

Pleated Trouser

The pleated trouser is another classic design. It has one or more pleats that can be folded toward the center front or, toward the side seam or converted to a box pleat.

Fabric suggestions: light- to medium-weight woven fabric or stable knit.

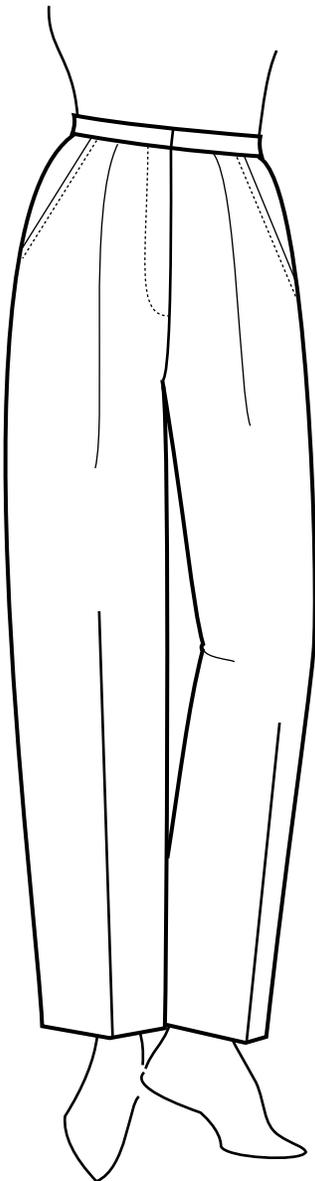
Pants can be lined or unlined.

Belt loops optional when using a fly-front zipper.

Select: Any pocket. The pocket with stay keeps the pleats smooth over the tummy.

Any closure. A fly-front zipper is traditional.

A traditional waistband. The two-piece waistband allows for easier alterations.



Pattern Adjustments for Pleats

Pattern adjustments are made to the front only. (Remember to trace a copy of the basic pattern front before you start and work from the copy rather than the original.) On pleated trousers, it is important to balance the leg to ensure that the grainline is on the creaseline and to extend the grainline from waistline to hemline. (See section on Balance the Leg.)

Determine the number and depth of pleats, the placement and direction. There are several ways to do this. You can duplicate a pair of ready made pants that you like, use a commercial pattern, or use my favorite method which is a more visual approach.

Take a piece of muslin about 6" wider than your pants front and about 1/2 yard long. Crease it through the center to represent the grainline of the pattern (and the creaseline of the pants). Match the grainline on the muslin piece to the grainline of the basic pant or fitting shell. Put on the pant or fitting shell, then pin pleats in the waistline on the muslin piece. (You will have to take the pins out at the top of the grainline to do this.) Vary the number, the depth, the position and the direction of the pleats to determine what you like best. It is preferable but not essential that a pleat fall on the creaseline. (You will see later in the section on pressing that when the pleat doesn't fall on the creaseline, you do not press the crease all the way to the top.) When you are pleased with your choice, mark the position and depth of the pleats on the muslin.

Just a matter of semantics: When I talk about the direction of the fold, I am referring to the direction the outside of the fold lies. If the fold lies to the side, that means that if you put your fingers under the fold while wearing the pants, your fingers would point toward center front.

Slash and spread the pattern front for the pleats. If you want added fullness all the way to the hemline (the traditional Katherine Hepburn look), slash through the grainline from waistline to hemline and from the bottom up to the hemline, leaving a hinge at the hemline. (See *Illustration 1*.) If you want the leg to maintain the same width at the knee and below, slash through the grainline from the waistline down to about halfway between the crotch and the knee. Then slash perpendicular to the grainline to the side seam stitching line. Slash into the seam allowance to the stitching line, leaving a hinge. (See *Illustration 2*.) If this leaves a dip at the hinge, smooth out the side seam with a French curve or similar drafting tool. (Note: If you want the pleat to fold on the grainline toward center front, slash to the inseam rather than the side seam.)

