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p. 15

thread

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**5 Autumn Trends
TO SEW**

*Vintage-inspired
collar p. 22*



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Photo: Jack Deutsch

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Stitched Connections

Each time I sit down to sew, or pick up my knitting needles, I think of my mother, who was an expert textile artist. Although I'll never match her skill or design acumen, I still feel connected to her through this shared love of making. I suspect most of us have someone—past or present—whose spirit accompanies us on our needlecraft pathways. It's lovely and sustaining to feel part of a chain of creativity.

The articles in this issue remind me of how strongly a sewing practice connects us to the world around us, to history, and to each other. Our fashion reporter, Vanessa Nirode, identifies a trend for incorporating the old with the new in the season's styles and for finding comfort in this fusion (p. 56). Becky Fulgoni has realized this in her use of kantha quilts for clothing that's new, yet tied to countless makers and wearers before her (p. 48). In a story about working with vicuña fabric, Susan Khalje pays homage to the South American animals and the stewards who make possible this rare textile (p. 70).

Looking to past fashions with contemporary significance, Pamela Howard traces the history of barn coats and shows us how to make them modern and luxurious (p. 40). Timothy Long shares his research into the velvet suits worn by George Washington—a fitting subject for our nation's 250th anniversary (p. 64) and one that reveals much about the role of fashion in our country's earliest years. Finally, Evelyn Oliver Knight, a talented quilter I met at a juried art exhibition, tells us how her quilting has reinforced her links to community, family, memories, and her own identity as an artist (p. 81).

Even if you sew by yourself at home, I hope you know that you are always connected, and that you are doing your part to carry a priceless tradition forward.

Carol J. Fresia
Carol J. Fresia, Editor



WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Send your letters to: *Threads* Letters, 2143 Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312 or via email th@threadsmagazine.com

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What are your rules for using color in your designs?



BECKY FULGONI

("Reinterpretations in Kantha," p. 48) says, "As I've gotten older, I've found that I have fewer and fewer rules in my life about anything, including in my sewing rooms. But I'm more likely to use analogous or monochromatic colors than strong contrasting or complementary ones. I'm a big fan of 'less is more,' and I love one exquisite detail, be it a pop of color or the perfect pocket welt. I do have a spool of turquoise button thread. So if the design has buttons, there will be a smidge of turquoise."

Becky's Michigan summers and Key West winters have all but eliminated wool from her life. She says she has recently embraced linen and turquoise.

STEPHANIE FAGAN (*Threads* art director) says, "Color is one of my favorite ways to tell a story. I always try to use it to complement, not compete with, the subject. When used thoughtfully, color creates mood, adds personality, and guides the reader through a design in a way that feels natural and engaging."

When Stephanie is not designing the pages of *Threads*, she's planning and tending to the colorful ornamental and vegetable gardens surrounding her home in Newtown, Connecticut.



KENNETH D. KING

("How Did They Sew That: Elegant Raglan Collar,"

p. 22) says, "I studied color theory early in my career, and found that I prefer a split-complementary color combination whenever I'm combining colors. Meaning, when I'm choosing a combination and am stumped as to the final colors, I will look to the split-complementary model to reason out the final color."

Kenneth began sewing doll clothes at age 4. The human-scale clothes he's made, his couture business, and his career grew from that.

EVELYN OLIVER KNIGHT

("Closures: My Quilting Life,"

p. 81) says, "Color is often the star of a garment or quilt I create. The only rule I follow is that I am pleased with the outcome. With such an abundance of interesting fabrics that convey various hues, shades, shapes, and designs, it's fun to explore and connect colors in a unique way."

Evelyn, a retired state of Connecticut communications consultant, revels in creating messages through her fiber art quilts.



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HOW-TO | PROJECTS & PATTERNS | INSPIRATION

ONLINE EXTRAS

Sewing challenge finalists: See four finalist entries and more images of the winning ensemble from the vintage-to-modern *Threads*/Folkwear Sewing Challenge.

Kantha garment construction details: Find out more about how Becky Fulgoni created the apron dress shown in “Reinterpretations in Kantha,” p. 48.

Chore jacket examples: Go to ThreadsMagazine.com to see greater detail of two additional upscale coats created by Pamela Howard, author of “Elevated Barn Jacket,” p. 40.

See the patterns: Use the QR code on p. 62 for links to every pattern listed in “Fashion Connection” by Vanessa Nirode.

ON-DEMAND LEARNING with Martha Pullen



Heirloom-sewing expert Martha Pullen lays out the basics of sewing delicate fabrics and trims by machine to create treasured garments in her *Beginning Heirloom Techniques* class. She shows how to stitch lace to fabric and other trims, make twin-needle pin tucks, create wing needle effects, and more.

Go to Courses.ThreadsMagazine.com to sign up for this and other on-demand classes.



This sewing challenge garment is based on the Folkwear Calico Day Dress pattern.

Best-selling STRIPES

Make your own version
of a popular
oversized sweatshirt

If you've walked into a coffee shop in the last year, you most likely saw someone wearing a Free People crewneck sweatshirt with cheery confidence. This shirt continues to rank among Free People's bestsellers, in an ever-changing array of striped colorways. It's vibrant and easy to wear—no wonder it's been a multi-season favorite.

As a sewist, I am constantly looking at designs and thinking, "How can I make that?" I keep track of these inspirations in notes and photos; organize my ideas with a planning template (you can find one at SewingWorkshop.com); and I let my sewing friends inspire me to take action.

When I saw the striped sweatshirt, I knew I wanted to replicate it. I'll show you how to make your own—so you'll be on trend, but also original. You'll reach for your sweatshirt often.

Alex Woodbury is a designer, artist, teacher, and writer who shares her love of colorful style at the Sewing Workshop. @alexnotaliceinwonderland

A sweatshirt worth lining up for: Colorful stripes and a generous cut make this a must-have in your casual wardrobe.

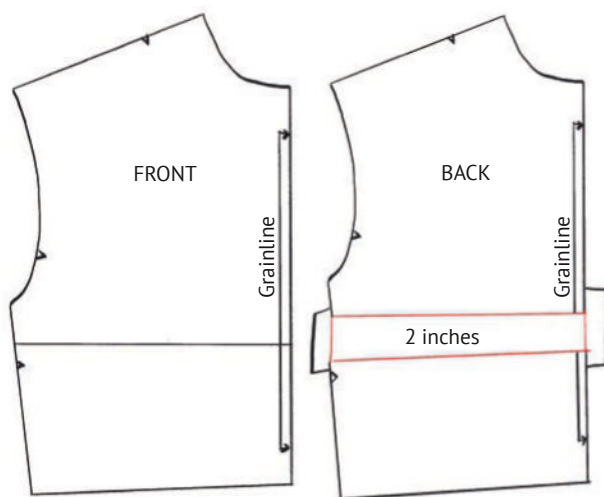
Pattern: Maison Top, SewingWorkshop, modified. Fabric: cotton-blend jersey, SewingWorkshop.com.



Finesse the Silhouette

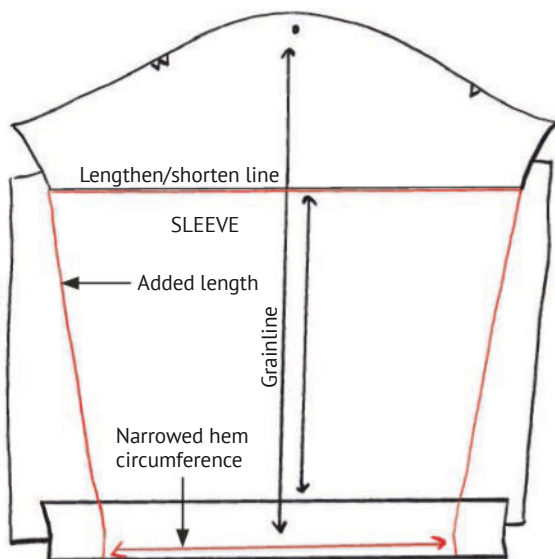
I opted to start with the Maison Top, from SewingWorkshop.com. It has the loose fit, round neckline, and dropped shoulder I wanted, and it is easy to adapt.

1 Lengthen the body. Cut the front and back patterns along the lengthen/shorten line (or cut 1 inch above the waist level, perpendicular to the grainline). Separate the top and bottom pieces by the desired amount, and tape pattern paper between them. I usually lengthen this shirt by 2 inches.



2 Extend the hem band. I like the hem band to match the shirt's hemline, so it doesn't pull in at the bottom. Measure the front and back hemlines, minus seam allowances, and add them together. Extend the hem band pattern to this length, plus two seam allowance widths.

3 Lengthen the sleeve. Determine the desired sleeve length by tissue-fitting the bodice and measuring from the shoulder point to your wrist, or measure the sleeve on a garment with a similar fit. Cut across the sleeve, perpendicular to the grainline, at the lengthen/shorten line, and spread the pieces by the amount you want to add. Fill the space with pattern paper.



4 Narrow the sleeve. Measure around your wrist and add an inch or two for the desired ease. Reduce the sleeve hem to this measurement, plus two seam allowances. Redraw the sleeve seams using a hip curve as a guide.

5 Create a hem band pattern. Draw a rectangle the length of the sleeve hem by 2½ inches.

6 Create a "dorito" pattern. Draw an equilateral triangle, 2 inches per side. Mark this pattern "Cut 1."

WHY IT'S A FAVORITE

This shirt is simple, but I love sewing and wearing it for so many reasons.

Comfort. The slouchy style is easy to wear and works with bottoms of different silhouettes. Throughout the fashion world, oversized garments are seen as effortless and athleisure-like.



Simplicity.

This shirt is a basic in the best way. Add interest with color and it becomes a design to make and wear again and again.

Stripes. From the 1910s—when Coco Chanel adopted the blue-and-white Breton pattern—to today, stripes have been considered modern and luxurious.

Sporty details. The dorito element—the little appliquéd triangle at the front neckline—speaks to the sweatshirt's heritage as athleticwear, where these insets were designed to absorb sweat. On my shirt, it's decorative.

Plentiful patterns. Choose from generously proportioned T-shirt and sweatshirt patterns for this simple design:

- Boreal Sweater, FibreMood.com
- Fenix Sweatshirt, StyleArc.com
- Linden Sweatshirt, GrainlineStudio.com
- Maison Top, SewingWorkshop.com
- Mile End Sweatshirt, ClosetCorePatterns.com



Details like ribbed edging and a dorito appliqué nod to the shirt's athletic heritage.

Choose Fabrics Wisely

Fun stripes were the first requirement for my fabric. But I also considered other characteristics. If you can shop in person and feel the fabrics, do so. If you shop online, order swatches to determine if the fabric has the qualities you want.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Stretch and drape: Given the garment's generous ease, my fabric didn't need a lot of stretch, and a medium-weight cotton-blend jersey knit was just right. It's also heavy enough to drape well.

Yardage amount: Most knits are wide—60 inches or more. Follow the yardage requirements on your pattern, and add $\frac{1}{4}$ yard if you've lengthened pattern pieces.

Stripe repeat: If the stripe repeat is large, add about another $\frac{1}{4}$ yard to make it easier to match. It's sometimes better to overbuy and use any remnants for future pattern-blocking.

Contrasting bands: Buy at least $\frac{1}{2}$ yard, in case you need to piece the long waistband piece. I chose a rib-knit bamboo/spandex blend, which has good stretch and recovery.

tip

FINISH STRONG.

Knits don't ravel, so a seam allowance finish isn't mandatory, but it does make the garment look better and keeps the allowances flat. A three-thread serger stitch is ideal. You can apply a zigzag stitch, if you don't have a serger.

PREPARATION STEPS

Prewash: This saves the heartache of shrinkage in the finished garment.

Layout and cutting: Plan to match stripes at major seams (side seams, sleeve seams), and cut the sleeves to match. A single-layer layout, with careful pinning, is the best option for ensuring symmetry and a good match.

Transfer marks: Make small snips in the seam allowances to mark notches, and use tailor's tacks for dots, as at the sleeve cap.

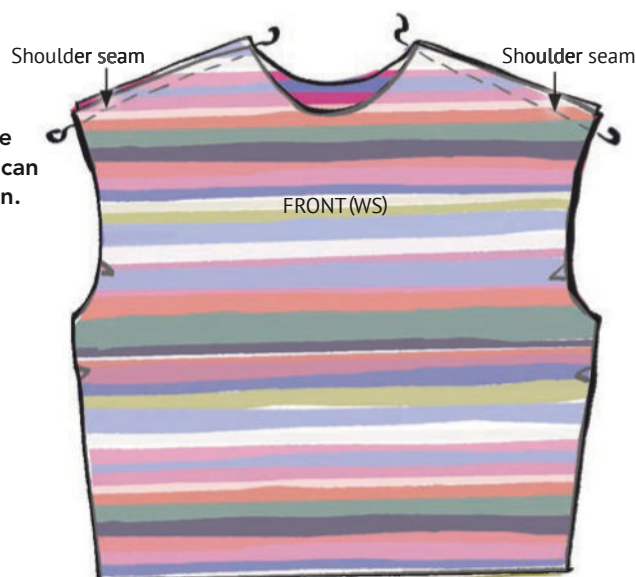
Test seams: To make this top on a sewing machine, use a walking foot, a size 75 or 80 microtex/sharp needle, or a stretch needle. Because the garment is oversized, you can use a straight stitch without worrying that the seams will pop.

Enjoy the Simple Sewing

The construction for this top is straightforward once you've determined the best seaming method for your fabric. You can be wearing your new sweatshirt by the end of an afternoon.

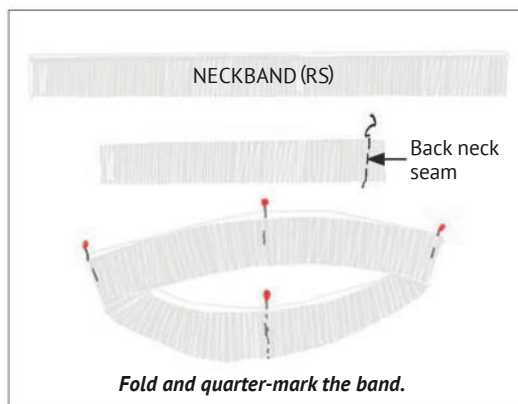
NECKLINE

1 Sew the shoulder seams. With right sides together, stitch the front and back at the shoulder seams. Finish the allowances and press toward the back.



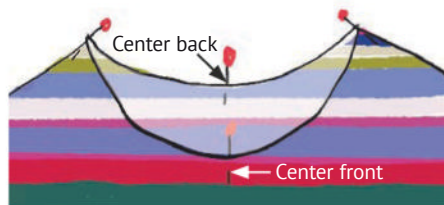
2 Prepare the neck-band.

Fold the band in half, with wrong sides together, and press the long crease. If the fabric curls, secure the layers together with Fusi-Web, leaving the ends open. Then open the short ends, place them with right sides together, and sew the seam. Trim and press the allowances open, and refold the band. Now, quarter-mark the neckband, placing one pin at the seam; this will be the center back.

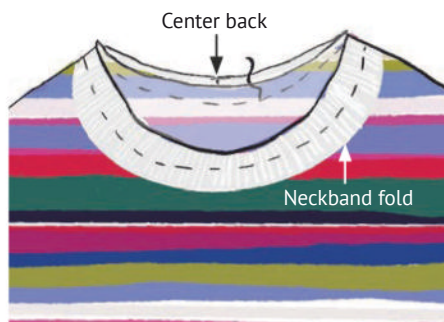


3 Quarter-mark the neck-line.

Place pins at centers front and back, then center pins between the front and back pins. These pins may not be at the shoulder seams.

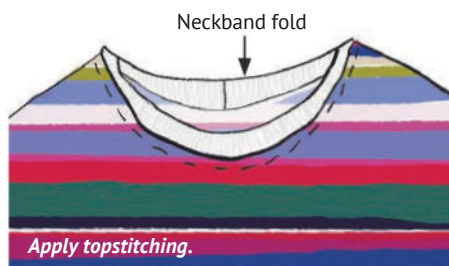


4 Attach the band. Matching the quarter marks, pin the band to the neckline, with right sides together and raw edges aligned. Start sewing at the center back and sew each quarter, holding the fabric taut so the neck opening matches the neckband length. Then serge the seam allowances.



5 Topstitch to secure the allowances.

First, finger-press them toward the shirt, then stitch from the right side, $\frac{1}{8}$ inch from the seamline. Press over a ham to shape the neckline curve.



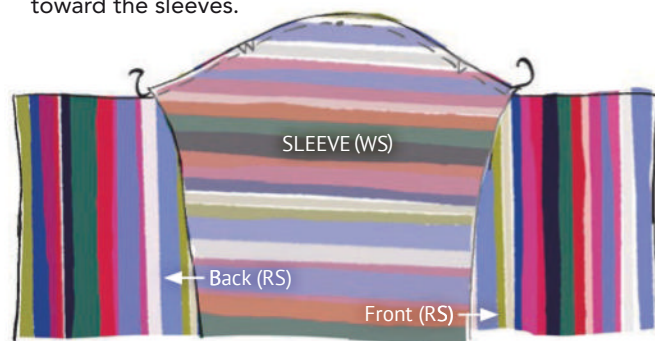
6 Appliqué the dorito. Place it at center front and use Fusi-Web to anchor it in position. With a decorative machine stitch, sew around the edges; if desired, extend the lower stitching lines into an X, to mimic a traditional sweatshirt look.



SEAMS AND HEMS

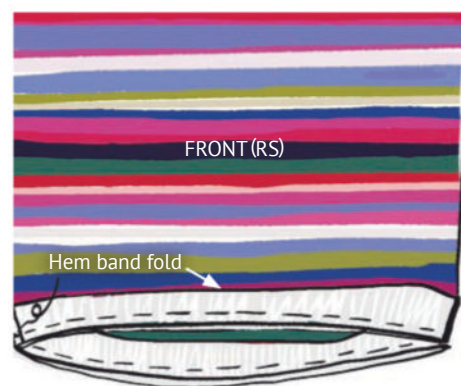
1 Add the sleeve bands. Press them in half with wrong sides together, then pin them to the sleeve hems, with right sides together and raw edges aligned. Sew, then finish the seam allowances and press them toward the sleeve.

2 Insert the sleeves. With right sides together, match notches and shoulder dots. Sew and finish the seam allowances, and press toward the sleeves.



3 Sew the sleeve and side seams. With right sides together, match the stripes and notches. Use Fusi-Web to secure the fabric if desired. Then stitch from the sleeve band to the underarm, pivot, and sew to the hem. Finish the allowances and press toward the back.

4 Add the hem band. Follow the steps for attaching the neckband.



Sew the hem band, then press down and topstitch if desired.

Place at center front and secure with decorative stitches.

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Guidelines for **BETTER SEWING**

Where, when, and how to mark projects
for the most accurate stitching

I'm going to talk about sewing guidelines—literal guidelines: machine-stitched, pressed, chalked, or hand-basted lines to guide your sewing. We all have limited time to sew but still want good results. I have used stitched guidelines for many years because they lead to accurate sewing with minimum effort and time commitment.

Marking all seamlines is time-consuming and unnecessary, but strategically marking selected seamlines is, in my opinion, mandatory. It saves time in the long run because your sewing turns out right on the first attempt. I'll explain when to mark seamlines during the sewing process. Pre-marking lines before doing any sewing often does not work well. It is better to do your marking right before, or even during, garment construction.

And speaking of construction, I usually modify the instructions to break down the process of constructing garment details into small steps so I can check the accuracy as I go. This allows you to compensate for any inaccuracies in the earlier steps by making adjustments in the later steps.

Eve Kovacs is a longtime pattern tester for the Threads Pattern Review department. See her prize-winning ensemble on p. 78.

It pays to strategically mark stitching lines when you're striving for absolute accuracy where it shows.

Pattern: out-of-print Vogue 2958, modified;
sewn by Pamela W. Howard. Fabric: denim.

Simple Tools

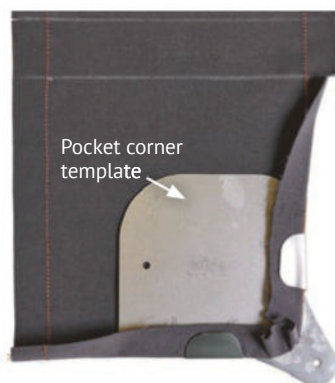
You don't need anything complicated to create precise, easy-to-follow guidelines on most fabrics.

MARKERS

A chalk wheel, such as a Chaco Liner or Chakoner, needs to deliver a fine, easily visible line. I use white so the color will not bleed onto my fabric. Washable and disappearing ink markers are readily available and deliver a finer line than chalk pencils. I have never had a problem removing the marks from washable fabrics. Test all markers on a fabric scrap before working on the project.

CORNER TEMPLATE

The pocket-former template (CuttingLineDesigns.com) is a useful tool that is designed for use when marking and shaping curved patch pocket corners. It offers 1.0 cm, 1.5 cm, 2.0 cm, or 3.0 cm curves and can be used for marking other small curves such as at the ends of a collar stand.



RULER

Use a see-through ruler with 1/8-inch marks or gridded lines. An 18-inch by 3-inch ruler is the most convenient.

SEAM GUIDE

A magnetic seam guide is a handy sewing tool, and I strongly recommend you add it to your lineup. I get more accurate and consistent stitching results by placing the seam guide at the desired width from the needle and butting the fabric edge against the guide as I sew (see the facing page). The seam guide's edge provides a fixed location that is easier to judge than aligning the fabric edge with the engraved seam allowance mark on the throat plate. And if you want to stitch at a width that falls between the marks, using the guide is easier and more accurate than trying to "guesstimate" the distance between the marks.

tip

STEAM SUPPLY.

Since you will be pressing along guidelines, make sure your steam iron can easily press a sharp crease in woven fabrics. For a copious, reliable burst of steam, I use a steam generator iron with a separate water tank.

Guideline Fundamentals

Balance accuracy with efficiency by marking only where it really matters, and following a labor-saving construction order.

WHERE TO MARK

Major seamlines such as side seams or princess seams do not need to be marked. It's sufficient to use a magnetic seam guide, placed at the required seam allowance width. But smaller details don't look right unless they are accurate to at least 5 percent of their finished size. For example, if the width of a 1 1/4-inch placket varies by 1/8 inch, it is noticeable and compromises the project's appearance.

Pay attention to these areas:

Plackets and cuffs. They should be on grain as well as an even width.

Patch pockets, pocket welts and flaps. Keep them on grain, symmetrical, and any points must be centered. Paired details should be identical.

Necklines and collars. Mirrored areas must be symmetrical.

THE KEY SEQUENCE

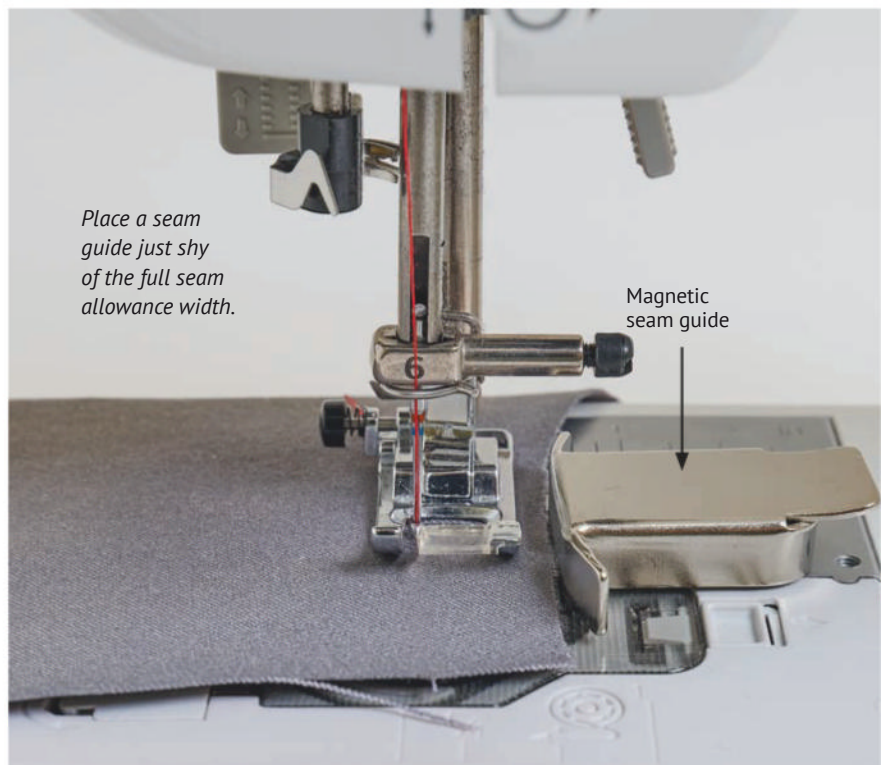
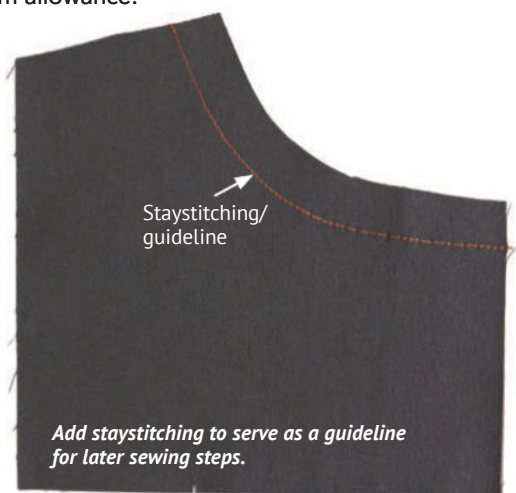
- 1 Work on individual details.** Break down the assembly of the garment detail into steps that eliminate sewing around sharp corners.
- 2 Create the long edge first.** Stitch or fold the longest edge first, then turn, press, and understitch if using a seam.
- 3 Establish the guideline.** From the right side of the partially finished detail, measure and chalk-mark the desired finished width from its finished edge, so you can correct for any inaccurate cutting. It's fine if the seam allowance is uneven. Then stitch just inside this line. As a general rule, guidelines are stitched a hair inside the seam allowance. Check the stitched line for accuracy in grain orientation, placement, and length.
- 4 Finish the detail.** Complete any additional steps so the element is ready to be attached to the garment.
- 5 Apply the detail.** Follow the stitched guideline, now visible from the wrong side, to sew the detail to the garment. The final stitching is done just to the outside of the guideline.

