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3 *Capsule Wardrobes*
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*Fashion a stylish
coat from on-trend
fabrics, p. 34.*

NOVEMBER 2018 NUMBER 199

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ON THE COVER:
Select an exciting trend to sew, like a vibrant coat with a faux fur collar. For more colors, fabrics, and patterns to inspire your fall sewing, turn to p. 34.



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Do you spend more time experimenting or perfecting your skills?



LAUREL HOFFMANN
("Industry Seam Allowances," p. 40) says, "When writing technical instructions, testing is a constant, which is the reason I spend the same amount of time experimenting as I do perfecting. For me, they are one and the same. I sew as I write, editing the writing, and correcting the diagrams until the material can be easily understood."

Experienced in custom and industrial garment creation, grading, and patternmaking, Laurel is completing her instructional sewing program books, tested during the 20 years she taught in college. She lives in Oreland, Pennsylvania. CFashionEdu.com



KATIE STRANO (part of "Three Capsule Wardrobes," p. 70) says, "I would like to say that I spend more time perfecting my skills but, in truth, I spend more time experimenting. However, most of the experimentation is done with the hopes of eventually perfecting a skill. I like experimenting with cause and effect to fully understand the process."

Katie Strano is an editorial assistant at *Threads*, a weaving instructor, and a freelance production weaver. She lives in Southbury, Connecticut. Find her on Instagram, @katie.too, and on her website, HeddleOverHeels.com.

ERIN WEISBART

("Essential Techniques:

Catchstitch review," p. 74)

says, "I think it's important to do both. When developing a pattern or following a personal sewing whim, I often experiment for the joy of trying new things and to figure out the best approach for the circumstances. Once I've decided on an approach, I'll do it over and over again so I know it thoroughly enough to teach others."

Erin publishes sewing patterns as Tuesday Stitches, and she promotes inclusivity, representation, self-expression, and self-love through sewing. She lives on an island near Seattle. TuesdayStitches.com



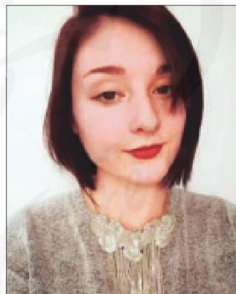
HAYLEY JOYAL

("Embellishments: Built

from beads," p. 20) says, "I

spend more of my time experimenting with my skills. Perfection comes with time. By trying new techniques, I am able to perfect my skills and expand my knowledge of the art simultaneously. My interests lie in unusual jewelry and embroidery patterns, so the more I can try, the better."

Hayley enjoys beaded and traditional embroidery. She is from Norwich, Connecticut. Find her on Instagram, @hayley.made.



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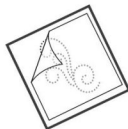


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EDITOR'S NOTE

Investment sewing

When you spend time making a garment, it should work for you on many levels. There's fit, color, silhouette, fabric type and care requirements, as well as how it integrates with your existing wardrobe and day-to-day activities. Creation takes resources, and you deserve worthwhile returns. Of course, that means different things to each of us. We hear from readers about specific garment types, textiles, and methods you want to learn about. Our goal for each magazine video, and podcast is to keep

building a library of sewing education and inspiration. For this issue, we focused on garment versatility and wearability.

Clothes that work in a number of situations offer an excellent return on sewing effort. In "Single-Layer & Reversible," p. 58, Becky Fulgoni shares her ingenious techniques for edges, seams, closures—even pockets—that look wonderful from either side. Becky is a *Threads* digital ambassador, who also contributes to our online content, so be sure to check our website for more from her.

Proper fit is an ongoing concern for many sewers, and a beautifully sewn garment that does not fit will not be worn. New online services, however, offer a remedy with made-to-measure patterns. In "Custom Patterns Tryout," p. 52, Assistant Editor Erica Redfern compares three custom shirt patterns made to her measurements. You'll want to check out the results, as à la carte patterns seem to offer savings in time and money, and more pattern providers appear online.

Erica also researched and wrote our annual autumn sewing preview, "Fall Looks," p. 34. It's designed to help you find patterns and fabrics to sew contemporary clothes you'll love. What I have always enjoyed about *Threads*' take on a seasonal preview is that it considers established and new patterns to represent trends. Inspiration comes from many sources, but what is important is that it works for you.

Sarah McFarland
Editor

P.S. Thank you to all who registered for the Threads Experience, our September 8 event in New York City. As I write this, the day is still weeks away. However, we are already planning a 2019 event—watch these pages and ThreadsMagazine.com for announcements.

We'd love to hear from you!

Send your letters to:

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In our next issue:

Get ready for the holidays with inspiring sewing gift ideas and techniques for creating cozy garments. Learn how to select, care for, and sew quality sweater knits. An award-winning seamstress shares her secrets for working with wool. Our Pattern Hack department puts a flattering designer twist on a winter coat, plus much more.

Write an article for *Threads*

Threads is a reader-written magazine, and we welcome your submissions. To learn how to propose an article, go to ThreadsMagazine.com/authorguidelines.

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HOW I SEWED THAT

In *Threads* #163, Oct./Nov. 2012, Judith Neukam wrote “How *Did* They Sew That? A notch up on tucks,” explaining a masterful shaped tuck technique.

I was so inspired by the beautifully detailed garment, a 1940s dress, I knew that I had to try my hand at the technique. It took a while, but I was joyfully successful. I have made a blouse that I am very proud of. Thank you for the inspiration, the details, and the directions.

—Karen Castlebury, via email

Judy does an amazing job analyzing the “Up Close” vintage garments shown on the back cover. We are lucky to have her as a contributing editor.—SMc

SEWING SHOW, PART 2

Reading the letters in *Threads* #198, Aug./Sept. 2018, I spotted Blair Turrentine’s comments about the BBC Two reality series, *The Great British Sewing Bee*.

Happily, the show has been commissioned for another series here in the United Kingdom and should be on air next year. As a novice sewer from London who finally decided to take the plunge as a result of that show, I hope the news of its return will make you as wildly ecstatic as I am. The only downside is that the brilliant host, Claudia Winkleman, will not be back. Comedian Joe Lycett will be taking her place.

Thank you for an informative magazine and excellent podcast.

—Sabrina Manneh-Velazquez, via email
Sabrina, thank you for the happy news. Our team enjoys the show, too.—SMc

TIMELY INFORMATION

I loved “Sleeve Medley,” by Andrea Schewe, from *Threads* #196, April/May 2018. I recently bought the Simplicity dress pattern used in the article and found the article useful because it breaks down how

to sew the sleeves correctly. Thanks again for all the amazing topics and tips for how to improve my sewing.

—Magana, via email

COVER QUERY

Is the vest on the cover of *Threads* #198 really Vogue 1556, as noted on p. 46? The neckline is similar but everything else looks different. I love the concept and everything about Susan Khalje’s design choices. The finished vest is exquisite.

—Susan Boundy-Sanders, via email

The cover garment is indeed Vogue 1556. Susan shortened the skirt to a peplum. I am sure she will appreciate your kind comment.—SMc

SEEKING INSTRUCTION

I would like to use hair canvas to stabilize a wool jacket. An article on using hair canvas would be very helpful to me. Thank you.

—Valerie Wood, via email



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The project hanger

BEST TIP

I learned at an early age the importance of keeping pattern pieces available until a project is completed. However, pattern pieces take up a lot of space, and it is not easy to stay organized. I solved this problem with what I call my “project hanger.” It has two deep pockets and a cylindrical pincushion along the bottom edge. You can make it using any hanger size.

When I am ready to begin a new project, I put the pattern envelope in one of the hanger pockets. I collect all the necessary notions and interfacing in the other pocket. Once the fabric is cut, I pin the pattern pieces to the pincushion. At the end of the sewing session, it's easy to store the hanger in a nearby closet until I need it again. My sewing time is used much more efficiently because I don't have to search for anything.

—Kathryn Brown, Nanaimo,
British Columbia, Canada



SMARTPHONE AIDS THREADING

When seated at my sewing machine, I often find myself threading a hand needle while holding the needle so it is backlit by my machine's computer screen display. If I am doing handwork away from my machine, I lay my smartphone on the table with a screen that is mostly white, then thread my needle with the phone's soft white light highlighting the elusive eye of the needle. I love the blend of new technology and old sewing methods.

—Patty Tidwell, Lakeland, Florida

CUT HEMS, ROTARY-STYLE

My rotary cutter is my best friend when I am hemming gowns with multiple fabric layers. After I pin the hemline while the garment is on the client, I lay one layer at

a time across the cutting mat on my work surface. I make a small dot using an appropriate marker for the fabric every few inches along the hemline, removing pins as I go. If I am working on a fabric that needs a narrow hem, I add ¼ inch hem allowance. On layers of fabrics that require no machine hemming, I simply mark the finished hemline. I then use a curved ruler and rotary cutter to trim the hem. This creates a smooth, precise edge.

—Darlene Shelton, Clifton Forge, Virginia

DOUBLE-TIME MARKING

When transferring dots, circles, or triangles from a pattern to fabric, the instructions recommend puncturing the pattern and fabric with a pin, then marking both sides, or using tailor's tacks. I find it easier

to use a piece of transfer paper (dress-maker's carbon) cut into a rectangular shape, long or wide enough to fold in half, transfer side out.

Sandwich the paper between the fabric layers, with wrong sides together. The paper's transfer surface is now in contact with both fabric areas that need to be marked. Place the pattern on top of the fabric and transfer paper, making sure it is correctly aligned. Select an item to use as a stylus: Something with a rounded tip is best. Apply gentle pressure and fill in the dot, circle, triangle, or other mark using the stylus tip. This method creates clear, accurate markings from the doubled transfer paper on both fabric layers.

—Monica Scoggins Douglas,
Yukon, Oklahoma

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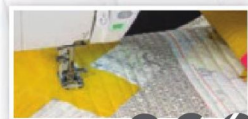
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Handy thread cutting

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The ring comes in black, ivory, pink, and glow-in-the-dark white. You have the option to bedazzle it with Swarovski crystals for an additional cost. (ThreadCutterz.com; \$12.99–\$24.95)



The little roller that could

When you need to press open a seam or crease an edge without heat, turn to **Press Perfect Roll & Press** by Joan Hawley. It is made of sturdy, lightweight plastic that is contoured to fit comfortably in the hand. The roller is 4¾ inches long and 1 inch wide. Simply roll over a seam or fold while pressing down firmly. The roller is tapered at the edges to focus pressure on the center without distorting the fabric. It can also be used to seal glued seams in leather or felt. Use this tool before ironing to open seam allowances and keep your fingers out of the steam. (Clover-USA.com; \$15.50)



Photos: Mike Yamin.



bookshelf

Inspiring designs from the father of haute couture

Get inspired by ***The House of Worth 1858–1954: The Birth of Haute Couture*** (Thames and Hudson, 2017). The book was compiled by four authors, including Charles Frederick Worth's great-great-granddaughter, Chantal Trubert-Tollu. This 321-page tome is a mix of history and breathtaking photos of garments from the entirety of the house's lifetime. It explores the history of the house from its formation in 1858 to 1954, when it was purchased by Paquin, Ltd., and it focuses on the life and impact of founder Charles Frederick Worth. Heralded as the “father of haute couture,” Worth secured his place in the fashion pantheon through his attention to detail and ability to make women feel incredible in his designs. The images accompanying the extensive biographical information are sure to inspire any sewer or student of fashion. There are 486 illustrations and photos, 324 of them in color, including Worth's fashion sketches, and photographs of his garments with close-ups of details to be emulated. His designs were exquisitely embellished, the effort and detail that went into every garment clearly visible in the photos. *The House of Worth* will interest fashionistas and historians alike.

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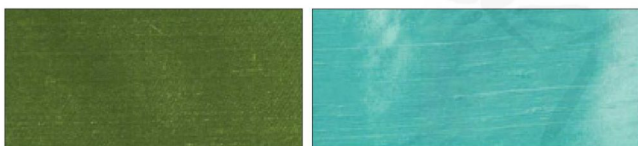
Dupioni and shantung

Look closely: These silk fabrics are not the same

Dupioni and shantung are often treated as interchangeable descriptions, but these fabrics are different. Dupioni doesn't work in place of shantung in some applications, and vice versa. Both fabrics are typically made of silk and have visible cross-grain slubs. However, there are key differences to understand so you can make an informed choice between them.

DEFINING THE TERMS

In the past, dupioni could only be produced when two silkworms spun their cocoons too close together in the wild. The cocoon fibers tangled, which created rough, uneven filaments. These tangles give the fabric its characteristic slubs. The word "dupioni" could be related to the Italian and French words for "double."



Shantung (left) is smoother and has a more regular weave, while dupioni (right) has larger slubs.

Shantung originates from the Shandong province in China. Though it may look similar to dupioni at first glance, it has a more refined texture, smaller slubs, and a lighter hand. Shantung also uses silk from double cocoons, but the manufacturing process decreases the size and appearance of the slubs.

Both fabrics come in different weights and usually have a crisp hand. Washed dupioni or shantung has a softer hand, matte face, and drapes better.

HOW THEY DIFFER

When the weft and warp threads are different colors, dupioni is iridescent, giving the illusion the fabric

Dupioni's stiff drape makes it ideal for structured silhouettes.

Pattern: Vogue 1392. Fabric: silk dupioni, Banksville Designer Fabrics, Norwalk, Connecticut.





Pink weft threads give this dupioni a largely pink hue from a distance, while its green warp threads impart a distinctive iridescence.

changes color when it moves. Shantung does not have the same characteristic because it typically is woven using the same yarns in warp and weft. However, it is possible to find shantung fabric that has iridescence.

The two fabrics also differ in manufacturing process: Dupioni is always woven by hand, while shantung is machine-woven. Hand weaving leaves the slubs larger and less regular than machine weaving.

The similarities between dupioni and shantung cause many fabric stores to label these textiles as “shantung/dupioni” or even use the incorrect term for the fabric. The fabrics pass through so many hands before reaching consumers that the label often has been changed multiple times and may not be technically correct. You can use the qualities noted above to tell the difference.

CARE AND FINISHING

All silk fabrics are altered when cleaned using any method. Dry cleaning silk produces a different effect from machine washing or hand washing. Dry cleaning is recommended for applications where the fabric needs to remain crisp. Machine washing creates a softer hand and dulls the luster that is the hallmark of many silk fabrics. Hand washing is a middle ground between dry cleaning and machine washing. If you are unsure how treating the fabric will affect the outcome, cut several swatches and experiment with different methods. Always pretreat the fabric the same way you wish to clean the finished garment.

Both dupioni and shantung tend to fray after cutting. Consider finishing the fabric edges with serging, a machine zigzag, or a Hong Kong finish. Pinking also helps neaten edges. It is recommended you finish the edges even if you plan to line the garment.

Double-cocoon silk is weaker than regular silk because of the yarn's irregularity. Therefore, these fabrics are susceptible to seam slippage. A full lining will support the fabric, as will an underlining layer. Avoid fitted applications that place strain at the seams.



Washed shantung (top three swatches), has a softer hand, matte face, and smaller slubs than dupioni (bottom four swatches).

Built from beads

Hand-sew sparkling bijoux for appliqué or accessories



Use basic stitching skills to create dimensional, textured pieces for jewelry or garment adornment.

Custom-made adornments for garments, bags, hair ornaments, or jewelry are delightfully easy to create. Basic hand-beading skills and a simple backing method produce beautiful pieces you can attach to ready-to-wear clothing or your own designs. If you prefer to wear them as jewelry, add earring hooks or backs, or chains, ties, or strings of beads to make necklaces.

My design approach is no-fuss, and the jewel motifs evolve as I work. Each piece begins with a focal bead or stone, and then I add smaller beads and sequins around the center bead. Choose a

pleasing assortment of bead colors, then let the design develop as you sew. The technique is creative and relaxing, and you can redesign as you go, as long as you knot the beading thread securely between rows or sections.

Whether you're making an appliqué for a beloved garment or just exercising your spirit of invention, you'll enjoy the process and the lovely results.

Hayley Joyal is an artist and former Threads art intern.

Easy-to-find supplies

Most of the items used for these beaded jewels are easily available at craft or sewing stores, or online.

BEADS

For a focal bead, opt for a flat style; spherical beads larger than about 6 mm in diameter are difficult to work with.

For the ground beads, choose size 11/0 seed beads, which are about 1.8 mm to 2.0 mm in diameter. You'll use these beads the most, so be sure to have a good supply. An 8-gram package is usually plenty; choose as many colors as you would like to use. Iridescent beads and subtle variations of a single hue add rich dimension to the finished piece.

BACKING MATERIAL

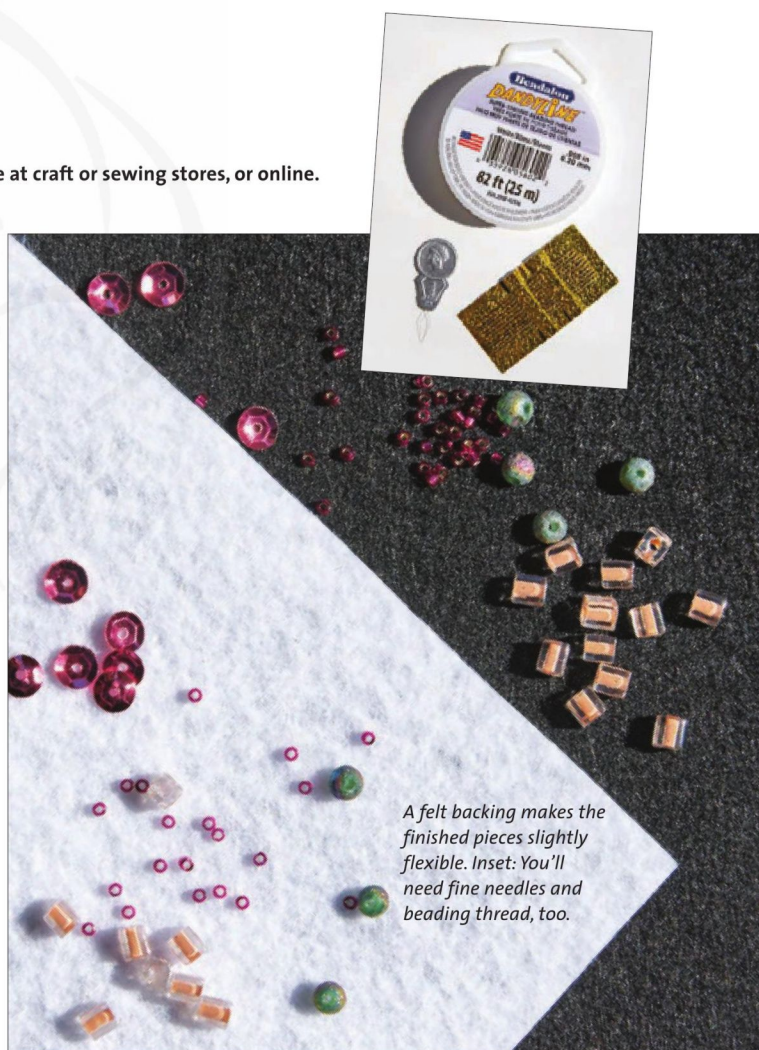
Thin, stiff craft felt is easiest to work with, and it makes a somewhat flexible finished piece. I like to use black or white, depending on whether the beads are primarily dark or light colors. These neutral base colors tend to change the color of clear seed beads the least, but feel free to use whatever color you want. You will need a piece to stitch the beads to, and another of the same size to finish the back.

NEEDLES

I often use a small hand-sewing needle, with an eye just big enough to allow the thread through, for beading on felt. Fine beading needles are sometimes too flexible to penetrate the felt easily, so test first. The needle should be small enough to pass through the beads without having to be pulled.

THREAD

I prefer silk beading thread or thin, braided synthetic beading thread, as they're flexible and strong (Beadalon.com; ArtBeads.com). It's best to match the thread color to the felt backing color. Embroidery floss can be used for making decorative embroidery stitches among the beads, but it's not strong enough to hold beads in place.



A felt backing makes the finished pieces slightly flexible. Inset: You'll need fine needles and beading thread, too.

Stitch the beaded design

Most motifs begin similarly, but once you master the basics, you can try other approaches. Work on a piece of felt larger than the desired finished piece. You will trim the edges when the beading is complete.

BEADING BASICS

1 Prepare to bead. Thread a needle and bring it up from the felt's wrong side, wherever you want the center of the piece. Leave a tail of several inches. Stitch back down; this anchors the thread for the beading.

3 Add seed beads. Sew concentric rows of seed beads around the focal bead using the beading backstitch: Bring the needle to the right side close to the focal bead and string on three seed beads. Lay them in a row along the focal bead's edge, and push the needle to the wrong side. Pull the thread taut to hold the beads in place. Then bring the needle back up through the last bead in the set of three. String three more beads and repeat, until the focal bead is encircled.



2 Attach the focal bead. Bring the needle back up to the right side in the same place, and string the bead onto the thread. Place the bead in the desired location, and stitch down through the felt to anchor it. Repeat this step for added security.

4 Complete the beading. Sew additional rows of beads around the focal bead until you have achieved the desired size and design. Feel free to add larger crystals, sequins, or embroidery stitches.



