 52.

Emma Seabrooke is a sewing instructor and pattern designer and the owner of SewkeysE Inc. SewkeysE.com

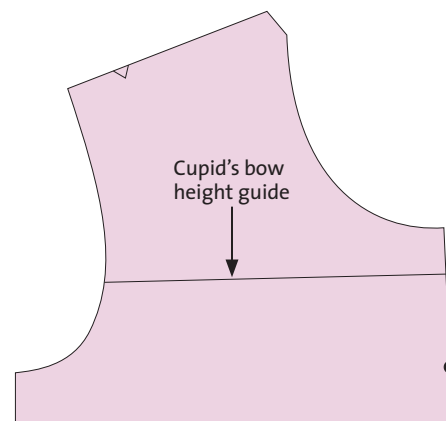
Sculpt a sweet new shape

It's easy to create a sweetheart neckline from any jewel- or scoop-neckline pattern. Copy the master pattern's front from the shoulder to about 1 inch below the armscye. You'll need a design curve. You can use the same techniques—with a few key changes—to adapt patterns for other simple neckline shapes. For a V or square neckline, substitute a straightedge for a design curve.

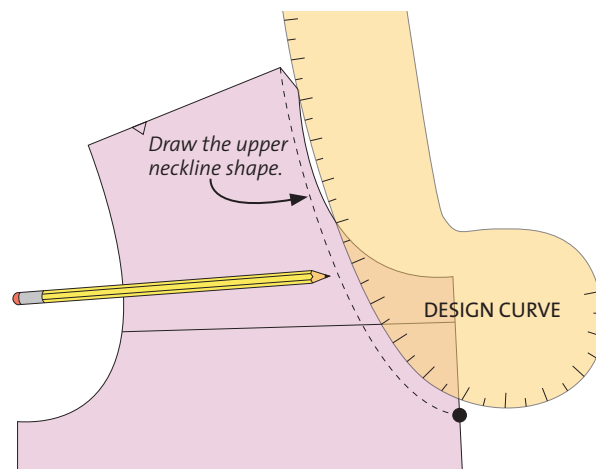
1 Determine the neckline depth and width. Measure from the indentation between your collarbones to the desired finished depth. Transfer this measurement to a corresponding point on the pattern and mark a dot on the center-front foldline. When changing a neckline's width, you should account for bra strap positioning to prevent the straps from interfering with a neckline. Put on the bra you plan to wear with the garment, drape the pattern on your body, and mark the bra straps' position on the pattern's shoulder line.



2 The Cupid's bow may be shallow or deep. The curve can peak between ½ inch to 3 inches higher than the center-front marking. At the desired height above the mark, draw a horizontal line across the pattern to use as a guide.

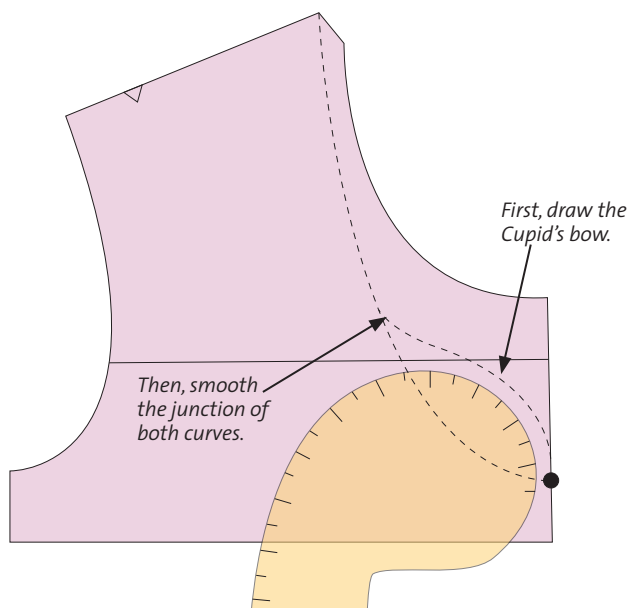


3 Align a design curve's long curved edge with the pattern's neckline where it meets the shoulder seam. Position the rounded end's outer edge at the center-front depth marking. Shift the tool until you establish the desired upper neckline shape. For a wide sweetheart shape, angle the neckline farther out along the shoulder seam. Draw the new curve from the shoulder to the center-front mark.



continued >>>

4 Use the design curve's rounded end to create an arch between the center-front marking and the horizontal line. Shift the ruler until it creates the desired curve for the Cupid's bow. Draw the curve. Smooth the line between the Cupid's bow and the upper neckline either by drawing it freehand or using the design curve as a guide.



