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## A Simple Way to Iron a Shirt

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### Recommended Citation

Knowles, Elaine, "A Simple Way to Iron a Shirt" (1944). *Cooperative Extension Circulars: 1917-1950*. Paper 412.  
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a *Simple*  
*Way* to  
**IRON** a  
**SHIRT**



**South Dakota  
Agricultural  
Extension  
Service  
BROOKINGS, S. D.**

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## NOTES

This circular is a reprint of Extension Bulletin 629 of the New York State College of Home Economics, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

EXTENSION SERVICE—SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE  
OF AGRICULTURE AND MECHANIC ARTS  
BROOKINGS, SOUTH DAKOTA

Published and distributed under Acts of Congress, May 8 and June 30, 1914, by the Agricultural Extension Service of the South Dakota State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, Brookings, JOHN V. HEPLER, *Director*, U. S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

# *A Simple Way to Iron a Shirt*

By ELAINE KNOWLES

While walking along a street in a city recently, a woman noticed a group of men and women standing close to a shop window. She worked her way through the crowd to see what the attraction might be. Inside stood a Chinese laundryman ironing men's shirts. Each person was intently watching the simple, skillful way he worked. Anyone can iron a shirt well, if he practices a good method.

This bulletin presents a quick, simple method of ironing men's shirts. Women who have followed these directions have ironed a shirt in much less time than that required by their usual method and have improved the looks of the shirt.

## LAUNDERING THE SHIRT

A shirt cannot look well ironed unless it has been well washed. Washing, whether by machine or by hand, is most satisfactory, if the soil on the collars and cuffs is first loosened. Place them on a flat surface and scrub them with a small, stiff vegetable brush that has been dipped in diluted bleach-water and rubbed on a cake of naphtha soap. One tablespoon of Javelle water or a commercial bleaching fluid added to 1 cupful of warm water may be used for the bleach. On colored shirts, use soap and water without the bleach, as the bleach may fade the fabric.

Directions for making Javelle water follow:

1 pound washing-soda crystals	½ pound chloride of lime
1 quart boiling water	2 quarts cold water

To the washing soda crystals in an enameled utensil, add the boiling water. Mix the chloride of lime and cold water in another enameled dish. Combine the two mixtures and let them stand for several hours to settle. Pour the clear liquid off from the sediment, or strain the liquid through a thick cloth, then pour it into dark bottles and keep the bottles corked tightly.

Javelle water deteriorates with time, therefore it should be made in quantity not larger than that given in the recipe.

## DIRECTIONS FOR WASHING

For washing by hand, place the shirts in as hot water as the hands will stand; if using a washing machine, use somewhat hotter water. Keep the suds at least 2 inches high, as it is the suds that helps to hold the particles of soil. Wash the shirts for at least 5 minutes. Rinse them three times, twice in warm water and once in cold water. If the water supply is low, try to rinse them in at least two waters. Soap or soap curd left in the material gives a grayish cast to the shirts when ironed.

Bluing is not necessary.

Starch the shirts as the owners like them. A basic starch recipe is:

½ cup starch      1 cup cold water      2 quarts boiling water

Mix together the starch and the cold water, add the boiling water, stirring constantly. Allow the starch to boil for about 5 minutes. Strain it through a fine sieve or a thin cloth. If a thin all-over starching is preferred, use 1 part of the starch mixture to 5 parts of water. If the collars, cuffs, and the button and buttonhole hems only are to be starched, use equal parts of the starch mixture and water. If other stiffnesses are desired, experiment with the mixtures until a satisfactory one is found and keep that recipe for further use.

## DAMPENING THE SHIRT

The best dampness for ironing must be worked out by the person who is to do the ironing. Too much dampness lengthens the ironing period and makes the collar, seams, cuffs, and front hems more difficult to iron. With too little dampness it is difficult to iron out the wrinkles. From 30 to 35 "shakes" of water from a pint bottle with a sprinkler top, give a good uniform dampness. But again this depends upon the stiffness of the shirt and the force with which the bottle is shaken.

Warm water for dampening lessens the time required for the clothes to stand before ironing. From 2 to 3 hours is generally needed for the moisture to be uniform throughout the shirt.

