

DESIGN OVERVIEW

You love your loom. All the relatives and friends have blankets and placemats. Where do you go from here? How about making clothing? For over 20,000 years, the weaver of the household provided all the textiles for the family, including the clothing. Clothing in ancient times reflected the simplicity of cloth taken straight from the loom. The era of tailoring and bodyshaping took our attention away from this type of dress for quite some time. However, we are once again in a time of simplicity in cut and construction, a time that can lend itself to the simple beauty of handwoven clothing. And we can do it with modern style.

Clothing Patterns from The Weaving Room is a graduated series of patterns. The construction techniques are based on the ones of the mass-produced, easy-to-care-for sportswear that we wear every day. The patterns outline the process of clothing design and construction in a straightforward way. Construction ideas and techniques are introduced in a logical progression that will take you from basic, simple forms and grow more complex as you proceed through the designs presented here. Each pattern addresses a specific problem, such as, “How narrow can I make a sleeve?” If you begin with Pattern #1, and proceed through them at one pattern a month, you will complete a course in pattern design. As an example, take a look at the difference in sophistication between the Shepherd’s Vest in Pattern #1, and the Point-front Vest in Pattern #10. The Shepherd’s Vest is a simple flat piece of cloth, with a slit front and keyhole neck opening, with side panels added to accommodate the chest of the wearer. The Point-front Vest has subtle shoulder darts and shaped armholes, and a stylish hem detail added in the front. Taken a step at a time, this styling becomes easy.

**Shepherd’s
Vest
Pattern #1**



**Point-front
Vest
Pattern #10**

Each member of the family can wear something from *The Weaving Room*, *your* weaving room. The vests and poncho in Pattern #1 are wonderful gifts for every taste in the family. The vests can function as everyday jacket liners, or for dress when worn with a suit. Grandmothers love the Belted Tunic, and the Serape Vest can be a first project for a teenage weaver. The Kimono, Pattern #5, is a dramatic and warm addition to a woman’s wardrobe. The Warm-up Jacket, Pattern #6, works well for the young men in the family. In black, with red stripes down the sleeve, it has the look of contemporary athletic wear. Pattern #7, the Shawl-collar Jacket, is a more conservative rendition of the same cut. It works well for Casual Friday for a man or

— *Clothing Patterns from the Weaving Room* —

woman. The teenage girls will love the Bolero, Pattern #9. If you are weaving for a business-woman, try Pattern #10, the Roll-cuff Cardigan. Remember that the business meeting she is going to attend is about her, not the jacket. You must be tasteful and original without being intrusive. Think about her wardrobe's color so that she will wear your creation often. Comfort is paramount. And last, it's fun for *you* to have a closet full of **Weaving Room** jackets and coats. All have an artsy panache and dramatic flair that is an appropriate complement to today's basic black and grey.

The tips outlined here may also help you to solve any problems that you might have with ***Clothing Patterns from the Weaving Room***. You will be able to adapt the width of your fabric to the patterns, acknowledging the probability that your fabric will not be exactly the same as the one suggested by the pattern. As a weaver, you should know that things do not always turn out as we intend them to, and we must always be ready to change our plans to accommodate the direction in which our materials take us. You will be able to understand the fundamentals of fitting, draping, and sizing. You will be on your way to sustainable clothing design.

— EQUIPMENT SUGGESTIONS —

Loom - 24" or 36" four or eight-shaft.

Weaving accessories -As many as you can have.

Sewing Machine - I have a New Home™ that I bought used. It's a work horse.

Serger - I got the cheapest four-thread Baby Lock™ on sale, and I love it.

Scissors - Ginghers™ are the best. You need clean, precise cuts.

A good pair of paper cutting scissors.

Steam Iron - A shot of steam is really helpful when working with handwovens. I have a Rowenta Powerglid™, which really puffs out the steam. Use a wet pressing cloth if you don't have enough steam.

Cutting surface - A folding cardboard with grid from the fabric store works well. You can stick pins into it.