Finish the piece

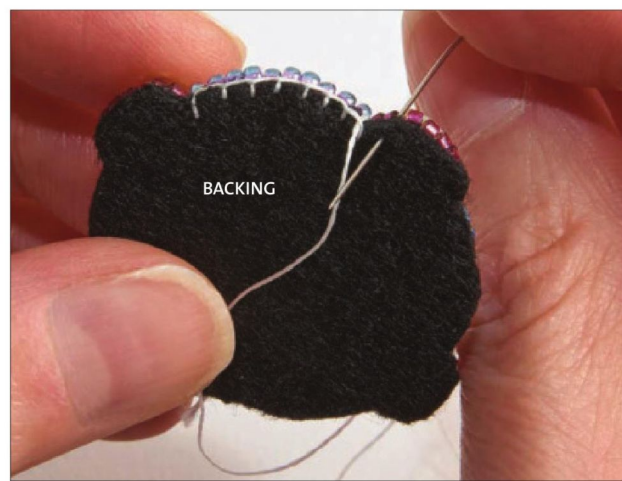
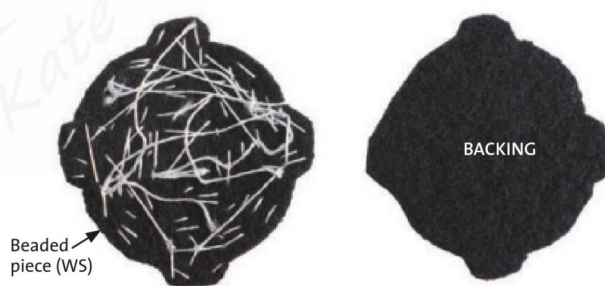
Complete the beaded item by hand-sewing a felt backing. This covers the beading stitches, finishes the edges, and provides extra body if you choose to mount the piece on a pin back.

1 Trim the piece. Cut around the work, a few millimeters outside the outermost row of beads. Be careful not to cut the beading thread.

2 Cut the backing. Lay the trimmed item on a second felt piece, and trace around it. Cut it along the line.

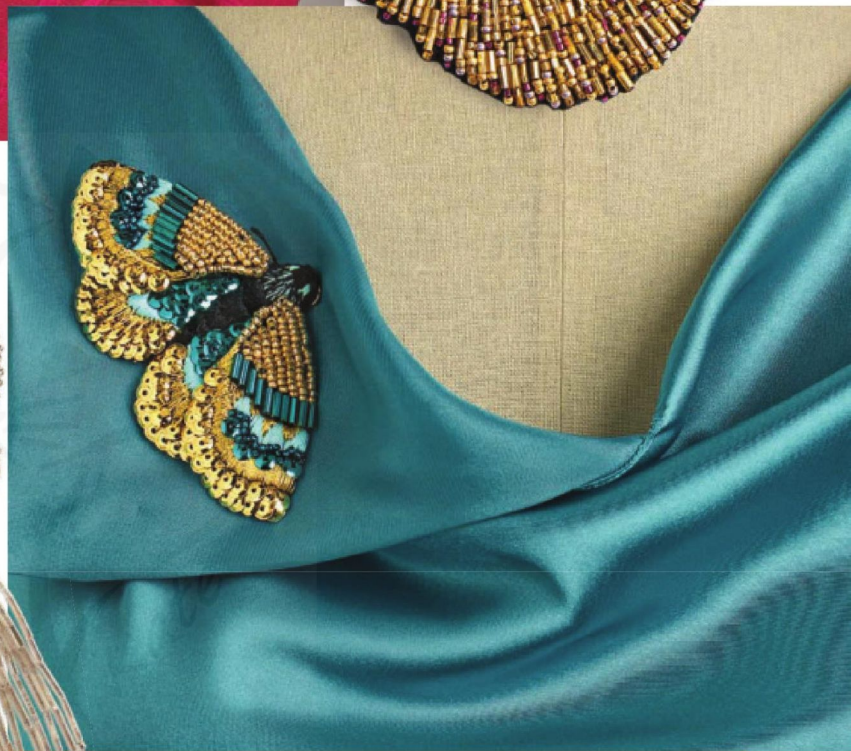
3 Attach the backing. Pin the backing to the beaded piece's wrong side. Join the edges with a blanket stitch, worked with sewing thread in a color that matches the felt (contrast thread used for visibility). Finish the stitching by taking three stitches in place and burying the thread tail between the felt layers.

4 Appliqué or add findings. Hand-sew the piece to a garment, or attach a pin back or chain to create jewelry.





Stitch the beaded motifs permanently to a garment, or add a pin back. You can also make statement necklaces that are comfortable to wear.



TIPS FOR COMPLEX DESIGNS

Rethread as needed. When you're reaching the end of one thread strand, loop the thread several times through the felt, behind the beads, to form a "knot." Start a new thread as you did when beginning the piece. Don't place a starting or finishing knot near the edge, as it might be cut off when you trim the edges.

Try a couching stitch. To sew on longer lines of beads, lay the string of beads in place on the felt and sew over it to secure.

Add other decorative elements. Consider applying crystals, sequins, or embroidery to further embellish the piece.

Vary the shape. Add more focal beads or change the contours of the bead rows to create any motif shape you like. A fringe of strung beads increases the drama.

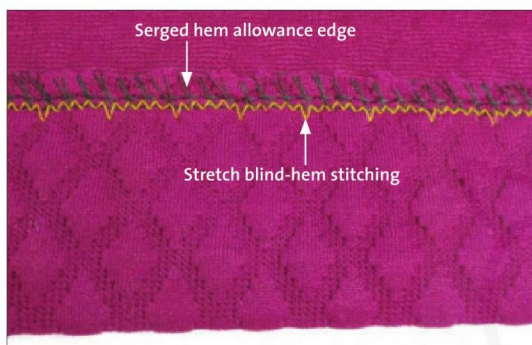
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Machine-Sew a Stretch Blind-Hem

Watch this tutorial at ThreadsMagazine.com to learn to machine-sew smooth, unseen hems in knit garments with a stretch version of a blind-hem stitch. This video accompanies “Three Capsule Wardrobes,” p. 66.



The stretch version of a blind-hem stitch incorporates zigzag stitches for greater give.

Experts Chat on the *Sewing With Threads* Podcast

The *Sewing With Threads* monthly podcast features one-on-one interviews with guest experts, including Susan Khalje, Kenneth D. King, Mimi Goodwin, Peter Lappin, Pamela Leggett, and Sarah Veblen. You can hear the *Threads* podcast on iTunes, Stitcher, and Google Play, or listen or download directly at ThreadsMagazine.com/podcast.



Threads Contributing Editor Kenneth D. King joins Threads editors during the recent podcast recording of *Sewing With Threads*, Episode 6.

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The Virtues of Vintage Sewing Machines

In this online article, *Threads* Digital Ambassador Peter Lappin observes that the one shared benefit of vintage sewing machines is they were built to last for generations. Peter recounts his first vintage purchase—an early 1980s all-metal Kenmore from eBay—and discusses his four favorite machines collected through the years.



One of Peter Lappin's favorite vintage sewing machines is the gear-driven Singer 15-91 straight-stitch machine.

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Furled cuff

A shaped edge adds an organic twist

This mid-century wool jersey dress uses engineered seaming details to give interest to a simple silhouette. The designer, Marion McCoy (1912–1960), manipulated the fabric with merging darts and innovative seaming to sculpt a form-fitting, meticulously crafted day dress.

For this design, she also created a shaped hem on the dolman sleeves. The visual effect is of a sleeve that wraps around the forearm, but the method is more straightforward: A simple change along the hem edge of a two-piece dolman sleeve pattern yields a shape that combines geometry with an organic line. You can modify any sleeve pattern that has an under- and overarm seam for the same style.

Judith Neukam of Omaha, Nebraska, delights in discovering how vintage garments were made.

Redefine the hem shape on a two-piece sleeve for a wrapped cuff reminiscent of a curled new leaf.

Adapt a two-piece sleeve pattern

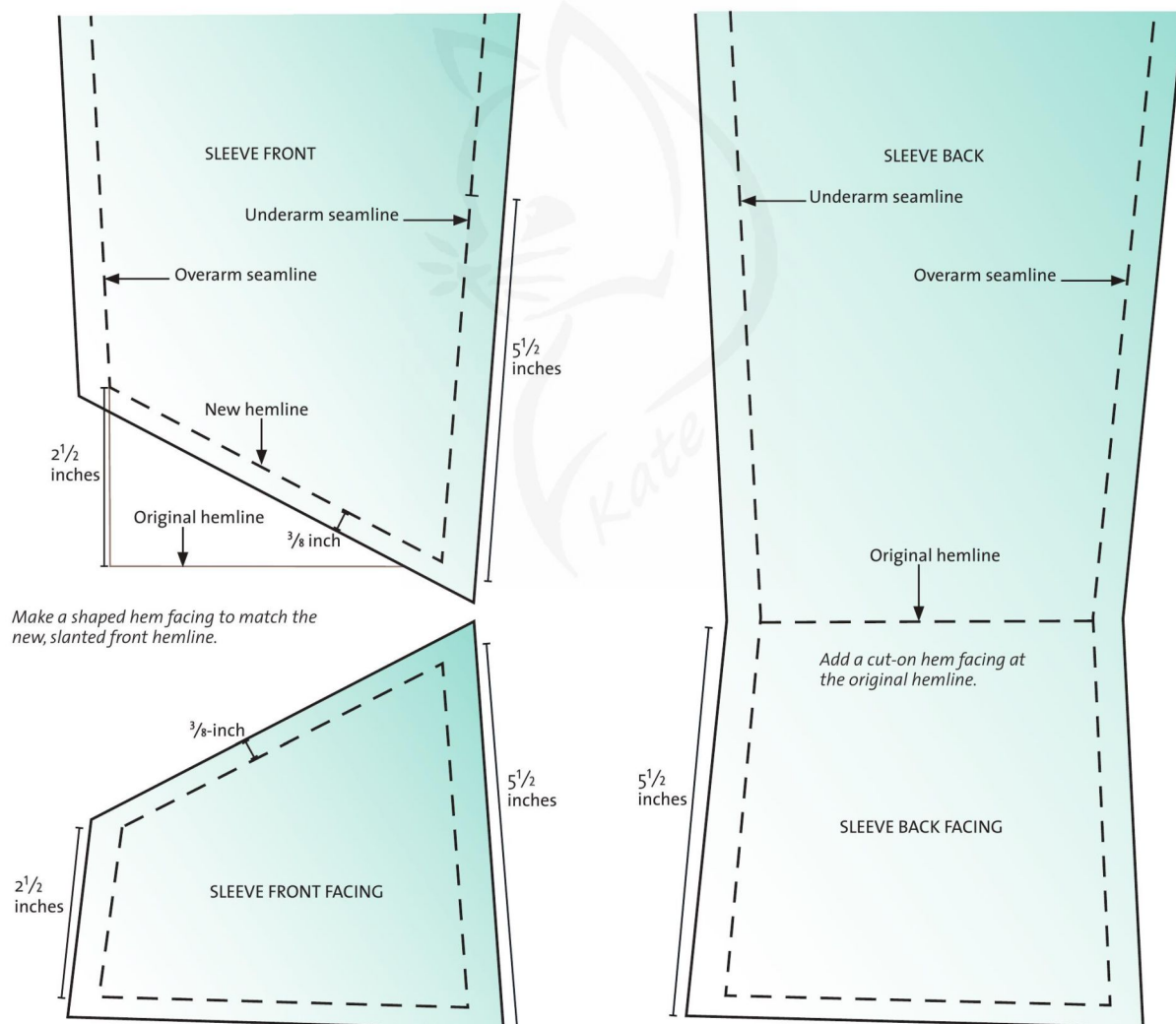
Convert a sleeve pattern that has an under- and overarm seam by shaping the hemline and adding a deep facing. Begin by removing the original hem allowances from the front and back sleeve patterns.

1 Add a cut-on back hem facing. Make it $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, and shape it to reflect the sleeve back's lower portion.

2 Shape the front hemline. On the overarm seamline, make a mark $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches above the original hemline. Draw a diagonal line from this point to the hemline at the underarm seamline. Add a $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch-wide hem allowance along this new hemline.

3 Create a front hem facing. Make a mark $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches above the new hem seamline on the underarm seamline. Trace the lower portion of the new sleeve front pattern from this level to the hemline.

4 Cut the fabric. Using the new sleeve front and back patterns, cut the sleeves and front facing.

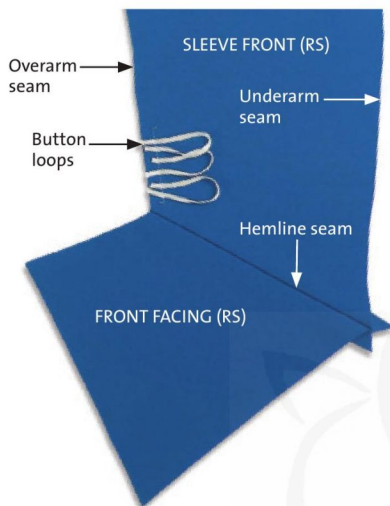


Construct the sleeve

Assemble the sleeves with their hem facings for a clean finish. Start by making self-fabric bias tubes for button loops, and covering six small buttons with fabric.

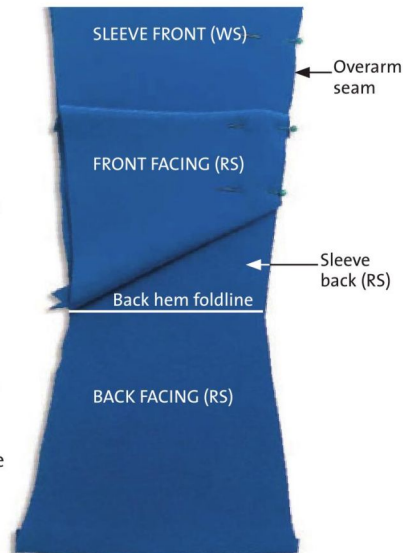
1 Attach the sleeve front facing.

With right sides together, sew it along the new, slanted hemline. Press the seam allowances open. Position and baste the button loops on the sleeve front overarm seam edge, with the loops facing away from the edge.



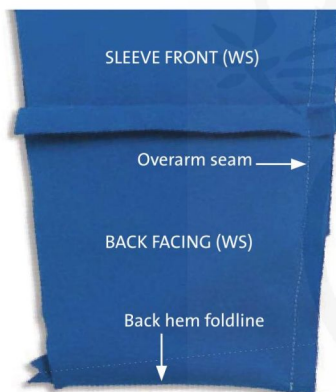
2 Prepare the overarm seam.

First, press the front and back facings' raw edges to the wrong side by $\frac{3}{8}$ inch. Then fold the sleeve front facing to the wrong side. Next, with right sides together, pin the sleeve front and sleeve back together along the overarm seam.



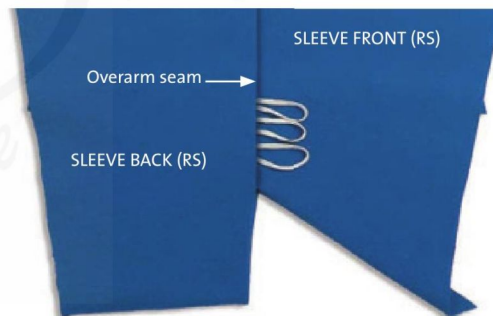
3 Fold up the back facing.

Fold it along its hem foldline, over the layers pinned in step 2. Pin along the overarm seam, then sew the seam through all layers from the shoulder to the hemline.



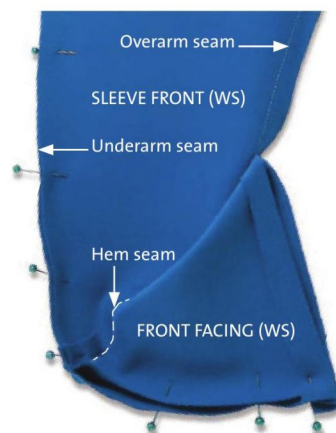
4 Unfold the sleeve.

Open the sleeve front and back, and turn the back facing to the wrong side. Push out the back hem corner, then press the edges.



5 Sew the underarm seam.

With right sides together, pin the sleeve front and back, and the facing front and back, along the underarm seam. Sew the seam in a single pass, from shoulder to hemline, and continue from the hemline to the facing edge.



6 Complete the sleeve.

Fold the facing to the wrong side, hand-sew its free edge to the sleeve, and attach buttons to correspond to the loops.





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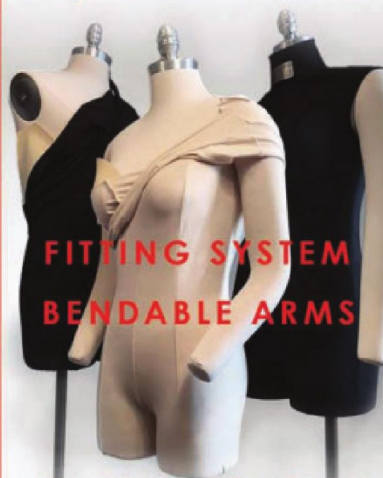
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pattern review

TESTED AND SEWN BY *THREADS*



Named Clothing Agate Pencil Dress in viscose double-face jacquard from MarcyTilton.com.



Named Clothing: Agate Pencil Dress (NamedClothing.com)

This panel dress has a casual yet elegant look. The semifitted midi-length dress has a bateau neckline, three-quarter-length sleeves with a dropped shoulder seam, and a left-side zippered hemline slit from thigh to hem. Princess seams originate at the shoulders and subtly curve between the waistline and thigh. The dress has a side zipper closure and a narrow self-fabric belt with eyelets and a buckle. Our tester recommends making a muslin to check the fit and placement of the curved seamlines on the body. This design is ideal for medium-weight woven fabrics such as wool crepe, linen, piqué, chambray, and lightweight denim.

(Sized 0–18 [European 32–50] for busts 30–45.75 in. and hips 33–48.75 in.) ↓

—Tested by Pam Howard, Newnan, Georgia

STYLE TIP: Emphasize the vertical seams with piping.

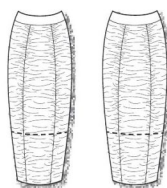


Christine Jonson: Ruched Pencil Skirt (CJPatterns.com)

A modern take on a classic, this ruched knit pencil skirt is made from six rectangular panels, has a 4½-inch-wide tubular waistband, and is self-lined. There are two lengths, above or below the knee. The vertical seams are drawn up by stretching and sewing ¾-inch-wide elastic over the seam allowances. The instructions do not include illustrations and are written for construction by serger. A sewing machine with a zigzag or stretch stitch could be used instead. Our tester recommends practicing the elastic application method. Customize the look by combining prints or adding a ribbed waistband. This design requires knits that stretch along the lengthwise grain because the skirt has negative ease and all panels are cut on the cross-grain. Use soft, stretchy fabrics such as rayon or polyester jersey with spandex.

(Sized 4–22 for hips 33–50 in.) + ★ ↓

—Tested by Colleen Hubbard, Duluth, Minnesota



SEWING TIP: Experiment with the ruching and proportions by adjusting the elastic-to-panel-length ratio.

Every pattern shown has been sewn and evaluated. We keep a close watch on fashion trends and select patterns that reflect the latest looks. Each one is then sent to a talented tester, who sews it in muslin to evaluate the proportions, style, and pattern instructions. —Compiled by Anna Mazur

LOOK FOR THESE ICONS ON THE PATTERN REVIEWS

- ✚ Includes sizes 24 and up
- Fast and easy
- ▲ Challenging techniques
- Petite options
- ★ For knits
- ▼ Downloadable pattern

Butterick 6523 (Butterick.com)

This unlined, body-skimming jacket and straight-leg pants offer a classic ensemble that goes together quickly. The jacket can be made with a shawl collar and closed with a self-fabric belt, or left collarless and closed with ties attached at the side front. The details include front princess seams, patch pockets, one-piece sleeves, and back waist darts. The pants sit at the natural waist and have a 4¼-inch-wide curved yoke, straight legs, and a left side zipper closure. The pieces line up beautifully, the instructions are complete, and the illustrations are clear. Use medium-weight woven fabrics such as velvet, satin, crepe, gabardine, silk shantung, and cotton-blend materials.

(Sized Misses' 6–22 for busts 30.5–44 in. and hips 32.5–46 in.) ●

—Tested by Rachel Kurland, South Strafford, Vermont

STYLE TIP:

Make a monochromatic ensemble, but mix fabric textures for sophisticated coordination.



Pamela's Closet: Fancy Pantz 807 (PamelasClosetInc.com)

Embrace comfort and style with this updated version of culottes. The calf-length culottes are fitted from the waist to the hips and then widen to a drapery, feminine silhouette. They have front and back waist darts, a 2-inch-wide hidden elastic waistband, and 15-inch-long hemline slits. They are designed to be made with knits. The instructions and illustrations are thorough and complete. The simplicity of this design is a perfect canvas for embellishment or an interesting print. The sizing is similar to ready-to-wear sizing and starts at size 6. Although designed for knit fabrics, the culottes can be made with wovens if you choose a size that gives adequate ease and you add a zipper. For a summer version, choose a light, drapery fabric and pair the style with strappy sandals. In colder weather, try stretch velour or a ponte knit and wear with boots.

