



THE GREAT BRITISH SEWING BEE®

THE SKILLS

Beyond basics: tips and tricks to take your sewing technique to the next level





THE GREAT BRITISH
SEWING BEE

THE **SKILLS**





THE GREAT BRITISH SEWING BEE THE SKILLS

Beyond basics: tips and tricks to take
your sewing technique to the next level

Edited by Sarah Hoggett
Additional text by Caroline Akselson
Photography by Clare Nicolson

Hardie Grant
QUADRILLE



CONTENTS

Introduction

CHAPTER 1: Preparation & pattern matching

Tools

Preparing your fabric

Pattern matching

CHAPTER 2: Working with different fabrics

Wools

Stretch fabrics

Silk, slippery & delicate fabrics

Lace

Sequinned fabrics

Leather

Niche fabrics

Underlying fabrics

CHAPTER 3: Taking your sewing to the next level

Fastenings

Pockets

Cuffs & collars

Facings & linings

Pattern adaptations & alterations

CHAPTER 4: **Specialist techniques**

Working on the bias

Special hemming techniques

Lace inserts

Swing catches

Boning

Swimwear

Underwear

CHAPTER 5: **Decorations & embellishments**

Lace-trimmed edges

Bobble-trimmed hem

Scalloped hem

Fabric bow

Surface-mounted zip

Glossary

Index

Acknowledgements

Copyright Page



INTRODUCTION

Learning how to make your own clothes is a skill that you can build on for life. No matter how long or short a time you have been sewing for, there are always new techniques, tools or tricks to learn and add to your repertoire. Sewing is ageless, timeless and popular all at the same time. A constant skill and necessity in an ever-changing world, sewing is all around us and it is not going anywhere. Whether you know how to replace the buttons on your favourite winter coat or how to make the entire coat from scratch, sewing is a valuable skill to have. It's definitely a skill for life.

This book builds on *The Great British Sewing Bee: The Techniques* by highlighting more specialist techniques, as well as focusing on strengthening essential skills and adding personal style and fit to patterns. We assume that you have a basic level of sewing and that, in reading this book, you are interested in expanding your knowledge. This book will cover some seemingly basic skills in more depth, such as sewing on buttons properly and spacing out buttons for a bespoke fit. The reason for this is that a garment is nothing if the basics aren't right. 'Basic skills' is, in fact, a very nuanced phrase in sewing, as there are many skills that could be said to belong to a basic sewing skill set, but it takes time and practice to learn them properly. Once you've mastered them, you can start to really inject personal style into your dressmaking: adapting patterns, adding style features such as pin tucks, changing pockets, drafting collars. You will find all of these methods in this book.

Building on a basic skill set could also mean trying your hand at a different area of dressmaking, such as underwear or swimwear, or

making garments in a fabric that you have previously shied away from, such as a slippery silk satin or a lightweight chiffon. You will find an introduction to all of this in *The Great British Sewing Bee: The Skills*. We hope it will encourage you to branch out into new styles to make for your wardrobe.

The main aim of this book is to show you to use your newly found skills in a creative way. One of the best things about sewing is that one single technique can be applied in so many different ways. It's up to you how you decide to use it in your projects! We hope to teach you, guide you and inspire you to be creative in your dressmaking.

CHAPTER 1

Preparation & pattern matching

Half of the fun of a new sewing project is getting started! In this section we will go over how to make sure you are well prepared: we will recommend some tools, go over how to prepare your fabrics and finally we will cover pattern matching.



TOOLS

You probably already have tools that you use regularly. Here are suggestions for other tools to take your dressmaking to the next level.

MACHINE FEET

Below are six of the most useful presser feet.

Standard presser foot: This foot allows you to do all the basic stitches and is a useful guide for keeping the seam allowance consistent or simply sewing in a neat, straight line.

Standard zip foot: This foot enables you to stitch close to zips, piping cord or a bone. Some machines also let you change the needle position.

Invisible zip foot: This foot has a groove on the underside that holds the zip's teeth in the perfect position for sewing invisible zips.

Gather foot: This draws up the fabric for you, eliminating the need to sew a line on a big stitch and then draw up the threads by hand.

Automatic buttonhole foot: Use the gauge and slider at the back of this foot to set the length, then select the buttonhole function on the machine and your machine will automatically stitch the whole buttonhole.

Walking foot: This allows for better control over stretchy fabric, multiple layers and when pattern matching. It has its own set of feed dogs, which move at the same speed as the lower feed dogs, so fabric is fed evenly through the machine.

PATTERN DRAFTING TOOLS

To draft or hack your own patterns, you may need some additional tools.

Pattern Master and Vary Form curved ruler: A Pattern Master is most useful for drawing perfectly parallel lines and lines at a right angle. For curved edges, use the different curves on this ruler or a Vary Form ruler.

Pattern paper and card: You can get both plain pattern-making paper and dot-and-cross paper (which has dots and crosses at regular intervals, to make measuring easier). To keep a master copy to draft other patterns, copy it onto sturdy card.

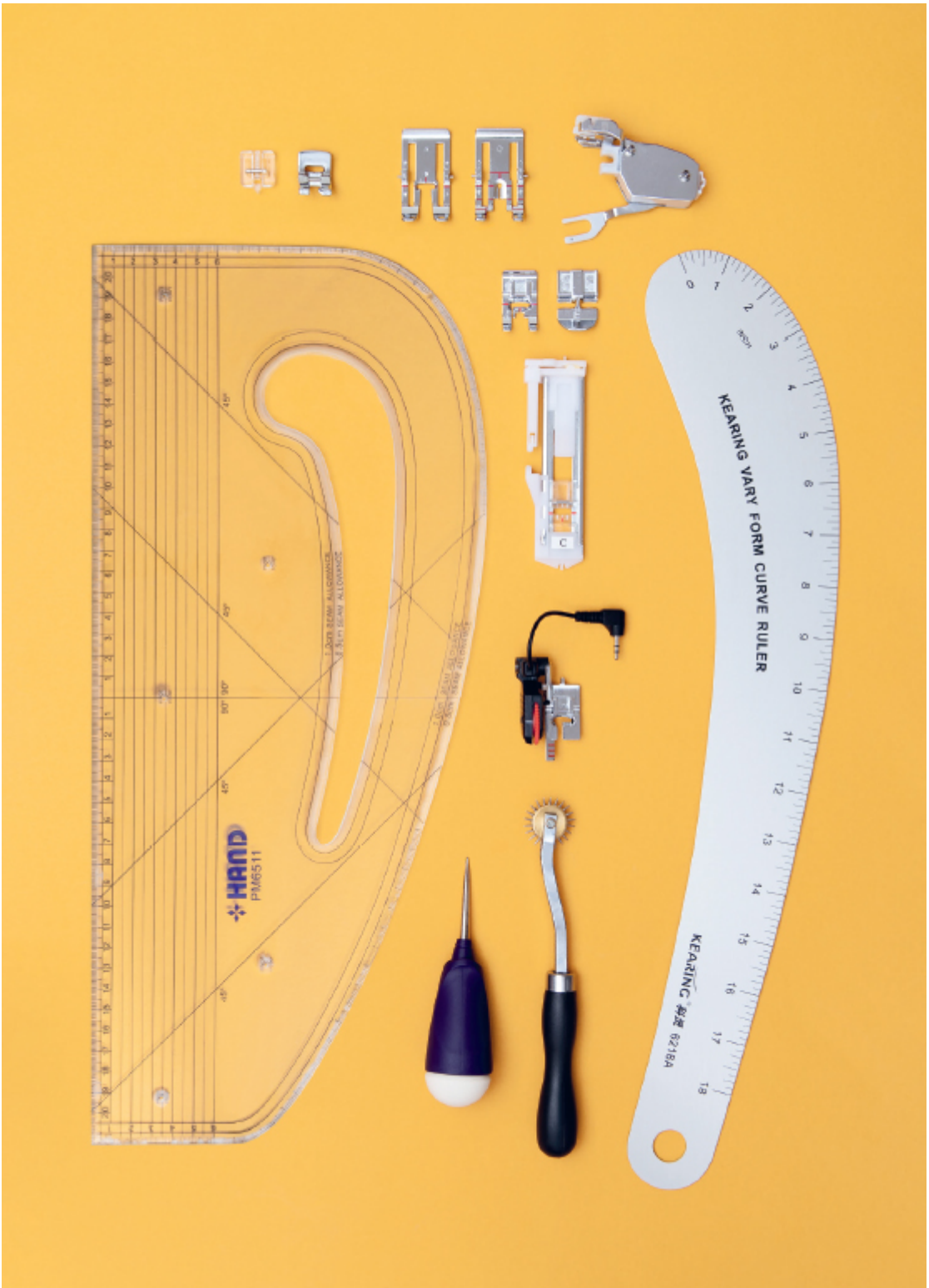
Clear sticky tape and/or masking tape: Tape is used to attach additional paper when drafting a pattern.

Pattern drafting book: If you want to draft from a basic block, a pattern drafting book will give you step-by-step instructions on how to draft different designs from basic shapes.

Pens and pencils, eraser, pencil sharpener: Use a sharp pencil for drafting. If the many lines are confusing, draft in different colours.

Awl: Use an awl to anchor part of the pattern in place, most commonly the dart apex, so that you can pivot the rest of the pattern and draft your design.

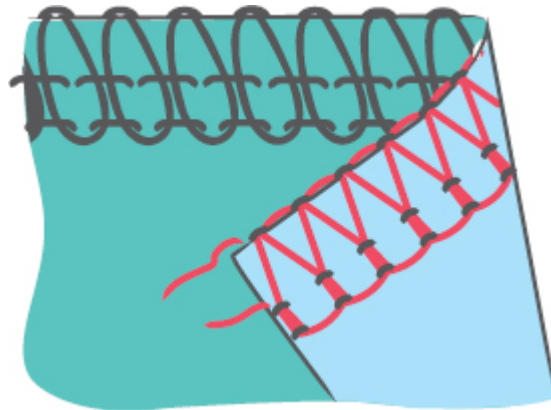
Spiky tracing wheel: Wheel on top of a pattern line and then pencil over the dents.



OVERLOCKER TROUBLESHOOTING

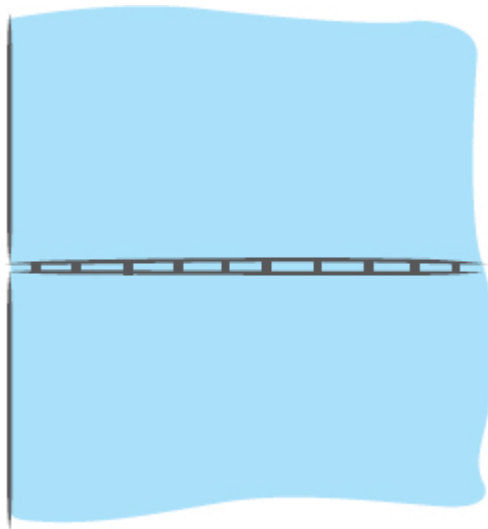
An overlocker is a great piece of equipment to have if you do regular sewing at home. It ensures your projects are finished neatly on the inside. If you sew a lot of stretch, such as dance wear, underwear or swimwear, an overlocker could even replace a sewing machine entirely if you have a 4-thread overlocker. A 4-thread machine has a double row of straight stitching, so you wouldn't have to sew the seam on a sewing machine first. (A 3-thread overlocker does not have this function and merely serves to finish raw edges.) Many 4-thread machines can be used with either three or four threads.

The machine manual will guide you as to how to use your overlocker for different functions. Besides producing an overlocked edge, you can also sew a rolled hem by changing the machine set-up. You can also create decorative finishes if using the overlocker in specific ways, such as for a wavy lettuce hem.



This is what good overlocking should look like – the stitches should look perfectly balanced on both sides of the fabric.

However overlockers can sometimes produce stitching that doesn't look quite right. Always consult the troubleshooting section in your manual as there are many things that could cause the issue: wrong tension, a blunt blade, wrong threading up, wrong differential feed setting for your fabric. Below are five of the most common issues and how to fix them:

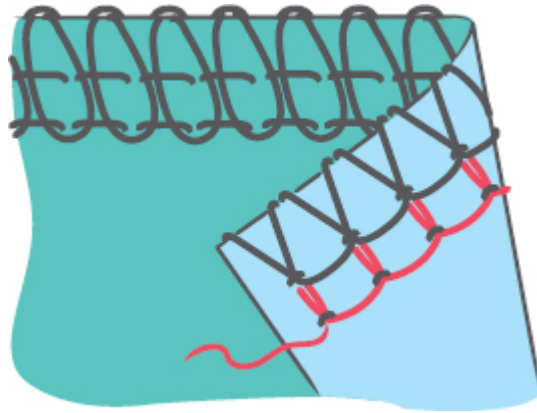


YOU CAN SEE THE STITCHES WHEN YOU GENTLY PULL THE SEAM APART FROM THE OUTSIDE

The needle tension is too loose so the seam isn't tight enough. Look for the tension wheel that corresponds to the needle thread, then turn the needle tension up bit by bit until the problem is solved.

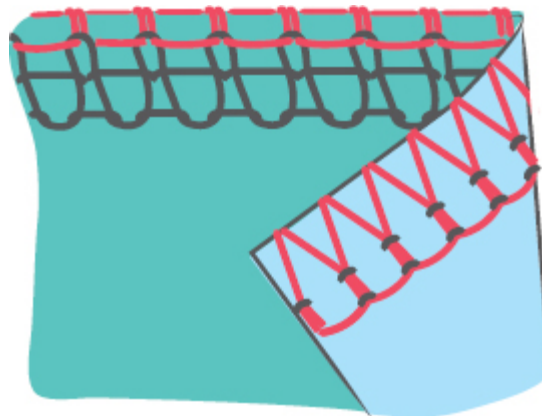
THE LOOPS ARE BEING PULLED TO THE WRONG SIDE OF THE FABRIC

This happens when the upper looper thread is pulling incorrectly, either because the upper looper thread tension is too low or because the lower looper thread tension is too high. Adjust each little by little, one at a time, to identify which one it is. When the tension is correct, the two loops should meet on the edge of the fabric.



THE LOOPS ARE BEING PULLED TO THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE FABRIC

This happens when the lower looper thread is pulling incorrectly, either because the lower looper thread tension is too low or because the upper looper thread is too high. Adjust each little by little, one at a time, to identify which one it is. When the tension is correct, the two loops should meet on the edge of the fabric.



THE FABRIC BUNCHES UNDER THE MACHINE AND EVERYTHING LOOKS A MESS!

Check your threading first, then change the needle(s). If the problem persists on different fabric types, change the overlocker blade. Once this gets blunt, the machine can't cut the seam allowance off and the fabric gathers up under the machine. Make

sure you order a new blade for your specific machine and model, and only after you have ruled out any other issues.

THE THREADS BREAK WHEN YOU START OVERLOCKING

This might be because the thread tension is too high, which pulls the thread through too tightly and breaks the thread. Loosen the thread tension to see if that fixes the problem. You could also check that your needle(s) is/are inserted the right way around (the groove on the needle should be facing you) and that the machine is threaded up properly.

PREPARING YOUR FABRIC

Before you start any sewing project, it's important to prepare your materials – and that generally means pre-washing or steaming them before you cut out any of your garment pieces.

PRE-WASHING FABRIC

Many fabrics shrink when they are washed for the first time, so it's really important to wash them before you cut out your garment pieces. (Some fabrics cannot be washed at all, of course – for example, a fabric made entirely of sequins.) Here are some useful tips.

Pre-wash the fabric at the temperature you would use once the garment has been made up – for example, on a hot wash for fabric for baby clothes or everyday T-shirts.

- Some fabrics have a coating that can make them feel a bit stiffer and perhaps even give them a sheen. After a wash, this layer will disappear and the fabric's natural character will reappear – another good reason to pre-wash.
- Trims can also shrink, so pre-wash them with the fabric. Don't cut into the trim first – put the whole trim in the wash. If the trim can't be washed (a metallic trim, for example) or you have a small amount of trim and it's a waste of a wash, then use plenty of steam on the iron.
- Some fabrics will unravel or shed in the wash around the cut edges. Microfibre fabrics, teddy fabrics or towelling fabrics all

benefit from being overlocked at the cut edge before they are washed.

CORRECTING DIFFERENT SHRINKAGE PERCENTAGES

A fabric that's been woven using two different fibres with very different shrinkage percentages (cotton in the warp and polyester in the weft, for example) might shrink a certain amount widthwise and a different amount lengthwise. You can usually tell if this has happened by analysing the selvedge or looking at the grain: it will look wavy. You need to correct this before you cut out your garment pieces. Using a steam iron and working on the ironing board, try and manipulate the grain back into shape by applying heat and gently pulling the fabric in the direction that has shrunk the most until the grain is straight. It can help to start at the selvedge and work your way out.

FABRICS THAT WILL BE DYED

If you are planning to dye the fabric and/or trims, the water during the dyeing process may cause the materials to shrink. It's a good idea to get the shrinking done before dyeing. Pre-washing will also remove any coating or dirt on the fabric so that the dye can penetrate evenly.

DRY-CLEAN ONLY FABRICS

If your finished project will be dry cleaned, it won't be exposed to water but it might still be exposed to heat, so it's still important to expose it to some level of heat before cutting out the pattern. Fabrics that will be turned into dry-clean only garments (for example, a delicate silk blouse) could be steam ironed instead of washed.



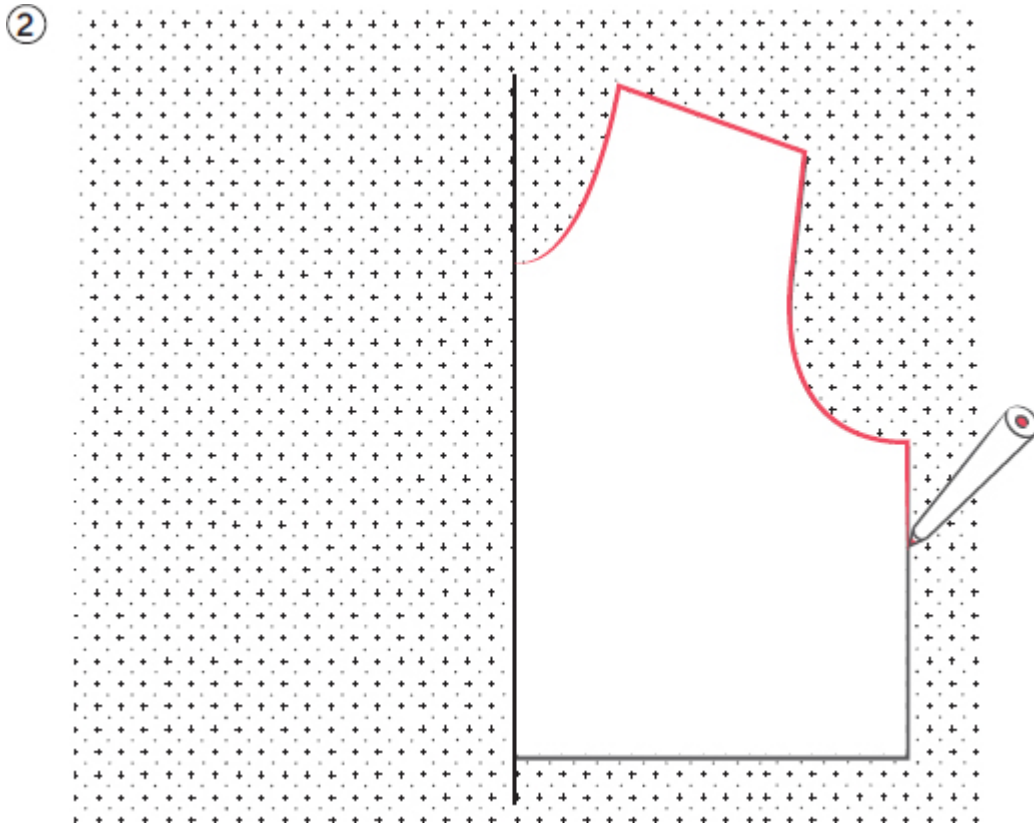
PATTERN MATCHING

The idea behind pattern matching is to make a print look continuous around a garment. It's impossible to make a printed fabric match everywhere, as a garment is made of curved seams, but there are lots of ways you can pattern match and also ways of choosing where to strategically place a motif. Remember that you will probably need a bit more fabric if you have chosen to pattern match, as you won't be able to lay out the pattern pieces on the fabric in the way you usually would. If you have a very small, busy print, you will probably not need to pattern match and you can cut out on a double layer of fabric.

PATTERN PIECES ON THE FOLD

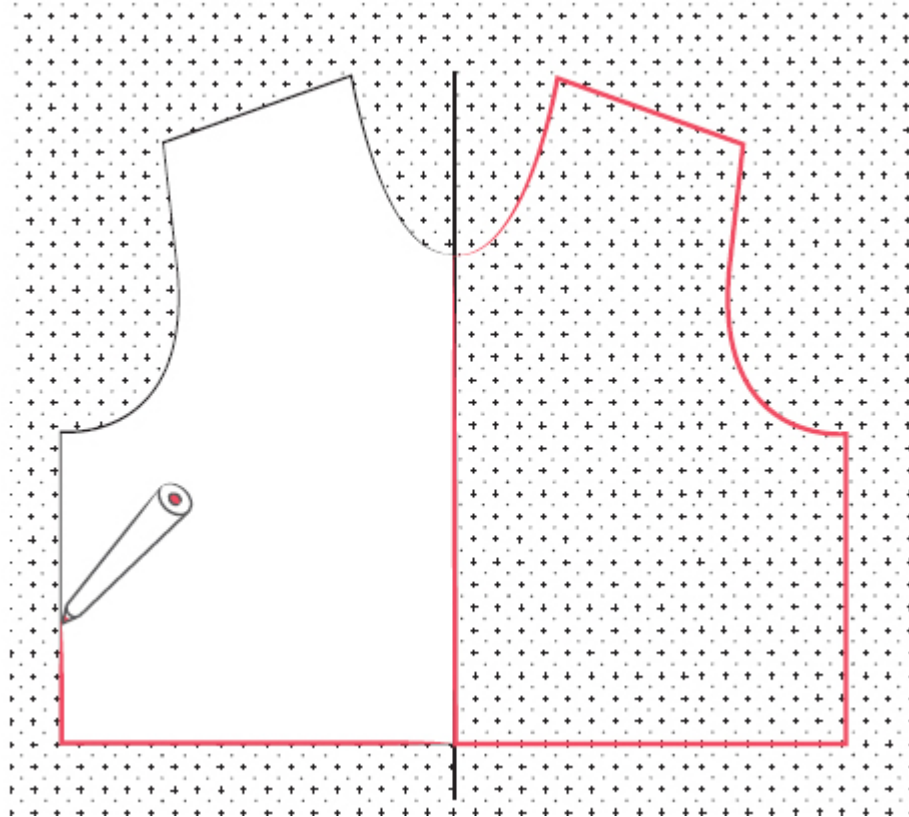
To be able to pattern match correctly, whether you are matching stripes or want an interesting print placement, you will need to cut the pattern pieces on a single layer of fabric. This means that when a pattern piece is labelled to be on the fold, you need to create a complete pattern piece. Then you can lay the whole piece out on a single layer of fabric and see exactly how the fabric print will sit.

- 1** Draw a straight vertical line on a large piece of pattern paper.
- 2** Match the centre front or back of your pattern to the line you drew in step 1 and draw around the outline of the pattern piece.



- 3** Flip the pattern piece over, align the centre front or back with your drawn straight line again and draw around the outline. You have now mirrored the pattern piece to create a complete front or back. Cut out your new pattern and transfer the grainline and any other markings to it from your original pattern. Now you can lay your new paper pattern on your chosen fabric and move it around until you're happy with the motif placement. A pattern piece without a seam lends itself really well to interesting motif placement!

③



TIPS

- **Prioritise matching the most obvious and visible seams, such as the centre front and back.**
- **Pattern matching requires you to cut the pattern pieces on a single layer of fabric and you will need to create a mirror left and right.**

CHOOSING PATTERN PLACEMENT

If you have chosen a fabric with a clear print, spend some time thinking about how you will use the print before cutting out. It's usually best to centre any big motifs or any part of the print that's arranged as a stripe or border. It would look odd if these motifs were on one side of the garment or slightly off centre.

If you have quite an eclectic or busy print, it can be helpful to single out the pattern repeat and see which motifs are most obvious.

For a fabric with a large print, the pattern will be very obvious in large pattern pieces such as a skirt piece, but less so in small pattern pieces such as a bodice piece.

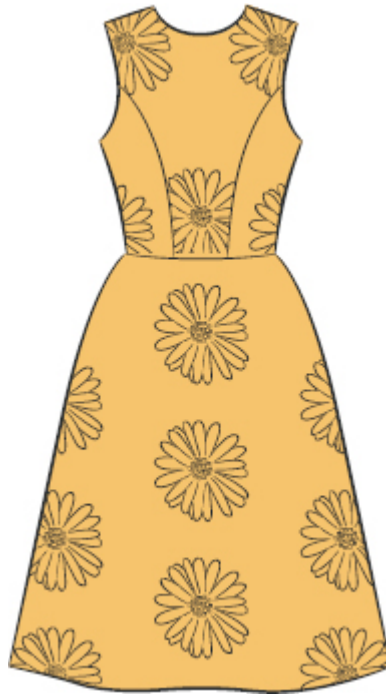
If the seam is curved in some areas and straight in others (for example, a side seam of a simple skirt that curves over the hip before turning into a straight line), you can only pattern match across the straight area.

TIPS FOR PATTERN PLACEMENT

- **On the top half of a garment, you could position large or obvious motifs around the centre front, the centre back, the front shoulders or the top of the sleeves. For a garment that opens at the centre front, such as a jacket, it looks best if the print matches across the centre front.**
- **With a busy print, focus on one motif within the repeat to pattern match.**
- **Be sure to avoid awkward placement, such as a circular motif on each breast.**
- **Decide how to use the print 'strategically' in smaller areas by choosing a part of the print to focus on, or selecting a focus within the garment, such as letting the print to feature in the middle of a bodice or on the top of the sleeve.**
- **With a seam that is both curved and straight, let the curved area of the seam be, and pick a point where the seam is straight enough to match. Make sure you mark this point on both pattern pieces that you are matching. You could measure from the top of the seam with a tape measure, mark the point where you're going to start**

matching, then mark the same point on your other pattern piece. Then you are ready to start laying out your paper pattern on a single layer of fabric.

GOOD PATTERN MATCHING



Large motifs centred on the skirt front and matching on the shoulders.

BAD PATTERN MATCHING



Random placement of motifs on skirt and unfortunate positioning of motifs over the breasts.

CONTINUOUS MOTIF



The pattern continues across the two coat fronts.

SYMMETRICAL

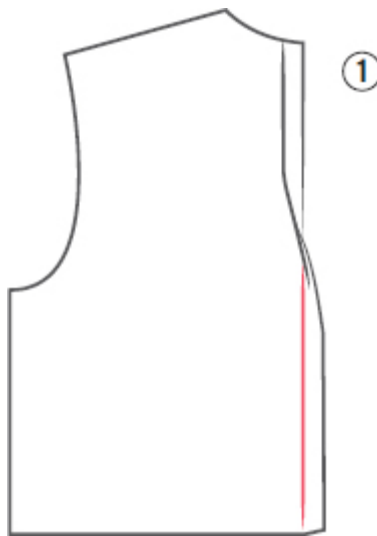


The motifs are mirrored on the coat fronts, giving a pleasing symmetry.

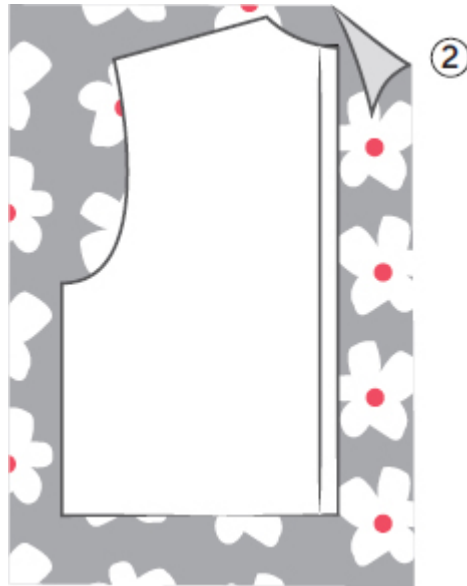
MATCHING A PATTERN ACROSS SEAMS AND ACROSS TWO HALVES OF A GARMENT

Across a seam, or across two halves of a garment such as a jacket front, it will be very obvious if a large motif isn't perfectly matched. Follow these steps to get your match right. (Note that this only works on a straight seam edge, as folding a curved seam in paper would be difficult.)

- 1** Locate the edge of the paper pattern that you want to match across – for example, the centre back if you want to match two halves of a back pattern. Using a ruler, carefully draw in the seam allowance on the paper pattern on this edge. Fold the paper seam allowance back so you can see where the finished edge will be.



- 2** Place your paper pattern on a single layer of fabric, right side up, keeping the paper seam allowance folded away. Move the pattern piece around until you have decided on a placement.



- 3** Pin the pattern to the fabric, fold the paper seam allowance out, and cut out.
- 4** Remove the paper pattern, then flip the cut-out fabric piece over so that you can see the wrong side. Very accurately, press the seam allowance to the wrong side, at the edge you are matching. Place the fabric you are going to cut your second piece from right side up, in a single layer. Place your first cut-out fabric piece on top, right side up, and move it around until the print you are matching is perfectly aligned across the cut-out piece and the fabric. The seam allowance of the already cut-out piece is still pressed under, so you can pattern match very precisely. Keep the cut-out piece securely in position with pins or pattern weights.

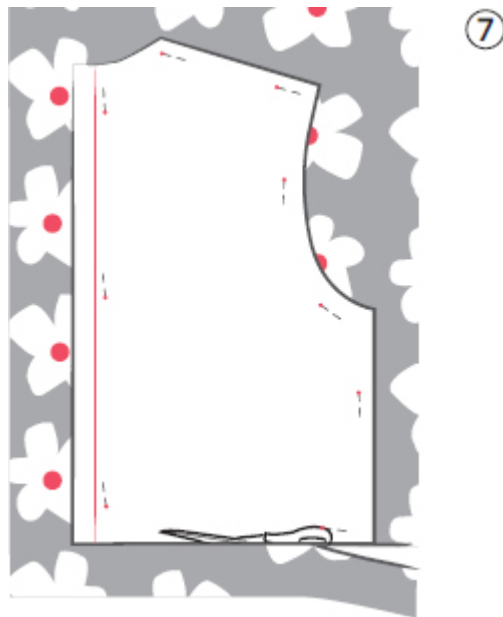


- 5** Fold under the seam allowance on your paper pattern again, flip it over so it's the mirror of your first piece, then carefully pin it in place, butting it up against the edge of the first cut-out fabric piece.

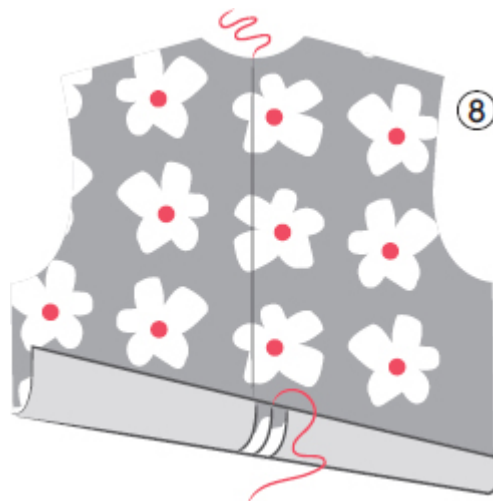


- 6** Carefully remove the first cut-out fabric piece, leaving the pattern piece in place.

- 7** Unfold the seam allowance on your paper pattern, then pin it to the fabric and cut out your second piece.



- 8** Pin then tack your seam, so that you can double check the pattern matching before you sew the seam.



TIPS

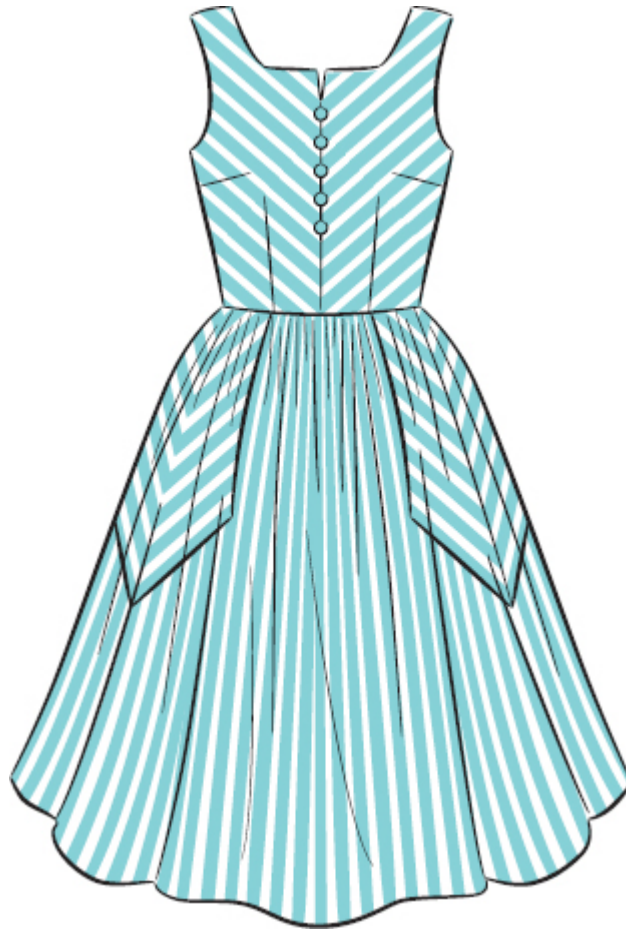
- **Make sure your paper pattern is completely flat (iron it if necessary) and lying on the correct grain.**

- **If the seam will straddle a very obvious part of the print, put the seam across the very centre of that motif.**
-

MATCHING STRIPES AND CHECKS

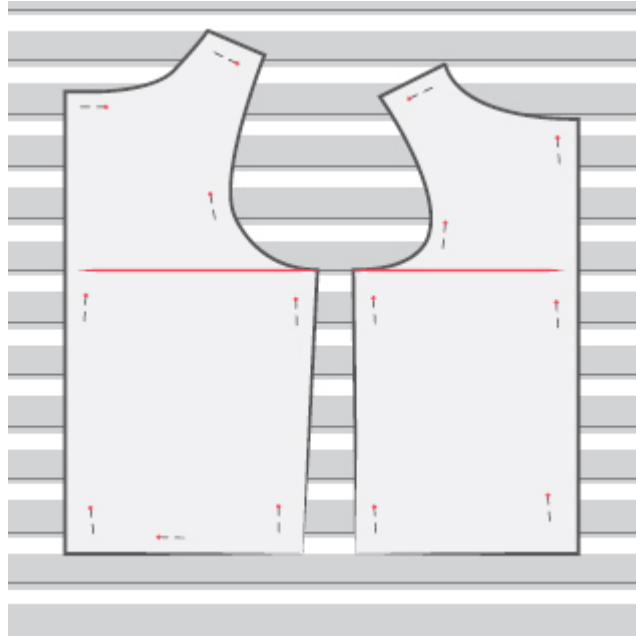
You can match stripes in different ways: for example, you can make them look continuous or cut on the bias to create a chevron pattern where the stripes meet diagonally. Matching checks can be challenging, as there are stripes going in two different directions. Depending on your fabric, you could focus on a dominant stripe or on matching in certain areas of the garment.

Cutting stripes on the bias was very popular in the 1930s to 1950s, when lots of sun dresses featured chevroned stripes in the same garment, done symmetrically to create an amazing effect.



STRIPES

If you're cutting two of a piece, place your first pattern piece on a single layer of striped fabric. Align the stripes in the way you would like them to be. For example, if your fabric has horizontal strips, you might decide to position your pattern with the armhole immediately below a stripe. If you have vertical stripes, pay close attention to the position of the stripe closest to the centre front or centre back edge. Then follow the steps under Matching a pattern across seams and across two halves of a garment.



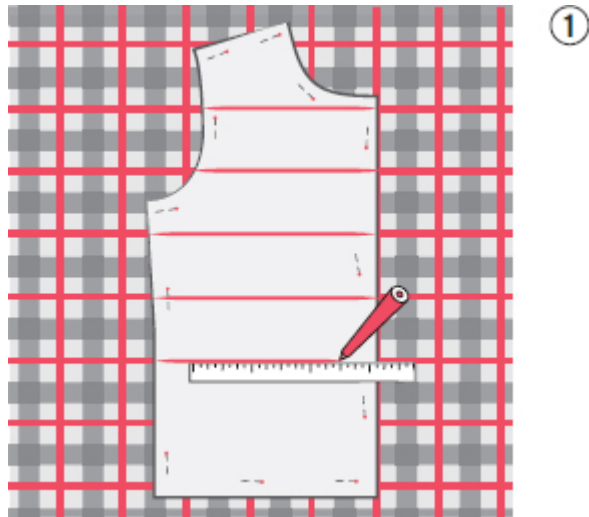
TIP

When you are ready to pin up your seam, make sure you use plenty of pins for stripes that are horizontal! Ideally, every stripe should be pinned.

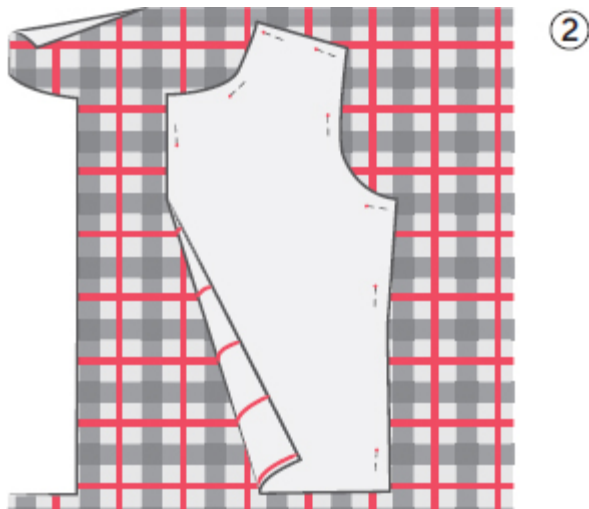
CHECKS

The more obvious the stripes are on a check fabric, the more important the pattern placement will be in making a visually beautiful and balanced garment. An obvious check print would be a really large check, or a check that has a dominant stripe in very contrasting colours. It's also important to make a symmetrical left and right, so that the checks are in exactly the same place on the right and left sleeve, for example. On a garment with sleeves, such as a tweed jacket or a checked shirt, you should also match the horizontal stripe from the body across to the sleeve, focusing on the top arm area.

- 1** Lay the paper pattern on top of a single layer of fabric. Decide on the placement, pin in place, then draw guidelines on the paper pattern: you are continuing any or all lines from the fabric to the paper. Cut out your first fabric piece and remove the paper pattern.

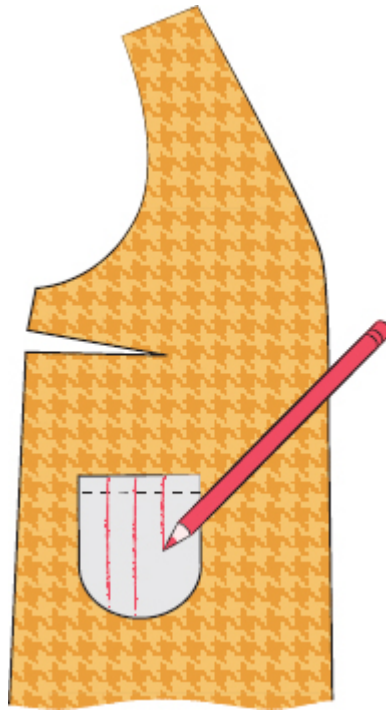


- 2** Using the guidelines, match the drawn lines on the paper pattern with the checks on the fabric to cut the second pattern piece.



PATTERN MATCHING A SMALL PIECE

The method shown for matching checks is also really useful for pattern matching small pieces, such as patch pockets! Position the paper pattern piece on the cut-out piece of material where the pocket will sit and draw a small section of the print on your paper. Remove the paper and pin it onto the fabric that you're cutting the pocket from, matching the print lines so that the print aligns.



CHAPTER 2

Working with different fabrics

Each fabric has its own characteristics and choosing the right needles, threads and tools, plus the appropriate methods to cut out and sew, will enable you to work with the fabric rather than against it. Almost everyone starts their sewing journey with woven cottons or linens, so in this chapter we're looking at more unusual (and sometimes harder to handle) fabrics.



WOOLS

Wool fabric is available in many forms, from floaty gossamer sheers to heavy blanket-weight plaids, and includes boiled wool, bouclé, cashmere, challis, crepe, flannel, gabardine, houndstooth, melton, tartan and tweed. The way you sew these fabrics depends to a large extent on the weight of the fabric you're using. The general preparation is similar for all, however.

WHAT GARMENTS ARE WOOL FABRICS SUITABLE FOR?

- Lightweight wools, such as wool crepe, voile or challis, are suitable for blouses, shirts and dresses.
- Medium-weight wools such as gabardine and suiting are perfect for trousers, jackets and more structured dresses.
- Wools such as heavy tweeds are for heavy jackets and coats.

PREPARING WOOL

- Wool can shrink. Unless you buy pre-shrunk wool (known as 'needle ready'), steam it well before cutting.
- You can test whether the fabric has been pre-shrunk by laying a clean pressing cloth over the corner where the cut edge and selvedge meet and then running a steam iron, set to the wool setting, over it for at least 10 seconds. If this has not distorted the shape of the corner, you can go ahead and cut it out. If the fabric

has shrunk a little around the iron imprint, take the whole piece of fabric to the dry-cleaners and ask them to steam-press it.

- Wool is elastic when damp so, to avoid stretching, steam in sections and allow to cool before moving.

WHICH SIDE IS WHICH?

- To work out which is the fabric's right side, look for the smoother selvedge.
- Mark the wrong side with crosses in tailor's chalk so that you don't get confused later.

CUTTING OUT AND MARKING WOOL

- Some wool fabrics have a nap to them, meaning that the fabric can look darker or lighter depending on the direction you hold it in. Lay out your pattern pieces so that they lie in the same direction on the fabric.
- If you're using a very thick wool, cut it in a single layer rather than folding the fabric to cut out two pieces at once.
- Use tailor's tacks to transfer pattern markings, as chalk and carbon paper can rub off and air- and water-soluble marking pens may not work on wool.

PRESSING

- If your iron temperature is too high, it can easily scorch the fibres. Always use the wool setting.
- Press on the wrong side of the fabric, especially when working with fine wools, to prevent shine.

- Always use a pressing cloth between the iron and your project. A light-coloured or undyed pressing cloth is best, since heat or steam can cause dye to transfer from the pressing cloth to your project.
- Use a seam roll when pressing seams in heavier wool fabric to avoid getting imprints on the right side.
- Place brown paper between the top layer and darts or seam allowances to stop imprints from forming on the front.
- Always let the area you've pressed cool down before moving it off the ironing board; this allows the press to set.
- For razor-sharp pleats or creases, use a wooden clapper to really set the press.

SEWING

- Universal needles work well with most wool fabrics, but you might find sharps are better for a densely woven wool fabric and ballpoint needles for cashmere. Try a 70 or 80 for lightweight wools, a 90 for medium-weight wools, and a 100 or 110 for heavyweight wools.
- The heavier the fabric, the longer your stitch length needs to be: use a shorter stitch length (e.g. 2.0) for lightweight wools, a medium length (2.5) for medium-weight wools and a longer length (3.0 or 3.5) for heavy wools. Test your stitch length on a scrap of fabric first.
- Wool can easily pull out of shape, so staystitch all curved edges, such as armholes, necklines and waistlines, to stabilise them while you are making up the garment.
- Practise seams on a double layer of fabric before sewing – you'll need longer stitches for really thick wool.

- For loosely woven woollens such as bouclé, use a [walking foot](#) that prevents the two layers of fabric from sliding as you sew.
- For heavy, bulky wool fabrics (particularly those used for outerwear), avoid seam finishes such as French seams, which would make the seams very stiff. The good news is that wool is less prone to fraying than many other fabrics, so you may be able to get away with just using pinking shears to neaten your seam allowances – but do make sure they're really sharp, otherwise they may just 'chew up' the fabric instead of making clean cuts. Other ways of reducing bulk in seams include overlocking or zig-zagging the raw edges, grading (cutting one side of the seam allowance narrower than the other), and binding the seam allowances together with bias binding and then pressing the seam to one side.
- You may find that a regular double-turn hem is too bulky. Alternative hem finishes include a single-fold hem (overlock/serge the raw edges first), a [faced hem](#), or a bias-bound hem.

LINING

- Some people find the texture of wool too rough against their skin, so it's a good idea to line wool garments. Silk is an excellent choice for this.
- Lining also hides any unfinished seams.
- Make sure your lining material has the same care instructions as your main fabric.

CARING FOR WOOL GARMENTS

- Always check the care instructions on your fabric when you buy it and make a note of them to refer to later. If it can be washed (many wool fabrics are dry clean only), be sure to use a low-temperature wool cycle in your washing machine.

- Re-shape the garment while it is damp and dry it flat to avoid stretching the fibres.
- To avoid moth damage, store woollen garments in zipped garment bags or vacuum-sealed storage bags. Moth balls, or another type of moth repellent, are also essential!
- Over time, it's really common for wool fabric to develop little 'bobbles' of fibres on the surface, particularly in high-friction areas such as armholes. A little tool called a lint remover can get rid of this and it will significantly improve your garment's appearance and prolong its life. Lint removers come in different formats. The most common are a little electrical device with a round head and a simple tool with a sharp edge that shaves the lint off.

STRETCH FABRICS

Stretch fabrics come in all weights and qualities. They're defined by the way they're knitted, rather than by the fibre content: it's possible to buy cotton, wool, silk and synthetic fibres in knits, and there are also blended knit fabrics. Double knit, fleece, four-way stretch, interlock, jersey, spandex, Lycra and two-ways are all examples of stretch fabrics.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT PATTERN

- Stretch fabric requires less ease than woven fabrics, so be sure to choose a pattern that's designed for knits, not woven fabrics. Sometimes it's possible to use a woven pattern, but you'll need to cut a smaller size and adapt fastenings.

LAYING OUT YOUR PATTERN

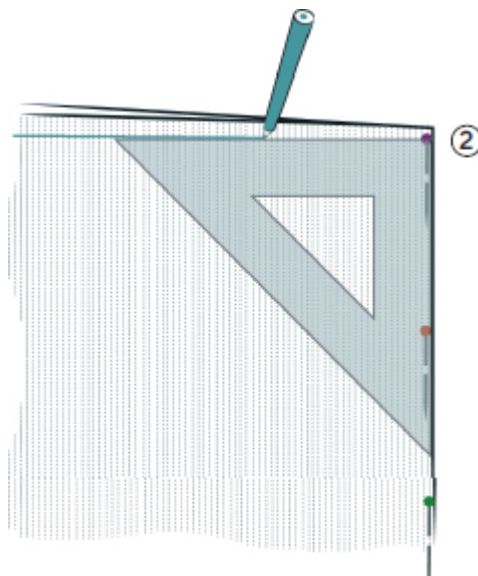
- Lay the pattern correctly across the direction of stretch. Knits have more stretch across the width, which is best laid around the body.
- Use a nap layout when cutting out.

PREPARING TO CUT OUT

- 1** First find the straight of grain. Look for the vertical lines of the knit on the right side of the fabric. Fold the fabric in half lengthways and pinch along the fold, making sure you are

keeping to one or two vertical lines of the knit. Pin the layers together as you go.

- 2** Smooth the folded fabric out without stretching it, so that both layers are flat. Place one side of an L-shaped steel ruler or set square down the lengthways grain that you marked with pins. The other side will follow the crossways grain. Mark this with tailor's chalk, being careful not to stretch the fabric. Pin the pattern pieces in place.



SEWING MACHINE OR OVERLOCKER?

