

BIKES AND BLOOMERS

VICTORIAN WOMEN'S
CONVERTIBLE CYCLE WEAR
SEWING PATTERNS

#6 CYCLING BLOOMERS I, II

A cycling costume inspired by
inventive Victorian women cyclists

PATTERN #6

CYCLING BLOOMERS I, II

DESIGN FEATURES

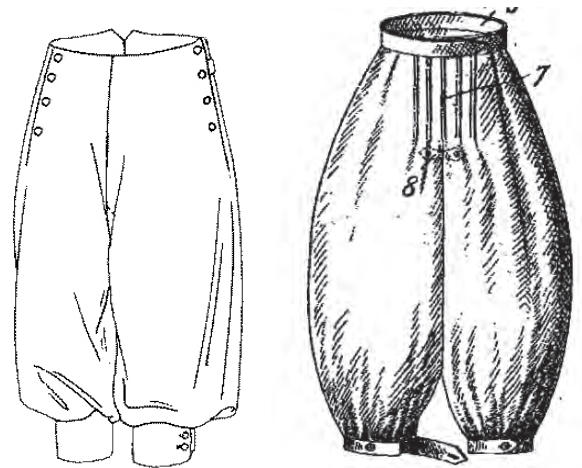
Cycling bloomers took many shapes in late nineteenth century Britain. This pattern is for one of two versions: **I. Tailored Bloomer** and **II. Full Bloomer**. The first features two pockets, four buttons on each side of the waist and two on the cuffs. Tucks at the knee and waist reduce the fullness of the material while still delivering freedom of movement. A back buckle can be added to adapt the fit. The second version has more voluminous proportions. It is fitted to the wearer via pleats at the waistband and cuffs. It could be worn in place of a skirt as it gave the impression of one. The bifurcation enables the wearer to move her legs unimpeded and also (marginally) conceal this action from the view of others.

THE BLOOMER: A SHORT HISTORY

BLOOMERS played a pivotal role in enabling women to undertake more active lives - replacing hot and heavy layered petticoats and sometimes full length skirts. They were initially associated with American writer and social activist Amelia Bloomer in 1850s. The garment became popular and also deeply divisive in Britain in the late nineteenth century. It was adopted by dress reformers who advocated 'rational' dress over 'irrational' fashion. Amongst other problems, skirts became waterlogged, dragged in the dirt and easily caught alight. While the bloomer helped to popularise dress reform politics, it also polarised society. The image of a cyclist in bloomers swiftly became a site for debate more broadly about women's role in society, which meant that in some circumstances wearers had to be very brave to wear them.

“The idea was almost entirely new and the British Public was dead against it. Hooting and screeching were then the usual accompaniments to every ride. Caps, stones, road refuse—anything was then flung at the hapless woman who dared to reveal the secret that she had two legs. And the insults were not confined to the lower classes. In fact, cycling in rationals in 1894 was a very painful experience.”

Irene Marshall. The Rational Dress Society Gazette (1899)



(I. Tailored and II. Full Bloomer)



(While cycling in bloomers was a safer, more comfortable option for many women, it exposed them to verbal and sometimes physical abuse from onlookers).

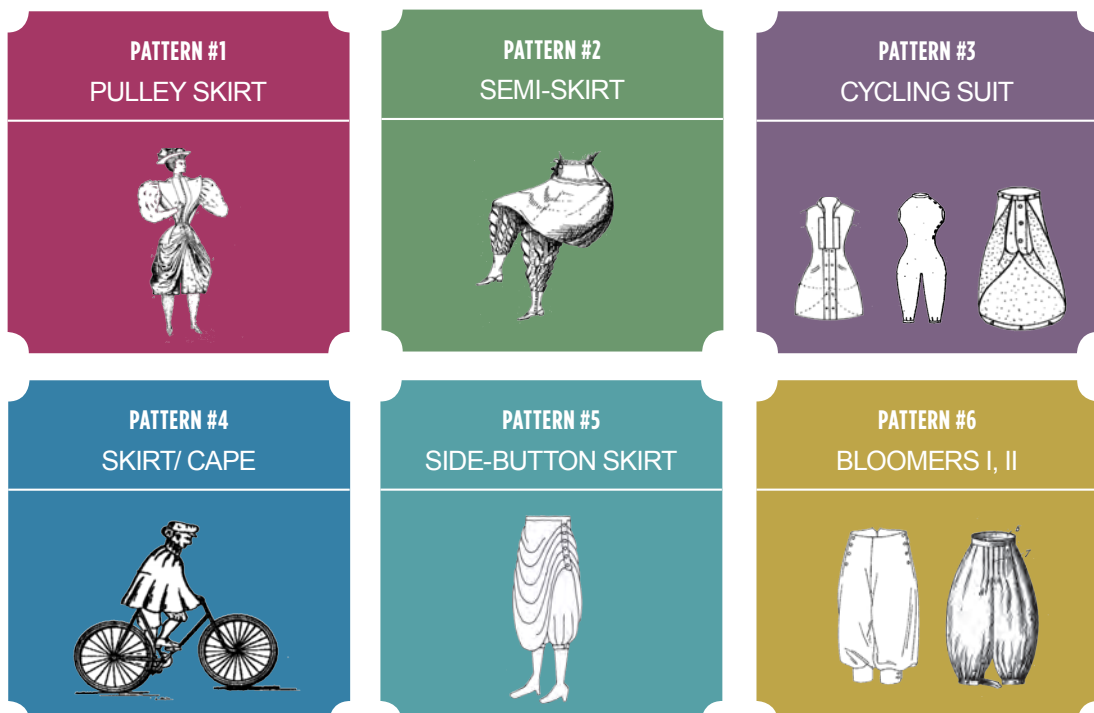
VICTORIAN WOMEN'S CONVERTIBLE CYCLE WEAR SEWING PATTERNS

