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## EC81-402 Shaping a Tailored Garment

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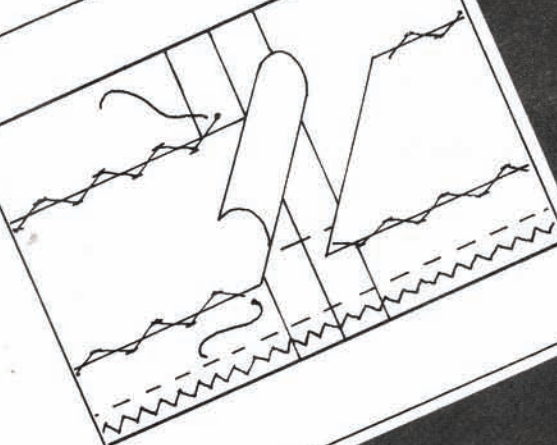
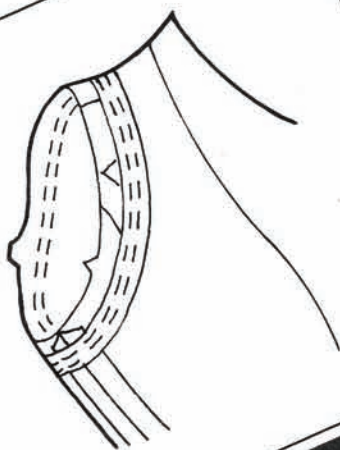
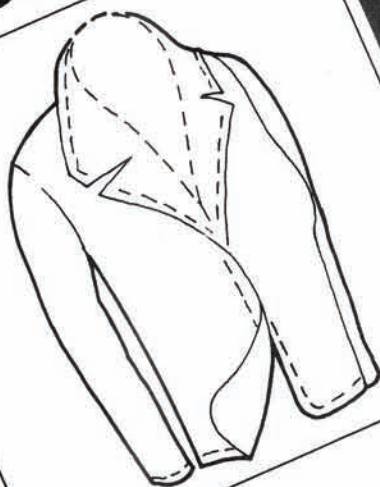
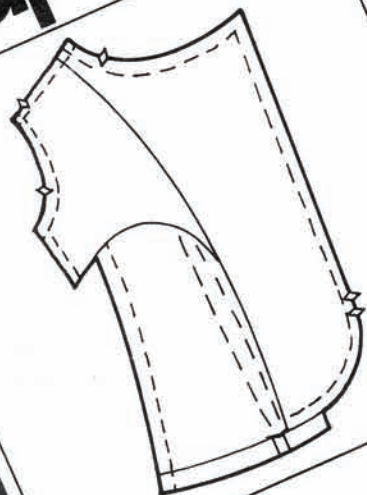
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# shaping a tailored garment



Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Leo E. Lucas, Director of Cooperative Extension Service, University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.





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**Extension Specialist-Clothing and Textiles<sup>1/</sup>**

Fashion features in coats and suits may appear and disappear but qualities of good construction do not change. The well-made tailored garment includes two important components:

- Interfacing to help shape and mold the garment.
- Tape to define edges.

Tailoring is the process using sewing and pressing techniques to mold the fabric, build shape into the garment, and define garment edges. As with any garment, pressing during the construction process is vital to help establish and maintain the desired effect.

Today, fusible interfacing or the use of the sewing machine can give results similar to that created by the traditional hand pad stitching. Three methods of tailoring are possible: hand tailoring, machine tailoring, and fusible tailoring. Slightly different appearances and results will be achieved with each method. Because all three methods are important, each is discussed as the uses of interfacing and taping are described. In addition, techniques are indicated for both lined and unlined garments. When using this publication, select techniques appropriate for the particular garment you are making. For some garments, it may be desirable to combine techniques from different tailoring methods.

When tailoring, the garment must fit properly before sewing begins. This can be best achieved by making a muslin of the garment.<sup>2/</sup> Alterations made on the muslin must be transferred to the pattern and must also be made on facings and interfacings. All fabrics and notions (including interfacing and tape) used in tailoring should be preshrunk, using the same method that will be used for cleaning the finished garment.

