Garment Sewing with Woven Fabrics: Beyond a Straight Stitch with Amanda T

Chapter 1 - Garment Sewing with Woven Fabrics: Beyond a Straight Stitch

Overview

(bright gentle music) - Once you're comfortable sewing a basic seam, it's time to move beyond a straight stitch. I'm Amanda Todaro, I'm a Sewing Educator with Ditto Patterns. I will show you how to sew curved princess seams and darts, set-in sleeves and install inseam pockets. (bright gentle music) The next time somebody asks, "Did you make that?", you'll confidently answer, "Yes, isn't it beautiful? And it has pockets." (bright gentle music)

Sewing and pressing curved seams

- Here, I have two bodice pieces that will represent the front half of our bodice. This will be our center front. Here is our princess seam and our side seam. Princess seams can come from the armscye, or from the shoulder. No matter where they start, putting them together is the same process. The first step is we want to pin these two curves together. As you can see, they're very different shapes, so we're going to use our notches to match them up. I'm going to take my pins. And you can see my notch here and here. And line those up. We'll also line up the notch right here. After lining up these two notches, we can work on the outer edges of our pattern pieces. We're going to use this final notch to line up the center of this curve. As you can see, sometimes when pinning a princess seam, you'll have slightly extra fabric here. That's important for fit, so what we want to do is ease that in. We're going to use our pins to manipulate the fabric into place. You can pull gently on this side to make it all match up. Now we're gonna take our bodice piece to the sewing machine. When sewing this piece, we're going to use a 5/8" seam allowance. You can use the 5/8" mark on your machine as a guide for your raw edge. Place the pattern piece in the machine, starting at the armscye. Sew a few stitches, back stitch, and then continue sewing straight on your curve. You can remove the pins as you go. I like to sew with the convex part of the pattern up just so I can really manipulate this area that's been eased in. You may find that sewing other way is helpful. I encourage you to try both and see what you like best. When we get to the end of this bodice piece, we can go off, back stitch a few stitches, and come back off the pattern. We can then clip our threads. Now you're going to get into clipping and ironing your curve. You want to check your seam before clipping and ironing. If you find that you have any little gathers in here, you're gonna want to re-sew those before moving on to the clipping and the ironing. A tailoring ham is a great tool for ironing curves. You can place it in various parts of the garment to press your princess seam. I'm going to show you why you want to clip your seams as you go. As you can see, when I press this, we have some pieces going over here while this curve is pulling. To fix this, we're going to clip the seam allowances. You can just do a few slices into your seam allowance, like this, being sure that you don't hit your newly sewn seam. For this convex curve, we're going to clip V-shapes in. That way, when these get pressed together, they won't overlap. Now that our seams are clipped, we can use our tailoring ham to press the seam open. Some patterns may have you press your seam allowance to one side or the other, so it's always a good idea to read the instructions. Once pressed on the inside, we can press the seam again on the outside. Now that your princess seam is sewn, pressed and clipped, you can see the shaping take place.

Sewing darts

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- Another common way to shape a woven bodice is with darts. Darts can be found around the bust, waist, back, and neckline. Darts can come in several shapes, including a diamond shape, called a fisheye, or a triangle shape. To start pinning a triangle-shaped bust dart, we're going to fold our fabric with the wrong side out to line up our dart lines. Start on the side seam here, and place a pin directly on your line. Then, continue down, matching up this line as you go. (fabric rustling) I like to place my final pin across, so that I can easily see the endpoint of my dart when I put it in the sewing machine. For this demonstration, I'm using a contrasting thread, so that you can easily see where I'm sewing this dart line on my fabric. When you're sewing your dart, you're gonna wanna use a thread that matches your fabric color. To start, I'm going to set the edge of the dart into my machine. I'm going to sew directly on the line drawn on my pattern piece. (sewing machine whirring) Make sure to backstitch a few stitches before moving forward. (sewing machine whirring) Be sure to pull out your pins as you sew. (sewing machine whirring) Because I put a pin here at this end mark, I can see exactly where I want my dart to end. (sewing machine whirring) Get as close as possible without going over the pin. Then, pull out your pin, and sew off your garment. (sewing machine whirring) Just like that. We do not wanna backstitch here. Instead of backstitching the stitch, we're going to tie these two threads together to secure the end of this dart. Take these two threads and tie a knot. Tie again to secure. Once you tie these knots, you can clip your thread, but be sure to leave at least 1/4 of an inch. This will ensure your knot does not come undone. (fabric rustling) Now that our dart is secure, we can press it to either side. Your pattern will tell you in which direction to press your dart. If it does not, generally you press darts down or to the center. (iron puffing) (fabric rustling) You can press on the right side of the fabric as well. (iron puffing) (fabric rustling) This dart is complete, and you can see how the shaping of the bust is starting to form. Fisheye darts are common in the back of a garment, and they add a little bit of shaping to the arch of your back. Sewing a fisheye dart starts the same as the other style of dart. We're going to fold our fabric in half on the dart. We're then going to use pins to line up our lines. Again, you can find the endpoint and place a pin horizontally. Place your fabric underneath the foot, so that the needle will be right next to where your fabric starts. Take your first pin out, and begin stitching. (sewing machine whirring) We do not wanna backstitch on this dart. (sewing machine whirring) Just like the previous dart, when we get close to our pin here, we'll slow down, so that we can end up directly at this point. (sewing machine whirring) Now, we will tie off both ends of our dart. Tie the bottom of the dart twice, and the top of the dart. You can then clip your threads to 1/4 of an inch. (scissors clinking) The last step is to press our dart towards the center of our garment. (iron puffing) Now, you know two ways of sewing darts to get a smooth shape in your garments.

