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EC72-424 Pressing Methods

Jane Speece

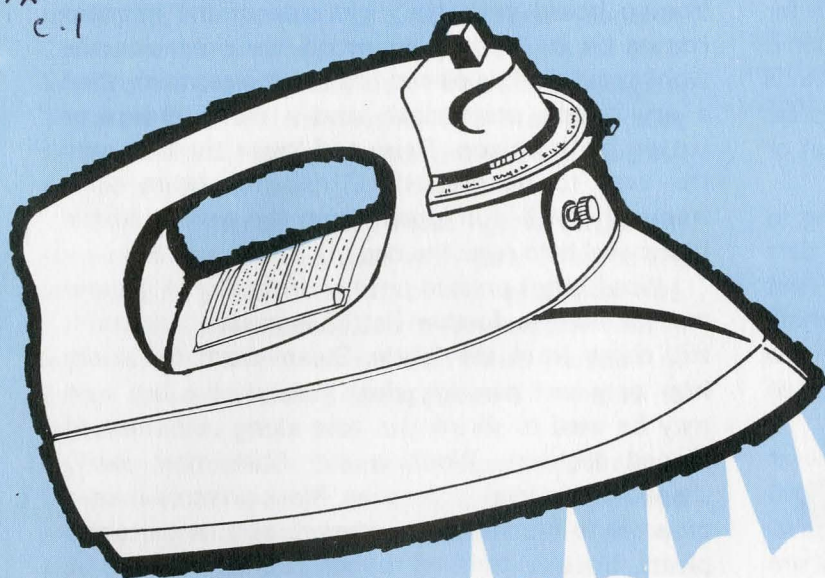
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PRESSING METHODS

Jane Speece, Extension Specialist (Clothing)

A skillful job of pressing requires time and practice and the use of methods that will not mar the fabric. Pressing should not make the fabric shine, flatten the nap, nor press out texture or weave.

Pressing is not ironing. In ironing, the iron is pushed from one spot to another in an unbroken motion to remove wrinkles. In pressing, the iron is

lifted up and set down in a particular spot to flatten or shape small areas. Avoid using a sliding motion when pressing to avoid stretching 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.



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Moisture is needed to press most fabrics, but it should be used with care since it can give a shiny, over-pressed look. A steam iron may be enough for some fabrics. In others, a press cloth with a damp cloth placed on top will be necessary. A dry iron is usually used with the latter technique. Use a press cloth with either kind of iron when doing final or finish pressing on the right side of a garment.

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

Press on the wrong side of the fabric whenever possible. Keep the grain of the fabric straight and press with the grain. Use light pressure at first. Some fabrics require little pressure to flatten them without marring the texture of the weave. Let the garment dry from steam before it is handled or it will stretch. If the fabric will show press marks on the outside, place brown paper strips under the seams or use a seam roll.

PRESSURE, MOISTURE, HEAT FACTORS

1. Pressure. Keep the weight of the iron in the hand. Use light pressure on the fabric rather than the full weight of the iron. Careful lifting and lowering of the iron controls the amount of pressure. Add pressure only for crease resistant and firmly woven fabrics.

2. Moisture. Excessive moisture often spots fabrics, makes them look overpressed, gives shine and ruins texture. For fabrics that cannot take direct moisture, place a damp cheese cloth over a dry press cloth or dampen the press cloth with a sponge.

3. Heat. Generally, cotton and linen fabrics require higher temperature and man-made fibers a lower degree of heat. Some synthetics should not be pressed at all with an iron as heat will flatten a pile or deteriorate the fiber. For a fabric made of two or more fibers, use the temperature setting for the one requiring the lower heat.

PRESSING SPECIAL FABRICS AND FINISHES

The pressing technique for wool can be used to advantage with many of the other fibers and fabrics made into coats, suits and other tailored outfits. Because it is an important technique, it is listed first.

Wool. Use a wool pressing cloth to press 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, then a dry cotton press cloth, and a damp cheese or 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 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 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.

Beads, Sequins. Use a low heat setting. Run the tip of the iron along the seam. Use a dry iron as steam may erase the shine or finish.

Brocades, Embroideries, Laces. Use a turkish towel on the ironing board to prevent the raised pattern from flattening out. Press only on the wrong side. Steam should be used with care. A dry iron may be preferable in some cases.