### **PURPOSES OF INTERFACING**

The purposes of interfacing in tailoring are to:

- Shape special areas of the garment (especially lapel and collar).
- Add body to fabric and garment area.
- Support specific design features such as pocket flaps.
- Cushion seam allowances and hems to prevent ridges on the garment's outer surface.

### **WHERE TO USE INTERFACING**

Use interfacing in the front of a tailored garment to provide shape, body and stability. Across the back shoulders it provides reinforcement. It helps shape and mold the collar and lapel. It cushions the hemline of the garment and sleeves (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.**

### **SELECTING INTERFACING**

Choose the highest quality interfacing to achieve and maintain the effect of fine tailoring. Select interfacing that is:

- Lighter in weight than outer fabric (unless special effect is desired).
- Compatible with garment in relation to hand and drape.
- Suitable to method of tailoring.
- Similar in care requirements to that of fashion fabric.

Types of interfacing include: woven hair canvas, percale, muslin, nonwoven, fusible, and combinations of these. More than one type may be used.

Remember to preshrink all interfacings.

#### **Hand Tailoring**

Woven hair canvas is most often used in hand tailoring collars and lapels because it shapes and molds easily.

Muslin is most often used for the garment back and hem interfacings.

#### **Machine Tailoring**

Either woven or nonwoven sew-in interfacings may be used for machine tailoring. Muslin would again be the choice for garment back and hem interfacings.

#### **Fusible Tailoring**

Fusible interfacing is used for fusible tailoring. Test the interfacing on a fabric sample. This will indicate if proper weight interfacing has been chosen and if steam and pressure from fusing will mar fashion fabric. Do not use fusible interfacing if a line will show on the garment where the interfacing ends.

### **CUTTING INTERFACING**

Both the tailoring method used and whether the garment is lined or unlined will affect specific procedures for cutting the interfacing.

#### **Hand and Machine Tailoring**

##### **Unlined Garment**

For a neat and attractive appearance interfacing in an unlined jacket should not extend beyond the edge of facings.

<sup>1</sup> This publication replaces HEG78-88 "Interfacings in Tailoring" and EC 69-452 "Taping and Padstitching."

<sup>2</sup> Refer to EC 69-451 "The Trial Muslin Garment".



Cut the interfacing using the designated pattern. If a separate interfacing pattern is not provided, use the facing and undercollar patterns. Be sure the interfacing is 1/2-1" (1.3-2.5 cm) narrower than the facing to reduce bulk and so it will not be visible. Generally, do not use interfacing in the garment back or hem of an unlined garment. Use the regular pattern to cut interfacing for garment details (such as pockets and pocket flaps).

### Lined Garment

When the garment is fully lined, the front and back interfacings often extend beyond the facing edges. This provides additional support to the garment and cushions the facing edge.

The front interfacing is usually cut to extend below the underarm seam, providing additional strength and backing. If a separate interfacing of this shape is not provided, develop your own pattern as follows: Place the interfacing or facing pattern over the garment front pattern (overlap seams on princess style). Draw a line 2-3" (5-7.5 cm) below the underarm at the side seam. Mark the width of the interfacing so it is 1/2-1" (1.3-2.5 cm) wider along the front than the facing. Draw a curved line from the underarm point above the bustpoint to meet the front interfacing line. Interfacing extends down to hem line, or 1/8-1/4" (3-6 cm) above. Place tissue over the marked front and trace the new interfacing pattern (Figure 2).

A back interfacing pattern is rarely included in a pattern, but the reinforcement is often desired. Using the back garment pattern, mark 2-3" (5-7.5 cm) or same as front below the armhole at the underarm seam and 5-6" (12.5-15 cm) below the center back neckline. Draw a curved line between the two points. Use this for the back interfacing pattern, following the same grain as the fabric. Place center back of interfacing on fold line to eliminate bulk (Figure 3).

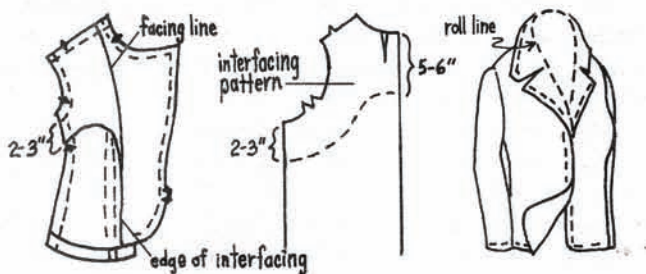


Figure 2.