(Sized 6–24 for hips 36–57 in.) ✚ ● ★ ▼

—Tested by Michele Kwiatkowski, Danbury, Connecticut

STYLE TIP: Frame the hemline slits with a touch of machine or hand embroidery.



Butterick 6523 View B in acetate and nylon velvet with polyester satin lapels from JoAnn Fabric and Craft Stores.



DP Studio Coat with Incorporated Scarf in Telio Charlie polyester tweed from Fabric.com.

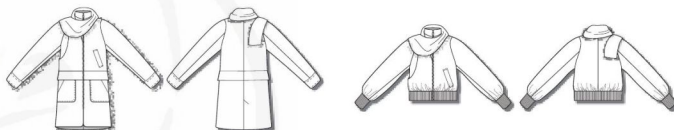


DP Studio: Le 204—Coat with Incorporated Scarf

(DPStudio-Fashion.com)

This lined coat or bomber-style jacket offers a unique design. Both views are loose-fitting with extralong two-piece sleeves. They also feature: an attached 5-inch by 58-inch scarf, extending from a panel sewn into the right bodice; a 3-inch-wide band collar; left welt pocket; and a front zipper closure. The coat has an overlay waistband, diagonal patch pockets at the hip, and a back hemline vent. The jacket has a rib knit waistband and cuffs. This pattern is rated three out of three on the company's difficulty scale, and could be challenging even to advanced sewers. The notions list does not include the zipper length or interfacing for either view, or the rib knit yardage for the jacket. Our tester found inconsistencies in the pattern piece labeling. Read the instructions thoroughly before sewing, as our technical editor found some steps out of sequence and some ambiguous illustrations. We recommend sewing a test garment to practice the construction. Consider bulk when choosing fabric for the coat, since there are many fabric layers where the zipper meets the waistband seam. (Sized French 36–48 [US 4–16] for busts 32.25–44 in. and hips 35.5–46 in.) ▲

—Tested by Toby Barton, Winsted, Connecticut



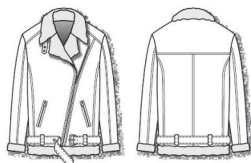
SEWING TIP: Interface the scarf piece where it will be sewn into the zipper seam.

Style Arc: Carly Aviator Jacket (StyleArc.com.au)

True to its military and menswear inspiration, this lined women's jacket has an oversized silhouette. The shape tapers from the shoulders to the hem. It features a two-piece notched collar, asymmetrical front with a diagonal zipper closure, yoke with forward shoulder seams, side panels, and two-piece sleeves. The jacket also has slant zipper pockets, a buckled neck tab, a self-fabric buckled belt with eyelets, belt loops, and twin-needle topstitching along all the seams. There is no mark indicating the center of the sleeve cap; use the marked underarm point as a reference point. The sleeve front and back are not labeled. This design is rated challenging. The instructions are brief, assuming sewing knowledge, and illustrations are provided only for the collar and zippered pocket construction. Recommended materials are wool jacket-weight fabric, leather, and shearling. Our tester recommends first trying it in wool.

(Sized 4–30 for busts 30.3–58.25 in.) + ▲ ↓

—Tested by Samina Mirza, Katy, Texas



SEWING TIP: Anchor the left-front facing to the lining so it doesn't shift within the jacket.

Marfy 3840 & 3841 (www.Marfy.it)

This dress and jacket have intriguing details that present interesting sewing challenges. The jacket, 3840, has a band collar, front yoke, pocket flaps, front panel seams, abutted front opening edges, two-piece sleeves, and back princess seams. The front edges, hemline, flaps for faux breast pockets, and sleeve hems are trimmed with 1 3/8-inch-wide bands. The dress, 3841, is semifitted with a banded jewel neckline, center-back zipper closure, and front dropped-waist seam. Four sunburst tucks radiate from the neckline band at center front. The skirt has three knife pleats on each side front. The waist seam can be trimmed with a contrasting band or include flaps for faux pockets. Marfy patterns are cut to one size and include no instructions, illustrations, or seam or hem allowances. The patterns do not include pattern pieces for the bands; our staff seamstress created pattern pieces for the bands and appliquéd them to the garment. This ensemble is best made in wool crepe, tweed, or silk/linen blends.

(Sized European 42–46 for busts 34.63–37.75 in. and hips 36.25–39.38 in.) ▲

—Tested by Karen Konicki, New York City, New York



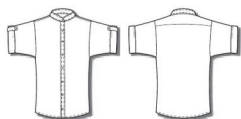
SEWING TIP: Edgestitch the knife pleats' inner folds to help maintain their crisp line.

Ralph Pink: Lara Shirt (RalphPink.com)

Envision a menswear-style button-up shirt with a softer, feminine look. Designed with a relaxed fit, the Lara Shirt features a narrow band collar, a center-front button opening with cut-on plackets, dropped shoulders, and a slightly curved back yoke. The kimono-style, three-quarter-length, set-in sleeves roll up and fasten with a buttoned tab. The shirttail hem has a gentle curve and ends at the high hip. All the seam allowances and the hem allowance are scant, at a centimeter wide. Adjust if you prefer wider allowances. The hem allowance, in particular, could be too narrow to control. The instructions are basic, and our technical editor noted inconsistencies in the text and illustrations. Beginner sewers should proceed cautiously, and advanced sewers may wish to modify the allowances and techniques for more refined results. For easier sewing, choose fabrics with body, such as shirting or cotton poplin. For a softer look, opt for drapery fabrics, such as silk charmeuse, rayon challis, or voile.

(Sized 4–12 [UK 8–16] for busts 33.5–43.25 in.) ▼

—Tested by Nancy Muro, Wallingford, Connecticut



STYLE TIP: Apply French seams, adjusting the seam allowances accordingly.



Threads Insider and
tablet exclusive



Marfy 3840 and 3841 in
jacquard with brocade trim
from MoodFabrics.com.



FALL LOOKS

Recharge your sewing with
trending patterns and fabrics

BY ERICA REDFERN

This season, focus on staying warm, being comfortable, and looking fabulous. Quilted jackets, long wool coats, and flowing capes steal the stage at many fall ready-to-wear shows as trends veer from severe, fitted styles and move toward the comfort of looser silhouettes. Designers played with volume by layering sheer fabrics with different patterns to create a casual yet chic look in tunics worn over slim-legged pants, and other ensembles. Many runway looks are '80s inspired, with big shoulders and vibrant colors. This season's trends urge boldness with your fashion choices. Don't be afraid to stand out with loud prints or eye-catching details. It's about being unique and embracing your personal style.

Erica Redfern is Threads' assistant editor.

For a striking coat, consider an abstract patterned jacquard and faux fur. The silhouette and fabrics express contemporary outerwear style.

Pattern: BurdaStyle 6462. Fabric: abstract metallic jacquard, MoodFabrics.com; faux fur, Threads stash.



High-impact outerwear

A great coat can keep you warm and show off your sense of style at the same time. Create your ideal outerwear look with bright colors and playful details.

STYLISH STATEMENT JACKET

Take jackets and coats up a notch this season with a vibrant print or color. Consider using brocade or jacquard to bring flair to a simple pattern. Collars often include faux fur or shearling, which can be substituted or modified to work with many patterns. If you're feeling daring, brightly colored or patterned faux fur makes an even bigger statement.

Closet Case Clare Coat

New Look 6534

Colette patterns Albion

Style Arc Genevieve Coat

Grainline Studio Yates Coat

Vogue 9136

QUILTED COAT OR VEST

Athletic-inspired silhouettes are the star of the season. Embrace volume with quilted jackets and vests; they're warm and fashionable. Use prequilted material, or make your own with different types of fabric. Put a new spin on nonquilted jacket or vest patterns with this chic technique.

BurdaStyle 6986

McCall's 7695

Dana Marie Everyday Hoodie

Simplicity 8222

Make It Perfect Women's Hero Vest

Waffle Patterns Dropje Vest

COZY SHEARLING COAT

Enhance coats and jackets with a shearling collar or lapels. Use faux shearling for a cruelty-free look that will keep you toasty during the winter weather. Some of the patterns below do not recommend shearling, but they can be easily modified to include it.

BurdaStyle Shearling Coat 10/2016 #123

Butterick 6604

Folkwear Siberian Parka

New Look 6536

Simplicity 8467

Vogue 1563

A lofty faux fur collar adds texture and warmth. This application may be added even if the pattern does not call for it.



Playful weekend styles

Enjoy comfortable, loose-fitting garments in more relaxed times. Create voluminous ensembles with different colors and prints for the most impact.

LAYERED LOOKS

The bigger the better with these buildable and versatile ensembles. Put a kimono jacket over a long tunic over pants and you'll be on trend. Use different prints, fabric types, and colors to layer. Whether two layers or more, you will look comfortable and fabulous.

Butterick 6294

Butterick 6576

Hot Patterns 1211

Simplicity 8177

The Sewing Workshop Fillmore

Vogue 1356

OVERSIZED KNIT TOPS

As the temperatures drop, look to oversized tops made with thick knits to keep warm. Piece, color-block, or otherwise manipulate chunky knits for interesting garments with a variety of daring colors and patterns. Don't forget the turtleneck and cowl necklines, which are popular on the runway.

BurdaStyle 6476

Butterick 6392

Hot Patterns 1223

Style Arc Brooklyn Knit Top

The Maker's Atelier The Big Easy Top

Waffle Patterns Diagonal Knit Top

WHIMSICAL BOWS

From dainty bows placed at the waistline to giant statement bows at the collar, bows of all sizes decorated the looks on the runway. There are many ways to rock this look, even by adding a bow to a pattern you already have at home. Get creative when determining the size and placement, and don't be afraid to go big.

Decades of Style 104

Deer and Doe Bleu et Dress Doooz

Eva Dress 1958 Cocktail Dress
E50-8673

Marfy 3623

McCall's 7627

Named Clothing
Stella Shirdress

SLIM-LEGGED PANTS

Not quite skinny, these pants make an excellent counter to the voluminous layers in style this season. Casual jeans, as well as dress pants, look great in this silhouette. Experiment with colors, textures, and patterns.

BurdaStyle 6432

Cashmerette Ames Jeans

Closet Case Sasha Trousers

Jalie Vanessa Fluid Pants 3676

McCall's 7726

Vogue 9228



View this ensemble at
ThreadsMagazine.com.

*A flowing top
and a bold print
create a casual
look with drama
and room to
move.*

*Pattern: Vogue 9305.
Fabric: (tunic) medium-
weight linen and
(pants) double-face
woven cotton,
MoodFabrics.com.*

Photos: (pp. 34–37) Jack Deutsch. Stylist: Jessica Saal. Hair and makeup: Stacy Beneke. Styling credits: (p. 34–35) earrings—Hue (Macy's.com), boots—Adrienne Vittadini (Nordstrom Rack); (p. 36) earrings—Crown Vintage (DSW.com), necklace—Baubles Bijoux (Anthropologie.com), bracelet—Thalia (Macy's.com), shoes—Marc Fisher (Nordstrom Rack); (p. 37) earrings—I.N.C. International Concepts (Macy's.com), belt—stylist's own, shoes—Louise et Cie (Nordstrom Rack).

Exaggerated lapels convey confidence and authority.

Pattern: Vogue 8992.
Fabric: cotton suiting,
MoodFabrics.com.

Chic workwear

Workplace clothes don't have to be standard. Explore different silhouettes and textiles that make you feel like the boss.

REVAMPED BLAZER

The blazer is back. Versions have been updated with feminine twists such as a nipped-in waist or peplum. Reimagine the classic shape into dresses and jumpsuits. Change the lapels with a different fabric, such as faux leather, for a modern style.

BurdaStyle 6581

Dana Marie Angles and Ohs! Jacket

McCall's 7818

Orange Amsterdam Blazer

Style Arc Sara Jacket

Vogue 1560

PROMINENT COLOR BLOCKING

A pop of color instantly brightens and brings life to a look. Color-blocking is back on a larger scale, creating striking half-and-half looks using solid colors and patterned fabric. You can accomplish this technique with almost any pattern if you're willing to plan new seamlines and add seam allowances.

Butterick 6377

Decades of Style 2005

Gail Patrice Triangulate the Tee

Megan Nielsen Patterns Karri Dress

Simplicity 8547

Vogue 1581

EYE-CATCHING ASYMMETRY

Every type of garment can be made asymmetrical by adjusting the sleeves, hems, and other elements. This season is all about adding different details on the same garment. Try modifying your existing patterns at the hem or neckline. Adjust the lapels of your favorite blazer pattern for a fresh interpretation of a classic look.

Cutting Line Designs

Passport to Style

Indygo Essentials Asymmetrical
Top and Tunic

Silhouette Patterns 127

Simplicity 1068

The Sewing Workshop
Memphis Dress

Vogue 1513

SOPHISTICATED COORDINATES

Garments pull more weight in your wardrobe when they go with other pieces. Thoughtfully chosen coordinates keep you looking professional while giving you more options for mixing and matching.

Butterick 6524

McCall's 7635

Simplicity 8465

Style Arc Parisian Classic Look

Vogue 1527

Vogue 9189

web extra

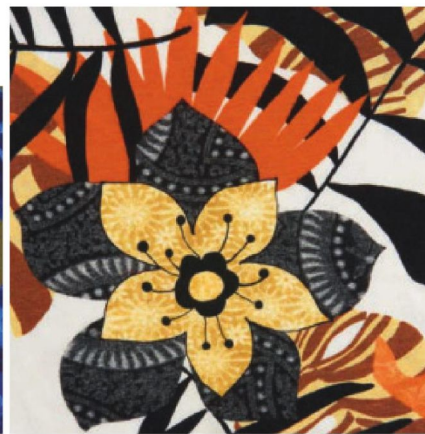
For more fall patterns and sewing inspiration, visit ThreadsMagazine.com.

Bold fabric options

This season, textiles with personality bring flair to even simple styles. Fabric weight varies from sheer to lofty.

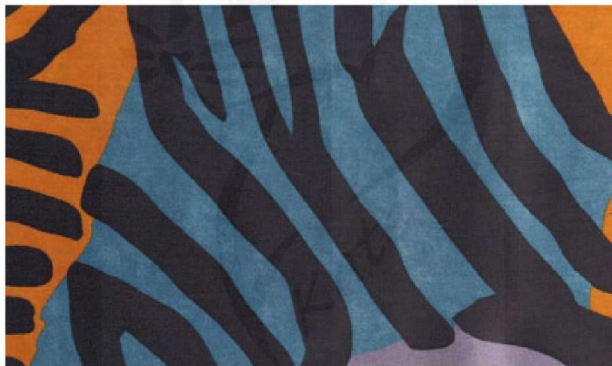
FLORALS

Many collections show florals of all colors, motifs, and scales. Garments sewn in these fabrics—from dresses to coats and skirts—bring a feeling of energy.



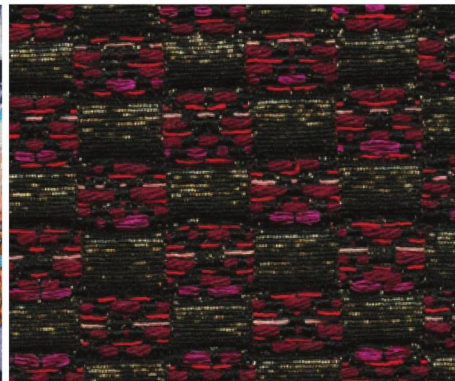
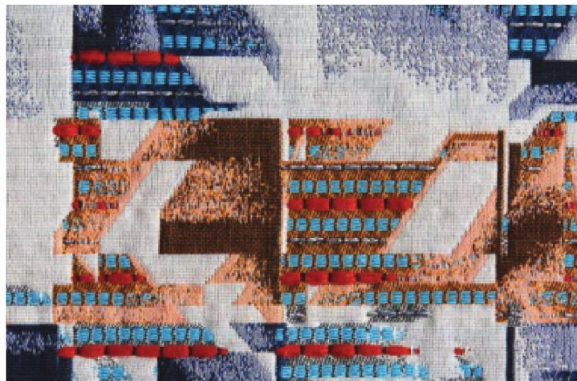
INSPIRED BY ANIMALS

Beyond traditional animal skin prints such as leopard, cheetah, and zebra, this season also includes representational prints of animals such as birds, cats, or dogs, and textured fabrics reminiscent of reptilian scales.



METALLICS

A runway staple in recent years, metallic fabrics sparkled ubiquitously at the fall fashion shows. Silver and gold are the most prevalent, made into suits and coats. Fabrics with metallic threads will add a luxe feel to garments of any silhouette.



PLAIDS

Coats, skirts, shirts, dresses: Try any of these in the season's plaid fabrics. Bright, large-scale versions are popular for coats and skirts, while smaller scale and abstract plaids create beautiful tops and dresses. Mix and match colors and scales for a fresh look.



Photos: (pp. 38–39) Mike Yamin. Color chips: courtesy of Pantone Color Institute. Swatches: (p. 38, top left, middle center and middle right, bottom right; p. 39, bottom left) ElliottBermanTextiles.com; (all others, pp. 38–39) EmmaOneSock.com.

Trans-seasonal colors

The Pantone Color Institute color forecasters compiled 10 must-have colors and 5 core neutrals for fall 2018. The palette includes traditional fall colors, such as Valiant Poppy, as well as touches of spring influence such as Ultra Violet, Pantone's 2018 color of the year.

TOP 10 PALETTE



CLASSIC NEUTRALS



Industry Seam Allowances

How and why patternmakers apply varied widths to designs

BY LAUREL HOFFMANN

Most commercial patterns are drafted with a consistent seam allowance width along every seamline. It might be $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in patterns designed for knits, or it could be $\frac{5}{8}$ inch, the standard used in the majority of garment patterns drafted for woven fabrics. It appears convenient to work with the same seam allowance width throughout a garment: You can set the needle position relative to the desired seam guide and simply follow along for each seam.

However, all seams are not equal, and they don't all need the same allowance. Consider that you typically trim most of the allowance at enclosed areas, such as along facing seams, or you occasionally need to let a garment out along a side

seam. In these cases, narrower or wider allowances facilitate your work.

In the sewing industry, allowances vary according to the seam location and type. The purpose of these different widths is to make construction efficient and yield a sturdy garment with the proper structure and drape. Home sewers can easily adapt commercial patterns to these same standards. Most commonly, seam allowances need to be reduced in width. Narrower seam allowances save time and fabric, because you don't waste yardage on larger pattern pieces or spend time trimming the unneeded allowances. It is also easier to sew "on gauge," that is, accurately along the seamline. Finally, narrower seam allowances are neater and

less bulky within the garment.

I'll share the guidelines I use as a production patternmaker and show you how to revise your patterns with precision. My example is a basic shirt with a cut-on front facing, but the same process works for any pattern you adjust. Bear in mind that you should fit the pattern first, as these allowances may not be wide enough for significant fit-while-you-sew adjustments. Once you've achieved a great fit, revise the seam allowances, and you'll have a pattern you can use again and again, with truly professional results.

Laurel Hoffmann has developed a fashion technology program. Learn more at CFashionEdu.com.

Best practices in patternwork

Reducing seam allowances is a straightforward process, but to minimize confusion and ensure accurate results, follow these guidelines. These instructions assume the pattern has standard $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch-wide seam allowances.

MATERIALS

Tracing paper: Purchase 36-inch-wide yellow tracing paper, as it is more transparent than white tracing paper. You'll find it at art supply stores (ArtSupply.com).

Drafting tape: This secures the pattern and the tracing paper. Test to find one that can be easily peeled off when you've finished tracing (DickBlick.com).

Pencils: Red and blue pencils for tracing help you distinguish visually between the traced lines and the pattern's printed lines, visible through the tracing paper.

Rulers: Equip yourself with transparent rulers, including a straight ruler with a $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch grid, at least 12 inches long, and a curved, or fashion, ruler.