5 Cut away the original neckline from the altered pattern. Lay the altered pattern atop the master pattern, aligning the shoulder lines. Trace the new upper half and the original lower half of the patterns onto pattern paper or tissue. Add seam allowance to the new neckline. If you changed the front shoulder seamline's length, you must also adjust the back shoulder seamline to match.

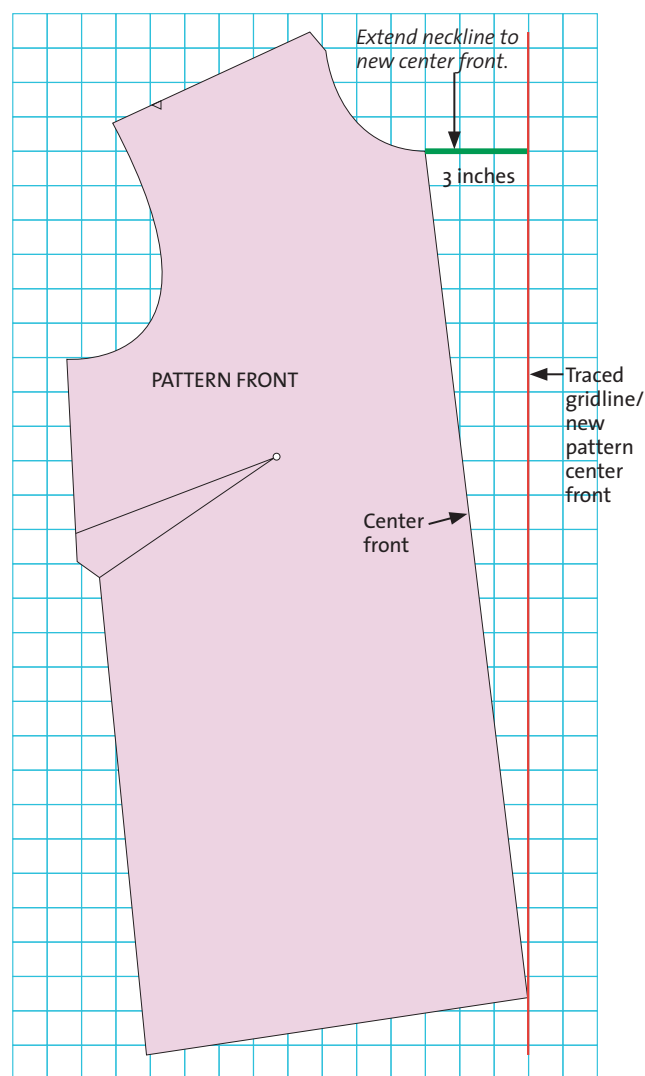
MAKE A V NECKLINE

Creating a V neckline is even simpler than a sweetheart neckline and uses the same basic techniques. You can make it a straight-angle V by using a straightedge or a modified V with a slight curve by using a design curve. Follow the same steps outlined for shaping a sweetheart neckline, omitting steps 2 and 4.

Add neckline pleats

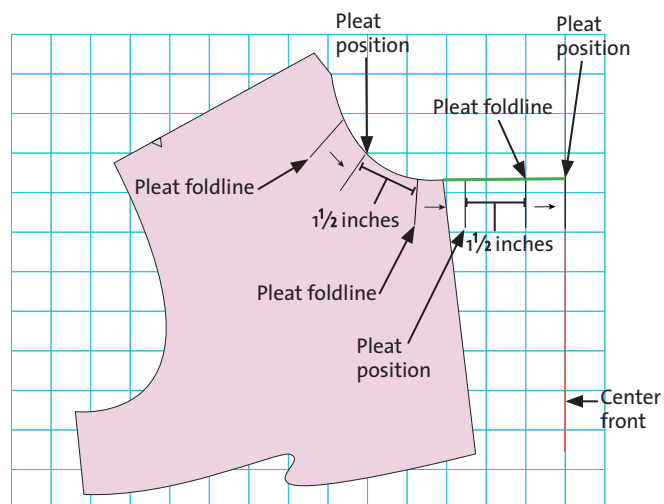
Multiple neckline pleats create soft volume over the bustline, and the pleats create radial lines that pull the eye upward toward the wearer's face. Use a master pattern with or without a bust dart. You'll need a copy of the complete master pattern front, a design curve, a straightedge, and 1-inch-grid paper.

1 Lay the pattern atop 1-inch-grid paper and align the center-front foldline with a vertical gridline. Trace the gridline and label it "center front." Swing the pattern's top half 3 inches from the gridline, keeping the pattern's bottom center-front corner on the gridline. Tape the pattern to the paper. Extend the neckline to join the new center-front line, correcting its curve so that it creates a 90-degree angle at center front.



