OREGON STATE LIBRARY Decuments Section

MAKING SHIRTS

For the men of the family



HAVE you been wondering whether you should undertake the task of making shirts? Maybe the following questions will help you decide whether to make or buy shirts for the men of your family.



Figure 1.

- **Do you have time** to make shirts without neglecting other important duties? Are you so tired after sewing that you do not feel like devoting any time to your family?
- **Do you have the skill** to make a satisfactory shirt—one that your husband will be proud to wear?
- Can you buy the type of shirt you want as inexpensively, or more so, than you can make it? (Visit your local stores, check the shirts and fabrics available, and compare costs.)
- Can you find satisfactory patterns, fabrics, and findings in local stores?
- Can you get a shirt that fits as well, or better, by making it? (If the men of your family have trouble buying shirts that fit satisfactorily, you may definitely save by adjusting a pattern and making their shirts.)

 Will the shirt you make wear as well as, or better than, one of similar quality readymade?

Most women, whose husbands and sons can buy shirts that fit well, find it to their advantage to buy at least the business-type shirt. It is quite difficult to find a stiffening for the collar and cuffs that is as satisfactory as in the readymade shirt. The business-type shirt also requires exceptional skill in sewing to produce a garment as nice looking as one can purchase at a reasonable price. If your husband cannot buy a shirt that fits comfortably because he has exceptionally long arms, etc., you may prefer to make this type of shirt, even though it does not have some advantages of the readymade shirt.

The real saving usually is found in making the sport-type shirt. It is easier to make and does not have the stiff collar that is so hard to achieve. There also may be quite a saving in making boy's blouses.



Figure 2.

MAKING SHIRTS

for the men of the family

Select the Pattern

Business shirt

Patterns for business-type shirts usually come in these neck sizes: 14'', $14\frac{1}{2}''$; 15'', $15\frac{1}{2}''$; 16'', $16\frac{1}{2}''$; 17''; and 18''.

Sport shirt

Sport shirts usually are classified as Small, Medium, Large, and Extra Large.

Small: 14" - 14½" Medium: 15" - 15½" Large: 16" - 16½"

Large: 16" - 16½" Extra Large: 17" - 17½"

Before you make a shirt, measure the man or some of his shirts to determine the correct pattern size to purchase.

Measure an old shirt

Neck size. Lay the collar flat and measure the inside of the neckband from the center of the button to the far end of the buttonhole.



Figure 3.

Sleeve length. Put the tape measure at the center of the back yoke and, laying the shirt out flat, measure to the lower edge of the cuff.

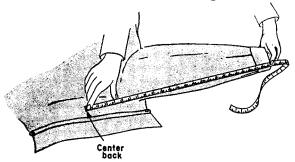


Figure 4.

Measure the man

Neck size. Place the tape measure snugly where the collar usually rests.

Sleeve length. Measure from the prominent bone at the back of the neck to the wrist bone, with the arm extended straight out.

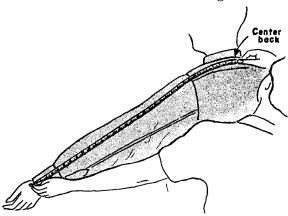


Figure 5.

Check pattern

After you receive the pattern, compare it with the most satisfactory shirt of the wearer. Give particular attention to the collar. Collar points may be too large to be attractive.

Check pattern with the shirt on hand for:

- size of neck
- length of yoke
- length of sleeves
- width of sleeves
- length of cuff
- width of cuff
- length of shirt
- chest measurement of shirt
- width of armhole

Some men have to buy shirts that are too long on the shoulder, in order to get the neck size and arm length needed. You can correct this difficulty by making his shirts. Check the man's favorite shirt while he is wearing it to see whether it fits correctly.

Alter the pattern if it is needed. Draw down the entire grainline of each piece of the pattern, so it will be easier to place the pattern on the grainline of the fabric.

