

Sleeve Savvy

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The sleeves in a garment should add style and beauty as well as provide comfort to the wearer. Perhaps few steps in the construction process can add so much to or detract so much from the final appearance as do the sleeves. Sleeve savvy can be easily achieved with an understanding of fit and a few basic sewing principles.

Types of Sleeves

A quick look through a pattern catalog reveals a profusion of sleeves in lengths and shapes to suit every whim. Sleeves and sleeve treatments help shape fashion for men and women alike. The interesting element is that most of these fashion-shapers fall into three basic types: set-in, raglan, or kimono.

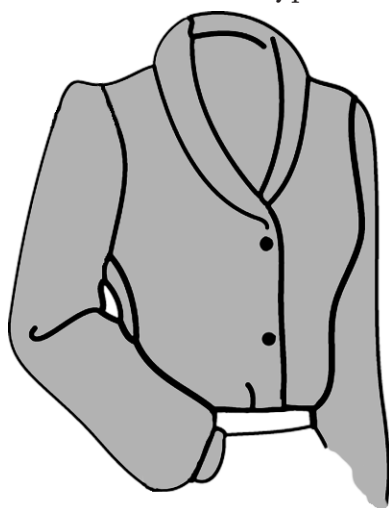


Figure 1

Set-in Sleeve

A set-in sleeve (Figure 1) is a separate, precisely shaped piece of fabric which joins the garment in a seam that encircles the arm over the shoulder.



Figure 2

Raglan Sleeve

A raglan sleeve (Figure 2) is a separate, precisely shaped piece of fabric which joins the bodice in a diagonal seam extending to the neck-line area.

Kimono Sleeve

A kimono sleeve (Figure 3) is a sleeve that is cut as one with the garment or as a part of it, such as a yoke.

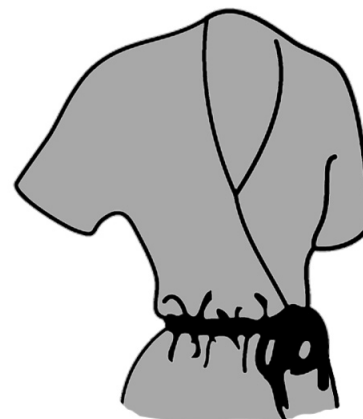


Figure 3

The manner or technique of handling the sleeve application can spell perfection or disaster—the difference between a “homemade” look and the “handmade” look.

Sleeve application is required in two of the three sleeve types—the set-in and the raglan. Both require specific steps and procedures to achieve success.



Set-in Sleeve

The one-piece set-in sleeve is the most popular of the three sleeve types. A number of variations in its style have been developed. Among those variations are the shorter cap sleeve and the action sleeve (Figure 4). The set-in sleeve is frequently given the distinction of being the most difficult to sew. Perhaps this distinction came about as a result of the brief directions given on most pattern guide sheets. Actually the set-in sleeve is not difficult if a few simple techniques are employed. It is important to understand the shape of the set-in sleeve, as well as the so-called sleeve terminology, in order to follow pattern directions effectively and to construct a better garment.

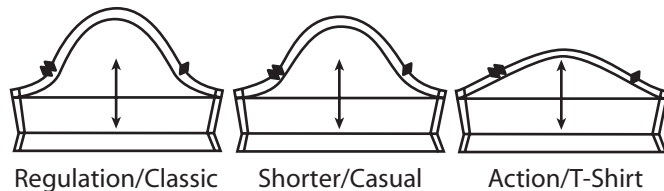


Figure 4

Regulation/Classic

This sleeve has a cap with the greatest height. There is approximately 1½ to 2 inches ease in the sleeve cap as measured from notch to notch. The ease is required to provide adequate arm and shoulder movement as well as comfort. Proper ease distribution is a must for a well-made, comfortable set-in sleeve. If the sleeve is not correctly set into the armseye (armhole), the sleeve will be uncomfortable and the sleeve area unsightly.

Note: Patterns that are specifically designed for knit fabrics would have less ease.

Shorter/Casual

The shorter cap sleeve is designed for a slightly dropped garment shoulder-line. There is approximately ¾ to 1 inch ease in the sleeve cap between the notches. Being less fitted, this sleeve provides

a greater amount of movement than the classic or regulation set-in sleeve.

Action/T-shirt

The sleeve with the shortest cap is sometimes called the action/T-shirt or the man's shirt sleeve. It is the sleeve that is used in men's shirts and women's man-tailored shirts and blouses. There is approximately ½ to ¾ inch ease in the sleeve cap as measured from notch to notch. This is by far the easiest of the set-in sleeves to apply. The technique used to apply this sleeve to the garment is different from that of the classic and casual styles.

Classic and Casual Set-in Sleeves

The first step is to check the sleeve pattern for proper fit prior to pattern layout and cutting. The location of elbow darts in a long sleeve and the sleeve length can be determined by measuring and by pattern fitting. If corrections are needed, they should be made before proceeding with layout.

After checking for proper fit and making adjustments, the next steps are layout, cutting, and marking. As in all garment construction, special care should be given these steps. A slight deviation from the proper grain alignment can result in a poorly fitting sleeve, regardless of the technique used in applying the sleeve to the armhole. Accuracy in cutting and transferring of all pattern markings is important since the symbols and notches are the only guides for properly easing the sleeve into a comfortable, well-proportioned position in the garment.

Before sleeve application is undertaken, the bodice and shoulder fit of the garment should be checked and established. Major changes in shoulder length and slant should be detected and altered when the pattern is fitted prior to layout. Minor changes (less than ¼ inch) can be made during the garment-fitting of the bodice before sleeve application.

