

"Beatrix" Jacket Pattern Instructions



Notes:

This pattern was inspired by the example of Beatrix Potter, who worked all around her English farm, caring for animals, sketching and watercoloring - all while wearing tailored tweed jackets and skirts! I also drew inspiration from an original double-breasted jacket in my collection and photographs of two tailored jackets from the late Edwardian period. The princess lines of the jacket make it flattering for any figure, while the notched collar gives it a polished look that is quite up-to-date. Enough garment ease has been included so that you can wear the jacket comfortably over a blouse, but you can also make it button high and wear it as a blouse (this works particularly well if you use linen or another lightweight material). My 1909 "Beatrix" Walking Skirt pattern was designed to complement this jacket, although you can certainly pair it with just about any long, A-line skirt for a trim, uncluttered look.

I do recommend that you make a muslin toile before you begin on your jacket so that you will be able to adjust the fit before you cut into your fashion material. No one falls exactly into the "average" pattern size, and you will want to adjust the bustline curve, hip area and

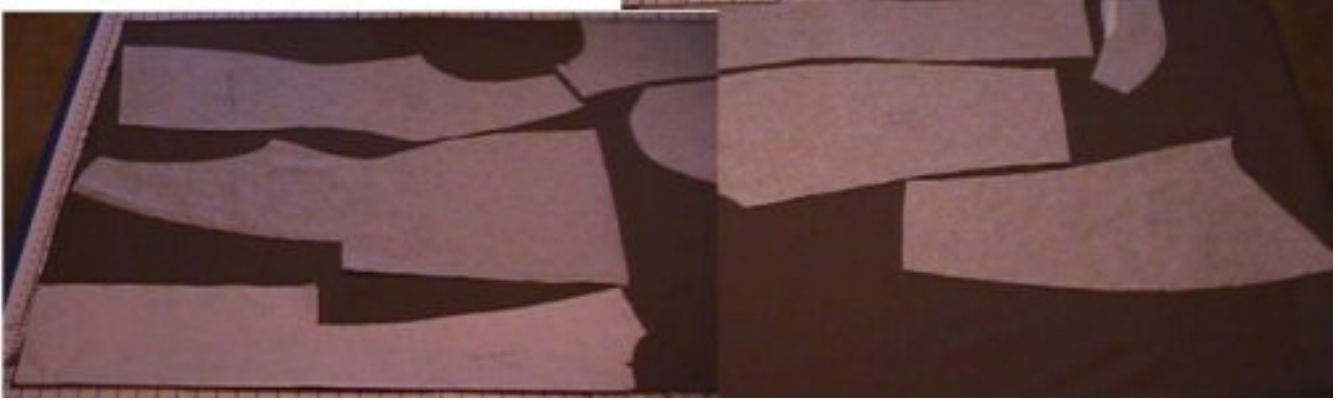
back vents to suit your shape exactly. Short-waisted ladies may also want to take up the waistline a bit. For full instructions on how to resize any pattern, see www.sensibility.com/pattern/resizepattern.htm. Many of the illustrations included in these instructions come from period tailoring books and will help you see exactly what you are aiming for with each step (particularly during fitting). I've also included three pocket options in the appendix so you can further customize the look of your jacket to suit your individual tastes.

Recommended materials include woolsens, tweed, linen, lightweight denim and other suiting materials. For a fancier jacket, Dupioni silk works beautifully-particularly if you plan to make the jacket to wear as a blouse.



This illustration shows an earlier incarnation of the princess-line jacket (note puffed sleeves). Interestingly, the purpose of the picture was to show what style of hat was not considered appropriate to wear with a smartly tailored jacket!

Suggested pattern layout:



Here is the suggested layout for the pattern pieces on 54"-wide material for a size 18.

The fashion material left over after you've cut out the jacket pieces will be used to cut out two more front pieces (self-lining). [Note: You can cut the collar out of contrasting material if you like; this is a period correct option—black velvet was quite common, as you see in the illustration above.]

Cutting Layout for Lining:



Assembly Instructions:

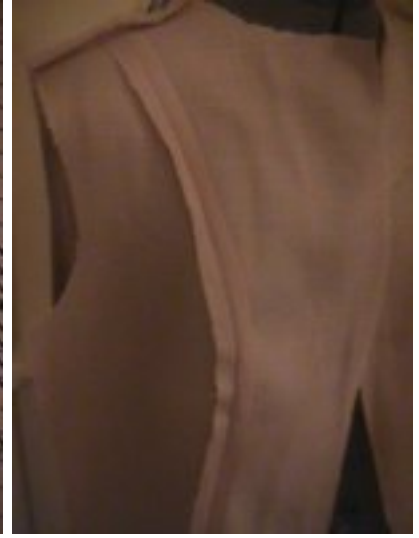
1. Begin by cutting out your toile of muslin or another inexpensive material. Set your stitch length the longest it will go on your machine. [Note: If you are very sure of the accuracy of your measurements, you can use your jacket lining material to make your toile. But if you feel you will need to make significant changes to the toile, use an inexpensive material.]
2. Baste together all of the jacket pieces, beginning with the center back and working your way around each side to the front, matching notches as you go.



Easing stitches at bustline curve.



Side front pinned to front.



Side front seam sewn.

(Click thumbnails for larger images.)

3. Sew each side back piece to the back down to the dot marked on the pattern.



Side back pinned.

