SHIRTS . . . .
how to make them

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Before making a shirt it is well to visit your local store or shopping center and check the ready made shirts and compare fabrics and patterns available. Then compare costs. There are two types of ready-to-wear shirts available for men - dress shirts and sport shirts. A dress shirt differs from a sport shirt mainly in its collar top, which is stitched to a collar band and designed to be worn with a tie. Such a shirt usually has one pocket on the left side. The collar of the sport shirt is attached directly to the body of the shirt, and may be worn closed or open.

Whether you buy a ready-to-wear or make one yourself, the value of a shirt lies in good design, good workmanship and good fabric. Suitable fabrics are: Cotton broadcloth, chambray, denim, pique, gingham, shantung, flannel -- wool or cotton, light weight woolen, oxford cloth, madras, percale.

Check the label of your fabric. It should be colorfast, pre-shrunk and durable. Buy the amount of fabric called for in your pattern. Allow an extra half yard if plaids or materials has to have a matched pattern. You will need two spools of matching thread. Interlining is frequently used in the collar. A thin muslin or batiste may be used. One-fourth yard should be sufficient for collar and cuffs. Durable buttons should be selected.

If you are a beginner, it is best to begin with the sport shirt. It is easier to make and does not have the stiff collar that is difficult to make. High precision manufacturing has standardized sizes of shirts most effectively. All ready-made shirts carry two size designations - the collar size and the sleeve length. Other dimensions of the shirt are proportionate.
Patterns for men's business shirts come in neck sizes: 14".14-1/2"; 15".15-1/2"; 16".16-1/2"; 17"; 18".

Sport shirts usually are classified as small, medium and large neck sizes. Small 14".14-1/2"; medium, 15".15-1/2"; large, 16".16-1/2"; extra large, 17".17-1/2".

Boy’s shirts and blouse patterns come in the following sizes:

Chest: 14, 26, 28, 30 and 32 inches
Neck: 11-1/2, 12, 12-1/2, 13,13-1/2 inches

When buying a shirt pattern for women or girls, you'll need the bust measurement. Length of shirt at center-back from natural neckline is also stated on the back of the pattern envelope.

Next test your pattern. Pin your pattern together as shown in the figure below and check your pattern with a shirt that fits and that you consider good design. You will need to check the following measurements:

1. Size of neck.
2. Length of sleeve - measure from center back at neckline to end of cuff. See figure 1.
3. Width of sleeve at arm hole and upper arm.
4. Length of cuff.
5. Length of shirt at center back.
6. Chest measurement.
7. Width of back at edge of yoke.

Fig. 1

TO MAKE THE SHIRT

First, straighten your fabric by tearing across end or pulling thread and cutting along where the thread was removed. Next, study your pattern with the aid of the guide sheet. Decide which layout corresponds to the view and fabric you are using.

Place all pieces of the pattern. Pin grain lines in place. Smooth the pattern, then pin the outer edges as needed. Cut and put all pieces to one side. All pattern details, notches, darts and seam lines should be transferred to the material with tracing wheel and dressmaker's carbon or by the use of tailor's tacks.

FOLLOW A PLANNED PROCEDURE WHEN SEWING

1. Make cuffs, collar and pocket. Do not top stitch collar and cuffs at this time.

Note: If making a wool shirt, according to some patterns, collar is made later.
2. Make placket on both sleeves.

3. Stay stitch neckline of back yoke and lining separately.

4. Put in gathers or pleats on lower back to fit below yoke.

5. Combine yokes and lower back.


7. Stay stitch neckline of front facings.

8. Turn back edge of facings and edge stitch.

9. Pin and sew shoulder seams to back yoke.

10. Pin and stitch facings to fronts unless they are cut in one with the fronts. Add a strip of interfacing for buttons and buttonholes and stitch to front facings. On wool shirts a complete front interfacing may be used.

11. Make and put pocket in place.

12. Sew in sleeves.

13. Put on collar.

14. Pin and sew up side seams of shirt and sleeves.

15. Put on cuffs and top stitch according to plan.

16. Hem shirt and top stitch according to plan.

17. Make buttonholes and sew on buttons.

18. Press as you sew.

Sewing details

1. Cuff

Baste interlining to the wrong side of the under section of cuff. Pin the top section of the cuff to the under part, right sides together. When pinning hold the two sections over your left hand with top section up. Ease the top section slightly as you pin.

Pin exactly on the seam line with pins right angle to seam a

(See figure No. 2 - arrow 1).
Stitch. Press the seam of the under layer back on the cuff. See figure no. 2 - arrow 2. Trim seam; pressed back to about 1/8 inch and the top seam a about 1/4". Notch seam at corners if round to take out surplus material; if sharp corners, clip. If sharp corners, clip interfacing back at corners before stitching to avoid unnecessary bulk. Turn cuff to the right side and roll the seam to a smooth edge and baste. Press. See figure No. 2 - arrow 3.