- There are two problems with sewing stretch fabric: first, if the fabric overstretches as you sew, you will get a wavy, puckered seam, and second, stitches that don't stretch are likely to break when the garment stretches. An overlocker is ideal for sewing stretch fabric as it allows the seam to stretch; it also cuts off the raw edges as you sew and 'binds' the seam in the process.
- An overlocker cannot sew over pins, so remove them before you reach the foot or pin to the left of the foot.

- When sewing with an overlocker, adjust the differential feed on your machine to avoid fluted seams. Test that the needle tension is high enough so the threads don't show when the seam is stretched open (see [here](#) for more information).

MACHINE SETTINGS

- You can still sew stretch fabric on a regular sewing machine – but a straight stitch can result in broken stitches when the garment is pulled on or off. Choose a stretch stitch (consult your sewing machine manual) or a small zigzag stitch, reduced to 2.5 width, stretching the fabric slightly as you sew. The width of the zig-zag stitch will determine how much stretch you get; the length will determine how close together the zig-zags are. If they are too close, it will take you ages to sew the seam – but if they're too far apart, there may be gaps in the seam. Test the stitch on a double thickness of spare fabric. Try different stitch lengths and widths until you find the combination that works best for your project.
- With such a range of fabric weights and qualities, it's a good idea to sew a test seam each time you use a new stretch fabric. Keep a notebook with samples and the settings you find work best.
- It's worth decreasing the pressure of your presser foot if your machine has that function. This can stop the fabric from stretching out as it goes through.

NEEDLES & FEET

- Use a ballpoint or stretch needle when sewing with stretch fabrics. A two-way stretch fabric such as Lycra needs a stretch needle, while most jersey fabrics are best sewn with a ballpoint needle. Both these specialist needles, available in different thicknesses for the different weights of fabrics, have rounded points, so they will separate the fibres in your fabric rather than piercing them, which

could create laddering. Using a universal needle can cause skipped stitches.

- A [walking foot](#) feeds both layers of fabric through the machine at the same pace, so it can help reduce the risk of one layer stretching while you're sewing.

AVOID STRETCHING THE FABRIC WHILE YOU SEW

- Support the fabric so that it doesn't slip off your work surface, as the weight could cause it to stretch. If you've got an extension table for your sewing machine, that will help enormously; otherwise, just hold the fabric up while you sew. And take care not to pull the fabric through the machine.

NEATENING SEAMS

- Not all knitted fabrics will fray, so often you won't need to neaten your raw edges. Test the edge of a spare piece to see if your fabric frays.
- The edges of knit fabric can have a tendency to curl, causing bulky seams. To avoid this, stitch with a double seam by stitching two parallel rows close together, working both in the same direction. Stitch the first row, using a stretch or zigzag stitch. Stitch again in the seam allowance a scant 3 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in.) away, using either a straight stitch or a small zigzag stitch, then trim close to the stitching.

STABILISING SEAMS

- There are some areas on a stretch knit garment where the fabric shouldn't stretch too much or they will pull out of shape – for example, necklines, shoulder seams and armholes. Avoid

unwanted stretch by adding a strip of fusible stabiliser (ease tape) to the seam allowance. Alternatively, with right sides together, place seam binding, ribbon or twill tape over the seamline and stitch it in place when you stitch the seam. Use a knit stabiliser that's a similar weight to your fabric.

SILK, SLIPPERY & DELICATE FABRICS

The slipperiness of silk and satin makes them difficult to handle. They can all too easily slither around as you machine stitch, resulting in inaccurate seam matching, puckers and bubbles or, even worse, the fabric getting caught and damaged in the feed dogs. If they are cut on the bias, they are even trickier to deal with because you will be in danger of overstretching the fabric and producing wavy seams and edges. Here are some tips for handling these difficult fabrics.

BEFORE STARTING

- Always store satin fabric rolled to avoid bruising the surface.
- Before sewing, make sure your workspace is clean and wash your hands to remove any oil residue.
- If your cutting table has a rough surface, cover it with an oil cloth so that your fabric doesn't snag on it.
- If your fabric is washable, you can try using a little starch spray on it before cutting it out. This will make it a bit stiffer and easier to control – but always test on a piece of scrap fabric first.

PINNING AND CUTTING OUT

- When pinning the pattern pieces to the fabric, only place pins in the seam allowances to avoid making holes in the fabric that will show.

- Use new, extra-fine silk pins – they won't leave holes in the same way as normal dressmaking pins.
- Pin frequently!
- Placing pattern weights on the fabric will hold the fabric layers together while you pin the pattern pieces in place.
- For really accurate cutting, you might prefer to cut in a single layer. Just remember to flip any non-symmetrical pieces (such as the front of a bodice) so that you end up with a left and a right side.
- If you're cutting a piece that is marked to be cut on the fold from a single layer, place the paper pattern in position on the fabric and mark where the fold would be. Cut around all the other edges, then flip the paper pattern over, align the edge with your fold mark, pin the pattern in place again, and cut the second half of the piece.
- You may find it easier to use a rotary cutter on a cutting mat, rather than scissors.
- Satin looks different when seen from different angles (it essentially has a very subtle nap), so you need to lay out the pattern pieces in the same direction before cutting them out.

TRANSFERRING PATTERN MARKINGS

- Don't use carbon paper with a tracing wheel, as this may mark the fabric permanently and may show on the finished garment. Instead, use tailor's chalk or an air-soluble marker pen on the wrong side of the fabric.
- You can use a spiky tracing wheel without carbon paper and follow the indentations as your guide. This can work well for transferring pattern markings within a pattern piece, such as a dart.

SEWING

- Tack everything in place before you machine stitch to reduce the risk of the fabric slipping while it is being sewn.
- When tacking, use a very fine needle and work within the seam allowance – otherwise you may end up with visible pin holes in the finished garment.
- Always do some test seams to work out the best settings. As a general guide, a stitch length of 1.5–2 is usually about right for very thin silks and satins, while 2–2.5 is better for thicker silks.
- Start each project with a new, fine sewing machine needle. Sharps are recommended for these fabrics.
- A [walking foot](#) will feed the layers through the machine at the same speed, reducing the risk of slippage.
- If you don't have a walking foot, another way to reduce slippage when machining is to pin tissue paper over the seam you're about to stitch; stitch through it, then tear it away once the seam is done.
- French seams enclose the raw edges of seams and prevent fraying.
- [Rolled hems](#) are a good option for these very fine fabrics.
- When working with fine fabrics, a tip to remember is that the needle and thread you use in your machine should match the fineness of the fabric's fibres – so a silk with very fine fibres, for example, should be sewn with a size 60 or 70 needle and a thin polyester thread. This way the needle and thread won't make ugly holes in the fibres while sewing.

PRESSING

- Always use a pressing cloth. Silk organza is good – it's transparent, so you can see exactly where you're pressing, and it can withstand reasonably high temperatures.

LACE

Prized for its delicacy, lace never seems to go out of fashion. It's always been a fabric of choice for wedding gowns, but it's also perfect for pretty summer tops as well as being popular on lingerie. Traditionally produced in white or cream, it's now available in all kinds of colours that can make it a stand-out feature.

Lace is produced either as a fabric or as narrow trim known as an insertion. Using a lace insertion is a cost-effective way to add a touch of luxury to a garment – you can find more information about using [lace inserts](#).

While it's true that lace is delicate and needs careful handling when sewn, it's actually more forgiving than you might expect, and mistakes can often be disguised.

GENERAL TIPS

- Avoid using a heavily corded lace for your first lace project as it's trickier to sew with. An all-over lace with no large spaces is a great first choice.
- If you're using a large-patterned lace, buy an extra 75 cm (30 in.) or so to allow for matching up.
- Lace can easily snag and catch on a rough surface – even on rough hands and nails. Handle with care and make sure your work surface is completely smooth.

PREPARATION

- Lace is often heavily starched. It's a good idea to gently rinse it, following the manufacturer's care instructions, and allow it to dry before you attempt to cut it and use it in your project.
- If you cut lace straight from the roll, it will shrink back, so your cut garment pieces will end up smaller. Before you cut, lay the lace out flat and let it stretch and relax naturally – preferably overnight.
- Tailor's tacks or long tacking stitches in a contrasting colour are the best way to transfer pattern markings to lace; chalk and carbon just don't stay on.

CUTTING

- Lace often has a one-way design, so it's a good idea to cut it out in a single layer.
- Consider where to place the motifs in the lace pattern on your garment – make sure you centre motifs on garment pieces, for example. You'll also need to match up the lace pattern horizontally. For more on pattern placement see [here](#).
- Use pattern weights rather than pins when cutting out lace.
- Use a rotary cutter rather than scissors, so that you don't have to lift the lace up as you cut and the fabric will stay perfectly flat.

SEWING

- If you are sewing stretch lace, you will need stretch needles.
- If your machine has a stretch stitch, use it. If not, use a narrow zig-zag stitch.

- Lace is very delicate. Use a thin sharp or universal needle to avoid ripping the fabric.
- Sew lace seams slowly – at least to begin with! Otherwise the lace can easily shift as you sew.
- Backstitching at the start and end of seams can look unsightly on such a delicate fabric. Instead, leave long thread tails (on both the top and bobbin threads) and simply knot them together when you finish sewing.
- If you find that the lace fabric is getting pulled into the throat plate of your machine, try placing a piece of tissue paper under the fabric edge.
- To finish lace seams, an overlocker gives a really professional-looking result. However, it looks best on fairly dense lace patterns; on a more open lace, you'll see the overlocking through the holes. Other options are to bind the seams with bias tape or sew them with French seams.
- Well-made lace trim usually has a decorative border, such as a scalloped edge. For a dress or skirt, you could use this border as the hem and leave that part of the hem unlined so that you can appreciate the outline of the scallops.

BACKING & LINING

- As lace has a level of transparency, you will need a second layer of fabric to make it opaque. You can either back the lace with a second fabric – this means cutting out all pattern pieces in the lace as well as the backing material, backing all the separate pattern pieces first, then putting the garment together (see [Backing](#)). Or you could make up the garment in lace first and then add a lining.

PRESSING

- Always use a pressing cloth to avoid synthetic lace melting.
- Do a test press on a scrap of lace to work out the temperature. Start with a synthetic setting, as often lace fabric is blended with synthetic fibres.

SEQUINNEED FABRICS

Sequinned fabrics add a definite touch of 'bling' to party and evening wear, but sewing them requires a few specialist techniques. They're definitely not a good choice for beginners!

CHOOSING A PATTERN

- First, work out whether that gorgeous sequinned fabric you couldn't resist buying is stretch (for example, jersey or stretch tulle) or non-stretch (for example, organza, taffeta or tulle) as this will have an impact on the type of pattern you choose and the way you sew it. The stretch kind can be used for figure-hugging styles and dancewear, whereas the non-stretch kind is most commonly used for dressmaking and it is well suited to designs that would be made from woven fabrics in general such as gowns and jackets.
- If you are using a stretch sequinned fabric, then you will need a stretch pattern designed for the same stretch percentage as your fabric. For non-stretch sequinned fabric, choose a woven pattern.
- Then think about the style of the pattern. You want the sequins to be the star of the show, so avoid fussy details like pleats, pockets or gathers.
- Sequinned fabric can be rather bulky, so you should also steer clear of patterns with darts or lots of seams.

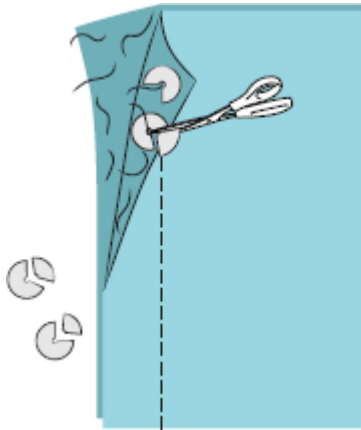
CUTTING

- Follow the 'with nap' layouts, making sure that all pieces are laid head to toe in the same direction. This ensures that pattern pieces are cut so that the sequins all go the same way, and this is usually done so that the sequins face down. If you're using two-tone sequins, cut so that the colour you want to show off the most is facing down.
- Use sharp scissors or a rotary cutter to cut out the fabric – but not your best dressmaking shears, as the sequins can blunt scissors really quickly.
- Cut from a single layer of fabric with the fabric right side up, remembering to flip the pattern piece over if you need to cut two in order to get a left and a right side.
- Keep the pattern pieces in place with pattern weights.
- Sequins will invariably ping off as you're cutting, so you might want to consider wearing a pair of glasses or safety goggles to protect your eyes.
- As you cut, you'll find that sequins go everywhere – in fact, you'll probably be picking them up off your floor for weeks afterwards! Make life easier for yourself by putting a cloth under your cutting table to catch them. An old sheet will do – then you can just shake the loose sequins into the bin when you're done.
- Cut a scrap of your sequinned fabric and put it to one side. The spare sequins will come in useful if you need to sew a few on to cover up any bald patches later on.

SEWING

- Make up the garment as a toile in a fabric that is similar to your sequinned fabric (i.e. woven or stretch), in order to check for fit and finish. Use a new machine needle and change the needle frequently, as they will blunt more easily. Blunt needles can cause skipped stitches and snags in the fabric.

- Use sew-in interfacings where interfacing is necessary. Alternatively, use a transparent organza as an interfacing so that it doesn't change the look or handle of the garment.
- When handling the cut pieces, if the sequins are dropping from the edges, apply tape to the cut edge temporarily until the seams are stitched.
- Sew with straight seams, using machine needle size 60–75 depending on the base fabric, with a stitch length of 2.2–2.5.
- If you're using a stretch sequinned fabric, use a stretch needle in your machine.
- To reduce bulk, you can remove sequins and beads from seam allowances by carefully cutting away individual sequins (see [pictured](#)). Do not cut the threads holding them in place, as this may unravel more than you wanted to remove.



PRESSING

- Press with care, from the wrong side of the fabric and with a pressing cloth covering the material.
- Press on a soft surface, such as a towel, to avoid the fabric being crushed.

- Avoid using steam on sequinned fabrics as it might tarnish the sequins.
- If you're not removing the sequins from the seam allowances, you'll need a bit of pressure to flatten them. Sometimes finger pressing will work but if you need more force, you can use a rolling pin or something similar.

LINING

- To avoid irritating your skin, line sequin fabric garments with a fabric that's kind to your skin such as cotton lawn or voile – or a soft jersey, if you're using a stretch sequin fabric.
 - A lining will also hide any raw seams.
-

TIPS

- **A panel of sequin fabric stitched to the hem of a dress makes a stylish design detail. It's also the perfect fix if you've accidentally cut your hem too short!**
 - **Non-stretch sequinned fabric can be cut into a multitude of shapes and appliquéd to other garments as a decorative detail.**
 - **For a beaded fabric, remove beads from the seam allowance by crushing them with a hammer, leaving the threads be.**
-

LEATHER

Leather comes from many different animals – most commonly cows, pigs and reptiles. Once a skin is tanned, it can be dyed and many colours are now available. Sometimes textures or treatments are applied to the skin (patent leather is one such treatment).

Leather can be challenging to sew and it's not recommended for beginners. However, although you might think you would need an industrial machine to sew it, it is perfectly possible to create leather garments on a domestic sewing machine, with a few specialist tools.

BUYING LEATHER AND CHOOSING A PATTERN

- Leather is sold by the hide or square metre, rather than by the metre like fabric. Pigskin hides will be smaller than, say, cowhide, so you'll need to discuss what to buy with your leather supplier.
- If you've never sewn leather before, choose one that drapes well rather than something thick and unwieldy.
- Avoid patterns with lots of shaping details like easing or gathering, as this is unsuitable for most leathers.
- Once you've bought your leather skins, unfold them immediately and store them rolled up until you're ready to use them. If you don't do this, you'll end up with unsightly cracks across your fabric.
- Leather marks easily when sewn, so make a toile first to iron out any pattern issues.

PREPARATION

- Check over the skin for marks, tears or faded sections before cutting out.
- Leather doesn't have a true grain in the same way as a woven fabric, but the strength runs from the neck to the tail, so use this as your grainline guide for big pieces such as the front, back and sleeves of a jacket. This is not so important for small pieces like pockets or cuffs – place these however they fit best on the skin to minimise wastage.
- Before cutting, trim your pattern's seam allowances to 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) – a 1.5-cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ -in.) seam allowance is too big and your seams will be bulky.

CUTTING

- Lay out and cut your pattern pieces on a single layer only, then flip them over to mirror for the opposite side.
- When cutting out, weight down pattern pieces rather than pinning.
- Score around the pattern outline with an awl, then cut the pieces out with a leather rotary cutter or a pair of very sharp shears.
- Cut sleeves and legs a little longer than usual, as the leather creeps up the arms and legs when worn.

SEWING

- Mark any darts and notches on the wrong side, using a regular pen.
- Never use pins in leather, as they'll leave a permanent hole. Instead, use paper clips or mini bulldog clips to hold your seams together until sewn.

- A regular presser foot will stick to leather, preventing it from feeding correctly through your machine. Change to a [walking foot](#), roller foot or Teflon foot, all of which will glide over the leather.
- Use a specialist leather needle, which has a triangular blade at the tip to punch holes into the leather as it sews. (They come in different sizes for different thicknesses of leather.) If you use a regular needle, the leather can split around the seam over time.
- Even with a special leather needle, you're likely to have some breakages – especially when sewing thick areas – so have some spares at hand.
- Use a longer-than-normal stitch length – about 3–4.
- Test your thread tension – you'll probably need to decrease this.
- Use a polyester or nylon thread, as the tannin in leather can rot cotton thread over time.
- Don't backstitch to secure the start and finish of seams, as the additional stitching will make new holes in the leather and weaken the seam. Instead, leave long thread tails and tie them off by hand.
- Instead of pressing the seams open, which can damage the leather, use your thumb to open the seam and a leather roller or wallpaper roller to flatten the seam allowances.
- Try using double-sided leather tape or contact adhesive inside hems, as hand sewing will show on the right side. (Tape is not an option on curved hems – adhesive is your only choice.)
- Whichever of these two methods you choose, flatten the hem with a mallet or your fingers afterwards. Topstitching is another option for hems – it looks decorative, too.
- For home sewers, the easiest fastenings for leather garments are [snap fasteners](#), which are available in kit form.
- Regular buttonholes on leather will rip, so use [bound buttonholes](#).

ALTERNATIVES TO ANIMAL LEATHER

- If you like the look of leather but want to avoid a leather product, there are more and more fabrics available that are not derived from animals. These materials are sometimes referred to as faux leather, vegan leather, PU leather, leatherette, pleather or synthetic leather. They can have a plant base such as fruit peel or a plastic base.

NICHE FABRICS

Certain fabrics are only suitable for a very limited number of projects, so you may never use them or not encounter them when buying fabrics. Neoprene and latex are two such fabrics. Scuba is under-represented in dressmaking, but easy to use.

NEOPRENE & SCUBA

The terms neoprene and scuba are sometimes used interchangeably, but they are two different types of fabric. Neoprene is made of polychloroprene, a synthetic rubber foam that's placed in between two layers of another kind of fabric, usually a nylon or polyester knit. Scuba is a double-knit fabric that's mixed with spandex or Lycra. It has a four-way stretch. It has a similar feel to neoprene, but is thinner and more flexible. Check the fabric composition to be sure you know what you're buying.

Neoprene can be anywhere from 1–7 mm ($\frac{1}{16}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$ in.) in thickness: most domestic sewing machines can cope with neoprene that's 1–2 mm ($\frac{1}{16}$ in.) thick; some can handle neoprene that's 3 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in.) thick; for anything 4 mm ($\frac{3}{16}$ in.) and above, industrial sewing machines are recommended. Scuba is thinner and can be sewn on a domestic machine.

CUTTING

- Use pattern weights rather than pins to hold the pattern pieces in place.

- Use a rotary cutter on a cutting mat.
- Neoprene does not have a 'right' and a 'wrong' side.
- As neoprene is thicker, it's best to cut it in a single layer.

SEWING

- Use sewing clips rather than pins to hold seams together prior to sewing.
- For neoprene you will need a robust needle, between size 90 and 110, and strong topstitch-weight polyester thread. As scuba is a knit fabric, always use a stretch or ballpoint needle.
- Set the machine to a medium or long stitch with a low tension and test on a spare piece of fabric. If you want to make a waterproof item using neoprene, you will need to apply heat-seal tape to the seams after you have stitched them.
- A [walking foot](#) will help to move the fabric through the machine.
- Use a plain seam (or a flat fell seam for added strength).
- Neoprene and scuba do not fray, so you can leave the edges unfinished – although a bias bound hem looks good on scuba.

CLEANING

- Neoprene cannot be dry-cleaned, machine washed or tumble dried. To wash, fill a bathtub with warm water and add a little mild hand wash detergent. Gently rub any stained areas. Rinse thoroughly, using a shower if possible and squeezing the fabric as you go. Hang up to drip dry.
- Scuba fabric can be washed at 30–40°C, but avoid using a tumble dryer.

LATEX

Latex is made of rubber and is very stretchy and form fitting. As a dressmaking material, it is used for skin-tight costumes, couture and fetish wear. In fashion and costume, latex is often used in a shiny format: the surface is so shiny that it almost looks liquid! Latex requires its own set of tools and working methods and it will take some practise before you get it right.

NOTE: Some people have a latex allergy.

CUTTING OUT

- You can buy latex in different thicknesses and it comes as a sheet of material.
- Using a rotary cutter and a cutting mat will make cutting out a lot easier.
- Use pattern weights rather than pins to hold the pattern pieces in place.

'SEWING'

Latex cannot be sewn; it's glued together. You need to overlap the seam allowances. The 'seam' allowance should be 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) so that you can assemble the seam and not cut anything away. This means you are overlapping two edges by 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.). There are several important steps to making a strong latex seam:

- 1** Clean the seam allowance area with acetone first.
- 2** Apply adhesive, such as rubber cement, to both seam allowance areas and let the adhesive air dry briefly.
- 3** Overlap the seam allowance area and press the seam together. Go over the seam with a seam roller to get a good, strong bond.

- 4** Apply talcum powder around the edge of the seam to make any excess glue non-sticky.
-

GENERAL TIPS

- **Always work in a well-ventilated work area when making latex seams!**
 - **Any leftover pen marks from marking out your pattern can be cleaned off with a little acetone.**
 - **You can use a water-based silicone spray to make the latex shiny before wearing it.**
 - **Using some talcum powder on the inside of the garment will help you wiggle into it and prevent it from sticking to your skin.**
-

UNDERLYING FABRICS

Apart from the top fabric you choose to make your clothes with, there are various kinds of underlying fabrics. Here's a guide to what they are and when you'll need them.

INTERFACINGS

Interfacing is an extra layer that is added to the reverse of some areas in a garment to add body, firmness or help support concentrated stitching without changing the way the garment drapes and hangs.

TYPES OF INTERFACING

There are three main categories. **Non-woven** interfacing is made from pressed fibres with a felt-like appearance. There is no grainline to follow, so pattern pieces can be placed in any direction. It adds firm support, even in lightweight varieties. **Woven** interfacings have a fabric grain and are handled in the same manner as fabrics. They are more flexible than non-woven types. **Knitted** interfacings have two-way stretch in order to move like knitted fabrics, adding support without changing the handle of the garment.

Interfacing may be iron-on (fusible) or sew-in. It can be super light, light, medium or heavyweight (generally, the weight used should be the same as the fabric).

TIP

On very lightweight, transparent fabrics you can use a second layer of the main fabric instead of a traditional interfacing, which doesn't spoil the transparency of the fabric.

APPLYING INTERFACINGS

Iron-on (fusible) interfacing

While this can be quick to apply, it is very important to fuse it completely to avoid it 'bubbling' under the fabric when laundered – a problem that can't then be rectified. Iron-on interfacing is attached with a combination of heat, moisture and pressure. It has a glue applied to one side, which can be seen as a slightly raised surface that may glisten or shine slightly.

- 1** Cut interfacing to the size of the pattern pieces. If you are using medium to heavyweight fabrics, trim the interfacing so that it fits just within the stitching line.
- 2** Place the fabric wrong side up on the ironing board with the interfacing glue side down on top. Cover the interfaced area with a damp cloth.
- 3** Check the manufacturer's instructions to find out what temperature to set your iron to and whether steam is applicable. Place the iron on top of the press cloth and press down in the same position for 10–15 seconds. Lift the iron, move to an adjacent area and press down again. Repeat until the whole interfaced area has been pressed.

- 4 If the corners of the interfacing can be lifted away, press again until it has completely bonded. Leave to cool completely before working with it.
-

TIP

The actual time to achieve a good bond varies depending on interfacing and fabric weight. Always test on a sample first.

Sew-in interfacing

This is either hand or machine sewn to the reverse of the main fabric. It is the best choice for fabrics where the heat and moisture would damage the fabric.

- 1 Use the appropriate pattern piece to cut out the interfacing.
 - 2 Stitch it to the reverse of the main fabric section, just within the seam allowance.
 - 3 To reduce bulk, trim away excess interfacing, cutting the corners at an angle.
-

TIP

Apply sew-in interfacings to the garment, not the facings, so that they will shadow-proof the seam allowances showing through and help prevent facings from rolling out.

LINING

This is a second layer of fabric on the inside of a garment. Usually linings feel silky, and are often there to allow for a garment to be slipped on and off with ease. A lining also hides all the construction details and, on light fabrics, prevents the shadows of the seams from showing through when the garment is worn. A favourite lining fabric for dressmakers is an anti-static type that allows the body to breathe. Linings are often cut from the same pattern pieces as the main garment, but without facings, waistbands or collars.

High street clothes are often unlined, and being able to choose to add a lining is one of the benefits of sewing for yourself. For more information about drafting lining patterns and attaching linings to garments, see [here](#).

INTERLINING

Interlinings are used to provide an additional layer of warmth; they can be sewn in to the garment or made as a separate removable piece. If you're using a very thick interlining, you may find that you need to make the garment in a larger size. Sleeves are generally not interlined, as that would make them much too bulky.

Interlining in a coat is typically applied in the same areas as the lining and uses the same pattern pieces as the lining. You wouldn't attach interlining to the facings. Cut out the lining and interlining using the same pattern, machine tack them together within the seam allowances, then trim the interlining material out of the seam allowances as best as you can.

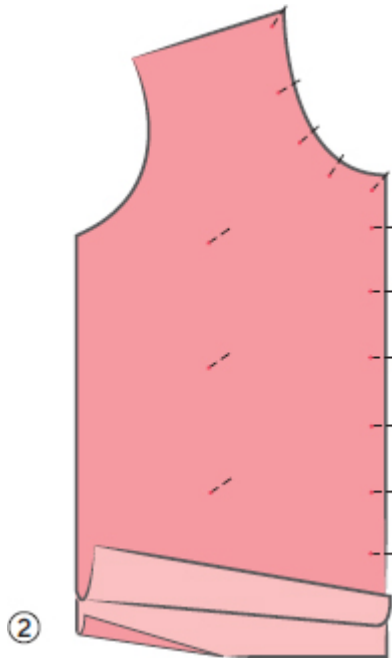
You can now treat the lining and interlining as one and proceed with your garment. When you reach the hemming stage, make sure to trim away the interlining from the hem to avoid a bulk. If there is a dart in the lining pattern pieces, sew the dart in the interlining but then cut away the seam allowance from the dart.

BACKING

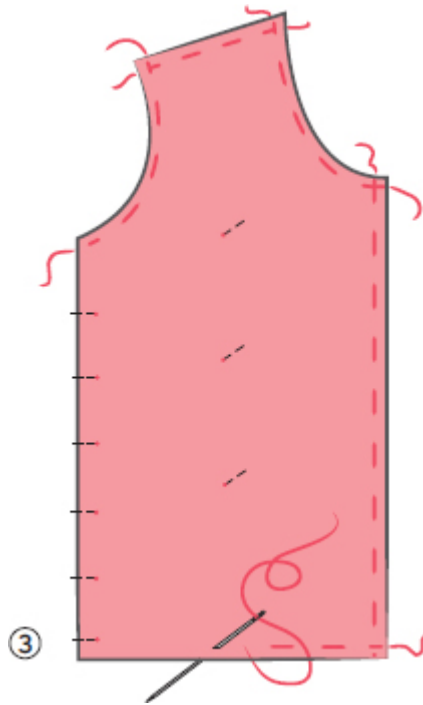
In addition to lining and interfacings, there is a different way of adding strength and structure to a lightweight fabric, called backing. It can also be used to make sheer fabric less transparent. This technique is sometimes also referred to as mounting or underlining, and involves putting two or more fabric layers together and then treating them as one.

Backing is used mainly in top garments and not so much in trousers or skirts. It is used regularly in couture, evening and bridal wear, historical costume making and tailoring. Whereas a lining will hide all internal seams, the main purpose of backing is to provide a level of strength that the top fabric can't provide on its own. Examples of this include a bridal bodice that has a lace fabric backed onto a layer of net or an eveningwear item that has silk backed with organza.

- 1** To back a pattern piece, cut the same pattern piece in the different fabrics you need. Then put the different fabrics on top of each other in the order that they will be in your finished garment – so the top fabric on the outside. Make sure you take the time to arrange them well.
- 2** Pin the pieces together really well, using pins within the seam allowances. It's a good idea to put some pins in the centre of the pattern piece, to keep the layers securely in place as you pin – but only do this if your top fabric won't mark! If you have a silk layer, for example, this won't work. You could use a couple of pattern weights instead.



- 3** Then either hand tack or machine tack just outside of your pattern line: aim for 2–3 mm (a scant $\frac{1}{8}$ in.) outside your pattern line, so that you're tacking within the seam allowance. This step is really important: you need to be close to your pattern line so that the different fabric layers can securely act as one layer and not move around. Tacking slightly outside your pattern line means you can leave the tacking stitches in there as you construct your garment – they will never be seen! If you tack right on top of the pattern line, you will spend ages later trying to pick the tacking stitches out of the seams.

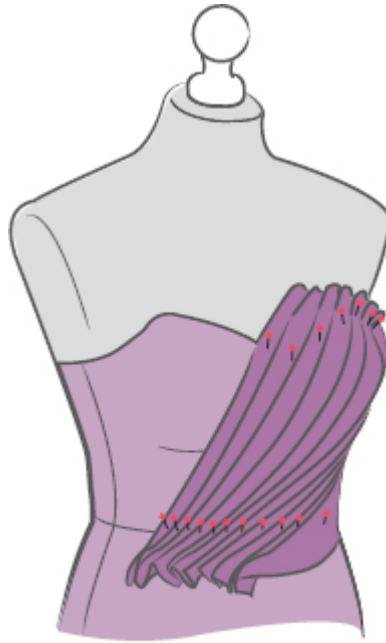


- 4** When you have successfully added backing to your pattern piece, you can continue the construction of the garment as you normally would.
-

TIPS

- **For a garment with a top layer that stretches, or where the top layer has a motif (like lace) or needs to be arranged in 3D (like pleated net on a wedding dress), it is best to pin your fabric layers on a mannequin so that you can get the shape and design right. If you mount the layers flat, tack them together, and then put them on a body, they will not sit correctly.**
- **If you have more than one backing layer, tack those together first. If you have just the one backing layer, start with that. Put it on a mannequin and lay your top fabric on top so that it sits taut and neat, and in the way you want any motifs to sit. Pin the layers together while they are on the mannequin, and then either take it off and**

tack, or hand tack while it's on the mannequin. Remember that when you take this piece off the mannequin and lay it on a table, it will not lie flat; this is correct!



ARRANGING A
PLEATED TOP FABRIC
ON A BACKING



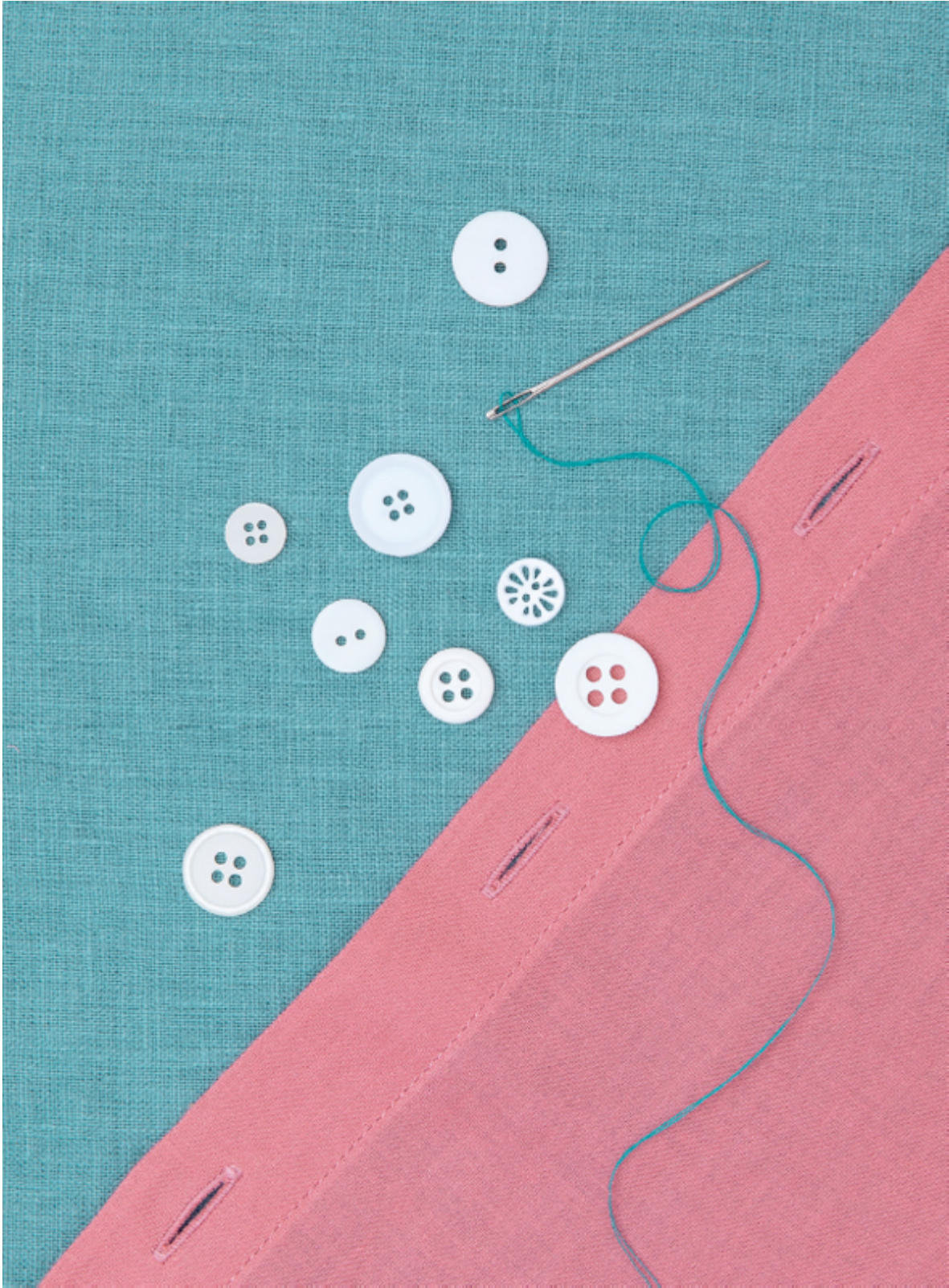
TIP

- **In tight-fitting garments that have backed pattern pieces, you may have to take extra care when mounting to allow for the layers to follow the shape of the body. This goes for any pattern pieces that will sit around curved areas of the body, such as a bust area, waist, or even a cuff. You do this by pinning the layers together while slightly rolling the top fabric over the inner fabric. Technically speaking, the pattern piece in the top fabric will be slightly bigger than an inner layer, because it's sitting on top of the inner layer. This difference might be only small, but it will ensure a professional fit and a smooth, taut finish. The more rounded the pattern piece (a cuff being a good example), the more you need to roll the top fabric over the backing layer. It should look smooth when you put the pattern piece into the shape it will have when worn and the top layer should look a bit puckered when lying flat.**
-

CHAPTER 3

Taking your sewing to the next level

Dressmaking is a lifelong learning curve and there are always things you can learn to take the next step in your sewing. It's often the details that make a garment look well made, so here we will give you an insight into some of the techniques that can make your garments look more professional. We will also show you how to approach drafting and pattern adaptations to inject more personal style or achieve a better fit.



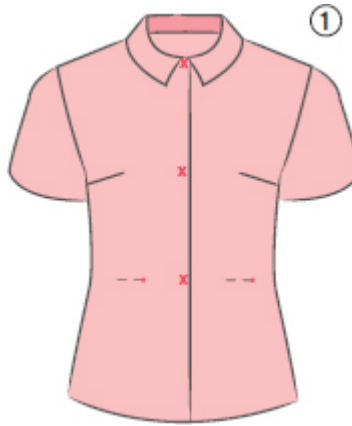
FASTENINGS

The way you fasten a garment is critical in creating a professional-looking finish. You need to consider not only how you apply the various kinds of fastening but also where you position them so that the garment does not pucker or gape. The right choice of fastening and the right placement can take a garment to the next level. In this chapter we will mainly focus on buttons and buttonholes, as they are often overlooked on the technical front.

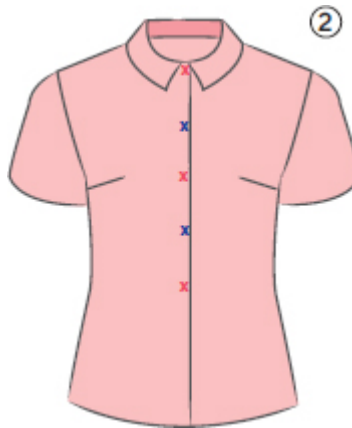
BUTTON PLACEMENT

Button placement can make all the difference between a standard off-the-peg garment and a well-fitting, bespoke garment. It is hardly ever discussed in home dressmaking, so here are some ways to get a professional fit at home, using a button-down blouse as an example. As a rule, it's easier to work with an odd number of buttons.

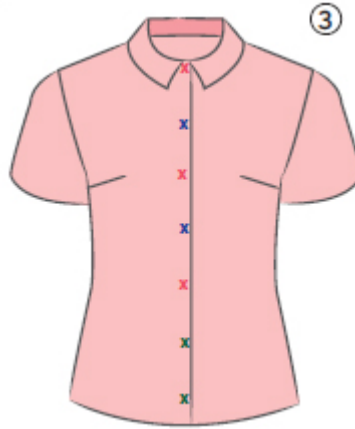
- 1** Lay your finished blouse on a work surface and mark the waist point and bust point along the centre front. This is where you will start with working out your button placement. There should always be a button on these two points, as they are stress points: the bust/chest and waist are the areas where the garment pulls the most. There is nothing worse than a blouse that gapes at the bust, which is what happens when you start button placement from the top and simply work your way down the centre front in equal distances. You will also need a button at the very top of the centre front, so that's your next button.



- 2** Then mark the position of the remaining buttons in between the top and bust button, and in between the bust and waist. Below the waist you can keep going until you're a few centimetres from the hem. Buttons never go all the way down to the hem. Look at a shirt you have at home for reference, as there is no set measurement.



- 3** The buttons don't have to all be equally spaced. Prioritise getting equal distances where you can, but you can position the buttons a bit closer to the two stress points (bust/chest and waist) if necessary, as they will help carry some of the stress.

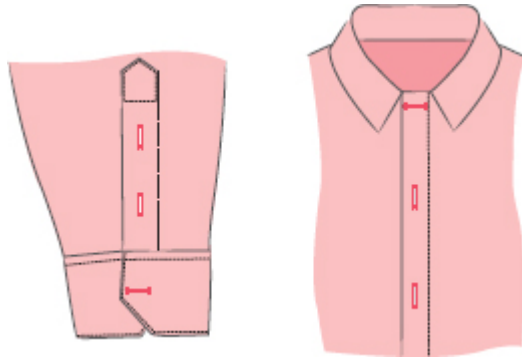


TIP

If you have a jacket with a lapel, then you will always need a button at the break point, where the lapel turns into the centre front. If you don't, then the lapel will keep opening up until it hits a button.

BUTTONHOLES- HORIZONTAL OR VERTICAL?

Buttonholes can be made either vertically or horizontally, depending on where the buttonhole sits. A vertical buttonhole will provide zero movement for the button, whereas a horizontal buttonhole will allow the button to move slightly within the buttonhole. Horizontal buttonholes are therefore used in areas like collars and cuffs, where you need a bit more movement. On a button-down shirt, all the buttonholes down the centre front will be vertical except for the very top one, where you'll use a horizontal buttonhole to button by your throat.



CUFF AND PLACKET BUTTONHOLES

A horizontal buttonhole on the cuff allows for a little extra movement, whereas the placket buttonholes are vertical.

SHIRT BUTTONHOLES

Vertical buttonholes down the centre front restrict button movement, whereas a horizontal buttonhole at the neck affords a little flexibility.

BUTTONHOLE SIZE

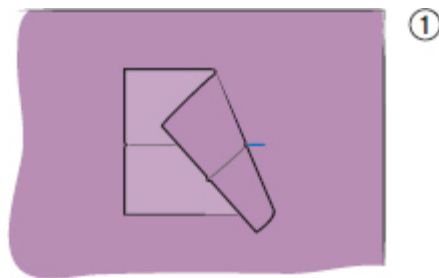
As a rule of thumb, a buttonhole should be 2–3 mm (a scant $\frac{1}{8}$ in.) more than the diameter of your button. So if you have a round 13-mm ($\frac{1}{2}$ -in.) button, then the corresponding buttonhole should be 15–16 mm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in.). Always try one first and see if it works: you shouldn't have to push the button through with force, and equally the button shouldn't swim around in the buttonhole. If you have a domed button, you will need to add a bit more length to the buttonhole to be able to button up.

BOUND BUTTONHOLES

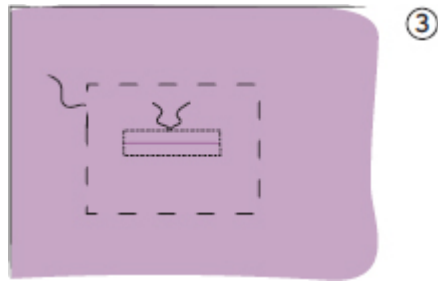
Bound buttonholes give a tailored look and it can be easier to achieve a smart finish with them than with stitched buttonholes,

especially if you are working with a heavy fabric, such as for a coat. It's really important you try out the method on spare fabric – getting it wrong on your garment could be an expensive mistake! You should have already marked the buttonhole positions on the garment before starting the steps outlined below.

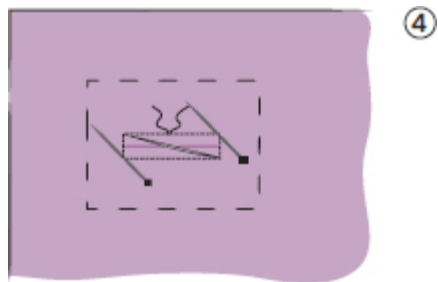
- 1** Start by cutting a patch of fabric for each buttonhole. This should be 5 cm (2 in.) wide and 2.5 cm (1 in.) longer than the length of the buttonhole. Fold this in half along its length and crease. Place the patch right side down on the right side of the garment, making sure the crease in the patch is perfectly aligned centrally over the marked buttonhole position. Tack in place.



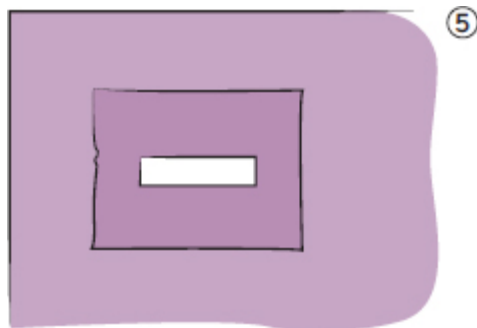
- 2** On the wrong side of the garment, mark lines 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) above and below the buttonhole markings. If your fabric is extremely heavy, mark the lines a little further out. If it is light, mark them closer in.
- 3** Machine stitch around the marked 'box', starting part way along one of the long sides. When you get to the corner, leave the needle down to keep the fabric stable before pivoting it to stitch the next side.



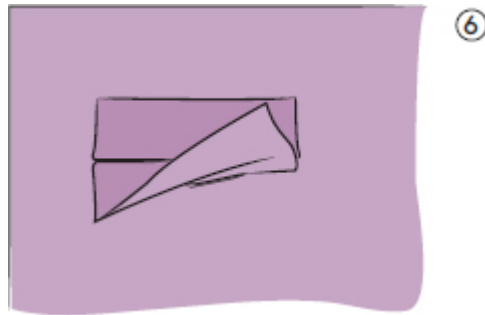
- 4** Place a pin diagonally at one corner just inside the stitching, then cut along the centre and into each corner.



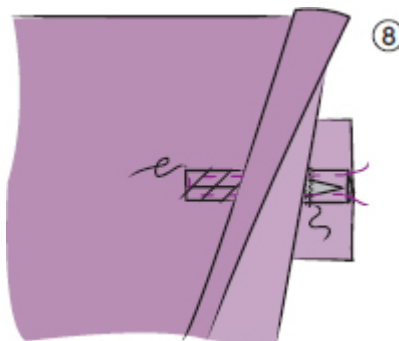
- 5** Take out the tacking and pull the patch through to the wrong side. Carefully manipulate it until the seam is exactly on the edge of the opening.



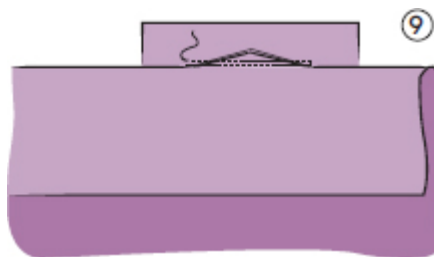
- 6** Now fold each long edge over the opening to form the lips, making sure they are exactly the same size.



- 7** Check that the lips are even on the right side, then use small hand stitches to tack them into position. Diagonally tack the lips together to hold them firmly together.
- 8** With right side up, fold back the edge of the garment to expose the outer end of the buttonhole, then machine back and forth several times over this end. Repeat with the other end.



- 9** Now swivel the garment and fold it back so that the horizontal side is under the machine. Stitch through the seam allowance and the patch slightly inside the original stitching line. Repeat with the other side.



- 10** To finish, on the wrong side, trim the patch all around to 6 mm (¼ in.) from the machine stitching and tie the ends of the threads together at each corner to secure them.

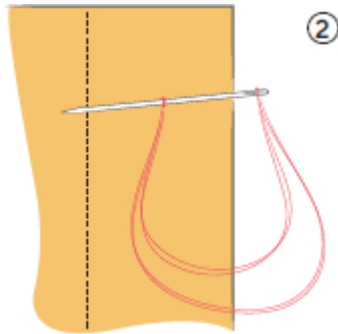
SEWING BUTTONS ON SECURELY

Sewing on buttons might seem like a basic skill, but it's essential to a good garment that the buttons are secure and well attached. It's a good idea to use quadruple thread so that you will need fewer stitches to attach the button. Sewing your buttons on in this way means they look neat and it makes the stitching very strong, which is exactly what you need for buttons!

- 1** To thread quadruple thread, fold a thread in half, then put the two tails through the eye of the needle. Pull half of your length of thread through, then tie a knot at the end.



- 2** Start your thread underneath where the button will be placed. Sew a very small stitch and pull your thread all the way through. A knot is a weak point in sewing, so sew one more very small stitch, pull the thread nearly all the way through, then put the needle through the loop, and pull tight. Your thread is now secure.



- 3** Secure your button with approximately three stitches. How you do this, and whether you pull the stitches taut or not, will depend to some extent on what your button looks like, as there are so many different designs:

BUTTON WITH A SHANK

If your button has a shank already (a little stem on the back), you can finish sewing by creating a small stitch within the threads that secure the button. Pull the thread almost all the way through and then put the needle through the loop. Pull tight.

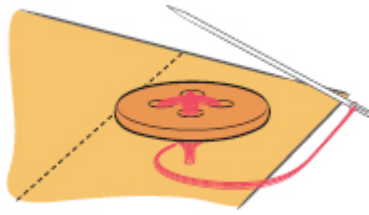
DOUBLE FABRIC LAYERS

If you have a double layer of fabric where the button is, then after knotting off, insert your needle in between the layers, come up a little bit away from the button, and cut the threads off as close to the surface as possible. This way there will be no ugly thread tails anywhere.