Sleeve Cap Preparation

The sleeve cap must be prepared for easing into the armhole. One of the following methods should be selected.

Method I

1. Using an ease stitch, which is generally eight to 10 stitches per inch, sew on the seam line around the cap of the sleeve between the notches. Be sure to leave at least 1½ inch thread ends at each end of the stitching to assist with easing in a later step (Figure 5). The weight of the fabric will determine the number of stitches per inch to use. Generally, the finer the fabric, the smaller the stitch. When sewing single fabric thickness, it is sometimes necessary to adjust thread tension slightly. Always follow the instructions given in your sewing machine manual. It is important to sew directly on the ⅝-inch seam line as this will also serve as an important guide for stitching when placing the sleeve into the armhole.

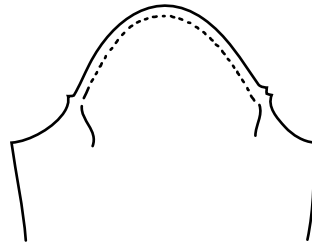


Figure 5

2. Sew a second row of ease stitching approximately ⅛ inch from the seam line (first row of stitching) in the seam allowance. Leave at least 1½ inch thread ends at each end of stitching.
3. With right sides together, stitch the underarm sleeve seam. Finish the seam edges using a technique appropriate for the fabric. (For assistance refer to *Seams and Seam Finishes* FCS2-304, www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/fcs2/fcs2304/fcs2304.pdf) Press seam. (Figure 6).

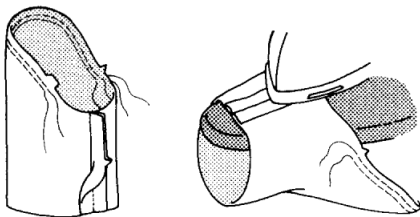


Figure 6

Any type of seam may be used—French, flat-fell, or variations—depending on the fabric. Seams should always be pressed. A sleeve board or pressing roll allows the sleeve seam to be pressed without putting creases in other sections of the sleeve.

4. Complete the lower edge of the sleeve according to the pattern directions. A discussion of finishing techniques can be found on page 11.

Method II

1. Using a regulation machine stitch, which is generally 12 to 14 stitches per inch, sew on the seam line from seam edge of sleeve to the first notch. Without removing the sleeve or interrupting the stitching line, change the sewing machine stitch regulator to an ease stitch setting. Continue stitching around the cap of the sleeve to the other notch, then change the stitch regulator back to regulation machine stitching and continue stitching to the sleeve seam edge (Figure 7). As in Method I, the weight of the fabric will determine the number of stitches per inch to use for both regulation stitching and ease stitching. It is important to sew directly on the ⅝ inch seam line since this also will serve as an important guide for stitching when the sleeve is stitched into the armhole of the garment.

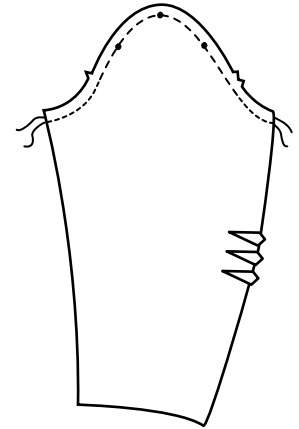


Figure 7

2. Stitch the underarm seam. Finish the seam edges using a technique appropriate for the fabric. Depending on the fabric, any type of seam such as French, flat-fell, or variations may be used. Seams should always be pressed.
3. Complete the lower edge of the sleeve according to the pattern directions.

Method III (For Special Fabrics Only)

There are a group of fabrics that are difficult to ease, thus making sleeve construction and application somewhat more difficult by the preparation methods given above. These fabrics include: jersey and interlock knits, satin, taffeta, and permanent press fabrics such as kettlecloth and poplin. Method III reduces some of the sleeve cap ease and was designed with these fabrics in mind.

With a fabric-marking pen or suitable marking device, redraw and establish a new seam line along sleeve cap. Maintain a ⅝ inch seam line from sleeve seam edge to notch. At notch begin to swing out into sleeve cap, depth not to exceed ¼ inch at the

midpoint between notch and dot (pattern symbol indicating ease mark). Return to the $\frac{5}{8}$ inch stitching line at the dot. Maintain the $\frac{5}{8}$ inch seam line from dot (dots should be approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 inch away from the top of the sleeve or shoulder marking). Begin to swing out into the sleeve cap at the dot, duplicating the depth at the midpoint between notch and dot. Return to the $\frac{5}{8}$ inch stitching line at the notch and continue to the sleeve seam edge.

The solid line in the drawing is your new stitching and preparation ease-line (Figure 8).

Use either Method I or II, stitching on the newly created line. Sleeve cap may be cut leaving a consistent $\frac{5}{8}$ inch seam allowance around outer edges to conform to the new stitching line.

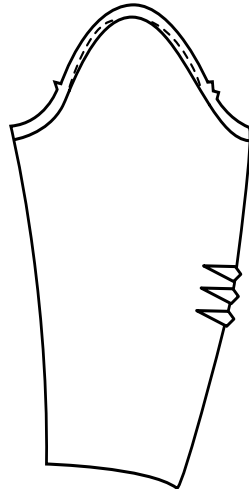


Figure 8

Attaching Set-in Sleeve to Armhole

The classic and casual set-in sleeve requires that the garment side seams and the sleeve underarm seam be stitched before the sleeve is positioned into the armseye or armhole area. In order to position and stitch the sleeve, work from the inside of the garment.