Pattern paper - The grid of the pattern paper helps in transferring the small pattern to life size.

Pins - Large quilting pins with yellow plastic heads are easy to see. And more angels can dance on them.

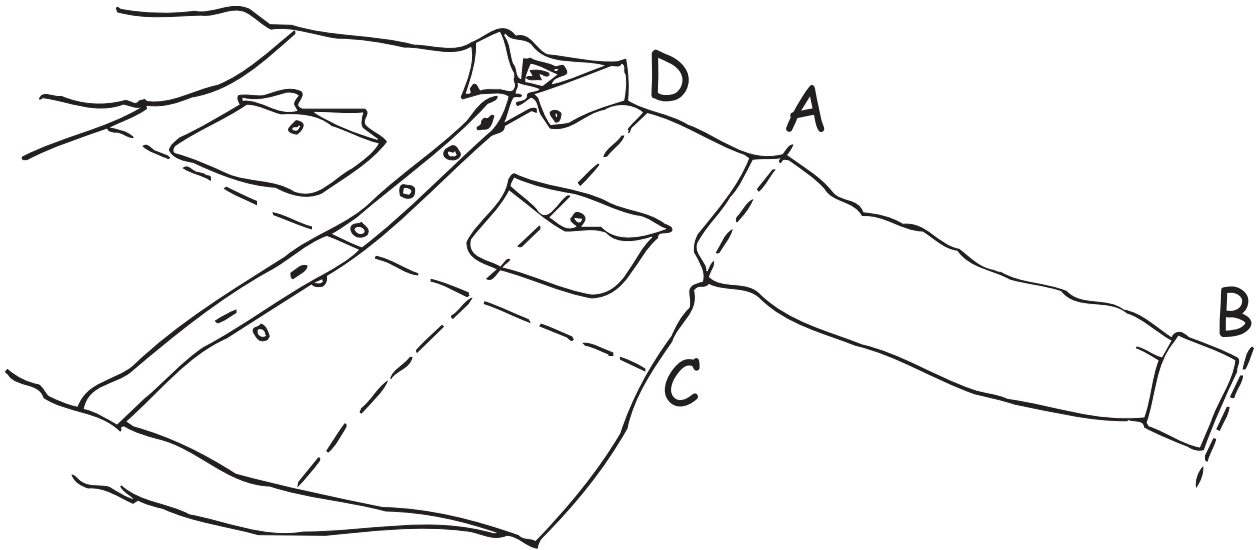
These are my favorites. I'm sure you have your own to add to this list.

— **CREATING A FASHION SILHOUETTE** —
— **WITH HANDWOVEN CLOTH** —

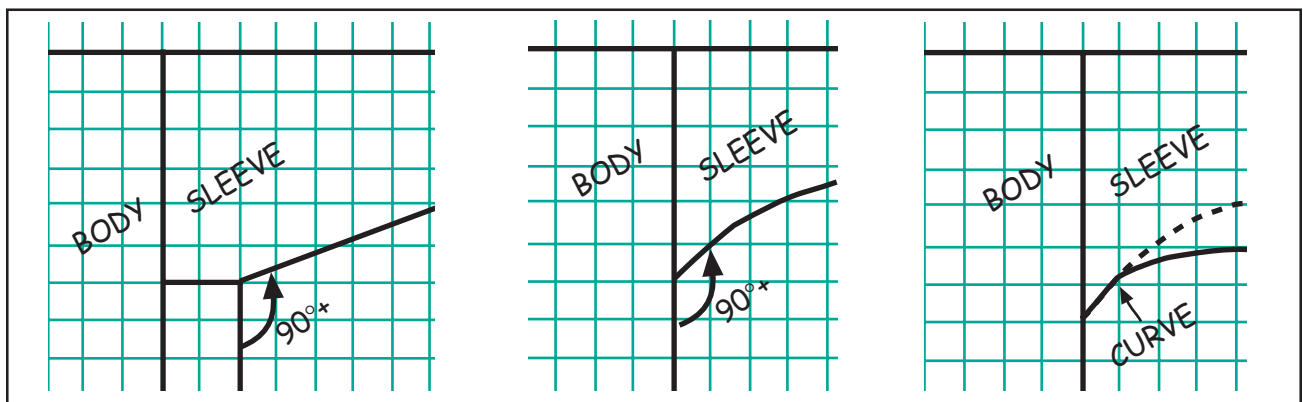
1. Find a loose-fitting commercially produced garment that fits you well, and lay it out flat.

