

1970

## EC70-453 Interfacing and Underlining Jackets and Coats

Jane Speece

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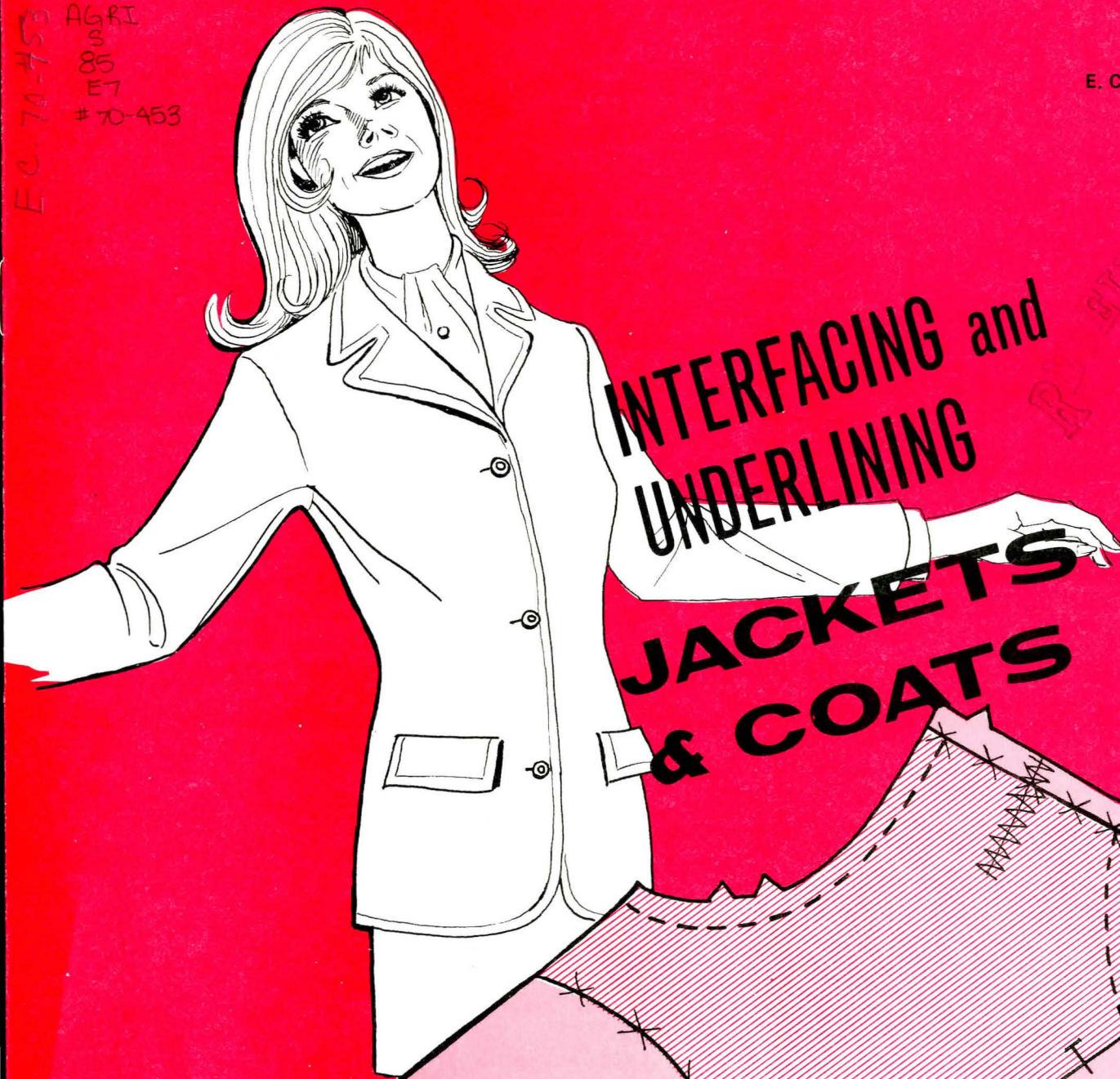
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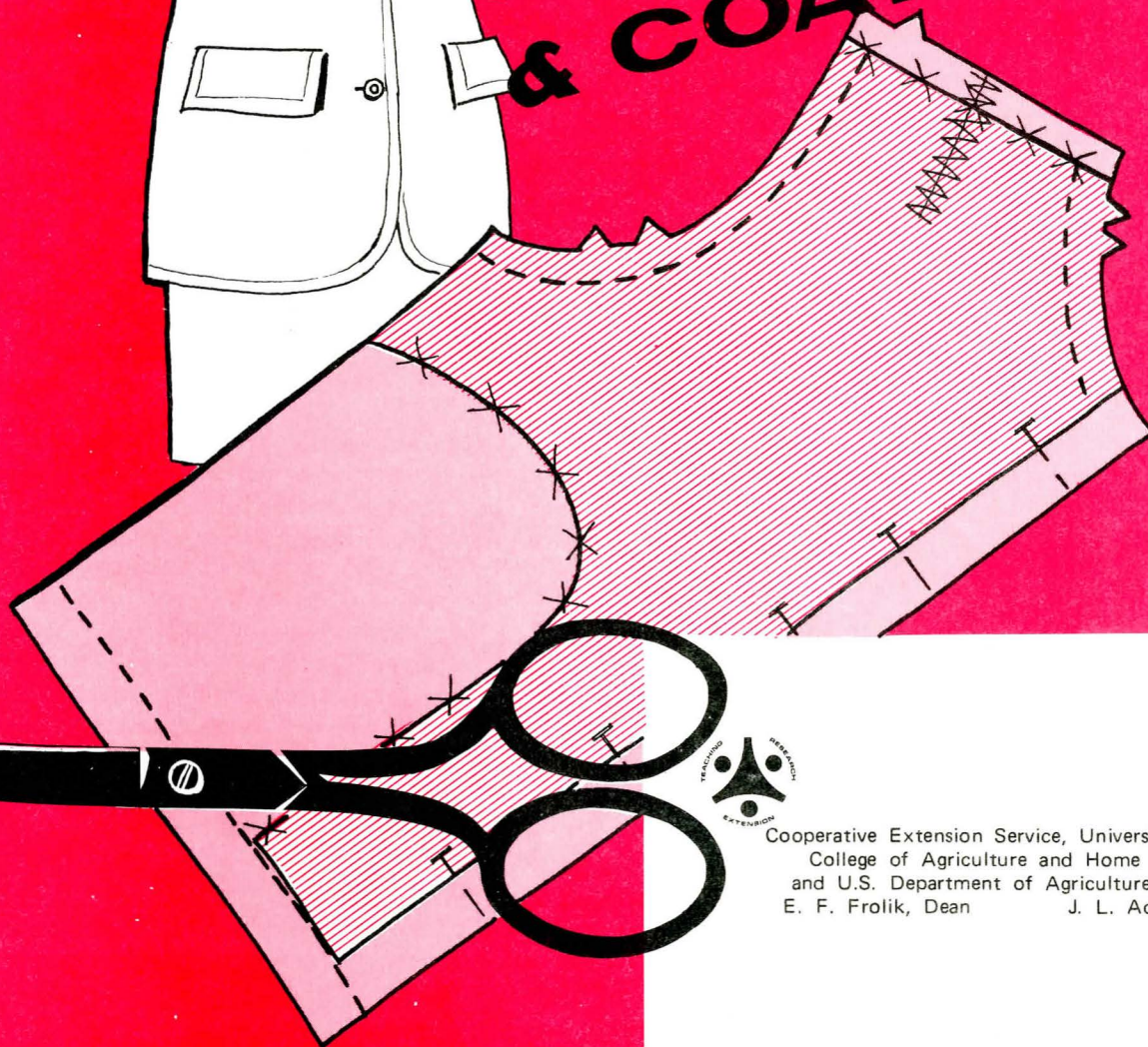
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# INTERFACING and UNDERLINING

# JACKETS & COATS



Cooperative Extension Service, University of Nebraska  
College of Agriculture and Home Economics,  
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# INTERFACING and UNDERLINING JACKETS & COATS

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Extension Specialist (Clothing)

Interfacings and underlinings, though hidden in the well-tailored suit, are important to the effect achieved by the tailor.