1. Fit the sleeve into the armhole; right sides of the fabric (sleeve and garment) should be together.
2. Place pins into the sleeve and garment. Use the following guideline to place pins because their positioning is important.
 - Match the top of the sleeve to the shoulder line. Pin in place. Put two additional pins approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch on each side of shoulder seam pin, at points (a) in figure 9.
 - Match each of the two notches. Pin in place.
 - Match underarm section of the garment with the underarm section of the sleeve. Pin in place.
 - Match the two markings on either side of the sleeve top. Pin in place (Figure 9).

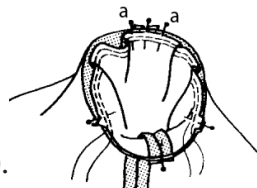


Figure 9

When comparing the sleeve to the armhole opening, there should be ease in all sections of the sleeve including the underarm area. As a result of the pin placement along either side of the sleeve cap, the ease at the top of the sleeve is shifted toward the notches, leaving a 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch area across the sleeve cap top without ease. This is the only section of the sleeve which is without ease.

3. If you selected **Method I** (page 3):

Gently pull the two ease threads simultaneously on one side of the sleeve pulling the fullness between notch and top of sleeve. Do not pull beyond the pin marking (a) of the sleeve (Figure 10).

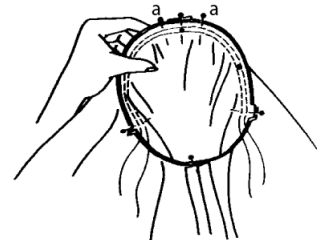


Figure 10

- If you selected **Method II** (page 3):

Using a pin, pick up the ease thread at the top of the sleeve. Gently pull to one side of the sleeve, then the other, moving and evenly distributing the fullness down to the pins at the notches. Do not pull or distribute fullness beyond the notches (Figure 11).

Use the thumbs to distribute the ease evenly and smooth out puckers. A few additional pins may be used to secure sleeve in place.

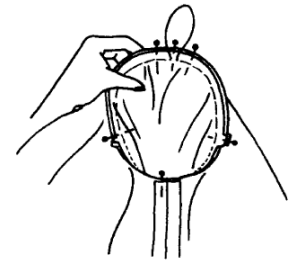


Figure 11

4. Distribute the small amount of ease between the underarm line and the notch; secure with a pin if necessary. Repeat on the other side. Sleeves made from heavier fabrics will often fit more smoothly if the excess fullness is shrunk out of the seam allowance. To shrink the excess fullness, remove the sleeve from the armhole without disturbing the fullness and place the sleeve cap over the end of a pressing ham, pressing cushion, or ironing board. With a steam iron, steam the seam allowance only. Continue steaming until the fabric shrinks to the desired shape or to a more manageable size. Do not shrink the sleeve cap, only the seam allowance (Figure 12).

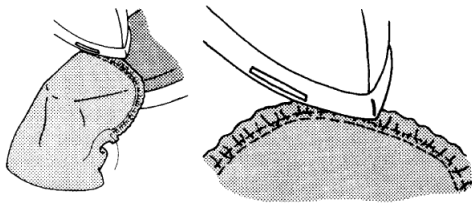


Figure 12

5. Baste the sleeve in place, stitching from the sleeve side. Stitch directly on the line of stitching used to prepare the sleeve—the $\frac{5}{8}$ inch seam line. Try on the garment and check the position of the armhole seam and the grain of the sleeve. Refer to the section on “Checking the Proper Sleeve Fit on Your Garment” on page 6.
6. Position the garment and sleeve under the machine presser foot, the sleeve side up toward you. Starting at the notch, stitch on the seam line crossing underarm seam, from notch to notch, and around the sleeve. Continue stitching to the opposite notch, creating a double line of stitching along the underarm area (Figure 13).

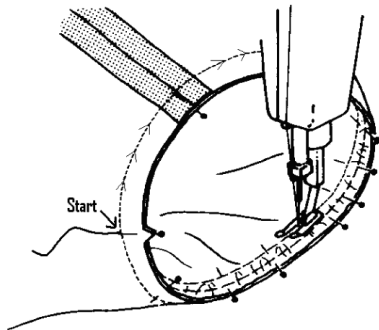


Figure 13

Treating the Completed Armhole Seam

Before putting the finishing touches to the armhole, check to see that the stitching is even, smooth and correct. The sleeve cap should be free from noticeable pleats, gathers, or tucks.

For firmly woven fabrics

(medium to heavyweight fabrics):

1. To reduce bulk, grade the garment portion of the seam allowance approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ inch around the cap from notch to notch.
2. Trim both seam allowances to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch between the notches along the lower edge of the sleeve/armhole area.
3. Notch the sleeve seam allowance segment along the sleeve cap where necessary to remove excess fullness (Figure 14).

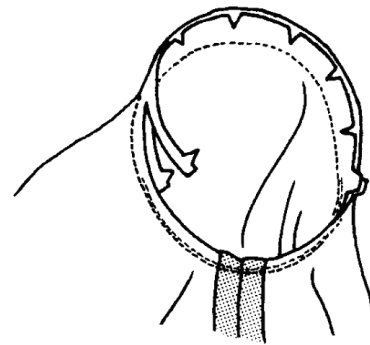


Figure 14

4. If the fabric requires a seam finish, so will the sleeve/armhole area. Hand overcast is frequently selected due to the bias area and uneven (graded, trimmed) seam allowances. A liquid seam retardant such as Fray Check® also is suitable. (Note: The use of any commercial seam retardant should be tested first as some may cause fabric color to change, or to be scratchy and irritating to the skin.)

