

Guide to a Bespoke Suit

How to make a
tailored waistcoat

Proof 2.3

Index

- 3. Index
- 4. Materials
- 6. Seam allowance
- 6. Inlays
- 18. Mark stitching
- . Cutting a waistcoat

Introduction

Welcome all. This is my guide to making a bespoke tailored waistcoat. It is under development so not all of the sections are included, but it currently covers making the waistcoat, or vest as it used to be called, from cutting out the cloth to basting it together for a fitting.

This guide is split into distinct sections. Cutting and preparing; basting for a fitting; making and finishing. Extra sections will be added as further guides to include lapels, alternative methods, pattern drafting and toiling.

Making it to the fitting stage can be skipped entirely and you can make a waistcoat start to finish as both the basting and the making sections begin at the end of the cutting and preparing section.

What I think is great about this method of handmade waistcoat is that it is almost universal. You could apply these methods and others that I will cover in further guides, to easily make any style of waistcoat you want.

You can use your own waistcoat pattern or block template with this method, however you must be aware of the differences in where the seam allowances are on your patterns and where they are in my pattern, so that you can properly account for the differences.

I have a graphic showing where there is and isn't seam allowance for your reference. Seeing how the toile is made and learning the making process will also help you to understand.

If this is the first of my guides you're seeing I am a training tailor making guides to as many parts of bespoke tailoring as I can for you to learn as well. I suggest referencing earlier content to better frame what I might do differently. There are fewer bespoke resources and it's a different process to production garment making.

Materials

This small section I will cover the materials and specific hardware needed and recommended to make a bespoke waistcoat, or vest. I'll talk about what you need and why you need it as well as potential substitutions.

Cloth



A waistcoat requires less cloth than every other garment as it's just the front piece. Sometimes the back is also cut from cloth, but in my opinion that makes it more of a gilet. A gilet is distinct from a waistcoat in other ways too though.

If you have a small amount of leftover cloth then you could make a waistcoat from it, which is exactly what I am doing. I have a few pieces of leftover cloth, so I'm making some waistcoat blocks just to keep that can be tried on and fitted instead of always starting over.

There are layplans specific to cutting 3 piece suits, i.e. how the jacket, trousers and waistcoat patterns can be arranged onto the cloth to cut them all out with the least amount of cloth wasted. I will share examples of those in the future. Odd waistcoats though are easy, because they don't require a lot of cloth. Nearly just the height + 11 cm (4") and the width plus 5 cm (2"), plus a little excess for pocket welts

and facing.

Lining

Often the backs of waistcoats are made of lining, usually to match the lining of the jacket it goes with. Again it can only require a small amount of lining.

The inside of the waistcoat can be lined with the same material that the outside of the back is made of. Sometimes a striped sleeve lining or a fine cotton is traditionally used (Or a fine cotton striped sleeve lining). In this case I will use a distinct lining for the inside to make it easier to communicate the making process.



Body Canvas



The same body canvas for jackets can be used or sometimes a lighter body canvas, but it depends on the effect you want. Canvassing doesn't add a lot of time to a waistcoat making, but I'll mention that it is easy to use a fusible interfacing with this making method. It's important to note that the canvas I use is doubled up like the cloth. You typically find canvas as a single layer and have to cut one, then cut the other.

Buckles



You can find prong buckles or just normal two bar buckles. I've read that a vest should have either back darts or strap and buckles. I am using both to show a method for both, but I typically chose a buckle for style purposes. Some tailors don't like using 2 prong buckles, because it damages the straps, which is totally fair. I find that buckles with just bars come undone constantly though and the strap shouldn't need to be adjusted, so there won't be any excess damage to the strap from the prongs.



Silecia

Silecia is the pocketing material of choice in tailoring, being a tightly woven cotton. Commonly in black sometimes with a herringbone stripe. There are many colours and sometimes you need a specific colour like white to go into loosely woven light colour cloths. I use french navy, which helps to distinguish exactly what I'm doing on camera. You don't need a lot of pocketing as there are only 2 to 4 pockets on a waistcoat unless you add one inside then there are up to 5 pockets.



Beetled Holland linen

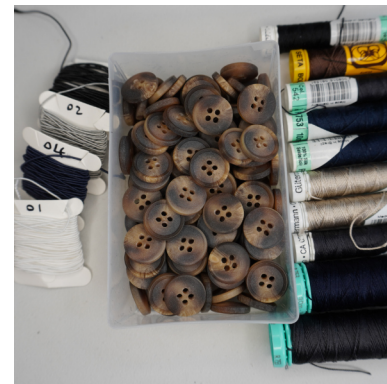
The linen is oft used in bespoke instead of a fusible stiffener in pockets, welts and other areas that require reinforcement. It does the same thing, just strengthening weak points and giving the cloth more body, or stiffness. Other materials can be used instead since it's an expensive material and it can always depend whether you want a certain effect, but cotton pocketing or fusible are the best immediate alternatives.



Edge tape

There are a few kinds of edge tape and it also depends on the effect you want, but it is used with a floating canvas, so it is also used in jackets. The tape stops the canvas from falling away from the seams because the body canvases can't be caught in the seams. The body canvas being caught and folded would cause very thick seams.

Edge tape can come as bias tape, beetled linen tape and fusible tape. Edge tape is generally a lining material and cut on the bias. Linen tape is usually cut on the straight grain and fusible can be on the bias or straight grain.



Buttons and twist

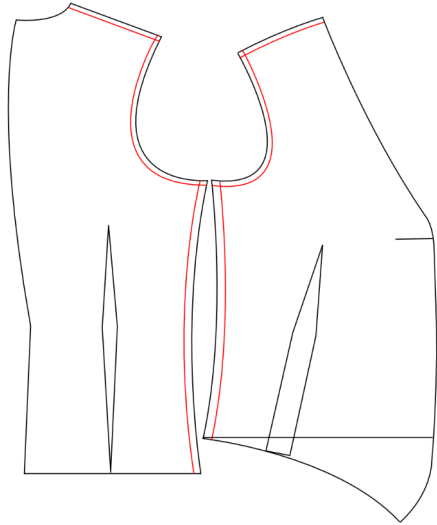
Waistcoat buttons are generally the same buttons used on the cuff of the jacket, 22L, 5/8" or 15mm. The quantity depends on the waistcoat you're making.

Buttons will commonly be horn and sometimes mother of pearl. Certain dress waistcoats, like Marcella vests will have 3 buttons, either covered or silver kilt thistle buttons.

Lastly buttonhole twist to go with it. Waistcoat buttonholes usually contain gimp too. I've gone over sewing on buttons and buttonholes elsewhere, so I won't need to repeat it here.

Seam allowance

The seam allowance is 1 cm (3/8") and each edge that has seam allowance is highlighted in with the inner lines. The remainder are either sewn, or folded along the marked edges of the pattern.



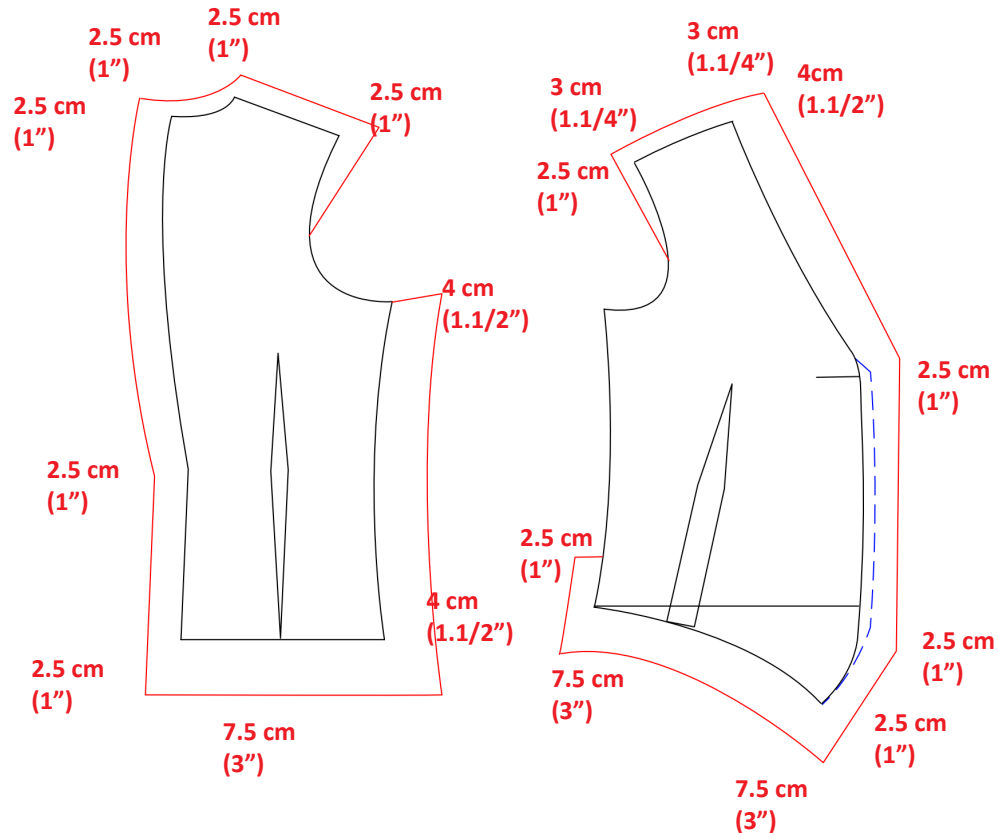
Seams that include the seam allowance are the front and back shoulders, front and back armholes and the front and back side seams.

The edges without seam allowance; the edges that are just sewn or folded along the marked edges of the pattern are the centre back seam; the back neckline; the hems along the front and back; and the front edge.

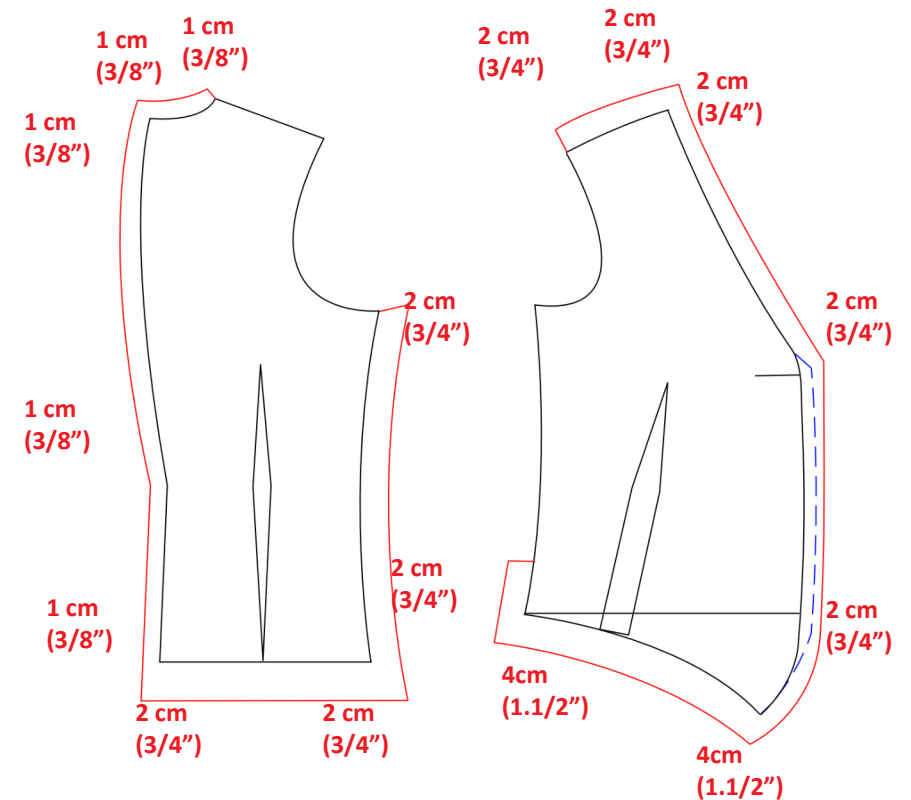
Occasionally you'll find sources that list and suggest different seam allowances. It may be very different to production and/or commercial patterns. Be aware of the differences in seam allowance because the method to make the garments that I am laying out is based on these seam allowances.

Inlay

Full vest inlay



Limited vest inlay



The full vest inlay is one possible way of adding inlay with measures at each area. The amounts are about as big as can be reasonably used. Some of the inlays will be cut down for the finish because certain alterations just couldn't be made. However; after fitting the basted vest all of the inlay could be used to alter the fit.

The limited vest inlay indicates the minimum amount of inlay you need to add in order to make the waistcoat, accounting for where there are no seam allowances. The front shoulder inlay and back side-seam inlay aren't needed to make the waistcoat, but they're the generally accepted amount to keep inside of the finished garment. They can be cut down to the limited inlay or left mostly as the full inlay.

Any amount between the two layouts can be used. If you're being taught to cut and/or make waistcoats then you may also be shown a different layout all together. You will have an opportunity to experiment when you do it as a tailor yourself.

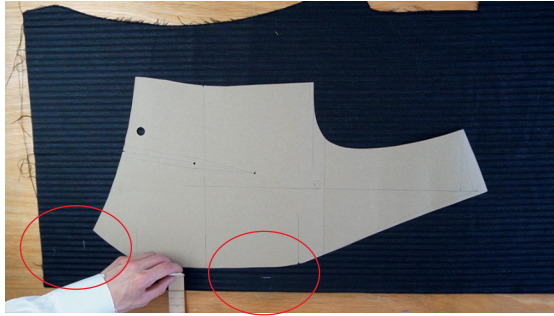
Take note of the forepart down the button stand. The dashed line indicates the right-hand-side front forepart that extends an extra 1 cm (3/8"). Both foreparts don't need 2 cm (3/4") inlay, but leaving it on both lets us cut it down later. The limited inlay also means the breakline can't have a grown-on facing, unless it has a laid on lapel.

Do note that each set of metric and imperial measures are equivalent measures rather than conversions. As you better understand how to make a waistcoat you will be able to judge how much inlay you do or do not want in your situation. This isn't a concrete rule-set, just something to get you started.

1.

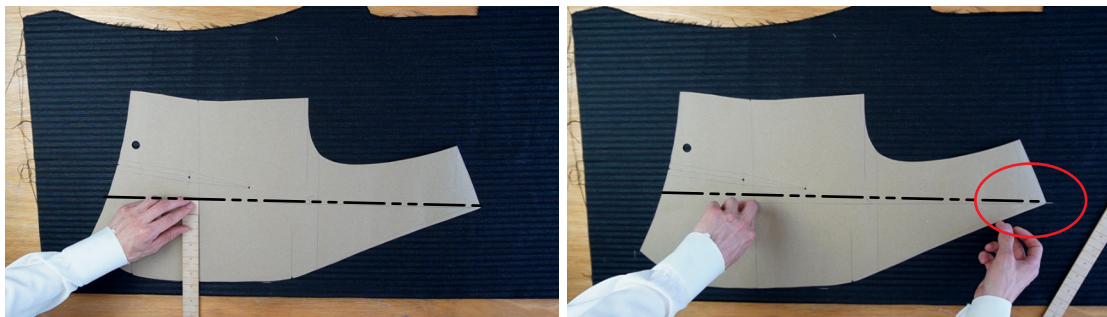
Cutting and preparing the waistcoat

This section covers the cutting of the cloth and the back of the garment. Cutting and preparing the canvas and making appropriate preparations before getting to the cross-roads of either basting the waistcoat or simply making it to completion.

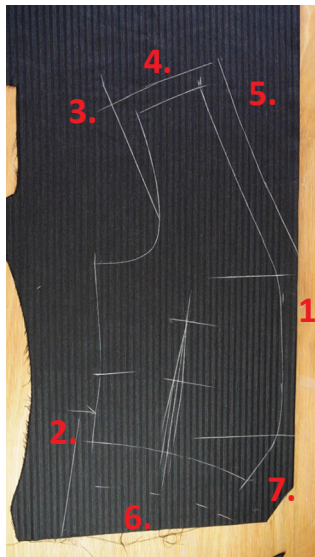


Laying out the cloth, I have some leftover instead of cutting the waistcoat from a length with a 3 piece suit. There are some lays I can share for a 3 piece later. Here I am still using the warp of the cloth to match to the grain of the pattern. Placing the pattern towards the fold of the cloth in this case.

First two things I am measuring is that there is enough space for the inlay that I want to add at the hem and the front edge. Measuring 8 cm (3") from the raw edge and 2.5 cm (1") from the fold. This is to have enough cloth to use at the hem to fold up and the front edge for seam allowance and to allow for alterations after a fitting. This gives me an approximate location to put the forepart onto the cloth and then I can find the grain.



Generally with a forepart I will use the vertical line from the neck-point. Since the closest straight edge is the fold and the cloth is folded exactly on the warp then I can measure from the fold to the vertical line at two points to ensure the measure is the same and the lines are parallel.



With the forepart pattern on the grain and the pattern is far enough from the edges to allow me to add the inlay I can chalk around the pattern.

The waistcoat pattern in tailoring often doesn't have pockets marked on already. If the fitting requires an alteration to the length or the width then the pocket also has to be moved.

Similarly each button isn't marked individually until the waistcoat is ready for finishing. Therefore there is only the top and bottom button, dart and waist-line balance point to add from the pattern onto the cloth. If you would like to do things differently and add all these to the original pattern though then that is no problem at all.

Removing the pattern I had small holes that I used to indicate where the internal details are. Therefore I can easily mark the dart onto the cloth just using a dot at the top, middle and base. I know the dart is 2 cm (3/4") so I chalk that on. Same for making the top and bottom buttons and the waist balance point on clearly so that they can be markstitched accurately.

With the vest comfortably marked; the inlay can be added. There is an illustrated diagram you can reference for the inlay if you'd like that also shows where you could use less or no inlay if you're tight on cloth or if you are finishing the waistcoat without a fitting straight away. (pg 6-7)

The amounts of inlay can be subjective but what I'm adding here can get you started.

1. 2.5 cm (1") on the front edge.

2. Something I started doing is adding about 2.5 cm (1") of inlay at the bottom of the sideseam starting 5 cm (2") from the hem. This is something that I've found makes it easier to make the correct finish when adding the vent at the bottom of the seam. The inlay flares from the hem so that there's definitely enough.

3. Around the shoulder there is 2.5 cm (1") at the top of the armhole that graduates to nothing above the front of scye, so that when it's tried on the cloth won't get in the way of the persons arm.

4. Along the shoulder 2.5-3 cm (1"-1.1/4")

5. Down the breakline it can depend on exactly how you are making the vest. For a vest with a grown on facing (Which is how I will make this) then you may need up to 5 cm (2") along the front edge. If it will have a facing that goes all the way up to the shoulder then it can have less inlay. As little as 1 cm (3/8") to give it the seam allowance it needs in order to be made, but 2.5 cm (1") allows for alterations to be made in the fitting.

6. Along the hem, as mentioned earlier I am giving it 8 cm (3"). If I had less cloth to work with then this could be as little as 4 cm or (1.1/2"), but I have also read that you can easily leave just a seam allowance and use another piece of the cloth to add a hem-facing.

7. At the bottom of the front edge I have marked a lot of inlay to leave, but it can be a continuation of the inlay down the placket.

Worth noting here is that this specific cloth is patterned with a wide stripe. Therefore to cut it, as I do cutting any patterned cloth, I am cutting one layer of cloth at a time. This is to align the top layer with the stripe on the other layer of cloth.

Also I will keep repeating whenever I cut something out; never place your scissors further along the cloth than you intend to cut. If you watch closely at every corner I have closed the scissors into that point. It doesn't matter all the time, but build the habit when you don't need it and it'll save you when you do.

Again I cut through one layer in order to take a minute to match the pattern. If it were a plain cloth I would have cut through both layers already.

Also this was cut against the fold of the cloth so the fold needs to be cut now too.

Cutting a notch into the waist balance point I can put the forepart and the cloth to one side. Until I get to the making stage I don't need to cut anymore cloth out. Pocket welts and facing can all be cut when needed.



12 The back piece of the vest is often cut from a lining material. In a three piece suit it's often one to match the lining of the jacket, but with an odd waistcoat it can just be a match to the cloth. I have another leftover piece that I can use here.

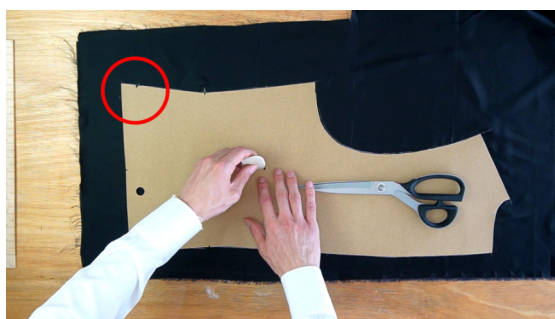
This lining needs to be thoroughly ironed before using it. Typically I don't expect to have any shrinkage in the lining cloth, but other tailors have experienced issues that they associate with the lining shrinking while they're using it, so they steam and press it thoroughly before cutting.



Similarly to the forepart I am placing the back pattern with the hem towards the raw edge in this case. Therefore I measure the same amount of inlay below the hem as the forepart, which was 8 cm (3") in this case.

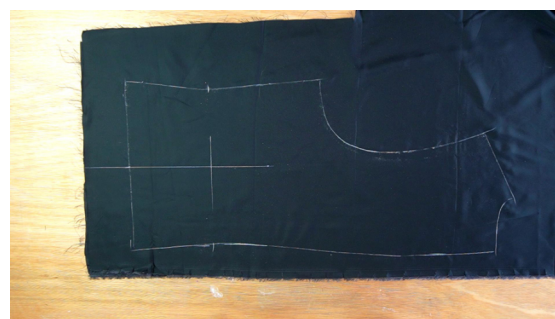
The centre back seam here is along the selvedge edge and I measure at least 2.5 cm (1") from the edge of the cloth to the most prominent part of the back, which is often the cross back to place the pattern piece as close to the edges of the lining as possible, only for the sake of economy.