Setting in a sleeve

- Setting in a sleeve can feel tricky, but with the use of notches and an ease stitch, setting in a sleeve can be a breeze. To create an ease stitch, we're going to run two rows of basting stitches on the cap of our sleeve to gather them in to fit into our armscye. Because our sleeve has a seam allowance of 5/8 inch, we're going to run one line of stitches a half-inch in and a quarter-of-an-inch in. Set your machine in right around the notch. I'm going to use the lines on my sewing machine as a guide. We want to set our length of stitch as high as it will go. You're then going to stitch without back stitching around the cap. End the first run of stitches at our notch in the front. Start the second round of stitches a half-inch in from the edge of your cap. End it at the first notch. Before moving on, you'll sew the inside seams of your sleeve. Fold your sleeve in half, right sides together, and pin in place. Reset your stitch length to the setting you had to sew your garment. Generally, this is

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between a 2.2 and a 2.6. Set your sleeve in the machine using the 5/8 marking on your sewing machine as a guide. Set the foot down, stitch a few stitches, back stitch, and then continue sewing. Be sure to back stitch at the end of your sleeve as well. Before setting your sleeve into your armscye, be sure to press that seam open. Turn your sleeve right side out. Then set it into the armscye. Before pinning, check that your sleeve is setting correctly. Two notches means the back. One notch means the front. Use the notches on the sleeve to match up the front and the back. You can also use the underarm seams and the shoulder seam to line up the sleeve. Once these four parts are marked, we can then start pulling our gathering stitches to ease the cap of the sleeve into the armscye. Grab your thread and gently pull, moving the gathers up the cap. What we are trying to achieve here is even gathers throughout. When complete, the cap should just sit in to match the bodice like that. Repeat on the backside of the cap. The reason you put in two rows of stitching is so you can easily slide your fabric up and down the stitch lines. Once you are happy with the amount of ease you put in your cap, you can then pin around the cap and the armscye. Now that your sleeve is set in place, it is helpful to do a hand baste around to hold it in place as you sew. Take a needle and thread with a knot on the bottom and do large hand basting around the entire opening. I like to set my hand basting about a half-inch in from the raw edge, that way I know when I sew with my 5/8-inch seam allowance, it won't show. As you're sewing or basting around the cap, be sure that your seam allowance is pressed open, stays open, and it doesn't get caught as you baste. Do a slight loop or knot to hold your basting in place while we send it through the machine. Now we can remove our pins and take it to the sewing machine. Set your garment underneath the foot. I like to start at my underarm seam. Drop the foot, sew a few stitches, back stitch, and continue to sew. As you can see, I use my fingers on both sides to maneuver the fabric and make sure nothing is being gathered underneath or on top. When you get back to the bottom of your seam, sew, back stitch, and remove from the machine. Check your cap for any gathers or folds that may have occurred from that ease stitch. What we're looking for is for the seam line to be smooth while our seam allowance is still slightly gathered. That means that the cap is sitting nicely in that armscye. Once that is to your liking, we can then clip our threads and pull out our basting stitches. Next, press your seam allowance towards the sleeve. You can use either a tailoring ham or the edge of your ironing board. Your sleeve is set in and has a nice, beautiful, full, even cap.

