

1966

EC66-1193 Make Short Work of Ironing

Clara Leopold

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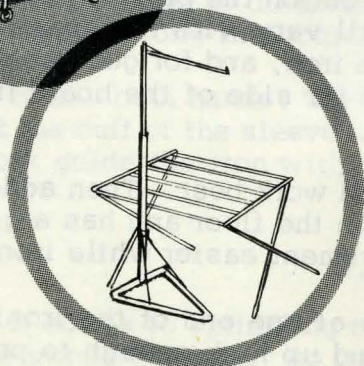
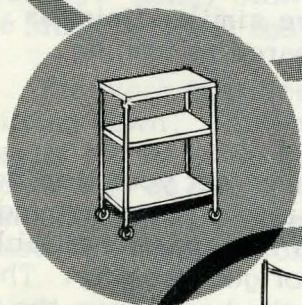
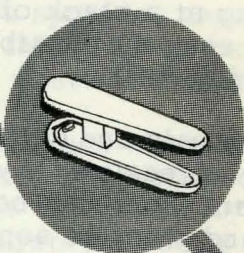
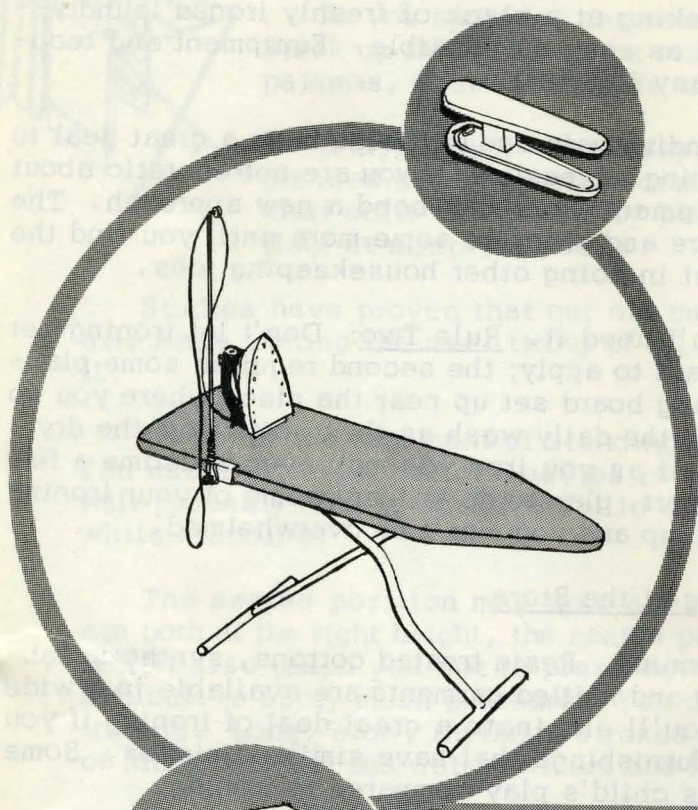
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make short work of IRONING

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

MAKE SHORT WORK OF IRONING

BY MRS. CLARA N. LEOPOLD
STATE EXTENSION SPECIALIST
HOME MANAGEMENT

There is iron-easy satisfaction in looking at a stack of freshly ironed laundry--particularly if you have made your ironing as easy as possible. Equipment and technique are, of course, essential to doing any job well.

Ironing methods and habits vary with individuals and will also have a great deal to do with the problems of making the total ironing job easier. If you are not ecstatic about ironing, even with today's efficient equipment, you may need a new approach. The first step is willingness to study, practice and practice some more until you find the new way is easier, not only in ironing but in doing other housekeeping jobs.

Rule One: Don't iron pieces that don't need it. Rule Two: Don't let ironing get too far behind. The first rule is not too hard to apply; the second requires some planning. For instance, if you leave the ironing board set up near the place where you do your laundry, you can do a few pieces from the daily wash as they come from the dryer or clothes line. And if you can learn to sit as you iron you may even welcome a few minutes rest from being on your feet. In short, plan to do at least some of your ironing in brief, pleasant, sessions. It won't pile up and you won't be overwhelmed.

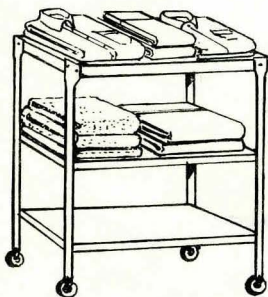
Start Ironing at the Store

Choose fabrics that need little or no ironing. Resin treated cottons, synthetic fabrics, blends of synthetic and natural fibers and knitted garments are available in a wide variety of clothing for all the family. You'll eliminate a great deal of ironing if you buy permanent press clothing, and home furnishings that have similar finishes. Some may require touch-up pressing, but that is child's play compared to ironing.

Where Do You Iron?

An ironing center can be set up wherever you are. You may set your ironing table in the utility room, family room, bedroom or even out on the patio. Just surround yourself with everything you need. Arrangement will vary with the space available, the location of convenience outlets for plugging in the iron, and for good seeing. The convenience outlet should be to the right end of the far side of the board from the worker who is right-handed.

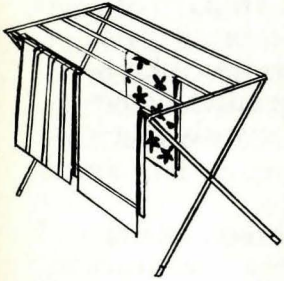
Place your ironing board where you think it will work best. Then add a sturdy comfortable chair that allows you to have your feet on the floor and has a good back rest. A swivel type chair or one on castors makes movement easier while ironing.



Now place the dampened clothes at one end of the ironing board (left hand is perfect in most instances) and up high enough to prevent bending for them. They may be in a laundry cart or on a small table the same height as the ironing board. Next provide a supply of hangers, a rack nearby on which to hang ironed garments, a table or counter to take the folded ones.

Reduce Your Time and Energy

Good management and a few minutes spent in setting the stage will reduce both time and energy. Cut your ironing down by being super-organized. Lots of things do just as well with no ironing at all--or maybe only a slicking-over. That leaves your extra time and energy to concentrate on a band-box look for the specials.



As you sprinkle, separate the don't-irons and sort them for easy storing. Stack up the things to be slicked-over dry--the knits, play clothes, shorts, pajamas, most seersuckers and the everyday sheets.

A drying rack within easy reach is another time saver and will keep fresh-pressed clothes from becoming wrinkled. Avoid dingy edges on linens or shirt cuffs and linens by placing wrapping paper or a plastic sheet on the floor at strategic points.

Studies have proven that our old methods of ironing, especially standing to do it all, make ironing the most tiring of all housekeeping jobs. No wonder women dislike it.

To settle the argument of standing versus sitting to iron, just do a little of each. You use a different set of muscles in each position, so for long stints of ironing you will probably find it more restful to do part of the ironing while seated and part of it while standing.

