The Power Tee

by Lisa Shanley, Ph.D.
Introduction

The humble tee shirt is one of the most versatile of all wardrobe items.

- It can be plain and simple...
- or brightly colored and embellished.
- It can be feminine and flirty...
- or all business.
- Its packs easily, travels well, and is great in all kinds of weather.
- It provides a great canvas for artistic expression with unlimited color blocking and embellishment opportunities.
- And, with the right neckline, collar, sleeve, and cuff, it can be suitable and flattering for any body shape.

Darts and Fit

Of course, the best tees are those that fit well and suit our body shape.

- What influences tee shirt fit most is darts (or lack thereof), armhole shape, and sleeve cap.
- If you have a bustline-C cup or larger, you need darts even in knit fabrics.
- **Without darts, nothing can fit well and will always look sloppy.**
The Power Tee

Armhole Shape and Sleeve Cap

- Armhole shape and sleeve cap will also influence fit.

Bust dart rotated into armhole

- For a C cup or larger, the dart will still try to form in the armhole.

Darts for Various Cup Sizes

- To create a pattern with no darts, the darts are rotated into the armhole and the armhole is redrawn.

Sleeve Cap Heights

- Sleeve cap – as armhole changes, sleeve cap must change
- As the sleeve cap gets flatter, a gusset forms.
- This gusset provides greater freedom of movement but a sloppier appearance.

B Cup                D Cup                  F Cup

Armhole Shapes

- Classic               Casual             Tee Shirt

Dart forming at armhole

B Cup                D Cup                  F Cup

Darts for Various Cup Sizes

- To create a pattern with no darts, the darts are rotated into the armhole and the armhole is redrawn.

Sleeve Cap Heights

- Sleeve cap – as armhole changes, sleeve cap must change
- As the sleeve cap gets flatter, a gusset forms.
- This gusset provides greater freedom of movement but a sloppier appearance.

B Bust dart rotated into armhole

- For a C cup or larger, the dart will still try to form in the armhole.
Shirt below has the classic sleeve on the left side and the tee shirt sleeve on the right side. The choice here is between style and function/comfort.

**Dart Equivalents**

- But, some knits, such as slinky and other very stretchy knits, do not work well with sewn darts.
- Use dart equivalents instead to “hide” the dart, change the style, and improve fit without calling attention to the dart.
- Dart equivalents are used to create unique and different styles by converting from the dart from a triangular shaped fold to other design elements such as princess seams, tucks, pleats, gathers, and flare.
- Dart equivalents must still point toward the apex of the body bulge but change how the fabric is controlled over the bulge to give a different look.

Princess Panel tee below – has shoulder and armseye princess seams (the dart equivalents), a classic armhole with sleeve cap height decreased by 1 inch (2.5 cm), curved veeneck, and fit and flared sleeve.
Selecting Knits

- Commercial patterns provide a description of the most appropriate knit description on the envelope.
- For daywear and business wear, choose stable knits with 10 to 50% stretch crosswise (from selvage to selvage) and 10% or less lengthwise so that the garments will hold their shape.

Wild Ginger Stretch Gauge

- For patterns created in PatternMaster, use our stretch gauge provided in the Help file to measure the amount of stretch in your fabric.
- In PatternMaster Style Editor (Knits, Curves, Child's Play, Tailor Made), select the appropriate Stretch Type setting.
- In PatternMaster PatternEditor, use the Scale tool (SZ) to scale horizontally and vertically according to the scale factor.
General Guidelines for The Power Tee

- For more formal or business styles, choose medium to heavy weight firm, stable knits
- Avoid thin, transparent and very stretchy knits
- Avoid dropped shoulder lines especially if you have broad shoulders and narrow hips
- Choose darts, princess seams, or dart equivalents if your bra cup size is a C cup or larger
- Avoid horizontal side bust darts as they tend to sag in knit fabrics
- Choose styles that skim the body rather than cling to it – 1 to 2 inches (2.5 to 5 cm) of chest and hip ease is attractive on most any body shape
- For business styles, choose necklines and neck depths that do not show cleavage
- Choose styles with options for color blocking to help hide figure flaws

Necklines for Broad Shoulders, Narrow Hips

Choose necklines and collars with vertical lines to visually narrow the shoulders – deep vee, deep scoop, keyhole, tab collar, built up, and veeneck collar.

Darts for Broad Shoulders, Narrow Hips

Choose darts and dart equivalents that create vertical lines to visually narrow the shoulders – shoulder princess, neckline princess, princess panel, blouson, waist darts, shoulder tucks.
**Sleeves for Broad Shoulders, Narrow Hips**

Choose sleeves with smooth sleeve caps and fullness at the elbow or wrist – flared, bell, cuffed with gathers, raglan, long circle, lantern, flared gored, fit and flared, bishop.

**Sleeves for Broad Hips, Narrow Shoulders**

Choose sleeves with large sleeve caps, short sleeves, and sleeves with no detail at the wrist – puffed, juliette, leg-o-mutton, tailored, petal, short flared, dolman, kimono, cap, short set in.

**Necklines for Broad Hips, Narrow Shoulders**

Choose necklines and collars with horizontal lines to visually widen the shoulders and de-emphasize the hips – wide shallow scoop, square, and sweetheart, wide d diamond, shallow cowl, off the shoulder, sailor collar, and ruffled collar.

**Necklines for Rectangular Shapes**

Choose necklines and collars with horizontal lines to emphasize the face and minimize the waistline – notched collars, deep vee and scoop necks, vee neck collar, triangular and shawl collars.

**Darts for Broad Hips, Narrow Shoulders**

Choose darts that create horizontal lines above the waist to visually widen the shoulders and de-emphasize the hips – armscye princess, side bust and side waist, armscye panel.
Darts for Rectangular Shapes

Choose darts and style lines the slim the waistline and emphasize the shoulders and hips – shoulder, armseye, and neckline princess, princess panel, frenchdarts, and color blocking.

Sleeves and Cuffs for Rectangular Shapes

Choose sleeves and cuffs with fullness and the top and bottom toadd curves at the waistline – petal, circular, fit/flare, cap, leg o’mutton, flared gored.

Additional Resources

For more great ideas on styles for your body shape, check out our Style Match program at the link below.

http://www.wildginger.com/products/stylematch.htm