For loosely woven fabrics and fabrics that ravel (medium to heavyweight fabrics) choose one of the following:

- Serge both seam allowances together, trimming approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ inch off evenly around the seamline.
- Using a very close machine zigzag stitch, zigzag both seam allowances simultaneously around the entire armhole area approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the seamline. Trim away seam allowance very close to the zigzag stitching.
- OR if your machine is capable of overcasting: Trim both seam allowances to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. Machine overcast raw edges together.

For sheer or very lightweight fabrics:

1. With seam allowances together, trim to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch around the entire armhole.
2. Encase cut edges in stretch lace or a sheer bias cut or tricot knit tape specifically designed to bind seam allowances such as Seams Great®. Stitch in place.

The armhole seam allowances are always pressed together and treated as one. Using the tip of the iron, press the finished seam allowance gently toward the sleeve. Never set the iron directly on top of the seam allowance as it could distort the shape of the sleeve cap.

Checking the Proper Sleeve Fit of Your Garment

Now you should be ready to try on your garment to check for proper fit. The following points should be examined for proper fit of the regulation set-in sleeve (Figure 15).

Shoulder Line: Important matching line for sleeve. Should fall exactly on top of shoulder. Divides front and back of bodice.

Upper Arm: Must contain sufficient ease to permit sleeve to hang smoothly and for arm to move freely.

Armhole: Large enough not to bind to allow arm to move freely.

Lower Arm: Should fit comfortably, not too tight. Darts or ease stitching at elbow can provide shaping for more comfort and easier movement.

Length: Should be appropriate for garment design and individual figure proportions.

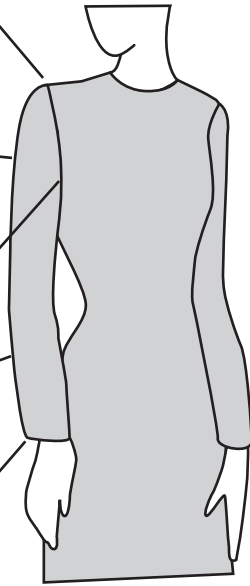


Figure 15

Look for the Following Fit Characteristics:

- Smooth, rounded cap with no pleats or gathers (unless these are part of the pattern design).
- A slight amount of ease in underarm area; greatest amount of ease in cap of sleeve is at back and front. No ease at shoulder line at the top of sleeve cap.
- Good armhole line resulting from straight, even stitching and well-matched seams.
- Crosswise grainline should be parallel to the floor; lengthwise grainline will be perpendicular to the floor; no diagonal wrinkles.
- Seam finish is appropriate to the fabric. Excess bulk in seam has been removed prior to finishing seam.

Action/T-shirt Style Set-in Sleeve

The shortest cap version of the set-in sleeve is frequently referred to as the shirt sleeve. It is the sleeve most often found in men's shirts, women's casual style shirts and blouses, and children's clothing. The sleeves eligible for this method of application

have a less rounded sleeve cap and therefore a flatter sleeve curve (Figure 16). Because the sleeve cap has less ease, it can be sewn into the armhole before the garment side and sleeve underarm seams are stitched.

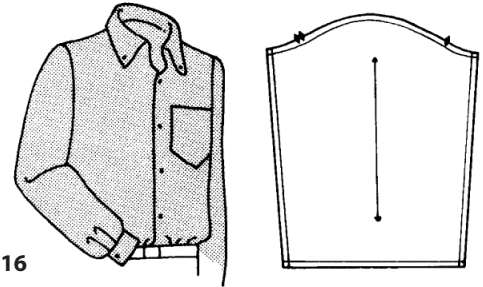


Figure 16

The Easiest Technique

1. To aid in the distribution of a slight amount of ease, stitch a line of ease-stitching between the two notches $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from raw edge along the sleeve cap.

2. With right sides together, match the sleeve to the armhole at the notches and center shoulder marking. If necessary, pull ease-stitching thread to distribute any fullness in the sleeve cap (Figure 17).

3. With regular machine stitching, stitch sleeve on the $\frac{5}{8}$ inch stitching line.

4. Finish seam allowances, treating the two seam allowances as one (Figure 18). Press toward the sleeve.

5. With right sides together, match, pin, and stitch underarm seam and garment side seam in one continuous line of stitching (Figure 19). Finish seam allowances.

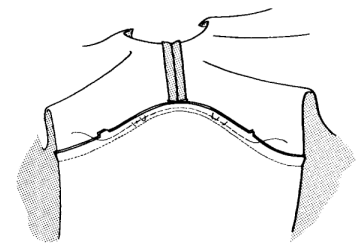


Figure 17

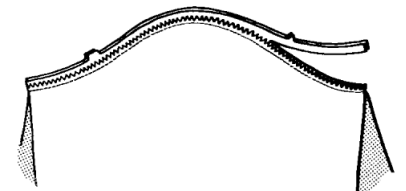


Figure 18

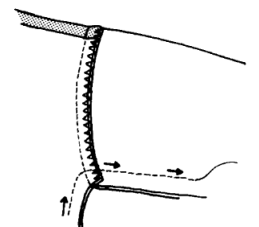


Figure 19

Flat-fell Technique

The masculine sleeve style frequently uses the flat-fell insertion technique. It should be selected for traditional fabrics and when a finished, man-tailored look is desired. The flatter the sleeve cap, the easier this application will be to achieve.