2. Collar

Make collar next. Apply interlining to the under section of the collar as you did when making cuff. Cut back corners of interfacing to avoid bulk. Ease the top layer in place - pin, baste and stitch. Press and turn in the same manner as the cuff. Note fig. No. 3 - arrow 1 and 2.

If the top and under collar are one piece, just stitch across the ends. A more detailed method is sometimes used in making a wool collar. Follow the pattern directions.

3. The Patch Pocket

Turn back 1/4 inch seam at the top of the pocket, press. Turn a 1 inch hem to the right side and stitch corners along seam line. See figure No. 4 - A.
Clip corners. Turn the hem of the pocket to the wrong side and press the two side seams in place. See figure No. 4 - B. Miter the two lower corners. See figure No. 4 - C.

4. Plackets - one piece placket

Follow pattern in cutting placket opening in sleeve and placket binding. The placket binding for sleeves is usually cut 1-1/2" to 2" wide on the lengthwise grain of material and twice as long as the slashed opening. Open up the slashed placket opening so that it forms a continuous straight edge. Apply the placket binding along the cut edge with the right side of binding to the wrong side of slash, keeping seam on the binding uniform in width and taper the seam of slash to almost nothing at the point. See Figure No 5 - 1. Pin and stitch.

Turn under 1/4 inch free edge of binding. Stitch the binding to the sleeve just covering the previous stitching. See figure 5 - 2 and 3. Four shows finished placket.

Tailored shirt placket - a two piece placket - See figure 6.

Note: If the overlap of this placket is pointed, cut it straight across and make the point as shown in diagram. See figure No. 6 - 1 and 2.

Figure 3 shows placket pieces folded and pressed.
Place the right side of both underlap and overlap to the wrong side of the sleeve. See figure 6-5. Be sure to place the underlap on the shorter side of the sleeve. Use the pressed seam line as a guide for stitching. Pin and stitch from the bottom of the sleeve up to edge of both underlap and overlap. Back stitch in both cases. Next cut the placket opening to the edge of placket. See figure 6. Turn the underlap to the right side first and stitch. Then push the folded overlap through to the right side. Stitch outside edge to end of placket opening. Stitch placket in place. See figure 17 for finished placket.

Attach yoke to back. Gather or pleat top of back between notches. Stitch one row of gather on the seam line, and another row 1/4 inch outside. See figure No. 7.

Fig. 7

Place the yoke and yoke facing on the back part of the shirt as shown in figure No. 8 and stitch all three together.

Fig. 8

Turn up the outside yoke and top-stitch close to seam. Press yoke facing upward. See figure No. 9.

Fig. 9
Seam the yoke facing to the front sections at shoulders, making outside seams. Turn under the seam allowance on shoulder edges of yoke and top-stitch over the seams. See figure No. 10.

Put a sleeve. Join seam with wrong sides together. Ease in fullness of sleeve. Make shoulder seam extend into the sleeve. Use a flatfell seam. See figure No. 11. For heavy fabric make a plain seam. Stitch with right sides facing each other. Press seam toward the yoke. Stitch the seam to the shirt 1/4 inch from the first row of stitching.

Next make continuous seam under arm from edge of sleeve to bottom of shirt. Use either flatfell or plain seam as suggested above. See figure No. 12.
Complete sleeve by putting on cuff. Seam one edge of cuff to lower edge of sleeve, RIGHT SIDE of cuff to WRONG SIDE of sleeve, matching notches to sleeve seam, and adjusting gathers. Turn in and stitch free edge of cuff over the seam. See figure No. 13.

Fit collar to neck line and pin. Clip through seam at shoulder seams. Apply front facings over collar, pin and baste. Hold top back section of collar out of seam line and stitch. Trim seam back and clip seam to avoid binding when collar is turned. You will note that the divided seam is turned down to the body of the shirt in front and up to the collar from shoulder seam to shoulder seam across back. See figure No. 14 - a, b, and c.

To hem the skirt, turn the corners as shown in figure No. 15. Figure No. 15-a shows facing turned back and stitched across. Figure No. 15-b shows cutting away corner to avoid bulk. Figure No. 15-c shows finished corner. Complete hem. Other methods of hemming may be used. Follow pattern directions.

The shirt is now ready for buttonholes, buttons and top stitching. Buttonholes may be made by hand or on the machine with a buttonholer. To make by hand, see Figure No. 16-A.B.C.D.