The seated position may take a while to get used to, but if your board and chair are both at the right height, the seated posture will avoid fatigue of your back and legs. It will also teach you not to press down on the iron since when you are seated it is difficult to apply much pressure. You don't need to use much muscle power in modern ironing. Long, slow, rhythmic strokes that follow the lengthwise or crosswise grain of fabric will let the water, steam and heat do much of the work for you.

Flatwork that doesn't require a lot of rearranging on the board can easily be done sitting down. The few garments that require a lot of reaching and twisting may be more easily ironed while standing--particularly if the article is bulky. Use the board to good advantage as you work. Lay flat pieces on it in such a way that you'll have the least amount of rearranging to do after you start ironing; it's more efficient to lay a pillow-case lengthwise along the board, rather than crosswise.

Learn to use both hands. Switch the iron from hand to hand so you can iron into the gathers at the cuff of the sleeve without having to rearrange the sleeve. And when ironing flatwork guide the iron with the right hand and use the left hand to fold the pieces as you go.

Sprinkling Is Important

When it comes to sprinkling remember that most of the moisture you sprinkle in will have to be ironed out later, so be stingy with it.

Use warm water--it dampens more evenly and quickly than cold. Fold each piece loosely--avoid tight rolls as they only make more creases to iron out--and pack in a basket lined with a plastic sheet, a damp towel or oilcloth liner. Huddle the articles together that require similar iron temperatures, with the ones requiring the highest temperature in the bottom.

Let your washer and dryer do part of the ironing. Most of the newer ones give you a choice of the right laundering conditions for all types of fabrics. Gentler spins and water temperature that are just right put fewer wrinkles in easy-care fabrics. Tumbling in the heat of the dryer makes most wrinkles disappear. Avoid overdrying and remove clothes from the dryer as soon as it stops so folds in the clothes won't have a chance to "set" and need ironing.

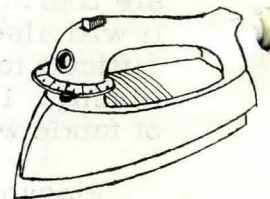
Many items can be ironed right from the dryer, eliminating the sprinkling step. Follow instructions in your equipment books for best results with all kinds of fabrics. As you hang clothes outside to dry, a few minutes care in hanging will mean fewer wrinkles to be taken out later at the ironing board. When line dried, better ironing results come if clothes are dried completely, then sprinkled. The moisture will be more evenly distributed.

Use Good Equipment

All irons are now light weight. With a controlled setting and steam to do the work a heavy iron is not necessary to get good results. The soleplate of most irons is either aluminum, or is plated with chrome or stainless steel. Aluminum heats and cools quickly but is easily scratched. Chrome or stainless steel are more scratch resistant. Some are coated with Teflon to make them glide easily; but care should be taken to avoid scratches & mars.

Most new steam irons are designed to be used with tap-water, but any steam iron will last longer if distilled or demineralized water is used. Empty your iron after each use while it is still warm, so that any moisture that remains will evaporate.

Modern irons have thermostatic controls to keep them at precisely the right temperature for all fabrics found in the modern washbasket, from delicate synthetics to heavy cottons and linens. Many may be used as steam irons even at the low-temperature settings required for synthetics. Heel rests and button slots are virtually standard features on all irons. In addition, there are such niceties as headlights, a choice of black or white handles, water-level indicators. For left-handed ironers some provide for changing the cord about.



How Hot Should an Iron Be?

What temperature should an iron be to remove wrinkles but not discolor or weaken a fabric excessively? Research* has established some guides to produce satisfactory results in ironing fabrics of various fibers that have no special finishes.

Iron Temperatures

<u>Degrees</u>	<u>Fabric</u>
225	Modacrylic
250	Acrylic; Dacron polyester
275	Triacetate
300	Wool; acetate, nylon
325	Kodel polyester; rayon, silk
350	Cotton; linen

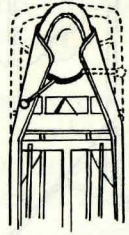
These temperatures are recommended at the starting points. If these do not give satisfactory smoothness, try a little more heat. The scientists found that increasing temperatures from 50 to 75 degrees did not injure most of the fabrics studied. Exceptions were modacrylic fabrics, which could not be ironed above 250 degrees. Acetate, nylon and silk all showed significant losses in tearing strength when ironed repeatedly even at recommended temperatures.

*/ Enid Sater Ross and Katherine Taube, Beltsville Housing & Equipment Laboratory, USDA, Washington, D. C.

Temperatures for blends should be set to accommodate the fiber in the blend that requires the lowest temperature. Never iron fiberglass.

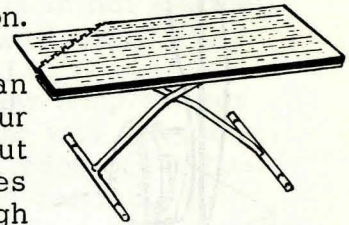
A Well-Dressed Ironing Board

Choose metal board that is both light weight and sturdy. The top should be ventilated so steam can escape. In the better models the vent holes have deflectors to direct the steam away from the worker. The vent perforations should be fairly small so that they won't make a pattern on the pad or cover. The board must be narrow enough to slip a slim skirt over it and tapered to a point to place shoulders of small garments, cups of brassiers and so on.

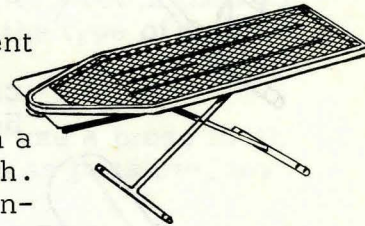


If the board can be squared off or widened it will speed up the ironing of curtains, tablecloths and other flatwork. The ironing board should be adjustable in height so you can either stand or sit comfortably. If you sit, your hand should be lower than your elbow when your hand rests on the iron.

Regardless of the type of ironing board you have or plan to buy, you can do much of your ironing on a 20-inch wide board that lies on top of your regular board or atop a card table. Such a board is not on the market but is easily made at home. Use 3/4-inch plywood. Cut the board 20 inches wide and 50 inches long. Scatter some quarter-inch perforations through the center. Pad well and cover with your favorite cover. Sheets, tablecloths, shirts, blouses, napkins and similar wide articles can be ironed with less rearrangement and shifting, reducing both energy and time. (Directions on pages 8 to 16).



The board should be well padded and the cover taut. There are different types of covers and pads on the market:



1. The polyurethane pad provides maximum ventilation when used on a perforated board. Open cell structure lets the steam and moisture through. It provides a firm, smooth, always-dry surface ideal for steam or dry ironing. Non-skid rubberized cotton netting holds pad firmly in place.

