How to Successfully Print and Assemble PDF Patterns

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Technology can be a wonderful thing. The ability to have immediate access to a sewing pattern is one of those wonderful things... unless you run into trouble with printing. We've answered countless emails from users who have fairly simple issues – an old version of Adobe Reader, or failure to properly set their Page Scaling. We can't solve every issue, but this guide summarizes how to print our PDF patterns, as well as how to assemble patterns that require more than one page.

Printing PDF Patterns

To begin, be sure you have the latest version of Adobe Reader (it's free), and confirm you *don't* have "Internet Downloading" disabled in your browser preferences.

If the tutorial you are using requires you to print a pattern piece(s), you'll find the links in the **Getting Started** section of our tutorial, as shown in the example below:

Click on one of the links and the PDF will appear in the same window once it is fully downloaded. Be patient, this may take a few moments. Many of our early patterns are listed as individual links for each pattern piece, but lately – thanks to faster connections for most folks, we've been bundling multiple pages into a single, larger PDF file to make the download easier.

To print the PDF, you can either go up to the **File** menu and scroll down to **Print**, or drag your mouse to the bottom of the image and in some (not all) browsers you will see a toolbar appear. Some systems may require you use the toolbar to print. In these cases, when you attempt to print from the File > Print menu, a blank page will appear. If this happens to you, as we mentioned above, try dragging your mouse to the bottom of the page, and print directly from the tool bar, simply clicking on the little picture of the printer.

Example tool bar

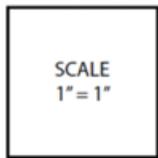Once you have the **Print** window open, you need to check a couple of things prior to printing.

1) Change to Portrait or Landscape if necessary to insure the pattern lays correctly on the page.

2) Be sure you are printing at 100%. **DO NOT SHRINK TO FIT, or FIT TO PAGE** (terminology is dependent on your browser).

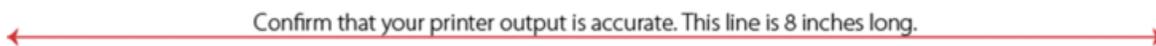With these two items confirmed, you're ready to click the **Print** button.

Once printed, it's critical to confirm your pattern piece is the correct size.

Our patterns have evolved over the years, so you'll encounter one of three different sizing confirmation tools.

On the oldest patterns, there is a one-inch-square box for sizing confirmation. If you encounter one of these, use a ruler to measure the printed box to confirm it is exactly one inch.

Some patterns have a double-arrow line at the top of the page, usually in red. This line will be 6" - 8" in length and the pattern will indicate the length. For example: *"Confirm that your printer output is accurate. This line is 8 inches long."* Use a ruler to measure the arrow on your printout. Make sure you measure from arrow point to arrow point.

Confirm that your printer output is accurate. This line is 8 inches long.

Our most recent patterns have a solid black bar. As above with the arrow, this bar will be 6" - 8" in length and the pattern will indicate the length. For example: *"Confirm that your printer output is accurate. This bar is 8 inches long."* Use a ruler to measure the bar on your printout. Make sure you measure from end to end.