To place the pattern on the grain of the cloth I know that the waist is suppressed 1.2 cm (1/2") from the across back prominent point, the back at the hem and neck is suppressed 1/4". I can use this to make sure the across back is a given amount from the edge of the lining and the waist that same amount plus the suppression from the edge. Just be aware that the lining isn't twisted, which is much more likely since there's a lot less friction that will hold it steady as it's being used.



As I am marking the balance points that I skip this one (Circled) which is 2.5 cm (1") from the hem. That is where the side seam of the forepart should finish; one inch above the hem of the back. Between the waist balance point and how short the seam is it's difficult to sew it wrong, so there's no reason to bother with it.

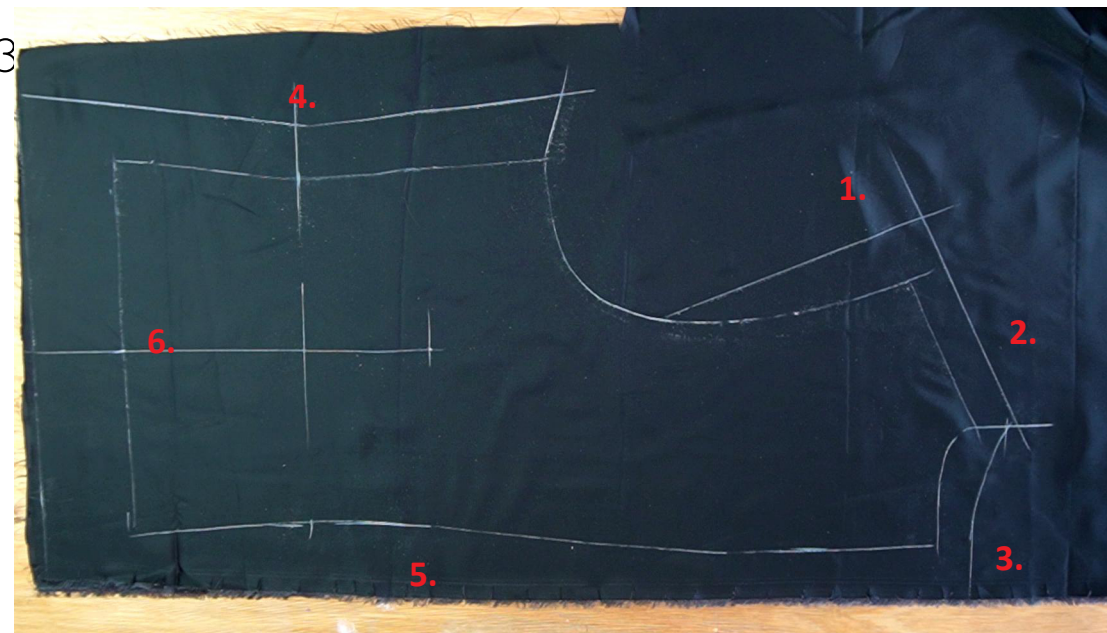
Inlay on the back is important because it's where most of the alterations to the waistcoat can come from. Again, there's subjectivity and some will be removed when it's being finished.



12

12

13



1. On the shoulder at the top of the armhole add 2.5 cm (1") to match the front shoulder, so that they can both be let out the same amount. It can also be important for widening the neck.

2. Along the shoulder 2.5 cm (1").

3. Same along the neck line.

4. The side seam on the back carries the inlay to let out the waist and chest when necessary. I add 4 cm (1.5") of inlay along the side seam and it is kept in the finished vest to allow it to let out quite a lot. From the base of the armhole I spring the seam up towards the end of the inlay. It may stop the inlay from becoming tight as it's sewn and folded towards the inside of the back

between the lining.

5. Down the centre back it only needs to be given a seam allowance, but it's usually given 2.5 cm (1") or more. Sometimes cut against the fold or the selvedge, like it is here, and then it's just left alone.

6. Down the hem is often left to match the forepart as well. I leave 8 cm (3"). This is so that they can be adjusted together in the fitting. The inlay at the hem also allows the back to be passed up as well, but that's a detail for making alterations in fittings. It's quite important that the raw edge of the back is cut parallel to the hem of the pattern so that the back can be accurately made when the back lining is added.



12

13

13

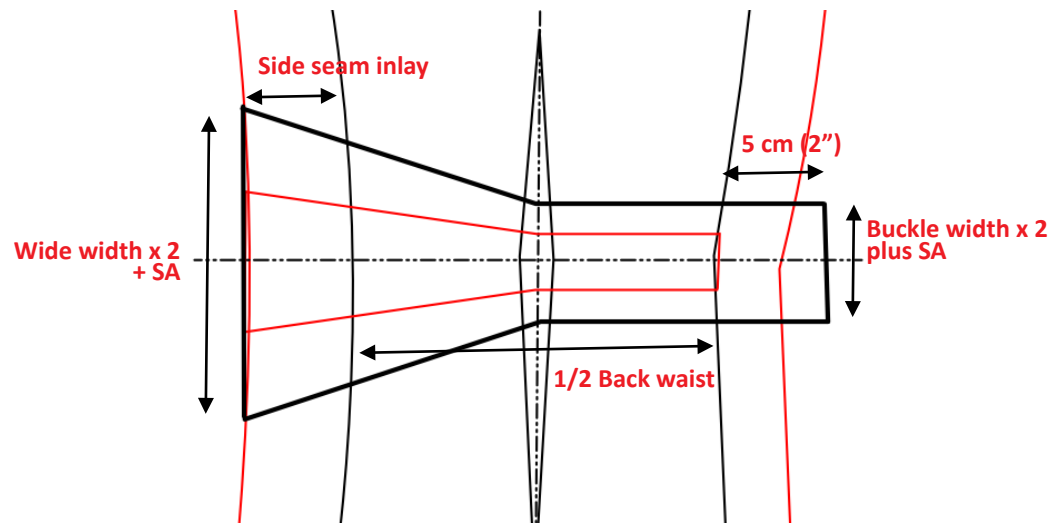
The armhole and shoulder inlays will be cut down before the finish and the seams with just a seam allowance; being the armhole, shoulder and neck can all be cut with normal shears, but the side seam down the inlay, the centre back inlay and later the hem inlay I cut with pinking shears. Especially the side seam inlay cutting with pinking shears reduces the mess from fraying that I may have to deal with while working with this waistcoat and after it's finished if alterations need to be made it is not messy for the alterations tailor and the inlay hasn't completely frayed away inside of the vest either.

I like to add pins at various points around the top, bottom and middle of seams, so that the layers of lining don't shift as it's being cut or markstitched.

I never fully drew in the dart because again I know how big it is at the centre, I only need to know the top, bottom and middle to use it effectively.

I trimmed the centre back inlay down to match the contour of the centre back seam. I felt that there was too much inlay at the waist point so I wanted to make the inlay even all the way down the back. Using pinking shears for the reasons mentioned a moment ago.

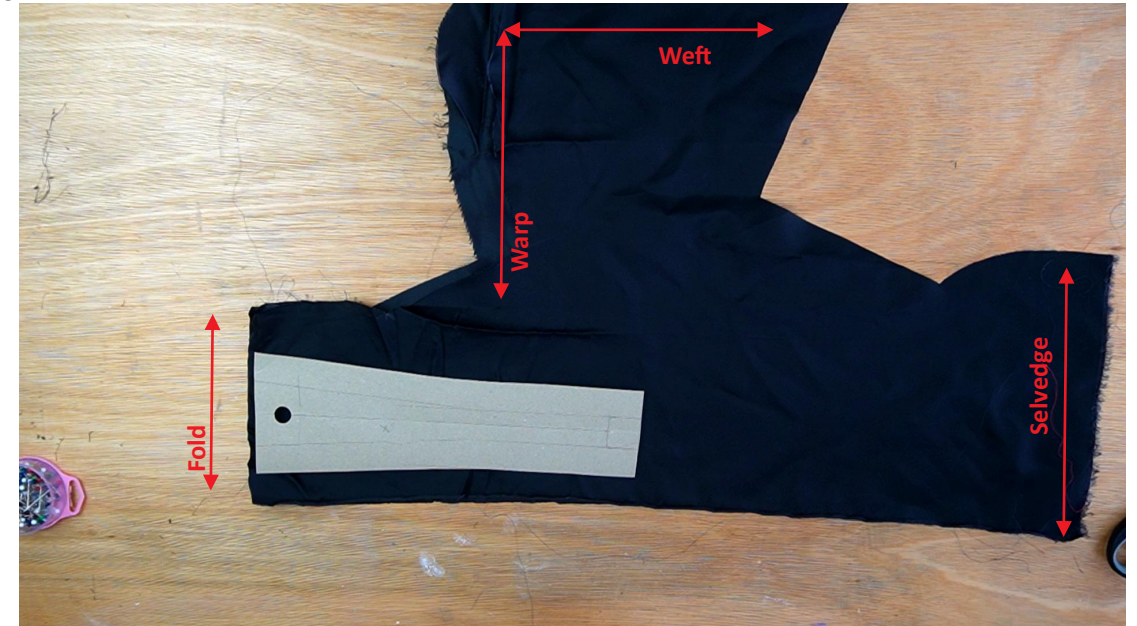
Marking the centre back seam below the hem as a straight continuous line which also completely prevents the lining from getting tight inside when it's folded up. The seam could taper inwards to match, but that does run the risk of causing tightness. There is ideally a balance so that there isn't too much excess, but this is safest for now.



If you are making a strap there often isn't a pattern made to go with the waistcoat pattern. It is just marked and cut straight from the cloth. It needs to be the width of the back at the waist from the centre back seam to the edge of the inlay. The width at the narrow point should be double the width of the buckle plus a seam allowances, and the width at the wide end can be 7 cm (2.3/4") up to around 10 cm (3.3/4") so that the finished size is about 2.5 - 4 cm or 1"-1.1/2". It should be nearly straight from the narrow side and then flair from about halfway to the wide side.

I don't know whether it's better to cut the straps with the warp or the weft of the grain. I would typically expect the long edge to go down the warp of the cloth, but if the lining has a pattern with a distinct direction then cutting it along the weft is probably better.

I mark the wrong sides, pin them together and they can be sewn while making the waistcoat, but I will prepare them in this section.



Canvas

I'm using a leftover piece of body canvas that doesn't quite fit the forepart. In my case this is okay because I know that I won't make any alterations to the pattern. The parts of the cloth that don't fit onto the canvas will be cut away when it is being made. If this was being made into a baste that may have to be altered; then I would want a piece of canvas to properly fit onto the cloth.

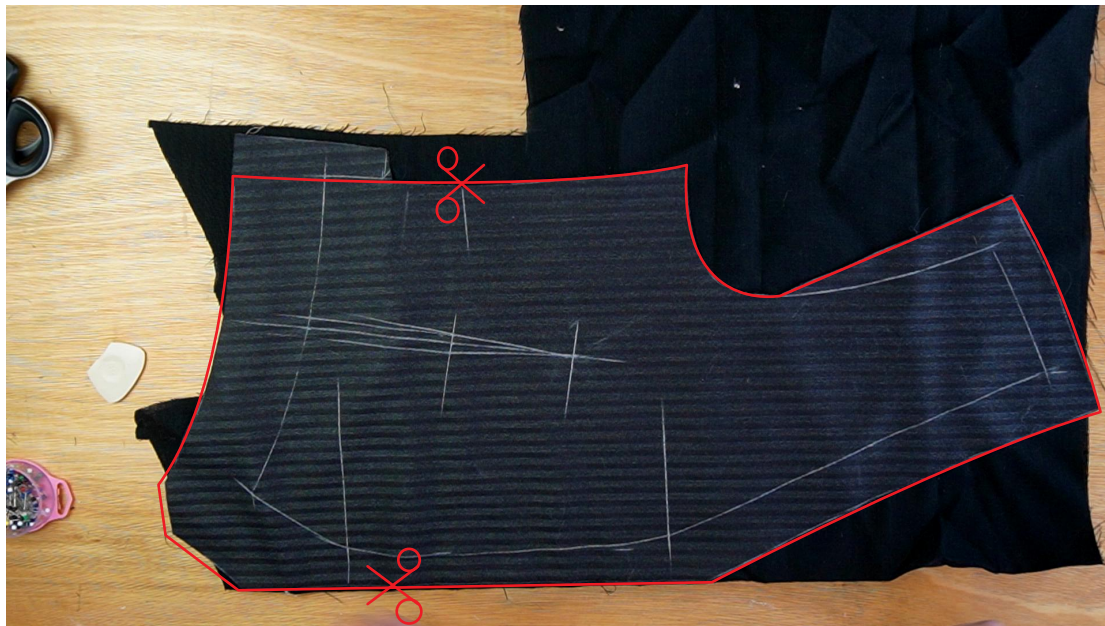
Importantly the canvas I use is doubled up, so I only need to cut it once. Other canvas you'll find is a single layer so you cut this first one and then you use the first to cut the second.

I'm not concerned about putting the cloth on the grain exactly. It's mostly straight so I can live with that. Jackets will sometimes have their canvas cut specific amounts off the grain, I don't know whether they do the same with vests though.

Cutting around the forepart piece so that the canvas matches the pattern and the inlays.

The only place that I don't exactly match is at the bottom of the side seam where I added the inlay that I use for the vent. I follow the sideseam to the bottom to cut the canvas. It can be left on, but it'll be cut away later anyway.

I will make the canvas in the simplest way that I know. In my opinion right now it doesn't need to be complicated, especially without a grown-on lapel.



Instead of chalking the dart into place I prefer to mark stitch through the cloth. I find this to be easier to make more accurate and it can be cleaner, because it avoids getting chalk all over the place.

I make as many mark stitches as I need to, so I mark one at the top, middle and one where the dart meets the hem.

I peel the cloth away from the canvas to leave the mark stitches in the canvas only.



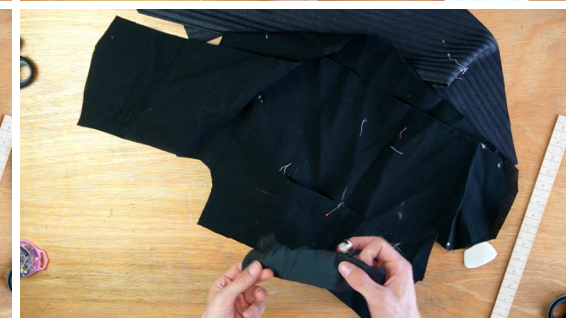
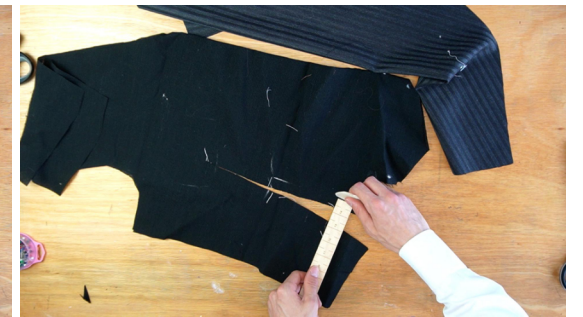
To make the dart in the canvas I cut all the way to the top of the dart as marked along the middle. At the waist and where the dart meets the hem I mark the width of the dart just on the front

The back edge of the dart is moved onto the front to meet the marks and create the dart suppression.



I pin it in place to get two mirror images and each side of the dart is even. In essence one side isn't pulling up or down against the other.

I have a piece of lining material that will be used as a patch to reinforce the top of the dart where it barely overlaps. Again, I'm pinning them to the canvas so I don't lose them. One on each side so that I get mirror images, but it's not hugely important if the waistcoat lining is opaque and the colour mostly matches the canvas.

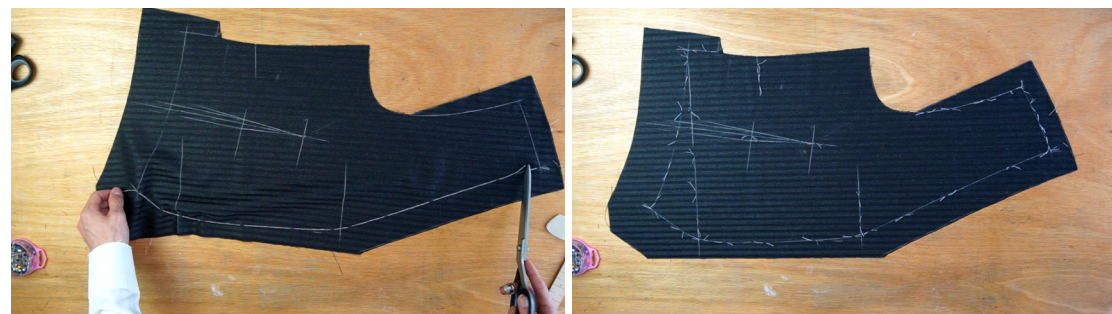
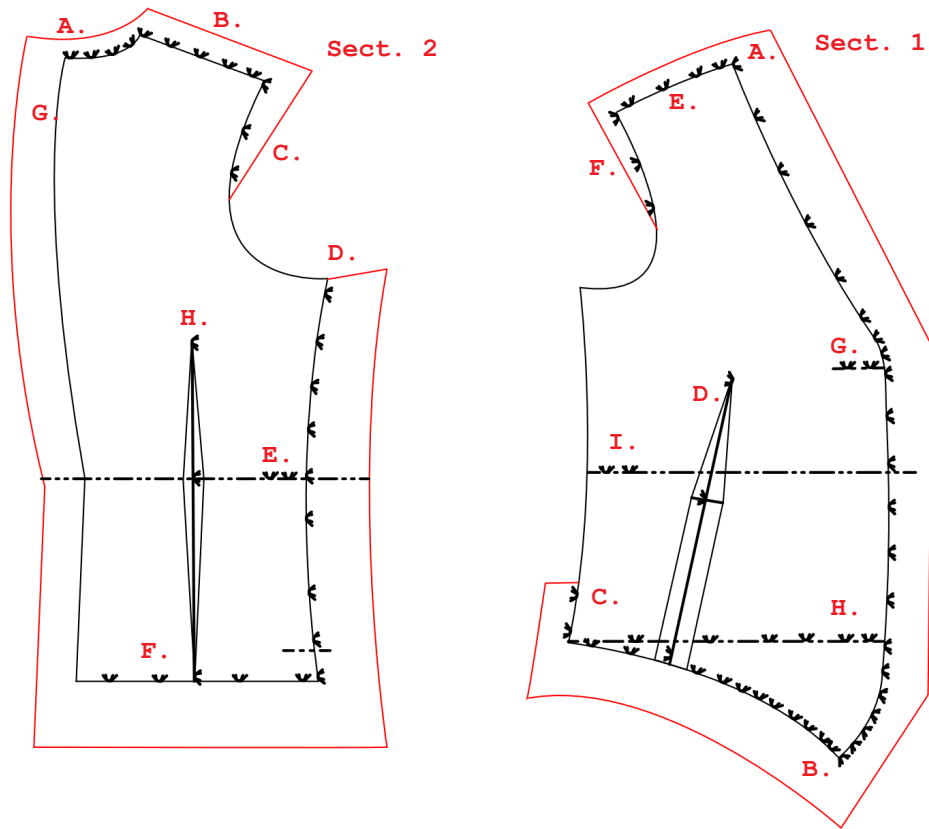


Continued on page 22.

Mark Stitching

There are typical things to keep in mind when mark stitching. Some things are subjective. You can mark stitch how you feel comfortable, but I will go over some useful ideas and why I place each stitch where.

I start with the longest single line of stitching, which is down the breakline and front edge. This is psychological to get the biggest bit of work done earliest, so it's all easier after the first. I can also start with a very long piece of basting thread and then continue with the leftover and then I don't have to take another piece as long.



Sect. 1

A. For the front edge I start at the shoulder point at the corner. This way I can make the shoulder exactly as crooked or straight as I intend to and most accurately alter as necessary. The edge is on a gently curve, so more mark stitches would help make it most accurately.

At the breakpoint where the edge curves down to the placket the markstitching should be more dense to accurately sew it into the correct shape as patterned. The placket may also be slightly curved, so denser mark stitching would be appropriate. The same as it curves to the bottom edge of the waistcoat and the final mark stitch goes in the corner again, so that I can tell where the point is exactly.

B. At the hem the first stitch I place a small amount away from the bottom mark stitch on the front edge. You could make the two mark stitches intersect in the corner, but I simply don't like cutting mark stitches that intersect in corners. The stitch that is on the point already tells me where the point is, because it finishes there exactly, so I find that the second is redundant. I make more dense mark stitches since it has a pronounced curve. Though due to the dart the bottom edge might not follow the same line exactly after the dart is closed, so it may have to be re-run after the dart is sewn.

At the side seam it is important that the last stitch is 1 cm (3/8") from the side seam. This is because the vent is made before the hem is folded up, so with the vent folded away the markstitch has gone from the front. It doesn't matter if you place mark stitches every half cm (1/4"), but with my limited mark stitching it is intentionally distanced from the edge.

C. I place two stitches in the vent that tells me where the side seam is at the hem and where the inlay starts. This inlay might be unique to me, so these mark stitches usually wouldn't be necessary, but it is there and so are they.

D. The dart doesn't require much to copy it correctly onto both sides of the cloth. Note how wide the dart is at the waist and hem (they can be different widths) and I make a stitch at the top, the waist and the hem along the centre line. This tells me everything I need to know to accurately copy and sew the dart into the other piece of cloth.