The way to dampen and roll a shirt so that it will be in good position for ironing is illustrated in figures 1, 2, and 3.

## THE IRONING BOARD

A comfortable working height while ironing helps to prevent fatigue. No formula giving the "right" height for an ironing board for a person of given height has been found satisfactory for everyone of that height. Women of the same body heights may vary in other body proportions, such as elbow height, arm length, girth, and bust measure. Defects of vision and other physical handicaps also make the selection of a working height an individual problem.

FIGURE 1

Spread the shirt flat on a work surface; smooth out as many wrinkles as possible. Sprinkle the front and the sleeves.

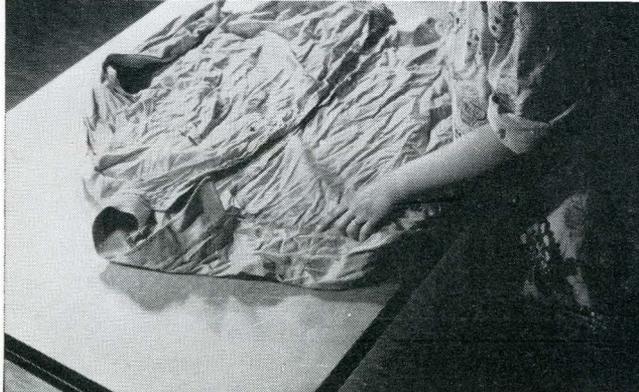


FIGURE 2

Turn the collar and yoke down over the front about one-third of the length of the shirt. Sprinkle the collar. Little moisture is needed on the yoke as it absorbs moisture from the collar.



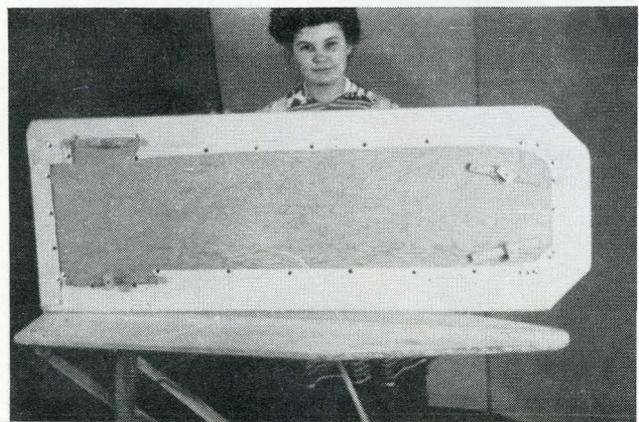
FIGURE 3

Fold the shirt so that the tail is on the underside. (Note the position of the shirt when unrolling it for ironing, figure 6.) Roll it lightly. Tight rolling tends to deepen the wrinkles.



FIGURE 4

The cleats and wooden buttons are placed to fit the individual board. Make the cleats wider if you want to use the board over a padded ironing board.



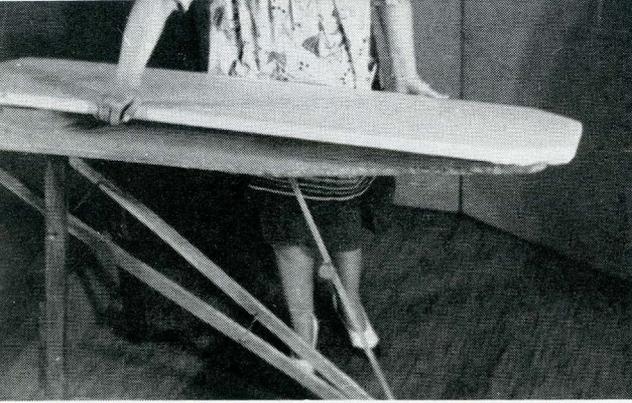


FIGURE 5

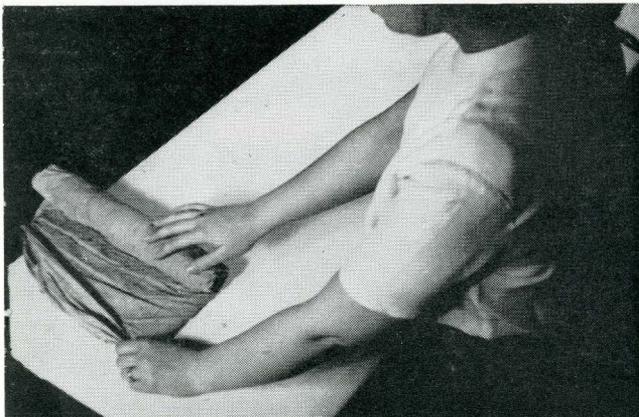
The wide board is easily put on and removed from the regular board and can be conveniently stored when not in use.