(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

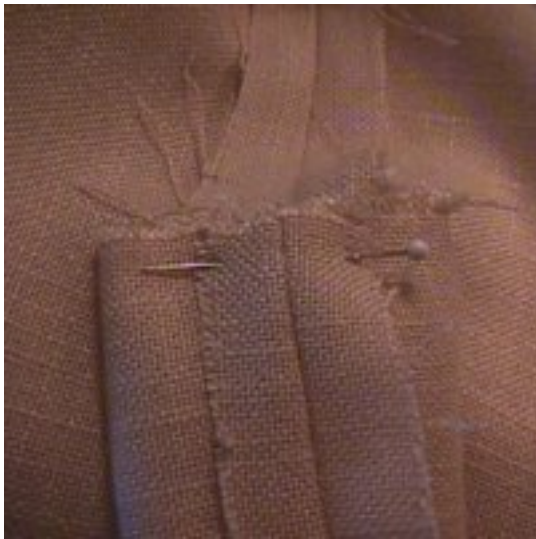
Sew the back pleats together, leaving the top extensions free as shown below.



Pleat sewn.

(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

Open out the top pleat extensions and tack them down as shown below.



Pleat pinned open.



Pleat stitched.

[Note: To stitch the pleats without stitching showing on the outside, you just stitch the free edge of each side of the pleat until you reach the side back seam and stop.]

4. Sew the shoulder seams together, matching seams at center.



*Shoulders pinned with seams matching.
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)*



Back of jacket

5. Baste sleeve pieces together, matching notches and easing through elbow (between the marks). If you are using a fabric with a bit of stretch to it, you may find you do not need the easing stitches in the elbow at all.
6. Run basting stitches in tops of sleeves, then pin sleeves into armholes, matching the X on the sleeve pattern to the side seam of the jacket. Ease sleeves into armholes and baste in place.



Sleeve pinned into armhole.
(Click for larger image.)

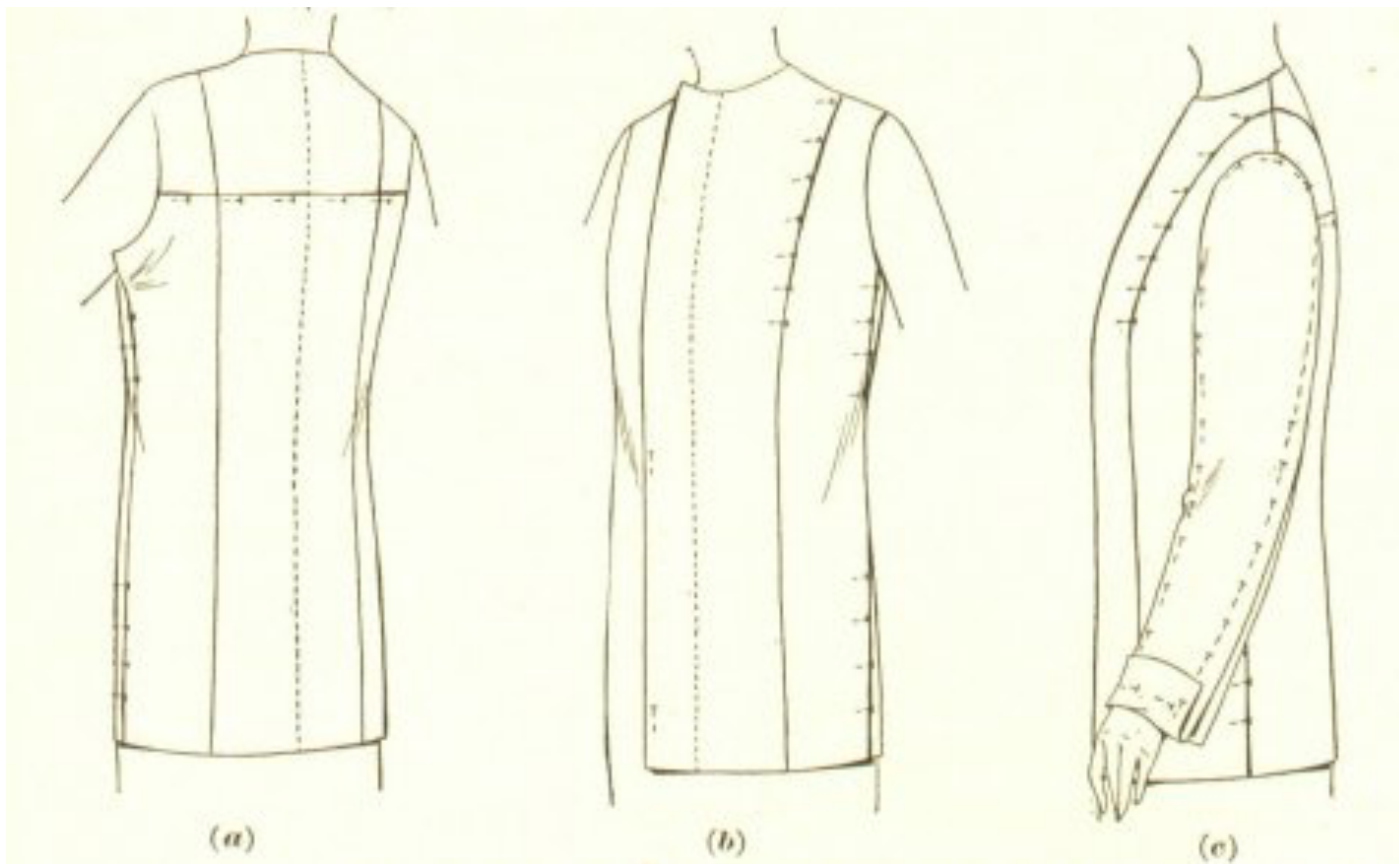
Fitting Instructions:

