

## MANITOBA AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

WINNIPEG, CANADA

### HOME ECONOMICS

#### METHOD IN SKIRT MAKING

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If a mistake has been made in a bodice, the pieces being small, one may be replaced, or the effect concealed by trimming, whereas if a mistake has been made in the skirt, it cannot be concealed, and the effect of the whole garment is spoiled. It is for this reason I have chosen as my subject the making of a skirt.

Before taking up the method of making, however, let us for a moment consider the selection of material.

To insure a successful skirt three points must be kept in mind in selecting the material.

(1) **Color.** The garments with which the skirt is to be worn, as well as the color that is becoming.

(2) **Design.** Whether a plain material, or a material with a stripe or other design will best conceal the defects, or bring out the good lines in the figure.

(3) **Quality.** The pattern to be selected will largely depend upon the kind and quality of the material to be used. The heavier the material, the plainer should be the pattern.

Another point that might be added here is appropriateness; nor can too much emphasis be placed upon the value of good lines and proportion. This knowledge can only be acquired by careful observation.

The first essential, then, to successful skirt making is that the maker shall have an appreciation of good lines and proportion.

Seams, plaits and darts should follow a line straight from the waist to the floor.

If they point forward they give to the wearer the appearance of falling backward; or, if they point backward, they give to the wearer the appearance of falling forward.

The natural position of the body in standing or walking is erect, therefore the lines of the skirt should be straight.

According to human standards, we are not all perfectly proportioned; created thus, no doubt, that we might have an opportunity of developing the artistic sense.

To be graceful the skirt must have length in proportion to width. For this no formula can be given; a study must be made of each individual figure, and this study should be made before deciding on the particular pattern that shall be used. Having decided, try the pattern on the person, and make any necessary alterations before placing it on the material; also study the material, to know how to place the pattern. For instance, if there is a flower in the design, it should appear to grow upwards; if a stripe, one should be placed in the centre front and one in the centre back; if velvet, the nap should run upward, but in cloth downward; if a plaid, it should be matched and follow a line straight around the figure. In all cases, the warp thread should run lengthwise. In cutting, a good rule to follow, when possible, is to begin by placing the wide end of the gore to the raw edge of the material. When placed in this way, pieces fit into one another and leave little waste.

In basting, place the parts together evenly at the top and pin. If a bias edge is to be basted to a straight, as in a gored skirt, place the parts together on the table with the bias on top and back; this will prevent that fullness so objectionable in seams

One edge being bias, the edges may not be even at the bottom. This is not necessarily a fault, provided the same seam on the opposite side of the skirt comes out exactly the same; failing this, you will have a crooked skirt, seams will twist, there will be more fullness at one side than the other, and although the skirt may be turned evenly around the bottom when made, it will have a tendency, when worn awhile, to droop at one side. All this may be prevented, then, by having the seams perfectly even at the top, and coming out exactly the same on each side at the bottom.

Next, try on the skirt to see that it fits and that the lines are good.

Stitch, press and finish the seams; next make the placket. The kind of placket will depend on the kind of skirt. The chief point to bear in mind is that it must be concealed, unless the fastening is with buttons and button-holes. Placket facing should be cut with the warp threads running lengthwise; this rule should be observed also in making bands as the warp is the stronger thread and will not stretch.

A skirt should hang from the waist. It should never be so tight that it clings to and hangs from the hips. It should fit smoothly, but never tightly, about the hips, else all the stitching and fastening you may put on it will never perfectly conceal the opening, because of the strain that is there.

The band should be placed next. The skirt should be slightly larger around the top than the size of the band. Holding the skirt

towards you, place the centre front of the band to the centre front of the skirt and pin so that the seam will be on the right side. By so doing it is much easier to make an alteration if necessary. Pin along one-half of the band, then the other half, being careful to mark and have the seams exactly opposite each other, baste and try on the skirt, finish the band and sew on the fasteners.

Then it is time to turn the hem around the bottom, but not before for you cannot be sure of the length until the top is finished. The slightest alteration at the waist-line affects the length, and so time will be saved if the turning of the hem is left until all the rest is finished.

In fitting any garment, only one side should be fitted. If any alteration has been made, the bastings should be removed, the parts placed together and marked alike, then basted again. In this way only can one be sure of having straight garments.

Should the person be larger on one side than the other, fit the larger side, mark both the same; then, when you have made both alike try the garment on and take in what may be necessary on the smaller side.

In dressmaking establishments there is usually a platform on which the person stands while the hem of the skirt is being turned, so that it is not necessary for the one turning the hem to kneel or sit on the floor, as is the case when both are on the same level, that position being awkward and the work tedious.

In the average home sewing-room there is seldom space for more than the absolute necessities. A platform is not one of these. If the person to be fitted will stand at the head of the stairway and the person who is to turn the hem will sit on the first or second step, the work may be done quickly and with comparative comfort.

To the home dressmaker, an adjustable dress form is of much assistance, so also is a skirt hemmer. With these one can make a skirt and know it is going to be all right without troubling any person.

The walking skirt, to be correct, must be an even distance from the floor; and, as people are not always the same size on both sides, one cannot be sure of getting a perfectly even length by measuring the skirt off the form. To those who must work unaided, the following method, if carefully carried out, will prove satisfactory:—

Put on the skirt, place one end of a yard-stick on the floor, and, keeping it straight, place a pin in the skirt at the other end of the yard-stick. Repeat this until there is a row of pins all

around the skirt, thirty-six inches from the floor; then take off the skirt, place it on the table, and, placing one end of the stick as many inches above the pins as you wish your dress to be from the floor, place a pin at the other end of the stick. Repeat this around the skirt. The last row of pins will mark the turning for the hem, as many inches from the floor as the yard-stick was above the first row of pins.

There is more time wasted in the work of the home from lack of thought than from lack of things with which to work.

There are many women who work from the time they open their eyes in the morning until they close them again at night, but who do not accomplish any more than many women in just the same circumstances in life who begin work as soon as they rise, but who plan to have an hour or two every day for rest or recreation. The latter have method in all they do, and plan ahead.

That is the secret of success in all kinds of work, and until we form the habit of working systematically we will never be the success that we should be, nor will we have the pleasure that comes to those who have an exact knowledge of their work, howsoever gained, and who have learned to apply that knowledge systematically.

If the method here outlined is followed, you will find it easier to make a success than a failure of skirt-making.

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