

# Making Pressing Pads

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Reprinted January 1977

Fact Sheet 233

Fabrics of wool and thermoplastic man-made fibers retain their shape and look more professionally finished if the seams, darts, and ease (small amounts of shaping fullness such as in sleeves) are pressed over a rounded pressing pad rather than a flat ironing board. Pressing pads may be purchased or made inexpensively at home if time is available. A variety of sizes and shapes will serve different purposes.

## Supplies needed for sawdust- or wool-filled pads

Heavy unbleached muslin, mattress ticking, or firm drill

Cotton outing flannel

Wool and/or additional muslin

Fine, clean, *dry* sawdust or finely snipped wool scraps

Sieve (for sawdust)

Thread, needles, pins, shears, thimble

Sewing machine

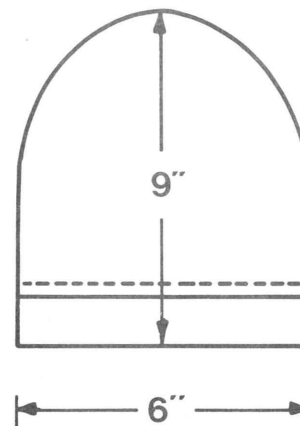
Patterns, tracing wheel and dressmaker carbon to mark seam lines

## Directions for making pads

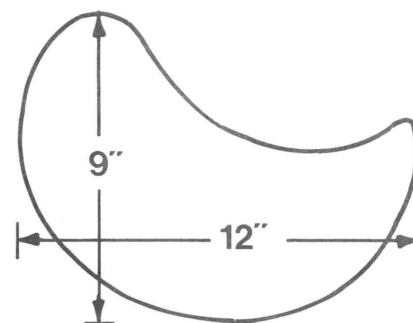
Pressing pads filled with sawdust require three covers: an inside cover to hold the sawdust, a middle cover of cotton flannel to provide padding, and an outer cover. The outer cover may be muslin, wool, or a combination. Muslin is used for most pressing. However, a wool cover will prevent shine if you intend to press wool fabric. You can make one side of the pad in muslin and the other in wool. Pressing pads filled with finely snipped wool scraps require only the inside cover to hold the wool and the outer cover of muslin, wool, or muslin and wool.

Pressing pads should be firm. To achieve firmness with the sawdust, sift it through a sieve and pack the fine particles firmly into the inside cover. If you use wool scraps, snip them into very small pieces and tamp them tightly into the inside cover.

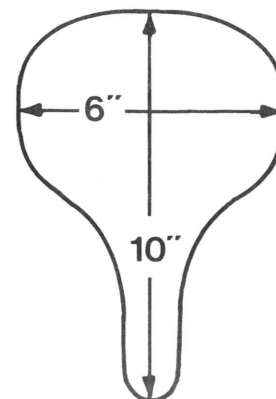
1. Add 1/2" seam allowance to the finished measurements illustrated.
2. Cut 4 pieces of muslin (or 3 muslin and 1 wool) and 2 pieces of flannel by the same pattern and on the same grain or yarn direction. Extra heavy muslin or mattress ticking should be cut on the true bias (45 degree angle between lengthwise and crosswise yarn directions).
3. Mark seam lines, allowing for an opening to be finished by hand.
4. For the inside bag, pin together 1 piece of flannel to each piece of muslin. With the flannel pieces to the inside, pin and machine stitch the 4 layers together with a small stitch. Leave a 4-inch opening at the smaller or flatter end of the pad.
5. Make the outer cover by machine stitching the 2 remaining pieces of muslin, leaving an opening across the wide end of the pad.



Pressing mitt



Pressing ham



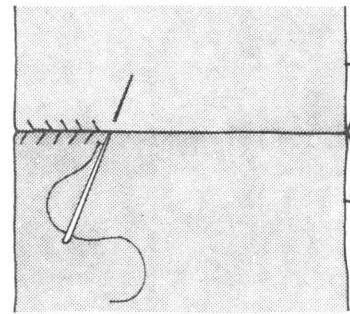
Shoulder shape

6. Fill the inside cover with a small amount of sawdust or wool. Tamp or pack it firmly using a spoon or small bottle. Fill and tamp alternately. Shape the pad as it is filled.

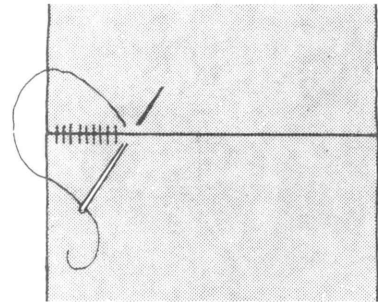
7. Close the opening with close baseball stitches or overhand stitches, working alternately from each end using 2 needles and double thread. Pound in more filling as hole diminishes and as is needed.

8. Place the filled pad in the outer cover. Keep seamlines parallel and see that the fit is wrinkle free.

9. Close the outer cover by hand stitching.



Baseball stitch



Overhand stitch

### Pressing mitt

1. Cut one additional piece of the outer covering. This piece will form the mitt portion.

2. Press a 1/2" fold and a 1" hem on the straight side of the mitt portion. Machine stitch close to the hem edge.

3. Lay the mitt portion on the inside when machine stitching the outer covering. (Step 5 of the general directions.)

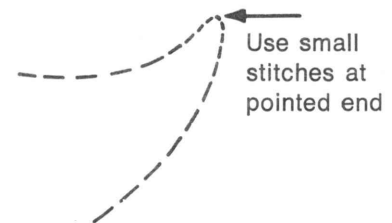
4. Turn the outer covering right side out so that the hem is hidden.

5. Complete the mitt according to the general directions.

### Pressing ham

Although hams frequently come in a rounded shape, this one allows for pressing inside-curved seams as well as outside curves, and pointed garment areas as well as gently rounded and sharply rounded.

Follow the general directions. On the pointed end, reduce the size of the stitch from 12 to 15 stitches per inch to 18 to 20 stitches per inch and use 2 to 3 short stitches across the point so that it can be trimmed to turn smoothly.



### Shoulder shape

A short amount (6 to 8 inches) of dowel or broomstick helps to support the handle area. Pack the sawdust firmly into the wide end, add the support to the handle area, and continue filling with sawdust.



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