1-INCH GRID PAPER

2 Mark the pleat positions and foldlines. On the new neckline, mark three 1-inch-wide pleats $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches apart. Start by marking the first pleat position on the center-front foldline, then measure 1 inch toward the shoulder and mark the pleat foldline. Measure and mark the remaining two 1-inch pleats $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches apart.



3 Mark the pleat directions with arrows, as shown above. The pleats may be folded toward center front or toward the shoulder. The pleats on the left and right of center front form an inverted box pleat if they are folded toward the center or a box pleat if they're folded toward the shoulder.

4 True the pattern and draw a softly curved hem that forms a 90-degree angle at the side seams and center front. Copy the entire altered pattern onto the grid paper or onto a clean piece of tissue.

Tip

TESTING CHANGES. I like to check the drape and fit of neckline changes by tracing them onto cheap, white plastic tablecloths because the tablecloths have enough drape to show fitting problems.



Neckline pleats add soft volume and create a loose, floating effect.

Pattern: Butterick 5948; fabric: silk crepe de Chine, FabricMartFabrics.com.



Radiating darts at a high neckline create a sunburst effect, with your face as the focus.

Pattern: Simplicity 8523; fabric: jacquard, FabricMartFabrics.com.

FINISH THE NECKLINES

You can finish any of the necklines described on these pages in several ways: attaching a facing, bias binding or bias-tape facing, or—on knits—a simple turned and stitched edge.

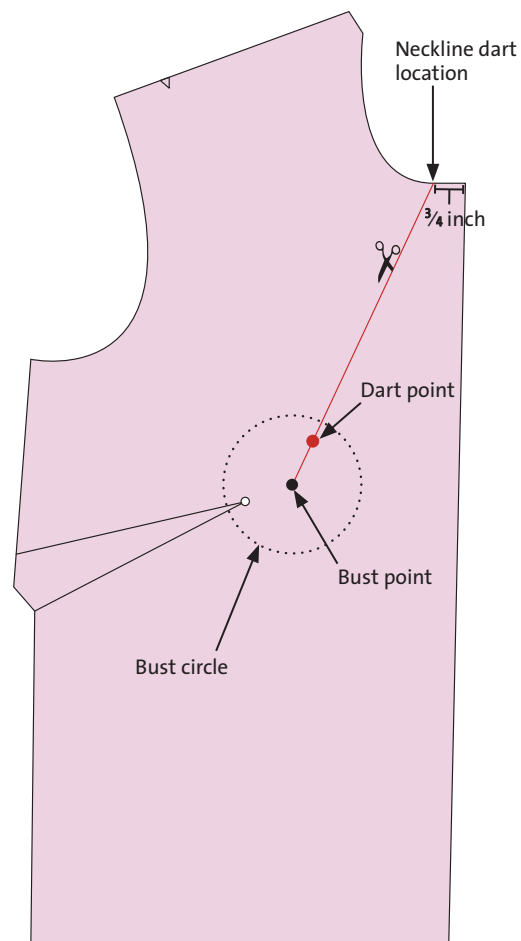
To create a facing for a sweetheart neckline, simply trace the front and back necklines and make the facings about 2 inches deep. For the pleated or darted necklines, fold the pleats or darts on the pattern piece before tracing the front neckline.

Design a radiating-dart neckline

Neckline darts can perform double duty as a fitting device and a design feature. An effective way to create a dart in a neckline is to rotate a dart into it from another location, such as the bust or waist. But for the sunburst effect of multiple radiating darts, you also need to add design darts. Here, you'll learn how to do both, adding a total of six darts to a neckline.

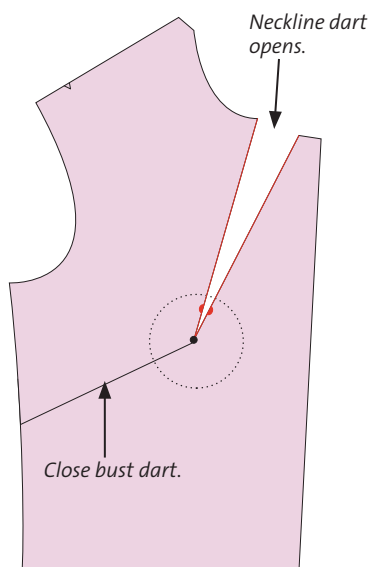
Start with a jewel neckline that rests no higher than 1 inch to 1½ inches below the indentation between your collarbones. You'll need a complete copy of a master pattern front with a bust dart, and a straightedge.