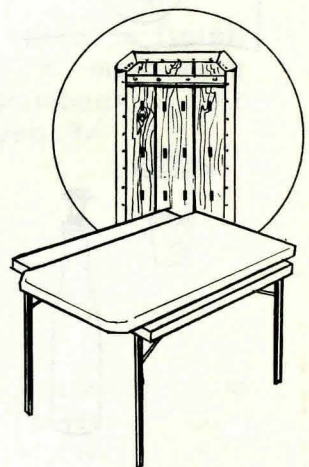
2. Treated heavy cotton twill covers have high scorch resistance. Both pad and cover can be laundered. Cover fastens with a string-and-tie button. No elastic to rot or metal accessories to rust.

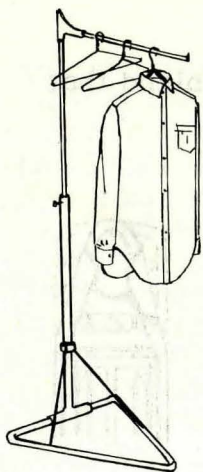
3. Silicone covers are scorch resistant and reduce friction so iron glides freely. They do not absorb moisture.

4. Teflon covers withstand scorching up to ten minutes under a 450 degree iron. Equipped with draw string fastening. Usually a metallic beige color. An Olum foam pad often included in a set of pad and cover.

5. Yardage pocket drill or heavy muslin can be purchased and made to fit any type of size board. To avoid scorch problems cover should be washed before using to remove starch filler. A tight fit is accomplished by fitting the board while the fabric is wet. Pocket drill & muslin often slip, become stiff, and are difficult to make smooth and firm.

6. Old sheeting has a soft texture and needs a good padding. It scorches easily.





Racks Save Reaching and Walking

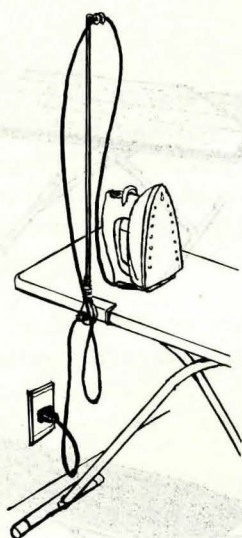
A clothes rack for hanging freshly ironed garments is a great step saver. Some fold flat for storage. Place the rack near you on which to hang freshly ironed pillowcases and other flatwork. A roll-about hanger caddy may be used near the ironing board for hanging dresses and blouses.

Less Rumples with Cordminder

A cordminder may be attached to the ironing board to hold the cord up high and out of the way. Some have an outlet into which you can plug the iron; the minder's cord is connected to the wall outlet. A cordminder means less re-ironing or "touching up," and lengthens the life of the cord on the iron.

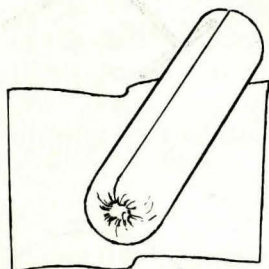
Less Shine with Press Cloth

To protect some fabrics pressing cloths are needed. Use a medium weight cotton cloth for pressing silk, rayon, and the like. The use of a light weight woolen flannel between the pressing cloth and woolen fabric helps prevent a hard, shiny finish on wools, and the wool is less apt to water spot. A convenient size is 14 x 28 inches.*

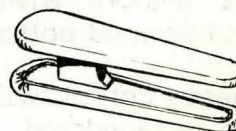


Pressing pads or mitts simplify the steam pressing of darts, curved seams, shoulders and gathers, both in regular ironing and when sewing. Another help is a sleeve rod. You can buy one, or let one of the "tall" magazines do double duty. Roll it up first in a terry towel, then in a smooth cotton cloth. Slipped inside a long or elbow-length sleeve, you can eliminate the unfashionable creases.

A sleeve board is excellent not only for sleeves where you don't want creases, but also for yokes in children's garments, blouses, and the like. Some fold down to take less storage space when not in use.



pressing
mitt



sleeve
board

Sprinkling Aids

A plastic bag or piece of plastic is excellent for holding sprinkled clothes until they are uniformly damp and ready to iron. It prevents drying out, particularly on the outer surfaces of the packets.

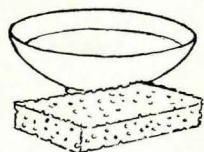


Proper sprinkling means smoother, easier ironing. One of the easier gadgets to use is made of plastic with a spray top. It is light to handle and quite easy to squeeze for a fine spray. Of course, the old type sprinkler top in a cork stopper that fits into a soft drink bottle works well if the holes in the top are very small. Some of the plastic tops have large holes that stream too much water, so uneven and too much sprinkling results.

* See E. C. 60-423, Pressing Equipment, available at County Extension Offices.

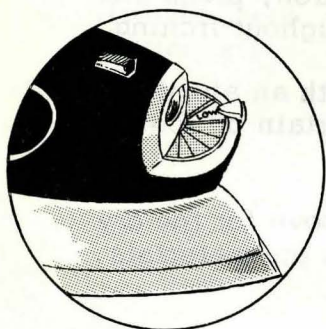
IRONING TECHNIQUES

You can save ironing time by folding clothes neatly as you take them from the dryer or line. If you catch them before they dry completely, there are many pieces that won't need sprinkling. Straighten hems and selvages; pull facings, collars and lapels into shape and stretch the seams.



If the clothes dry completely, you'll need to sprinkle heavy cottons and linens even if you have a steam iron. If you rely on the iron's spray for sprinkling these heavy fabrics, you'll need to refill the iron too often. If your iron does not have the spray feature, it is handy to place a bowl of water and a fresh sponge near you for "correcting errors."

Use warm water for sprinkling. Dampen collars and cuffs well, seams lightly. Fold loosely rather than roll them to aid water penetration. Let stand for an hour or more. If they are to stand overnight in hot weather, put them in a plastic bag and refrigerate them to avoid mildew.



Start your ironing with the fabrics to be done with low temperatures--an iron heats up more quickly than it cools down. By the way, if you are about to break in a new steam iron, let it steam over the edge of the board or onto a piece of scrap cloth before using it on a good garment, just in case there is a bit of factory dust in it.

Pairing off the big and little pieces is a speeder-upper. For example, while a dampened apron gets a thorough going over, a dry sheet underneath can be smoothed as it absorbs moisture and heat. Move the next pieces to be ironed along to smooth the bed linens and still not actually iron them. Use the iron dry for silks and the type of polished cotton on which the finish may be spoiled by water spots or steam.

Use a press cloth when ironing over a nylon zipper, and always use a press cloth on woolens. Woolens should be pressed on the wrong side as much as possible, and so should dark colors in other fabrics.

Always iron with the grain of the fabric. Watch this particularly on bias-cut slips and dresses, to avoid stretching the fabric into sagging hemlines. Do not press creases into women's sleeves.

If you miss the crispness in some of your wearables, try a light starch or finish treatment. Starch either in the washer, or spray-on as you iron. Bonus: most such aids contain silicone or something similar to speed ironing. The only drawback is that some sprays may accumulate on the iron, especially if you've oversprayed.*

* To remove coating, allow the iron to cool and then wash with cool water. Do not use detergent or cleanser. May use baking soda and then thoroughly rinse. (Research of Faultless Starch Co.) If substance is plastic, cool iron to barely warm. Rub soleplate lightly with fine steel wool soap pad dampened in acetone. Wipe soleplate clean with a damp cloth or paper towels. Repeat if necessary.