TRACING SETUP

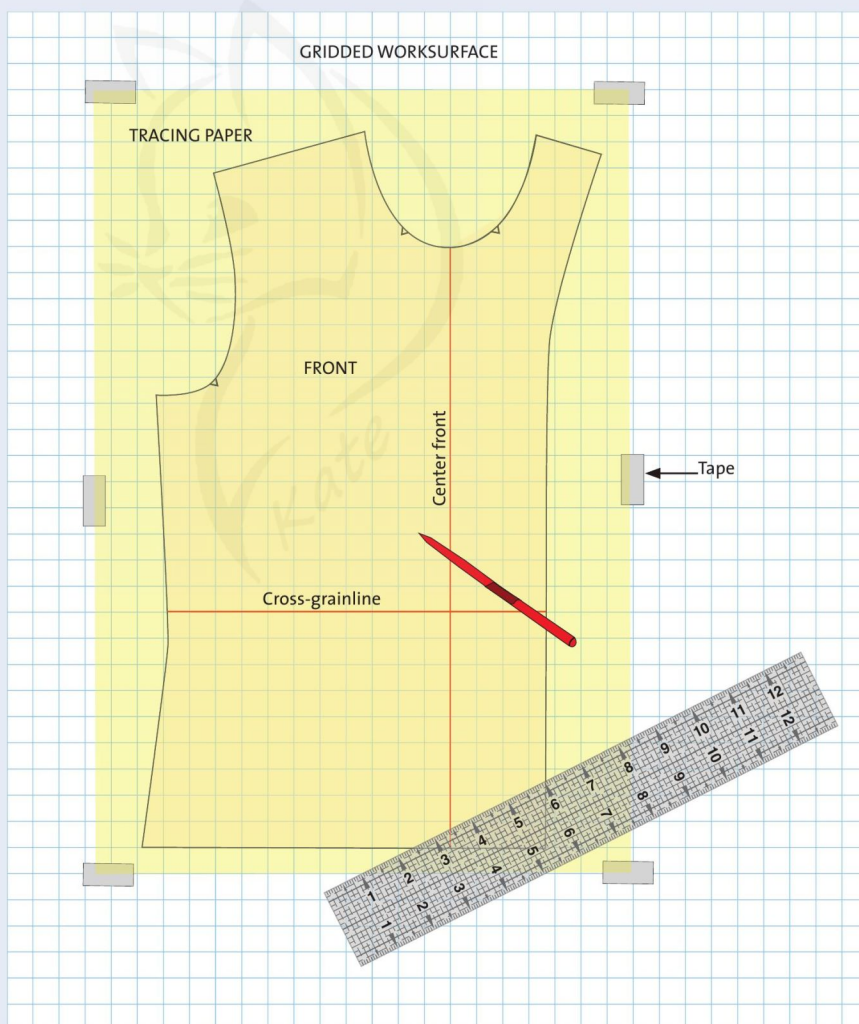
1 Tape the pattern in place. Press the pattern to remove creases, then tape it to a gridded worksurface, aligning the grainline or foldline along a gridline. The grid shown is marked at 1-inch intervals.

2 Tape the tracing paper in place. Lay it over the pattern and tape its edges.

3 Add guidelines. In red pencil, trace the grainline or center-front or center-back foldline and a cross-grain line. If the pattern has no cross-grain line marked, create one perpendicular to the grainline.

4 Proceed with the seam allowance reduction. Use a dashed red line to indicate the narrowed allowances; a solid red line for unchanged cutting lines. Next to each edge, write the amount the allowance was reduced and/or the new seam allowance width, so you know how to sew the seam.

5 Add notches and marks. Consult the "Diagram key," p. 42, for helpful marks.



continued >>>

Adjust the front and back patterns

The example pattern has a cut-on front facing. If the original pattern has a separate facing pattern piece, reduce its seam allowances to 1/4 inch wide at the neckline and front opening edges.

FRONT AND BACK

Reduce the seam allowances as noted.

Neckline: Reduce by 3/8 inch, to 1/4 inch.

Armhole: Reduce by 1/4 inch, to 3/8 inch. If you plan to apply a flat-felled or other seam treatment, adjust this allowance as needed to accommodate the desired technique.

Shoulder seam: Reduce by 1/8 inch, to 1/2 inch. Reduce the shoulder seam portion of the cut-on facing similarly.

Diagram key

Use these marks consistently on the traced patterns to indicate cutting lines, notches, and centers front and back.

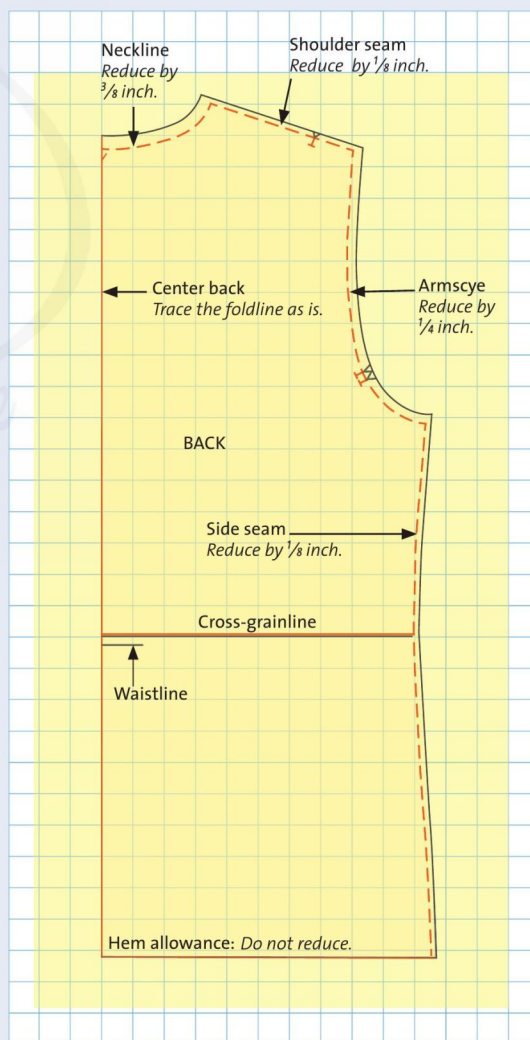
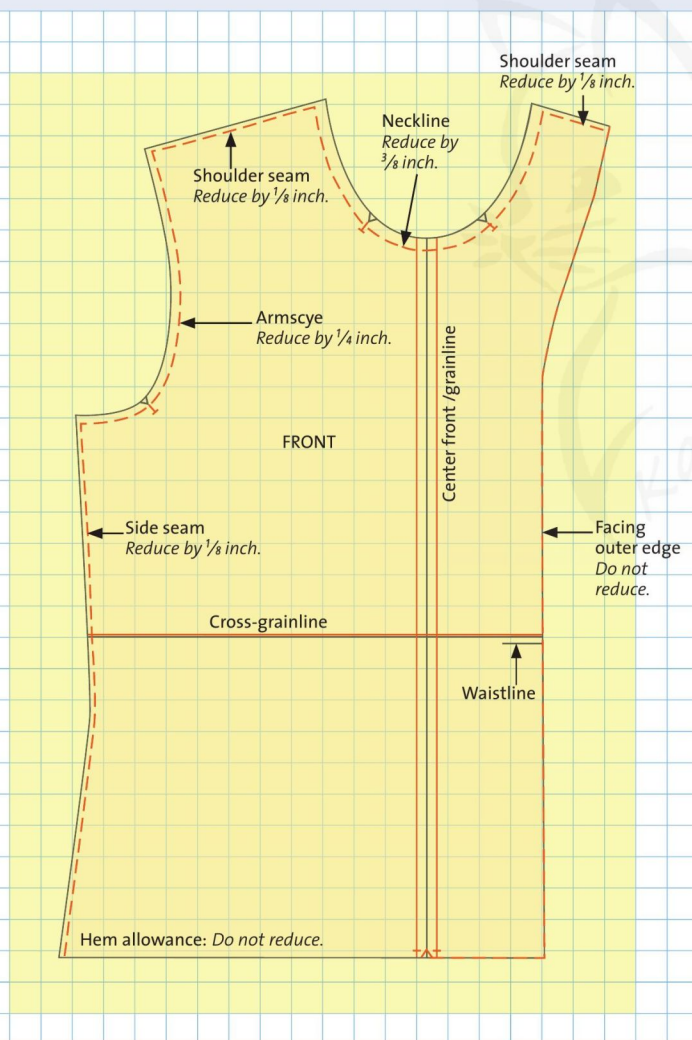
- Reduced seam allowances (new cutting lines)
- Unchanged cutting lines
- ⊥ Notch with stop mark; shift to new cutting line
- ∨ V-notch; use at centers and at sleeve-cap peak

Side seam: Reduce by 1/8 inch, to 1/2 inch.

Hem allowance: Do not reduce.

Facing outer edge: Do not reduce. Sew it with a 1/4-inch-wide allowance rather than a 5/8-inch-wide allowance.

Center back: Trace the foldline as is.



tip

Draft with care. Use a curved, or fashion, ruler as a guide when tracing curved seamlines to achieve the smoothest results.

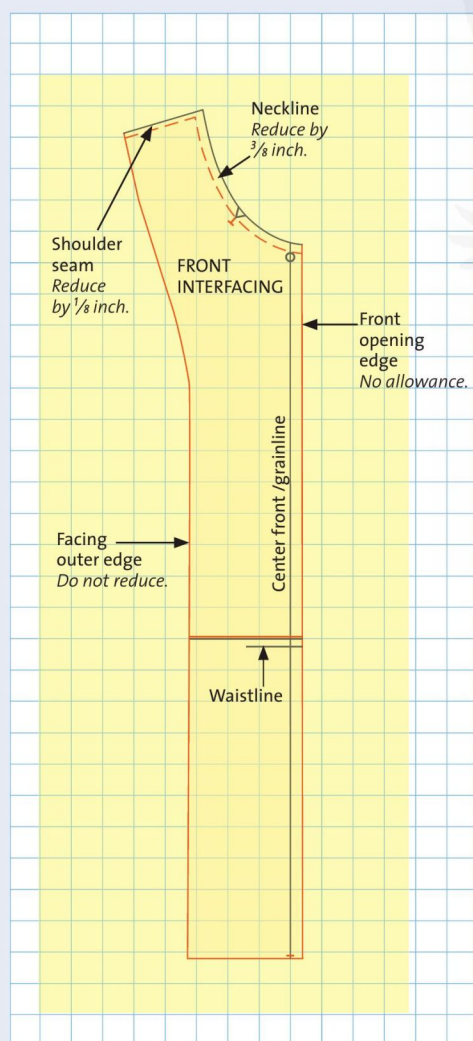
FRONT INTERFACING

Neckline: Reduce by $\frac{3}{8}$ inch, to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.

Shoulder seam: Reduce by $\frac{1}{8}$ inch, to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch.

Outer edge: Do not reduce. Sew with a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-wide seam allowance rather than a $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch-wide allowance.

Front opening edge: No allowance. If using nonfusible woven interfacing, overcast this edge or cut it on the selvage.



Revise the sleeves and cuffs

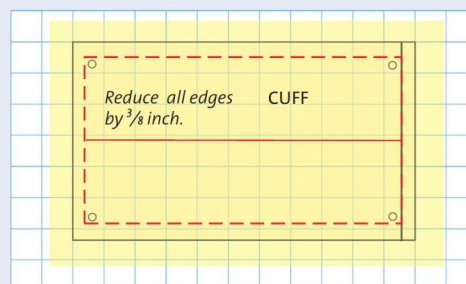
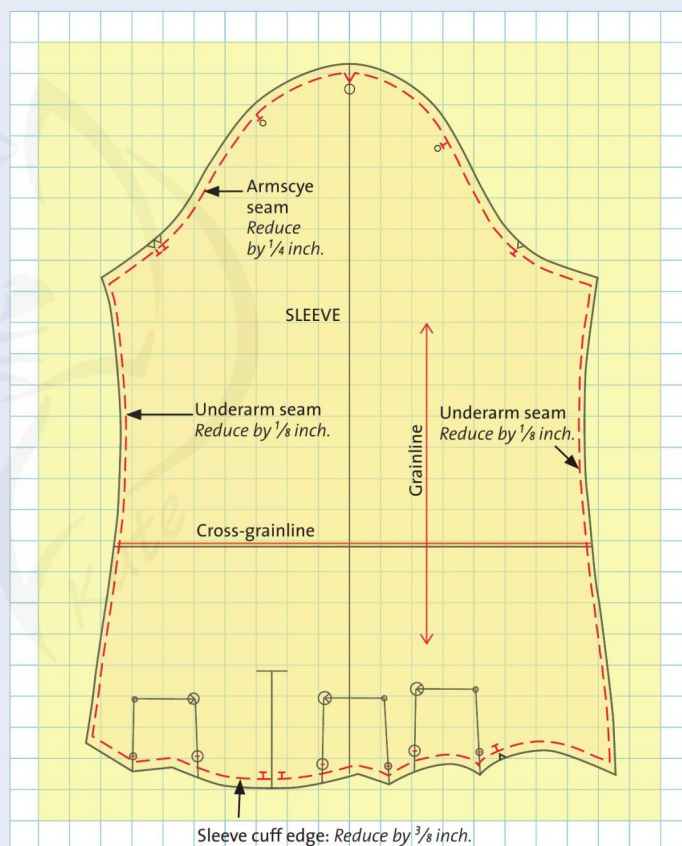
This sleeve is pleated into a cuff. If your pattern has a different treatment, adjust as desired.

Armhole seam: Reduce by $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch. If you plan to apply a flat-felled or other seam treatment here, adjust this allowance as needed to accommodate the desired technique.

Underarm seam: Reduce by $\frac{1}{8}$ inch, to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch.

Sleeve cuff edge: Reduce by $\frac{3}{8}$ inch, to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.

Cuff pattern: Reduce all allowances by $\frac{3}{8}$ inch, to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. If the fabric is delicate or prone to fraying, reduce the allowances by $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch. Reduce the cuff interfacing seam allowances by the same amount.



Modify the collar patterns

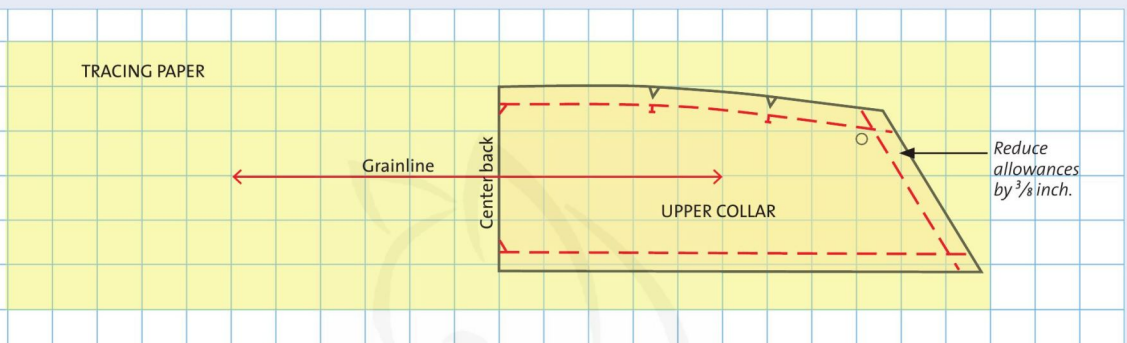
The process shown is for a collar pattern cut on the fabric fold. You'll adjust the seam allowances and make a complete pattern at the same time. Cutting the collar with a complete pattern, rather than on the fold, ensures the fabric is cut on grain.

DRAFT THE UPPER COLLAR

1 Prepare the tracing paper. Tape the half-collar pattern to the worksurface and overlay it with a tracing paper sheet that's twice as long. Tape the tracing paper to secure.

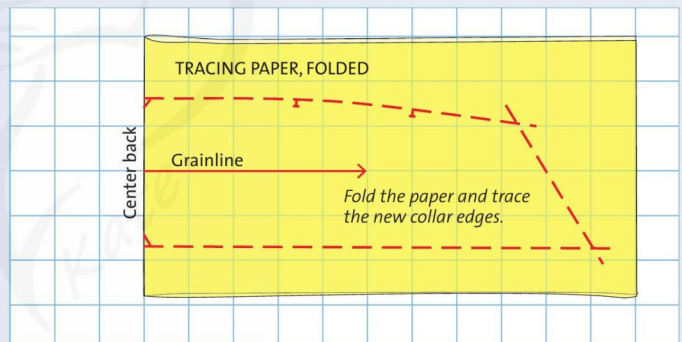
2 Extend the grainline. Trace the marked line and extend it to twice its length.

3 Adjust the seam allowances. Reduce them by $\frac{3}{8}$ inch, to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. Add V notches at the center back, and transfer all other notches to the new cutting lines.

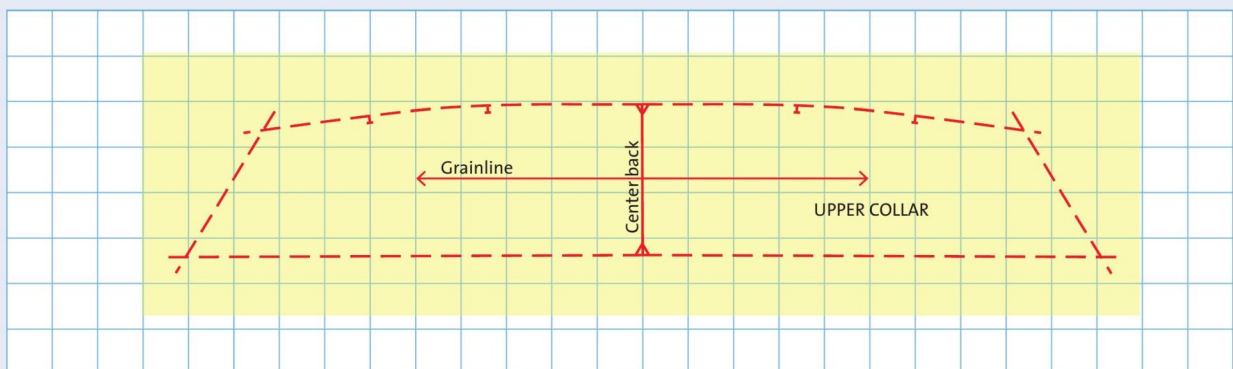


4 Fold the tracing. Release the tape and slide the original pattern out. Retape the traced side of the new pattern. Fold the blank portion of the tracing paper along the center-back foldline, aligning the grainline accurately. Tape the top paper ply.

5 Trace the collar. Transfer the newly traced collar to the upper paper ply.



6 Complete the pattern. Remove the tape from the top ply and unfold for the new, complete pattern.

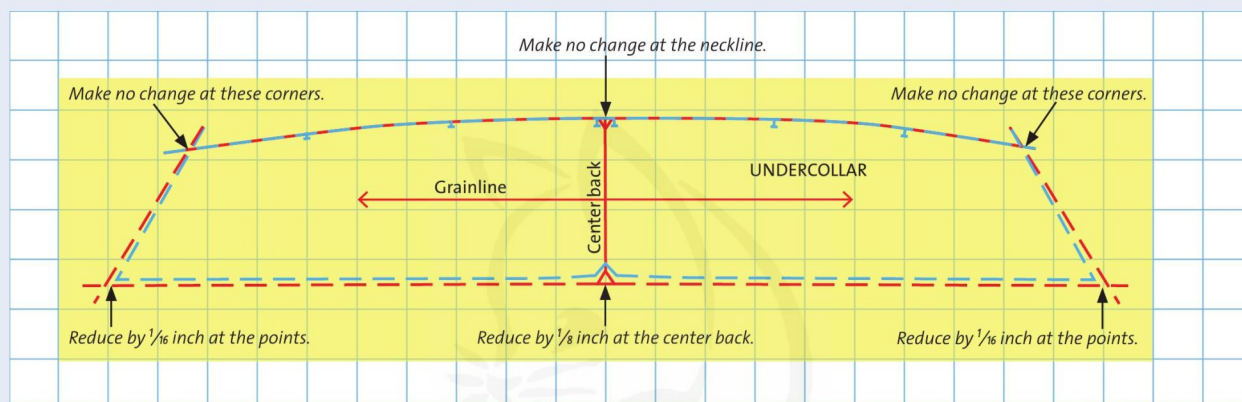


DRAFT THE UNDERCOLLAR

1 Tape the upper collar. Cover it with tracing paper and tape the new layer in place.

2 Trace the neckline edge. Work with blue pencil to differentiate the lines from the upper collar. Add a notch at each side of center back to identify this as the undercollar.

3 Reduce the pattern's long outer seam allowance. At the points, reduce the allowance by $\frac{1}{16}$ inch. At center back, reduce it by $\frac{1}{8}$ inch. Blend the short ends, using a straightedge as a guide. Blend the long edge using a curved ruler as a guide.



SUGGESTED SEAM ALLOWANCES

Choosing the optimal allowance for seams and hems helps you sew more efficiently and accurately, and it can provide the option of future alterations. These widths are based on industry standards.

$\frac{1}{8}$ inch: Knit placket lapels.

$\frac{1}{4}$ inch: Curved or difficult-to-sew seams with no stress: collars, necklines, sleeveless armholes, cuffs, lapels, and center-front openings.

$\frac{3}{8}$ inch: Curved or difficult-to-sew areas with stress: armseye seams, cuffs with a stitch-in-the-ditch finish; waistbands; crotch seams; knit side seams; seams in silky fabric; invisible zipper opening seams in knits; any seam to be serged.

$\frac{1}{2}$ inch: Shoulder and side seams. Armseye seams that will be finished with serging.

$\frac{5}{8}$ inch: Occasionally used in zipper-opening seams.

$\frac{3}{4}$ inch: Zipper-opening seams; some side seams to allow for alterations.

1 inch: Hem allowances in moderately priced garments.

2 inches: Hems in better women's garments.

2½ inches: Hems in better men's pants.

The Armhole Squared

Multiply your design and fit opportunities

BY RAE CUMBIE

Pattern blocking and embellishment have been important trends on fashion runways in recent seasons, and I've enjoyed participating in this creative direction. However, many of the top designer examples are shown on dramatically oversized garments. A bold print mix on a large-scaled silhouette can be visually overwhelming on all but the most statuesque frames. To make this style statement wearable—rather than over-the-top—a suitable garment pattern is essential. The pattern should offer uninterrupted areas for decoration, but be streamlined enough to flatter the figure.

