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DRESS MAKING MADE EASIER

By FLORENCE RITCHIE

I NEVER make my own clothes because its so hard to do the fitting when I'm alone," is the complaint of many a capable dressmaker, who buys clothes that never exactly suit her, because she finds it impossible to place seam lines, make alterations, fix the hem and do a dozen other things that must be done in the fitting of a dress.

The dress form saves many useless fittings, is less trying to the nerves and gives a finished article that satisfies in every respect.

There are, of course, a variety of types of dress forms that can be purchased from every mail order house, some adjustable, some permanent. The permanent forms seldom prove satisfactory as every person has her individual form which no manufacturing company putting out an average product can hope to copy.

The adjustable form solves the problem of difference in hip, waist, chest measure, but even so, does not allow for the high shoulder, low hip or some other physical variation that has to be considered in dressmaking.

These forms cost from sixteen to thirty dollars and the woman who makes only one or two nice dresses for herself a year does not feel justified in investing that amount of money in an article so seldom used.

What then is my point? A dress form that is an exact imitation of the individual and can be made for two dollars or less.

The necessary articles or tools are: a pair of scissors, a roll of heavy gummed paper that can be purchased from any paper company, 60 pound weight, 60c, two high neck, long sleeve cotton vests of size ordinarily worn which can be obtained from the Elliott Manufacturing Company, Manchester, New Hampshire, for fifty cents a piece, a roll of tape, small bottle of shellac and twenty-five cent paint brush, a cup one-half full of water and a sponge, thread and needle and two or three friends to assist in the making which will require from one to three hours of steady work and perhaps some tiresome standing for the person being fitted out with the form. But when compared to the hours of standing and fitting ordinarily required it is a mere drop in the bucket.

An afternoon call could profitably be spent in making a dress form, as the making is much quicker and easier when several are working and of course the women could take turns in helping the others and every dressmaker or home seamstress will want one when she realizes how easily they are made.

The first step is to cut a large part of the roll of gummed paper into ten inch strips which can be accomplished in a short time by one measuring and a second cutting.

Another may cut a piece ten inches long and five inches wide from the bottom of one of the cotton vests, stretch and sew it to the back of the vest forming a collar but leaving the



Many Hands Make Quick Work

front open. The sleeves are cut off an inch from the arm's eye. The vest is then put on the one to be fitted, who has on a corset, brassiere, and a snug petticoat to eliminate excess bulkiness. The vest is sewed up the front and the buttons cut off. The vest is then pulled down tightly and smoothed around the arms and hips to eliminate wrinkles. A few long strips of gummed paper are cut.

The sponge is placed in the cup of water, thoroughly soaked and the wet side turned around toward the top. Too much water in the cup causes it to splash in wetting the gummed paper, of which one end is taken in the right hand, pressed on the wet sponge then pulled over the sponge the length of the strip by pulling with the right hand and pressing lightly with the left.

A long strip of paper is then placed on the center front of the vest, kept perfectly smooth and pressed down firmly to insure sticking. Another long strip is placed down the center back, then the waist line marked, care being taken to keep the strips smooth, tight and firm.

One worker can start at center front and paste strips from the waist line to the bottom of the vest around the hips, to center back following the strip of paper marking the waist line. These strips will be placed on vertically and formed slightly over the hips allowing each strip to overlap the previous one about three-eighths of an inch.

Another worker can start placing strips on the front, starting a diagonal line from the marked center front near

the neck toward the underarm. A strip is placed first on one side of the center front, sloped toward the underarm, then on the other side sloping toward the opposite underarm. Each strip is lapped three-eighths of an inch.

An underarm line to the waist is kept which requires cutting the strips of paper that are too long.

The third worker may start on the back and if necessary another sponge and cup used as every strip of paper must be thoroughly dampened to insure its security. As the sponge becomes dry it may be turned over. The diagonal direction of the strips on the back start from the outer point of the shoulder with a gradual slope toward the center back line. These strips are also alternated and lapped.

When the first coat of paper is put on there is a space near the neck both front and back that will need to be filled in with short pieces of paper running in the same direction as those first put on.

To make the form firmer a second layer is put on. The strips below the waist line are put on the same as the first. Those for the front of the waist are put on with the diagonal line running the opposite direction. The first strip is started from the outer point of the shoulder and sloped toward the center front.

Care must be taken not to run the shoulder line too far out on the arm. The strips are then alternated from side to side down the front and lapped as before.

The strips on the back are started from the center back near the neck

and sloped to the underarm. The strips are then alternated from side to side and lapped. The first worker done can cut 30 or 40 short strips from 3 to 4 inches long for the neck, clipping the sides to allow for the shape of the neck.

The collar of the vest is then sewed up tightly around the neck and the head held high while the neck of the form is finished by pasting the strips vertically around the neck. The distance of the bottom of the form should be measured and the line around the bottom made the same distance from the floor. Note of the distance should be put on the form.

All parts of the form except the neck should have a second layer of paper by this time so the form is cut off the individual by cutting up the center back, care being taken not to cut the individual, and the form opened as little as possible to allow the wearer to get out of it. The individual will probably be tired from long standing and should lie down and rest while the workers close the opening in the form by pasting short strips of the gummed paper on the inside of the form as the opening is pressed together. A long strip down the back then covers it up. The neck is reinforced by strips of paper placed

on the inside after the form is off.