Figure 3.

Figure 4.

### Fusible Interfacing

Procedures for cutting fusible interfacing depend on how and where it will be applied. It may be applied to the garment front and/or front facing. If it is applied to the garment front, extending it to the seam line will give a smoother look (provided the garment is lined). Fusible interfacing is usually applied to the undercollar. Garment back and hem interfacings are optional.

## ATTACHING INTERFACING

### General Suggestions

Thread (pad stitching) or an adhesive (on fusible interfacing) attaches the interfacing to the fabric. Either substance:

- Holds the interfacing and garment fabrics as one piece of fabric.
- Shapes and molds lapels and collars in their desired form.
- Achieves the slightly stiffened, tailored look of the quality tailored garment.

Specific techniques for attaching interfacing vary depending on the tailoring method used—hand, machine, or fusible. A few general steps are always followed:

- Determine and mark lapel and collar roll line. The roll line (or break line) is the line where the lapel and collar roll, and usually ends just above the top button. If the roll line is marked on the pattern, check the muslin to be sure it is correct. If the roll line is not marked, have another person mark it with pencil or basting while you wear the muslin (Figure 4). The fall of the collar must be sufficient to cover the neckline seam (Figure 5). Transfer the roll line to the undercollar and lapel interfacings. The lapel roll line should be a straight line (Figure 6).

- Apply interfacing to undercollar to help shape it.
- Apply interfacing to garment fronts and back separately before shoulder or underarm seams are joined.
- Remove interfacing bulk in darts and seams.
- Hold interfacing and garment in desired finished shape when attaching interfacing.
- Pin interfaced undercollar to tailor's ham in the shape it will be on the body. Steam to set the stitches and mold the shape. Allow to dry thoroughly before handling (Figure 7). Store undercollar around a rolled or shaped towel or roll and pin collar in proper shape. Do not allow collar to become flattened (Figure 8).

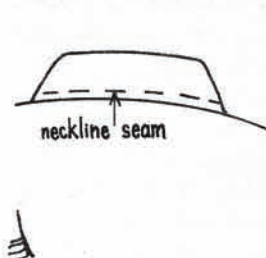


Figure 5.

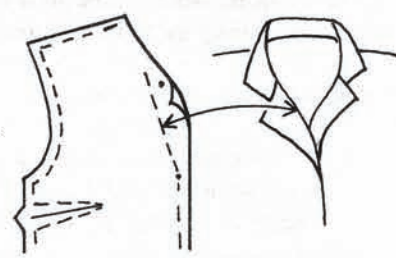


Figure 6.



Figure 7.



Figure 8.



Figure 9.



- Lay interfaced lapel over seam roll, tailor's ham, or folded towel; steam press; allow to dry thoroughly before handling (Figure 9).

### Reducing Bulk

Bulk of darts in interfacing must be reduced. If the interfacing is hand or machine stitched, slash the dart through the center and lap the two edges until the stitching lines meet. Machine straight or zigzag stitch. The point can be reinforced by stitching over it several times, or a 1-inch (2.5 cm) square of light weight fabric can be stitched in the point. Trim excess fabric (Figure 10).

Another method is to cut out the interfacing dart on stitching lines. Bring edges together and pin to seam tape or a strip of light weight fabric (longer than dart). Straight stitch on either side of raw edge, or zigzag (Figure 11). If the interfacing will be fused, trim out the entire dart on stitching lines (Figure 12).

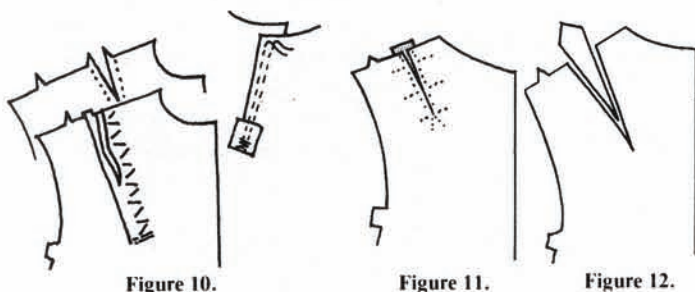


Figure 10.