Take stock of these critical measurements:

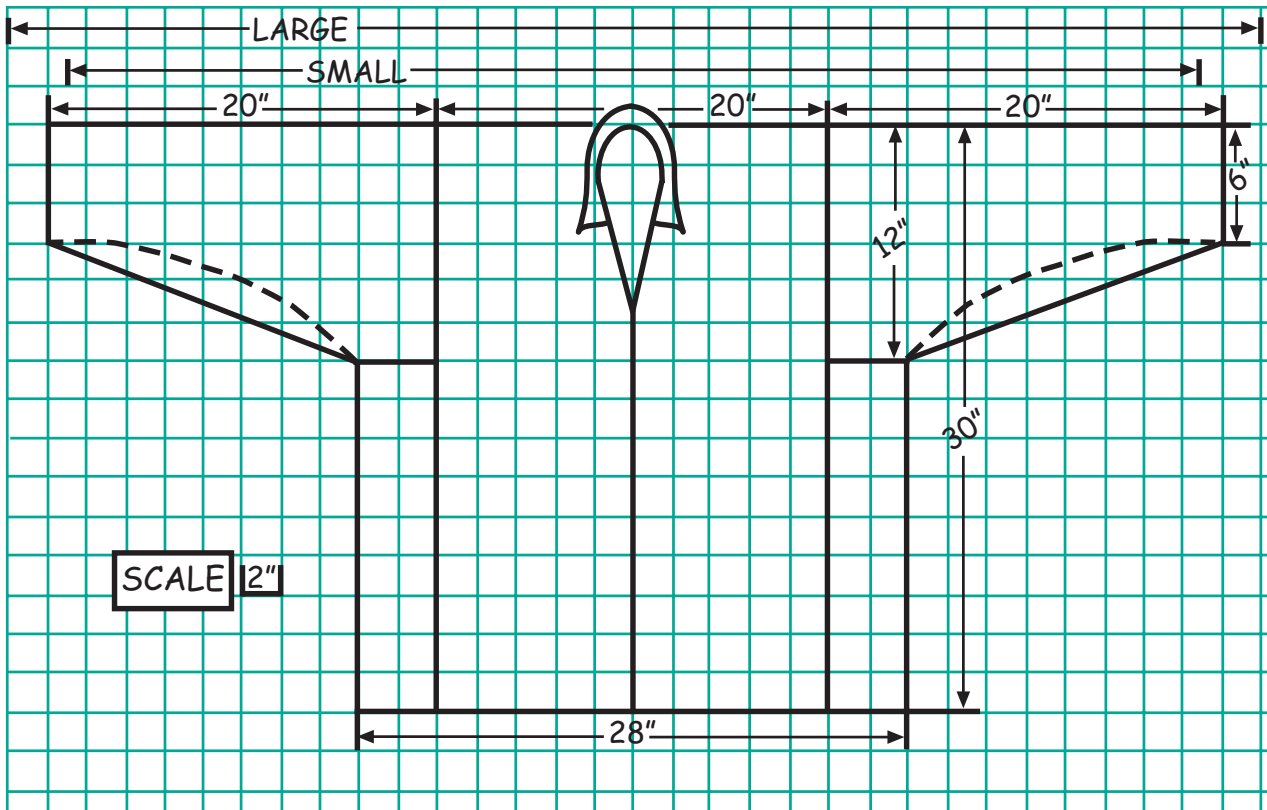
- A. The distance from the shoulder to the underarm (M-L, at least 12").
- B. The sleeve opening width (M-L, at least 5").
- C. The chest measurement.
- D. The length.