Select Fabric and Findings

Fabric

Be sure to select a durable fabric that will justify the time you spend in making the garment. On the back of the pattern envelope you will find a list of recommended fabrics. This may help you to choose a satisfactory one.

Check the label to see that fabric is colorfast to light and washing (if a wash shirt) and has been preshrunk. If not, preshrink the fabric before making the shirt.

Buy the amount of fabric called for in the pattern, plus additional for matching a design or plaid, or for adding length to the pattern. If you have a plaid design, refer to *Plaids and Stripes*, HE 2-330, before cutting out the shirt.

Findings

Thread. Three spools are needed. Remember to buy the exact shade of the fabric, or a shade darker. The thread always stitchesin a little lighter.

Interlining (if using). Choose a very soft muslin or batiste. For a boy's cotton blouse or a man's shirt that has no right or wrong side to the fabric and is lightweight, you may use the same fabric for interlining.

Durable buttons. Select buttons that are of uniform thickness and have the holes or eyes located exactly the same distance from the edge.

Make the Shirt

Prepare the fabric

Straighten each end of fabric by tearing or pulling thread and cutting along this drawn thread. If needed, pull the fabric on a true bias to straighten it so the fabric will lay smoothly when it is folded selvage to selvage.

Cut out the shirt

Study the pattern guide sheet and understand your pattern before beginning to cut out the shirt. Decide which pictured layout on the guide sheet you will use, and circle it with a dark pencil. Very carefully place each piece of the pattern on the correct grainline and pin down entire length of this grainline. Smooth the pattern, then pin the outer edges as needed.

Use the width seams indicated on the pattern. Cut with the grainline—from the wide to the narrow—as far as practical.

Do not cut the opening for the sleeve placket at this time.

All pattern markings, grainline etc., may be transferred with tracing wheel and dressmaker carbon or with tailor tacks.

For cotton shirts the dressmaker carbon and tracing wheel are usually preferred. Tailor tacks, made with nonmercerized or plain darning cotton, are better for transferring markings to wool or wool-like fabric.

Work order

To eliminate unnecessary handling, stack work in this order at right of machine:

1. Buttons 7. Underlap

Left front
 Right front
 Shirt back
 Overlap
 Pocket
 Collar

4. Shirt back 10. Colla 5. Yoke 11. Cuff

6. Sleeves

If you have a machine difficult to adjust put all gathers in before doing anything else, then stack the work as shown above.

If you are making a wool shirt you may wish to place the collar after the buttons, and not make it before stitching to the garment.

Follow this order of work to speed up the process of making the shirt:

- 1. Make cuff, collar, pocket, and stack in that order. (If making a heavy wool shirt, you may not wish to make collar now.)
- 2. Make overlaps for both sleeve plackets.
- 3. Pin and sew overlap and underlap on
- 4. Stay stitch neck of back yoke.
- 5. Put in gathers or pleats on back.
- 6. Combine yoke and back.
- 7. Stay stitch right front neck.
- 8. Stitch facing edge on right front. If there is to be an interfacing, stitch it now.
- 9. Stay stitch left front neck.

- 10. Stitch facing edge on left front. If there is to be an interfacing, stitch it now.
- 11. Put pocket on left front.
- 12. Sew shoulder seam of left front and back yoke.
- 13. Sew shoulder seam of right front and back yoke.
- 14. Put on collar. (For wool, sew under collar to garment, sew top collar to facing, then combine.)
- 15. Put in sleeves.
- 16. Sew side seams of sleeves and shirt.
- 17. Put on cuffs.
- 18. Hem shirt.
- 19. Make buttonholes and put on buttons.

Cuff

Attach interlining. If an interlining is to be used, baste it to the wrong side of the under cuff. However, for many shirts no interlining will be needed.

Bubble the cuff. Pin the top cuff and under cuff together on the end and side, with the two right sides together. Bubble the top cuff by pushing the seam up so that a bubble forms as shown in Figure 6. Baste in position. Stitch from the *under cuff* so that the size of the cuff will not be altered.