Figure 11.

Figure 12.

If the collar interfacing is seamed, reduce bulk by overlapping at center back, sewing with a straight or zigzag stitch, and trimming 1/8" to 1/4" (3-6 cm) from stitching (Figure 13). An easier method of reducing bulk is to cut the collar interfacing on the fold and thus avoid the seam.

### Hand Tailoring

A lining is usually used in a hand tailored garment, thus concealing extra interfacing.

### Pad Stitching

Pad stitching, also called a tailor's stitch or stab stitch, is a series of small hand stitches used to attach the interfacing to the fabric in the lapel and collar and to shape these areas. Stitches are made with a single thread and short needle from the interfacing side, catching only a small amount of garment fabric so stitches will not show on the outside. A few short stitches rather than knots are used to secure the thread. Length of stitches

depends on location and desired result. Small, close stitches make the area firmest and provide greatest shaping. Stitches should be firm but not tight (Figure 14). Always hold the garment in wearing position, so pad stitches can help shape garment properly.

### Front Interfacing

With a pencil, lightly draw rows on the lapel of the front interfacing about 1/4" (6mm) apart and parallel to the roll line (Figure 15). These will be guides for pad stitching. Lay the interfacing on a tailor's ham. Place garment front, right side up, on top of interfacing, matching notches, seamlines, etc. Baste in place along body of garment using tailor's basting (long pad stitches with rows 2" apart). Start at the middle of the shoulder seam and baste to the hem. Do not baste interfacing in the lapel or in seam allowances (Figure 16).

Begin pad stitching of lapels at the roll line. Hold the lapel firm with the thumb. Roll the lapel over the second and third fingers (or over a seam roll) as you stitch parallel to the roll line. Stitches should be about 1/4" (6 mm) long. Use smaller, closer stitches at the point of the lapel to prevent curling. Stitches do not extend into seam allowances (Figure 17).

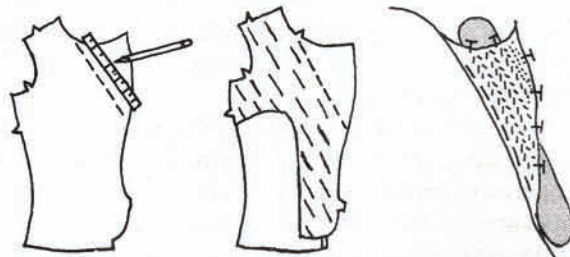


Figure 15.

Figure 16.

Figure 17.

### Undercollar Interfacing

Cut interfacing for the collar on the same grain as the undercollar, usually on the bias. If the interfacing is cut on the fold, it should be a bias fold. Interfacing cut on the fold will cushion the undercollar seam.

Mark the roll line on the interfacing (Figure 18).

Place the interfacing over the undercollar. Baste along the roll line.

Use small, 1/4" (6 mm) close pad stitches, rows 1/4" (6 mm) apart parallel to the roll line in the stand of the collar. Do not take any stitches in seam allowance. Begin at center back and work toward ends of collar. Curve the collar as you stitch (Figure 19).

In the fall, use longer, 1/2" (1.3 cm) looser stitches

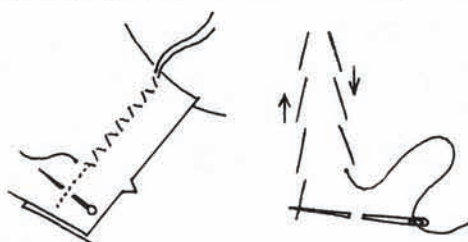


Figure 13.

Figure 14.

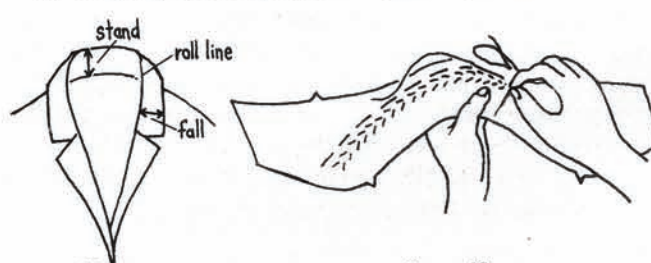


Figure 18.