1. Pin sleeve to shirt, wrong sides together, matching notches and markings. Adjust ease along cap area. Join edges together with continuous line of machine stitching.
2. Trim sleeve segment of seam allowance to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.
3. Complete flat-fell seam by turning garment seam allowance under. Topstitch to sleeve approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from first line of stitching. Stitch sleeve and side seam; finish (Figure 20).

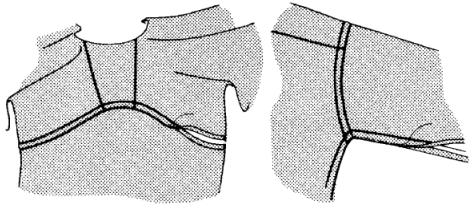


Figure 20



Raglan Sleeve

The raglan sleeve is often selected for its comfortable fit and relatively easy construction. It can be cut on the straight or bias grain and in one or two pieces. Because the sleeve continues into

the neckline area or some other part of the garment bodice, shaping is needed over the shoulder curve. Shaping may take the form of a dart, a seam, or gathers. The dart is the most common device used in the one-piece raglan sleeve, while the seam shapes the shoulder area in the two-piece raglan sleeve. Regardless of the type of sleeve, the deepest part of the sleeve curve should fall over the edge of the shoulder without protruding. Adjustment may be needed in the shoulder shaping after the sleeve is in the armhole area.

One-piece raglan sleeve with dart:

With right sides together, pin and stitch shoulder dart using markings from pattern as stitching guide. Slash dart if necessary and press open using a pressing ham (Figure 21A)

Two-piece raglan sleeve:

With right sides together, match, pin, and stitch shoulder seam.

Notch out fullness from seam allowance along shoulder curve.

Finish seam allowances and press open (Figure 21B).

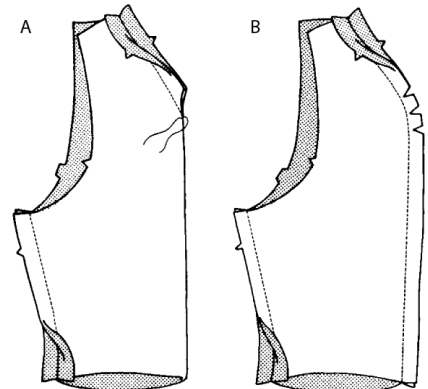


Figure 21A and B

Both the one-piece and

two-piece raglan sleeve:

- a. Match, pin, and stitch sleeve underarm seam allowance. Finish seam allowances and press. Garment seam allowances should also be stitched, finished, and pressed.
- b. Pin sleeve to garment armhole area matching notches and underarm seams or markings. Baste in place and fit (Figure 22A).
- c. With sleeve side up, stitch sleeve to garment in one continuous seam. Stitch a second row of stitching between notches approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from first stitching into the seam allowance.
- d. Clip seam allowance at notches. Trim close to the $\frac{1}{4}$ inch stitching between the notches at the underarm area. Press seams open above clips. Finish seam allowances as required for fabric (Figure 22B).

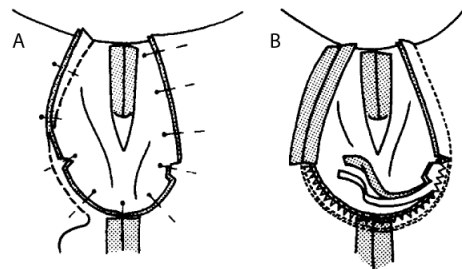


Figure 22A and B

Alternative Method

There are occasions when the raglan sleeve may be constructed in flat form. Refer to the pattern guide for the most appropriate method to use.

1. Stitch sleeve shoulder dart or shoulder seam. Leave garment side seam and sleeve underarm seam open.
2. With right sides of fabric together, pin sleeve to garment front and back, matching notches. Stitch. Notch garment seam allowance as needed and clip sleeve seam allowance as needed for seam to press open and lie flat. Press seam open. Use a seam finish appropriate for fabric and situation (Figure 23).

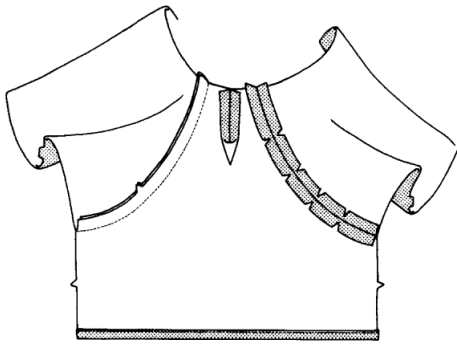


Figure 23

3. Pin and stitch underarm and side seams. Clip curve seam as needed for seam allowance to be pressed open. Press (Figure 24).

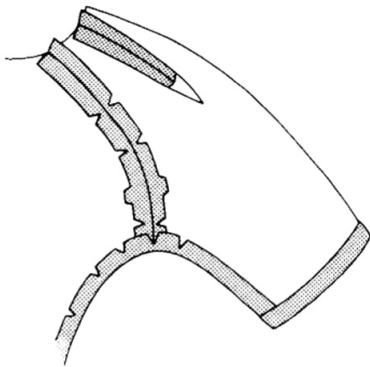
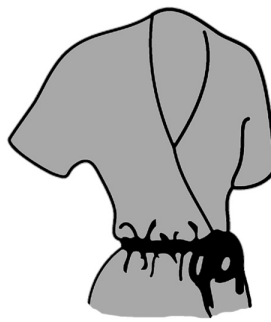


Figure 24



Kimono Sleeve

The kimono sleeve is actually an extension of the bodice or body of the main garment and sometimes is referred to as a gem of simplicity. The sleeve is frequently cut as one piece with the garment, thus

producing a T-shape bodice. When the garment is worn the arms are seldom at right angles, therefore the sleeves create folds in the arm and shoulder area. A very graceful draped effect can be achieved when the sleeve/armhole area is large or more open in structure.

