

Shirt Collar Pointers

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Whether you're a beginner or a seasoned shirt maker, getting the points on collars to look professional can be a challenge. It's easy to get points that don't look the same shape, are uneven, or worse yet, points that want to stick up and fly away.

Parts & Pieces

Most shirt collars have two parts—an undercollar and an upper collar. On some patterns, there are separate pieces for these, on others, they're cut from the same pattern.

If your pattern has two pattern pieces, the upper collar should be just slightly larger than the undercollar to allow for the turn of the cloth over the curve as the collar sits on the neckline.

Interfacing

A professionally sewn collar must be interfaced. Most patterns call for interfacing the top layer only, but a firmer roll line is achieved by using interfacing on both the upper and lower collar pieces.

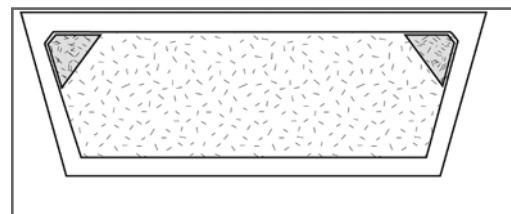
The interfacing also helps to hide the inside seam allowances for a nicer appearance, as it makes the fabric more opaque.

For best results, choose a light- to medium-weight fusible woven or knit interfacing for most fabrics. Heavier interfacings will not allow the collar to roll smoothly and create a board-like appearance.

To trim or not to trim? There are differing schools of thought about whether or not to trim interfacing seam allowances. Some believe that trimming the seam allowances

makes for flatter edges, especially if you're topstitching the edges. Others believe that extending the interfacing into the seamline creates a firmer edge. Try both on samples and see which you like best.

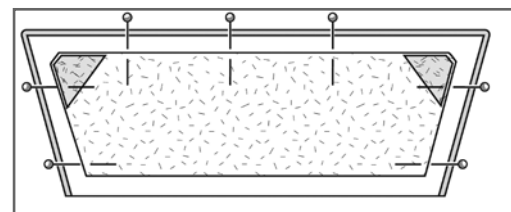
Use an extra triangular layer of interfacing in both collar points to help keep them neat and flat (1).



1

Slipping the Collar

If your shirt collar is cut using the same pattern piece for the upper and undercollars, you'll need to slide the upper collar as you pin the layers together. Allow the undercollar to extend 1/8" on three collar edges (not the neckline) (2). When doing this, the upper collar doesn't lie flat.



2

If you find it easier, simply trim 1/8" off the undercollar, and then match the raw edges as you join the two layers together.

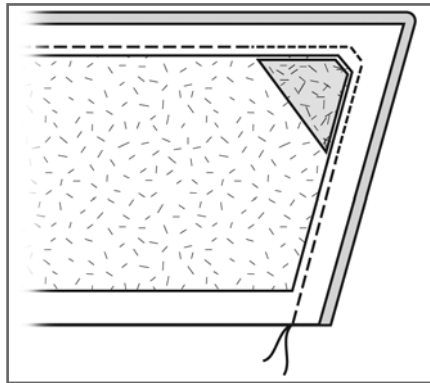
Getting to the Point

Stitching matching collar points can be a challenge, as you're entering the point from different directions as you stitch.

When you sew the collar edges together, shorten the stitch length on both sides of the point to reinforce it. Instead of stitching a sharp corner, take two short stitches

diagonally across the point (3). This gives a bit of room for the trimmed seam allowances to fill out the point once the collar is turned right side out.

For a professional look, stitch the outer collar seam in two steps—from the center outward, slightly overlapping stitching at the center back. This allows you to stitch more symmetric points since you're approaching them both from the same direction.

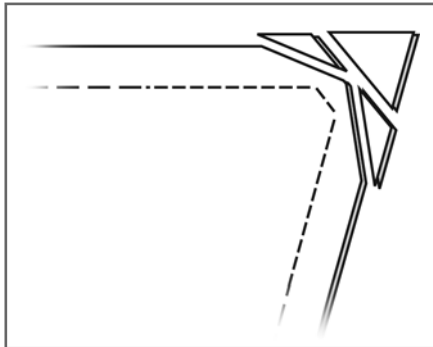


3

Trimming

It's imperative to trim out as much bulk as possible from the collar points so they turn and lie smoothly. The shortened stitch length makes it easier to trim close to the stitching without weakening the point seaming.

Trim off the corner seam allowances diagonally, and then trim off additional bulk along both sides of the point (4).



4

The remaining inside collar seams should be graded, leaving the upper collar seam the longest and the undercollar seam the shortest.

Pressing

Before you turn the collar right side out, press open the collar seams. If you have a point presser tool, insert that into the point for easier pressing.

Turn the collar right side out and press the stitched edges flat, ever so slightly rolling the top collar under to avoid having it roll up at the edges when completed.

Perfect Points

To create sharp corners, use the point of a pin to ease out the fabric at the collar points. Be careful not to snag threads that can cause visible damage.

Topstitching

Most ready-made shirts have topstitched collars. Whether you choose to sew right at the edge, or 1/4" inside the edge, or both, a row of stitches through all the layers will help to hold a firm and tucked under edge.

Baste the neckline edges of the collar together to make for an easier application to the garment—note that the raw edges may not meet exactly because of the turn of the cloth. It takes more fabric to go over a curve than under it.

Once the collar section is complete, follow the pattern instructions to attach it to the shirt—some collars are sewn directly to the shirt, others have a separate stand, depending on the style. 📌