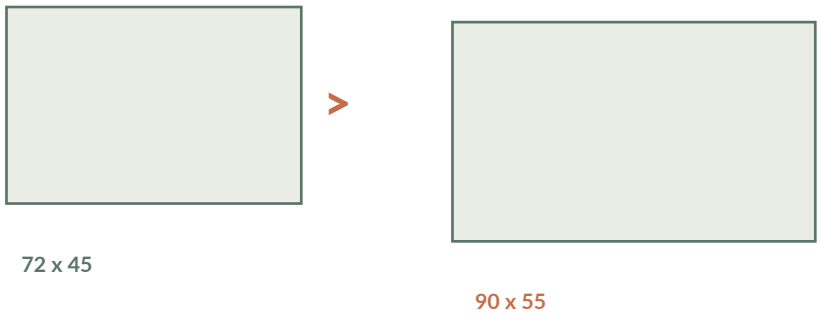
PERSONALISED GIFTS / MEASURED PATTERNS

Adapt a Craft Pattern for a Gift

Change dimensions, not the meaning of the seam or the use

RESULT SIZE • CUT SIZE • ALLOWANCE

PAPER TAG / REDRAW DIMENSIONS



72 x 45

90 x 55

PATCHWORK: finished side = (2 x cut square) - 40 mm

RESULT SIZE • CUT SIZE • ALLOWANCE

Original illustrations and two reusable printable worksheets

Illustrative diagrams — not photographs of tested craft objects.

Steadleaf Press / MAKE / M11 Personalised Handmade Gifts / STP-MAKE-F023 / FREE COMPLETE GUIDE

A size-change worksheet that keeps cutting dimensions, folds, seam allowances, printing scale, and gift suitability separate.

A handwritten gift looks more personal when its size fits the recipient and the message. But making an existing pattern “twenty per cent bigger” is not always as simple as enlarging a PDF. A tag may need a readable writing area, a safe attachment point and a fold that still closes; a sewn object needs seam allowances that are not automatically multiplied by the same factor as the visible result. The best adaptation begins by naming what the pattern must do and identifying which dimensions may safely change.

This guide shows **two original worked examples**: a flat paper gift tag changed from **72 x 45 mm to 90 x 55 mm**, and a four-square decorative fabric mat changed from a nominal **120 x 120 mm to 140 x 140 mm** while preserving 10 mm stitch allowances. The first example changes the width and height by **different amounts**, so it is not proportional scaling. The second recalculates fabric cuts rather than enlarging a printed diagram. A two-page size and suitability worksheet accompanies the free edition. All measurements are editorial drawings, not tested fit or attachment ratings.

Do not use this guide to alter protective clothing, structural sewn goods, baby equipment, toys, load-bearing straps, hot pads, medical devices or food-contact objects. For a third-party or purchased pattern, respect its copyright, licence, printing instructions and technical limitations. Adapt only where you are entitled and competent to do so; changing dimensions does not grant redistribution rights to the original artwork or pattern.

1. Write down the gift's actual job

Is the object meant to carry a short name, hide a note, sit flat on a desk or protect something fragile? A decorative flat tag is not a structural attachment. A fabric mat is not a certified heat-resistant coaster. Decide how the recipient will receive, use and store the object before changing size. If a ribbon is required, the attachment method may fail even when the paper dimensions look correct. If a cloth mat will be used under a hot kettle, the correct response is to choose a purpose-made heat-rated item, not to scale the fabric pieces.

Write a **finish line** you could actually inspect: “A name fits with a visible blank margin,” “The paper corner remains intact,” or “The fabric mat lies flat after the turning opening is closed.” Avoid words such as “perfect fit,” “child-safe,” “waterproof” or “heatproof” unless a separate appropriate specification and verification exists. This book is a planning aid for low-risk paper and cloth craft only.

For our original examples, the chosen jobs are simple: **a flat decorative tag** and **a small ordinary desk fabric mat**. We do not change the purpose into a hanging weight-bearing sign, a toy or cookware protection. One useful improvement may be *not* to enlarge the item at all: perhaps choose bigger lettering, reduce decoration or select a more appropriate existing blank.

