Tailored Jackets

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TAILORED JACKETS
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Speed tailoring methods versus more time consuming hand tailoring methods can be used to create quality jackets, providing the home sewer selects fashion fabrics which are easy to sew, uses simple classic designs which require little shaping, and uses sewing techniques designed for quick sewing.

Patterns suitable for speed tailoring have fairly straight seams and use seams and/or darts for shaping curved areas. Styles with patch or in-seam pockets are easier and quicker to tailor than those with welt pockets. Patterns designed without back or sleeve vents eliminate some sewing techniques and are quick to sew. Generally, lined jackets are quicker to tailor than unlined ones, providing the lining pattern is included in the pattern envelope. Machine buttonholes are both easier and quicker to make than tailored buttonholes.

Fabric selection is a crucial factor in determining whether speed tailoring techniques can be used. Textured fabrics such as tweeds and those containing slub yarns can be tailored with speed techniques. Avoid fabrics with hard twisted yarns and flat surfaces such as gabardine, lightweight wool flannel, and chintz because mistakes are more pronounced and a ridge along the edges of fused interfacing is apt to show on the outside. Some speed tailoring techniques can be used on corduroy after the sewer is skilled in the procedure; however, deep naps and crushable pile fabrics should be avoided. Puckered fabrics and seersucker should also be avoided because the fabric is likely to flatten and stretch when speed techniques are used. Speed tailoring techniques can be used on most patterned fabrics; however, plaids and large designs require additional time and skill for matching.

Interfacing

Interfacing supports, shapes, and reinforces specific areas of the garment. When tailoring, the interfacing usually is applied to the jacket front, the undercollar, and patch pockets (Figure 1). If a very tailored look is desired or more body is needed, a lighter weight interfacing may be fused to the pieces listed above and to the uppercollar and front facings (Figure 2). Lightweight interfacing can also be used in the sleeve and jacket hems.
Always make a test sample to determine if the fusible interfacing gives the desired amount of support and body. If the interfacing covers only half of the test sample, you can determine whether the appearance of the fashion fabric is changed. If bubbles, ridges, or color distortion occurs, attach the fusible interfacing to an underlining or use a sewn-in interfacing with a traditional tailoring method. A ridge may be less noticeable if you pink all edges which will not be caught in a seam.

For more information on selecting fusible interfacings, pick up HE-223, "Interfacing" from your county Extension office.

Before you fuse the interfacing to the fabric, follow these steps to eliminate as much excess bulk as possible:

- Trim the interfacing 1/2 inch along the seam allowance edges. This leaves 1/8 inch of the interfacing which will be caught in the stitching and helps the interfacing to stay fused to the fabric.
- Trim the interfacing diagonally across enclosed corners such as the notch and collar points (Figure 3).
- Remove most of the interfacing from the dart area but leave enough interfacing so that the edges will be caught in the dart stitching line (Figure 4).
- Cut the sleeve and jacket hem interfacing pieces so they are 1/2 inch wider than the depth of the hem facing and pink the long, upper edge. This technique can only be used if the interfacing does not create a ridge on the right side of the fashion fabric (Figure 5).
- Stop the interfacing at the fold line so that it does not extend into the hem or front facings.

Be sure to follow the manufacturers directions when fusing interfacing to the garment. Fuse all interfacing to the fabric before stitching any seams.

Fuse the interfacing in the jacket and hem areas with the straight edge along the hem fold. Lap any edges where the interfacing joins, such as where the hem interfacing joins the front interfacing (Figure 6). If the interfacing created a ridge on the test sample, cut the interfacing the exact width of the hem and sleeve facings and fuse it to the hem facings, instead of fusing to the wrong side of the jacket (Figure 7). If the edge of the hem facing needs to be eased so that it will lie flat when turned, do the ease stitching and pressing before fusing the interfacing to the hem facings.

When fusing the interfacing to the jacket front, the roll line will be flatter if the interfacing is cut along the roll line before it is fused; however, this technique may be too severe for lightweight fabrics such as linen and linen blends (Figure 8).

If using woven interfacing or felt insertion interfacing for the undercollar, cut the interfacing on the bias. If using a non-woven, cut the interfacing so that the greatest amount of stretch goes around the neck line. Trim the seam allowances and corners, and fuse the interfacing to the undercollar. Mark the roll line on the interfacing. Stitch the center back collar seam, trim, and press the seam allowances open (Figure 9).

Stiffen the stand area of the undercollar with another piece of fusible interfacing. Trim 1/2 inch of the neckline seam allowance from this interfacing and fuse it to the stand area after the center back collar seam is sewn and pressed (Figure 10).

If desired, fuse a lightweight interfacing to the uppercollar, after trimming 1/2 inch from all edges of the interfacing.

Fold the undercollar along the roll line and pin it around a pressing ham. Shape the roll line with steam, and allow the collar to cool before unpinning (Figure 11).

**Basic Sewing**

Sew the jacket together along the side, center back, and shoulder seams. Sew and attach the pockets as directed in the pattern guide. Stay-stitch the neck edge of the jacket at 1/2 inch and clip the neckline seam allowance to the stay-stitching.