Figure 19.



with rows 1/2"-3/4" (1.3-2 cm) apart. Stitches should follow the grainline of the interfacing. Shorter, tighter stitches may be desirable at the corners to help the collar points roll toward the body of the garment (Figure 20).

### Back Interfacing

Stitch darts in garment back and press. Darts in muslin may be stitched and pressed in opposite direction garment darts are pressed, or use one of the previously mentioned methods of reducing bulk in darts. Baste muslin to seams of garment back (Figure 21).

### Machine Tailoring

A lining is optional in a hand tailored garment. If a lining will not be used, do not use back interfacing and do not extend front interfacing beyond front facing.

### Front Interfacing

Baste front interfacing to garment as in hand tailoring. Machine stitch twice on roll line. Use short (15 stitches/inch) straight stitches and place the second row of stitching directly over the first. Rows of machine stitching should be 1/4" (6 mm) apart and parallel to roll line in the lapel. Stitching should stop 1" (2.5 cm) from the center front seamline. Do not stitch in seam allowances (Figure 22).



Figure 20.

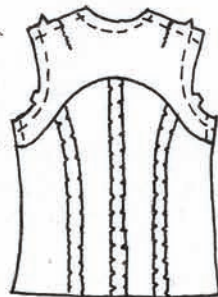


Figure 21.



Figure 22.

### Undercollar Interfacing

Place interfacing over the wrong side of the undercollar. Machine stitch (15 stitches per inch) twice along the roll line (second row on top of first). In the stand, rows of machine stitching should be 1/4" (6 mm) apart (Figure 23). Stitches in the fall may be longer and can be straight or zigzag. Rows of stitching should be 1/2-3/4" (1.3-2 cm) apart. Make stitches smaller and rows closer together at the corners to prevent curling (Figure 24).

Figure 23.

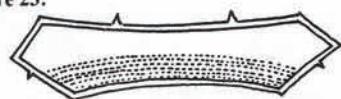


Figure 24.

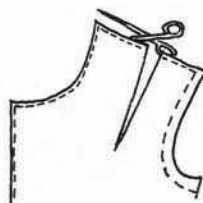


Figure 25.

### Back Interfacing

Muslin interfacing in the back is basted in place same as for hand tailoring.

### Fusible Tailoring

A lining is optional in a fusible tailored garment. If the garment is not lined do not use the back interfacing; it may be preferable to interface the front facing instead of garment front.

### Front Interfacing

A variety of techniques can be used for fusing, depending on whether the interfacing is fused to the front, facing, or both. To reduce bulk with any technique, trim interfacing out of any darts by cutting on dart stitching line. Trim interfacing in seam allowances to 1/8" (3 mm), except armseye where full seam allowance should be kept (Figure 25).

If the interfacing is attached to the garment front (as is done in hand and machine tailoring) the interfacing should extend to seam lines (princess or side). This will prevent a ridge from showing on the outside of the garment where interfacing ends. It will also give smooth support to the front garment section (Figure 26). Method of applying tape to garment (described later) must also be considered before fusing interfacing to garment front.

Following are some methods for applying front fusible interfacing (combinations of some of these methods could also be used):

- Fuse the front interfacing to the garment's roll line. Then fold the lapel over a folded towel as it will lay on the figure. Fuse the lapel interfacing in place (Figure 27).
- Fuse interfacing to garment front (as above) and to front facing (Figure 28).
- Fuse interfacing to garment front (as above) and to lapel only of front facing (Figure 29).
- Fuse front interfacing to roll line only (cut off interfacing in lapel area). Fuse interfacing to entire facing or to facing lapel area only (Figure 30).

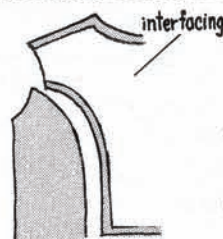


Figure 26.



Figure 27.



Figure 28.

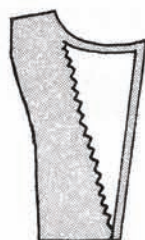


Figure 29.

