

How to Measure Your Head for a Hat: The 2-Minute Guide to a Perfect Fit

A beautiful hat in the wrong size is just an expensive mistake. It slides back, it pinches at the temples, or it sits on top of your head like it is visiting rather than staying.



The fix takes about two minutes and one soft tape measure. Once you know your number, you can shop confidently online, order custom pieces with no guesswork, and stop returning hats that were never going to fit.

Here is exactly how to measure your head for a hat.

Why Size Is the One Thing You Cannot Style Around

You can adjust almost everything else about a hat. Tilt it, change the trim, swap the ribbon, and pair it with a different neckline. Fit is the exception.

→ Too tight and you will get a headache and a red line across your forehead within an hour. → Too loose and you will spend the entire event with one hand on the brim.

Neither problem is fixable at the venue, which is why the measurement comes first and shopping comes second.

What You Need

Thirty seconds of prep, and nothing you do not already own.

- **A soft fabric tape measure:** The kind used for sewing.
- **A strip of paper and a ruler:** A ribbon works too. Wrap it, mark where it meets, then lay it flat and measure.
- **A mirror:** So you can see where the tape is sitting.

Do not use a metal builder's tape. It will not follow the curve of your head and the number will come out short.

How to Measure Your Head, Step by Step



1. Style your hair the way you plan to wear it with the hat: This matters more than anything else on this list. A high bun and a smooth blowout can differ by a full size.

2. Wrap the tape around the widest part of your head: That is roughly a finger's width above your eyebrows, just above your ears, and around the small bump at the back of your skull.

3. Keep the tape level all the way around: Check the mirror. A tape that dips at the back gives you a false reading.

4. Snug, not tight: You should be able to slip one finger underneath comfortably. This is where the [hat](#) will actually sit.

5. Measure twice: If the two numbers differ, use the larger one. Write it down in both inches and centimeters.

If you prefer to follow along visually, we also have a head measurement video on our site that walks through the same steps.

Reading a Hat Size Chart

Millinery sizing is based on that circumference measurement, so once you have your number, the chart does the rest.

Head circumference	Approx. cm	Common letter size
21" – 21 3/8"	53 – 54 cm	XS / S
21 5/8" – 22"	55 – 56 cm	S / M
22 3/8" – 22 3/4"	57 – 58 cm	M
23" – 23 3/8"	58.5 – 59.5 cm	L
23 5/8" – 24"	60 – 61 cm	XL

Most adult women land between 22" and 23", with roughly 22 1/2" being the most common. Letter sizes vary between makers, so the inch measurement is always the more reliable number to shop by.

If you are unsure how a particular piece runs, our [ordering and sizing FAQ](#) has the specifics.

What to Do If You Fall Between Two Sizes

This happens often, and the answer depends on the hat.

- **For structured hats and hatinators:** A slightly generous fit can be padded down with felt sizing tape inside the band. A hat that is too small cannot be made bigger.
- **If you are between sizes and buying for a long event:** Always size up, heads swell a little in heat, and a hat that fit perfectly at breakfast can feel tight by mid-afternoon.

The cleanest solution is to skip the guessing entirely. Our [custom hat](#) options are built to your measurement, so between sizes stops being a problem.

The Half Inch Nobody Accounts For

Three things quietly change your measurement, and they catch people out.

1. Hair Braids, extensions, a bun, a fresh set of curls: All of it adds volume. Measure with the style you will actually wear, and if you plan to change it, take a second measurement.

Our guide to [keeping your hair from getting messy under a hat](#) covers styles that hold their shape without adding bulk.

2. Glasses: Frames that sit high can lift the hat by a few millimeters at the front. Try both on together before you decide.

Slipping, Pinching or Perching: Three Fit Problems and Their Fixes



→ **It slips backward:** The hat is slightly large, or it is sitting too far back. Add sizing tape inside the band and reposition it so the front edge sits just above your eyebrows.

→ **It pinches at the temples:** You are half a size down. Sizing tape will not help here. Steaming can relax some natural straw, but the real answer is the next size up.

→ **It perches on top instead of sitting down:** Usually hair volume, not size. Flatten the crown area of your hairstyle, and the hat will drop into place. If it still will not settle, our tips on [keeping a headpiece secure](#) without pins working loose will help.

Once fit is sorted, shape is the next decision. Our guide to [how big a hat should be](#) covers scale, and [finding the right hat for your face shape](#) covers flattering silhouettes.

From there, take it to the occasion: our church hat style guide handles Sunday services, and how to wear a wide-brimmed hat handles everything from race day to resort.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Where exactly do I put the tape measure?

A: Around the widest part of your head, about a finger's width above your eyebrows and just above your ears, passing over the bump at the back of your skull.

Q: What is the average hat size for a woman?

A: Around 22 1/2 inches, or 57 cm. Most women fall between 22 and 23 inches.

Q: Should I measure with my hair up or down?

A: Whichever way, you will wear it with the hat. If you are undecided, measure both and shop for the larger number.

Q: How do I know if a hat fits properly?

A: It should sit level, just above your eyebrows, with even pressure all the way around. You should be able to nod and turn your head without holding it.

Find Your Fit, Then Enjoy the Hat

A good hat should feel comfortable, secure, and natural, not something you have to keep adjusting. Take two minutes to get your measurement right, and choosing your next hat becomes much easier.

And when you are looking at styles from [The Hat Girls](#), you can use that measurement as a starting point before deciding which shape, size, or style feels right for you.

Because the best-fitting hat is not the one you have to keep adjusting. It is the one you can put on, forget about, and simply enjoy wearing.

Meta title: How to Measure Your Head for a Hat | 2-Minute Guide

Meta description: Learn how to measure your head for a hat in under 2 minutes. Get the right tools, technique, and size chart for a fit that won't slip or pinch.