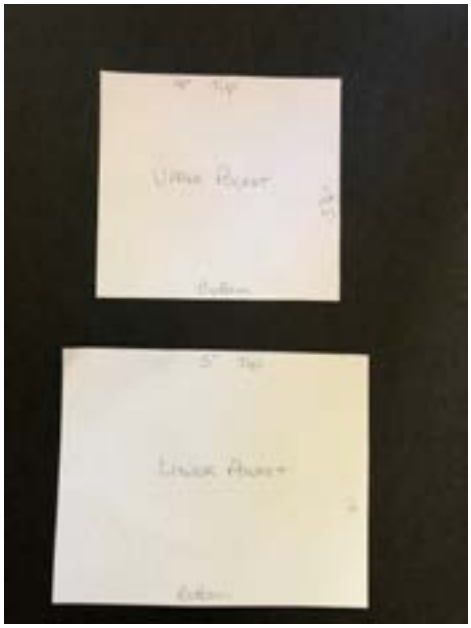
AUSSEW Along

Couture Cardigan Jacket - Part 11

Finishing touches this week. Patch pockets are a feature of the couture cardigan jacket. Most jackets have two pockets but some have as many as four. In contrast to tailored pockets, these have no interfacing, giving them a softer look to match the design of the garment.

Pockets

Now that the jacket is complete, it's time to cut the pockets. The reason for leaving pockets until last is so you can determine the correct placement and then pattern-match the pocket fabric to the garment fabric. Of course, if your fabric does not have a distinct pattern (stripes, checks, etc.) no matching is required.



Determine how many pockets you want. The suggested Vogue pattern has a total of four pockets; you may decide two is enough for you. To help with your decision, cut some templates from paper. Suggested dimensions: lower pocket - 5 inches wide x 4 inches deep (12.5 cm x 10 cm); upper pocket - 4 inches wide x 3 3/4 inches deep (10 cm x 9.5 cm). Cut two of each and pin them to your jacket to determine placement. You decide what you like best and what suits your body shape.

Pockets should be placed equal distance from the centre front. The two lower pockets can be positioned right on the hemline or slightly above. If adding upper pockets, they should line up vertically with the lower pockets at the centre front edge.

When you have determined the correct placement, cut the pockets from fabric, being careful to match patterns.

1. Lay the paper template on your fabric, in the correct position to match patterns if necessary. Thread-trace around the template. Cut, leaving a 1 inch (2.5 cm) allowance around all edges.

You will not interface the pocket, but if you have a very loose weave fabric you may underline the pocket with a piece of silk organza.

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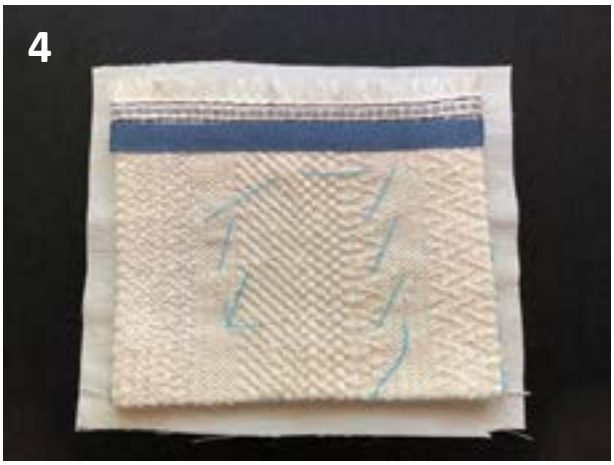
2. Remove the pattern and fold the bottom edge of the pocket to the wrong side, using the thread-tracing as a guide. Pin in place. Then fold the sides under and mitre the cornes. Last, fold the top hem to the wrong side and mitre the corners. Baste 1/4 inch (6 mm) from all four edges.