Simplify the lines, and put in seams to accommodate the width of your fabric. Keep the silhouette of the commercial garment, but completely redefine construction. The sleeve underarm must join the body with **MORE** than a 90° angle **OR** have a small curve at the underarm if the sleeve is to lie flat when you wear it. This curve takes the place of the ancient gusset. We have removed the sleeve cap, so we put the fullness *back* under the arm.



2. Block out and draw up your ideas on graph paper.



3. Create a paper pattern, using both loom-width and garment shape as your guides. Add half-inch seam allowances around each pattern piece. One-eighth inch will come off with the serger, and you will use three-eighths inch seam allowances in construction. Be sure to take full advantage of selvages as finished edges, and as outside topstitched seam treatments. Inside the garment, the serging will look like embroidery. Use a four-thread serger, with the stitches set close, and as wide as possible.

4. Using the paper pattern, construct a garment out of muslin, checking it for fit and drape. Make necessary changes in the muslin, and change the paper pattern as needed.

5. Lay out the handwoven fabric in a single layer, and pin the paper pattern to the handwoven fabric. Cut, serge, press and assemble as instructed.

— **SOME GENERAL NOTES ON SIZING** —

Since there are no means of standard sizing in our garment industry, it is best to stay with the general and forgiving categories of SMALL, MEDIUM, and LARGE. I have culled these generalities from a number of catalogs, and I advise that you add generous ease to each garment. For a vest or light jacket, add 4"-6" more than the chest measurement. For a coat that will go over a sweater, add 8" or more. For a long coat that goes past the hips, add 10" or more. For handwovens, you want a roomy fit. The drape of the cloth is its greatest attribute, and one which will do much of the fitting over the human body for you.

SMALL CHEST 33-35" SLEEVE LENGTH 29"

MEDIUM CHEST 36-38" SLEEVE LENGTH 30"

LARGE CHEST 38-40" SLEEVE LENGTH 32"

Length of a garment is often determined by fashion, so keep an eye on what is going on at the time of your design. Measure from the shoulder to the hem. The lengths that are common in the early 21st Century are:

1. 22" for a CROPPED JACKET.
2. 24" for a DAY JACKET.
3. 30" for a STADIUM COAT.
4. 47-50" for a LONG COAT.