Victorians enthusiastically took to the bicycle. Yet women had to deal with many social, political and material challenges to their freedom of movement. Cycling in 'ordinary' dress could be dangerous as it wrapped around pedals and caught in wheels. Wearing more 'rational' cycle wear, such as shorter skirts and bloomers, was more comfortable, but not necessarily safer as some parts of society were threatened by the sight of this progressive 'New Woman' carving new modes of gendered independence in public space. Onlookers sometimes hurled abuse and stones! However, nothing was going to stop women from cycling. In response, some creatively protested against restrictive ideas of how a woman should act and move in public through their clothing, by designing **convertible costumes** that enabled wearers to switch from street wear to cycle wear when needed. Luckily for us, these inventive women not only imagined, made and wore radical new forms of cycle wear - they also patented their designs!

Six sewing patterns in this collection (comprising a total of nine different garments) are inspired by convertible cycle wear patents lodged in the 1890s by inventive British women. They form part of an ESRC funded **Bikes & Bloomers** sociology project led by Dr Kat Jungnickel at Goldsmiths, University of London, with Rachel Pimm, Nadia Constaninou, Alice Angus and Britt Hatzius. More about the lives of these fascinating inventors is in *Bikes & Bloomers: Victorian Women Inventors and Their Extraordinary Cycle Wear* (Goldsmiths Press). Along with the book, these patterns bring to life some of the inspiring cycling, sewing and suffrage stories that have helped shape how we cycle today. They also (still) provide useful ideas for functional clothing that works on and off the bike. We look forward to seeing what modern sewing cyclists make with them.



PATTERN COLLECTION





SEWING PATTERNS

PATTERN #6

CYCLING BLOOMERS I, II

(I. TAILORED OR II. FULL)



Pattern #6 is for one of two bloomer patterns. **Version I** is a tailored bloomer with concealed pockets, buttons at both sides of the waist and cuffs, tucks at the knee and an optional back buckle to adapt the fit. (An extra twist at the outer knee is required for high-wheel riding.) **Version II** is a full bloomer fitted to the wearer via pleats at the waistband and cuffs. The voluminous proportions provide ample space for moving legs. Concealed pockets can also be sewn into this garment. **Requirements:** See individual patterns for details.

This pattern is approx UK size 12 and will need to be customised to fit as required. Minimal instructions are provided. See our mistakes, workarounds and suggestions at: bikesandbloomers.com

RESEARCH PROJECT
Kat Jungnickel
SILK LINING ARTWORK
Alice Angus
COVER PHOTO
Eoin Norton

BIKES & BLOOMERS CONVERTIBLE CYCLE WEAR SEWING PATTERNS:

- #1 – Pulley cycling skirt
- #2 – Cycling semi-skirt
- #3 – 3-piece cycling suit
- #4 – Cycling skirt/cape
- #5 – Side-button skirt
- #6 – Cycling bloomers I, II