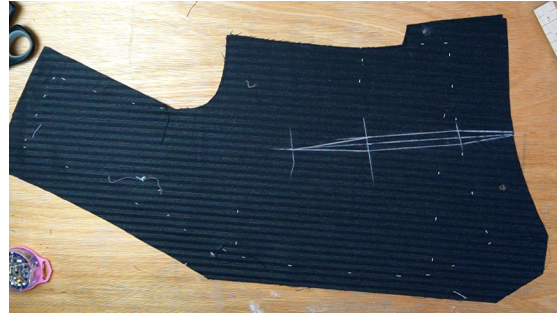
E. The shoulder often has a slight curvature, so I want to stitch more densely to accurately sew the shoulder later. At the neck point I place the mark stitch slightly away from the mark stitch on the front edge only to avoid intersecting stitches which only complicates cutting the stitches. At the armhole there is a seam allowance and the armhole seam is folded away before the shoulder is sewn; therefore a mark stitch at the edge would be lost. This way I will know where the shoulder seam is all the way across.

F. The armhole inlay allows for the vest to keep the same shoulder length if it needs to be crooked after the fitting (Crookening and straightening is a fitting alteration). At the armhole I make a stitch at the intersection of the armhole and the shoulder. The armhole is made up before the shoulder is sewn and the inlay is cut off to finish it. This way I know where the end of the shoulder is. Down the armhole I don't get too close to where the inlay finished just because I find that the mark stitches are more likely to fall out the closer to a raw edge they are. Since my inlay creates a sharp angle where it finishes in the scye; it's easy to tell where the armhole curve meets the inlay and ends.

G. The top and bottom buttons need to be marked for reference to the pattern and for the top button later.

H. The bottom mark represents the trouser waistline. The vest needs to be fitted so that the mark is on the trouser waistband, either as the trousers of the three piece or the preferred trousers for an odd waistcoat. I mark it all the way to the bottom of the side seam to mark-stitch a horizontal line that will make positioning the pockets easier.

I. A couple of stitches on the waist balance to join the side seams properly.



At this moment I will mark the dart onto the other forepart so that I can sew them next.

Again I have the centre line of the dart, the top and middle and the hem so I can find the bottom of the dart. I know the suppression of the dart at the waist and hem so I can mark that.

For clarity here I chalk the tapering of the dart below the hem. Tapering to nearly nothing towards the end of the inlay makes it easier to fold

the hem up without having to stretch it too much. It's easier to stretch with certain materials, but especially vegetable fibres (cotton, linen) it can be more difficult.



Sect. 2

A. At the neck-line and usually I have the most dense stitching, since the neckline, as patterned, is the sew-line. The last mark stitch is a seams width from the shoulder line because the shoulder has a seam allowance.

B. Along the shoulder I begin at the intersection of the neck and shoulder lines and I usually want to end a seam away from the armhole.

C. Starting the armhole I want that to start at the corner of the armhole and shoulder lines. The use of the armhole inlay is that I can widen the neck without narrowing the width of the shoulder or having to let out the whole centreback.

I make the vest by sewing the back-neck, the shoulder and the armhole at the same time. The inlay on the shoulder can be cut off before sewing the back, so the idea behind the mark stitching can be the same.

D. At the top of the side seam I start at least a seam allowance from the raw edge. The armhole includes seams so I need to see where the top of the sideseam is to line it up with the forepart.

Mark stitching towards the hem I typically make a mark where the balance point it because that it the narrowest point of the vest and that should be taken care of to make accurately.

I'm not sure whether a mark all the way to the bottom of the side seam is specifically helpful since the bottom 4 cm (1.1/2") is the vent.

E. Couple of stitches in the waist balance point. I make the pair so that I can create a straight line past the side seam and most easily tell where the balance point is on the side seam without an extra mark that might get stuck in the machining.

F. The hem of the back is typically straight, but the lining will shift and twist very easily. A few stitches to help me fold it up will be ideal.

G. To make the preparation as easy to follow as possible I am basting down the centre back line. I tack the baste just a little bit above the neckline, only up to 0.5 cm (1/4") above the neck. Sewing a slightly narrow and firm stitch just inside of the chalkline. I don't want it on the chalk line because I will machine down the chalk and I don't want the baste caught in the machining.

H. Lastly the dart. I mark the top, middle and bottom, but be as thorough as makes you comfortable.

When cutting the stitches the pins can be removed because the baste is holding the layers together at the centreback seam and the mark stitches are now showing either side independently.

I can chalk the dart onto the side that isn't already marked. I don't need to draw the whole dart since it's only a 1 cm (3/8") dart. I can just shape it in the machine.

To press it over I fold it approximately along the length and press down on either the top or bottom mark stitch.

I hold down the opposite stitch and draw the iron towards it to allow the cloth to fold as it wants to naturally towards the other stitch. This can make the dart straighter than it might be otherwise if the middle mark is off centre due to minor twisting in the lining.

Avoid pressing a crease into the cloth too far above or below the dart. It won't necessarily leave a permanent mark, but if it can be avoided then we may as well. Continued page 23.



Forepart dart

The forepart dart gets folded along the centreline and pressed flat all the way to the bottom of the hem inlay. Press it only a small amount above the top to avoid creating unnecessary creases. Anything will press out at this point, but this saves the effort.

I take a small scrap of the cloth and place it against the top of the dart. This only makes it easier to press, because it means that I don't actually have to press the cloth open all the way to the top of the dart which can be difficult and if the dart is too thin then the cloth can fray away and basically create a tear.

I make a point to keep the scrap on the same side of both pieces. I place the scrap on the side of the dart towards the side seam. As I often do I pin the scrap onto the forepart so that I don't lose it between the board and the machine and it doesn't accidentally end up on the wrong side of the cloth.



I'm doing all of what I've just prepared in one go, to make fewer trips back and forth between the board and machine.

For the canvas I start the stitch at the bottom of the dart where it meets the hem, instead of the bottom of the canvas. I leave the bottom of the canvas dart open so that it can be most easily folded up.

I keep the canvas overlapped and stitch halfway between both raw edges. At the waist suppression I allow the canvas to separate towards where it wasn't cut at the top. I'm not trying to keep the canvas evenly overlapped and machined, I just machine towards the top.

Afterwards I place the lining underneath from about the waist point and machine to a little above the cut. I stitch down the middle of the dart to initially hold the patch there. I create a box of stitching around the whole top of the dart that isn't overlapped. The box can be as narrow as 1 cm (3/8") but I make it about 2.5 cm (1") wide to make it easy to have either side of the dart secured and keep the next stitching mostly inside.

Make diagonal stitches inside of the box across either side of the dart to keep it securely and tightly closed. There are techniques to do it and I've previously used the zig-zag stitch on a domestic machine. You can keep changing the direction by spinning the canvas in so that it's always going forwards in the direction you want.

What I like is using the reverse stitch function and holding the canvas changing the directions to make the peaks and troughs at the perimeter of the box over the dart. It's not too difficult but getting the timing and feel for the movement can take a little bit of practice. It doesn't matter too much if the stitches go outside of the box of stitching so it's not worth stressing too much over it.

I want to avoid allowing the lining to fold over itself under the stitching. Since it's lining and thin it doesn't actually cause any problems, so it's not worth fixing, but I would prefer to avoid it in the first place.

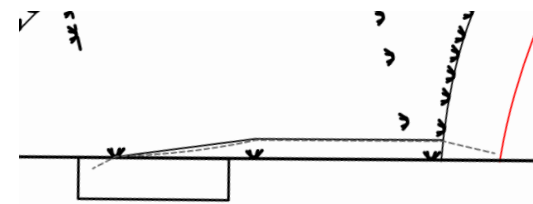


To sew the forepart darts I will almost always start at the bottom of the hem inlay. I expect that most tailors start the left and right one from the top and one from the bottom. I don't, just because I don't see the advantage at this moment.

I leave the bottom in the hem without back tacking in case I need to open the dart a little more than it is. At hem of the waistcoat I make sure it's the width of the dart. I follow the chalk line to the waist suppression.

At the waist I position the scrap at the top of the dart and I don't exactly follow the straight chalk mark of the dart. I sew the concave stitch towards the fold of the cloth curving inside of the straight chalk.

The last CM or so (1/2") is on the fold and then it gets just run off of the waistcoat onto just the scrap for a few CMs.



The dash lines show the machine stitching.



Lastly sewing the darts in the back. In a similar way except this is a fisheye dart. I start by placing the fold of the cloth under the needle at one side of the dart. Back tack and sew the dart in the same way with a concave run towards the middle where I'm trying to suppress is 1 cm (3/8") in total, so 0.5 cm (3/16") on the double.

From the middle, another concave run of stitching towards the fold of the lining and back tack at the end again.

If I were straight finishing the waistcoat then I would machine the centreback seam while I was here now as well





To make the back strap fold in down the middle and sew the long-side with the allotted seam allowance, here 1 cm (3/8"). You don't need to back tack, but it might be better to do so.

One of the straps' narrow ends needs to be closed. The seam allowance needs to be opened and the strap opened placing the seam against the fold. The end can be closed. I usually start in the middle, stitch to the first fold, reverse stitch to the other fold and then stitch forward again to the middle.



I make the other strap in the same way except I leave the narrow end open.



At the board to snip threads and press; I trim the lining off of the patch around the dart. This is why I want to avoid stitching outside of the rectangle so that I can trim it around most easily.

That's why the diagonal darning is important, because the lining could fray away from the outer stitching.

Pressing the lining I don't think it matters which side the dart is pressed onto, but I tend to stay consistent and press it towards the centre back seam. I make sure that I'm holding the lining tight and that I am pulling the stitching open completely to avoid causing any pleats.

Double checking the right-side of the cloth that the dart is open and press out any creasing above or below the dart. Using steam helps, but we can't use water spray. Water will stain the cloth with wet spots and it won't evaporate out. Again though; steam is fine to use.

If I know whether I'm straight finishing the waistcoat or just making the baste I would have machine the centre back, or I would baste the back open as I will in the following parts, but putting it to one side here is better for structure.

To press the front dart start with pressing the stitching while flat. Then cutting the middle of the dart open up to where the scrap is sewn to.

Make a snip down to the stitching at the base of the scrap so that the top of the dart can be pressed to one side and the scrap to the other. Separate either side of the stitching to press the dart open below the scrap.

At the top, the scrap gets pressed to one side of the stitching and the top of the dart gets pressed to the other. The top of the dart on the forepart side is very small and it can be tight to press them apart. Make sure the front of the cloth is pulled open. Press very hot, hard and firm to keep the dart permanently open.

The scrap of cloth should be trimmed down to about 2 cm (1/2") and then the top layer of it trimmed down slightly further to layer it.

I didn't realise before, the pattern has a 1 cm repeat and because the dart is exactly double that then when the dart is closed the pattern realigns either side of the seam.



26 Canvassing



Since the canvas isn't fused it has to be basted onto the forepart. For clarity I am chalking the lines that I will baste along. The first starts from the shoulder at the neckline, inside of the mark stitches around 2 cm down and 2 cm from the front edge, or 3/4" down and 3/4" from the front edge. I make it straight down from the neck following the grain of the cloth to the dart where I follow that to the hem.

The next two, the order doesn't matter. Down the front edge I keep it about 3 cm (1.1/4") from the mark stitching. It can start from the same point as the first baste or a few CMs lower.

The other baste goes around the armhole and down the side seam. This one should stay 3 or 4 cm (1.1/2") from the edges. It can start a little below the shoulder. They all end just above the hem.

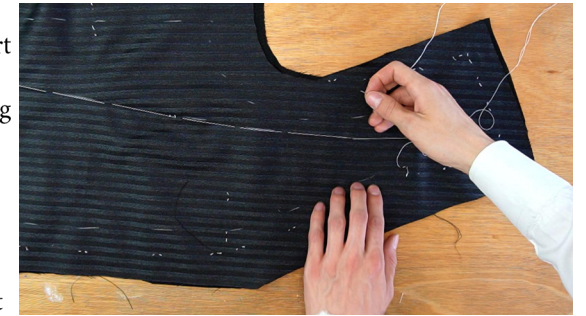
I place the canvas underneath the forepart. It doesn't always matter which way up the canvas it, whether the patch is against the cloth or towards the inside of the vest. It's best to keep both consistent. If the patch contrasts against the canvas then it's more important that the patch is towards the cloth otherwise it may show through the lining of the waistcoat when it's finished. Going back this is also why it can be important to make both mirror images every time.

With the darts in the cloth and the canvas they don't sit flat on the board anymore. Allow the top of the dart to sit away from the table and put the shape on top of each other. Try to keep the raw edges together, but more important is that the cloth is even with the canvas.



To start the basting the first stitch is down the length of fronts. I tack the thread and leave a short length tailing. From each previous stitch I'm smoothing the cloth over the canvas before making the next stitch. The stitches can be about 5 cm (2") between each one. So holding the previous stitch down against the table I'm pulling the cloth tightly over the canvas and making a stitch. It's really important that the cloth is tight over the canvas. Put another way the canvas is long against the cloth. There are different degrees of how much extra canvas there is underneath the cloth. Some tailors will make the canvas a lot longer. All of this keeps the cloth smooth. If there's more cloth over canvas then then the cloth will sag over down the front. The same if the canvas shrinks inside of the waistcoat; the cloth will sag down.

Like I say this is a more simple way of canvassing. All I do is clean the cloth tightly over canvas without pushing extra canvas underneath it, or bending it in any way.



At the bottom, a little above the hem tack the thread to fasten the stitch firmly. The first stitch down the middle cleans the cloth down the length of the forepart. The other two mostly function to clean horizontally. It doesn't matter which side is done first.

Pull the cloth over the canvas from the first baste along the warp of the cloth. It has to be pulled perpendicular to the grain going down the canvas. It's quite important to avoid twisting the cloth over the canvas because it may create drags between the finished sides.

Keep in mind the second and third canvassing stitches should also be pulled tight down the length.

At the side seam the suppression from the dart can cause it to be wavy. It's still important to make sure they're flat together as you're doing the stitch. The excess can be moved around to the front which will flatten it on the other side of the dart.

If there is excess canvas around the cloth, check that the canvas does cover the rest of the important areas, mostly that there aren't any mark-stitches that aren't covered by the canvas, the canvas goes all the way to the edges of the side seam and armhole, and then the excess can be cut away. If there are exposed mark stitches shown from the inside then the canvas may have to be removed and the position altered in order to make the vest properly.

Now if you were fusing the forepart of the waistcoat instead of using a floating canvas, you might know better than me, but it should be fused before the dart is added. However fusing the forepart means it can't necessarily be mark stitched because if you mark stitch and then fuse the stitches will get stuck by the glue and can be very difficult to remove. Mark stitching after fusing is certainly an option, except the pattern needs to be chalked over the fusing. It's an option, just not one for me.



I would say you don't need to be too gentle with the canvassed foreparts. Out of habit I fold it gently down the middle to help maintain the shape when I put it to one side. It'll be pressed many times between now and finishing, so at this stage it will probably be fine.

The second forepart is the same. Still starting from the shoulder, cleaning down to the hem. I've sometimes seen people chalk the lines that they will baste down and I notice that the canvassing bastes are very neat when they do that. Typically I don't just because I find that difference unnecessary. It doesn't carry any function. I've brought it up before, but a counterpoint is that this is the first time someone is seeing their new garment in the making, so it should make a good impression. Counterpoint to that is that an experienced tailor once said that he's never had someone "complain about how the baste is sewn together" in the specific context of the canvassing. You can pick one, or try both; they're just alternative perspectives and experiences. Moot anyway if it's being finished straight away without a fitting.

This concludes the preparing stage of making a bespoke waistcoat. The stage directly leading on from this is the basting together for a fitting. To reiterate the baste section can be skipped in favour of the making and finishing if you do not want or need to do a fitting. Page 36 for making the waistcoat.

2.

Making the waistcoat baste

The waistcoat baste, or waistcoat fitting is for trying on the pattern pieces nearly as they will be when the waistcoat is finished. This stage allows for the greatest number of possible alterations to be made to the already cut fabric without having to undo potentially permanent stitching.

Since the fabric is already cut there are limitations to what alterations can be made. At this stage though it is still much easier to make the alterations and other changes that can't be made later. Not just fit changes, but also making sure that in a 3 piece suit each garment fits together correctly.

Fitting any garment requires it's own extensive study that I will do at some point in the future.

Back

First of all I am opening the back and basting the centre back seam. I have to baste the seam as I haven't machined the seam. I usually don't machine the centre back seam for the baste. Letting it out is much easier when the seam is only basted, thence I will typically baste the centre back seam for a fitting. If the centre back seam of the waistcoat had to be let out it might not be possible since the machining could leave scarring.

A few times the centre back seam had been let out and this is much easier to alter in that situation.

The baste needs to begin just above the neckline again. It's best to knot the thread and tack it. The lining is much smoother so the thread doesn't hold as well because there isn't as much friction as there is against typical cloth. It can't be basted too much above the neckline otherwise the inlay will be held tight together and it can alter how the waistcoat appears to fit causing you to potentially make alterations in error when the vest is finished. The baste needs to be holding the inlay down, but it doesn't need to be as narrow as the initial baste down the back. I also finish it just above the hem instead of down to the raw edge of the inlay for no particular reason.

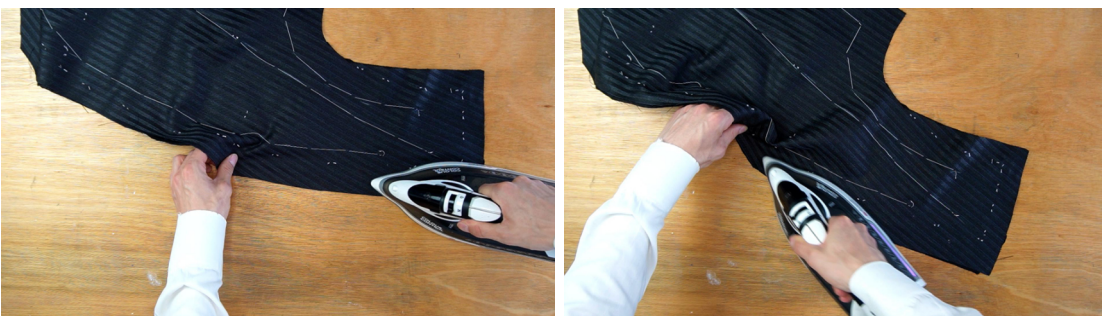


Foreparts

I find it best to press the front edges and hems before basting down the forepart edges. The edge is cleaner and it's often sitting better on the mark stitches giving a better representation of the finished article. I see it done the other way around where it's basted first. You can give it a try. I've found that when I baste first I sometimes don't secure it in exactly the correct position, so when it is pressed the mark stitches roll to one side or the other of the fold. I try to keep the canvas in the fold, so that the edge remains firm.

With the inward curve along the hem and slight inward curve of the breakline the inlays should be stretched so that they most comfortably fold over the mark stitches.

I mostly find that folding over a longer section and pressing all at once is more accurate and creates a smoother edge.

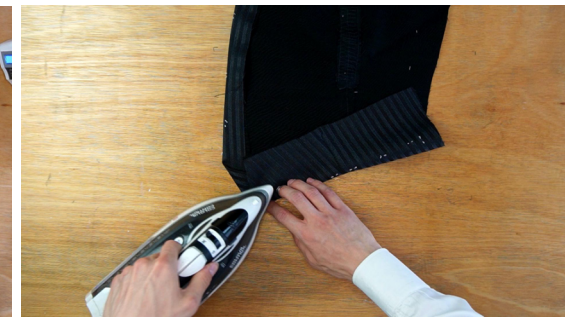
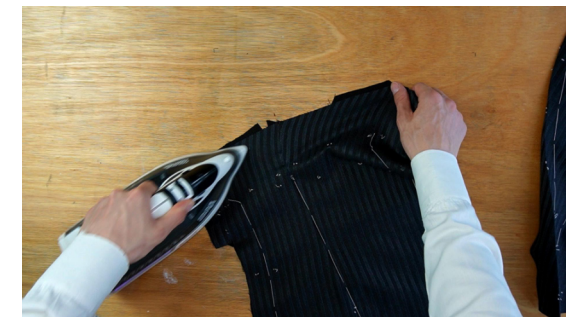


It can be pressed from the hem up, or from the shoulder down. Either way at the corners the inlay will be folded over itself.

The vent inlay doesn't require any extra steps in the baste. It still just folds up.

With the edges pressed they need to be basted down. To start the stitch it's simple enough just to knot the thread. It can be basted halfway across the inlay just firmly enough to hold it down. The stitches can't be pulled too tightly or it'll draw in the edges altering the fit.

Over the corners I'll tack the thread to help keep the thicker areas more tightly set in place.



Seams

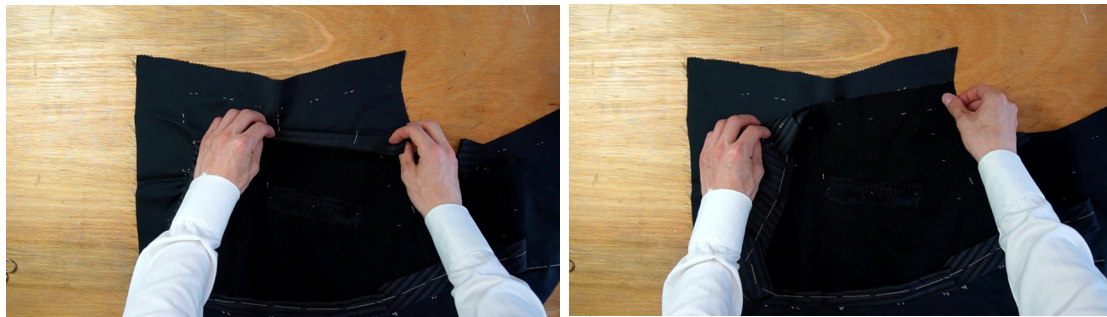
With the foreparts and back ready, the seams can be sewn. Placing the first forepart against the markstitches of the back piece, right side to right side. Lining up the waist balance points and the raw edge of the forepart side seam against the markstitches of the back. Baste the foreparts down with a 1 cm (3/8") seam allowance between the armhole and the hem.