Pile Fabrics

You can restore the pile on crushed velvet (and even carpeting) by steaming with an iron held about one-half inch above it. Brush the pile after steaming. Embroidering, velvet or corduroy will keep their raised look if they're lightly ironed face down on a terry towel with a warm iron.

Sheer Ruffled Curtains

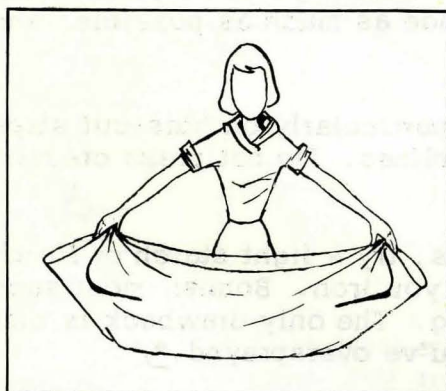
Sheer, ruffled curtains can be done one of several ways:

1. With a dry iron on a pre-dampened curtain, iron the body first so you won't have to resprinkle it. Holding the heading, feed ruffle under lifted head of iron, press and move nose into gathers. Iron should stay in about the same position throughout ironing.
2. To eliminate sprinkling when using a dry iron, cover board with an aluminum foil and then put down a completely damp, plain large bath towel. Iron curtain on towel. Do ruffles first, the body last, moving it away from you on the board.
3. With a steam iron, iron ruffles first, using method described above for the dry iron. Iron body of curtain with smooth, even strokes and on the grain on the materials.

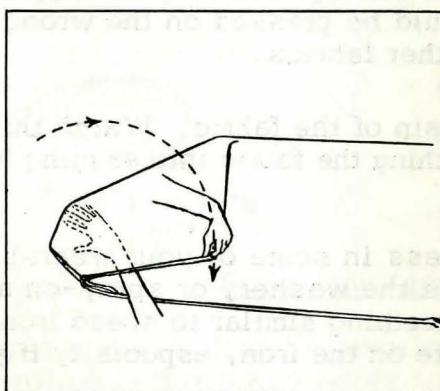
For better draping and folding hang curtains immediately.

IRONING SHORTCUTS

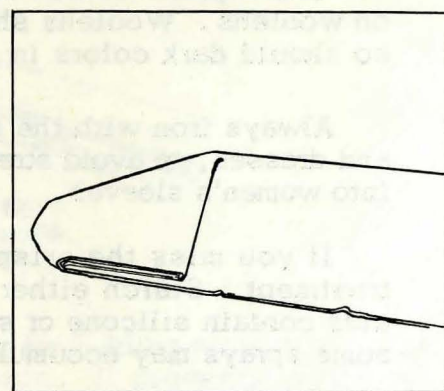
FITTED SHEETS



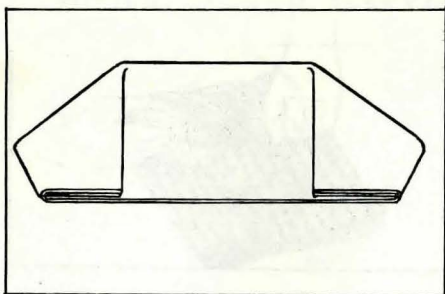
Fold sheet lengthwise once by bringing the two selvage edges together, allowing corners at both ends to hang loose. (Pockets should be right-side-out.)



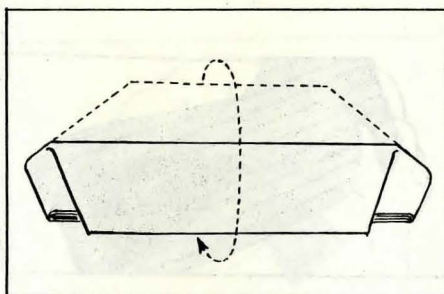
Place sheet on ironing board with selvage edges towards you. With left hand, pick up extreme left end of sheet, and with right hand push top pocket down into bottom pocket. Bring extreme left end of sheet over towards selvage edges (as indicated).



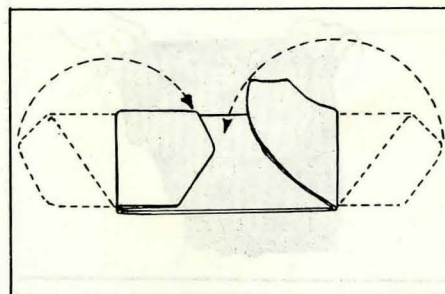
Left end of sheet now looks like this. To accomplish similar fold at other end of sheet, push top pocket into bottom pocket, fold, and smooth out as you did on left end of sheet.



Sheet now looks like this. (If you wish to iron your fitted sheets, press all flat surfaces.)



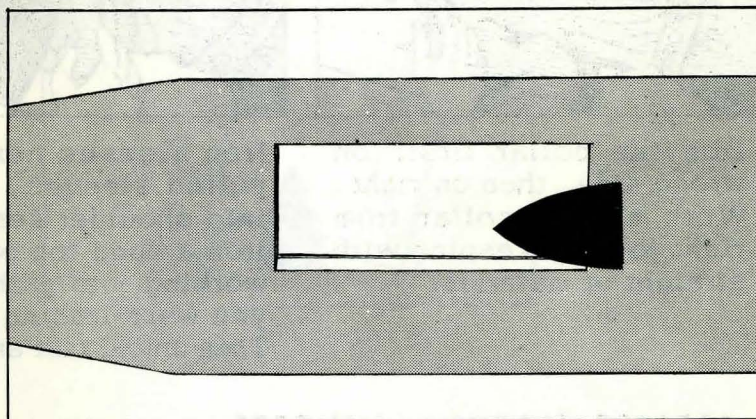
Fold sheet in half by bringing center fold over to selvage edges, as shown.



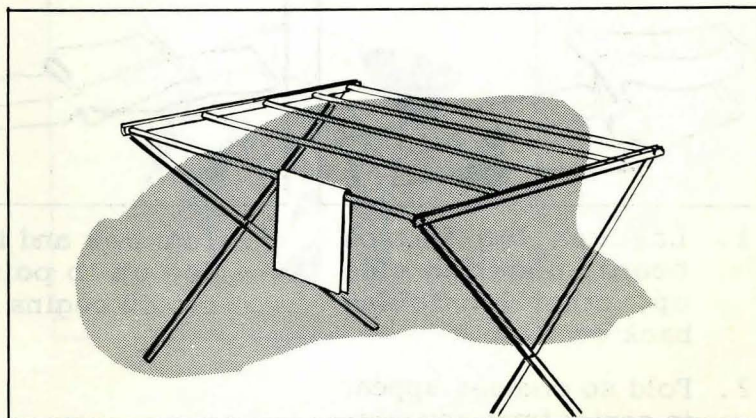
Fold both ends to middle and fold in half again, as many times as you wish. If you've been careful to buy your fitted sheets labeled pre-shrunk, they will always fold to the same exact dimensions.