Adjust the height of the board or table by some means so that an upright posture can be maintained even while reaching the full width of the board. In this way one can move freely and without strain on the neck, arms, and back while ironing.

A well-padded table or a wide ironing board is more satisfactory for ironing shirts than is the usual narrow ironing board, because on the wider surface the shirt requires less handling. One of the secrets of good ironing is to handle the shirt as little as possible.

The board shown in figures 4 and 5 is 20 inches wide and is made of  $\frac{7}{8}$  inch plywood. Small wooden buttons fastened to wooden cleats on the underside of the board hold it firmly to the regular-sized ironing board.

One homemaker cut the ironing time of her total laundry by 15 per cent when using the wide board. This board is too wide for skirts, children's dresses, or any garment that must be placed over the end of the board.



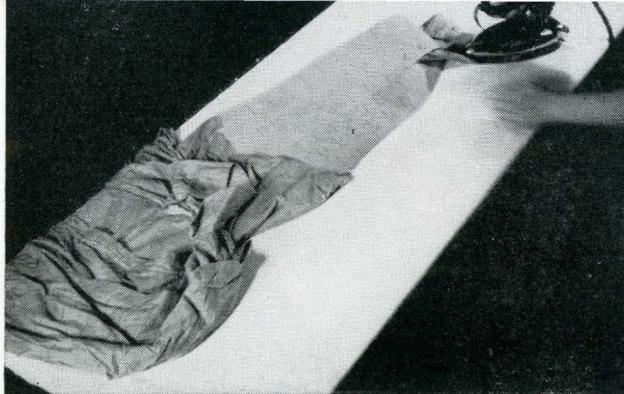
#### IRONING A SHIRT

FIGURE 6

Place the rolled, dampened shirt at the left end of the board. As it is unrolled the tail will fall over the side of the board and the yoke will be toward you.

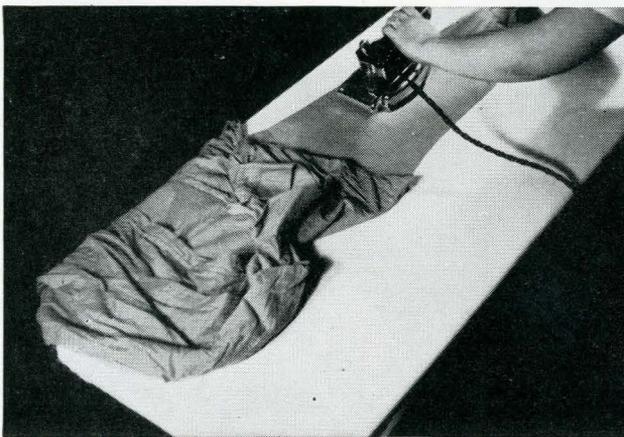
**FIGURE 7**

Pick up the right sleeve by the cuff and shoulder, and turn it placket side up. Smooth the wrinkles toward the shoulder and the cuff. Start ironing in the center of the sleeve toward the shoulder. Shift the iron to the left hand when ironing into the cuff. Shift the iron back into the right hand, and iron the inside of the cuff. Stretch and dry the seams well.



**FIGURE 8**

Turn the sleeve over and repeat the process.