1. Put on whatever you plan to wear beneath your jacket. It is meant to be worn over at least a blouse and a skirt (and your regular undergarments). If you plan to wear a corset, put that on with your other correct undergarments before you put on a blouse. It is a good idea to wear a skirt or at least something with a waistband so that this bulk at the waistline is accounted for when you do your fitting. You do not want to fit your jacket so tightly that it is uncomfortable over these other clothes. If you are using a mannequin to check fit, size it up properly, then dress it in the clothes you plan to wear.
2. Try on your toile *wrong side out*, pinning the front closed (single- or double-breasted) and folding out the self-lapel along the fold line (Note: The fold line is a suggestion; you can fold the lapel out to suit your own tastes, having the jacket button higher or lower). When you overlap the jacket front, take into account the fact that you will "lose" 5/8" of each front edge in the front/lining seam allowance. The single-breasted jacket then needs to overlap enough to accommodate a single row of buttons (at least one inch). The double-breasted jacket overlaps enough to accommodate a double row of buttons (at least three inches). You want the toile wrong side out so that you can mark any changes directly onto it at the seams.
3. If you do not have a partner to help you, stand before a full-length mirror. Give the jacket an overall look first, checking to see if there are any odd puckers or wrinkles where you don't want them. (IMPORTANT: Keep in mind that you are checking a toile made of thin material—suiting fabrics will not behave in exactly the same manner!) To check your back, use a hand mirror to see the reflection of the back of the coat in your large mirror. If the fit is good (not binding in the sleeves, too loose or tight in the waistline or puckering in the bustline) pat yourself on the back. You can move on to the "Construction" section! If you see some problem areas, continue on through the directions below for improving the fit.

Troubleshooting:

1. **Jacket too loose:** If you are slender and/or long waisted, you may find the jacket is too

loose in the bustline or the waistline. Additionally, you may notice that the armholes seem to stand out too far from your body. Below are three original illustrations from my period sewing manual which show where to adjust the toile for a better fit:

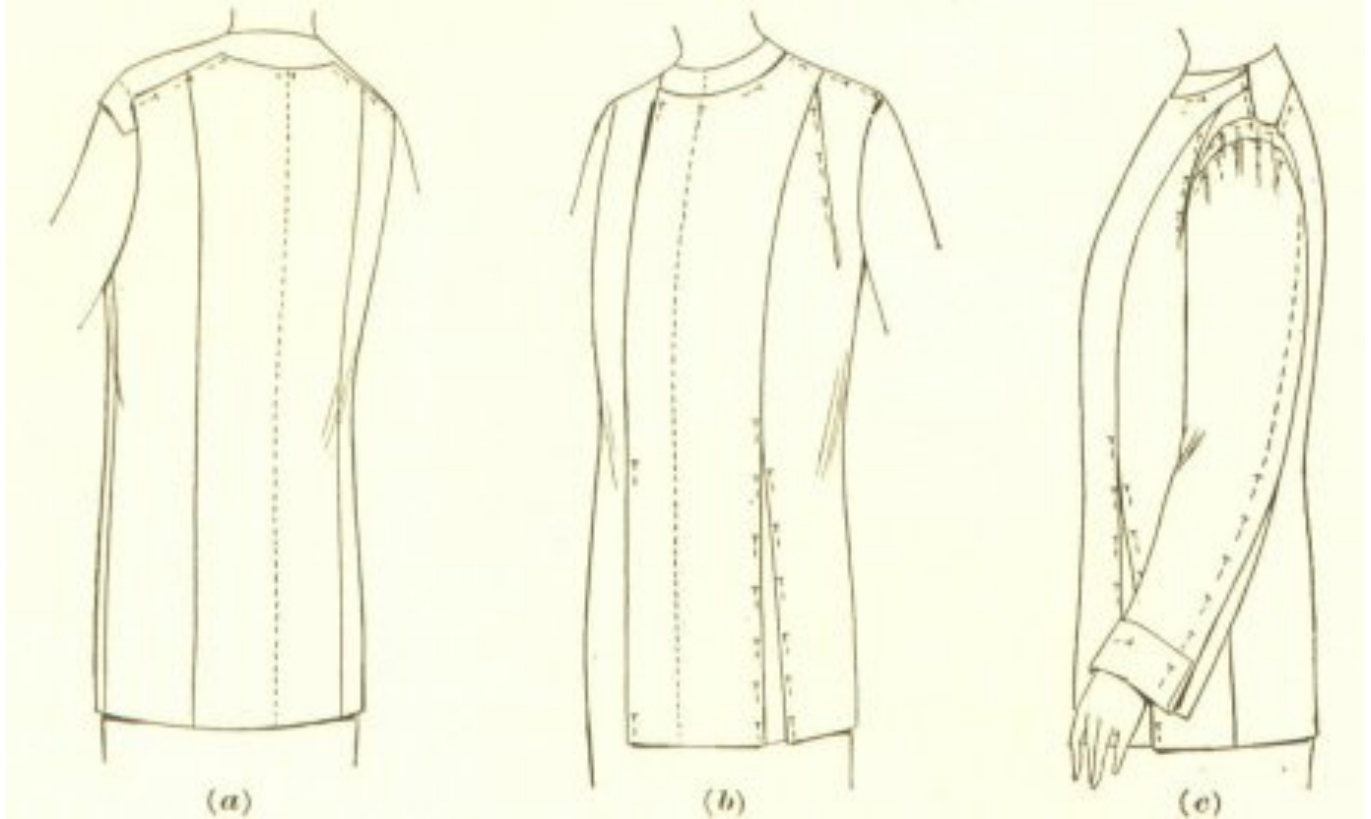


Picture (a) shows a tuck pinned across the back of the jacket to raise it. This change is due when the back of the jacket looks too long compared to the front or when the bottom of the armhole stands out too far from the body. Make the tuck as deep as it needs to be to bring up the bottom of the jacket and fix the gaping armhole. You can always cut the armhole down later if it becomes too tight. Also shown are pins at the side seam to take in any fullness there.