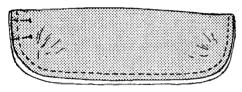


Figure 6.

Press seams. Press the seam of the under cuff back on the under cuff.

Trim seams. Trim seams to ½ inch, if cotton. If wool or wool-like fabric, grade seams by trimming the seam of the top cuff to about ¼ inch and the under cuff seam to a fraction less. Notch rounded edge of cuff where needed to take out the surplus material. See Figure 7.

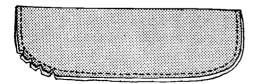


Figure 7.

Roll seam to underside. Turn cuff right side out and slightly roll the seam to the under side, so the seam will not show from the top cuff. Baste and press. Place cuffs to one side to be attached to sleeve later.

Collar (cotton or lightweight fabric)

If the fabric is cotton or a lightweight fabric, you will make the collar next. If the top and under collar are one piece, just stitch across the ends.

If there is a separate top and under collar, you will stitch around three sides. Bubble the

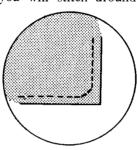


Figure 8.

three sides. Bubble the three sides of the top collar as you did for the cuff. When stitching around the point make one or two stitches across the point. This gives room for the seam in the point when the collar is turned.

Press underseam of collar back on underside. Trim the seams to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch and clip the seams very close at the point. For wool, grade seams as for cuff.

Note: If the fabric is wool or wool-like, delay making the collar until the shoulder seams are finished. Refer to page 12.

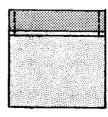
Pocket

There are many types of pockets for shirts. You may follow your guide sheet in making the one suggested, or you may make the simple hemmed pocket shown here.

Turn back 4-inch seam at the top of the pocket. Press.

Turn a 1-inch hem to the right side and stitch the corners of the hem $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the edge.

Clip the corners.



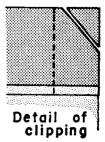


Figure 9.

Turn the hem of the pocket to the wrong side. Baste sides down. Miter the two lower corners of the pocket as follows:

- 1. Turn points of corners so fold touches corner of seam allowance, then trim point.
- 2. Fold bottom of pocket on seam allowance.
- 3. Fold side seam to finish miter.

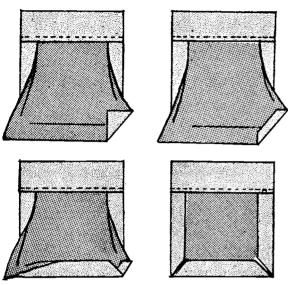


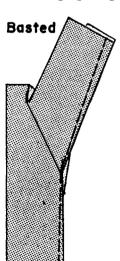
Figure 10.

Press thoroughly. Stitch across hem of pocket. Place pocket with collar and cuffs.

Continuous sleeve placket

Cut placket piece lengthwise. Using your pattern, cut the continuous placket facing lengthwise of the fabric.

Cut opening in sleeve. Follow pattern in cutting opening in sleeve to form placket.



Place facing on opening. Place the facing on the edge of the opening with the two right sides together.

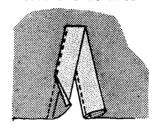
Stitch. Start with 4-inch seams and narrow the seams at the top of the opening so the fabric is just caught. Continue stitching on the other side of the opening, increasing the seam allowance back to 4 inch. See Figure 11.

Figure 11.

Turn facing. Turn facing to the wrong side. Turn under \(\frac{1}{4}\)-inch seams on the facing. Stitch the facing to the sleeve, just covering the previous stitching. Refer to Figure 12.

Reinforce top. To reinforce the top of the placket, lift one side of the placket out of the way. Stitch across the top of the placket to hold the fold to the shirt sleeve. See the finished placket. Figure 13.

Turned to wrong side and hemmed



Right side of finished placket



Figure 12.

Figure 13.