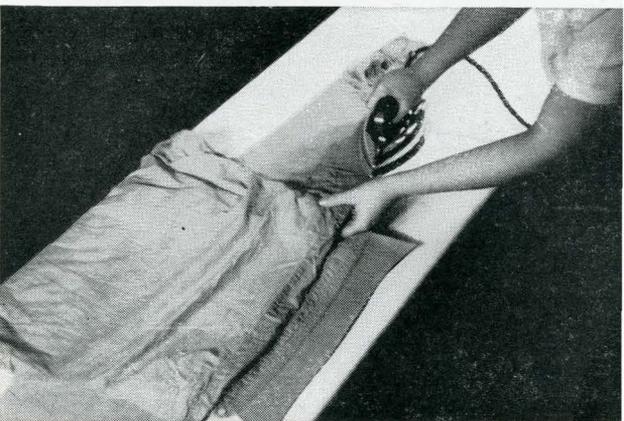
**FIGURE 9**

Iron the top of the collar and the band while the shirt is in this position; or, if you prefer to iron them after the underside has been ironed, do it when the shirt is in position for ironing the yoke (figure 11).



**FIGURE 10**

Crossing the arms as in figure 11, turn the shirt in position for ironing the left sleeve. The right sleeve is now hanging free over the end of the board away from the rest of the dampened shirt. Iron the left sleeve and the underneath side of the collar and the band.



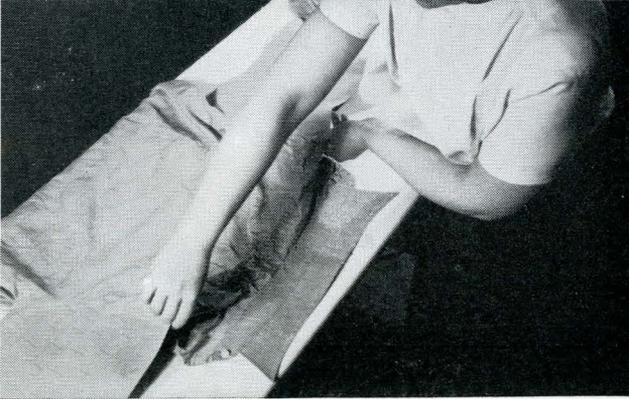


FIGURE 11

Making a Z turn by crossing the arms requires little handling of the garment. Turn the shirt in position to iron the yoke and the collar.

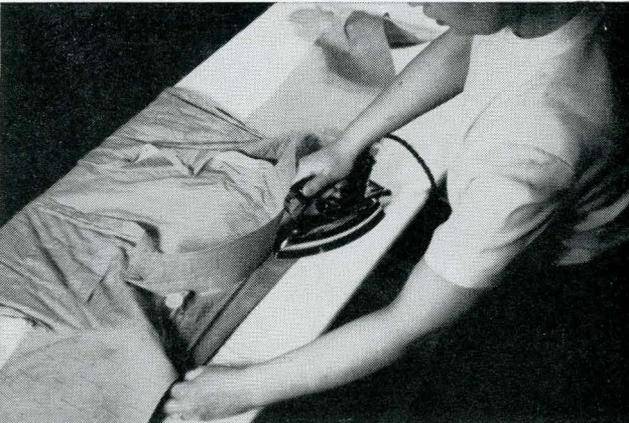


FIGURE 12

Fold the yoke across the back. Do not always fold it at the seam, for constant creasing with the hot iron may cause the fabric to break at that spot.

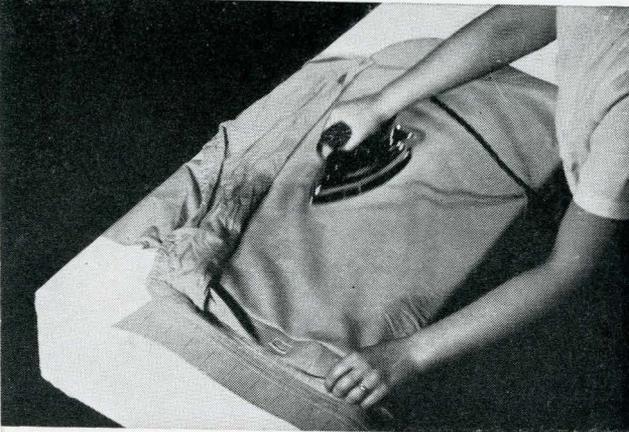


FIGURE 13

Give the shirt a one-fourth turn, which places it lengthwise of the board. Iron the inside of the left of the back and yoke. Stretch and press dry the underseams of the sides to prevent puckering.