— **GENERAL CONSTRUCTION RULES** —

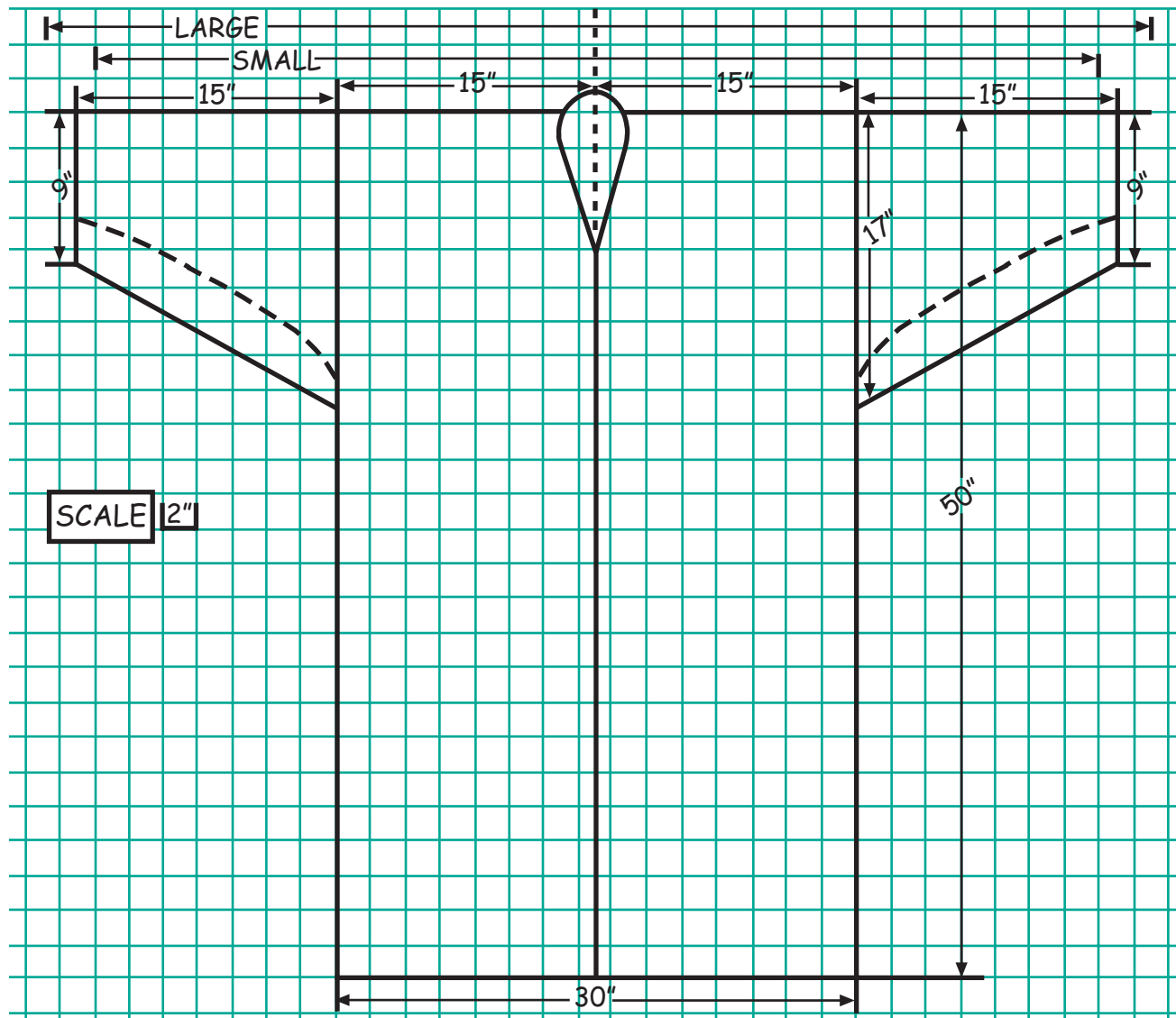
The rules are general and are made to be broken, once in a while. They highlight techniques that do not work well for the non-tailor. I went to fashion shows and saw what did not work for handweavers and designed it OUT!

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. No darts | 4. No sleeve caps | 7. No linings |
| 2. No inter facings | 5. No hand sewing | 8. No kidding! |
| 3. No buttonholes | 6. No padding | |