If you find that there are puckers above the bustline on the jacket front, pin in the fullness at the side front seam, grading to nothing toward the top, as shown in **picture (b)**.

If the sleeves are too loose, follow the pinning guidelines shown in **picture (c)** to achieve a smooth fit. If the elbow fullness does not hit your elbow area, mark where that needs to go. Now is the time to mark how long you want your sleeves (keeping in mind that you need to leave enough extra material to turn under when you finish the sleeves).

- 2. Jacket too tight in the bust, waist, hips, shoulders or sleeves:** You can basically follow the directions given for a too-tight jacket, simply adding to the areas shown instead of subtracting. The best places to add to the jacket are at the side seams and the side front seams. In each area, you want to grade the seams from the top down. If the armhole is too binding simply cut it down until it is comfortable (keeping in mind that it will have a 5/8" seam and will be that much bigger all the way around when finished—and making sure you enlarge the sleeves to match). Take care when adding to the bustline fullness so that you do not end up with an odd "point" at the front. Make the curve gradual as you add fullness in this area. If you have a more rounded figure and/or broader shoulders, you will need to try one of the methods illustrated below:



Picture (a) shows a panel added in at the top of the jacket to broaden the shoulders and lower the back of the jacket. This is called for if the coat pulls up at the back or if the armholes cut in too tightly. Rip out the shoulder seams and insert a new piece of muslin (3-4 inches deep) across the back neckline. Cut it to follow the curve at the base of the neck so that it matches the original pattern piece in the neckline. When you take the toile apart later to use as your final pattern, cut through the new muslin panel above each shoulder where the seam should go, and remember to add 5/8" for your seam allowance on each cut.

In **picture (b)** you can see where a panel has been added in the side front seam at the hipline to give more room there. A dart can also be taken between the side front and the armhole to take up any puckering there.

Finally, **picture (c)** shows how the sleeve has been lengthened at the top to accommodate a larger armhole. The rest of the sleeve can be marked along the pinned lines in the illustration to show where extra fabric is necessary for a more comfortable fit. Go ahead and mark the sleeve length now, making sure you leave enough at the end to turn under when you finish the sleeves.

[Note for short-waisted ladies: If you find that the jacket's waistline hits you at the top of the hipline, you will want to shorten the jacket accordingly. I have instructions for altering patterns for short-waisted gals on my [Resize Any Pattern](#) page. You'll shorten each section of the jacket above the waistline, folding your toile/pattern pieces down to take up any needed length.]

3. After you have pinned everything to your satisfaction, remove the jacket and mark all of the sections you have pinned with a pen or fabric marker. If you are taking in some seams, trim the marked seams down to within 5/8" of your marks (in order to leave a seam allowance). If you'll be adding to any seams, you can either note down how much to add along your marked lines or create extensions out of muslin and add them where needed. Now remove all basting stitches to take the toile apart. Iron the pieces, and there is your final pattern for your jacket!

Constructing the Jacket:

1. To begin with, if you are using wool or a wool blend, you'll need to "size" your fashion material by sponging it with a damp cloth and ironing on the appropriate setting. This will prevent any further shrinkage with subsequent cleanings or ironing. If you're using linen or denim, make sure you pre-wash the fabric to prevent shrinkage later.
2. Using your toile pieces, follow the pattern layout given at the start of these instructions and cut out your jacket and jacket lining. Cut the collar from either the same material or a contrasting fabric if you wish. (Optional: If you're using thin or stretchy fabric, I recommend cutting two jacket front pieces from your interfacing to reinforce your lapels. Baste interfacing to wrong side of jacket fronts before you begin construction.)
3. Sew all jacket seams together, beginning with the center back and matching notches all the way around to the front. For larger bust curves (and depending upon your material), you may need to use basting stitches to ease the bust curve of the side front into the front. Just go slowly and carefully, and you'll avoid puckers. Sew the back pleats as instructed in the toile section above. Clip curves where necessary and iron the entire jacket, pressing open all seams. [**Note:** If you intend to add pockets, scroll down now to the appendix.]
4. Sew sleeves together, matching notches and easing through the elbow (if necessary). Run basting stitches at the tops of the sleeves, then pin them into the armholes, using basting stitches to ease the cap of the sleeve into the top of the armhole so there are no puckers. Stitch and press.
5. Pin interfacing to the wrong side of two collar sections and baste it in place.



Interfacing basted to collar and clipped close to stitching.

Pin collar sections together and stitch down the center seam.



Center collar seam sewn.

Clip center seam allowance at dot.

