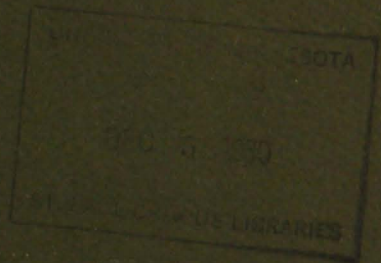


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Altering Ready-to-Wear



LOIS A. GOERING
Former Extension Specialist
Textiles and Clothing

Agricultural Extension Service
University of Minnesota

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Good fit is as important as color, fabric, and style in the way you appear to others. Because our figures vary in proportion, posture, and symmetry, few of us fit perfectly into either ready-to-wear garments or commercial patterns. You will look your best and feel most comfortable in well-fitted garments that stay in position on the body and allow you to move freely.

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editor..... Leona S. Nelson
design/illustrations Dianne C. Swanson

What is Good Fit?

A well fitted garment

- becomes you
- sets in balance on your figure
- adjusts to body movement
- de-emphasizes less desirable features

A well fitted garment is related to

- your figure variations
- your figure type
- fashion trends
- how you like clothes to fit
- use of the garment
- fabric of the garment

A garment that fits well is snug where fashion demands, but never feels or looks tight or strained. It should look smooth on the body with no pulled areas or folds of extra fabric. The "correct" amount of ease in a garment depends on many factors: your personal preference, fashion trends, the garment style, the fabric, the intended use of the garment, and your figure. With the proper amount of ease, a garment isn't over-fitted, causing it to ride up or bind, and it isn't under-

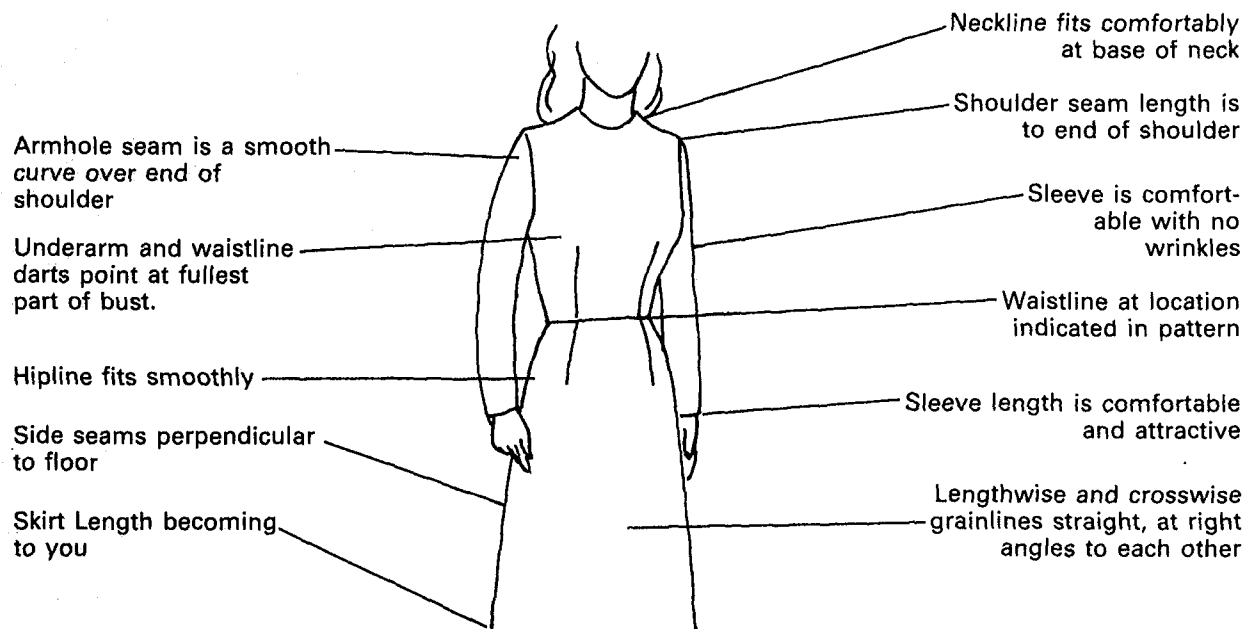
fitted, causing it to look too loose, wrinkled, or bulky. Even though you like a snug fit, enough ease should be allowed so that your body doesn't change or strain garment lines.

The direction of the fabric grainline in a garment is an indication of fit. The lengthwise grainline is usually perpendicular to the floor at center front and center back unless the garment has a center seam. The lengthwise grain in the sleeve should follow the direction of the arm through the center of the sleeve cap from the shoulder through the elbow to the wrist. The crosswise grainline is parallel to the floor at the bustline or chest, the base of the sleeve cap, and the hipline.

GOOD FIT IN BODICES

A basic **neckline** should rest comfortably at the base of the neck. A neckline of any style should not be so tight that it is uncomfortable or so loose that it gaps. Collars should lie flat and smooth or stand as designed.

The **shoulder seam** should rest exactly on top of the shoulder and should be inconspicuous from the front or back when viewed at eye level. On suit jackets and coats the shoulder seam often slants slightly to the



back at the armhole end or may have a different location for design purposes.

The **armhole seam** should form a smooth curve over the end of the shoulder. It should appear to be perpendicular to the floor for about 5 inches from the tip of the shoulder, then follow the natural curve under the arm.

The **sleeve** should fit comfortably with no wrinkles or pulls and should be a comfortable and attractive length.

Darts should point toward the fullest part of the body. They should end at least an inch from the fullest part of the body.

The **side seam** should fall straight to the floor from the underarm and should appear to be a continuation of the shoulder seam.

GOOD FIT IN SKIRTS

The **waistline** should appear to be parallel to the floor.

The **side seam** should be perpendicular to the floor and not swing toward the front or back.

The **hip area** should fit smoothly and should be parallel to the floor.

The **hemline** should be at a length becoming to you and in fashion. It should be an even distance from the floor, unless the design has a shaped hemline.

GOOD FIT IN PANTS

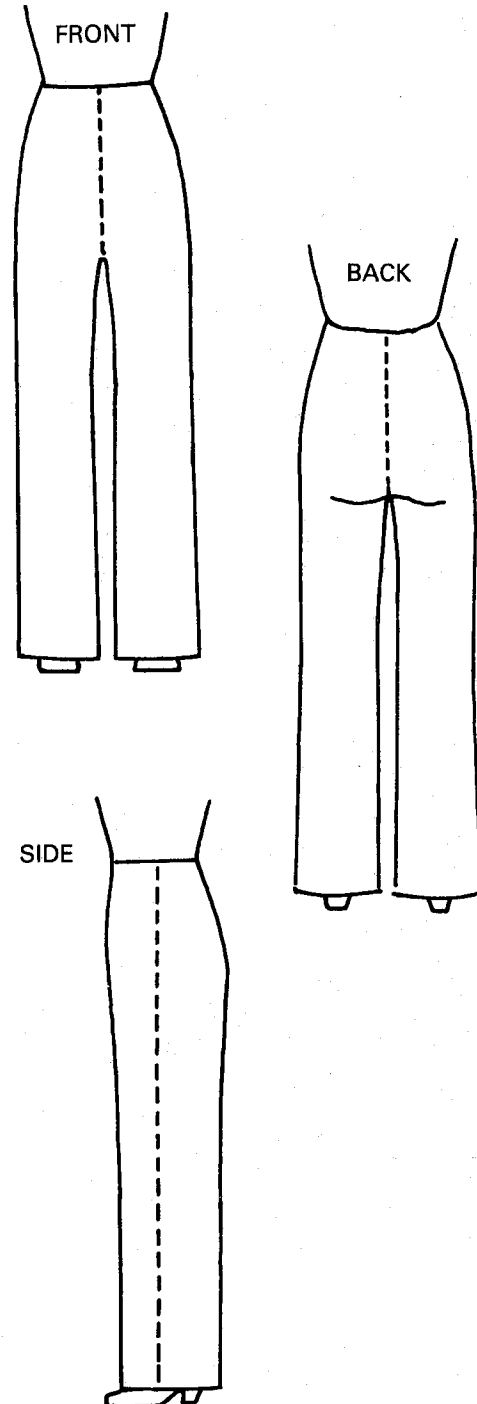
Pants that fit well rest easily against your body from waist to crotch level. There shouldn't be any diagonal wrinkles through the body of the pants or in the pant legs when they are worn. When you wear pants that fit properly you should be comfortable whether you are standing, sitting, walking, or bending.

The **front creases, lengthwise grainline** and **side seams** should hang perpendicular to the floor. The **crosswise grainline** should be kept level at the hip and knee lines.

The **crotch** should be high enough to prevent a saggy look, but low enough for comfort when sitting, walking, and bending.

The **legs** should be balanced with equal amounts of fabric all around your legs rather than resting against your legs.

The **waistline** should be at the normal waistline and should not slide very far down in back when you sit.



What Can and Can't be Altered

If you are considering buying a garment that doesn't fit and altering it, or trying to alter a garment that's been hanging unworn in your closet, take a careful look at the garment to see if it can be altered successfully and easily. Ask yourself these important questions before you attempt any alterations:

- Are the seam allowances wide enough to let it out to fit you? You need to have at least ¼" seam allowances left so the seam won't pull out. Many seams in ready to wear are very narrow.
- Have the seams or darts been clipped or punched? If so, alterations may be impossible in that area of the garment.
- Can the old stitching lines be removed so they won't show? Some fabrics are damaged permanently by stitching or pressing.
- Is the garment made of permanently pressed fabric? You won't be able to successfully change pressed in creases.

- Is the design of the garment relatively simple? Garments with too many seams and details are difficult to change.
- Does the garment need many changes? Too many changes in one garment may affect the garment design and proportions.

It's easier to take in a garment than it is to let it out. If the garment is more than one size too large, or small, alterations become impractical, especially in the areas around the neckline, shoulders, across the back, and across the upper chest.

Garments are most difficult to alter through the neckline, chest, bust, underarm, and crotch. If you have a choice in size, you will find it easiest to alter a skirt portion of a garment or suit.

If drastic changes are needed, the garment may not be worth all the work it would take to make it fit properly. The wisest decision may be to give away the garment or not buy it.

How To Fit Garments

Find a friend who can help with fitting. Unless you twist, you can't see all parts of your body even when looking in a three way mirror. Twisting and turning will cause wrinkles and pulled areas in the garment.

When checking the fit of a garment, be sure to try it on over the undergarments you plan to wear with it and wear the shoes you will use with the garment. Try the garment on right side out. If your body is not symmetrical (and most are not) you will want to pin in the needed changes on both sides of the body to make the garment fit correctly. Close the garment accurately and put on the belt (if it has one). Check to see that the neckline and shoulders are setting properly on the body.

In all fitting, begin your analysis at the top of the garment and work down. Changes in the shoulder area will affect the fit of the garment below. For best results the first changes should be made before trying to analyze the next area of the garment. Don't worry about hem and sleeve adjustments until everything else fits well.

In analyzing fit, ask yourself three questions:

- What's wrong?
- What's the cause?
- What needs to be done to correct the problem?