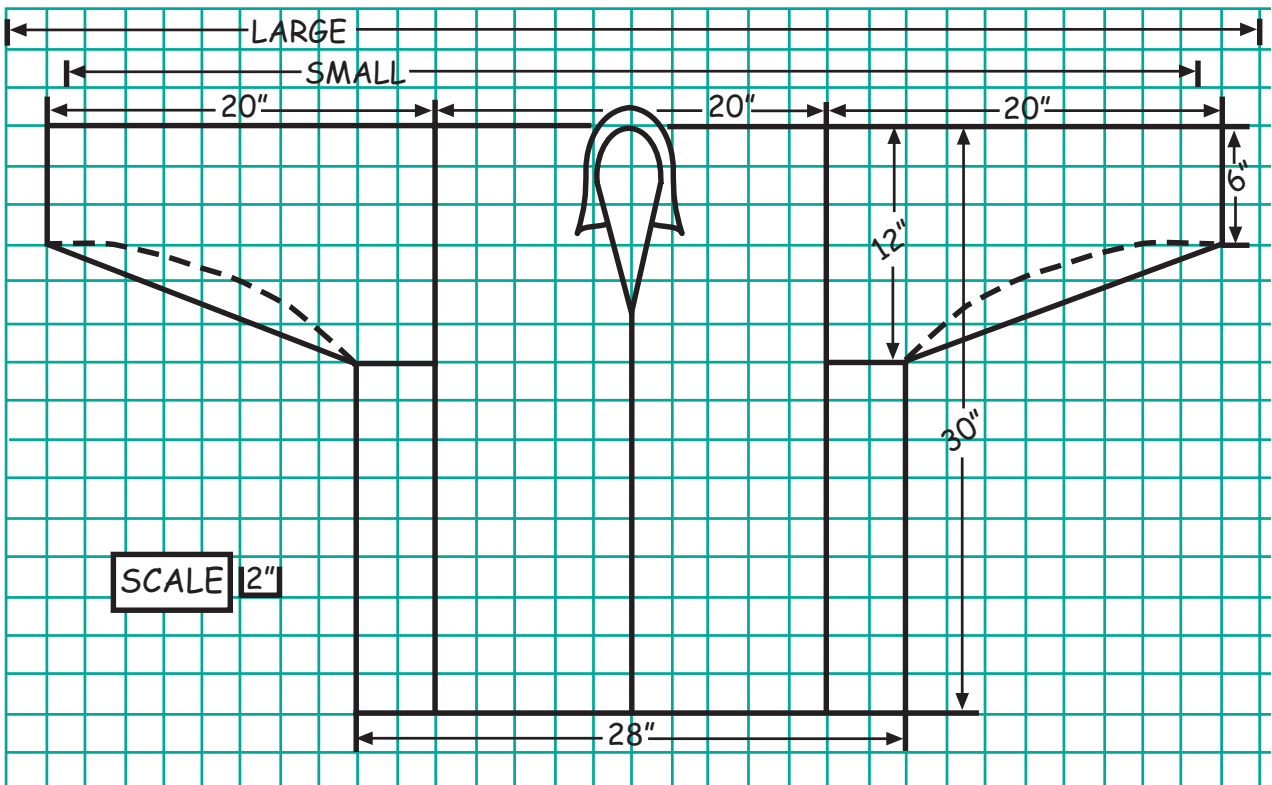
— SOME GENERAL NOTES ON FABRIC WIDTHS —

The wrist to wrist measurement for the average person is 60". Therefore, the fabric widths that work the best for this method of construction for the average person, are the twenty inch, and the thirty inch. A small person will have a 58" wrist-to-wrist measurement, and a large will be 64". Take your own wrist-to-wrist measurement to determine the best fabric width for your work.