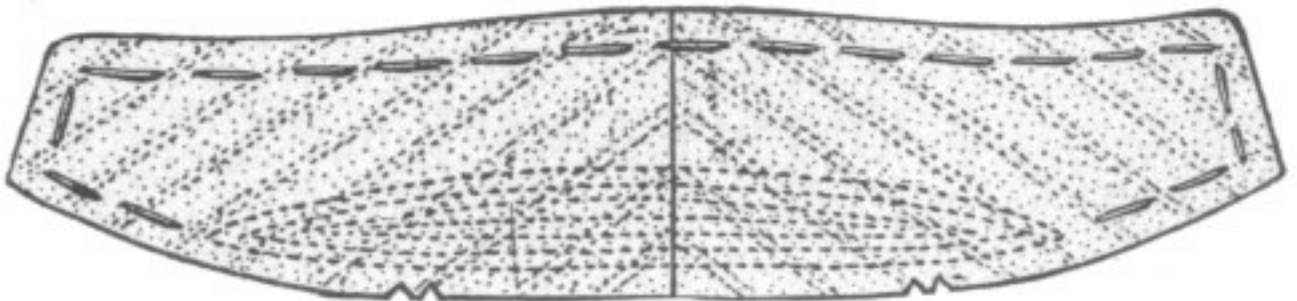


Clipping to seam at dot.

(Note: I used a different fabric, because it was easier to see this step.)

Press seam open.

- Optional Period Technique:** You can make "standing" stitches on the lower portion of the collar section that has interfacing on it to help encourage the collar to fold down properly when it is on the coat. All of these stitches go below the clip on the center back collar seam. Here is a 1911 illustration to help you out (you are seeing the "right" side of the collar):



- Take the two collar pieces and pin them, right sides together. Stitch up one short end, around the top edge and down the other short end as illustrated below:

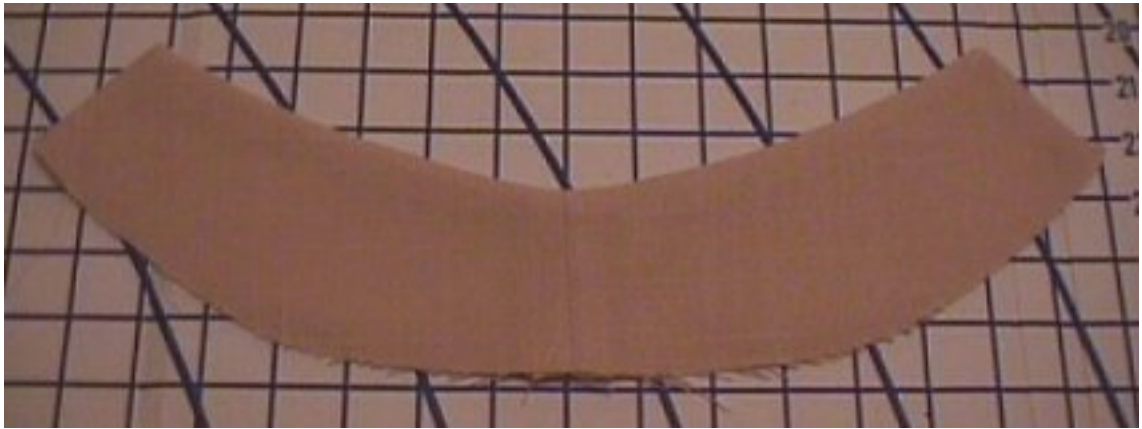


- Trim corners, clip curves and turn the collar right side out.



Clipping corner.
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

Press.



Collar pressed.

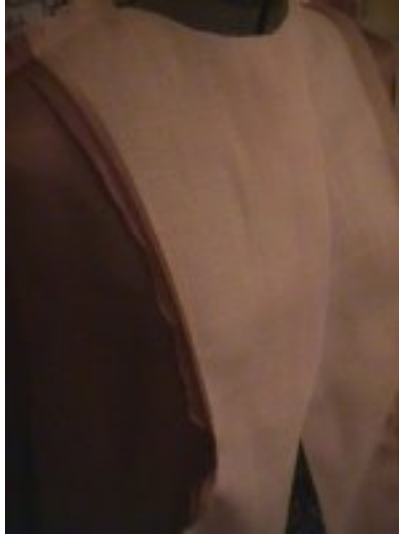
9. Pin collar to the neckline of jacket, matching center seam with jacket center back seam and bringing the collar around to the "dip" in the jacket's front neckline.



Collar pinned to jacket.
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

Stitch in place.

10. Try on your jacket now to check the fit. Make any needed adjustments before you move on to the lining.
11. Now sew your jacket lining together, beginning at the center back and working your way around to the front. (Remember that the front lining piece of the jacket is made from your fashion fabric!) \



*Jacket lining sewn together.
Front lining is jacket fabric.*

Clip curves where necessary and iron the lining. Insert sleeves just as you did for the jacket.

12. Pin the lining to your jacket, right sides together, matching neckline and front openings.



Lining pinned.



Close-up of lining pinned at front neckline.

(Click thumbnails for larger images.)

Stitch all the way around from the bottom of the left front opening to the bottom of the right front opening, taking care that your fashion material does not pucker or shift as you sew. Clip curves at the neckline.



Curves clipped.

Turn lining to the inside of the jacket and understitch the front edges up to the desired lapel fold line to prevent the lining from rolling out. [Click [HERE](#) to see a video clip demonstrating understitching!]

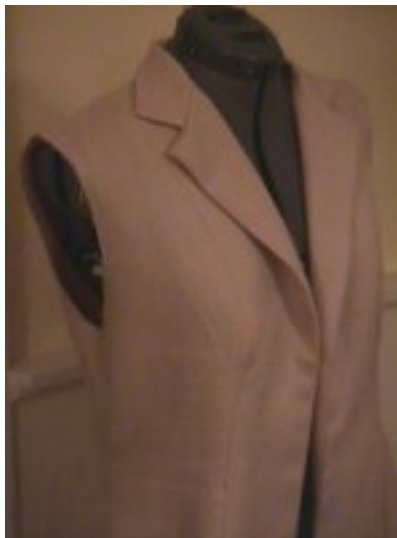


Understitching.

