

Detachable wrap

Draft and sew a button-on shawl with pockets

During a field trip to Helen Uffner Vintage Clothing in Long Island City, New York, the *Threads* staff discovered an adorable two-piece dress from the 1950s (see the back cover). It comprises a simple fit-and-flare strapless dress, with an optional halter neckband, and a matching shawl that buttons to the dress's back. When attached, the shawl looks like a sailor collar from the back and an unstructured sleeveless jacket from the front. It even has pockets. Whether you're looking for protection from a breeze or from the sun's rays, this cover-up is an easy-to-make solution.

You can create a similar shawl to go with existing strapless or halter dresses, or plan one as part of a coordinating ensemble. The basic pattern shown is drafted from your measurements to achieve an effect like the vintage inspiration. Once you've made the pattern, you can adjust the dimensions as desired for wider shoulders, longer or shorter front pieces, custom edge shapes, or different pockets. For a jacket-length shawl, you'll need about 1½ yards of fabric; you can estimate by measuring from the bottom of one shoulder blade to the desired length in front, and add about 6 inches.

We show a single-layered version, but you could make a fully lined or reversible one if preferred. As in the inspiration garment, our example is made from striped woven fabric, for a lively summer look. For fall, consider making a tweedy wool pinafore dress with matching shawl; in winter, a velvet strapless gown would look dazzling with a matching wrap lined in silk. The button attachment means you can conceal or reveal your shoulders at will.



The wrap forms a collar effect in back, where it buttons to the dress back edge. From the front, it looks like a jacket.

*Pattern: Simplicity SewStylish 1195.
Fabric: linen, GrayLineLinen.com.*

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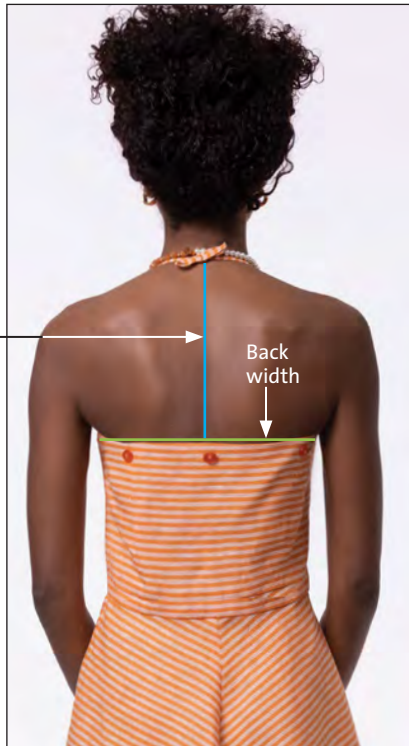


Take measurements

The shawl pattern is drafted from your measurements and is based, in part, on the fit of the strapless dress you plan to attach it to. Complete the dress first, or at least make a muslin that fits as the finished dress will.

1 Find the center-back length.

Put on the dress or muslin. Measure from the prominent vertebra at the back neck down to the dress's upper edge at center back.



2 Establish the back width.

Measure across the dress's upper back edge, between the underarm creases. This is the back width.

3 Establish the desired length.

Measure from the back neck around to the front, over the bust, and down to the preferred length. Our example is 29 inches long, and ends at the upper thigh. One way to decide how long to make the front panels is to determine your preferred pocket level; the bottom of the pocket is at the shawl's hem edge.