At the bottom of the side seam I have the vent inlay so I just have to also make sure the markstitches on the forepart and the back are properly lined up and then continue to sew the seam allowance from the mark stitches.

The stitch needs to be firmly tacked, so I knot the thread and do an extra stitch on top of the first to hold it down steady. The baste shouldn't be too large, at most 2.5 cm (1") in length.

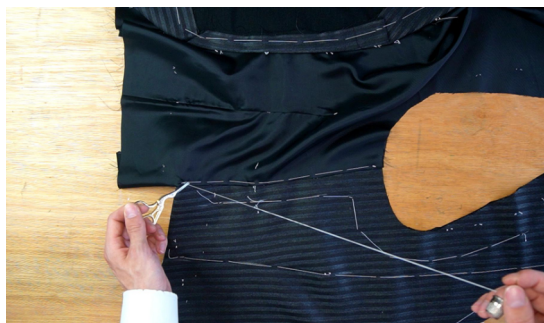
At the hem, tack the stitch to finish it firmly.

Baste the other side seam in a similar way. Fastening the stitch at the bottom again.

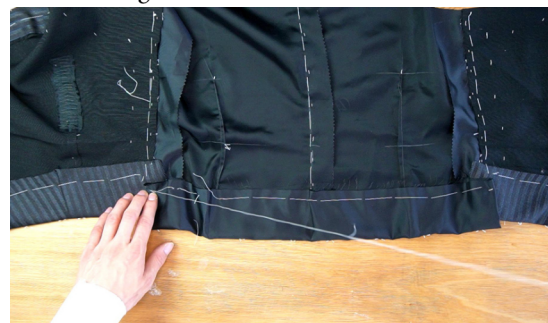


Open the two pieces and baste the lining down with the forepart seam allowance and the back side seam inlay. These bastes don't need to be as narrow, just enough to keep it in place.

At the hem of the back again flip over the waistcoat and fold the back cloth over the mark



stitches showing the hem, which will generally be an inch below the hem of the foreparts at the side seam. Baste the hem across the inlay. It can be more efficient to carry on the second side seam baste all the way down to the raw edge of the lining then fold up the hem and continue to baste along it with the same stitch.



To position the shoulders there are a couple of ways, but a good and reliable way to do it for a good result is to place the shoulders right-sides to right-sides.

Starting with the right-hand-side shoulder with the back on top, I can place the markstitches denoting the shoulder lines on top of one another and I can place the neckline on the back against the front edge of the forepart.

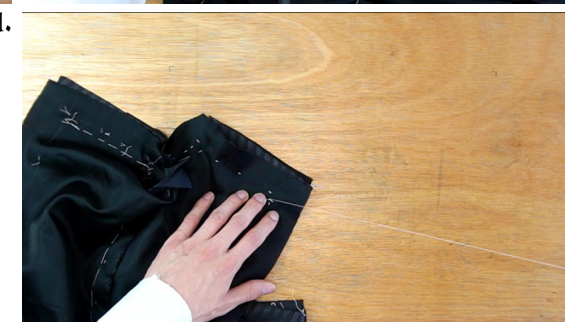


On the left-hand-side I baste from the armhole end. The neck is very important to match accurately, so I align it the way I did the first shoulder and pin the neckline against the front edge again.

I place the armhole and shoulder mark stitches together and tack that to trap the excess and then distribute the ease across the shoulder moving the inlay out of the way to check that the shoulder mark stitches are lined up between the front and back and the seam allowance is sewn accurately.

Turn the vest right-side out and you can check that the neckline runs down the front edge of the forepart.

The shoulder is top-stitched down to the inlays to reinforce the first stitch and keep the back flat on the seam.



3.

Making the waistcoat

This section follows directly from the preparation stage as the pieces were after the tear-down at the end of basting for a fitting.

This section covers cutting the waistcoat lining, facing and pocket welts and making and finishing the waistcoat. This waistcoat is made with a grown on breakline facing because that is the common and generally more economical choice in bespoke tailoring. It is also easier to infer how to make a waistcoat with a full facing from the guide as it is.

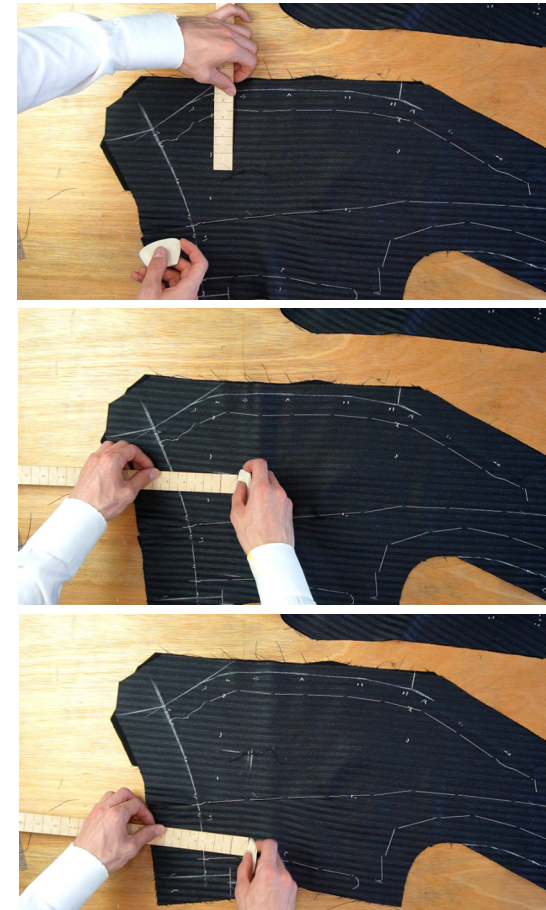
Marking the Pockets

As stated the pockets aren't already marked on here. When I remake waistcoat drafting I will include it again. At this point though I will also mark the pockets on. This will be a 4 pocket waistcoat. It'll be much easier to refer you to the graphic I made for the waistcoat pockets. If you want only two then it's the same, but the bottom two pockets.

The front of the pocket is around 11 cm (4.1/4") from the finished front edge. So I am measuring from the mark stitches that are there now, not the chalked edge.

The width of the bottom pocket is generally 12.5 cm (5").

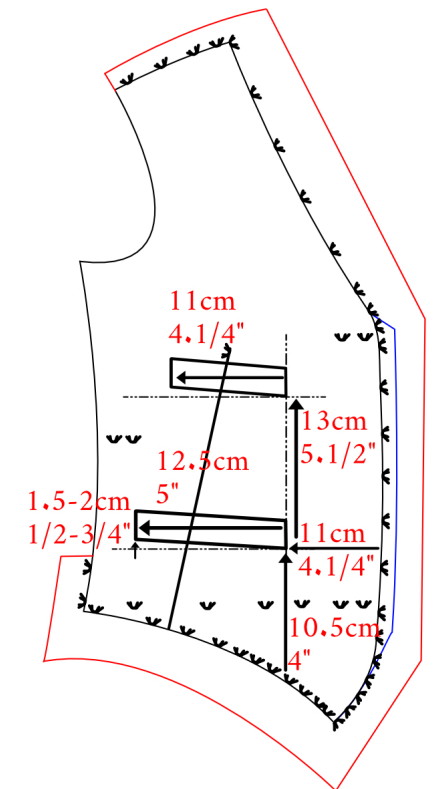
To find the height of the pocket for a typically shaped waistcoat you expect it to be 10.5 cm (4") from the bottom edge. Seeing how much higher the side seam is than the front I might sometimes make it higher, so that the pocket itself isn't too small.



Using the horizontal mark stitches between the front edge and bottom of the sideseam as a reference I measure the height of the front point in order to make the back of the pocket 1.5-2 cm (1/2-3/4") higher than the front to slant the pocket.

Chalking the front and back edges of the pocket parallel to the grain at the front and joining the back and front points for the bottom edge of the pocket. The pocket is the same as the outbreast jacket pocket and usually around 2.5 cm wide (1"), but it can be a little more or a little less. In essence 7/8"-1.1/8".

The front edge breast pockets are placed in line with the bottom pockets and are 13.5 cm (5.1/2") above the bottom edge of the lower pockets. The length of the breast pockets are 11 cm (4.1/4") and the slant is parallel to the lower pockets.



These are just suggestive measurements. If you have a specifically large or small waistcoat then the amounts should be changed to match. In some cases the position will cause the pockets to become too close to the edges of the waistcoat and in others they may be disproportionately small and close together. The pockets could be marked on for a re-baste before putting the pockets in at this point.

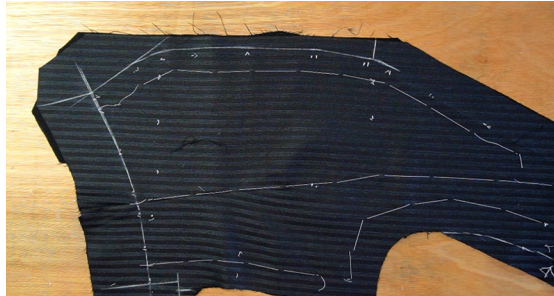
Front edge and facing

Since there are no alterations to the pattern I follow the mark stitches to mark the lines that I want to use.

I make a point to draw on the hem. It isn't interrupted by the dart so I do follow the mark stitches, but in some cases the line needs to be smoothed out.

Along the front edge of the left-hand-side forepart I mark the seam allowance past the mark stitches. This is the line I will use to cut off the excess material and use to sew the facing in place.

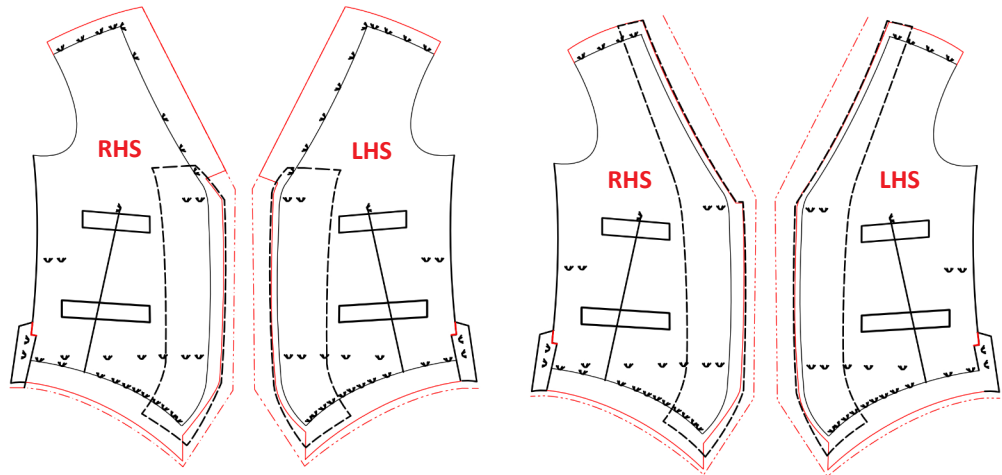
I mark the seam allowance up the placket. This will have a grown-on facing up the breakline, therefore I don't mark a seam allowance much above the top button, just up to 1 cm (1/2"). I just chalk a line out from the seam to the raw edge. A little bit higher than the top button so that it won't interfere with the buttonhole when that is being sewn.



At the bottom where the hem meets the seam allowance that needs to be trimmed off straight down.

I mark the armhole run and begin removing some of the mark stitches.

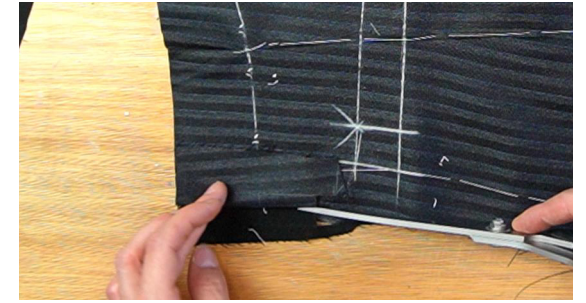
For the vent I mark 4 cm (1.1/2") above the sideseam perpendicular to the seam for top. I draw 1 cm (3/8") inside of the sideseam between the top of the vent and hem. That was the seam allowance. Lastly I chalk the seam allowance onto the inlay so that I can continue the run of the sideseam to the top of the vent when it's cut and folded away.



The dot-dash outer line indicates the original inlay that I had left. The solid outer line indicates new edge of the inlay and seam allowances. Note on the RHS forepart (right-hand-side, as worn) that the seam down the stands are wider than the left. On the full length facing (Dash line) I added a step at the bottom of the breakline for the extended stand. The step can be added on either version, but this is to illustrate both possible methods.

Cut the hem inlay to about 5 cm (2") because it's unnecessary to keep it all and it shouldn't interfere with the pocket.

I cut down along the sideseam to the top of the vent and then cut the top of the vent 1 cm (3/8") into the forepart. Fold the cloth out of the way to cut the canvas away so that the bottom of the sideseam can be folded away to create the vent cleanly.



To save having to measure the pockets twice I place the right-hand-side forepart over the left-hand-side. It's important that the raw edges like the armholes and sideseam are lined up together and that the markstitches are lined up as they were originally cut.

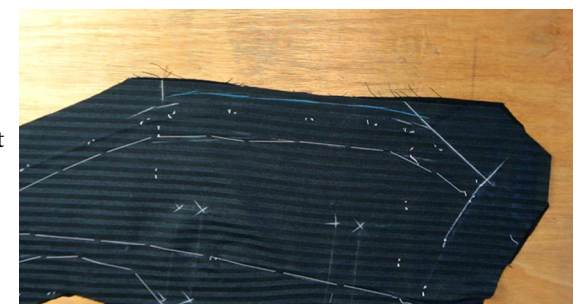
This only works because I used chalk instead of a pen/pencil or wax marker; the chalked areas can be hit or slapped which transfers enough of the chalk to the right-hand-side forepart to mark the pockets on.

On the right-hand-side forepart I make sure the edges of the pockets are clear.



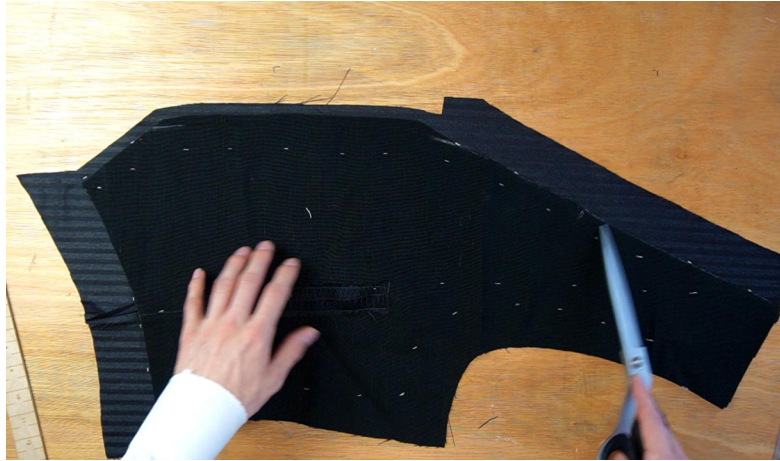
Also mark and cut the vent. It's the same with or without the vent inlay; you would only cut the seam allowance into the sideseam at the top of the vent and fold it over without the extra cloth.

Down the button stand of the waistcoat I want the front edge to be a little bit longer. I have blue chalk and I measure an extra 1.2 cm (1/2") from the mark stitches on top of the 1 cm (3/8") seam. In total then I measure 2.2cm (7/8") from the mark stitches (or the finished edge) to find the right-hand-side forepart front edge. This extended front edge can be joined to the breakline with a step at the top and bottom or the breakline and curve from the bottom can be continued straight to the extension as I've done here.



With the seam allowance added to both foreparts the excess inlay down the front edges can be trimmed.

The same can be said for the armhole inlay. I want to keep the shoulder inlay too. You could cut off the shoulder inlay along the markstitches too, but leaving it allows the waistcoat balance to be altered, where-as the shoulder width can't reasonably be changed anyway.



Along the hem the canvas needs to be cut away to match the markstitches to avoid folding it up when the cloth is turned up. It's already marked here because I chalked along the creased line before I pressed the forepart flat after fitting it. The hem line can be copied onto the canvas in any way though.

Since I have a grown-on lapel it's the same along the breakline. If it were a full

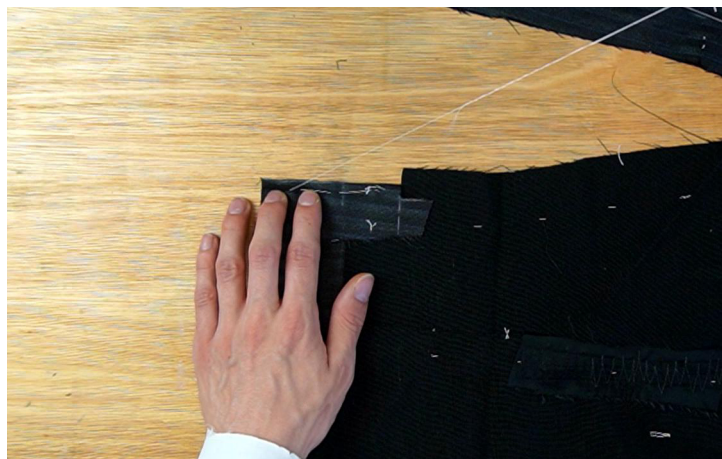
length facing then it would be cut the same as the placket.

Down the placket I can just approximate a little over a seam allowance from the edge. If you need to chalk it on then that will be the most accurate. The canvas needs to be cut to just a little behind the finished edge of the waistcoat so that it doesn't get caught in the stitching. If you were to measure, then the canvas needs to be cut 1.2 cm (1/2") from the edge of the cloth.

As long as you see the markstitches along the hem and front edge (specifically on the left-hand-side, since the right has the extension) then you've cut enough canvas away.

At this moment I start removing some markstitches. I only need to remove the stitches that are along the edge that will have the facing sewn along it. Otherwise the hem should keep their markstitches unless the hem line has been chalked on. The mark stitches down the breakline should also be removed, so long as the edge has been marked on. However with the canvas cut I know that the cloth can just be folded over the canvas, so it will be ok to not mark it.

The graphic on page 38 indicates the mark stitches I would leave in for now and the ones that I would definitely remove.



I fold the cloth over the canvas where the seam allowance was cut away at the vent. It's important that the top of the vent is a whole seam away from the raw edge of the side seam because the lining needs to be sewn down to the top of the vent and then below to the bottom of the back cloth/lining.

I just baste it over to be prick stitched as it's finished. Some tailors will also then cross stitch the raw edges of the cloth to the canvas.



With the excess of the forepart cut away the lining can be most economically be cut because now I have a better sense of the minimum amount that I can use. I'm using this distinct lining and it has a stripe so I want to get that mostly lined up.

I cut quite generously here. I leave around 4 cm (1.1/2") of lining down the front of the vest. At the hem inlay I just match the inlay, but it almost only needs to be a cm or so past the hem of the waistcoat to have enough to ease and then fold up.

Above the shoulder I leave a little bit extra as well for just in case.

Along the side seam and armhole I cut the lining along the raw edges.

That is the front lining done and it can be put to the side until the foreparts are ready to have the lining sewn on.



On the other side of this piece of lining I'm laying the back lining onto it in a similar way as I did the forepart.

With the back lining, this is a specifically large waistcoat so I don't have as much lining to cut from as I usually would. I'm only losing a small amount of the centreback inlay though so it should be ok. Adding pins so that I can cut around it without worrying about them shifting. A few weights would serve the same purpose.

The side seam and hem I'm cutting those with pinking shears. The sideseam inlay I want to copy that exactly as it is on the main back cloth is right now, though you could cut them down to leave less inlay in the finished garment.

The hem I am cutting that down because it will almost never serve a purpose and it will just get in the way now. It still needs to be cut parallel to the back hem. After cutting the inlay to match I cut down just the inside lining an extra 2 - 3 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ "-1.1/8"). It doesn't need to be cut a specific amount and it doesn't necessarily need to be cut at all. This can just improve the look of the finished waistcoat preventing the lining from dropping out from underneath the back lining.

The back neck doesn't need to be cut down at this point, it'll be cut down when it's finished. The shoulder and armhole though need to have the inlays cut off and the rest of the armhole just matched as well.

The centreback seam of the back also needs to be matched onto the back lining, I markstitch through the CB of the back into the lining to show me where the seam is, but any other way is fine. With another kind of lining; chalk or using a tracing wheel could work as well.

Basting along the seam ahead of machining it with the back.



The back and back lining now can be machined that the waistcoat is being finished. With both I want to back tack a little bit above the neckline, just up to 0.5 cm or an eighth. This is the same with most necklines with the seam allowances that I use. Tacking the stitch just a little above the neckline means that the seam is open above the neck and that allows the seam to open either up the neck on collared necklines or down the neck in this case with the seam is turned inwards.

The front lining is one option for where to attach the label. With both right-side up I can tell which is the left- and right-hand-side. I'm putting the label into the RHS forepart. I'm placing the label a few cms (couple of inches) from the sideseam and around level with the waist suppression, so that it's not too close and interfering with the hem.



I pin it there before taking it to the machine.

I just top stitch it in place with a matching thread. You could cross stitch it down, but for some reason I don't like the aesthetic of the cross stitched label. That's a personal preference though, you can add the label however you like.

Removing the baste down the back seams. The inlays can be pressed open or to one side. In this case I've left the back lining with the fold and pressed it to one side. I had already cut the back cloth, so I pressed the seam open.



Here the straps can be basted to the back. I have one with the narrow end closed and one open. If both were open it wouldn't matter which side is which. Here though the closed strap needs to be on the right-hand-side of the back as it's worn. The way I look at it is that the wearer reaches around their back with their right hand to pull the strap tighter. Since I made it to size I put the wide ends against the raw edge of the inlay and it should overlap the centreback seam by an arbitrary amount.

They're placed across the waist suppression halfway over the waist markstitches and go straight across.