Tailored sleeve placket

The tailored or French placket shown in Figure 14 is the most durable type of placket. Sleeve pattern is shown in Figure 15.

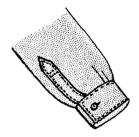
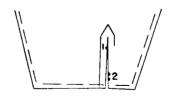


Figure 14.

Adjust pattern. If you make the following adjustment in your tailored placket pattern before cutting the fabric, you will find it easier to do.

Pin a piece of tissue paper under the overlap. Cut the tissue paper straight across as shown in Figure 15.



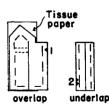


Figure 15.

Do not cut the placket slit in the sleeve until after you have stitched both the overlap and underlap into position.

Stitch across top of overlap. Fold overlap wrong side out and stitch across the top as shown in Figure 16. This seam is your regular seam allowance. Notice that you will have to turn the overlap for the right sleeve as shown in Figure 16. For the left sleeve you will turn the overlap the opposite way. Great care must be taken to prevent making both overlaps for one sleeve.

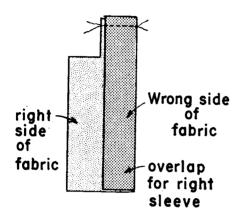
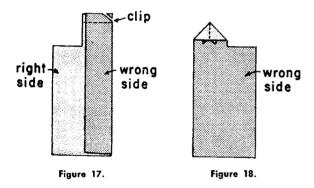


Figure 16.

Trim seams. Trim seam to \(\frac{1}{4}\) inch or less and clip the point almost to the stitching. Figure 17.



Turn point right side out. Turn the point right side out, and shape point by having seam exactly in center of point. See Figure 18. If this is not done the point will be one sided when finished.

Stitch on edge of overlap. Turn the overlap on the seam line. See Figure 19. Using about 20 stitches to the inch, stitch on the very edge and to within 1 inch of the top. (In heavy wool, 16 stitches to the inch may be preferred.) Pull thread to the under side

and tie. Press. Turn seam of opposite side on seam line and press. Be sure that both sides of the point are the same.

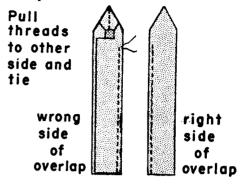


Figure 19.

Press seams of underlap. Press both seams of underlap to the wrong side.

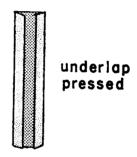


Figure 20.

Stitch overlap and underlap on wrong side of sleeve. Place the right side of both underlap and overlap next to the wrong side of the sleeve. Be sure to place the underlap on the shorter side of sleeve. These seams will meet exactly. Use the crease lines as a guide to stitching. Pin and stitch from the bottom of the sleeve up to the edge of both underlap and overlap. Back stitch in both cases. Do not stitch across the top.

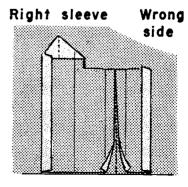


Figure 21.

Cut slit. Cut the slit exactly to the top edge of underlap and overlap. Figure 22.

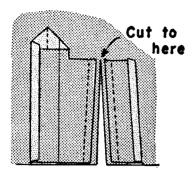


Figure 22.

Stitch underlap and overlap on right side of sleeve. Turn underlap to the right side through the slit that you cut. Stitch on the very edge, stitching from the bottom of the sleeve up to the top of the underlap. Back stitch or tie threads, Figure 23.

In like manner, turn the overlap to the right side and stitch it in place. Start stitching at the bottom of the sleeve and stitch around the overlap until you connect with the other stitching, or as far down as the pattern suggests. Figures 24 and 25.



Figure 23.

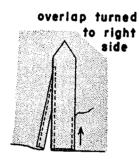
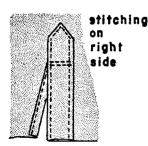


Figure 24.

Reinforce top with stitching. Make two rows of stitching across the top for reinforcements as shown in Figure 25.