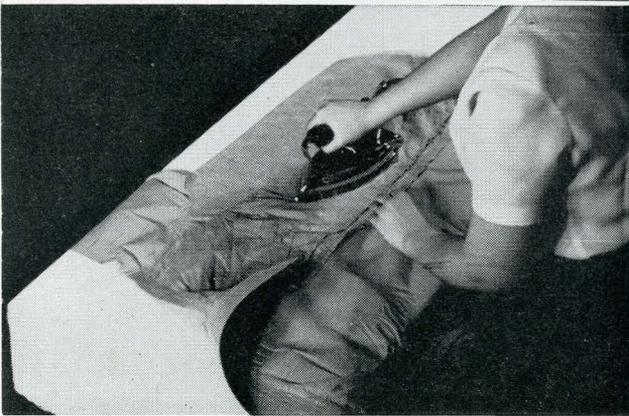
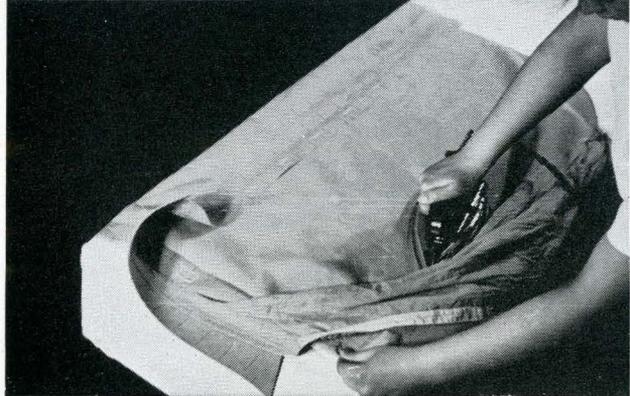


FIGURE 14

Fold the unironed left front over the ironed back, smooth and iron it. Press the buttonhole band, turn it back and press it on the wrong side as in figure 17. Retouch the front if necessary.

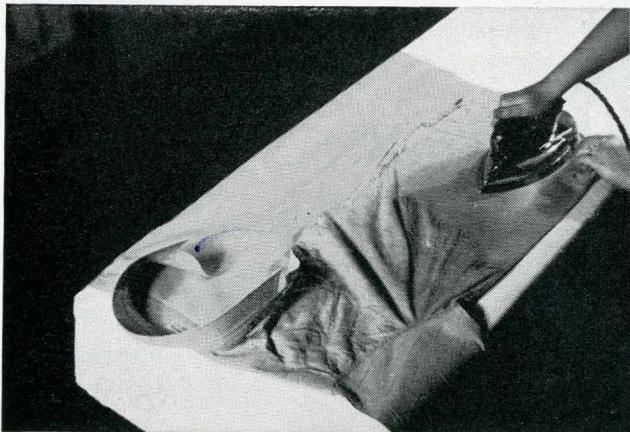
**FIGURE 15**

Shift the shirt slightly toward the back of the board. Iron the inside of the back.



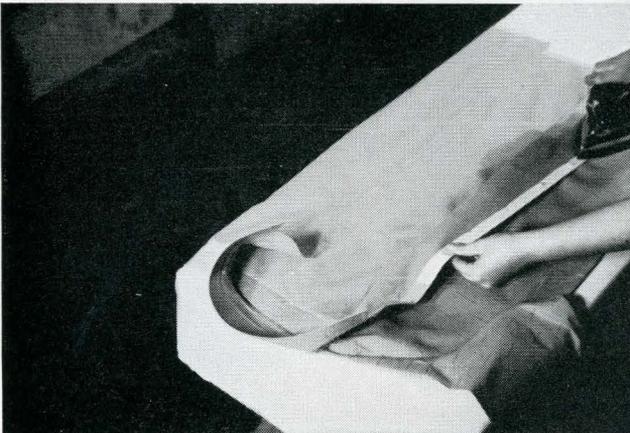
**FIGURE 16**

Iron the right front over the ironed back.