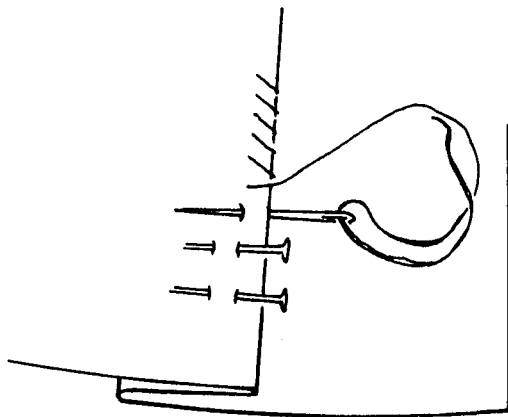
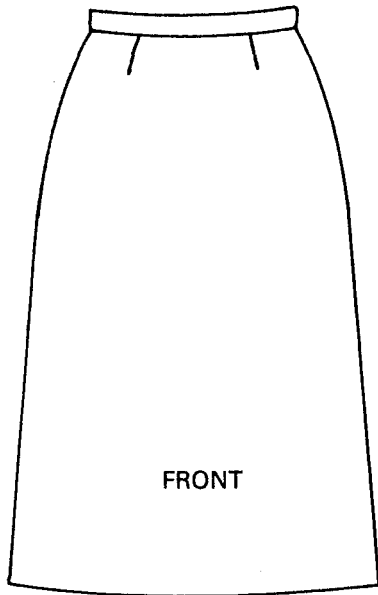
The first step in fitting is to recognize what's wrong. Take time to look at the general effect of the garment and look it over carefully from the top down. Any of the following conditions suggest that some changes need to be made:

- off grain
- wrinkles
- slanting lines where they should be straight
- looseness or tightness

The second step is to recognize the cause of the problem. Generally you can expect the grain on the two sides of the garment to be the same unless there has been an obvious design change from one side to the other. A bulge or hollow area of your body will cause the crosswise grain to curve up or down where it should be parallel to the floor or cause the lengthwise grain seamlines and/or creases to swing to one side.

A diagonal wrinkle may:

- point to the seam needing to be let out or taken in
- suggest that the seam just above or below it needs to be changed
- suggest that a seam or dart that causes a bulge needs to be let out



The third step is to decide what you should do to correct the problem. There is usually more than one way to correct a problem in the fit of a garment. The solution to use in any one garment depends on the amount of seam allowance available, the effect of the solution on the other parts of the garment, and the location of design details that might be affected by changes made.

Suggestions for correcting problems in specific areas of garments are in the next section of this publication. Read through the suggestions carefully as you analyze a garment. Try to imagine what the changes would do to this garment before ripping out seams and darts and making changes.

Making the actual changes could be considered a fourth step in fitting. As you are working with a garment, rip out only that part of a seam that you must change to make the garment fit better. Be careful not to stretch the fabric or cut the fabric yarns as you are working. Try on a garment after each alteration before making any other changes. You may have corrected more than one problem area.

There are two ways of using pins when fitting. You may use the pins to mark a new seam or dart line or you may actually pin the new line in place.

To mark a new line with pins, place the pins exactly where you want the new seam to be. This technique is helpful when making changes such as resetting sleeves. You would place a line of pins where you want the new armhole seam to be located. The sleeve would then be removed and stitched to the new armhole without changing the seamline on the sleeve.

To repin a seam, insert the pins with the grain of the fabric perpendicular to the seamline. This method of pinning helps you to see how the seam will look when stitched. When the pins are placed parallel to the seam, it will look puckered and bumpy. To transfer this pinned seam into a stitched one, baste the two layers together with "dressmaker basting" before you take the pins out. Then turn the garment wrong side out and stitch through the center of the basting.

How To Alter Women's Clothing

NECKLINE

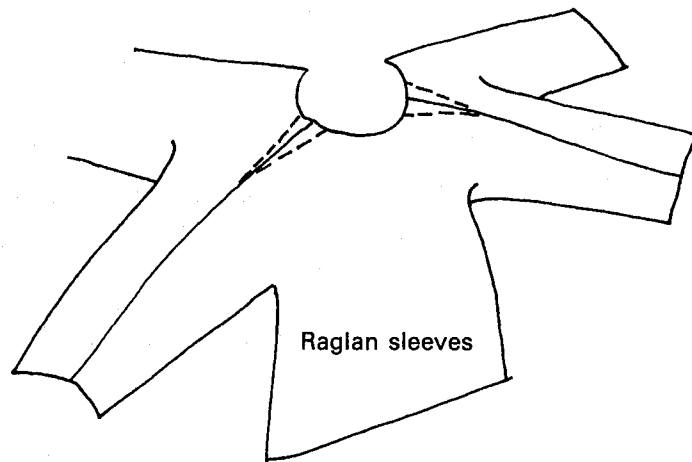
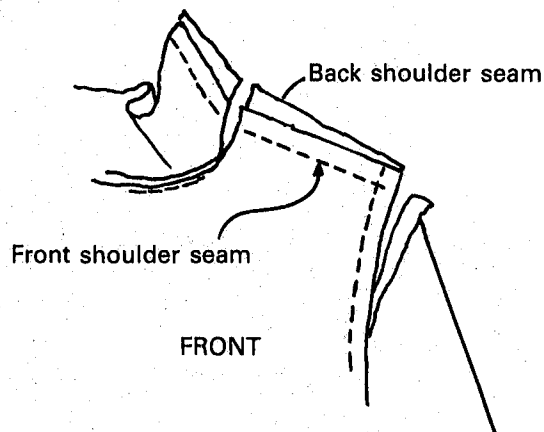
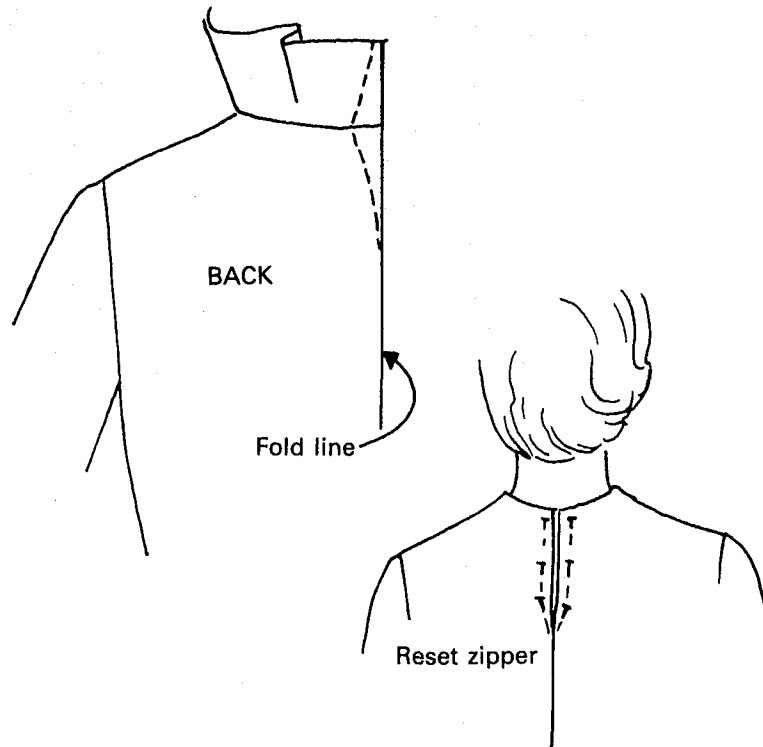
When the **neckline is too large across the back**, the center back of your garment stands away from the back of the neck. To correct the problem, make small darts in the neckline about 2 inches from center back on both sides. You can successfully remove about 1 inch of fullness from the back neck in this way.

If there is more than one inch of fullness to remove, take some of it out by moving over the upper 4 or 5 inches of center back seam and reset the zipper if there



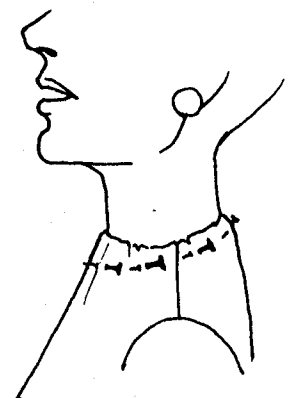
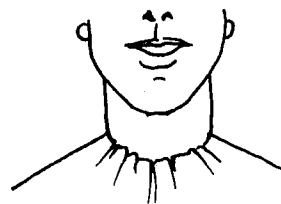
is one. If there is no center back seam, the extra fullness can be taken out of the back shoulder seam. Keep the front seam allowance the same, and increase the back shoulder seam allowance as much as necessary at the neckline edge, tapering to the original seam allowance at the armhole end of the seam. Make the same change in the facing.

If the garment has raglan sleeves, you can take a deeper seam in the upper portion of the sleeve seam. Check to see if the extra should be taken from both the sleeve and bodice seams or just the bodice part of the garment.



When the **neckline is too tight**, lower it to make the garment more comfortable. Put the garment on and pin the location of the new neckline. If only the front is too tight, start at the shoulder seam and put a row of pins around the neck so that it crosses the hollow at the base of the neck in front. Make the new neckline a smooth curve.

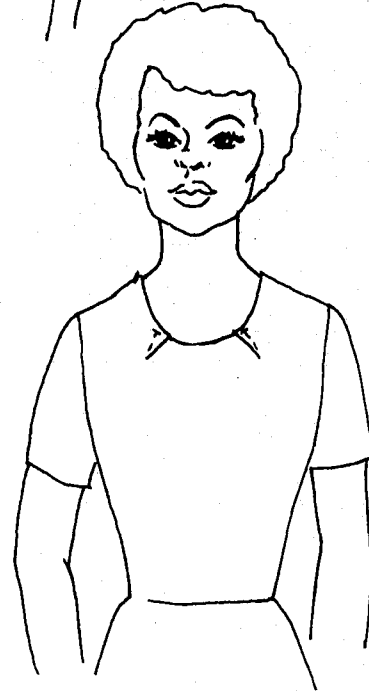
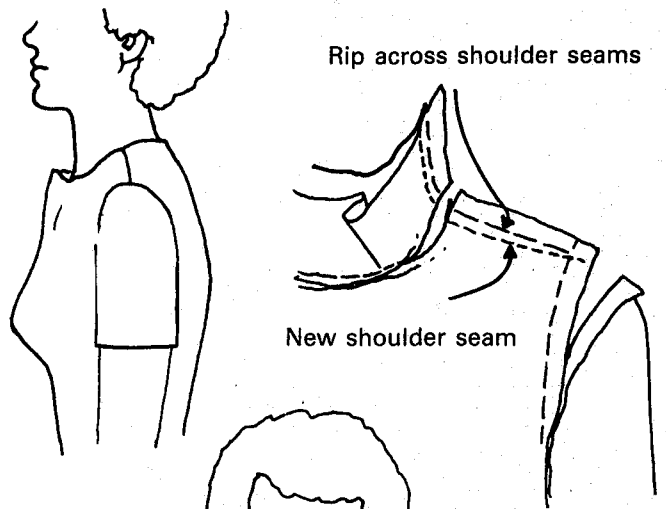
If the neckline is too tight all around, begin pinning the new lowered neckline at the center back and continue around the neckline making a smooth curve. Stitch the facing to the neckline on the row of pins, trim and clip the seam.