To fulfill these requirements, I have developed the Tabula Rasa Jacket pattern (FitForArtPatterns.com). Its natural shoulder line, relaxed fit, and vertical panel seams provide options for pattern blocking, while contributing to a slimming effect on the body. Unique to this design is its squared armhole shape: The underarm area is straight, not curved, and the sleeve attaches to a side panel in a horizontal seam. This makes fit adjustments and garment construction straightforward and quick.

This sleeve and armhole style is reminiscent of traditional ethnic garments, such as kimono or bog coats, where the sleeves are rectangles joined to a rectangular bodice. Those styles create excess fabric around the armholes and bust, which can distort or obscure fabric motifs or embellishment. To solve this, I've merged the squared underarm with a rounded, set-in shoulder style. The Tabula Rasa pattern provides flattering definition through the shoulders and falls softly over the body's curves below the armhole. It's streamlined and modern, while offering enough space in the bodice panels for creative embellishment or other design options.

I'll show you easy steps to a good fit with this pattern and demonstrate how simple the sewing is, as well. Finally, we'll look at some examples of how to use this design as the basis for a creative, mixed-print jacket.

Rae Cumbie is a teacher, designer, and president of the Association of Sewing and Design Professionals Charitable Foundation.



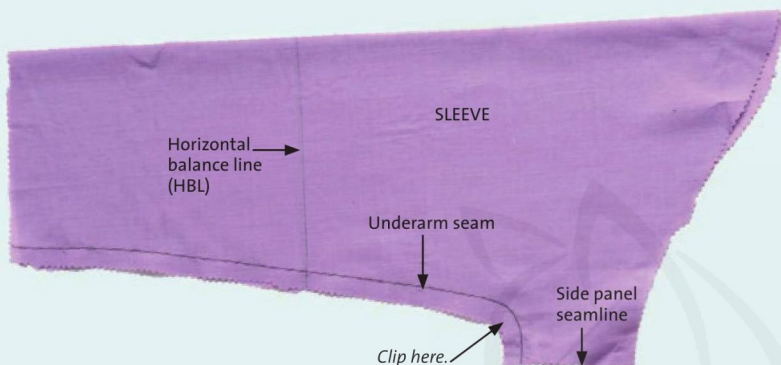
A straight underarm seam and side panels simplify jacket construction.

*Pattern: Tabula Rasa Jacket, FitforArtPatterns.
Fabrics: author's stash.*

Make a muslin

An excellent fit begins with a muslin test garment. The pattern shown is the Tabula Rasa Jacket from FitForArtPatterns.com. This design comes with different bust and hip pieces, so you can quickly choose the best size to start with. The clever construction sequence is the same one you'll use to make your jacket.

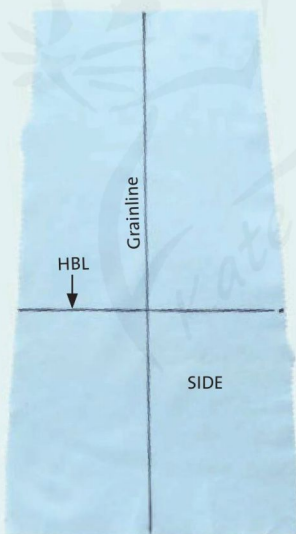
- 1 Cut and mark the muslin.** Use a solid, light-colored, heavyweight muslin or jacket-weight fabric. We used different colors to distinguish the jacket sections easily in photos. Cut the pieces and transfer the horizontal balance lines (HBLs) and grainlines to the fabric. These will aid in fitting.



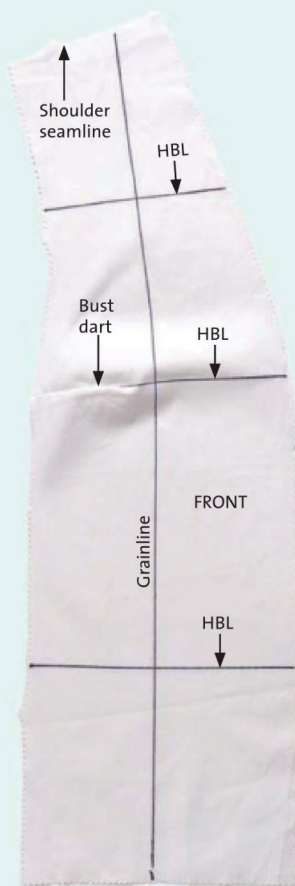
- 3 Baste the sleeve's underarm seam.** With right sides together, pin, then stitch, from the wrist to the underarm. Clip the curved section just under the arm, and press the seam allowances open.

tip

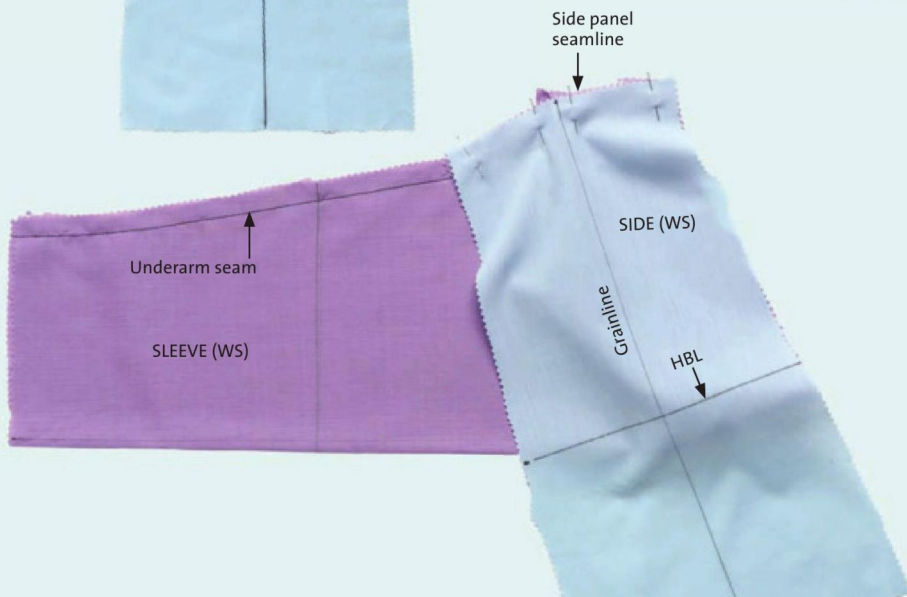
Fit the muslin, then use it as a master pattern. Change the neckline treatment, the cuffs, and even the shape of the side panels to get different looks.

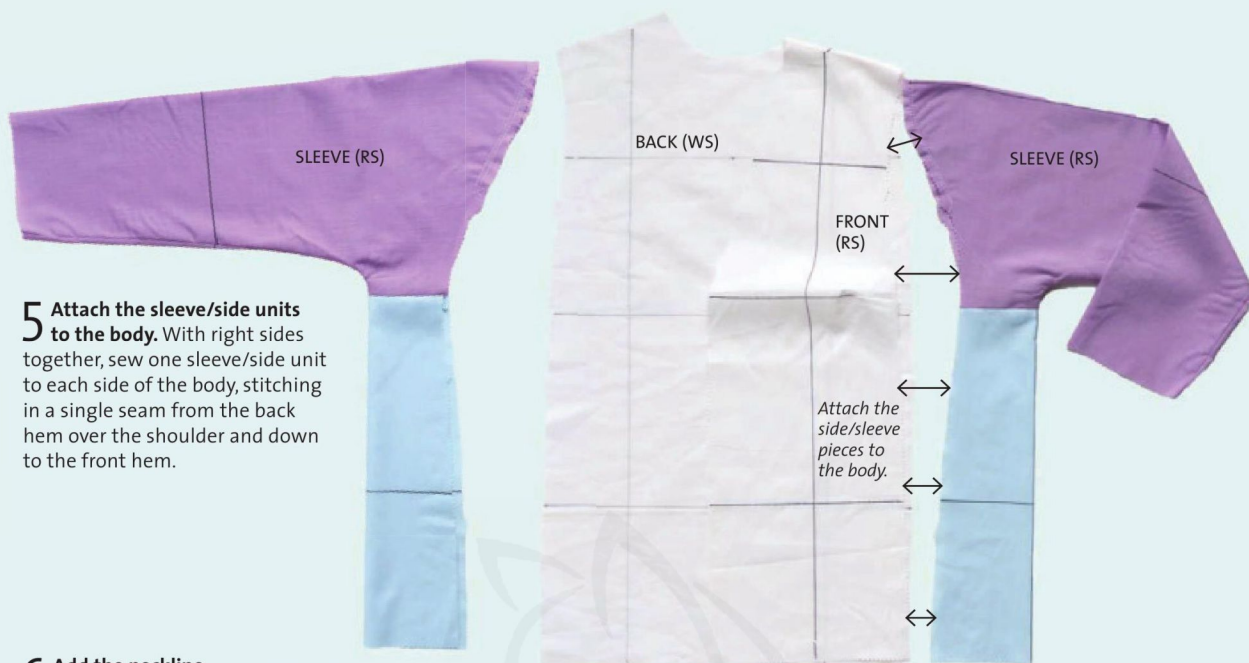


- 2 Baste the shoulder seams.** With right sides together, baste the fronts to the back at the shoulder seams. Stitch the bust darts, if you are working with a size that includes them.



- 4 Join the sleeves and the side panels.** With right sides together, baste a side panel at the sleeve side panel seamline.





5 Attach the sleeve/side units to the body. With right sides together, sew one sleeve/side unit to each side of the body, stitching in a single seam from the back hem over the shoulder and down to the front hem.

6 Add the neckline treatment. Sew the neckband or other finish to the muslin.



The linear patterns of menswear stripes, plaids, and checks work well with the jacket's straight seamlines.

Refine the fit

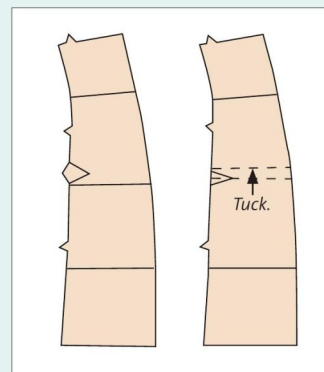
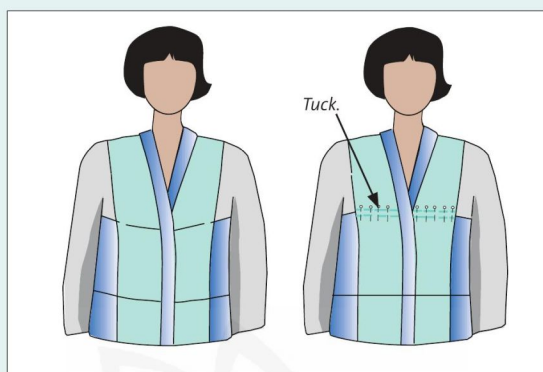
Put on the jacket and assess the fit, keeping in mind your fitting preferences. Here are some common fitting adjustments made easy by the square armhole design, and by consulting the HBLs marked on the muslin.

BUST ADJUSTMENTS

Assess the front HBLs first.

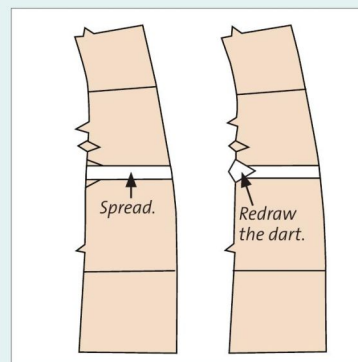
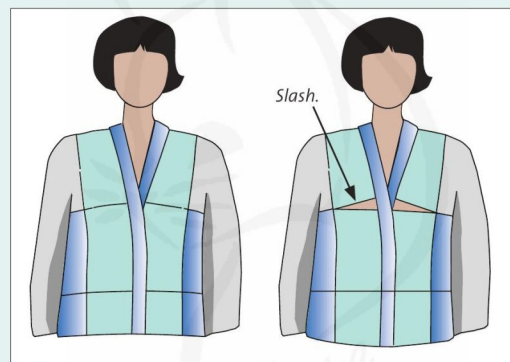
Too large at the bustline

If the middle and lower HBLs tilt downward at the center front, there is too much bust space. Pin a $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch to $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch tuck across the middle HBL until it and the lower HBL are parallel to the floor. Alter the pattern by folding along the middle HBL the amount you pinned out in the muslin. Then reduce the dart intake, or eliminate the dart if the tuck is the same depth.



Too small at the bustline

If the HBLs and the front hem curve upward, even slightly, more length is needed to accommodate the bust. Slash across the middle HBL from center front to the side-front seamline, and let the lower center-front piece slide down until the HBLs are parallel to the floor. Pin a muslin patch to fill the gap. Slash the front pattern across the middle HBL and spread it to add the needed length. Redraw the dart to accommodate the added length.



ROUNDED-BACK ADJUSTMENT

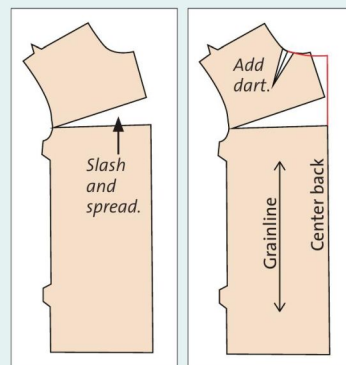
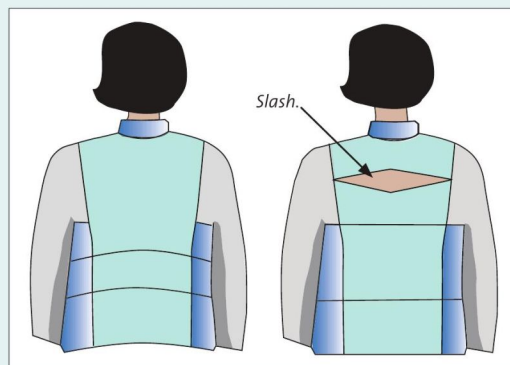
This common fit issue is revealed in several ways: The HBLs curve upward at the center back; drag lines radiate from the armhole toward the neckline or upper back; and the center-back hemline swings up and out. The following adjustment adds back-neck shaping darts and length in the upper back.

Alter the muslin

Slash across the upper back HBL, and let the lower jacket drop until the other HBLs are parallel to the floor. Pin fabric into the gap.

Alter the pattern

Slash across the upper HBL from the center back to the armscye, leaving a hinge. Spread the center back by the amount determined on the muslin, and tape paper to fill the gap. Next, reestablish the center-back foldline by continuing the low-back foldline toward the neckline edge. Extend the neckline to meet this new center-back line at a 90-degree angle. Measure the width of the addition and draft a dart this width, 2 inches long, at the neckline curve. Redraw the grainline.



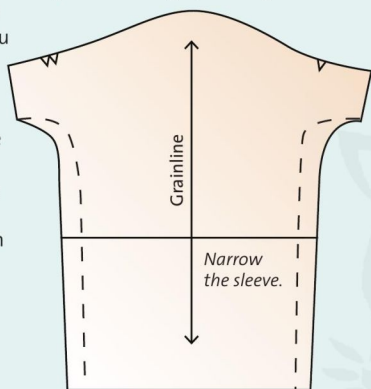
Photos: (p. 47; p. 49, bottom right; p. 51) Jack Deutsch; all others, Mike Yamin. Illustrations: Rae Cumbie and Rosann Berry. Stylist: Jessica Saal. Hair and makeup: Stacy Beneke. Styling credits: (p. 47; p. 51, bottom) tank top—J.N.C. International Concepts (Macys.com), pants—Dolan Left Coast Collection (Anthropologie.com); (p. 49; p. 51, top) earrings—J.N.C. International Concepts (Macys.com), tank top and pants—Charter Club (Macys.com).

SLEEVE ADJUSTMENTS

Streamline the sleeve fit or improve the hang of the sleeve if it twists with the following minor pattern changes. They can create a smoother look, yet retain plenty of ease for comfort and mobility.

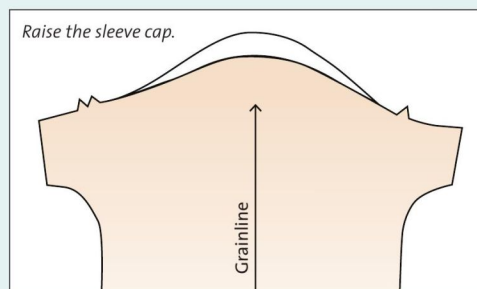
Underarm alteration

If you observe more fabric than desired through the underarm, pin out excess fabric along the sleeve underarm seam, through the sleeve length and into the armhole area as desired. Keep the grainlines straight. Stitch the pinned changes, then try on the muslin again to be sure you haven't removed too much ease. Change the pattern to reflect the amount you pinned out in the muslin.



Sleeve-cap fix

If the sleeve twists or the HBLs curve up toward the shoulder, you need to add sleeve-cap height. Release the armhole seams at the cap and pin in extra fabric, adjusting until the HBLs hang straight. Measure the added fabric at the cap. Add this to the sleeve pattern, between the front and back notches. The minimal ease this adds can be easily sewn into the armhole.



HIP ADJUSTMENTS

Add or reduce hip width in the side panels rather than in the front and back. This maintains the jacket's appearance while enabling you to achieve the desired amount of ease through the hip.

Enjoy the design opportunities

With its simple pattern shapes, flattering seamlines, and easy construction, this square armhole design is ripe for variations. These examples have a basic kimono-style neckline and front band and buttoned closures, but you can play with other neckline shapes, collars, and closures.

HIS-AND-HERS PRINTS

A pleasing assortment of menswear fabrics, including pinstripes and plaid, plus a bold, high-contrast floral print yield a jacket that's just right for a creative office environment.

Insert contrasting flat piping along select seamlines to define the sections and enhance the vertical lines.

Pattern: Tabula Rasa Jacket, FitforArtPatterns. Fabric: wool pinstripe, houndstooth, and large plaid, and wool challis, author's stash.



EXOTIC PRINT-BLOCKING

The organic plant print on a black background comes from a sarong. It is paired with black side panels, for a slimming effect, and bronze silk bands and piping.

The side-panel seams make it a cinch to install a patch pocket between the front band seam and the side-front seam.

Custom Patterns Tryout

My experience with three digital design services

BY ERICA REDFERN



Different pattern companies have different processes for customizing patterns, but all begin with taking body measurements.

If you're like me, you've found commercial patterns don't fit properly, necessitating precious time spent altering them. There's no shame in it: Everyone has to adjust patterns because commercial patterns are drafted to fit an average of measurements rather than an actual person. Generally speaking, they are drafted to fit a woman who is about 5 feet, 6 inches tall and has a figure with balanced proportions and a B-cup bust. Although patterns now come in sizes to better fit a greater range of women, not all women have proportions that match a single size. For example, my bust measurement indicates that I'm two pattern sizes larger on top than in skirts and pants. Most commercial patterns are simply not designed for people with disproportionate measurements anywhere on the body.

I set out to discover how the fit-challenged sewer could find patterns that don't require major adjustments. Today, custom sewing patterns are readily available online. Simply pick the pattern, add your measurements as the developer requires and, in minutes, a custom drafted pattern arrives in your email ready to print. The costs are much lower than average commercial patterns. I set out to test three of these services in order to find out if they were a viable alternative to commercial patterns.

MY INITIAL PLANNING

For my evaluation, I chose three garments with similar construction elements to ensure any fit issues could be ascribed to problems with measurements or adjustments rather than the garments' individual style. I selected button-up shirts, because the front placket highlights any bust-fitting imperfections.

Each of the three companies was selected based on the range of patterns and styles available. To use these services, you need a computer and a printer. A sewing buddy also will be helpful for the measuring process, as it is difficult to get accurate measurements by yourself.

• *BootstrapFashion*

This service requires only your measurements to create a custom pattern. BootstrapFashion has an online app that enables you to digitally audition colors and fabrics for each pattern piece. Most of the patterns are \$3.49, with some more or less expensive options.

• *Lekala Sewing Patterns*

This company uses measurements you input to customize its patterns. Designs from Lekala are royalty-free, meaning you can produce and sell clothes made from the patterns without committing copyright infringement. This service also gives you the option to create made-to-measure sewing patterns from scratch, without a commercial pattern base. The company's patterns are priced between \$1.99 and \$2.99.

• *Sew Fitography*

In addition to measurements, the site requires that you create a "body outline" with the Fitography Pattern Fitter software. The process uses photos of yourself and white tape, which enables the software to take your proportions into account. Before any patterns can be ordered, you must purchase the Fitography Pattern Fitter software. The \$30 software purchase includes points redeemable for two patterns. Patterns cost \$15, so the software price is recouped quickly.

WHAT TO TAKE AWAY

I enjoyed working with each of the pattern companies. It was especially interesting to see my body outline take shape with Sew Fitography. Overall, I would recommend these services as a shortcut to pattern fitting.

However, this is my experience, and I urge you to try a custom patterns service for yourself. I hope you learn from my mistakes and feel inspired by the results.

Erica Redfern is Threads' assistant editor.

BootstrapFashion

Patterns.*BootstrapFashion.com*

The Short-Sleeved Blouse with Yoke (\$3.49) has front and back yokes, a collar and collar band, bust darts, and back darts. In addition, it features faux welt pockets at the bustline and short set-in sleeves. The pattern recommends “woven fabric with drape, lightweight.”