Curved Edges

Staystitching achieves two purposes: It stabilizes edges such as necklines, and it establishes a guideline for finishing the edge.

1 Install a magnetic seam guide. Place it at a distance from the needle that is $\frac{1}{16}$ inch shy of the full desired seam allowance width.

2 Stitch along the curved edge. Align the fabric with its cut edge along the seam guide, and sew. This places the staystitching just inside the seam allowance.



Plackets, Straight or Curved

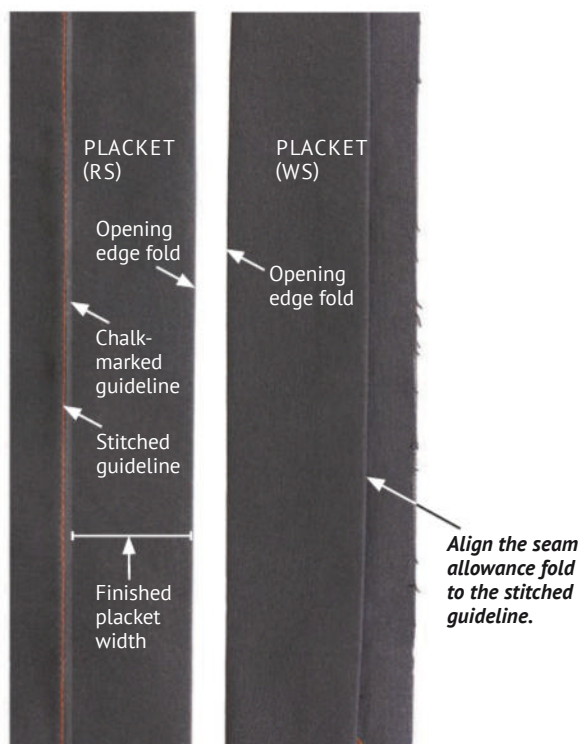
Because plackets are narrow, any discrepancy in width over the placket's length can be obvious. Accurate marking, pressing, and stitching ensure professional-level consistency.

STRAIGHT PLACKETS

1 Press the placket. Typically, a straight placket's outer edge is folded. Press the fold as marked, making sure it is on grain.

2 Mark the placket width. With a gridded ruler as a guide, draw a line to indicate the finished placket width. Measure from the fold and mark on the right side. This ensures an accurate width in the finished garment, where the placket is seen from the right side. Then machine-stitch a guideline on the right side, a hair to the seam-allowance side of the marked line. Stitch only through the outer placket layer, leaving the facing layer free.

3 Press under the seam allowance. On the placket's wrong side, press under the facing's seam allowance, following the stitched guideline. After attaching the placket to the garment, this fold will be secured by edgestitching or hand stitching.



CURVED PLACKETS

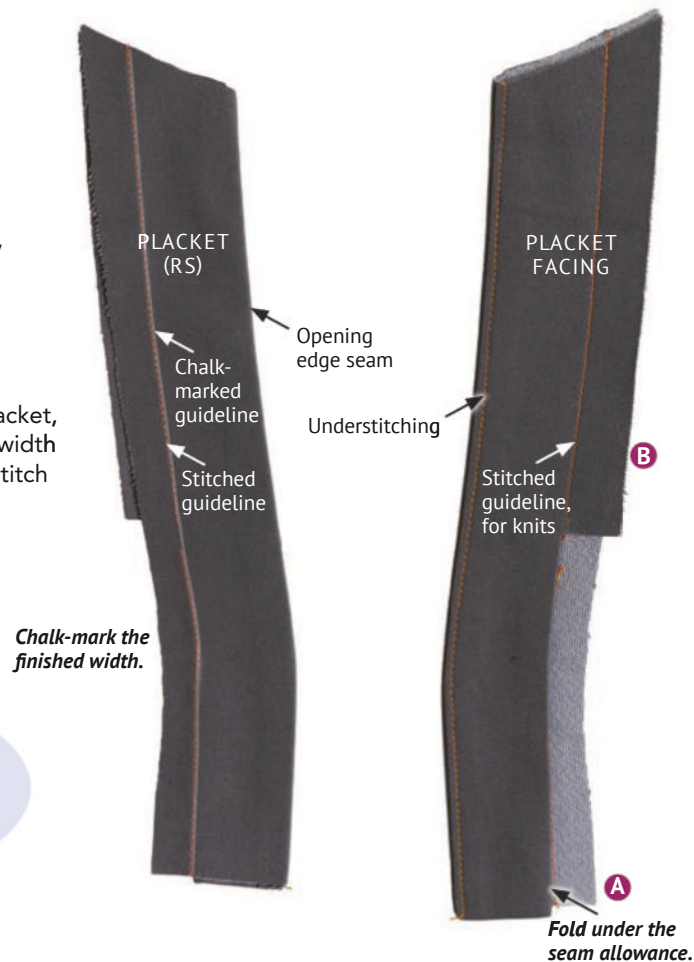
1 Join the placket and its facing. With right sides together, stitch the long outside edge. Trim and grade the seam allowances, turn and press open and then press flat. Understitch this long edge, then press the edge flat again.

2 Mark the placket width. As described for the straight placket, use a chalk marker and ruler to mark the finished placket width from the right side, measuring from the finished edge. Then stitch just inside the marked line, through the placket layer only.

3 Press under the seam allowance. On the wrong side press under the placket facing's unfinished edge (A).

tip

SHORTCUT FOR KNITS. For knit fabrics, the placket is often treated as a single layer. In this case, stitch the guideline through both placket layers after marking the placket width (B).



Collars

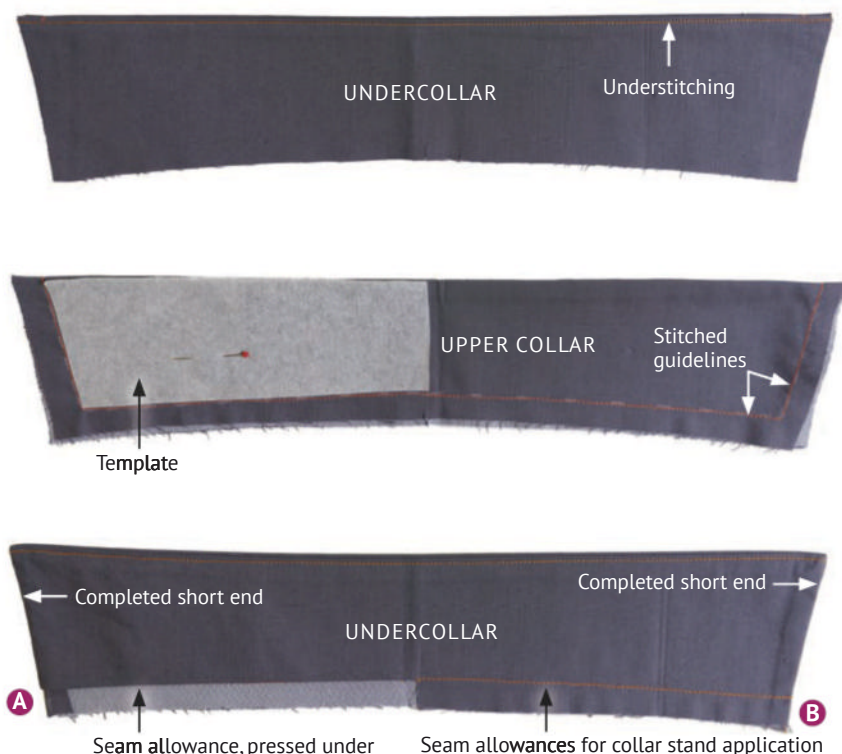
Collars come in a variety of shapes. This method works for all of them. In addition to key guidelines, it includes steps for checking accuracy, so the finished collar is crisp and symmetrical.

1 Sew the collar's long edge. With right sides together, join the upper and undercollars along the outer edge. Trim, grade, and understitch the seam allowances. Press the finished edge.

2 Stitch guidelines. On the upper collar, sew guidelines at the neck edge and short ends. Use the magnetic seam guide to position the guidelines a hair inside the seamline. Check that the short ends are the same length from the finished edge to the neck guideline. Check the guideline to make sure it is symmetrical around the collar's center. Alternatively, cut a paper template to the shape of the finished collar and use it to chalk-mark the guidelines; stitch a hair inside the marked line. Then press under the undercollar's neckline seam allowance (A).

Note: If the collar is to be inserted into a collar stand, stitch the neck edge guideline through both layers, and don't press under the allowance (B).

3 Stitch the short ends. Use the wrapped corner technique to ensure sharp points. For instructions, see "How to Sew Crisp and Clean Collars," at ThreadsMagazine.com. Turn the collar right side out and press.



Cuffs

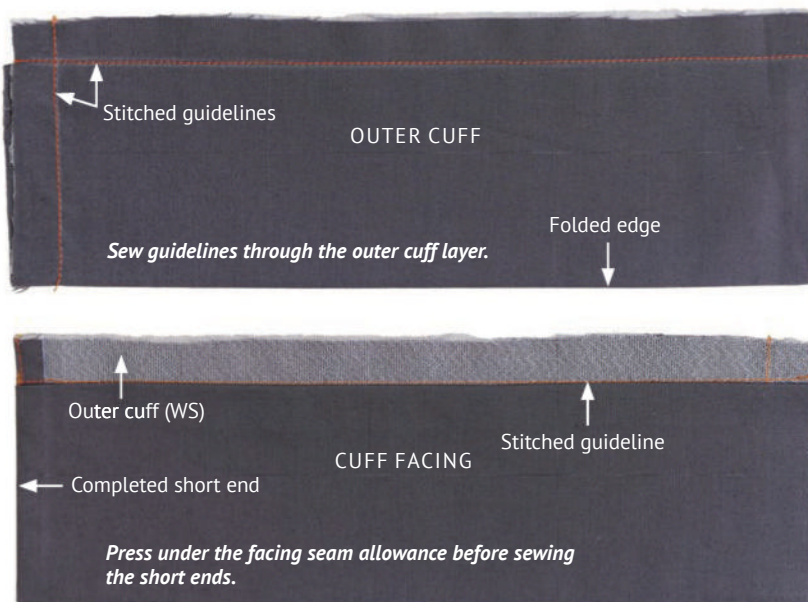
Like collars, cuffs should have short ends that are identical, whether they are straight or curved.

STRAIGHT CUFFS

1 Mark and stitch guidelines. Straight cuffs are usually cut with the outer cuff and facing as a single piece, folded along the cuff hemline. First, press the cuff in half along the foldline, with wrong sides together. On the right side, chalk-mark lines just within the seam allowances on the three remaining sides. Stitch the guidelines through the outer cuff, sewing from the right side.

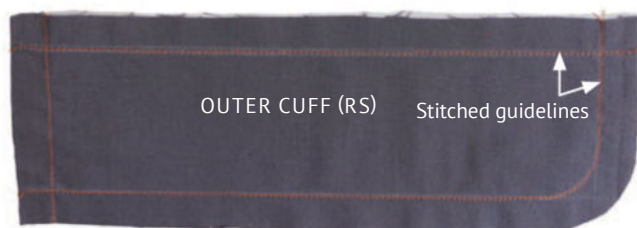
2 Press under the facing seam allowance. Fold the allowance under to align with the outer cuff's stitched guideline and press. Check that the short ends are the same length.

3 Stitch the short ends. Fold the cuff with right sides together, aligning the facing's folded edge to the stitched guideline. Sew the seams from the fold to the guideline. Turn the cuff right side out and press.



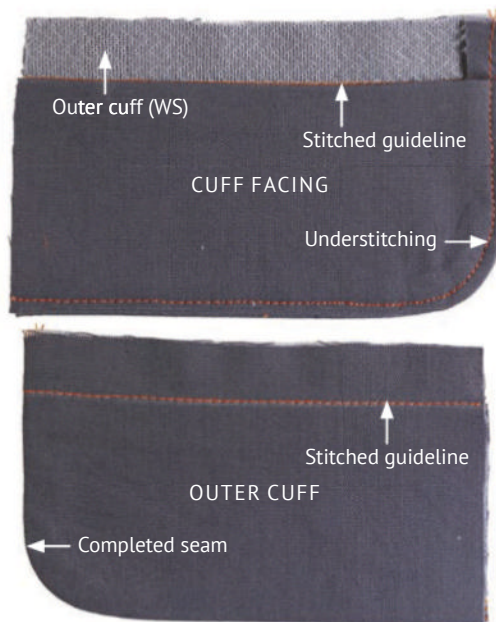
CURVED CUFFS

1 Mark and stitch guidelines. Curved cuffs are cut in two pieces—an outer cuff and a facing. On the outer cuff's right side, chalk-mark and stitch guidelines on all sides. To ensure consistent curves on the corners, trace an appropriate curve on the pocket template. Check that the straight sections of the guidelines along the cuff's long and short edges are on grain.



2 Press under the facing seam allowance. Place the cuff and cuff facing right sides together, matching all the edges. Press the facing's upper seam allowance under by following the stitched guideline on the outer cuff.

3 Sew the cuff. With right sides together, stitch the cuff facing to the cuff following the guidelines along the sides and lower edge. Understitch the facing as far as possible. Then turn the cuff right side out and press.



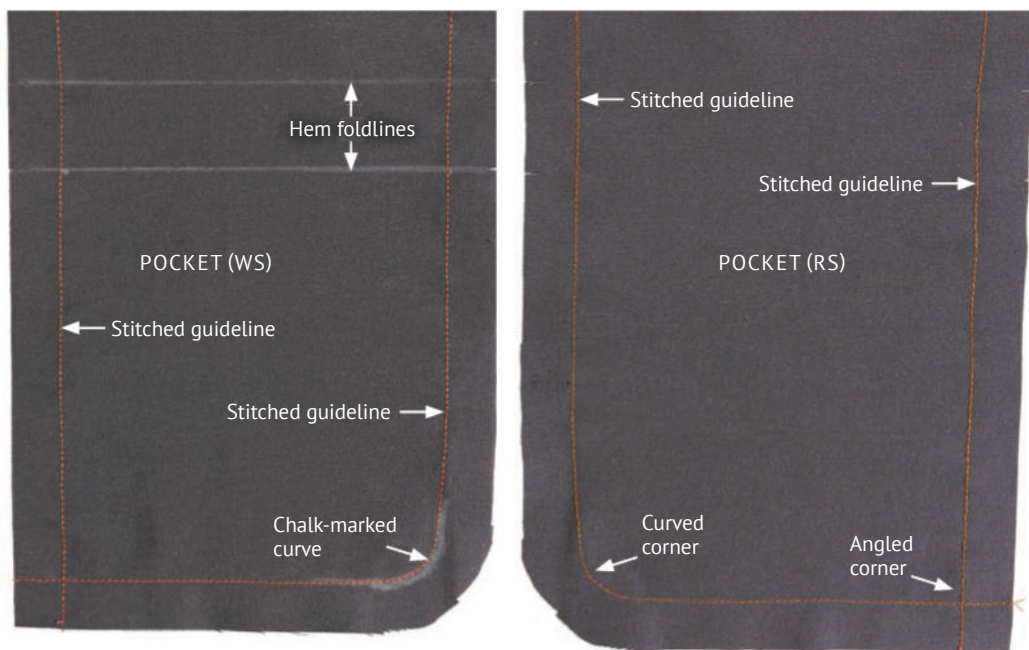
Patch pockets

For great-looking patch pockets, pay attention to these elements: The edges are on grain (unless designed differently); the pockets are symmetrical, with well-shaped corners; and they are identical to any paired pockets. Stitched guidelines make it possible to check these details and correct any issues before attaching the pockets.

1 Mark the hem. On the pocket's wrong side, chalk-mark the foldlines. Check that they are on the straight grain and correct if not.

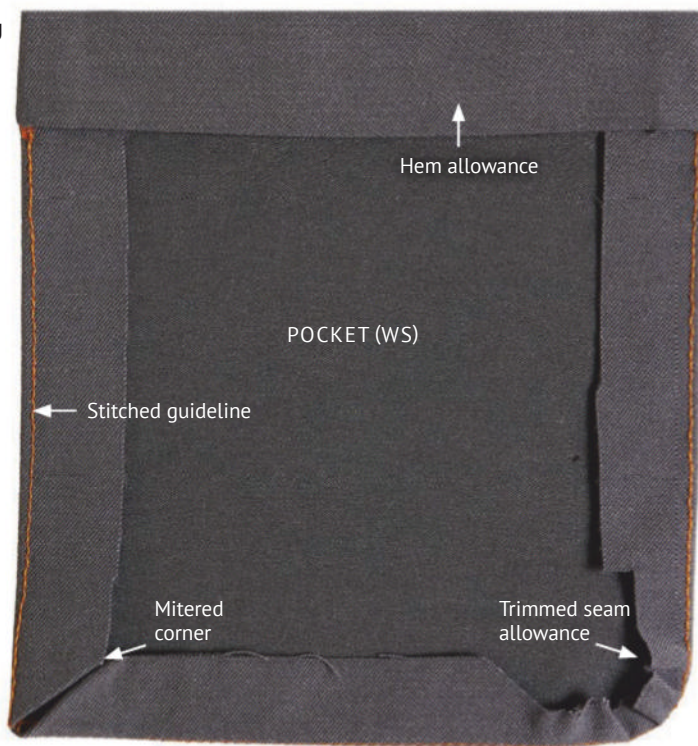
2 Stitch guidelines. Set the magnetic seam guide $\frac{1}{16}$ inch less than the seam allowance from the needle. Stitch guidelines along the pocket's sides and lower edge. Check that straight sections are on grain.

If the pocket bottom has a point, fold the pocket in half to press-mark the center line and pivot the guideline stitching on this center line. If the pocket has curved corners, use the pocket template as a guide to chalk mark the curve before stitching. Stitch curved guidelines in one pass, from one upper corner, around the bottom, and ending at the opposite upper corner.



3 Hem the top edge. Press under the edge along the upper chalk line, then fold the hem allowance to the right side along the lower chalk line. Stitch the sides. Turn the hem right side out.

4 Form the pocket. Follow the guidelines to press the sides and bottom into the final shape. The fabric will naturally want to turn along the stitched guidelines, making the pressing step easy. Miter right-angle corners. If you are having trouble pressing a sharp corner on the miter, take a couple of hand stitches on the wrong side to keep the corner in shape. For rounded corners, trim the seam allowances and press over the pocket template.



web extra

Find more instructions on using guidelines in an enhanced version of the article, at [ThreadsMaazine.com](https://www.threadsmaazine.com).

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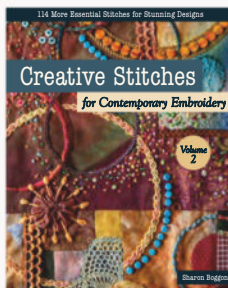
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Elegant RAGLAN COLLAR

Release the raglan seams to create a face-framing neckline

The smart jacket shown on p. 83 was designed by Egyptian-born French couturier Jean Dessès (1904–1970). Not well known today, Dessès was nevertheless internationally successful in the years following World War II, including in the United States.

This garment has a number of intriguing features, all of which are worth reproducing together or individually. I'll explain how to replicate the standing collar, which is cut in one with the raglan sleeves and wraps to the center-back neck. Add this collar to a coat, jacket, or—with sufficient support—a dress or blouse.

Contributing Editor Kenneth D. King liked this designer jacket so much that he's made two versions for himself. See them on Instagram @kennethdking.

MORE DETAILS TO COME

In the winter issue, Kenneth D. King will show how to create the pockets that are hidden in the lower slot seams.

Put raglan seamlines to creative use by building in a layered neckline that functions as a standing collar.

*Pattern: author's design, SewingAndDesignSchool.com.
Fabric: boiled wool, GorgeousFabrics.com.*



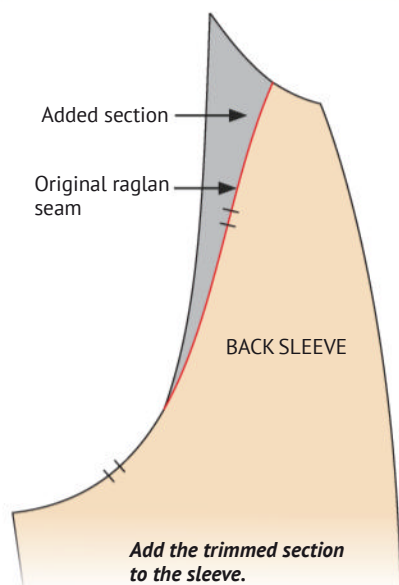
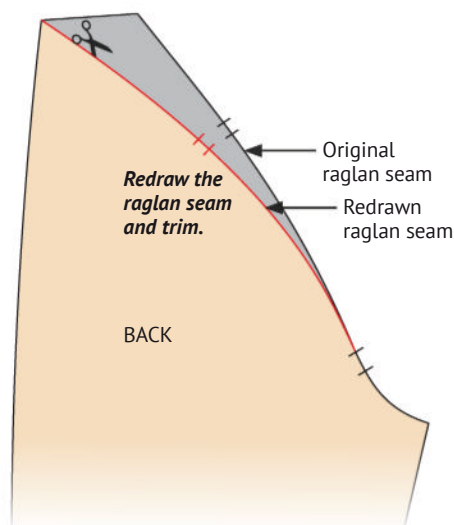
Adjust a Raglan Pattern

This design is based on a raglan sleeve pattern. I used a raglan coat pattern of my own design, available through SewingAndDesignSchool.com. You'll move the raglan seams and extend the neckline edge to create the standing collar. Remove the seam allowances before altering the patterns.

BACK RAGLAN SEAM

1 Shift the back raglan seam. On the back pattern, redraw the raglan seam from midway along the seam, so it terminates at the center-back seamline. Trim the marked section from the pattern.

2 Add to the back sleeve pattern. Tape the trimmed portion to the sleeve, matching the notches and neckline. Clip the sliver of pattern as needed to conform with the sleeve's raglan seamline. Check that the seam lengths are equal. Adjust at the underarm if necessary.



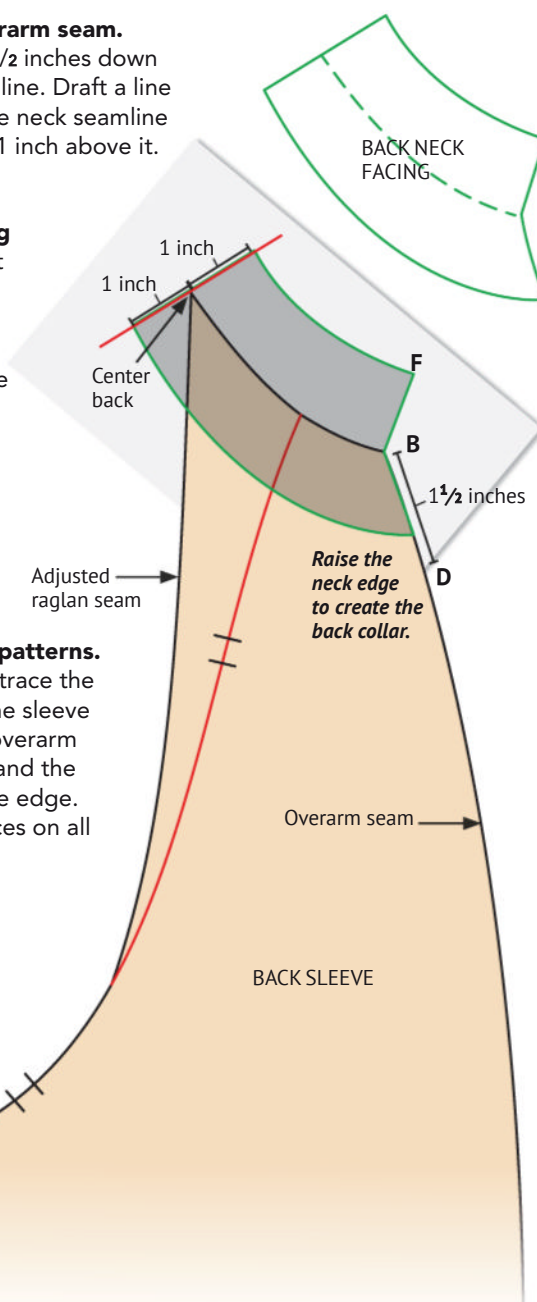
BACK COLLAR AND NECK FACING

1 Mark the center back. On the back sleeve pattern, draw a line perpendicular to the center-back point. Mark points 1 inch above and 1 inch below the center-back intersection. This indicates the built-up neckline.