NAPKINS

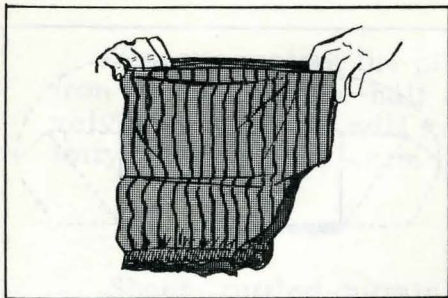
To prevent underneath edges peeking out to spoil an otherwise perfect fold, fold napkin before starting to iron. Straighten corners, right sides out, and lay top edge parallel with underneath one but about 1/4 inch back. Now iron each half dry, being careful not to push hems out of position.



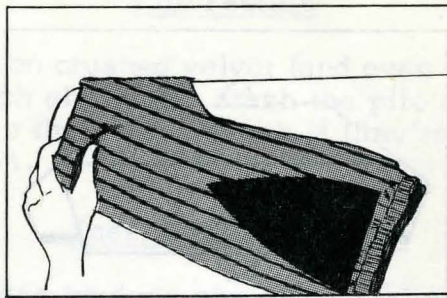
Fold again across first fold but don't press in any more creases. Hang to finish drying. Iron tablecloths same way - only first lengthwise fold is pressed. Make second fold parallel first.



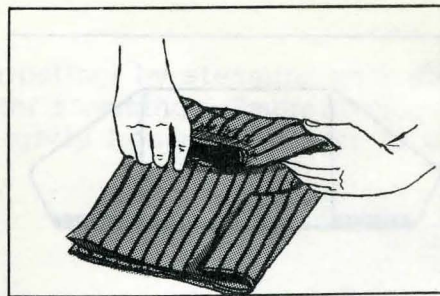
SHORTS



If the men in your family insist on having their shorts ironed, here's a way to do it in 45 seconds flat. First, fold one leg inside the other, seams meeting...

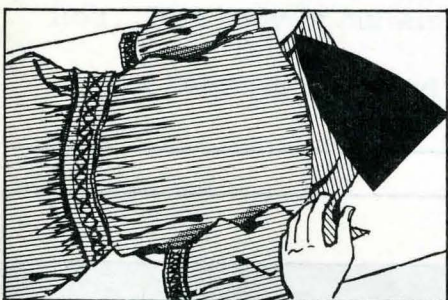


Slip folded shorts over end of board and iron around them once. Result may not be perfection, but wrinkles will be out and fabric softened so shorts are more comfortable to wear.

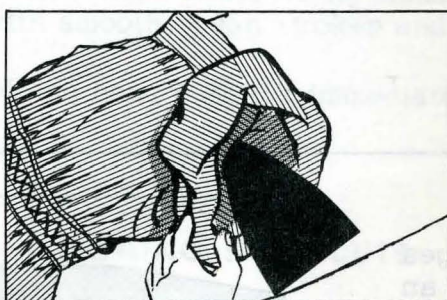


Refold shorts so they are easy to get into. You can iron boys' play shorts same way; for pajamas, use the leg-fold idea but iron them across the board.

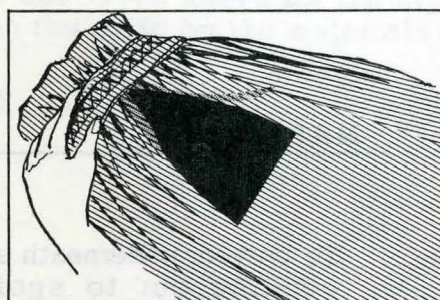
LITTLE GIRLS' DRESSES



Iron the collar first: on wrong side, then on right. Work around collar from right to left, keeping with straight of material.

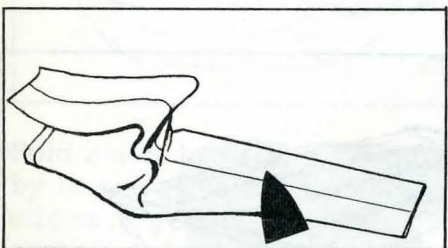


Iron sleeves next. With puffed sleeves, fold cuff into shoulder seam. Now iron around top of sleeve, working into gathers as if you were ironing a ruffle. Then unfold cuff and iron it.



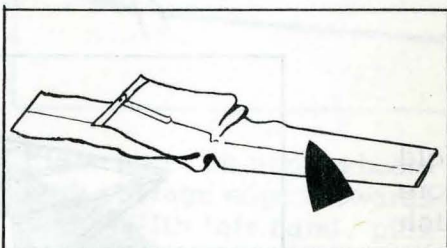
Iron bodice after sleeves and skirt last. Secret of ironing gathered skirts so they stand out crisply is to run point of iron right into gathers, not over them.

CREASED SLACKS and SHORTS

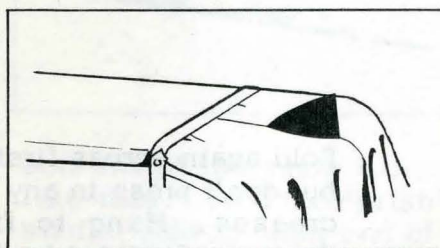


1. Lay one leg flat on board, underleg side up, other leg folded back over top.

2. Fold so creases appear in center front and center back of leg and iron.



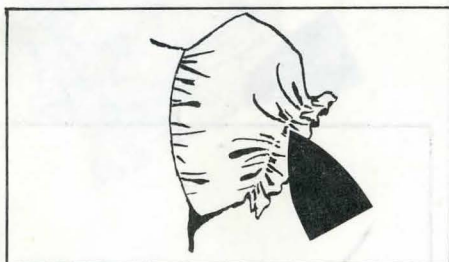
3. Turn over and iron outer leg up to point where crotch begins.



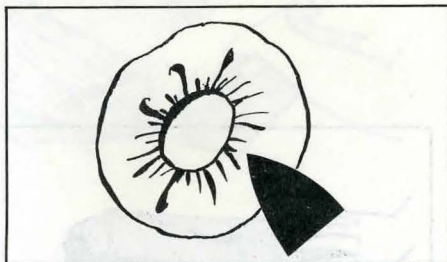
4. Repeat with other leg. Finish top over end of board.

Note: Pajama pants, play slacks and shorts are often ironed with legs folded side to side. Finish top over end of board.