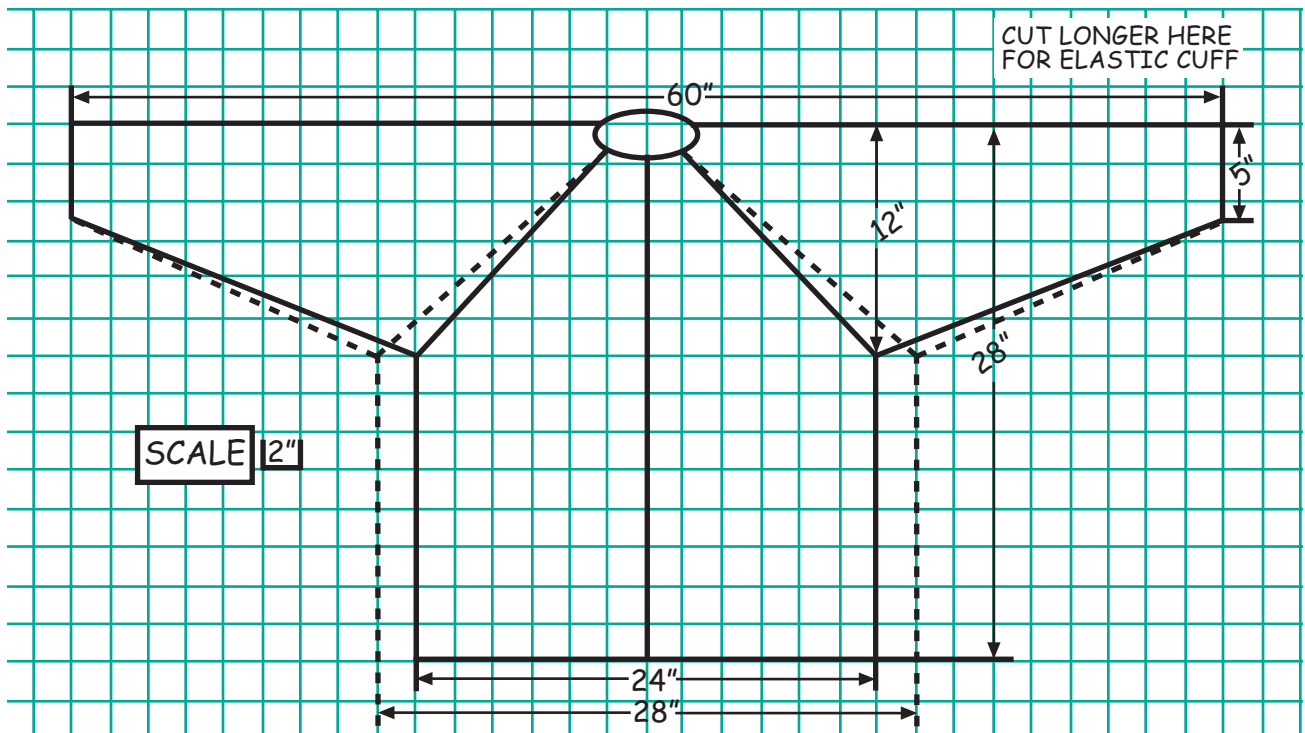
Twenty-inch panels can be placed side by side to build the body and sleeves of the garment. The side panels are sized to accommodate the chest width plus ease. The upper sketch on the facing page illustrates this configuration.



With a thirty-inch panel, one can create an ample body for a kimono, with the sleeves made out of two half-widths. The appropriate fullness of the sleeves can be determined by a fitting in the muslin stage. The sleeves are fuller in this long coat than in the stadium length jacket. This is in keeping with the proportions of the garments. A fifteen-inch wide panel will also work for this design.



The twenty-four inch panel is good for a medium-sized jacket body. Raglan sleeves work well with this fabric width. For a wider chest, add side panels and change the angle of the sleeve seam.



Everything that I have outlined here can be manipulated with creative piecing. Bands of contrasting fabric can be pieced to sleeve caps or cuffs to get the appropriate sleeve length. Side panels can be added or widened.

— *Clothing Patterns from the Weaving Room* —

With a 24" loom, one that can fit comfortably into the corner of a room, you can weave fabric for most **Weaving Room** designs. A 24" loom will yield 20" fabric. A 36" loom will yield 30" fabric. You can even make the patterns that call for a 30" panel by sewing together two 15" panels, or the 24" panel with two 12" panels. There will be a light, almost invisible seam down the back of the garment. The rest of the construction will be the same as that presented here in ***Clothing Patterns from the Weaving Room***.

Weaving Room patterns provide a way to convert your handwoven cloth into fashionable apparel that family and friends will be proud to wear. Weave in colors that are favorites, colors that are in style, with a studied understatement so that the garments do not overpower their wearers. Weave with the idea that you are creating someone's favorite jacket. It is the jacket that one can proudly wear with anything, and anywhere. It will have a touch of style, with a timeless beauty.

Best wishes to you in your journey of design and discovery.

Susan Lilly
Susan Lilly
Designer/Weaver

***Clothing Patterns
from the Weaving Room
by Susan Lilly***

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Color Design
Yardage Estimates / Sources / Resources

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paperback with photos and line illustrations



Susan spinning on a Columbine Spinning Wheel

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