

1960

## EC60-424 Pressing Methods

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# PRESSING methods



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EXTENSION CLOTHING SPECIALIST

Pressing is that part of dressmaking which gives a special finished quality to a garment. It is "pressing as you sew" which gives shape to the garment, smooth flat seams, sharp edges on collar, cuffs, and hems, and keeps the fabric looking new.

A skillful job of pressing requires time and practice and the use of methods that will not mar the fabric.

Fabrics react differently to heat, moisture, and pressure. The kind of fiber from which fabric is made governs the temperature to be used in pressing. The texture of the fabric governs factors such as moisture and pressure.

Pressing should not make the fabric shine, flatten the nap, nor press out texture or weave.

Extension Service  
University of Nebraska College of Agriculture and Home Economics  
and U. S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating  
E. F. Frolik, Dean J. L. Adams, Director



### General Suggestions:

● Test a scrap of your fabric before beginning to press parts of the garment. Make a test seam or dart to check imprints on the right side.

● Set the heat control of the iron for the kind of fiber from which the fabric is made.

● Remember pressing differs from ironing, in the way the iron is handled. In pressing the iron is lifted from place to place, applying heat and pressure to parts of the garment that need flattening or shaping.

● Press on the wrong side of the fabric whenever possible. A steam iron may be used on some fabrics without a press cloth.

● Use a press cloth with either kind of iron, when doing final or finish pressing on the right side of a garment.

● Place the fabric carefully on the pressing surface to avoid stretching or pulling out of shape.

● Keep the grain of the fabric straight and press with the grain.

● Curves and shaped sections should be pressed on a curved surface, such as the press mitt or pressing cushion. Avoid using a pushing or sliding motion of the iron or the material may be stretched out of shape.

● Use light pressure at first. Some fabrics require little pressure to flatten them without marring the texture of the weave.

● Moisture may come from a steam iron or be supplied with cheesecloth. Some fabrics press well with the steam iron used directly on them. For others less moisture is better, so a cloth should be placed over the fabric before using the iron.

● With a dry iron use an evenly dampened piece of cheesecloth directly over the fabric - or if less moisture is needed place a heavier press cloth next to the fabric with the dampened cheesecloth on top.

### PRESSING SPECIAL FABRICS

Generally, cotton and linen fabrics require higher temperature, and man-made fibers a lower degree of heat.

Wool next to wool gives good results in pressing wool fabrics. A piece of wool may be placed on the ironing board with the right side of the garment resting on it. When



pressing on the right side the wool press cloth is placed next to the garment and a damp cotton cloth on top. Raise and lower the iron over the area to be pressed. Lifting the press cloth frequently will pull steam from the surface of the fabric and help to raise the nap.

Wool is not pressed until entirely dry. A clapper may be used to further flatten edges while steam is still rising from the fabric. Steam from the steam iron or a wet pressing cloth held over a dry iron may be used to shrink out ease along seam lines of shaped sections. Wool is the fiber most easily shaped or molded in pressing. More pressure is used on areas that are to be shaped or creased, as bust darts and pleats. Material finished to look like wool should be pressed with steam as you press wool.

For a fabric made of two or more fibers use the temperature setting for the one requiring the lower heat.

Napped fabrics, such as velveteen and corduroy, usually require light pressing - sometimes steaming will remove wrinkles. A piece of self-fabric may be used instead of a press cloth if pressing is needed on the right side. When pressing construction from the wrong side use self-fabric, a piece of mohair upholstery, or a pad of turkish towels on the ironing board. Brushing with a stiff clothes brush while the fabric is steaming will help to raise flattened nap.

The press mitt may be heated with the iron and used to smooth and flatten delicate, easily marred fabrics. Pounding with the press mitt aids in flattening seams and other areas of nap fabric.

Embossed fabrics keep their design best when pressed dry on the wrong side.

Sheer crinkled fabrics require only light pressure to smooth out stitched lines. Press on a board padded with turkish towels.

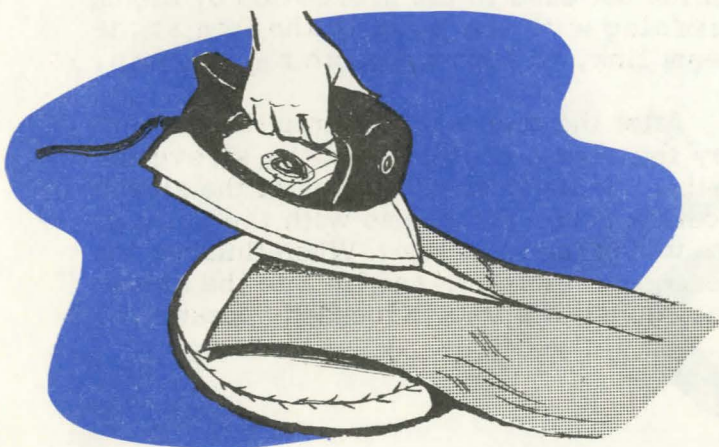
Some glazed finishes are permanent for steam pressing. Others must be pressed without moisture.

Crease resistant fabrics require more pressure than untreated fabrics.

Jersey and other knitted fabrics are pressed on the wrong side in the direction of the lengthwise ribs. Lift the iron or glide it with little pressure to avoid stretching.

Dark cottons and linens are pressed on the wrong side to prevent shine. If pockets, collar edges or other finishes need to be pressed on the right side use a press cloth.

## PRESSING CONSTRUCTION DETAILS



### Darts

Press over a curved surface. Press along line of stitching then turn and press against the garment. Avoid imprints on the right sides by the same methods used for seams.