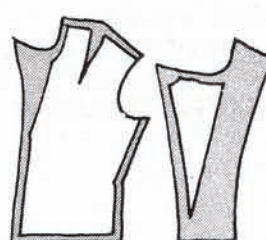


Figure 30.



Figure 31.



- Cut front interfacing on roll line. Leave 1/16-1/8" (1.5-3 mm) between lapel interfacing and front interfacing at roll line. Fuse both in place (Figure 31).

- Fuse interfacing to facing. Cut and fuse interfacing to lapel area only of garment front (Figure 32).

To prevent the corner of lapel from curling, a second piece of interfacing can be applied. This can cover the entire lapel area or only the outer corner of the lapel. Remove all seam allowances from this second piece of interfacing (Figure 33).

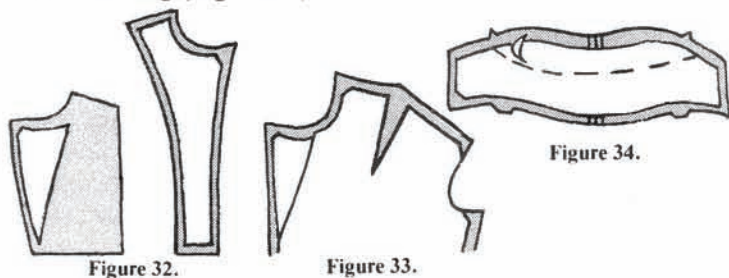


Figure 32.

Figure 33.

### Undercollar Interfacing

Several options are available for fusing interfacing to the undercollar. Regardless of technique used, trim interfacing seam allowances to 1/8" (3 mm).

If the front was interfaced by fusing, the upper collar should also be interfaced in combination with one or more of the following methods:

- After fusing interfacing to entire undercollar, cut a second piece of interfacing the shape of collar stand; trim off seam allowances. Fuse in place (Figure 34).

- Cut interfacing on roll line. Fuse stand and fall separately, leaving 1/16-1/8" (1.5-3 mm) distance between them at roll line. Machine stitch (15 stitches per inch) on each side of roll line, catching edge of interfacing (Figure 35).

- Fuse interfacing to collar stand only. Fold collar on roll line and fuse remaining interfacing to fall (Figure 36).

- Fuse interfacing same as above. With collar folded on roll line, machine stitch on roll line using a short, medium width zigzag stitch (Figure 37).

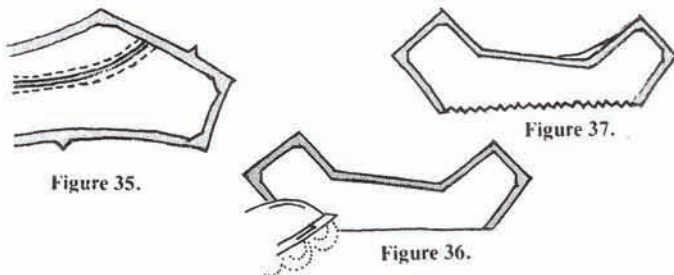


Figure 35.

Figure 37.

Figure 36.

Corners of collar can be stabilized with any technique by cutting a triangle of interfacing the shape of the corners inside the seam allowances. Fuse over previous interfacing (Figure 38). Roll line can be emphasized by machine stitching along it using 15 stitches per inch (Figure 39).

### Back Interfacing

If garment is lined, back interfacing can be fused in place if it will not form a ridge where it ends.

### TAPING

Tape is used in tailoring to:

- Stiffen edges where a flat creased line is desirable (such as front closing of jacket or coat).
- Stabilize areas subject to stretching (such as lapels).
- Strengthen areas subject to strain (such as armholes or shoulder seams).
- Retain the shaped effect throughout the life of the garment.

Specific areas where tape is used are: front edges of garment, lapel roll line, armseye, and shoulder seam.

One quarter inch (6 mm) cotton twill tape in white or black (depending on fabric) is usually used. Plain weave linen tape is preferable but is difficult to obtain. Rayon seam binding can be used if twill tape is not available.