1 If necessary, lower the pattern's neckline. Then, mark the pattern's bust point and draw a circle with a 1½-inch to 2-inch radius around it (use a smaller circle for a smaller bust, a larger circle for a larger bust). Mark the first dart along the neckline seam ¾ inch from center front. Draw a line from the mark to the bust point. Mark the dart point within the bust circle, at least ½ inch from the bust point. Cut along this line up to, but not through, the bust point.

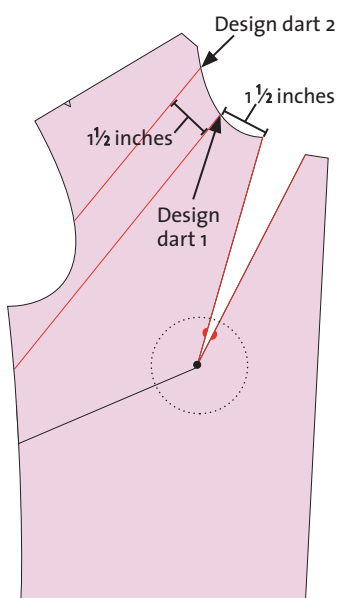


Photos: Jack Deutsch, stylist: Jessica Saal, hair and makeup: Sokphalia Ban for Halley Resources, Illustrations: Michelle Penney, Styling credits: (p. 48) necklace—Jones New York (Macy's.com), handbag—Calvin Klein (Macy's.com); (p. 51) earrings—Robert Lee Morris (Macy's.com), pants—Zara.com; (p. 52) earrings—Kate Spade (Macy's.com), bracelet—Vince Camuto (Macy's.com), skirt—Calvin Klein (Macy's.com)

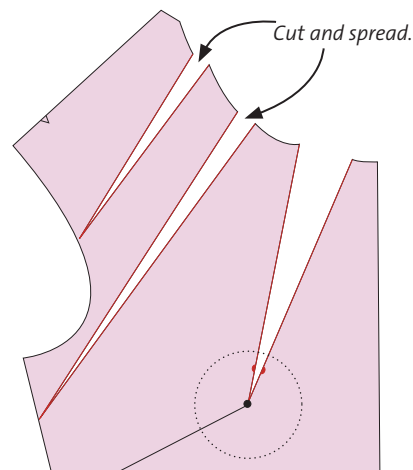
2 Cut along the bust dart's upper leg up to, but not through, the bust point. Then, close the bust dart, aligning the upper and lower legs. The neckline dart opens as you close the bust dart. Tape the bust dart closed, back the pattern with a sheet of tissue, and tape the neckline dart opening securely to the tissue.



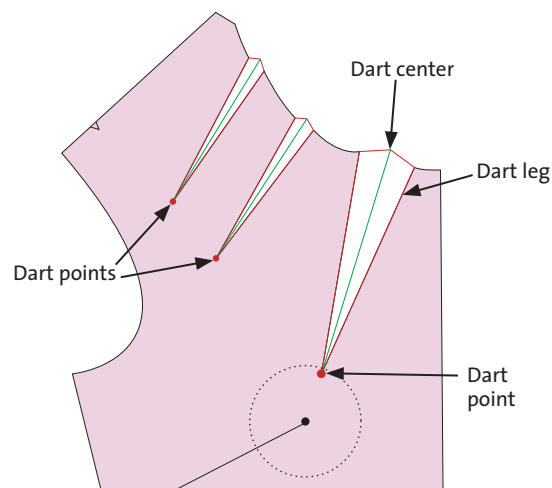
3 Add two design darts. Measure $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the first dart's outer edge toward the shoulder, and mark the first design dart's location. Do the same for the second design dart. Draw a diagonal line from the first design dart marking to a point on the side seam just below the armhole, then draw a line from the second design dart marking to about the middle of the armhole. Adjust the angles as necessary so they complement each other.



4 Cut along the design dart lines, leaving hinges at the pattern edges. Spread the pattern at the slashed lines by $\frac{1}{2}$ inch each at the neckline to open the two design darts. Tape the dart openings in place on the tissue.



5 At the center of each dart, draw a line from the dart opening to the opposite end. Draft the first dart's legs by drawing lines from both sides of the dart opening to the dart point marked in step 1. Mark a dart point along each design dart's center, and draw lines from that point to each of the two cut edges at the dart openings. The first dart is the longest; darts should decrease in length from center front to shoulder seam.



6 Finish the pattern. Fold the darts in the pattern and pin them flat. Then, true the new neckline edge, incorporating the shape of the dart bases. True the side seam.