CHILD'S PUFFED SLEEVE



1. Iron cuff first.



2. Fold sleeve back upon itself, matching cuff opening with armhole opening.

3. Iron sleeve, cuff side first. Work point of iron into fullness at cuff.



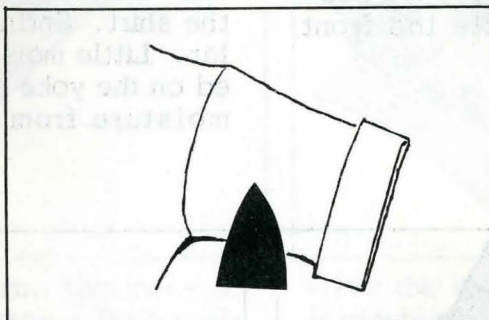
4. Iron shoulder side working point of iron into fullness at shoulder.

ONE SEAM SLEEVE WITH CREASE

1. Fold sleeve flat with seam on one crease.

2. Begin at seam crease and work iron outward.

3. Turn and iron on opposite side. Touch up cuff and shoulder.

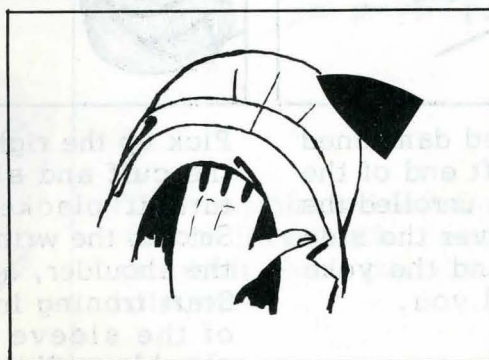


FOR EXTENDED SHOULDER EFFECT

1. Iron sleeve first. Fold top of sleeve at shoulder in crescent shape.

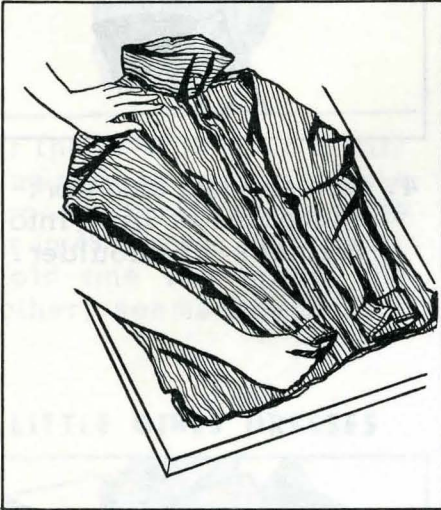
2. Place hand through neckline and hold body of garment away from crescent area.

3. Press lightly.



SHIRTS AND BLOUSES

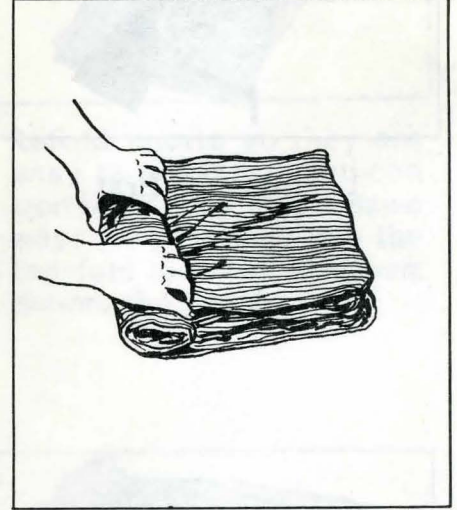
Sprinkling



Spread the shirt flat on a work surface; smooth out as many wrinkles as possible. Sprinkle the front and sleeves.

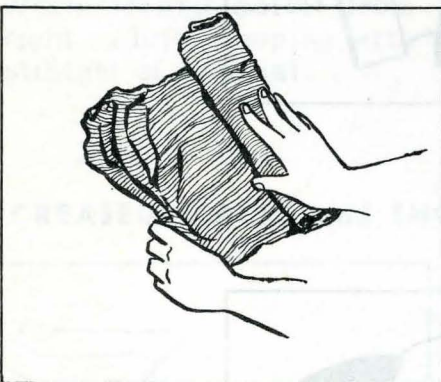


Turn the collar and yoke down over the front about one-third of the length of the shirt. Sprinkle the collar. Little moisture is needed on the yoke as it absorbs moisture from the collar.

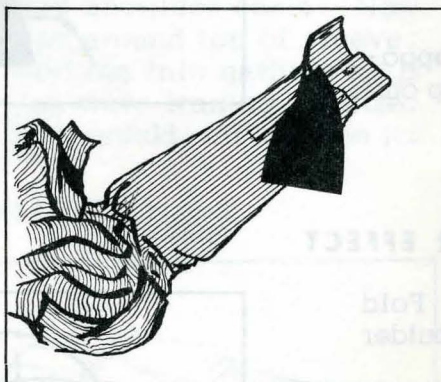


Fold the shirt so that the tail is on the under side. Roll it lightly. Tight rolling tends to deepen the wrinkles.

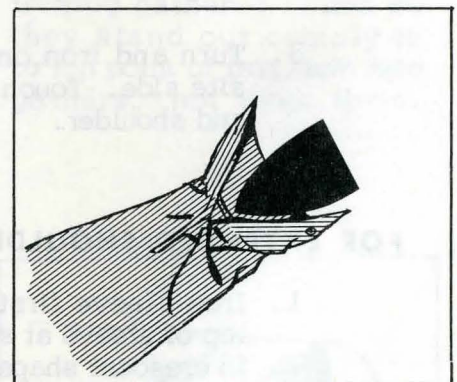
Ironing



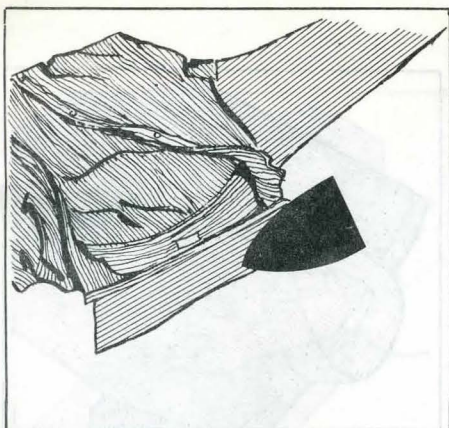
Place the rolled dampened shirt at the left end of the board. As it is unrolled the tail will fall over the side of the board and the yoke will be toward you.



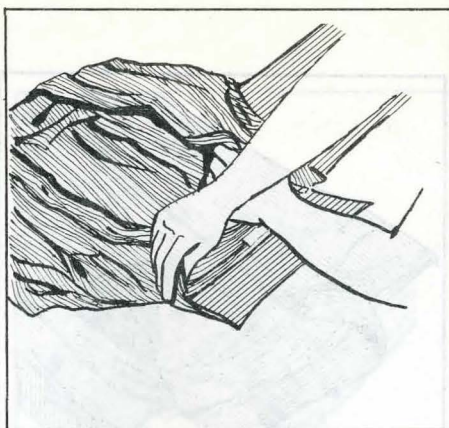
Pick up the right sleeve by the cuff and shoulder and turn it placket side up. Smooth the wrinkles toward the shoulder, and the cuff. Start ironing in the center of the sleeve toward the shoulder. Shift the iron to the left hand when ironing into the cuff. Stretch and dry the seam well.



