

# Resize a vintage jacket

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<http://www.burdastyle.com/techniques/resize-a-vintage-jacket>

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When buying vintage clothes you should ideally only buy garments you can wear as is, because it can be difficult to alter it to suit your shape and size, and the item may suffer as a result. You could also easily alter the shape and style of the garment so it loses its vintage identity altogether. So that's one rule I always follow which I decided to break for this pea-green wool pre-1964 jacket! This is why: - I loved it and had to have it - It fits well in the shoulders, which is important because it is almost impossible to alter, unless you disassemble the entire jacket and start again. Which vintage fabrics usually do not survive - It has princess seams which are easy to alter - The jacket and fabric are in perfect, as-new condition - I loved it and had to have it! I wanted the jacket to become one I could wear cycling in Spring and Autumn with a cardie or a knit underneath and a scarf and hat for that lady-like look. So here is how I went about fitting the vintage size 18 jacket (more a generous modern 14) to become a modern size 12.

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**Step 1 — Decide which seams you want to use**



The professional way to resize a jacket is to take the jacket's measurements and your own, then divide the difference by the number of seams you are going to use to reduce the size with. In the case of this jacket I had six seams, so say I wanted to lose one inch I could reduce each seam by  $1/6$ '. However, that's not how I did it. I knew I wanted to shape the waist more than the upper body, because my shoulders are a size 12 and my waist a 10. I also wanted extra room in the shoulders and leave the sleeve length untouched because I want to use this jacket for cycling into town. I decided to lose more from the side and back seams than from the bust seam, which I simply wanted to shape to better suit my measurements, than to reduce the size with. There were also the pockets which are positioned over the bust seam and I did not want to have to remove and re-attach them. I did not need to reduce the size by that much to make the jacket fit better, so taking slightly more off the side and back seams was not going to 'unbalance' the jacket.

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## **Step 2 — Turn jacket inside out**



You are going to work from the inside of the jacket.

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### Step 3 — find the seam



You will find that lined jackets have been turned right side out via the lining of the sleeve, usually the left. (This is because the majority of people are right handed and will pull on a jacket right arm first, then the left. Do you know how you 'dive' into your right sleeve in a hurry and have to be slightly more careful pulling the other sleeve on so you don't get tangled up and/or pull your jacket apart? That's why the seam is in the left arm).

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#### **Step 4 — Open the jacket up**



Using your seam ripper, carefully open the stitching. You might find like to use embroidery scissors so you don't pull on the fabric too much. I left the double stitching on either side of the seam in place to protect the fabric from tearing in the next step.

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#### **Step 5 — turn jacket out through the lining**



Carefully pull the jacket inside out once more through the lining. Lay the jacket out in front of you to get your bearings and find the seams you want to work with.

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### **Step 6 — match your seams**



Now, carefully pair up your seams and pin so you are taking off exactly the same amount of fabric on each side. Each bust seam, side seam and back seam must be altered in exactly the same way as the same seam on the other side of the jacket. I started with the bust seams and measured the point from where I would start and stop my stitching from the shoulder hem using a tape measure. I made sure I pinned both sides exactly the same.

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### **Step 7 — mark 'stop and start' for your new seam**



I used a purple quilting pen with ink that disappears to mark the stop and start points. Tailorâ's chalk can be used too. Bear in mind that when you sew you lose fabric on either side of the seam, so if you want to lose half an inch on a seam, you sew a quarter of an inch along the original stitching. Repeat steps 6 and 7 for each pair of seams, check and double check and sew.

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### **Step 8 — Turn jacket back and try on**



I tried my jacket on and went back to the back and side seams once more before I was happy with the alterations. It is better to go back and lay another seam next to your first one than to have to unpick your work, creating extra work and potentially damaging your material in the process. Don't rush and take your time.

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### **Step 9 — press jacket and close your sleeve lining**



When you're happy with the alterations, give your jacket a careful press to check the jacket looks as you want it. Then carefully close up your lining.

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## Step 10 — Look fabulous



Enjoy your resized jacket! My jacket is now perfect for cycling in style. Oh, it might as well be spring!

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