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# Cutting Skills

## 4-H Clothing, Skill Level 1

Cutting must be done carefully so seams will match and be smooth. Be sure the scissors or shears you use are sharp and cut easily.

### Cutting out the pattern and fabric

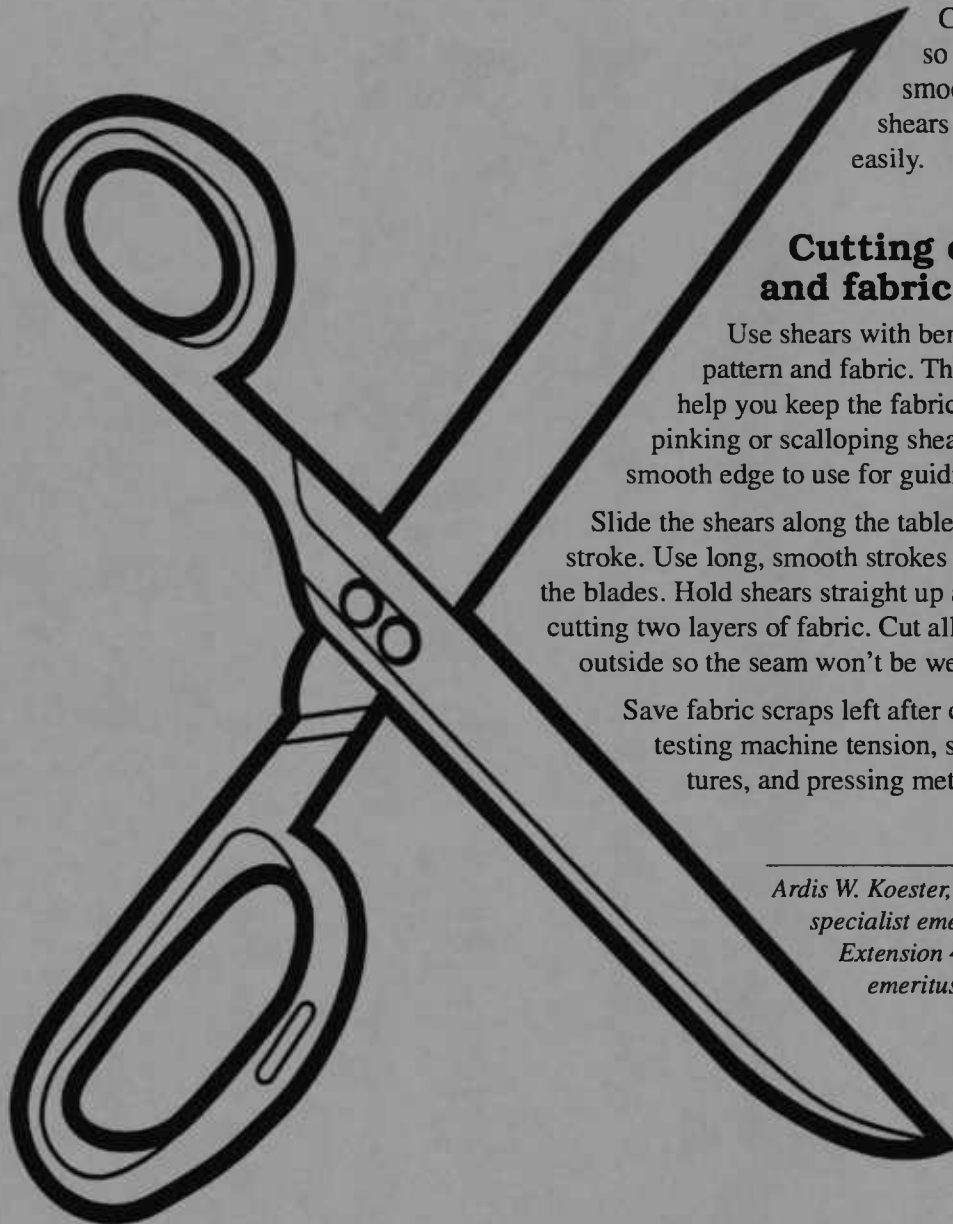
Use shears with bent handles to cut out the pattern and fabric. They make a smooth edge and help you keep the fabric flat while you cut. Don't use pinking or scalloping shears, because they don't make a smooth edge to use for guiding your stitching.

Slide the shears along the table to move forward for the next stroke. Use long, smooth strokes and cut with all but the tips of the blades. Hold shears straight up and down, especially if you're cutting two layers of fabric. Cut all pattern notches toward the outside so the seam won't be weakened.

Save fabric scraps left after cutting. You can use them for testing machine tension, stitch length, iron temperatures, and pressing methods.

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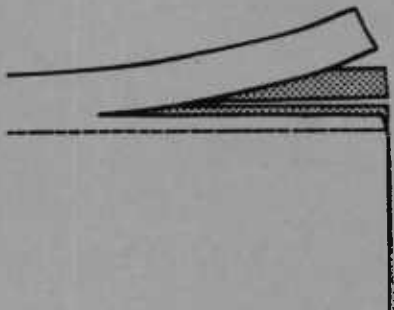


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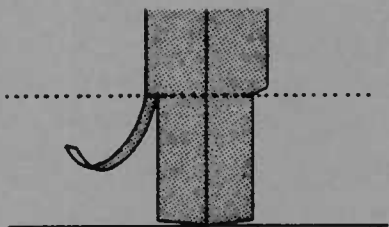
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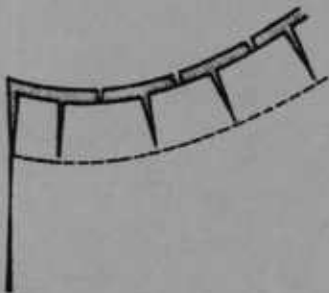
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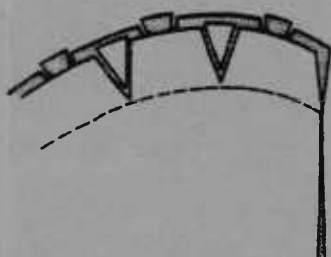
Grading



Grading below the fold



Clipping on a seam that curves in



Notching on a seam that curves out

## Cutting to remove fabric bulk

*Grading* is a special way of removing extra fabric when a seam isn't going to be pressed open. It helps prevent ridges on the right side of the garment after you press. Use scissors or shears for grading.

Grading means cutting each layer of a seam allowance a different width, each narrower than the one before. The widest layer should be the one that will be toward the outside. Grading should be done before notching or clipping.

Grade the seam allowance in hems narrower than the seam allowance in the garment. Begin to grade just above the fold on the garment side to remove bulk in the fold. Be careful not to cut away so much that the hem can't be made longer.

## Cutting shaped seams

Be sure to *clip* seams that curve in, so fabric edges will stay smooth and not strain or pull. An example of a seam that curves is a neckline seam.

When there are two or more layers of fabric, clip through each layer separately so the clips don't happen at the same place. Few clips will be needed on gentle curves. On sharp curves you will need to clip more often. If you did staystitching to make a curve stronger, don't cut through the staystitching when you clip.

*Notching* means cutting a small triangle of fabric from a seam that curves out. It helps to make the seam smooth. Examples of seams that curve out are collars and pockets with round corners.

When there are two or more layers of fabric, notch through each layer separately so the notches don't happen at the same place. Few notches will be needed on gentle curves. On sharp curves you'll need more notches. If you did staystitching to make a curve stronger, don't cut through the staystitching when you make notches.



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