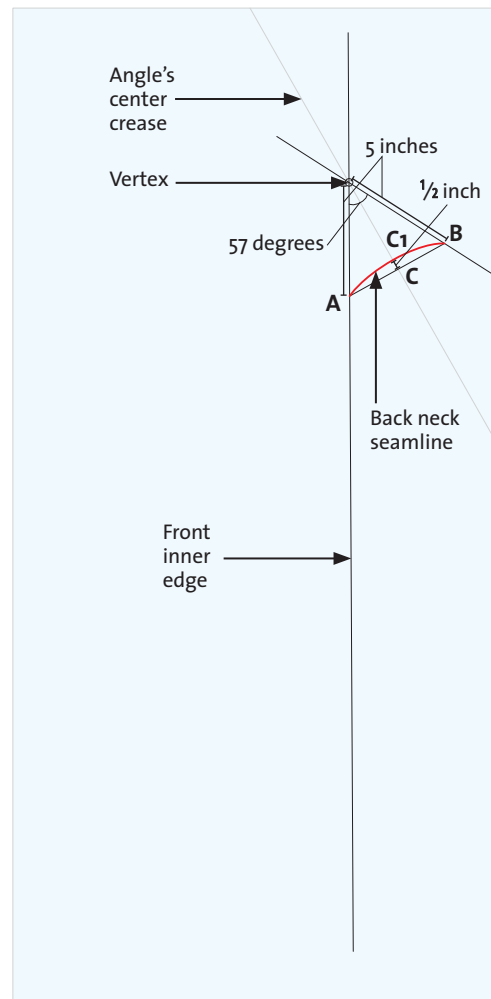
Draft the neckline

Start with a large sheet of paper, at least 20 inches by 45 inches. You'll need a protractor, a yardstick, and a fashion curve.

1 Establish the inner angle. Draw a line at least 30 inches long. This line will be the shawl's front inner edge. Place a mark about 12 inches from the upper end. With this point as the vertex, mark an angle of 57 degrees (the angle used in the original garment). Extend this angle leg by at least 10 inches.

2 Find the angle's center. Fold the paper, aligning the angle's legs, and make a crease that extends by 12 inches or more on both sides of the vertex. This crease bisects the angle.

3 Draft the back neck. Measure along each leg and mark 5 inches from the vertex; label these points A and B. Draw a line to connect A and B, and label the intersection of line AB with the bisecting crease C. Measure $\frac{1}{2}$ inch along the crease from C toward the vertex and mark point C₁; this is the neckline's center back. With a fashion curve



as a guide, draw a smooth curve that connects A and C₁, with a right angle at C₁. Refold the paper along the center crease and trace the curve from C₁ to B. This is the back neck seamline.

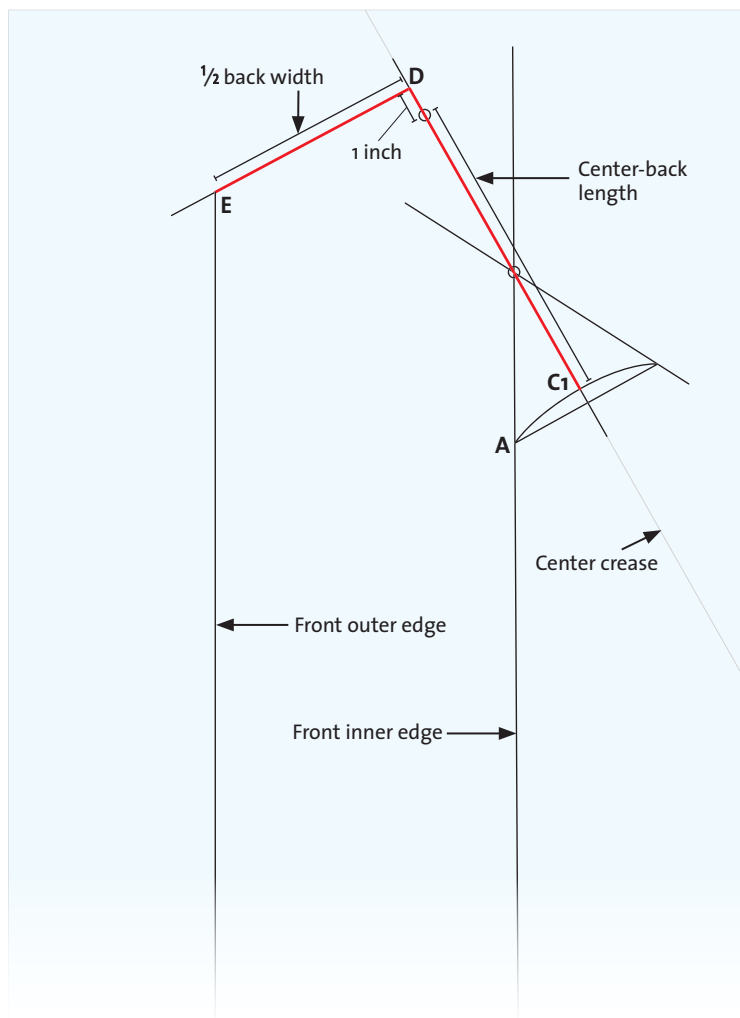
NOTE: These instructions are based on a pattern size 10, but will fit a range of sizes. You can adapt the measurements as needed. If you wear a larger size or have a broad back, mark A and B farther from the vertex to make a wider neckline. If desired, use a tape measure around your back neck to determine the neckline length.

