AUSSEW Along

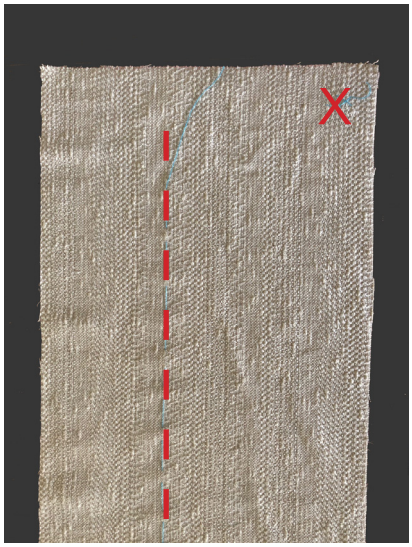
Couture Cardigan Jacket - Part 2

The cutting and marking process in couture sewing is very different from that of 'home' sewing. All seamlines are thread-traced onto the fabric. The couture method of construction is to match seamlines rather than cut edges. Your seam allowances can be any width, usually about 1 inch (2.5 cm). All markings are done with basting thread, as opposed to chalk, so they can be seen on both sides of the fabric and will not disappear when handling during the construction process.

Thread-marking the fabric

If you have not already removed all seam allowances from your pattern (as instructed in Part 1), now is the time to do so.

Cut rectangles of fabric a few inches wider and longer than each pattern piece. This will allow for any possible shrinkage during the quilting process.



1. Begin by marking the grainline on the fabric with thread. Mark the top of the rectangle with an X. This is important if your fabric has a nap or a one-way design, and is also used to indicate the right side of the fabric which can sometimes be hard to distinguish.

2. Position the pattern piece on the fabric, matching the grainline on the pattern to the grainline on the fabric. Pin in place and thread-trace around the pattern piece. Take care to thread-trace exactly on the edge of the pattern as the edges are your seamlines.

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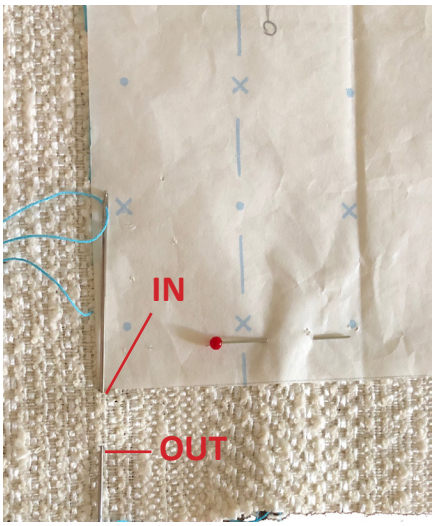
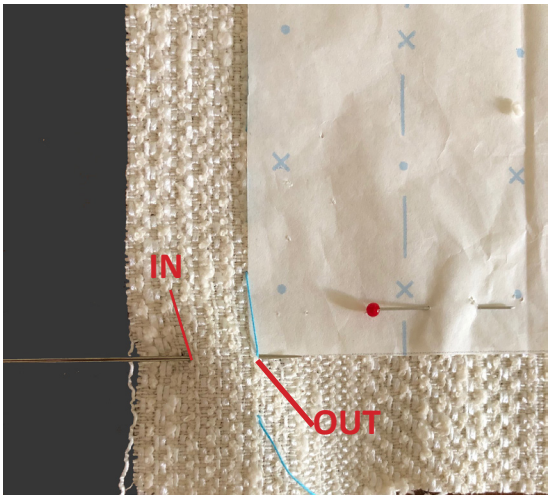
3. Thread-mark all construction symbols (notches, circles, squares, centre front, buttonhole placement, etc.). These symbols are marked with short basting stitches across the seamline.



4. Corners must be marked very precisely to enable accurate matching of seamlines during the construction process. For a sharp corner, put the needle into the fabric right at the end of the seamline and bring it out about 5/8 inch (1.5 cm) beyond.

Then insert the needle about 5/8 inch before the beginning of the next seamline, bringing it out exactly at the same corner.



5. Thread-trace all the quilting lines - placement is indicated on pattern V8804. If using another pattern that does not show quilting lines, use the following guidelines:

- 1 x quilting line on each front piece, approximately 2 - 2.5 inches (5 to 6.5 cm) away from, and parallel to the centre front
- 3 x quilting lines on each side front piece, evenly spaced and running parallel to the seam that runs over the bust. These lines will be curved, rather than on the straight of grain.
- 4 x quilting lines on each back piece, evenly spaced and parallel to the centre back seam
- 2 x quilting lines on the upper front sleeve, evenly spaced and parallel to the seam running from the shoulder. These lines will be curved
- 1 x quilting line on the upper back sleeve, parallel to, and about 1.5” (4 cm) away from, the seam running from the shoulder
- If you have a one- or two-piece sleeve, mark 3 quilting lines as evenly spaced as possible.

All quilting lines should be at least 1” to 2” (2.5 to 5 cm) away from seams and hemline.

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Cutting lining and interfacing

1. For each pattern piece, cut a corresponding rectangle of lining.

2. Cut a rectangle of silk organza for the two front pieces (1). This will be the interfacing. Don't throw away the selvage edge; you will use some of that later.

3. From the light-weight woven interfacing, cut back neck interfacing (9), sleeve interfacing (15) and hem interfacing (10).

DO NOT cut the pockets now. Pockets are left until the very last week.

You may be wondering why the only interfacing for the body of the jacket is the silk organza, which is quite light-weight. That is because this is a cardigan-style jacket, not a tailored jacket which has more structure. The lack of interfacing is compensated for by the quilting which gives shape and body to the garment. A trademark of the Chanel jacket is the soft tailoring which makes it so comfortable to wear.

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