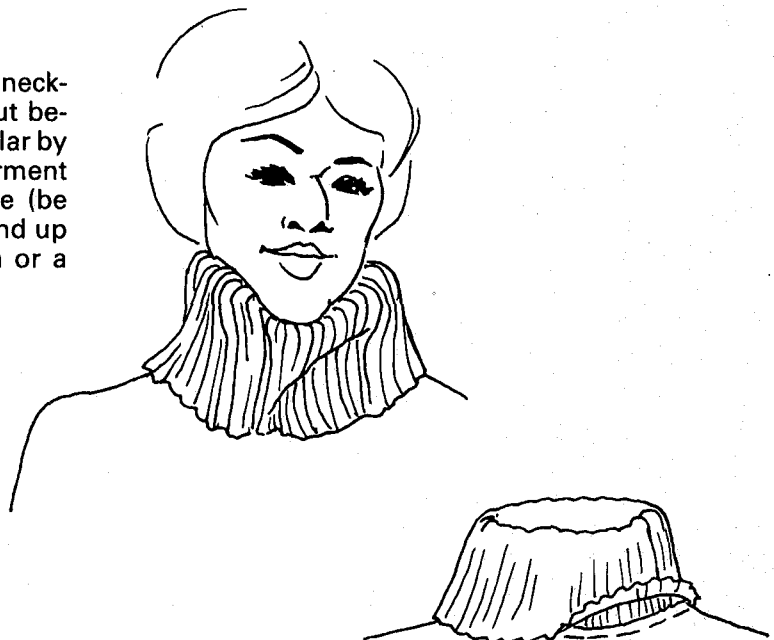
When the **front neckline gaps**, the garment tends to look too large all over. If the neckline is low in front, it should lie against the chest and not move away from the body when you bend.

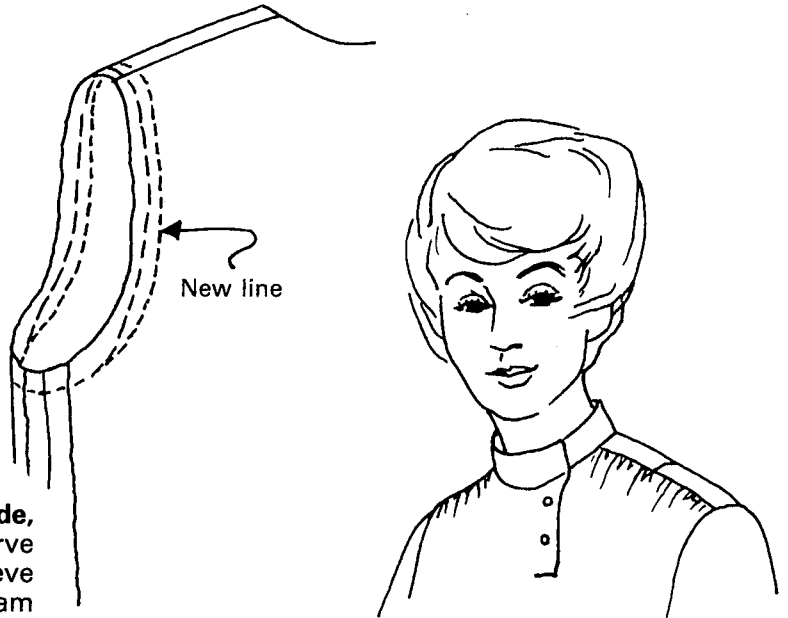
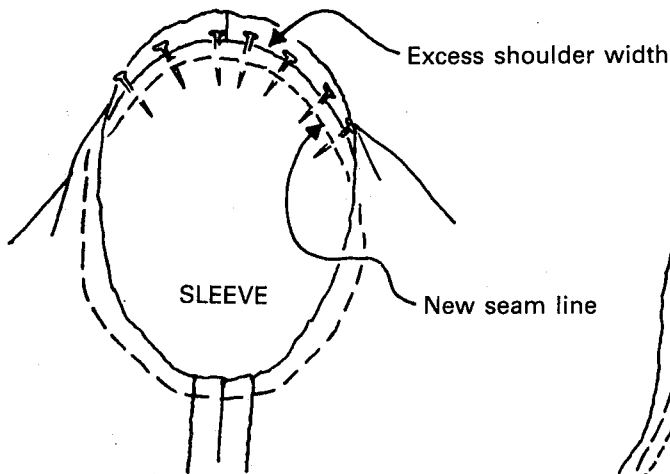
To correct the problem, take the extra fullness out of the shoulder seam near the neckline. Take out the shoulder seam and restitch leaving the back seam allowance the same and taking a deeper seam in the front only. Taper the seam leaving the armhole end of the shoulder seam the same as it was. Make the same change in the facing.

If the garment has a scooped neckline, some of the extra fullness can be removed from the shoulder seam. If it still gaps, remove the neckline facing, try on the garment and pin tucks in both sides of the front neckline until it lies against the chest when you lean over. Measure the tucked neckline. Cut a piece of seam tape the length of the tucked neckline. Ease the garment to the seam tape and stitch. Ease the facing to the garment.



If a **turtleneck is too high** stitch just below the neckline twice on the same row of stitching, then cut between the stitching and the collar. Shorten the collar by cutting the extra off the raw edge. Stitch to the garment stretching the collar to the size of the neckline (be careful not to stretch the neckline or you may end up with a seam that ripples). Use a straight stitch or a zigzag.





SHOULDER

When the **shoulders of a garment are too wide**, move the sleeve in so that it follows the natural curve of the body. Put a row of pins where the new sleeve seam should be located. Start at the shoulder seam and work down in front, then in back. Remember that the armhole seam should be straight down from the shoulder seam 4 to 5 inches in front and back and then curve under the arm.

If the shoulder seam is less than $\frac{1}{2}$ " too long, remove the top 4 to 5 inches of the sleeve, mark the new seam line on the bodice and sew the original sleeve seam to the marked line overlapping the ends of the stitching with the original seam.

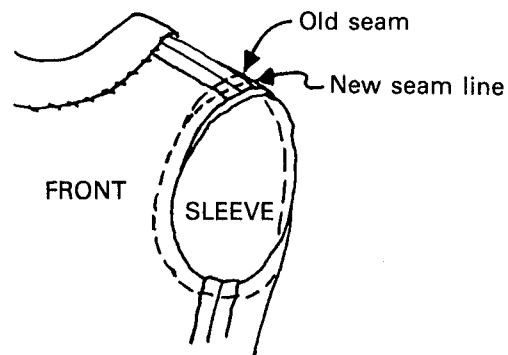
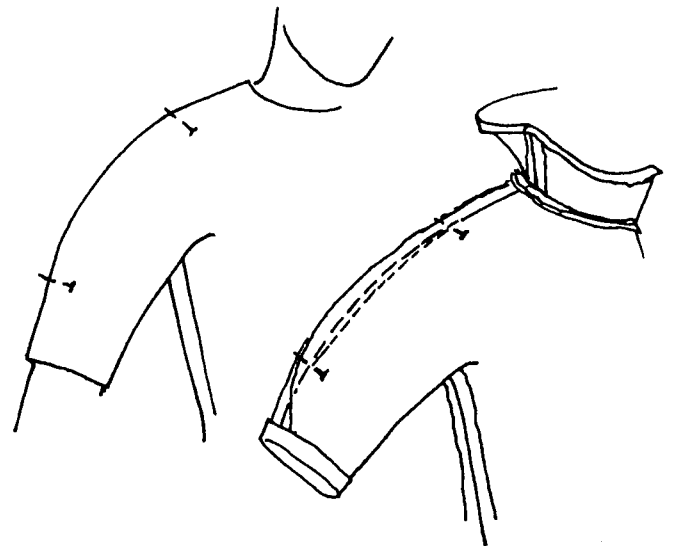
If you try to stitch a deeper seam on both the bodice and sleeve, you will shorten the sleeve cap and the sleeve will have pull wrinkles toward the top of the sleeve.

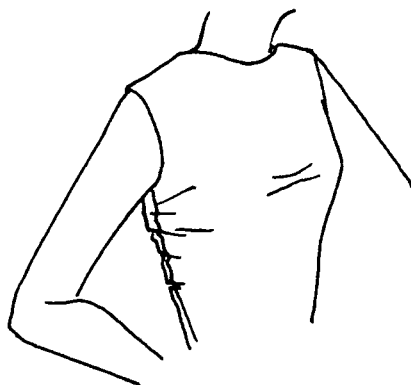
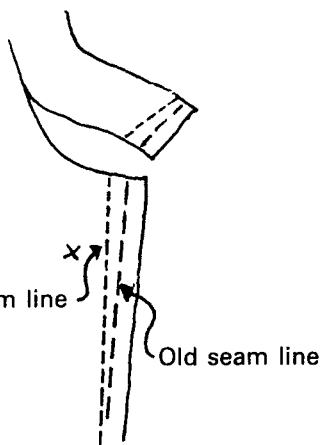
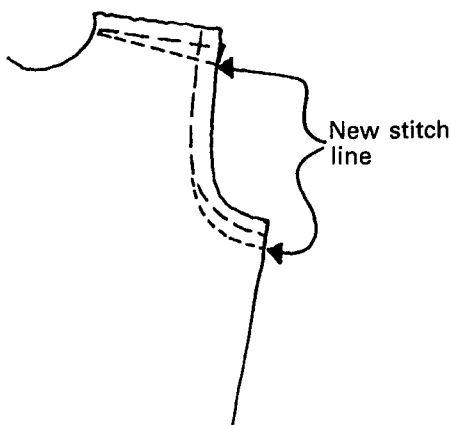
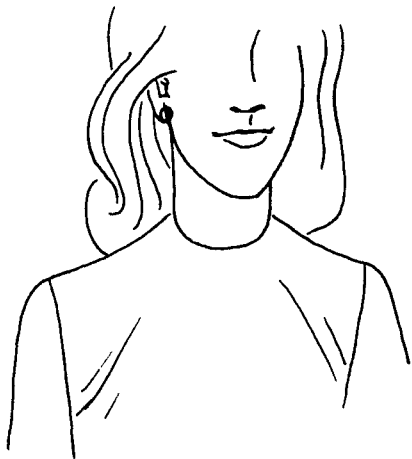
If the shoulder seam needs to be shortened more than $\frac{1}{2}$ ", remove the entire sleeve. To make the sleeve fit the enlarged armhole, take in the top of the bodice underarm seam so that the sleeve will fit.

Another alternative to shorten the shoulder line is to stitch in a back shoulder dart and gather the front shoulder line to match. This does not involve removing the sleeve and is a good solution if your back is wide through the shoulderblade area.

To shorten the shoulder width in kimono sleeve designs reshape the seam between the neckline and the main part of the sleeve. Use a pin to mark the sleeve at the end of your shoulder. Baste a new seam from the pin to the full part of the upper sleeve tapering to the original sleeve seam. Check the fit and machine stitch. Trim the seam allowance and press as the original seam was pressed.

