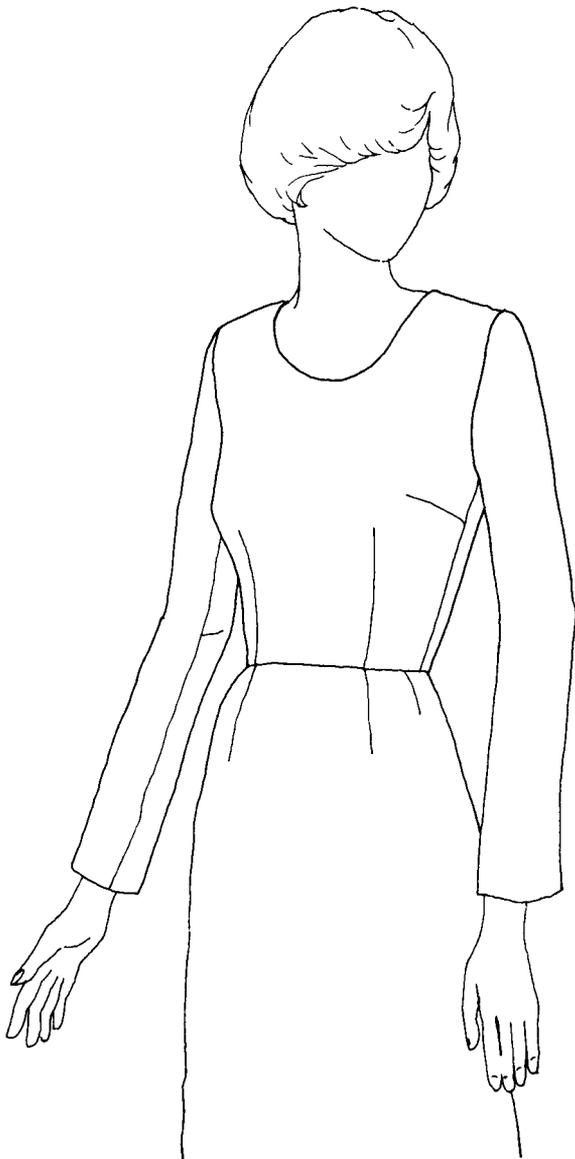


# Darts

DOCUMENT  
COLLECTION  
OREGON  
COLLECTION

Darts are stitched, pointed tucks that shape the fabric to fit body curves. Vertical darts may be located at the back shoulder seam, and above and below the waistline. Diagonal or French darts go from the side seam at the waist or hip toward the point of the bust. In addition to these basic darts used for fitting, some garment designs may use darts decoratively. Loosely fitting garments, garments cut on the bias, and garments designed for stretchy fabrics may be designed without darts.

## The well-made dart



~~DISCARD~~

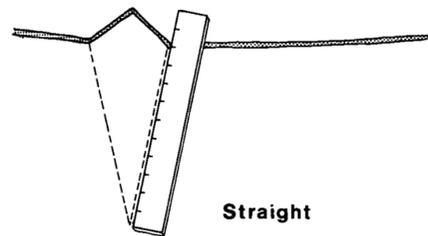
The primary purpose of a dart is to make fabric that is flat conform to the body which is made up of curves. Curves may be bulges like the bust or hips or hollows like the waist. To be certain that the darts help the fabric fit the body, check the fit of the darts twice; the first time for major alterations before cutting out the pattern and fabric; the second time for minor adjustments before permanent stitching and pressing.

When you are checking the fit, think about the placement of the dart and its length and depth. Bodice front darts should point toward the fullest area of the bust, but end 1/2 to 1 inch (1.5 to 2.5 cm) from the point of the bust. Other darts should be directed toward, but stop short of the fullest part of the body. Darts that fit closely around a bulge such as a full bust should be stitched with a slight curve toward the fold line. Conversely, darts that fit closely into a hollow such as the waist may be stitched with a slight curve away from the fold line.

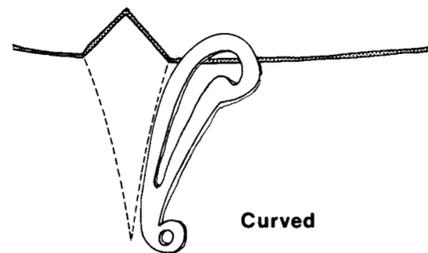
Regardless of where a dart is located, the point of the dart should look smooth—like a well pressed plain seam without a pucker on the right side. On the inside, the dart should be stitched so that the point is tapered with the last several stitches along the fold.

Vertical darts in light- and mediumweight fabrics should be pressed toward the center-front or center-back depending on the garment section. Horizontal darts should be pressed downward. In heavyweight fabrics, darts may be slashed and pressed open with a small box pleat at the point where it is too narrow to cut without weakening the stitching.