The arms and neck of the form are trimmed out carefully and finished by folding the gummed paper over the edge. The pattern of the neck and bottom of the form should next be made on paper and then cut out of corrugated pasteboard or wood and pasted or tacked on.

The arm may now be made if the individual is rested. The sleeve cut from the vest is smoothly put on and may be fastened in place on the shoulder by pinning to a band fastened around the neck and the opposite arm.

The first strip is placed from the shoulder to the elbow. The second from the elbow to the waist and a band put around the wrist to hold the sleeve in place. The strips are then placed around the arm until the entire sleeve has two coats of paper.

The sleeve is then cut off on the inside line of the arm. The form fits so tightly that great care must be taken in cutting it off. The sleeve is then closed with small strips of paper and the top of the arm reinforced and the top and bottom finished neatly.

The arm and body of the form are now ready for shellac. While they are drying the lower frame for the form can be made by making two wooden bases the size of the base of the form, and fastening these a distance apart

that will bring the distance from the floor that it was on the individual. They may be fastened with lathe. This stand takes from six to eight lathe, or yard sticks may be used if the individual is not too tall.

The form when finished is the exact shape and height of the individual. The form when dry is covered with the extra vest to allow for something to pin the material or dress to in fitting. The sleeves are cut out and used to cover the arm.

All physical peculiarities are brought out in these forms and can be taken care of easily by the home dressmaker when she has the form to work with. If the individual changes materially in a few years another form can easily be made and anyone will be willing to stand the few hours of fatigue when it eliminates the many useless fittings required for each garment made.

The form could be taken by customers to their dressmakers to be used for the fitting and would eliminate the personal trips usually involved.

While the first form may not be entirely up to expectations so far as neatness is concerned it only takes a little experience to put out a neat and finished product.

The forms may be filled with excelsior or straw to keep the shape better as heat causes the paper to shrink

On the Homemaker's Book Rack

By EDA LORD MURPHY

LET US sit down at this big table by the reading lamp and look over these books, one by one. We shall find many kinds, from cook books and care of children all the way up to essays and poetry.

First, let us look at these on the mechanics of housekeeping. There are two by Mrs. Christine Frederic, "The New Housekeeping" and the later one called "Household Engineering." There is also that delightful little book called "The Efficient Kitchen" by Mrs. Georgie Boynton Child. In all of these we shall find lists of equipment, methods of housekeeping, schedules, systems with and without maids, suggestions for budget making and account keeping and discussions of many topics in which homemakers are deeply interested.

And while we are thinking of the practical affairs of every day we'll find in C. W. Taber's "Business of the Household" much food for thought. It is the kind of book that men will read with great surprise and interest and if the "partnership plan" is not operating in your case it will be a good \$2 investment.

These two books are not very new but they are from the pen of our incomparable leader, Mrs. Ellen Richards, and hold the inspiration that she always gave to others. "The Art of Right Living" and "Euthenics" give the broad fine outlook on the work of homemaking that the modern woman needs.

"Home Problems From a New Standpoint," by Mrs. Caroline Hunt and "The Woman Who Spends" by Mrs. Anna Steese Richardson are as

fine now as when they were first published.

As an antidote to restlessness and discontent and for the recipe for living on "nothing a year" read "An American Idyll" by Mrs. Carleton Parker. There is also a little book by Mrs. Tynen called "Speaking of Home," being essays by a contented woman! Rara Avis! A little book of poems by Edgar A. Guest called "The Path to Home" is advertised in this way, "The love light in the home life and the joy of just being in it and of it shine thru the pages of this latest book by Edgar A. Guest." This stanza from the poem "What Father Knows" may not be great poetry but it is a great truth:

In conversation Father can
Do many wondrous things,
He's built upon a wiser plan
Than presidents or kings,

He knows the ins and outs of each
And every deep transaction
We look to him for theories
But look to Ma for action!

There are several series to help in the training of children, among the best are those published by the University Society Incorporated, 44 East 23rd St., New York City and the Parent Association, 45 West 16th St., also in New York City.

If you want to feel quite "comfy" and satisfied read the observations of an Englishwoman on American women in Mrs. A. Burnett-Smith's book, "As Others See Her."

If your husband is shirking a bit, get him to read Theodore Roosevelt's "Letter's to his Children." There is Miss Winifred Kirkland's "The Joys of

Being a Woman" and more essays by her in a book called "The View Vertical." Both she and Miss Ida Tarbell see us as we are and as we might be.

It is no longer an affectation to be found among the devotees of the Atlantic Monthly. If you live in a town without an up-to-date library, work for it and meanwhile subscribe to magazines and open an account in the book section of a department store.

You will make better bread, and smoother beds, your house is more likely to run on ball bearings if you, the wife and mother, keep your wits awake and your soul revived, not with Bromo Seltzer or spirits of ammonia but by varied reading—the daily paper and magazines of various kinds and best of all the books and better than all, the Book of Books.

FOR THOSE WHO PLAN TO CAN

"Every Step in Canning" by Grace Viall Gray is a book explaining fully the canning of fruits and vegetables by the cold pack method, which is taking the place of all other methods because it is the easiest and quickest way to can and prevent waste. Cold pack canning was introduced by the government during the war to stimulate the preservation of foods and products with such wonderful results that the women who adopted it will never return to the old fashioned laborious and wasteful ways of preserving. Grace Viall Gray was at one time associate professor of Home Economics at Iowa State College.

"Every Step in Canning" is priced at \$1.50 and may be obtained from Forbes & Company, Publishers, 443 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.