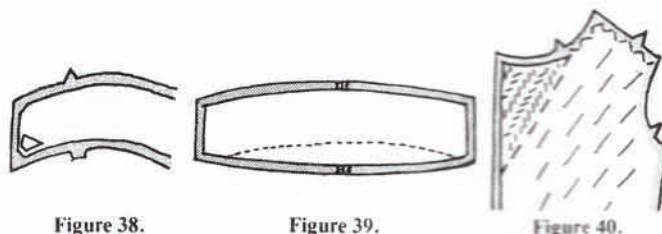


Figure 38.

Figure 39.

Figure 40.

### General Guides

- Preshrink twill tape or seam binding.
- Remove interfacing seam allowance at center front, neck and shoulder. Catch stitch interfacing to garment seamline at neck and shoulder (Figure 40).
- Remove interfacing from under collar seam allowances (if not already done); catch stitch interfacing to garment seam line (Figure 41).
- Curve tape to fit garment curves by pressing and shaping (Figure 42).
- Place tape on front edge of garment in body of garment, not in seam allowance (Figure 43).
- Do not overlap tape in roll line with tape along front and neck edges of garment; butt edges together (Figure 44).
- Keep tape taut. Use 1/2" (1.3 cm) less tape along lapel roll line than length of roll line. This will help lapel roll line lay closer to body.

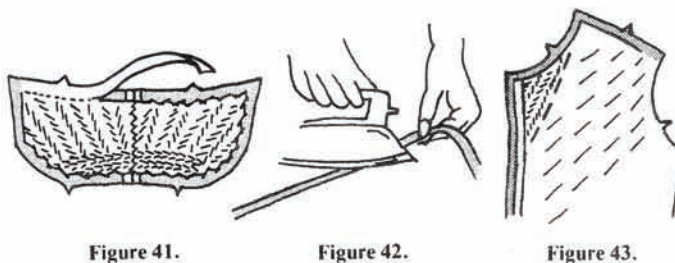


Figure 41.

Figure 42.

Figure 43.



## Garment Front

Place garment flat on table. Pin baste tape just inside front seamline, with tape extending toward garment front. Keep tape straight and firm but do not stretch. Press curve into the tape to fit around curved edges of garment front. Permanently fasten tape edges with small hem or whip stitch. Catch a few threads of garment fabric on seamline edge. Secure other edge of tape to interfacing (Figure 45). Do not extend tape into seams or hems. Butt tape at neckline and extend along top of lapel, ending where collar joins garment. Jacket necklines are usually not taped, unless jacket is collarless. Coat necklines are taped if coat is collarless or heavy fabric is used.

## Lapel Roll Line

Cut tape the length of roll line plus 2-3" (5-7 cm). Center tape, 1/2" (1.3 cm) less than length of roll line, over roll line of lapel. Remaining 2 1/2-3 1/2" (6.25-9 cm) of tape will extend beyond top of roll line, and will be secured to collar roll line. Use hem whip stitch to catch tape to interfacing only on each side of tape (Figure 46).



Figure 44.

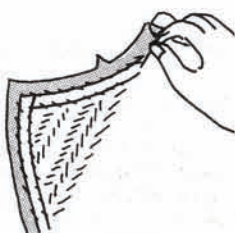


Figure 45.



Figure 46.

After the under collar has been attached to the garment, extend the tape into the collar. Center the tape over the roll line and stitch each edge to the interfacing (Figure 47).

## Armhole

Cut tape 1/2" shorter than length of total armhole seam line. Center tape over seam, easing garment to tape. Baste in place. Tape will be machine stitched as sleeve is sewn into garment (Figure 48).

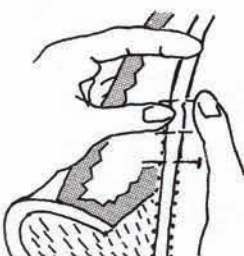


Figure 47.

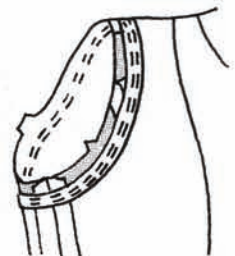


Figure 48.

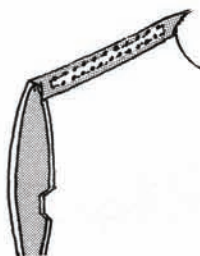


Figure 49.