Glossy Finish, Glazed Finish, Satins, Crepes. Use little or no moisture. Press only on the wrong side with a light touch.

Dull Finishes, Dark Colors. Press on the wrong side, whenever possible, to prevent shine. Use a press cloth on the right side.

Sheers. Use a low temperature and a dry iron. Steam or too much heat may pucker the fabric. Use the tip of the iron just along seams.

Blends. Select the pressing temperature of the more delicate fiber. Test in an inconspicuous spot for water spotting before using steam.

Pile Fabrics, Napped Fabrics. Use a needleboard, a heavy turkish towel or self fabric on the ironing board. Place the right side of the garment next to the fabric. Press the garment on the wrong side. Use a light touch so that pile will not be flattened. For delicate velvets, prop up the iron and draw the wrong side of the fabric over it. Steam, rather than pressing, is important. Shower steaming will remove wrinkles. Do not touch the iron to the right side.

Fake Furs. They melt easily and the pile may matt. Usually finger pressing is sufficient. Use a dry iron if you feel pressing is necessary, not steam.

Always press on the wrong side, never on the right.

Durable Press, Wash and Wear. Use low to moderate temperatures. Check fiber content. Creases once pressed may stay. Be sure of seam lines before pressing. Use tip of iron along seamline. More pressure will be needed. The final press may be done with a higher temperature and a press cloth to give sharper creases.

Stretch Fabrics, Knits. Press lightly to prevent stretch. Steam may be used with care. Press on the wrong side in the direction of the lengthwise ribs.

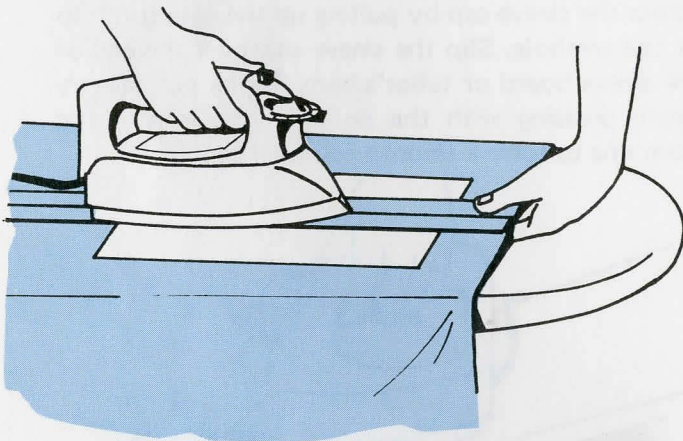
Bonded, Laminated. Select temperature for the outer fabric. Do not let the iron touch the foam or other laminate. Use a press cloth if needed to prevent this.

Vinyls, Leathers. Pressing is usually difficult or impossible. If needed, use a low temperature and brown paper for protection. Use a dry iron, no steam.

PRESSING CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

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. The kind of fabric will determine whether or not a press cloth is needed to protect the fabric or to improve the press.

Waistline seams are usually turned up into the bodice. Curved seams should be pressed over a curved area such as a tailor's ham.

Darts

Press over a curved surface toward the tip. Do not let the iron go beyond the stitching line. Avoid imprints on the right side by using the same technique as used for seams.

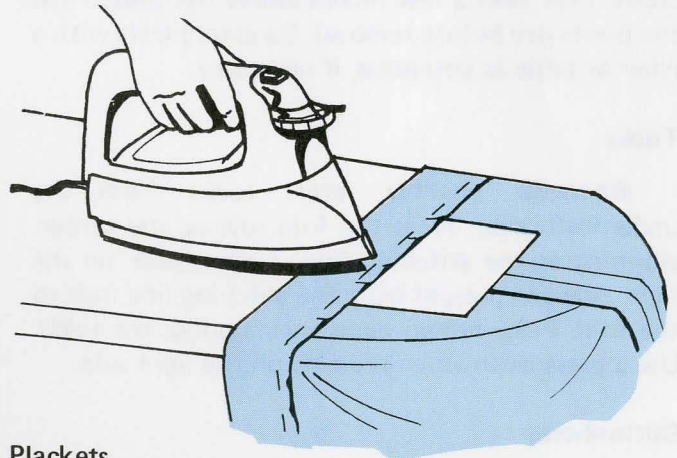


Unless the design indicates otherwise, vertical darts are pressed toward the center and horizontal darts are pressed downward. Slash wide or bulky darts and press them open.