2 Adjust the overarm seam. Mark point D 1½ inches down from the neck seamline. Draft a line perpendicular to the neck seamline from B and mark F 1 inch above it.

3 Draw the facing edges. Connect the marked points with curved lines, as shown, approximately following the shape of the original neckline.

4 Complete the patterns. For the facing, trace the shaded area. For the sleeve pattern, trace the overarm and raglan seams, and the new, raised neckline edge. Add seam allowances on all edges.



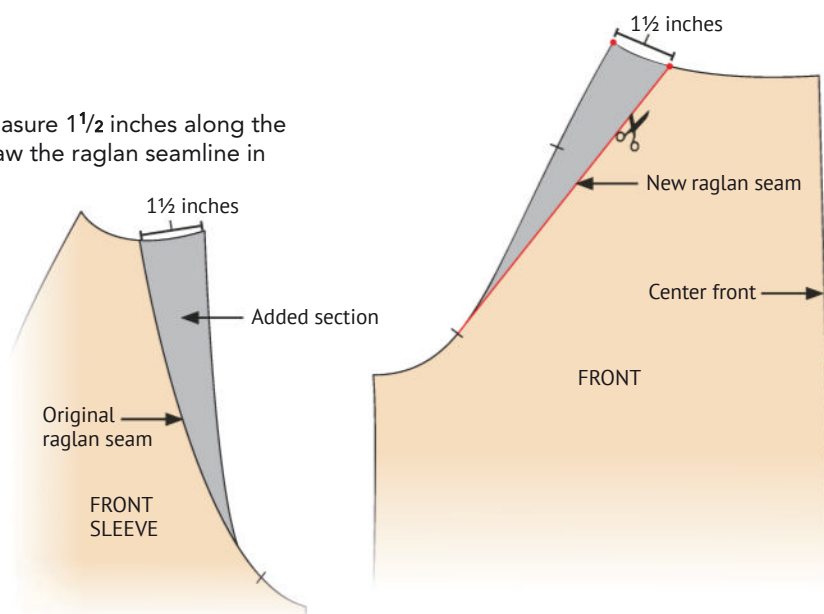
FRONT PIECES

1 Shift the front raglan seam. On the front, measure $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches along the neckline seam from the raglan seamline. Redraw the raglan seamline in a straight line, to just about the lower front notch. Trim off this section and attach it to the sleeve's raglan seam. Clip the wedge to conform to the curved seamline. This new raglan seam will form the front collar edge.

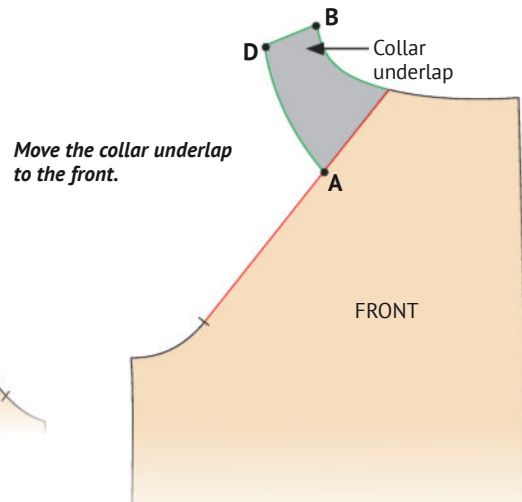
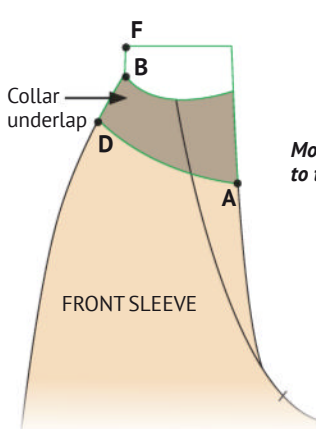
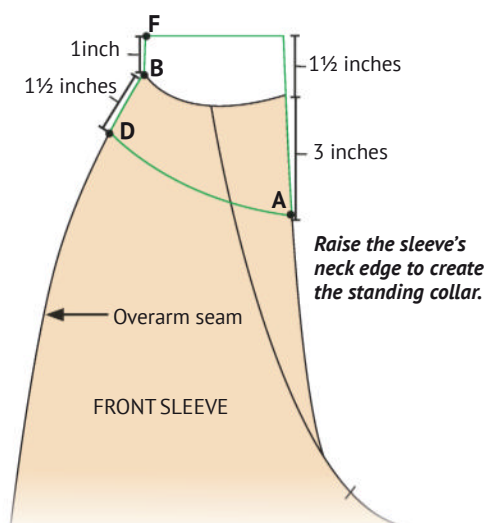
2 Draft the front collar portion. On the front sleeve pattern, measure down from the neckline by 3 inches and mark A. Extend this line up to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches above the neckline.

3 Extend the overarm seam. Measure down from the neckline by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches and mark D. Extend a line up from B, parallel to the front line, and mark F at 1 inch.

4 Connect the points. Draw a straight line, from F to the extended front raglan seam. Connect D and A with a curved line.

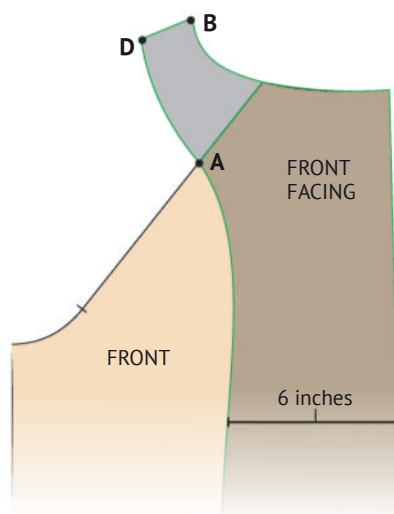


5 Transfer the collar underlap section. Trace the shaded area, cut it out, and attach it to the front pattern at the neckline.

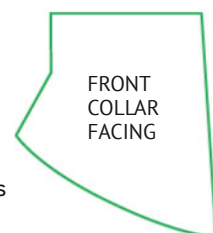


FRONT AND FRONT COLLAR FACINGS

1 Outline the front facing. On the front pattern, draw a line from A to the hem, in a curve, as shown. Make this about 6 inches wide. Trace the facing onto fresh paper.

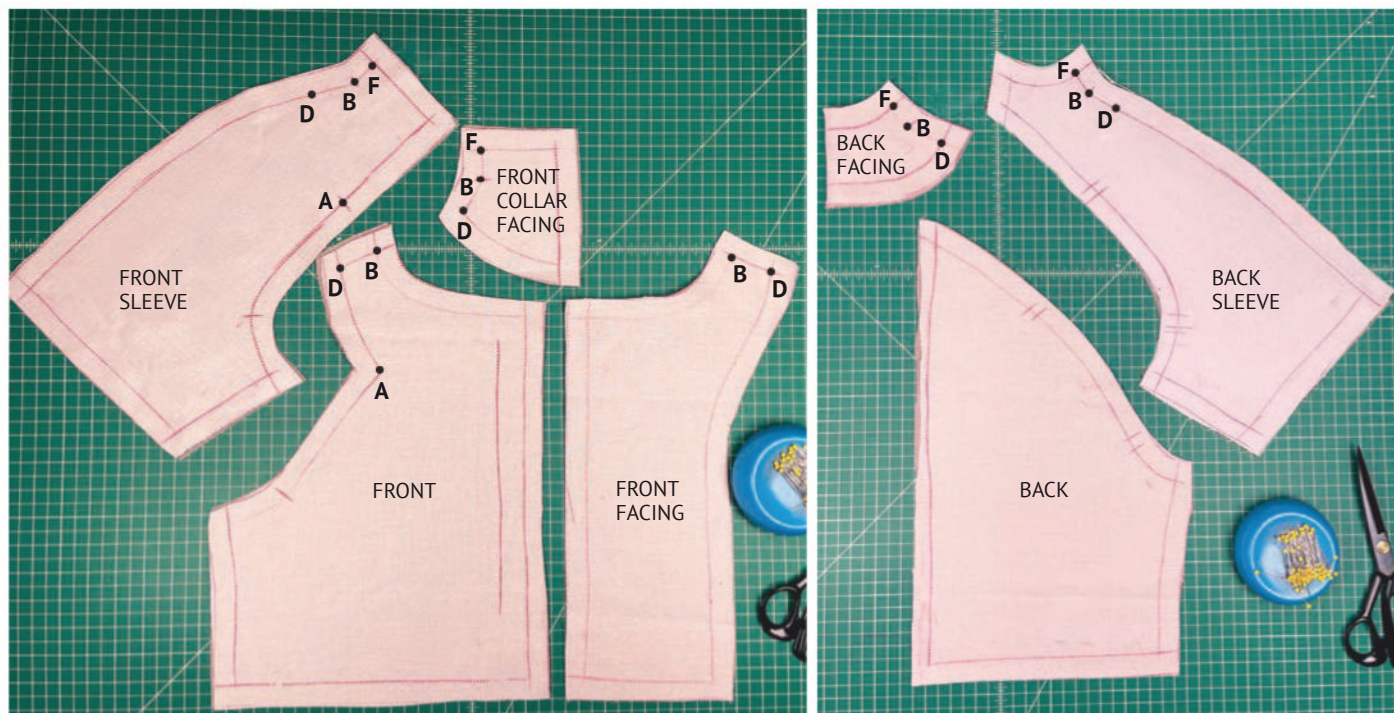


2 Trace the front collar facing. On the front sleeve pattern, trace the area you marked in "Front Pieces," step 4. Then erase any unnecessary lines from the sleeve pattern. Add seam allowances on all edges.



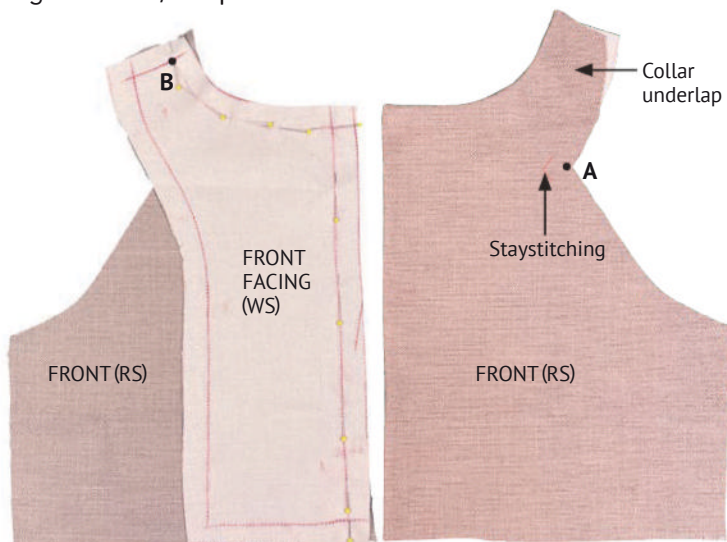
Construct the Main Pieces

You'll build the front, back, and facings separately. For visibility, the fabric has been block-fused on the wrong side. Be sure to mark all stitching lines and other key landmarks.



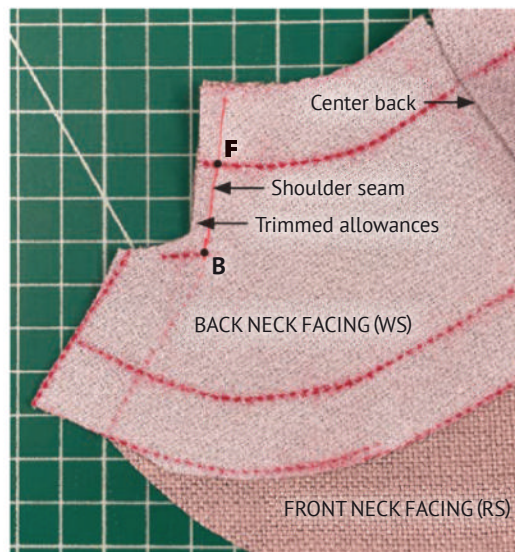
START WITH THE FRONT

1 Attach the front facing. On the jacket front, staystitch the seamline for an inch on each side of A, with a 0.5-mm to 0.75-mm stitch length. Then pin the facing to the jacket front, from B (on the neckline) to center front, and down the front opening edge. Sew, grade the seam allowances, turn right side out, and press.



Apply both front facings.

2 Construct the neck facing. With right sides together, pin the front and back neck facings at the shoulder seams. Sew from F on the neck seamline to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch shy of B. Trim the seam allowances between F and B to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch and press the seams open.



Sew the neck facing seams from F to B, then trim the allowances.

PROCEED TO THE BACK

1 Join the back sleeves at center back. With right sides together, sew the back raglan sleeves along the center-back seam. Press the seam allowances open.

2 Join the back to the sleeves. First, sew the bodice center-back seam. Then join the back bodice to the back sleeves. Match the center back and raglan sleeves precisely at the back neck intersection. Then press the seam allowances toward the sleeves.



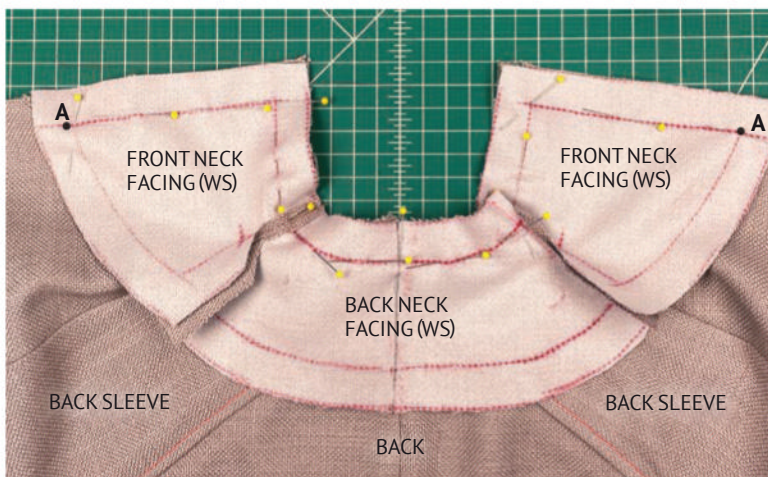
Assemble the Jacket

Because of the overlapping layers at the collar front, the jacket's construction isn't intuitive—but it's worth working through the process for the uniquely stylish result.

ATTACH THE NECK FACING

1 Sew the overarm seams. With right sides together, join the front and back sleeves from the neckline to the hem. Press the seam allowances open.

2 Join the neck facing. With right sides together, place the facing on the jacket's neckline, matching points A. Pin and sew from A on one front sleeve, around the neckline, to A on the opposite sleeve. Backstitch at A on both sides.



3 Clip the sleeve seam allowance to point A. Trim and grade the seam allowances and turn the facing to the garment wrong side. Press.

Photos: (p. 22; p. 27, bottom right) Jack Deutsch; all others) Kenneth D. King. Stylist: Jessica Saal. Hair and makeup: Nancy Cialdella. Styling credits: earrings—Nordstrom Rack.com, turtleneck—Uniqlo.com, skirt—Banana Republic.com.

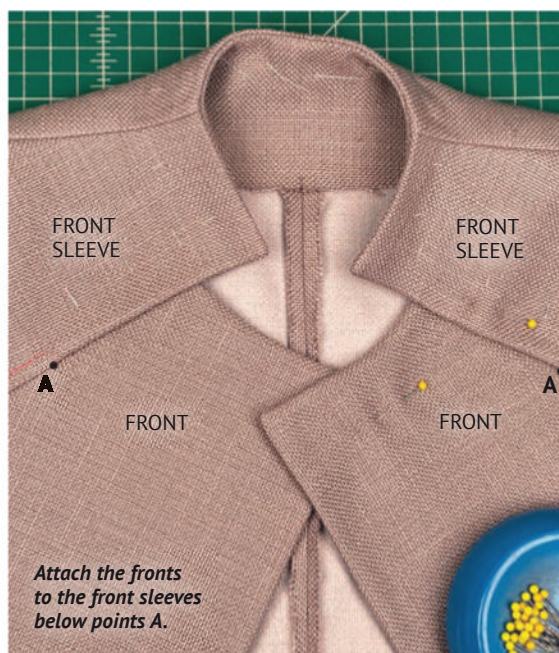
JOIN THE JACKET FRONTS

1 Clip the seam allowances. On the jacket front, clip the allowances to the staystitching at A.

2 Sew the fronts to the front sleeves. With right sides together, pin the front pieces to the corresponding sleeve pieces, matching points A and any notches on the armhole seam. Sew from A to the underarm seam.



3 Press the seam allowances. Working over a sleeve board or seam stitching, press the raglan seam allowances toward the sleeve.



SECURE THE FRONT SHOULDER END

1 Align the shoulder seams. At this point, the collar underlap is hanging free under the standing collar. The front and back-neck facings are partially open, from B to D. With the front- and back neck facings right sides together, match B and D. Sandwich the front underlap shoulder seam end between these layers, again matching B and D. Pin in place. Sew from B to the facing edge.



2 Turn the facings to the inside. Secure the free edges by hand-stitching along the front facing edge and tacking the facings to the overarm seam allowances.

3 Complete the jacket. Sew the underarm seams, hems, and insert a lining. Add a closure at the neck edge.



The angular collar stands above an underlap, formed from an extension of the jacket front's neckline.

Putting on the Glitz

Removable cuffs dress up
a favorite shirt

*A little hand embroidery
applied to easily sewn,
detachable brocade cuffs
makes a simple blouse
look and feel special.*

This fall and holiday season, minimalism and “quiet” luxury need to take a back seat. It has been one heck of a year, and we have earned some glamour. It is time to embrace the “maxxing” trend and let your wardrobe make a statement.

ECLECTIC INSPIRATIONS

Dries Van Noten’s Fall/Winter 2026 collection has done just that. Its designer, Julian Klausner, was inspired by Flemish paintings, the port city of Antwerp—a “treasure box” of cultures during its peak in the 16th century—and school uniforms. Those references translated into tailoring that incorporates gold jewelry ornaments and tapestry-inspired embellishments. The details echo the way students customize school uniforms to express their individuality.

A key feature on many of the runway looks was oversized bejeweled cuffs. The designer’s collection showcased these cuffs, but they are not exactly practical for everyday officewear. Adding removable cuffs, however, enables you to transform a basic shirt into a red-carpet-ready look in seconds.

You can start with a shirt or blouse you already own. If it has French cuffs, you can save a few steps. If not, you can easily update the cuffs yourself.

Choose a base fabric with texture and a beautiful pattern. I like metallic accents. Using a textured, bold pattern also eliminates the need to cover the entire cuff with embroidery to make it look rich. Knowing that you don’t have to fully embellish your piece allows for more design flexibility.

DETACHABLE AND CUSTOMIZABLE

One thing I love most about removable accessories is their versatility. A white shirt can become dramatically different depending on your cuff materials. Whether you choose antique brocade, jewels, or pearls, these cuffs let you indulge in maximalism without sacrificing a favorite garment.

Mariana Leung, a writer, photographer, and close follower of fashion, spends time experimenting with embellishment techniques.



WHAT YOU'LL NEED

MATERIALS

- 1/2 yard brocade
- Interfacing or stiffener, optional
- Sew-on jewels, buttons, beads, and even embossed mylar flowers in various sizes and shades of gold
- Stud buttons or cuff links
- Thread to match fabric, metallic type is optional

TOOLS

- Buttonhole and zipper feet for the sewing machine
- Clear ruler
- Embroidery hoop, optional
- Needles, including a large-eye beading needle if sewing on fine beads
- Needle threader
- Sharp fabric scissors
- Straight pins, preferably fine silk pins
- Tailor’s chalk or marking pencil
- Thread, in a contrast color

ALTERNATIVE CUFF DESIGNS

Steampunk: antique watch parts, vintage gears, and beads

Military: antique brass buttons, braid, and cord

Victorian: jet beads on black brocade, velvet ribbon

Geometric Art Deco: metallic cord and beads, crystals, and matte-surface sequins

Nature-inspired: velvet flowers, pearls, jewels, and ribbon embroidery

Prepare the Shirt Cuffs

If you need to convert a shirt's button cuffs to cuffs that take studs or cuff links, use this guide. If you are using a shirt with French cuffs, you can skip this section and go to "Make the Removable Cuff Pattern."

1 Remove the buttons. Cut them off, then mark buttonholes where the buttons were, on each cuff's underside. The marks should mirror where the buttonholes are on the other side of the cuffs.



2 Install the buttonhole foot on your sewing machine. Following the machine's instruction manual, sew buttonholes where marked on each cuff. Make them the same length and width as the original buttonholes.



3 Trace the shirt cuff and/or measure its dimensions to create a template. Be sure to mark the buttonhole placements.



Photos: (p. 28, p. 33, top right) Jack Deutsch; (p. 29, background; p. 32, center; p. 33, bottom right) Mike Yamin; all others, Mariana Leung. Stylist: Jessica Saal. Hair and makeup: Nancy Gialdella. Styling credits: earrings—Nordstrom Rack, necklace—stylist's own, pants—Cupshe (Amazon.com).

Make the Removable Cuff Pattern

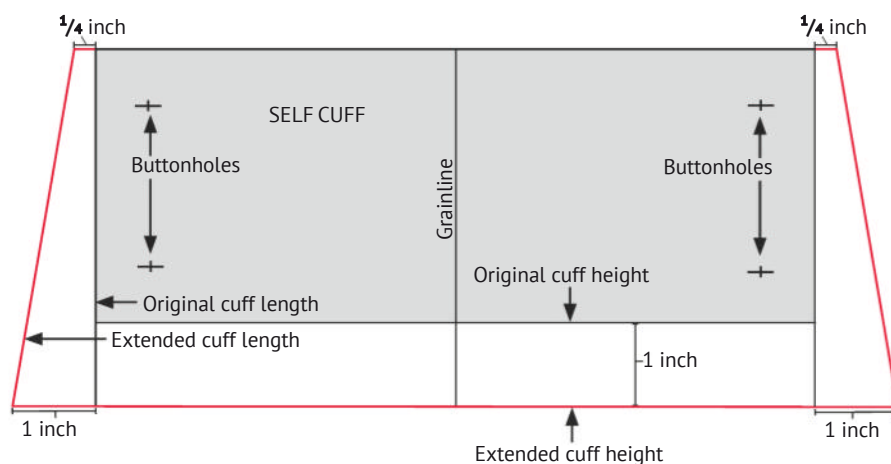
To create the removable cuff pattern, determine how tall and dramatic you would like your finished cuff to be.

1 Enlarge the cuff.

First, establish the grainline by drawing a line down the cuff's center. Using a ruler as a guide, add 1 inch to the cuff height, then extend the length on both cuff sides: Mark a point $\frac{1}{4}$ inch outside the cuff's inner edge. Draw an angled line to 1 inch beyond the outer edge.

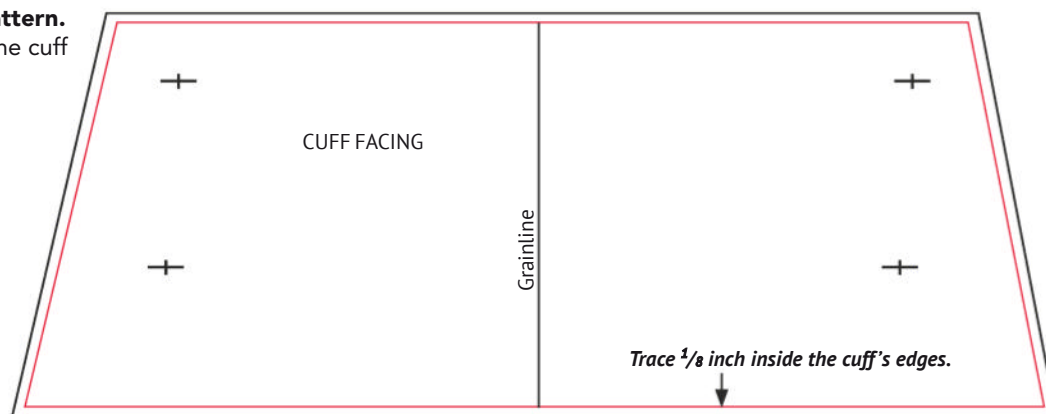
You can further increase the height and length for a bolder silhouette.

Be sure to keep the buttonhole placements the same as the original.