(Click thumbnail for larger image.)



Inside of jacket with lining.

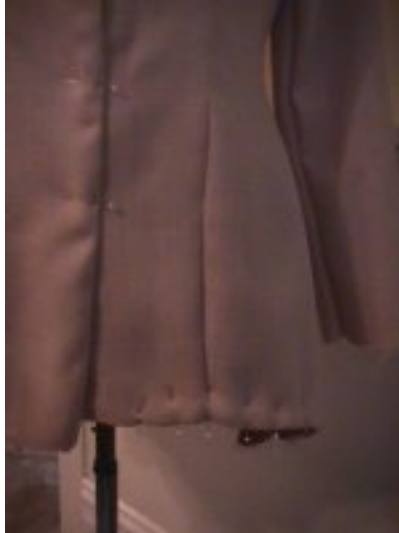


A view of the collar correctly sewn on.

(Click thumbnails for larger images.)

Finishing the Jacket:

1. Try on the jacket, pushing the sleeve linings down through the sleeves. The collar should naturally fold itself down at the point on the center seam where you made the clip (just above the optional standing stitches). Now you are ready to finish off the hem and the sleeve ends. Begin by trying on your jacket (or putting it on the mannequin) and pulling the lining down evenly all the way around. Turn up 5/8" at the bottom of the jacket toward the lining, then turn up an equal amount of the lining toward the jacket.



Pinning the lining to the jacket.
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

Pin the jacket and lining all the way around the bottom and slipstitch in place.



Slipstitching the lining to the jacket.
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

[Important Note: Do not attempt to pin the lining to the jacket with the jacket laid out flat! You will end up with an uneven or puckered hemline all the way around. The jacket must be hanging properly from a mannequin or a person while you are doing the pinning.]



Wrong way to pin hem.

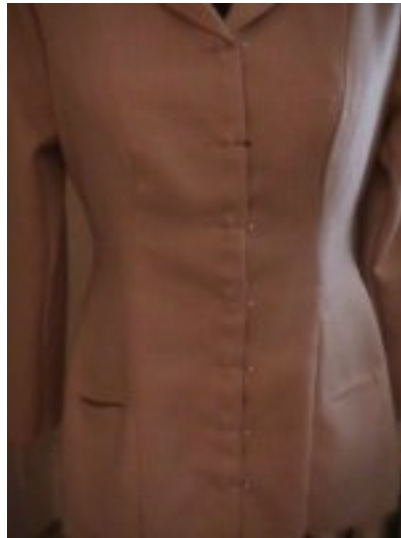


Results of bad pinning job.

(Click thumbnails for larger images.)

2. Finish the sleeves in the same manner, turning under the sleeve ends toward the lining and turning under an equal amount of the lining toward the sleeve ends. Pin and slipstitch together. Now iron the entire jacket, paying particular attention to the hem and sleeve ends so that they lie flat and smooth.

3. Mark where you want to place the buttonholes on the right front of the jacket. You can use anywhere from five to eight buttons, depending upon how high you intend to button the jacket and how far apart you want to space the buttons. I recommend having a button at the waistline with two below that point, then as many buttons above it as you desire, depending on where you want the lapels to fold out.



Jacket pinned closed with buttonholes marked.
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

Make the buttonholes, then try on the jacket and use pins to mark where the buttons will go. Sew your buttons on. Once all are firmly sewn in place, you are ready to put on your jacket, button it up and go to town!





Finished jacket shown with "Beatrix" skirt.

Enjoy your new creation!

Appendix

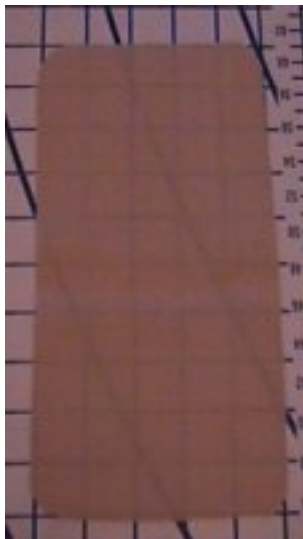
Pockets are always handy, and you may wish to include them in your jacket. I've placed a guideline on the side front pattern piece to show you approximately where you would place a pocket, but you can use your imagination to place yours higher or lower. You can also get creative with more diagonal slash lines or-if you're feeling up to a challenge-curved or "S"-shaped pocket lines! The illustrations in the instructions came from a period dressmaking book in my collection, as did the instructions. The photographs below will show you the details of the first option. As complicated as these steps may look at first blush, I think you'll be amazed at how easily a slashed pocket goes in! If you've never tried your hand at this type of pocket before, experiment with some scrap fabric until you are happy with the results. You can also use these same steps to make pockets in the inside lining of your jacket!

Pocket #1: The Slash Pocket with Binding and Pocket Section in One Piece



Finished slash pocket.
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

This method of making a bound pocket is for use when material is light in weight and when you have enough of your garment material or of a contrasting material to make the pocket. Run a line of basting to mark the pocket opening, letting it show plainly on both sides of the material. Arrange the section on the outside of the garment with right sides together and the center of the section over the line of basting that marks the opening of the pocket.



Pocket cut out.