The pattern includes brief but clear instructions, with no illustrations. It would, therefore, be appropriate for an intermediate-level sewer.

MEASURING

Bootstrap asked for six measurements, including bust, waist, and hip. These measurements were easy to obtain and input.

PROS/CONS

It is inexpensive, and there are many styles available. Most people will be able to find their aesthetic here. However, the sleeve pattern piece lacked notches to differentiate the front and back.

CHANGES TO FIT

The bust darts are too long; the dart point was beyond my bust apex, which caused slight fitting issues. If the darts were ½ inch shorter, the blouse would fit much better.

ADVICE FOR BETTER RESULTS

Pay attention to the Fit Adjustment section. There are a number of tools that help the service draft a pattern that better fits your proportions. Options include a full-bust adjustment, increasing armhole size, changing the waist level, and so on. This is valuable if your proportions differ from “normal.”

GENERAL NOTES

With this service, seam allowances are an extra 50 cents. While I was impressed by the fit in general, I would still recommend making a muslin to check for small fit changes, like the dart alteration needed on my shirt.



Though the shirt fits relatively well, the wrinkles at the bust and back indicate minor fit issues.



Fabric: Pure Elements cotton, courtesy of Art Gallery Fabrics.

Lekala Sewing Patterns

Lekala.co

Blouse 4002 (\$2.99) features a back yoke and forward shoulder seam, as well as bust darts, side panels, two-piece sleeves, and a collar and collar band. The original pattern included a sleeve bow, which I omitted. The pattern recommends "blouse fabric, cotton, polyester, viscose."

The pattern includes concise instructions, with no illustrations. It would be appropriate for an intermediate-level sewer.

MEASURING

Lekala required eight measurements, including bust, neck, and upper arm. The additional measurements were rewarded with a good fit.

PROS/CONS

It's less expensive than most commercial patterns, and Lekala has many vintage-inspired designs. However, there was no pattern layout included, and both pattern pieces of the two-part sleeve lacked notches to determine which side was the front.

CHANGES TO FIT

Similar to the BootstrapFashion shirt, the Lekala shirt has bust darts that were too long and didn't fit my bust properly. The same adjustment would fix this issue.

ADVICE FOR BETTER RESULTS

Lekala also has a Fit Adjustment section that enables you to change certain proportions on the garment. It does not include measurements. Rather, it asks if your proportions in a certain area are normal, reduced, or increased. This is a helpful option if your proportions differ from standard.

GENERAL NOTES

With this service as well, seam allowances are an extra 50 cents. The notions list for my button-up shirt included an invisible zipper, which was not necessary. Double-check the notions to make sure you obtain the needed supplies and that none are superfluous.

Fabric: Pure Elements cotton,
courtesy of Art Gallery Fabrics.



This shirt fits well at the neck and waist. Drag lines at the bust and back indicate fit issues in those areas.

Sew Fitography

SewFitography.com

The Sasha Shirt (\$15.00) has extended shoulders, back yoke, collar and collar band, tailored sleeve placket, sleeve cuffs, front placket opening, breast pockets, and front and back waist darts. Bust darts will be included, if needed, based on measurements. The shirt's length can be adjusted from hip length to 5 inches below

the hip. I added 3 inches to the length of mine and removed the breast pockets so that they would not obscure any fitting issues in the bust area. The pattern recommends "shirting, lightweight broadcloth, sateen, crepe de Chine."

The pattern includes clear, illustrated instructions. An advanced beginner would likely be able to sew this shirt.

MEASURING

Sew Fitography was a different experience from the other two companies. Fitography software creates a digital outline that enables you to fit the patterns to your measurements and proportions. You are directed to mark 15 key measurement points with contrasting tape, such as bust apex, center-front waist, shoulder, biceps, and so on. Then take eight photos, front, back, and both sides, from eye level and waist level. The photos must be taken from the same distance so the perspective isn't skewed. Using a tripod or other stable device to support the camera is helpful because the photos must be at the same angle and position to work properly.

You must upload the photos into the Fitography software. The tape marks where you place small nodes to create the outline. The nodes must be placed as close as possible to the lines of your body. Placement greatly affects the outcome. The directions for taking pictures and using the software are clear, which makes creating the outline simple. In addition to the photos, the software uses six measurements to create an accurate outline of your body.

It takes time to make the outline, but you do it only once, unless your body changes or you're unhappy with the fit. The photos create a whole-body outline, so it works for most garments.

PROS/CONS

The process, from the photos to creating the outline, takes half a day, and the pattern selection is not currently as extensive as those offered by the other pattern companies in this article. However, the pieces are essentials that everyone can appreciate.

CHANGES TO FIT

The side bust darts were too low, but, as you'll read in the next section, that may have been my mistake. The armholes seams curved in more than on a typical pattern. With further refinements to my outline, I see potential for a successful fit.

ADVICE FOR BETTER RESULTS

Fitography will create your body outline for an additional \$30. I created mine, and I suspect that the odd fitting around the arms and bust is due to human error. Your outline can be used with all the company's patterns, so the additional cost may be worth it.

GENERAL NOTES

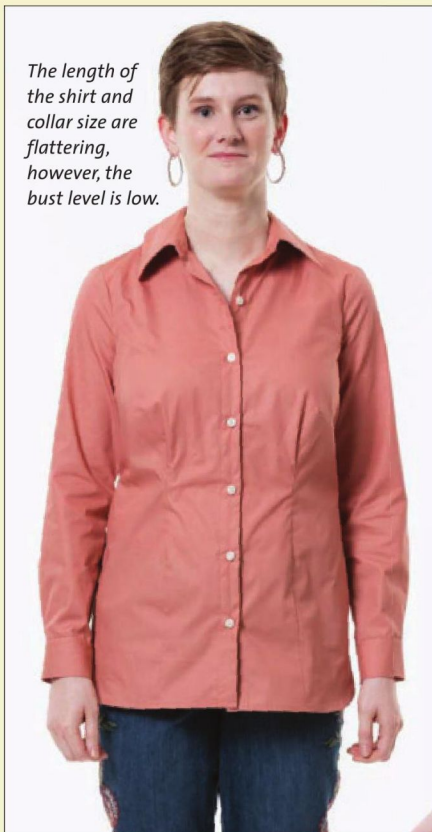
If I created a second outline, I would have better results because I understand how the process works. Excellent reviews online speak to the software's potential. I would like to try Fitography again to see if what I learned would help yield a better-fitting garment.



The taped square on the ground ensured that I was in the same position for every photo.

Photos: (pp. 52 and 56) Mike Yamin; all others, Jack Deutsch. Stylist: Jessica Saal. Hair and makeup: Stacy Benetke. Styling credits: (p. 54) earrings—Jcrew.com, pants—Style & Co. (Macys.com), shoes—Abound (Nordstrom Rack); (p. 55) earrings—Kelly & Katie (DSW.com), bracelet—Lucky Brand (Macys.com), jeans—Articles of Society (Macys.com), shoes—Vince Camuto (DSW.com); (p. 57) earrings—Lucky Brand (Macys.com), jeans—Style & Co. (Macys.com), shoes—Gunnmetal (DSW.com).

The length of the shirt and collar size are flattering, however, the bust level is low.



The sleeve cap needed more ease, but the waist level was accurate and well-defined.

Fabric: Pure Elements cotton, courtesy of Art Gallery Fabrics.

web extra

For direct links to more digital pattern services, visit [ThreadsMagazine.com](https://www.threadsmagazine.com).





Show your quiet—or bold—side with a reversible knit top. Contrasting serged seams create interesting style lines on the print side.

Pattern: top, McCall's 7538; skirt, author's design. Fabric: Interlock twist yarn (ITY) knit, author's stash.

Single Layer & Reversible

Apply clever engineering to double-faced fabrics

BY BECKY FULGONI

I love the concept of reversible garments, especially for traveling. Packing items that serve double duty means more outfit choices and more room in my suitcase for souvenir fabric. The catch is that most reversible garments are two pieces: an outer layer and a lining that can be turned to the outside. This doesn't lighten the suitcase at all. I have also found that double-layer garments usually hang nicely on one side, but pull and bunch when reversed. Edges cause problems as well, when one side shows where it shouldn't.

My solution is to use double-faced fabrics and smart sewing methods to create truly reversible, single-layer garments. They're stylish, useful, and fun to design and sew. The key to success is to create seams and details that work on both sides. If you are like me and want the inside to look as good as the outside, then double-faced, reversible garments let you geek out on all those lovely, and usually hidden, sewing details. I recommend making test samples of each detail to discover any potential problem areas before you work on the garment.

TWO RIGHT SIDES

A true double-faced fabric has two distinct "right" sides, often different from each other and sometimes of different fibers. These can be woven or knit. I grab these whenever I see them

because they are difficult to find.

Many printed and dyed fabrics have a wrong side that is different from the intended right side, and is equally attractive. These textiles provide great opportunities for coordinated but distinct garment sides. Fabrics with complex weave patterns, such as jacquards, metallics, and some brocades, often have a beautiful reverse side that incorporates the same colors. Consider using these for garments that reverse from casual to dressy. Even upholstery fabrics sometimes have surprising wrong sides and are good options for jackets. In each case, be sure both sides are comfortable, if the garment will be in contact with your skin.

DUAL-DUTY DESIGNS

Garment elements that may require rethinking in a reversible garment include darts, curved seams, areas that need stabilization or interfacing, closures, pockets, collars, and plackets.

Because seam allowances are finished on both sides, it is impossible to 'tweak' the fit with seam adjustments, so fit the pattern first. Experiment with the techniques shown, and you'll multiply your wardrobe options—and your creativity.

Becky Fulgoni of Kalamazoo, Michigan, designs, sews, blogs at TBalloons.Blogspot.com, and is a Threads digital ambassador.

Seam and hem treatments

When considering how to treat the seams, decide whether the allowances should match or contrast with the garment. Experiment with your fashion fabric to determine how wide a seam allowance you'll need and whether the method is viable on curved as well as straight seams.

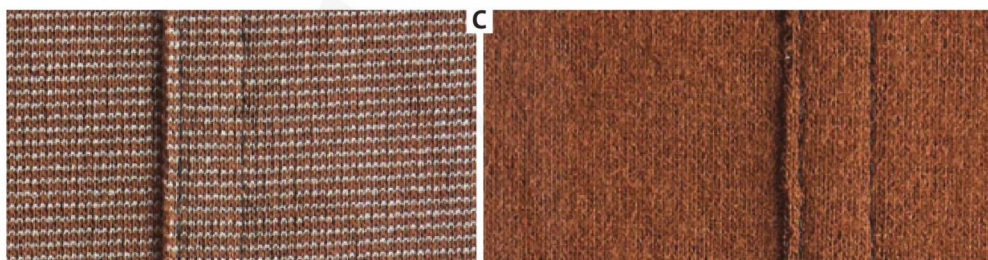
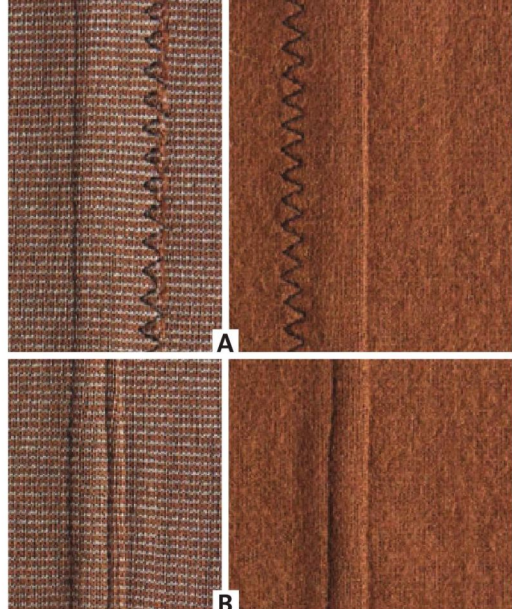
MATCHING SEAMS

The seam allowances match the fabric on both sides, for subtle definition.

Pressed and topstitched (A): Trim one seam allowance narrower than the other, and press both allowances to one side, to cover and enclose the narrow one. Topstitch along the raw edge; a zigzag stitch is a decorative option.

Flat-felled (B): This is a good choice for loosely woven or ravelly textiles. It provides a clean, unobtrusive finish.

Lapped (C): Ideal for bulky and heavyweight fabrics, as well as most knits, this treatment presents an opportunity for a raw-edge detail.



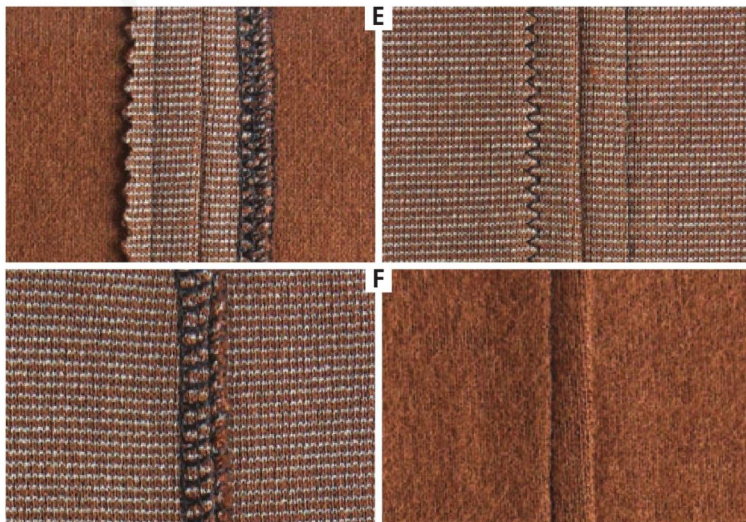
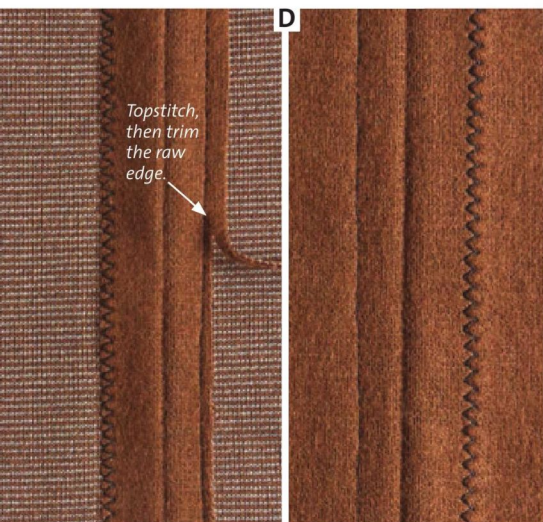
CONTRASTING SEAMS

A conventionally stitched or serged seam places high-contrast seam allowances on the fabric's reverse side. Make these a design feature.

Pressed open and topstitched (D): Turn under the edges, or leave them raw on fabrics that don't ravel. Topstitch with a straight or zigzag stitch. This is simple and balances the seam allowance bulk.

Serged or pinked (E): Serge or pink each seam allowance first, then press the allowances open and topstitch flat with a straight or zigzag stitch, for a decorative finish.

Faux flat-felled (F): Serge the seam, press the allowances to one side, and topstitch to secure. This method is quick and leaves a narrower visible allowance.



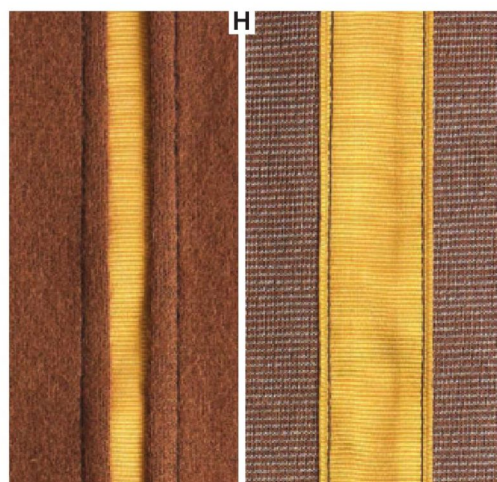
BOUND AND COVERED SEAMS

Add a decorative touch to beautifully finished seams with contrasting binding or trim.

Hong Kong finish (G): For an eye-catching finish, sew the seam conventionally, then cover the seam allowance edges with a contrasting bias strip. Finally, stitch in the ditch of the binding seam, through all layers, to anchor the seam allowance to the fabric.

Slot seam (H): Fold the seam allowances under and trim to 1/4 inch wide. Apply narrow fusible web tape along the folded allowance, and fuse the edge to a ribbon strip. Topstitch 3/16 inch from the fold to secure. Repeat on the other edge. The effect is intriguing from both faces.

Covered seam (I): Sew the seam, press the allowances open, and trim them to about 1/8 inch wide. Lay a single-fold bias strip over the allowances and edgestitch to secure. This creates a bold line that's also flat.



HEMS AND EDGES

When possible, coordinate the hem finish with the seam treatment. Neckline and armhole edges can be finished similarly. Bindings and narrow facings are a great alternative to standard wide facings on curved edges.

Conventional topstitched (J): Serge the hem allowance edge or leave it raw. Press it up, and topstitch as desired.

Matching facing (K): Apply a fabric strip so its face matches the face to which you turn it. Press under the facing's upper edge or leave it raw, and secure it with a straight or zigzag stitch.

Contrasting facing (L): Apply a facing of contrasting fabric.



Hong Kong finish (M): Wrap the hem allowance edge with a contrasting bias strip, and stitch in the ditch to secure.



Pocket science

Because many of my reversible garments are intended for travel, pockets are a must. Finding ways to make pockets accessible from both sides of the garments is a fun challenge. One solution is a patch pocket that can be accessed from both sides. The other is a hanging pocket that can be moved from one side to the other through an opening.

IN-SEAM/PATCH POCKET COMBO

1 Add a seam for the pocket opening. This can be horizontal or diagonal. Sew the seam, leaving the pocket opening unsewn. Press the seam allowances open and topstitch them.



2 Create the patch pocket. This should cover the entire in-seam pocket opening; it can be larger if desired. Add a faced opening along one edge. In this example, it is at the side seam.



3 Attach the patch pocket. Lay it over the in-seam pocket opening and pin in place. Stitch around the edges. You can fold them under and edgestitch, or incorporate them into garment seams or edges.



HANGING POCKET

1 Create the pocket. Start with a pocket bag that includes an extension at the top, which will be anchored to the garment above the pocket opening. Sew two pocket bags to the back, with right sides together. The example is shown only partially stitched.



2 Finish the pocket. Turn the outer pocket bag to the back's reverse side, so there is a pocket bag on each side. Press under the back extension's upper edges. Topstitch around the pocket edges and 1 inch above the bags' upper edges.

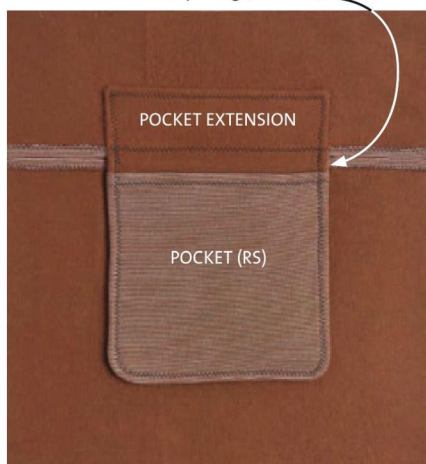
web extra

To see more reversible details for double-faced fabrics, visit ThreadsMagazine.com.

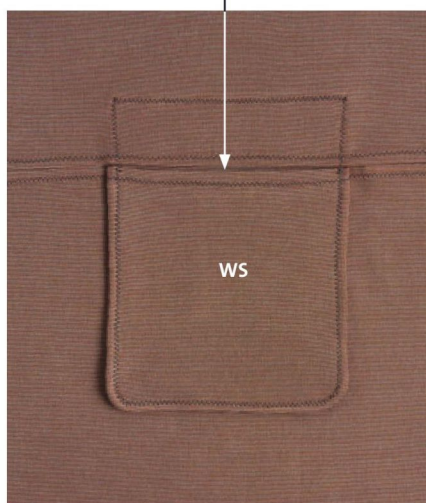
3 Make the in-seam pocket opening. Add a horizontal seam $\frac{1}{2}$ inch to 1 inch above the desired pocket opening. Sew the seam, leaving it unstitched in the pocket opening area. Press the allowances open and topstitch the lower allowance.

4 Attach the pocket. Lay the completed pocket on the garment, with its extension above the in-seam pocket opening. Topstitch around the extension edges, then across the upper seam allowance and across the pocket extension. When the garment is worn, the pocket can be moved from one garment face to the other through the in-seam opening.

