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## HEG84-197 Short Cut Tailoring Techniques: *Shoulder Shapes*

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## Short Cut Tailoring Techniques: *Shoulder Shapes*

This NebGuide provides instructions on how to make and attach shoulder shapes and sleeve heads to give jackets and coats a smooth, professional look.

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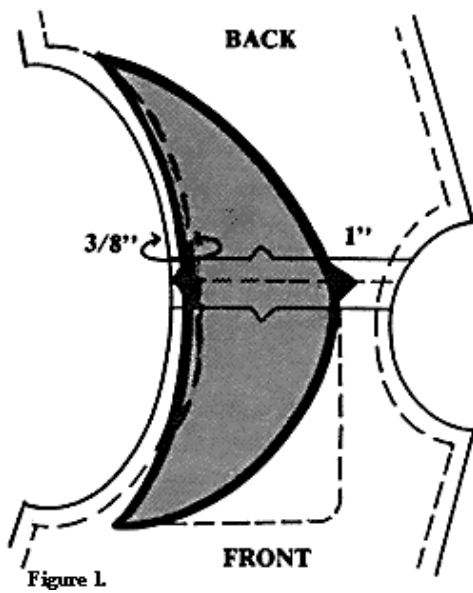
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- [Developing a Pattern for the Shoulder Shape](#)
- [Fabric for the Shoulder Shapes](#)
- [Shaping the Shoulder Shape](#)
- [Attaching the Shoulder Shapes](#)
- [Sleeve Heads](#)

Padding or shaping through the shoulder area gives a smooth appearance to a jacket or coat. It also helps to fill out the hollow just beneath the front shoulder and is useful to disguise such figure faults as round, thin, narrow or sloping shoulders. If one shoulder is higher than the other, one shoulder can be padded more than the other so that the garment shoulder lines are the same when the garment is worn. Making your own shoulder shapes gives a more exact fit to your garment.

### **Developing a Pattern for the Shoulder Shape**

Pin in all of the shoulder darts of the pattern; then pin the front and back pattern pieces together along the shoulder seamline. Place a sheet of tissue paper on the pattern and trace the armhole curve between the front and back notches, beginning on the seamline and gradually extending the curve  $\frac{3}{8}$  inches out at the shoulder line. Draw another curve about 1 inch from the neck edge. Place a notch on either side of the shoulder seamline. Square off the front portion of the shoulder shape as indicated by the dotted line for a hollow-chested person (*Figure 1*).



### Fabric for the Shoulder Shapes

There is a variety of fabrics used for making shoulder shapes, including polyester fleece, cotton felt or nonwoven interfacing. Select a fabric and cut graduated layers of the shoulder shape pattern. The number of layers you cut depends on the amount of shaping needed. Three layers is a good number with which to start. Grade the layers by approximately 1/2 inch on all edges except the armhole edge. Staystitch all three layers together (*Figure 2*). Make shoulder shapes for both the right and left shoulders.

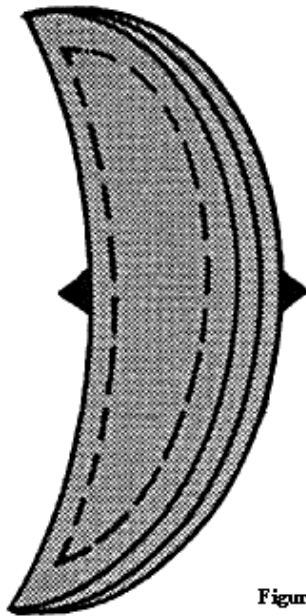


Figure 2.

### Shaping the Shoulder Shape

Pin the shape over a tailor's ham, dress form or rolled turkish towel. Steam press with an iron. Let the pad dry on the curved form to preserve its shape (*Figure 3*).