When the **shoulders of a garment are too narrow**, move the top of the sleeve out on the shoulder seam. Keep the sleeve seam the same and make the bodice seam narrower. Be sure to leave a $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance on the bodice so the seam does not pull out.





Diagonal wrinkles in the bodice from the neckline to the underarm area or from the shoulder toward the bustline indicate that the **shoulder slope of the garment is not correct for your figure**. When wrinkles are toward the underarm, the shoulder line is too square for you. When the wrinkles are toward the bustline or shoulder blade, the shoulder line is too sloped.

To correct the shoulder slope of the garment, take out the shoulder seam. Smooth the garment fabric onto the shoulder and pin in a new seam line. Notice that the garment may be too square in front and sloped in the back or vice versa. The shoulder seam will probably need to be taken in on either the front or back and let out on the other. You may also notice that one shoulder seam needs to be changed and not the other. Remember that the shoulder seam should follow along the top of the shoulder. You may need to trim out the lower part of the armhole to make the sleeve fit the armhole and to make the armhole comfortable. Trim out only the amount you remove from the shoulder seam. If too much is trimmed away the sleeve will feel tight and it will be difficult to raise your arm.

If the amount you need to pin out of the shoulder seam is more than $\frac{3}{4}$ " , you may need to add a small shoulder pad to the garment instead of changing the shoulder slope that much. Shoulder pads should extend just beyond the armhole seam to fill in the top of the sleeve.

When only one shoulder is sloped, fitting the garment closely may emphasize your figure irregularity. The total effect will usually be better if a small shoulder pad is used, rather than altering the garment a lot to follow your body contour.

BODICE

When the bodice is too loose, pin the extra fullness out of the side seams. Mark the top of the seam the amount that needs to be taken out. Take out the lower part of the sleeve seam. Taper the side seams to the waistline. Taper the sleeve or facing underarm seam the same amount as the bodice so the seams will fit together or lower the armhole seam slightly so that the sleeve fits the garment.

When the bodice front is too loose or the bodice back is too loose, but not both, take in the extra in the side seam. Leave the seam allowance on the part of the garment that fits (back or front) in its original position. The extra fabric should be removed from only one side of the seam. When the bodice front is too loose, you may also need to make the underarm dart smaller to make the bust cup size of the bodice match your own. The extra side seam length from the dart can be moved to the armhole or waist seam.

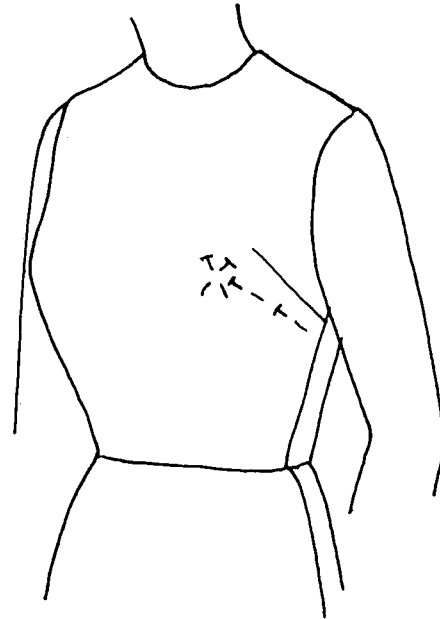
When the bodice is too tight, take out the side seams and the lower part of the armhole seam. Repin the side seam using smaller seam allowances. You may need to let out the sleeve seam so the sleeve will fit into the armhole.

When **only the bodice front is too tight**, let out the front side seam and stitch it to the original back side seamline.

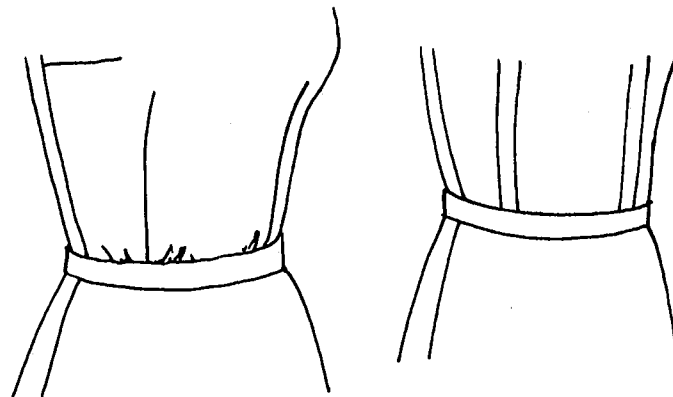
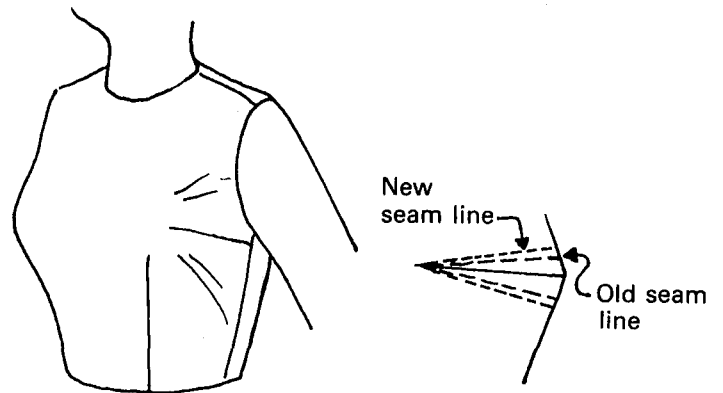
When **only the bodice back is too tight**, let out the back side seam and stitch it to the original front side seamline.

When the **bodice back is too tight or loose through the upper back**, the alteration will need to be done in the armhole seam. Take out the back of the sleeve seam and set the sleeve in or out to make the back fit properly. If the bodice back is extremely tight in this area, it may be necessary to remake the dress into a jumper or sleeveless dress or to let out the center back seam if there is one.

When **bodice darts do not point to the fullest part of the bust**, they should be raised or lowered until they do. Wearing the bra that will be worn with the garment, mark the place the new dart should end with crossed pins. Take out the side seam through the area of the darts and the original dart. Pin in a new dart parallel to the original dart in its new position. Stitch the darts and restitch the side seam.



Diagonal wrinkles from the bust to the side at the waistline usually indicate that the darts are too small for your bust cup size. To correct this problem, take out the side seam and stitch a deeper underarm dart. If that shortens the side too much at the waistline, make the dart as large as possible, then let out the side seam at the waistline and add a few gathers along the waistline or a second waist dart on each side.



WAISTLINE

When the **waistline is too low**, tie a string around your waist to find the location of your waist. Put pins where the string falls. Take out the waistline seam and restitch using the pinned line on the bodice and the original skirt seam. You may find that the **waistline is too low only in the front or only in the back**. When this happens, follow the same procedure making the changes only where they are needed and tapering to the original seamline at the side seams.

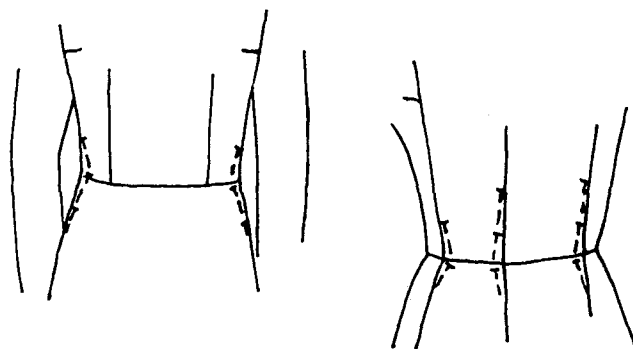
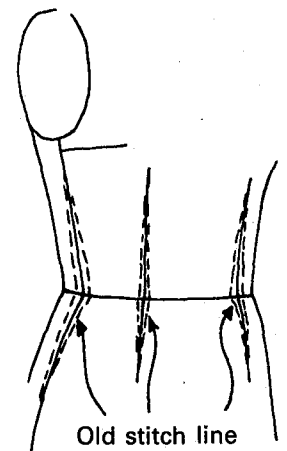
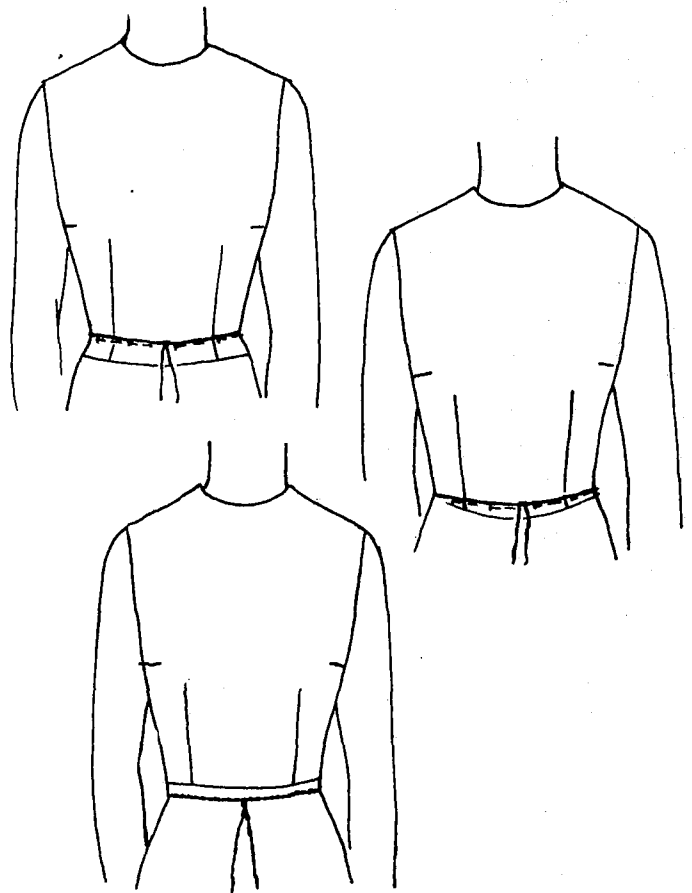
When the **waistline is too high**, check to see how high it is by tying a string around your waist. You can only lower the waistline about $\frac{3}{8}$ " by moving the seamline down on the bodice section of the garment. There should be about $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance left after the garment is altered or the seam may pull out. To lower the waistline seam more than the seam allowance will allow, put a band of fabric between the bodice and skirt. Use a matching piece of fabric from a facing or pleat, or use a fabric that looks good with the dress. A belt can cover the fabric inset.

