

How to sew a gusset (for sleeves)

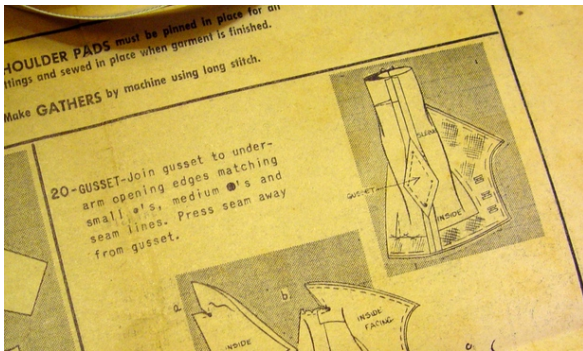
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<http://www.burdastyle.com/techniques/how-to-sew-a-gusset-for-sleeves>



I have recently undertaken the making of a delightful cropped jacket using a 1950's vintage pattern. Unfortunately, when it came to sewing gussets for the sleeves, the brevity of the instructions left me feeling somewhat frustrated. I decided to persevere with the task, and share the steps I took to reach the successful making of the sleeve gussets. For those who may not be familiar with the gusset, it is a piece of fabric (in this case, kite-shaped) inserted where you find the armpit, to give the wearer a bit of room to move. The gusset should be subtle – that is, not bulging out so that it's visible or obvious to the eye. This is intended as a "sew-along" for anyone who already has their gusset pieces cut and ready to sew into the jacket or blouse.

Step 1 — Original instructions that came with my pattern...



As you can see, the original instructions, aren't overly helpful; they sort of just say "do it"...

Step 2 — Prepare jacket...



I have already joined the front and back of the jacket at shoulders, and then the side seams (up to the point where the gusset is to be sewn). The sleeves have been sewn, also up to the point where the gusset is to be sewn. I am left with a sizeable hole where the gusset will be sewn in.

Step 3 — Prepare gusset...



Here is the gusset piece I will be sewing into the armholes.

Step 4 — Lay the pieces out, ready to pin...



The gusset piece is kite or diamond shaped, with the longer extension to be sewn into the sleeve, and the shorter one will go to the side seam.

Step 5 — Begin to pin...



With right sides together, begin to pin one side of the longer gusset extension to one side of the open armpit at the sleeve end. The trickiest part is getting the starting point right - you are aiming to match the point that is 1.5cm from the armpit corner of the gusset, with the point that is 1.5cm from the armpit corner of the jacket. (1.5cm is roughly my seam allowance). Pin from the corner to the end of the gusset, i.e. where the hole closes again.

Step 6 — Sew first side...



Sew slowly and carefully down the seam allowance, towards the sleeve seam, as per your pinning. Take care not to allow the fabric to slip. Your end point should again be 1.5cm from the corner of the gusset, matching the join of the sleeves. Once you reach that point, backstitch and cut your thread.

Step 7 — Pin second side...



Now pin the second side of the gusset, starting from the join of the side seams and the gusset corner of the shorter extension.

Step 8 — Sew the second side...



Sew where you have pinned. Again, be mindful of your seam allowances and ensure that the starting points of the stitching match as best as possible. End as neatly as you can, in the armpit corner. Backstitch and cut your thread. You have now sewn one whole side of the gusset!

Step 9 — Pin the third side...



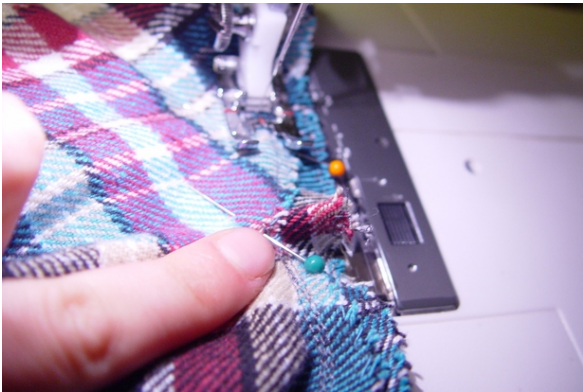
As before, start in the middle of the armpit, matching corners within the seam allowances as best as you can. You are pinning here from the middle points towards the side seam.

Step 10 — Sew the third side...



Sew slowly and evenly down your seam allowance from the middle point to the joined side seams. Backstitch at the end and cut your thread.

Step 11 — Pin and sew the fourth side...



Now pin the final side of the gusset, then sew from the point where you last ended, back to the middle point. Backstitch and cut thread as per previous steps.

Step 12 — All 4 sides are sewn. Now what?



You may find that your corners don't quite match perfectly - this can happen, since this sort of sewing is a bit fiddly. You may also find that, like me, you would like a little bit more reinforcement at the corners of the gusset, to make sure there's less chance those corners are going to tear with wear. It's time to grab that needle and thread! Sew using a backstitch along your seam at each corner. 1cm each way is probably a safe length. (For instructions on how to backstitch, try this website: <http://www.mahalo.com/how-to-back-stitch>)

Step 13 — Here's how it will look...



I did the hand sewing in blue thread to make it stand out against the grey thread of the matching stitching.

Step 14 — View from inside...



This is what the finished gusset looks like from the inside.

Step 15 — View from outside...



And from the outside. Notice how it puffs out a little bit at this point.

Step 16 — Prepare to iron...



You'll need to iron the gusset flat to stop it from puffing out in the armpit. Grab your tailor's ham, or if you haven't got one, tightly roll up a bath towel.

Step 17 — Insert your "ham"...



With your jacket right side out, insert your tailor's ham or rolled towel into the sleeve, with the gusset on top. You may need to fiddle around underneath to ensure your seams are all lying flat.

Step 18 — Iron the gusset...



making sure your iron is set to the appropriate temperature for the fabric of your garment, press the gusset so

that the sides become nice and flat.

Step 19 — Voila! The finished gusset!



Congratulations! You've made a wonderful gusset!

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