FLAT, SHANKLESS BUTTON

If you have an entirely flat button with no shank, you will have to create a thread shank before knotting off. Also the stitches that secure the button to the garment should not be pulled completely taut, as you need to leave room for the thread shank. Make the

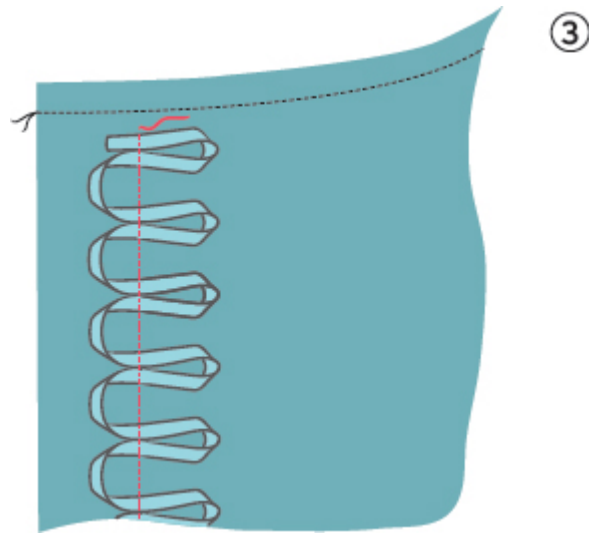
shank by wrapping your thread in a few circles in between the button and the garment.



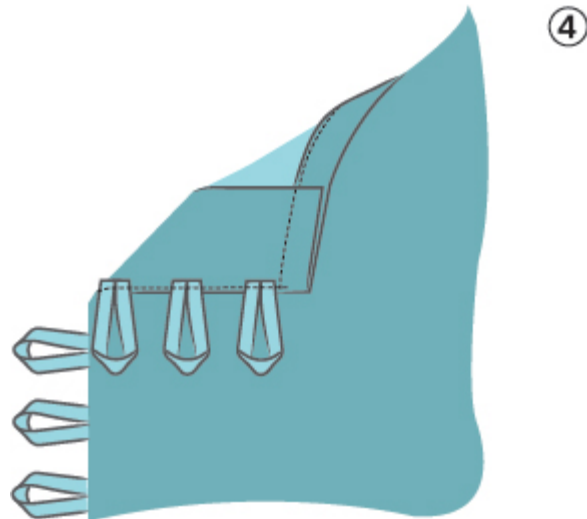
CONTINUOUS ROULEAU BUTTON LOOPS

Rouleau button loops are most commonly found on vintage garments, evening wear and bridal wear. You may have seen lots of little fabric loops on a wedding dress. Rouleau loops are thin fabric strips that are turned right side out with the help of a rouleau turner. They can be used as shoulder straps on garments but also as button loops. Sometimes you might want a single rouleau loop – for example, to fasten a small button at the top of a back neckline. But you may want lots of them – for example, on the cuffs or centre back of a very special garment.

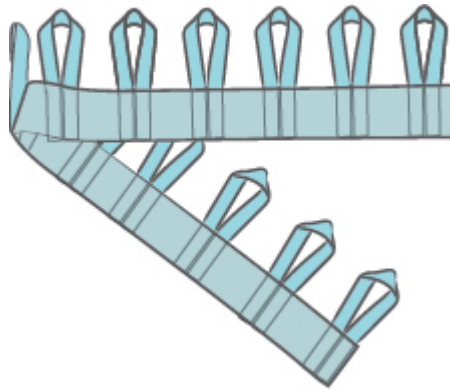
- 1** Prepare a rouleau strip as you normally would. Make it as long as your rouleau turner can handle.
- 2** Instead of cutting the rouleau into little pieces to make individual loops, position the rouleau in a continual S-shape on the right side of the garment along the area where the button loops will sit. Try one loop first to get the size right for the button, then replicate. Pin in place with lots of horizontal pins so that the loops are held securely.
- 3** Sew the rouleau in place on your machine on the pattern line.



- 4** Trim the unseen rouleau loops down to avoid bulk. Press the seam allowance towards the wrong side of the fabric. The loops will now stick out, ready for the buttons on the other side of the garment. The seam allowance on the wrong side will be covered by the garment's lining.



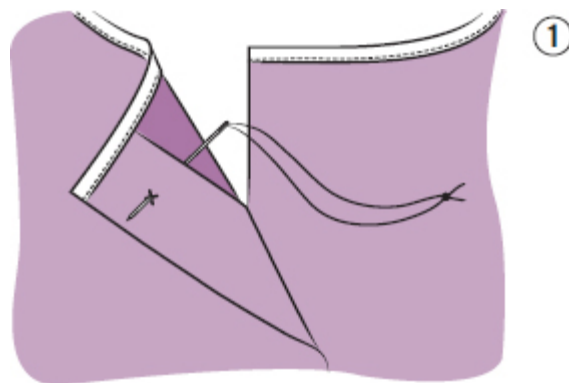
You can also buy ready-made continuous rouleau loops in a strip, which is used in bridal wear. You can buy it in different colours (white, black, gold and ivory) and in an elasticated version, too.



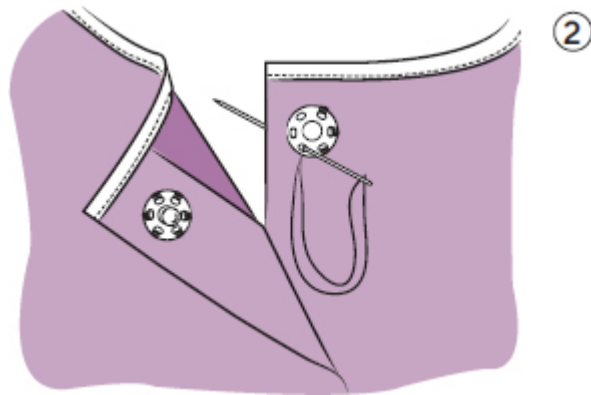
PRESS STUDS

Amazingly strong for their size, press studs can be used to close a whole opening, or simply used at the top of an otherwise buttoned opening. They consist of two parts: a ball and a socket, both with four or six sewing holes around the circumference and a central hole, which can be used as an alignment aid. Start by measuring and marking the position of the ball part on the garment.

- 1** The ball part goes onto the underside of the overlapping part of the garment, so you need to carefully sew it to the facing inside to ensure the stitches don't show at the front. Position the centre of the press stud over the marked position and stitch through the holes around the press studs in the same way as you would for hooks.



- 2** To position the socket, pass a needle through the central hole in the ball part and use that to align the ball with the hole in the centre of the socket part, held in position on the other side of the opening. Hold the socket part in position as you remove the needle from the alignment holes, then stitch the socket in position.



NO-SEW FASTENINGS

Jeans buttons, heavy-duty snaps and rivets used on workerwear and casual clothing are now available as kits for home sewers. They are not only quick and easy to apply, but they give a professional finish to the garment. They are not sewn in position; instead they are securely riveted or hammered into place. To attach some no-sew fastenings, all you need is a hammer. Others come complete with their own tool set, which is essentially a small mould and a tool to secure the fastening in position. Each is slightly different, though all come with instructions on how to apply them.

APPLYING JEANS BUTTONS

Buttons for jeans come in two parts: a tack for the underside of the fabric and a button for the top.

- 1** Start by marking the position of the button. Now push the point of the tack up through the fabric from the underside. Place it on a flat surface and position the button piece over the point of the tack. Gently hammer the button into place using a light hammer. You will have to work a buttonhole in the same way as for any other button.

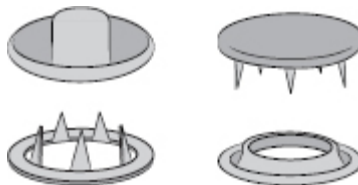
SNAP FASTENERS

Snap fasteners can add a really pretty and professional finish to garments, particularly children's clothing. They come in different sizes and colours. Many also come with a set of tools for handy application, and instructions for use on the back of the pack.

TIPS

Try out the snap on a scrap of the fabric, with the same layers and interfacing. Work on a solid surface, such as the floor, protected by a block of wood such as a chopping board.

ATTACHING LIGHTWEIGHT SNAPS

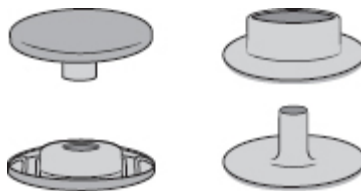


- 1** Snaps are made up of four parts, two for each half of the snap. On lightweight snaps there are two washers with prongs that are pushed through the fabric, plus the snap top with the nub and

the snap bottom with the recess into which the nub fits. Start by pairing up the pieces.

- 2** Line up the two garment pieces where the snap is to go and push a pin through both layers. Using a marking pen, mark the snap positions.
- 3** Push the prongs of one washer through from the underside to the right side of the lower section of fabric. Then insert the top of the snap with the centre nub right side up over the prongs. Cover with the tool and hammer together to spread the prongs and hold the first half of the snap in place.
- 4** Fix the second half of the snap by pushing the prongs of the front of the snap through from the right side to the underside of the lapping section. Having the underside of the lapped section uppermost, drop on the washer, with the ridge down towards the fabric. Cover with the tool and hammer the snap pieces together.

ATTACHING HEAVYWEIGHT SNAPS



- 1** For heavy-duty snaps, there are two sockets instead of pronged washers – so you need to make holes in the fabric before the snaps can be applied. Pair up the pieces, as above, so that you have one socket with the smooth snap top (which has a centre rod), and the lower half of the pairing with a centre rod to be topped by a larger socket.

- 2** Mark the snap position on both sections of the garment and then, using the hole punch tool that comes with the snap kit, make a hole at the marked positions. Push the protruding parts through the holes and top with the snap sections, using the tool to protect them and hammering the parts together on each of the garment sections.

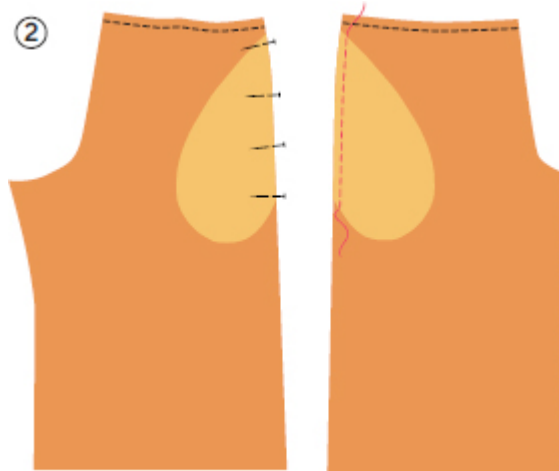
POCKETS

Pockets can add function and style to any garment. Some pocket styles are invisible from the outside and therefore are merely functional, whereas others are very visible on the surface of the garment and can be made in a very personal and creative way. Some pocket styles can only be added where there is a seam; others, like welt pockets, can be added anywhere in the garment. It's always good to make a sample if you are trying a new pocket technique.

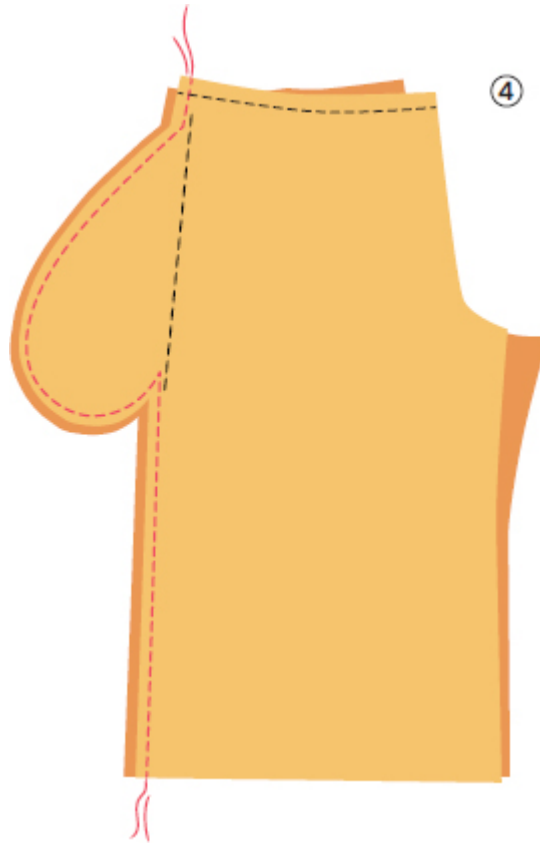
IN-SEAM POCKET

This type of pocket is often used in the side seams of loose-fitting skirts and trousers. Sometimes the pockets are cut as separate pieces, as shown here; in other patterns, the pockets are extensions of the front and back garment pieces and the pocket is stitched as one with the garment seam, following steps 4 and 5, opposite.

- 1** Staystitch the upper edge of the front and back garment pieces, stitching just inside the seam allowance.
- 2** With right sides together and the straight edge of the pocket along the raw edge of the garment, pin one pocket piece to the front of the garment at the position shown on the pattern. Sew in place along the seamline. Repeat on the back garment section.



- 3** Trim the seam allowances and neaten the raw edges of the pockets with a zig-zag or overedge stitch. Press the pocket pieces away from the garment along the stitching line.
- 4** Place the front and back of the garment right sides together, matching up the pockets. Pin the side seams and the pocket (which extends beyond the garment). Stitch the side seam, pivoting at the top of the pocket and continuing around the pocket bag, and pivoting again down the garment seam.

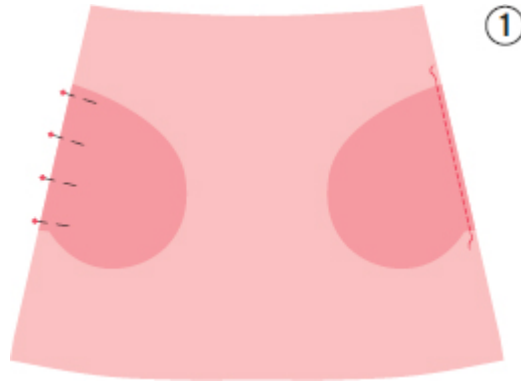


- 5** Snip into the seam allowance of the back garment piece at the pivot points. Neaten the garment seam allowances separately and the pocket seam allowances together. Press the garment seams open and press the pocket towards the front of the garment.

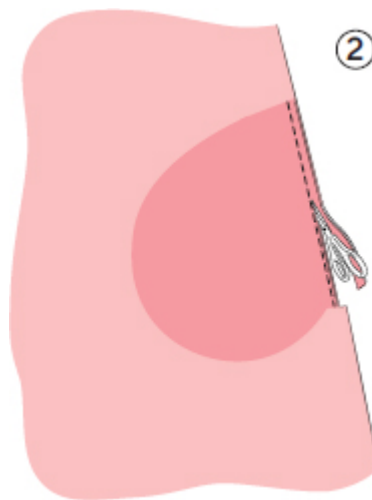
FRENCH SEAM SIDE POCKET

Sometimes a French seam is the only way to finish a seam, perhaps because it's a special garment where the inside is important, or because the fabric is a bit transparent or delicate. But how do you French seam a side seam that has a pocket? There are a lot of steps to this and it can be helpful to make up a sample before doing it on your actual garment. You will need the front and back of your garment, and the two parts of your pocket bag. Take care to follow the steps and measurements precisely for a neat finish.

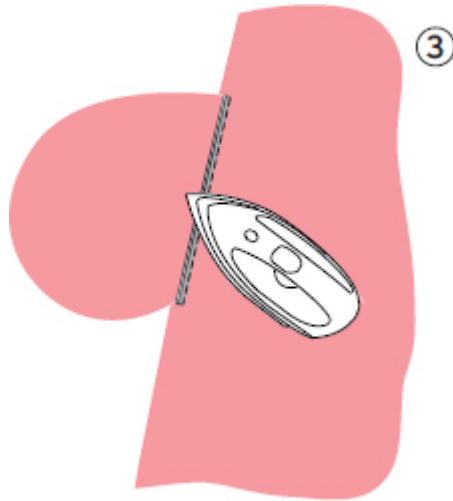
- 1** Take the front of your garment and one pocket bag. Pin the pocket bag in place on the garment, wrong side to wrong side. Pin across the pocket opening. Stitch in place across the pocket opening, taking a 6-mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ -in.) seam allowance. Repeat on the other side of your garment, assuming your pattern calls for a pocket on each side.



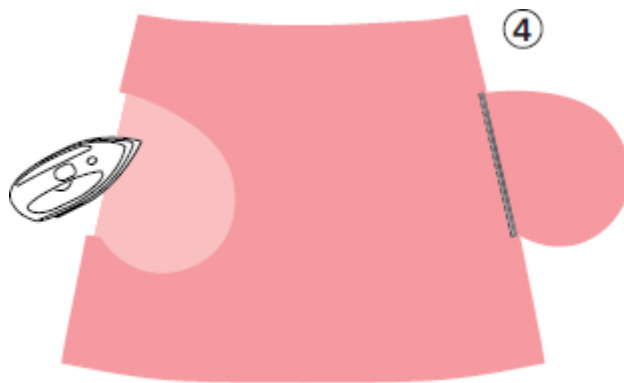
- 2** Trim the seam allowance of the pocket opening section only to 2–3 mm (a scant $\frac{1}{8}$ in.), leaving the rest of the side seam allowance intact.



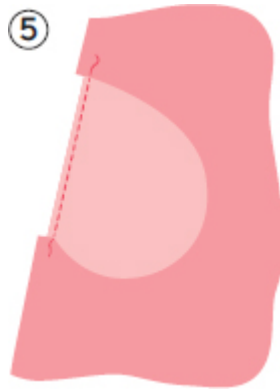
- 3** Fold the pocket bag over to the other side of the garment, so that the pocket bag and garment are right side up and the pocket bag is lying away from the garment. Press the seam allowances towards the pocket bag.



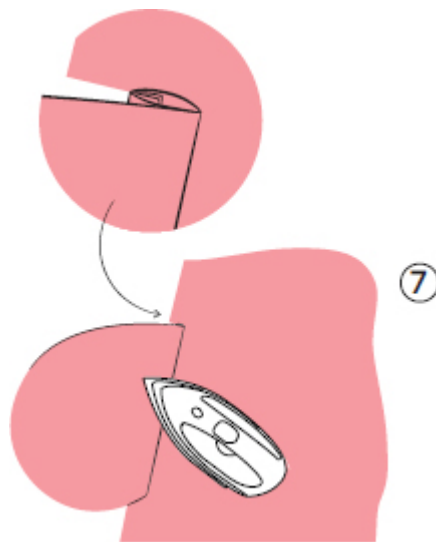
- 4** Fold the pocket bag over on top of the garment, so that they're right sides together, and press on top of the seam. Repeat on the other side of your front garment.



- 5** Stitch across the pocket opening, 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) away from the edge, taking care to stay within the pocket bag section only. Repeat on the other side of your front garment if it also has a pocket.

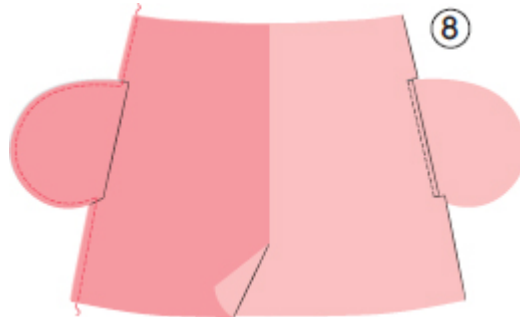


- 6** Repeat steps 1–5 for the back of your garment. If you have a pocket on each side, you will have done this four times.
- 7** Fold the pocket bag out so that it's lying outside your garment, right side up. Press the seams towards the pocket bag. Do this on all four pieces.

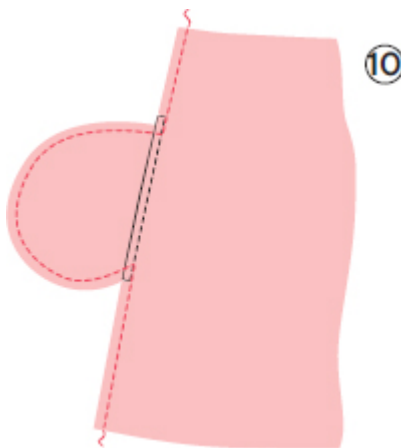


- 8** Now you can start to sew the side seam. Take a front and back and pin the side seam and pocket bags wrong sides together. Repeat on the other side of your garment. Taking a 6-mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ -in.) seam allowance and starting at the waist, start sewing the side seam, pivot when you reach the pocket bag, stitch around the pocket bag, pivot again, then continue down to the hem. (Note that the 6-mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ -in.) seam allowance does not line up

with your pocket seam; this is correct, as you still have one seam left to do to create a French seam.) Trim your seam allowance to about 3 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in.).



- 9** Turn the garment wrong side out and press really well, making sure the corners where the pocket meets the side seam are lying flat without any puckers.
- 10** Using a 6-mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ -in.) seam allowance, sew the side seam, pivot, stitch around the pocket bag, pivot, then continue the side seam to the hem. This final stitch line should line up with the seam across the pocket bag when you look at the inside of your garment.



- 11** Finish sewing both pockets and give the garment a good, final press.

WELT POCKETS

Welt pockets are pockets found on the back of trousers and in garments like suit jackets and waistcoats. A 'welt' is a rectangular piece of fabric that binds the edge of the pocket, either on one side only (a single welt pocket) or on both sides (a double welt pocket or a jet pocket). This gives the pocket a neat, professional finish. The traditional method of making welt pockets, which is used in tailoring, uses a separate pattern piece for the welt. A more straightforward method is used in fashion and the welt is stitched to the pocket bag to make a single piece. We will start with the fashion method, which is more user friendly. It can be used to make both a single and a double welt pocket. You will find instructions for making a single welt pocket using the traditional tailoring technique [here](#).

TIPS

- **When making pockets like this, always start by making the pocket before moving on to constructing your garment: welt pocket construction requires cutting into your top fabric, so if you make a mistake, you can start over without having to do redo other parts of the garment.**
- **Be extra careful if your top fabric appears to fray easily; in fact, avoid these types of fabrics if you know you will be making welt pockets, or if you are a beginner dressmaker.**
- **You can make the welt in the same fabric as your garment or in a contrasting colour in the same fabric type. Only choose a contrasting colour if you are a confident, neat maker, as it will be very obvious if something is even a little bit off. You will see part of the pocket bag when you look into the pocket from the front of the garment, so you can either make this a statement or make it subtle. The**

pocket bag can be made out of lining fabric or a very lightweight woven fabric.

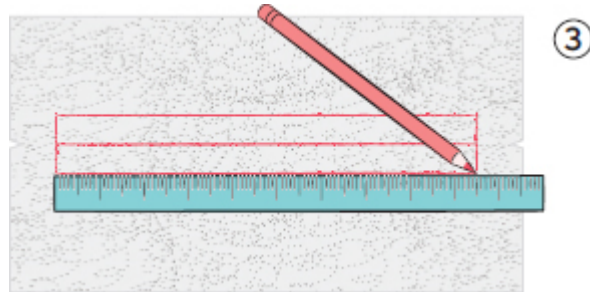
FASHION METHOD: SINGLE AND DOUBLE WELT POCKETS

Follow the steps below whether you are making a single or double welt pocket. There are variations to how the pocket bag is made: it can be made in one long piece or two separate pieces. In the instructions below we are using one long piece for the pocket bag, made in lining fabric, with a piece of the top fabric added to form the welt(s).

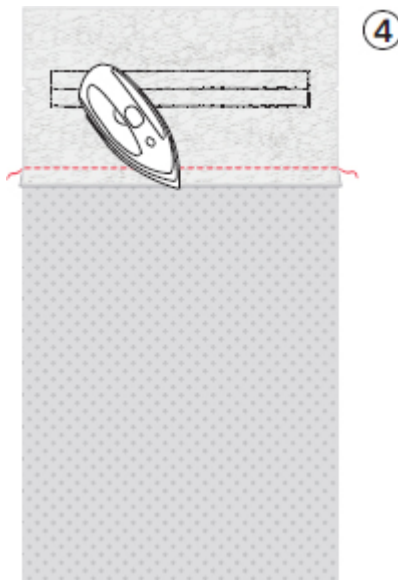
You will need the body pattern piece that will contain the pocket, some iron-on interfacing, a piece of top fabric to form the welt(s), and the pocket bag piece.

- 1** On the wrong side of the garment, apply a rectangular piece of iron-on interfacing that's 3–5 cm (1¼–2 in.) bigger all around than the pocket line.
- 2** The pocket line needs to be visible on both the right and the wrong side of the fabric. You can either mark it on the right side and transfer to the wrong side, or vice versa. If you have a fabric with a smooth surface you can draw the shape on, but if you have a textured fabric like a wool, it's best to tack the shape from the right side. You can draw the shape on top of the interfacing on the wrong side.
- 3** Apply interfacing to the wrong side of the welt piece. Then on the interfaced side of the welt, using a ruler, draw a rectangular shape that is the length of your pocket. The width of the rectangle will form the size of the single welt, or the combined size of the two welts, about 2 cm (¾ in.). Once you've drawn the rectangle, also draw a line straight through the middle of the

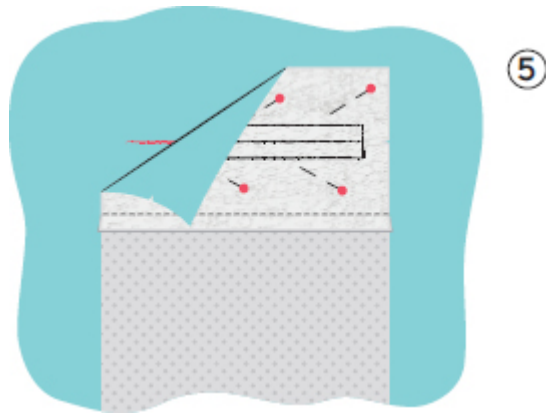
rectangle. This will be the slash line and, if you have a pocket line on your pattern, this is that line. Make sure your three lines are absolutely parallel and the same length.



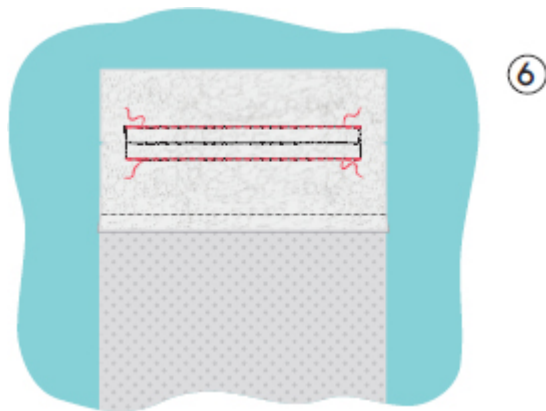
- 4** With right sides together, sew one short edge of the pocket bag to the bottom of your welt piece. Press the seam allowances towards the pocket bag. You now have one long piece.



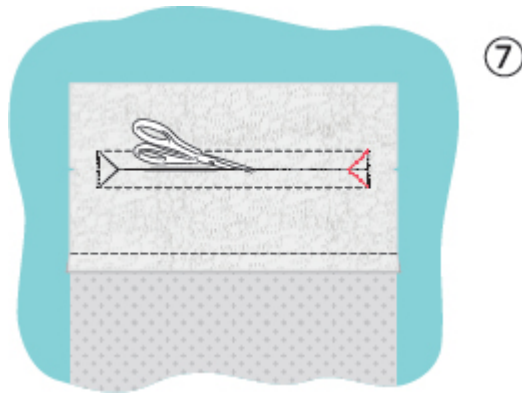
- 5** Lay the welt piece on the garment, right sides together, matching the slash line on the welt to the pocket line on your garment. You should see the interfaced side of the welt. Pin the welt piece into place. It can help to tack through the slash line so that the welt lies in exactly the right position.



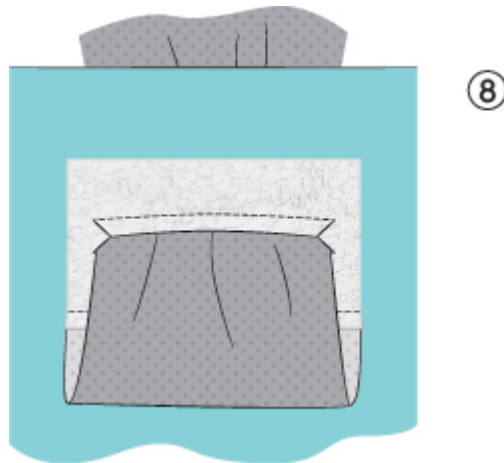
- 6** Machine stitch the two long sides of the rectangle, taking care to backstitch well and to stay exactly within and on top of your lines. It's very important that the two lines are exactly the same length.



- 7** Using sharp scissors, cut your garment fabric open along the slash line, stopping 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) away from the side edges, then snip diagonally up to each corner so that you end up with a little triangle on each side. It can be helpful to draw this in advance to be accurate. Cut the triangle as close as possible to the stitch lines, without cutting any stitches.



- 8** Turn the pocket bag and welt piece to the inside of your garment through the opening. Make sure the welt and the pocket bag are lying straight and flat, including the seam allowances. Pull the triangles at each side outwards.



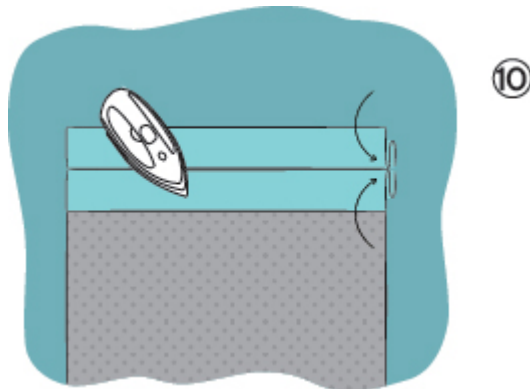
- 9** On the inside of your garment, you should now see a rectangular opening in your garment, like a letter box. You should not see the seam allowances that connect the welt to the pocket bag. Press well.



In the next step you will create either a single or a double welt.

Double welt

10 Create your two welts by folding the long edge of the welt piece towards the centre of the opening. To do this accurately, put a mark on each short side of the welt piece indicating the centre and use that as a guide. Fold the top of the welt piece down towards the centre of the opening and fold the bottom of the welt piece up towards the centre. They should meet exactly in the centre of the opening. Press well. Make sure the welts are not separating or overlapping in the centre by pinning or tacking.

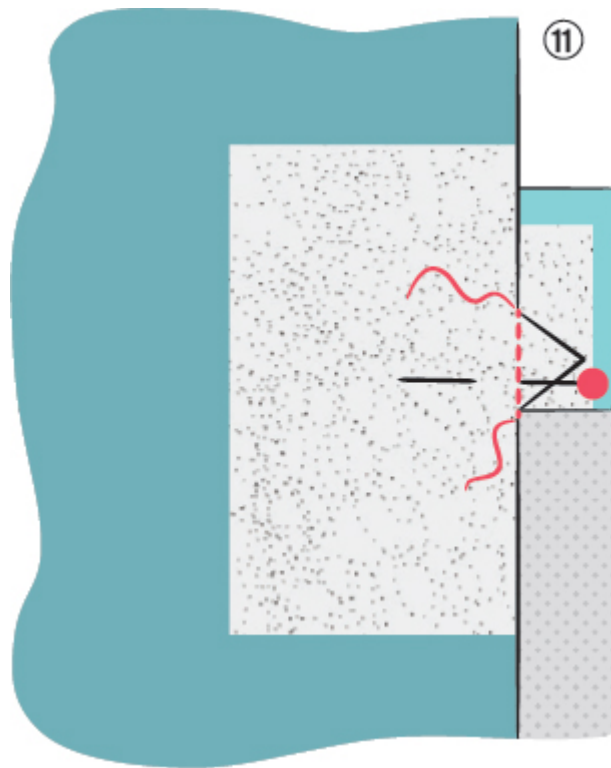


Single welt

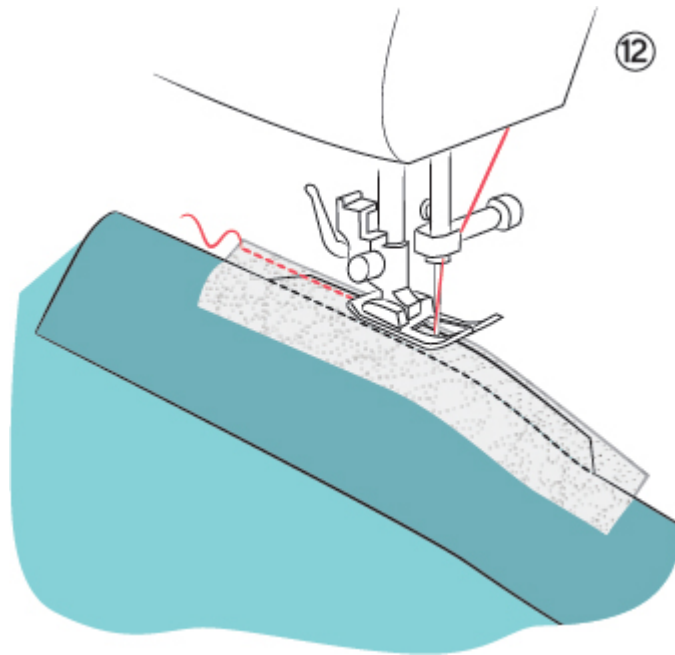
10 Create a single welt by folding the bottom of the welt piece up to align with the top of the pocket opening. Press well. The edges should not separate or overlap; pin or tack in place.

The remaining steps are the same for single and double welt pockets.

- 11** Secure the triangles to the welt by stitching back and forth a few times. One way to do this is to look on the outside of your garment and fold away the garment at each side of the pocket in turn, revealing the triangles.



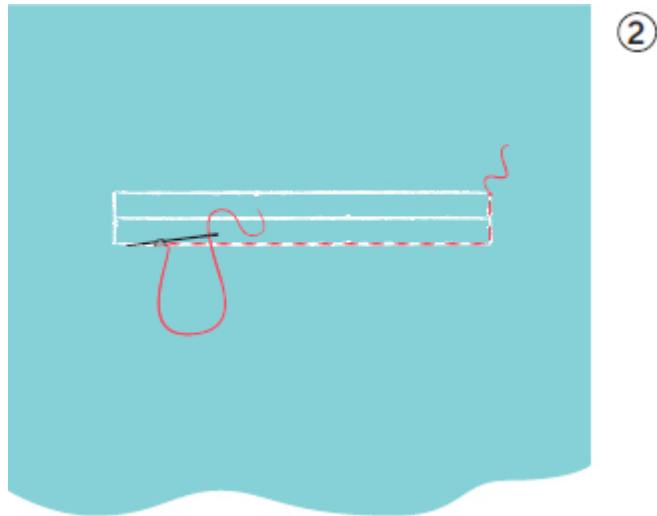
- 12** On the inside of your garment, fold the bottom of the pocket bag up to meet the top raw edge of the welt piece. Pin in place and sew along the top and both sides (the bottom of the pocket bag is on the fold). The easiest way to do this is to work from the right side of the garment, folding away the garment to reveal the seam allowances. Overlock the seam allowances of the pocket bag if necessary. (Overlocking is not needed if the pocket bag will be entirely hidden inside a garment.)



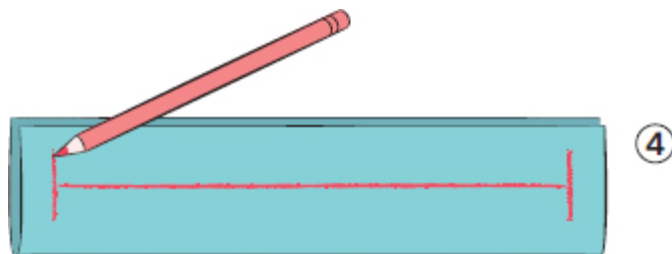
TRADITIONAL METHOD: SINGLE WELT POCKET

In a single welt pocket, the welt is attached to the bottom of the pocket opening and there is no welt on the top. You will need the body pattern piece that will contain the pocket, some iron-on interfacing, the welt, and the two pocket bag pieces.

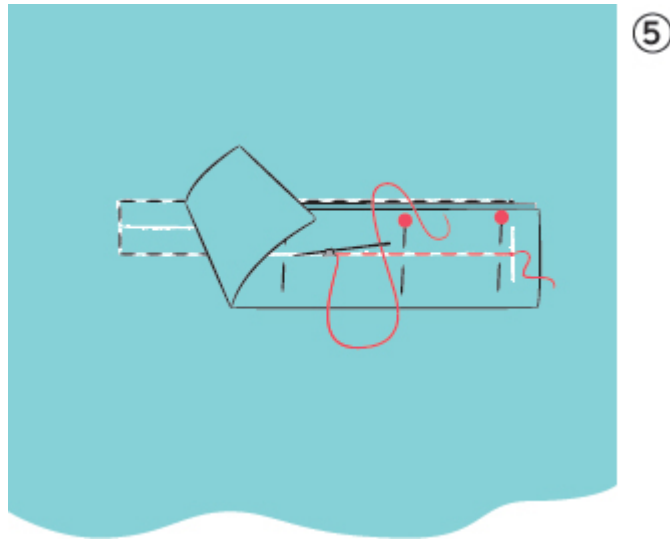
- 1** On the wrong side of the garment, on top of the pocket line, apply a rectangular piece of interfacing that's 3–5 cm (1¼–2 in.) bigger all around than the pocket line itself.
- 2** The welt shape needs to be visible on both the right side and the wrong side of the fabric. You can either mark it on the right side and transfer to the wrong side, or vice versa. The pocket position should be marked as a rectangle on your pattern, and it's this exact shape that you're transferring. If you have a fabric with a smooth surface you can draw the shape on, but if you have a textured fabric like a wool, it's best to tack the shape from the right side. Draw the shape on top of the interfacing on the wrong side. Also draw a line exactly across the middle of the rectangle.



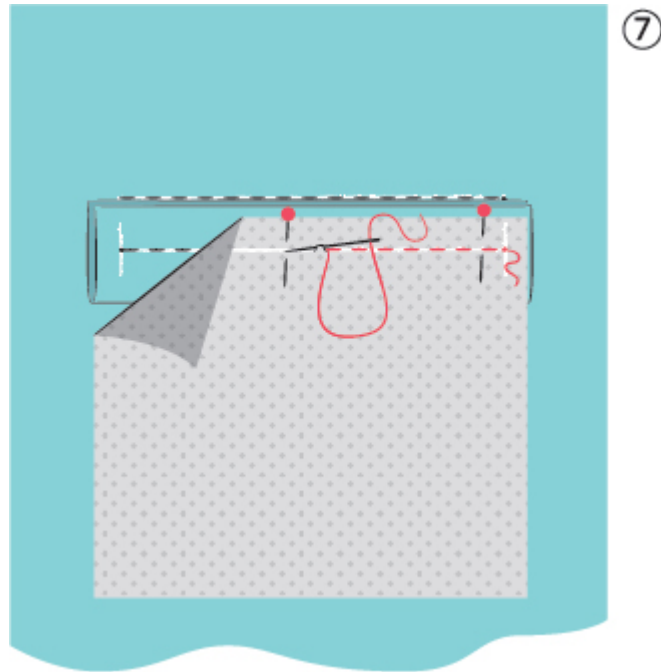
- 3** Interface the welt, then fold it in half lengthways, right sides together, and press.
- 4** Draw a straight line exactly in the middle of the folded welt. Then mark the ends of the pocket as well, making sure you've drawn everything centrally on the welt.



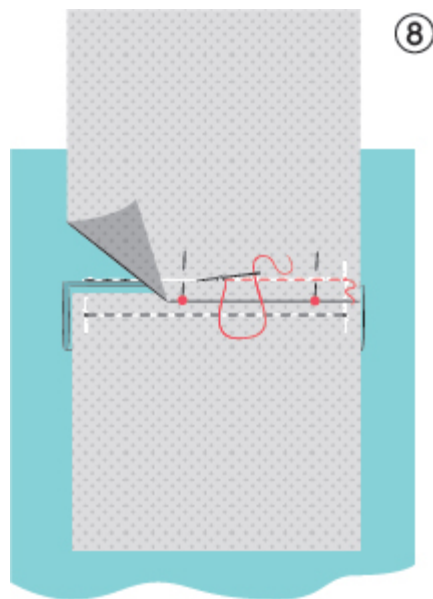
- 5** Now match the line on the welt to the bottom line of the rectangle on your garment (working from the right side of the garment). This means that the raw and unfolded edge of the welt should face the top line of the rectangle. Position the welt very precisely, using the side edges of the pocket line you drew earlier. Pin and then tack the welt in place along the length of the pocket line, finishing exactly where your pocket line finishes.



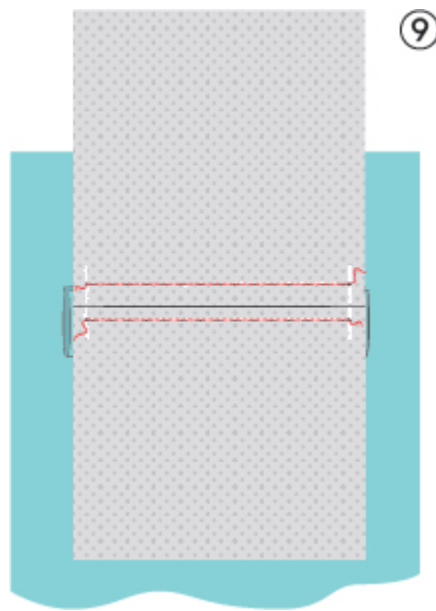
- 6** On the wrong side of the smaller pocket bag piece, draw a straight line across the top raw edge, using the pattern's seam allowance; in other words, if you have a 1.5-cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ -in.) seam allowance in your pattern overall, draw the straight line 1.5 cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in.) away from the raw edge. Mark the ends of the pocket line on this drawn seam allowance line. Repeat the process on the wrong side of the larger pocket bag.
- 7** With the smaller pocket bag wrong side up, match this line to line on the welt, which is also the bottom straight line of the rectangle on the right side of your garment. Position it very precisely, using the side edges of the pocket line to position. Pin in place and then tack it into position along the marked line, starting and finishing at the ends of the pocket line. This means you are tacking the small pocket bag in the same position as the welt.



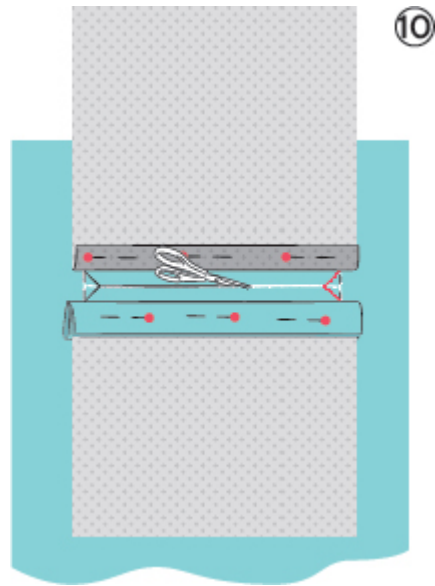
- 8** With the bigger pocket bag wrong side up, match the marked line to the top straight line of the rectangle on the right side of your garment. Position it very precisely, using the side edges of the pocket line to position. Pin in place and then tack it into position along the marked line, starting and finishing at the ends of the pocket line.



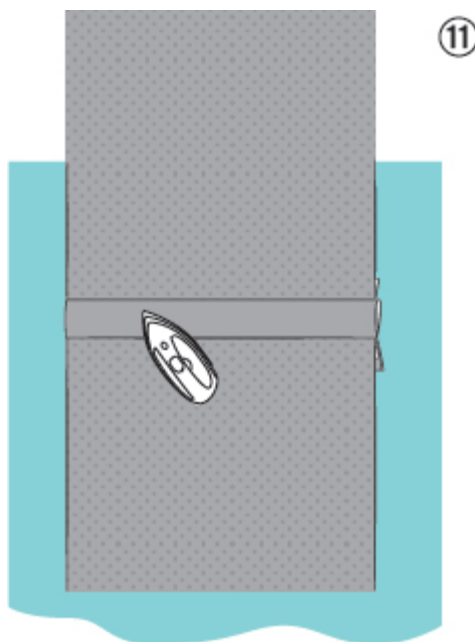
- 9** Machine stitch the welt and small pocket bag exactly where you have tacked them, backstitching well at each end. Do the same for the big pocket bag. All the marking and tacking that you did earlier will come into play now, as both these stitch lines need to be perfectly parallel to each other and to start and finish at exactly the same points. Remove your tacking stitches if necessary.



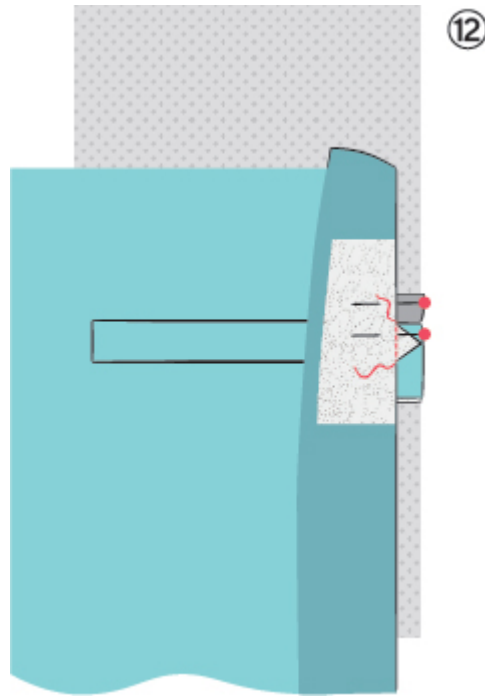
- 10** Pin the seam allowances of the welt and pocket bags inside the rectangle out of the way, revealing the centre line that you drew in step 2. Using sharp scissors, cut your garment fabric open along this line, stopping 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) away from the side edges of the drawn rectangle. Cut diagonally into the corners of the rectangle to create a Y-shape at each side, so that you end up with a little triangle on each end. It can be helpful to draw this in advance to be accurate. Cut the triangles as close as possible to the stitch lines, without cutting through any of the stitches.



- 11** Turn the pocket bags to the inside of your garment through the opening, bringing the seam allowances of the welt to the inside as well. From the right side of the garment, the pocket should now look finished. Make sure the welt and the pocket bags are lying straight and flat, including the seam allowances. Pull the triangles at each side outwards. Press all the pocket bag seams. Then press the small pocket bag downwards.



- 12** Secure the triangles to the welt by stitching back and forth a few times. One way to do this is to look on the outside of your garment and fold away the garment at each side of the pocket in turn, revealing the triangles.



- 13** Working on the inside of your garment, fold the larger pocket bag piece down and press. Matching the edges of the two pocket pieces together, sew around the sides and the bottom of the pocket. If your pocket bag will be seen on the inside of the garment, you can overlock all around it. If it will be hidden by a lining, leave the seam allowances raw.

TIP

For all welt pockets, you can do a hand stitch or a tiny zig-zag stitch along both short edges of the welt pocket. This is done on the right side of the garment to add extra strength

to the little triangles you folded away and stitched previously.

CUFFS & COLLARS

Finishing cuffs and collars is usually done together towards the end of the garment-making process. Leave plenty of time to finish them neatly.

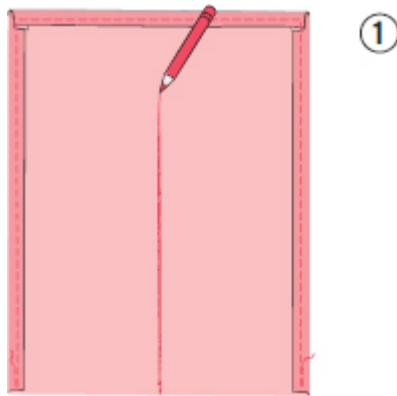
OPENINGS FOR CLOSE-FITTING CUFFS

Cuffs that fit snugly around the wrist need an opening for the wearer to slip their hand through; make this opening before you stitch the sleeve underarm seam and attach the cuff.