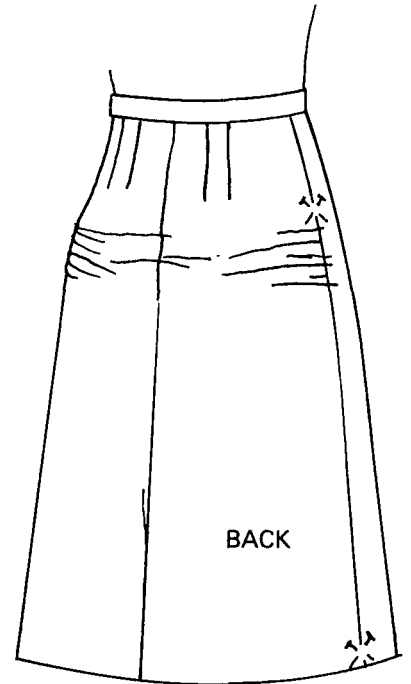
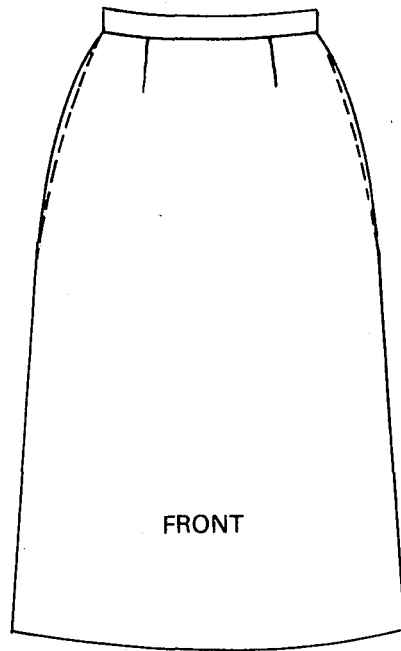
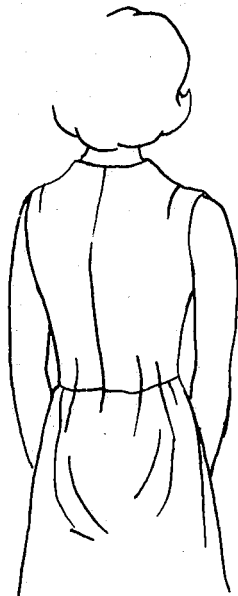
The **waistline shaping may be too low or high even when there is no waistline seam**. To change the waistline in a garment fitted with darts, reshape the darts and side seams or princess seams so the waistline fit is in line with your waistline.

When the **waistline is too tight**, the garment may not close or may pull and be uncomfortable. To alter the garment, measure your waist and the waistline of the garment. You will need at least one inch of ease to feel comfortable in the garment. The extra fabric to make the garment fit may be found in the side seams and in darts. If only one or two inches need to be added, let out the side seams equally front and back. Keep in mind that letting each seam out $\frac{1}{4}$ " will give you a total of 1" in circumference. If you need to add more than two inches, check to see if you can let out the darts also. Again, remember that if you move the stitching line on a dart $\frac{1}{4}$ " you are actually adding $\frac{1}{2}$ " to the width of the waistline.

Alter the skirt and bodice of a garment the same way in the same places. Taper skirt alterations so that you do not make the hipline bigger also.

When the **waistline is too loose**, pin in the waistline until it feels comfortable. If the garment is less than 2" too large, you can make the changes on side seams. If it is more than 2" too large, you will need to take in the darts as well.



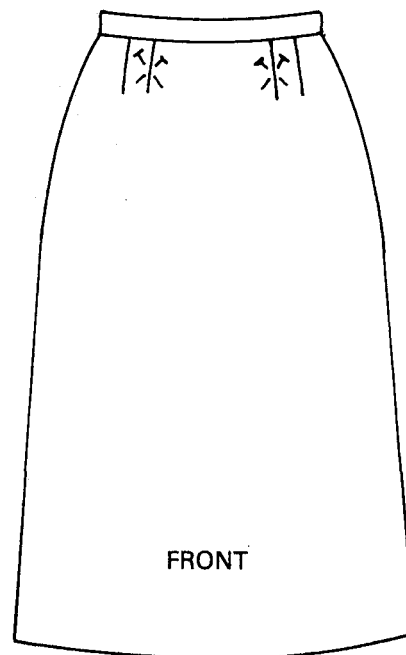


SKIRT AND PANTS

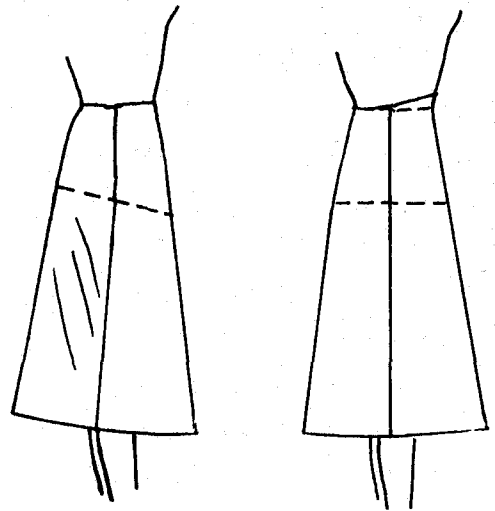
When a **skirt or pants are too big through the hip-line**, pin in the side seams until the garment looks and feels comfortable. You may need to take more out of the back or front to have the side seams hang straight and in the right position. When this is the case, take out the side seams and repin them in the new location. Be careful not to overfit. Walk and sit in the pinfitted skirt to check that you have not fitted it too tightly.

When a **skirt or pants are too small through the hipline**, take out the side seams and repin them so that the garment is comfortable and does not pull in under the seat or across the front. You may need to let out only the front or the back to have the side seams hang straight and in the right position. Try to do all changes on the side seams. Changing the center back seam may change the grainline and create other problems in the hang of the skirt or pants.

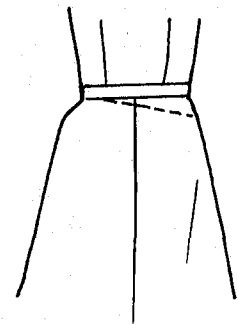
If the garment is too tight right below the waist, but fits lower in the hip, take out the side seams from the waist to the hip and let out the darts and/or shorten them so that they point to the fullest part of your figure. You may find that curving and shortening the darts will make the garment fit better than changing the side seams.



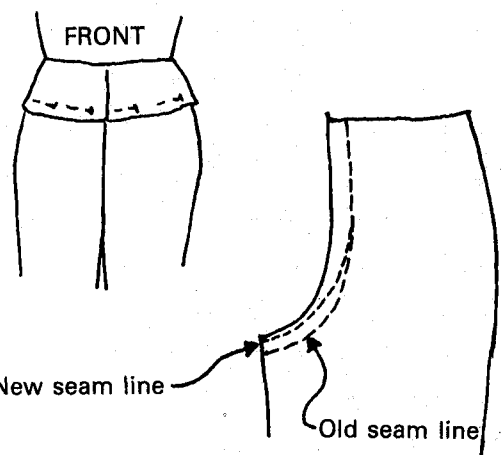
If the **side seams of pants or a skirt swing toward the front or back**, change the general hang of the garment by changing the waistline. Tie a string around your waist. Pull up on the part of the garment that droops until the side seams hang perpendicular to the floor. Mark the new waistline with pins. Take out the waist seam or take off the part of the waistband that needs changing. Restitch the waist seam in the marked position. When you make this change in pants, you have shortened the crotch seam. To make the pants comfortable, restitch the front or back crotch seam lower in the curved area (just front or back depending on where you changed the waistline).



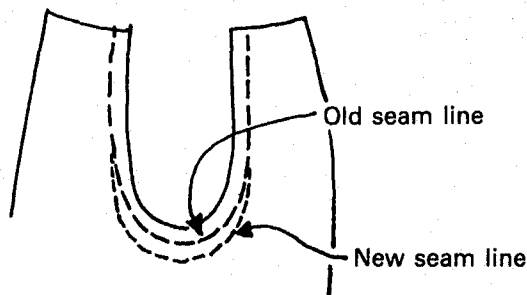
If you have one hip that is higher and fuller than the other, pants and skirts will have **diagonal wrinkles toward the side waist** and the garment will be shorter on that side. To make the garment hang straight, take out the side and waist seams on your larger side. Pull the skirt down so that it hangs level at the hipline and repin the side seam. Stitch the side seam. Repin the waist seam letting the skirt or pant down so that the hipline is level. If you don't have enough waist seam allowance, take out the other side waistline seam and raise the longer side until the diagonal wrinkles disappear. Mark and stitch the new waistline.



If the **crotch looks long and falls more than 1 inch below your figure**, you will want to raise the crotch depth. Pin a tuck all the way around the pants to raise the pants to the proper position. Check to be sure this does not create other fitting problems. If the crotch depth only needs minor changes, you may be able to correct them by restitching the crotch seam in a higher position. If the crotch seam needs to be raised more than that, the change must be made at the waistline. Take out the waistline finish (casing or waistband), cut off the excess fabric leaving enough for the casing or a seam allowance to restitch the pant to the waistband. Redo the waistband or casing as originally sewn.

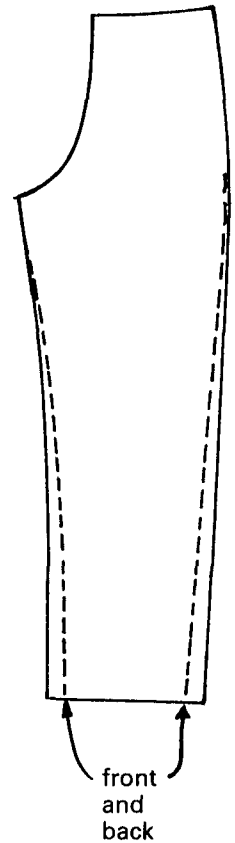
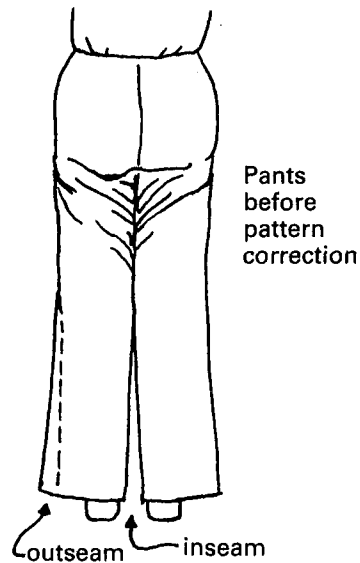


If the **crotch looks and feels short**, you may or may not be able to correct the problem. To resew the pants and make the crotch long enough, stitch a lower crotch seam. Trim away the excess seam allowance and try them on to see if you need to stitch the seam still lower. The problem with this solution is that you shorten the leg length as much as you lengthen the crotch. You could also check to see how much seam allowance there is in the waistband. It might be possible to lower the crotch depth slightly by lowering the pant in the waistband.



When the **pant legs pull against the inner leg** you may notice diagonal wrinkles from the inner leg seam at or above the knee toward the side seam at seat level. These wrinkles are most noticeable from the back, and are caused by legs, knees or thighs that are large or close together. To correct the problem, take out the inseams and restitch from the crotch point to the hem using as small a seam allowance as possible. Take in the outseams so that your legs are centered in the pants. Trim excess seam allowance off the outseams. Press seams open and rehem.

When **pant legs are too wide**, check to see where the extra fabric is. If the pant legs fall against your inner legs, take in only the outseams. If your legs are centered in the pant legs, take equal amounts out of the inseam and outseam. Pin in the new seamline and try on the pants. When they look the way you wish, take out the pant hems and stitch the leg seams. Trim off the excess seam allowance, press the seams open, and rehem the pants.