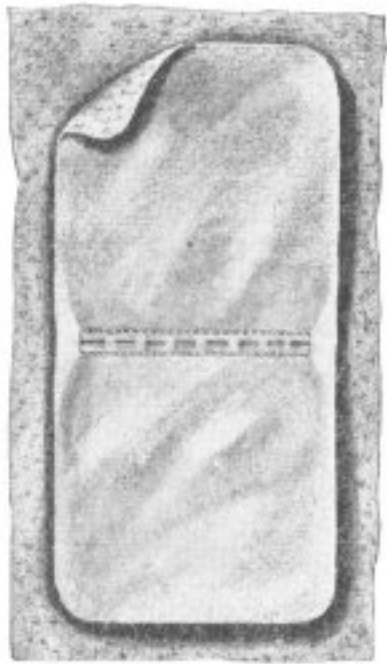


Pocket pinned to right side of jacket.

(Click for larger image.) (Click for larger image.)

(Click thumbnails for larger images.)

Baste to position. Stitch across the ends and each side of the line of basting, keeping $\frac{1}{8}$ th of an inch from it on each side (179).



179—Stitch the pocket
to the outside

Period illustration of stitching.



Stitching around the basting line.

(Click thumbnails for larger images.)

Slash along the basting line to within $\frac{3}{16}$ ^{ths} of an inch from each end. Make a diagonal cut from that point, almost, but not quite, to the stitching line at each corner, forming a sideways "Y" at each end.



Cutting along the slash line.
(Click thumbnail for larger image.)

Press the seams open. Push the pocket through to the inside, letting it form a binding $\frac{1}{8}$ " wide on the right side (180). This will form a tiny inverted plait at each end on the wrong side.



Pushing the pocket to the inside.



Pocket pushed through.



Pocket seen from the inside.

(Click thumbnails for larger images.)

Put crosswise stitches through the binding edges to hold them in shape until the garment is finished.



Basting edges together.



Basting edges together.

(Click thumbnails for larger images.)

Run lines of stitching above and below the opening, along the lines where the upper and lower bindings join the garment.



Sewing around the opening.

(Click for larger image.)

Turn to the inside of the garment and fold the upper section down.



*Folding the top of the pocket down.
(Click for larger image.)*

Baste and stitch the edges of the two pocket sections together, trimming off any unevenness. Overcast the edges.



Sewing pocket together.



Trimming off excess.

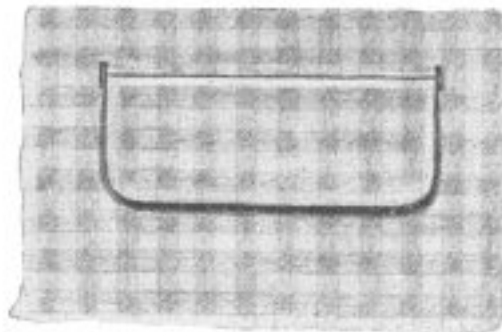


Finished pocket inside.

(Click thumbnails for larger images.)

Press the finished pocket from both the inside and outside of the garment.

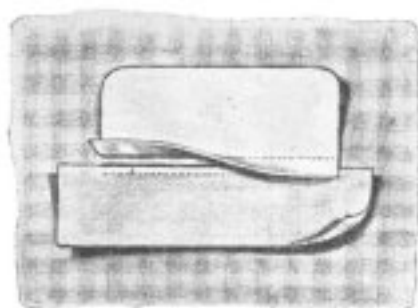
Pocket #2: Pocket with In-and-Out Lap (Self Fabric Flap)



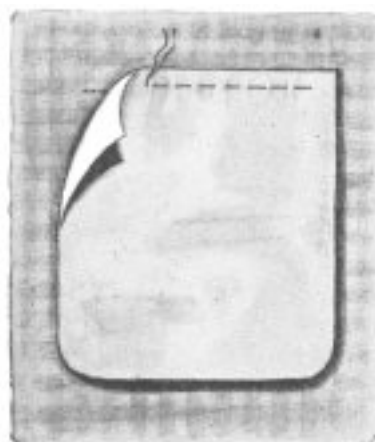
*188—Finished Pocket from the outside
(Click for larger image.)*

Run a line of basting to mark the pocket opening, letting it show plainly on both sides of the

material. The lap must be finished completely before the pocket is begun. Cut the piece for the lap from the material of the garment, being careful to have the grain or stripe match the garment when the lap is laid in the position it will take when the pocket is completed (188). Stitch the lap and its lining with right sides together, then turn right side out and baste around the turned edges. Leave the finished edges soft or topstitch close to the edge, according to the finish of the garment. Press. Baste along the top, leaving the edges raw and being careful to have the top or outer section a trifle easy. Baste a pocket section on the inside of the garment, placing the top half-inch above the line of basting that marks the opening of the pocket (184).



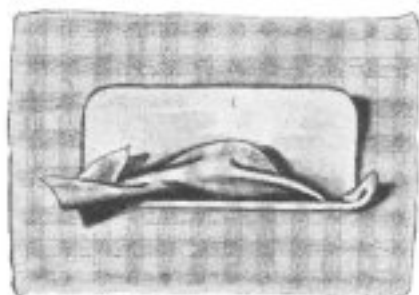
185—Stitch lap and facing on the outside



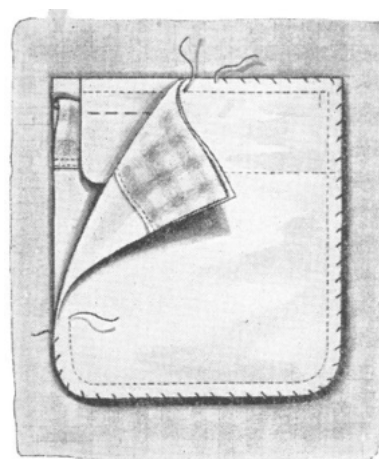
184—Baste one section inside the garment

Turn the garment to the outside. Cut a facing of the material about two inches wide and long enough to extend one inch beyond each end of the basting line that marks the pocket opening. Lay this on the garment below the line for the opening and with its upper edge just touching this line. Baste and stitch $\frac{1}{8}$ th of an inch below the edge (185).