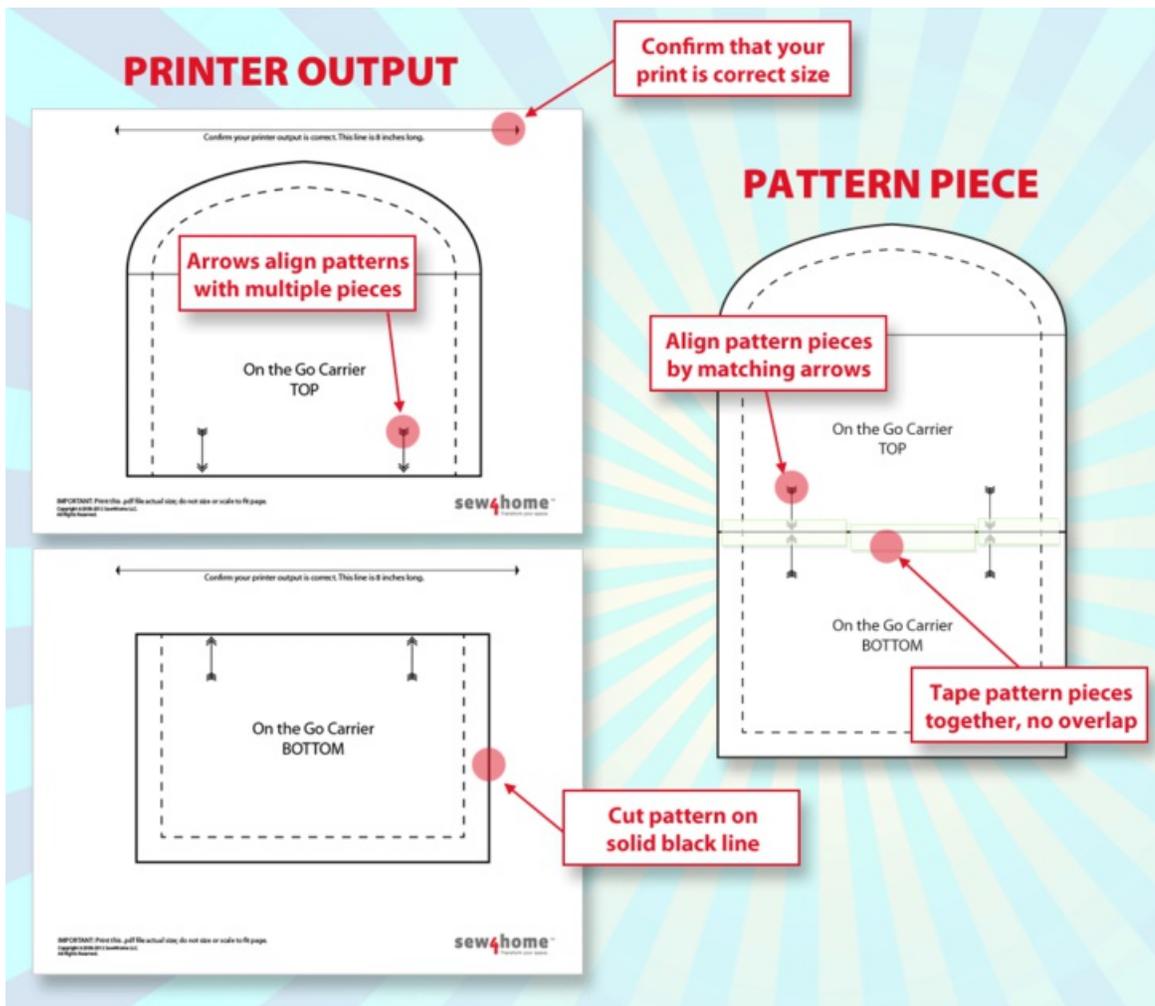Confirm your printer output is correct. This bar is 8 inches long.

If your measurement does not match what it should be, go back and confirm you don't have "Fit to Page" enabled. Your pattern *must* be the correct size in order for you to successfully complete the tutorial.

Once you have an accurate pattern piece, you can click on your browser's back arrow to return to the tutorial to print any additional pattern pieces required and/or to simply start into the project instructions.
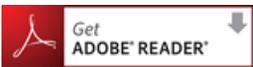
Assembling Patterns

Some patterns will fit on a single 8½" x 11" page. Other patterns must be assembled from several printed PDF pages. In the example below, there are two pattern pieces that need to be assembled into one finished pattern. The two images on the right show the pages as they come out of the printer. After confirming your pattern is the correct size, cut along the outer solid black line (the inner dashed line is the seam allowance line). Butt together the two pieces as shown on the left; *do not overlap the pieces.* Align the arrows and tape the pieces together.

PRINTER OUTPUT

Confirm that your print is correct size

Confirm your printer output is correct. This line is 8 inches long.

Arrows align patterns with multiple pieces

On the Go Carrier
TOP

IMPORTANT: Print this .pdf file actual size; do not size or scale to fit page.

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Confirm your printer output is correct. This line is 8 inches long.

On the Go Carrier
BOTTOM

IMPORTANT: Print this .pdf file actual size; do not size or scale to fit page.

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PATTERN PIECE

Align pattern pieces by matching arrows

On the Go Carrier
TOP

On the Go Carrier
BOTTOM

Tape pattern pieces together, no overlap

Cut pattern on solid black line

Sew4Home works hard to create the fewest pages possible for each of our patterns in order to conserve printing ink and paper. One of the ways we do this on some larger projects is to design the pattern pieces for the "negative spaces." For example, on a traditional chef's style apron, rather than creating many, many pages to assemble the body of the apron (what you'd likely find with a commercial pattern), instead we create just a one or two-piece pattern for the area the will be *cut-away* from the main rectangle of fabric. In the photo below, you see an assembled "arm hole cut out" pattern in position on the main folded rectangle of fabric. Once cut away through both layers and opened up flat, you have your full apron shape. Clever!

We test all our patterns prior to posting on a variety of computers and browsers. Most problems can be resolved by installing the latest version of Adobe Reader and/or adjusting your print window to insure you are printing at 100%.

Sewing Tips & Tricks