2. Identify what can and cannot be changed

Separate the original design into three types of information. **Result dimensions** describe what the recipient sees. **Construction dimensions** include folds, seam allowances, glue tabs or openings that let the item be made. **Constraints** include paper grain, punch reach, fabric stretch, material thickness, printing scale and permitted end use. If you change one category without tracking the others, the adapted pattern can look plausible on screen and still fail the intended action.

For flat paper, an enlarged writing face is often enough. A hole's safe location must be reconsidered because hole reach and edge margins are not properties of the whole shape that can be trusted to scale automatically. For sewn cloth, a seam is an actual distance between a stitch line and a cut edge. Increasing it from 10 to 12.5 mm because the whole picture was enlarged by 25 per cent may change assembly and produce a result different from the intended finished dimensions.

Seamwork's digital-pattern guidance advises printing at **actual size** and measuring a calibration square rather than trusting automatic page fitting [1]. Utah State University Extension's sewing teaching material defines seam allowance as the distance between the stitching line and the cut edge, with appropriate construction methods chosen for the fabric [2]. Our paper and fabric dimensions are **new original examples**, not adopted from their copyrighted patterns.

3. Use the original flat-tag example

The starting tag is **72 mm wide and 45 mm high**. It is a one-layer piece with no fold and an optional punched attachment. Its shape can have simple angled upper corners, but the exact angle is decorative. The new gift requires a wider name and slightly more vertical space. We choose a new visible rectangle of **90 mm width and 55 mm height**.

The ratios are **90 / 72 = 1.25** across, and **55 / 45 = 1.222...** vertically. These are different ratios. If you had enlarged the entire original at exactly 125 per cent, the height would instead be **45 x 1.25 = 56.25 mm**. Neither size is universally right; the selected width and height serve this specific writing task. Record them independently rather than labelling the change a uniform 125 per cent enlargement.

Draw the **90 x 55 mm** outline afresh with a ruler on ordinary expendable card. For a flat tag, do not insert a fold the source design never had. Check that the recipient's name fits within a visible safe writing area. Leave space away from the physical edges for handling. If you want a corner cut, measure and mark both top corners before trimming; do not cut so close that lettering or a punch mark crosses the resulting chamfer.

An optional hole should be **re-positioned based on your actual punch reach and the observed material**, not copied blindly from a small original. For a simple trial, mark a tentative spot **12 mm from the left edge and halfway down the new height (27.5 mm)**. This is an **illustrative location**, not a verified tear-strength margin. Check the punch's actual reach on scrap first. If the tool cannot reach without forcing or the paper begins to split, omit the hole and use a removable paper band or place the tag inside the wrapping. Do not tie long cords within reach of children.

4. Recompute the paper pattern without distorting it

A responsible enlargement workflow has five actions. First, record the starting width, height and intended function. Second, choose the desired **finished** dimensions based on the specific gift. Third, redraw the **outer cut outline** using these dimensions with the same measuring unit. Fourth, revisit any fold, opening, tab or hole independently; place it where its function is still appropriate. Fifth, cut one expendable trial on a stable table and check actual dimensions with a ruler.

If a digital PDF is printed, select the correct A4 or US Letter file and choose **Actual size / 100%** when it is intended as a true-size pattern. Turn off automatic “fit to page.” Measure any published calibration line or square before cutting. **This guide's own worksheet is a schematic, not a full-size cutting template.** Never assume a phone screenshot, preview thumbnail or enlarged sheet prints at the dimensions written beside a drawing.

If the adapted pattern would no longer fit on ordinary paper, draw it on larger suitable material with a ruler or use a qualified print method that preserves scale. Do not stretch one printed page in both directions until the ruler happens to match a single measurement. A one-sided scale adjustment can change angles, fold positions and the shape of the final object.