In-seam opening (beneath)

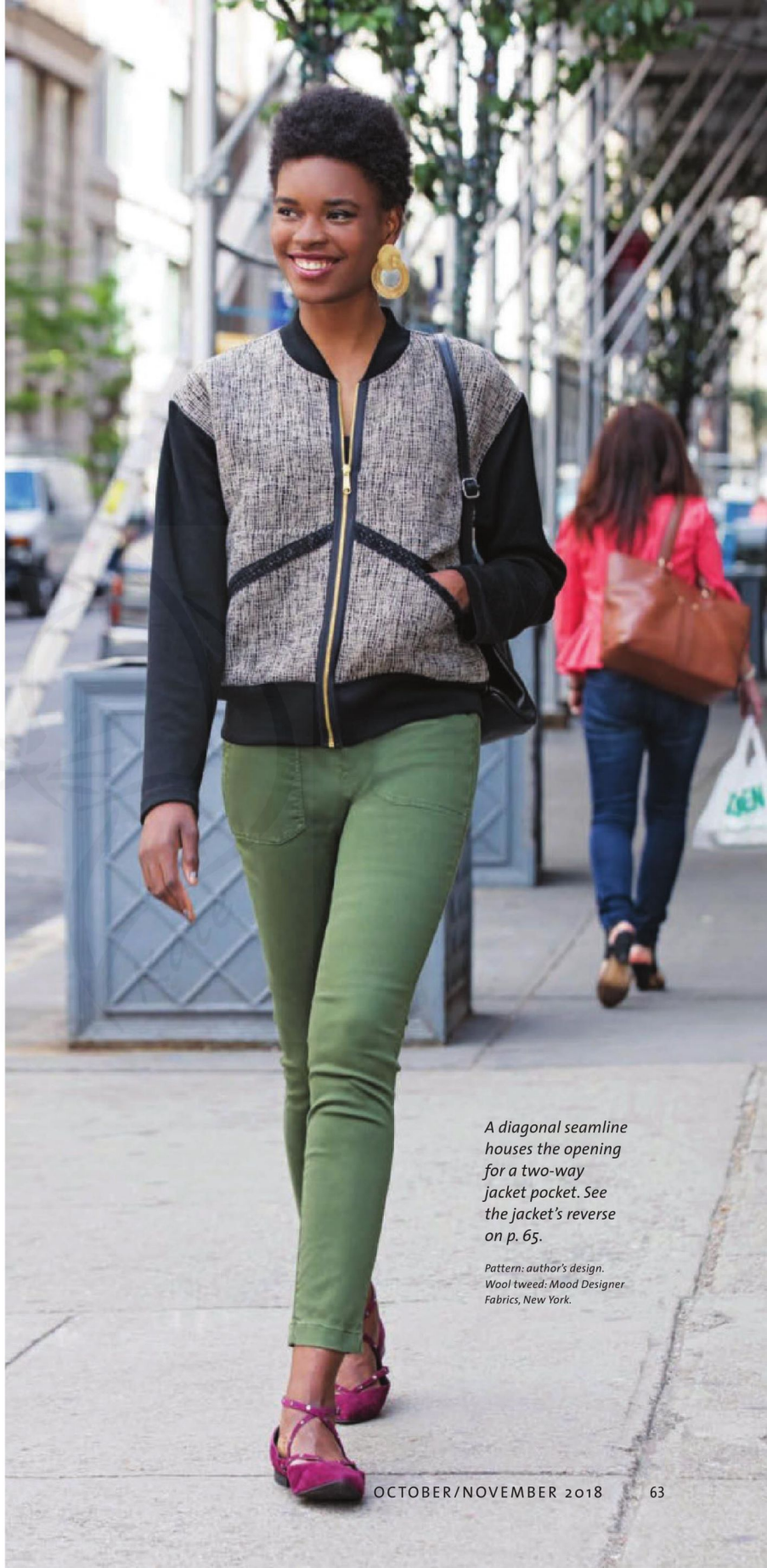


In-seam opening



A diagonal seamline houses the opening for a two-way jacket pocket. See the jacket's reverse on p. 65.

*Pattern: author's design.
Wool tweed: Mood Designer
Fabrics, New York.*





Closure options

There are a variety of ways to close a reversible garment, and it's important that the closures work well and look good from both sides. Consider a few examples of attractive, functional dual-sided closures.

REVERSIBLE ZIPPERS

Seek out zippers with reversible sliders. Install them with an exposed application method, then embellish the zipper tape on the side where it's fully visible. Topstitch, stencil or stamp, or sew on decorative trim (A). Only the zipper teeth and topstitching show on the reverse side (B).

REMOVABLE PINS

Finish both opening edges as desired with a binding (as shown), a facing, or by turning and topstitching. Overlap and fasten with a decorative pin (C).



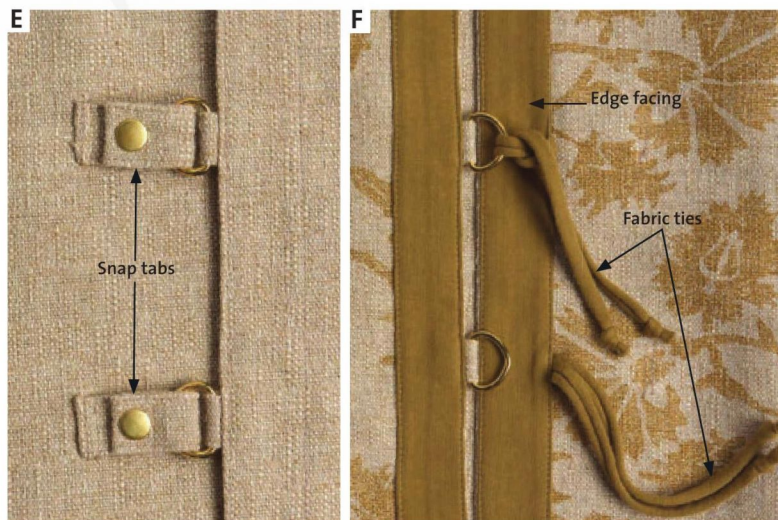
TWO-WAY SNAPS

Add gripper snaps using decorative snap heads on the ball and socket, in place of the rings usually found on the inside section. The snaps look good from both garment faces (D).



RINGS, TABS, AND TIES

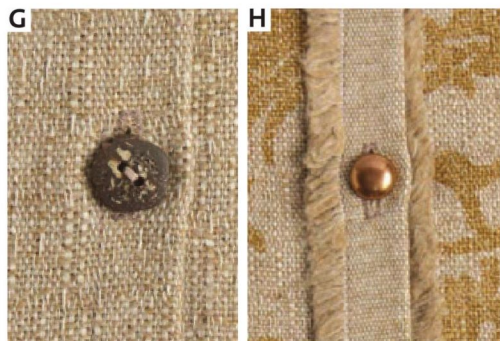
Attach D- or O-rings to one edge with fabric tabs. Face the opening edges. On the opposite side, add small snap tabs on one face (E), and fabric ties on the other (F).





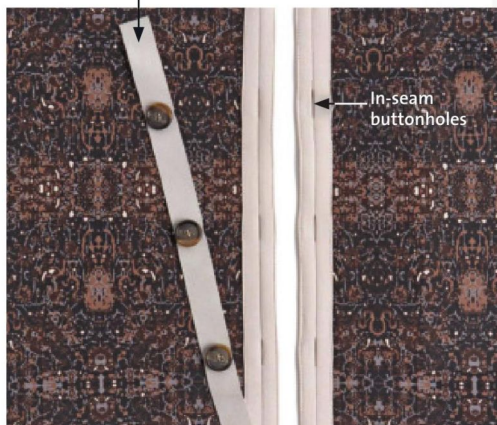
CHANGEABLE BUTTONS

Finish the opening edges and sew buttonholes on both sides. Make double buttons by joining a flat button (G) to a shank button (H). Insert the buttons through the two sides to fasten.

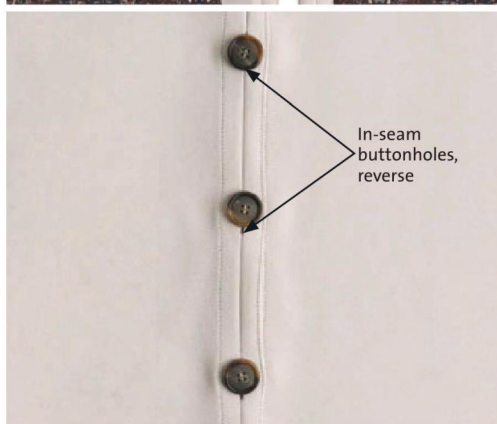


Alternatively, attach the buttons to a ribbon strip and switch it when you reverse the garment. Try in-seam buttonholes for a clean finish on both sides.

Buttons on a ribbon



In-seam buttonholes



In-seam buttonholes, reverse



Turn the jacket on p. 63 inside out for a new look. This side features a patch pocket in matching fabric.

Photos: (p. 58, p. 63, right) Jack Deutsch; all others, Mike Yamin. Stylist: Jessica Saal. Hair and makeup: Stacy Benete. Styling credits: (p. 58) earrings—DKNY (Macy's.com), necklace—Lucky Brand (Macy's.com), handbag—Nanette Lepore (DSW.com), boots—Enzo Angiolini (DSW.com); (p. 63) earrings—Guess (Macy's.com), pants—Crew.com; (p. 63 and p. 65) backpack—Coach and Four (DSW.com), shoes—Rebecca Minkoff (DSW.com); (p. 65) earrings and necklace—Anthropologie.com, belt—Calvin Klein (Macy's.com), jeans—Top Shop (Nordstrom Rack).



March to your own beat when it comes to sewing coordinates. Start with a cornerstone fabric.

web extra

See every outfit combination possible at ThreadsMagazine.com.

Three Capsule Wardrobes

From one pattern, create personalized ensembles

Observe the differences three people make when they build personalized ensembles from the same pattern. No two sewing enthusiasts create the same garment designs, and fascinating details are found in the variations.

Threads editors come across great techniques, interesting new patterns, and exciting fabrics every day. To combine expertise with inspiration, we brainstormed three capsule wardrobes from Simplicity's ensemble pattern, *Threads* 8748, a collection of coordinates for knit fabrics with a pencil skirt, pull-on pants, mock-turtleneck top, and wrap jacket with shaped raglan sleeves. We paired knits with stretch wovens and found wonderful choices for their comfort and versatility. Many of these fabrics are easy-care and simple to sew, although, as you will see,

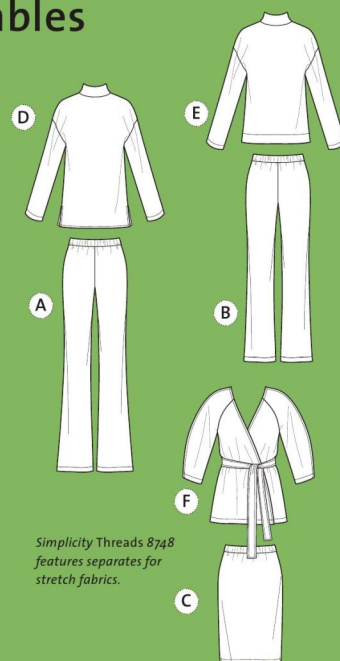
you can expect even better results when you refine your techniques.

Making garments that intentionally mix and match is a great way to start building an integral wardrobe and fashioning amazing travel clothes.

Threads Senior Technical Editor Carol J. Fresia, Editorial Assistant and accomplished weaver Katie Strano, and I applied wardrobe preferences to the fabric selections, then chose techniques and modifications based on experience, appropriateness to the fabrics, and individual style.

Have fun with us and sew your own capsule wardrobe. We'd like to see what you made and hear what you learned. Post your creations in our online gallery at ThreadsMagazine.com.

Sarah McFarland is Threads' editor.



Simplicity Threads 8748 features separates for stretch fabrics.

Shine in textured metallics

I opted for a multitextured assortment of fabrics in black, silver, and gray, all of which coordinate with the centerpiece of the capsule, the jacket's lofty magenta bouclé. My adjustments to the garments' construction enabled me to take full advantage of each textile's characteristics. —Carol

FABRICATIONS

Silver metallic jersey

Boxy silhouettes easily overwhelm me, so I wanted a drapery fabric for the turtleneck top. This black and silver metallic is lightweight and fluid, with lots of stretch in both directions.



Gray stretch denim

Although the pattern calls for knits with 25-percent stretch across the grain, I wanted a crisp woven for the pants. I chose woven denim with 50-percent stretch on the lengthwise grain, and cut the pants on the cross-grain so the stretch travels around the body. Because the denim is stretchier than the prescribed knits, I took in the side seams by 1½ inch, for a total reduction of 2 inches in circumference at the waist and hip.



Magenta/metallic knit bouclé

This wool/polyester blend fabric was my starting point for the entire ensemble. I couldn't resist the rich color, silver accent yarn, and thick, cozy hand. It offers the look of a classic tweed but with 20-percent widthwise stretch and a lovely drape.



Black patterned reversible ponte knit

For a pencil skirt, I love stretch, so I selected a rayon/nylon/polyester/spandex ponte knit with 40-percent stretch lengthwise and widthwise. It has dots on one side and stripes on the other. I made the skirt reversible so I could enjoy both faces.



Carol is 5 feet, 6 inches tall. Her upper body is pattern size 10 and lower body is pattern size 12.

All fabrics: EmmaOneSock.com. Separating zipper with herringbone tape: PacificTrimming.com.

Photos: (pp. 66 and 68) Jack Deutsch; (p. 69) Mike Yamin. Illustrations: courtesy of Simplicity Pattern Co. Stylists: (p. 66 and 68) Jessica Saal; (p. 69) Carol J. Fresia. Hair and makeup: (pp. 66 and 68) Stacy Beneke. Styling credits: (p. 66, left; p. 68) earrings, belt, and bracelet—I.N.C. International Concepts (Macys.com); shirt—DKNY (Macys.com); boots—Marc Fisher (DSW.com); (p. 69) shoes—Reebok (T.J. Maxx).

Stretch-denim pants are as comfy as yoga pants yet, office-appropriate.

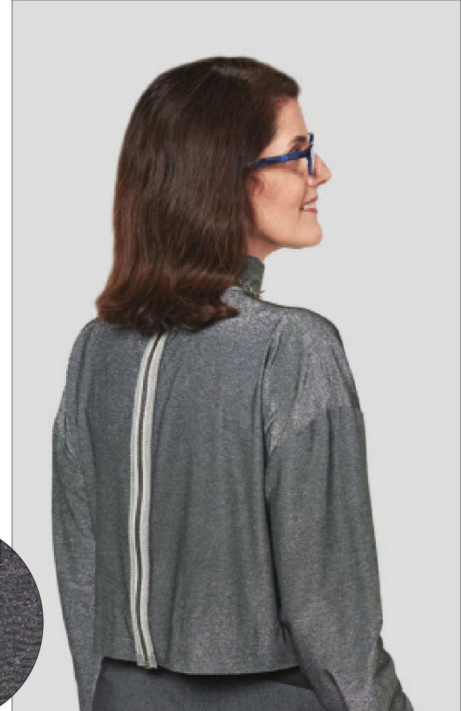
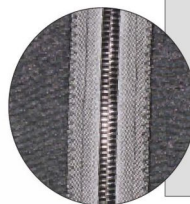


On the striped fabric side, the skirt seams look sporty. On the dotted side, they are nearly invisible.

TECHNIQUES

Exposed, separating zipper

Play up the back-neck zipper detail by extending it to the full length of the top and adding a decorative separating zipper in an exposed application. First, I cropped the top to fall just above waist level, and measured the center-back seam from the turtleneck's upper edge to the hem. I interfaced the wrong side of the center-back seam allowances for stability, pressed the allowances to the right side, and topstitched the zipper in place over them. A row of zigzag stitches secures the zipper tape edges.



Reversible skirt

My skirt fabric called out to be used in a reversible garment. Inspired by Becky Fulgoni's "Single-Layer & Reversible," p. 58, I constructed the skirt with seams that look good on both sides. The seam allowances are finished with contrast serging, and then topstitched flat with black zigzag stitches. The hem and waistband are finished similarly.



Piped sleeves

The Simplicity jacket is designed for fabrics with body, so the sleeves can maintain a modern, sculptural shape. To emphasize the silhouette, I added black, faux-leather flat piping in the overarm seams.



Faux-leather flat piping

Boost a limited palette with prints

Pieces I choose to add to my wardrobe need to coordinate easily and transition from the office to kindergarten pickup. For this mini wardrobe, I decided to work with my core neutrals: black, blue, and white, and to sneak in a few prints. I made alterations to each piece to ensure the most use and wear from every garment. —Katie



Katie is 5 feet, 8 inches tall. She worked with pattern size 16, and lengthened the View C pencil skirt to midi length.

Fabrics: ponte knit, denim (in-store only), and bonded wool: Mood Designer Fabrics, New York; cotton twill, woven by Katie Strano.

FABRICATIONS

Ecru and black ponte knit

There is something about a black-and-white stripe that keeps me coming back. This top is a simple shape, so I wanted to use a classic fabric to make a timeless-looking wardrobe staple.



Navy and black bonded velour/knit

This floral-motif fabric looks elegant, yet it is warm and comfortable to wear; it's perfect for cold New England winters. I wanted the skirt to be a piece that I could dress up or down, and this knit wool paired with luxurious velour fit the bill.



Dark blue stretch denim

The pattern calls for 25-percent stretch knits, but my choice of woven cotton/Lycra stretch denim fabric does not meet that criterion. On grain it has about 10-percent stretch, and on the cross-grain it has 20-percent stretch. I made a quick muslin with similar fabric to check whether I needed to add a zipper. There is only about a 1 inch difference between my hips and low waist, so I was able to get by without adding a zipper.



Handwoven cotton twill

For the jacket, I wanted to subtly mimic and play with the idea of denim. Classic denim is woven in a 2/1 twill with indigo yarn in the warp and natural white yarn in the weft. I flipped my yarns around and wove a warp of natural cotton with a weft of black and dark blue cotton slub yarns. The cloth is woven in a 1/3 twill, making the weft yarn the dominant color. This fabric only stretches on the bias. However, it worked with the lofty, structural cut of the jacket.



Photos: (p. 70, left) Jack Deutsch; (all others on pp. 70–71) Mike Yamin. Stylist: (p. 70) Jessica Saal; (p. 71) Katie Strano. Hair and makeup: (p. 70) Stacy Beneke. Styling credits: (p. 56, center; p. 70) earrings—J.N.C. International Concepts (Macys.com), bracelet and shirt—Crew.com, shoes—Vince Camuto (DSW.com); (p. 71) shoes—Michael Kors (model's own).

TECHNIQUES

Top adjustments

I adjusted the top to suit my body and my choice of bold striped fabric. Because I am prone to pulling at mid to high turtlenecks, I reduced the turtleneck's height by $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. To do this, I took $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches off the collar pattern's width. This shorter collar allowed me to eliminate the back-neck zipper. I made View D and lengthened the slide slits. My hips are about $5\frac{1}{2}$ inches wider than my chest so higher vents keep shirts with straight cuts from stretching across my tummy. I also made the sleeves three-quarter length to reduce the garment's visual width at hip level.



Extended side vents make it easier to access the added pants pockets.

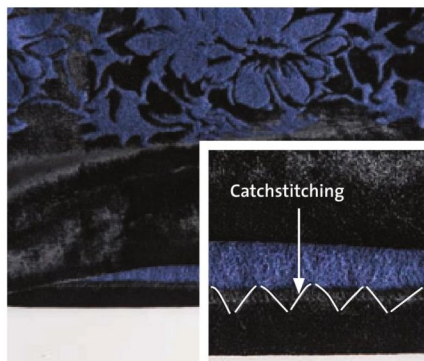
In-seam pockets

I love pockets and add them to pants, dresses, and skirts just about every chance I get. For these pants, I used Kathleen Cheetham's method of adding in-seam pockets from "The Low Profile Pocket," *Threads* #195 (Feb./March 2018). The top of the pocket pouch is sewn into the waistline to prevent the pocket from gaping. This technique was essential to a successful in-seam pocket with the stretch denim. The pants were cut 2 inches shorter than View A. I like to cuff my pants, and this length was perfect for a double-rolled cropped look. I chose to keep the edges raw but didn't want the pants to look messy. My solution was to put in a row of stitching $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the cut edge of each leg and then remove the weft yarn, row by row, up to the stitches.



Catchstitched hem

The skirt hem was cut on the fabric's selvage to create a bold velvet border. I did not want a seamline showing on the velvet, so, after serging the cut edge, I used Kenneth D. King's quick method of hand-sewing a catchstitch, explained in "You Say Underlining, I Say Interlining," *Threads* #135 (Feb./March 2008). Each stitch takes a prick on the hem allowance and on the surface fabric to create a flat join that is invisible from the right side.



Build basics around a wild card

The centerpiece of my capsule wardrobe is a wool-blend flame-stitch knit. Its colors inspired the fabric choices for the rest of the pieces. Mix-and-match knit separates are a welcome addition to a winter wardrobe for the office, and the pencil skirt is my favorite skirt silhouette. Aside from a ponte, I worked with uncommon knits that were new sewing experiences for me. I made sure to plan and test needles and stitching techniques on swatches first. —Sarah

FABRICATIONS

Wool-blend chevron knit

The strikingly colorful zigzag knit incorporates textured yarns held in place by black chain stitches. The chain stitches, clearly visible on the wrong side, run parallel to the selvage. Sold as a flame-stitch knit, this fabric has stretch on the lengthwise and crosswise grain; however, it ravels if you so much as look at it. Cut edges require serging or alternative finishing to stay stable.

Taupe stretch faux suede

This polyester and spandex blend knit has a heavy drape and rich texture. It also has plentiful stretch, and both faces have a brushed, suede-like texture. Of course, it required a with-nap layout. Although the fabric did not stick to the presser foot or throat plate, it did “grip” the plastic sewing machine bed.