## Marking



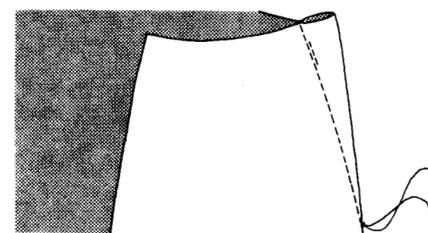
Straight



Curved

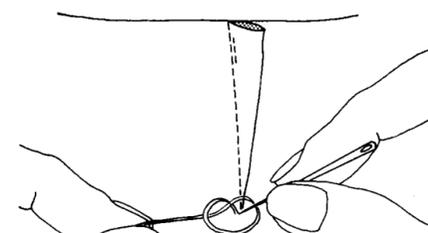
Choose a marking method appropriate for the fabric. Transfer the stitching lines, the center line or cutting lines, and any matching dots or symbols from the pattern to the fabric. A curved ruler helps guide the tracing wheel or chalk to make the slightly curved dart suggested in the section, "The Well-Made Dart." An alternative method is to use a hem gauge as a guide for marking a slightly curved stitching line.

## Sewing

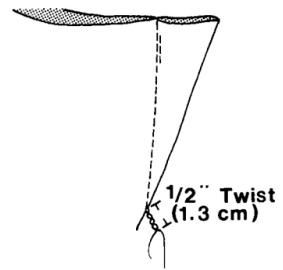


Fold the dart on the center fold line or match the cut edges to bring marked stitching lines together; pin or thread baste. Start stitching at the wide end and stitch toward the point gradually so that the last two or three stitches are along the fold. This will result in a smooth pucker-free point.

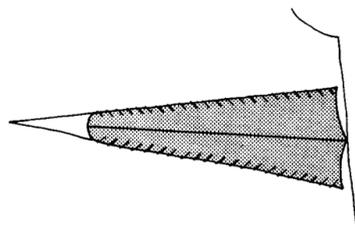
## Finishing



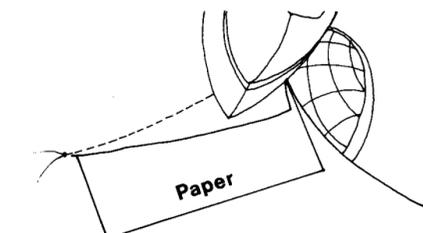
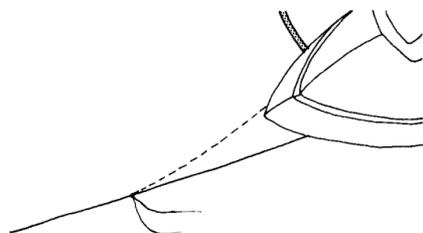
Knot the threads at the point to secure them. An overhand knot tied with both thread ends together is the most secure. Tighten the knot as close to the point as possible. Cut the thread leaving 1/2 to 1 inch (2 to 3 cm) of thread.



1/2" Twist  
(1.3 cm)



## Pressing



Paper

For garments that will receive minimal wear and gentle care, a secure finish is not needed. After stitching the dart to the point, run the stitching off the fabric about 1/2 inch (1.5 cm) to twist threads. Trim any excess thread, but leave 1 to 2 inches (4 to 5 cm) including the twisted thread.

Backstitching is too bulky at the point of a dart and should not be used there. Backstitching is suitable for reinforcement at the wide end where the dart will be crossed with a seam.

Darts that are wide or are in heavy fabric should be slashed to within 1/2 inch (1.3 cm) of the point after the fit has been checked. The cut edges of the dart may require a seam finish such as overcasting.

Before pressing darts, be certain that the fit is correct.

First, press dart flat as it was stitched, but be careful not to crease the garment beyond the point of the dart. Then open out the garment, wrong side up, and shape the dart by completing the pressing over a pressing ham or the end of the ironing board.

Trimmed or slashed darts are pressed open except for the point. Vertical uncut darts are pressed toward the center of the garment. Horizontal and diagonal darts are pressed downward. If the fold or cut edges of a dart tend to make an imprint in the front of the fabric, before pressing slip a piece of paper between the dart and the fabric.