## Shoulder

Cut tape the length of front shoulder seam plus 1/2" (1.3 cm). After shoulder seam has been stitched and pressed, center tape over seam, extending 1/4" (6 mm) into neckline and armhole seams. Stitch each edge of tape to seam allowances using hem or whip stitch (Figure 49).

## Fusible Tailoring

### Garment Front

Apply same as for Hand and Machine Tailoring Method.

### Lapel Roll Line

In fusible tailoring the tape can be applied to the lapel roll line before the interfacing is fused in place or after the interfacing is fused in place.

*Before interfacing is fused in place:*

Cut twill tape 1/2" (1.3 cm) shorter than lapel roll line. Place twill tape on right side of interfacing roll line with one edge on roll line and other edge extending into lapel. Ease interfacing onto tape. Machine stitch with a wide zigzag or multiple zigzag stitch (Figure 50).

Fuse interfacing to jacket.

*After interfacing is fused in place:*

Cut and apply tape to roll line same as in Hand and Machine Tailoring (Figure 51).

If desired, the tape can be machine sewn in place. Cut tape as before; however, place tape on roll line so width of tape extends into lapel. Machine straight stitch on each side of tape or zigzag down the middle (Figure 52). Apply tape to collar roll line after undercollar is attached to garment. This method may be desirable for a heavy fabric.

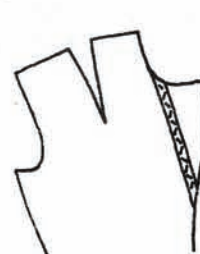


Figure 50.

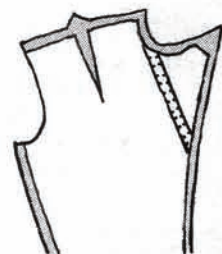


Figure 51.

### Armhole and Shoulder

Apply same as Hand and Machine Tailoring Method.

## INTERFACED HEMS

Bias interfacing strips are used to cushion sleeve and jacket hems. These strips are usually cut from muslin or light weight hair canvas and may be pieced by overlapping and machine stitching, if needed.



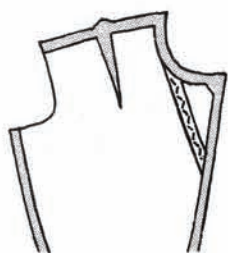


Figure 52.

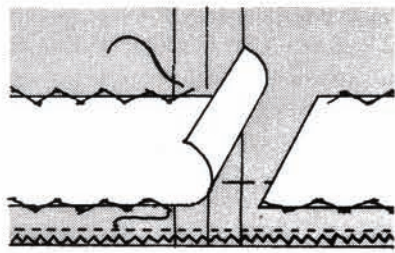


Figure 53.

### Lined Garment

Cut the strips 1" (2.5 cm) wider than garment hem allowance. Pin strips to extend into hem allowance 1/2" (1.3 cm) from hemline. Catchstitch both edges of bias to garment (Figure 53). The hem is then stitched to the bias strip (Figure 54).

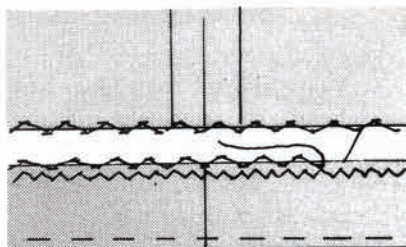


Figure 54.

### Unlined Garment

Cut strips same width as hem allowance. Place over hemline so 1/3 of interfacing extends into hem allowance. Catchstitch each side of interfacing in place (Figure 55). Hem will be sewn to garment.

### Fusible Tailoring

Cut fusible interfacing same width as hem allowance. Place interfacing 1/4" (6 mm) from cut edge of hem. Fuse in place (Figure 56).

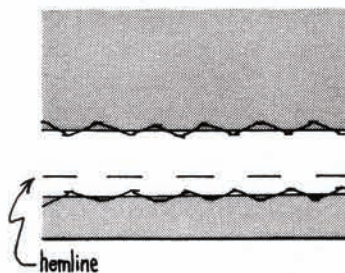


Figure 55.



Figure 56.

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