

## T-Shirts and how they can be the basis of your costume.

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Costume and Patterns are often thought of as a sort of mystery known only unto a certain group of people. The mystery of the 2dimensional pieces which become a 3dimensional wearable piece of clothing.

I wish to let you into a cast secret: costume making and pattern drafting is not as hard as it appears. And in fact all it needs is some basic items and a bit of imagination to make it work.

You can do this one of two ways. One involves you unpicking the stitching of the garment and using the pieces to draw out the pattern. The other (the way i will show you here) involves keeping the garment intact.

### Basic equipment you will need:



Old t-shirt or Shirt which fits comfortably  
News papers  
Sellotape  
Scissors  
Marker pens (any colour will do)  
Ruler and/or tape measure.

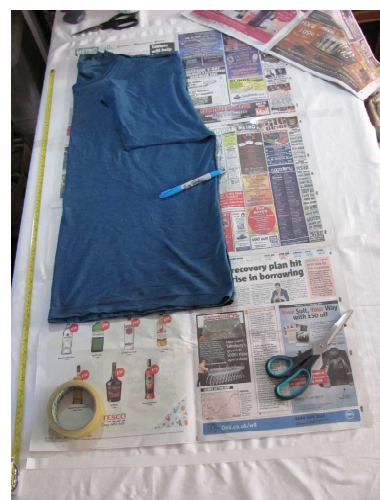


Take sheets of your news papers and stick them together to match the length and width of the t-shirt when it is folded in half. I find that usually you will need three sheets of a tabloid newspaper stuck landscape fashion to fit most shirt/t-shirt width. If you are using a broadsheet newspaper then you can probably use fewer sheets. It's up to you. I do suggest making the sheet as large as possible. This allows you room to adjust and adapt the pattern as you need to.



Fold the Shirt or t-shirt in half and lie it flat onto the newspaper sheet. Line up the central half of the garment with the edge of the paper sheet (this means you have a line which you don't have to cut out). Make sure all the edges of the garment are as straight as you can get them. This may be slightly tough as the sewing may pucker the edges a little. Just use your imagination a little to make the edges work.

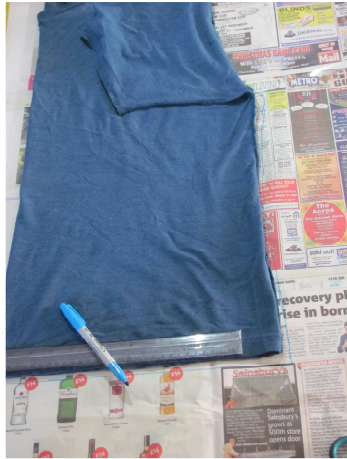
**Be Aware..**t-shirts tend to be made of a stretchy knitted fabric which can skew if you pull it too hard. This is why you



should use a t-shirt which fits you comfortably, or is slightly too large for you. Make sure that you allow the t-shirt to rest naturally on the table.

Tuck the sleeves into the garment so that you get the sewn edge. Try to keep everything as flat as possible. Then take your marker pen and draw round the body of your shirt. Do not worry if you are not particularly straight. You can adjust the pattern as you work or after.

If you wish you can use a ruler or tape measure for the straight edges.



Sleeves can be done in a similar fashion. Again make sure that the piece is flat flat against the paper before you draw round it.



Gather the main body of the garment and pull it over onto the drawn side so that you can get the part that joins to the main part of the shirt.



Normally a sleeve will fit onto 1 sheet of paper.

If you want to be able to remember which bits of the pattern fit together then you can write along the edges or one of the tailor's tricks is to put letters or numbers where the pattern fits together so that you put A to A, B to B.. etc.





As you can see here you should end up with a front piece and a back piece and a sleeve. Which you can then use as a basis to make what ever you want

**Remember** though the front piece will have a drop at the neck, lower than the back part. Don't have to put in this difference if you don't want to, but you will find it difficult to add collars which fit, later on if you want to because the collar will sit further down the back than it should.

**Be Aware:** this way of taking a pattern means you have to remember to add "seam allowance" which is an extra half an inch or so around the outside of the pattern when you cut out.