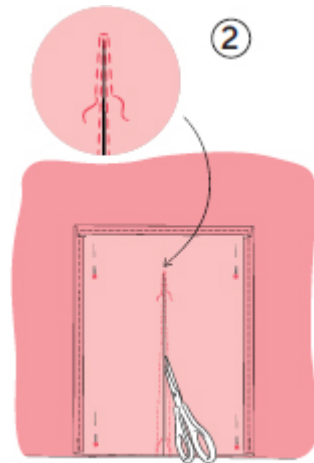
FACED CUFF OPENING

In this method, a rectangle of fabric (a facing) is stitched over the area where the sleeve end is to be slit, neatly finishing the raw edges. Cut the facing about 6.5 cm (2½ in.) wide and 2.5 cm (1 in.) longer than the slit.

- 1** Fold under and press 6 mm (¼ in.) to the wrong side along both long edges and one short edge of each facing strip. Machine stitch in place. Mark the position of the slit on the facing.



- 2** With right sides together, pin the facing over the end of the sleeve, matching up the marked slits on both pieces. Working from the facing side, stitch closely around the marked slit line in a V shape. Carefully cut up the middle of the slit, making sure you don't cut through the stitches at the top.



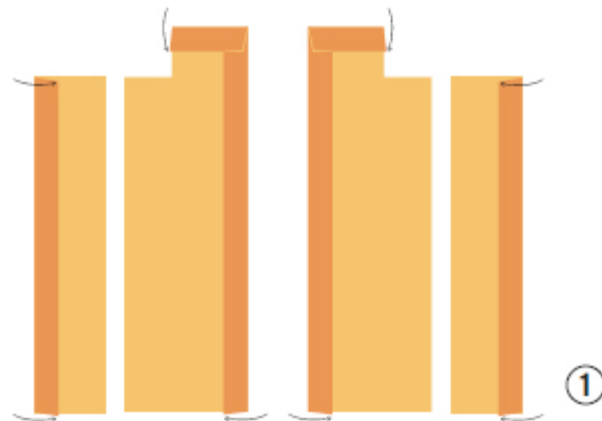
- 3** Turn the facing to the wrong side of the sleeve and press. Tack the bottom edge of the facing in place, ready to attach the cuff. Stitch the facing to the sleeve, close to the edges; you can either machine stitch it in place or slipstitch by hand. Press carefully.



SHIRT SLEEVE PLACKET OPENING

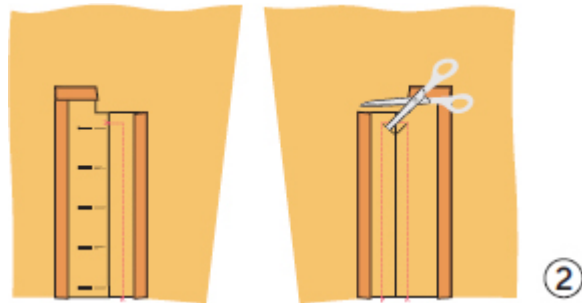
This consists of two pieces of fabric for each sleeve – a sleeve placket and a sleeve binding – that overlap, allowing the cuff to fit closely around the wrist. The overlap piece (the placket) has a shaped top end; the underlap piece (the binding) has a straight top end.

- 1** On one long edge of each sleeve placket and placket binding piece, fold 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) to the wrong side and press. Fold under and press the top edge of each sleeve placket piece by 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.), too. Be sure to make a mirrored set!

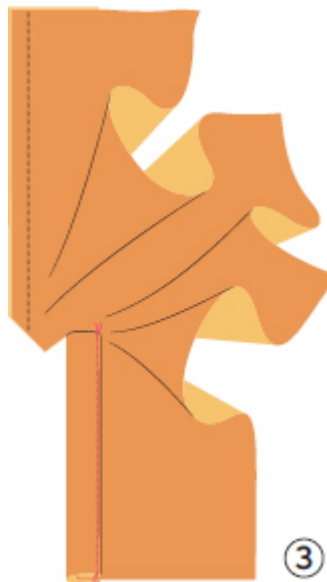


- 2** Lay the sleeves out, wrong side up, and cut the marked slit on each one. Place the plackets and bindings wrong side up on each side of the slit, remembering to mirror their positions on

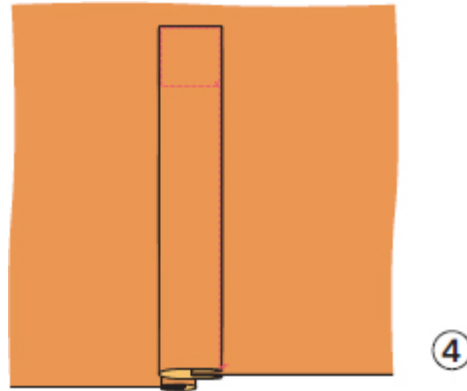
the second sleeve. Pin in place and stitch along each side to the top of the slit. Cut from the top of the slit towards either side of the stitched edges to form a Y-shape.



- 3** Turn the placket piece through the slash line to the right side of the sleeve. Wrap the placket binding around the raw edge of that side of the slit, encasing the stitching. Press, pin and topstitch close to the original seamline.



- 4** Fold the placket in half, wrong sides together, making sure you cover the line of stitching, and press. Pin and topstitch in place, starting at the hem edge.



TIP

Place the placket binding on the side of the slit nearest the back of the sleeve and the sleeve placket on the side nearest the front.

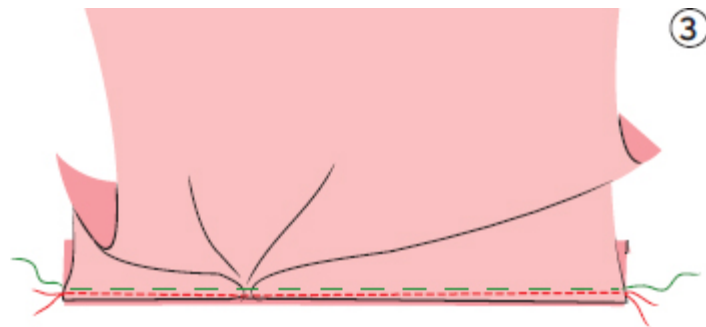
CONTINUOUS BOUND SLEEVE PLACKET

A continuous bound placket can be a good option if you are working with a challenging fabric or if your sleeve placket is simply very small: a continuous placket doesn't have lots of separate pattern pieces to struggle with. Once you get the hang of this technique, you'll find that it's a really neat placket finish.

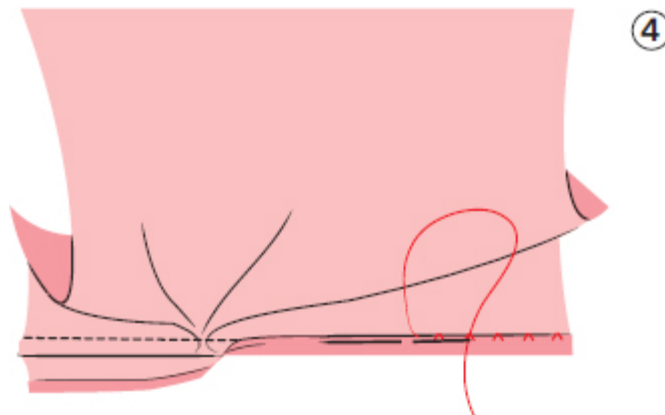
- 1** Re-inforce the marked slash line at the lower edge of both the sleeves by stitching closely around it in a V-shape. Slash the opening, making sure to slash to a hair's breadth at the point.



- 2** Fold under and press 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) along one long edge of the sleeve placket, then press the second placket in the same way.
- 3** Open up the bottom of the sleeve opening, so that it lies in a straight line. With the right sides together, pin and tack the unpressed edge of the placket to the sleeve along the length of the slashed edge. Machine stitch along the unfolded edge of the placket.

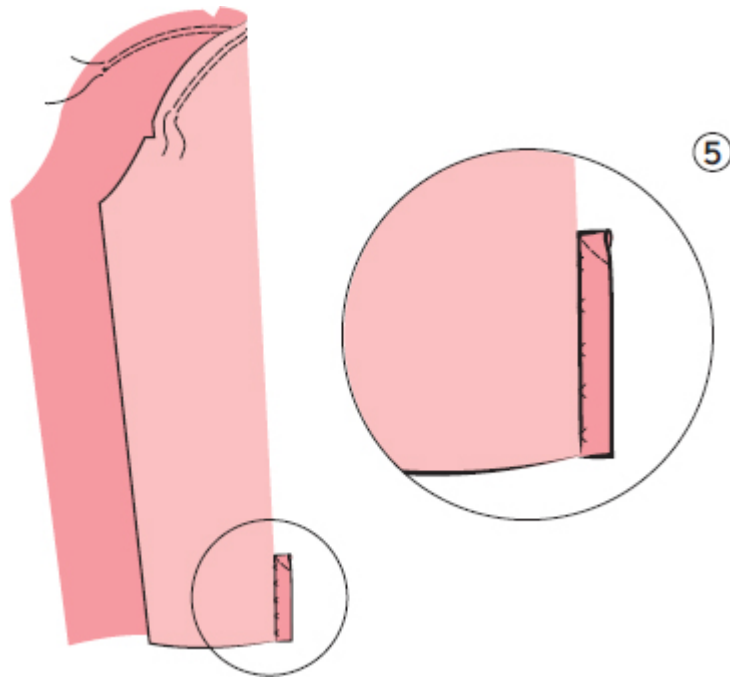


- 4** Press the seam allowance in towards the placket. Fold the pressed edge of the placket over to the wrong side of the sleeve and pin the pressed edge over the seam allowance. Slipstitch the placket in place.



- 5** Working from the inside of the sleeve, fold the sleeve in half, aligning the short ends of the placket, and sew a short diagonal row of stitching across the top edge of the placket from the fold

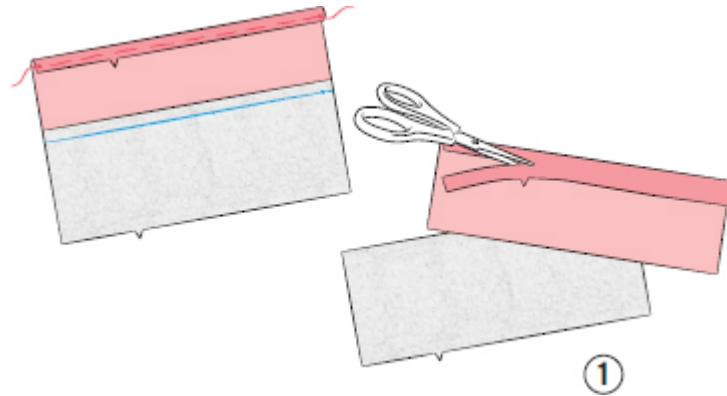
closest to the sleeve across to the other side of the placket. This reinforces the opening.



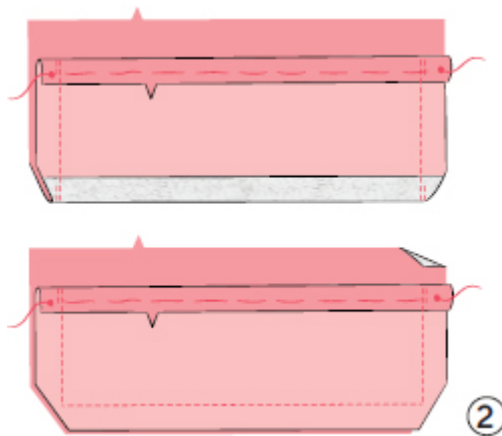
- 6** Join the underarm seam of the sleeves with a French seam.

ATTACHING CLOSE-FITTING CUFFS

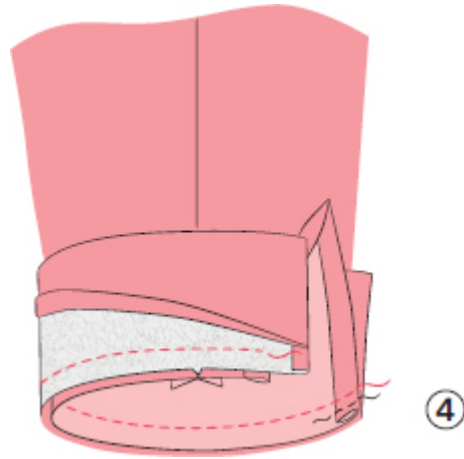
- 1** If your cuff is just one piece, apply interfacing up to the central foldline. If it is two pieces, interface one piece. Along the top edge, turn and press the seam allowance to the wrong side on the non-interfaced section of a one-piece cuff and on the non-interfaced piece of a two-piece cuff. Tack in place.



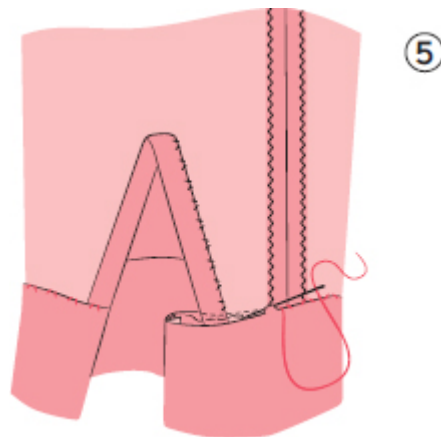
- 2** On a one-piece cuff, fold the piece in half, right sides together, and stitch the side edges together. On a two-piece cuff, pin the two pieces right sides together, aligning the raw edges. Stitch along the side and lower edges. Grade the seam allowances, trim the corners and turn right side out.



- 3** Stitch the underarm seam of the sleeve and press the seam open. Finish the seam allowances separately.
- 4** With right sides together, matching the notch on the cuff with the sleeve seam, pin the cuff to the end of the sleeve. The front edge of the sleeve opening should be level with the cuff; the back of the cuff will extend beyond the sleeve opening. Tack and machine stitch in place. Trim and grade the seam allowances.



- 5** Pull the cuff down and press the seam allowances towards the cuff. Bring the loose, tacked edge of the cuff in line with the machine stitching on the inside of the sleeve and slipstitch in place.

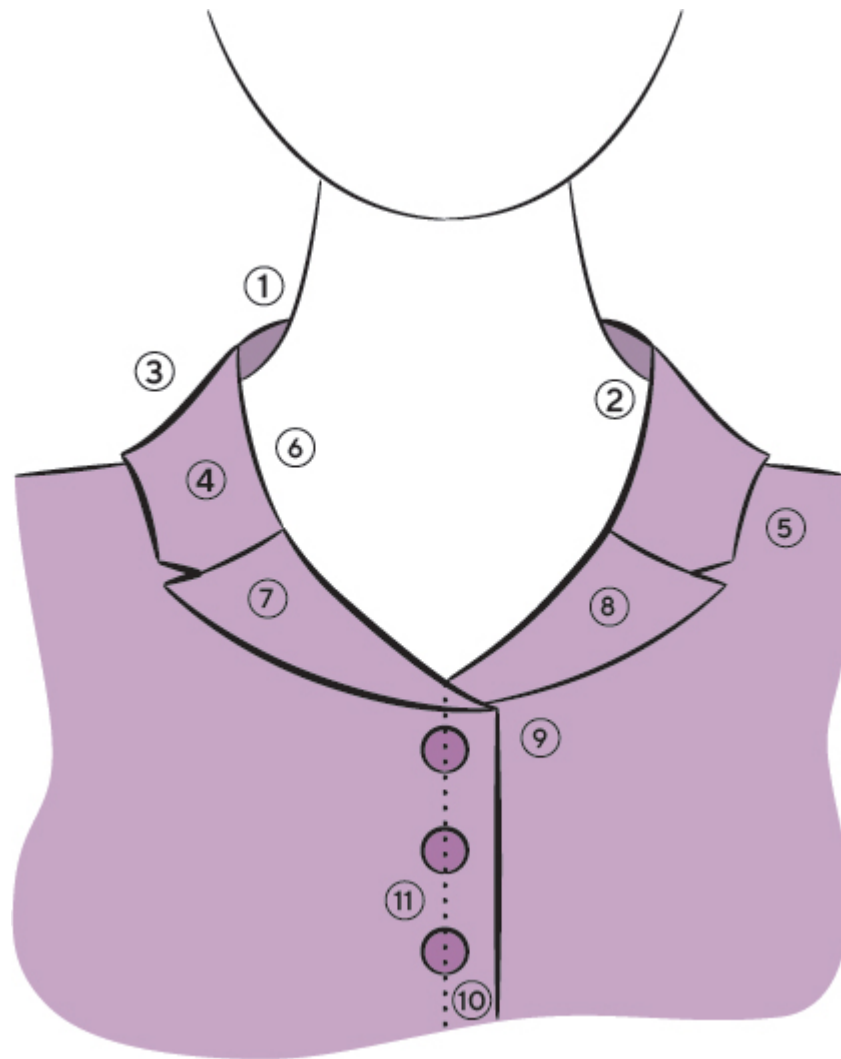


- 6** Work a buttonhole on the overlap of the cuff and sew a button to the underlap.

COLLARS – WHAT’S WHAT

Here is a visual guide to what’s what on a collar. There is lots of terminology involved in collars and some of these terms you may never encounter if you stick to making flat collars. You can refer to this handy guide whenever you are stuck or to gain a better

understanding of how a collar operates and what's what on your garment.



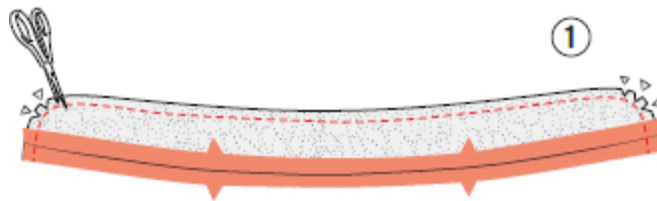
- ① Collar stand
- ② Roll line
- ③ Fall
- ④ Collar
- ⑤ Style line

- ⑥ Break line
- ⑦ Gorge line
- ⑧ Rever/lapel
- ⑨ Break point – where the collar turns into the garment (you need a button here)
- ⑩ Button stand
- ⑪ Centre front (CF)

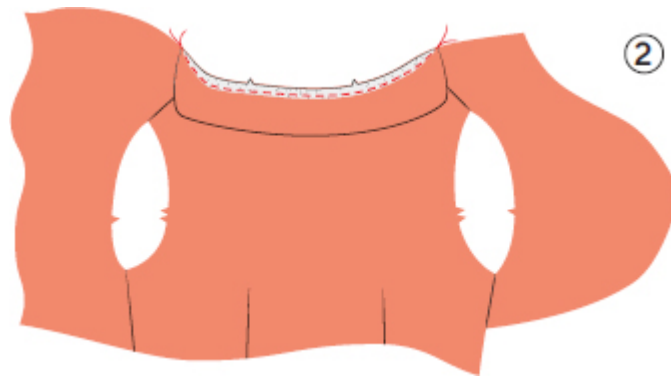
BAND COLLAR

This collar shape, also referred to as a standing collar, is a classic and relatively straightforward way of adding a collar. It's a close-fitting collar that follows the shape of the neck and is typically found on shirts and cheongsams.

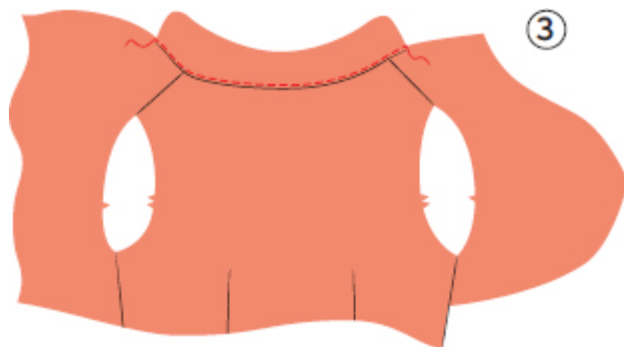
- 1** Following the manufacturer's instructions, apply iron-on interfacing to the wrong side of the two collar pieces. Turn the bottom edge of the inner collar to the wrong side by 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) and press. With right sides together, pin and then stitch the two collar pieces together along the curved top edge. Trim the seam allowances to 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.), and notch to reduce the bulk inside the seam. Turn the collar right side out and press to create a clean edge.



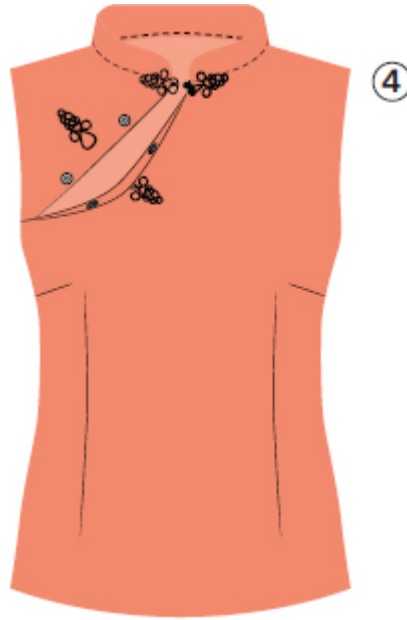
- 2** With right sides together, matching the notches, pin the raw edge of the outside collar to the neckline. You'll need to ease the two curves together, so pin carefully. Machine together with a 1-cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ -in.) seam allowance.



- 3** Working from the wrong side, press the outside collar seam allowance to the inside of the collar. Line up the pressed fold along the bottom edge of the inner collar, covering the stitch line from the previous step. Pin in place from the right side and topstitch.



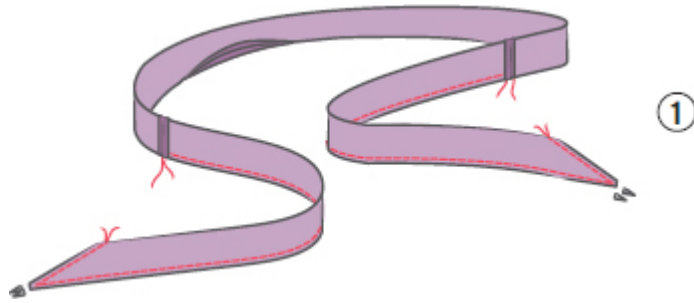
- 4** You can stitch snap fasteners, frog fasteners or a hook and eye to the centre front of the collar, if you wish, or it can be left open.



PUSSYBOW NECKTIE

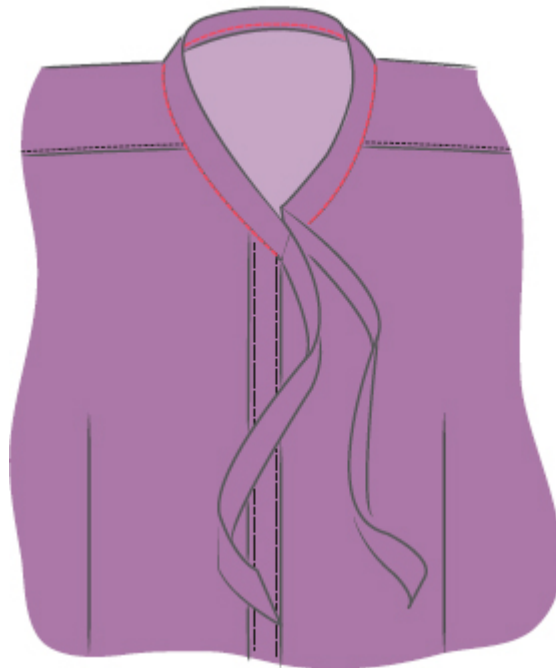
This style of collar can be worn tied in a bow or with the tails loose. You can imagine this collar as a band collar with a tie on each end at the front of the neck. Play with the proportions of the ties to create either a small or a big bow. Perhaps even play with the colour?

- 1** With right sides together, pin one front necktie piece to each side of the back necktie piece. Sew the seams and press the seam allowances open. With right sides together, fold the entire tie in half lengthwise and sew the front sections of the tie up to the point where the fronts join the back. Trim the seam allowances of the front sections and turn the tie right side out. Try to get nice sharp corners on the fronts of the tie and press the front sections.



- 2** Press one edge of the back section of the tie under by 1.5 cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in.). With right sides together, pin the unpressed edge of the tie to the neckline of the blouse, matching the front of the neckline to the seam in the tie and matching the notch to the shoulder seam. The necktie will be lying upside down on top of the outside of the blouse. Sew, then press the necktie and all seam allowances upwards. Then align the remaining side of the necktie (the one you pressed earlier) to the inside of the neckline and sew from the outside by stitching in the ditch. Alternatively, slipstitch the necktie in place from the inside of the garment.

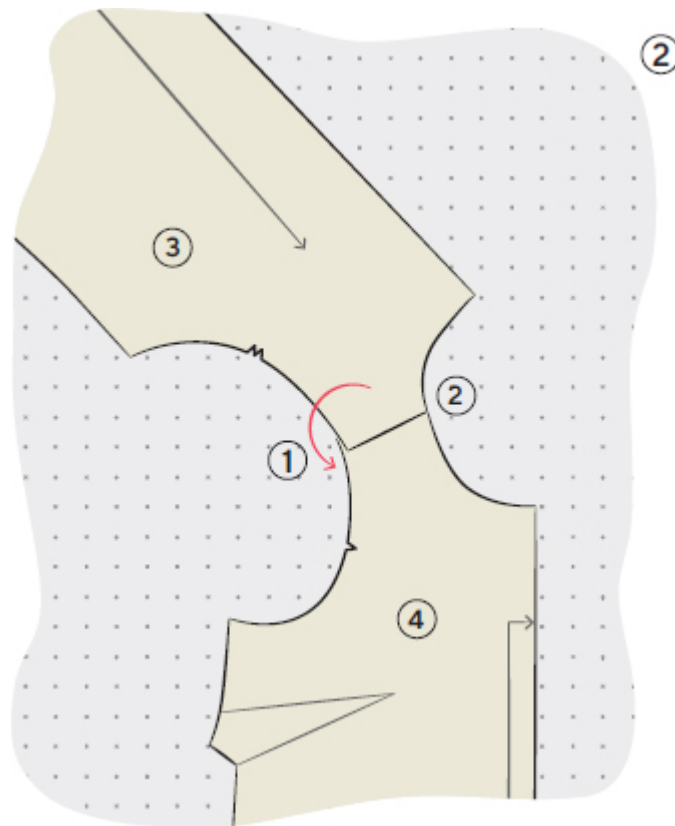
②



DRAFTING A FLAT COLLAR

A flat collar, also called a Peter Pan collar, is a classic collar shape, iconic in vintage fashions and children's wear, and continues to be popular in various forms. You can draft a collar like this to go on a pattern with a high neckline, such as a blouse, and it's also great if you are making a pattern from scratch using a basic block. To draft, you will need your front and back bodice pattern pieces, a ruler, a curved ruler and some pattern paper.

- 1** Lower the neckline on your front bodice pattern by 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) at the centre front. Please note: if you are drafting on a basic block that has a shoulder dart, this dart needs to be temporarily removed from the shoulder before drafting, to give you a clean drafting area. You can move the dart into either the waist or bust dart, for example.
- 2** Put a piece of pattern paper on your work surface, big enough to draw around the shoulder and neck areas of your bodice pattern. Put the front and back bodice pattern pieces together at the shoulder so that the neck points touch. Keep this point together, like a hinge. Overlap the pattern pieces at the outside shoulder by about 4 cm ($1\frac{1}{2}$ in.). The more you overlap, the more of a stand the collar design will have. You can move the front bodice shoulder over the back, or vice versa. The maximum you can overlap the front and back at this point is 10 cm (4 in.). Overlapping the shoulder area ensures that the outside edge of your collar will fit snugly around the body; without this process, the outside circumference of the collar would be too big.

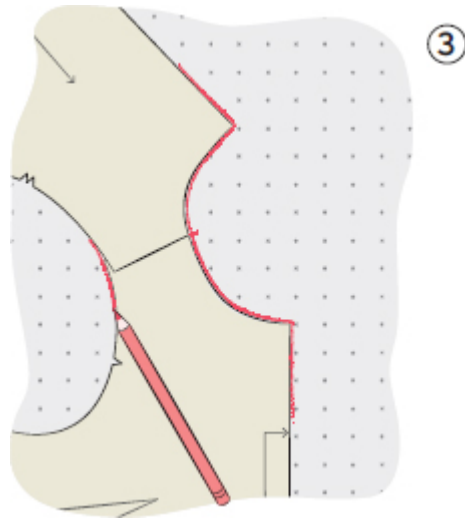


- ① Outside shoulder
 - ② Neck point (hinge)
 - ③ Back bodice
 - ④ Front bodice
-

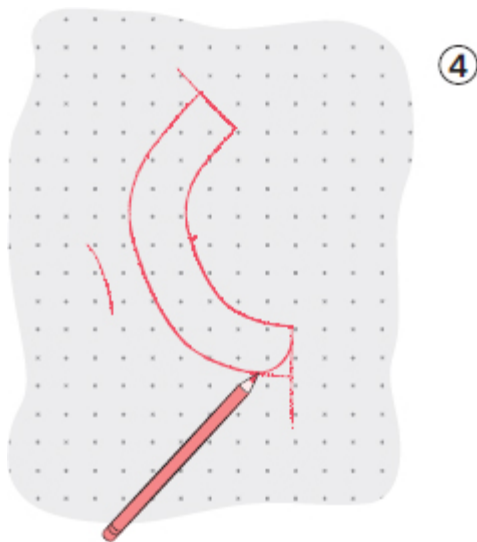
TIP

There are two ways to draft: you can either draw directly on your pattern and then trace off the new pattern piece(s); alternatively, you can copy your pattern first and draw on the copy.

- 3** Now draw around the front and back neckline and about 10 cm (4 in.) of the centre back and centre front. Trace a little of the armhole area around the shoulder seam, so that you know where the pattern finishes.



- 4** Then draw in the shape of your collar, making sure that the collar design line is at a 90-degree angle where it hits the centre back line. This will ensure that, when the collar is cut on the fold at the centre back, this will be a beautifully smooth line.



- 5** This is now your under collar pattern. Smooth out the inner neck point if necessary, add a grain line at the centre back, mark the centre back to be cut on the fold, and add a seam allowance all around. Please note: If your garment has a centre back opening, you need to add a seam allowance to the centre back collar pattern and cut two collar pieces, not one piece on the fold.
- 6** For the top collar pattern, use the same outline but add 3 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in.) to the outer edge. This is a roll line, which ensures that your top collar can roll over slightly at the outer collar edge to hide the seam in the finished garment. You will do this during pressing.
- 7** Cut the under collar in top fabric and interfacing. After interfacing the under collar, place it right sides together with the top collar and sew around the outer edge. Trim the seam allowance and clip into any corners. Turn the collar right side out and press the outside edge, rolling the top collar slightly over to hide the seam. Attach the collar to your garment as normal.

TIPS

- **You can play with the shape and size a lot, and the only way to find out if your design is working is to cut the collar as a toile and put it on a mannequin or pin it to your pattern. You can design the collar to curve away from the centre front, change the size around the neck, create a scalloped or pointed collar or even insert a ruffle into the outer seam.**
 - **It's best not to let your design line go outside the armhole, as this means that the finished collar would extend past your shoulder.**
-

FACINGS & LININGS

The inside of a garment can be as exciting as the outside – well, nearly! Facings and linings live on the inside of a garment and ensure that the outer edges are finished neatly, that there is structure and strength around essential areas, that seams are hidden, and that the inside of the garment looks neat and finished. A facing and lining can be used together; some jacket designs have a facing only, with exposed internal seams. You could use bias binding to finish those seams for a professional-looking jacket. Inside pockets and labels can also sometimes be added to facings and linings.

DRAFTING A JACKET OR COAT FACING

A facing is a pattern piece that sits on the inside on a garment, but it's made from top fabric. It's there to provide stability and structure and to make sure the garment looks good if you happen to see that part of the garment. A facing is normally found on the inside of the centre front of a jacket or coat. Another common area for a facing is around the back neck, where you'll typically have a label or a hanging loop as well, if you look at ready-made garments. A facing is joined to the [lining](#) if there is one. A facing is also cut in a suitable interfacing.

Although most commercial patterns will include a facing pattern, it's useful to know how to create one if you've drafted your own jacket or coat pattern or want to replace the facing on an existing garment.

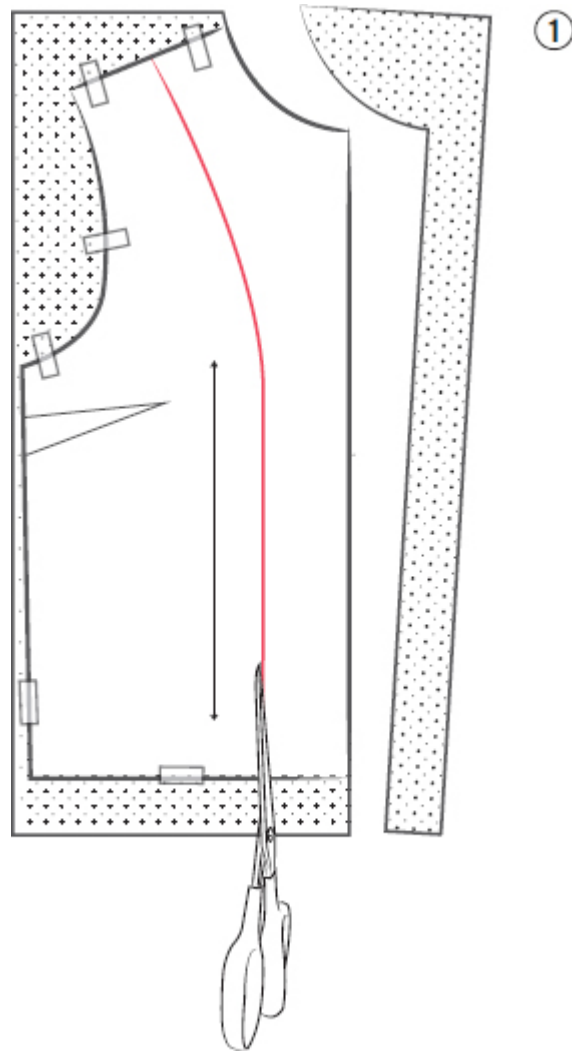
There are two ways of doing this and it's up to you which method to use.

Option 1: Trace your original paper pattern onto pattern paper, but don't cut it out immediately. Draft your new pattern on the tracing and then cut it out. This way, your original paper pattern remains untouched.

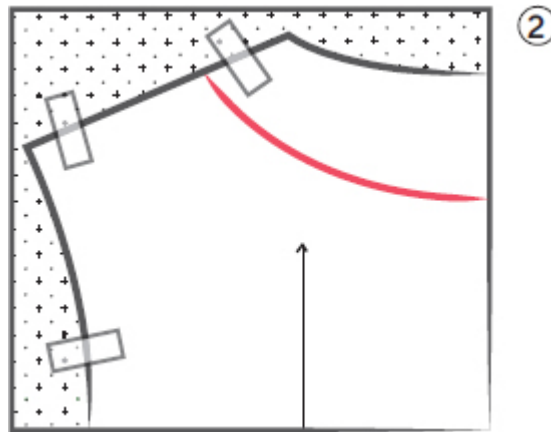
Option 2: Draft on top of your original paper pattern, then put pattern paper on top and trace off the new pattern.

To draft a front facing for your jacket or coat you will need a coat or jacket pattern, pattern paper, a ruler and a curved ruler.

- 1** Take the paper pattern (either the [original pattern](#) or a tracing) for your front body piece. Starting at the centre of the shoulder seam, or slightly more towards the neckline, draw the design line for the facing. There is no set measurement for this (although 8 cm/3 in. from the neck point is sometimes used as a guide), but make sure it's not too narrow by being too close to the neckline, and that it doesn't come too close to the armhole. Draw a line that curves down in a gentle, natural shape, aiming it towards the hem, then continue in a straight line to meet the hem. The straight line should be about 10 cm (4 in.) away from the centre front edge. Again, there is no set measurement – but don't make the facing too narrow, as this won't allow it to sit neatly inside the garment.



- 2** If you have a pattern without a collar stand, you can also draft a centre back facing. Start a gently curved line from the shoulder seam and finish at the centre back. The shoulder seams of the facings need to match, so measure your front facing to get the shoulder seam correct. Finish the facing 6–10 cm (2–4 in.) down from the top of the centre back.



- 3** Add a seam allowance all around your facing pieces.
- 4** On all your facings, draw balance marks to enable you to match up the facings along the shoulders and to match the lining to the facing. You'll need to transfer these markings to your lining pieces, too. Cut a pair of centre front facings in both top fabric and interfacing and cut one centre back facing on the fold in both top fabric and interfacing.
- 5** Interface the facing pieces, then assemble your [lining and facing](#) form the complete inside of your garment, ready to sew and finish. Use the balance marks you made during the drafting to sew neatly and accurately. Remember that if you want to insert a hanging loop for your coat or jacket, now is the time! Simply sandwich a fabric loop in between the coat back and the facing at the centre back neck.

TIP

Pay attention to fastenings: if you have a zip or a single row of buttons, then you can aim for around 10 cm (4 in.) from the centre front edge. If you have a double-breasted jacket, however, the facing should cover the entire buttoned area and you might have to make it wider.

DRAFTING A JACKET OR COAT LINING

A lining is drafted using the same paper pattern as the main garment. It's easiest to draft your lining pattern on top of your original paper pattern. If you can, trace your original pattern piece onto pattern paper without cutting it out. Make sure you have space around the traced piece, then you can use the full paper to draft. If you need to re-line an existing garment, take the old lining out, unpick it, and use it as a pattern.

The lining pattern will end up slightly bigger and slightly shorter than the main garment pattern.

Cut your lining pattern in a lining fabric. Together with the facings, this forms the inside of your jacket or coat. If you want to add an inside pocket to your garment, add it to the lining before you attach the lining to the garment.

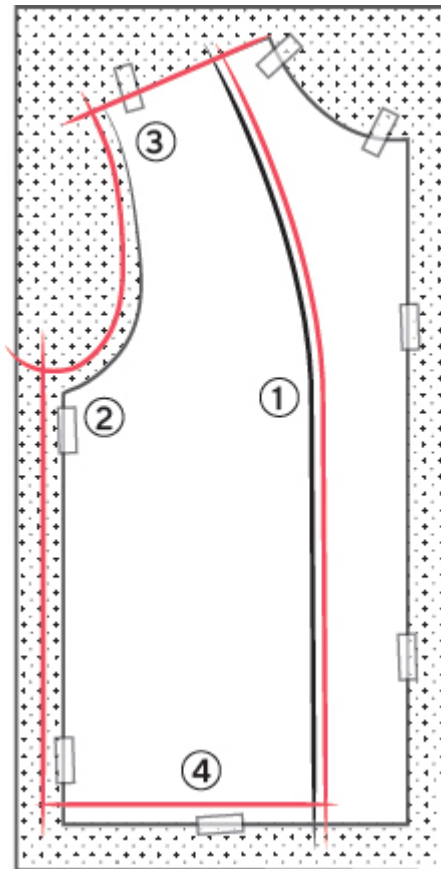
Follow these steps to draft a lining for your garment. You will need a coat or jacket pattern, pattern paper, a ruler and a tape measure. We will assume your garment also has a [facing](#).

FRONT LINING

The front lining will follow the front jacket pattern and attach to the facing.

- 1** Extend the edge where the lining meets the facing by 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.). This will ensure that it's not too tight on the inside.
- 2** Extend the side seam up and out by 1–1.5 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{2}$ in.).
- 3** Extend the shoulder seam beyond the shoulder point by 3 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in.).

- 4** Draft the bottom edge of the lining at half the depth of the finished hem. If your original pattern has a seam allowance included, then you have now finished your front lining pattern. If not, add a seam allowance around your lining pattern. Mark your lining pattern with 'cut 1 pair'.

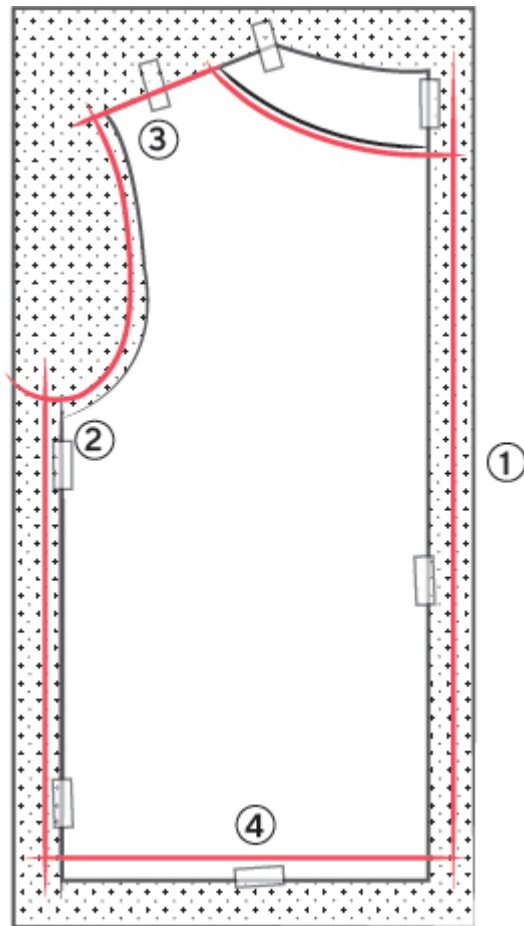


BACK LINING

The back lining will follow the back jacket pattern and attach to the neck facing, if there is one.

- 1** Extend 2–3 cm (1–1¼ in.) beyond the centre back line to create the centre back pleat.
- 2** Extend the side seam up and out by 1–1.5 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ – $\frac{5}{8}$ in.).

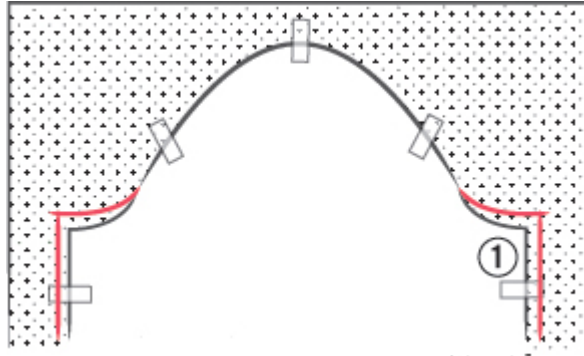
- 3** Extend the shoulder seam beyond the shoulder point by 3 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in.).
- 4** Draft the bottom edge of the lining at half the depth of the finished hem. If your original pattern has a seam allowance included, then you have now finished your back lining pattern. If not, add a seam allowance around your lining pattern. Mark your lining pattern with 'cut 1 pair'.



SLEEVE LINING

- 1** Bring the underarm point up and out by 1–1.5 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ – $\frac{5}{8}$ in.).

- 2** Draft the bottom edge of the sleeve lining at half the depth of the finished cuff. If your original pattern has a seam allowance included, then you have now finished your sleeve lining pattern. If not, add a seam allowance all around your lining pattern.



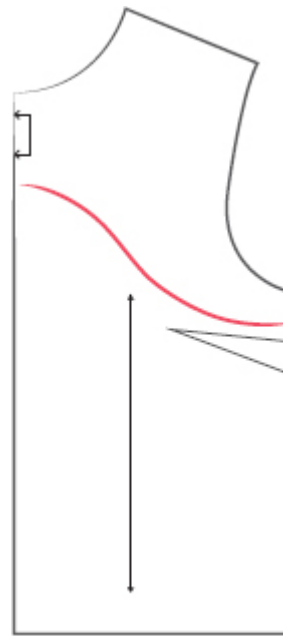
If your jacket or coat has shoulder pads, you can take a little wedge off the shoulder seam of the lining.

DRAFTING AN ALL-IN-ONE NECK AND ARMHOLE FACING

Sleeveless garments often have an all-in-one facing for the neckline and armhole. It will follow the same outline as your main pattern, but there are a few things to keep in mind:

FRONT

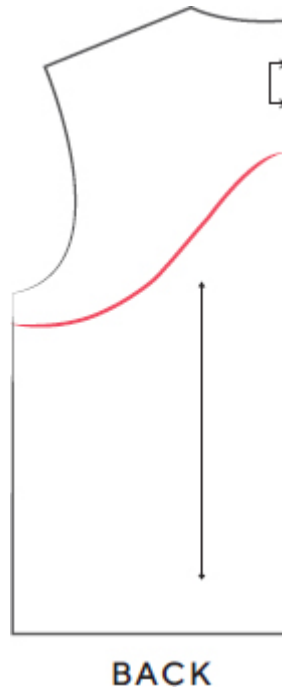
The front hem of the facing should have a gentle, natural curve to make it blend in when worn. The facing should finish above the bust, so as not to pucker and ride up. Start a design line in the side seam, about 5 cm (2 in.) down from the underarm point, and curve up towards the centre front. Make sure that the design line hits the centre front line at a 90-degree angle. Aim for about 8 cm (3 in.) down from the centre front neckline.



FRONT

BACK

On the back, we want to avoid the facing hitting the shoulder blades. Again, start a design line in the side seam (make sure it's the same as the front) and curve up towards the centre back. Make sure that the design line hits the centre back at a 90-degree angle. Aim for about 8 cm (3 in.) down from the centre back neckline.



BESPOKE FIT

For a snug-fitting or bespoke garment, the facing should be a few millimetres smaller than the main garment. To achieve this, draw a slightly diagonal line from the shoulder seam to the hem of the facing, front and back. Fold along this line and fold away 3–5 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$ in.). You can also cut and overlap. Make sure that the shoulder seam is still a straight line after this and smooth out the curve in the hem.

When you are done with your draft, add seam allowances everywhere except for the hem (which you would typically overlock, so there is no need for a seam allowance). Also mark the facing pattern so that you know whether to cut on the fold or to cut two pieces. Cut the facing in both top fabric and interfacing.

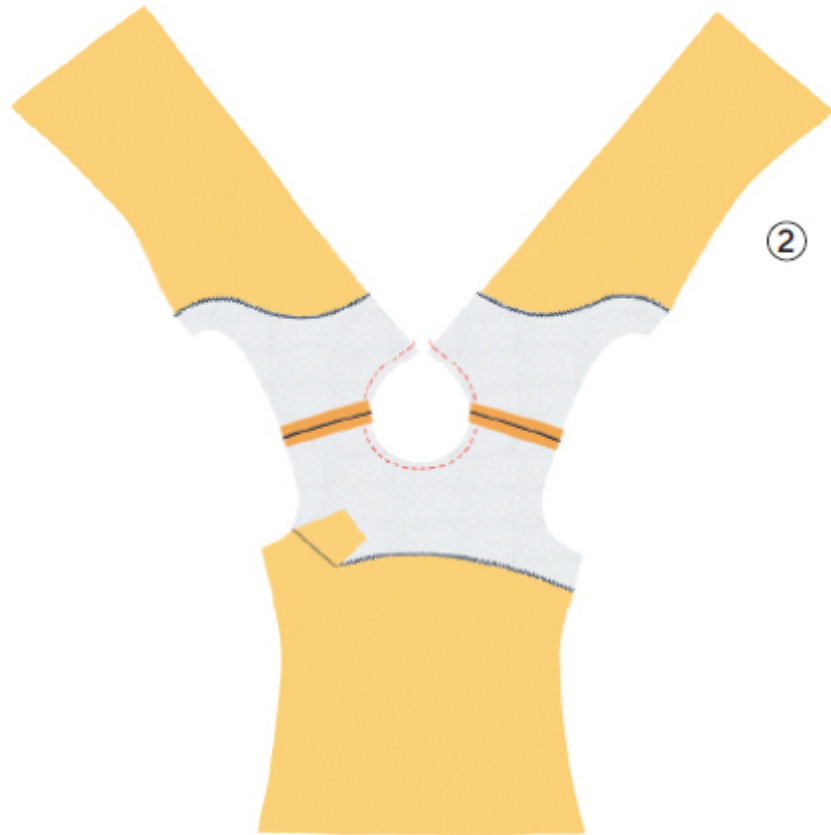
ATTACHING AN ALL-IN-ONE NECK AND ARMHOLE FACING

Sew the shoulder seams of the garment before you attach the facing.