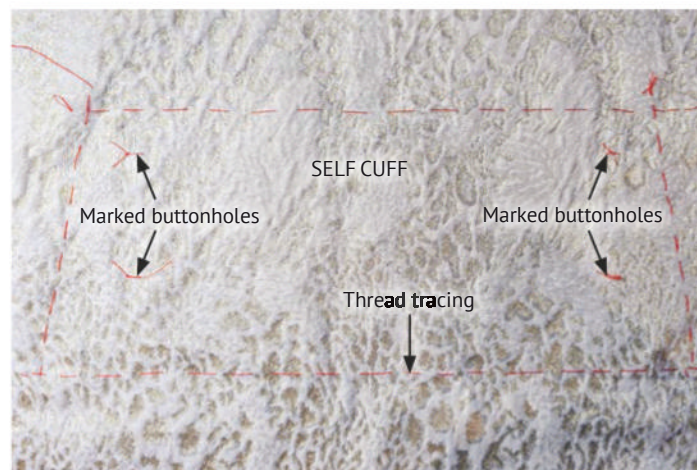
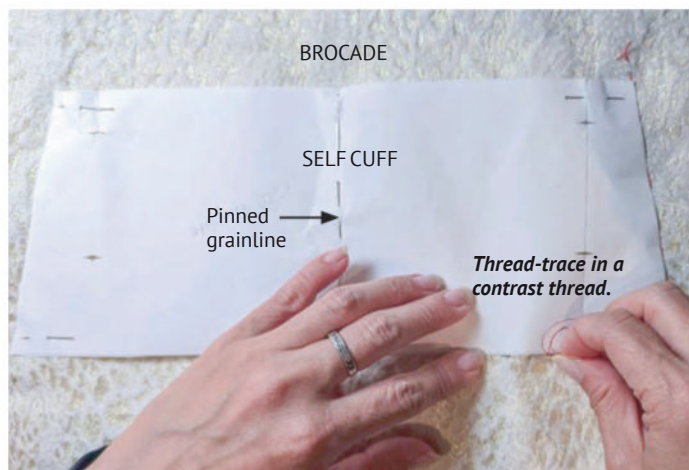


2 Create the facing pattern.

Trace $\frac{1}{8}$ inch inside the cuff lines all the way around the self cuff.



3 Pin the patterns to the fabric and transfer markings. Pin along the grainline first and then at the corners. Be sure to mark the buttonholes, then the corners, and finish with the straight edges. I like to thread-trace in a contrast thread around the pattern and at the buttonholes to avoid marring the fabric with transfer paper or a marker.



Embellish the Cuffs

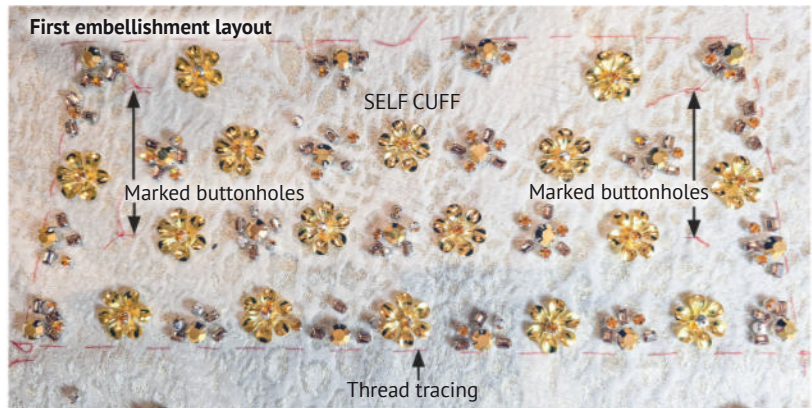
It's time to add the bling. Be sure to include a layer of interfacing or stiffener to support the self cuff if you plan heavy embellishment.

1 Lay out the embroidery design. On the marked self cuff, place the embellishment materials as desired. Make sure you leave enough space around the marked buttonholes for the sewing machine to work around. You can fill in with embroidery later if needed.

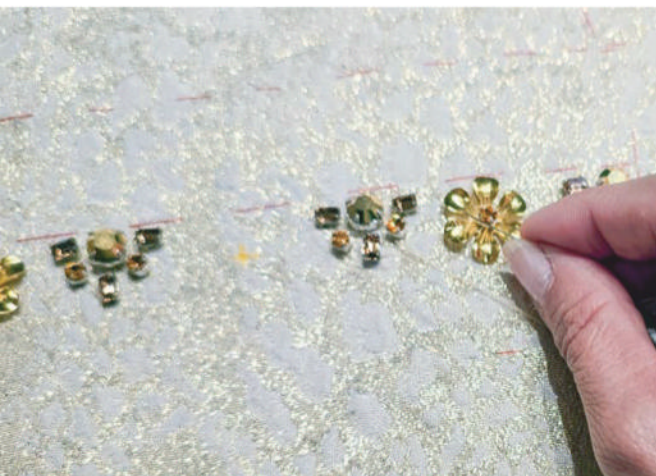
I initially planned a rigid geometric layout of jeweled motifs but quickly realized I preferred an organic arrangement that gradually dispersed across the cuff. The natural progression also enabled me to be less precise and more free-form as I embroidered the materials.

tip

AUDITION DESIGNS. Photograph each layout with your phone before committing. Scrolling through the images makes it much easier to compare designs. Plus, the photos become a useful guide while you are embroidering.



2 Sew on the embellishments. Place the marked fabric into an embroidery hoop. Sew on the largest embellishments first, to anchor your composition. Gradually fill the remaining spaces with smaller jewels, beads, and decorative details until you're happy with the overall balance.



Assemble the cuffs

After the embroidery is complete, the embellished section can be sewn to the cuff facing and finished.

1 Attach the facing. With right sides together, align and pin the facing pieces to the embroidered pieces. Match the corners first and pin around the edges. Leave the inner edge open.

Trim the marked seam edges, leaving a narrow $\frac{5}{16}$ -inch-wide seam allowance all the way around.

2 Use the zipper foot on your sewing machine

to stitch around the cuff's outside edges, leaving the inner edge open.

Trim the corner seam allowances. Press the seam allowances open.



3 Turn the cuffs right side out. Lightly press with steam so the seams roll neatly to the edge and the facing remains hidden from view. Make sure the buttonhole markings are lined up.



4 Add buttonholes.

Replace the zipper foot with the buttonhole foot. Stitch the buttonholes in the cuffs as marked, being careful not to disturb the embroidery.

Check that the buttonholes on the embroidered cuffs are aligned with the buttonholes on the shirt. If they are, you can open the buttonholes.



Organically arranged beads and sequins add just enough bling.

5 Assess the design. After completing the buttonholes, decide if more embellishment is needed. If so, add beads, jewels, or other embellishments.

Then test your buttons or cuff links with the embellished cuffs on the shirt.

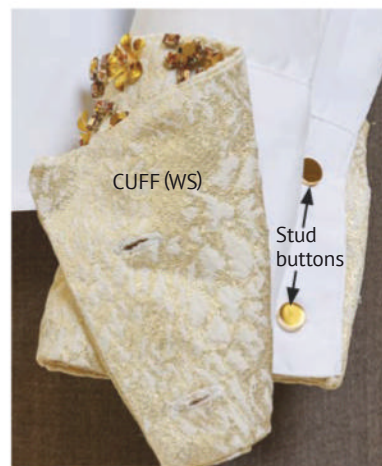
6 Stitch each cuff opening closed.

Fold the inner edge seam allowances inward and press lightly. Pin the pressed edges together. Hand-blind-stitch the cuff openings closed.



7 Give the facing side a final light press to smooth the seams.

Then place the cuffs over the existing shirt cuffs and secure them with cuff links or stud buttons that fit the buttonholes. Make sure to slip the cuff links through the buttonholes in the shirt cuffs and the removable cuffs.



PATTERN REVIEW

TESTED AND SEWN BY **THREADS**

LOOK FOR THESE ICONS ON THE PATTERN REVIEWS

- ✚ Includes sizes 24 and up
- Fast and easy
- ▲ Challenging techniques
- ▼ Downloadable pattern
- ◆ Printed pattern
- ✴ Projectable pattern



Tested and sewn by
Pamela Howard,
Newnan, Georgia

Fabric: ITY (Interlock
Twist Yarn) jersey knit,
GorgeousFabrics.com



Knit dress with a twist

KNOW ME 2143

(Simplicity.com) ✚ ◆ ▼

Skill level: The instructions are straightforward and the sewing is moderate due to the twist at the hipline, which requires special attention during assembly.

Size range and fitting: Sized Misses' 10 through 20 for busts 32½ inches to 42 inches, waists 25 inches to 34 inches, and hips 34½ inches to 44 inches. It is also available in Women's sizes 20W through 38W for busts 42 inches to 60 inches, waists 35 inches to 54½ inches, and hips 44 inches to 62 inches. Designed for stretch knits, it has negative ease.

Fabrics: Options include matte jersey, wool jersey, stretch velvet or velour, or any knit that follows the pattern's knit gauge. Choose a fabric that drapes well and will not look bulky in the twist element at the hip.

Style and sewing details:

This elegantly draped below-the-knee or maxi-length dress features an asymmetrical off-the-shoulder neckline, elasticized for comfort and detailed with delicate gathers on both shoulders. Graceful batwing sleeves have cuff-like extensions that end just above the wrist, while the elasticized waistline seam flows into a twisted seam at the right hip, creating a wrap effect. For a seamless finish, the skirt right front extends around to the back and connects to the skirt's left back.



- All hems are machine-sewn. To avoid wavy stitching, our tester finished the hems with a double needle and cut close to the stitching.
- Pay close attention to the steps for the twist-draped area. Because these pattern pieces are uniquely shaped, they must be seamed first and then twisted to connect properly.
- Try using contrasting colors or mixing fabric textures, like a fluid silk bodice paired with a textured crepe, to visually separate the top from the draped skirt.
- The instructions say to sew with double seams, at ⅝-inch and again at ¼ inch away from the seamline, then trim the seam allowances.
- A helpful step-by-step online video tutorial is available.

Polished or casual ensemble

BUTTERICK 7061

(Simplicity.com) ♦ ▼

Skill level: This multi-piece ensemble is best for an intermediate sewist, as the fly-front zipper requires technical experience.

Size range and fitting: Sized Misses' and Miss Petite 10 through 24 for busts 32½ inches to 46 inches, waists 25 inches to 39 inches, and hips 34½ inches to 48 inches.

Fabrics: Choose wovens such as gabardine, lightweight tweed, wool crepe, and poplin. This versatile pattern works beautifully in different textiles. Try brocade for a sophisticated evening statement. Note that stretch wovens will require stabilization in areas such as on the fly-front zipper closure.

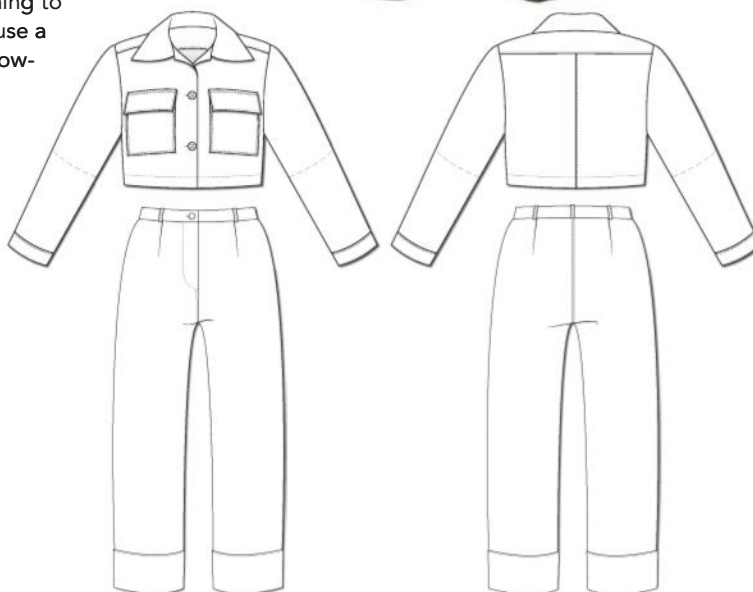
Style and sewing details: This three-piece capsule coordinates beautifully to create polished business attire. The jacket, skirt, and trousers can also be worn separately for versatile casual looks. The boxy jacket is rooted in traditional denim jacket styling. It has a convertible collar, two-button front, bust darts, oversized patch pockets with flaps, self-lined back yoke, a center-back seam below the yoke, a faced hemline, and above-elbow or full-length sleeves with a hem band. The voluminous calf-length A-line skirt gathers into a 1½-inch-wide straight waistband. It also has in-seam pockets and an invisible center-back zipper closure. Capping off the capsule are straight-leg trousers with a 1½-inch-wide curved waistband, belt loops, a fly front, front and back waist darts, side-seam pockets, and 4-inch-wide cuffs.

- The QR code links to a library of how-to-sew tutorials. They consist of step-by-step videos for common sewing construction methods.
- The instructions for the fly-front zipper feature 12 detailed illustrations that guide you through the construction. The accompanying video tutorial on the website is clear and helpful.
- For a clean inside finish, our tester recommends serging all raw edges. A finish-the-seam instruction where appropriate would be helpful instead of leaving the decision up to the sewer.
- For the pants in-seam pockets, use lightweight lining to avoid bulk. If the pants are made in white fabric, use a skin-tone lining to avoid pocket bag and seam allowance show-through.



Tested by Samina
Mirza, Katy, Texas

Fabrics: (jacket) cotton
canvas and (trousers)
viscose/nylon/spandex
stretch woven,
MarcyTilton.com





*Tested by Jane
Headley, Exeter,
Rhode Island*

*Fabric: polyester/rayon
flannel suiting,
FabricMartFabrics.com*

Princess-seamed shirtdress

NH PATTERNS: THE DIANA DRESS & TOP

(NHPatterns.com) ✚ ✦ ✨ ⬇

Skill level: Appropriate for an advanced beginner. The overall design is easy to sew, though constructing the collar, lapels, and buttonholes requires some experience.

Size range and fitting: Sized UK 4 through 32 for busts 32 inches to 60 inches, waists 24 inches to 50 inches, and hips 34 inches to 60 inches. It is fitted in the upper torso but flares out generously from the waist down.

Fabrics: Choose stable, light- to midweight woven fabrics with minimal to no stretch, as the dress and top require weight to support the collar and buttons. Consider lightweight denim, crisp cotton, cotton twill, chambray, linen, linen blends, Tencel, and suiting.

Style and sewing details: This 1990s-inspired, A-line shirtdress and top have a classic notched collar, shapely front and back princess seams, and a button front. For versatility, it can be made sleeveless with modern, cut-in shoulders or with classic short sleeves.

- As for hemline lengths, the dress view ends at the lower calf, while the top variation is designed to sit at hip length.
- The pattern is well drafted. All match points line up, and there are enough for easy assembly.
- The sewing instructions provided are thorough, illustrating every step of the process in clear, meticulous detail.
- The final page of the instruction booklet features an interactive link to the designer's YouTube channel. There, you can access a comprehensive, step-by-step video tutorial for the dress and the top designs.
- To achieve a custom look, make the facing and outer collar in a coordinating or contrasting fabric.
- The flare of the A-line shape causes the long vertical seams to fall slightly on the bias. To ensure a level hem, allow the fabric to settle by hanging the dress for 24 hours before sewing the hem.



Flowy, neck-tied blouse

JOLI LAB: CLÉO

(JoliLab.fr/en) + ● ◆ ▼

Skill level: This is an ideal project for an ambitious beginner who has experience with gathering and hemming.

Size range and fitting: Sized French 34 through 52 for busts 31½ inches to 47¼ inches, waists 24½ inches to 40¼ inches, and hips 40 inches to 49¾ inches. It is fitted at the neckline and has a medium-to-large amount of ease in the bodice and hips, which is appropriate for the design.

Fabrics: Recommended fabrics are poplin, soft cotton, voile, rayons, modals. Other options are textiles with embroidered details and border prints. For a romantic blouse, use lace and satin. Sheer fabrics over a lined bodice or paired with a coordinating camisole also are lovely.

Style and sewing details:

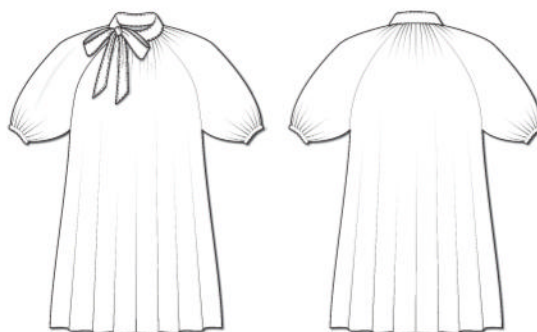
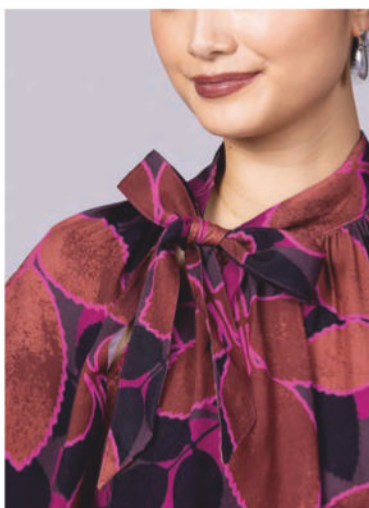
This pattern for a flowy blouse and a dress features voluminous raglan sleeves available in short or long lengths. It has an asymmetrical tie collar, where the bodice gathers into the neckline. Designed as a pullover style, the blouse slips on via a neckline opening.

- This French pattern is drafted in metric measurements. Instructions are in French and English. Seam allowances are 1.0 cm wide and hems are 2.0 cm wide.
- A scannable QR code links to the patternmaker's YouTube channel for a video tutorial. The subtitles can be changed from French to English by clicking the gear icon at the bottom right.
- The curved stand-up collar can be constructed to knot at the right side front or at the center back. Take time to transfer the collar pattern match points precisely to ensure perfect alignment with the neckline.
- Because the collar is curved, it is helpful to interface the fabric before cutting the section out.
- When hemming the bodice and sleeves, use a soft stabilizing tape.
- The instructions suggest finishing several raw edges with a serger before assembly. The narrow 1.0 cm (3⁄8-inch) seam allowances leave little room for error. Avoid accidentally shaving off crucial fabric by guiding the edges carefully or disengaging the serger's knife.



Tested by Mary Jo Hines, Cranston, Rhode Island

Fabric: rayon twill shirting, StylemakerFabrics.com





*Tested and sewn
by Jenny Freedman,
Soquel, California*

*Fabric: poly/cotton jacquard
denim, MarcyTilton.com*



Adjustable-waist trousers

ANN TILLEY HANDMADE: MAGIC PANTS

(AnnTilleyHandmade.com) ✚ ✦ ✨ ⬇

Skill level: These pants are best suited for an intermediate sewer who wants to take their time to make an unusual garment.

Size range and fitting: It is sized 2XS to 6X for hips 34 inches to 66 inches. The waist is adjustable based on the length of the waist tabs. Finished garment measurements are given for waists 24 inches to 59 inches and hips 42 inches to 72 inches. There is plenty of ease in these pants, as the knit front panel and adjustable elastic waist tabs allow for flexible, on-the-go-fit adjustments.

Fabrics: Lightweight wovens such as linen, or slightly heavier wovens such as denim, canvas, and cotton, are recommended.

Style and sewing details:

These wide-leg, gender-neutral trousers have slash pockets and a clever waistband. The “magic” refers to the adjustable waistband via a hidden stretch-knit panel behind the sailor-style pants front, plus the hidden back-waist elastic, allowing for stretch. Waist tabs attached to the internal back elastic exit through faced openings in back and fasten through the front D-rings, looping back to secure the ends with snaps.



- These finished pants are designed to accommodate proportions that fall outside traditional standardized waist-to-hip ratios.
- Since there is no separate waistband, the use of twill tape to reinforce all the waist seams ensures they maintain their structure and never stretch out of shape.
- This design is unconventional, so pay attention to all directions, especially about fabric choice. Avoid selecting heavy fabric.
- The construction order is similar to making a pair of jeans. Assemble the back entirely, then the front. Join front and back at the inseam, then sew the outside seam.
- Be sure to mark all notches and match points to avoid reversing the pieces.
- The sewing instructions are thorough, and every step is described in detail along with tips. Our tester recommends reinforcing the back crotch seam to ensure the seam holds up over time.
- A notions kit containing the knit panel, D-rings, twill tape, and snaps is available for purchase. However, you can use any kind of snaps, multiple snaps, buttons/buttonholes, sliders with longer straps, and other details.

Photos: Jack Deutsch. Illustrations: Steven Fleck.

Fitted jacket with inset belt

ITCH TO STITCH: SHIMLA JACKET

(Itch-To-Stitch.com) ✚ ✨ ⬇

Skill level: The assembly is detailed and time-intensive, as is to be expected for a tailored garment requiring a moderate skill level.

Size range and fitting: Sized 00 through 40 for busts 30¹/₈ inches to 63 inches, waists 25³/₈ inches to 54¹/₄ inches, and hips 33¹/₈ inches to 62 inches. Separate front pattern pieces are included for cup sizes A, B, C, D, and DD.

Fabrics: Nearly any medium-weight woven is ideal for this jacket. Choose from a wool or wool blend, poplin, and bouclé.

Style and sewing details: This fitted and fully lined button-front jacket has a front yoke, front and back princess seams, and an inset waistband with flaps that secure directly to the waistband, concealing the pockets underneath. The two-piece sleeve has a sleeve hem vent with an attached cuff that closes with a button. Collar choices include a pleated design or a classic stand-up style. Customize the look with optional ruffles to accent the pockets and sleeve cuffs.

- This jacket is a pleasure to sew when you follow the 37 pages of illustrations and well-written instructions. They contain links to multiple online tutorials and a companion video, which offer clear demonstrations for the complex steps.
- There are many sizes on this pattern. Although the lines are color-coded, they overlap in several places, making it difficult to decipher the size. Print only the size(s) you need.
- The tester offers a few recommendations to achieve the best results. For steps 16, 80, and 86: When joining seams of slightly different lengths, position the longer piece against the feed dogs, as they naturally ease in the fullness as you sew. For step 49: After setting in the sleeve, stitch a second row along the underarm curve ¹/₈ inch from the original seamline within the allowance, then trim excess fabric close to this second row of stitching. For step 78: Staystitch the front facing and clip the curve before attaching it to the garment.
- This design provides ample space to add special decorative buttons you may have been holding on to.



Tested by Michelle Loggins, High Point, North Carolina

Fabric: wool-blend suiting, StylemakerFabrics.com



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 skilled tester, who sews it to evaluate the proportions, style, and pattern instructions. —Compiled by Anna Mazur

Elevated Barn Jacket



Luxe fabrics, pattern upgrades, and improved construction transform a utilitarian coat

BY PAMELA W. HOWARD

The barn/chore jacket has served as workwear for farmhands, laborers, railway workers, and others for more than a century. Typically, it has been constructed from mid- to heavyweight fabrics with corduroy collars and flannel or quilted linings for warmth. Multiple pockets in various sizes inside and out were originally designed for carrying tools and other necessities. The silhouette remains loose-fitting, making it easy to wear a sweater or other garments underneath.

The garment originated in 19th-century France and was made from a distinctive deep indigo fabric. A jacket like this was called *bleu de travail*, or work blues. Its color was chosen to mask stains, leading to the term “blue-collar worker.” Designed for function, not fashion, the jacket was unlined and worn over other clothing as a uniform. The original design included a pointed collar; a minimum five-button front closure; durable stitching; and four pockets—one to hold a watch, another for a notebook, and two larger ones for tools.

American versions, first known as sack coats and produced mostly by Levi Strauss & Co. and

Carhartt, evolved into chore coats by the early 1900s. Then they were made of heavy brown duck canvas or indigo denim, sometimes with rivets for extra durability. They developed into barn coats, which were often lined and popular with farmers and hunters. The original all-cotton duck canvas is ideal for making workwear, as it has a tightly woven plain weave.

This jacket style has been reinterpreted in higher fashion by Miu Miu, Fendi, Prada, and others. It is a street-style favorite and can be worn with everything from a dress to a top paired with jeans, trousers, or a skirt.

I love making timeless, utilitarian-style jackets like those on the following pages because they’re functional and fashionable. Adding construction and style details can make this jacket something special.

I hope you decide to make your own luxury barn jacket. You’ll have a classic, well-made garment you can wear for years to come.

Pamela W. Howard, who specializes in women’s tailoring and fitting, has a passion for sewing jackets and coats. Find her on Instagram @pams closetinc.



Turn a simple chore coat into a statement piece with fine fabrics, extra garment details, and thoughtful construction.

Pattern: Merchant and Mills Paynter Jacket, modified. Fabrics: (jacket) silk matka and (bodice lining) silk dupioni, SilkBaron.com; (sleeve lining) silk charmeuse, ThaiSilks.com; (pocket lining) silk organza, the author's stash.