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. For a rolled effect on the hem edge, hold iron a few inches above hem. Let steam penetrate. Pat with a block or ruler to mold the hem.



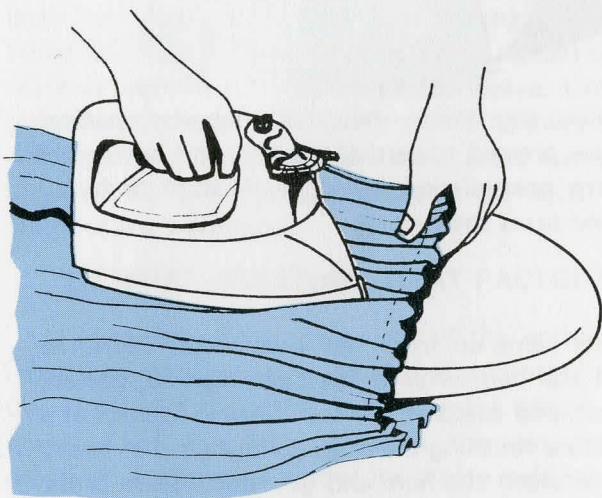
Plackets

Press the placket on the wrong side on a textured surface such as terry cloth. Use a press

cloth and limited moisture. Avoid zipper teeth. Place paper strips between the laps to prevent imprints on the right side. Then press the placket on the right side over a rounded surface such as a press mitt, tailor's ham or rounded turkish towel. Fabric which shows imprints easily should be protected by slipping paper between the zipper teeth and the outside fabric.

Gathers and Shirring

Press from the wrong side whenever possible. Hold the gathering or shirring along the stitching line. Press toward the gathers, sliding the point of the iron into the gathers. Slide the iron with grainline; do not move it from side to side.



Pleats

Press pleats from the hem to the waistline. Use brown paper strips under the folds. Unpressed pleats may be pinned to the ironing board and a steam iron held a few inches above the pleats. Let the pleats dry before removal. Support pleats with a chair or table as you press, if necessary.

Tucks

Whenever possible, press tucks from the underneath side. Press the fold toward the center, stopping at the stitching line. Tucks made on the right side are pressed from the stitching line toward the fold. Place brown paper strips under the folds. Use a press cloth when pressing on the right side.

Buttonholes

Press over a sleeveboard on the wrong side of the fabric. Then turn and press on the right side. Use a press cloth on the right side.

Pockets

Press from the right side using brown paper strips to cushion the pocket edges and a press cloth to protect the fabric.

Facings

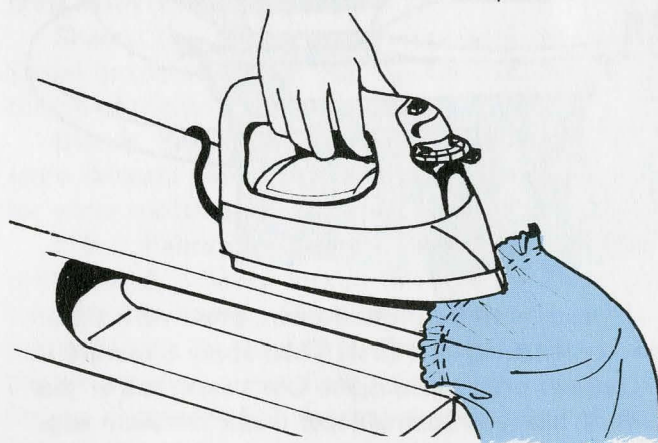
Seams should be graded or trimmed before pressing. Press along the stitching line, then press the seams open. Finally press the seams toward the facing. Turn facing right side out and press the garment so that the seam edge rolls to the facing side.

Collars, Lapels

Seams should be graded or trimmed before pressing. Press along the stitching line, then press seams open. Use a point presser to achieve sharp corners. Then press the seams toward the undercollar or underlapel. Turn. Press collar or lapel on the right side, making sure that the seam rolls to the underside.

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. Ease in the fullness across the sleeve cap by pulling up the ease stitch to fit the armhole. Slip the sleeve cap over the end of the sleeve board or tailor's ham. Shrink out ease 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 along the seam line. When finished, both seam edges will turn and lie into the sleeve cap giving it a smooth rounded appearance.