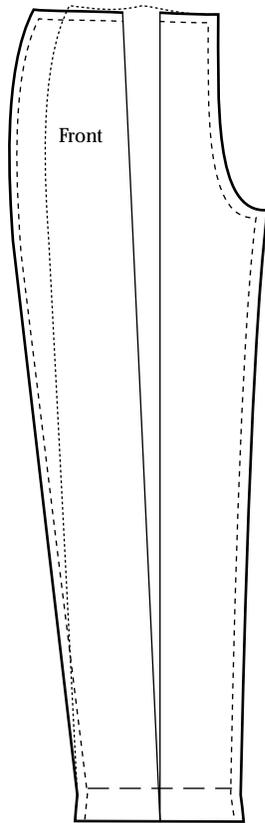


Illustration 1

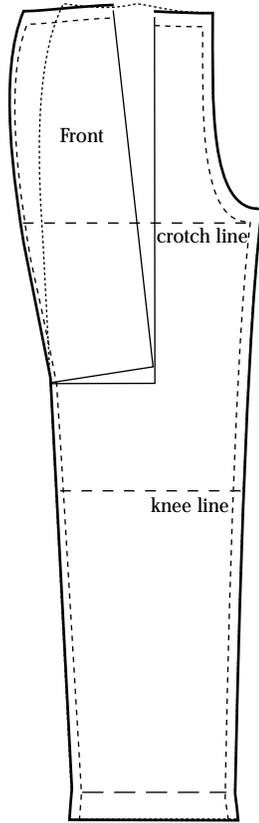


Illustration 2

To determine the amount of spread for the pleats, measure the total pleat uptake and subtract the amount of the dart(s) on the basic pattern front. When working with the muslin, an easy way to do this is to draw hash marks on the fold of the pleats from the waistline to two to three inches below the waistline. (See *Illustration 3.*) When you open the pleats on the paper, the hash marks define the folded edges and their matching lines. (See *Illustration 4.*)

Mark the pleat position and depth of the pleats on the pattern waistline. If you are copying ready made pants, measure the position of each pleat from the grainline and the depth of each pleat, and mark these points on the waistline of the pattern.

At this time it's a good idea to fold the pleats into the fashion fabric and hold it to your waist to see if you like the results. This is the time to make a change if you aren't satisfied.

Fold the pleats into the pattern paper in the same position they will be when they are stitched. Use a French curve, hip curve or similar drafting tool to true up the new waistline, adding about 1/8" in the pleat area. Add seam allowance. By cutting the folded paper on the cutting line, you can automatically establish the shape of the dart underlay in one operation.

Establish the new grainline. If all of the pleats are toward the side, the new grainline is the edge of the slash closest to the center front. In other words, the side section swings out and the section toward center front stays on grain. If all of the pleats turn toward the center front, the new grainline is the edge of the slash closest to the side. In other words, the center section swings out and the section toward the side stays on grain.

If you have pleats on both sides of the grainline, the new grainline will fall inside the slash. Measure the amount of the pleats uptake from the grainline to the center front, and move the grainline that distance away from the slash toward center front.

Important note: If you change the leg below the kneeline, you will have to re-balance the leg. (See section on Balance the Leg.)

Adjust the hem width if you wish. Remember that when you do this, you must change front and back, in-seam and side seam equal amounts from the kneeline to the hemline. (See section on Hem Width.)

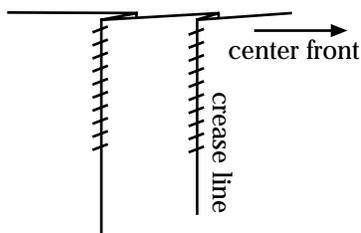


Illustration 3

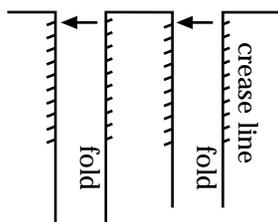


Illustration 4