Comfort and fit are important to sleeve success. As the kimono sleeve becomes more fitted, the arm movement becomes more restricted. If the sleeve fit is very close, a gusset is needed for comfort and movement. A gusset is a triangular or diamond-shaped piece of fabric which is set into a garment at a slashed location. It makes a longer, slimmer-fitting kimono sleeve possible with an armhole fitting closer to the body. As a general rule, the gusset provides a more sophisticated fit than a fitted kimono sleeve without a gusset. Comfort is an additional feature since there is increased flexibility in the sleeve and armhole area. Regardless of the kimono sleeve fit, some form of seam reinforcement is recommended.

Sewing the Kimono Sleeve

(Without Gussets)

Method I

1. Stitch shoulder seam; finish seam allowances appropriately for fabric. Press.
2. With right sides together, match and pin front and back garment piece at underarm seam line. On the garment back section, center and pin a 4- to 5-inch piece of open-width bias tape or Seams Great® over the curved section of the underarm seam line. Baste entire seam, catching the tape in the stitching. Fit garment as necessary (Figure 25A).
3. Stitch the seam as basted; shorten stitch length slightly along the length of the tape. Press the seam flat, not open (Figure 25B).

- Clip seam allowance along the curve, being careful not to cut tape or stitching. Press seam open, using a tailor's ham or rounded surface. Finish seam allowances (Figure 25B).

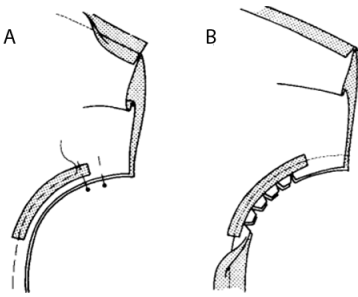


Figure 25A and B

Method II

1. Stitch shoulder seam and finish seam allowances appropriately for fabric; press.
2. With right sides together, match and pin front and back garment pieces at underarm seam line. Baste and fit as necessary.
3. Stitch seam allowance; shorten stitch length along curved section of the same line. Press flat, not open (Figure 26).
4. Clip seam allowances along curve to the stitching. Using a tailor's ham or rounded surface, press seam open.
5. Center, pin and baste a 4- to 5-inch piece of open-width bias tape or Seams Great® along the curved seam area (Figure 27A). Basting stitches should go to the right side of the garment.
6. From the right side of the garment, stitch approximately 1/8 inch on each side of basted line and across the ends. Stitching should be through all thicknesses—tape, seam allowances and garment—to form a small rectangle. Remove basting; press. Tape may be secured to each seam allowance on inside of garment (Figure 27B).

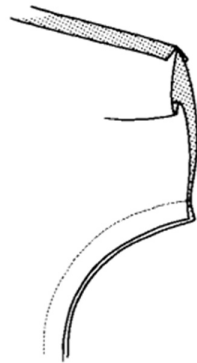


Figure 26

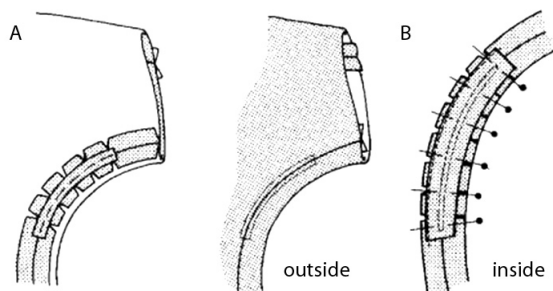


Figure 27A and B

Sewing the Kimono Sleeve (With Gussets)

Although gussets vary in shape, there are basically two types: the one-piece (usually diamond-shaped), and the two-piece (usually triangular) (Figure 28). The one-piece is frequently the more difficult to insert as the entire gusset must be sewed into an enclosed slashed opening after the underarm and side seams have been stitched. When using the two-piece gusset each piece is inserted separately, then the underarm and gusset sections are connected.

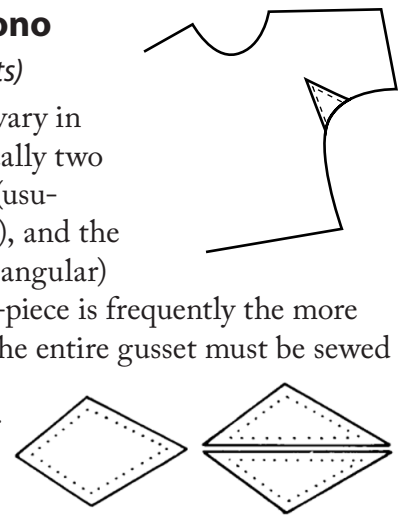


Figure 28

For maximum comfort and ease of movement, cut gussets on the bias. The length of the gusset should be placed on the fabric to attain the greatest amount of give or stretch. Transfer all pattern markings carefully and accurately, especially the gusset corners and garment slash points.

Reinforcing slash opening with fusible interfacing

It is important to reinforce the garment at the point of the slash before slashing. If fashion fabric is lightweight or ravel easily, use a small, lightweight fusible interfacing patch on the wrong side of the fabric at the slash point before reinforcing (Figure 29).