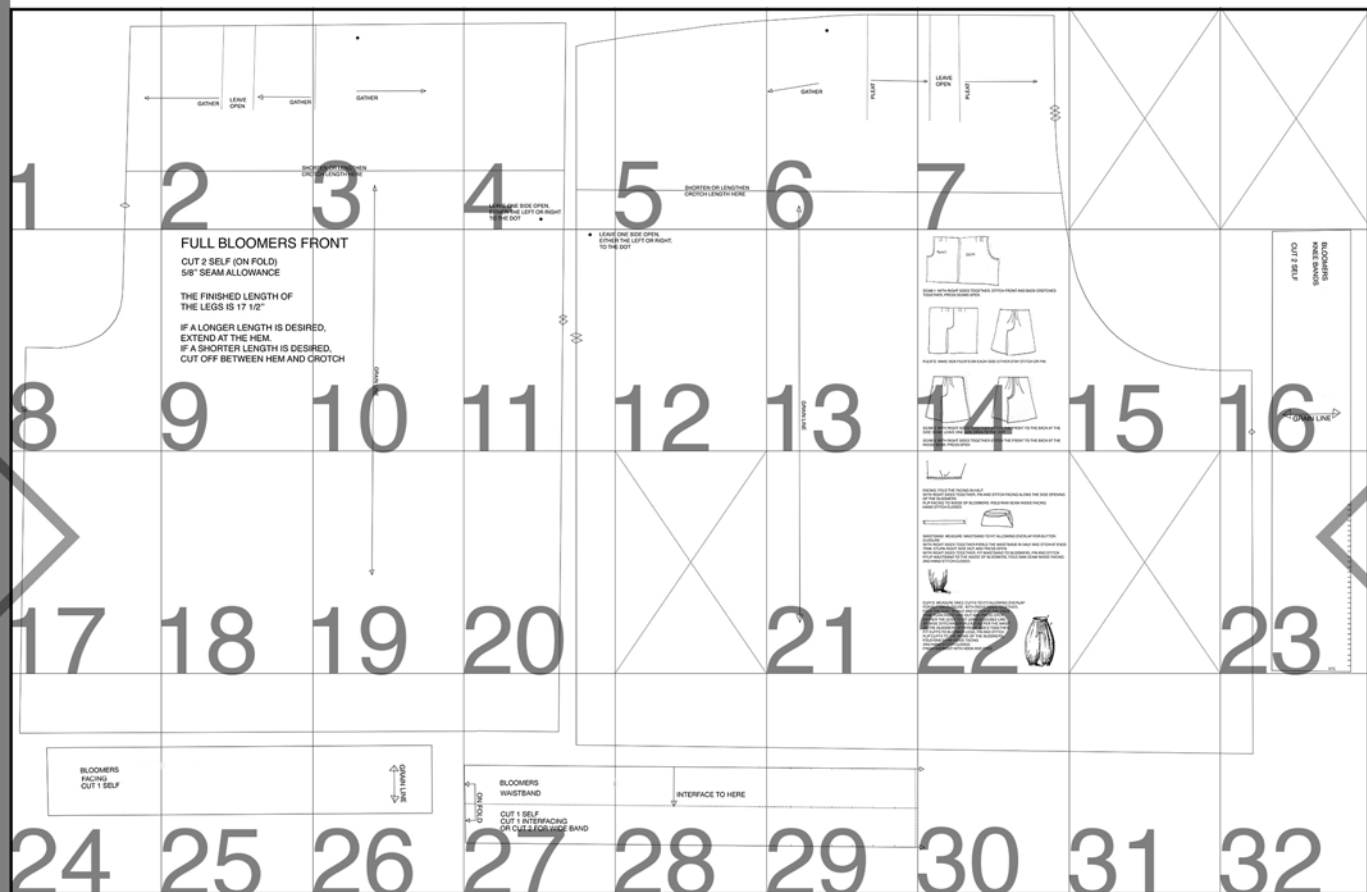
All sewing patterns are free to download. Profits from the sale of printed patterns go to the London Bike Kitchen, a DIY workshop. Please share your cycle wear creations with us on [Twitter](https://www.instagram.com/bikesandbloomers) [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/bikesandbloomers) [#bikesandbloomers](https://www.instagram.com/bikesandbloomers) & www.bikesandbloomers.com