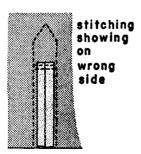


Figure 25.

Adaptation of tailored sleeve placket

This adaptation is used on wool or heavy fabrics where the regular tailored placket may become too heavy.

Hem the side where the underlap would normally be used. Figure 26.

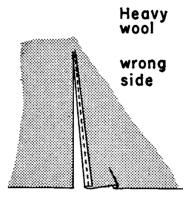


Figure 26.

Make a small pleat at the top of the slit of the placket; then proceed as you did in making the plain tailored placket.

Figure 27 shows the right side and the wrong side of the finished placket.

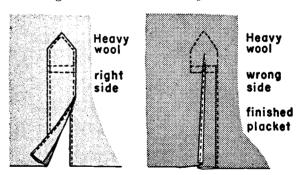


Figure 27.

Attach yoke to back

Stay stitch. Stay stitch neck of yoke and yoke facing separately. This prevents stretching the neckline. Start stay stitching at each shoulder seam and stitch to center back of the neck. Use about 12 to 14 stitches to the inch and stitch just above the seamline.

Put in pleats or gathers. Put gathers in shirt back by machine, using the longest stitch possible. Stitch one row exactly on the seamline and one about \(\frac{1}{2}\) inch above this on the seam allowance. Pull, at one time, bobbin threads of both rows of stitching to regulate gathers.

Stitch yokes and back. Place the yoke and yoke facing on the back part of the shirt as shown and stitch all three together.

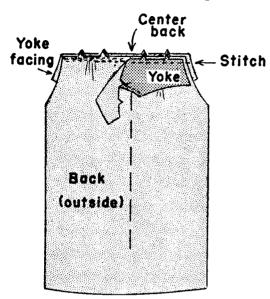


Figure 28.

If the fabric is cotton, or thin or medium weight, follow Figure 29. This brings the yoke up on the three seams and top stitches the yoke and the three seams.

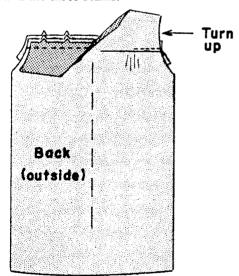


Figure 29.

If the fabric is heavy, fold the yoke facing, facing seam, and the back seams out of the way. Top stitch the yoke and the yoke seam together. See Figure 30. This eliminates stitching through so many thicknesses of heavy fabric.

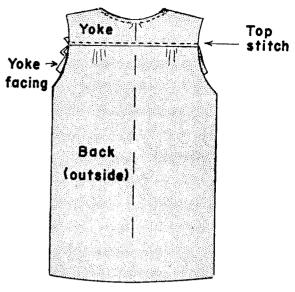


Figure 30.

Front facings and interfacings

Stay stitch neckline from shoulder seam to center front of neckline.

Attached facing, such as on sport shirts. Before front halves are stitched to the yoke, turn the seam allowance on facing under and stitch on the *very edge* of the fold. This gives a sharp edge which is easy to iron. If the extra seam allowance bothers, trim it off.

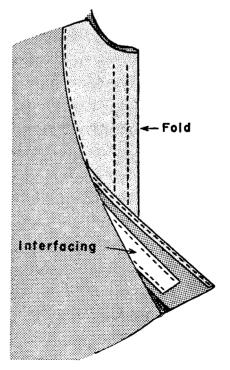
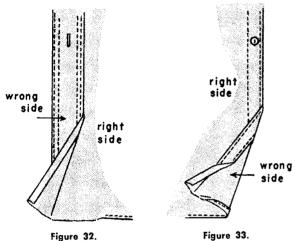


Figure 31.

If you desire an interfacing, cut a lengthwise strip about 2 inches wide from soft muslin. (It must be preshrunk.) Stitch muslin to the facing, so it will be a reinforcement under the buttons and buttonholes when the facing is folded in place. Refer to Figure 31.