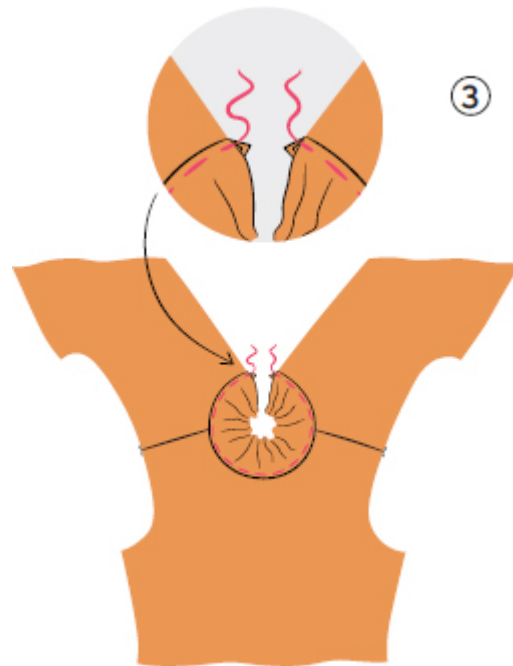
- 1** Apply interfacing to the front and back neck facings. With right sides together, pin the front and back neck facings together at the shoulder seams. Machine stitch. Neaten the lower edge of the facing with a zigzag stitch or an edge stitch, or on an overlocker.



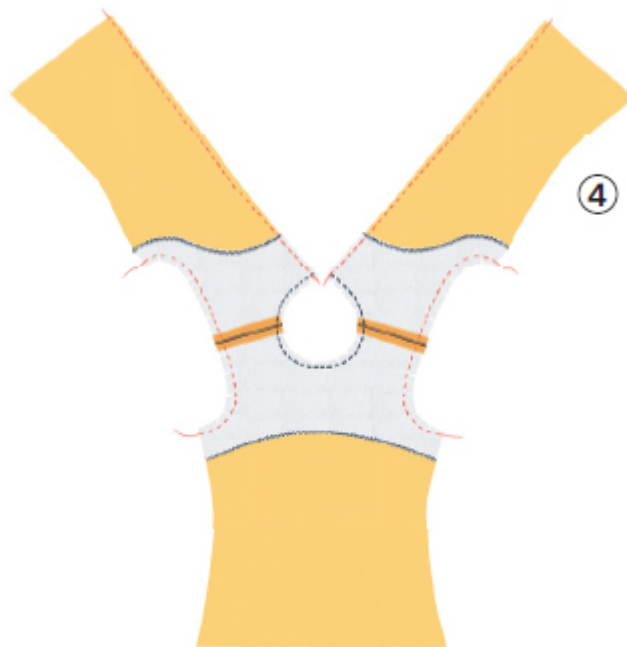
- 2** Lay the garment flat, right side up. Lay the facing right side down on top, matching up the raw edges of the neckline and the shoulder seams. Pin, then sew around the neckline.



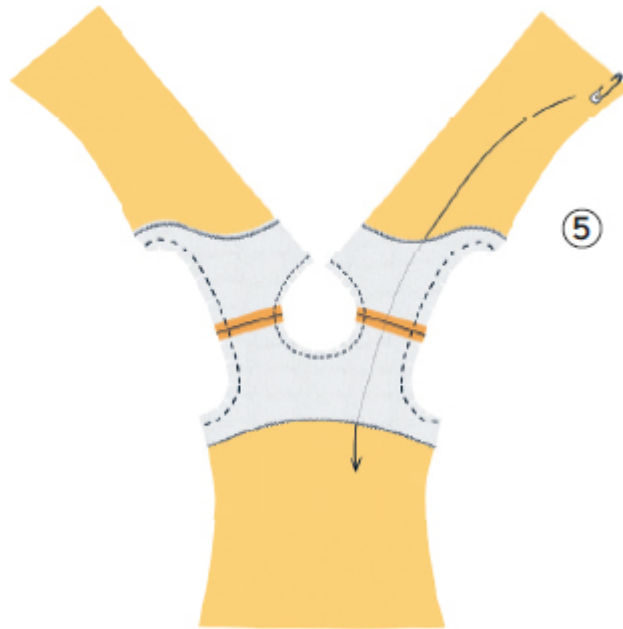
- 3** If the neckline is curved, as here, clip the neckline curve. Press the seam allowances towards the facing and understitch the facing from the right side. Be sure to only stitch through the facing and the seam allowance.



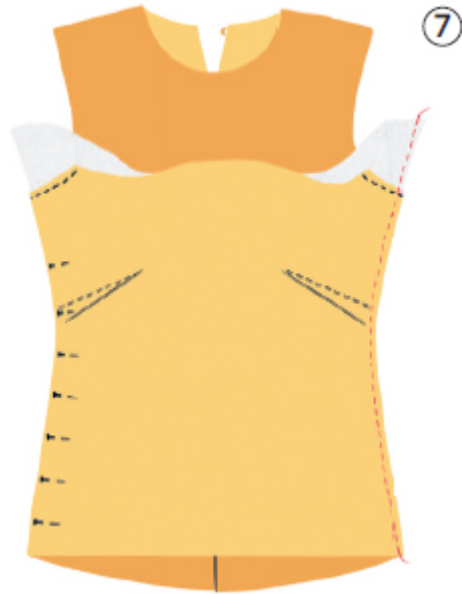
- 4** Now turn the facing inside out, so that the facing and garment are right sides together. Pin the facing around the armholes and the centre back neck opening, matching the shoulder seams. Machine stitch in place. Clip into the curved armhole seams.



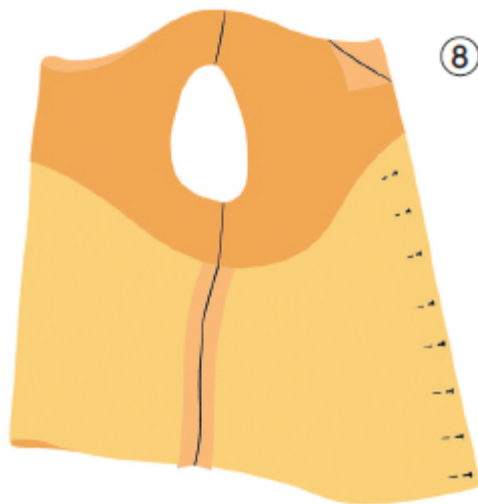
- 5** Attach a safety pin to one corner of each back piece. Use the safety pin to slide the first back piece through the 'tunnel' at the shoulder, through to the right side. Repeat on the opposite shoulder.



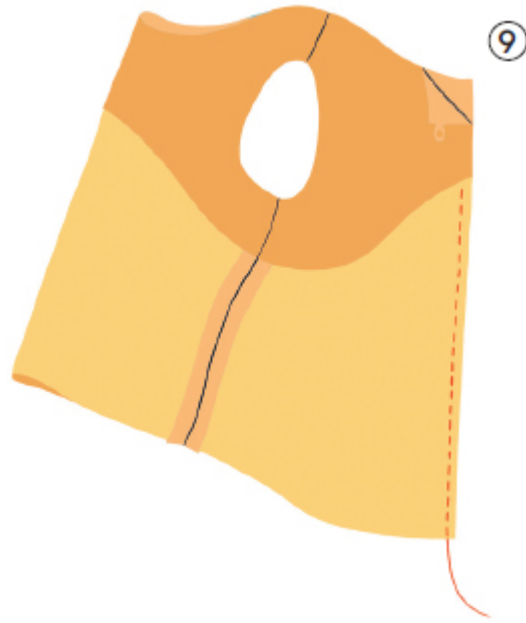
- 6** From the wrong side, press the facing really flat at the armholes, centre back opening and neckline, rolling the seamlines in towards the wrong side as you press.
- 7** Place the front and back of the garment right sides together, matching the side seams. Lift up the facing at the side seams and pin and stitch the side seams from the top of the facing through the underarm seam, all the way down to the hem. Press the seams open and turn the facing to the wrong side of the garment. Press the armhole edge. Use a hand stitch to secure the hem of the facing to the side seams.



- 8** Pin and sew the centre back seam from the hem to the bottom of the facing. Press the seam open. Insert the fastening of your choice into the centre back seam.



- 9** Once you've pulled your facing through to sit in its final position, stitch in the ditch at the underarm and the shoulder seam to make sure it stays in place.



TIPS

- **A facing should be exactly the same shape as the garment edge that it finishes, so if you alter the shape of the garment in any way (for example, by changing the shape of the neckline), remember to alter the facing to match.**
 - **Facings are usually interfaced. Choose an interfacing that's the same weight or lighter than the garment fabric.**
-

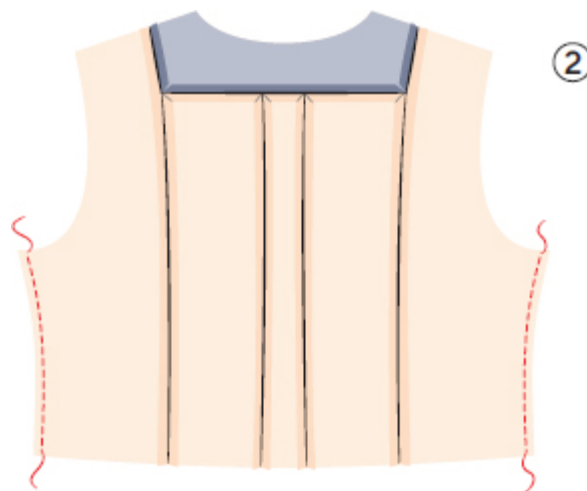
ATTACHING A JACKET OR COAT LINING

Below you will find the most common steps to attach a jacket or coat lining. There are variations to this process, so if you are using a ready made pattern it's best to follow the instructions. Make sure that you have added any pockets before you start attaching the lining, and give the garment and its lining a really good press before you start assembling them. The steps below are for a lining with facings at the neck, front and hem.

- 1** Pin the centre back lining pieces right sides together. Following the marked stitching line, machine between the upper edge and the upper pleat marking, and then from the lower pleat marking to the hem edge. Hand tack between the two machine lines to keep the pleat closed during the construction process. Press the centre back seam to one side.

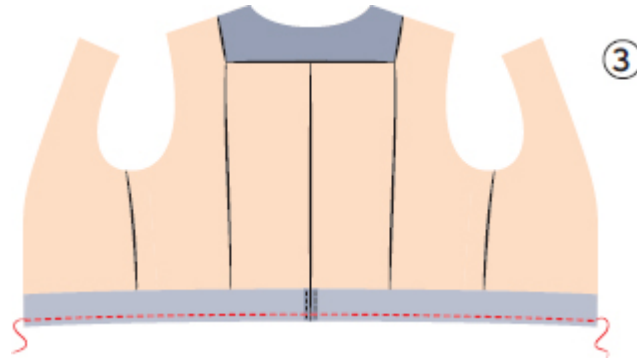


- 2** With right sides together, pin the back neck facing to the lining centre back panel and machine in place. With right sides together, pin and then machine the side back lining panels to the centre back lining panel and the short side edges of the back neck facing. Press the seams open. With right sides together, pin and then stitch the back lining section to the side front lining pieces at the side seams.

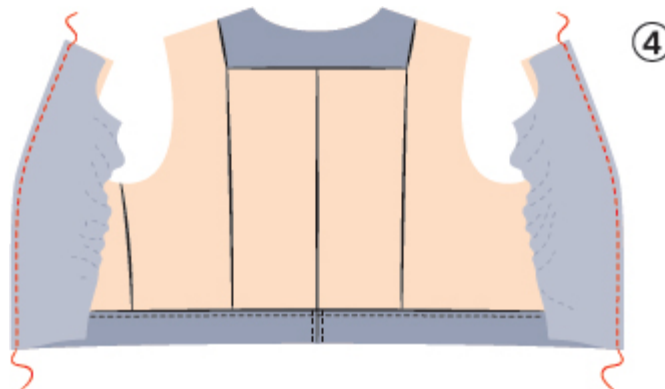


- 3** With right sides together, pin and stitch the centre back seam of the waist facing pieces together to create one long piece. Finger press the seam open, and then topstitch. With right sides

together, aligning the waist facing notches to the lining seams, pin then stitch the waist facing along the entire lower edge of the jacket or coat lining. Finger press the seam allowances up towards the lining, so that the waist facing now extends across the lower edge of the lining. This is now treated as one piece.

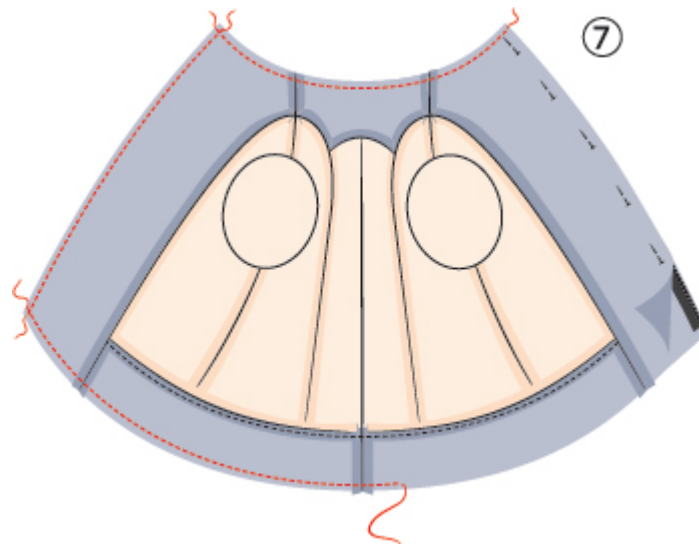


- 4** With right sides together, matching the notches, pin and stitch the side front lining to the front facing piece. Repeat for the opposite side.

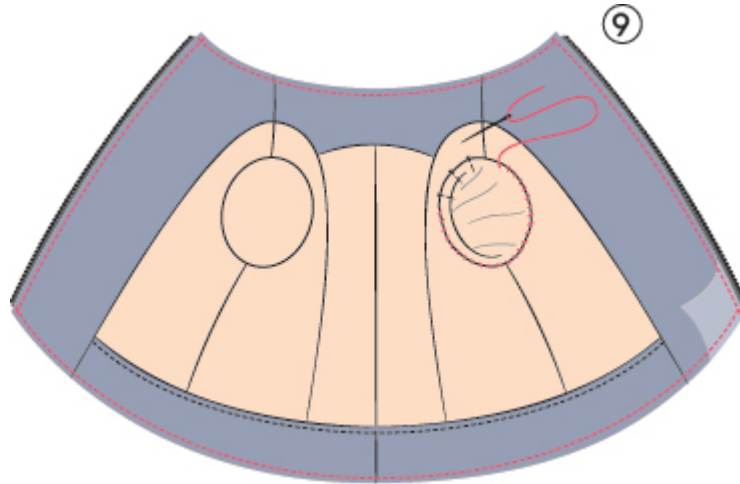


- 5** With right sides together, pin then stitch the front lining to the back lining at the shoulders.
- 6** If your garment has a centre front zip, insert it now. Also [attach the sleeve linings](#), as described.
- 7** With the lining shell and jacket shell right sides together, pin the jacket to the lining around the neckline, centre front and hem.

Stitch around the neckline from one centre front edge to the other, making sure to backstitch at either end. Using a regular zipper foot, stitch the two centre front edges, backstitching at either end (and catching the zipper tape, if you have a zip). Finally, stitch around the hemline from one centre front edge to the other.



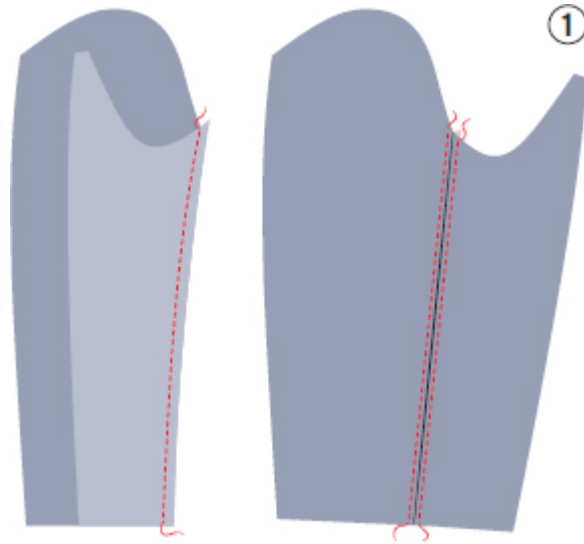
- 8** Clip into the neckline curves and grade the corners. Trim and grade all seam allowances. Turn the garment right side out through the opening at the armhole. Finger press all the edges and work flat with a roller or hammer, and press flat with a cloth. Topstitch around the neckline and centre fronts.
- 9** Secure the lining to the jacket armholes by tacking the lining armhole seam allowance to the jacket armhole seam allowance. Pull the sleeve lining up from inside the sleeves and fold over the armhole seam. Make sure the sleeve linings aren't twisted and that the seams line up. Pin in place and hand sew the lining around the armhole.



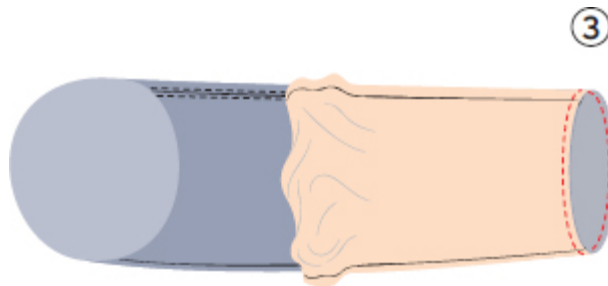
ATTACHING A SLEEVE LINING

There are a few ways to treat the sleeve lining: it can be entirely machine stitched, or machine stitched around the cuff and then hand stitched to the body lining around the armhole. It could even be machine stitched around the armhole and then hand stitched around the cuff. The steps below are for a sleeve lining that's machine stitched to the cuff. Make up the sleeves and the sleeve linings first, before you insert the sleeves into your garment.

- 1** For a one-piece sleeve, pin then sew the underarm seam. Press the seam open and topstitch on both sides of the seam to finish. For a two-piece sleeve, you will have an upper sleeve and an under sleeve piece for both arms. With right sides together, matching the notches, pin then stitch the front edge of the under sleeve to the upper sleeve. Finger press the seam open, then topstitch on both sides of the seam to finish off. Then stitch the back of the under sleeve to the upper sleeve. It's not possible to topstitch this seam, so finger press it open and flatten with your roller or hammer. Repeat on the other sleeve.



- 2** Make up the sleeve linings in the same way, omitting the topstitching. Then press the seams open.
- 3** Working with the sleeve right side out and the lining inside out, slide the lining over the sleeve. The right sides should now be together. Machine around the cuff edge of the sleeve, attaching the lining to the sleeve.



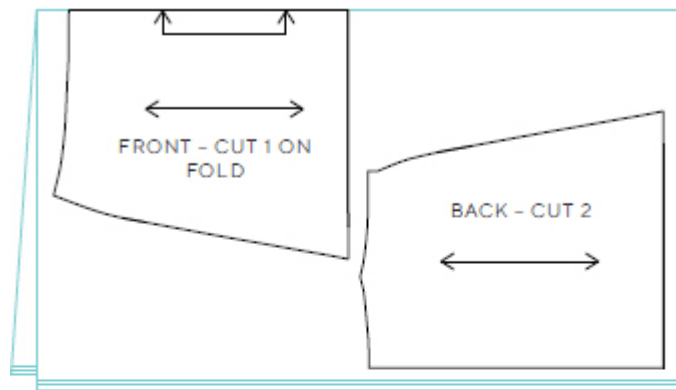
- 4** Turn the sleeve so you can see the wrong side of the fabric, then slide the lining over the sleeve. You should see the right side of the lining and the sleeve is covered at this stage. Pull the lining upwards, away from the hem, to prepare the hem of the sleeve (the lining is shorter than the sleeve). Using a cloth, press up a 2.5-cm (1-in.) hem around the cuff edge. Topstitch the lower edge of the cuff 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) from the edge. Repeat with the other sleeve.

ADDING A LINING TO A SKIRT

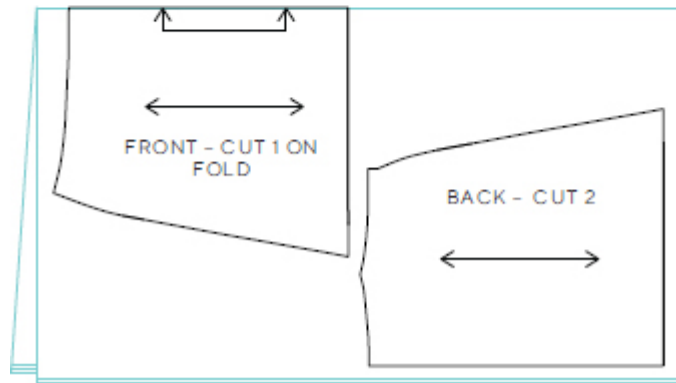
You can add a lining to a skirt for several reasons: for comfort (a scratchy fabric would be uncomfortable against bare skin), for modesty (maybe the top fabric is slightly transparent) or simply for a more luxurious finish. A skirt lining typically follows the same pattern as the main skirt, just a bit shorter. If you have a very wide or long skirt, however, it would be a waste of fabric to construct a really wide or long lining to go with it. You could make a simplified lining to go with it instead. An alternative to lining a skirt is wearing a slip or underskirt underneath.

Cut out the front and back skirt pieces in your chosen top fabric. Cut out the skirt front and back in the lining fabric, making the hemline 2.5 cm (1 in.) shorter – this stops the lining from poking out from underneath your skirt. Transfer any pattern markings to the top fabric as well as to the lining fabric.

FABRIC

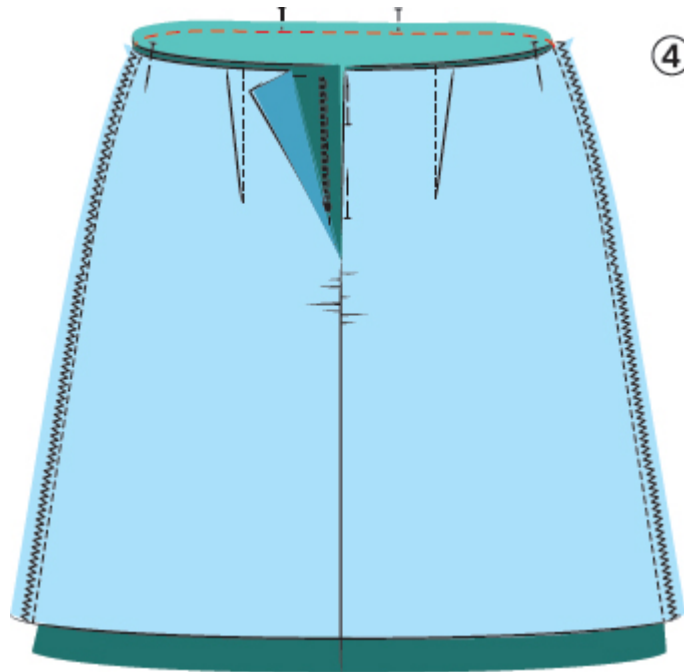


LINING



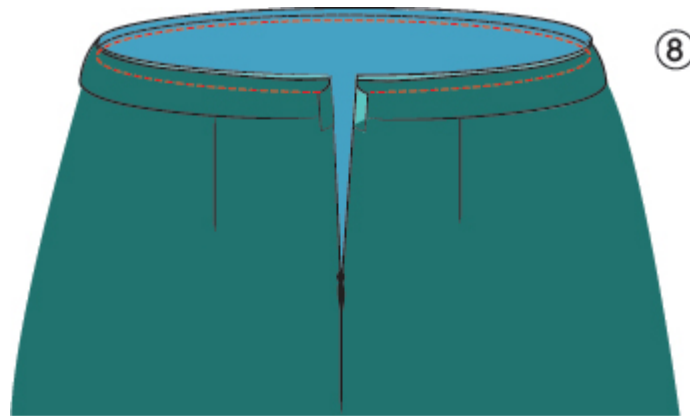
- 1** Staystitch the waistline of the skirt pieces in the top fabric, stitching 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) from the raw edge. Pin and sew in any darts and press them towards the side seams. With right sides together, pin and stitch the side seams. Repeat for the lining pieces.
- 2** Insert an invisible zip in the centre back seam of the skirt.
- 3** Machine the lower section of the centre back seam on the lining from the bottom of the zip to the hem. Press the seam open.
- 4** Open up the zip and fold the tape back so that the seam allowance lies flat. With right sides together, slide the lining over

the skirt, matching up the side seams and notches, and pin the layers together along the waist edge. Working on one side at a time, pin the seam allowance of the lining to the zip tape on the skirt over the zip teeth. You won't be able to pin right to the end, so pin as far as you can. Repeat on the opposite side..

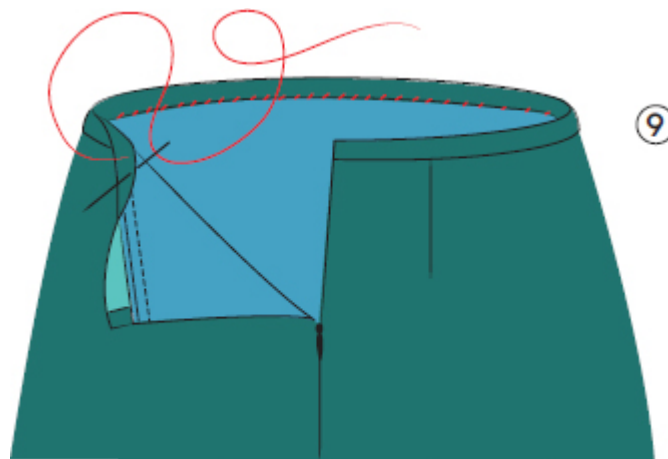


- 5** Using a regular zip foot, sew the lining to one side of the zip tape. Sew as far as you can and make sure to backstitch. Repeat on the other side of the zip tape.
- 6** Un-pin the waist and turn the lining to the inside of the skirt, so that the wrong sides of the skirt and lining are together. Press the lining around the zip. Use a cool iron, so there's less chance of melting either the zip or the lining.
- 7** Pin the lining to the skirt around the waist, matching up the side seams and notches. Machine tack the two layers together around the waist, stitching 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) from the edge.

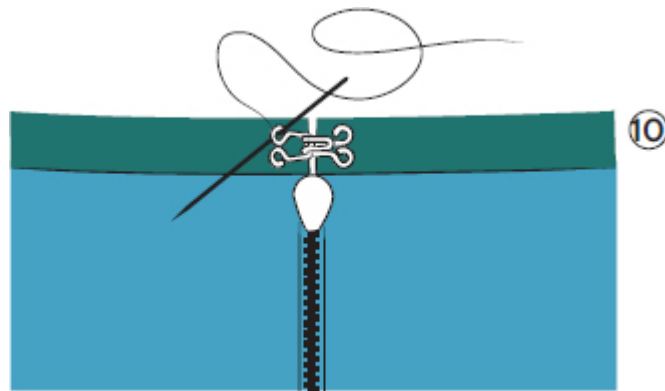
- 8** Assemble the waistband. Add the waistband to the skirt by laying it on the outside of the skirt, right sides together, matching the raw edges around the waist. Stitch in place 1.5 cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in.) from the waist edge, leaving approx. 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) protruding beyond each end of the waistline. Trim the seam allowance around the waistline to 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.), grading if necessary.



- 9** Tuck under each end of the waistband at the zip opening, then fold the waistband over to the inside of the skirt. Pin the remaining open edge of the waistband in place around the waist, which hides the seam allowances of both the skirt and the lining. Hand stitch the waistband in place on the inside of the skirt, or stitch in the ditch from the outside of the skirt.

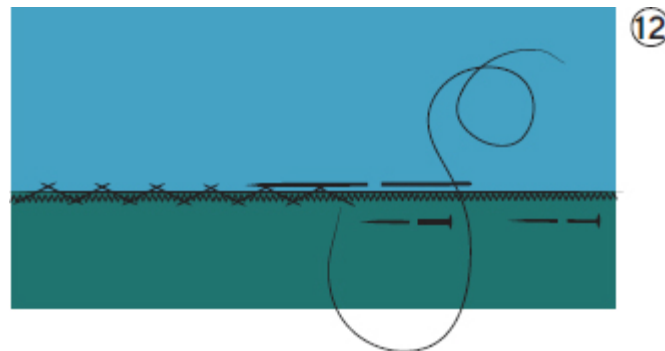


- 10** Attach a hook-and-eye fastener to the centre back edges of the waistband to hold the edges of the skirt together.



- 11** Hem the lining with a double-turned hem. You are aiming for the lining to be 2.5 cm (1 in.) shorter than the skirt. The lining and skirt are hemmed separately to allow for movement. If they were stitched together, there is a chance that the lining would pull the skirt up.

- 12** Hem the skirt using your chosen hemming method.



PATTERN ALTERATIONS & ADAPTATIONS

Pattern adaptations and alterations, or 'hacks', are changes made to an existing pattern, without pattern cutting from scratch. They don't have to be complicated and do not require extensive pattern-cutting knowledge. Here are some ideas that you can use to make ready-made patterns or existing garments more your style.

ADDING A BUTTON STAND TO A PATTERN

A button stand is the part of a garment that holds buttons and buttonholes. If you have a top or blouse pattern in which the back or front are cut on the fold as a single piece, and you would like to add functioning buttons, you can draft a button stand. If your pattern calls for a different type of fastening, such as a zip, you could change that for buttons, too.

A button stand can either be grown on (part of the main garment pattern piece) or separate (seamed on). To draft your own, you will need a ruler, tracing wheel, the buttons you intend to use, pattern paper and sticky tape. The steps here show a button stand for a centre front opening, but the same would apply for a centre back.

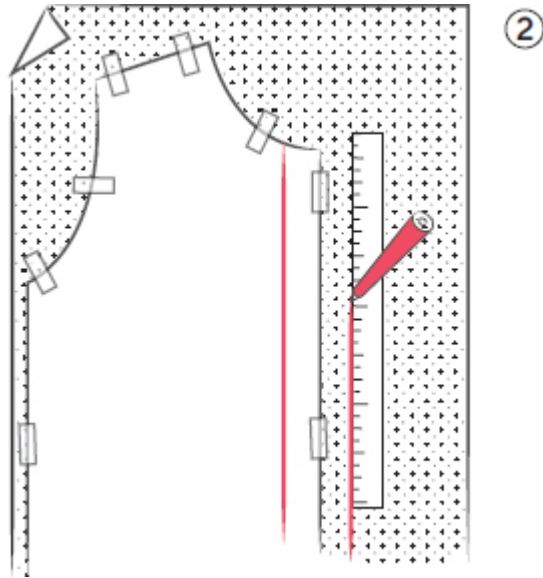
If you have a pattern that has a seam already, either a plain seam or a seam that's ready for a zip, you can only create a separate button stand. Remember that this edge will already have a seam allowance (double check the pattern's seam allowance before you sew on the button stand to make sure everything is accurate).

- 1** Mark the centre front edge of your pattern piece clearly with CF for centre front. Front and back bodice pieces without an opening are cut on the fold, so your centre front line will be the 'place on fold' line on the original pattern piece.
-

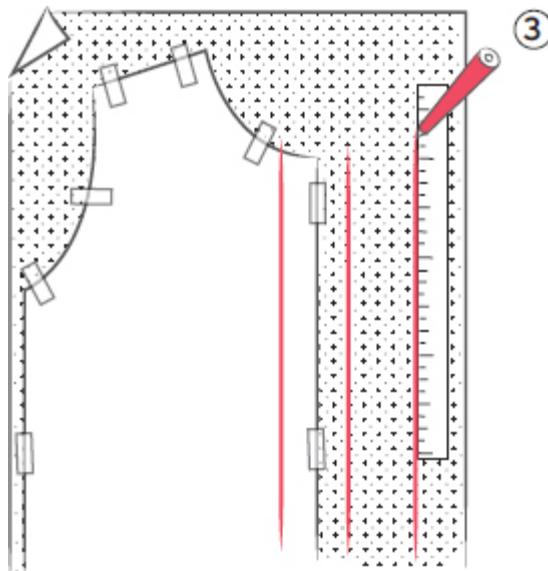
TIP

Your **buttons will sit exactly on this centre front line when sewn on. Vertical buttonholes will also sit exactly on this line, whereas horizontal buttonholes will sit 2–3 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in.) beyond the centre front.**

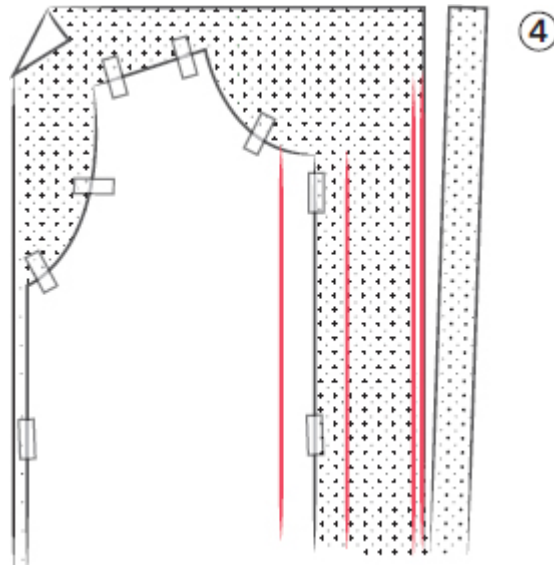
- 2** Tape some extra pattern paper to the centre front of your pattern, so that you have space to draw beyond the centre front line. Measure the diameter of your button to work out the size of button stand you need to draft. The button stand needs to be at least 2 mm (a scant ($\frac{3}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{8}$ in.) more than the diameter of the button on each side of the centre front line. So for a button that's 1.5 cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in.) in diameter, draw a vertical line 2 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in.) each side of the centre front line. This 2 mm (scant $\frac{1}{8}$ -in.) measurement is standard for a flat button, but you may need more if you have a shaped button. The only way to find out is to estimate and try.



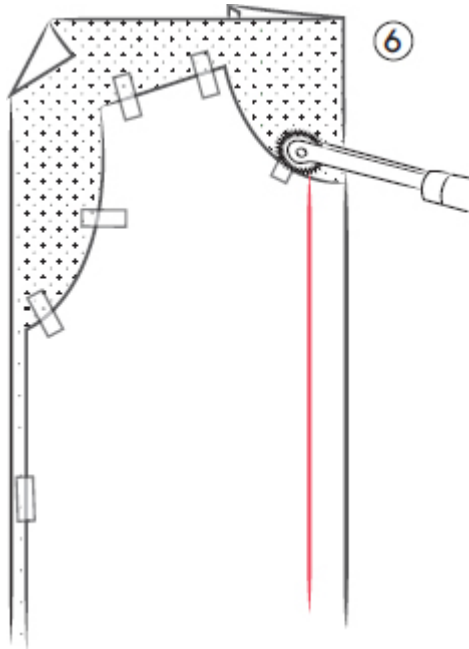
- 3** Now draw a straight line beyond the outermost line drawn in step 2 that measures the entire width of the button stand. Using the 2-cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ -in.) button stand example in the previous step, this section would be 4 cm ($1\frac{1}{2}$ in.) wide. This section is the button stand facing.



- 4** Draw a final straight line which is the seam allowance.



- 5** Continue the hem of the garment into the button stand in a straight line.
- 6** The centre front line marks the centre of the neckline on the original pattern or garment, so now you need to shape the neckline of the button stand pattern. Fold in the seam allowance edge, then fold the facing to sit on the wrong side of the pattern. Using a tracing wheel, trace over the neckline of the bodice pattern, thus transferring the marking to the button stand pattern. Unfold the facing and seam allowance on the button stand pattern and you should now see a very subtle curve along the top. This is the top (neckline) edge of your button stand pattern piece.



- 7** To make the button stand a separate pattern piece, cut along the button stand line that sits furthest inside the garment, then add a seam allowance to both the main garment pattern piece and the button stand pattern piece. Mark your new pattern 'cut 1 pair' – as you need a left and a right button stand. To make a grown-on button stand pattern, leave the pattern just the way it is and make sure you have a seam allowance all around. When worn, the button stand will overlap to match along the centre front line. The garment will fasten wearer's left over right (for men) or wearer's right over left (for women). Interface the whole button stand and the facing.

ATTACHING A BUTTON STAND

For a separate button stand, sew the button stand to your garment using your chosen seam allowance. Then press both seam allowances inwards, towards the garment. For both types of button stand, press the seam allowance and then the facing to the wrong side of the garment. Pin in place and stitch very close to the folded edge of the facing. It's easiest to do this from the inside of the garment.

ADDING A BUTTON STAND TO AN EXISTING GARMENT

If you have an existing garment that you would like to add a button stand to, you will have to cut the garment open and draft a separate button stand.

- 1** Find the exact centre front or centre back and cut a neat line along it to open the garment.
- 2** A separate button stand sits across the centre front/centre back line: half of it extends beyond the garment, half of it sits into the garment. This means you will have to cut into your garment one more time to get the position correct. Work out how wide your button stand should be (see [step 2](#) of Adding a button stand to a pattern), then calculate the amount you need to cut off as follows: half of the total button stand minus the seam allowance. For example, if your button stand is 2 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in.) each side of the centre front (i.e. 4 cm/ $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. in total) and your seam allowance is 1.5 cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in.), the extra amount you need to cut off your garment is 2 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in.) minus 1.5 cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in.) seam allowance, meaning 5 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in.). Cut this amount off each edge.
- 3** Draft your button stand pattern following the steps under Adding a button stand to a pattern.

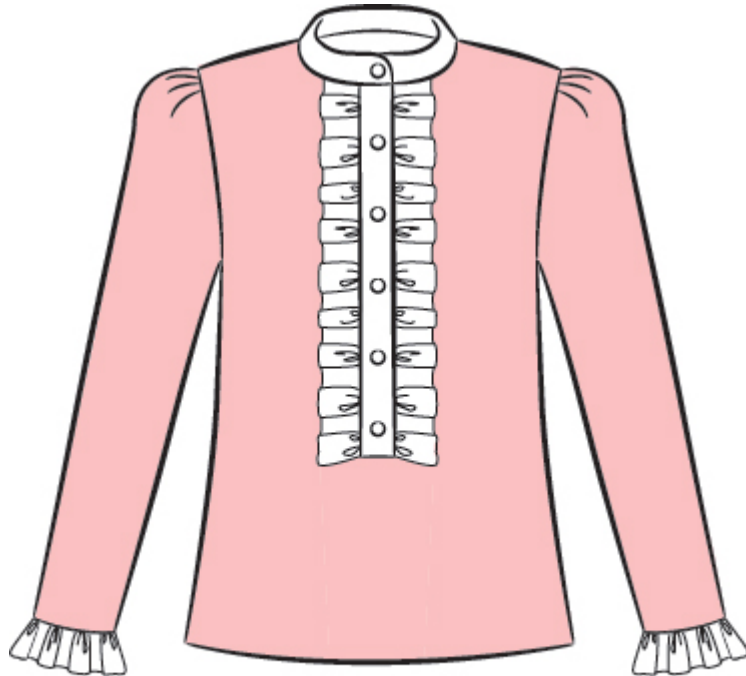
CREATIVE OPTIONS FOR BUTTON STANDS

Adding a button stand can also be a great opportunity to add some colour and style to the garment. If, for example, you're making the garment in a print or striped fabric and have used the stripe in a certain direction in the main garment, you could use it in the other direction on the button stand to make an interesting contrast.

Another option is to add piping in the seam that joins the button stand to the garment – or how about adding a ruffle?



HORIZONTAL STRIPES ON
YOKE; VERTICAL STRIPES
ON BUTTON STAND



BUTTON STAND
WITH RUFFLE

ADDING A YOKE

A yoke is a way of dividing a top garment into two sections. A yoke is most commonly found on the back of a shirt and can be either a plain horizontal shape or a curved shape (think a cowboy shirt). You can also create a yoke on the front of a top or blouse to add visual interest, to create a seam so that you can insert a ruffle, or to create more volume. You could then make the corresponding lower bodice pattern piece a bit bigger using a simple [slash-and-spread](#) method, and then gather it onto the yoke to make a more floaty garment.



CURVED BACK YOKE



STRAIGHT FRONT YOKE

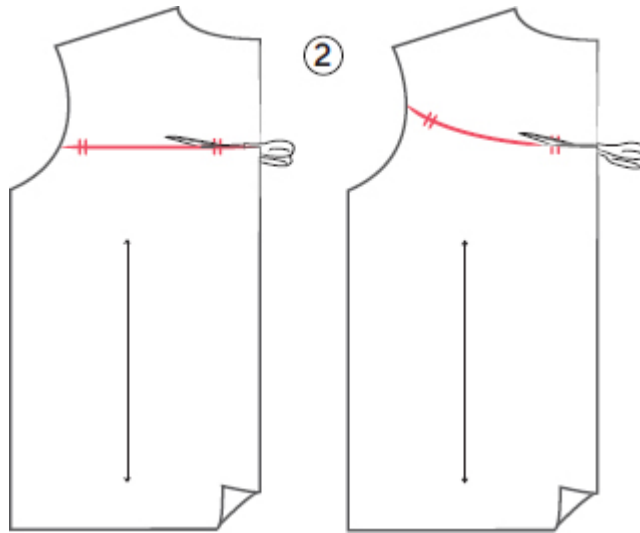
- 1** Lay your back or front pattern piece on a work surface and plan where you want the yoke to be. It can be either a plain horizontal shape or a curved shape. Using a straight or a curved ruler, draw in your yoke line. With your pattern piece still intact, add some balance marks for easier assembly later on.

TIP

If you have a top pattern with darts, you need to make sure that your design line for the yoke does not hit the dart. You should also make sure you don't put the yoke line too low, in

order to avoid the bust and chest area. The yoke should sit above this. When it comes to assembling your garment, you can either sew the dart or ignore it if you are going for a more loose-fitting garment.

2 Cut along the yoke line and separate the two pieces.



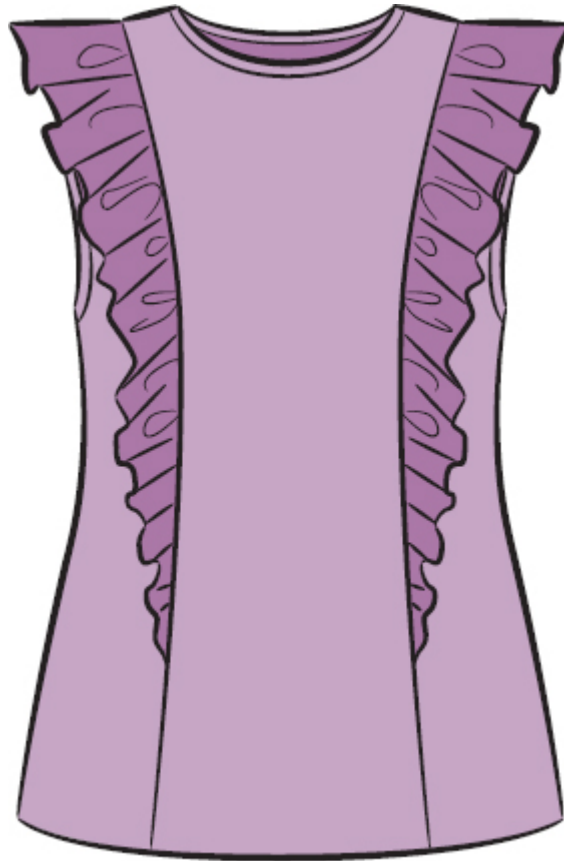
3 Add a seam allowance to both edges and mark whether the yoke is to be cut as two pieces or on the fold.

ADDING A RUFFLE

Adding a ruffle can be a great way to personalise a garment you're making from scratch. A ruffle can easily be inserted into most seams and you can tailor the size to your taste or what will look flattering in that area of the garment. A big ruffle will draw attention to a certain area and make it visually bigger, so you can play with proportions: adding a big shoulder ruffle or a big bust ruffle can add volume to a small frame, for example, while a ruffled peplum can visually balance out narrow hips. A delicate collar ruffle can accentuate your face or your neck, and a ruffle around the cuff can add interest and balance.

INSERTING A RUFFLE INTO A SEAM

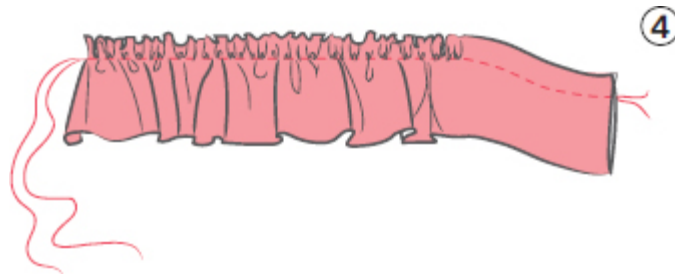
A seam ruffle is inserted during construction and then you continue your project instructions as per usual.



RUFFLE IN SEAM

- 1** Prepare a strip of fabric that's twice the width that you want your finished ruffle to be, plus a seam allowance on each side – so for a finished ruffle that's 3 cm (1¼ in.) wide, with a 1.5-cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in.) seam allowance on each long edge, cut a strip that's 9 cm (3¾ in.) wide. The strip should be at least twice the length of the seam you're attaching the ruffle to; the longer it is, the more drawn up the ruffle will be. To test what it will look like, do a small section first.
- 2** Fold the strip in half widthwise, right sides out. Press flat.

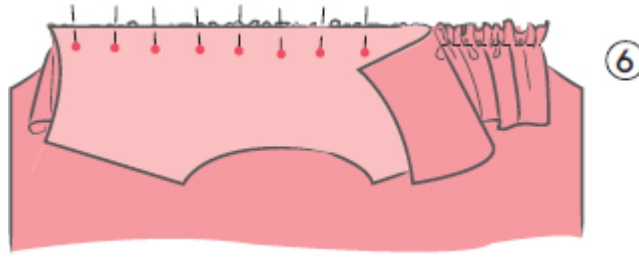
- 3** Machine stitch the open long raw edges using a long stitch, so that you can gather up the strip. You can either work this machine stitch right on top of your pattern line or 2 mm (a scant $\frac{1}{8}$ in.) into your seam allowance, but by going slightly into the seam allowance you minimise the risk of this stitching being visible in the finished garment.
- 4** Start gathering the ruffle to the required length by gently pulling the threads from one end of the strip and easing the gathers out evenly as you go.



- 5** Pin the ruffle in place on the first pattern piece, using horizontal pins and aligning the raw edges of the ruffle strip with the raw edge of your pattern piece. Machine stitch the ruffle in place, using either a regular stitch or a tacking stitch.

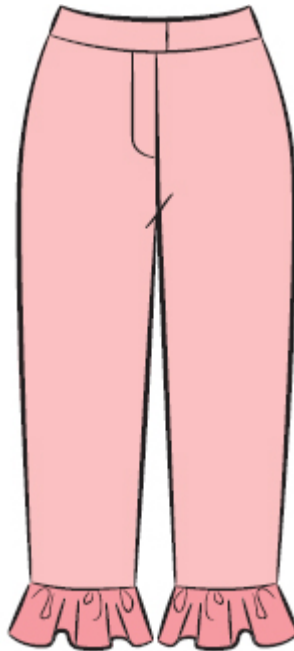


- 6** Pin the next pattern piece (illustrated here as a yoke) in place as you normally would, right sides together, and sew it in place. The ruffle is now sandwiched in between the two pattern pieces. When you finish the seam allowances, the ruffle's seam allowance will be finished as well.



ADDING A RUFFLE TO A HEM

A statement ruffle on the cuff of a blouse or the hem of a skirt, or even a pair of trousers, can add balance to an outfit that has volume happening elsewhere in the top half of the outfit, or it can simply add some glamour to a garment. It's also great if you want to use up every inch of a special fabric, or if you need to add length to a skirt or dress.



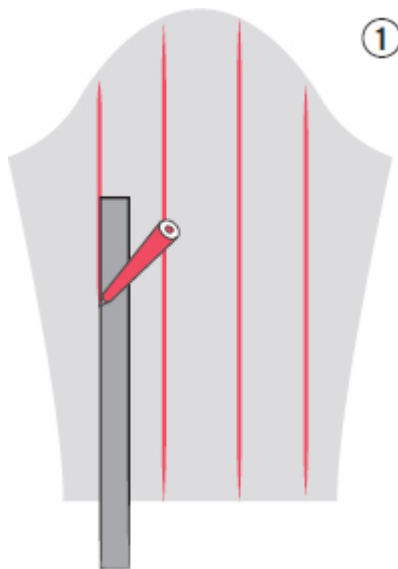
RUFFLE ON HEM

SLASH AND SPREAD

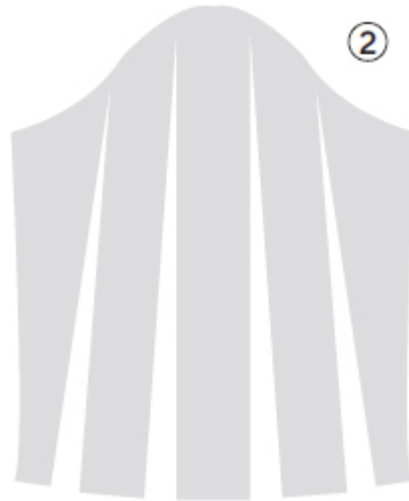
A great method to hack a pattern is to use a technique called slash and spread. With this easy method you can turn a fitted shape into a

flared shape: a straight sleeve can become a bell sleeve, an A-line skirt can turn into a more flared skirt, a straight trouser leg can turn into a flared leg. It is demonstrated here on a sleeve pattern, but once you give it a go you can experiment!