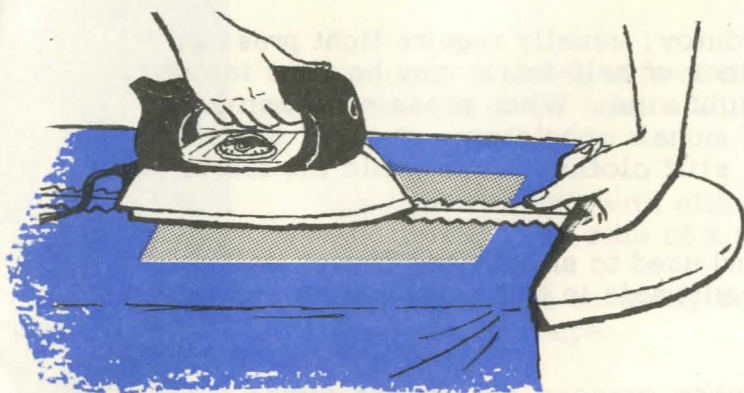
All darts on the front of a garment are pressed toward the center front unless the design directs otherwise. All darts or tucks in the back are pressed toward the center back. Elbow and bust darts are pressed toward waistline.



## Seams

Press along the stitching line in the same direction in which the seams were stitched before opening the seam or pressing to one side. This smooths the stitching and works it into the cloth.

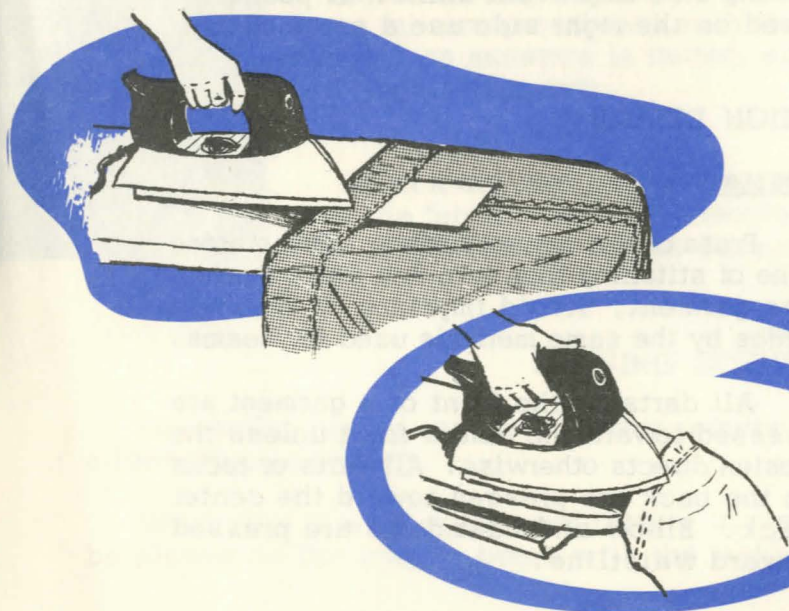
If seam is to be pressed open, press with tip of iron on stitching line first. Then apply moisture if needed and press seam open. Use a seam roll or slip strips of heavy wrapping paper under the seam edge so imprint does not show on right side.



## Hems

Press hems up from the lower edge. Press the fold of the hem after it has been marked, basted, trimmed, and eased at the top. Shrink fullness of a hem before finishing the edge, using a strip of heavy paper between the hem and garment. Steam press. Slip the iron into the fullness at right angles.

Never press around a skirt hem as it tends to stretch and ripple the fabric.

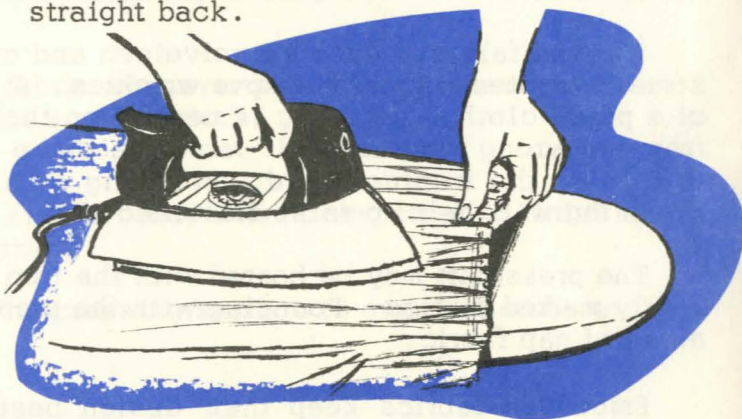


## Plackets

Press a zipper placket on the right side over a padded surface as a pressing mitt or turkish towel. Fabric which is thin or shows imprints easily should be protected by slipping paper between it and the metal of the zipper.

## Gathers

Press toward a gathered line, sliding the iron into the gathers. Do not move it from side to side, but lift it or move it straight back.



## Sleeves

Use a sleeve board or seam roll for pressing sleeve seams. If there is an elbow dart or fullness press before stitching the sleeve.

Fullness in the sleeve cap is controlled by making two rows of machine stitching between the notches. Make one row on the seam line and the second 1/8 inch from it, in the seam allowance. Ease in the fullness across the sleeve cap by pulling up the machine stitching to fit the armhole. Slip the press mitt over the end of the sleeve board and adjust the sleeve cap over it. Shrink out ease in the sleeve cap by steam pressing with the point of the iron at the seam line, to form a smooth rounded cap.

After the sleeve is set into the garment lay the seams at the top of the sleeve together, on the cushion or edge of the sleeve board. Press the seams with the point of the iron at the seam line. When finished the seam edges will turn and lie into the sleeve cap, giving it a smooth rounded appearance.