Interfacing is used to shape special areas of the garment. The underlining is used as a backing for the fabric.

The highest quality interfacing, though not necessarily the most expensive, should be chosen for jackets and coats to achieve and maintain the quality of fine tailoring.

Underlining fabric choices should be explored to enhance the fabric used for the tailored garment.

One tailoring technique is presented in this circular. The woman interested in custom tailoring should consult other references and adapt tailoring techniques to her personal preference.

## INTERFACING

Interfacing is used in tailoring:

To keep the fabric from stretching in areas of strain such as shoulders, armhole areas and front edges.

To add body and firmness to a fabric.

To give emphasis to particular design features such as pocket flaps or cuffs.

To cushion seam allowances and hems so that ridges will not show on the right side of the garment.

To build shape and silhouette whenever it is needed, such as on an intricately designed jacket.

To preserve the well-tailored, well-pressed look of quality suit or coat.

Various ways to cut the interfacing can be used by the tailor. The choice depends upon the garment fabric, the pattern design and the desired effect. Interfacing fabric used may be either a hair canvas or muslin, depending upon the weight of the outer fabric.

An active person often prefers to cut the front interfacing so that it extends below the underarm seam. Additional strength and backing are gained. The interfacing pattern is superimposed upon the front jacket or coat pattern and a line extended about 3 inches below the armhole at the underarm seam. A curved line is then drawn between this point and a point just below the bustline of the original interfacing pattern piece (Figure 1).

By cutting the interfacing 1/2 inch to one inch wider than the garment facing, edges will be cushioned. The front interfacing can be cut on the bias, as are the hem interfacings, to add to the molding and easing qualities of the fabric (Figure 2).

A back interfacing pattern is rarely included in a pattern. The reinforcement is often desired. Using the back garment

pattern, mark about 3 inches below the armhole at the underarm seam and about 5 inches to 6 inches below the neckline. Draw a curved line between the two points and use for the back interfacing pattern. This interfacing should follow the same grain as the suit grain. (Figure 3).

Bulk of darts is reduced by slashing the dart through the center and lapping the two edges until the stitching lines meet. Stitch by machine or catch stitch by hand. A strip of muslin or other lightweight fabric may be stitched in the length of the dart for reinforcement. The point also can be reinforced by stitching back and forth over it several times. A one-inch square of lightweight fabric can also be stitched in the point to add holding power (Figure 4).