Black ponte knit

A straightforward cotton/polyester/spandex ponte knit with 40-percent stretch lengthwise and widthwise worked for the jacket sleeves, appliquéd top, and a pencil skirt. The ponte has wonderful body to hold the curved jacket sleeve shape. This dense knit required a stretch needle to avoid skipped stitches.

Nude swimsuit lining

To keep the double-faced stretch suede pencil skirt hanging smoothly over winter tights, add a stretch lining. Swimsuit lining fabric was the choice. It is inexpensive, easy to care for, and has two-way stretch.

Raspberry double knit

Chosen to match the zigzag knit, this double knit has a texture and look like diamond matelassé. It was easy to cut and sew, as it did not ravel, and it pressed neatly on the iron's setting for synthetics.

Sarah is 5 feet, 9 inches tall. She worked with pattern size 14, and lengthened the view F jacket body by 5 inches.

Fabrics: flame stitch knit and stretch faux suede, MoodFabrics.com; black ponte knit, raspberry double-knit, and knit swimsuit lining, JoAnn Fabric and Craft Stores.

Photos: (p. 72, left) Jack Deutsch; (p. 73, bottom left) Sarah McFarland; (all others on pp. 72–73) Mike Yamin; Stylist: (p. 72) Jessica Saal; (p. 73) Sarah McFarland. Hair and makeup: (p. 72) Stacy Beneke. Styling credits: (p. 66, right; p. 72) earrings—Kelly & Katie (DSW.com), bracelet—Crew.com, boots—Muk Luks (DSW.com); (p. 73, top and bottom) model's own.



Dart →

You can use a single pin to denote the level of the serged dart point.

TECHNIQUES

Serged darts

To reduce bulk in the stretch suede skirt, serge the darts. I was inspired by Pamela Leggett's "Serge Darts for Knits," a post on [ThreadsMagazine.com](https://www.threadsmagazine.com). I used a narrow three-thread overlock stitch to serge from the waistline to the dart point. To finish the darts, tunnel the thread ends from the dart point into the serger stitches with a darning needle.

One jacket, two tops, and three skirts have the potential to make nine outfits. Not shown, a taupe skirt in faux suede.

Stretch skirt lining

Cut the skirt front and back from swimsuit lining fabric, with a few adjustments. I narrowed the front and back lining pieces $\frac{1}{2}$ inch by moving the cut-on-fold pattern edge $\frac{1}{4}$ inch outside the folded fabric edge. I also shortened the skirt lining by $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. This was to ensure the lining would not extend beyond the skirt hem. After sewing the lining's side seams, sew the lining hem, with a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch hem allowance and a zigzag or stretch stitch. Next, with wrong sides together, incorporate the lining into the seam between the skirt and waistband. The lining, cut slightly smaller, does a nice job of smoothing around the body.

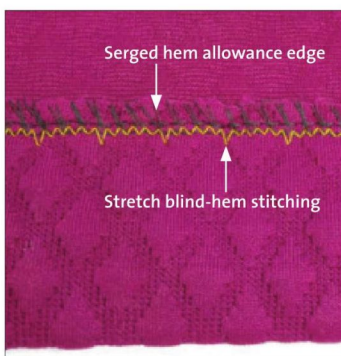
Knit appliqué

To add some pizzazz to my black ponte knit top, I appliquéd a length of the zigzag knit onto it before construction. First, rough-cut the knit, around the colors to highlight (taupe and raspberry). I used a narrow zigzag stitch and black thread to appliqué the chevron stripe to the ponte. Trim the excess zigzag knit yarns. I'll use this easy treatment again to connect knit coordinates.



Stretch blind hem

It seemed a shame to mar the textured raspberry double knit with a topstitched hem. I adapted the pattern instructions slightly to sew a stretch blind hem by machine instead. The stretch version of the machine blind-hem stitch has narrow zigzag stitches instead of straight stitches. The results are secure, flexible and stretchy, and undetectable on the garment's right side. Mission accomplished.



web extra

See how to prepare and machine-sew a stretch blind hem at [ThreadsMagazine.com](https://www.threadsmagazine.com).



Catchstitch review

A hand stitch for more than hemming

I have a crush on the catchstitch. It is simple to sew. I get into a groove while sewing it, and it is useful in many applications. It is employed extensively in traditional tailoring and couture construction, but it is handy to have in your repertoire no matter what kind of sewing you do most. There are applications for the catchstitch in wovens and knits, bulky and delicate fabrics, decorative and invisible stitching, along a straight line or a curve—it's seriously versatile.

The catchstitch is a flexible stitch used primarily to anchor one fabric layer atop another. A common example is to fasten a hem allowance edge to a garment: It can be nearly invisible on the right side of the fabric, and it looks like a series of Xs on the wrong side. For a right-handed stitcher, the catchstitch is worked from left to right, though the needle points toward the left. Lefties can simply reverse the process. The catchstitch is also known as the cross stitch or the herringbone stitch.

Once you're mastered the stitch, try varying its depth and spacing. You'll be surprised how many new uses you can find for it.

Erin Weisbart sews and designs patterns, including swimwear in extended sizes. TuesdayStitches.com

This versatile stitch has a purpose in nearly any garment.

Catchstitch technique

The basic stitch shows as a row of Xs; the blind version hides those stitches between fabric layers, as along a hem allowance. You'll be working on two fabric layers, one placed on top of the other. These will be referred to as "top" and "bottom" fabrics. Contrasting thread was used in the sample photos for visibility; when you use matching thread, the stitches are invisible on the reverse.

THE BASIC STITCH

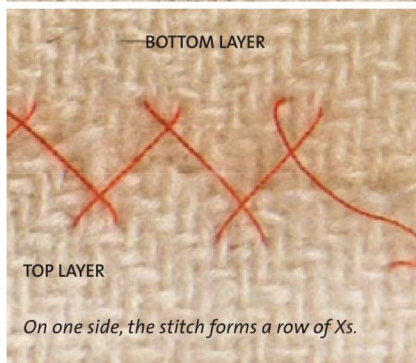
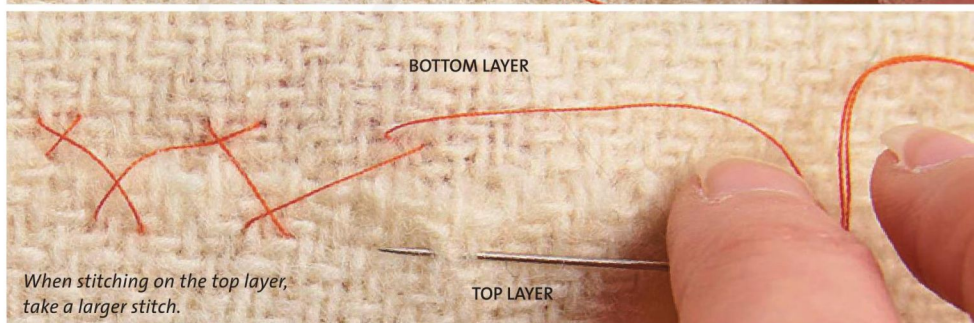
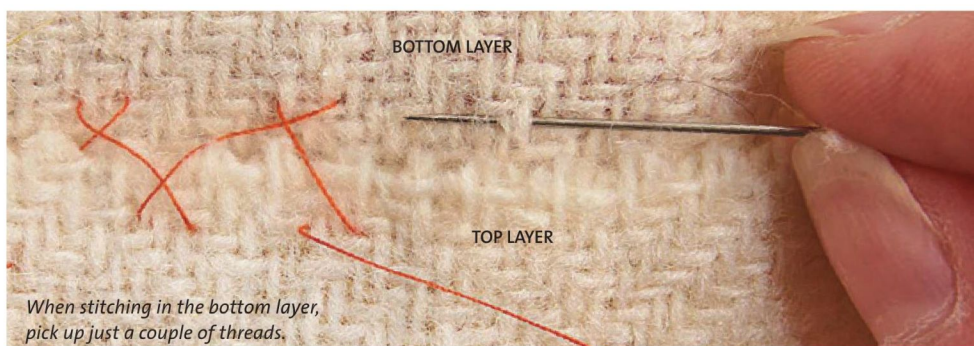
1 Prepare the seam. Arrange the top fabric layer in its finished position on the bottom fabric layer. For a hem, press the (top layer) allowance up and pin or baste.

2 Anchor the thread. Thread the needle with a single strand and knot the end. With the seam surface up, orient the work horizontally, and hide the knot between the fabric layers at the seam's left end. Bring the needle out from between the layers.

3 Start the stitch. Insert the needle into the bottom layer, slightly to the right of where the thread has emerged from the top layer. Take a tiny stitch, from right to left, catching just a couple of threads.

4 Take the next stitch. Move the needle to the right and take a stitch in the top layer. Since these stitches don't go through to the garment's right side, you can take a larger, more secure stitch, if desired.

5 Repeat across the seam. Alternating stitches from the top to the bottom layers, complete the seam. The Xs span the top fabric's raw edge. To end the seam, stitch in place on the hem allowance several times.



web extra

Learn Contributing Editor Kenneth D. King's quick catchstitch method at ThreadsMagazine.com.

continued >>>

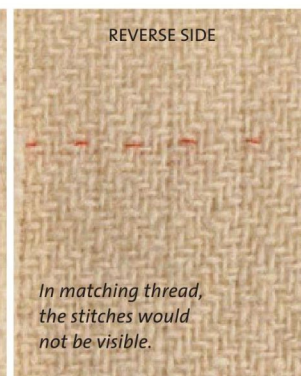
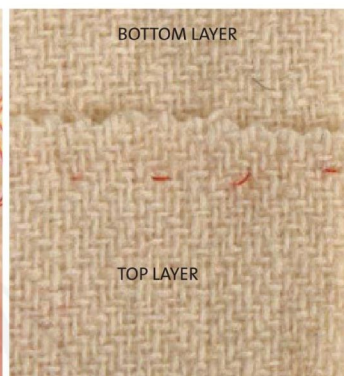
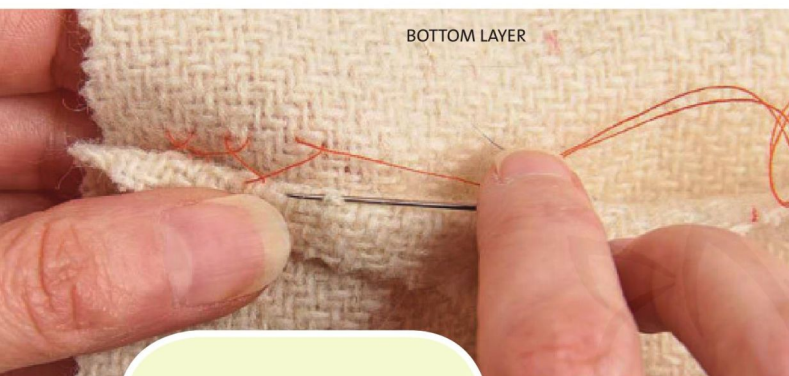
THE BLIND VERSION

1 Prepare the seam and anchor the thread. Follow steps 1 and 2 on the previous page for the basic catchstitch.

2 Start the stitch. Fold the top layer's edge back about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch; hold the edge in place gently with your left thumb. Take the first stitch in the bottom layer, as for the basic stitch.

3 Continue stitching. Form the catchstitch as for the basic method, but alternate between the top layer's folded edge and the bottom layer.

4 Complete the seam. When the top layer's edge returns to its unfolded position, all you see on each layer is a series of small, horizontal stitches.



TIPS FOR SUCCESS

The catchstitch isn't challenging, but each garment has different characteristics to account for. These tips apply to every project.

Don't pull too tightly. Pull the thread taut after every stitch but don't overpull, as the fabric will pucker, or even gather slightly.

Select a short needle. You'll have better control, especially in the blind catchstitch version.

Practice a few stitches. Sew several inches, then look closely at the garment's right side to confirm that the stitches are invisible and the fabric is lying smooth and flat. If not, remove the stitches and adjust the size and/or the thread tension.

Vary the stitch size to accommodate the fabric.

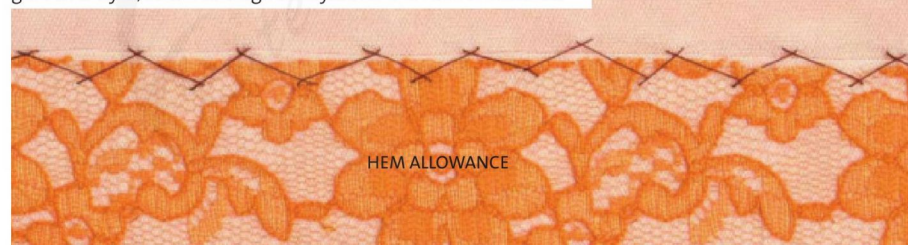
Stitches with a height and interval of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch are suitable for most fabrics. Use smaller stitches on thin, lightweight textiles and larger stitches on bulkier fabrics.

Xs mark the spot

Catchstitches are most often seen along hem allowances, but they're also useful in many other areas.

Sew underlined hems: When catchstitching the hem on an underlined garment, stitch through the underlining only on the garment layer; stitch through all layers on the hem allowance.

UNDERLINED GARMENT (WS)



Stitch into a hem finish: Finish the hem allowance edge with hem tape, serging, or by pressing it under. When you sew, take tiny stitches into the garment, and larger stitches into the hem finish.

GARMENT (WS)



Manage bulky seam allowances:

Stitch through only part of the fabric's thickness or into underlining or other interior layers, if present. Catchstitching holds the allowances open and flat.

Anchor pocket bags: Catchstitch around the sides and bottom of a pocket bag to secure it within the garment. Stitch into surrounding hair canvas, interfacing, or other underlining.

Stabilize bound buttonholes: Use a catchstitch around the buttonhole's wrong side to secure it to the surrounding hair canvas, interfacing, or underlining.

Control vent facings: Catchstitch the vent facing's upper end to secure it.

Secure the pleat or tuck take-up in a lining: Catchstitch the pleat or tuck fold to the lining, near the neckline or hem edge, at waist level, or elsewhere as required by the garment.

Apply stay tape along a jacket roll line:

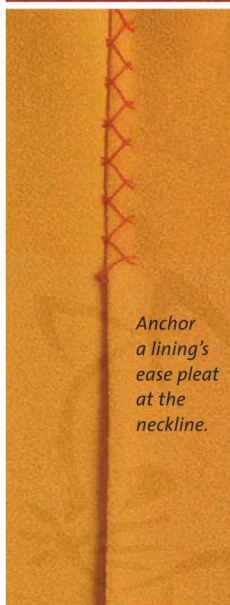
In traditional tailoring, a stay tape is stitched along the inside lapel roll line to help define the roll. The catchstitch is within the seam tape's width. Each stitch should catch a thread of the garment fabric.

Hem knits: The catchstitch has give, so it can be used to hem stable knits—like ponte or other double knits with minimal stretch—or stretch wovens.

Create casings for elastic and tapes:

Catchstitch over elastic or tape to make a pretty and interesting casing. If there will be tension on the elastic or tape, use a heavier-weight thread to prevent thread breakage.

Stitch decoratively: This stitch has much potential for embroidery embellishment. Use it on its own, in combination with other decorative embroidery stitches, or to couch ribbons or cording to a garment.



Q & A

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Velvet takes a cat nap

Q If I'm making a velvet garment, which way should the nap run?

A *Threads Contributing Editor Judith Neukam explains:* There is no hard-and-fast rule about which way the nap should run on a velvet garment. The choice depends on several considerations. Many people compare determining the nap direction to petting a cat. Down is smooth, like petting head to tail. Up is rougher, as if you tried to pet a cat from tail to head. When you rub traditional velvet with the nap, which is considered down, it feels smooth

and silky. If you run it against the nap, or up, it feels rough.

How the velvet feels, however, is often a secondary consideration to how it wears and looks. Velvet often gets shiny in some areas, such as on the seat of a skirt or trousers. This crushed look is minimized in garments in which the nap runs down. Light reflects off the smooth surface more intensely, and camouflages these shiny areas.

When the garment is made with the nap going up, the color looks richer and deeper, and any crushed areas are more visible.

Make sense of button sizing

Q I would like to order buttons online but am confused by the sizing. Can you explain how buttons are measured?

A *Threads Senior Technical Editor Carol J. Fresia replies:* It's tricky when you have the buttons in hand, but even more so when working with online descriptions.

There are three common ways to designate a button's size, and manufacturers and retailers seem to use any or all of them.

Since the majority of buttons are round, they are measured by diameter. Other button shapes are usually measured along their longest dimension. The measurement may be given in inches, millimeters, or "ligne," abbreviated as "L," or some combination of these. One ligne is equal to $\frac{1}{60}$ inch. This unit was developed in the late 18th century. (Lignes are

also used in watchmaking and to measure the width of men's hatband ribbons, but in those cases, the unit is closer to $\frac{1}{12}$ inch.)

Converting dimensions from one unit of measure to another is almost guaranteed to produce variation in the listed button size, due to changing from fractions to decimals and back again, and rounding up or down along the way. Charts I've consulted, for example, designate an 8-mm button as 12L or 14L. One ligne is small at approximately 0.635 mm, so the difference is minuscule. Millimeters or sixteenths of an inch are the smallest units marked on most standard measuring tools intended for sewing, therefore, they are the most practical units to use when selecting a button size.

Note that these measurements account for only the diameter of the button and are most useful for flat buttons. If you're replacing a garment's flat buttons with thicker, rounded, or domed buttons, you may need to select a smaller diameter so they can fit through the existing buttonholes.



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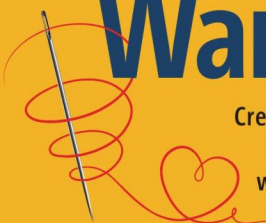
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Mrs. Patchin's praise

In 1959, I signed up for home economics at my junior high school. I was 12 years old and already fascinated by sewing. Our teacher, Mrs. Patchin, scooted around in kitten heels as she taught us the rudiments of the craft. She called us “little ones” most of the time, and although every seventh-grade girl I knew tried to act older than she was, we didn’t mind having “little one” status while under Mrs. Patchin’s merry gaze.

We completed our first few projects, including pillowcases with French seams, easily enough with Mrs. Patchin’s help. All too soon, it was time for our final projects.

We would be making outfits for ourselves, which needed to include a blouse and a skirt, one of which had to have a zipper. We were required to make a full skirt with a waistband, but we had more leeway with the blouse design. I picked a simple blouse, which came just to my waist and had short sleeves.

Mrs. Patchin offered extra help after school, and most days, the sewing room had at least 20 of us sewing away. When we approached her with a balled up, rumpled sleeve, her advice was always, “Little one, you need to rip the seam out completely and start over. Make sure you pin carefully before you start sewing.” She expected us to always do our best, but she made sure we knew that, sometimes, our best might need help, and that was OK, too.



She expected us to always do our best, but she made sure we knew that, sometimes, our best might need help . . .

When we neared the end of our endeavors, Mrs. Patchin announced a grand finale: We were all required to wear our outfits to school on the same day.

When the fated day arrived, I was in a full-blown panic. Somehow, my blouse ended up too short and my midriff peeked out when I stood up straight, which was not as acceptable in the '50s as it is now. Since my full skirt had hooks and eyes for closure instead of a side zipper, I had installed a facing to cover the opening. However, I had not counted on wearing a crinoline, and with that, my skirt suffered from gaps between the closures. How was I going to navigate a full day with an exposed midriff and a yawning canyon in the side of my skirt?

As I stepped off the bus that morning, Mrs. Patchin’s students were easily visible among the throng of people. Outrageous patterns coupled with garish colors assaulted my eyes. When I joined my fellow seamstresses, I saw blouses that were too tight

and arms jammed into sleeves that begged for mercy. Half of us couldn’t raise our hands in class. Our zippers were crooked and lumpy. Several skirts had massive gaps on the side, as mine did.

In truth, we were wearing the most unsightly clothes I had ever seen, but we were excited and proud to be wearing our finished ensembles. As we each stood and modeled our outfits in class, Mrs. Patchin beamed and praised every one of her “little ones.”

Mrs. Patchin inspired a life-long passion for making my own clothes. My mother, a fabulous seamstress herself, continued my sewing lessons and bought me a portable Singer sewing machine in my late teens. And when I became a teacher, I sometimes found myself calling my young students “little ones,” as Mrs. Patchin did.

Beverly Schultz of Aurora, Colorado, grew up surrounded by skilled seamstresses. She sews for family and charities.

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Up Close



Marion McCoy worked as head designer for the Carlye Dress Corporation from 1938 until she started her own company in 1945. Mid-twentieth-century designers were faced with the financial effects of the Depression, World War II regulations on materials, and the dawn of patents for garment designs. Even as she confronted these challenges, McCoy was praised by *Women's Wear Daily* for her silhouettes, style lines, and ornamentation. This 1951 wool jersey dress has an elegant, deceptively simple silhouette. The design includes merging darts and diagonal seams, drapery dolman sleeves, and intriguing, asymmetrical, wrapped-look cuffs. See how to create the cuffs on p. 26.

From: *Vintage Details: A Fashion Sourcebook* (Laurence King, 2016);
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