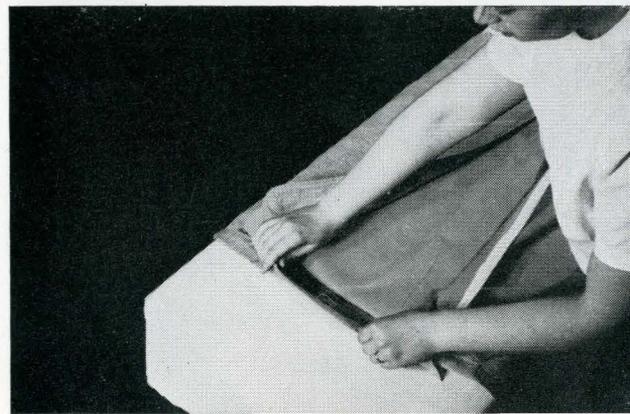
**FIGURE 17**

Turn the button band over and press it on the wrong side. Touch up the side front if necessary.



**FIGURE 18**

Turn the collar in position by folding; ironing is not necessary.



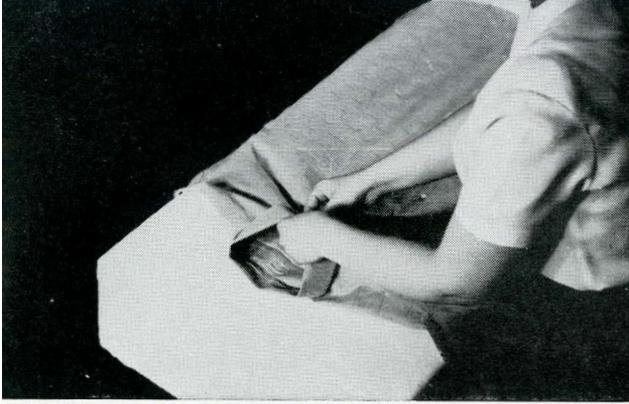
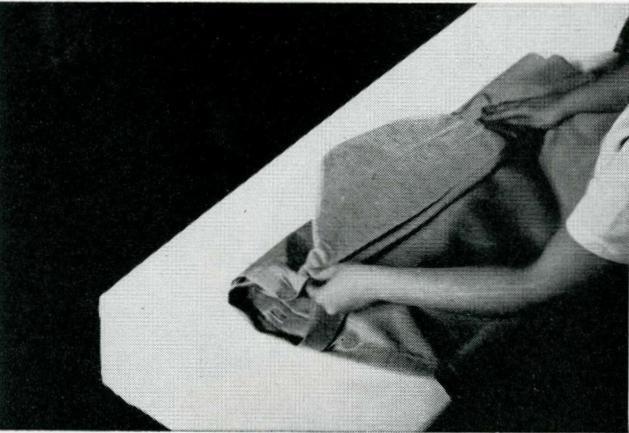


FIGURE 19

Without moving, the shirt is now in position for folding. Button the collar button, and the third and fifth buttons. The shirt has been turned only three times. Thus there has been little handling or opportunity to wrinkle the shirt.

## FOLDING THE SHIRT

Some women prefer to hang the ironed shirts on clothes hangers until they are worn. Unless allowed to hang free with plenty of space between garments, the shirts may have a somewhat wilted look by the time they are to be worn. This is especially true in warm, damp weather.



### METHOD 1 FOR FOLDING

FIGURE 20

With the shirt front up, grasp the yoke with the left hand and the tail of the right half of the shirt with the right hand. Fold about half-way between the collar and the armhole; bring the fold the full length of the shirt. Bring the top edge of sleeve along this fold. Turn the fold and the sleeve back under the body of the shirt.

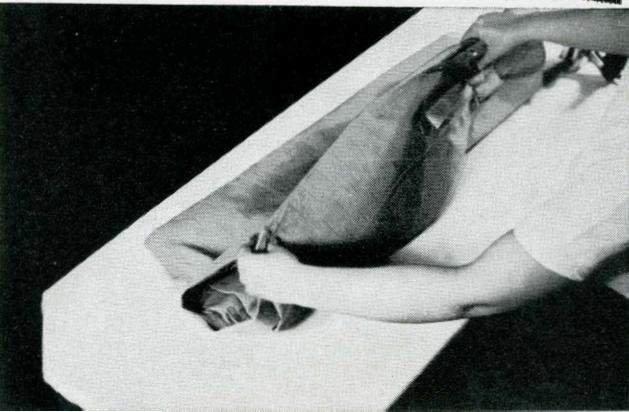


FIGURE 21

Repeat the process on the right hand side of the shirt.

