

Lapels – Quick and Easy

There are many styles of jackets, coats and dresses some of which have the design feature of a collar and lapels. When deciding on this style, consider these guidelines:

- Narrow lapels are the best choice if you are full-busted, short-waisted, or broad through the shoulders.
- To avoid overwhelming a small-busted individual, select lapels which are narrow to medium in width.
- Very wide lapels are best on a well-proportioned, larger-framed individual.
- When constructing a garment with standard lapels, take time to fit carefully before cutting. Lapels that are too long will gap at the bust line.

The Experts' Book of *Sewing Tips and Techniques* defines a lapel as "the part of the front of a jacket that is turned back onto itself between the collar and the first button." Sewers through the ages have struggled and sought techniques that will make this undertaking simple and foolproof. The hints that follow are designed to assist you in making lapels quick, easy, and worthy of compliments.

A visible mark of quality workmanship on a garment is its collar and neckline area. Regardless of style, this section or unit of garment construction requires careful handling in all stages of construction.

Do not permit yourself to be rushed. The collar/neckline area will usually be one of the most time-consuming techniques if the final product is to have a quality appearance. Shortcuts are also somewhat limited in number. Before using a sewing shortcut in the collar/neckline area, be sure to try it out first and take the opportunity to analyze the final results. If quality workmanship has been maintained, add the

technique to your index of sewing knowledge.

Always read and consult the pattern guide sheet *before* beginning construction. Specific information on handling may be given that should be followed to achieve that quality look. If the directions for applying the collar, lapel, and neckline area vary from the technique you generally use, analyze the new information carefully. If possible, try the method on scrap fabric and examine the results.

You now have sufficient information on which to determine the best construction techniques to use on your garment.



Collar and Neckline Terms

Collar: A construction detail used to add interest to the neckline of the garment.

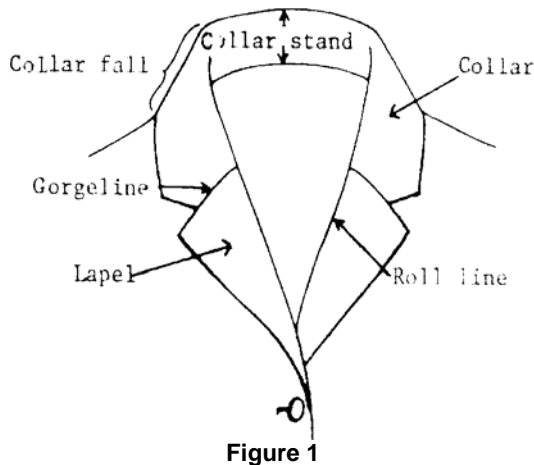
Roll line: A line that is formed by the natural roll or turn of the collar, or collar and lapels, when the garment front is in correct position on the body.

Collar stand: The area between the neckline seam and the roll line. It is generally at its greatest height at the center back (CB).

Collar fall: The area between the roll line and the edge of the collar. It is on the outside of the garment away from the body.

Gorge line: A short seam that joins the collar and lapels on a garment (lapels with collar-style garment). It can be machine or hand sewn.

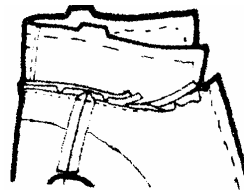
Lapel: An extended, shaped section of the garment front neckline area that joins the collar.



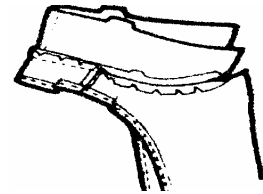
Professional Techniques

- Always stitch the collar sections together directionally, following the collar grain. Stitch from CB to one end; turn garment over and repeat from CB to other end. Overlap stitching at CB about ½-inch.
- At corners (points), use a short stitch length (15 to 20 stitches per inch). Use **one** stitch across the point when collar points are to be sharp.
- The upper collar pattern piece is usually larger than the under collar to allow for some “roll ease” in the collar—permitting the collar to roll and the neckline seam to be adequate in depth. Depending on the fabric used, more or less ease can be built into the pattern **before** cutting the garment out (¼ to ⅜ inch additional ease is needed for very bulky fabrics).

- When the garment has lapels, the collar and lapel area is finished with facings. The seam at the neck edge is **clipped** and **pressed open**. (Figures 2 & 3)



Jacket and under collar
Figure 2



Facing and upper collar
Figure 3

- With wrong sides together, match and pin the facing and upper collar piece to the jacket and under collar piece. (Figure 4)

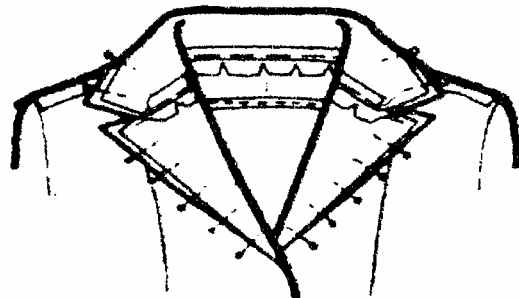


Figure 4

- Stitch collar sections together between markings. Begin at CB and stitch to the marking at the gorge line (**DO NOT STITCH OVER SEAM**). Repeat for other side of the collar. Stitch lapel from marking to lower edge of the garment. Repeat for other side of garment (**DO NOT STITCH OVER SEAM AT GORGE LINE**). (Figure 5)

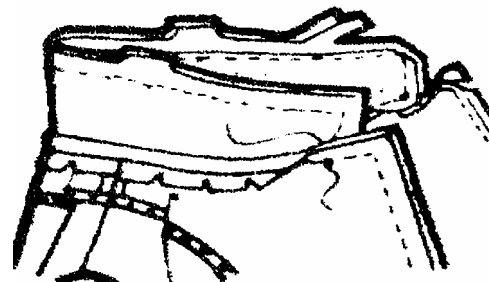


Figure 5

- Grade seams so that the seam allowances of the upper collar and garment are left the widest.
- Trim corners diagonally as close as possible without cutting stitching. (HINT: Use a small dot of seam sealant. Allow it to dry before turning collar or lapel.) Seams on either side may need to be cut diagonally to insure a mitered corner when area is turned. For fabrics that ravel, do not trim closer than ¼ inch.
- Notch and/or clip curved seams so the seam allowances will lie flat.
- Pre-press the collar **before** turning. Press collar seams open over a point presser or board, then press toward the under collar.
- While holding seams allowances together at one corner, turn the collar corner by pulling the upper collar over your hand. Use the same technique for the lapel point. **NEVER** use scissors or a sharp-pointed instrument to force collar points out into position.

Summary

Lapels are often the focal point of the jacket. Take that little bit of extra time to make them perfect.

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