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# Making the Paper Dress Form



AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION DIVISION  
NORTH DAKOTA AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE  
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# Making the Paper Dress Form

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For the woman who wishes to dress well with the least possible cost, a home-made paper dress form is most valuable. The form is made by pasting strips of gummed paper on a tight fitting vest worn by the owner, removing the stiff form by cutting it up the back, reuniting the severed edges, and, if desired, mounting the form on a stand in such a manner that it is the exact height of the woman for whom it was made.

With one of these inexpensive forms, a woman can make for herself garments that fit, so essential to the well gowned person. One worker besides the woman upon whom it is fashioned, can make the form. In many communities, however, several women meet at a home and spend part of the day making forms for each other.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

The materials (Fig. 1) needed for making a paper dress form are:

**Vest**—A snug fitting vest of any of the following kinds may be used:

Regulation dress form vest, comes in small, medium and large sizes.

Ordinary vest with high neck and half or full length sleeves.

Old vests.

Tops of old union suits.

Men's undershirts. These last four usually need to be altered to fit the figure.

**Paper**—One roll of gummed tape one inch wide is needed. These rolls come in 500 and 800 foot rolls. A 500 foot roll will make a small form. Two 800 foot rolls will make three forms.



Fig. 1. MATERIALS NEEDED

The cost of material is small, seldom more than one dollar.

**Other Materials**—Needle and thread, tape line, cloth or sponge, yard stick or extension rule, dish of water, pencil, sharp scissors, and one sharp edged safety razor blade, are required.

### METHOD OF PROCEDURE

The method of making the paper dress form follows:

**Preliminary Preparation**—If the regulation dress form vest is used, nothing is necessary in the way of preparation. Have the model put the vest on over her corset, which should be a good fitting one, and drawn up at least an inch smaller than ordinarily worn, covered with a tight corset cover or brassiere and a smoothly fitting underskirt. Sew vest together to the top of the collar.

If an ordinary vest, man's shirt, or top of an old union suit is used, first cut off the trimming around the neck and the facings, buttons and button holes down the front. Sometimes it is necessary to cut the shirt to the bottom. Next, alter wherever alterations are necessary to make it fit the figure snugly, and trim off all darts close to seam. Then cut off a section of the sleeve to use as a collar. Split this in two, lap it over the neck so that the ribs run vertically, stretch it tight, being careful not to stretch neck of shirt. Baste with heavy thread or stitch on machine. Put it on model and proceed as before.

Cut the paper in long strips, two to three yards in length. Arrange the materials so they will be convenient to the worker. The sponge or small cloth should be dampened and held in the right hand of the person applying the strips. The tape is drawn over the sponge and dampened as it is pasted on, and torn off the required length. (Fig. 2). All strips are overlapping half their width. Too much emphasis cannot be placed on getting the strips tight and smooth.



Fig. 2. METHOD OF WETTING AND APPLYING TAPE

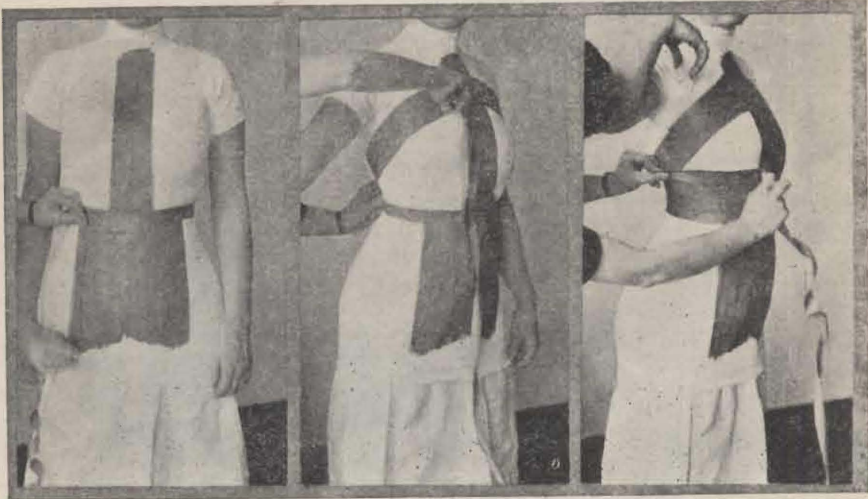


Fig. 3. VERTICAL FRONT STRIPS

Fig. 4. FILLING IN SIDES

Fig. 5. FILLING IN SIDES

**First Coat**—The model should stand with weight evenly balanced on both feet. Pull shirt well down over the hips.

Paste a strip around the waist, being sure to strike the exact waist line, getting it as tight as possible and lapping the ends well.

Begin at the neck and paste five strips vertically down the front to below the hip line.