Lay the lap right side down on the outside of the garment, with its finished edge upward and its raw edge extending $\frac{1}{8}$ th of an inch below the line of stitching that holds the facing to the garment (185). Stitch the lap to the garment $\frac{1}{8}$ th of an inch above the top of the facing. Slash between the stitchings, being sure to turn the edge of the lap up out of the way (185). Press the seam of the facing open and push the facing through the opening, letting it form a binding $\frac{1}{8}$ th of an inch wide (186).



186—Slash, and push the facing through



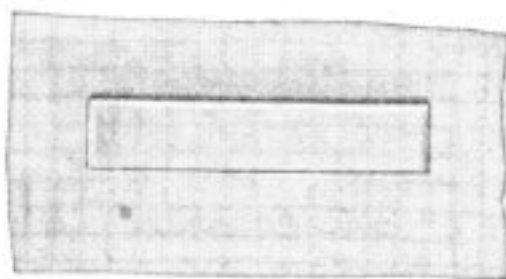
187—Join the inner and outer sections

Baste and stitch along the line where the binding joins the garment. Turn the lap down and baste close to the upper edge. Turn the garment to the inside and stitch the facing twice near the lower edge, stitching it to the pocket section but not to the garment (187). Push the lap through to the

inside, with the raw edge upward and the lap downward, and baste to the garment just below the pocket opening (187). Face the inner pocket section with a piece of material about three inches wide, of the same kind used for the lap. Place the inner pocket section over the outer with the edges even, and baste along the upper edge. If the garment is finished with soft edges, blindstitch the top of the inner section to the garment. If the garment is finished with topstitched edges, turn it to the right side and stitch through all thicknesses just above the line where the lap joins the garment, then sew at each end to reinforce the opening. Turn the garment wrong side out and stitch the pocket sections together. Overcast the edges (187).

Finish the ends with bar tacks on the right side. Pull out the basting that holds the pocket-lap and pull the lap out through the opening (188) Press the finished pocket from both the inside and outside of the garment.

Pocket #3: Pocket with Welt and Pocket Section in One Piece



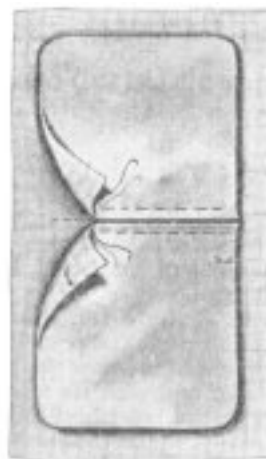
200—The finished pocket from the outside

(Click for larger image.)

This method is to be used when material is light in weight and you have enough to make the pocket and welt of the same material as the garment or of a contrasting material. Run a line of basting to mark the pocket opening, letting it show plainly on both sides of the material. Baste both pocket sections facedown on the right side of the garment with the raw edges exactly even with the line of basting that marks the opening of the pocket (198).



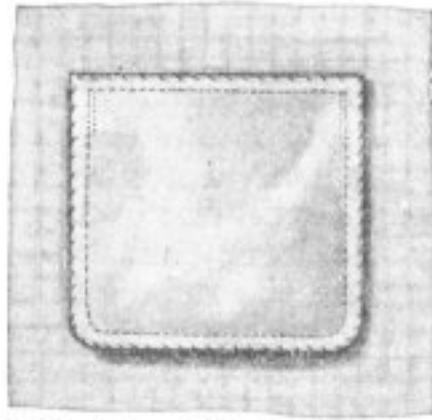
199—Slash, and push the sections through



198—Baste both sections to the outside of the garment

Run a row of machine stitching $\frac{3}{8}$ " from each end, leaving $\frac{3}{4}$ " between stitchings, and tie the threads securely. Slash along the basted line within $\frac{3}{16}$ " of each end. Make a diagonal cut from that point, almost, but not quite, to the stitching line at each corner, forming a sideways "Y" at each

end. Turn under the little triangle of material thus formed at each end of the pocket opening. Push the pocket sections through the slash, creasing the lower section at indicated tailor's tacks to form a welt (199).



*201—The finished pocket
from the inside*

Press down the seam at the lower edge of the opening, and press up the seam at the upper edge of the opening. Blindstitch along the seam at the lower edge to form a welt. Sew the ends of the welt to position (200). Stitch the pocket sections together and overcast the edges (201). Press the finished pocket (200-201) from both the inside and outside of the garment.

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A Note on the Sleeve Curve for Sizes 6-10 and 16-18

When you pin the sleeves together, you may find that you have an extra "tag" of fabric left over on the "notched" part of the lower sleeve next to the underarm curve. This is because it was not possible to draw a customized curve for each size without creating a confusing mess of overlapping lines on the pattern sheet! Simply trim away any extra material once you have your sleeve pieces sewn together. It won't hurt a thing or alter the way the sleeve fits into the armhole curve.

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