VICTORIAN WOMEN'S
 CONVERTIBLE CYCLEWEAR
SEWING PATTERNS

**#6 CYCLING
 BLOOMERS II - FULL**

www.BIKESandBLOOMERS.com



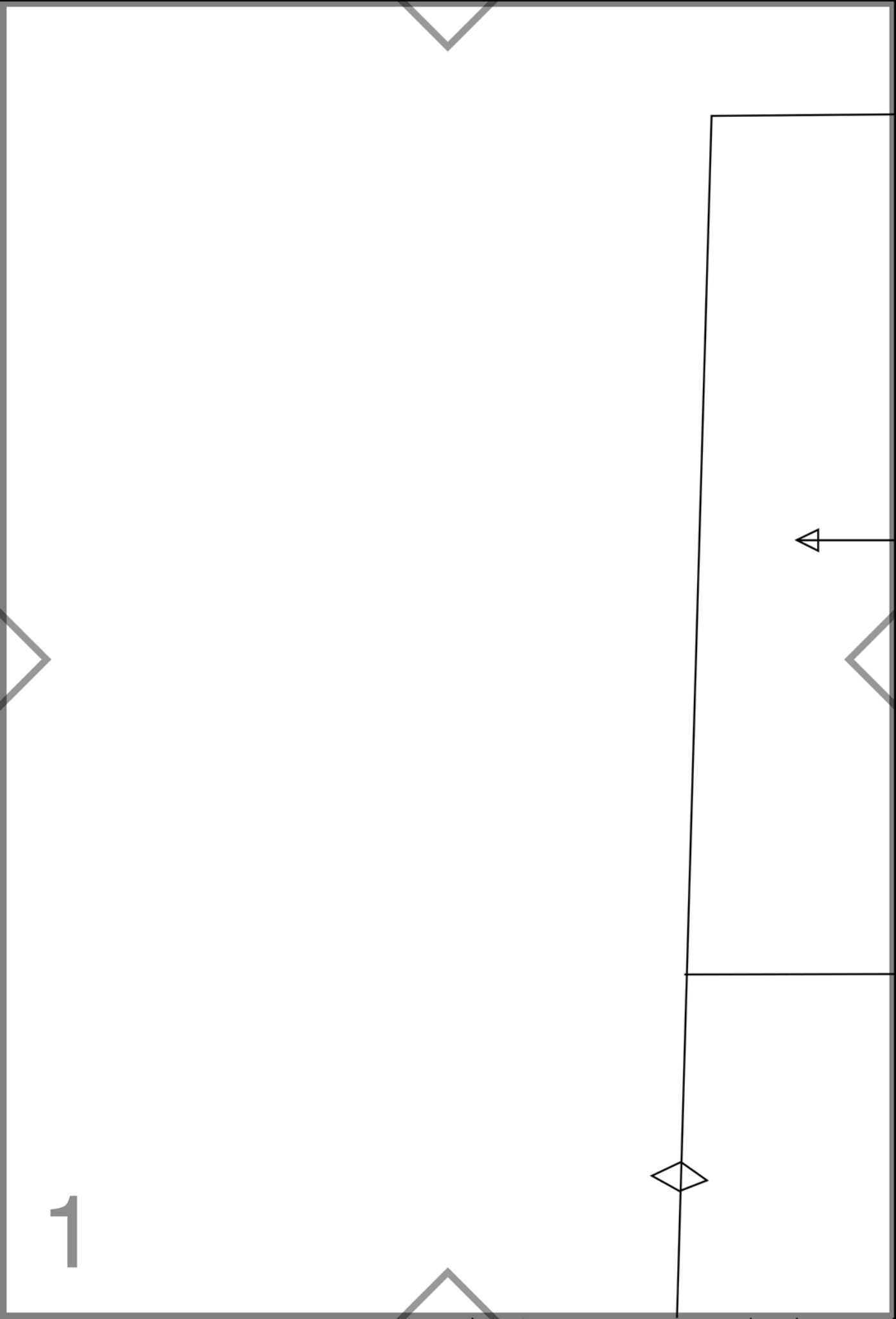
CUT OR FOLD TO PRINT SAFE BOX

