

# Dart Basics

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## SEW-lutions Guidelines

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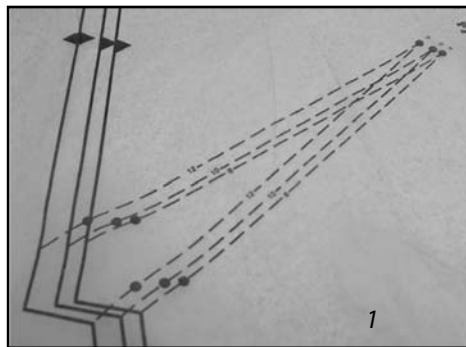


Because our bodies aren't flat, it's necessary to shape fabric to fit our curves. There are several ways to shape a garment, but one of the most common ways is by using darts. You usually find them at the bustline, hipline, waistline, elbow and shoulder areas on garments, though sometimes they're used to create design lines in other areas as well.

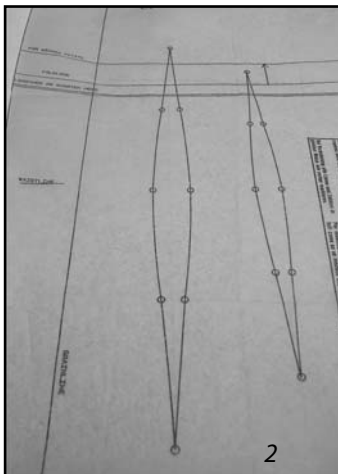
### Shaping Up

Darts can be vertical, like on a bodice or skirt; horizontal, like at the elbow; or any angle in between. They always point to the area where fullness is needed and there are two common types of darts—single- and double-point.

A single-point dart (1) is marked on the pattern as a triangle with two angled sides, sometimes called "legs." After stitching, fullness is formed at the point, which corresponds to the body curvature, usually the bust or hip.



A double-point dart (2) is diamond shape. This type of dart, when used in a garment front creates fullness at the ends to accommodate both the bust and hip; in the back it creates fullness for the shoulder blades and derriere, like on a fitted sheath dress.



### Marking

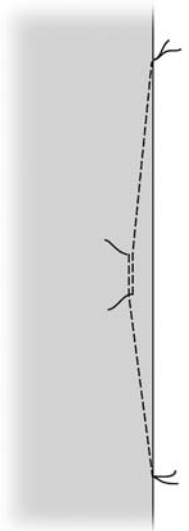
It's important to accurately transfer dart markings from the pattern tissue to the garment fabric and this can be done with chalk, marking paper or tailor's tacks, depending on the fabric. The point of the dart is crucial for fit, and it's usually marked by a dot on the pattern, and the dart legs (sides) are dashed lines, sometimes with one or more intermediate circles for matching. On some patterns, a center foldline is also indicated, but for the sake of clarity this line is often omitted on multi-size patterns.

The easiest way to mark a single dart is by clipping 1/4" into the seamline at the dart leg end, and marking the point with chalk on the fabric wrong side.

### Stitching

Stitched darts should showcase a smooth line of stitching and a pucker-free point. To stitch a single-point dart, fold the fabric right sides together down the center, matching the side markings; pin. Beginning at the wide end of the dart, backstitch to anchor the stitching and sew along the marked line, tapering off at the point and sewing off the fold. To secure the point, tie threads ends or shorten the stitch length as you approach the fold.

To stitch a double-point dart, pin the marked lines right side together, then begin at the dart center and stitch toward each point, slightly overlapping the stitching at the center (3).

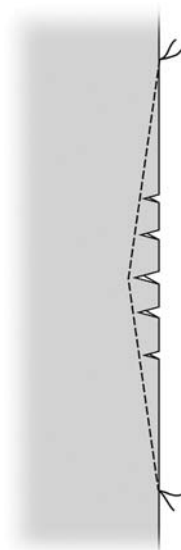


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## Pressing

Double-point darts need to be clipped to allow them to lie flat when pressed. Depending on the curvature of the dart, a single clip may suffice, or more may be needed (4). Single-point darts may be pressed as stitched, or in bulky fabrics, you can trim some of the bulk for a flatter press.

It's important to press darts over a shaped pressing ham to avoid flattening the fullness that's been stitched in. Pressing over a ham maintains a pucker-free point with no bubbles.



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Vertical darts are pressed toward the center and horizontal darts are pressed down, but before pressing in the final direction, press the dart fold as you stitched it to help flatten it, carefully avoiding the point(s).

On bulky fabrics, the fold of a single dart can be slashed and pressed open for a flatter finish. If the fabric is loosely woven, zigzag the edges to prevent raveling. 🖱️