PATTERNS TO TRY

There are plenty of barn/chore jacket designs to choose from:

Bill Denim Work Jacket,
Sewingilgi.imweb.me

Cobden Chore Jacket,
MunaAndBroad.com

The Foreman, MerchantAndMills.com

Fowler Barn Coat,
ClosetCorePatterns.com

Ilford Jacket, Friday Pattern Company

Jaime Workwear Jacket,
ModernSewingCo.com

LA Barn Jacket, AtelierBrunette.com

The Ottoline, MerchantAndMills.com

Sienna Maker Jacket, View C,
ClosetCorePatterns.com

Thayer Jacket, GrainlineStudio.com

Patterns and Fabrics

Despite its humble beginnings, the chore jacket has become a wardrobe staple. Choose from lined and unlined versions.

A LUXURY CHORE JACKET

I used the original pattern from the Paynter Jacket Company (paynter.co.uk) to construct the jacket shown. It is Paynter's first make-your-own jacket in collaboration with patternmaker Merchant and Mills.

My upscale streetwear jacket is made from four types of silk—you can't get more elevated than that.

The exterior is matka, a handwoven silk that presses and sews well. It looks a lot like midweight linen but barely wrinkles. I added a silk dupioni lining to further elevate the jacket's structure.

Hand-painted silk charmeuse lines the sleeves, making the jacket easier to put on and take off. The patch pockets are lined with silk organza.

TWO VARIATIONS

For the short tan tweed jacket, below right, I used out-of-print Butterick 4889, a design by Linda Allard for Ellen Tracy. The fabric is from the home decorator fabric aisle. Before cutting, I washed the yardage to soften it. The lining is silk dupioni.

I made the oversized dark brown denim jacket, at right, from Vogue 2958, an out-of-print DKNY design. The bindings and sleeve lining are a plaid silk blend.



FABRIC OPTIONS

Suitable fabrics for making your own barn jacket include 100 percent cotton twill, denim, heavy linen, waxed cotton, water-resistant oilskin, and wool or cotton gabardine. Many styles can have corduroy, self-fabric, and faux or real leather or suede collars. Fabric choices for elevated versions can include brocade, damask, tweed, or medium-weight handwoven silks.

Update a barn coat while keeping its relaxed silhouette, collar, and functional pockets.

Distinctive Details

Make a barn jacket your own by selecting design details that suit you. Your choices can be influenced by fabric choice, desired finished look, and personal preferences.



BUTTONS

For the women's version, add the hidden button placket to the right front. For a traditional men's version, you would add the hidden placket to the left front.

COLLARS, CLOSURES, AND TABS

You can install a pointed collar or a rounded version, shown at bottom right, p. 42. Front closure options include buttons or a zipper, which may be hidden behind a placket, shown at left. You can also add sleeve and waist tabs.

POCKETS

Most of us no longer need pockets for the tools used years ago, but we do need them for our modern devices: cellphones, pens, eyeglasses, etc. So add outer and inner pockets in various sizes to make the jacket more functional. Outer pocket styles include patch, bellows, and welt pockets. Many of these pockets have flaps as well.

SEAM TREATMENTS

For unlined versions

Try bound/Hong Kong seams, flat-felled, or mock flat-felled seams.

For mock flat-felled seams, stitch, serge, and press to one side. Then topstitch and edgestitch from the right side to create the look of a jeans seam.

I used Coats & Clark Dual Duty 100 percent polyester all-purpose thread. Gütermann and Mettler Metrosene threads are also excellent options.

For lined versions

There's no need to serge or finish seams before topstitching and edgestitching, as the lining will cover the inner construction.



Waist tab

Topstitch and edgestitch for mock flat-felled seams.

LININGS

Linings can be installed using the traditional bagged method, Hong Kong lining, or flat lining. For a flat lining, sew the lining separately. Then lay it onto the jacket's interior, so the jacket hem and sleeve lining hems are caught into the hem folds. See the instructions, p. 47.

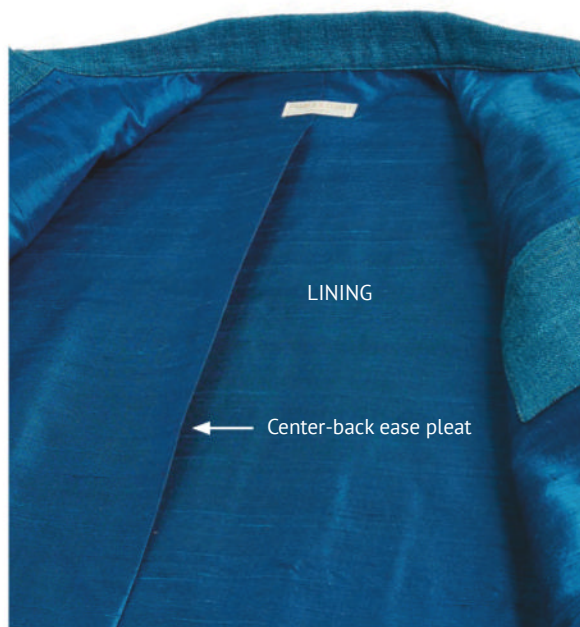
Pattern Adjustments

I made several edits to the original pattern for better construction and/or style.

- Add a $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch-wide seam allowance to the jacket back for a center-back seam. The original pattern piece was to be placed on the fold.
- Fold the undercollar pattern in half at the center back. Add a $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch-wide seam allowance so you can cut two pieces instead of one piece on the fold. Be sure to cut the undercollar pieces on the bias.



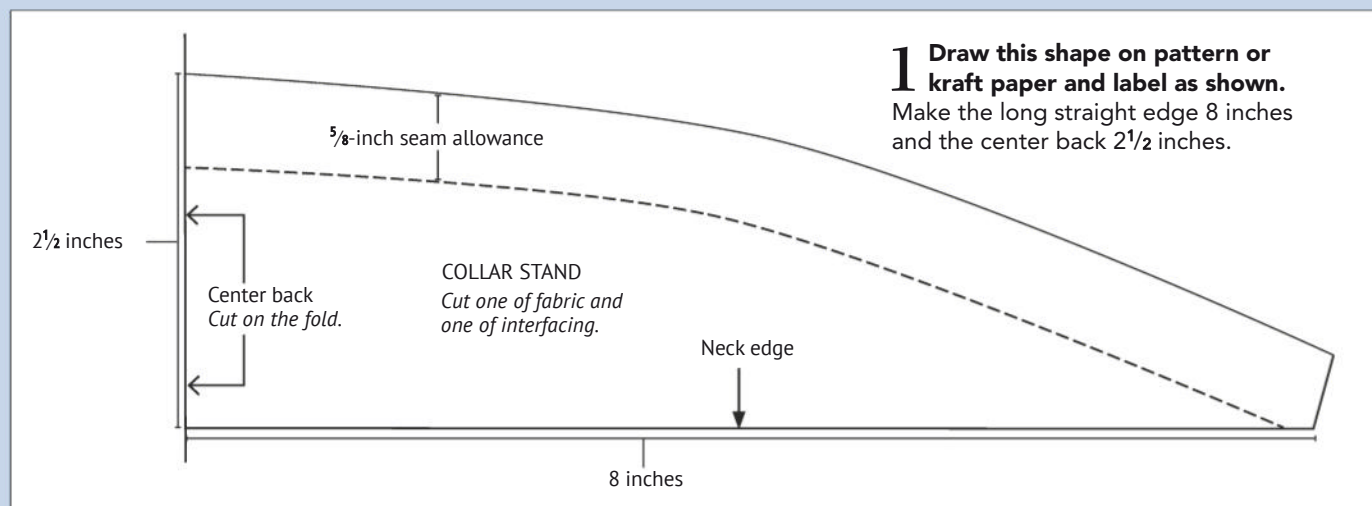
added 2 inches at the neck edge, blending back into the center-back seam at the center-back waist. Note: The original jacket is unlined, but a lining makes a jacket more upscale. It also extends the garment's life.



- Create a collar stand pattern. A collar stand helps the jacket hug the neck and improves the collar's fit. You can base the collar stand dimensions on collar stands from other jackets or patterns you own. Or use the directions below and on the following page as a guide.
- Add a 2-inch-wide ease pleat to the lining at the center back to allow for movement. My jacket pattern was to be cut on the fold, but I added a center-back seam. Then I

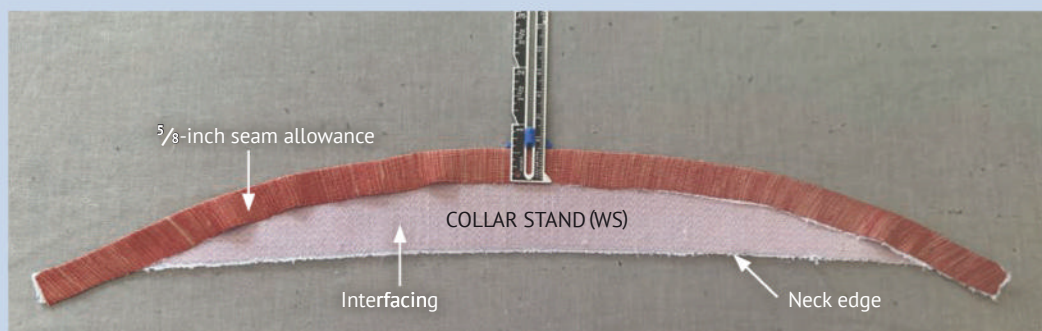
MAKE A COLLAR STAND

I add a collar stand to my jackets. This additional piece is applied to the undercollar to improve a jacket's fit at the neckline. I made this pattern for a medium-size jacket. Your collar stand pattern dimensions may differ depending on the jacket size, collar length, and fabric choice.

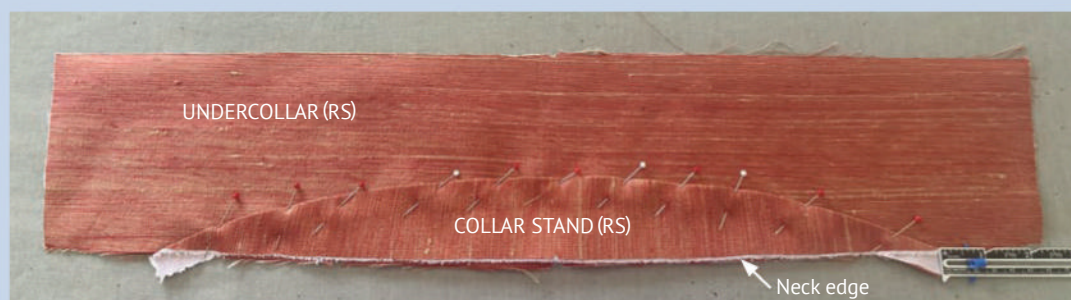


2 Cut one collar stand on the fold from fashion fabric. Then cut one from fusible lightweight weft insertion, as in the sample, or from tricot (Fusi-Knit). To ensure stability, cut the interfacing so the nonstretch direction is parallel to the neck edge.

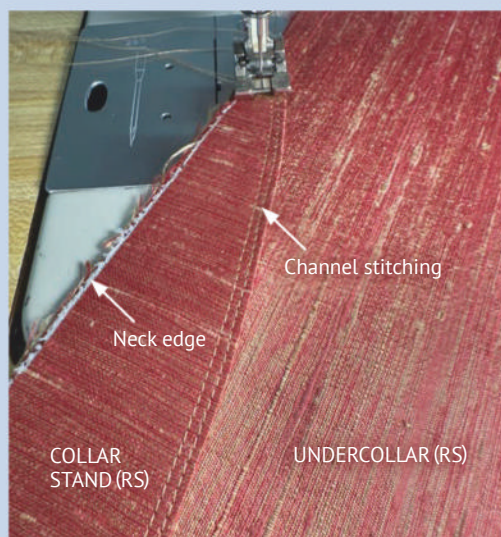
3 Unfold both pieces and fuse the interfacing to the fabric's wrong side. Then press under the $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch seam allowance on the curved edge.



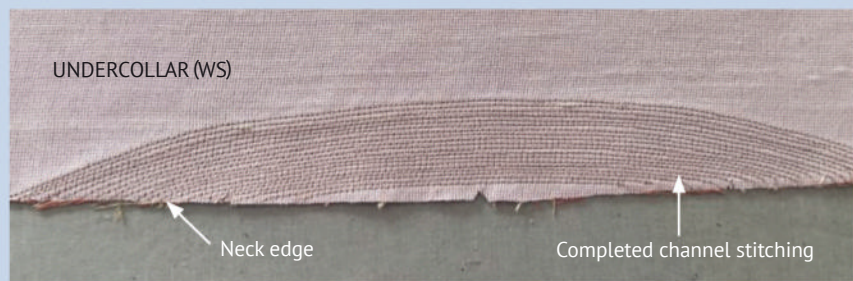
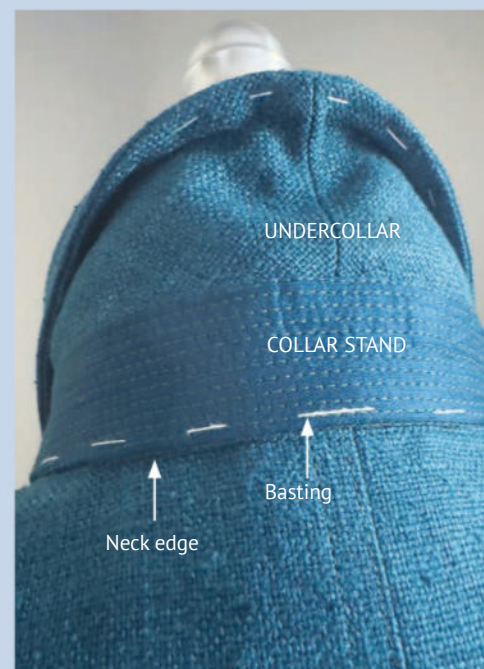
4 Pin the collar stand's fused side to the undercollar's right side, aligning the center backs and neck edges. Baste and stitch along the curved edge, then trim the collar stand seam allowance to reduce bulk. Note: The undercollar sample below is one piece, following the original pattern—not two bias-cut pieces, as I suggest; see "Pattern Adjustments," p. 44.



5 Channel-stitch the collar stand to the undercollar. Begin stitching at the long curved edge, starting and stopping each line of stitching at the neck edge. Space the stitching lines $\frac{1}{8}$ inch apart. Then trim the collar stand's excess fabric along the unstitched neck edge to line up with the undercollar edge.



6 Pin and baste to the jacket neckline. Turn down the collar to check that its edge covers the basted neckline seam. Then turn the collar back up and machine-stitch the neckline.



Construction Refinements

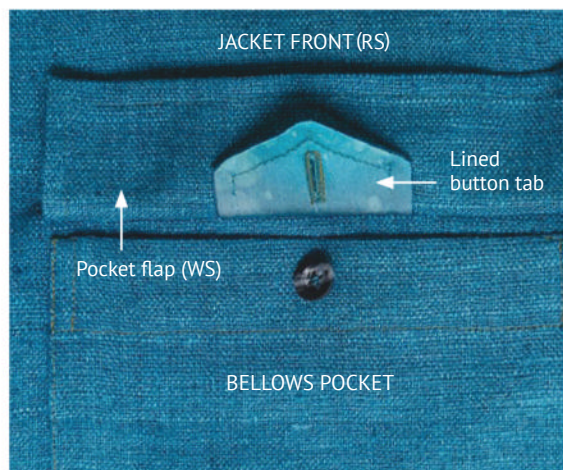
The original pattern's instructions were basic and suited to a utilitarian garment. To enhance my jacket, I applied techniques from fine tailoring and dressmaking.

Interface. Back the jacket fronts with fusible polyester tricot (GoldStarTool.com). Also apply the tricot to the upper and lower pocket flaps, upper pockets, pocket tabs, sleeve and back waist tabs, sleeve hems, jacket hem, upper collar (two layers), and undercollar.



I made the back waist tabs in matka and lined them with dupioni interfaced with fusible tricot.

Also interface the entire pocket flaps with tricot—not just up to the foldline. The four front pocket button tabs that I made in dupioni and hand-painted silk charmeuse are also interfaced with fusible tricot.



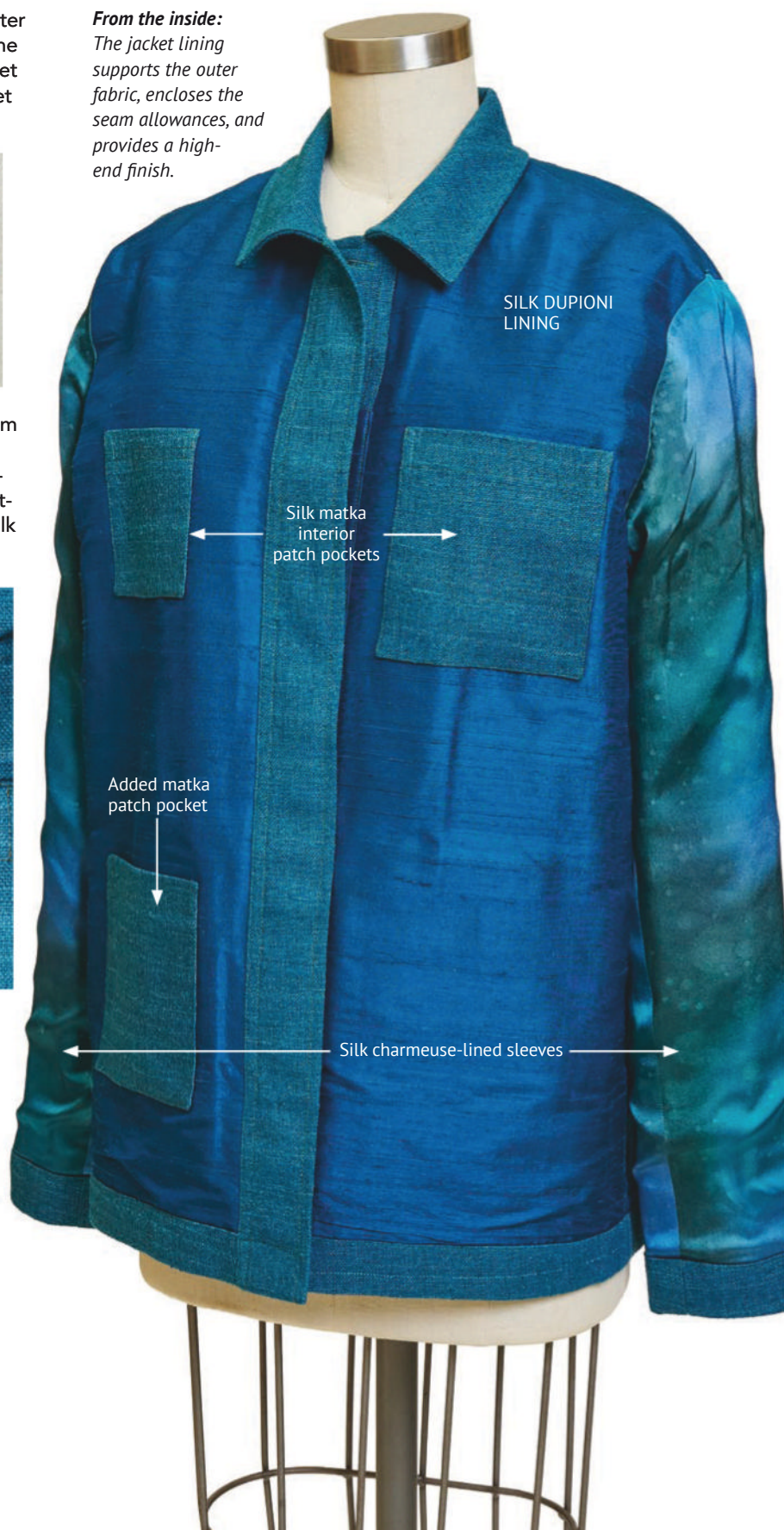
Stabilize. Reinforce the jacket and sleeve seams with stay tape. I applied SewkeysE knit stay tape (Emma Seabrooke.com). This prevents seam slippage when sewing handwoven or loosely woven fabric.

Also use stay tape to stabilize the pockets on the foldlines and at the neck edge and shoulder seams.

Topstitch. Use a 3.0-mm to 3.5-mm stitch length to topstitch the jacket, tabs, pockets, flaps, etc. I sewed with the same contrasting thread color used for the collar stand.

From the inside:

The jacket lining supports the outer fabric, encloses the seam allowances, and provides a high-end finish.



Add interior pockets.

Sew the inside patch pockets to the front lining pieces before assembling the lining. I added a third pocket to the lower left.

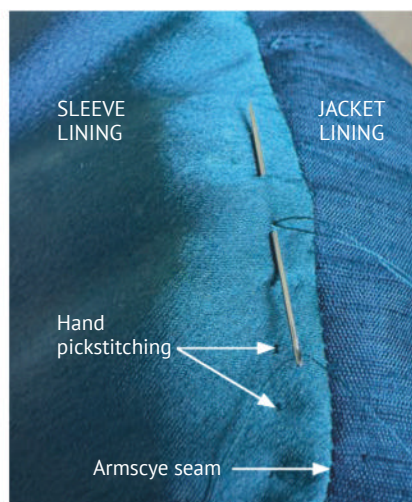
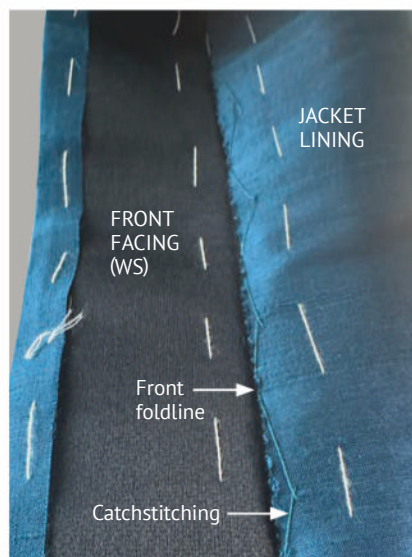
Flat-line the jacket.

Construct the lining, including the sleeves; don't attach the collar yet. With right sides together, place the lining inside the jacket.

Cut away the lining front along the front opening's fold and catchstitch the lining to the jacket's front fold-line to keep it in place. The jacket's front facing covers the lining there. Trim away the jacket and sleeve lining hem allowances; the lining edges are enclosed within the hem allowances.

Add pickstitches. Do this hand stitching at the lining's shoulder and side seams to keep them in place inside the jacket. Also add pickstitches to the lining armholes. Pickstitching, which is not visible on the jacket's right side, is functional and imparts a couture-level detail.

Take your time. Sew with care when constructing the front button placket and the lower front bellows (gusseted) pockets. It's worthwhile to view the Merchant and Mills YouTube video on the Paynter Jacket to see how to sew these complex parts.





Reinterpretations in

KANTHA

Find satisfaction in working with
an upcycled, quilted fabric

BY BECKY FULGONI

The first time I encountered kantha cloth was several years ago when I saw a Mieko Mintz jacket at Santa Fe Dry Goods. I was fascinated by the unique texture of the fabric and the amazing colors. At the time, I was unaware of the process of making kantha cloth, and when I learned that it is made by stitching together layers of used fabric to give them new life, I was totally awed and smitten.

QUILTS BY ANOTHER NAME

Kantha cloth is a quilted textile, traditionally made in India and Bangladesh, using layers of old cloth—often saris—sewn together with a simple running stitch. The word *kantha* means “rags” in Sanskrit, highlighting the practice of repurposing worn fabric. This technique creates a unique, textured fabric that can be used for quilts, blankets, clothing, and other items. Kantha is most often made from layers of cotton lawn, but it can also be made with old silk saris. The cotton thread used to stitch the fabrics together can be any color and often serves as a unifying element to the myriad fabrics that are layered together.

The idea of reusing storied bits of fabric speaks to my scrappy soul, and I love giving these textiles another reincarnation and story. Kantha is an amazingly versatile fabric and surprisingly easy to work with.

IN-PERSON SHOPPING

Originally crafted in India as a way to reuse precious textiles, kantha has become valued as an art form and is now sought after around the world. It has gone in and out of fashion over



the centuries, almost becoming extinct at one point, but it has endured. Today it is popular in garments, bags, bed and table linens—nearly anything that can be made of cloth can be stitched from kantha. Its international appeal and demand have made its manufacture a source of economic stability for the artisans, mostly women, who create the fabrics. As its popularity has increased, kantha cloth has become more widely available and today can be purchased from many sources, including online.

A quick web search will turn up hundreds of kantha cloth importers and sellers. But because each piece is unique, it is difficult to know exactly what you are getting from only a digital image. While there are many opportunities to purchase kantha online, I prefer to the old-school experience of shopping for my kantha cloth at a boutique. This gives me the chance to feel the cloth to make sure it will work for the projects I have in mind. I also like supporting the shop owners who have taken the time to curate a selection of kantha.

I feel honored to work with these pieces of art, and I can sense their history as I reshape a kantha quilt into yet another life. I love taking apart a few of the scraps to see all the amazing patterns and layers that have been sewn together. When I add my own stitches, I am humbled by the original artist's delicate work. I strive to create pieces that respect the tradition of the art and the artisans and hope my interpretations continue the stories already stitched into the cloth.

Becky Fulgoni is a talented designer and stitcher who sews in Michigan (summer) and Key West, Florida (winter), when she's not traveling.

Kantha quilts are the ultimate in upcycling. Each piece contains many older textiles, combined into truly one-of-a-kind fabric. Try it for garments, accessories, or soft furnishings.