Tailored shirt with right and wrong side of the fabric the same. Turn the wrong side back on the right side for the facing on the left half of the shirt, Figure 32. Follow Figure 33 in making facing for the right half of the shirt.



Heavy wool tailored shirt. Place the interfacing on the wrong side as shown in Figure 34.

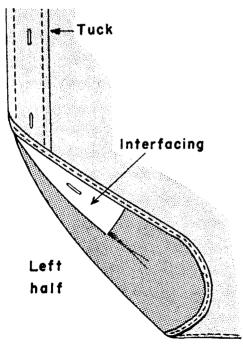
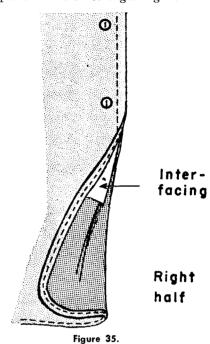


Figure 34.

Be sure to catch the interfacing on the outer edge when making the hem and also when making the tuck.

On right half of shirt the interfacing is caught in the edge of hem, and buttons hold it in place on the other edge. Figure 35.



Sew on pocket

Place the pocket in place on the left side and pin or baste in place. Then stitch $\frac{1}{8}$ inch or less from the edge as shown. Be sure to make the corner reinforcements. Tie the thread. The diagonal stitching at the corner is less likely to tear the fabric than when stitched straight across, as the bias grain has more give to it than stitching on the straight of the grain.

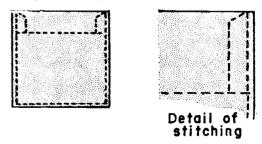


Figure 36.

Shoulder seam

Sew yoke facing to the front half of the shirt so that the seam is on the right side of the shirt front. Press seams back on yoke facing.

Lay the yoke, with yoke seam edge turned under, over these seams, and top stitch.

Notched collar for lightweight fabrics

Pin the under collar center back to the center back of the neckline of the blouse.

Pin both thicknesses of the collar to neckline at center front on left and right side.

Pin under collar at each shoulder seam. Take a small bite with each pin being sure that the seam line of the collar is exactly on the seam line of the blouse.

Baste collar to neckline from one shoulder seam to the other. You may baste a little past the shoulder seam on the front neckline.

Stitch, following the exact seam line. You may find it helpful to straighten the seam by clipping in a few places the seam allowances of neckline and collar almost to the stay stitching. Now baste collar to shirt from notch to shoulder seam.

Make fabric loop for button. Baste in place as shown in Figure 37.

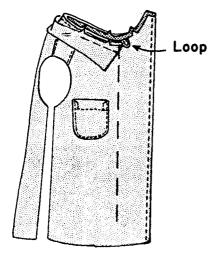


Figure 37.

Turn the facing back over the collar front as shown in Figure 38. Baste into position.

Stitch together the facing, collar, and blouse neckline. Stitch from the folded edge of the facing to the shoulder seam. Be sure that the collar has not slipped out of position. If you do not follow the seam exactly, one side of the collar will be larger than the other.

Trim the seams you just stitched to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. Clip the seam at the corner where the facing was folded back. Clip the neck seam as needed.

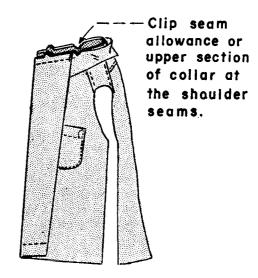


Figure 38.

Clip the upper collar seam almost to the stay stitching at the shoulder seam.

Turn the facing right side out. Baste and press. Turn under the seam of top collar and check to see how it fits the neckline.

Clip the seam as needed to make it fit correctly. Turn the top collar seam under just past the stay stitching, and baste to the back neck seam covering the neckline seam. Stitch by machine or put down by hand. Figure 39. shows finished collar and button loop.

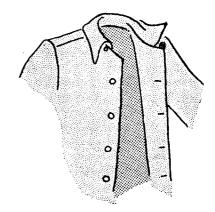


Figure 39.