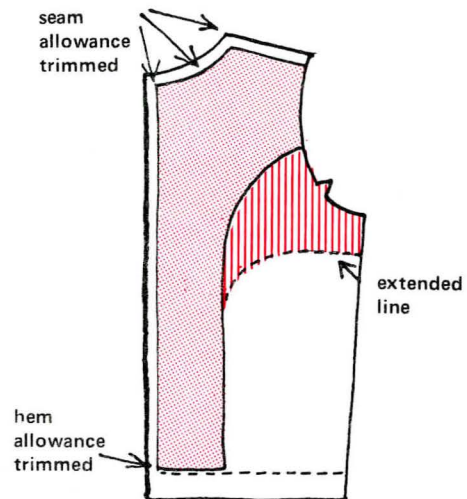


FIGURE 1 Interfacing extended

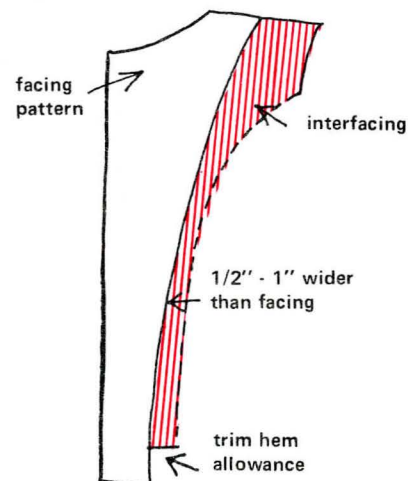


FIGURE 2 Interfacing width extended

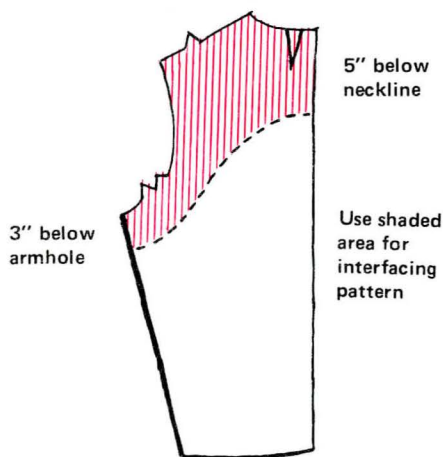


FIGURE 3 Cutting back interfacing

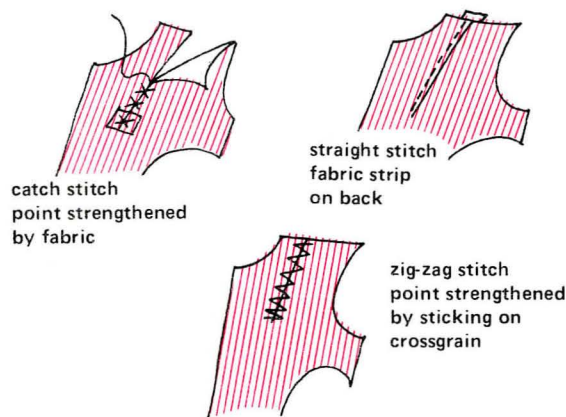


FIGURE 4

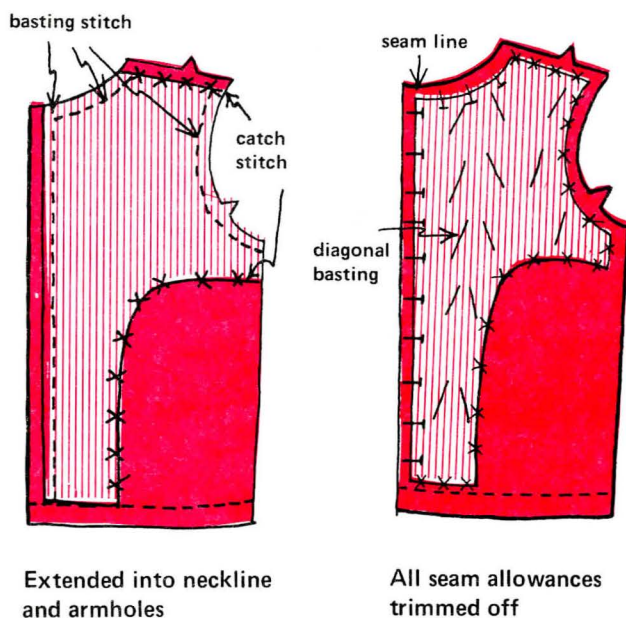
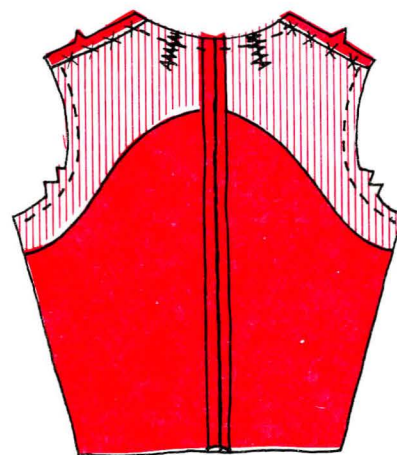


FIGURE 5

## Applying the Interfacing

Be sure that darts are stitched, slashed and pressed in the garment and interfacing before joining the two fabrics. Trim  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch from the front and shoulder interfacing seams so they lie  $\frac{1}{8}$  inch inside the stitching lines of the garment. The front edge is basted or pinned as the tailoring tape will affix to this edge.