Assess the Fabric

Most of the items that I make with kantha cloth are meant to be worn or used, so it is important that the cloth is in suitable condition to stand up to the anticipated use in its new form.

STRUCTURE AND CONDITION

Each kantha quilt offers unique opportunities and challenges. Check your textiles carefully when planning a project.

Weight

The cloth's hand varies from firm to lusciously soft and drapey. I look for lightweight pieces for garments and save the heavier weights for home decor or bags.



Thicker kantha gives bags and pouches body.



Worn areas

I love the worn areas of the cloth that are a testament to its former lives; they often become focal points in new projects. However, it is important that even the worn spots are in good enough condition to hold up when the kantha is remade into garments.

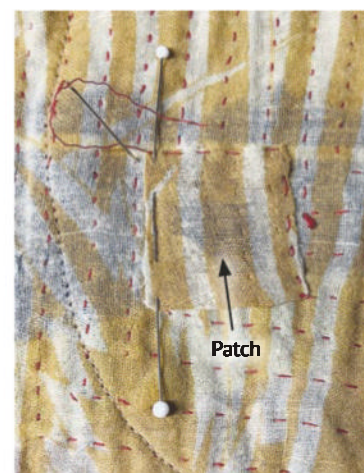
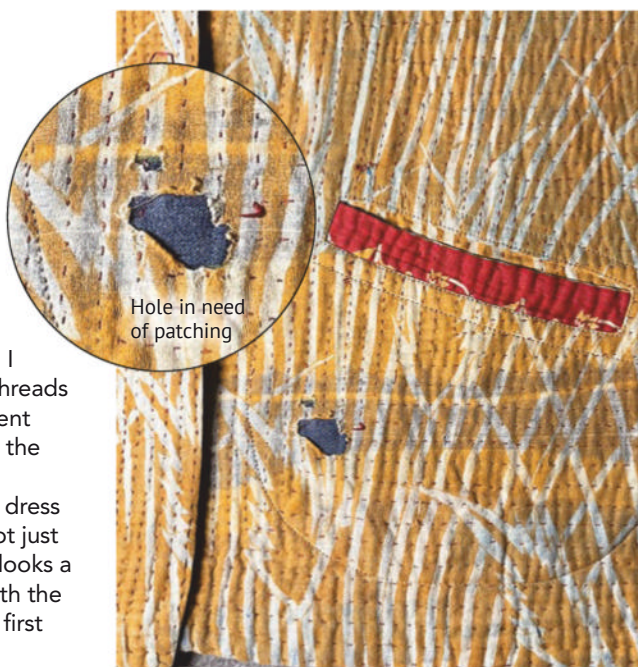
Stitch patterns

The size and number of stitching rows is also something I look for when choosing kantha for projects. Longer stitches work for pillows or place mats but tend to get caught and pulled out of shape if they are on a jacket or a tote bag.

REINFORCEMENT

When the cloth's beauty overwhelms my practical concerns, I add stitching and patches to the vulnerable places to make sure it will work. To reinforce a piece of kantha, I prefer to use the fabrics and threads that are already in the piece. I identify a weak spot, and once I have cut out my pattern pieces, I reclaim some of the scraps and threads to make my repair or reinforcement with pieces that have come from the original kantha.

I also keep a few men's striped dress shirts that have been washed a lot just for patching. Adding new fabric looks a bit jarring and isn't in keeping with the ethos of kantha. Old fabric is my first choice for repairs.



A hole in the upper fabric layer revealed dark fabric underneath. The author hand-sewed a patch with scraps and threads from the main fabric.

Plan Your Design

Because each piece of kantha cloth is one-of-a-kind, every project needs extra attention to make the most of the fabric's special characteristics. I have two methods I like for creating an artistic, balanced design.

CHECK THE KANTHA SIZE

Kantha cloth pieces come in a variety of dimensions, so it is likely that you can find one that will accommodate your project. You can also use several quilts for a single project. Still, it is important to determine the pattern layout before cutting into your precious cloth.

IDENTIFY KEY FEATURES

Some of my favorite features of kantha cloth are the edges. The layers are tucked in and stitched, sometimes with a decorative cross stitch or overcast stitch, to keep the layers from fraying away. I use these decorative edges in my projects whenever I can. This adds yet another consideration when laying out pattern pieces for a project. Fortunately, grainlines are not an issue with kantha cloth (since the layers and patches go in every direction) so turning pattern pieces is usually safe.

Along with the finished edges of the quilt there are often borders, woven or printed, that were part of the original sari design. These make wonderful features in a kantha cloth project as well.



TRY DRAPING

Draping the quilt on my dress form or on my body gives me good ideas for placement of edges and borders or particularly interesting patches or worn spots. It also helps me avoid those awkward "giant flower on the bum" moments! I turn the cloth to both sides and examine all the edging possibilities to find those that work with the garment I have in mind. Sometimes, as I am draping, a new garment idea emerges and I go in a totally different direction. I love it when a quilt lets me know what it wants to be.

After a short jacket was cut from a quilt, there was a large piece of fabric left in the middle. By draping it on a dress form, the author designed this playful apron dress. It highlights borders and interesting textured areas from the original quilt.

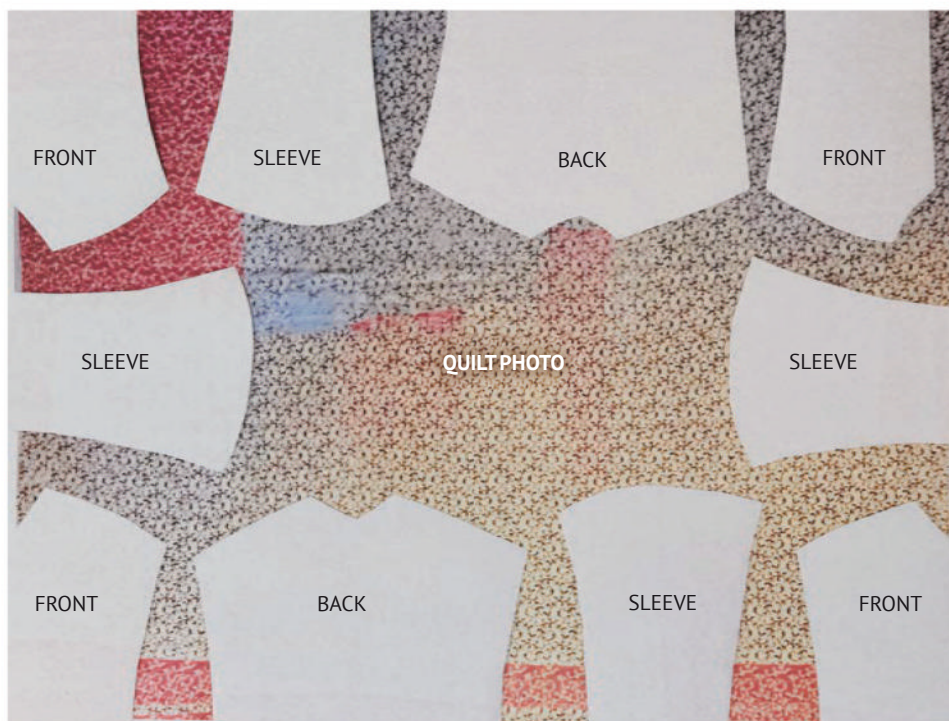


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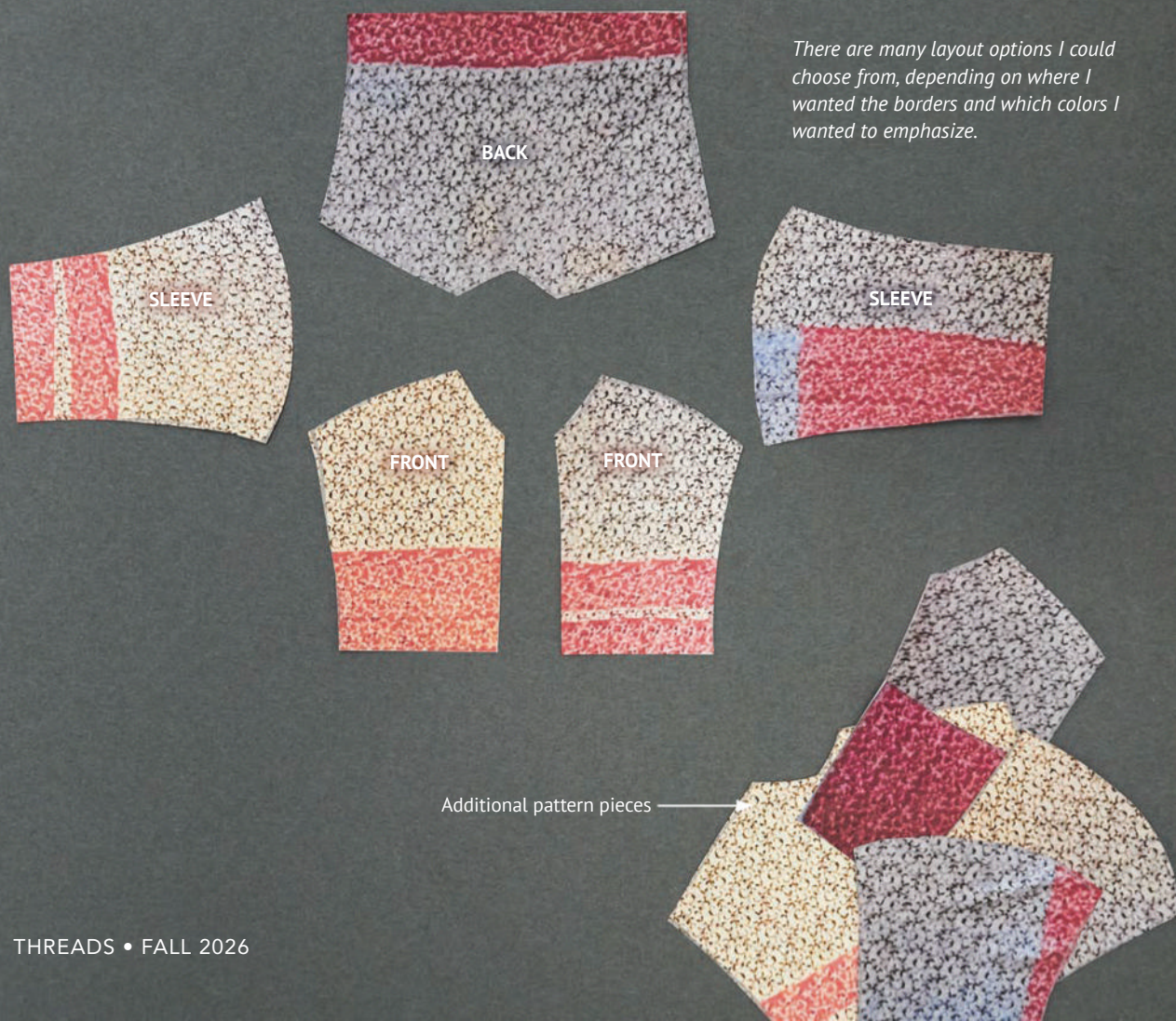
For an enhanced article with more details on how the apron dress was constructed, visit ThreadsMagazine.com.

PLAY PAPER DOLLS

The “paper doll” method is particularly helpful when I am trying to make the best use of limited yardage or limited edges or borders. I photograph the fabric and print the image as close to full-page size as possible. I can then determine the scale I need to adjust my pattern pieces to in order to lay them out on my paper fabric. These mini pattern pieces enable me to experiment with different layouts. I don’t get too mathematical with the sizing; rough approximations are usually just fine for seeing the possibilities.



I wanted to use the corners of the quilt for the jacket fronts, so I placed the front patterns in the corners first and then used the remaining edges for the back hem and the sleeve hems. In this paper trial, I was able to cut two of each pattern piece, giving me more options for designs.



There are many layout options I could choose from, depending on where I wanted the borders and which colors I wanted to emphasize.

Additional pattern pieces



The final jacket incorporates red borders on the body, sleeves, and pockets. When the jacket is reversed, below right, the border shows on the collar as well.



An alternative layout places stripes on the back and emphasizes the ecru areas of the quilt. Pockets, collars, and other elements can be placed after the main pieces are cut.



MIX IN COMPLEMENTARY FABRICS

Some projects require additional fabric, particularly when you're working with smaller scraps. At first glance, it would seem that just about any fabric would blend well with kantha scraps. In my experience, some fabrics detract from the kantha's beauty, and some enhance and add depth to a piece. I find that sticking with fabrics that come from similar traditions works well.

Batiks. Batiks often have a worn or muted look and their light weight makes them great companions for kantha cloth.

Madras plaids. These cotton plaids, originally from India, also complement kantha's colors and textures.

Cross-weaves. Linen/cotton blends that have one color in the weft and another in the warp are lovely options. Their cross-woven structure creates a soft yet complex color effect.

Stripes. I like using Kaffe Fassett stripes for bias bindings on kantha cloth projects. The color combinations often echo those of the kantha textiles.

Natural fibers. I try to stick with natural fiber materials like cotton, silk, and linen when choosing fabrics to mix with kantha cloth, as they are compatible with the kantha pieces.



Pair fabrics that share color, hand, texture, and print scale with the kantha quilt.

Technique Tips

Kantha cloth is surprisingly easy to work with. Here are a few things I have discovered as I have worked with kantha that will give you a running start on your projects.

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

Use interfacing sparingly. Kantha cloth has a wonderful hand as is. If I want to stabilize or reinforce an area, I apply just enough interfacing to add strength without changing the cloth's texture. I might put a narrow strip of interfacing behind a patch pocket to keep it from tearing at the corners.

Keep closures light. Heavy buttons and zippers can pull and distort the somewhat fragile layers of kantha cloth. Also, cutting open buttonholes interrupts the quilting threads. My go-to closures for kantha are snaps. They are now available in lots of decorative colors and metals, come in different sizes, are lightweight, and work great for reversible garments. I also like to use ties if they work for the design.





Opt for simple patterns.

The fewer pieces the better. Because kantha has “design lines” built in, adding extra seams as design features can make the end garment feel too busy. Take advantage of the borders and patches to create a dynamic garment.

Include handstitching.

It is lovely to create handsewn details, such as stitching a pocket in place, hemming, or adding edge- or topstitching. Hand stitches maintain the quilted texture and add your story to the piece.

Finish seams neatly.

Simple serged or zigzagged edges keep the layers and cut threads under control. Flat-felled seams are a great choice for places where both sides of the garment will be seen. To reduce bulk, cut away several of the internal layers before folding and stitching the felled edge.

KANTHA CARE

I treat my kantha pieces as delicately as possible when it comes to washing them. They can be machine-washed in a mesh laundry bag, but rough treatment can damage the stitching and worn fabrics. Hand washing is also an option, but don't twist too much. Hang kantha garments to dry. A quick fluff in the dryer once they are dry restores the quilted texture.

Let the fabric do the talking: An uncomplicated garment pattern allows the kantha's details to shine. Bias-cut striped binding enhances this jacket's outlines.





Fashion CONNECTION

Let your fall sewing celebrate a blend
of generations and backgrounds

BY VANESSA NIRODE

For many of us, the world feels uncertain, whether in a big-picture geopolitical sense or in a close-to-home sense, due to the rising cost of living and unpredictable weather. Market research across various industries supports the concept that when the world feels precarious and unpredictable, people turn to things that inspire hope and safety: home, closeness, cozy mysteries, happy endings, and comforting television shows with low stakes and solvable problems. Fashion trends, as always, reflect the same inward focus toward daily life. This season, we see an emphasis on celebrating personal cultural heritages and blending the new with the old to create clothing that moves effortlessly between generations and time periods. There's also a continued movement for wardrobes that feature core staples and lived-in authenticity.

VALUES DRESSING

Undone imperfection and disheveled layering, perhaps as a counterpoint to the flawless, seeming perfection of artificial intelligence, permeate many of the fall/winter 2026 trends. In January, 2026, at Texworld New York City, an annual apparel sourcing convention, expert Sharon Graubard of SG Files shared a trend report. She spoke about how shifting consumer values shape the narrative around fashion and trends. "Current concerns like climate change, radical inclusivity, zero waste, and brand ethos inform the way we shop," she said.

Depop, an online marketplace for secondhand clothing, reports that across the trends and within many online fashion communities, people are choosing clarity over clutter. Consum-

ers in general continue to lean toward pieces with longevity and seek to develop a personal style that is a reflection of who they are—not just a copy of what others are wearing. As Graubard said in her talk, "A crowded closet like Carrie Bradshaw's [from the TV series *Sex and the City*] used to be a status symbol, but now it's a curated closet."

DECLINE OF TAILORING SKILLS

On top of these market trends toward owning fewer clothes and wearing them longer, many news outlets have recently reported on a skilled tailor shortage. As the bespoke and alterations tailoring workforce grows older, there are few waiting to take up the mantle. In New York City's Garment District, many longtime specialty artisans and suppliers are going out of business because there is no one to take over their enterprises. Yet there is a renewed interest in and demand for repair and alteration services. Well-loved garments with visible mending continue to be popular and fashionable. Skilled trades such as sewing and patterning are having a moment, though it may not be enough to inspire many to learn these skills. In keeping with the themes of the season though, I like to remain hopeful.

Whether we sew for ourselves or others, we can find comfort in our sewing spaces as we navigate a sometimes difficult and changing world. Creating our own happiness and joy through making is one of the best kinds of remedies we have.

Vanessa Nirode is a patternmaker and tailor in the entertainment industry. WeatherYourOwnStorm.com



From enveloping outerwear to enhanced basics, you can sew a wardrobe that warms you, body and soul.

Patterns, clockwise from top left: Sunday Coat from Merchant & Mills; Butano Button Up from Friday Pattern Company; Hanbok Coat from Sewing Therapy; Nox Skirt from Sew Different. Fabric swatches: MoodFabrics.com.



Interwoven Generations and Cultures

This trend exemplifies the use of clothing and fashion as a bridge between generations. None of us has a single identity. We are influenced by and reflect our parents and friends; our histories and jobs; and our loves—all woven together.

In clothing form, for me, that means my dad's worn gas-station jacket and a gathered top or dress worn over pants. Consider outfits that incorporate grandma furs, Muppet fringe, Fair Isle sweaters, chain mail, micro flowers, and wallpaper flowers. Think disheveled layering and unexpectedly soft versions of workwear.

The customizable patchwork garment patterns of Roberts Wood offer a means for incorporating fabric from a variety of sources: a true heritage project. Graubard, speaking at the apparel sourcing convention, noted the use of ancient techniques in a modern way and how society can manage repair and sustainability in a throwaway world. "We're talking about craft and circularity and repair and sturdiness," she said.

PATTERNS TO TRY

27 Azur Blouse from Atelier Scammit: shirt with pointed or ruffled collar; sleeve options

1309 Skirt from Grasser Patterns: midi skirt with asymmetrical front tuck

+ Blanca Trousers from Fibre Mood: ankle-length pleated trousers with buckled waistband

+ Brooklyn Knit Top from Style Arc: roll-neck top with side-seam pockets

+ Celeste Batwing Cardigan from Ellie & Mac: dolman-sleeve, open-front sweater in two lengths

+ Chore Skirt No. 106 from Decades of Style: full skirt with back pleats and wide contrast hem band

+ Corset Duster from The Prairie Misfit: underbust corset with attached dirndl

+ Dorte Top from Tauko Magazine: Blouse or tunic with attached shawl

+ Drafters Grid Dress from Roberts Wood: patchwork dress with full skirt and sleeves

+ Fowler Jacket from Closet Core Patterns: unisex button-front, collared chore jacket with patch pockets

+ Ginger Jeans from Closet Core Patterns: classic jeans in straight and skinny silhouettes

Hanbok Shirt & Coat from Sewing Therapy: wrap jacket, blouse, or coat

Liza Shirt from Viki Sews: voluminous blouse with shoulder yoke and full sleeves

Multi-Strap Bow Harness from Roberts Wood: fanciful harness to layer over other garments

+ Quilt Coat from The Prairie Misfit: button-front jacket made from an existing quilt

+ Romey Gathered Dress & Top from Sew House 7: raglan-sleeve dress with gathered skirt; cross-stitch patterns available

+ Rue Quilt Coat from Spaghetti Western: oversized quilted jacket with patch pockets and collar

+ Tabula Rasa Jacket from Fit for Art Patterns: panel jacket with square armholes, suitable for quilted fabrics

+ Victor Apron from Merchant & Mills: coverall apron

+ Waikerie Shirt & Dress from Muna & Broad: straight shirt or dress, back yoke, long or band sleeves

Wolf Bundle from Stitch Maiden: dress with tiered skirt; hooded capelet; assorted bags

+ Worker Trouser from Modern Sewing Co.: tapered, fly-front pants

LOOK FOR THIS ICON

Patterns with this symbol extend to sizes for bust measurements of 55 inches or more and hip measurements of 58 inches or more.

Enhanced Everyday Clothes

The “Daily Life” trend includes a sporty hybrid, such as an elevated track jacket, or non-synthetic and vintage activewear. You can wear the same great, comfy pieces on repeat, bringing a splash of joy and deliberate naivety—especially when it comes to color—and some 1990s simplicity.

It’s all about finding happiness and peace close to home (however you define that) and in your day-to-day living. Graubard called it “basic clothes worn with intention.”

I recently excavated a 67-year-old shirt with a ridiculous—and large—chainstitched Holstein cow on the back from a closet in my parents’ house. It was my dad’s, and embroidered on the front are his first name and the year he graduated from high school. It is now a part of my work uniform. People comment on it all the time, and it brings me an uncommon amount of joy. To me, it reflects home, family, safety, and a time when things seemed simpler.

Adding embroidery to your track jacket or favorite timeless shirt or skirt is a way to honor whatever says home to you. Also consider vintage details, scarves, and oversized caps.

PATTERNS TO TRY

1074 Turtleneck from Grasser Patterns: close-fitting knit turtleneck top

1314 Trouser from Grasser Patterns: pleat-front trousers with cargo pockets

+ 90s Rewind Look Bundle from Style Arc: jean jacket, pullover knit top, and pull-on pants with ankle tuck

Almost Long Trousers from The Assembly Line: trousers with elastic waist and ankle cuffs

Audrey Scarf from Merchant & Mills: loose-fitting tie-on head scarf

+ Bonnet Shirt from Daughter Judy: popover shirt with armhole insets, tab front, and dress-length option

+ Butano Button Up from Friday Pattern Company: classic front-button shirt with two sleeve-length options

+ Cassatt Dress from Sew Different: knee-length smock dress with back-button closure

+ Cobden Chore Jacket from Muna & Broad: classic barn coat with four patch pockets

+ Columbus Woven Jacket from Style Arc: front-zip parka jacket with stand collar, lantern-shaped sleeves

+ Droma Skirt from Muna and Broad: midi-length pull-on skirt with gathered waist and faced hem

+ Esmond Cargo Pants from Cashmerette: relaxed pants with cargo pockets and cinched hems

Francine Shirt from Merchant & Mills: pullover top or smock dress with open collar and single front button

Maali Jacket from Make My Lemonade: blouson-style jacket with stand collar

+ Nox Skirt from Sew Different: pull-on skirt with side cargo pockets or hem flounce option

+ Oxbow Pants from Sew House 7: jeans-style pants with front and back patch pockets

+ Sanda Jacket from Merchant & Mills: coat or jacket with drop shoulders and small shawl collar

+ September Coat from Merchant & Mills: raglan-sleeved coat with patch pockets, small collar, and oversized fit

+ Simplicity 3005: pleated midi skirt with cargo pockets

+ Tarlee T-Shirt from Muna & Broad: knit top with crew or turtleneck and sleeve-length options

+ Toaster Sweater from Sew House 7: funnel-neck pullover sweater with raglan sleeves

+ Twig Woven Pant from Style Arc: barrel-shaped pants with pin tuck details





Tailored Looks and Coats with Substance

This trend includes fine Italian tailoring, ties, button-front shirts, and suiting for women, as well as the relaxed tailoring and androgynous silhouettes synonymous with the 1990s. Much of this reflects this year's fascination with Carolyn Bessette Kennedy's style, which grew in influence through the television series *Love Story*.

Who doesn't love a good funnel-neck coat, sweater, or dress? As extreme temperatures (hot and cold) continue, outerwear equipped with a funnel neck is practical and fashionable—they aren't too tight and can also be worn open when needed, creating cool lapel arrangements. They've long been a design element in the steampunk space: For styling inspiration check out AllSaints.com.

Wrap coats, especially those of the trench persuasion, and hats were also prevalent on the fashion runways.

You can add your stamp of individuality to any of these looks: Use fabric with character, add embroidery to the pockets on a coat, or choose unique buttons. Or accessorize with one of Waffle Pattern's animal-shaped bags, the penguin or whale.

PATTERNS TO TRY

905 Jacket 905 from Grasser

Patterns: double-breasted blazer with asymmetrical belt closure

1284 Long Coat from Grasser

Patterns: ankle-length puffer-style parka with hood

Asymmetrical Blazer by Majesti

Collections: fitted jacket with asymmetrical front opening and stand collar

+ Barons Dress from Daughter

Judy: funnel-neck dress or top with back neck buttons

Copenhagen Coat from Alice & Co.