FIGURE 22

With the left hand under the shirt, lift the shirt; with the right hand bring the tail under the top.

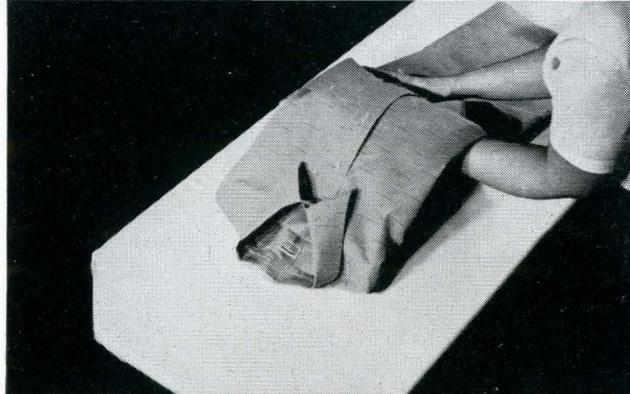


FIGURE 23

Leave about 6 inches of the tail of the shirt to tuck under the yoke, to hold the folded shirt in place.

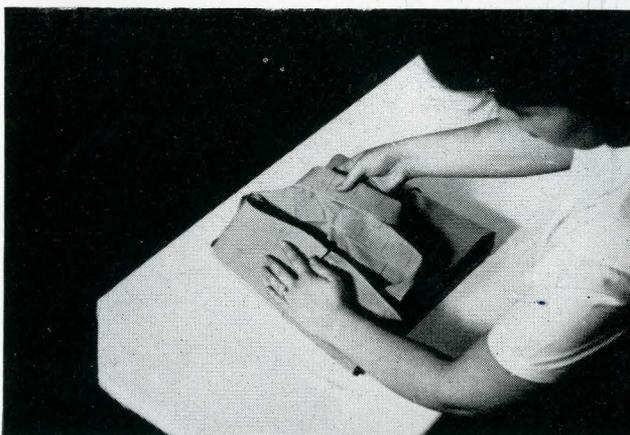
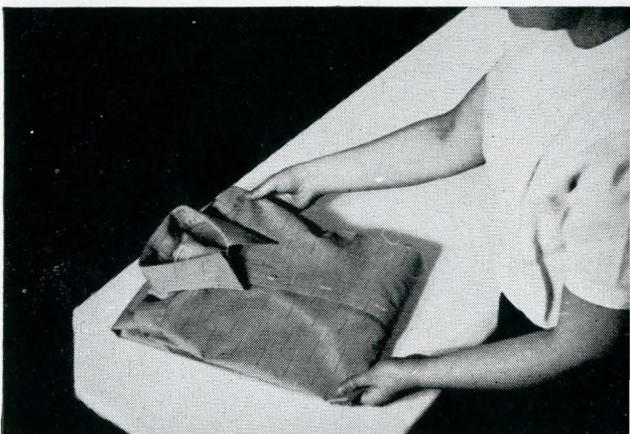


FIGURE 24

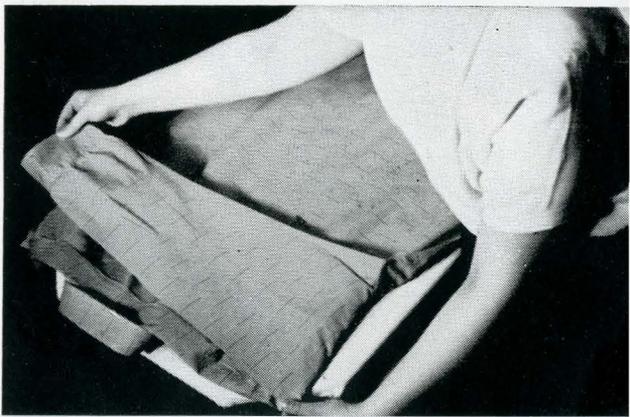
It is not necessary to pin the shirt to hold it together. The finished shirt is now ready for storage.



#### METHOD 2 FOR FOLDING

FIGURE 25

Turn the shirt back side up. Fold the left sleeve across the yoke, with the cuff brought to the opposite sleeve seam. Fold the right sleeve on top of the left one.