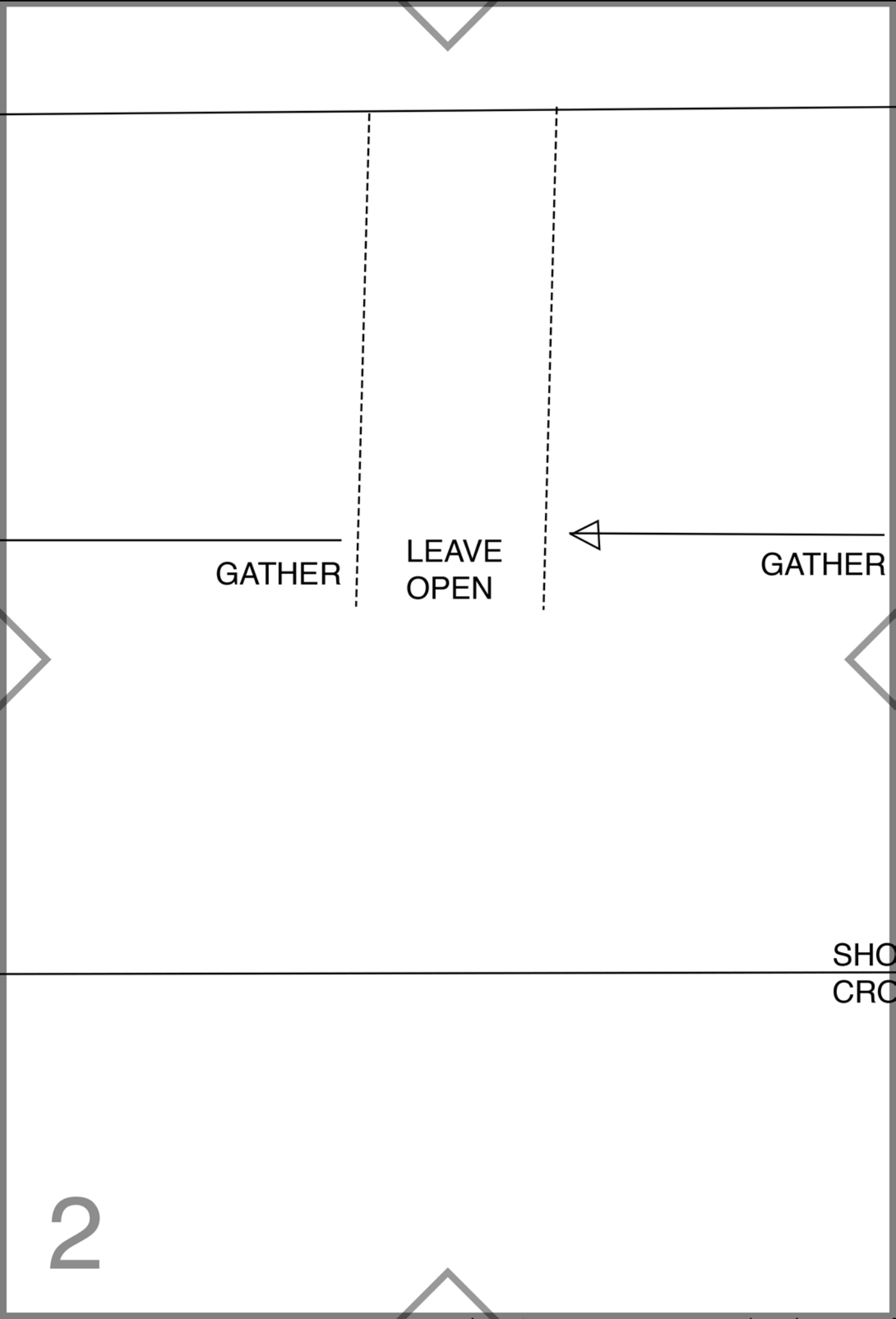
LINE UP SHAPES

STICK TOGETHER

CUTTING LINE

SEAM ALLOWANCE





GATHER

LEAVE
OPEN

GATHER

SHO
CRC

2



GATHER