The open strap (in my case) goes on the left-hand-side. Positioned in the same way. They're basted across. I tack the stitch in the inlay which will have to be cut before the waistcoat is bagged out to remove the baste across.

With it basted in place, in hindsight it would be best to sew the straps down where the darts are as is done later when finishing the waistcoat. Doing it now makes it easier to reinforce the area and it won't show through the back lining.

To finally prepare the back of the vest my last step is joining the back and the lining at the hem. Place them right sides together, lining up the raw edges. It is good to line up the centre back seam too.

This edge can be machined with a normal seam allowance. If the amount of inlay is quite short on the main back, if there's only around 2 cm ($\frac{3}{4}$ ") then only sew with a 1 cm ($\frac{3}{8}$ ") SA, but if it has more inlay then a larger seam is advisable. I pin it across and just sew it.





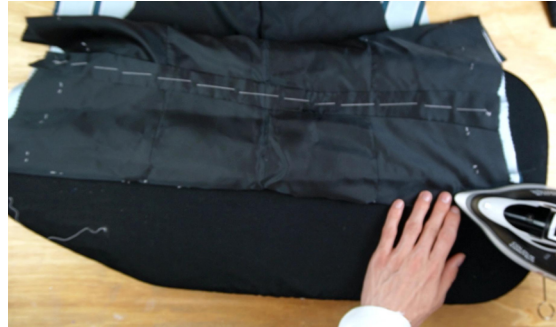
Pressing the seam flat, this stitch will stay pressed flat and the next thing to press is the hem of the back up over the mark stitches showing the hem. I want to keep the back lining out of the way to avoid pressing it at this moment.

The back lining up and the back on the table, the raw edges of the back lining should be lined up to the back of the waistcoat as it was cut initially. They were cut to match except at the hem. They need to match around all of the other areas, so that they don't match at the hem.

Therefore keeping the back and lining even with each other and the back still pressed up flat and then press the bottom of the back lining. Essentially however much higher you cut the back lining to the main back that will be half the distance between the finished hem of the back and the back lining.

Having put a soft crease into the back lining with the linings definitely correctly positioned together I give the hem a firm press to solidify the crease there.

Without stitching the straps to the back and saving that for the finish I put the back lining to one side to finish making the foreparts.



At some point it should be noted that I didn't copy the dart into the lining. I don't have a justification why to or why not to. If you're cutting the lining before the fitting then it's easy to copy. If you cut the lining after darts are added then make sure you let out the side seam at the waist the size of the dart and double check afterwards that the side seams still match after they are sewn in.

This will have a grown on facing along the breakline, but will still have a facing down the button stand to the hem.

Since the right-hand-side is cut with the extended front I use that piece as the template on the cloth to cut the facing I need.



As shown the shape is initially traced along the raw edge. I also mark the bottom of the inlay left along the breakline.

At the bottom of the stand where the shape curves away I mark a line between the top of the incline and from about 1 cm (1/2") from where the front edge meets the hem. This effectively opens a dart in the facing that gets eased closed when the facing is being made. That creates tension inside and forces the front edge to keep its shape.

Taking away the forepart I mark the extended forepart behind the edge already marked.

I also mark about 4 cm (1.1/2") above the bottom of the breakline inlay, so that it can be overlapped and finished neatly at the top.

Mark the size of the facing at the stands. It has to be at least 5 cm (2") wide, to account for 2-3 cm (3/4"-1.1/8") of seams, the 1.2 cm (1/2") overlap either size and the 1.5 cm (5/8") buttonholes.

If you are making a full length facing from the top of the placket it can narrow towards the shoulder to no less than 3 cm (1.1/8") for the seams to keep the lining at least a small distance from the front edge. Ideally it shouldn't be more than a third of the shoulder plus seams, because I want to put a pleat in the lining halfway across the shoulder. See page 38 for the diagram.

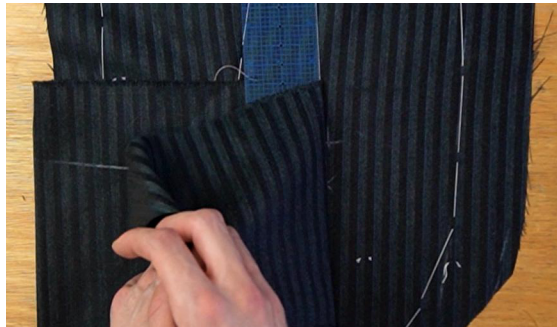
The width I carry on to the hem. Using the outer line to follow. I also mark the bottom of the facing at least 2 cm (3/4") past the hem of the finished waistcoat. You could add more, but this is to add ease down the length and to have enough to turn up and finish the bottom edge most cleanly.

Despite being patterned I cut in one go to since I'm not putting much attention on matching the pattern of the facing.

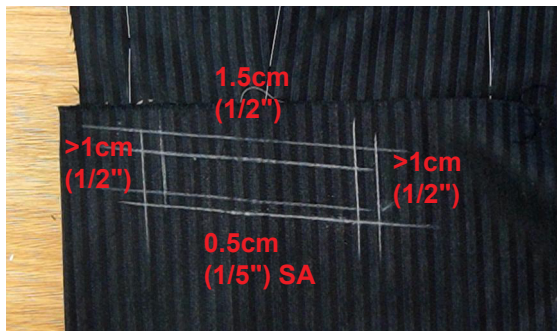
Sewing the Pockets

The pockets I am matching the pattern, but if it were a plain cloth then you would just match the grain.

Firstly matching the cloth I want to cut to the grain at front there making sure the pattern lines up. I'm not even sure whether I noticed at this stage that the pattern lines up on both sides, so I am looking only at the side of the dart towards the front edge. With the grain, and patterns as applicable, lined up I copy the shape of the pocket welt to the cloth.



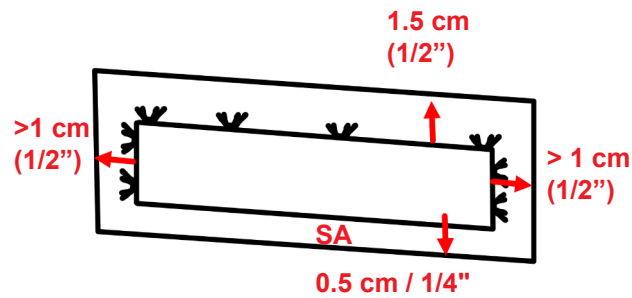
With the bottom edge and the front edge marked I can more easily and accurately just re-draw the shape onto the cloth. On top of the top edge I add 1.5 cm (1/2"). Either side I add 1/2" - 2.5 cm (1") and on the bottom I add an exact seam allowance of either 0.5 cm or 1/4". A normal size seam allowance works too, but I wanted a strong distinction between the top and bottom of the welt.



Taking the cloth away I match the patterns between each and cut around the outer perimeter.

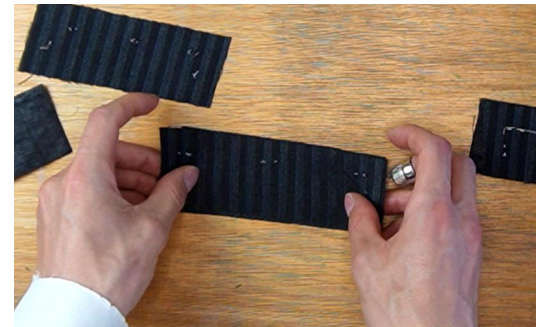
I mark stitch along the top edge and either side of the welt shape to accurately copy the top and the width of the welt that I will make.

If you have breast pockets then it's the same thing.



With the welts cut I have some beetled linen that I use to interface the pockets. I add it to the entirety of the cloth welt. Some will only add it in exactly as the shape of the welt. You could use a fusible interfacing in place of this. Or a light canvas, but in that case I definitely recommend using only the finished size of the welt.

I place the linen against the wrong sides of the welt cloth and baste them together along the top edge of the welt. This stitch will stay there until the fold is prick stitched in order to keep the linen in the edge. Though if it were being fused that's not necessary. Similar if it's only the finished size.

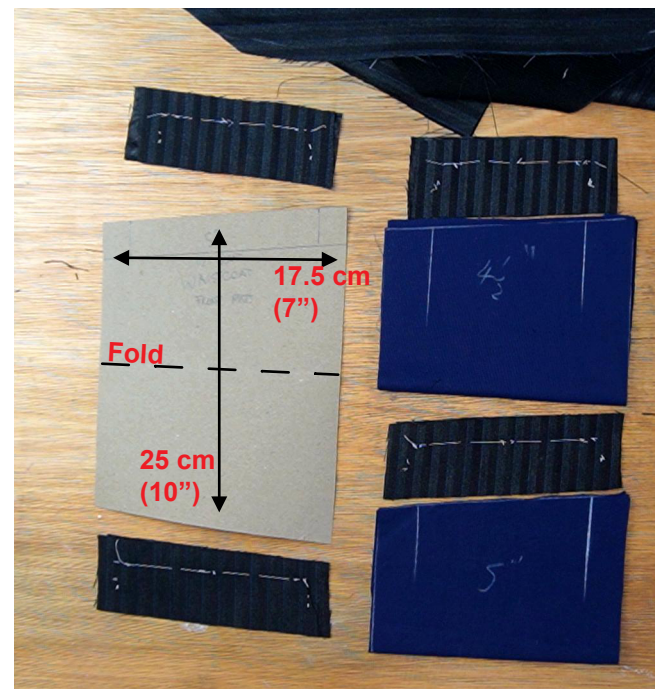


I don't want any excess linen around the raw edges of the cloth, so it is cut down.

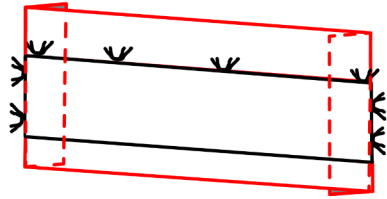
I can measure from the baste or from the raw edge the width of the welt. This chalk line just gives me a sew line to reference when the welt is being sewn in the machine.

The pocket bags I cut are all the same size and then they are just made to the size of the pocket. Marked inside are the widths of the welts and the slant matches that of the pockets. Both have at least 1" or 2.5 cm of extra either side of the width of the welt.

All the pockets should be done in tandem.



For this method of making the welts it starts by pressing over the two edges either side. The front and back edges are important to make parallel and in line with the grain. It's easier here because the pattern is in line with the grain, but having the mark stitches is useful specifically on a plain cloth to make the pocket the correct dimensions. Sect. A



Due to the top edge being on a slant that causes the folded edge to poke out from the edge on the high side of the folded edge. In order to fix that and to reduce the bulkiness in the corners I cut out a wedge from the folded edges. Don't cut the wedge too close to the corner of the welt in order to avoid fraying on the finished pocket.

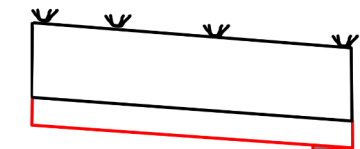
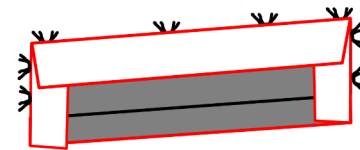
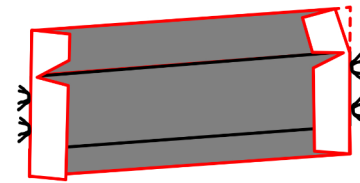
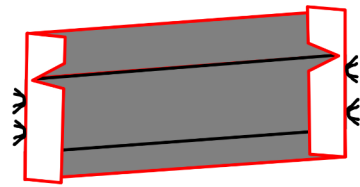
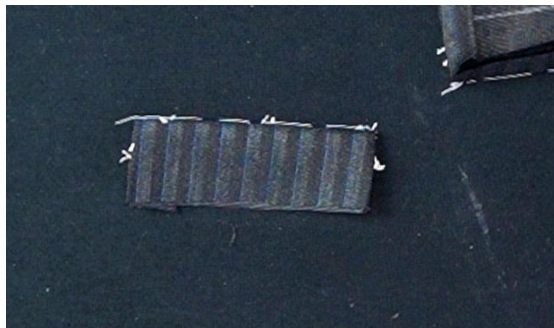
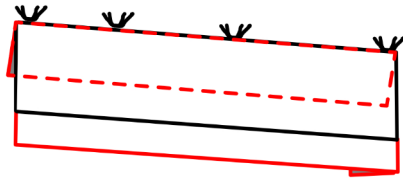


Specifically on the high side of the welt where the top edge pokes out of the side it can now be folded inwards so that when it's folded down again this time both edges are behind the finished welt.



With the edges folded into place they will be finished, so I baste them down first so that I can hand stitch the welt.

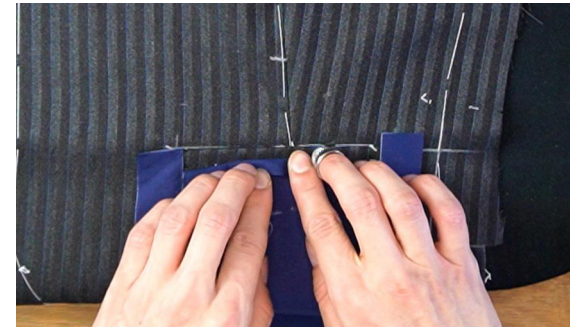
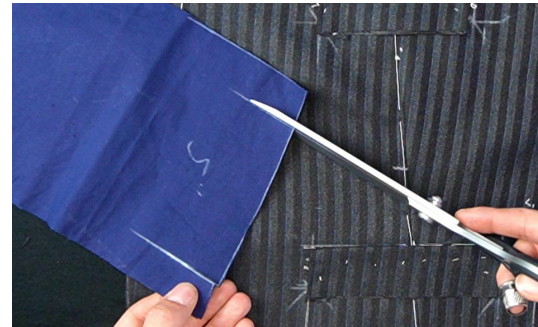
Across the top the welt is folded over the basting stitch that's holding the linen to the cloth. Without the linen or the baste you'd just reference the mark stitches or whatever you used to mark the top edges. Sect. B



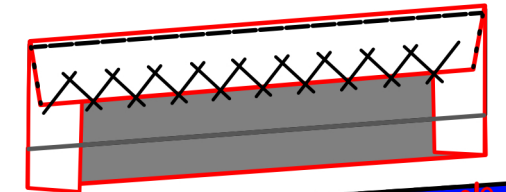
With the edges folded into place they will be finished, so I baste them down first so that I can hand stitch the welt.

Again I chalk the sew line across the bottom of the welt measuring from the top edge marking the sew line to the folded edges either side.

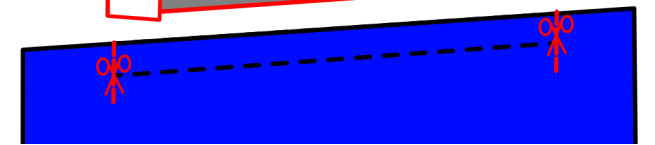
Just ahead of attaching the pocket bags to the welts I mark the wrong sides and cut down the width of the welt, just a small amount more narrow.



To hand finish the welt there are a few stitches to do. One is cross stitching the cloth that was folded over the top edge. In my case I can cross stitch it down to the linen. With fusing you'd do the same but be more careful you don't stitch through the cloth.



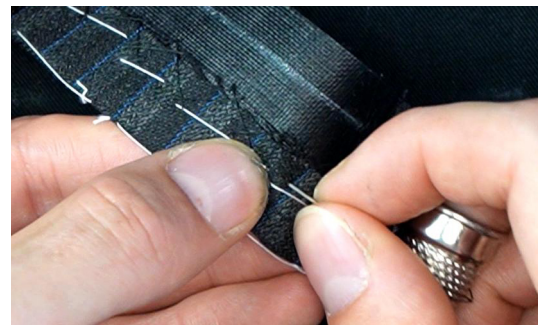
The edges folded down on either side could theoretically be left, but I fell the edges down.

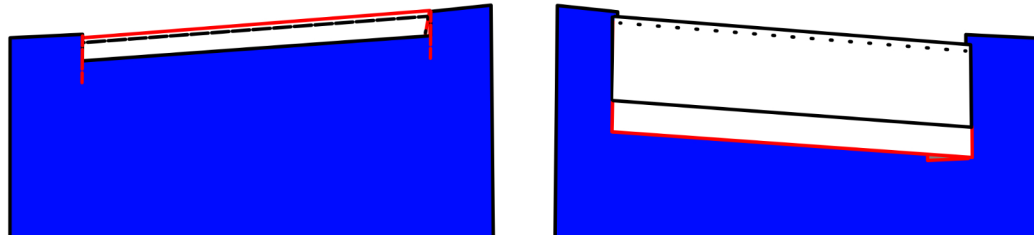


I also prick stitch long the top edge of the welt. This keeps the fold in place and it keeps the linen in the edge after the baste has been removed. The prick stitch across can be left until finishing the pocket and/or the waistcoat itself. I do it here to save that time later, I find it easier and neater doing it before the welt is attached to the foreparts and I can prick stitch across to fell the other side down instead of starting a new stitch.

By this point the mark stitches could have come out, since they only get in the way.

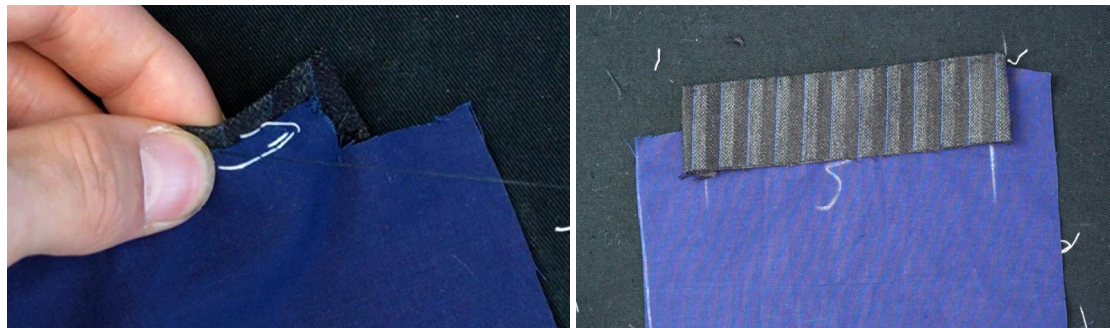
Having done the hand stitching now the basting stitches all need to come out. If the prick stitch wasn't done; the baste holding the linen in place has to stay there until it is done.



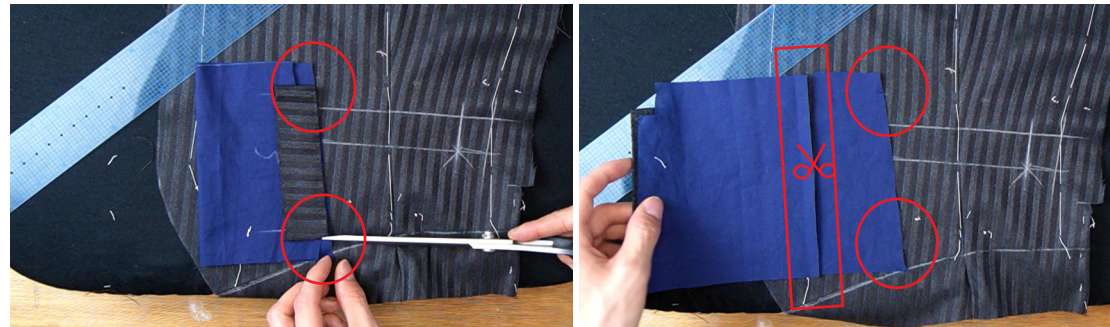


With the pocketing silecia I fold over about a seam along the section I cut down. I place it directly up to the edge. The cut section is narrower than the welt, so make sure that it's placed evenly. The cotton can be quite close to the edge of the welt, but there's no specific distance. It just also has to cover the cross stitching. Baste it down and then I fell that to the welt as well.

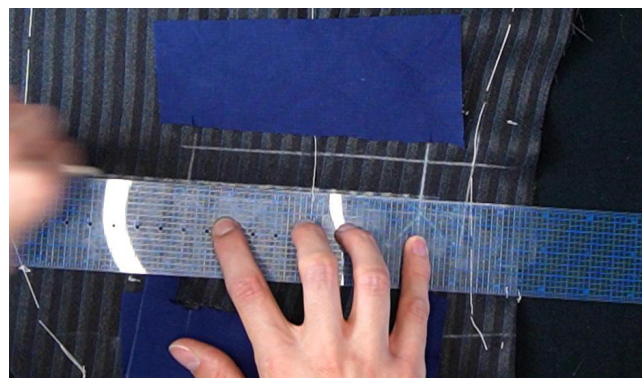
The silecia does need to have cuts just inside of the edge of the welts to about halfway down.



I am making the welt pocket without a cloth facing, so I fold the pocketing up along the fold and make snips either side of the welts for reference sewing it on. Cutting about 5 cm (2") from that back edge.