Notched collar of heavy fabric

If the fabric is wool or other heavy material, the notched collar may be put on by the following method.

Sew under collar to garment. Do not stitch across seams at the end of the collar. Back stitch to prevent ripping. Refer to Figure 40.

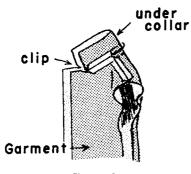


Figure 40.

Sew top collar to facing. Do not stitch across seams at the end of the collar. Figure 41.

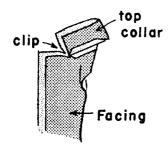


Figure 41.

Combine facing and shirt, and top and under collar. Bubble top collar and facing part that turns back at neck. Be very sure that seams match exactly at notch. Do not make a bubble at the notch.



Figure 42.

Stitch. Start stitching at notch and sew to center back of collar. Repeat on other side. Turn seams at notch out of the way so that you do not stitch across the seams at any time. Start stitching at notch and stitch down facing edge. Repeat on other side.

Take one or two stitches across collar and facing point so that it may be more easily turned. Refer to Figure 8.

Press seams of under collar back on under collar. Do the same for the facing. Trim upper collar seam to ½ inch and under collar to slightly less than ½ inch. Trim facing in like manner. Trim seams very close to stitching across the collar and facing points. Figure 43.



Figure 43.

Turn collar and facing right side out. Roll seam slightly to the under side. Baste and press.

Turn the top collar over the neckline in back and stitch in place or put down by hand.

Business-type shirt collar

Follow directions in the guide sheet of your pattern.

Flat-fell seam

Place two wrong sides together and stitch the seam allowance on the right side.

wrong sides together

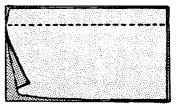


Figure 44.

Trim one seam close to stitching.

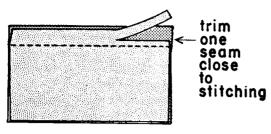


Figure 45.

Turn other seam over this seam. Press.

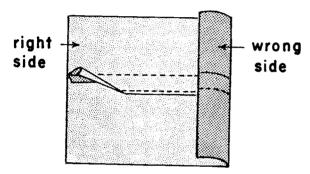


Figure 46.

Turn under raw edge of wide seam to form the width seam desired and baste. Stitch on the very edge of the fold.

Note: You will have two rows of stitching on the right side and only one row showing on the wrong side.

Mock flat-fell seam

Make it exactly as the flat-fell, except make it on the wrong side. When finished, two rows of stitching will show on the wrong side and only one on the right side.

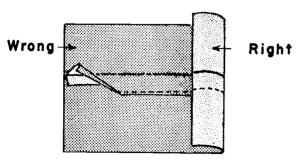


Figure 47.

Mock flat-fell for heavy fabrics

For fabrics that do not ravel, or for very heavy fabrics, this type of mock flat-fell is used.

Place the two right sides together and stitch the seam allowance on the wrong side.

Pink seams and press both seams to one side.

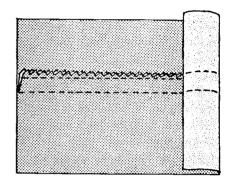


Figure 48.

Baste if needed. Top stitch the second seam the desired width from the first row (usually \frac{1}{4} inch from seam line).

Note: If the fabric is very heavy, you may wish to pink the seams so the top seam is a little shorter than the other one.

Lapped flat-fell seam

Place the pieces of the garment with both of the right sides facing up. Turn the edge of the seam of one under and place it on top of the other seam. Stitch in place. Press.

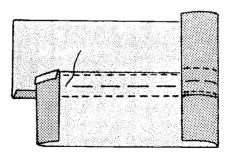


Figure 49.

Turn the garment to the wrong side. Trim the exposed raw seam the desired width and turn under the edge. Stitch on the edge.