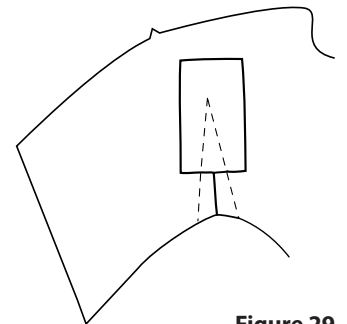


Figure 29

Other options for reinforcement material may be a 2-inch bias square of lightweight self-fabric or lining fabric, or a 4-inch piece of seam tape. For all reinforcements, stitch along the stitching lines using short machine stitches (15 to 20 per inch), and take only one stitch across the slash point.

Reinforcing slash opening with bias square:

1. If necessary, reinforce fashion fabric with fusible interfacing at slash point. On right side of garment, position bias square reinforcement over the center of the slash point. Pin and baste in place along stitching line (Figure 30).

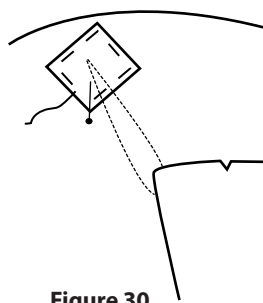


Figure 30

2. Machine stitch a thread's width from the marked stitching line, using shorter machine stitching. Begin stitching at the wide end and stitch to point, stitch one stitch across point, and stitch down other side. Press area flat.
3. Slash through center of marked opening (between stitching lines) up to reinforced point. Cut through all fabric thicknesses; cut to point stitching but not through it. (A small dot of liquid seam retardant may be helpful.) Turn square to the wrong side and press lightly so that it lies flat and in place (Figure 31).
4. Repeat for other side.

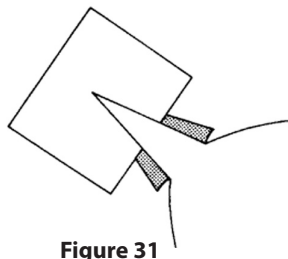


Figure 31

Reinforcing slash opening with seam binding:

1. Using a 4-inch piece of seam tape, fold tape in half, forming a V. Position and pin tape to right side of garment so that the V of the tape coincides with the V of the slash point (Figure 32).
2. Machine stitch. Complete as in bias square technique.

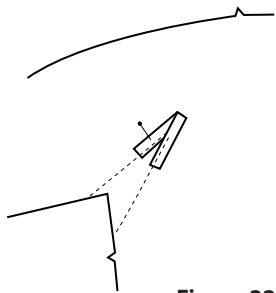


Figure 32

One-piece Gusset

1. Stitch all bodice seams, making sure to end stitching at markings. Leave gusset area open. Press and finish seam appropriately (Figure 33).

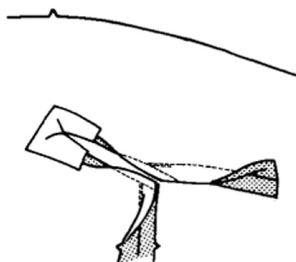


Figure 33

2. With right sides together, position gusset over slashed opening so that points of gusset match corresponding markings of opening; pin. Be sure to accurately align stitching line of opening and gusset seam line. Baste, but do not remove pins from corners (Figure 34).

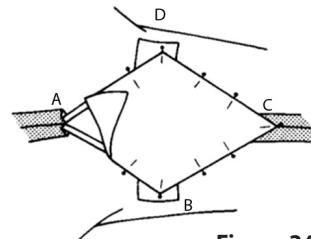


Figure 34

3. With garment side up, using short machine stitches, machine stitch from point A to point B. Stitch one stitch across point at B. Stitch to point C (Figure 35). End stitching but leave approximately 3 to 4 inches of thread at each end of seam. Repeat on the other side of gusset, stitching from point C to point D to point A.

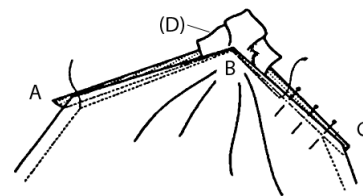


Figure 35

4. Pull all thread ends to wrong side; tie and secure. Press seams toward garment. Trim extending fabric edges to 3/8 inch from seam on outside section of gusset construction (Figure 36).

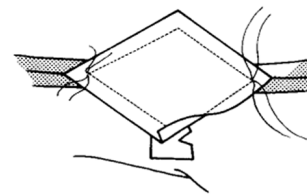


Figure 36

5. To strengthen gusset, especially on sporty or casual clothes, topstitch through all layers of fabric approximately 1/8 inch from seam on outside section of gusset construction (Figure 37).

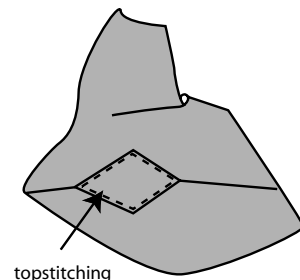


Figure 37

Two-piece Gusset

A one-piece gusset may be converted to two pieces for ease of construction. To convert, determine which halves of the gusset pattern correspond to the front and back garment pieces. Divide with a line from point to point; cut in half. Pin divided pieces to fabric, making sure the long edge is on the bias (Figure 38).

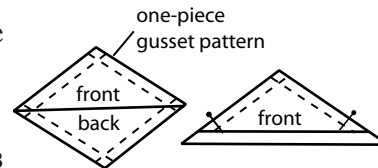


Figure 38

Add a $\frac{5}{8}$ inch seam allowance to long cut edge (for the underarm seam allowance). Cut pieces out and transfer all markings.