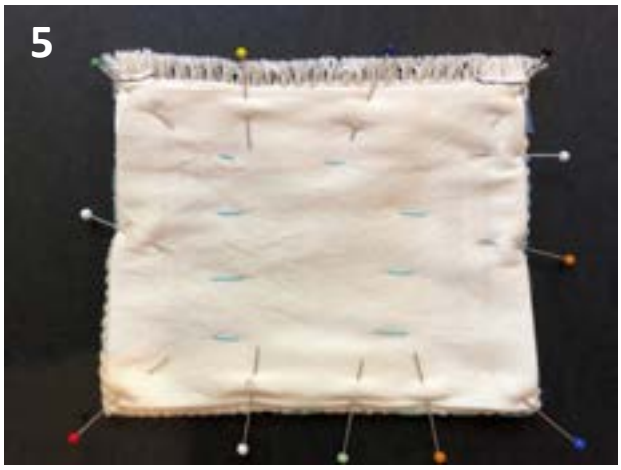
Gently press/steam the edges. Don't press too hard as you don't want a really sharp crease.

3. Sew the trim to the top edge of the pocket in the same manner as on the rest of the jacket. To finish the ends, wrap them to the wrong side of the pocket.

4. Place the finished pocket on top of a piece of lining, **wrong** sides together. Hold the lining in place with some diagonal stitches in the centre of the pocket. Trim away excess lining, leaving about 3/8 inch (1 cm) around all edges.



5. Flip the pocket over and turn under the lining. The folded edge of the lining should be about 1/8 to 1/4 inch (3 - 6 mm) from the edge of the pocket. Mitre the corners of the lining and pin to the pocket. Baste through all layers 1/4 inch (6 mm) from the folded edges of the lining. Remove the pins and use fell stitches to permanently attach the lining. Remove all basting stitches.



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6. Pin the finished pockets to the jacket in the desired positions and baste along the sides and lower edge. Upper pockets are aligned with lower pockets at the edge closest to the centre front (red line in illustration).

7. Permanently sew the pockets to the jacket with fell stitches. Be sure your stitches do not catch the lining on the inside of the jacket. Make a knot at the end of your stitching and then bury the thread between the fabric layers.

Buttons

Use a double strand of thread (buttonhole twist, if you have some) that has been waxed and pressed. Fasten the thread to the right side of jacket at the button position. Orientate the shank of the button so it is parallel to the buttonhole.

Stitch through the shank three or four times. Do not stitch into the lining as you don't want to see the stitches when the jacket is unbuttoned. Make a knot and bury the thread tails between the fabric layers.

Shaping the jacket back (optional)

To add subtle shaping to the back of the jacket, pin some tiny vertical darts into the lining between the centre back and side panel. The suggested Vogue pattern has markings on the pattern to indicate where these darts should be placed. If you are using a different pattern, use the quilting lines as guides for the darts. Two darts on each side will suffice. They are very shallow darts, extending about 3 1/2 inches (9 cm) above and below the waistline.

The darts are sewn, by hand, into the lining only. This causes the fashion fabric of the jacket to bubble slightly. With the right side up, use lots of steam to shrink these bubbles, patting with your hand as the steam cools. Repeat this process several times until the fabric matches the shape of the lining.

Watch video

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Add a chain weight

Another trademark of the couture cardigan jacket is the chain-weighted hem which controls the drape of the jacket. The position of the chain in relation to the hem is a matter of preference. Just be careful not to place it too close to the hemline, or it will pull the hem down and the chain will be visible when the jacket is worn.

The chain should not extend past the centre front of the jacket, so the ends of the chain don't overlap when the jacket is buttoned. If you have heavy buttons, place the chain only at the back of the jacket to compensate for the weight of the buttons at the front.

1. Measure the hemline from the beginning to the end point for the chain placement; add 1 inch (2.5 cm). The chain will be eased to allow for give in the fabric.

2. Baste the chain to the jacket.

3. Using a single strand of thread, sew the chain to the jacket. Make a stitch in every other link on one side of the chain, then stitch in alternate links on the other side. Work carefully to keep the stitches from showing on the right side.

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