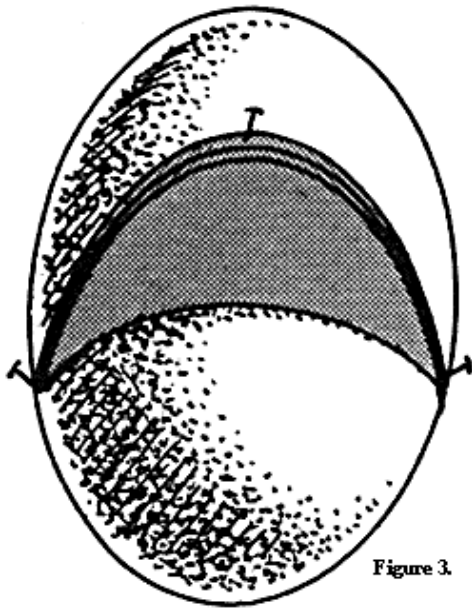


Figure 3.

Another alternative for shaping the shoulder shape is to stitch the layers together along the shoulder line using 8 stitches per inch, then machine stitch the curve into the shoulder shape. With the largest layer on the machine bed, stitch several rows 1 inch apart, beginning each row at the shoulder. Make the first row 1 inch from the arm hole edge (*Figure 4*).

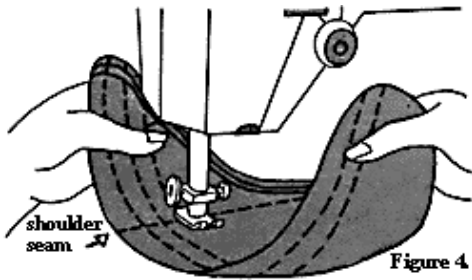


Figure 4

### Attaching the Shoulder Shapes

Put the shoulder shape inside the jacket, matching the shoulder seams. The largest layer of the shoulder shape should be against the wrong side of the jacket. Extend the shoulder shape  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch beyond the armhole seam. Pin the shape in place from the right side of the garment. Try the garment on and check the shoulder shape alignment. On the inside of the jacket, lift up the shoulder shape and loosely hand tack it to the shoulder seam allowance (*Figure 5*). Then, sew the shoulder shape at each point of the armscye.

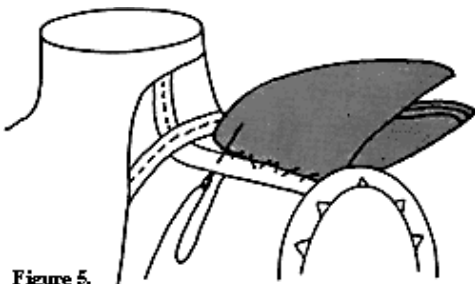


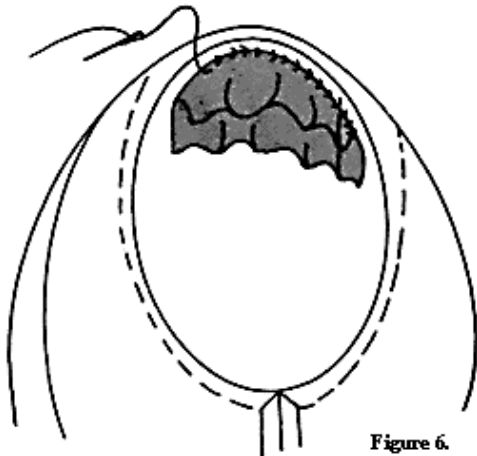
Figure 5.

### Sleeve Heads

A sleeve head is used to smooth the sleeve cap across the top and prevent it from caving in below the shoulder shape. It supports the weight of the sleeve cap fabric for the life of the garment. Sleeve heads are applied after the shoulder shapes have been attached.

To make a sleeve head, cut a bias strip from lambswool, muslin or soft flannel. A strip of polyester fleece can also be used. Cut the strip 3 inches wide and 6 to 8 inches long. Make a one inch fold on one long edge. Center the strip inside the sleeve cap, with the widest section next to the sleeve, and the fold line lying on the seamline. Hand stitch the sleeve head to the seamline around the top of armhole (*Figure 6*).

Put the garment on and examine the sleeve head. It should lie smoothly inside the sleeve. Slash the wide layer or trim the sleeve head if necessary.



**Figure 6.**

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