Stitch the undercollar to the jacket. Be sure to match the notches and the pattern markings or dots on the gorge line. Backstitch at each end of the neckline seam. Trim the seam allowances to approximately 1/4 inch and press open (Figure 12).

Stitch the sleeves together and set the sleeves into the armholes of the jacket following the directions on the pattern guide. Press the sleeve caps from the inside as they were stitched. Never top press sleeve caps.

Attach each sleevehead to the top of the sleeve caps. Do this by cutting a crosswise strip of polyester fleece, 3 by 10 inches for each armhole. Fold down 1 inch along one long edge (Figure 13). Pin the sleeve-
head inside the sleeve cap along the armhole seam with the wider edge against the sleeve. The end of the sleeve head should not extend beyond the armhole notches. If the sleevehead seems too thick for lightweight fabrics, trim it to 1 1/2 inches in width and pin unfolded into the sleeve cap (Figure 14). Hand stitch
the sleevehead to the seam line, and trim, rounding the corners of the sleevehead.

Pin shoulder pads in position with the armhole edges extending 1/2 inch beyond the armhole seams. Hand tack the shoulder pads securely to the shoulder and armhole seams.

Because the interfacing was fused to the jacket and sleeve hems before any stitching was accomplished, the hems can be hand sewn to the garment as usual.

**Collar/Lining Unit**

Sew the uppercollar to the facing. Be sure to match the pattern markings along the gorge line. Backstitch at each end of the neckline seam. Trim the seam allowances to approximately 3/8 inch and press open.

Stitch the lining together and set the sleeves into the lining. Attach the lining to the uppercollar/facing unit, leaving the lower 5-6 inches of the lining/facing seam open so that the lining hem pleat can be formed later (Figure 15).

**Join the Units**

With the right sides together, pin the uppercollar/lining unit to the undercollar/jacket unit (Figure 16). The uppercollar should be longer and wider than the undercollar, so it can be eased onto the undercollar. This ease provides enough extra fabric for the two collars to lie smoothly when turned and to hide the undercollar. Ease by pinning the collars together at the center back, the collar points, and at the dot where the collar joins the gorge seam. Stretch the undercollar slightly and pin where needed. Stitch from the center back, around the collar to the pattern marking (dot), and backstitch to secure the stitching (Figure 17). When stitching, stretch the undercollar where needed to maintain the ease and shorten the stitch length to 20 stitches per inch at the collar points where close trimming will be required.

Pin the front facing to the jacket, matching the notches and the clip marking at the bottom of the roll line. The lapel of the facing should be longer and wider than that of the jacket. Thus the jacket must be stretched slightly in the lapel area to maintain the ease needed so that the facing rolls smoothly when the lapel is turned to the right side. Turn the seam allowances up, out of the stitching line, and pin the lapels together, matching the dot on the gorge seam. Begin stitching at this point, leaving a tiny hole where the collar joins the lapel so that the fabric will not pucker when turned to the right side (Figure 18). Also shorten the stitch length at the notch point where trimming will be required. Continue stitching to the bottom of the jacket. Turn the garment over and stitch the other half of the jacket.

Clip the seam allowances at the bottom of the roll line to the stitching so that the lapels will turn evenly. Grade the seam allowances, trimming as much as possible at the corners. Understitch; turn the jacket right side out, and press. Understitching may be omitted if the edges will be topstitched.
Topstitching

For professional looking topstitching, use topstitching thread or two strands of regular sewing thread. If using regular sewing thread, wind two strands on the bobbin simultaneously. To do this, run both threads through the machine guides as usual until you are ready to thread the hole in the bobbin. Thread a large-eye needle with both threads, then wind both threads through the bobbin. Hold the needle containing the two threads close to the bobbin winder as you wind so that the two threads wind as one (Figure 19). Thread the top of the machine as usual using two strands of thread and run both threads through the needle. You may need to use a larger machine needle. Also, if the machine has only one spool pin, place a plastic drinking straw over the spool pin to lengthen it. If you have only one spool of thread, wind an extra bobbin and place it on the spool pin under the spool of thread. Then, wind the bobbin and thread the machine with both strands of thread as directed above.

Topstitch as directed in the pattern guide. One row of topstitching is traditionally placed 1/4 inch from the edge of the fabric. Topstitching looks more professional if stitched as a stairstep design at the lapel notch (Figure 20).

After topstitching, pull the loose threads to the wrong side of the garment. Tie a square knot. Then, thread a large needle with the loose ends of the thread and take a long stitch running the needle between the layers of the fabric. Clip the loose thread. If you began this final hand stitch right next to the knot, the knot will be inconspicuous.

For more information on clothing construction techniques read the following:
HE-223 Interfacings
HE-224 Facings
HE-225 Collars
HE-226 Bindings
HE-227 Fasteners: Hooks, Snaps, and Tapes
HE-228 Seams and Seam Finishes
HE-229 Linings and Underlinings

References