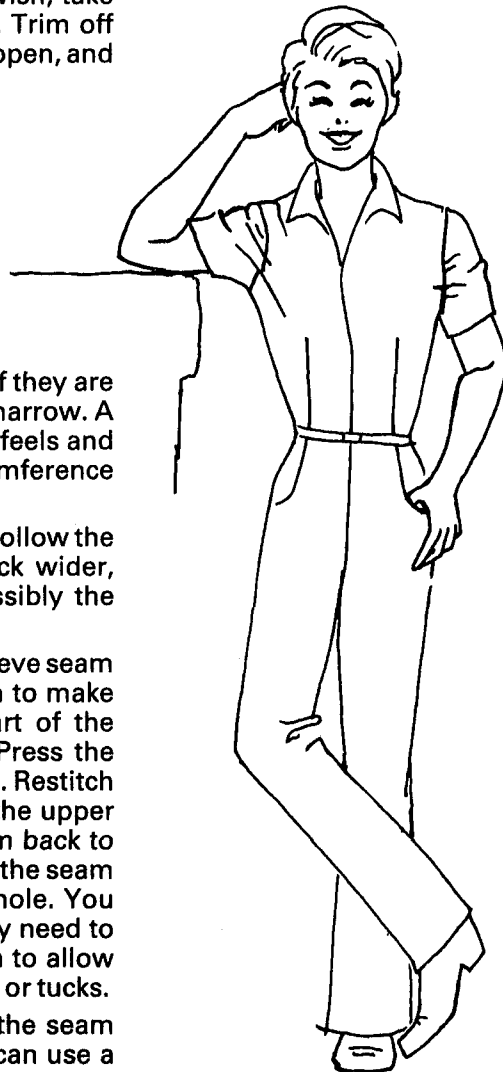
SLEEVE

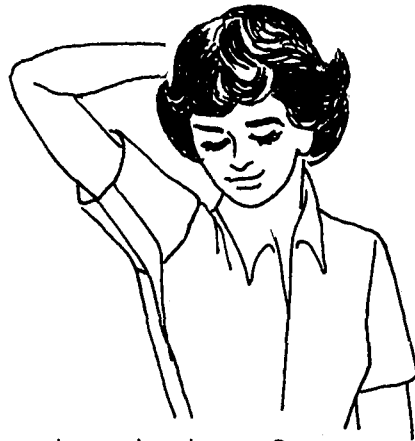
When **sleeves are too tight**, check to see if they are too small or if the back of the garment is too narrow. A narrow back can pull on the sleeve so that it feels and looks too tight even though the sleeve circumference is all right.

If the problem is the back of the garment, follow the suggestions given for making a bodice back wider, letting out the back armhole seam and possibly the center back seam (page 11).

If the sleeve itself is too tight, check the sleeve seam allowance to see if you can let it out enough to make the sleeve fit. If so, take out the lower part of the armhole seam. Take out the sleeve seam. Press the fabric flat to remove the crease from the seam. Restitch leaving at least $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowance. If only the upper part of the sleeve is too tight, taper the seam back to the original seamline below the elbow. Press the seam open and sew the sleeve back into the armhole. You will have made the sleeve larger, so you may need to let out the top of the bodice underarm seam to allow you to set the sleeve in again without gathers or tucks.

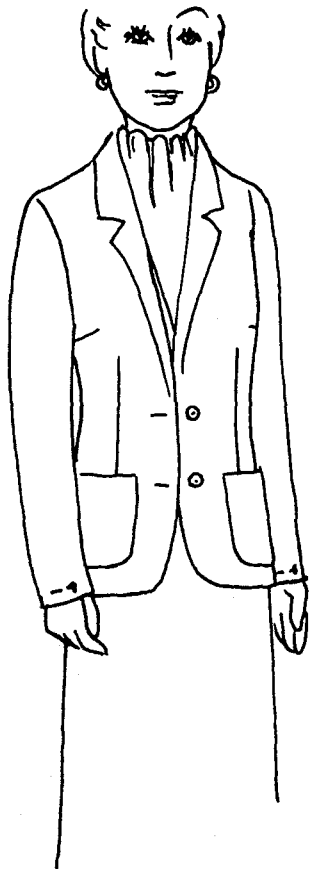
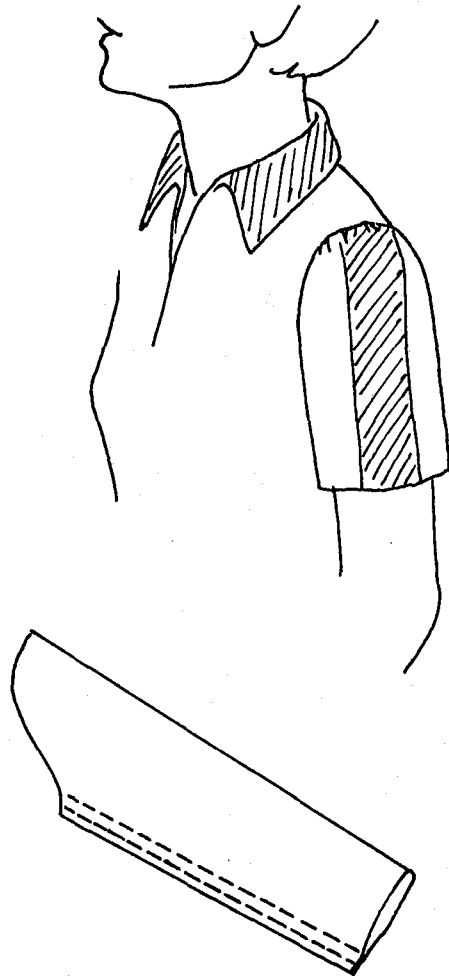
If the sleeve must be let out more than the seam allowance, check the garment to see if you can use a





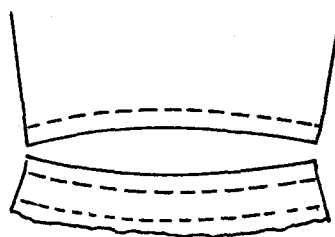
strip of fabric from a facing to enlarge the sleeve. Cut the strip wide enough to stitch it to the sleeve seam with $\frac{1}{4}$ " seam allowances. If matching fabric is not available, find a fabric that looks good with the garment. Take the sleeve out and split it from the top of the sleeve cap to the wrist and sew the strip of fabric on the top of the sleeve as trim. Let out the bodice underarm seam so the sleeve will sew in easily. Use the fabric to trim another part of the garment so that it looks as if it belongs to the garment.

When sleeves are too loose, take out the lower part of the armhole seam. Take out the sleeve seam and restitch it making the whole sleeve smaller. Take in the upper part of the bodice underarm seam the same amount and set the sleeve in.



When sleeves are too long, decide the sleeve length. If it is a long sleeve, hold your arm straight and put a pin in the sleeve right below your wrist bone. Mark both sleeves; your arms may not be the same length. Take out the original hem and turn up the end of the sleeve an even amount all the way around. Rehem or reapply trim to complete the alteration.

To shorten a sleeve that has a shaped facing instead of a hem, remove the facing. Decide how long the sleeve should be. Add seam allowance to the bottom of the sleeve and cut off the excess fabric. Sew the facing to the bottom of the sleeve, press, and hand stitch the facing in place.



To shorten a sleeve with a cuff, begin by pinning a tuck around the sleeve until the cuff is in the correct location. Bend your arm to be sure it is long enough. Measure the tuck to determine how much to remove from the bottom of the sleeve. Remove the cuff. Check to be sure the placket is long enough. If the placket will be too short, remove the facing or binding, cut the opening longer, and replace the facing or binding. Cut the excess fabric off the sleeve. Gather or pleat the lower edge of the sleeve to fit the cuff. Stitch the cuff on; you may have to take out any top-stitching to the bottom of the cuff to have working room. Replace the top-stitching.

If the cuff and placket will be difficult to change, you may find it easier to shorten the sleeve from the top. Remove the sleeve from the armhole and recut the top of the sleeve. Set in the sleeve. If shortened very much, this might make the sleeve too narrow.

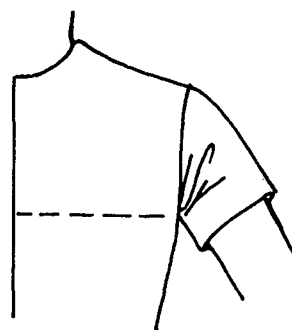
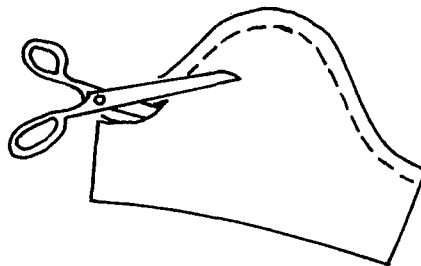
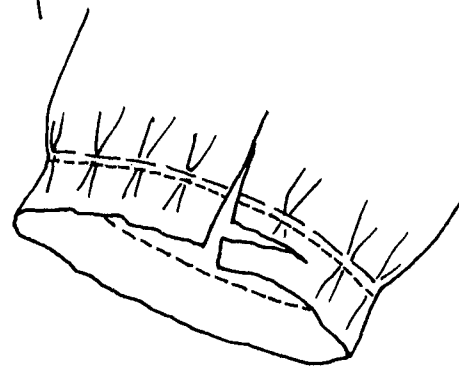
If the sleeve is only slightly too long, tighten the cuff by moving the button. This will keep the sleeve cuff in the proper position.

When sleeves are too short, look carefully at the way the sleeves are finished at the bottom. If they have a plain hem, take out the hem and press the fabric flat. Check to be sure the crease at the bottom of the hem comes out. Turn up a narrow hem and stitch it in place. Or, you can cut a facing the width of the original hem and stitch the facing to the bottom of the sleeves. Finish the sleeves by stitching the facing in place.

To lengthen sleeves with a cuff is difficult without changing the style of the sleeves. Usually there is not enough seam allowance in the cuffs to let out the upper cuff seams. Change the style of the sleeves to short sleeves and hem, or cut the sleeves and insert a piece of fabric that blends with the garment in the appropriate place on the sleeve. Try to use the fabric as trim in another place in the garment.