Continue these strips below the waist until the flat part of the front is covered. (Fig. 3).

Next place three or four strips diagonally from the front strips near the neck to the waist line a little back of the underarm seam, pulling the strips tight and having both edges smooth. (Fig. 4).

Fill in across the bust with crosswise strips, beginning at waist and proceeding upward. (Fig. 5.)

Fill in both sides of the front before beginning on the back.

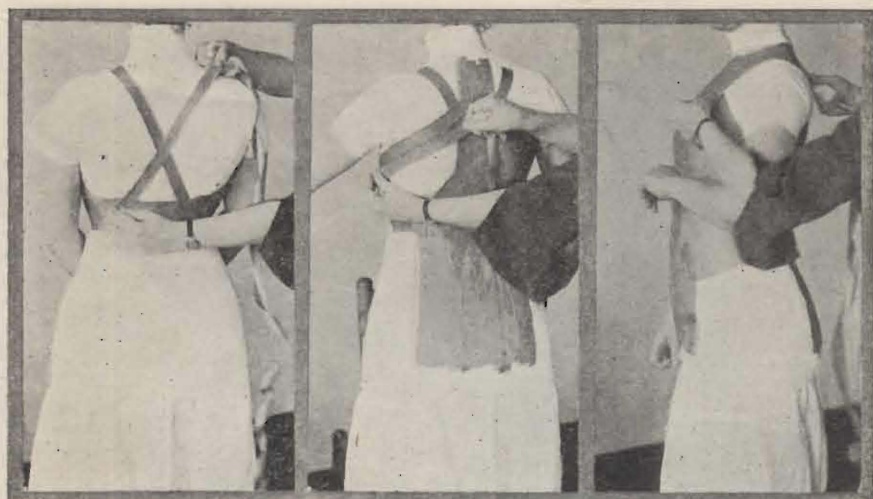


Fig. 6. PUTTING ON  
SHOULDER STRAPS

Fig. 7. FILLING IN BACK

Fig. 8. COVERING SHOUL-  
DERS

**The Back:**—Turn to back and put on suspender straps, beginning with the diagonal strips in front, extending to the waist line in the back and crossing in the center of the back. (Fig. 6).

Fill in the back in the same manner as the front, repeating on the back the processes shown in Figs. 3, 4 and 5, making the diagonal strips extend only to meet those from the front. (Fig. 7).

Below the waist, connect the vertical strips in front and back with crosswise strips over the hips until space is entirely filled in. Pull these strips as tight as possible.

The shoulders should be filled in by strips connecting the diagonal strips in front and back. Fill in around neck and arms with short fan-shaped strips, but avoid going out too far on the shoulders, since the arms are put on last. (Fig. 8).

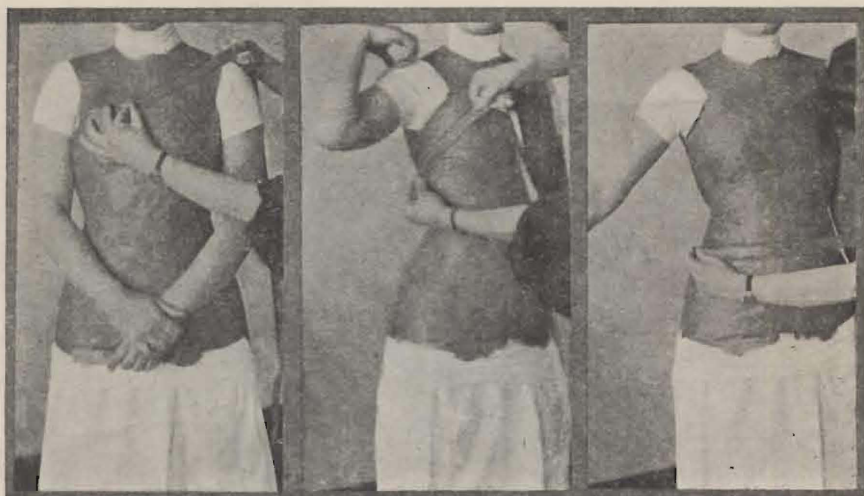


Fig. 9. SECOND COAT UP-  
PER FRONT

Fig. 10. SECOND COAT,  
FILLING IN SIDES

Fig. 11. SECOND COAT  
BELOW WAIST

**Second Coat:**—Front—Paste three short strips horizontally below the base of the neck. Paste strips of paper on slant from both shoulders to center of the front. Alternate these strips from one shoulder to the other, having them cross in the center of the front. Continue this until the fullest part of the bust is reached, being careful not to have the strips extend beyond the arm's eye. (Fig. 9).