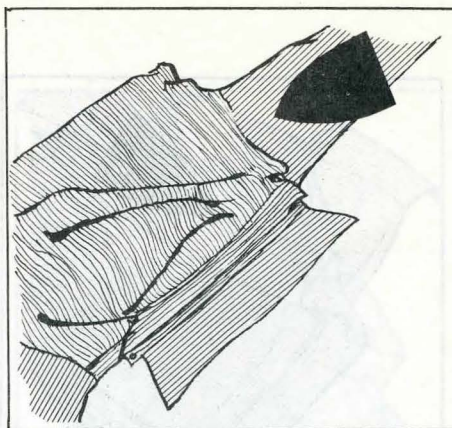
Shift the iron back to the right hand, and iron the inside of the cuff. Turn the sleeve over and repeat the process.



Iron the top of the collar and the band while the shirt is in this position.



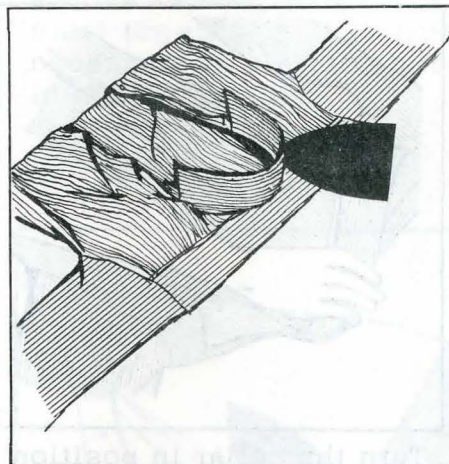
Make a Z turn by crossing arms to turn the shirt in position for ironing the left sleeve.



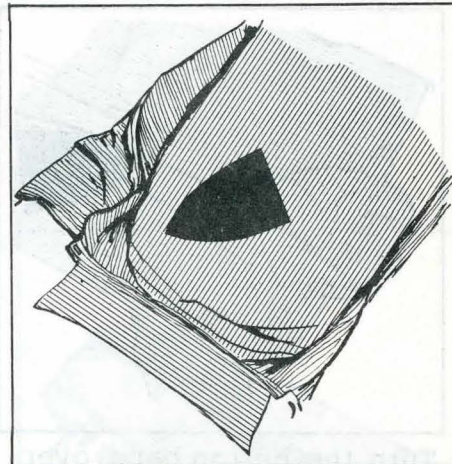
Iron placket side of left sleeve with dry sleeve over end of board. Iron wrong side of collar and band while shirt is in this position. Turn the sleeve over and iron other side of sleeve and cuff.



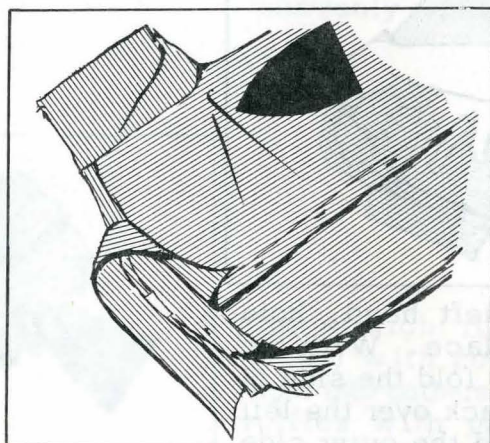
Make a Z turn to put yoke in position.



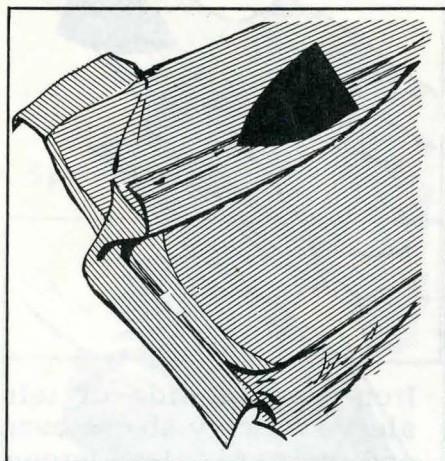
Fold and iron the yoke across the back. Do not always iron it at the seam, for constant creasing with the hot iron may cause the fabric to break at that place.



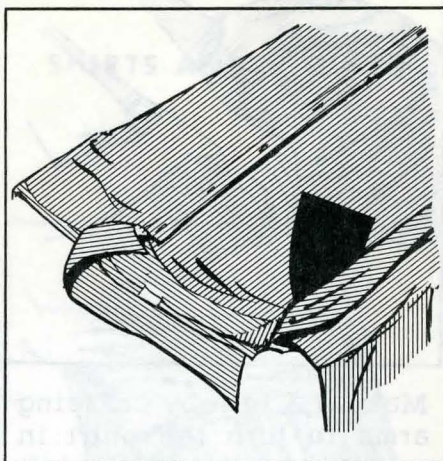
Give the shirt a one-fourth turn which places it lengthwise on the board, collar to the left. Iron the inside of the left of the back and yoke. Stretch and press dry the under seams of the sides to prevent puckering.



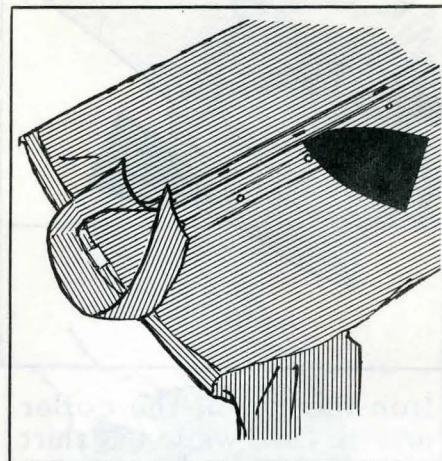
Fold the unironed left front over the ironed back. Smooth and iron it. Press the button-hole band.



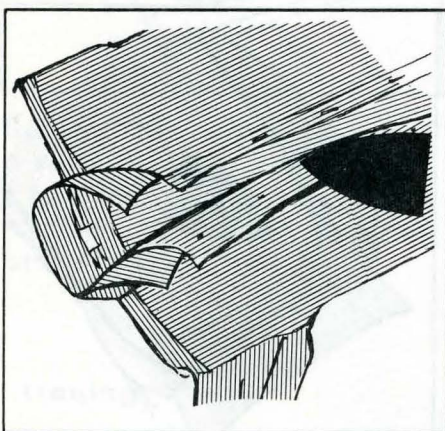
Turn the buttonhole band wrong side up and press on the wrong side. Retouch the front if necessary.



Shift the shirt slightly on the board away from you. Iron the inside of the right back.