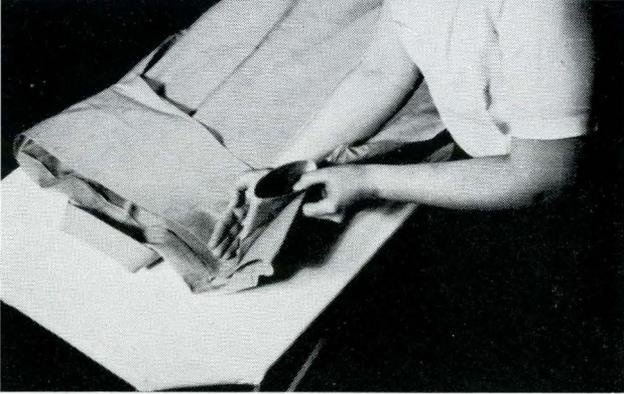


FIGURE 26

With the right hand, hold cuffs in place. With the left hand, fold the side of the shirt back over the right hand. Fold the other side in the same way.

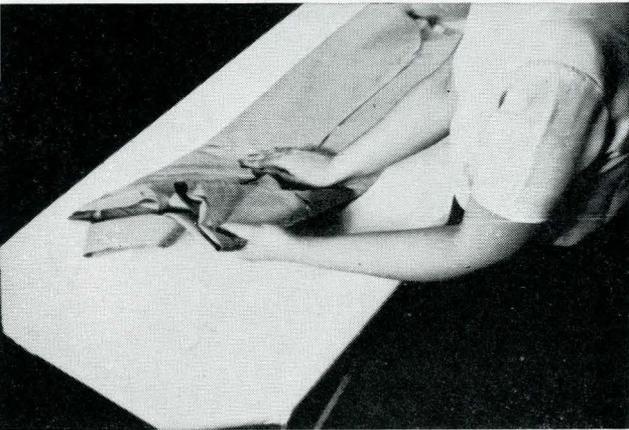


FIGURE 27

With the left hand, fold the top half of the shirt down toward the tail.

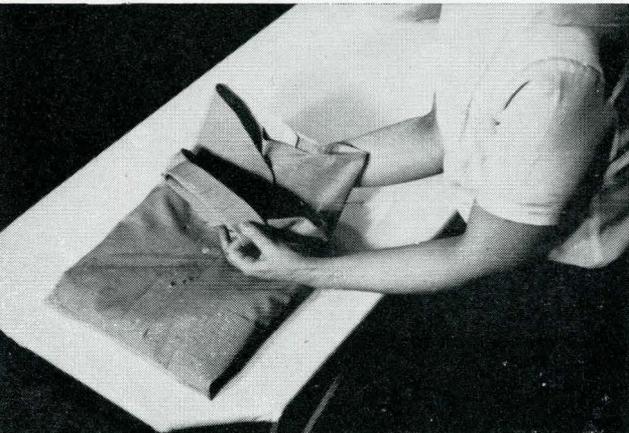
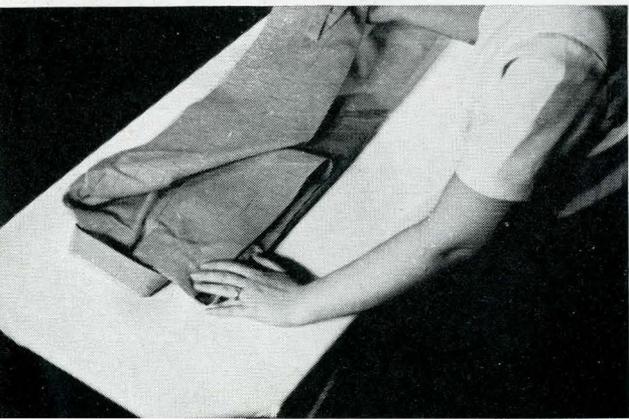


FIGURE 28

Tuck the remaining part of the tail between the collar and the sleeves, to hold the shirt together.



### METHOD 3 FOR FOLDING

FIGURE 29

With the shirt back side up, fold the left side back toward the center. Draw the left sleeve down toward the tail, fold the sleeve in the middle, and place the cuff just below the collar. Fold the other sleeve in the same way and place the cuff over the first one. Complete the folding as in method 2.