Catch stitch the shoulder seam to the garment. The seam allowance around the neckline or armhole may be left untrimmed and stitched into the seam. They may be trimmed to eliminate bulk and tailoring tape later applied to strengthen those areas. Long frontal areas may need several rows of diagonal basting to hold the interfacing in place (Figure 5).



Back interfacing

FIGURE 6

Use a catch stitch to fasten the interfacing to the garment where the neckline and armhole seam allowance is trimmed. Use a basting stitch when they are not trimmed. The catch stitch is also used around the curved interfacing area.

The back area is treated in the same way. The curved lower line, however, is not fastened down on the back interfacing. The back interfacing may extend over the back seam or it may be cut up to the seam on each half of the suit back (Figure 6).

Occasionally the interfacing is intended to give a rounded edge to a facing cut with the main body piece. In this case the interfacing is meant to extend past the fold line of the front edges. The pattern and the pattern guide will state this. Use a backhand stitch down the fold line to hold the interfacing. Stitches should be invisible on the right side. If this rounded edge is not desired, the interfacing is cut within the fold line and treated in the same way a suit with separate facing is treated (Figure 7).



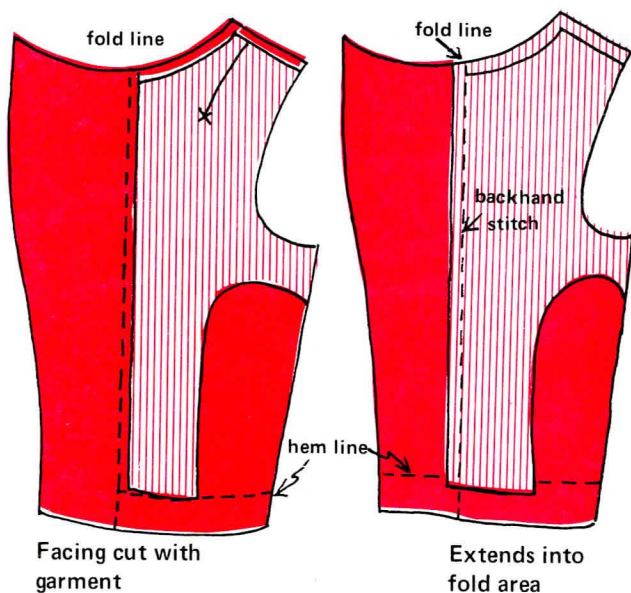
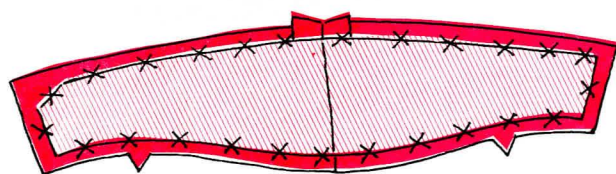
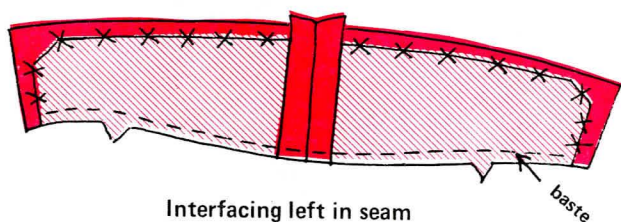


FIGURE 7

### Collars

The collar interfacing should always be cut on the same grain as the undercollar. Lap the seam lines of the interfacing and stitch. The seam allowance may be trimmed and the edges catch stitched under the seam of the undercollar. Seam allowances of the outer edge are trimmed to reduce bulk. Collar points may also be trimmed to reduce bulk. The inside edge may be left untrimmed and stitched into the seam. Catch stitch the interfacing to the garment collar (Figure 8).