Note: This gives two rows of stitching showing on both the wrong and right side.

Triple-stitched flat-fell seams

On work shirts a third row of stitching sometimes is added between the two rows on the right side. This is used especially on shoulder, yoke, and underarm seams.

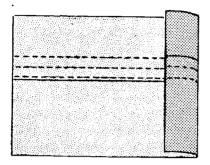


Figure 50.

Quick method mock flat-fell

Use only on lightweight fabrics.

Place wrong sides of fabric together with one side extending out past the other slightly less than 1 inch.

Turn edge (one extending out) over onto the other one and stitch near the raw edge. This will be about \(\frac{3}{8} \) inch from the fold.

Open with right sides up and bring fold over to opposite side. Press and stitch on the edge of the fold.

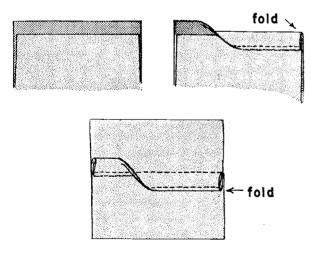


Figure 51.

Sleeves

Put in sleeves with a flat-fell seam. Refer to Figures 44, 45, and 46. Make shoulder seam extend over onto the sleeve. You may add a third row of stitching for added strength.

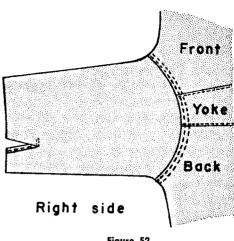
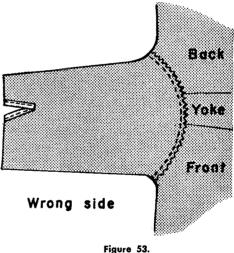


Figure 52.

For very heavy fabric make a plain seam on the wrong side. Pink the seams and turn toward the yoke. Stitch the seam to the shirt 1 inch from the other row of stitching. Refer to Figure 53.



This is the mock flat-fell seam for heavy fabrics listed on page 13. It gives the appearance of being a flat-fell seam. The lapped seam may also be used instead of the true flat-fell seam. See Figure 49.

Side seams

Use flat-fell or an adaptation of this seam. Sew the sleeves and side seam together in one operation. It does not matter which way you turn the flat-fell seam. Commercially made shirts are turned in various ways.

Attach cuff

After the sleeves are put into the shirt and side seams of shirt and sleeves are made, attach the cuff. If there is much fullness in the sleeve pleat it in; otherwise, ease in the slight fullness with gathers.

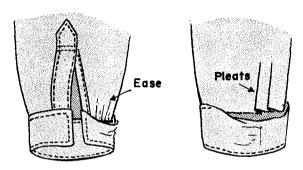


Figure 54.



Sport shirt

Sew across end of facing. Fold the facing back on the right side of the shirt and stitch across the bottom edge. Be sure that this stitching is exactly in line with the bottom of the crease for the hem. Figure 55.

Trim seam. Trim the seam as shown.

Turn facing back in place. Press.

Hem shirt. Hem the shirt by machine.

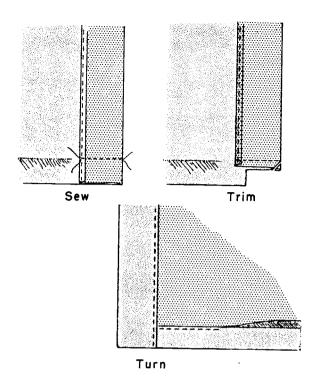


Figure 55.

Shaped shirt tail

Follow instructions on pattern in hemming a shaped shirt tail.

Make buttonholes and sew on buttons

Buttonholes may be either hand worked or machine made. In these busy times most homemakers wll prefer to use the machine.

Sew on buttons securely, but not tight enough to draw the fabric when the shirt is buttoned.

This circular was prepared by Miss Murle Scales, Extension Clothing Specialist, Oregon State College.

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