## Special Dart Techniques

### Double-pointed darts

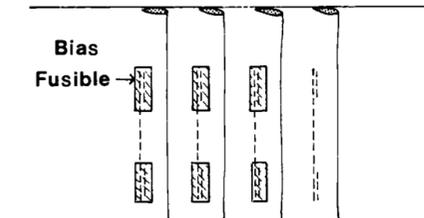
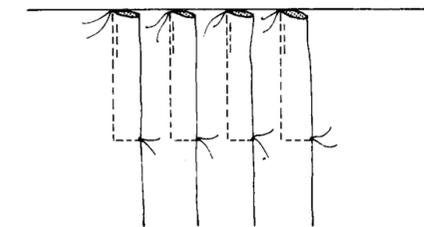
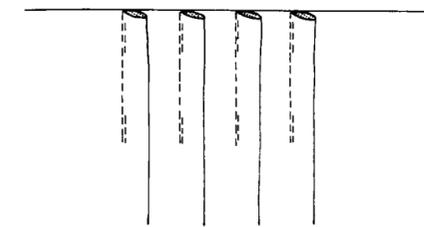


Top

Bottom

A double-pointed dart is a long dart used to control fullness at the waistline of a shift or A-line style dress. Where there is no waistline seam, a double-pointed dart takes the place of two separate darts, one directed toward the bust or back and the other toward the hip. The double-pointed dart is stitched in two separate steps and two separate directions. For double-pointed darts, start stitching in the middle where the dart is the widest and stitch to the point at one end. Begin again at the widest part of the part overlapping the stitching so that the stitching is reinforced where it will be clipped; stitch to the point at the other end.

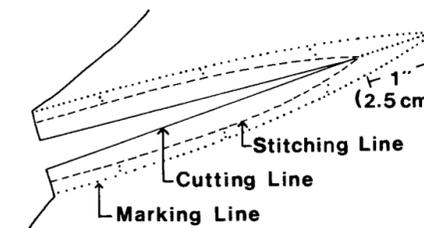
## Dart tucks



Bias  
Fusible

Dart tucks are the wide part of a dart used to control and release fullness where desired. They can be constructed on the inside or outside of the garment as required by the garment style. The fullness can be released from either end or both ends. The location of the dart tuck, whether it is inside or outside, and the garment fabric determine how it will be constructed and finished. Carefully mark and match stitching lines and beginning and ending points. Secure ends by dart tucks by backstitching or tying the threads. The end of a dart tuck located on the inside may be reinforced by a very narrow bias strip of woven fusible interfacing.

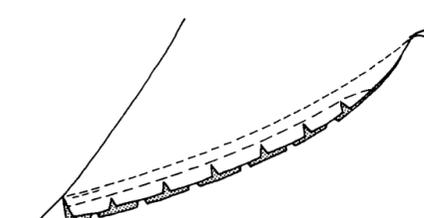
## French darts or curved darts



1" (2.5 cm)

Stitching Line  
Cutting Line  
Marking Line

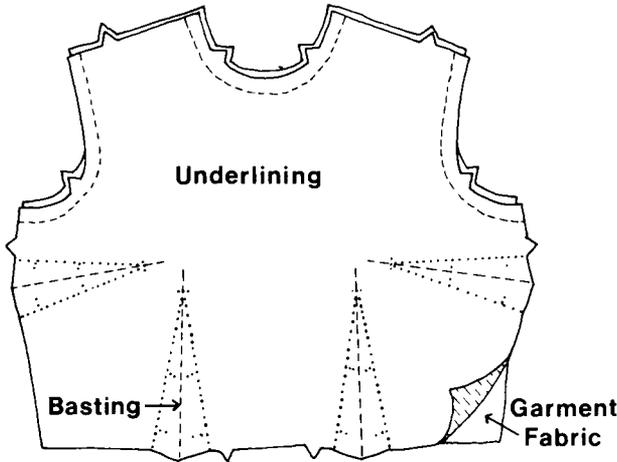
French darts, which control fullness in the waistline of a shift or A-line style dress, extend diagonally from the side seam in the waist or hip area to the bust. French darts are only on the front of a garment.



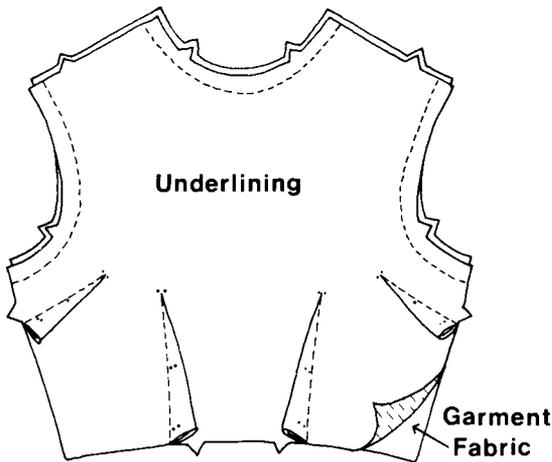
Staystitch 1/8 inch (3 mm) inside each stitching line starting at the side seamline and tapering staystitching lines to meet approximately 1 inch (2.5 cm) from the point of the dart. If necessary, cut through the center of the dart to where the rows of staystitching intersect. Match and pin the stitching lines accurately. If necessary, ease the lower stitching line to the upper stitching line accurately. Baste, then machine stitch from the wide end to the point. Remove bastings. Clip seam allowances to permit the dart to curve smoothly and lie flat. Press.