Paste diagonal strips from these to the underarm seam, beginning at the arm and extending to fullest part of bust. (Fig. 10).

Repeat for the other side.

Fill in the triangle with horizontal strips, working from waist up.

Below waist, paste on crosswise strips from the waist down, dropping a little at the sides to prevent bulging. (Fig. 11).

Put on a third coat by working from the bottom up to the waist in the same manner.

Put second coat on back in same way as front.

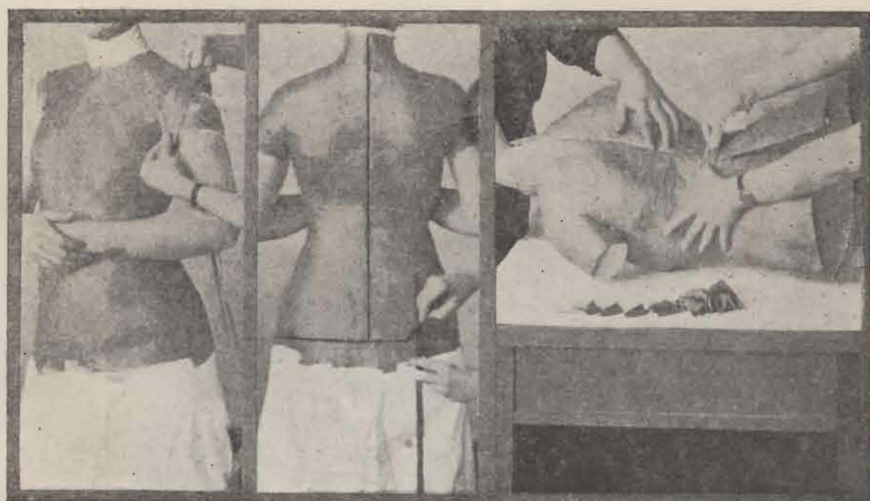


Fig. 12. MAKING  
ARMS

Fig. 13. MARKING  
FOR BOTTOM OF  
FORM

Fig. 14. JOINING SEVERED EDGES

**Arm:**—First fill in across top of shoulder, pressing in firmly around arm.

Paste several strips around arm about six inches down from shoulder and fill in space between with slanting strips. (Fig. 12).

For second coat paste strips crosswise beginning at bottom and proceeding upward until top of shoulder is covered, being careful to press in firmly around arm at front and back.

**Neck:**—Paste strips around neck, lapping in front and back. Put on two layers.

**Measuring:**—Using the yard stick or extension rule, measure from floor to the largest part of hips and mark this distance on front, back, and sides. Connect these points with pencil line to show hip line. Write on form number of inches from hip line to floor. (Fig. 13).

**Cutting:**—Using a single edged safety razor blade, cut down the center of the back. With sharp scissors cut each arm, from bottom to shoulder.

**Removing:**—Remove form by having model draw her shoulder back as far as possible and remove one arm at a time.

**Joining and Finishing:**—Measure model around waist, bust and hips and try these measurements on form. Make whatever corrections are necessary by

trimming off each side of the back. If it is much too large, cut up front and take half the excess out there.

Paste back and arms together by using strips about one and one-half inches in length and pasting them crosswise and over-lapping one-fourth inch. (Fig 14). If desired, these may be covered by lengthwise strips.

Build up the neck until it is firm and paste several strips around the arms. Reinforce wherever necessary. Then trim around the neck and arms and around the bottom at the hip line. Bind cut edges.

The neck may be finished in one of three ways: Strips of tape may be pasted from the top to base of neck on the inside so that the shirt is covered; or a piece of cardboard cut to fit the neck, and pasted down and covered with gummed tape; or a pin cushion made to fit the neck and fastened in the top.

Finish the arms by pasting strips of tape on the inside, so that the shirt is covered, and binding the edges.

Shellac form both inside and out. This gives a good finish and prevents harm from dampness.

If desired, a fitted lining may be made of old stockings, jersey or undershirt and sewed on the form. This gives something upon which to pin garments.

**Stand:**—A satisfactory stand may be made as follows:

Procure a board about a foot square and at least one inch thick, heavy enough to anchor the form firmly on the floor.

Use a post, two inches square or as near it as possible. Nail to center of the square board and brace at sides. Saw this post off the same distance from the floor as the height of the hip line.

Place form on a board and mark around bottom. Saw inside mark so this board just fits in bottom of form. Nail this board to top of post, thus making a pedestal.

Place form over this board so that bottom of form comes even with bottom of board and fasten in place with push tacks.

Four yard sticks may be tacked from the bottom of the pedestal to the bottom of the form, one at the front, one at the back and one on each side. They should be placed so that the numbers read from the bottom up, in order more easily to finish the bottom of the skirt the desired distance from the floor.

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