When You Press

Cooperative Extension South Dakota State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/extension_fact

Recommended Citation
https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/extension_fact/866

This Fact Sheet is brought to you for free and open access by the SDSU Extension at Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in SDSU Extension Fact Sheets by an authorized administrator of Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. For more information, please contact michael.biondo@sdstate.edu.
When You Press


5M–10-64–File 9.5.8–1847
When You Press

PRESSING METHODS

To press means to smooth or flatten fabric, usually with steam, lifting the iron up and down. Be sure to follow the grain of fabric and direction of stitching.

There are two kinds of pressing:

Pressing As You Sew, and
Pressing Garments in Your Wardrobe

PRESS AS YOU SEW

Good pressing methods are just as important as good cutting, stitching and fitting. Underpressing is pressing as you construct a garment. Top pressing smooths the finished garment.

TO UNDERPRESS

= press each construction detail
= press seam before crossing with another
= shape curved areas to fit rounded parts of body
= sharpen and flatten crease lines and edges

TO TOP PRESS

= make it the last step in finishing a garment
= press on right side only -- use press cloth for many fabrics

PRESSING GARMENTS IN YOUR WARDROBE

This kind of pressing is similar to top pressing. Be sure the garment is free from spots and stains, and if wool, is brushed thoroughly.

PRESSING METHODS

Whether you are pressing you as sew or pressing a finished garment, consider:

1. HEAT SENSITIVITY

Always press according to the fiber or fibers in fabric. It may be natural, man-made, or a blend. The amount of heat and moisture needed varies with each fiber. If in doubt, test a seam edge or other hidden area.

All man-made fibers are heat sensitive, so use medium to low heat. When two or more fibers are used, set the iron according to the most sensitive fiber. Many fibers require press cloths for top pressing.

2. PRESSURE NEEDED

Always keep weight of the iron in your hand and apply only the needed amount of pressure. Press mainly with tip of iron. The amount of heat and moisture and need for a press cloth also depend on the fabric.

3. USE OF A PRESS CLOTH

Your choice and use of a press cloth also depends on fabric and how the garment is made. Some fabrics are best when pressed until they are dry. Never press wool completely.
Plain Seam

Once you master pressing straight plain seams, other pressing is easier. Before opening a seam, press its two edges together as stitched (A). This helps flatten seam and works stitching thread into fabric.

Press seam open over seam roll (B). With curved seams such as hipline, use rounded edge of board to open. Then press over pressing cushion to mold area. Beater may be used gently to help flatten seams in some fabrics.

Dart

Press dart in position stitched, from wide end to point -- not beyond (A). Place over pressing cushion and press in same direction to shape and mold dart and area beyond point (B). With builder fabrics, you can trim wide darts to 1/2" and press flat to the point as in a plain seam.

Edges and Creases

Use a beater to sharpen edges and creases as on lapels, pleats, etc., with wool and other difficult to crease fabrics. Working on a small area at a time, steam press, remove press cloth, and immediately slap the fabric with beater. This forces steam through fabric leaving flat thin edges and creases.
Pocket Flap

Wrapping paper or lightweight cardboard will avoid marking pocket flaps, facings, seams, darts, etc. in pressing right side of garment. Tissue paper is best for lightweight fabrics.

Fabric Grain

Press with grain of fabric (A). Pressing on crosswise grain or bias may lead to problems in garment fit and appearance.

Molding Sleeve Cap Area

Place sleeve cap area over pressing mit and steam without touching iron to fabric. Using palm of hand, mold. A damp press cloth held around dry iron also produces steam.

After Pressing Garment

After garment has been pressed, place it on a well shaped hanger (wooden or padded--best). Close top button and all zippers. Depending on garment, close any fasteners that will help keep grain straight. Do not place belt in loops. Hang from buckle on hanger.

Reprinted with permission from Special Circular 72, When You Press, by Lenore Landry, Extension Service, University of Wisconsin.