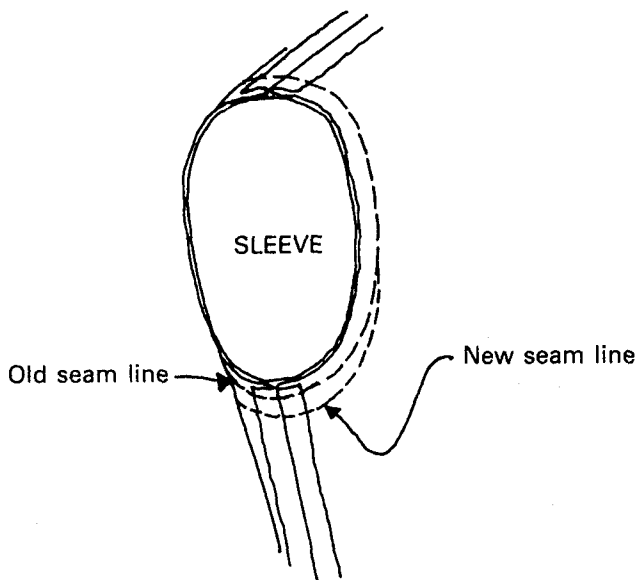
When there is a diagonal wrinkle from the top of the sleeve cap to the underarm area, it usually means that the sleeve cap is too short. To correct the problem, take out the upper half of the armhole seam. With the garment on, drop the upper part of the sleeve until the wrinkles disappear and the crosswise grain is level at the armhole level. Put a pin in the sleeve at the shoulder seam to show how deep the seam should be at that point. Sew the sleeve in using the original armhole seamline and the new sleeve seamline.

If the sleeve cap is so short that the suggestion above does not solve the problem, take out the lower part of the armhole seam and lift the lower part of the sleeve until the wrinkles disappear. Pin, then baste the sleeve in place. Try on to be sure the sleeve hangs correctly before cutting off the extra fabric in the sleeve. Stitch and trim the seam allowance.



When the **sleeve cap twists** and there seems to be too much fullness in part of the sleeve cap, take out the upper part of the armhole seam. With the garment on, repin the sleeve cap into the armhole shifting the fullness until the sleeve hangs straight. It may be necessary to shift the entire sleeve forward or backward to have the excess fullness disappear. Resew the armhole seam.

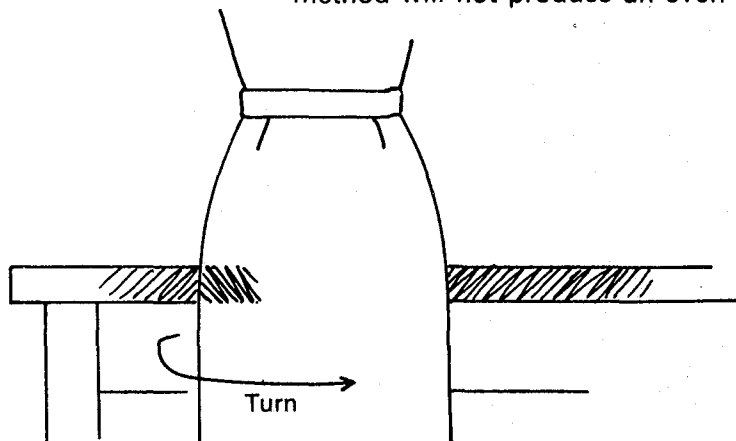
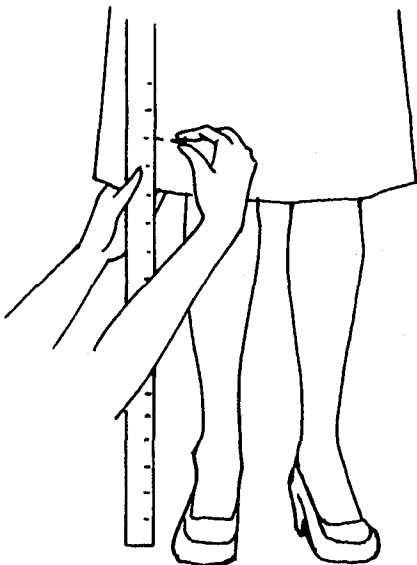
When the **armhole feels tight and binds** when the arm is moved, check to see if the shoulder slope is correct. If it is not, follow directions on page 10 to correct shoulder slope. If the slope is correct, trim away part of the seam allowance between the notches in the lower part of the armhole seam. If it is still tight, take out the lower part of the armhole seam and mark the correct position for the armhole seam (the armhole seam should be $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1" below your arm). Trim out the lower part of the armhole being sure to leave enough fabric for a seam allowance. Stitch the armhole seam using the original sleeve seamline. You may have to let out the underarm seam of the sleeve to sew in the sleeve easily.



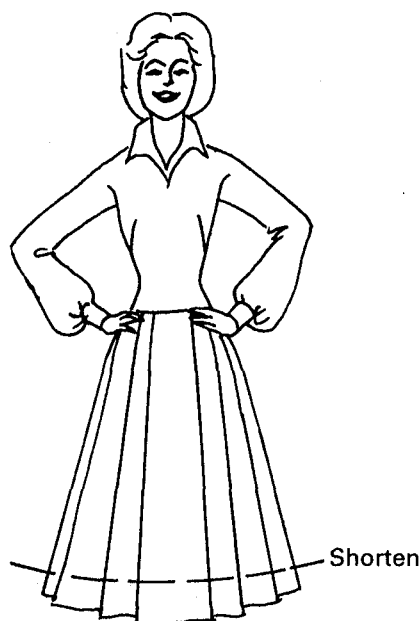
HEM

After you have made all necessary alterations, you are ready to check the hem. If the *garment hem is uneven* change the hem so it is an even distance from the floor. If you measured from the waistline, the curve of the hips caused the hem to be uneven.

To measure the hem from the floor, use a hem marker or yardstick. If you have a friend who will help, use a hem marker that marks the hem with pins or a yardstick and pins. If you must mark the hem by yourself, use a chalk hem marker to mark the bottom of the hem, or use chalk on a table edge. To use a chalked table edge, use a table that comes to the fullest part of your hipline or below. Coat the table edge with chalk and stand against the table. Turn slowly, transferring the chalk to the garment. Decide how long you want the garment. Measure down from the chalk line to the desired hemline and mark it with pins. Be sure the table is not above the fullest part of the hips or this method will not produce an even hem.



To finish the hem, turn up the hem on the marked line. Trim it to an even width appropriate to the garment and fabric. Pant and flared skirt hems are usually 1½" wide; straight skirt hems are usually about 2" wide. Finish the edge of the hem using the same hem edge finish used originally. To sew the hem by hand, use fairly loose stitches about ½" apart catching only one thread of the outer fabric in each stitch. To sew the hem by machine, you may top stitch or use a machine blind hemming stitch. To use the blind hemming stitch follow the directions in your sewing machine manual.



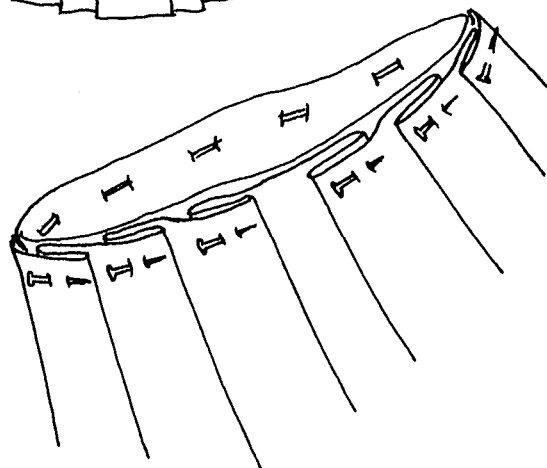
When a **garment is too long**, decide where you want the hemline after considering fashion, your legs, your height, and the proportions of the garment. If the original hem is an even distance from the floor, measure up from the old hemline the amount you want to shorten the garment. If it is not an even distance from the floor, mark the hem and stitch as described in the previous section.

Remove the old hem stitching. Turn up the hem on the new fold line and press the fold. Trim, finish, and stitch the hem as described above.

If a permanently pleated skirt is too long, you may find it easier to shorten the skirt from the top. First, decide how much the skirt must be shortened, then take out the waistline stitching and the stitching around the zipper. Cut the excess fabric from the top of the skirt, being sure to leave a seam allowance. The skirt will now be larger around the waist. Pin in the pleats making them slightly deeper so that the skirt will fit the waistband or bodice. Put the zipper back in the garment, and stitch the waistline seam.

If a coat is too long, you will need to shorten both the coat and the lining. Look carefully at the way the original coat and lining hems were done. Take out the old hem and press; mark the new hem length. Take out the stitching that holds the lining and front facing together in the hem area. Trim the coat hem to an even width (the same width it was originally). Finish the top of the hem. Hand stitch the hem in place.

Take the stitching out of the coat lining hem and press. Cut the same amount off the lining as you cut from the coat. Turn up the lining hem and machine or hand stitch it in place. Stitch the lining to the front facing in hem area by hand. Pin front facing in place. Hand stitch the bottom of the facing to the bottom edge of the coat.

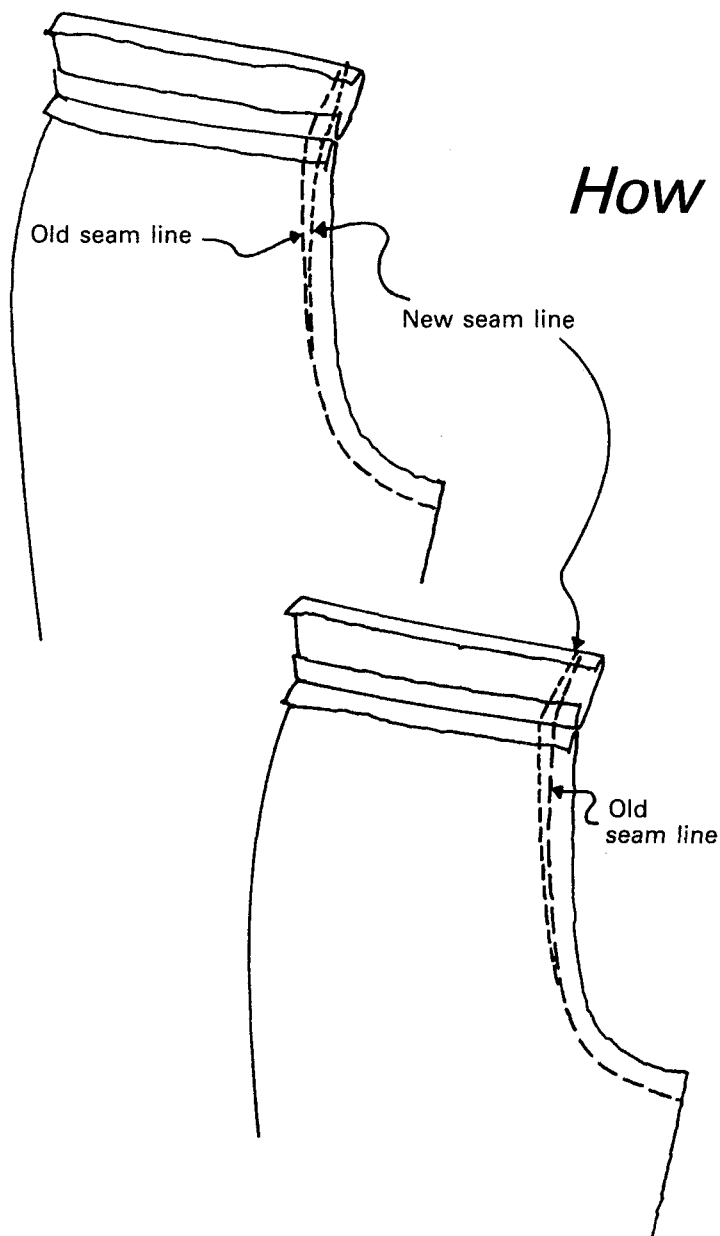


If a **garment is too short**, you may not be able to lengthen it without changing the garment design. Even if there is enough hem to let down to the desired length, you may not be able to remove the hem crease. To check the permanence of the hem crease, remove the hem stitches, press the fabric flat, and check to see if the fabric is worn or faded along the hem fold. If it is, you will need to consider methods of lengthening. If it is not worn or faded, try sponging a little white vinegar onto the crease and pressing it. Reapply and press again as needed.