### Darts in underlined garments

OR  
COLL  
OR  
COLL

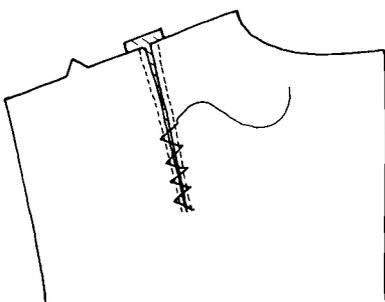


Darts in underlined garments are handled as one layer in light- and mediumweight fabrics. Machine baste on center line of dart through fashion fabric and underlining to keep the two layers together. Continue construction, following general direction for darts.



In bulky or very heavy fabrics the darts in the underlining and garment may be stitched separately. The garment darts are pressed in the correct direction (toward the center or downward) while the underlining darts are pressed in the opposite direction. With wrong sides together, join the layers with diagonal basting. Continue construction, handling as one layer.

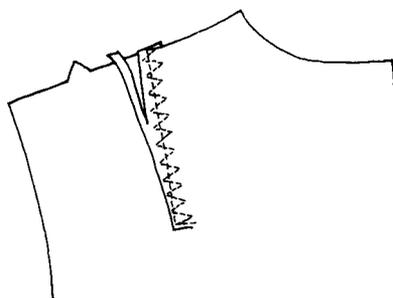
### Darts in interfacing



The bulk and stiffness of an interfacing require special dart handling methods. The method you use depends on the bulkiness, the stiffness, the raveliness and the durability required.

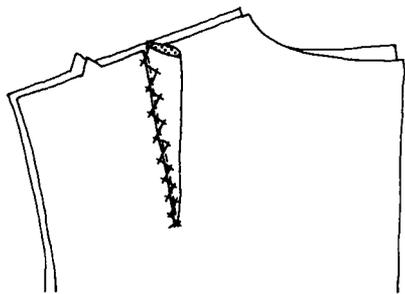
An *abutted dart* in the interfacing has the center of the dart cut out along the stitching line after marking stitching lines and matching points. The cut edges are then brought together and basted in place to an underlay of woven edge tape or a strip of lightweight fabric slightly longer than the dart. If a straight stitch is used, stitch  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch (3 mm) to each side of cut line. If zigzag is used, center over the cut line. A multiple stitch zigzag is preferable if your machine has one. Press over a cushion or pad.

4



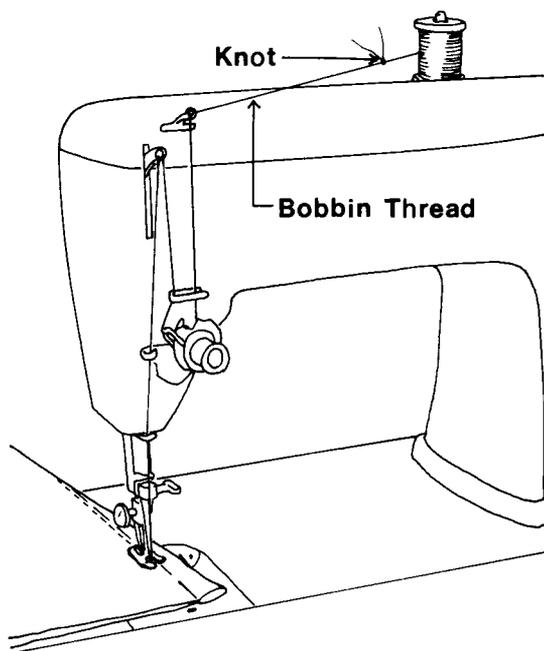
A *catchstitched interfacing dart* begins in the same way as an abutted dart with the center of the dart removed. But after marking and cutting along the stitching lines to remove the center of the dart, place the open interfacing dart over the stitched garment dart so that the dart is exposed through the interfacing. Pin the edges of the interfacing to the stitching lines of the garment dart. Catchstitch the interfacing to the garment dart.

E



A *lapped dart* also begins with careful marking of the centerline, stitching lines, and matching points. Cut along the centerline exactly to the point. Lap the cut edges so that the stitching lines match. Stitch on stitching line using a plain zigzag or two rows of straight stitch  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch (3 mm) on side of stitching line. Trim excess fabric. Stitch to reinforce the point.

## Continuous thread darts



Continuous thread darts are used in very sheer fabrics when a knot at the point would show. For each continuous thread dart, thread the machine needle with the bobbin thread in the opposite direction. Knot the bobbin and spool thread together; then wind the thread onto the spool to bring the knot up to the spool allowing adequate length thread for stitching the dart. Start stitching the dart at the point.

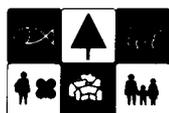
*Prepared by Ardis W. Koester,  
Extension textiles and clothing specialist.*

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