SHORTEN OR LENGTHEN
MATCH LENGTH HERE

3



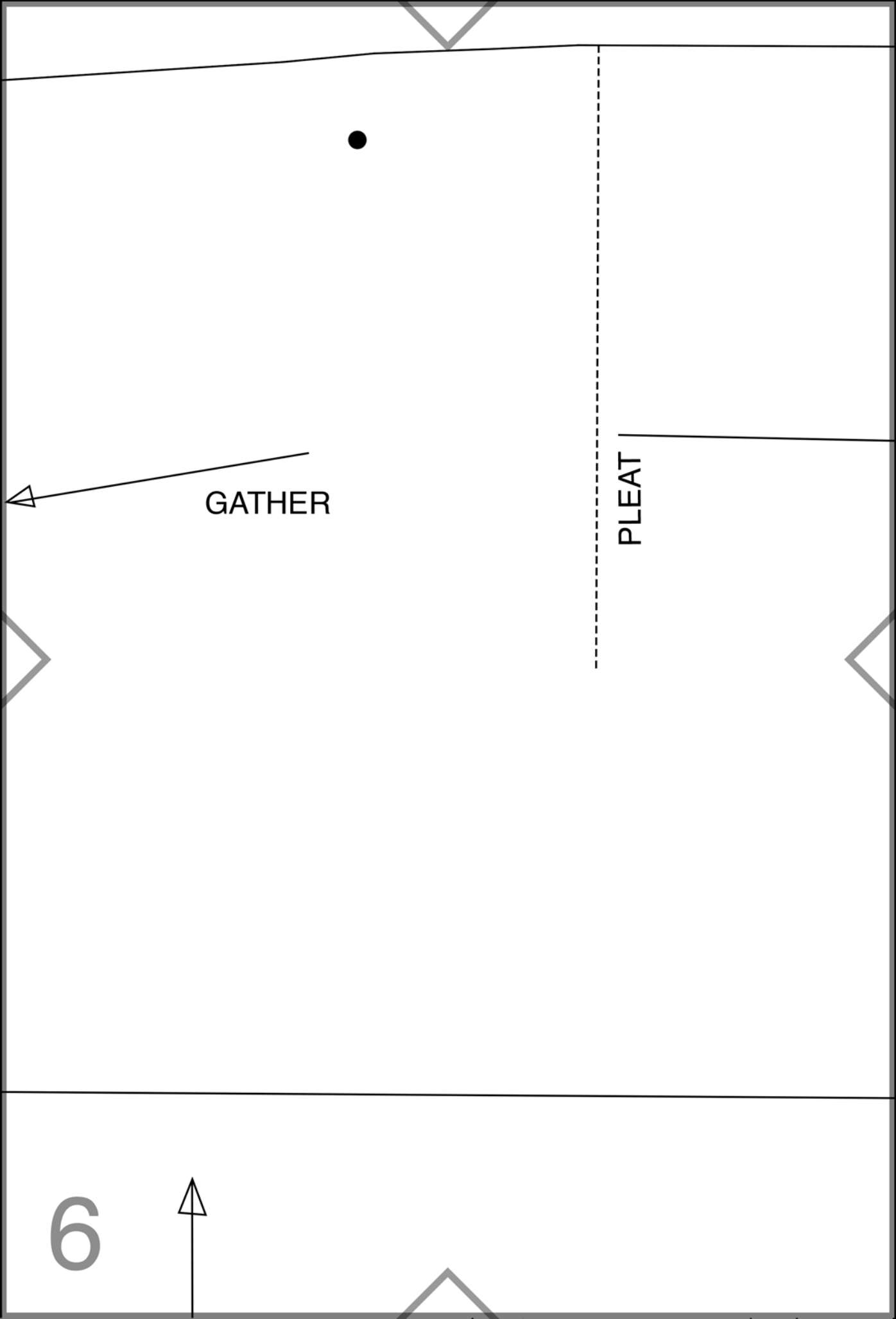
4

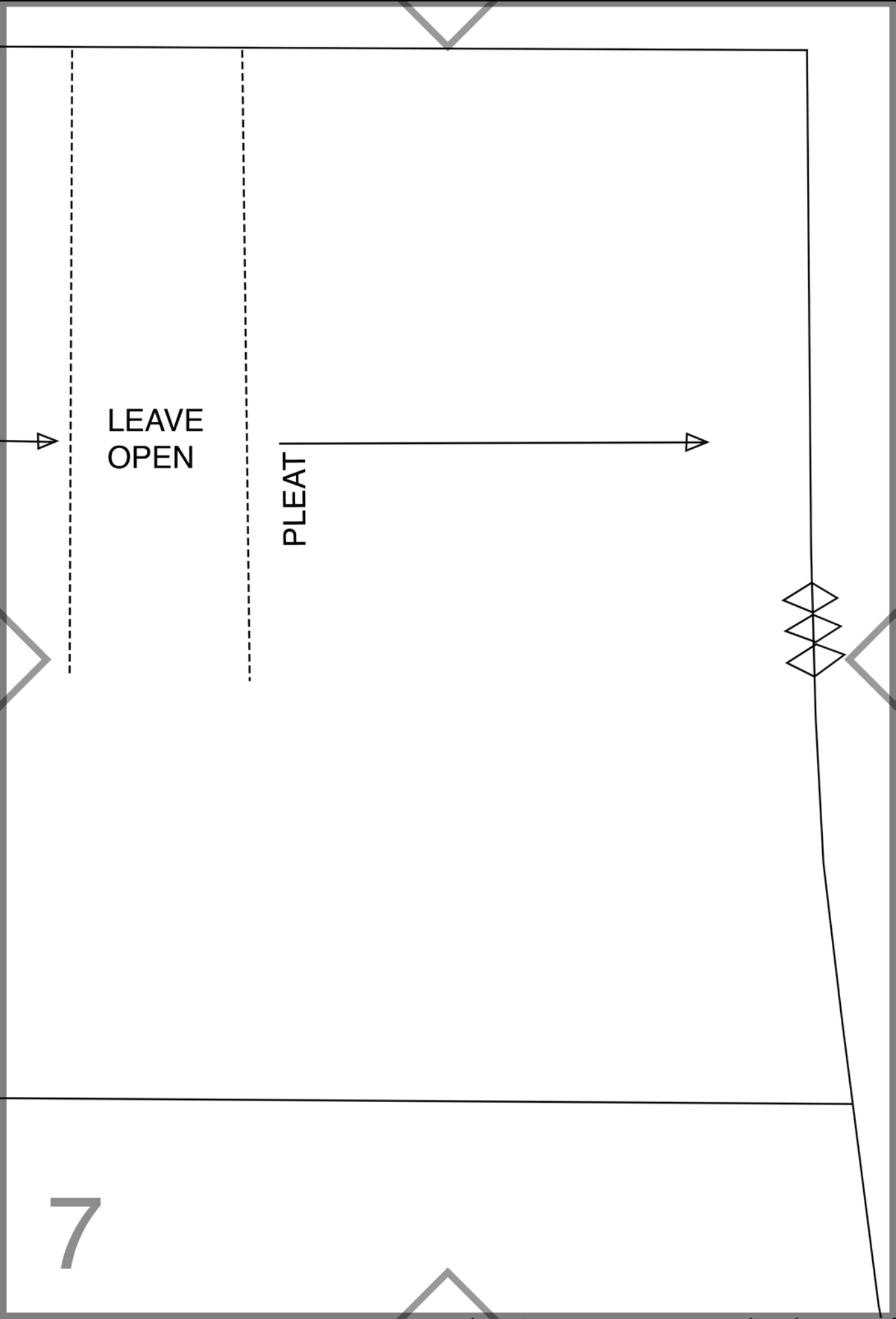
LEAVE ONE SIDE OPEN,
EITHER THE LEFT OR RIGHT
TO THE DOT