- 1** Draw vertical lines down your sleeve pattern and cut along these lines, leaving a hinge at the sleeve head. If you draw all the way up to the sleeve head you will get a sleeve that is flared all the way from the top of the sleeve. If you would like a bishop sleeve, you can draw a horizontal line first where you want the volume to start, and then draw vertical lines up to meet this line.

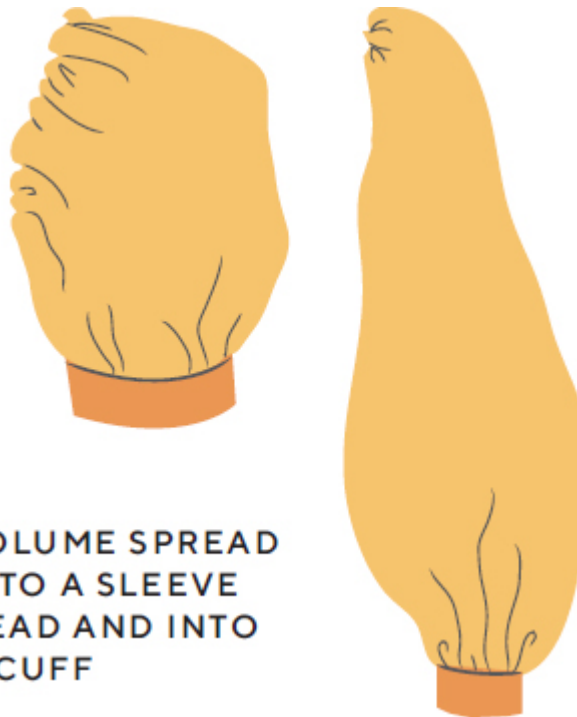


- 2** You can now spread the different sections by equal amounts, but leaving the sleeve head the same. This means nothing changes in your armhole.



- 3** Slide pattern paper behind your new pattern and stick your pattern down with tape. Make sure to smooth out the hem.

The variations to this are pretty much endless. You can reverse this hack by slashing and spreading into the sleeve head to create a gathered sleeve head, or gather your new sleeve into a cuff.



VOLUME SPREAD
INTO A SLEEVE
HEAD AND INTO
A CUFF

ADDING PLEATS AND TUCKS

The terms 'pleat' and 'tuck' are sometimes used interchangeably, but they are different things. Pleats are used to create volume and wearing ease in a garment. They are practical as well as decorative, as they allow for freedom of movement, and they are usually sewn only across the top to hold them in place. Tucks are usually very narrow folds on the outside of a garment; they are sewn down their entire length and are decorative rather than functional. Both, however, are created by folding the fabric, so more fabric is required than normal.

You can usually hack a pattern in quite simple ways to include tucks or pleats. The first thing is to make sure that the fabric you intend to use is not too heavy. Very thin, flimsy fabrics won't work either, as they're too light to hold the shape of tucks and pleats.

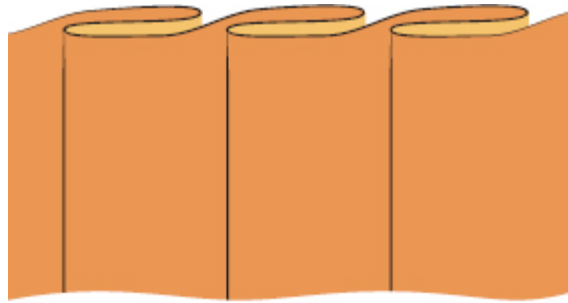
The most straightforward areas to add tucks and pleats are areas without any other design features. Adding pleats to a bodice with darts is not a good idea but adding pin tucks to a plain yoke can work very well. Other areas that work well for pleats and tucks are horizontally on sleeves and skirts, and vertically around wrists, the tops of sleeves, coming down from shoulder seams, and yokes.

PLEATS

There are several kinds of pleats. The method you use determines how much extra fabric you will need.

Knife pleats

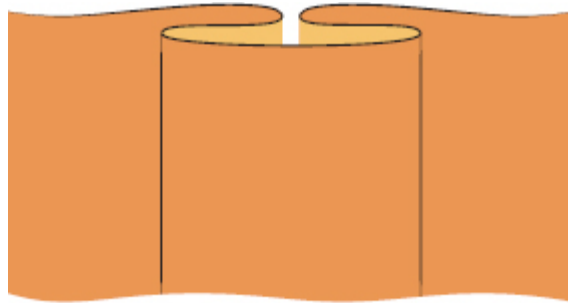
Knife pleats are equal folds on the inside and outside of the garment, all of which face in the same direction.



KNIFE PLEAT

Box pleats

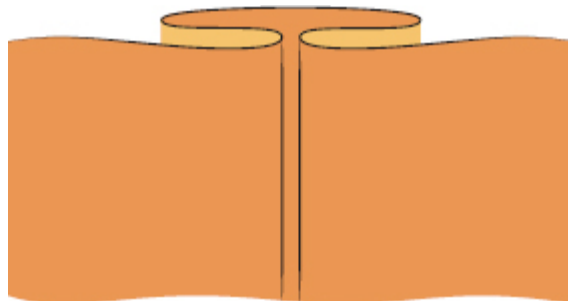
Box pleats consist of two knife pleats that face away from each other. The volume sits on the outside of this pleat.



BOX PLEAT

Inverted pleats

These are the same as box pleats but in reverse: the two knife pleats face towards each other. The volume sits on the inside of this type of pleat.



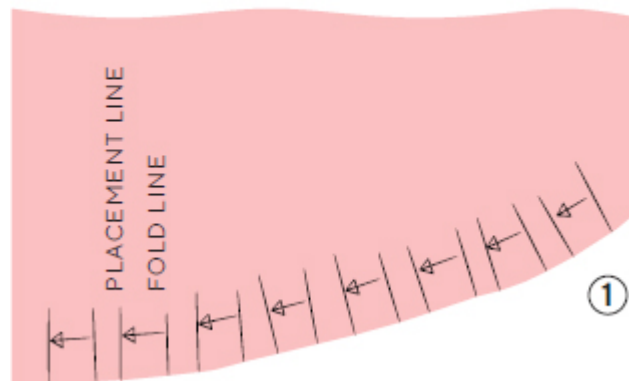
INVERTED PLEAT

- 1** First, practise the type and size of pleat you want to create on a piece of paper. Use the diagrams opposite to get a rough idea of how much wider you will need to make your pattern piece..
- 2** Once you have decided where you want to hack your pattern, trace the relevant pattern piece onto pattern paper so that you can start playing around.
- 3** If you're adding horizontal pleats, you can simply lengthen the paper pattern and then pleat the paper until you're satisfied. Then draw clear, straight placement and fold lines (see [Constructing Pleats](#)), making sure that the lines are equidistant and perfectly parallel.
- 4** If you're adding vertical pleats or tucks, draw design lines first, then [slash and spread](#), leaving a 'hinge' at one end of your cut lines. Tape pattern paper beneath the spread lines and re-draw your pattern outline.

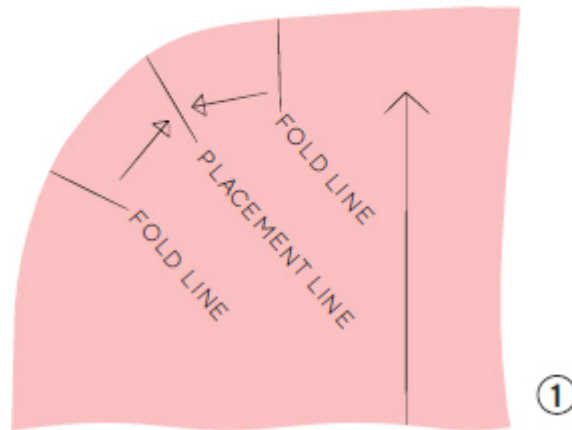
CONSTRUCTING PLEATS

- 1** Pleat lines on your pattern are indicated by two lines and an arrow for the direction in which to fold the pleat. The line that the arrow is pointing to is called the Placement Line; the other line is the Fold Line. Fold the fabric at the Fold Line mark and bring it to the Placement Line mark, keeping the raw edges of the fabric even. The pleat formed will be half the width of the marked fabric.

PATTERN MARKINGS FOR A KNIFE PLEAT

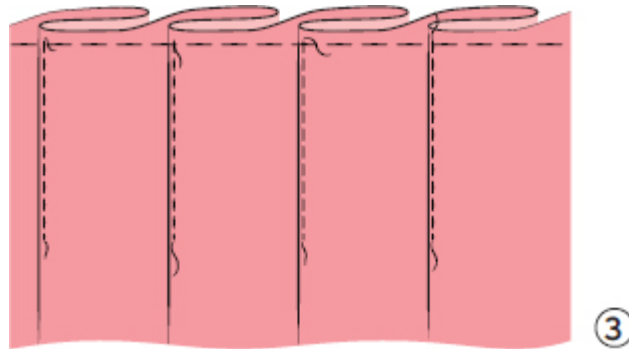


PATTERN MARKINGS FOR A BOX PLEAT

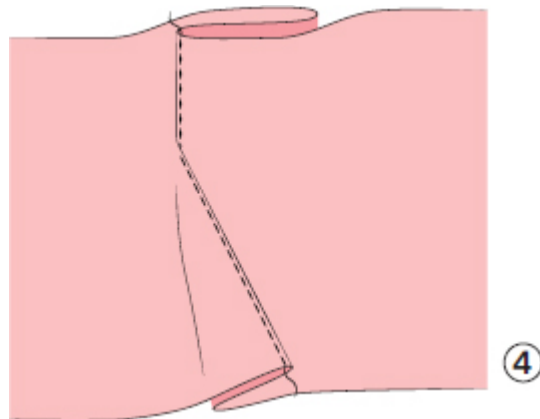


- 2** For pleats that are functional rather than decorative (like a waist pleat), the pleats are only pinned and pressed right at the edge, so they can be sewn into the seam. We recommend machine tacking them down within the seam allowance. The rest of the pleat creates volume in the garment. Some garments have pleats along the entire length of the garment for decoration and volume (like a pleated skirt), in which case you press the entire pleat to make it lie flat.
- 3** Machine tack across the top of the pleats to hold them in place, tacking within the seam allowance. You can also stitch down the

top 2–3 cm (1 in. or so) of the pleat to create a flatter shape; to do this, stitch very close to the folded edge of the pleat.



- 4** To keep pleats folded in place, working from the wrong side, machine stitch close to the inner fold, particularly in the hem area.

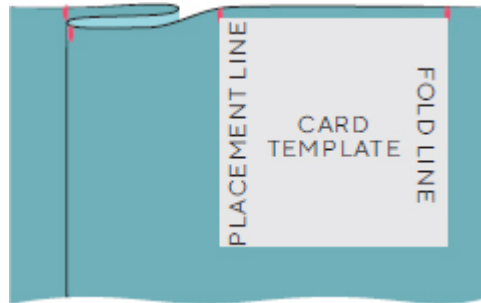


- 5** Press your pleats very carefully if you are pressing them in! Place a pressing cloth in between the iron and the garment to prevent the pleat indentations showing on the garment.

TIP

To ensure that multiple pleats are even, use a pleat template, which is easy to make from a strip of card. Having determined the width of the fabric to be taken in the pleat, cut a card strip to this width. On one long edge, mark

'Placement Line'; on the other long edge, mark 'Fold Line'. Place the card on the right side of the fabric to be pleated and mark the two lines, using a different colour for each.



PIN TUCKS

Often used on heirloom garments such as christening gowns, pin tucks also look smart on crisp, formal shirts and blouses.

- 1** Decide how wide you want the finished pin tuck to be. They should be very narrow – for example, 5 mm ($\frac{3}{16}$ in.). You need to add twice this amount for each tuck – so in our example, you would need to add 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) to create one tuck. On your pattern piece, draw design lines with a ruler that indicate where you want your finished tucks to sit.
- 2** Cut along those lines and spread them apart by 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.). Put pattern paper underneath and secure it in place with sticky tape. Neaten up the outline of your pattern piece to create your new pattern. Be sure to mark the tuck lines on your finished pattern so that you know where to sew them.



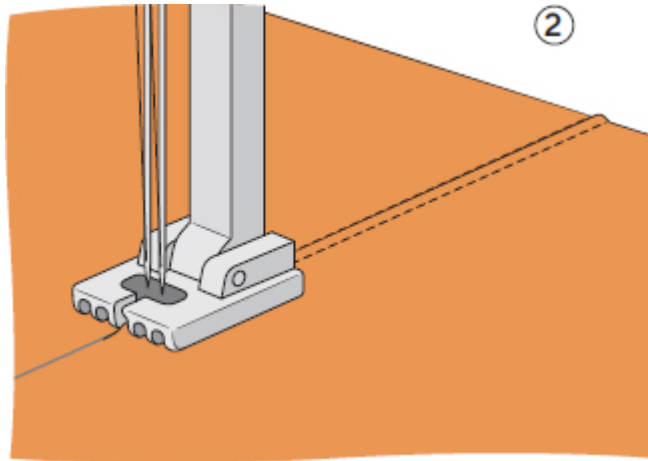
PLEATS ON CUFFS



PIN TUCKS ALTERNATING
DIRECTION ON A BODICE

SEWING TWIN NEEDLE PIN TUCKS

- 1** Insert a twin needle with gap of 2 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in.). Select a straight stitch, with the needle in the centre position. Increase the top tension to the highest (7–9) and use a stitch length of 2. Attach the pin tuck foot. Thread the machine for twin needle sewing, following the instructions in your manual.
- 2** Mark the fabric for the placement of the first row of pin tucks. Stitch the first row with the centre of the pin tuck foot on the marked line.



TIP

Make sure that the first row is perfectly straight, as this determines the accuracy of the following rows.

- 3** Having stitched the first tuck, move the fabric so that the first tuck runs in one of the grooves on either side of the centre of the foot, so that the next tuck is perfectly parallel to the first. Stitch all the tucks in the same direction.

CHAPTER 4

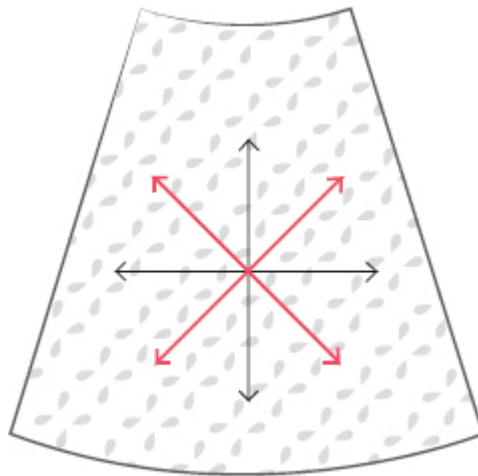
Specialist techniques

In this chapter we cover more specialist and advanced techniques, such as sewing underwear, swimwear and using couture techniques. You will learn about boning, working on the bias and tricky hems as well, to round out your dressmaking knowledge.



WORKING ON THE BIAS

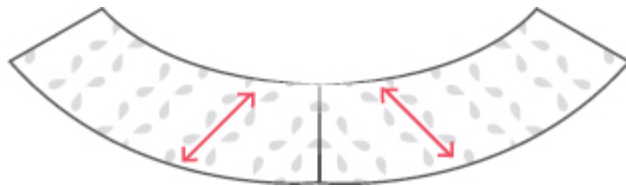
The bias sits diagonally in between the straight of grain and the cross grain and it's where the fabric has the greatest stretch. Pattern pieces that commonly use the bias are parts of a collar and swishy skirt panels. Bias-cut garments are known for their beautifully flowing silhouettes and their figure-hugging looks. Underwear like silk camisoles or slips also often use the bias to eliminate the need for darts. Every woven fabric has stretch on the bias, regardless of whether the fabric itself is non-stretch fabric – which means that you need to take special care when handling bias-cut fabric.



The plus side of cutting on the bias is that the pattern piece will have beautiful drape so that, for example, a collar can smoothly follow the curve of the neck or a skirt can have a snug shape without having lots of panels. The down side is that the stretch requires a lot of special attention when cutting and sewing, and hemming can only be done after the garment has been hung up for about 24 hours to allow it to 'drop'.

TIPS FOR CUTTING OUT FABRIC ON THE BIAS

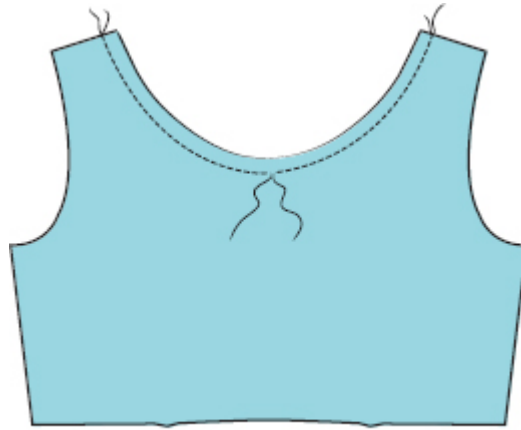
- Make sure the pattern piece and fabric can't move during the cutting-out stage by using pattern weights or using a rotary cutter instead of scissors. It's very easy for the fabric to stretch underneath the paper pattern, so it needs to be controlled well to prevent this.
- Make sure you are accurately using the true bias, the 45-degree angle in between the straight and cross grain. If you end up a bit off, the garment might not hang right on your body.
- Pay attention to the direction of the bias: if you have two symmetrical pattern pieces (such as the left and right sides of a collar), the direction of the bias should be mirrored. You will therefore have to cut the two separately. This ensures the garment falls in the same way on both sides.



TIPS FOR SEWING FABRIC ON THE BIAS

- Pin very well to prevent the fabric from stretching when you're sewing. If it is stretching, you will notice the fabric is puckering under your machine. This means the machine's presser foot is pushing the bias along, stretching the fabric out.
- Once your pattern pieces are cut out, stay stitch any curved edges – or all edges if your fabric is particularly challenging. This will stabilise the edge and prevent stretching. Stay stitching is worked just within the seam allowance, using a regular stitch length. To minimise the risk of the fabric stretching while it's being sewn, work from the centre of the piece out to the edge, then repeat

from the other direction, rather than stitching the entire edge in one go.



STAYSTITCHING

- You could sew seams with a very small zig-zag to allow the stitching itself to move with the bias. A bias-cut garment has a springiness to it that a normal seam with a straight stitch doesn't have. The thread in the seam might work against the bias' natural ability to stretch and this can be solved by setting your stitch to a very subtle zig-zag.
- If you have two symmetrical pattern pieces (for example, the left and right sides of a collar), start in the centre and sew down the left side, then start again in the centre and sew down the right side, rather than sewing the whole seam from left to right. You should be working with the direction of the bias, not against it. The bias will misbehave if it is sewn in one go, as halfway through the seam the bias would change direction.
- Sew very carefully when sewing a seam that's on the bias. Let the machine feed the fabric through and avoid pulling at the fabric when you're sewing: it's very easy for the seam to stretch out on your machine. Make sure the fabric is supported when you are sewing, and not hanging off the machine and therefore pulling.
- If a seam has stretched, you will notice the seam puckering when you take it off the machine. Carefully try some steam on the iron

by holding the iron on top of the seam and lifting and moving it along (instead of dragging the iron over the seam) to see if you can bring it back to a flat shape if this has happened.

- While you are working on your bias-cut garment, store all the pieces flat. Don't be tempted to hang up a half-finished dress, as this will cause the bias to start dropping before you have finished, resulting in an uneven garment.

HEMMING A BIAS-CUT GARMENT

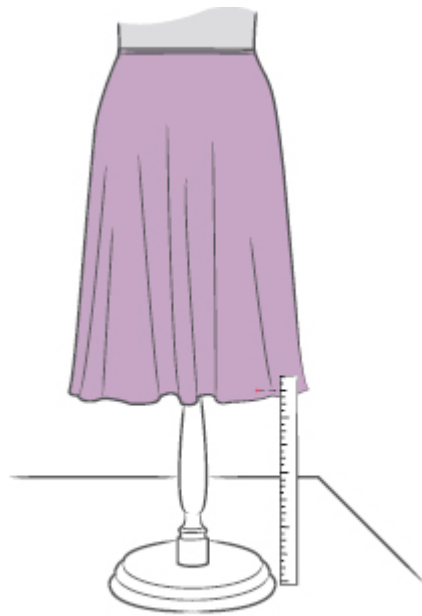
Once you have finished sewing your bias-cut garment, the only thing left is the hem. The stretch in the bias will cause the hem to 'drop' when you hang the garment up for a few hours: you will notice the length of the garment increasing, but not evenly all around. Bias behaves differently according to where on the bias the hem hits, so typically your hem will look very uneven after you have hung the garment up for 12–24 hours. Fabrics respond differently during this process: some will drop several inches, whereas others will just drop a little bit.

First, you need to level off the raw edge before you can hem. If your hem has dropped a lot, it's worth levelling the hem after 12 hours and then hanging it up for another 12 hours to see if it will drop some more. It's vital that the garment has dropped as much as it naturally wants to do before you hem it – otherwise your hem would grow longer over time as you're wearing it!

Once you think the hem has finished dropping, you can level it off and finish the hem. The most straightforward way to level the hem of a skirt or dress is to put it on a mannequin and then pick one of these methods:

METHOD 1

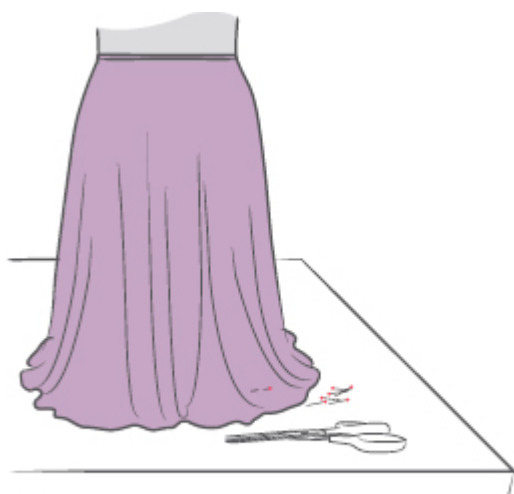
Mark the desired hem length on one area of the hem (either by trying it on or by using your pattern as a reference), then put the mannequin on a table and measure the distance from the table up to that point. Spin the mannequin around as you work and measure this distance from the table to the hem in small intervals. Mark and cut.



METHOD 1

METHOD 2

Mark the desired hem length on one area of the hem (either by trying it on or by using your pattern as a reference), then put the mannequin on a table and lower it so that this point hits the table. Mark and cut the rest of the hem to touch the table. This method will only work if your mannequin has a small foot, as anything bigger would interfere with the hemming process.



METHOD 2

SPECIAL HEMMING TECHNIQUES

Many garments can be hemmed using a standard, double-turn hem, but some fabrics need to be hemmed in a different way, either because they tend to slip under the machine or because you want a very narrow hem. Here are some of the options.

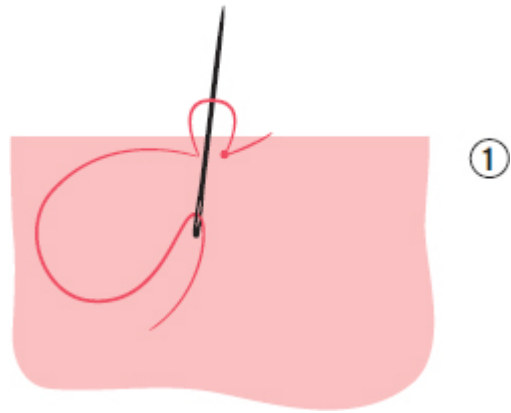
ROLLED HEMS

A rolled hem is a very narrow hem used on sheer or delicate fabrics. For easy-to-handle fabrics use a rolled hem foot, but for delicate or slippery fabrics use one of these methods.

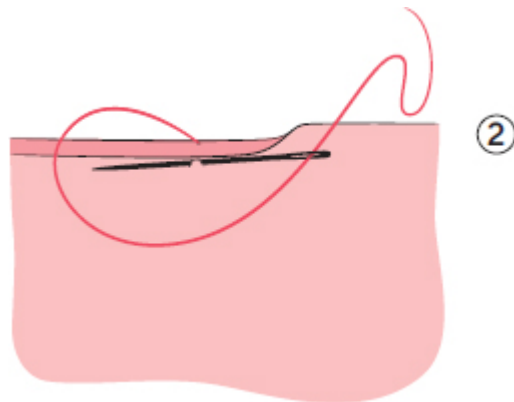
HAND-SEWN ROLLED HEM

This hem creates a rolled-over edge; a tiny stitch is visible on the outside of the garment.

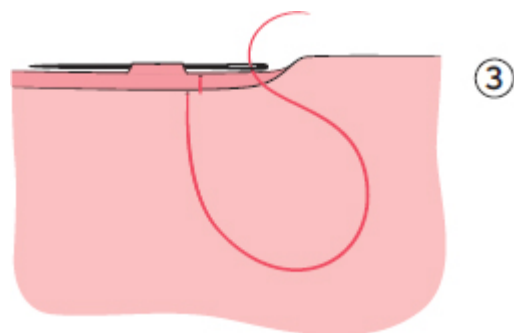
- 1** Trim the raw edge of the fabric so that it's even. Using single thread, start your stitch on the wrong side of the fabric, close to the raw edge. Sew a tiny stitch on the spot and pull the needle through the loop to start. (A knot alone can rip through fine fabrics.) Bring the needle out on the right side of the fabric.



- 2** Fold the raw edge to the wrong side by 5 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) over the start of your thread. Take the needle back over the fold and make a small stitch, catching just a few threads. Pull the thread through, but don't pull it taut. You've made a tiny vertical stitch.



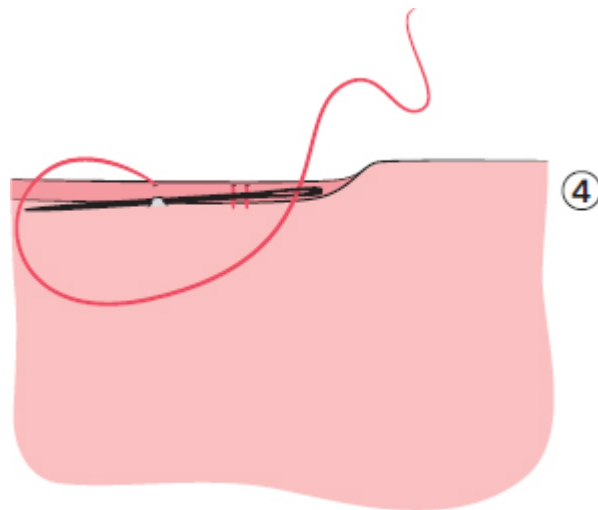
- 3** Bury the needle under the folded edge and travel about 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.), then come back out of the fold.



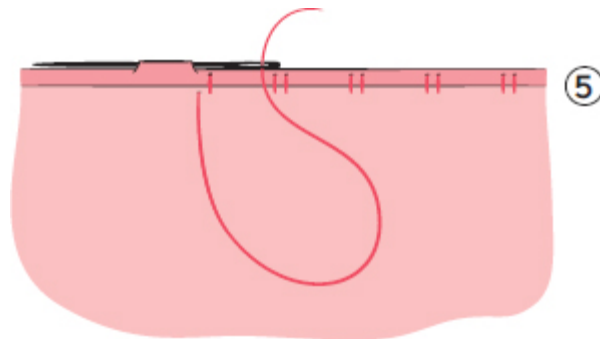
TIP

When making the stitches, your needle should point in the direction you're going in. Don't pull your stitches tight!

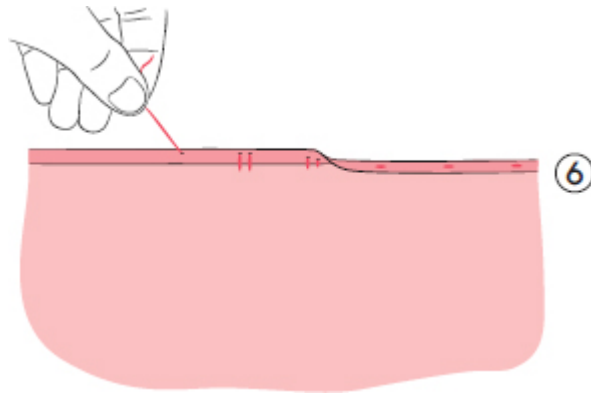
- 4** Directly below the point where your needle emerged in step 3, pick up a tiny stitch on the main part of your work and pull the thread through.



- 5** Repeat steps 3 and 4 until you've stitched 5 cm (2 in.) or so. You'll see that you create pairs of vertical stitches, with long gaps in between where the needle travels inside the fold.



- 6** Stop every 5 or 6 stitches and carefully pull your thread. The magic of the rolled hem will happen as the vertical stitches draw the edge over to the inside and create a hem that rolls towards the inside. Using your fingers, gently smooth the stitched section to get rid of any puckers that may appear.



- 7** Continue in this way until you've finished your hem. At the end, stitch on the spot and pull the needle through the loop.

MACHINE-SEWN ROLLED HEM

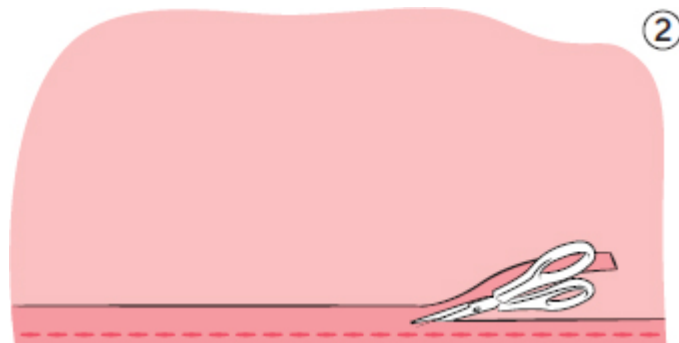
It is possible to machine sew a rolled hem on a very delicate or slippery fabric such as chiffon or silk satin, but it needs a different approach to a regular rolled hem. A rolled hem foot for these types of fabric is not recommended, as the fabrics will typically be too slippery to control accurately in the foot.

With this method there will be a visible stitch line on the outside of the garment. If this is not what you want, finish the hem by hand.

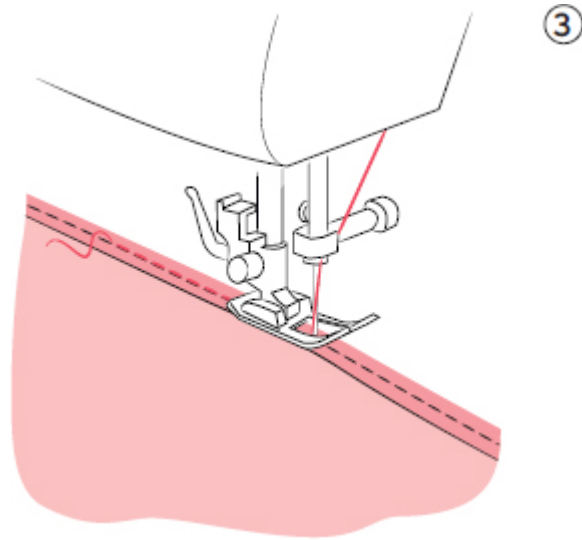
TIP

Insert a size 60 or 70 needle in your machine and lower your stitch length to 2–2.5.

- 1** A regular hem is created by folding up the seam allowance twice and stitching the hem down once. On very lightweight fabrics like chiffon, you work two stitch lines, one at each folding step, which allows you better to control the fabric. To calculate how much to fold, check the hem allowance on your pattern and also decide how small you want the finished hem to be. If you have a hem allowance of 2 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in.) and you want the final hem to be 5 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.), your first fold would measure 1.5 cm ($\frac{1}{2}$ in.). Fold the appropriate amount to the wrong side and press or pin in place.
- 2** Using a stitch length of 2–2.5, sew a line 2–3 mm (a scant $\frac{1}{8}$ in.) away from the folded edge. Use a line on your presser foot as a guide. Trim the excess hem allowance above the stitch line to 2 mm (a scant $\frac{1}{8}$ in.).



- 3** Fold up the hem again by the amount you want your finished hem to measure – for example, 5 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.). Because the hem is so small, you will probably be unable to pin it, so use your fingers to hold it in place and check the hem is the same depth all the way around with a measuring tool if necessary. The first stitch line is now visible and acts as a way of stabilizing the fabric. Stitch your hem again, sewing directly on top of the first stitch line. The hem will have two stitch lines directly on top of each other, but on the outside of your garment only one line will be visible.



TIP

The key to this hemming technique is to sew your final stitch line exactly on top of your first one. This is also why the first stitch line has to be very close to the edge.

HEM FACINGS

A hem facing (also known as a faced hem) involves attaching a separate width of fabric to an edge and then folding it to the inside of the garment to use as a hem allowance. You can create a faced hem on either a lined or an unlined garment, and on cuffs, necklines and armholes, as well as on the bottom edge of a garment.



FACED SKIRT HEM

TIPS

A faced hem can be used to:

- **Add weight and body to the hem – for example, to achieve a more exaggerated shape.**
- **Reduce wrinkling of the hem area on a lightweight fabric.**
- **Camouflage the fold of the hem by cushioning the area.**
- **Achieve a really crisp, sharp hem edge.**

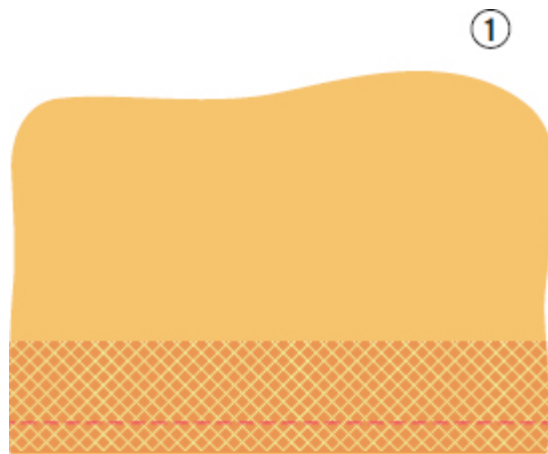
The choice of facing fabric depends on what you want to achieve. To add weight and body to the hem, choose a woven, non-fusible fabric such as canvas, muslin or organza. A thin, woven fabric like muslin will also help reduce wrinkling in a lightweight garment. Organza will add body and weight to the hem, which could help with

accentuating a voluminous shape such as a 1950s-style dress or skirt. Canvas is a stiffer material and suitable for sharp, tailored looks.

To pad out a hem and achieve a soft hemmed look, the facing needs to be something that cushions the hem area, such as lightweight wool or flannel. You could even quilt a hem by adding wadding or fleece as a hem facing.

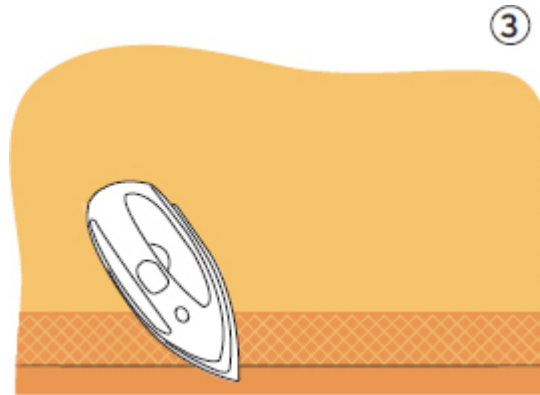
To achieve a very crisp hem edge, and an almost stiff hem, add horsehair braid or crin. Crin (short for crinoline) can be bought as a fabric or as a trim in different widths. Crin trim is used a lot in millinery and holds a shape beautifully. Adding a wide strip of crin to a hem could achieve a really dramatic, standout full-circle skirt. The deeper the faced hem, the more body it gives the garment.

- 1** With right sides together, match the raw edge of the facing to the raw edge of the garment's hem. Your facing piece will be lying on the outside of the garment during this stage. Pin in place and machine stitch 5 mm (1/4 in.) away from the raw edge.



- 2** Turn your work over so you're looking at the inside of your garment and fold the facing down so that you can see the wrong side of both the garment and the facing, plus the seam allowances. Press the seam allowances open.

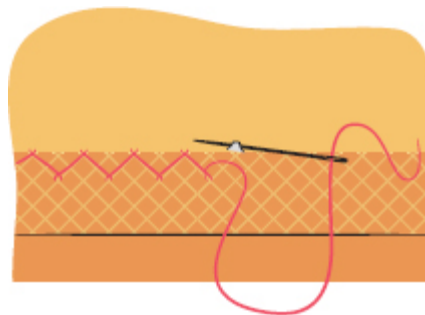
- 3** Fold the facing and the appropriate hem allowance on the top fabric up to the wrong side of the garment: if you have a hem allowance of, say, 3 cm (1¼ in.) on your pattern, you should make the part of the hem that's visible in the top fabric 2.5 cm (1 in.), as you have already used 5 mm (¼ in.) to sew the facing in place. Press carefully.



The way you finish the facing depends on whether the garment will be lined or not.

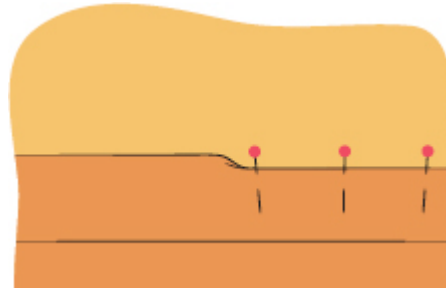
FOR A LINED GARMENT WHERE THE LINING WILL BE SEWN TO THE HEM

Leave the facing lying flat and work a simple herringbone stitch over the raw edge. This edge will never be seen and you don't want to create bulk by turning the raw edge under.



IF THE GARMENT IS UNLINED

Turn the raw edge of the facing under as you would with a hem. Press and pin or tack it in place, then machine or hand stitch in place.



TIPS

- **If you are using crin trim, you do not need to turn the edge under as it's already a finished edge.**
 - **You can also use the steps here to finish a hem with bias binding.**
-

LACE INSERTS

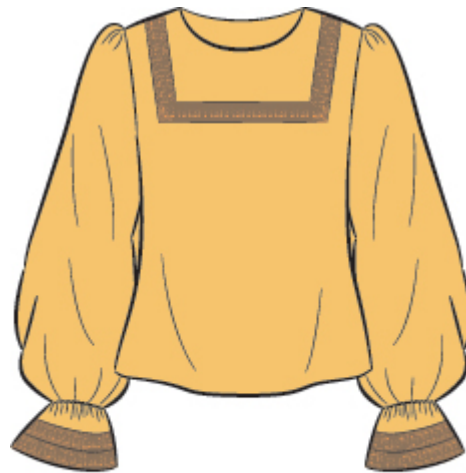
A lace insert can be a way of adding decoration to a garment or even adding length to a hem or sleeve. Cotton lace trim is the most suitable type for lace inserts and you can find this in many different widths and designs, and even different colours.

There are many different ways of inserting lace, both by hand and by machine. Here is a simple method using a sewing machine; you can either work a single hem, leaving raw edges, or a double-turn hem. Add lace trim after the whole pattern piece has been cut out in the main fabric. So if you are adding lace trim to a sleeve, for example, cut out the sleeve pattern first in your chosen fabric.

You can either mark the position of the lace trim on the paper pattern or lay the trim on top of the fabric pattern piece and move it around until you have created a design and spacing that you like. Once you have inserted your lace trim to the pattern pieces, continue making up your garment as per usual.



LACE TRIM ON A DRESS BODICE



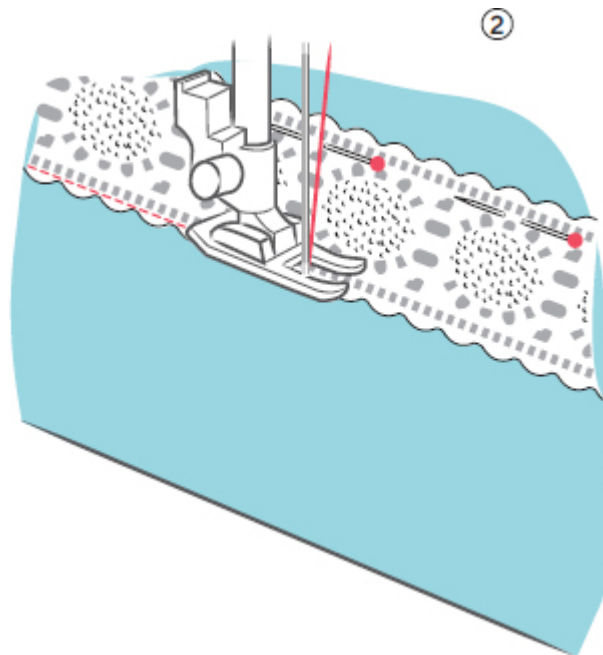
LACE TRIM AS A NECKLINE
AND CUFF DETAIL

TIP

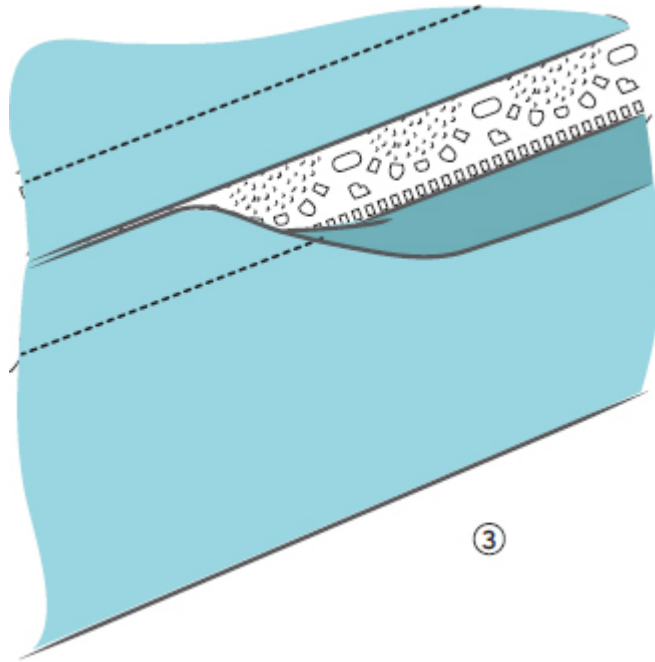
Be sure to wash the lace before use: you don't want to wash the garment and find that the lace has shrunk, drawing up

the seams in an unsightly way.

- 1** On the right side of the fabric, pin the lace in place in the desired design.
- 2** Topstitch in place close to the edge of the lace, on each side of the trim. It's best to stitch both sides going in the same direction. You can simply use a straight stitch. Use a smaller stitch length if the lace is very fine or fairly open.



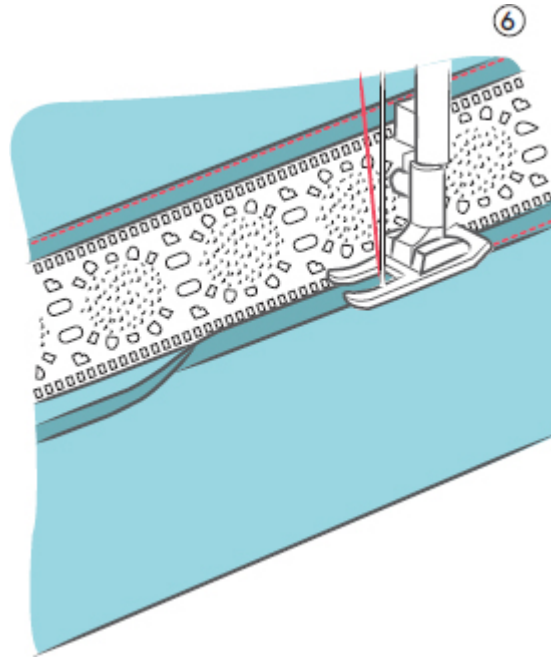
- 3** On the wrong side of your fabric, cut the top fabric in between the two stitch lines. Be careful not to cut the lace!



- 4** You have now created two seam allowances. Press each seam allowance away from the lace, so that the lace trim is visible in its entirety.

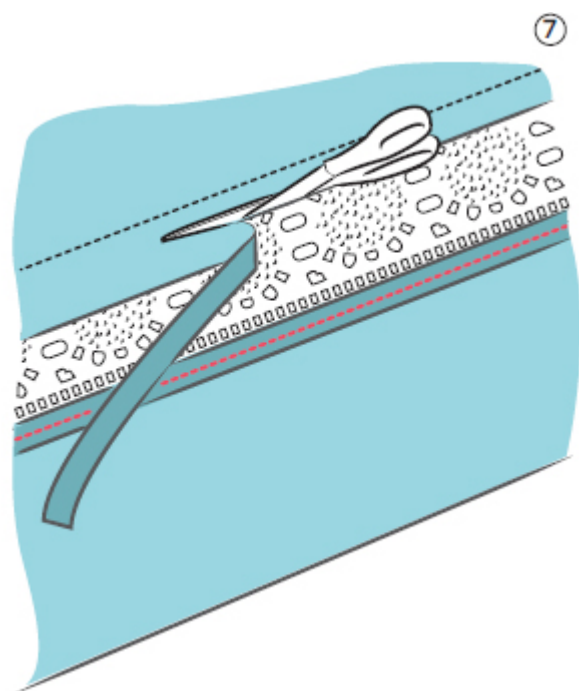
TO CREATE A DOUBLE HEM

- 5** Neatly trim both seam allowances to 1.2 cm ($\frac{1}{2}$ in.). Fold under the raw edge of the seam allowances twice by 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.) to create a double hem. Press and pin in place if necessary.
- 6** On the wrong side, machine stitch as close to the folded edge as you can. You could also stitch this by hand if you wanted the stitching to be invisible on the right side of the garment.



TO CREATE A SINGLE HEM WITH RAW EDGES

- 7** Neatly trim both seam allowances to 6 mm ($\frac{1}{4}$ in.). On the wrong side of the fabric, machine stitch 2 mm (a scant $\frac{1}{8}$ in.) away from the edge of the lace, securing the seam allowance in position. Even though the edge of the seam allowance is left raw, it should hardly fray: the two stitch lines and tiny seam allowances keep the threads of the fabric in control.



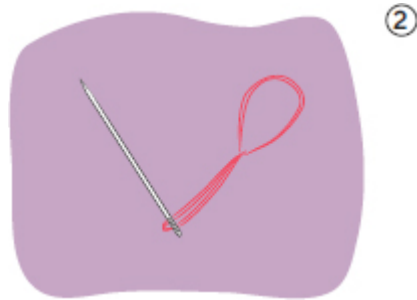
SWING CATCHES

A swing catch, also referred to as swing tack, thread bar or thread chain, creates a length of knotted thread that can be used as a button or hook loop or a belt loop. In bridal wear it's used as a loop to hook the train onto the main part of the dress. It can also be used to hold a loose lining in place in a few places so that it doesn't move too much out of place or flip up: a swing catch holds something loosely in place without restricting all movement. A really clever use of a swing catch is inside the shoulder area of a sleeveless garment, in combination with a snap fastener: hook the swing catch over a bra strap and secure with a snap to stop straps from peeping out or sliding down shoulders.

- 1** Start by making a length of quadruple thread. Using quite a long length of thread, fold it in half and put the two tails through the eye of the needle. Pull through so there is the same amount of thread on both sides of the needle. Put all the ends together and make a knot.