Co.: straight coat with notched collar or hood; large patch pockets

+ Gracie Coat & Headscarf from

Style Arc: straight coat, wrap or button front, with tall funnel collar or lapels; hood-like scarf

+ Hoodie Dress from The Assembly Line

Line: pullover dress with hood, patch pockets, and elasticized hem

+ Hoodie Parka from The Assembly Line

Line: A-line hooded coat with snap closure and flap pockets

+ Juno Culotte from Merchant & Mills

Mills: cropped, wide-leg trousers

LB Pullover from Paper Theory

Theory: boxy pullover tops with crew or turtleneck, for wovens

+ Mahina Cardigan from Scroop

Patterns: drapery knit cardigan with shawl-like collar

+ Ormond Designer Coat from

Style Arc: raglan-sleeve midi-length belted wrap coat

Simplicity 3006: pants with angled front pleats and slouchy hem

Sweater Weather Bundle from

Maria Denmark: pullover sweater dresses and tops

Vest, Pants, Blazer from Majesti

Collections: three-piece tailored ensemble

Vogue 1669: 1949 fit-and-flare coat with wide collar and emphasized pocket flaps

Vogue 1926: long princess-line A-line coat with jewel neckline or funnel collar

Vogue 1932: three-piece 1940s outfit with skirt suit and straight, hip-length coat

Whale & Penguin Bags from

Waffle Patterns: whimsical three-dimensional zippered bags

+ Women's Shirt Maker's Express

#227 from Islander Sewing: classic shirt with menswear details

Theatrical Vision

This trend is all about not being afraid to break the rules. If you're tired of 1990s minimalism, embrace those feelings and create drama.

Construct a pencil skirt out of vinyl, incorporate plastic and mesh into your office looks, try color blocking, don a statement brooch, and embrace a good old 1920s-style drop waist with a wide belt. Wear a cape or cloak. Use a "summer dress" pattern to make an autumn or winter garment out of a lightweight wool or a heavier cotton.

In her talk, Graubard called soft sculpture the new minimalism: minimalism that has been "given depth, dimension, and soul with craft." But not just craft as in your grandma's loving hands at home. Technology and 3D printing are also types of crafts. Consider creating volume and shapes with molding, padding, wires, and gathers.

PATTERNS TO TRY

1920s Dress from Lady Marlowe

Patterns: straight, sleeveless dress with handkerchief hemline and wrapped bodice detail

1925 Zig Zag Dress 2502 from

Decades of Style: drop-waist dress with zigzag waist seam; sleeveless or long sleeves

1927 Cloud Cape 2701 from

Decades of Style: opera cape with Shirred yoke and puffy collar

Ada Dress from Viki Sews:

sculpted, funnel-neck minidress

+ Charm School Uniform from

Charm Patterns: jumper with deep V-neck, front buttons; full skirt option

Clover Shirt from Stitchmaiden:

fitted shirts with tie collars and pin-tuck details

+ Elmwood Pencil Skirt from

Cashmerette: tapered skirt with contour waistband and optional front pockets

Hanbok Wrap Dress from Sew-

ing Therapy: design inspired by traditional Korean dress

+ Henrietta Skirt from Spaghetti

Western: gathered midi skirt with gathered inset side panels

+ Henry Skirt from Daughter

Judy: faux-wrap straight skirt

Hortence Dress from Fibre

Mood: top or tiered dress with smocked yoke and wide sleeves

+ Lenne Top from Lore Piar:

close-fitting knit top with asymmetrical gather at front shoulder

Magic Pencil Skirt from Pamela's

Patterns: simple, tapered pull-on skirt for knits or stretch wovens

+ Reznor Skirt from Elbe

Textiles: tapered skirt with angled front drape, for knit fabrics

+ Society Dress from Charm

Patterns: 1940s-inspired knit dress with full skirt, midriff panel, bodice gathers, and optional hood

Tango Dress from Folk-

wear Patterns: sleeveless flapper-style dress with dropped waistline

+ Traveller Cape from

Twig & Tale: cape with hood or collar, multiple length options

+ Winterberry Cape from Mood

Sewciety: collared cape with three length options

Zinnia Skirt from Stitchmaiden:

full, gathered skirt with corset-style waistband



Romantic Moods

Whether or not you liked the 2026 adaptation of *Wuthering Heights*, fashion inspired by the film's costumes showed up on the runway. Viki Sews pattern company even did a whole Instagram post on the story. The mood is romance paired with tragedy.

Think high collars, bustles, trains, ruffles, ethereal fabrics, and feminine styles. This trend gives us permission to dream again by escaping into an anachronistic, lush, sensual period drama. Other elements to include: high heels, gloves, a high-low skirt, poet-core, Paul Poiret silhouettes and adornment, Victorian jackets, and ornamental aprons.

PATTERNS TO TRY

+ **Anita Peasant Blouse from Style Arc:** loose blouse with gathered neckline

+ **Avital Blazer from Viki Sews:** vintage military-inspired jacket with decorative button loops

+ **Cyberpunk Crop Top from Tsuya's Cos Shop:** high-necked halter-style top

+ **Delma Skirt from Viki Sews:** high-low midi skirt with bubble hem

+ **Fantail Skirt from Scroop Patterns:** full midi or maxi skirt with multiple back pleats

+ **Howerdel Skirt from Elbe Textiles:** tiered skirt with asymmetrical yoke

+ **Infinity Ruffle Skirt or Dress from Roberts Wood:** made-to-measure skirt or dress with ruffle-edged scalloped elements

+ **Know Me 2015:** strapless bustier top with wrap skirt

+ **Nina Blouse from Scroop Patterns:** Edwardian-style high-neck blouses with heirloom details

+ **Princess Coat from Charm Patterns:** fit-and-flare coat with sleeve, collar, and length options

+ **Rayana Top from Viki Sews:** close-fitting, cropped blouse with cut-out at the upper front, full sleeves

+ **Ruckus Dress from Tauko Magazine:** pullover dress with adjustable ruching at front

+ **Metropolitan Suit from Folkwear Patterns:** 1910s ensemble with swing jacket and long skirt

+ **Sati Skirt from Viki Sews:** bias-cut skirt with a slightly flared silhouette

+ **Simplicity 3085:** boned corset top with fitted skirt and lace insets

+ **Underbust Corset from Tsuya's Cos Shop:** fitted, zip-front corset with wide-set straps, made to measure



web extra

For a version of this article containing links to all patterns, visit [ThreadsMagazine.com](https://www.threadsMagazine.com).

Photos: (p. 57) courtesy of the respective pattern manufacturers; (p. 57, background swatches; p. 63, right) Mike Yamin. Illustrations: Steven Fleck. Color swatches (p. 63); based on Pantone Color Institute's palette.

Textile Potpourri

In color, pattern, and texture, fall and winter's fabrics offer options that are often combined in nontraditional ways. A vintage feeling that centers wearability and comfort is a common bond among the many choices.

COLOR: OPTIMISTIC AND EARTHY

This season's palette has a David Hockney feel, with yellows, salmons, blue- and yellow-tinted greens, and periwinkle blues. Earthy tones also dominate, keeping in line with the general workwear, functional feel of many trends. Unexpected color pairings, whether by color blocking or in the prints themselves, show up in many designer collections. If color blocking is too much, try using brighter hues as accents.

In her talk, Graubard mentioned an upstate New York store, Pidgin, which sells clothing along with sculpture, household goods, and antiques. The aesthetic vibe is rustic with splashes of weathered colors thrown in. Store owner Kostas Anagnopoulos clarifies that: "A pidgin is a simplified form of communication; an informal language, often developed in trade, allowing those from different backgrounds to convey thoughts to one another." Think of your color and pattern choices as that kind of language: a special argot that brings together seemingly unrelated elements.



tip

SOFTEN UP. If a fabric seems too stiff, you can often wash out most of the sizing, though this might change the texture. In home decor fabrics, avoid those with heavy backings.

FABRICS: SOFT AND NATURAL

The fall/winter 2026 season spotlights materials with texture and heritage, those that are rough and elegant. Examples include oily khakis, washed-out fabrics, vegetable-dyed materials, and "weedy" florals, such as dandelions. Natural-fiber fabrics are prevalent even in athletic/sporty spaces: superfine cottons, hems, twills, and denims with overdyed and distressing.

Patterned textiles also appeared in jacquards, tapestry, brocades, fake snow-leopard, noir florals, and gold lamé. Wallpaper stripes, flowers over pinstripes, and embroidery—what Graubard considers "the new print"—popped up across collections from casual to fancier going-out and dressy garments. When choosing fabrics, be willing to venture into the home decor sections. Many of these textiles play up exciting prints and can be used for garments, especially outerwear and skirts.



George Washington's WARDROBE



The Lansdowne Portrait, painted by Gilbert Stuart in 1796, depicts President George Washington in a black velvet suit.

Following the trail of black velvet

BY TIMOTHY LONG

The wardrobe of America's first president is not lost. Scattered among collections in the United States and abroad, approximately 20 garments survive that are connected to, or are believed to be connected to, George Washington. Garment fragments survive as well.

Despite the remarkable survival of these objects, much of their history remains unknown. When were they made? Who made them? When were they worn? How do they relate to one another? And can their connection to Washington be proven?

These questions are at the center of my current research, which seeks to identify and understand George Washington's wardrobe through the surviving garments themselves. While the project examines clothing from across Washington's lifetime, one material has emerged again and again as particularly significant: black velvet.

A DISCOVERY DEEPENS RESEARCH

My interest in Washington's clothing began years ago while I was working as a collection manager and curator at the Chicago History Museum. Among the museum's extraordinary collection of presidential artifacts are several garments reported to be associated with George Washington, including a three-piece black velvet suit in poor condition.

Fast forward to 2015, during my tenure as curator at the London Museum. I was contacted by Sulgrave Manor in



*Fashion historian
Timothy Long*



Sulgrave Manor in the United Kingdom is the ancestral home of George Washington, and it is where the author discovered and painstakingly analyzed the worn black velvet jacket at right, which evidence shows was part of Washington's wardrobe beginning in 1789.

Northamptonshire, England—the ancestral home of the Washington family—to assess the provenance of another black velvet garment associated with Washington. As I was researching the garment, I experienced an “aha” moment. Although separated by an ocean and preserved in different collections, the jacket at Sulgrave Manor and the suit at the Chicago History Museum seemed connected by more than simple ownership. The more evidence I gathered, the more black velvet appeared throughout Washington’s surviving wardrobe and in the portraits he sat for during his presidency.

What began as research on a black jacket soon developed into a larger investigation.

Today, my research takes me to museums and archives throughout the United States and United Kingdom. Fellowships at Sulgrave Manor and the George Washington Presidential Library at Mount Vernon have provided opportunities to examine most of the surviving Washington garments. Mount Vernon houses the largest collection of clothing associated with Washington, while other museums preserve garments, fragments, and documentary evidence that contribute important pieces to the larger puzzle.

PROVING THE WASHINGTON CONNECTION

The challenge is not the absence of garments. It is the absence of certainty about their connections to Washington.

Of the approximately twenty garments associated with Washington that survive today, only five are documented as having been worn at a specific time or place. One of these objects, Washington’s only surviving uniform, enjoys unusually strong





General George Washington's well-documented uniform, worn from 1789 until 1799, appears in many portraits, including John Trumbull's 1790 painting, Washington at Verplanck's Point.

documentation. It appears in portraits, is repeatedly mentioned in historical records, and can be connected to numerous occasions during Washington's life and afterward. Most other surviving garments exist in a murkier historical landscape.

This is why I often describe the project as a form of historical detective work.

Traditional curatorial research remains essential. Receipts, correspondence, inventories, account books, family papers, newspaper references, and Washington's own writings all provide valuable clues. Together, these sources help establish provenance, identify makers, and place garments within the chronology of Washington's life.

ANALYZING GARMENTS FOR CLUES

Documents alone cannot answer every question. The garments themselves are historical documents and primary sources of information that can elevate curatorial research. My research focuses on clothing construction, so I am interested not only in what these garments looked like, but also in how they were made and mended. Every surviving object preserves evidence left behind by its maker, its wearer, and sometimes later generations who cared for it.

Pattern shapes, seam placement, stitch types, linings, interlinings, wear patterns, and alterations all provide valuable information. In many cases, repairs are just as revealing as original construction. Some garments display the work of highly skilled 18th-century craftsmanship that remains impressive today. Others reveal later repairs carried out by individuals whose skills were far more modest. Occasionally fabric has been caught in seams, stitches appear hurried, or finishing techniques differ noticeably from the quality of the



These investigations can uncover relationships between garments, distinguish original components from later alterations, and show how individual pieces fit into the broader story of Washington's life . . .

original construction.

For a researcher, these details are not flaws. They are evidence. Each repair documents another chapter in the garment's life. Each one shows how these objects were valued, maintained, and preserved long after Washington's death.

My research also incorporates scientific analysis. Examining fibers and fabrics under magnification reveals details invisible to the naked eye, helping identify the materials used in construction. These investigations can uncover relationships between garments, distinguish original components from later alterations, and show how individual pieces fit into the broader story of Washington's life when combined with archival research. See "Pocket Evidence," p. 69.

EVEN FRAGMENTS TELL A STORY

The surviving wardrobe also extends beyond complete garments.

Many of Washington's relatives and descendants treasured his clothing. Some garments were carefully preserved and passed down through generations. Others were cut apart, such as a pair of black velvet breeches at Mount Vernon. Small fragments were removed, some framed and others enclosed in letters. One swatch is recorded as being stolen from the family and taken out of the country. To a modern interpretation, such actions may seem alarming, but they reflect the reverence many people felt for Washington and the objects associated with him.

These fragments are often as important as complete garments. They are silent witnesses to clothing that has been lost, altered, or separated over time. Do they contain enough clues to connect them to surviving pieces? Can a single swatch reveal a garment that no longer exists, or is it simply a scrap of fabric?

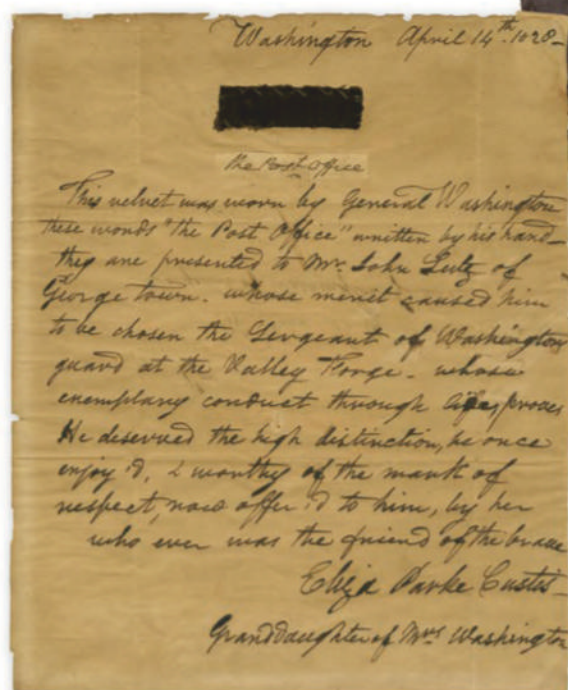
In some cases, my research has shown that fragments preserve evidence of garments that no longer survive intact. Others appear to be the leftovers from cutting out pattern pieces. By tracing the origins of these remnants, I am uncovering how they contribute to the wider story of Washington's clothing. Whether the clothes were tucked



Handsewn pocket bag



George Washington's black velvet breeches (above), circa 1790, were later mostly cut up into swatches that were framed or sewn into letters—as Washington's step-granddaughter did in 1828 (below).





Washington's velvet jacket has a dart in the underarm of each sleeve, just like an 18th-century jacket (below) at the London Museum.

AN UNDERARM DART AS A DATING CLUE

The Sulgrave Manor jacket carries a detail makers will recognize at once: a dart, roughly 3 inches long, set into the underarm of each velvet sleeve. The dart removes the fullness where the sleeve meets the body, drawing the velvet close to support the long, tight sleeve.

The feature is rare. Among the late 18th-century jackets examined for this study, only one other carries an underarm sleeve dart—a jacket at the London Museum. That comparison is no isolated match. It shares the Washington coat's stand collar, its 10 buttons down the center front, a similar flare through the skirts, and the same long, close-fitting sleeves. Its records date it only generally to "ca.1785".

The shared dart, therefore, does more than note a construction habit. Set against the two coats' common silhouette and detailing, it places the Washington jacket among garments made in the prevailing cut of the later 1780s. That stylistic placement aligns with the documentary evidence that dates the jacket to 1789, the year my research finds it entered Washington's wardrobe.

away in an attic or repurposed into fashionable new garments, the Washington family kept many of these pieces—not only black velvet, but a variety of fabrics used across generations. Together, they help highlight a wardrobe that has been dispersed, altered, and divided over more than two centuries.

Among all of these surviving objects, black velvet remains particularly important.

WASHINGTON CHOSE BLACK VELVET

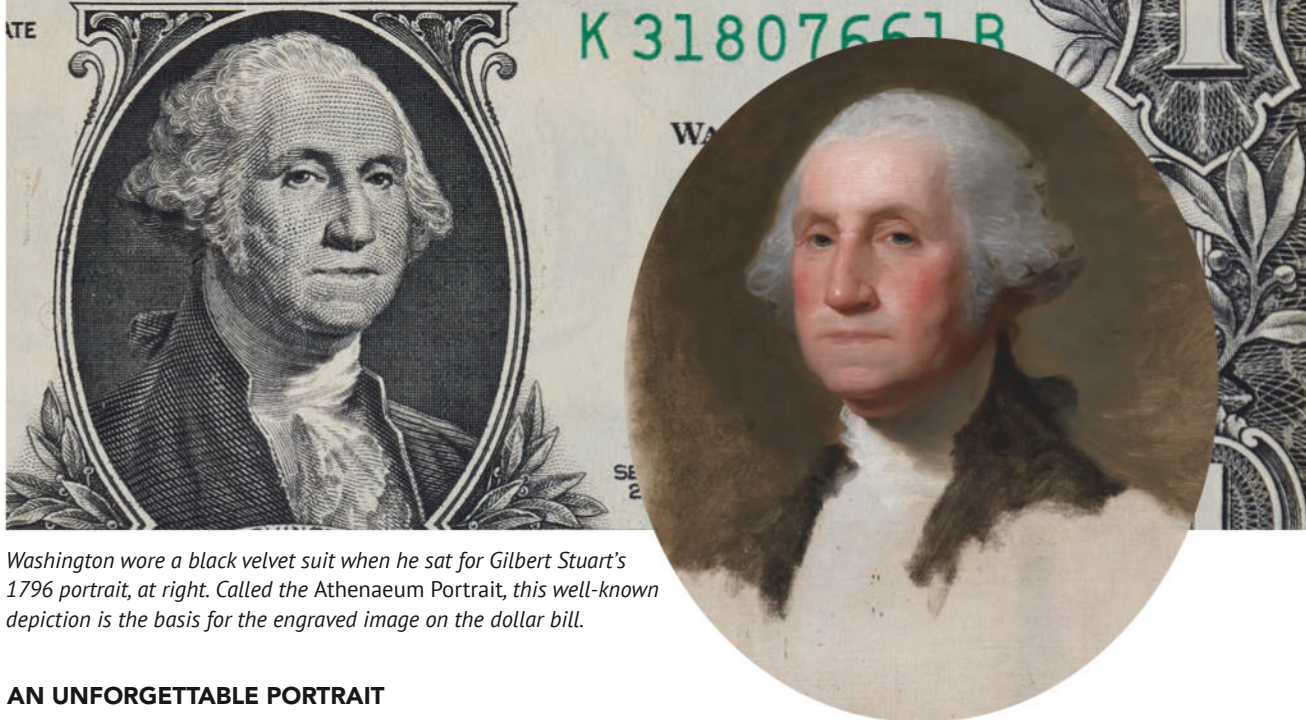
Today, Washington is often imagined first as a military figure. Yet one of the greatest challenges of his public life was the transition from commander-in-chief of the Continental Army to civilian leader of a new republic. Clothing played an important role in conveying that transformation.

Black velvet communicated a powerful visual message. Elegant without being ostentatious and formal without being martial, it projected authority, restraint, and dignity. Again and again, black velvet is associated with Washington. More significantly, it appears repeatedly in portraits commissioned during his lifetime, especially during his presidency, when Washington sat for the artists.

This pattern suggests that black velvet held particular significance for him.

Rather than viewing these garments as isolated objects, I believe they should be understood as part of a broader strategy of self-presentation. Washington understood that clothing transmitted messages. During a period when the young republic was defining itself, his choices mattered.

Photos: (p. 64, left; p. 69, top right) National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution; (p. 64, right; p. 65, right; p. 68, top) © Leah Band/Sulgrave Manor, courtesy of Sulgrave Manor; (p. 66, left) courtesy of National Museum of American History, the Smithsonian; (p. 66, right) courtesy of Winterthur Museum, gift of Henry Francis du Pont; (p. 67) courtesy of Mount Vernon Ladies Association; (p. 68, bottom and inset) courtesy of Timothy Long, © London Museum; (p. 69, top left) Mike Yamin; (all others) courtesy of Timothy Long.



Washington wore a black velvet suit when he sat for Gilbert Stuart's 1796 portrait, at right. Called the Athenaeum Portrait, this well-known depiction is the basis for the engraved image on the dollar bill.

AN UNFORGETTABLE PORTRAIT

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of this research involves the possibility that surviving black velvet garments may be connected to one of the most famous images in American history.

Gilbert Stuart's Athenaeum portrait, top right, is among the best-known likenesses of Washington ever created. The unfinished portrait later became the basis for the image reproduced on the dollar bill, ensuring that generations of Americans would encounter Washington through Stuart's depiction.

Many assume that the clothing represented in the portrait never existed or no longer survives. My research suggests that assumption deserves closer examination.

While definitive identification remains a subject of ongoing investigation, the evidence increasingly indicates that surviving black velvet garments may help us better understand what Washington wore when sitting for some of his most famous portraits. Whether the exact garment survives remains an open question, but the possibility challenges long-held assumptions about the fate of Washington's wardrobe.

For me, this is what makes the research so exciting.

CLOTHES PROVIDE IMPORTANT DETAILS

Every stitch, seam, repair, fiber, fragment, and document has the potential to reveal something new. The goal is not simply to catalog surviving garments but to place them back into Washington's life by identifying when they were made, how they were worn, what they communicated, and how they relate to one another.

The work is ongoing, and many questions are still unanswered. New discoveries continue to emerge from archival records, scientific analysis, and close examination of the garments themselves. What began as a search for a few surviving garments has become an effort to reconstruct an entire wardrobe and, through it, to gain a richer understanding of George Washington himself.

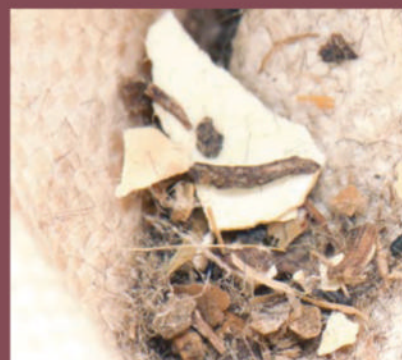
Timothy Long, a fashion historian and museum professional, plans to publish his extensive research and findings in a peer-reviewed journal and later in a book. Find him @timothylongfashioncurator.

POCKET EVIDENCE

Sometimes the most revealing evidence comes from unexpected places.

One area of my research involves studying debris preserved within George Washington's pockets. During the examination of material in one pocket, fragments that initially appeared unidentifiable revealed a different story under magnification. Several pieces proved to be eggshell. Under higher magnification, traces of what appears to be dried yolk became visible, along with a tiny feather embedded within it. These clues still are being investigated to see what information they may bring to light about the garment or its wearer.

The fragments are incredibly small, yet they are among the most personal pieces of evidence I have encountered. They remind us that these garments were not originally museum artifacts. They were worn by a living person moving through the routines of daily life.



Debris found in Washington's jacket pocket includes eggshells.



For warmth and soft texture, vicuña is hard to surpass. Apply your finest sewing to this precious textile.

Pattern: Vogue 8520, out of print. Fabric: vicuña, A Fabric Place, Baltimore, Maryland.



Viva Vicuña

BY SUSAN KHALJE

It's not often that one is able to venture into the realm of sewing with super-luxury fabrics—but if you can, it's an amazing journey. It's exciting to plan for, memorable along the way, and then, at the end, you've got something fabulous to show for it.

Recently, I embarked on a sewing experience with vicuña, an eponymous fabric made from the wool of a South American animal. If you're after vicuña, you'd have to begin your adventure by going very high into the Andes to meet up with them. Vicuña, a llama relative, are the smallest of the camelid family, and they're uniquely adapted to the high elevations at which they live.