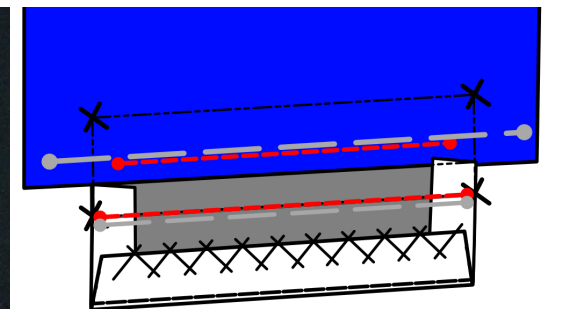
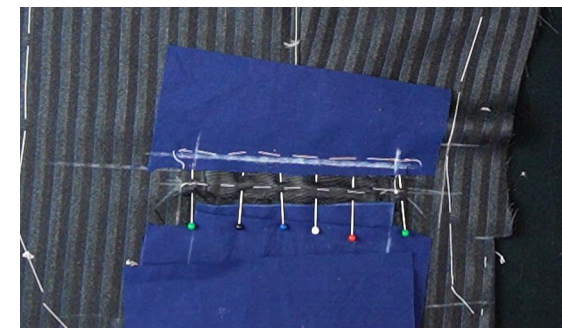
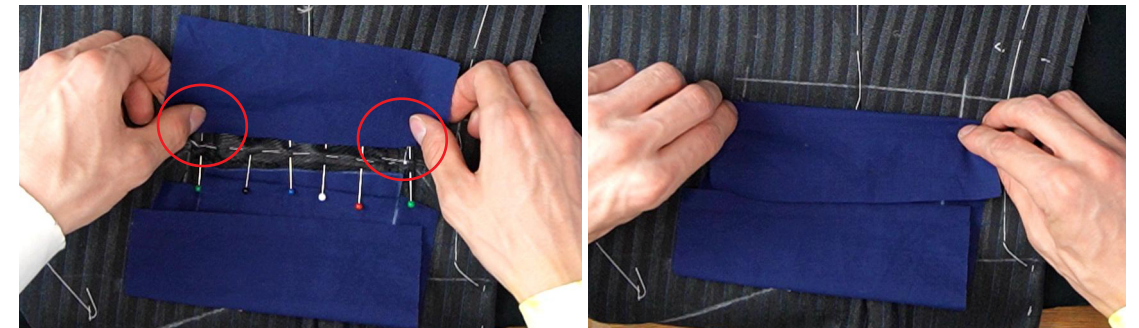
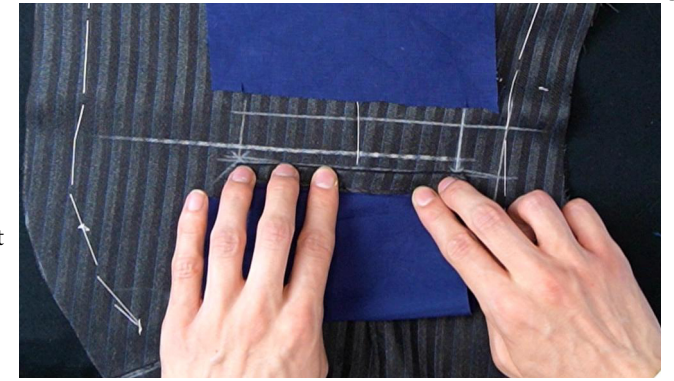
I very precisely mark the seam allowance that I added above the bottom of the pocket location. In this case that was 1/4". Being precise is important for sewing it into the correct place, also with the pattern will only match if this is done right as well.



To double check the pattern I fold the welt over the seam that it will be sewn along and check that the pattern lines up where it will be sewn. Holding it there I stick a pin along the sew line on the welt to check again. Basting along removing the horizontal pins to place some pins perpendicular to the sew line which is just a pattern matching technique.

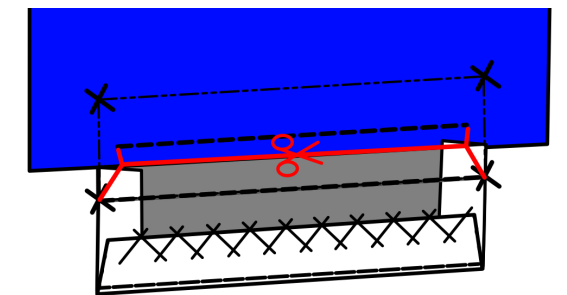
I baste just next to the sew line instead of on top of it, just to make it easy to remove.

I position the piece of silecia I cut from the pocket bag piece against the raw edge of the welt using the notches I'd snipped into the slanted edge to line it up on either side of the welt. I mark a little inside of either side of the welt itself on the silecia bearer, because that stitch needs to be narrower than the welt in order to be finished well. I also draw the sew line a SA, about 0.5 cm (1/4"), from the raw edge. I just want the seam to be narrow so that it doesn't show above the welt edge.



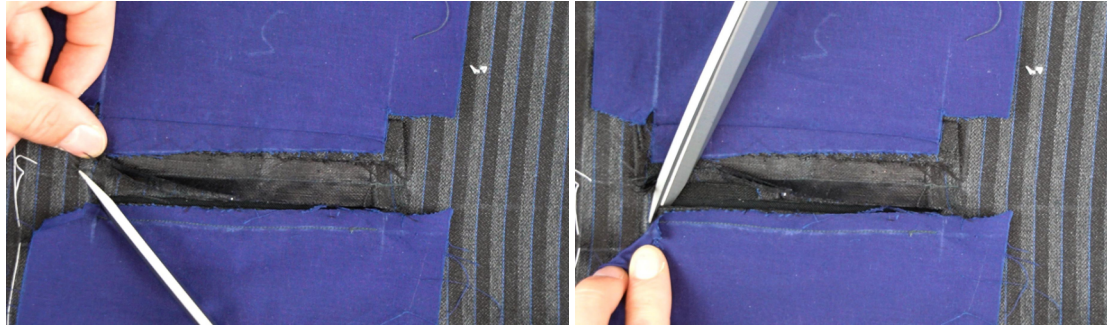
The two stitches are sewn. The start and ends need to be back tacked like any other pocket. The welt itself more precisely than the bearer piece. Back tack the welt at the front and back exactly on the folded edges, without going off of the welt and sewing just the cloth.

The bearer, the cotton here, is more forgiving since it's tacked inside the width of the welt anyway.



I make a cut around the middle of the stitching along where the raw edges meet. Cut along the opening and stop about 1 cm (3/8") from the edge of the welt. Ideally this will be about in line with the back tack of the bearer. Cut diagonally to the edge of the back tack. Again don't go past the machining and don't cut the seam allowance of the welt and facing.

From that point as well cut to the back tack on the bearer too.



My way of specifically pressing the seam allowances is by flipping the pocket to the back and folding the welt upwards taught along the machining. Similar to how I do other welt pockets. I pull down the body canvas and the forepart cloth to press the seam open. The silecia attached to the welt already is just moved up out of the way for now.

I spray it with water and press it firmly and definitely enough because the body canvas is more difficult to press and force to hold the shape.

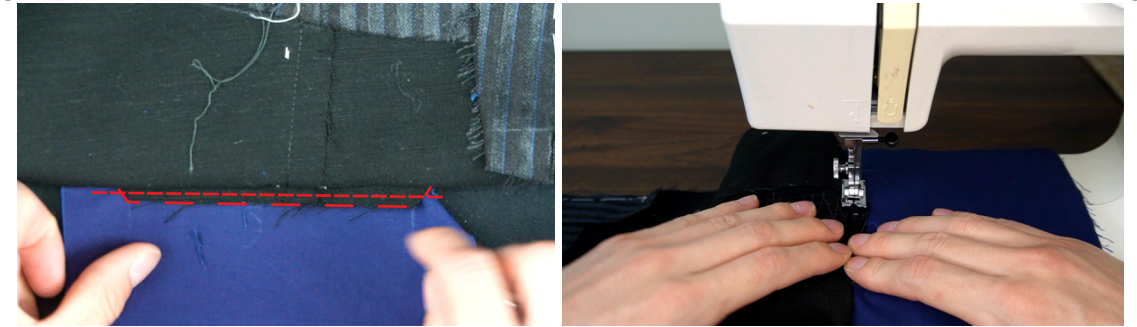
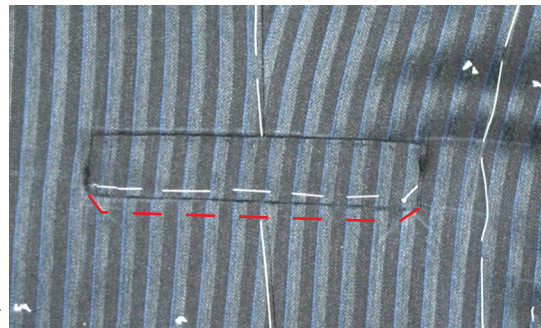
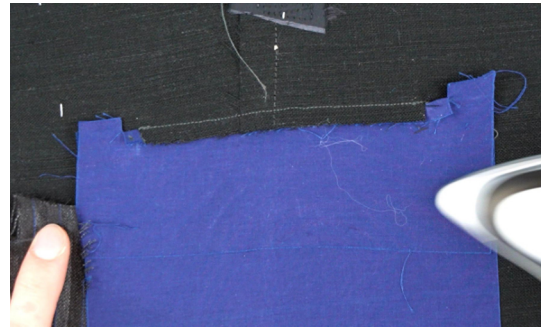
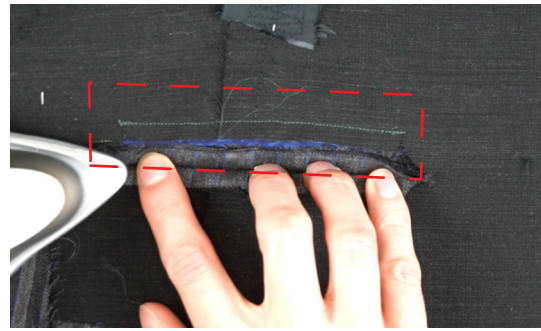
Next I push the silecia all through the pocket opening. The silecia that is sewn to the welt can go through because it's cut down either side enough that the edges that are wider than the opening slip through without crumpling or interfering with the opening or vice-versa.

I use silecia for the bearer instead of cloth, so that I don't have to open this seam allowance. This is a flatter, lighter choice. I lay all the cotton flat and press it.

Fold the bearer cotton up and out of the way, then position the welt in place. Along the base of the welt just above the stitch line baste it in place to hold the welt in position to sew the silecia from the welt to the seam allowance.

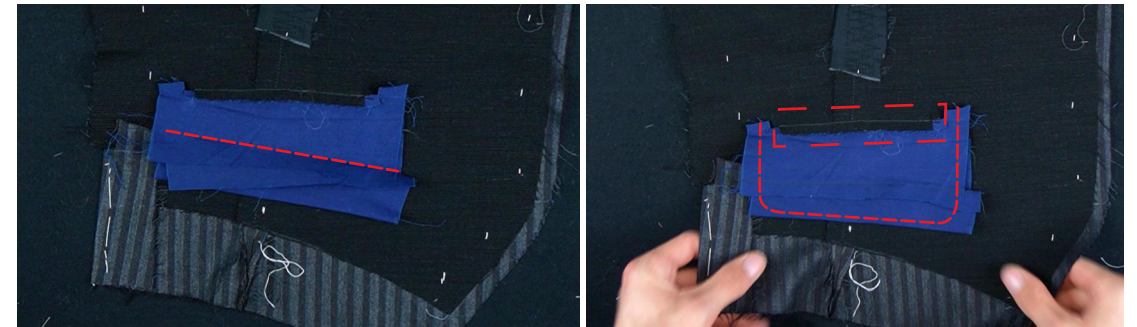
Move the main body of the cloth out of the way exposing the seam allowance that was pressed down and that is being sewn to the pocketing. I've seen this done by hand instead of by machine like a lot of welts you can do either.

I machine sew across the cotton making sure that I sew through the seam allowance that has been pressed down.



Remove the baste and the facing silecia can be folded down again in order to begin sewing the bag closed. Since I have the canvas cut above the hem already then I can see where the pocket needs to finish above. The pocket can be folded up straight, but I find that it would become very small. Therefore I fold the bottom up at a slight angle. I need the fold of the cloth to be at least 2.5 cm (1") from the finished hem to sit above the lining. I put a crease where I want it folded and fold down the facing silecia to meet it. The stitch to join them back together will be at a strange angle. I find where both pieces meet flat against the cloth put a finger crease into either side, which is only possible because it's cotton and I would pin them and they can be sewn together along the crease.

The breast pockets don't need to be angled because there's enough room to just sewn them up straight at the cottons cut height.

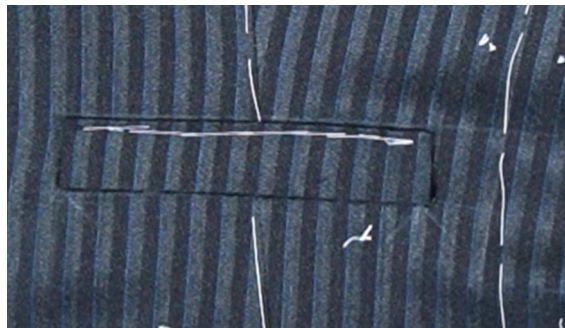
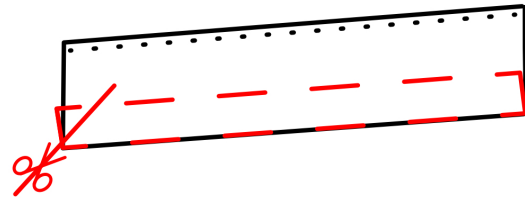
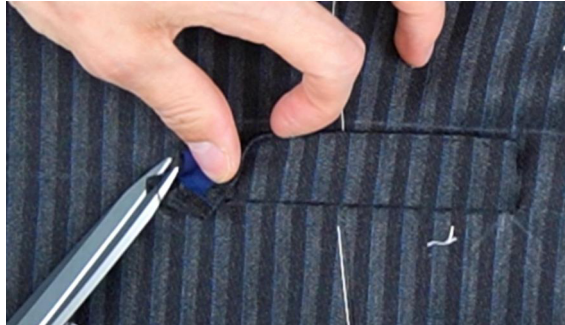


Trim the excess and I press the seams down instead of up or open. I'm not sure why it just seems like the best option being a single stitch and being light cotton.

The perimeter of the pocket bag can be sewn now. I start above the facing silecia on the parts still sticking out above the welt. I sew in line with the vertical edges of the welts, but being a small seam from the edges could be better to avoid having to place the presser foot of the machine over the multiple layers.

I do one continuous stitch, sewing in a curve around the bottom and along the fold of the bottom of the pocket and up the second side. I make sure the two sides of the silecia are pulled net together so that one side isn't any longer than the other causing it to kink or pleat in the stitch on the way back up as the excess doesn't have anywhere to go.

At the pocket again; it's slanted, so the seam allowance on one side will peek out from the low side of the pocket. This time the seam can just be trimmed off so that it's behind the folded edge.



I baste with a blind stitch here to fasten the welt up ahead of finishing the edges. The stitch is just to hold it very firmly while it's stitched. Usually in this kind of pocket in production you'll see machine stitching down either side of the pocket to finish it. Basically the same thing except it's by hand.

On the first edge I fasten the hand-silk on the inside of the waistcoat at either corner of the pocket. It'll be done all the same way but it depends whether you go up or down first.

At the top edge from a few mms from the edge (around an eighth) from the edge I will do a couple of prick stitches through everything and felling stitches towards the corner.

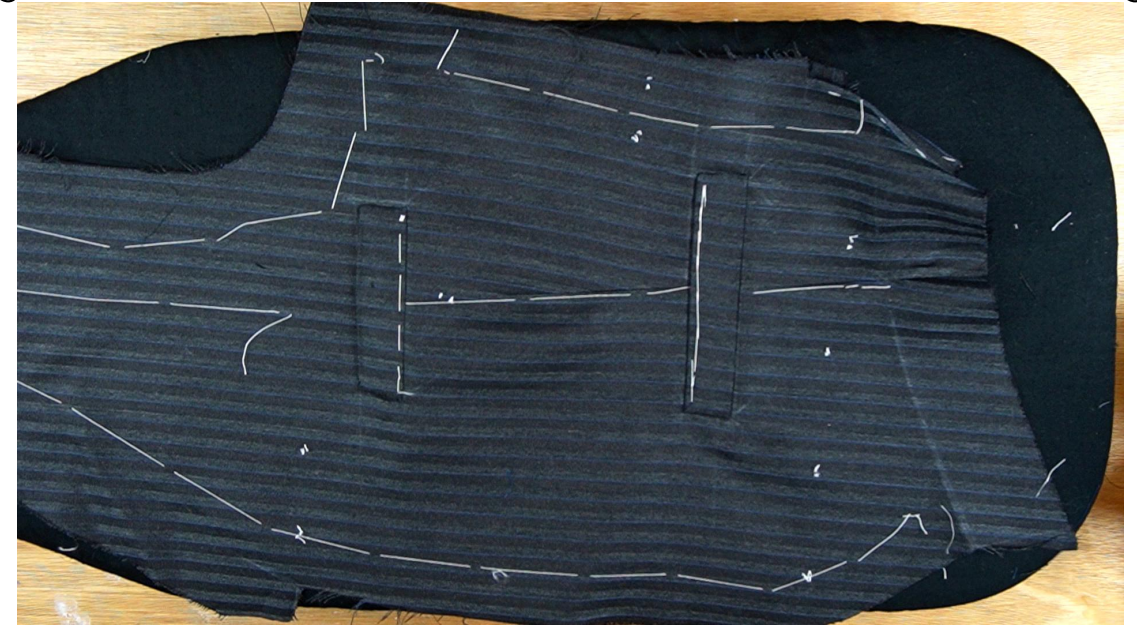
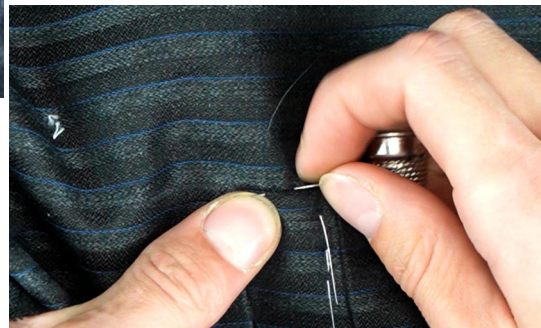
Then felling the open edge down.

At the bottom at the last stitch I send the needle and thread to the inside of the waistcoat. Whether at this point I'm at the top or the bottom I do a back stitch inside of the welt catching through as much as possible except the outer cloth of the welt so that this stitch doesn't show on the outside. It's a slightly large back stitch because of all of the layers I actually can't sew a much smaller back stitch than I do. Due to being a wide stitch I do a second stitch along the same line as the first back the other way.

Finishing the stitching I tie it off and do the other side in practically the same way.

I always start with the felling stitch from the outside along the edge because I can easily see that the welt is being held in place correctly before doing the stitch from behind that should bear most of the pockets strain.

The baste along the welt should stay there until the vest has been top-pressed at the very end.



Sewing the facing

An optional extra before adding the facing is to put a linen reinforcement along the button and buttonhole stands.

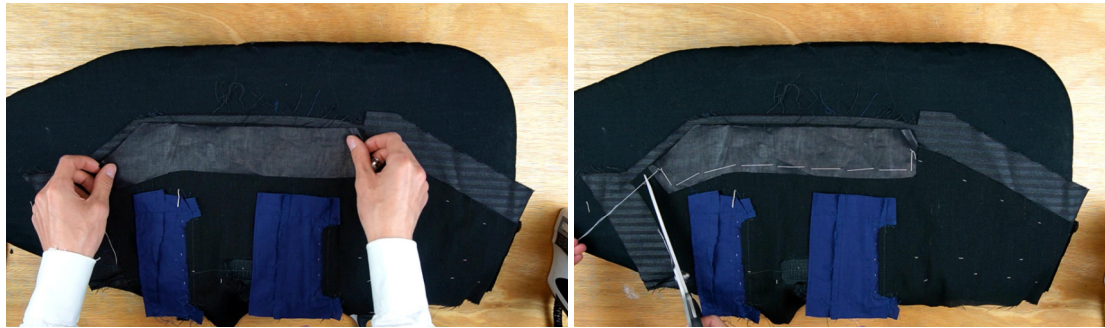
In some cases the weave of the cloth and canvas may be quite loose and therefore when the buttonholes are sewn the small amount of cloth that it is sewn to might not be thoroughly held in place.

Adding the linen gives the buttonhole stitching something tougher to be sewn to.

It can be added before or after the edge tape. I place it onto the canvas and just baste it in place. I only baste it through the linen and the canvas, so not stitching through the outer cloth. This way the baste can just be left in. The linen won't be under much strain at all and when the buttons and buttonhole go it those will be holding the linen in place anyway.

I do sew the linen into both sides when I use it. The linen shouldn't extend beyond the canvas at all either.

One alternative if you only have fusing is interfacing the stand areas on the facings and that will do the same thing.



Before sewing on the facing the edge tape has to be added. In this case I have a fusible edge tape. On this one I start at the shoulder. Position the tape halfway over the edge of the canvas.

Since the one I use here is fusible the mark stitches need to be removed by now, so ideally the breakline would be chalked onto the front. If it were a handsewn edge tape the mark stitches could be left there.

The tape down the breakline could either be drawn in, or if not it will be placed net with the cloth. In any case, being a grown-on facing, a full length facing or a laid on lapel the canvas does always need to be taped.

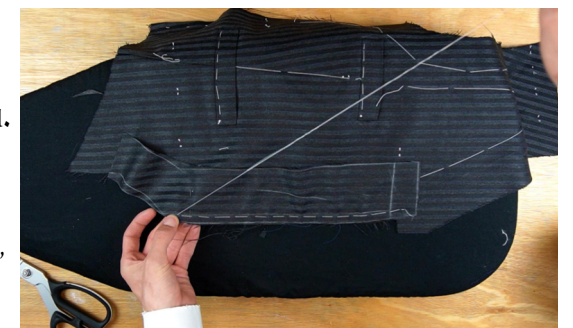
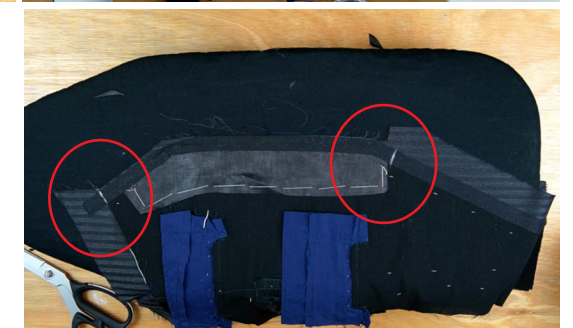


I manoeuvre the tape to go down the stand around the curve. If the curve is too steep then the tape needs to be snipped in order to go around without pleating over itself.