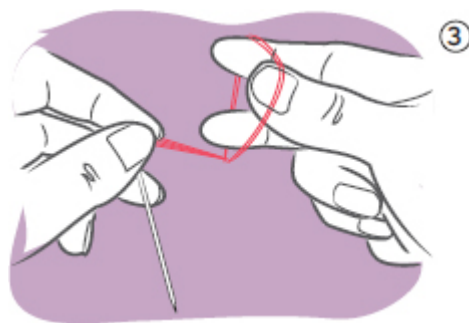
- 2** Start your swing catch where you're going to use this type of stitch. If possible, make sure the knot isn't directly going to touch your skin as this could be annoying. When the start of your thread is secure, do a very small stitch on the spot and pull the thread through until you have a small loop left to pull.



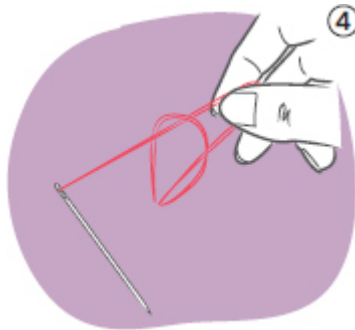
TIP

If you're making a swing catch to hold a lining in place or for use with a bra strap, start on the inside of the garment, within a seam allowance. If you're making a button or belt loop, insert the needle from the wrong side and then bring it out on the right side of the garment.

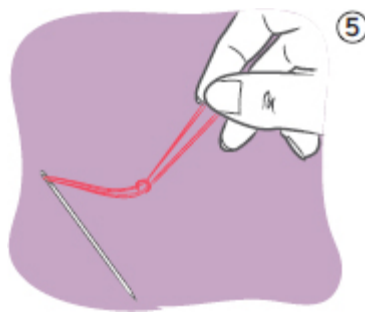
- 3** With your dominant hand, use your fingers to hold the loop open. With your other hand, hold the thread just after the needle eye.



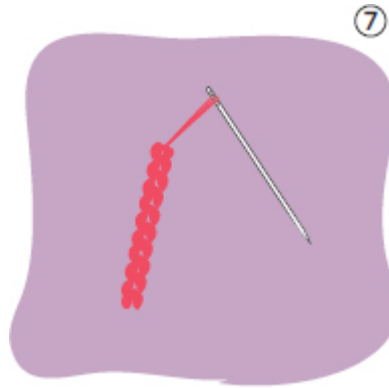
- 4** Pull the thread attached to the needle through the loop so that it makes a knot on the spot.



- 5** Pull the knot taut – it will sit exactly where you started your stitch. Be sure not to let go of the loop!



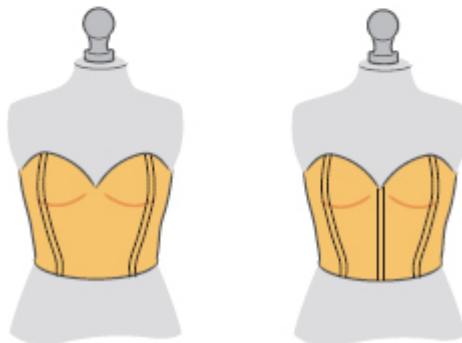
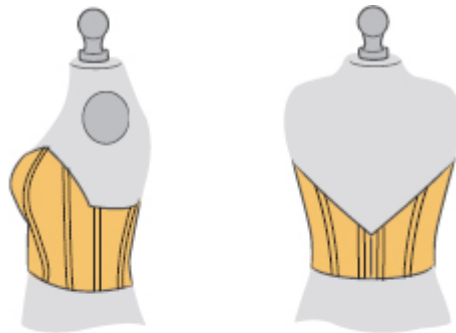
- 6** Repeat until you have the length of swing catch you need for your project. For a bra strap, you need enough length to go over the width of a bra strap, so about 2 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in.) or so.
- 7** When you have the length you need, pull the needle through the loop to secure the stitch. Your swing catch is now finished.

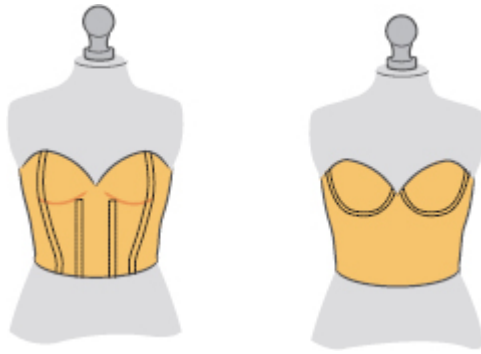


- 8** To make a bra strap fastener, sew one half of a snap fastener to the end of the swing catch, and the other half to the shoulder area of your garment. The swing catch will go over the bra strap and snap in place, keeping the bra straps securely inside the garment.

BONING

Boning has been used for hundreds of years to add structure to a garment (think of a Victorian boned corset). Nowadays, it tends to be used in evening wear and strapless dresses, or when a dress bodice needs to support the weight of something like a huge bow or train. These illustrations show where you might find boning in a strapless top or dress: the side seams, any back panel seams, any front panel seams, the centre front area, and under the bra cup.





TYPES OF BONING

Boning can be bought in both plastic and metal (spiral) forms. Plastic and spiral boning are a similar width. There is also steel boning which is used for making hoop skirts.

Plastic boning comes like a trim and is sold by the metre or by the roll. You can use scissors or a nail file to round off the sharp corners after you've cut the boning or apply masking tape over the sharp corners on both ends. You can leave plastic boning in a garment when you wash it, but it cannot be washed at a high temperature as this might distort the plastic.

TIP

You can also buy plastic boning in a ready-made cotton casing, which is applied simply by sewing the edges of the cotton casing to the garment.

Metal boning can be bought as a corsetry supply and needs a cap on both ends of the bone to prevent the metal from poking through the fabric or hurting the wearer. The bones can be bought in different pre-cut lengths and can also be cut to the right size using wire cutters. Ideally, metal boning should be removed when the garment is cleaned to prevent rust.

The other boning option is Rigilene, which can be sewn directly in a garment by sewing straight on top of the boning. Made from nylon, it's very lightweight and is often used in high-street brands. Press the Rigilene to encourage it to lie a bit flatter after being on a roll. Round off the edges of the bone when you have cut it to the right size to stop it from poking through the fabric. Use a slightly heavier needle (such as 90) to sew over Rigilene bones.

ADDING BONING TO A GARMENT

There are various ways to do this and the method you use will depend on whether you want the boning to be permanent, whether you want the stitches to be visible on the outside or not, whether you're making a garment from scratch or adding boning to an existing garment, and whether you're adding boning to a seam or in the middle of a garment. The following methods are for metal or plastic boning only, because Rigilene can be sewn as it is.

- ① Ready-made encased boning
- ② Plastic boning
- ③ Metal boning
- ④ End caps for metal boning
- ⑤ Rigilene



TIPS

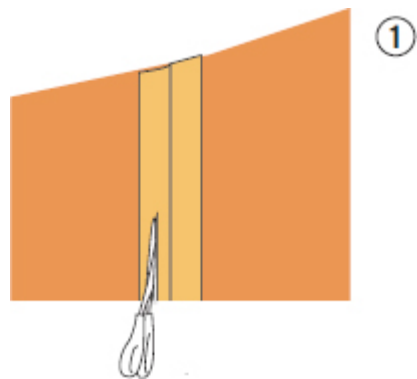
- **Always be careful using the sewing machine on a garment that has boning inside! You may want to use a zip foot to be able to finish the edges of the garment.**
- **Boning should never extend into the seam allowance or hem allowance of a garment, so it's important to measure the length of the bones accurately.**
- **If you're not attaching the boned section to another element, you still need to avoid stitching over the boning when you finish or hem the top and bottom edges – so be sure to cut the boning a few millimetres shorter than the length of the seam.**
- **Many garments where boning is required are backed; the boning is stitched to the backing rather than to the top fabric, so the stitching is not visible on the outside of the garment. Stitching through all layers to create visible**

stitch lines on the outside can, however, be an attractive decorative choice.

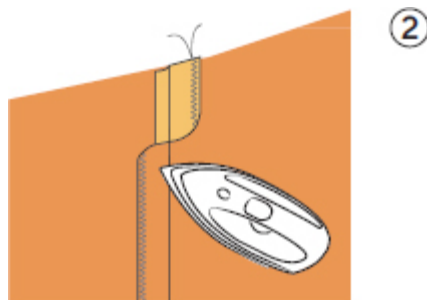
BONING ENCASED IN SEAM ALLOWANCE

This method is used for permanent boning and the stitches will show on the other side. It can only be used to add boning to a seam and the seam allowance needs to be big enough to create a channel wide enough to slot in the boning (the technique is the same as sewing a felled seam on a pair of jeans).

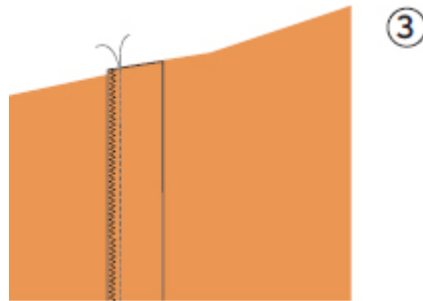
- 1** For one bone, press over both seam allowances to one side of the seam (it doesn't matter which side). If your fabric is stiff, trim the under seam allowance.



- 2** Neaten the raw edge of the untrimmed side of the seam allowance and re-press it over the trimmed side.



- 3** Topstitch the seam allowance 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) from the seam line. This creates a channel for the boning.



TIP

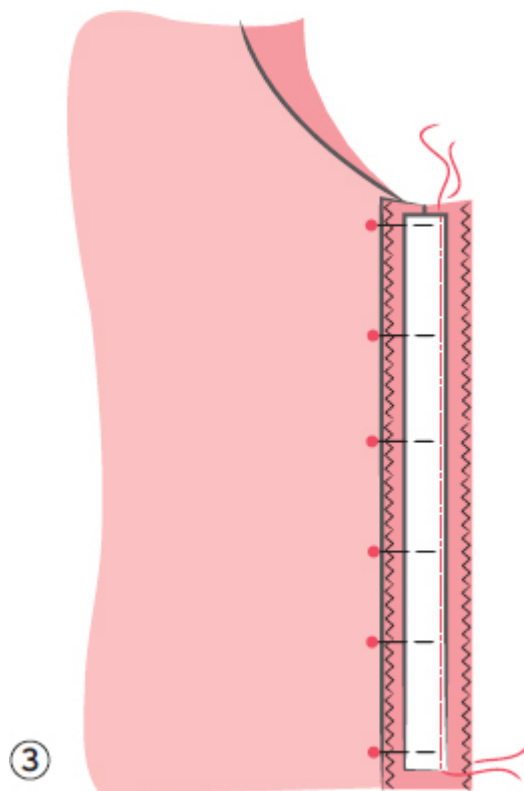
The same basic method can be used to add boning to each side of the seam. Press the seam allowances open, then press under the raw edges (making sure that the remaining seam allowance is about 3 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in.) wider than the boning you are using, and topstitch in place.

- 4** Slot the boning in from either the top or the bottom, making sure the bone is a few millimetres shorter than the seam so you can finish the edges of the garment. You shouldn't have to force it and equally the bone shouldn't be able to move around inside the seam. When you finish the top and bottom of the garment, the bone will be entirely encased in the garment.

BONING ENCASED IN TAPE ON TOP OF SEAM ALLOWANCE

This method is used for removable boning and the stitches will not show on the other side. It can only be used to add boning to a seam. You will need some narrow petersham tape to make the casing. If you are using ready-made encased boning, you can start at step 3. Please note that boning that comes with a ready-made casing is non-removable once it has been sewn in.

- 1** Press the seam allowances of your garment open and finish the edges of the seam allowances.
- 2** Cut the petersham tape 2 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in.) longer than the length of the seam. Fold 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) of each end of the petersham tape to the wrong side and then press.
- 3** Place the tape centrally over the top of the seam, right side up, and pin it in place. For the bottom end of the boning, the tape should sit very close to the bottom edge of the pattern – but not going into the seam allowance; for the top end it should sit a few millimetres away from the top edge of the pattern so that you can slot the boning in from the top. Edge stitch the tape to the seam allowance only on each long side. Tack across the bottom of the tape, but not across the top. If you are using boning that already comes encased, place the encased bone on top of the seam in the same way, and then edge stitch it in place, using a zip foot.



- 4 If you are attaching another pattern piece below the bottom of the boning channel, do that first before inserting the boning. Then slot the boning into the casing from the top. Tack across the top of the casing to keep the boning in place. If you ever need to remove the boning, undo the tacking stitches.
-

TIP

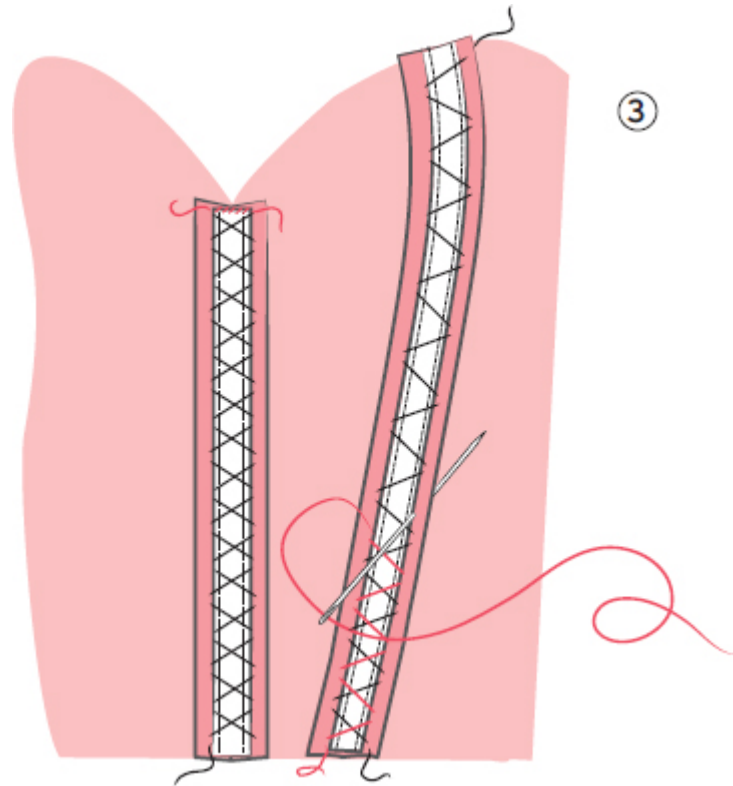
It's best to sew both edges in the same direction to prevent the tape from puckering. You could also stitch these lines going through the top fabric to create a decorative finish.

BONING ENCASED ENTIRELY IN TAPE AND SEWN IN

This method is used for removable boning. It can be used to add boning anywhere to a seam allowance or to a garment with an inner fabric layer. The stitches do not show on the other side. You will need some petersham tape to make a case. For one boning case, the tape needs to be twice the length of the boning plus 2 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in.).

- 1 Fold the tape in half across the width. The fold will form the bottom of the casing. Fold each short edge to the wrong side by 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) and press.
- 2 Machine stitch both long sides to finish the case. You now have a boning case with an open top into which the bone will be inserted. Slot the bone in.
- 3 Pin the boning case in place on the garment. Stitching to the seam allowance only, work a double zig-zag stitch by hand over the bone to secure it in place. For a lining garment, stitch to the lining only. Work a series of zig-zags one way over the whole

case first, and then do another one so that the stitches look like crosses when finished. To keep the bone inside the case you can work some separate stitches across the top opening.



SWIMWEAR

Although you may never have considered making your own swimwear there are quite a few sewing patterns available these days. It's not as difficult as you might imagine: you can use your regular sewing machine and overlocker to sew swimwear at home.

Below are some tips on materials, tools and sewing techniques to get you started.

SWIMWEAR MATERIALS

There is a relatively large selection of plain and patterned swimwear fabrics available nowadays. You will also need lining fabric, special elastic and thread.

SWIMWEAR FABRIC

Swimwear fabric should be stretchy, have good coverage (it should remain opaque when stretched out) and have good recovery (it should stretch in and out without losing its shape). A four-way stretch fabric will stretch in all directions, which is great for swimming costumes. A nylon spandex blend is common for good-quality swimwear fabrics, and you could look for ones containing recycled or sustainable fibres and also UV protection, if desired. It's best to use a high-quality swimwear fabric, as the fabric has to withstand chlorine and salt water.

The stretch percentage is very important for swimwear (and all other activewear). Your pattern will state what percentage of stretch it has been designed for. If you find a fabric you love with less stretch than the pattern needs, you might need to size up in the pattern. If you have a fabric with more stretch than the pattern has been designed for, you might need to size down.

SWIMWEAR LINING FABRIC

Buy actual swimwear lining, as this is nice and thin. Technically you could line using the same fabric as your main fabric, but swimwear fabric is quite spongy so this will likely become bulky.

SWIMWEAR ELASTIC

You can use rubber or cotton swimwear elastic. Ready-made swimwear will contain rubber elastic as it's very flat, so it looks good and is easy to sew with. It's also very long lasting, which is important for swimwear: salt, chlorine and sun will disintegrate regular polyester elastic. Swimwear elastic comes in different widths to make it suitable for different areas of swimwear.

- ① Swimwear fabric
- ② Swimwear fabric
- ③ Swimwear lining
- ④ Swimwear halter cups
- ⑤ Polyester thread
- ⑥ Woolly nylon thread
- ⑦ Clear swimwear elastic

⑧ Rubber swimwear elastic

⑨ Rubber swimwear elastic



THREADS FOR SWIMWEAR

Use high-quality polyester thread to ensure the seams will last well. Cotton thread is not suitable for projects like swimwear and active wear. For your overlocker, a woolly nylon thread will produce a soft, slightly fluffy overlocked edge, which is much more comfortable for swimwear.

TIP

Pre-wash all your swimwear materials, including your elastics!

TOOLS FOR SEWING SWIMWEAR

There are certain tools that will make your swimwear projects easier and you might already have them at home. Below are the tools we recommend you use for accurate cutting out and neat sewing. The key is to control the swimwear fabric properly and these will help you with that.

PATTERN WEIGHTS

The stretchy nature of swimwear and activewear fabrics means it's easiest to hold your pattern pieces in place with pattern weights. Do this on top of a cutting mat so that, when your pieces are ready to cut, you can use a rotary cutter to wheel around the pattern pieces.

CUTTING MAT AND ROTARY CUTTER

Swimwear fabric is stretchy, so once you've laid out the paper pattern it's best if you don't need to move the fabric any more. A rotary cutter is therefore easier to use than scissors.

Remember to put a cutting mat under your fabric before laying out the pattern! A big blade on your rotary cutter is suitable for long, fairly straight lines; if you have a lot of curves, switch to a blade with a smaller diameter.

TIP

It's easier to cut your pattern pieces on a single layer of fabric than on folded fabric. If your pattern piece says to cut 2, simply cut it out twice – but make sure you are cutting a right and a left side!

NEEDLES

Use a ballpoint or stretch needle to make sure the stitches will be neat and accurate; they're designed for stretch fabrics. If you use a regular machine needle, you will probably notice that the machine skips stitches because a regular needle can't perforate this type of fabric properly, which prevents the thread from being pulled through. Stretch needles become dull relatively quickly, so start each project with a brand new one.

Your pattern instructions might also call for a twin needle, which is commonly used in finishing stretch garments. The two needles form two rows of stitching close to each other, creating a strong seam. On a swimming costume, for example, you might finish the leg openings using a twin needle.

MACHINE FEET

Try using a [walking foot](#) to help control the stretchy fabric underneath the presser foot. You can either leave the walking foot on for the whole project or, if you prefer sewing with your regular presser foot, switch to a walking foot when you run into bulky areas

where you need some more assistance to move the fabric through the machine (for example, an area that has top fabric, lining and a strap).

TIPS FOR SEWING

- **To make sure that your seams can stretch a bit as well, sew using a slight zig-zag rather than a straight stitch. The stitches would snap if sewn entirely straight, so the seams need a bit of movement to follow the stretch of the garment. The zig-zag should be set to a small width and length.**
 - **Test your zig-zag stitching on scrap fabric before starting the actual seam, to see it's working well and looking neat.**
 - **You could also use a zig-zag stitch to put your seams together without using an overlocker. You'll need a wide but short zig-zag – 5 width and 1.5 length. This will imitate the look of an overlocked edge.**
 - **If you are using an overlocker in your project, test the machine on a piece of your fabric first to get the overlocker settings right. You will most likely need to change the differential feed on your machine. Check your machine's manual to find out how to do this. You can also put the overlocker blade down as you probably won't need to trim any of the seam allowance: the seam allowance should be quite small to begin with.**
 - **If you have a 4-thread overlocker you could even skip the regular seam and overlock two pieces together straight away. This is how dance leotards are made, for example.**
-

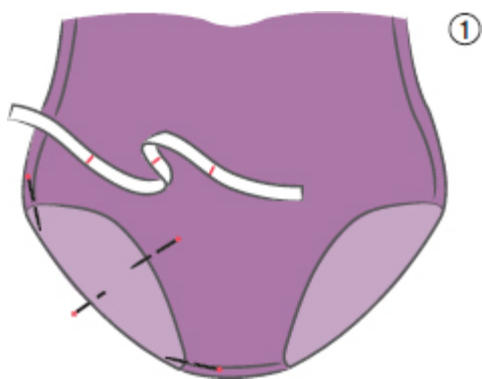
LEG ELASTIC

An important step in making your own swimwear is finishing the leg openings with elastics. This skill is also used in making leotards, performance wear and underwear. In underwear there are various ways of finishing the leg openings with elastic, but in swimwear it's most common to use the technique described here. This technique is also how you would do the elastic on armholes, necklines, underbusts and waists for swimwear and leotards.

The elastic is added when the swimming costume is assembled. If the elastic is too tight, the leg openings will be uncomfortable and the edges will dig into your skin. If the elastic is too loose, the swimsuit isn't functional as there is nothing to hold the bottom of the suit in its place. The elastic needs to be stretched in two places: around the crotch (to make sure the suit stays in place and you don't expose yourself) and the back leg (to make sure the suit stays fitted around the bum).

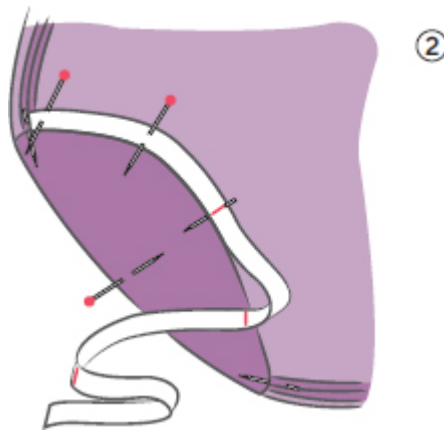
Before starting the elastic, try your swimming costume on to see that the general fit is good. You will need your swimming costume, swimming elastic for two leg openings, cut to the size your pattern specifies, a pen or pencil, and a tape measure or ruler.

- 1** Using a pen or pencil and a tape measure, divide each leg elastic into quarters. Then also divide each leg opening into four: the side seam, the crotch seam, the centre of the front leg and the centre of the back leg.

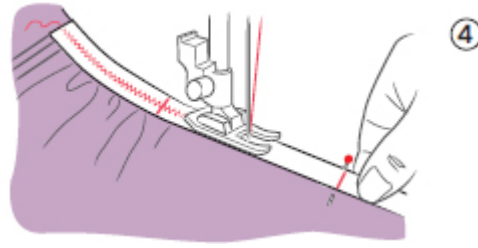


Note: The crotch lining should be in place before inserting the leg elastic. We've left it out of these illustrations for clarity.

- 2** Turn your swimming costume inside out and start pinning the elastic to the leg opening, starting at the side seam. Align the quarter marks on the elastic with the four points on the leg opening. Pin all four points well. Don't pin elsewhere. Note that the leg elastic is smaller in circumference than the leg opening. The elastic should lie right to the raw edge of the leg opening.



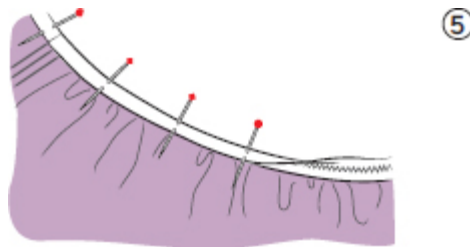
- 3** Overlap the elastic at the side seam by no more than 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.). Set your sewing machine to a medium zig-zag and get ready to sew. Make sure you are using an appropriate machine needle and thread, just as for the rest of the swimming costume.
- 4** Start sewing at the side seam, holding each pinned quarter mark with your fingers and stretching the elastic until it matches the fabric underneath. The zig-zag stitching should be in the middle of the elastic.



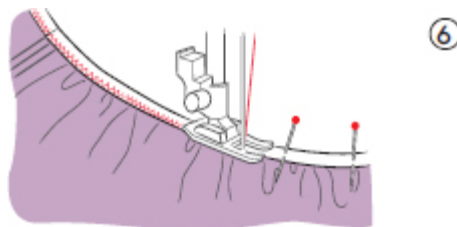
TIPS

- **Be careful to only stretch the elastic, not the fabric!**
 - **Make sure the edge of the elastic aligns neatly with the raw edge of the fabric.**
-

- 5** Now you need to sew a second stitch line to finish the elastic. Fold the edge of the leg opening inwards, hiding the elastic. You can either pin it in place or just hold it in place while you sew.



- 6** Use a zig-zag stitch again and line the stitch up with the raw edge of the folded-over leg opening. This ensures that the elastic stays neatly encased and that there won't be any flappy seam allowances. Stitch all around the leg opening, stretching the edge in the same way you did in step 4. Make sure to backstitch well when you finish.



TIP

You may need a slightly tighter or looser elastic to fit your particular shape. A very full bum might need the elastic to be a bit looser around the back of the leg opening to create more room, whereas a flat bum might need the elastic to be a bit tighter in between the crotch and the back leg to make sure the swimsuit stays put. The only way to find this out is to make a toile and to insert the leg elastic to assess the fit. Pay close attention to the fit around the bum. It is unlikely you will need to change the elastic around the front of the thigh.

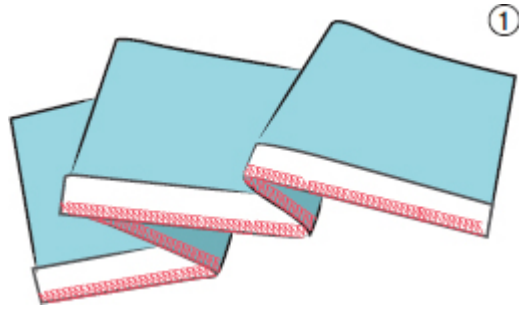
ELASTICATED SWIMWEAR STRAPS

Making separate elasticated straps for your swimwear is easier than you might think! You will need two strips of swimwear fabric about 5 cm (2 in.) wide (each the length of a strap plus a bit extra for attaching), two lengths of swimwear elastic (each the length of a strap plus a bit extra for attaching), an overlocker and a twin needle for your sewing machine.

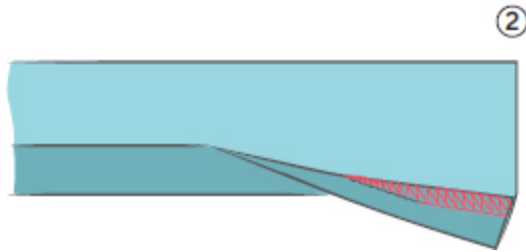
TIP

If you don't have a twin needle, you could do a zig-zag stitch instead.

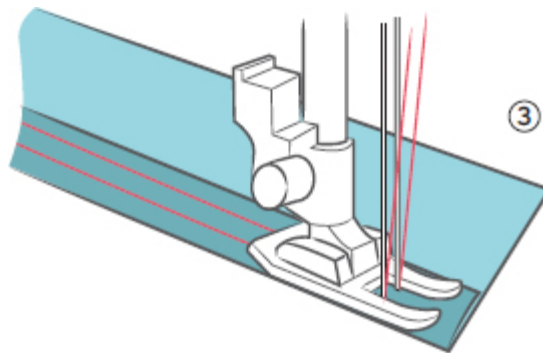
- 1** Lay your strip of top fabric wrong side up with the elastic on top, aligning the elastic with one long side edge. Overlock the edge without cutting off any material. This secures the elastic to the fabric.



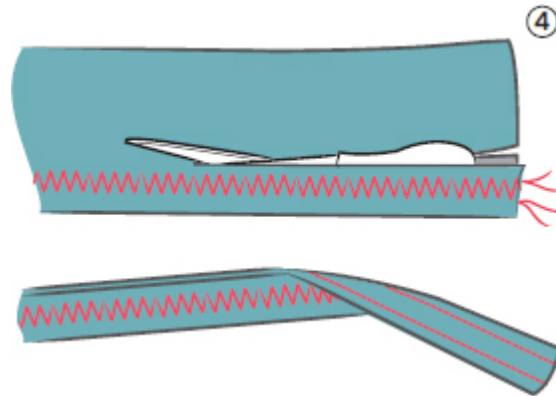
- 2** Fold the elastic over towards the middle of the strip, and then fold again. The elastic should no longer be visible. You should have a little bit of the fabric strip left over.



- 3** Pin the folded layers so that they don't shift. Topstitch on your machine by using either a twin needle or a regular needle with a zig-zag stitch. Aim for the stitches to be in the middle of the strap.



- 4** Carefully trim off the leftover fabric. Swimwear fabric does not fray, so the cut edge is the finished edge. The more neatly you cut, the better it will look!



- 5** Repeat for the other strap. You are now ready to attach the straps to your project, following the instructions of your chosen pattern. If you have used a twin needle, then the double stitch line forms the top of the strap. The side of the strap that has the cut seam allowance edge forms the underneath of the strap.

TIP

Before you commit to sewing the straps on, pin them in place and then try the garment on to make sure they are the right length and in the right position for your body.

TIP

If you are making a swimming costume that has separate pattern pieces for the cup, you could line the cups with [foam](#) for extra support and/or modesty reasons (for more information).

UNDERWEAR

Sewing your own underwear, just like swimwear, has become more and more popular. There are brands that cater to sewing underwear specifically, creating patterns, kits and classes to learn how to make knickers, bras and body suits. These garments can all be made using your regular machine, but they do require more specialist materials. Make sure you purchase a pattern and follow the instructions well, including the material requirements. You will need the right materials to make the underwear fit well, and the pattern will have been drafted with particular materials in mind.

If you are ready to give underwear a go, you will find some tips below to demystify the start of your project.

MATERIALS

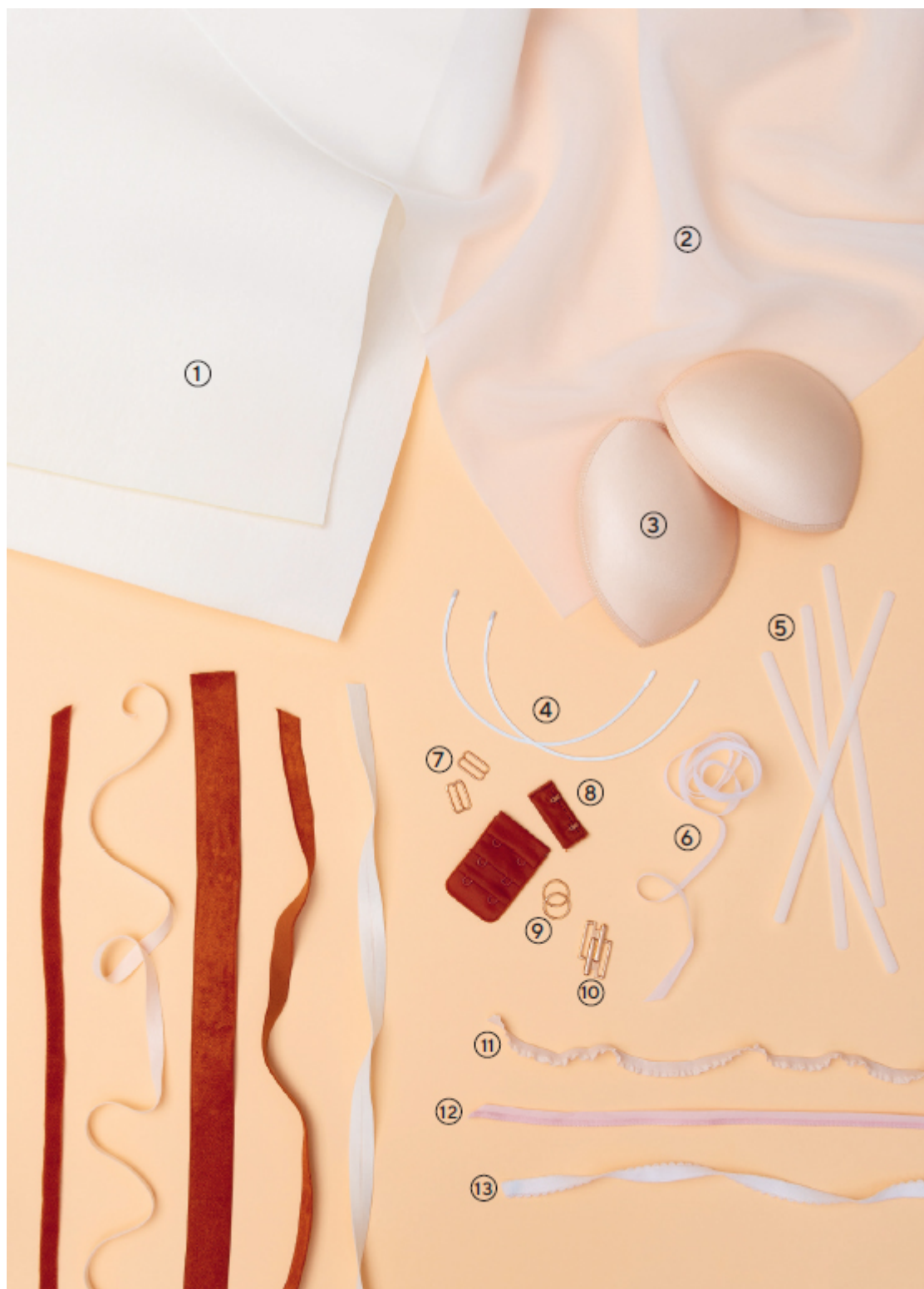
Making underwear will lead you to explore entirely different materials and haberdashery than perhaps you are used to. The right materials will make your underwear comfortable and form fitting.

FABRICS

Softness is the most important when choosing a material to use for knickers and thongs. There has to be an element of stretch as well, and the amount of stretch you need depends on the type of underwear you are making. A regular knicker pattern can be made in a stretchy bamboo jersey or other soft, very stretchy fabrics, whereas a thong or cut-out style underwear needs something less

stretchy (such as a cotton jersey, stretch lace, stable net or mesh), otherwise it will stretch out of shape. If you find a stretch lace you want to use, you could also back it with a mesh to make sure the lace doesn't irritate your skin. Woven fabrics are usually not suitable for underwear making as they lack the appropriate stretch. They could work in certain areas of a bra, mainly the cup, as there is no stretch needed in a moulded bra cup. You could, of course, make slips and nightwear out of materials like satin or silk. For knickers and thongs you should also consider the breathability of certain fabric types and how important that is to you.

- ① Cut-to-sew foam
- ② Spacer foam
- ③ Ready made cups
- ④ Underwire
- ⑤ Plastic boning
- ⑥ Channelling
- ⑦ Bra sliders
- ⑧ Hooks and eyes
- ⑨ Bra rings
- ⑩ Barrel closure/clasp
- ⑪ Decorative leg and waist elastic
- ⑫ Decorative elastic with piping
- ⑬ Picot elastic



For more breathable fabrics you can look for ones that have natural fibre content or are moisture wicking. Fabrics such as polyester, spandex and nylon tend to be the least breathable.

It is also common in undies to add lining to a small area of the crotch for added comfort and durability. A crotch lining is best made out of something soft, such as jersey.

As with swimwear, check what level of stretch your pattern has been designed for. A different percentage stretch in your chosen fabric will not produce a garment the way it's been designed.

ELASTIC

There are several kinds of elastic that you will come across when making underwear.

Strap elastic for bras, bralettes and body suits: You can use a few different types of underwear elastic for the straps, mainly picot, decorative or plain. Picot elastic has a decorative detail on one edge of the elastic and is specifically used for lingerie making. It comes in a smooth, shiny finish and also with a soft, fuzzy back (plush). A decorative strap elastic might have a lace or a scalloped edge, and you could also go for a plain strap elastic, or even transparent plastic elastic (usually bought as a finished strap and not as a trim).

Leg and waist elastic for knickers and thongs: Lingerie elastic for leg openings and waists is relatively soft and stretchy, as otherwise it would dig into your skin and be highly uncomfortable. It's worth buying this specific elastic to ensure a comfortable fit. It's soft and stretchy, moving with your body and keeping the underwear in place without digging in.

Elastic for finishing edges: Areas like armholes, necklines and the bottom edge of a bra can be finished with plush picot elastic. The

soft back of this type of elastic adds a level of comfort. The tiny detail on the edge of picot elastic will add a decorative edge without taking over the design, as picot elastic is narrow. You can also buy fold-over elastic, which encases a raw edge entirely. It's very versatile and can be used in areas such as leg openings, necklines, and armholes.

Waistband and underbust elastic: A wider elastic can be used for a more eye-catching waist finish on a pair of undies and it can also be used for the bottom of a bra or bralette. This type of elastic has a stiffer finish and therefore creates a tighter and more sporty fit. Specialist underwear sewing brands sell these wide elastics in really fun colours.

HABERDASHERY

Rings and sliders: Rings and sliders are the elements on a bra strap that make them adjustable in length.

Closures: Hooks and eyes are commonly used for fastening bras, bralettes and body suits at the back. They make the fastening adjustable, which is great, as you will often have to use a tighter eye over time, when the stretch in your lingerie gives a little. Lingerie hooks and eyes come on a piece of tape with either two or three rows of hooks and eyes for a more secure fit. There is also a plastic closure called a barrel or clasp, which is like a clip with two pieces that fit together. This can be used for front-fastening bras or swimwear.

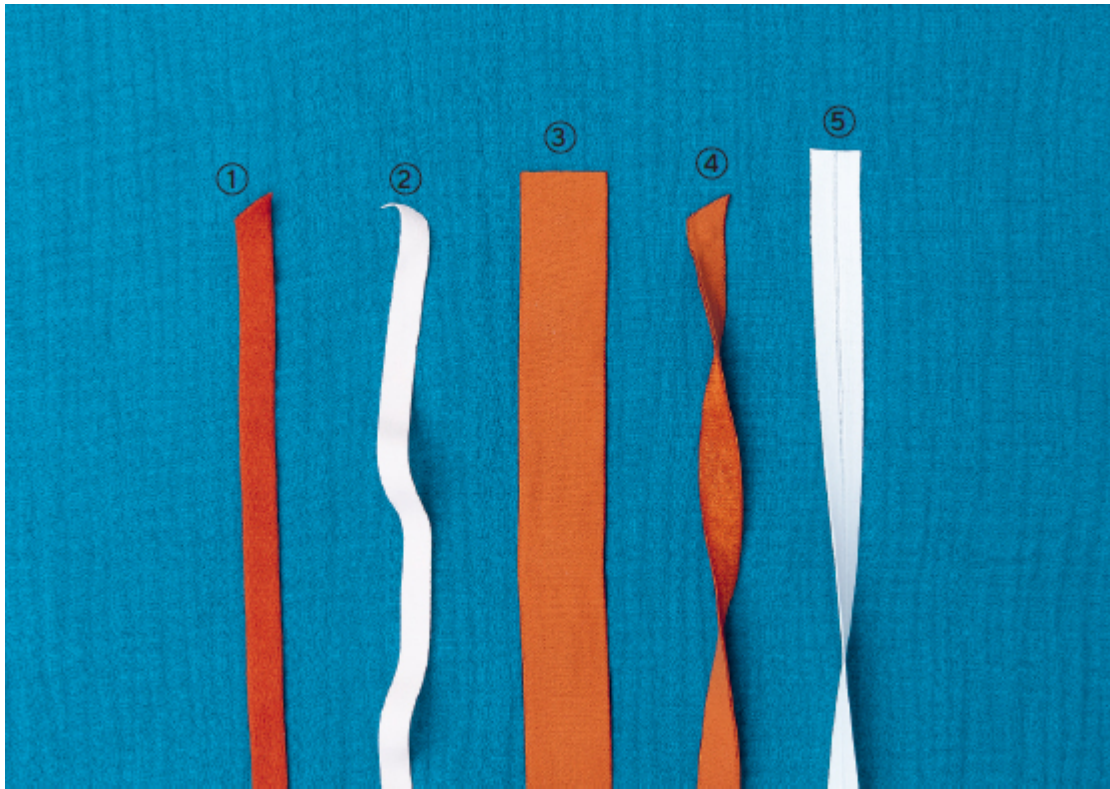
Underwire, monowire, V-wire: Wiring a bra or body suit around the cups means that you mould the bust area into a shape that holds the bust in place, as well as shapes it.

A wire can lift the bust, bring the breasts closer together or separate them. A classic wired bra contains two separate underwires, one under each breast. Underwires can be bought in different shapes,

where they either shape part of the underbust or the whole underbust and outside side bust as well. A monowire spans the whole underbust of both breasts, whereas a V-shaped metal wire can separate the cups at the front and hold the breasts apart. This V-wire is used in performance costumes as well as in lingerie making.

Boning and channelling: A short piece of plastic boning is sometimes inserted in the side seam of a bra with a wide band to shape that part of the body and enable the bra to pull in the bust. You might also use boning if you are making a bustier, a corset or vintage-style lingerie. To insert and encase boning you can buy channelling, which is an elastic fabric channel bought as a trim, specifically used in underwear. If you are using an underwire in your underwear, you will also need some channelling to ensure the wire is securely in place and doesn't hurt you. For more information on boning, please see [Boning](#). Your underwear pattern will tell you what type of boning you need and how to insert it, too.

- ① Elastic for finishing edges
- ② Plain satin elastic
- ③ Underbust or waistband elastic
- ④ Plush-back strap elastic
- ⑤ FOE



Cups: Adding foam cups to a bra adds shape, volume and ensures there is never any nipple on display. Cups can be used in lingerie as well as swimwear and you can either buy ready-made cup shapes in different varieties, such as push-up or balconette, or you can make a cup from [foam](#). If you make a cup from scratch, cut the foam in the same pattern pieces as the top fabric bra cup.

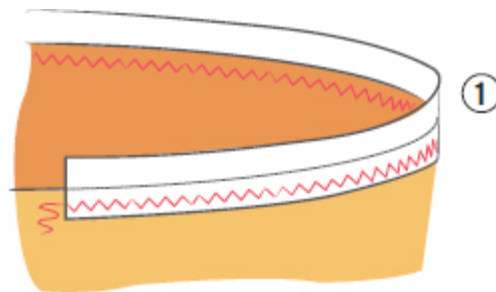
TOOLS AND MACHINE SET-UP

As with swimwear, one of the most important tools is a rotary cutter, as lingerie fabrics are simply much easier to handle without scissors. You might also need stretch needles or twin needles, and you will likely sew using a zig-zag stitch. For these tools and machine set-up tips, please see [Swimwear](#). As with swimwear and activewear, it's also great to use a woolly nylon thread in the overlocker when making underwear: it will produce a soft, slightly fluffy overlocked edge that is much more comfortable for underwear.

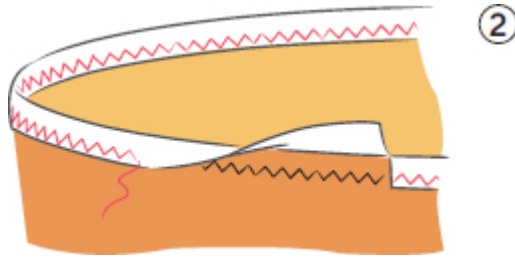
FOLD-OVER ELASTIC (FOE)

Fold-over elastic (often referred to as FOE) is a type of underwear elastic that wraps around a raw edge like binding. It's one of several methods to finish an edge in underwear making. You can find FOE on the edges of leg openings and waists on undies, and around armholes, necklines and underbusts of bras and bralettes. FOE has a line down the middle where it will fold over the edge of the garment and it often features a matte side and a shiny side. It comes in different colours and you can either match the colour to your garment or choose a contrasting colour.

- 1** With the wrong side of your underwear facing up, lay the FOE on top so that the centre line on the elastic aligns with the raw edge of the underwear. If the FOE you are using has a shiny and a matte side, the shiny side should be facing up at this stage. Zig-zag stitch on top of the innermost half of the elastic, which attaches the elastic to the underwear. You could experiment with the stitch width for the zig-zag first on a small piece of your elastic. As a guide, the width should be about 4–5 and the length 3–4.



- 2** Turn your garment over to the right side and fold the FOE over the edge. Zig-zag stitch on top of the elastic to secure it in place. Here it's very important to do neat stitching, as this stitching will be visible. Use the innermost edge of the elastic as a guide for the zig-zag so you have a straight edge to guide you.



TIPS

- **If you are using fold-over elastic, you need to remove any seam allowance from the edge of the garment as this type of elastic binds around the finished cut edge.**
 - **For instructions on how to manipulate the stretch of a piece of [elastic](#) in between marked points.**
-

TO FINISH FOE

If you are finishing a continuous edge with FOE, such as a leg opening, the elastic will meet and overlap when you're done and therefore it needs to be neatly finished. Choose a safe area to do this: not in a place where it will chafe and not in a place where it's really visible. On a bra you could choose the side seam or underarm, on a waist you could do the side seam or centre back, and on a leg opening you could do the side seam. FOE is finished in a similar way to bias binding. There are two methods:

Method 1:

- 1** Cut the elastic to 2 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in.) longer than you require.
- 2** With right sides together, sew the short edges of the elastic together with a straight stitch and a 1-cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ -in.) seam allowance.

- 3** Press the seam open and attach the elastic to your garment, matching the seam in the elastic to a point like the side seam or the centre back.

Method 2:

- 1** Cut the elastic to 2.5 cm (1 in.) longer than you require. Choose where to start attaching the elastic to the garment.
- 2** Fold back 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) of the elastic on top of itself, to the wrong side. Start your stitching on top of the folded section and continue stitching the elastic. When you have sewn all the way around and you come to where the elastic starts, overlap the elastic over the folded starting point by about 1.5 cm ($\frac{5}{8}$ in.). Finish the stitching and leave the overlapped elastic raw.
- 3** When you fold the elastic over the edge to do the right side, you will only see the folded end.

FOAM CUPS

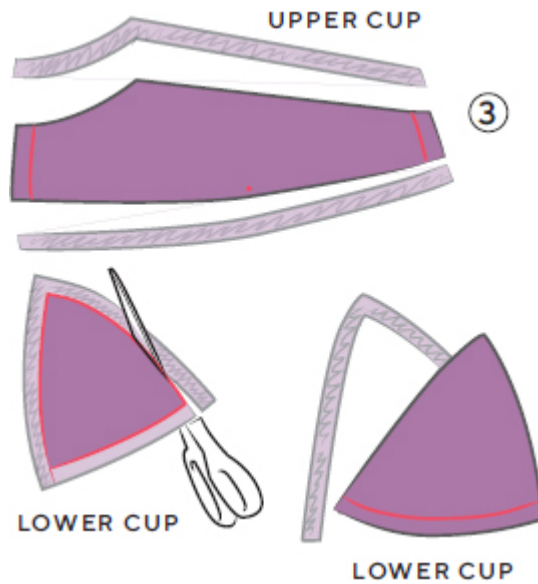
Foam cups can be added to underwear and swimwear for two different reasons: simply to add a lining to achieve a smooth and modest shape on top of your natural bust, or to actively shape and mould the bust.

You can buy moulded cups that already look like a finished cup and they come in different colours, shapes and with added functions, such as a push-up cup. You can also make 'cut-and-sew' cups out of foam fabric in the same pattern pieces as the bra cup. The technique for cut-and-sew foam cups is described overleaf. The instructions are for a cup pattern in three pieces (a top cup and a lower cup in two halves) but they would also apply to a pattern that has more or fewer pattern pieces than this.