Create the master shawl pattern

Using the body measurements you took, draft the shawl's main pattern piece. The back section needs to overlap the dress's upper back edge by 1 inch. The front section can be any length you like; about hip-length puts the pockets at a convenient level.

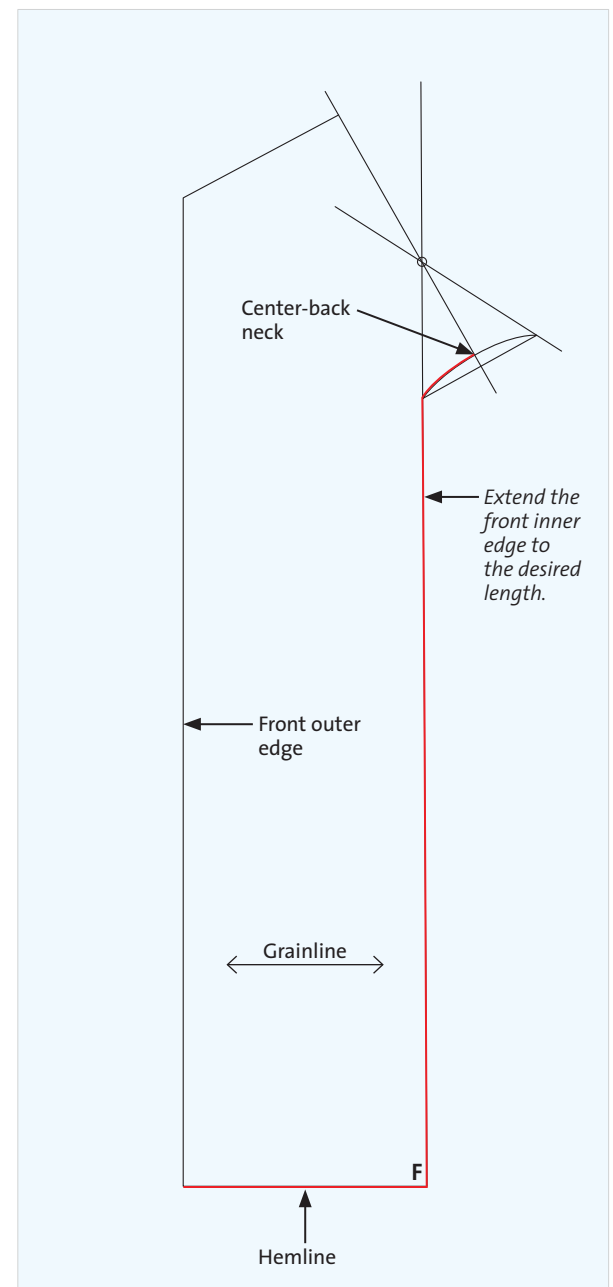
1 Draw the center-back seam. Measure along the center crease from C₁ through the vertex and to the center-back length you determined in your body measurements. Add 1 inch for overlap. Mark point D at this distance, and draw line C₁D.

2 Draft the back section's lower edge. From D draw a line perpendicular to D C₁. Measure along this line half the back width and mark point E.



3 Establish the front section's outer edge. From E, draw a line parallel to the front inner edge. An easy, accurate way to do so is to align the inner edge line along a line on a gridded mat, and find the parallel line that is closest to intersecting E. Use a gridded ruler to fine-tune this line if needed.

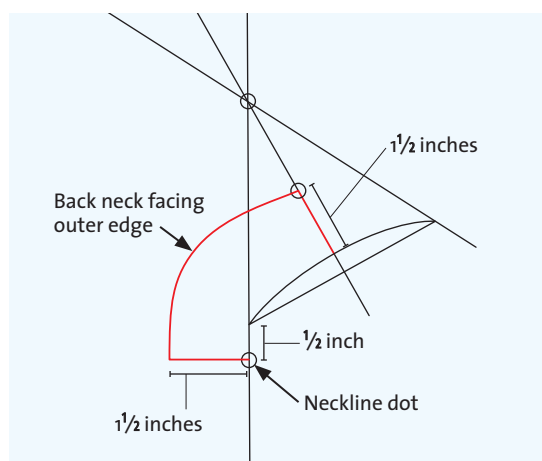
4 Draw the front hemline. With a tape measure, measure from the center-back neck along the front inner edge to the desired length and mark point F. From F, draw a perpendicular line connecting the inner and outer edges; this is the hemline. Mark a grainline on the front panel, perpendicular to its long, vertical edges.