I'm holding it slightly under tension as I place it down the front edge. I want it relatively under tension between the bottom of the hem and the bottom of the stand. At the bottom of the stand since it's fusible, not bias tape, I need to snip into the tape to allow it to change directions and go down to the hem



At the hem and a little above the breakline inlay I mark where I want to start and stop stitching.



Placing the forepart rightside up I place the facing piece rightside down onto it. Positioning the front edges in line; line up the bottom of the stand where they curve and put a pin in it. This keeps the bottom in position so that I can ease in the facing down the stand to make sure it's long against the waistcoat. I shift about 1 cm (3/8") of cloth towards the pin to trap it at the top when I start the baste.

I sew a slightly more narrow stitch distributing the excess cloth in the facing along the seam. I don't sew the whole seam allowance so that it's easy to remove this baste after the seam has been machined.

If you were adding a facing up the whole length then it doesn't need to be eased down the breakline, but just ensure that the facing isn't short.

Below the stand where the facing wasn't cut to match, just place the raw edges together and sew them like normal. Therefore trapping the excess there.

Press the ease in along the seams so that it becomes easier to sew.



Again I mark at the hem of the waistcoat to stop or start the stitching. For the grown on facing I mark the end of the stitch a seam above the start of the inlay.

The stitch is sewn with the seam allowance that I left when I prepared the front edge. I had left 1 cm seam (3/8"). Back tacking now lower than the hem to start on one side, following the contour of the seam to accurately make the edge as you normally would. Back tacking at the other end to finish the stitch.

When pressing the facing it is very important that the seam is thoroughly pressed open. Pressing the seam open helps tremendously in turning the edge and creating a clean front edge.



Usually you want to use an edge board. For the waistcoat the facing is small enough that it can be mostly pressed flat using a normal board. Heat and steam the cloth, then drying off the cloth with the iron to ensure the seam is firmly and permanently pressed open.



With the facing seam pressed open completely all the way down to the hem and up to the breakline inlay I press the hem inlay up over the canvas along the hemline.

The hem inlay has to be underneath the pocket, so you may want to cut off some more of the inlay if it doesn't fit. Honestly best to baste the hem up now.

To begin turning the facing through I start at the breakline inlay. You could use the line you drew where the mark stitches where, or I use the canvas here. I turn the inlay over the canvas and baste it down.



At the top of the facing where it isn't stitched in place I don't catch that with the basting yet. I tack the baste from the breakline and essentially start a new baste to sew the facing. When basting the facing edge it's important that the facing side of the seam is rolled slightly towards the inside of the waistcoat so that the seam and the facing don't show from the outside. My stitch isn't parallel to the edge that I'm stitching along, rather angled like a slip stitch, because I find that it holds the edge in place a lot more securely.

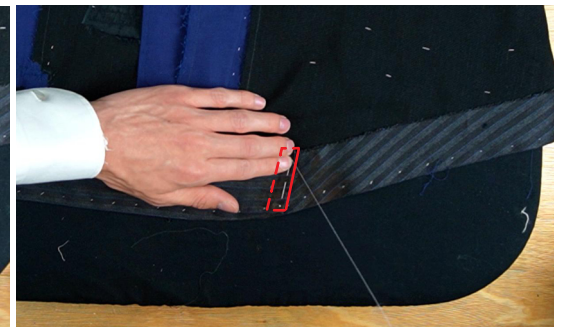
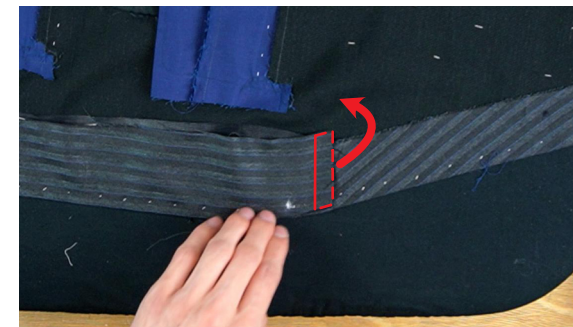
Having pressed the seam open really well earlier makes rolling the seam slightly inside a lot easier.

I baste the hem up in place. I don't knot the thread, specifically at the side underneath the facing, because that can make the baste difficult to remove later.

Basting across. You might notice that the folded edge of the hem at the sideseam sits slightly away from the outside edge of the vent. Usually you might have to stretch the hem out a little more to make it meet the outer edge of the vent. Due to the inlay I added though there is plenty of cloth covering the canvas.

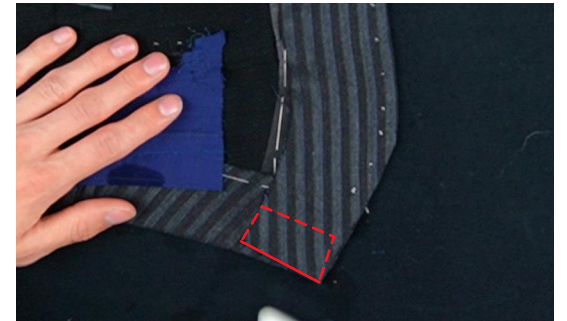
To finish the top edge of the facing on top of the breakline inlay I start by pressing the edges flat with the bastes.

Finishing the top is as easy as folding the raw edge of the top edge of the facing under itself, pressing and basting that down.



Finishing the bottom of the facing there can be a few ways, but it's very similar to the top of the facing. It's pointed so I fold this one over itself before folding it up under the rest of the facing, tucking it in between the forepart and the facing.

The fold could be almost along the hem, or as I put it here the fold is angled away from the hem at the point.



Baste the bottom of the facing down and then I make a continuous baste up the facing. I'm pulling the cloth over the canvas towards the raw edge to remove any horizontal excess in the facing. This keeps the front edge under a small amount of tension to prevent it from crimping outward.

Doing this baste it's important that the vertical ease is still distributed evenly, since it may not be shrunk in across the whole length.

In my case the ease at the corner at the bottom of the stand shrunk in very easily, so I didn't even have to think about it. It would also have to be carefully distributed so that it doesn't pleat over itself.

Along the breakline it's very similar, except there's no vertical ease to think about. Just slightly pull the cloth from the front edge cleaning out any excess and basting the raw edge down.

With the hem and front edge all basted in place iron everything to help cement the edges and seams. Shrinking in any ease and extra length if not already and re-affirming any cloth that has been stretched into place, namely the breakline inlay and the hem inlay.



Before the lining goes on there are stitches that need to be done which will hold the facing and the hem in place. One is cross stitching the hem up. It doesn't have to be a cross stitch, it could be the same as I use for the rest of the facing. There's nothing especially worth noting about the stitching really. In this case I started from the facing side and stitched towards the vent.

At the vent I fell stitch the folded edge on the hem inlay to the folded edge of the vent to keep it closed. I tie off the stitch at the end of the vent and hide the trailing thread between the layers of cloth.

I fell stitch the top of the facing to the breakline inlay to finish that edge. I start from the outside and work towards the raw edge of the facing. At the raw edge I tack the thread and slip stitch the facing to the canvas.



Where the facing is on top of the hem inlay I cross stitch the raw edge down. It's a tight stitch that is there to aesthetically cover the raw edge in case it doesn't get covered by the lining, as you'll occasionally see on jackets too.

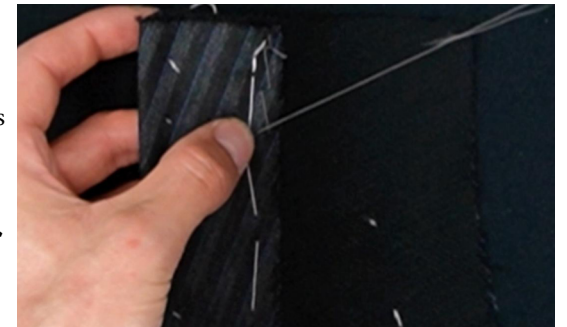
This stitch is tacked at the bottom of the facing too and then the folded edge gets felled to the hem inlay and tied off at the point of the bottom of the front edge.

The only portion left for me is the breakline inlay which also needs to be slip stitched down to the canvas. I'll always iterate that it's important that this stitch doesn't catch through the cloth at all because it creates apparent dimples in the cloth.

That gets tied off where it meets the other stitches. There isn't an order that each of these needs to be done, but they all need to be done before the front lining is added since the lining covers all of these stitches.

To prepare the armhole, it is very similar to the front edge for this method.

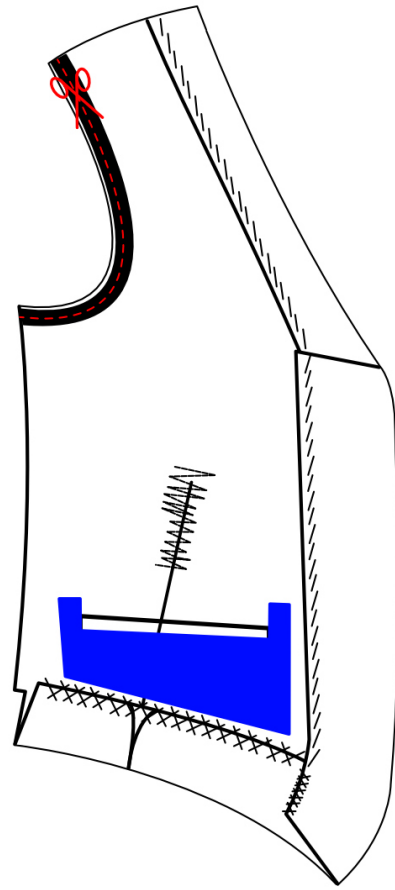
I trim any excess canvas and if you were specific about the shoulder width you could do a final check here. From the inside cut away a little more than a seams width of the canvas again. You could measure



but I'm happy to do it by eye. Cutting about 1.2 cm (1/2") from the raw edge. It then also gets taped. For fusing again it needs to be snipped into around the edge to follow the curve. With a bias tape you might be able to stretch and ease it around the corners. Still positioning it halfway over the canvas. At no point am I stretching or trying to put the tape under any tension. I want it net with the cloth.

One other thing before the lining goes on is that sometimes the waistcoat maker likes to cut away about 2.5 cm (1") of the canvas away from the side seam and/or a wedge at the bottom of the sideseam. This simply softens the waistcoat over the hip and along the sideseam. It results in less cloth being caught in the seam. When using lighter body canvas this can be irrelevant and if the back is made with lining material then it doesn't create much bulk anyway.

Try one or both and maybe you'll prefer it one way or the other.



This shows an alternative way of snipping into the fusible edge tape around the long edge of the curve to open the tape instead of the inside edge of the curve where it overlaps. The lighter coloured materials also hopefully creates a better idea of what is being done.

Forepart lining

Place the front lining as cut against the forepart, rightsides together. The label on the right-hand-side lining clearly indicates which is which, so I would typically start with that one.

Lining up the side seams and armhole net with each other. Around the armhole I pin them together along the seam. I'm moving a small amount of extra cloth in along the seam, only to prevent the lining from becoming tight against the main cloth. It's important that not too much ease is put into the lining so that it doesn't pleat over itself as it's being sewn.

Usually I've seen the lining around the armhole turned and finished by hand, which I have done in the past. Sewing the curved seams involving lining by machine is much more efficient and creates a much more reliably good result.

Sew with the normal seam allowance, which is not sewing through the canvas, just the tape and cloth.

I suggest back tacking at the top and the bottom of the seam, but specifically at the shoulder I just run the stitch off of the forepart onto the lining. There's inlay there and sewing the stitch through just the one layer means it isn't under any pressure to be pulled out. Sewing the entire length of the armhole.



The seam allowance needs to be cut down before it can effectively be turned. The two ways are to trim the seam allowance off towards the stitching, or to snip into the seam allowance to allow it to spread open. The seam allowance could also be stretched, but lining is not usually

as flexible and won't stretch as much as the cloth.

When being turned by hand it's snipped into, but usually a seam will be trimmed down to turn it. It only needs to be trimmed or snipped around the most curved section of the armhole.

As most places there are probably different schools of thought whether you baste the edge over the seam first and then press it, or press it before basting. In this case I think basting is probably the common option.

Here it's still important to shift the lining towards the inside, so from the inside you can see a little bit of the outer cloth and from the outside you can't see any of the lining.



I still use a slip stitch that involves the thread going through the seam perpendicular to the edge, because it will hold the edge much better than a running stitch that's sewn parallel to the edge.

Especially at the more curved portion of the armhole the seam needs to be forced towards the inside of the because the seam allowance would be shortest inside of it. Put another way, the seam allowance is stretching the most at the most curved portion and therefore you need to stretch it the

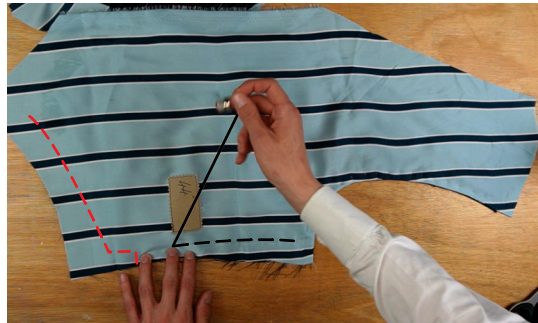
most to make it stay where you want to put it. Once it's thoroughly ironed the cloth will remain stretched more easily and the finishing stitch will help it maintain the new shape.

The baste firmly tacked at the start and the end of the stitch in order to prevent it from coming loose before the edge is finished.

The handsewn method of doing the armhole starts after the lining is basted to the forepart and includes two bastes, cross stitching, felling and prick stitching, whereas this method is one baste and one prick stitch. Both include the tape.

To start I fasten the sideseams approximately together. Make a baste from a little below the armhole a few CMs or an inch or so from the side seam. Going down the seam moving a small amount of length into the lining between each stitch. I want to keep the cut edges level with each other.

Start with this stitch at the side seam so that I don't pull it away from the side seam when making the pleat.



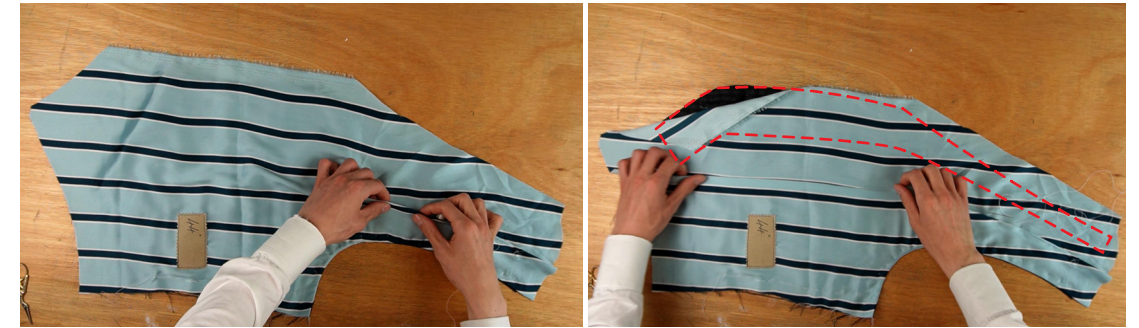
Tack the stitch a couple CMs, or an inch or so again above the top of the vent. Tack it firmly so that the stitch doesn't pull out, or come loose as the rest of the lining is being positioned.

The pleat will often be done in two bastes, the first just down the length of the lining to pull length into the lining and secure the lining to the forepart and a second basically on top of it but with a pleat folded on top.



At this point since I have the armhole and sideseam secure already I fold in the pleat and baste it down in one go. Beginning at the top of the shoulder I gauge about the midpoint between the armhole and the raw edge of the facing where I want the lining to finish. I pull the lining, folding it over itself. Make the pleat about 2 cm or 3/4" deep. Folding it over onto the lining and tacking the baste to begin the stitch.

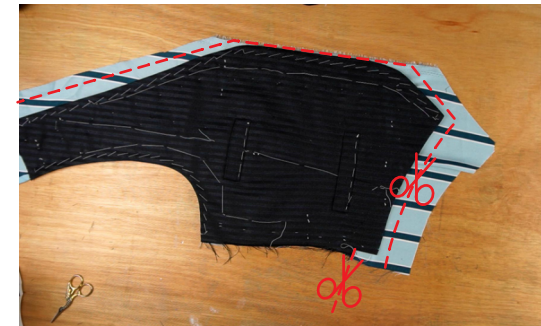
I continue the fold following the line of the armhole until it starts going straight down towards the hem. As it curves from the shoulder to straight down the front, don't make the curve too sudden. Try to make it quite gradual, so that the lining doesn't break over itself, I.E. fold or kink within the pleat down the front.



A long length of the lining can be pleated before basting. It's important that the pleat down the front is not on or near the facing. That the pleat goes down about the middle of the body. It's also important that not too much of the lining is pulled away from the front. There still needs to be enough to turn under and cover the raw edge and stitching on the facing. This is only if you don't have much lining, but mostly some of the lining will need to be cut away before being turned in.

Doing this in one stitch it is important to remember to push plenty of ease between each stitch. Make sure the lining is very long down the length of the vest. I constantly find that I don't add enough length here, and it can become very apparent when felling the lining in place. The lining gets tight, then gets short, so the baste has to be released in order to get the amount of length required. It's simple to do though, so it's not catastrophic to be shorter than it needs to be here.

I finish the stitch at least 6 cm (2.1/2") above the hem so that the lining can be turned up.



Cutting the lining down I start with the hem, because there's the most excess there. The forepart lining could have been cut after the facing was put on and the hem was put up to cut it more accurately but this was better for structure.

Importantly making a snip into the lining at the top of the vent. It needs to be cut all the way into the top of the vent so that the lining can be turned in.

I only leave a couple of CMs (inch or so) at the hem, which is more than enough. Similar at the bottom of the front edge, except a little less. From the bottom of the breakline I cut away quite close to the edge. At the top I leave a little extra, because the facing is smaller at the top so I need more lining to cover it.

This is a large waistcoat so there is a larger distance between the edges of the facing and the pleat that's basted in. Specifically down the stand there needs to be enough facing exposed to sew the buttonholes into it without touching the lining. I've folded the lining about 5 cm (2") from the front edge. In some cases to fold it that distance from the edge you'd have to cut down more lining to avoid it being blocked by the baste in the pleat.

I make the fold parallel up the stand to the bottom of the breakline. I then practically make a different fold up the breakline. I keep the folded edge of the lining a CM or so maybe half an inch from the edge. Starting maybe a larger amount from the edge at the bottom and getting closer at the shoulder, but that doesn't have anything other than an aesthetic effect.

It's important that any extra length that was put into the lining is distributed along this seam as well.

Similarly at the bottom of the stand I want to keep the fold of the lining about the same distance from the edge. Making a third fold and basting it down. About 2 cm (3/4") from the hem I definitely tack the stitch here before folding the lining up along the hem.

The hem is easy to fold up along the curve because of the pleat. It will open up as it's folded under itself. The pleat also helps to make sure there's enough horizontal length in the lining across the hem. The lining doesn't want to be tight anywhere. I just hope that's clear by now. The lining should be folded about 2 cm (3/4") from the hem of the forepart.

At the portion of the facing that I had cross stitched; I try to use the lining to cover the raw edge so that the edge doesn't have to be exposed at all.

If the pocket bag is interfering with the lining then I usually fold the lining up between the cotton and the canvas tucking the bag into the fold of the lining.

Baste the lining along its folded edge. Before getting to the vent fold the lining to where it was cut a moment ago and position the lining just inside of the vent. The lining at the vent can be folded before or after the hem lining is folded up and I would say it's better to fold the vent lining first, but it doesn't hugely matter.



Now I am more confident that there is enough length in the lining I can trim the excess beyond the shoulder inlay. I leave a few MMs past the raw edge, just in case.

The waistcoat foreparts have to be almost finished before the back can be added. The stitches that specifically go into the seams and the inlays need to be done, because when the foreparts are added to the back those areas can't be finished. Doing those stitches after the back is added also causes the front and back to be joined with small handstitches which makes it more difficult to alter the waistcoat. On top of that the foreparts then aren't completely finished either, which is a larger or smaller problem depending on how it has to be altered. The previous stitches just had to be done before the forepart lining was added, and these need to be done before the back is added to the foreparts.

The lining is felled to the facing, fastening the stitch at the top of the shoulder or the top of the vent depending on where you're starting from. Don't fell through everything, just sew it to the facing. You don't need to catch the canvas, but it doesn't matter, however; don't sew through the outer cloth. It's a very normal felling stitch.

Fell stitch across the hem and then fell it up the vent to finish the stitch. Realistically it will take a couple of lengths of thread to finish the lining. There will be overlapping of some stitches.

Again - one forepart will start from the vent and end at the shoulder and the other ends at the vent and starts at the shoulder, because of how it's objectively more comfortable to sew in one direction with the majority of the cloth towards yourself.



The armhole also needs to be prick stitched. Fastening the stitch and sewing a typical prick stitch.