Interfacing trimmed

FIGURE 8

### Pocket Flaps

Experimentation is sometimes necessary to determine if a crisper effect can be achieved by the use of an interfacing of lighter weight than that used on the front and back areas. A better effect is often achieved if the interfacing seam allowances are trimmed as in the silhouette pieces (Figure 9).

### Buttonhole Areas

Before making the bound buttonholes in the suit front, cut a square around the buttonhole area so that none of the bound buttonhole stitching will catch the interfacing. Insert a muslin or another lightweight fabric square and catch stitch the fabric to the interfacing. If the garment has been completely underlined, the underlining can serve as the base for the buttonhole. This will prevent too much bulk, yet provide a stable base for the buttonhole (Figure 10).

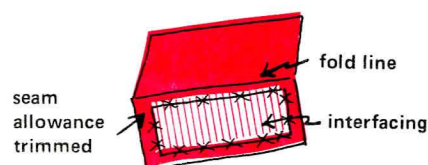


FIGURE 9

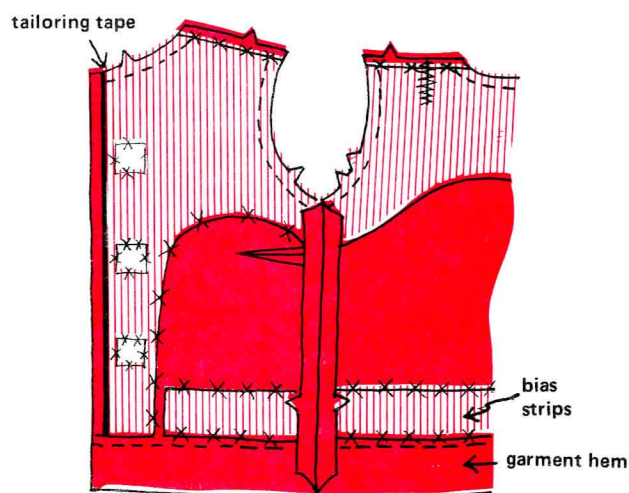


FIGURE 10

### Hems

Bias interfacing strips are used to cushion the sleeve and jacket hems. These strips may be pieced. Cut the strips 1/2 inch to one inch wider than the garment hem allowance. Pin or baste, then catch stitch the strips to the garment. The raw edge of the garment hem will then be catch stitched to the interfacing strip (Figure 10). For a rounded hem effect the interfacing strip is cut at least an inch wider than the garment hem and is placed to extend past the hem fold.



## UNDERLINING

Underlining is a second layer of fabric used as a backing for the outer fabric. This underlining serves:

To preserve the shape and grain of a fabric which stretches easily.

To add body to a loosely woven or soft, lightweight fabric.

To give an opaque look to open weaves.

To create an elegant, more luxurious look for the outer fabric.

The choice of underlining fabric will depend upon the weight and the weave of the fabric chosen for a coat or jacket. Underlinings are called soft or crisp. The soft backing is usually used when the support and shape of major garment seams is desired or when the grain and shape of a loosely woven, stretchy fabric needs to be preserved.

Although the heavier the weight of the garment fabric, the heavier the weight of the underlining, the backing should always be lighter in weight than the outer fabric. The underlining can be thicker than the outer fabric as long as the weight is less. For example, lamb's wool, associated with interlinings used for warmth in coats, gives an elegance to heavy silks and wool blends that is difficult to achieve with other kinds of backing fabrics.

The color of the underlining should match the color of the outer fabric as closely as possible in loosely woven fabrics. The color is not as important in heavier, more tightly woven fabrics.

Many good commercial underlinings in many colors are stocked in fabric shops. Often muslin or a similar fabric serves as an excellent underlining for woolens or wool blends. For greatest satisfaction try placing the outer fabric over several kinds of underlinings, both soft and crisp, to see which will achieve the best effect.

Although backing fabrics are usually preshrunk or shrink very little, it is safer to preshrink them at home with steam so that wrinkled seams will not appear later.

### Applying The Underlining

Often a complete underlining is needed for a stretchy fabric or to prevent the interfacing color from showing through to the right side of the garment. The suit jacket pieces are used as the pattern.