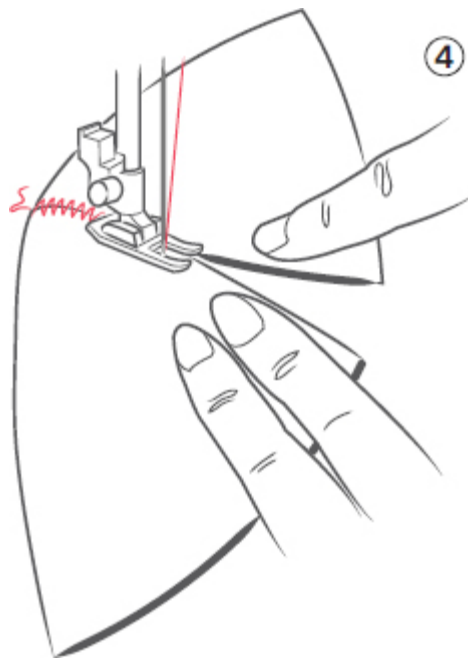
TIP

Look for a foam that's sold as a bra-making supply. It should be between 2 and 5 mm (1/8–1/4 in.) thick and it might be called laminate foam, poly laminate foam, bra-making foam, foam padding, foam lining, or spacer foam. You may be able to find it in basic colours, such as black, white and light beige.

- 1** First, you need to create a pattern for your foam cup by adapting your top fabric cup pattern. Trace the top fabric cup pattern pieces onto card. (Don't use paper or tissue paper: you will need to draw around your pattern on the foam and foam is too spongy for paper patterns.)
- 2** On the traced card pattern pieces, carefully mark on all the seam allowances if they are not already on there. Then you can cross out all vertical seam allowance within the cup, the neckline and the underarm. You can also cross out the seam allowance where the top cup attaches to the under cup. In other words, the only seam allowances you need are where the cup itself will be sewn into the frame of the bra (refer to your pattern instructions if you are unsure). Make sure the notches on the cup pieces are visible. The original paper pattern will be used for the top fabric and the traced and adapted pattern pieces will be used for the foam.
- 3** Cut out your new foam cup pattern pieces and cut a pair of cups in foam (make sure you have a left and right) by laying the card pattern pieces on top of the foam and drawing around them with a pen. Mark the notches as a small dot.



- 4** Assemble the lower cup first, then sew the lower cup to the top cup. Sew the seams by laying the foam pieces under your presser foot and butting the edges together. The edges should not separate or be squashed together. Stitch with a regular zig-zag stitch or a 3-step zig-zag so that the zig-zag catches both foam pieces across the join.



- 5** Overlock the neckline and the underarm area of the foam cup, without trimming any of the foam off. The overlocking flattens the edge of the foam, which will help you finish the edges of the bra. You could also overlock all edges of the foam cups if you wish.
- 6** Assemble the top fabric cup, following your pattern instructions.

FINISHING THE NECKLINE

There are two ways of finishing the neckline: you can either fold the fabric cup over the foam or add a lace trim or fold-over elastic.

Method 1: Roll the top fabric over the foam

- 1** Add a little extra (about 1 cm/ $\frac{3}{8}$ in.) to the neckline and underarm edges of the top fabric cup before you cut it out and assemble it.
- 2** Match the necklines and underarms of the top fabric cup and foam cup, right sides together.
- 3** Stitch around the neckline and underarm edges about 3 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in.) from the raw edge.
- 4** Fold the fabric cup over the edge of the foam to the outside. The cup should now have a finished edge all along the top.
- 5** Then smooth down the top fabric cup over the foam towards the bottom of the cup. Pin it in place as you work your way around. The top fabric should lie smooth and flat, but not taut.



- 6** Topstitch from the right side close to the raw edge of the foam. Cut off any excess top fabric so that it matches the edge of the foam.

Method 2: Bind or trim the neckline

- 1** Remove the seam allowances from the neckline and underarm edges of the top fabric cup before you cut it out and assemble it.
- 2** Match the necklines and underarms of the foam and fabric cups together, laying the two cups on top of each other as they would be in the finished bra.
- 3** Pin in place, then stitch around the neckline and underarm edges about 3 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ in.) from the raw edge.
- 4** Carefully and gradually smooth down the top fabric cup over the foam towards the bottom of the cup. Pin it in place as you work your way around the bottom of the cup. The top fabric should lie smooth and flat, but not taut.
- 5** Topstitch from the right side close to the raw edge of the foam.
- 6** Cut off any excess top fabric so that it matches the edge of the foam. Apply your chosen binding, trim or FOE in the normal way.

CHAPTER 5

Decorations & embellishments

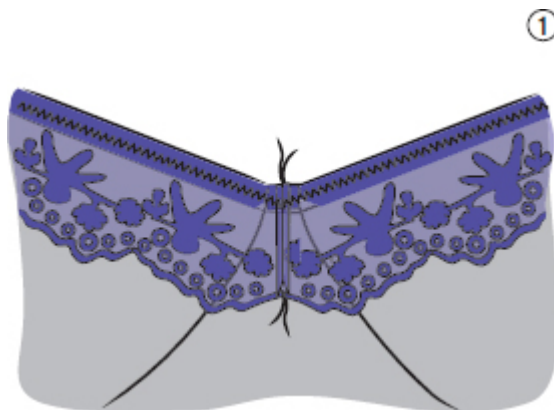
There are many ways to make a project your own, and embellishing is one of them! Here you'll find fun ways to decorate, such as lace inserts, and also ways to change an area of your garment into a decoration, such as adding a scalloped hem or pin tucks.



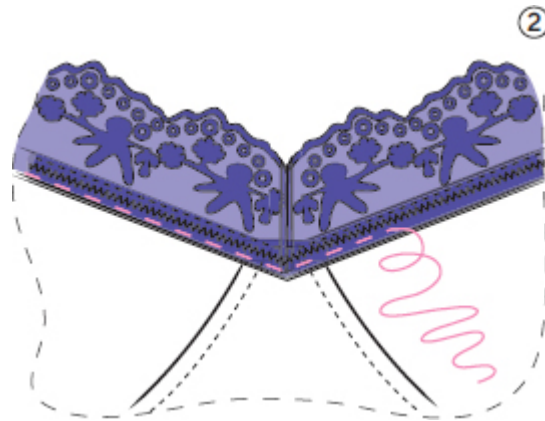
LACE-TRIMMED EDGES

Adding trims to a garment's edge, especially fine trims such as lace, can have its challenges because the combination of the edge finish and the trim could result in a bulky finish. This neat technique, demonstrated on a neckline, stitches the trim to the raw edge and finishes them together all in one step, before making the final fold and topstitching in place.

- 1** Fold in and press 6 mm (¼ in.) to the wrong side along the edge that is to be trimmed. Starting at a side seam – or in this case, the centre front of the neckline – and allowing for the seam allowance, pin the lace to the garment with right sides together, aligning the raw edge of the lace with the turned-over edge of the garment. When you get back to the beginning, place the ends of the lace with right sides together and stitch, trim the seam and press it open. Re-pin that section with the lace seams open and then tack the lace in place. Now zigzag stitch through all layers.



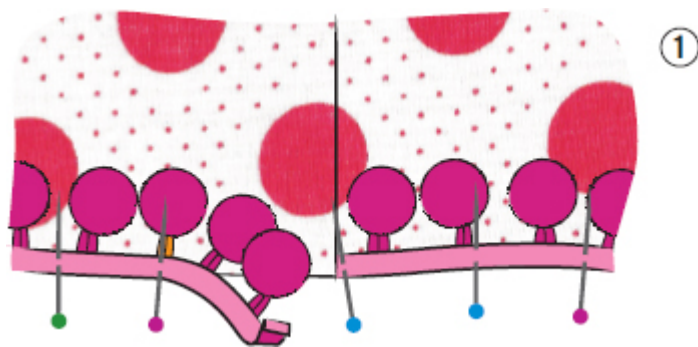
- 2** Fold the lace up so the line of zigzag stitches is on the inside of the garment. Tack to hold in place, 6 mm (¼ in.) from the garment edge. Using a zip foot, topstitch as close as possible to the edge of the garment. Remove the tacking stitches and press.



BOBBLE-TRIMMED HEM

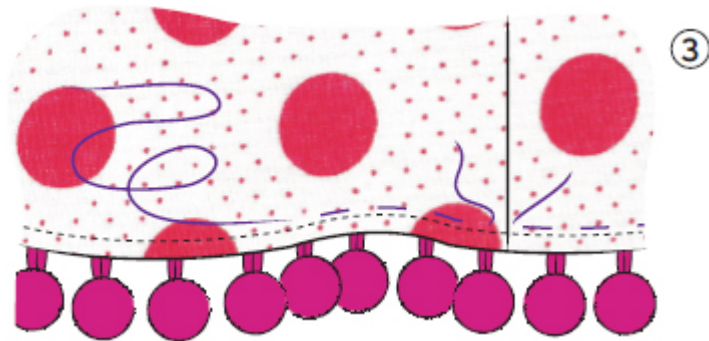
Bobble trims are very playful and can be added to garments, towels, tablecloths, lampshades, blinds and more. Here is how to finish a hem with a bobble trim.

- 1** Fold and press the raw edge of the hem to the wrong side by 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) Turn in one raw end of the bobble trim and, starting at one side seam, pin it right sides together to the pressed-under hem edge, aligning the folded edge and the edge of the trim. When you get back to where you started, cut the trim to about 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) longer than required, then turn in the raw end just as you did at the start. Tack in place, then remove the pins.



- 2** Fit a zip foot to your machine and stitch the trim in place. Carefully remove the tacking stitches.
- 3** Fold down the trim so that the bobbles hang down below the hem. Pin, tack and machine stitch around the hem just above

the fold, to secure the pressed-under section of the hem to the inside of the garment. Then remove the tacking stitches.



- 4** At the side-seam join, slipstitch the two turned-in ends of the trim together.

SCALLOPED HEM

A scalloped hem is a decorative and eye-catching way to finish a hem and has a vintage vibe to it. A scallop shape is essentially a half circle and the most suitable hem types are straight hems (as opposed to curved hems that you would find on a circle skirt, for example).

There are several ways to add a scalloped hem. They all end up looking the same; the only difference is a possible change to the length of the finished garment.

Option 1: You decide in advance that you are making a scalloped hem, so you can add some length to the hem on the paper pattern before cutting out.

Option 2: You decide when the garment is ready to be hemmed that you would like to do a scallop finish. You don't mind losing a little bit of hem length and you create a scalloped hem with the garment as it is.

Option 3: You decide when the garment is ready to be hemmed that you would like to do a scallop finish. You want the garment to maintain its designed length so you add a band of fabric to the raw hem and then make your scalloped hem.

For options 2 and 3, start at step 2.

TIP

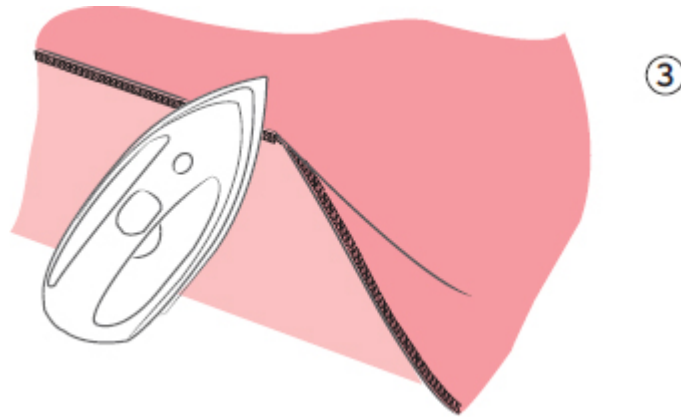
Think about the scale of the scallops you would like to create. To do a test, draw a row of scallops on a piece of paper, cut them out as a strip and pin to a garment to check the size in the mirror.

- 1** Tape some pattern paper to the bottom of your paper pattern, so that you can extend the hem. Using a ruler, extend the hem length by 1.2–4 cm ($\frac{1}{2}$ –1½ in.). (This depends on how deep you would like the scallops to be; for larger scallops, just add more to the length.) Cut out your finished, extended pattern. Make a note of how much you added and also what the original hem allowance is.
-

TIP

You are not making the finished garment any longer, but the extra length will determine how deep you can make the scallops.

- 2** Make up your garment following the instructions and stop before the hemming process. Overlock the raw edge of the hem without the overlocking blade cutting off any fabric.
- 3** Working from the right side of your garment, press up a single-fold hem that's the following depth:



Option 1: The measurement you extended by in step 1 plus the majority of your pattern's hem allowance. You'll need 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) or so as a seam allowance for the scallops, so don't add the entire hem allowance. Pin the fold in place or tack it in place by hand using very big stitches.

Option 2: Fold up by however much you are prepared to lose off the length.

Option 3: Cut a strip of fabric the length of the hem circumference (remember to add a seam allowance) and the depth you want the scallops to be (add a seam allowance so that you can sew the strip onto the garment). With right sides together, sew the strip onto the hem. Trim the seam allowance very short, then overlock the remaining raw edge. Press up a single fold as described under Option 1.

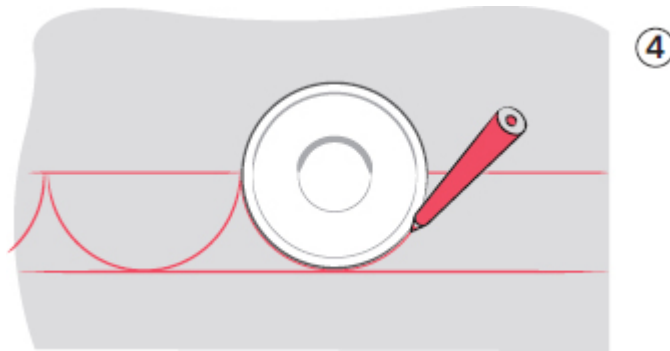
Pin the fold in place or tack it in place by hand using very big stitches.

TIP

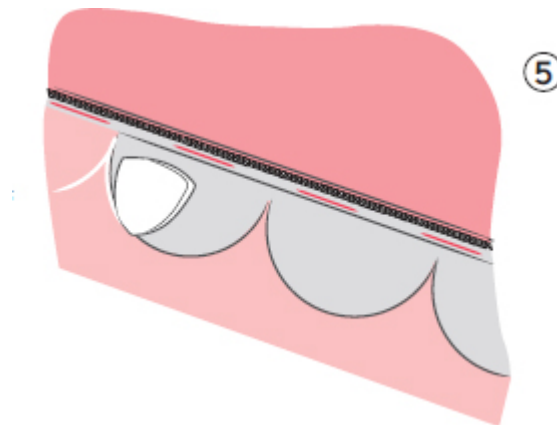
If you want precise and perfect scallops, you could measure the total circumference of the finished hem and divide that into scallops. A 120-cm (48-in.) hem circumference could be divided into 12 scallops measuring 10 cm (4 in.) each, for

example. You could make many smaller scallops or fewer bigger scallops.

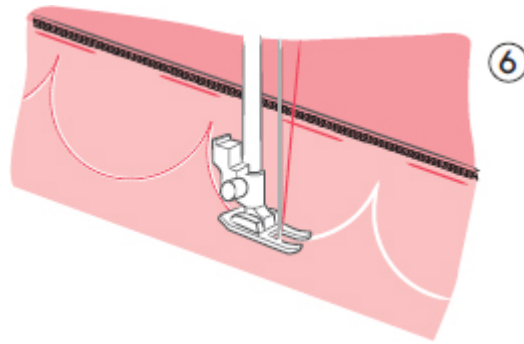
- 4** Make a paper scallop template by drawing two parallel lines with a ruler. The distance between the lines should be the depth of the scallop and it's the same as the extension you made on your pattern. Using a curved ruler or a circular object, draw a few scallops in between the lines, making sure the bottom of the scallops touches the bottom line. The individual scallops should connect at the top line. Transfer your scallop template to card and cut it out.



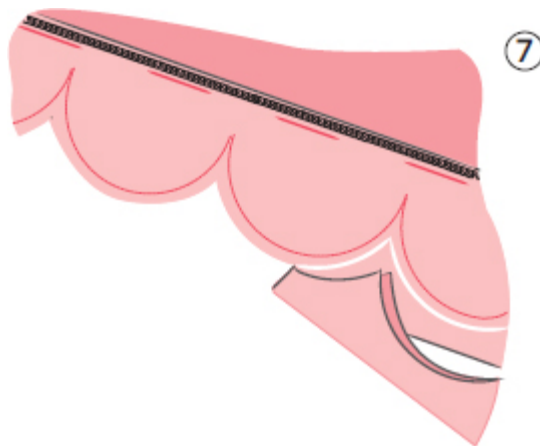
- 5** Draw around the scallops on the single-fold hem that you prepared on the right side of the garment, making sure there's about 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) seam allowance between the bottom of the scallop and the folded edge of the garment.



- 6** Lower the stitch length on your machine to about 1.8–2 to help you sew neat, well stitched curves. Sew the entire scalloped edge, pivoting in the corners. It's important the hem lies still while you're sewing, so double check you have pinned or tacked it securely in place before starting.



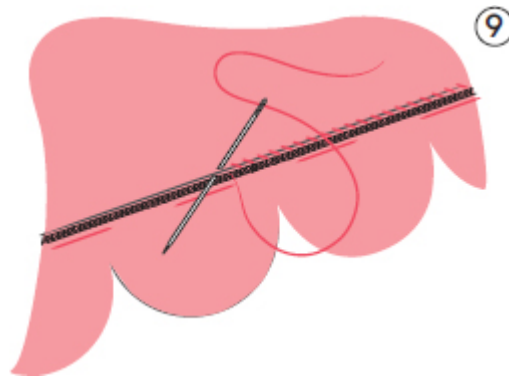
- 7** Snip into the points of the finished scallops as close to the stitches as you can get without cutting the threads. Then trim the entire seam allowance of the scallops to about 2.5–5 mm ($\frac{1}{8}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$ in.). You can use pinking shears or regular scissors to trim around the scallops, as long as you trim it short. You can grade the seam allowance shorter going into the corners, to make sure they can turn right sides out without puckering or pulling.



TIP

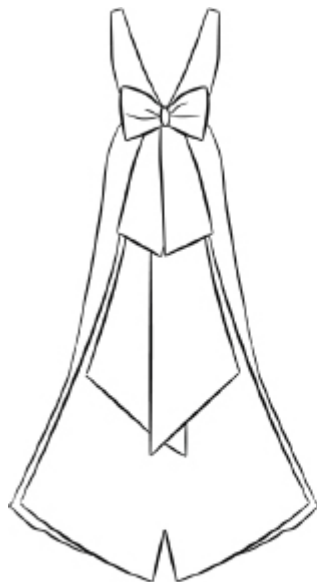
Some people cut out the scallop shapes plus seam allowance first and then snip into the points. We recommend snipping into the points first, while there's still fabric there – the seam allowance is very small and it's easy to accidentally snip too far.

- 8** Turn the scalloped hem right side out. Carefully poke out all the curves with a point turner and press well.
- 9** Sew the overlocked edge of the hem in place on the inside of the garment by machine or by hand.



FABRIC BOW

A bow is a classic, sweet element of decoration that has remained popular over time. You can really play with the proportions of both the bow and the tails and they can be added to projects or be made as accessories such as hair bows. Here are some simple steps to make a fabric bow as a ready-made unit. You could hand stitch it to a garment (perhaps the top of the centre back or on a shoulder strap), a cushion, a pet collar, add it to a hair accessory, glue it to a special gift or put it on your Christmas tree. It's entirely up to you!



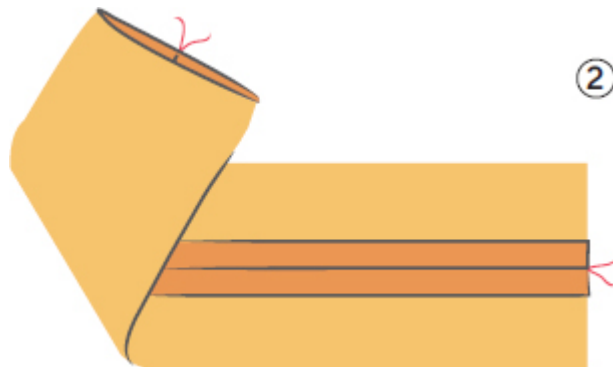
OVERSIZED WAIST
BOW WITH TAILS



SHOULDER BOW
WITHOUT TAILS

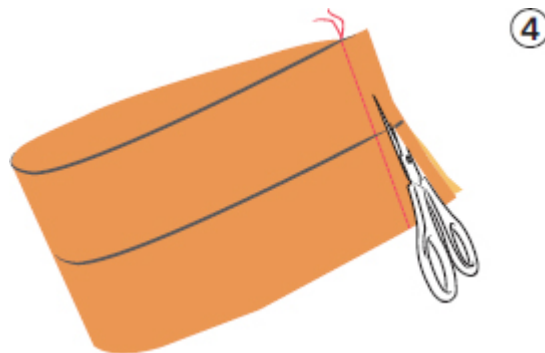
- 1** Cut a rectangle of fabric twice the length and twice the width of the finished bow for the main part, and a small rectangle about a third of the size of your big rectangle for the bow centre. You could use a piece of ribbon for the centre if you prefer.

- 2** Fold the big rectangle in half lengthwise, with right sides together. Pin and sew the long, open edge.

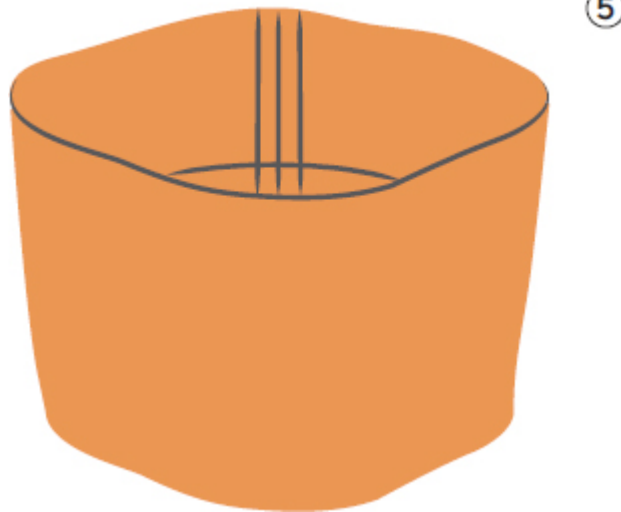


- 3** Turn the rectangle right side out and press so that the seam is in the middle.

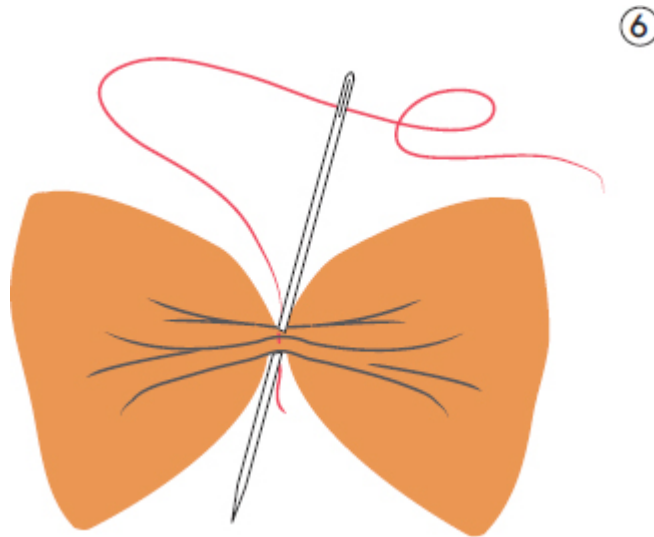
- 4** Fold the rectangle in half widthwise so that the short edges meet. Make sure the seam you made in step 2 is visible on the outside at this stage. Pin and sew the short edge to make a continuous tube. Trim the seam allowance very short.



- 5** Turn the tube inside out so that the seam from step 2 ends up on the inside. The seam from step 3 should also end up on the inside and centralised (this seam will be the centre back of the bow).



- 6** Pinch the bow in the centre, or pleat up the centre, until you're happy with how it looks. You can tack this in place.



- 7** Cover the centre with a bit of ribbon or a piece of fabric. To create a fabric centre, simply use a small rectangle and repeat steps 1 and 2. Use this to cover the centre and hand stitch the raw edges to the centre back.

TIP

For extra detail or to play with colours and patterns, you could make a double bow by using two pieces for the body of the bow. One should be a bit shorter than the other. Lay them on top of each other, then finish the centre.

BOW TAILS

You could also add tails to your bow, either in ribbon or in the same fabric as the bow itself. Fold a rectangle of fabric in half, right sides together, and draw on the finished shape of the two tails, using a ruler. You can make an inverted V-shape at the bottom for a classic look, or half a V. Stitch around the shape, leaving the short top edge open. Trim the seam allowances, turn right side out and press well. Turn under the raw top edges, then stitch the tails to the centre back of the bow.



**DOUBLE BOW
WITH INVERTED
V-SHAPED TAILS**

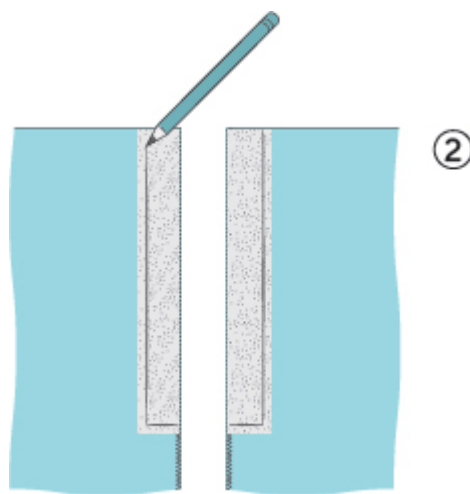


**SINGLE BOW WITH
HALF V-SHAPED TAILS**

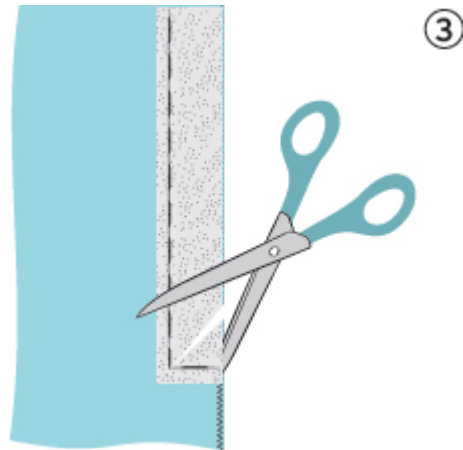
SURFACE-MOUNTED ZIP

Attaching a zip has traditionally been done by concealing the zip teeth and making the opening as discreet as possible, but they can be mounted in full, glorious view as a design detail. In this method, the whole zip is attached to the right side of the garment – a great opportunity for a fun design feature.

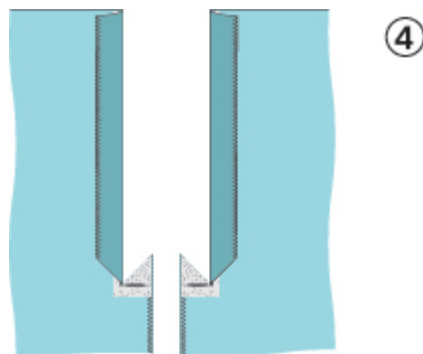
- 1** Neaten the raw edges of the seam allowances into which the zip is to be inserted. Press. Fuse strips of interfacing 2.5 cm (1 in.) wide to the wrong side of the zip placement area on each piece.
- 2** On the wrong side of the fabric, mark the zip placement lines with a chalk pencil, marking the length to just below the zip stop and the sides 2 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ in.) either side of the neatened edges. Hand or machine tack along the marked lines.



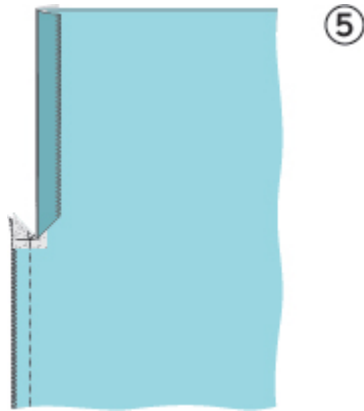
- 3** Snip diagonally into the seam allowances, starting 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ in.) above the end of the tacking (basting) and down towards the corners, making sure you don't clip the tacking stitching.



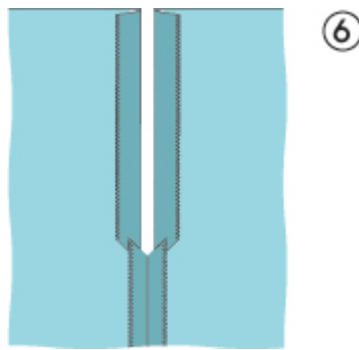
- 4** Fold the seam allowance of the zip placement areas to the wrong side along the tacking stitching and press.



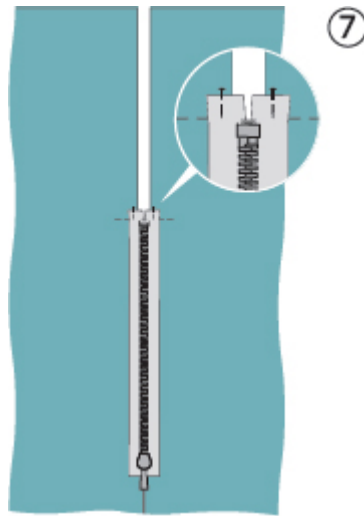
- 5** With right sides together, stitch the remaining seam from the horizontal tacking line down to the hem, taking a 1.5-cm seam ($\frac{5}{8}$ -in.) allowance. (Note this will NOT line up with the folded zip placement area, which has been folded at 2 cm/ $\frac{3}{4}$ in.).



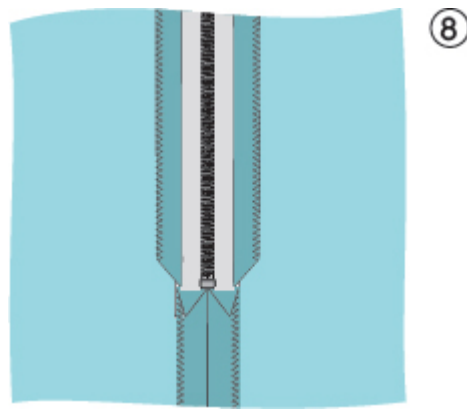
- 6** Press the seam allowances open. Note that, above the seam, the zip opening has a gap and the little triangles of fabric are pointing up.



- 7** Flip the garment so that the right side is uppermost and pin the zip right side down, with the zip stop end just below the horizontal tacking and the zip pull towards the hem. Stitch across the bottom of the zip, in line with the previous tacking – just across the centre of the zip above the zip stop, not all the way across the zip tape.



- 8** Flip the zip up and push it to the inside of the garment, so that only the teeth are exposed from the right side. On the wrong side, the little triangles of fabric should now be pointing downwards, although they will be covered by the end of the zip tape.



- 9** With the zip now looking the way it will when finished, pin the zip tape in place along both sides of the zip. With a zip foot, stitch both sides of the zip (leave the zip closed). Backstitch neatly when you reach the bottom of the zip.

GLOSSARY

BIAS

On fabric, this runs diagonally across the grain at 45 degrees to the selvages. The bias of the fabric has the most 'give' and is the most stretchy. *See also* [Grain and Selvages](#).

BINDING

A narrow strip of fabric wrapped around an edge of a garment, to enclose the edge and also for decorative purposes. Bias binding is made from fabric cut on the bias.

BONING

Narrow pieces of metal or plastic boning can be added to the inside of a garment to create a streamlined shape or to create volume. It's used in things like strapless bodices, couture, hoop skirts, corsetry and underwear. Historically boning was made of whalebone.

CASING

A channel, usually at the waist or neckline of a garment, through which elastic or a drawstring can be threaded.

DART

A fold (often triangular or diamond-shaped) sewn into the cut-out fabric to give the garment a three-dimensional shape to fit the contours of the body. Darts may be single (V-shaped) or contour (tapering to a point at each end); contour darts are also known as double-ended or fish-eye darts.

DESIGN/STYLE LINE

In pattern cutting, a design/style line is the term for drawing in elements of a design for a pattern. The design/style line is drawn exactly how the finished element would look in the garment. You might draw a design line for a collar or a pocket onto a bodice, for example.

EASE

The difference between the finished garment measurement and the body measurement, which means that the garment is not skin tight and the wearer has room to move. For example, on a dress pattern designed for someone with a 98-cm (38½-in.) bust, the finished garment bust measurement might be 116 cm (45½ in.); the pattern therefore has 18 cm (7 in.) ease.

EDGE STITCHING

The same as topstitching, but sewn much closer to the edge, hence its name. It is meant to be visible on the surface of the fabric. *See also* [Topstitching](#).

FACING

A piece of fabric used to neaten the edges on armholes, necklines and waists, as well as the front openings of some garments. Facings are cut to the same shape as the area of the garment to which they

are attached and interfaced to add support. Once sewn into position, they are folded to the inside to create a neat outside edge.

FINISHING

Ways of neatening the raw edges on the inside of seams.

FRENCH SEAM

A type of seam finish where no raw edges are visible. It is especially suitable for fine fabrics and is created by first sewing the seam with the fabrics wrong sides together, then trimming down the seam allowances and finally encasing the seam allowances with a second seam line, stitched with the fabrics right sides together.

FLAT FELL SEAM

A type of seam where no raw edges are visible. It's found mainly on outerwear and denim and is created by first seaming with the seam allowances on the right side of the seam, trimming one side of the seam allowance and folding the other one over, encasing all raw edges. The encased seam and final topstitching are visible from the right side.

FOE

FOE stands for fold-over elastic and is a type of underwear elastic. It has a visible line across the centre and can be used everywhere in underwear making where you need a finished edge. If you are using FOE, the edge does not need seam allowance as FOE finishes both sides of the raw edge.

GATHERING

Gathering can be done by hand or by machine. On a machine, stitch just inside the seamline, leaving long thread tails at each end, then pull up the bobbin thread from each end to gather the fabric. By hand, use double thread and take long running stitches, pulling up the fabric as required.

GRADING

Cutting the seam allowances to different depths to reduce bulk.

GRAIN

The threads in the fabric, running either horizontally or vertically. The straight of grain, or lengthwise grain, runs parallel to the selvedge and does not have any stretch. The cross grain, or crosswise grain, runs between the selvedges and stretches slightly. *See also [Bias](#).*

GRAINLINE

Most pattern pieces have grainlines marked on them, which need to be aligned parallel to the selvedges on the 'straight of grain' to prevent the garment pieces from twisting and hanging lopsided.

INTERFACING

A type of fabric that is added to the reverse of some areas in a garment in order to add body and support. Areas that need to be interfaced include buttonholes, waistbands, front facings, collars and cuffs. Interfacings may be either fusible (iron-on) or sew-in and come in different weights.

INTERLINING

Interlining is an inner layer of a garment, usually outerwear, that provides extra warmth. It sits between the top fabric and the lining. You can use the lining pattern to cut out the interlining; any facing pieces are not interlined. Using a high-quality interlining can make your coat or jacket really suitable for cold temperatures.

NAP

Corduroy, suede, and velvet are examples of nap fabrics: a fabric with raised fibres. If you are cutting out a fabric with nap, you need to make sure the nap is facing the same direction in all pieces. This is why a 'with nap' lay plan requires a bit more fabric.

NOTCH

A triangular symbol on a pattern that is used to match one pattern piece with another – for example, front to back, sleeves to armholes.

PLACKET

This term can refer to an opening in a garment that allows you to put it on and off – for example, a placket in a cuff opening or a skirt. It also refers to the narrow strip of fabric found in the opening of a garment, such as a zip placket or a placket in a buttoned centre front.

RIGHT SIDE/WRONG SIDE

Fabrics have a 'right' side, which is visible as the outside of the garment, and a 'wrong' side, which is the reverse. If the fabric is a solid colour and it is difficult to tell the right side from the wrong, mark each piece that you cut with a chalk cross on the wrong side.

ROULEAU STRIPS

These are very narrow strips of fabric that are sewn as a skinny, long rectangle and then turned right side out using a rouleau turner. Rouleau strips can be used as shoulder straps, as surface decoration, and as button loops.

STAYSTITCHING

Straight machine stitching worked just inside the seam allowance on curved or bias-cut edges to prevent them from stretching while the garment is being constructed.

SWING CATCH

Also called swing tack, thread bar or thread chain, this is a series of knots that turn into a little chain of thread, used as a button loop, a belt loop, or to secure loose linings.

TACKING

Long, temporary stitches used to hold pieces of fabric together. You can tack by hand or machine – on a machine, set the stitch length to the longest possible.

TOILE

A mock-up of a garment in a plain fabric such as calico that you can make any fit adjustments to before you cut into your expensive garment fabric.

TOPSTITCHING

A line of stitches worked on the outside of a garment. This may be either for functional reasons, such as holding a facing in place, or for a decorative finish.

UNDERSTITCHING

This is done to anchor the seam allowance to a facing, which helps prevent the facing from rolling out after it has been turned to the inside of the garment.

WELT POCKET

A pocket type mainly used in jackets and tailoring. It's characterised by a narrow strip of material visible along the edge of the pocket mouth, either on one side (single welt pocket) or both sides (double welt pocket).

INDEX

- armhole facings, all-in-one neck and [1](#)
- backing [1](#), [2](#)
- band collars [1](#)
- bias: cutting out fabric on the bias [1](#)
 - hemming fabric on the bias [1](#)
 - sewing fabric on the bias [1](#)
- bobble-trimmed hems [1](#)
- body suits, elastic for [1](#)
- boning [1](#), [2](#)
 - adding to a garment [1](#)
 - types of boning [1](#)
- bows, fabric [1](#)
- box pleats [1](#)
- bras: cups [1](#), [2](#)
 - elastic for [1](#)
 - foam cups [1](#)
 - underwire, monowire, V-wire [1](#)
- button stands: adding to an existing garment [1](#)
 - adding to a pattern [1](#)
 - creative options for [1](#)
- buttonholes [1](#)
 - bound buttonholes [1](#)
 - size [1](#)
- buttons: button placement [1](#)
 - buttons with shanks [1](#)
 - continuous rouleau button loops [1](#)
 - flat, shankless buttons [1](#)
 - jeans buttons [1](#)
 - sewing on securely [1](#)
- channelling [1](#)
- checks, matching [1](#), [2](#)
- closures [1](#)

- coats: attaching linings [1](#)
 - drafting facings [1](#)
 - drafting linings [1](#)
- collars: band collars [1](#)
 - drafting flat collars [1](#)
 - pussybow neckties [1](#)
 - visual guide to [1](#)
- cuffs [1](#)
 - buttonholes [1](#)
 - close-fitting cuffs [1](#)
 - continuous bound sleeve placket [1](#)
 - openings for close-fitting cuffs [1](#)
 - shirt sleeve placket openings [1](#)
- cutting mat [1](#)
- cutting out: fabric on the bias [1](#)
 - lace [1](#)
 - latex [1](#)
 - leather [1](#)
 - neoprene & scuba [1](#)
 - sequinned fabrics [1](#)
 - silk, satin & delicate fabrics [1](#)
 - stretch fabrics [1](#)
 - wools [1](#)
- decorations [1](#)
- delicate fabrics [1](#)
- dresses, lace inserts [1](#)
- dry-clean-only fabrics [1](#)
- dyeing fabrics [1](#)
- elastic: fold-over elastic (FOE) [1](#)
 - for swimwear [1](#), [2](#)
 - for underwear [1](#), [2](#)
- embellishments [1](#)
- fabric: backing [1](#)
 - correcting different shrinkage percentages [1](#)
 - dry-clean only [1](#)
 - dying [1](#)
 - interfacings [1](#)
 - interlining [1](#)
 - lace [1](#)
 - latex [1](#)

- linings [1](#)
- neoprene & scuba [1](#)
- niche fabrics [1](#)
- preparing your fabric [1](#)
- pre-washing [1](#)
- sequinned [1](#)
- silk, satin & delicate fabrics [1](#)
- stretch fabrics [1](#)
- swimwear materials [1](#)
- underlying fabrics [1](#)
- for underwear [1](#)
- wools [1](#)
- facings [1](#)
- all-in-one neck and armhole facings [1](#)
- drafting jacket and coat facings [1](#)
- hem facings [1](#)
- fastenings [1](#)
- buttons and buttonholes [1](#)
- no-sew fastenings [1](#)
- press studs (snaps) [1](#)
- snap fasteners [1](#)
- swing catches [1](#)
- for underwear [1](#)
- fold-over elastic (FOE) [1](#)
- French seam side pockets [1](#)
- hems: adding ruffles to [1](#)
- bobble-trimmed [1](#)
- hem facings [1](#)
- hemming bias-cut garments [1](#)
- lace inserts [1](#)
- rolled hems [1](#)
- scalloped hems [1](#)
- special hemming techniques [1](#)
- interfacings [1](#)
- interlining [1](#)
- inverted pleats [1](#)
- jackets: attaching linings [1](#)
- drafting facings [1](#)
- drafting linings [1](#)
- jeans, button fastenings [1](#)

knickers, elastic for [1](#)

knife pleats [1](#)

lace [1](#)

backing & lining [1](#)

cutting [1](#)

lace inserts [1](#)

lace-trimmed edges [1](#)

pressing [1](#)

sewing [1](#)

latex [1](#)

leather [1](#)

linings [1](#), [2](#)

adding to a skirt [1](#)

attaching jacket or coat linings [1](#)

attaching sleeve linings [1](#)

drafting jacket and coat linings [1](#)

lace [1](#)

sequinned fabrics [1](#)

for swimwear [1](#)

wools [1](#)

markings: marking wools [1](#)

pleats [1](#)

transferring pattern markings [1](#)

necklines: all-in-one neck and armhole facings [1](#)

finishing foam cups [1](#)

neckties, pussybow [1](#)

needles [1](#), [2](#)

neoprene [1](#)

niche fabrics [1](#)

overlockers, troubleshooting [1](#)

pattern drafting tools [1](#)

pattern weights [1](#)

patterns: adding button stands to [1](#)

adding pleats and tucks to [1](#)

adding a ruffle to [1](#)

adding a yoke to [1](#)

alterations and adaptations [1](#)

choosing for leather [1](#)

choosing pattern placement [1](#)

- choosing for sequinned fabrics [1](#)
- choosing for stretch fabrics [1](#)
- matching checks and stripes [1](#)
- matching a pattern across seams and across two halves of a garment [1](#)
- pattern matching [1](#)
- pattern pieces on the fold [1](#)
- slash and spread [1](#)
- transferring pattern markings [1](#)
- pin tucks [1](#)
- plackets, buttonholes [1](#)
- pleats: adding [1](#)
 - box pleats [1](#), [2](#)
 - constructing [1](#)
 - inverted pleats [1](#)
 - knife pleats [1](#), [2](#)
- pockets [1](#)
 - French seam side pockets [1](#)
 - in-seam pockets [1](#)
 - welt pockets [1](#)
- press studs (snaps) [1](#)
- pressing: lace [1](#)
 - sequinned fabrics [1](#)
 - silk, satin & delicate fabrics [1](#)
 - wools [1](#)
- pussybow neckties [1](#)
- rings and slider [1](#)
- rotary cutter [1](#)
- rouleau button loops [1](#)
- ruffles, adding [1](#)
- satin [1](#)
- scalloped hems [1](#)
- scuba [1](#)
- seams: French seam side pockets [1](#)
 - in-seam pockets [1](#)
 - inserting a ruffle into a seam [1](#)
 - matching patterns across seams [1](#)
 - neatening [1](#)
 - stabilizing [1](#)
- sequinned fabrics [1](#)
- sewing: fabric on the bias [1](#)
 - lace [1](#)

- latex [1](#)
- leather [1](#)
- neoprene & scuba [1](#)
- sequinned fabrics [1](#)
- silk, satin & delicate fabrics [1](#)
- stretch fabrics [1](#)
- swimwear [1](#)
- wools [1](#)
- sewing machines: machine feet [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)
 - set-up for swimwear [1](#)
 - set-up for underwear [1](#)
 - stretch fabrics [1](#)
- shirts: buttonholes [1](#)
 - continuous bound sleeve placket [1](#)
 - shirt sleeve placket openings [1](#)
- silk [1](#)
- skirts, adding linings to [1](#)
- slash and spread [1](#)
- sleeves: attaching sleeve linings [1](#)
 - jacket and coat sleeve linings [1](#)
 - shirt sleeve placket openings [1](#), [2](#)
- snap fasteners [1](#), [2](#)
- stitches, overlocker troubleshooting [1](#)
- straps, elasticated swimwear [1](#)
- stretch fabrics [1](#)
 - avoiding stretching while sewing [1](#)
 - choosing the right pattern [1](#)
 - cutting out [1](#)
 - laying out your pattern [1](#)
 - neatening seams [1](#)
- stripes, matching [1](#)
- swimwear [1](#)
 - elasticated swimwear straps [1](#)
 - foam cups [1](#)
 - leg elastic [1](#)
 - materials [1](#)
 - tools [1](#)
- swing catches [1](#)
- thongs, elastic for [1](#)
- threads: overlocker troubleshooting [1](#)
 - for swimwear [1](#)
- tools [1](#), [2](#), [3](#)

trims, pre-washing [1](#)

tucks [1](#)

underwear [1](#)

foam cups [1](#)

fold-over elastic (FOE) [1](#)

materials [1](#)

notions [1](#)

tools and machine set-up [1](#)

washing fabric [1](#)

welt pockets [1](#)

wools [1](#)

caring for wool garments [1](#)

cutting out and marking [1](#)

lining [1](#)

preparing [1](#)

pressing [1](#)

sewing [1](#)

suitability for garments [1](#)

yokes, adding [1](#)

zips, surface-mounted [1](#)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book came out of the blue and it was entirely what I had wished for in 2022. As if summoned, there it appeared. It was entirely written during my maternity leave, which seems to be a bit of a tradition I have going on that I think I will end now. This book is a combination of original writing as well as material from all the previous *The Great British Sewing Bee* books. Our thanks and credit go to their authors: Alexandra Bruce, Tessa Eveleigh, Wendy Gardiner, Claire-Louise Hardie and Juliet Uzor. Thank you also to Love Productions, who create and produce the much-loved TV show *The Great British Sewing Bee*, by now a staple on our screens.

I would like to thank Sarah Hoggett for being such an encouraging and communicative editor and Senior Commissioning Editor Harriet Butt for trusting me with another book. You have both put so much trust and confidence in me and it's allowed me to take a step into a new and exciting career direction. Thank you also to Katy Everett at Quadrille and the very talented Suzie London and Kate Simunek for all the new illustrations for this book, as well as Clare Nicholson who took all the beautiful photographs for this book. Thank you to Harriet at Sew Me Sunshine and Hannah and Rosie at The New Craft House for helping us with fabrics and haberdashery for the photographs, and to Laura and Caroline at Husqvarna Viking UK for lending us the sewing machine presser feet for the shoot.

All my love to my closest friends and family who keep me grounded enough to stay sane and let me fly free as much as I want to. To the entire boy crew at home – making this while making you is making me. You're like a Greatest Hits album that keeps on giving.

This book is a compilation of the books published to accompany the television series entitled *The Great British Sewing Bee*. The Great British Sewing Bee is a registered trademark of Love Productions Ltd.



Executive Producer Susanne Rock
Series Producer Catherine Lewendon
Sewing Producer Sue Suma
Director of Legal & Commercial Affairs Rupert Frisby

Published in 2023 by Quadrille an imprint of Hardie Grant Publishing

Quadrille
52–54 Southwark Street
London SE1 1UN
quadrille.com

Text © 2023 Love Productions
Photography © 2023 Clare Nicolson
Cover illustrations © 2023 Debbie Powell
Design, illustrations and layout © 2023 Quadrille Publishing Ltd

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, electrostatic, magnetic tape, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission in writing of the publisher.

The rights of Love Productions to be identified as the author of this work have been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988.

Publishing Director Sarah Lavelle
Senior Commissioning Editor Harriet Butt
Project Editor Sarah Hoggett
Series Designer Emily Lapworth
Art Director & Designer Katy Everett
Photographer & Stylist Clare Nicolson
Cover Illustrator Debbie Powell
Technical Illustrators Kate Simunek and Suzie London
Head of Production Stephen Lang

Production Controller Gary Hayes

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

eISBN 978 1 78713 950 3

Unless otherwise stated, the copyright and other intellectual property rights in all designs in this book are owned by Love Productions. For the purpose of this legal notice, any use of the designs other than for your own personal use, including resale, is prohibited.

If you have any comments or queries regarding the instructions in this book, please contact us at enquiries@quadrille.co.uk.