

Pressing Pants

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While pant styling varies from flat-front to pleated trousers, depending on fashion whims, all pants should be neatly pressed for a well-kept professional appearance. But, how does one accomplish the perfect press with ease? Follow these easy tips.



Photo courtesy of
Palmer Pletsch

Always select an iron temperature and settings consistent with the pant fabric. Steam works for most fibers, but if in doubt, test on a small hidden area such as the pocket bag or waistband inside before pressing the entire pant. Some fabrics may require the use of a press cloth to prevent shine when pressing on the right side.

Press on a long flat surface, preferably a padded ironing board.

Up Top

Working from the pant wrong side, pull out any pockets and press them flat first.

Pull the waistband over the end of the ironing board and press the band area, rotating it around the end of the ironing board as you go. Continue pressing the upper pant section down to the crotch curve, being careful not to over-press. Over-pressing may result in an unintended shine and imprinting of the construction details underneath, like pocket bags and zippers; depending on the fabric, these may be permanent.

Reposition the pocket bags under the pressed upper pant.

If the pants have pleats, keep them positioned as stitched and lightly steam into place.

Pant Legs

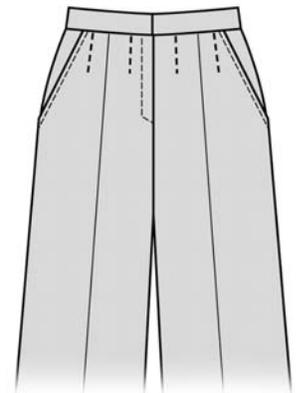
Some pants are flat-front, meaning they have no pleats or darts at the waistline. For this type of pant, creases are only pressed in at the lower hem area to help the legs hang properly.

Pants with pleats or tucks have creases pressed along the entire leg length, either in the front only or both front and back, from the upper design detailing through the lower leg hem.

Pant Creases

Pant creases are figure flattering as they divide the width visually, and they can be done to most pant styles. Pressed creases generally begin at crotch level in the back and meet waistline darts, tucks or pleats in the front (1).

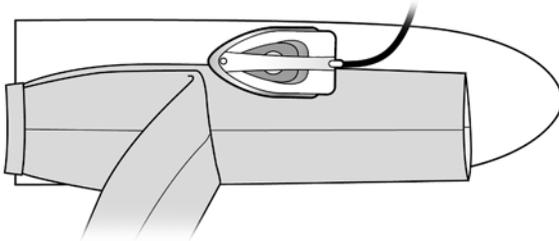
Creases may be pressed firm to the crotch area, then softer as they join tucks or pleats at the upper pant, if preferred. Hard creases may be pressed only in the front, or both front and back, depending on your preference.



When pressing creases, use a lifting motion with the iron. Sliding and pushing the iron may stretch the leg crease area and cause distortion.

To press creases in the legs, fold the pant legs (after hemming) in half carefully matching the inseam and outseam, and lay both legs along the length of the ironing board up to the pant crotch level.

Flip the upper leg out of the way and press the creaseline along one or both edges of the leg (2). Then change positions and press the opposite leg creases.



2

Try to keep the weight of the iron on the front and/or back fold only to avoid imprinting the inseam and outseam seam allowances. If the remainder of the leg area needs pressing, hover the iron and steam. On some fabrics, a press cloth should be used to help prevent shine.

If the pants are cuffed, be sure to firmly press the crease through the cuff/hem area.

On very bulky fabrics, use a tailor's clapper and apply pressure to the crease while the fabric cools to help set the line.

Let the pants cool after pressing each leg before changing legs. This will help set the creaseline.

Oops!

If you accidentally press the creases in the wrong place, or they are askew when you try the pants on, never fear. On most fabrics, you can simply dampen the creaseline with a spray bottle of water and re-press them in the proper position.

Permanent Creases

If you're not eager to find and press creases each time you wash the pants, consider making the creaseline more permanent. There are two ways to do this—edgestitching, or using fusible thread to maintain the crease.

Edgestitching a pants creaseline goes in and out of style, but it's a way to always maintain the positioning. To edgestitch, press the creaseline in place and stitch about 1/16" from the fold through both layers. Unless it's a style statement, generally only front creaselines are stitched.

To maintain the front crease without visible stitching, press it in place following the instructions above, then lay a strand of fusible thread into the pressed fold on the pant wrong side, and press in place along the leg length. The heat from the iron will melt the adhesive and hold the creaseline.

Setting Aid

Another option for helping the longevity of pant creases is to set them with a solution of one part white vinegar and one part water. Put the mixture into a spray bottle and dampen a presscloth (don't spray the pants directly). Place the damp cloth over the creaseline and press until it's dry, then respray and move to the next area. This solution helps to give the fabric memory.

Let the fabric cool and dry thoroughly before moving from the pressing surfacing.

Creasing During Construction

Some sewers prefer to press pant creases during the construction process instead of waiting until the pant is finished. Unless you're certain the pant fits you, it's better to crease them when the pants are finished as with any alterations, the creaseline may move.

Happy Hanger

When your creases are pressed to your liking, hang the pants on a pants hanger, keeping them in the creased leg position. 🍷