Sew in-seam pockets

- We all love pockets, and adding a pocket to your side seam of your skirt or dress is a pretty easy project once you know what to do. We're starting with a skirt that has a front and a back piece. You'll need a pocket for both the front and the back cut out. As you can see, I have finished the edges of my pocket and my skirt beforehand. The reason to do this is it's easier to get into some of these areas before it's sewn. We're gonna start by adding a pocket-bag piece to both the front and the back. I'm matching up the notches that are already drawn on the front. Pin the first bag, and then get started with the back piece. We're now going to sew from the top of the pocket bag to the bottom on both the front and the back. Set one piece underneath the sewing machine foot. Even though our side seam is 5/8 seam allowance, we're gonna sew the pocket only a half inch in. (sewing machine whirring) Be sure to back stitch at the top and the bottom of your pocket. (sewing machine whirring) Repeat this step on the back piece of your skirt or dress. Depending on how you pinned your pocket in place, you may have to move the direction of your pins. Simply pull them out and switch direction before sewing. Generally when you pin, you want your pins to go in the direction of the machine. Just like before, we'll set our pocket underneath the foot, stitch, back

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stitch, and continue sewing. (sewing machine whirring) Take a moment to press both the skirt seam allowance and the pocket to the outside of the skirt. Repeat on the front of the skirt. You're going to top stitch the pocket bag to the seam allowance of the skirt. To do that, line your pocket underneath your sewing machine. I'm using the foot as a guide to sew a quarter of an inch in. (sewing machine whirring) See how I'm following this fold and my foot? (sewing machine whirring) Repeat this step on the other side of your skirt. Lay your front piece on the table with right sides facing up. Lay your back piece on top, lining up your pocket bags and your side seam. Once your pocket bag and your side seam is lined up, we can pin around. Now we're going to sew around our pocket and the side seam to complete our pocket. Set the skirt underneath the foot. We're sewing our side seam end pocket with a 5/8 seam allowance. (sewing machine whirring) Start with a back stitch and continue on. (sewing machine whirring) Remember that we sewed this pocket with only a half inch seam allowance. The reason we did that is as we sew with a 5/8, we won't overlap our stitches and the pocket will stay set in to the skirt. (sewing machine whirring) Once you get into this pocket bag area, we want to start sewing in the pocket. To do this, drop your needle in place, lift your foot, and pivot your entire garment. We can then continue sewing with a 5/8 seam allowance around our pocket. (sewing machine whirring) If you're having trouble staying on the 5/8 seam allowance as you sew by just using the sewing machine guide, you can draw your seam allowance onto the pocket before sewing. (sewing machine whirring) Now that we're past our pocket stitch line, we can drop that needle again, lift our foot, and pivot. (sewing machine whirring) You will now continue sewing the seam allowance of your skirt or dress. (sewing machine whirring) Be sure to back stitch when you get to the hem. (sewing machine whirring) The final step of our in-seam pocket is to iron the seam allowance and pocket bag towards the front of our garment. (steam iron hissing) You can complete this process on the other side seam to have two pockets. Once finished, you have a great, almost invisible pocket in the side seam of your skirt or dress.

Sew a flat-felled seam

- Flat-felled seams encase the seam allowance as you're sewing them. These seams are commonly found in jeans, denim, and the side seams of button-front shirts. Unlike most seams, you start flat-felled seams by putting the wrong sides together. Line up the seam allowance of your shirt or jeans like this. Then, pin the two pieces together. Set the fabric underneath the foot, and sew with a 5/8 seam allowance. (sewing machine whirring) Open up your garment, and press the seam to one side. (iron rustling) (iron puffing) Then, clip down the seam allowance of only one of your seam allowances. (scissors snipping) We're going to cut this in half. (scissors snipping) You can mark this cutting line prior to cutting it. (scissors snipping) (scissors clinking) (fabric rustling) Now that our seam allowance is cut down, we can fold this seam allowance to meet our stitch line. To encase your seam, iron the fold over again. (iron rustling) (iron puffing) Take a moment to add pins to hold your fold in place. Next, you'll stitch a top stitching line to hold the fold down. To get a perfectly-placed top stitch, we're going to use an edge stitching foot or a blind foot to sew our top stitching. This is my blind hem foot that I'm going to attach onto my sewing machine. (pieces clinking) Set your fabric underneath the foot, and you can use this white part as a guide. This will ride along the fold of your fabric. Before stitching, set your needle in, and see if you like the position. You can move the position of your needle by pressing the width button on the left or the right. (machine beeping) Once you're happy with your needle position, you can begin sewing. (sewing machine whirring) Now, our flat-felled seam is completed. As you can see, it is reversible, and looks great on both sides. You can take this one step further by using a jean or top stitching thread to get contrasting

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top stitching stitches. These garment techniques, along with a basic straight stitch, create the foundation for your handmade wardrobe.

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