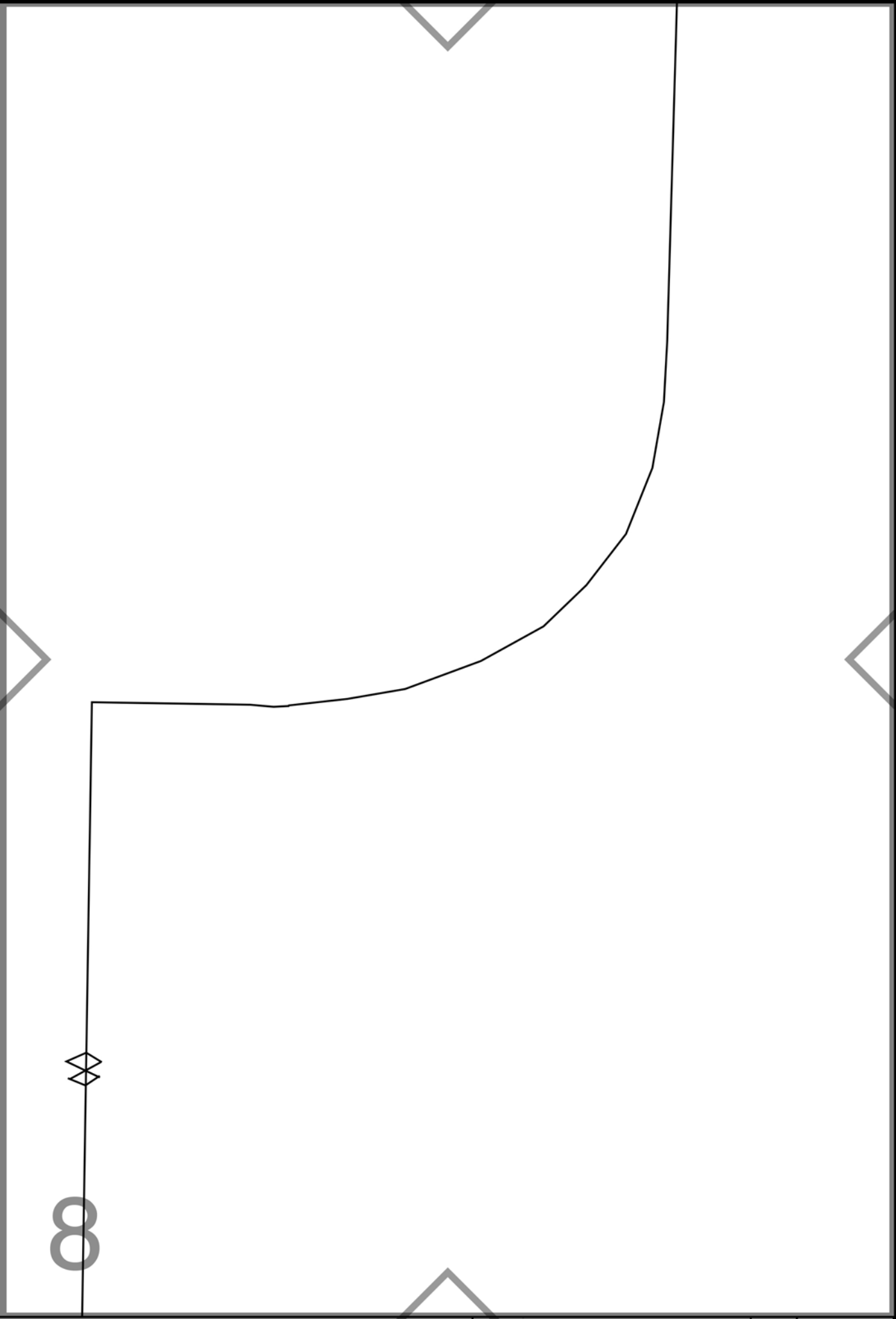


SHORTEN OR LENGTHEN
CROTCH LENGTH HERE

5







FULL BLOOMERS FR

CUT 2 SELF (ON FOLD)
5/8" SEAM ALLOWANCE

THE FINISHED LENGTH OF
THE LEGS IS 17 1/2"

IF A LONGER LENGTH IS DESIR
EXTEND AT THE HEM.

IF A SHORTER LENGTH IS DESI
CUT OFF BETWEEN HEM AND O

FRONT

ED,

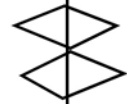
RED,
CROTCH

GRAIN LINE

10



LEAVE
EITHER
TO TH



ONE SIDE OPEN,
FOR THE LEFT OR RIGHT,
THE DOT

FULL BLO

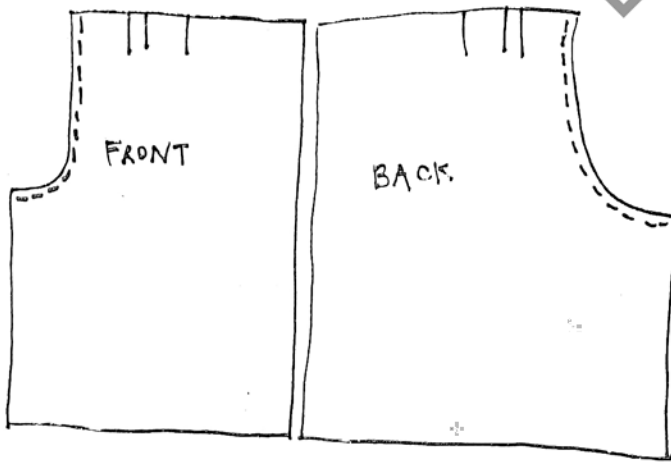
CUT 2 SELF (O
5/8" SEAM ALL

DOMERS BACK

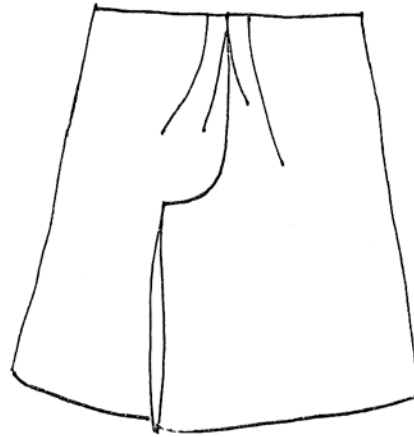
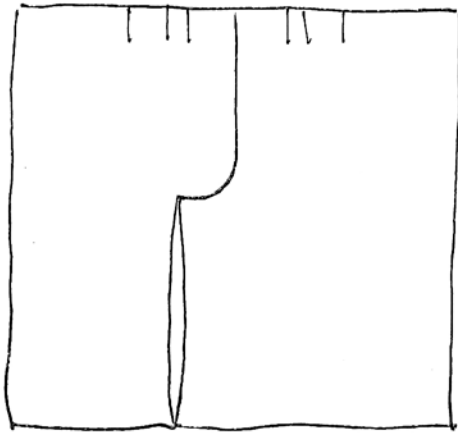
(ON FOLD)
ALLOWANCE

GRAIN LINE

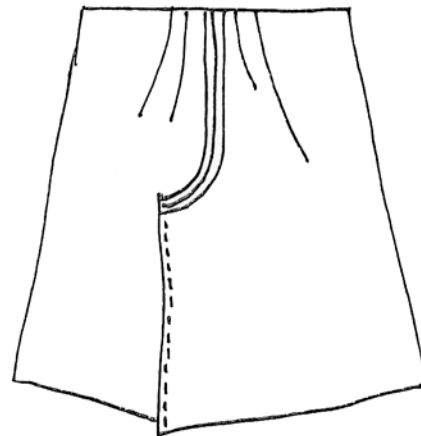
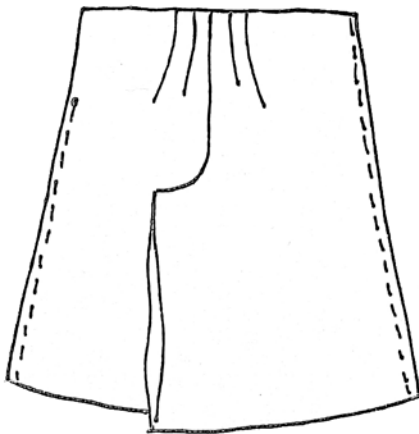
13