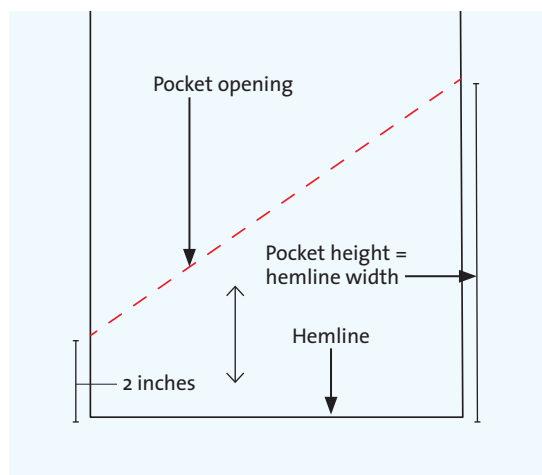
Draw the neck facing and pocket

Draft these shapes directly onto the master shawl pattern. Later, trace all the shapes to complete a full set of pattern pieces.

1 Create the back neck facing. Mark a dot on the master pattern's neckline, about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch beyond where the front inner edge begins to straighten. Draw a line $\frac{1}{2}$ inches from the neckline curve, from center back to the dot. This is the back neck facing's outer edge.



2 Establish the pocket location. On the front inner edge, measure up from the hemline by a distance equal to the shawl's front hem width, and mark a point. On the outer edge, measure up 2 inches and mark a point. Connect these points to form the pocket's slanted opening edge. Add a grainline parallel to the front edges.



Complete the patterns

From the master pattern, trace the main shawl piece, the back neck facing, and the pocket. You'll add seam allowances and cut-on facings along with key match points.

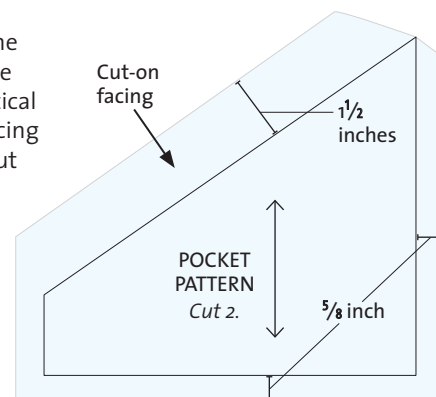
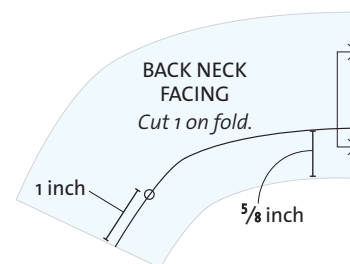
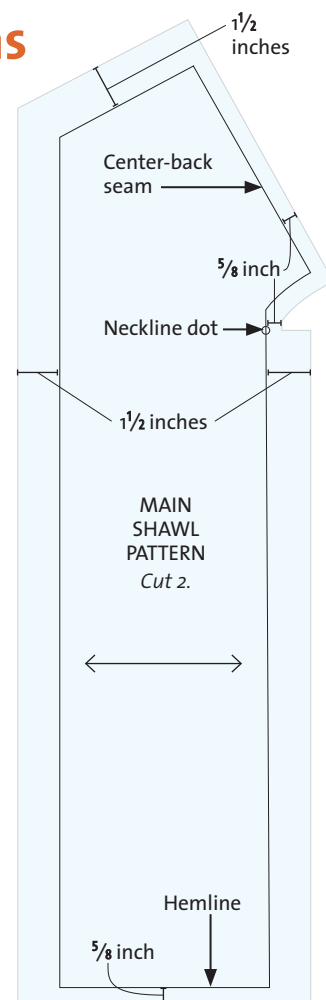
1 Trace the shawl pattern. Transfer the grainline and the neckline dot.

2 Add seam allowances to the shawl pattern. Add a $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch-wide seam allowance at the center-back and front hem edges, and along the back neck edge, to the dot.

3 Draw cut-on facings. On the outer edge and along the back section's lower edge, add cut-on facings of $\frac{1}{2}$ inches. For the inner edge, draw a facing of this width from the hem edge to the level of the dot. If you plan to finish the facing edges by folding under the raw edge, add another $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to the facing width. Label the pattern "Main Shawl Pattern: Cut 2."