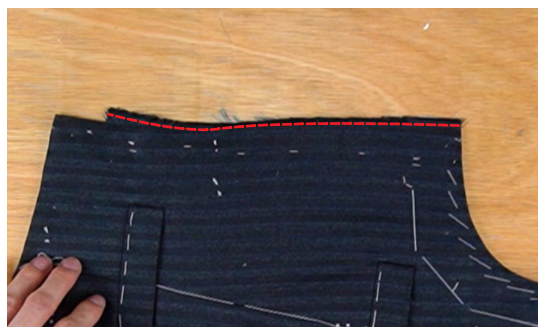
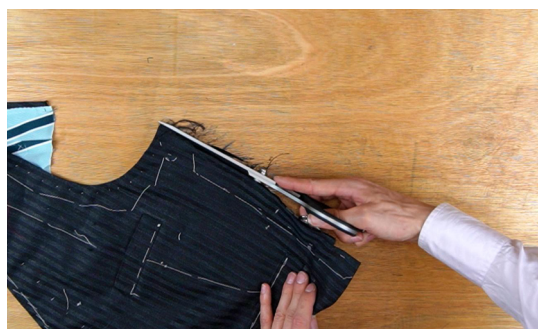
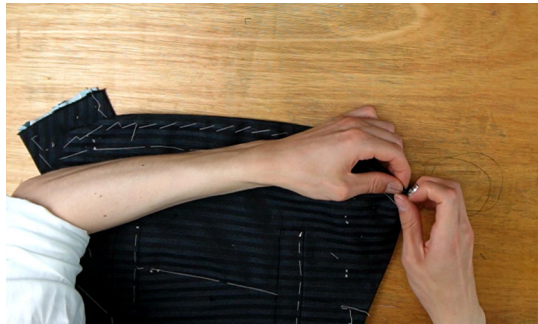
The last finishing stitch that needs to be done before the back is added is prick stitching the front edge. On one forepart the stitch should start at the bottom and finish at the top and the other is sewn shoulder to the hem. The prick stitch is still very normal.

The order of the stitches doesn't matter, they should be done though. This way the foreparts will be finished and able to be separated from the back most easily.

The bastes holding the lining and the edges should be removed, because taking them out now means they don't get trapped when the back is added.

Most importantly the baste holding the pleat closed needs to stay there until the waistcoat is actually finished and top-pressed.

I also take this moment to trim the fraying edges at the side seam. The side seam should be serged in some way inside of the seam allowance. I've never actually seen the edge be overlocked, which is something I think could be the best option except it might create impressions in the back. I've seen it lock stitched with basting thread 0.5 cm (B1/4") from the edge, so that it's hidden inside of the seam. I've also seen a machine stitch half a seam allowance from the edge to hold the layers together, which is what I prefer to do.



Joining the back

Open the back lining and lay the foreparts onto the back rightsides together. Starting with the sideseams. Placing the forepart side seam against the mark stitches on the back. Lining up the waist balance points the armhole on the foreparts should be a seam from the raw edge of the back lining.

I use pins to hold the side seam in position. Make sure the top of the vent and the bottom of the armhole are both positioned securely and that the side seam is lined up well to the mark stitches since the mark stitches are being used to actually sew the seams.

The other sideseam is done much the same way. What is important is marking the exact point that the sideseam ends at the top of the vent. One seam allowance away from the mark stitching on the lining.

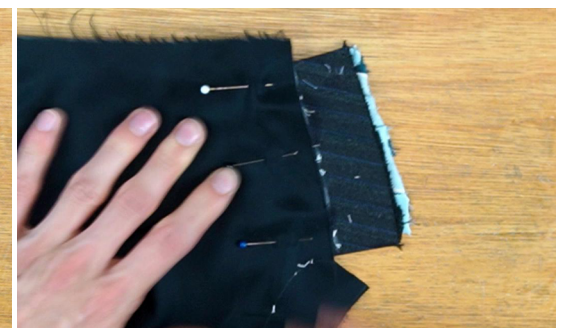


For the shoulders I flip over the whole thing, so the foreparts are against the table and the back is on top. Use the mark stitches to chalk the seam on. In this case the seam has a slight convex curve to it, so I keep that in mind. The mark stitches don't specifically need to come out at all either.

The most important is that the neckpoints along the shoulder are lined up. In essence the front edge is lined up against the first stitch on the neck that I placed the seams width from the shoulder line. This is basically how I know the seams are joined accurately. If you need an alternative perspective you can also see how the toile and baste are put together.

As patterned there's 1/4" ease in the back shoulder that needs to be distributed across the shoulder seam. Make sure there is still a seam allowance on the armhole side past the forepart to sew the lining armhole. The amount of ease is sufficiently small that it shouldn't be difficult to distribute and depending on how sloped the shoulder is it will just shrink in on the bias with no issue at all.

Again I trim off some of the basting above the seam, so that it doesn't get stuck in the machine stitching.



Positioning the back lining in place is just lining up all the edges to the back. For the first side seam I line up the raw edges of the lining at the top of the sideseam and pin it down to the forepart as well. In order to position and sew the hem properly I pin down the seam only making sure that the lining isn't tight against the forepart and back.

At the hem then with the lining above it held in place is to fold it up with the back on top. Folding the back along the back hem, that should still be mark stitched, but also creased. The crease though will be the wrong way around. And that's a helpful thing about having distinctly contrasting back inside and outside, so it's clear which way around it's being folded.

The back lining at the hem was cut shorter the back and be creased too. The back lining should also be creased and it should fold along the crease as it is. Pin the hem up and it will be sewn like that.



Similar at the shoulders. Match the lining either side of the inlay and pin it in place. Still be aware of the ease and distributing it across the shoulder.



Turning the pieces over so the back is on top I am feeling though the lining to find the corner of the vent. It's important this is accurately marked so that there won't be any exposed edges even a millimeter. This point will have to be sewn through without being able to see it.

From that point I mark a stitchline that's slightly flared away into the inlay to avoid catching anymore of the vent in the stitching.



Similarly I need to perfectly mark the top of the sideseam of the forepart so that I can change direction to sew the back armhole without leaving any gaps.

Same at either side of the forepart shoulder.



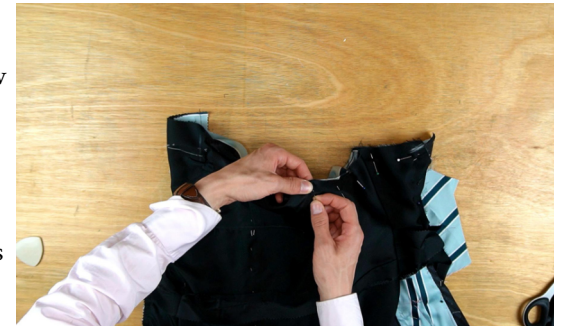
It's important to note that there are numerous ways to sew the back to the foreparts. What I like about this is that it's two short stitches and one long stitch. I found this gave me a better first time result than other methods I've tried.

The back armhole can be pinned and the two materials are put together evenly. I place quite a few pins and it's important that both the sideseam and shoulder are both pinned first, so that the lining between the two are even. I prefer to place pins a little more frequently.

Something finicky about the back armhole though is that it's often a lot longer than the front armhole. So it's difficult to see but the front armhole is causing the back armhole to be very loose. It's therefore important to position the lining together in small sections to keep the materials even together.

I ignore the neck at this moment while I do a lot of the same to the other side. Always before doing the hem, working from the top of the sideseam.

On this side I create the opening. Which side doesn't matter, but to make it easier to follow I've chalked the edge on following the mark stitches. Then again marking the top of the vent and marking the sew line slightly flared into the inlay, away from the forepart.



Sew line

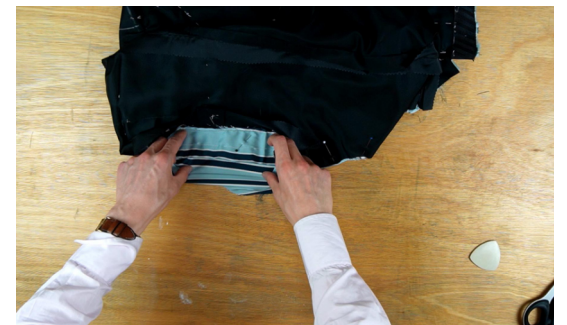
Mark stitches

Open section

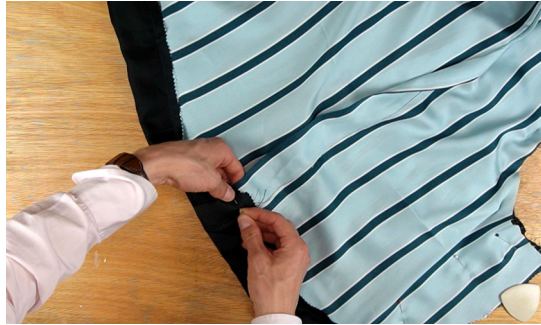
I then mark a section of the sew-line at least a few CMs, or few inches from the top of the vent and the top of the side seam. The section doesn't need to be too large. I say enough to get your hand through. It can go over the waist suppression, I just coincidentally hadn't this time.

This section importantly doesn't have any pins holding the back lining to the waistcoat. It's important though that the hem was positioned properly and isn't pulling the back lining tightly across this section.

The marked section will be machined. Only sewing the forepart to the back in this small section without catching the back lining initially.



The final small things are flipping everything over again I fold the back up over the hem onto the lining and pin the hem up onto the seam allowance. The hem inlay needs to be tacked in place onto the centre back inlay. I've typically seen it machined in place, but I end up tacking it together by hand.



Finally the neck. Some methods involve leaving the neck open, using it to bag out the waistcoat and hand stitching it closed. I'm leaving the sideseam section open though. I cut a piece of silecia that is about the length and width of the neck. You don't need a reinforcement or you could use linen, but I wouldn't use anything much heavier.

I place the cotton under the back lining and use



the neckline mark stitches to baste all the layers together. I baste slightly towards the raw edge of the neck inlay rather than on the mark stitches because if it's caught in the machining it'll get stuck. Keep in mind that the centre back seams are lined up when the edges are basted together.

Between the neck and shoulders I mark the sew-lines, 1 cm (3/8") from the raw edge of the back lining and that should join to the neck sew line at the mark stitches exactly at the front edge.

Chalking the neckline means I can remove the mark stitches there which is important now because they will otherwise get caught in the machine stitching and become difficult to remove afterwards.

Going back to the small marked section that gets sewn first. Without catching the back lining sew that section as though it's a normal stitch. Which it is a normal stitch. Sew it with the seam allowance, which in this case is marked on for clarity. The section isn't back tacked at the top or the bottom and I kinda ignore the section I drew, sewing slightly lower than I had marked to leave myself a larger opening.



I then do the second short stitch involved in this method. Moving the back lining into position again. I need to slightly overlap the new stitch with the first stitch. Relying on the pins being in the correct place and that the back lining won't be tight at all.

I back tack this stitch. The second stitch needs to overlap the first by at least a cm or half an inch and the stitching should be perfectly on top as though it were the same stitch.

I follow the seam allowance to the top of the vent as marked, I make sure that I sew perfectly into the corner of the top of the vent as marked, being careful because of the unevenness of all the layers in this area. Flaring away as indicated earlier.

I back tack at the bottom of the back hem, but it could as easily just be run off of the back too.



First stitch

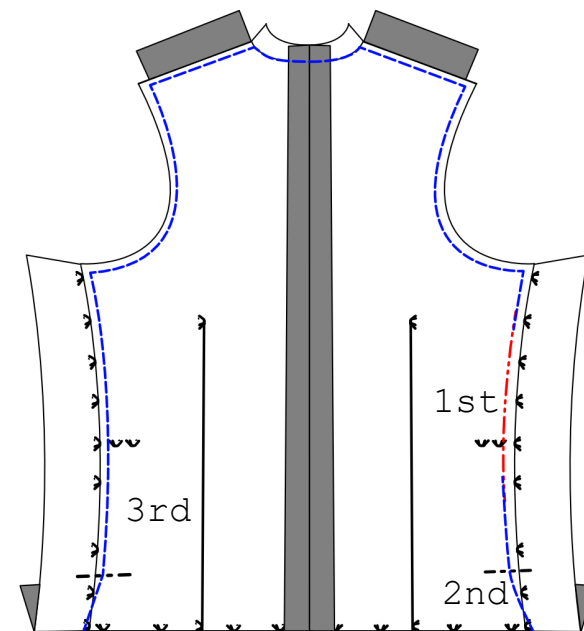
The first stitch is important to be the first one. It is only sewn through the forepart and the back, not sewing through the back lining.

Second stitch

After the first stitch; the lining is moved back into place as previously pinned. It's important that the whole way around the raw edges of the back and the back lining are lined up together.

Third stitch

The second and third stitch can be done in either order, I simply like to do the longest stitch last.



For the long stitch I switch to the other side of the hem. Beginning slightly away from the patterned sew line, as marked again, back tack and stitching at a slight angle towards the top of the vent. I feel through the back cloth in order to tell where it is exactly. Might have been easier with a sharper piece of chalk.

I follow the mark stitches, stitching the seam allowance from them up the side seam. Towards the top



I'm edging to the top of the sideseam. Again it's marked, but I feel through to judge exactly where I come off of the forepart where I'm only sewing through the back and change direction to sew the back armhole.

I push the forepart away from the seam so that I don't accidentally catch the forepart again as I sew the armhole lining. You can't see whether it's in the way, so you have to feel it.

It's possible that the start and end of the back armhole is not an exact seam allowance, rather a little more or less, so from whatever it starts or ends as graduate that back to about a 1 cm (3/8") seam as it's being sewn.

Approaching the shoulder it's similar to starting the armhole in that the foreparts armhole needs to be moved away so that it is not accidentally stitched through before the shoulder seam.

Typically it'll look as though the back armhole is almost gathering, because the front armhole is generally shorter than the back. This isn't imperative information, but it's worth noting that's why it can feel very inconvenient to sew and why the back is being pulled around.

As with starting the armhole stitch it needs to finish precisely next the shoulder seam in order to create a smooth transition from the back to the front. Changing direction and sewing across the shoulders and neckline is much easier, just follow the line and nothing is likely to go too wrong.

One potential thing is making sure any neck reinforcement doesn't fold and get stitched over itself.

Specifically on the back cloth try to avoid letting the cloth kink or pleat over itself due to the ease in the shoulder line. It could've also been basted to distribute it better and keep it all in place. The back lining in the shoulder is less important to keep clean, but it's a bonus to do so.



Specifically on the back cloth try to avoid letting the cloth kink or pleat over itself due to the ease in the shoulder line. It could've also been basted to distribute it better and keep it all in place. The back lining in the shoulder is less important to keep clean, but it's a bonus to do so.

Something that could help is a normal sewing machine trick when sewing over layers. Coming off of the thick area from the shoulder just onto the back. Press the front of the presser foot down onto the plate. This helps to maintain the machines grip onto the cloth when the back of the foot is being held up by the thicker position.

Going down the other armhole you keep the same things in mind as the first.

Back on the first side seam, the first stitch needs to be slightly overlapped and back tacked. That is the end of the long stitch and that's almost the end of making the waistcoat.

I go through and verify the stitching. There's a kink the in the lining there, but so long as it's not shortening the lining it's fine.



Back to the board I trim the trailing threads away and remove the pins and also the baste around the neckline.

Realistically you want to bag out the waistcoat and look at it flipped rightsides out before cutting anything away.

Here I cut away most of the inlay around the neck leaving just a seam past the stitching. Definitely not cutting into the foreparts at all.

Similar to sewing the forepart armholes the lining seam allowance needs to be snipped to the stitching around the back armholes and neckline, because they won't otherwise stretch enough.



Another thing is I had forgotten to sew the hem up to the seam allowance by machine so I tack the hem up where it's pinned to hold the hem up across the bottom of the back. This is especially important due to all of the hem inlay. It becomes less important with a smaller inlay, but I have a lot here so it needs to be secured.

Another important consideration is which way around the armhole seams should be pressed to turn them out the best. Now when you think about it and see it it's easy, but I have to try and remember every time. It's the last benefit of contrasting lining; being able to tell easily which way around to press the lining.

The lining is turned and pressed over the machining. Folding the back over itself and the back lining on the outside. Specifically the stitching is folded over with the seam allowance. This puts a crease going the correct way around with the seam on the inside when the waistcoat is bagged out.

Same for the neckline.

Specifically where the back armholes meets the front armholes fold the seam allowances over using the foreparts as a guide folding them over the cloth edges inside. This allows for slight imperfections in the stitching by folding the back exactly in-line with the foreparts and only creating a little extra excess in the back lining.

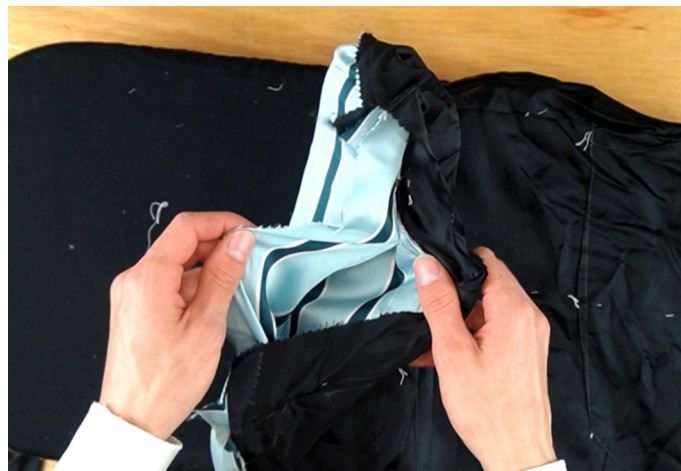
The centreback seam here had creased over itself a little, so I just press it open again because I won't be able to do it again when it's rightside out.



The back has to be pressed over the stitching with the back lining on the outside and the back on the inside.

To bag out the waistcoat I reach through the gap between the lining and the foreparts in the side seam. Pull out both foreparts and the waistcoat has finally taken shape.

Again I had checked the stitching from the outside already to make sure nothing had gone wrong. Therefore I don't go over it and check it again.



The back lining was very creased before I used it so I need to give it a good press flat. At the side seams though it's important that the back is pulled taught away from the forepart over the stitching and it's pressed flat.

The same at the shoulders.

The seams like the armholes and the neckline had been preemptively pressed over when it was inside out, so the creases and seams should automatically be in about the right place. The seams are then pressed flat, making sure here that the seam and lining is hidden towards the inside of the waistcoat. This is a potential disadvantage of the contrasting lining because if it is poking out past the main back then it is obvious, but a same lining won't be apparent at all.

Having the small ironing board makes pressing these individual portions very easy.



The open section here should practically become pressed correctly automatically, but what is important to really check is that the open section of the lining is not shorter than the length of the opening on the side seam. If it is, then the stitching below the opening needs to be undone and the back lining released a little bit more, because it wasn't done right the first time.

The opening in the lining then gets felled to the forepart. The lining is stitched ideally to hide the first stitch there. Tack the stitching at the top and bottom. Again there are a few places that the opening could have been left. I like this one, but it could be the shoulder done in the same way, or the neck as suggested, though there are also neck specific methods.



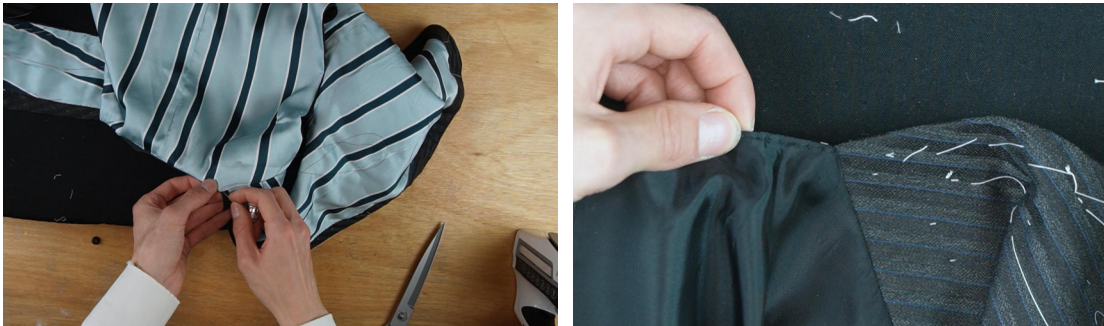
Finishing

First stitch I will do is the prick stitch across the neckline. I tack the thread on one shoulder on the inside and prick stitch from the right-side by the edge keeping the seam and the lining on the inside of the waistcoat.

As the prick stitch is being sewn, avoid sewing through the forepart inlay. If it's caught in the prick stitch the neck line will pull the forepart causing tightness across the neck and shoulder. The inlay will just lay over the shoulder and the neckline will go around the neck.

If you cut off the inlay then everything should be fine.

You might wonder why the prick stitch along the front edge has to be done before the back is added and why it can't be a continuous stitch around the edge. If the shoulder needs to be altered then the stitch would have to be partially removed and then the forepart is unfinished towards the top of the shoulder above the seam. It's small, but it's the same stitching. It just changes the order. This order is just my philosophy; that I don't want the finish of the garment to compromise the ability to alter it later on. It's a working idea that isn't infallible.



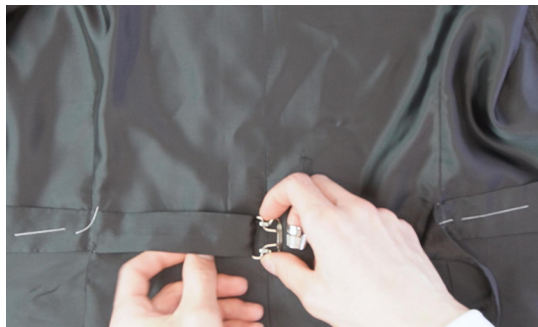
To finish the straps first I do a stitch down the strap where the darts would be or about 11 cm (4") from the side seam. I start the stitch a little away from the mark then fell stitch the edge, only a couple of stitches, prick stitch across the strap to the other side.

Felling a couple of stitches back and finishing the stitch.

This stitch can show through to the lining and I've seen waistcoats with that area cross stitched over. Also this stitch could have been done before the back was added and easily only sewn through the back and placing a piece of linen or silecia behind it to reinforce it.



To add the buckle I cut away the basting thread. I left the left-hand-side strap open so I trim the fraying thread away. Since I left it open as well I have to fold the raw edge under itself when it's put through the buckle. I initially find where the buckle is halfway over the centre back seam. Holding the buckle in the strap there I need to fold over the raw edge so that it's hidden and can be stitched away. If the strap were longer I could cut away more of it so that it's not too far back towards the side seam.



In position I fasten a thread in place and prick stitch it down.

I prick stitch in a box around the folded portion of the strap and stitch along the edge of the buckle so that it doesn't wobble.