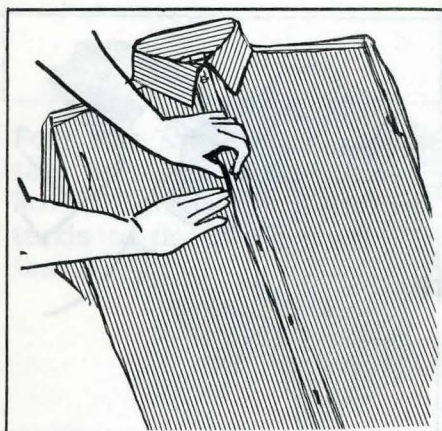
Iron the right front over the ironed back.



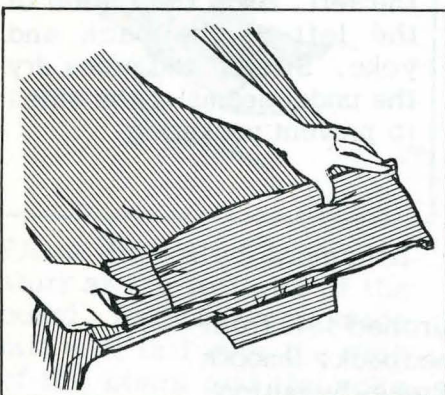
Turn the button band over and press it on the wrong side. Touch up the front side if necessary.



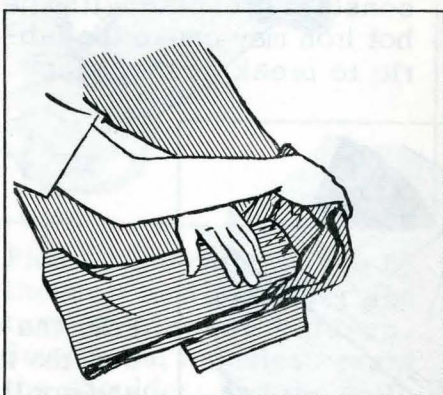
Turn the collar in position by folding; ironing is not necessary.



Button the collar button and the third and fifth buttons. The shirt has been turned only three times. There has been little handling or opportunity to wrinkle the shirt.



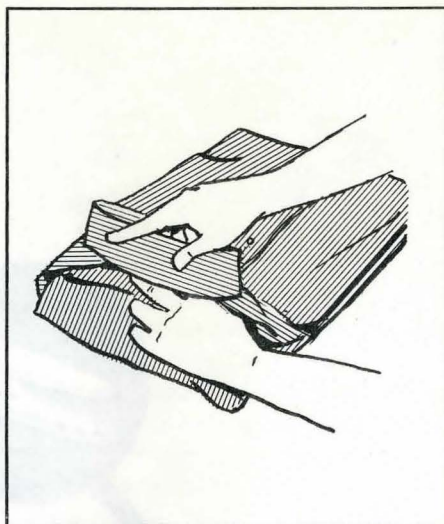
Turn the shirt back side up, collar to the right. Fold the left sleeve across the yoke, with cuff brought to the opposite sleeve seam. Fold the right sleeve on top of the left one.



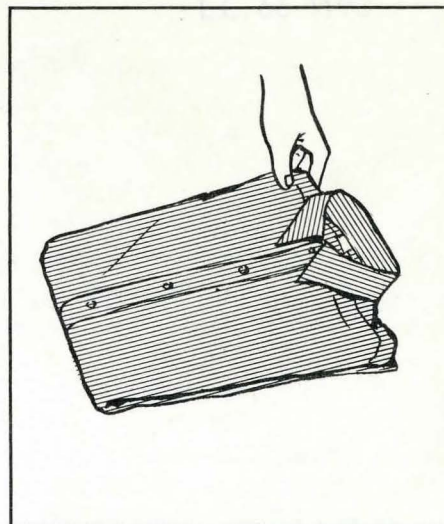
With the left hand, hold cuffs in place. With the right hand, fold the side of the shirt back over the left hand. Fold the outer side in the same way.



With the left hand, fold the top part of the shirt down to within six inches of the end of the tail.

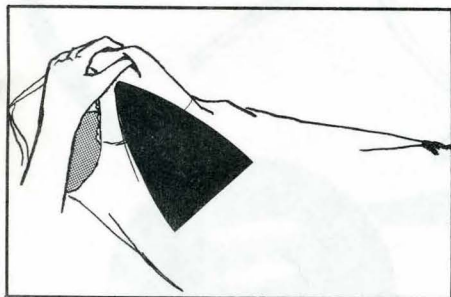


Tuck the remaining part of the tail between the collar and the sleeves, to hold the shirt together. It is not necessary to pin the shirt to hold it together.

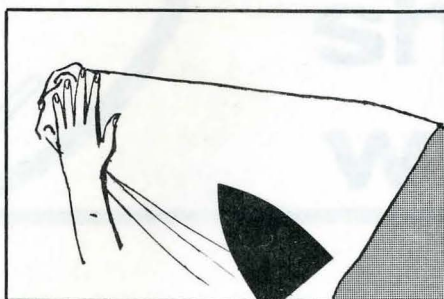


The finished shirt. Real pride in a job well done!

SLIPS

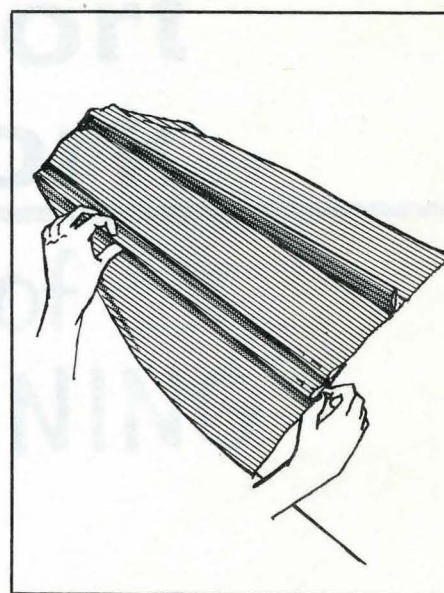


Iron bodice of slip first, so it will hang freely off end of board without getting mussed when skirt is being ironed.



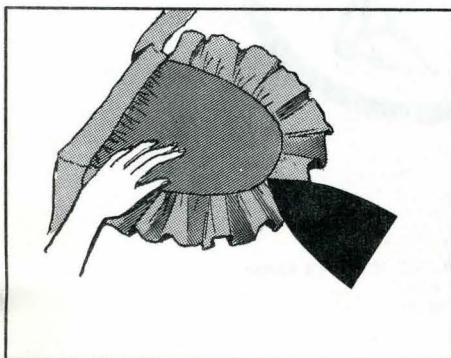
With bias-cut slips, always iron with the straight of the material--iron skirt at an angle across the board. Then slip should not hang unevenly when worn.

PLEATS



Keep long pleats straight in skirts, by tacking them in place with pins at hemline before ironing.

RUFFLES



Iron straight ruffles (like these) with point of iron right into gathers. Iron bias ruffles with point at an angle.