4 Trace the back neck facing. Transfer the neckline dot. Draw the center-back line. Trace the neckline and outer edges following the master pattern, and extend them 1 inch beyond the dot. Add a $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch-wide seam allowance at the neck edge. Mark the center-back edge with a cut-on-fold arrow. Label the pattern "Back Neck Facing: Cut 1 on fold."

5 Make the pocket pattern. Trace the pocket's edges. Add a $\frac{5}{8}$ -inch-wide seam allowance to the hem and vertical edges. Add a $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-wide cut-on facing along the upper, slanted edge. Cut out the pattern and fold under the vertical seam allowances. Fold down the upper facing. Trim the tissue that extends beyond the pocket. Label the pattern "Pocket: Cut 2." You'll create a casually mitered corner in the finished pocket.



Construct the shawl

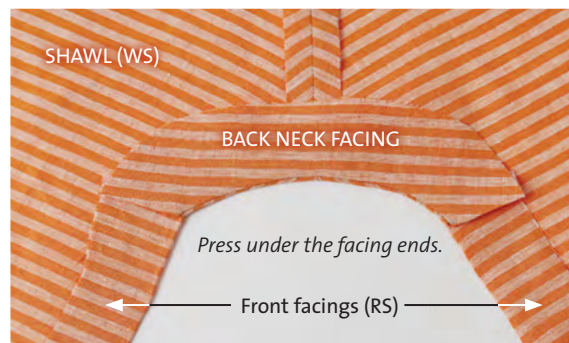
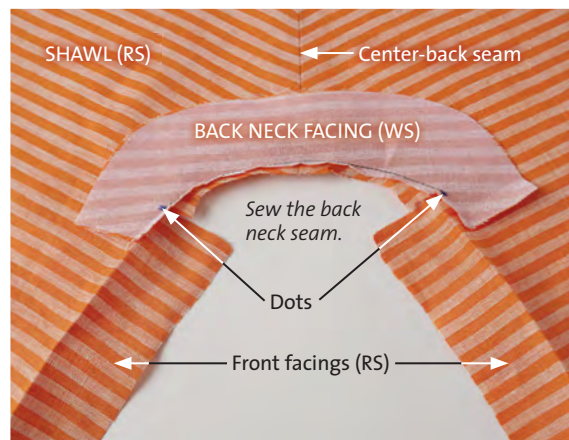
Once the pattern is made, the sewing is quick. You can speed up some of the edge finishing by creating a 1½-inch-wide pressing template. In our sample, we've serged the raw facing edges. You may turn under and press the edges, or bind them if you prefer.

1 Cut and interface the pieces. Follow the patterns to cut two main shawl pieces, two pockets, and one back neck facing on the fold, from fashion fabric. Transfer the dots. Cut one back neck facing from interfacing. Fuse the interfacing to the facing's wrong side. Fuse a 1½-inch-wide interfacing strip to each pocket's cut-on facing; this edge is on the bias and the interfacing prevents stretching. On the main shawl pieces, fuse a small piece of interfacing over the dots on the wrong side.

2 Press the shawl facings. Fold them to the wrong side on the foldlines and press. You'll secure them in place in a later step.

3 Sew the back neck and facing. With right sides together, sew the main shawl's center-back seam. Press the allowances open. With right sides together, pin then sew the neck facing along the neckline, starting and stopping at the dots. Understitch, trim, and clip the neckline seam allowances.

4 Join the neck and front facings. Clip the shawl's front facing to the dot. Turn the neck facing to the wrong side and press the neckline. Press under the neck facing's short ends to cover the front facings' upper ends. Pin. Fold the facings away from the shawl and edgestitch to secure the neck facing to the front facings. Finish the raw edges as desired. Then fold the facings to the wrong side.



5 Secure the shawl's facings. Pin them in place around all edges and sew by hand or machine. You can use a blind-hem stitch or, for a more casual look, topstitch them.

6 Create and attach the pockets. Press the seam allowances to the wrong side, followed by the upper facing. Hand- or machine-stitch the facing in place. With each pocket's right side against the shawl's wrong side, align the bottom edges and sew the hemline seam. Press the seam allowances toward the shawl, and press the pockets to the right side. Pin the vertical edges in place and edgestitch to secure. Reinforce the top corners by sewing a small triangle or bar tack.



7 Make buttonholes. Place one at center back, 1 inch from the shawl's lower edge. Place one on either side near the shoulder blade location. Sew buttons on the dress to correspond.