SEAM 1: WITH RIGHT SIDES TOGETHER, STITCH FRONT AND BACK CROTCHES TOGETHER, PRESS SEAMS OPEN



PLEATS: MAKE BOX PLEATS ON EACH SIDE EITHER STAY STITCH OR PIN



SEAM 2: WITH RIGHT SIDES TOGETHER STITCH THE FRONT TO THE BACK AT THE SIDE SEAM. LEAVE ONE SIDE OPEN TO THE DOT

SEAM 3: WITH RIGHT SIDES TOGETHER STITCH THE FRONT TO THE BACK AT THE INSIDE SEAM. PRESS OPEN

15

BLOOMERS
KNEE BANDS

CUT 2 SELF



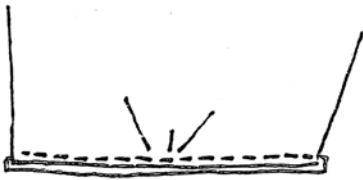
16

19

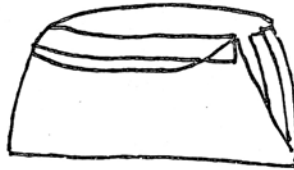
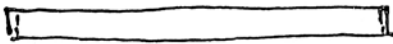


21





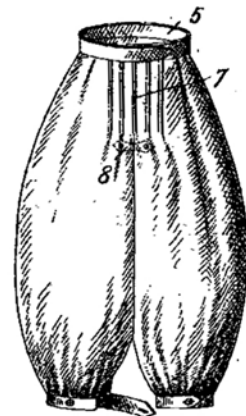
FACING: FOLD THE FACING IN HALF
 WITH RIGHT SIDES TOGETHER, PIN AND STITCH FACING ALONG THE SIDE OPENING
 OF THE BLOOMERS
 FLIP FACING TO INSIDE OF BLOOMERS. FOLD RAW SEAM INSIDE FACING
 HAND STITCH CLOSED



WAISTBAND: MEASURE WAISTBAND TO FIT ALLOWING OVERLAP FOR BUTTON
 CLOSURE
 WITH RIGHT SIDES TOGETHER FOLD THE WAISTBAND IN HALF AND STICH AT ENDS
 TRIM, TURN RIGHT SIDE OUT, AND PRESS OPEN
 WITH RIGHT SIDES TOGETHER, FIT WAISTBAND TO BLOOMERS, PIN AND STITCH
 FLIP WAISTBAND TO THE INSIDE OF BLOOMERS, FOLD RAW SEAM INSIDE FACING
 AND HAND STITCH CLOSED



CUFFS: MEASURE KNEE CUFFS TO FIT ALLOWING OVERLAP
 FOR BUTTON CLOSURE. WITH RIGHT SIDES TOGETHER,
 FOLD THE CUFF IN HALF AND STITCH AT THE ENDS
 TRIM, TURN RIGHT SIDE OUT AND PRESS OPEN
 GATHER THE LEGS TO FIT USING A DOUBLE LINE
 OF WIDE STITCHING OR PLEAT AS PER THE WAIST
 OF THE BLOOMERS WITH RIGHT SIDES TOGETHER
 FIT CUFFS TO BLOOMER LEGS, PIN AND STITCH
 FLIP CUFFS TO THE INSIDE OF THE BLOOMERS,
 FOLD RAW SEAM INSIDE FACING
 AND HAND STITCH CLOSED
 FINISH GARMENT WITH HOOK AND EYES OR BUTTON
 CLOSURE



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ETC

BLOOMERS
FACING
CUT 1 SELF



GRAIN LINE



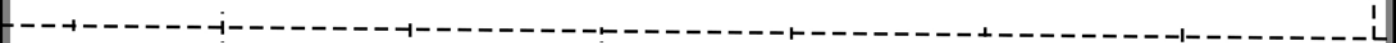
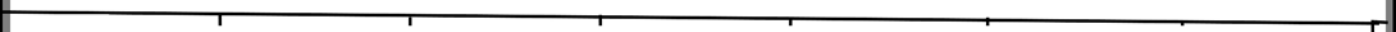
The diagram shows a pattern for a bloomers waistband. It consists of a large rectangular piece with a dashed horizontal line across its middle. On the left side, there is a vertical line with a small triangle pointing left at the top and bottom, and a vertical line labeled 'ON FOLD' with a small triangle pointing left at the top. The text 'BLOOMERS WAISTBAND' is centered in the upper half, and 'CUT 1 SELF', 'CUT 1 INTERFACING', and 'OR CUT 2 FOR WIDE BAND' are centered in the lower half. The page number '27' is in the bottom left corner.

BLOOMERS
WAISTBAND

CUT 1 SELF
CUT 1 INTERFACING
OR CUT 2 FOR WIDE BAND



INTERFACE TO HERE



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