5. Keep sewn seam allowances separate from visible size

Now consider the original Steadleaf four-square decorative fabric mat pattern used in F019. It starts with **four 80 x 80 mm** front squares, joined into two rows and then a two-by-two panel with **10 mm seam allowance**. The panel becomes **140 x 140 mm raw** after two inside joins. A matching **140 x 140 mm backing** is sewn around the perimeter 10 mm inside the edge and turned, producing a nominal **120 x 120 mm** visible mat.

The reader wants a somewhat larger finished **140 x 140 mm** decorative mat, without changing the type of seam or turning opening. **Do not multiply the 80 mm cut size by 140/120** and then assume the seam allowance still behaves identically. Instead, write the construction formula for the two-by-two layout:

Finished side = 2 x one square cut side - 2 x internal joining allowance - 2 x outside perimeter allowance. With 10 mm at both joins, this becomes **F = 2S - 20 - 20 = 2S - 40 mm**. To reach F = 140 mm, solve **S = (140 + 40) / 2 = 90 mm**.

Therefore cut **four 90 x 90 mm** squares for the front. After joining each row at 10 mm the row is **90 + 90 - 20 = 160 mm** wide; after joining two rows, the raw front is **160 x 160 mm**. Cut the backing to **160 x 160 mm**; the 10 mm outside perimeter allowance takes that to a nominal **140 x 140 mm** finished piece. Your cut list now matches the visible goal without silently enlarging seam allowances. Actual results may vary slightly as material stretches, seams settle and fabric is turned.

This adaptation does not convert the item into a heat pad. Do not introduce an assumed insulating filling or promise it can protect a table from a hot drink. If the desired recipient use is temperature-sensitive, select a separately rated product instead of deriving safety from geometry.

6. Preserve a sensible turning opening and safe process

The fabric mat still needs a turning opening. Our smaller pattern uses a **40 mm gap** on one side, well away from a corner. For the larger pattern, the same gap may remain practical; there is **no rule** that every seam feature must increase by the finished-size ratio. Choose its size based on the actual cloth thickness and whether you can turn the piece without damage, then record the opening before sewing. The perimeter remains 10 mm from the raw edge. Stitch and close the opening using a method you can perform confidently, and account for pins and needles.

Keep the material family consistent for a controlled comparison: sound woven cloth from a similar weight category is easier to compare than four unrelated coated, stretchy or brittle scraps. If a seam allowance changes because of material behaviour, stop and recompute the cut sizes rather than forcing the cloth to make the equation true. Utah State University Extension's Patchwork Pouch instruction provides background on joining adjacent patches right-sides-together and handling seam allowances [3]; it does not approve our new coaster adaptation.

For fabric marking, use a method compatible with the actual material and try its removal on scrap when the manufacturer permits. A marked cut line should not be presented as a physical seam that already exists. Do not sew an unfamiliar machine over pins or work with exposed needles near children and pets. Secure and return all sharps when you stop.

7. Know when resizing is the wrong solution

Some problems are **not** solved by changing dimensions. The chosen paper cannot hold a punch: use a no-hole attachment. The finished fabric mat would need to resist boiling water: a larger ordinary cotton mat is not an appropriate answer. A purchased commercial sewing pattern is licensed for personal use only: making a revised drawing does not automatically allow you to sell or redistribute that original pattern. A folded structure needs a working hinge or new tab geometry: redrawing its outline while ignoring thickness is not a tested fit.

If you intend a different material, fastening method, weight, heat exposure, child use or durability category, the task has changed enough to need new specialized guidance. Record “PAUSE - different function” rather than declaring the adaptation complete. Health Canada's arts-and-crafts safety page emphasises product labels, safer materials, appropriate workspace practices and precautions for sharp tools and young children [4].

When resizing a gift for a particular person, avoid publishing their address, private note, photograph or exact body measurements unnecessarily. If an item is intended to be worn, comfort and fit must be checked in an appropriate pattern-fitting process; the flat-paper and tabletop-fabric calculations here do not replace that process.