The suit and underlining darts are stitched, slashed and pressed open before the underlining piece is superimposed upon the suit piece, though the darts may be sewn through both underlining and fabric if loosely-woven or stretchy. If this method is used, the utmost accuracy must be observed. The hem allowance is usually trimmed from the underlining. The underlining can extend into the hem area to help cushion the fold line.

Matching thread is used to hand baste the underlining to the outer fabric inside the 5/8" seam allowance. This basting remains in the edge. A catch stitch is used along the hem area. Occasionally diagonal basting is used to hold the backing firmly in place. The interfacing is applied over the backing (Figure 11).

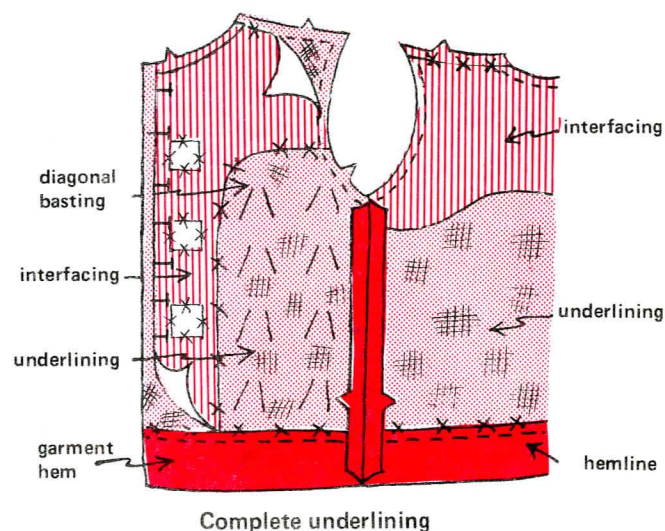


FIGURE 11

Sometimes only a partial backing is desired. In this case the underlining is cut about 1/2 inch past the interfacing edge and a catch stitch used to fasten the two edges. If a particularly soft hem edge is desired, the interfacing along the edge is eliminated and the hem turned back and catch stitched to the underlining (Figure 12).

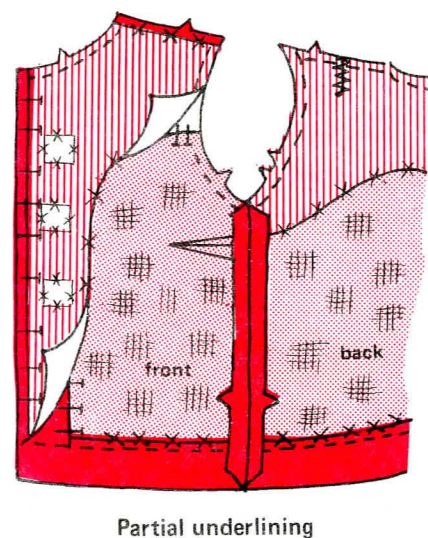
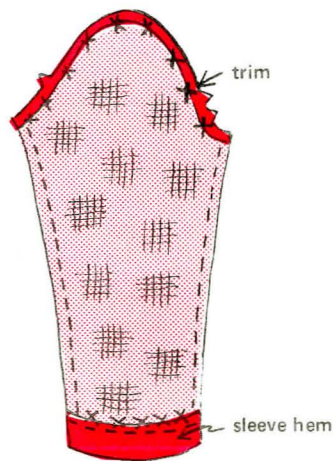


FIGURE 12

If the underlining will add too much bulk to the ease over the garment sleeve cap, the seam allowance can be trimmed from the underlining and then catch stitched to the stitching line of the garment sleeve cap (Figure 13).



Underlining a garment takes extra time and effort. Not all fabrics require underlining but there are many advantages in so doing. One feature often overlooked is that almost all construction stitches can be taken in the underlining instead of the outer garment fabric. The extra elegance achieved by underlining more than compensates for the extra work.

FIGURE 13

## Notes on Interfacings and Underlinings