In Defence of the Toile: Three Reasons Itâ??s Worth the Extra Step

Description

I am impatient. Itâ??s one of the few bad qualities I have that I donâ??t actually feel bad about. Iâ??m a foot tapper, a lane changer and for my sins, the kind of sewist who would cut straight into the good fabric. And of course, if youâ??re the same, youâ??ll know the highs and lows that skipping the toile step can bring. Sometimes you get it exactly right. Sometimes you waste a lot of fabric *and* time *and* end up with something youâ??ll never wear. And while there are some adjustments you can make as you go, there are some, like a the wrong rise on a pair of trousers, that thereâ??s no coming back from.

Finally, someone told me to buy some muslin and get into the habit of making a toile first. And since then, Iâ??ve never looked back. Hereâ??s why:

It allows you to invest in the fabric

So many of start out sewing with really cheap fabric and then wonder why we hate everything we make and would never be seen dead in it. I think the main reason weâ??re afraid to invest is because weâ??re afraid to get something wrong, to make a mistake, to waste that money. And in that situation making a toile allows you to practice where you need it and skip the finicky steps where you donâ??t. It ensures youâ??ll like the fit of the final piece and it means that when you finally do make that first cut, youâ??ll know youâ??ve done everything you can to make something that youâ??ll love and cherish for years to come. And if you mess it up, well, we all mess it up sometimes, but at least you know you tried!

It allows you to get that bespoke fit

I donâ??t know about you, but part of the reason I sew is because I wish I could afford more expensive clothing. And besides the fabric, the thing that really sets designer clothing apart from RTW is the attention on the fit. If you donâ??t believe me, go into a designer shop and try something onâ??you can feel the difference even without looking. (On a side note, I did a free styling session in a fancy department store when I was wedding dress shopping, where I tried on a bunch of very expensive evening dresses, and it was one of the most interesting experiences for understanding what couture level fit and construction looks like. I highly recommend you invent a reason and do it too.) The reality is, you can only get that special fit if you spend time getting it to fit right, and you can only get it right if you spend time making a toile first. Iâ??ve had toiles where I havenâ??t changed a thing and toiles where the final pattern is almost unrecognisable. You have to expect you wonâ??t always have needed one, but when you do, the difference makes all the other toiles worth it.

It allows you to make it your own

If youâ??re the kind of person who hacks a patten on the go, well, youâ??re a better sewist than I. For the rest of us, making a toile provides a safe creative space to see if you want to make any changes. I get to ask myself: Does it need a collar? Do I want to change the length, or adjust the volume of the sleeve? I spent a lot of time making patterns exactly as they were supposed to be made and itâ??s only recently Iâ??ve discovered the joy of taking a moment to ask myself if there are any ways I want to make it uniquely mine. Again, I donâ??t always, but when I do, Iâ??m always happy I did.

So there you go, there are three of my reasons to grab yourself some muslin or an old bedsheet and commit to the extra step, but Iâ??d love to hear your thoughts on the humble toile too. Are you for or against and if so, what are your reasons?

CATEGORY

1. COMMUNITY
2. SEWING OUTSIDE THE LINES

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