If you were successful at removing the hem crease, decide how long you want the garment and turn the hem up. If there is at least one inch of hem turned up, finish the hem edge and hand stitch the hem in place following the directions on page 18. If not, purchase hem facing tape in a matching color and stitch to the top of the garment hem. Hand stitch to the garment.

If you were not able to remove the hem crease, you have several alternatives to consider:

- Give the garment to someone who can use it as it is.
- Shorten a dress to make it a top to wear with pants.
- Insert a band of fabric that blends with the garment above the hemline or as a band around the bottom of the garment. Add some of the fabric as a band in another part of the garment to give the garment a unified appearance.
- Stitch a tuck incorporating the crease in the part of the tuck that does not show when the garment is worn.
- Stitch trim over the old crease or stitch on the creaseline.



How To Alter Men's Clothing

Many alterations are the same whether the fitting problem occurs in women's or men's clothing. There are some alterations which are different because of the construction of men's clothing and because of the differences in men's and women's figures.

PANTS

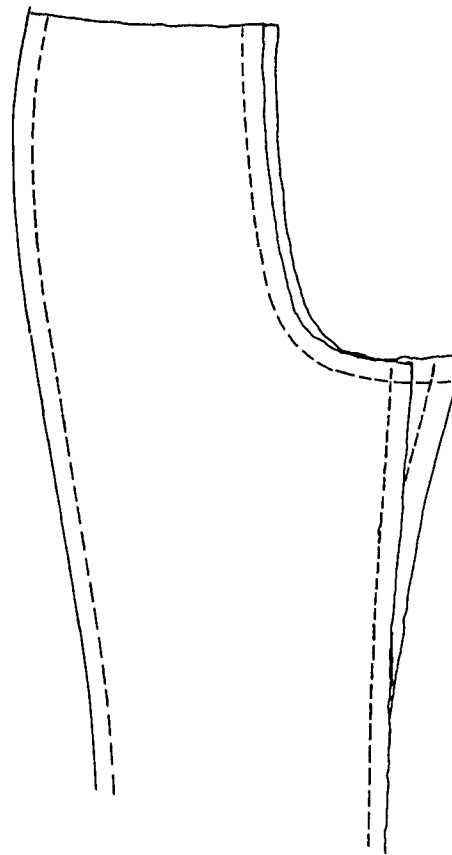
When the **waistline in men's pants is too tight**, remove the stitching that holds the center back belt loop and bottom of the waistband facing. Take out the center back seam of the trousers to the point in the seat where they fit. Press the seam allowances flat. Pin the back seam and try on the pants. Stitch the center back seam and press. Turn down the waistband facing and fasten in place as it was originally. Stitch the belt loop in place.

When the **waistline in men's pants is too loose**, pin out the excess along the center back seam. Remove the stitching that holds the center back belt loop and waistband. Take out the center back seam of the trousers to the point in the seat where they fit. Press the seam allowances flat. Pin the center back seam along the new stitching line and try on the pants. Stitch the center back seam and press. If the center back seam allowance is now too wide to lie smoothly, trim part of it out. Turn down the waistband facing and fasten in place as it was originally. Stitch the belt loop in place.

If more than 1½-2" must be removed from the pant waistline, part of the alteration must be made on the side seams. This involves removing the waistband from the entire back of the pants, and removing and resetting the side pockets, in addition to the steps listed above. Since this alteration is more complicated, evaluate whether the pants are worth the effort before beginning. If too much is taken out of the center back seam, the back pockets get too close together and the side pockets are pulled too far back.

When the **seat of men's pants is too long and baggy**, take out the lower part of the trouser center back seam. Take out the inseam stitching from crotch to knee. Pin baste the inseam, pinning the original front leg seamline to the back leg 1" in from the original stitching line. Check fit to see if more or less should be taken off the back leg. Stitch the new inseam and restitch the center back seam. Some width may need to be removed from the hip portion of the center back seam also. Do not stitch the crotch seam lower than it was or you will lengthen the crotch depth and shorten the leg length.

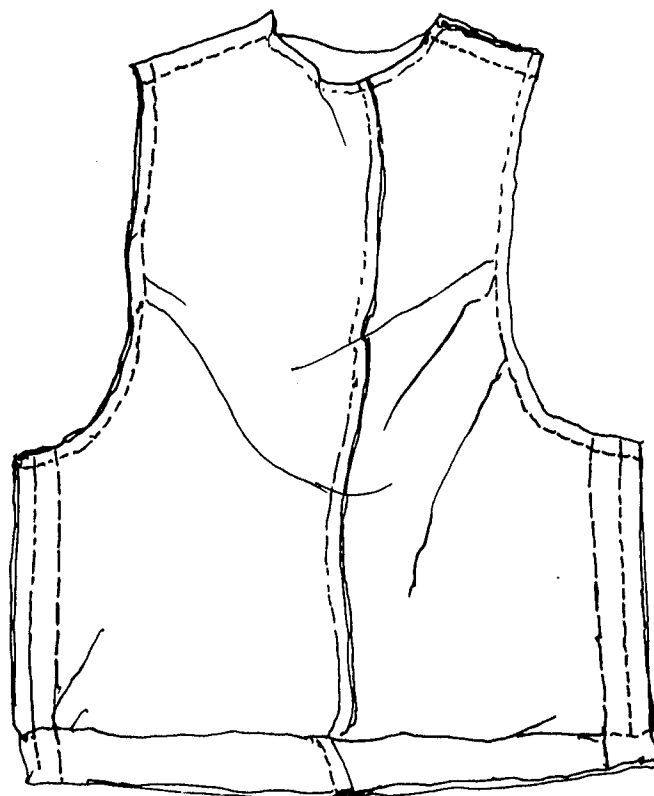
When you need to **hem men's pants**, measure the desired length from the the waistband at the inseam. Draw a diagonal line across the pant leg making the back ½" (1.3 cm) longer than the front. Measure down another 2" (5.2 cm) to determine the cutting line. Mark the second leg from the first. Cut off the excess fabric; pin up the hem, press, and hem. If the hem is too narrow to sew to the pant, let out the inseam and outseam from the hem edge to the top of the hem allowance to make it fit. If the hem is too big, take in the seams to make the hem fit smoothly against the pant leg.



VEST

If the **body of a vest is too large**, generally take it in at the side seams. Before beginning to make changes, carefully examine how the vest was constructed. The side seams are enclosed, so you will need to remove the stitching at the back neck edge to be able to turn the vest inside out. Restitch the vest side seams taking in front and back equally. Leave the extra seam allowance inside the vest. Turn the vest right side out. Hand stitch the neck edge; press.

If the **body of the vest is too small**, remove the stitching on the back neck edge, turn the vest inside out, and restitch the side seams. Rip out the original stitching. Turn right side out. Hand stitch the neck edge; press. If this doesn't allow enough room in the vest, it may be necessary to cut a new vest back from lining fabric. Cut it slightly wider than the original, and remake the vest as it was originally done.

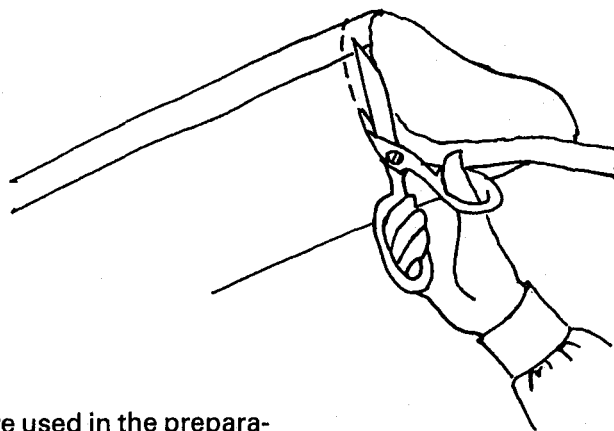
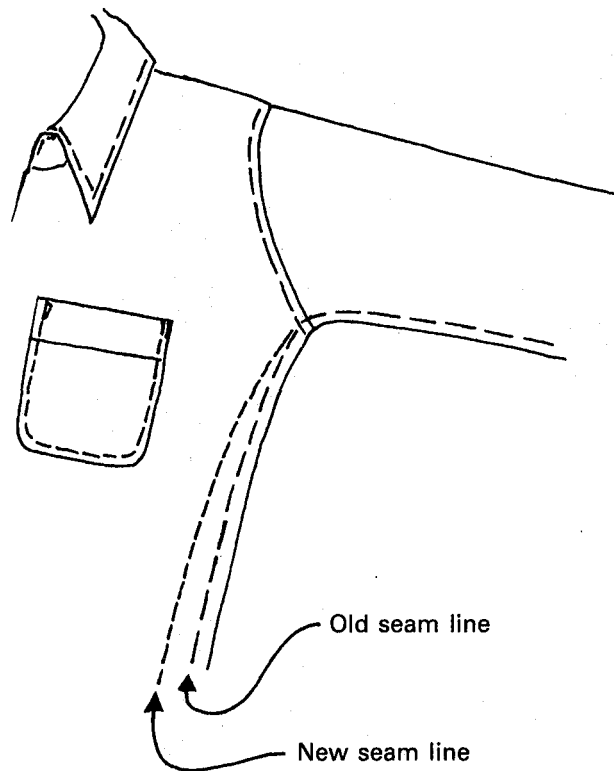


SHIRT PROBLEMS

If the body of a shirt is too big through the waistline, pin new side seams so the shirt fits and feels comfortable. Remove the same amount from the front and back. Examine the shirt to see how the seams were sewn and finished. Take out the original seams and resew on the new seamlines. Trim away excess seam allowance; press. If you must trim over 4" from the shirt body, continue the alteration into the sleeve, tapering to the original seam above the cuff.

If the **long sleeves of the shirt are too long**, there are two possible places to shorten: at the top or at the bottom. Pin a tuck around the sleeve so the cuff is in the desired location. Measure the fabric in the tuck to decide how much to shorten the sleeve. To shorten the sleeve at the top, take out the armhole seam. Set the sleeve back into the shirt. If the sleeve must be shortened very much, this method will not work because the sleeve is tapered, and it would get too small to set into the armhole.

To remove over one inch of length, shorten the sleeve at the cuff end. Remove the sleeve cuff and the placket binding looking carefully at how they were originally sewn. Cut off the bottom of the sleeve leaving the seam allowance below the sleeve length needed. Replace the sleeve placket; replace the cuff. It is important to take out the placket and move it up because the placket will become too short to look right and to allow the hand to slide through the opening easily.



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