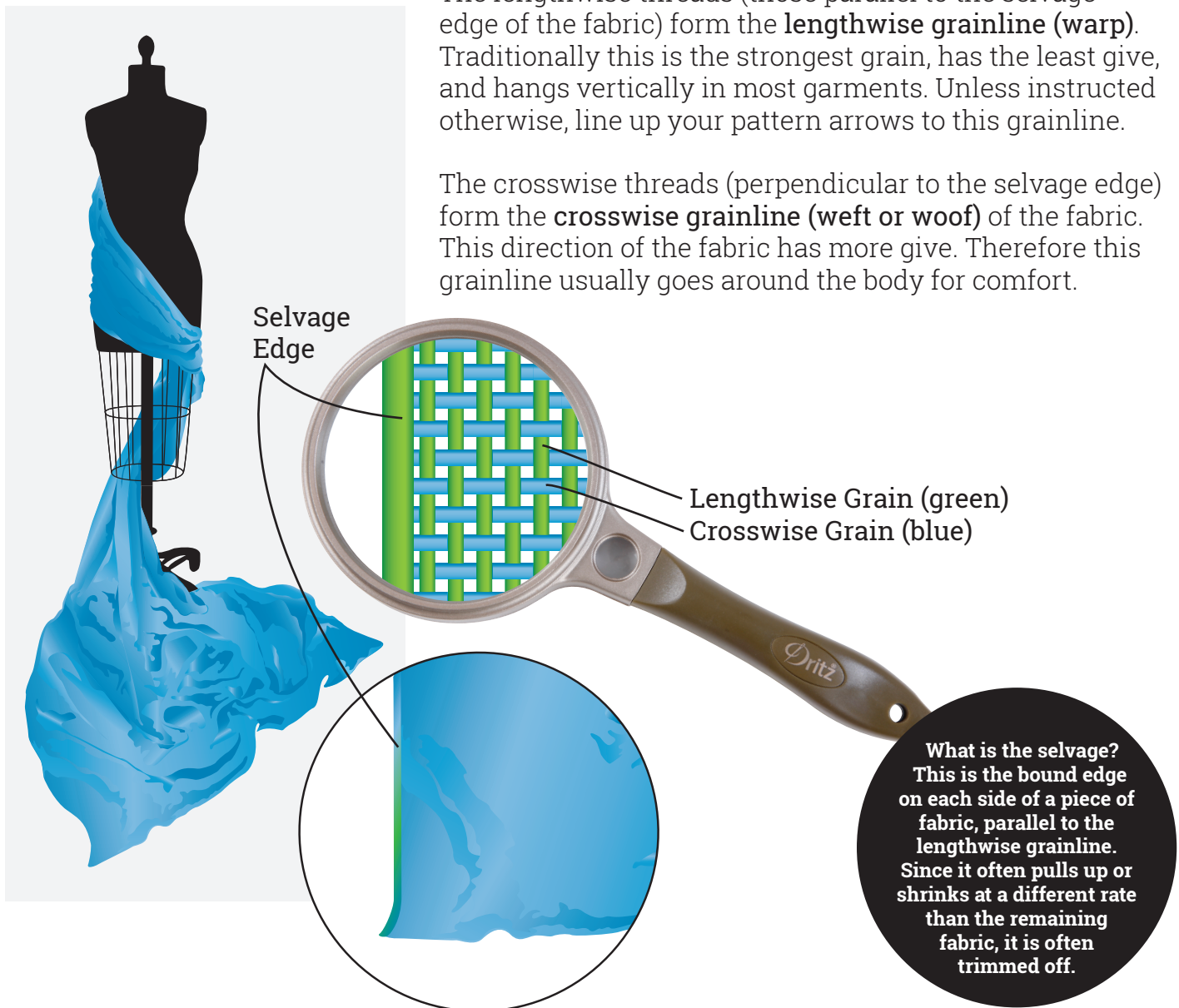


# What is a Grainline, and How Do You Find It?

Look closely at a piece of woven fabric. Woven fabric is made up of threads that go over and under each other in a variety of styles to form the weave of the fabric. Weavers call these directional threads by a variety of names such as warp and woof (also known as warp and weft). Patterns and sewing instructions simply refer to them as the crosswise and lengthwise grain, so that is what we will use here.

The lengthwise threads (those parallel to the selvage edge of the fabric) form the **lengthwise grainline (warp)**. Traditionally this is the strongest grain, has the least give, and hangs vertically in most garments. Unless instructed otherwise, line up your pattern arrows to this grainline.

The crosswise threads (perpendicular to the selvage edge) form the **crosswise grainline (weft or woof)** of the fabric. This direction of the fabric has more give. Therefore this grainline usually goes around the body for comfort.



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There is also a third grainline. **The bias grainline.** This one isn't formed by directional threads at all. The bias is the line formed when the crosswise and lengthwise grains are turned at a 90 degree angle. The resulting 45 degree foldline is the bias. Bias grainlines have the most drapability and give of any part of the fabric except for knits (a whole different story).

To find the bias grain, you must fold your fabric, lining up the selvage edge with the crosswise grainline. The fold is the true bias. The green line and arrow represent the lengthwise grainline. Note how it turns to run parallel to the crosswise grain. The blue line and arrow represent the crosswise grainline. Note how it turns to line up with the lengthwise grainline.