While now protected, the vicuña population has gone through perilous times, its precious fibers once reserved exclusively for Incan royalty. The governments of Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, and Peru have united to protect the vicuña and its harvest, controlling the process (which echoes the ancient Incan *chaccu* ceremony) in which the animals are rounded up, shorn, then released. The vicuña population was once down to 6,000, as the animals were unnecessarily killed for their fleece. It's now closer to 350,000. Each animal produces only about a half pound of fiber per shearing and can only be shorn every two or three years. By contrast, alpaca produce 4 to 10 pounds of fleece per year and sheep can produce up to 30.

I first came across vicuña a few years back at the fabric store Generaldiff in Paris. There was a bolt of it, and it was first time I'd seen it and felt it. Two things hit me—the unbelievable softness and

then the price. I was certainly taken with it, but I entered those waters cautiously. I bought just enough for two narrow scarves. You can understand why it's a fabric that's sometimes sold by the inch. Later, when I tried to fringe the ends of the scarves, the fibers were so delicate that they just pulled apart. Little wonder, though, given that it's the finest fiber of all, according to the British Wool Marketing Board.

You can spare yourself a trip to the Andes, though: My friend Jonathan Miller, owner of A Fabric Place in Baltimore, Maryland, often has it in stock. When you're ready to invest in creating a jacket or coat that you'll be happy to wear forever, consider vicuña. As the textile is costly, you'll want to prepare for some serious sewing. I'll share my process for making my coat.

What was it like to work with such a treasure? Well, all projects are special because your time, hopes and dreams, and careful work go into every one of them. But working with vicuña certainly raises the bar. The vicuña fabric took a journey to get here, and I took one of my own, enjoying every step and doing my best to honor this special fabric.

A couture expert finds delight in an ultrasoft, natural-fiber textile

Contributing Editor Susan Khalje is a couture expert who enjoys sewing projects that challenge and enable her to make use of her technical and artistic skills.
SusanKhalje.com

Plan for Success

Once I had the vicuña yardage in my hands, I pondered what to do with it. Treat it like just another fabric? Keep it locked up for the most special of occasions? Or find a path somewhere in the middle? I wanted something wearable, and I wanted to incorporate special touches. I needed to settle on a pattern, coordinating and supporting materials, and notions such as closures and threads.

A SIMPLE, CLASSIC PATTERN

I strongly considered a Ralph Rucci design. He's the brilliant American designer who often used double-faced cashmere in his jackets and coats, with lots of complicated seamlines, which show up in these wonderfully bodied fabrics. I wanted something less complicated, though, so I looked through my pattern collection and came across Vogue 8520 (out of print). It couldn't be simpler, but when I'm looking at a pattern, I always ask myself how it gets its shaping. I was happy to see that there were darts in the yoke in front and back. To my mind, curved shoulder seams (which this design has) aren't enough to shape a yoke—you need more than that to accommodate the back's curve and the neck's forward thrust.



COMPLEMENTARY FABRICS

In addition to their designs, I love the way couture garments often feature unexpected fabric combinations. Happily, I had a precious piece of Chanel cashmere/mink that coordinated with the vicuña. And while I didn't have enough of it for a whole garment, I decided I could add a few touches of it to my vicuña jacket—and maybe combine it with leftover vicuña for a matching dress.

Adding a second fabric is a good way to get more mileage out of a pricey fabric. Trims, fabrics, cuffs, and a collar can all be from another fabric. Yes, they add design interest, but they can also help you economize. When you're buying fabric that may approach \$2,000 per yard, 2 yards is different from 2½ yards.

In addition to the cashmere/mink, I had a pair of sable cuffs that were the right color. They could be tacked easily into place and just as easily removed.

I selected silk charmeuse for the lining, cotton flannel and silk organza for the underlinings, three nice buttons, and thick thread for the pickstitching on the four princess seams. With the pattern and materials in order, I could begin constructing my coat.



A Toile and Underlining

There are two essentials for ensuring a good fit and proper support of the fashion fabric.

THE MUSLIN TEST GARMENT

Start with a muslin, or toile, a copy of the garment worked up in an inexpensive fabric. You don't want to do your experimenting and fitting and initial cutting out with the fashion fabric, especially when you're working with something as delicate as vicuña. First perfect the fit and proportions on this test garment, then take it apart.

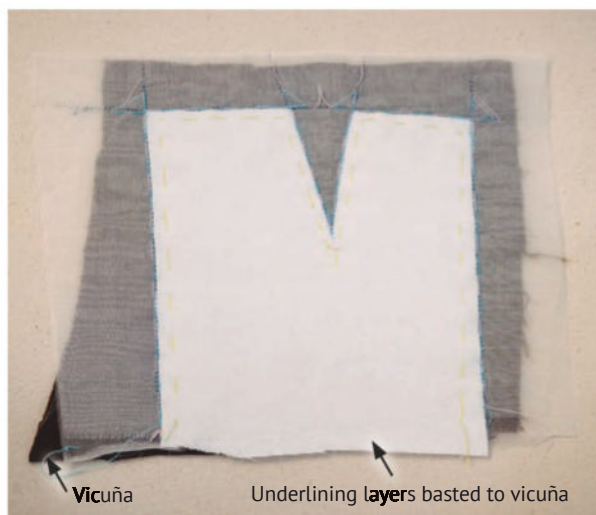
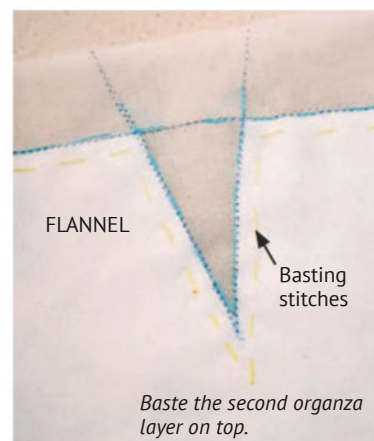
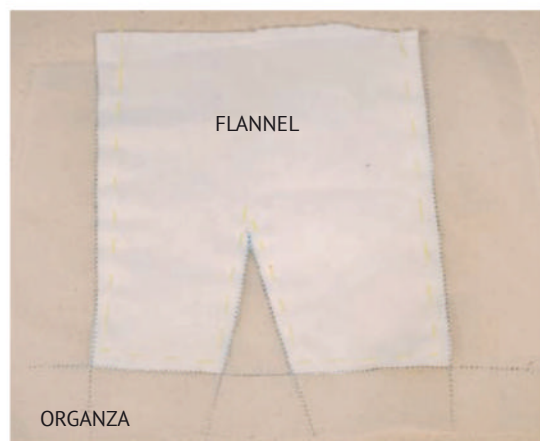
Use the adjusted muslin pieces as a pattern to test the layout. Arrange the pieces on another length of muslin, the same width as the vicuña. Experiment to determine exactly how much vicuña you need to buy.



The toile is essential for checking the fit and for determining the yardage needed for your garment.

UNDERLININGS

Couture garments have underlinings 99 percent of the time, and this jacket is no exception. A standard underlining choice is silk organza, which adds weightless support. While the vicuña fabric is midweight, I wanted it to have more heft and warmth, so I added a layer of cotton flannel to the silk organza. I didn't want the flannel in the seams, though; that would have been too thick. I trimmed the seam allowances off the flannel layer, basted it to one layer of silk organza to keep it in place, and joined that unit to a second piece of silk organza. Then I basted those three layers to the vicuña.



A three-layer underlining structure provides support, loft, warmth, and flexibility beneath the vicuña. This unconventional underlining prevents the vicuña from clinging to the flannel, which could create bulky ripples in the outer fabric.

Vicuña-Friendly Finishes

This fabric is lofty, and while it's soft and light, it can create bulk. I incorporated some of my favorite finishing techniques to control the thickness and emphasize the vicuña's depth of texture.

SEAM TREATMENT

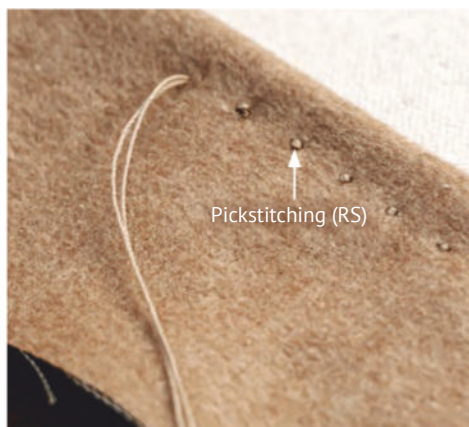
The jacket's construction was straightforward, and I took great care when pressing the fabric. I used a mohair pressing cloth under the fabric and multiple layers of silk organza between the fabric and the iron. To keep the seam allowances flat, I catchstitched them by hand to the underlining.



PICKSTITCHING

I wanted to give the jacket's princess seams definition. They're pickstitched by hand, and I experimented with the best way to mark their placement. You can apply a row of machine stitches and hand-stitch alongside that, then remove the machine stitches. Or you can mark the placement with chalk, or even special tape, but I didn't want to put my delicate vicuña through any of those processes. After a lot of experimenting, I decided just to place my stitches by eye; I've done a lot of hand-picked zippers and hand understitching over the years, so I'm good at placing stitches evenly.

I played around with different threads, too, and in the end used heavy-duty thread, doubled. It's pale green; beige and brown weren't visible enough and while you can't really tell what color the thread is, you can see the stitches. I prepped the area by hand-basting the layers together: The seam allowances go to one side, and my basting holds them in place. It's subtle, but I wanted loft in the seams. The basting holds the layers exactly as I want them until my hand stitches go in. Pickstitching is often used in bespoke garments around collars and lapels, so I thought it belonged on the vicuña, too.



CLOSURES

While the vicuña would have made beautiful bound buttonholes, the cashmere/mink facing would have been too thick for the back of them. I like to make silk organza-faced windows in the facings that back the bound buttonholes, but there was simply too much bulk with the mink/cashmere. Instead, I made bias fabric loops out of the vicuña and inserted them along the front edge. A silk-covered snap holds the underlay in place when the jacket is buttoned.



Self-fabric button loops solve the problem of creating buttonholes through the thick outer and facing layers.

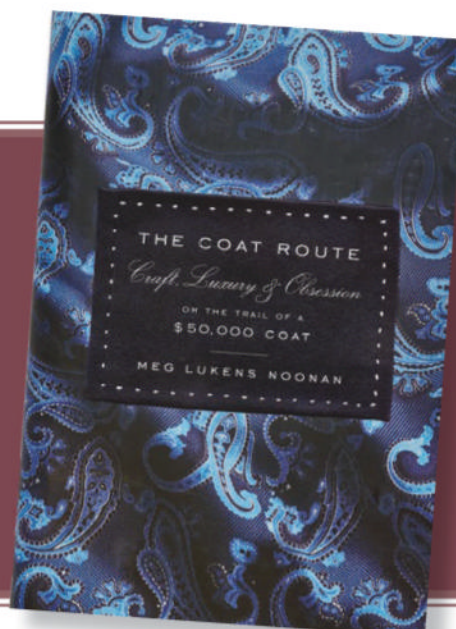
HEM FACINGS

I often use separate facings (instead of turned-up hem allowances) on sleeve and bottom hems. They add structure, they help reinforce a curve, they save you when there's not enough fabric, and—perhaps most importantly—they offer a contrast and some visual interest. When sleeves are narrow at the hemline, it can be hard to get a smooth curve along that bottom edge when the fabric is on the regular grain. One option is to cut the sleeves on the bias; another is to use a bias facing. It always gives a pretty curve, even with a tight opening.



LEARN MORE

Many of us first became acquainted with extraordinary vicuña in the 2013 book, *The Coat Route*, by Meg Lukens Noonan (Spiegel & Grau). Noonan examines all the components of a bespoke vicuña coat and profiles where and how each is produced. She visits a vicuña shearing in Peru, the silk mill in Italy that prints the lining, the fabric mill in the north of England that weaves the vicuña, and the small factory in Birmingham that makes the buttons. It's a fascinating story that provides insightful context for the creation of a unique garment.





A BONUS DRESS

We loathe wasting fabric, especially expensive yardage, so it's nice to be able to create a second garment. In this case, there was enough vicuña for a sleeveless bodice, and enough cashmere/mink for a skirt. That meant I could make a coordinating dress. The jacket stands on its own, but it's fun to have an ensemble, too.



Susan Khalje pairs her vicuña coat with a coordinating dress. For this more formal styling, she attached a pair of sable cuffs to the coat sleeves.



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Vintage Patterns, MODERN STYLE

Winner sews two Folkwear patterns into a timeless look



In this historic year for the United States, *Threads* and Folkwear challenged sewists to create a modern look from the longtime pattern-maker's vintage line. Among the 50 patterns that competitors could choose from were designs with an early American feel and others that reflect some of the many cultures represented in America, a nation of immigrants.

Challenge entrants submitted a wide range of ensembles that showed off their sewing skills, creativity, and ability to make garments that were personally meaningful.

The ensemble that won over the three-judge panel was a white blouse and trousers meticulously sewn by Eve Kovacs of Sandy, Utah. Her outfit retains the beauty of the original designs. However, it captures today's popular style that pairs delicate garment details with menswear-inspired pieces.

Eve received a prize package: a one-year membership to *Threads Insider*, which includes a subscription to the print and digital magazine, Insider e-letter, and access to the online archive; plus, three e-learning courses of her choosing.



The winning ensemble, left, was sewn by Eve Kovacs and based on the *Armistice Blouse*, above, and the *Hollywood Pant*, available at Folkwear.com.

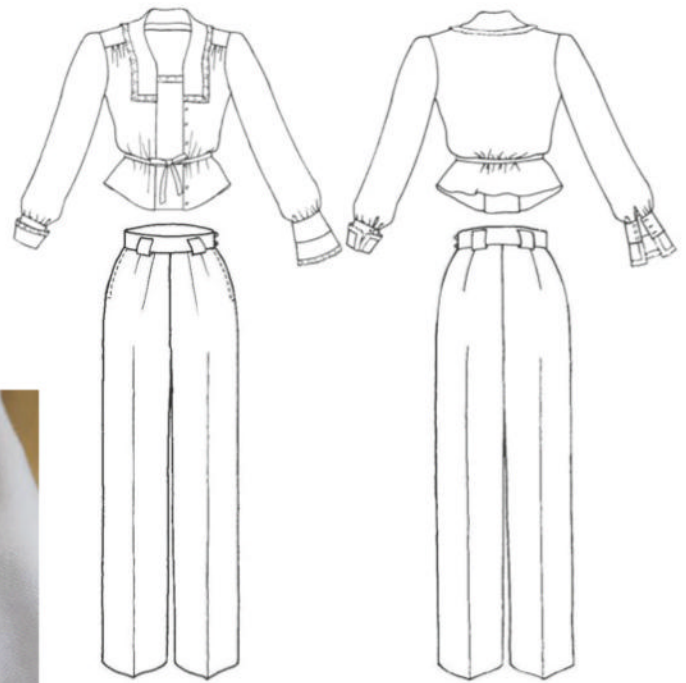
Fabrics: (blouse) cotton shirting, MoodFabrics.com; (pants) viscose-linen blend, StoneMountainFabric.com. Laces and trims: from Eve's local American Sewing Guild chapter.

A WINNING ENSEMBLE'S FEATURES

Eve says she chose the Armistice Blouse, Folkwear 210, "for its combination of the tailored elements with feminine details" and the Hollywood Pant, Folkwear 250, "for its simple lines and soft tailoring."

The ensemble, Eve notes in her challenge entry, is a study in contrasts: masculine and feminine features; vertical and horizontal embellishment; and structure provided by tailored collar, cuffs, and pants compared with gathering and lace edgings.

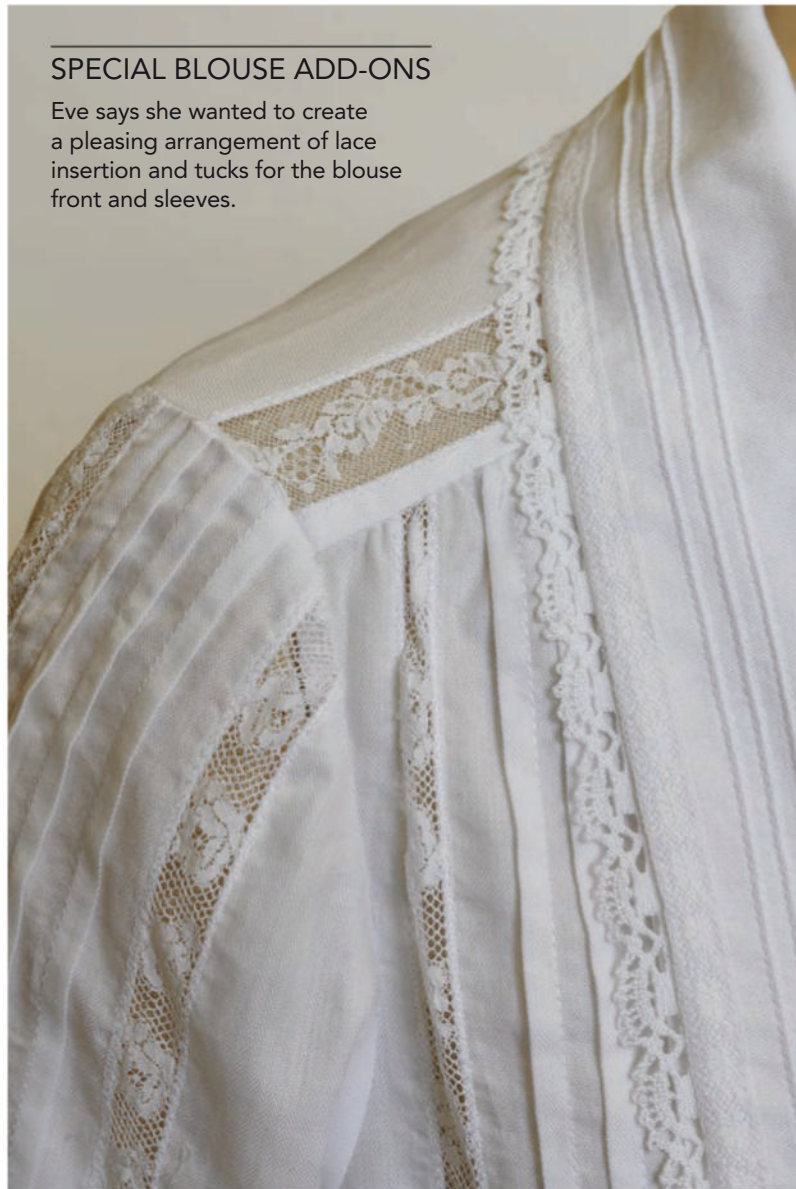
Though all-white, the ensemble's texture comes across in the many tucks, pin tucks, and lace that Eve added to the blouse, plus the viscose-linen fabric of the trousers.



The blouse and trouser patterns from the Folkwear vintage line provided a perfect canvas for interpreting trending style. Patternwork and construction details further customized the ensemble's wearability.

SPECIAL BLOUSE ADD-ONS

Eve says she wanted to create a pleasing arrangement of lace insertion and tucks for the blouse front and sleeves.



Wide, three-button cuffs adorned with rows of pin tucks and lace replaced the French cuffs suggested in the blouse pattern.



continued ►

Extra planning, pattern changes, and heirloom sewing techniques all contributed to the success of this blouse-and-trouser ensemble.

Planning the pin tucks

Starting with the sleeves, "I calculated how much extra width I would need to account for the tucks and cut rectangular pieces of fabric to this width," Eve explains. "I then completed the embellishment and cut out the sleeve pieces according to the pattern. Next, I used a similar arrangement of lace and tucks to decorate the blouse fronts and added a small panel of pin tucks at the center fronts to disguise the edge of the facing. I added a similar arrangement of horizontal lace and tucks to the vestee [center panel]."

On the blouse back, lace insertion frames a panel gathered at the waist.



Lace insertion lesson

Eve used heirloom sewing techniques to construct the blouse. "A video on lace insertion sewing techniques recommended a combination of zigzag stitching and trimming, which gave a very sturdy and neat finish," she says. "The tucks were measured and then press-marked by following the visible striped weave of the fabric. For the collar and cuffs, I used a combination of appliquéd lace and pin tucks."

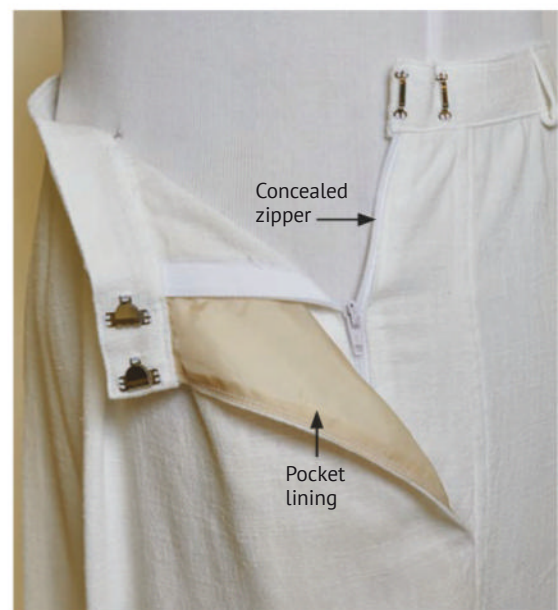
TROUSER ADDITIONS

Eve also altered the pant legs to accommodate her curves. Then she chose a pocket lining that matched her skin tone to minimize pocket bag show-through.

PATTERNWORK

Her well-planned approach included pattern adjustments and additions.

"My lace edging was narrower than that called for in the pattern, so I altered the width of the corresponding pattern pieces to compensate. For the pants, I added a left pocket and concealed the zipper inside the pocket for a clean finish."



web extra

To see the four finalist entries from the Threads-Folkwear Challenge, go to ThreadsMagazine.com.

My Quilting Life

I have loved creating items with beautiful fabrics since my seventh grade home economics class. A simple cotton, A-line skirt with one seam and an elastic waist led me to discover my sewing gift and eventually to create countless pieces: children's clothing, menswear, and household items. By far, I've had the most fun creating womenswear for myself and those closest to me, including Easter dresses, prom dresses, daily wear, and my own wedding dress 45 years ago. The variety of fabric colors, textures, and weights is a never-ending playground. I have purchased far more fabric than I have been able to use, but as any fabriholic would attest, I have plans for each piece.

FROM CLOTHES TO QUILTS

In the 1970s, artist Faith Ringgold's narrative textiles opened my eyes to the power of quilts. In 1986, during a hands-on session at the Craftery Gallery in Hartford, Connecticut, master quilter Edjohnetta Miller encouraged me to delve into the art of quilting.

But it wasn't until my retirement that I finally had dedicated time to quilt. Since then, I have exhibited in more than 20 shows around the country, and my work has appeared twice in *Quilting Arts* magazine. I continue taking online classes to stay current with new techniques. I even traveled to Ghana to expand my worldview—and yes, to buy more fabric.

Over the years, other master quilters have inspired me. I've taken a class from the renowned Bisa Butler; Torrea "Cookie" Washington accepted my first quilt for display in a public exhibit; and Dr. Carolyn Mazloomi has juried my work into two shows. Eventually, I was also fortunate enough to meet Ms. Ringgold.

A MEANINGFUL ART

Quilting allows me to combine my love of sewing with other lifelong passions: writing, and photography. I use my art quilts to tell a story, document a moment, express emotion, or hold a fond memory. My quilts have helped me process grief, explore difficult topics, and show my loved ones how special they are.

My fiber arts exposure continues to grow through memberships with the Studio Art Quilt Associates (SAQA) and the Connecticut Women Artists, Inc. (CWA). I was humbled when my quilt, *Touch of Tranquility* (2026), won Best in Show in the 2026 CWA



Annual Juried Members' Show. This quilt is a collage of appliquéd abstract shapes in calming shades of teal.

God has blessed me to continue to create over the years. Whether it's something to wear or hang on the wall, the joy of completing a project far outweighs the toil of creating it. It has been wonderful to meet and work with a community of stellar fiber artists who uplift quilting to a valued art form. I am honored to contribute to this endeavor.

In JW's Way (2020), the author commemorates a beloved community servant in a Bronx, New York, neighborhood. After his death, a street was renamed in his honor.

Award-winning quilter Evelyn Oliver Knight's works have been widely exhibited. She sees quilting as a way to honor the craft and artistry of her African ancestors.

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UP CLOSE

French couturier Jean Dessès (1904–1970), was a close contemporary of Balenciaga and Dior, as well as American designers Claire McCardell and Elizabeth Hawes. In 1949, he made his first trip to the United States, where he partnered with apparel manufacturer I. M. Bagedonow to produce a ready-to-wear line of coats and jackets.



This jacket from the collection made in 1952 reveals how he bridged the gap between French couture and American commercial clothing. It features intricate detailing, including a standing collar and welt pockets in slot seams. Dessès also diverged from the popular short, fitted silhouette, understanding that American women wanted something new.

In keeping with his interest in designing for his new audience, he worked with a wool blend made by Connecticut-based Warren of Stafford, and he lined the garment with a patented insulating fabric. It's truly an example of high style meeting practicality in a design that's still chic today.

Find out how to draft and sew this standing collar, on p. 22.

Source: From the collection of the Goldstein Museum of Design, St. Paul, Minnesota
Text: Carol J. Fresia



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