8. Fill in the original size-change worksheet

Page 1, the **Pattern Change Map**, records the original function, original and proposed visible dimensions, original cut sizes and any fold/punch/seam information. It also asks whether the result is a genuine scale change or a **redesign with separately selected width and height**. That distinction helps you explain what changed and prevents later work from trusting a misleading percentage.

Page 2, the **Cut, Trial and Gift Check**, records measured paper or fabric, actual printer settings if relevant, attachment or seam controls, the appearance of the first low-risk trial, what remains untested and the real recipient-use limitations. A blank “not measured” field is better than a fabricated precise fit.

Hypothetical paper example: Avery enlarges a 72 x 45 mm tag to 90 x 55 mm, but the only punch in the house cannot reach the tentative mark cleanly. Avery chooses a simple paper band and records “hole omitted.” The tag's new size can still suit a handwritten name without unsafe improvisation.

Hypothetical fabric example: Noor cuts four 90 mm squares and a 160 mm backing for the nominal 140 mm mat. If a row measures 159 mm instead of 160, Noor records the observed difference before assembly instead of promising an exact size. Nothing in this example indicates an actual publisher-run sewing test.

9. Check the result before gifting it

For the paper tag, confirm its writing remains legible and any optional attachment is genuinely convenient; do not lift a heavy gift by a tag cord. For the fabric mat, inspect the sewn edge and turning opening, choose a modest decorative use and record that heat/water resistance was **not tested**. Measure what you actually made. If an edge has torn or cloth has begun fraying, fix the ordinary craft under suitable instructions or do not gift it for the stated use.

The end product of an adaptation is **not** merely a larger diagram. It is a coherent set of newly measured cuts, allowances, practical assembly notes and honest use boundaries. If you can explain why you changed one dimension and kept another, the worksheet has served its purpose even if the first practice piece needs adjustment.

References and original-work boundary

[1] Seamwork, **How to download and print PDF patterns**. Actual-size printing, correct A4/Letter setup and measuring a test square before cutting. Read source

[2] Utah State University Extension, **Sewing Terms and Techniques**. Seam allowance defined as the distance between the stitching line and raw edge. Read source

[3] Utah State University Extension, **Patchwork Pouch**. General patchwork joining and seam handling; original instructions and project design differ from our example. Read source

[4] Health Canada, **Arts and crafts safety**. Labels, safer alternatives, sharp tools, child safety and clean workspace. Read source

Both the 72 x 45 to 90 x 55 mm gift-tag redesign and 120 to 140 mm patchwork-mat recalculation, original diagrams, teaching table and two planning records were independently created for Steadleaf Press. **No third-party pattern was reproduced or relicensed**, and no actual paper cutting, fabric sewing, recipient fit, heat or load test was conducted for this publication. A private rights holder's requirements, the actual material and end use, and appropriate project-specific safety instructions take precedence over this low-risk educational worksheet.

GIFT PATTERN SIZE-CHANGE MAP

Original diagram: reference dimensions only; measure real material.

TAG: redraw visible width and height independently

72 x 45 mm -> 90 x 55 mm

PATCHWORK: one axis at a time

2S - 40 = finished side; S = 90 gives 140 mm

Gift object and actual end use

Original visible width / height and units

New intended visible width / height

Change proportional or redesigned?

different width/height / uniform / other

Original seam, fold, opening or hole

New cut or blank dimensions; calculation

Rights or pattern-use restrictions

original Steadleaf / permission checked / unknown

Do not infer structural, heat, wash or safety performance from a diagram.

CUT, TRIAL & GIFT CHECK

Record only measured and observed outcomes, not imagined trials.

Chosen original pattern and rights

Printer size, 100%, scale independently checked

if printing intended at actual size

Original / new cut calculations

Revised seam allowance / attachment / fold

First sample actual measurements

NOT MADE / observed values

Paper hole reach or cloth opening checked?

not tested / yes / not applicable

Gift is decorative, not safety critical

yes / adjust / pause

One corrected cut or next decision

No samples physically made or certified by Steadleaf Press.