1. Shoulder seams should be stitched, seams finished appropriately, and pressed. Slash opening has been reinforced. Underarm and side seam have not been stitched.
2. With right sides together, match and pin gusset to slashed opening of front bodice. Be sure to align seam lines of opening and gusset correctly. Baste, but do not remove pins from point. With garment side up, using a shorter stitch, machine stitch from edge A to point B, take one stitch across point B, stitch to edge C. Press seams toward garment (Figure 39).

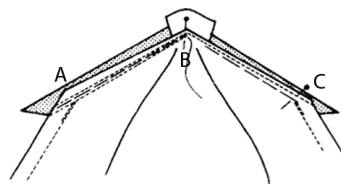


Figure 39

3. Repeat for garment back.

4. With right sides together, pin garment back to front at the underarm seam and side seams (Figure 40A). Be sure intersecting lines of gusset edge and other markings match; stitch. Press seam open (Figure 40B) and finish seam allowances appropriately for fabric.

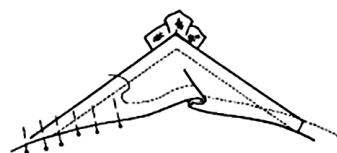


Figure 40A

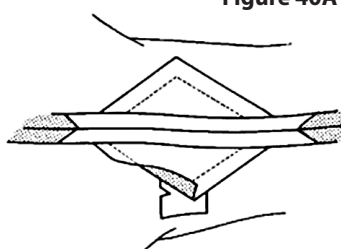


Figure 40B

5. Trim gusset edges and extending fabric edges to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch. Re-press toward garment. Pull threads to wrong side of garment, tie and secure.
6. Topstitch if desired (see “One-piece Gusset,” Step 5 on page 10).

Sleeve Finishes

The finishing of a sleeve edge generally depends on the pattern design and fabric. It may be as simple as a self-hem or as sophisticated as a cuff and placket. The finish may also be a design feature such as a casing or cuff. Your pattern guide generally has a finishing technique suited to the pattern design, but not to the fabric you have selected. Feel free to adapt a finish which will be in accordance with the pattern design and the fabric.

For successful completion of any sleeve, a few simple guidelines should be followed:

- The finish should be appropriate to the fabric. In almost every instance, if the technique given in the pattern guide is not the most appropriate, adapt or change technique to suit fabric and circumstance. An example would be the method of finishing a placket for a cuff. A ravelly fabric would best be finished with a faced placket rather than a continuous lap or bond placket.
- Sleeve hemline should be marked an appropriate, becoming length for the wearer as well as in proportion to the total garment silhouette. When changing hemline, take the total garment silhouette into consideration as it can add to or detract from the total appearance of the garment.
- Practice good pressing and sewing techniques.
- The handling of bulk is often a major consideration. Be sure to reduce bulk (enclosed seam, seams crossed by other seams) when ever possible.

The following reference guide is to assist you in determining or adjusting sleeve length (Figure 41).

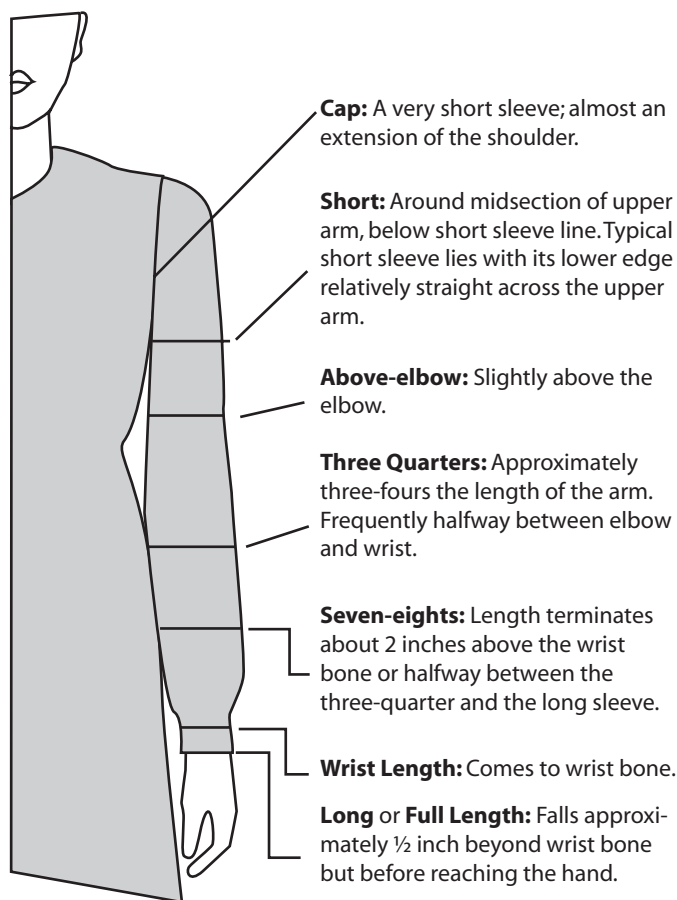


Figure 41

The correct sleeve length for you is one that is in direct proportion to your figure. If you experiment with sleeve lengths, you will probably find several that enhance your figure size and proportion.

Sleeves are frequently a very important part of a garment design. Not only do they influence the bodice of a design but the entire silhouette as well. The shape, length and finish can exaggerate a figure flaw or it can lead the eye away to a more important or pleasing part of the costume. The manner or technique of handling the sleeve application can spell perfection or disaster—the difference between a “homemade” look and the “handmade” look.

References

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- The New Vogue Sewing Book: Butterick Publishing, New York. 1980.*
- Unit Method of Clothing Construction: Iowa Home Economics Association, Iowa State University Press, Ames, Iowa. 1965.*
- Creative Clothing Construction: Allyn Bane, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York. 1973.*

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