

# Convertible Collar Construction Directory

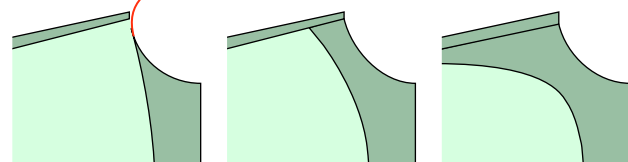
Click any image to go to that section

## Yoke/Facing Options: Intro and Gallery

By far the most common set-up for a convertible-collar shirt is that it has front facings and a yoke, and that these two details don't touch, as in the example at right.

That is, the facings don't extend far enough towards the shoulders at the neckline that they'll meet with or join to the fronts of the yoke layers. As a result, the yoke construction steps aren't integrated into the collar steps and are completed, in front at least, before the collar is begun, so the options for using the yoke as a back facing are eliminated. The steps for this classic arrangement are described below in Variation #5, in the **Front Facing Only** category.

The purpose of this introductory section is to feature and compare the range of other options also, if less commonly, in use beyond this classic one, before I proceed to work step-by-step through a handful of useful variants. Many other possible combinations, and of course, variations on the ones here, are conceivable and may suit your project better, so feel free to experiment.



## Collar Insertion Options Step-By-Step

### No Yoke or Facings Required

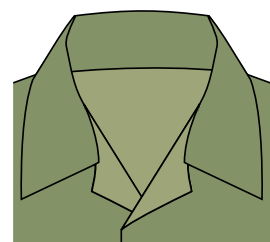
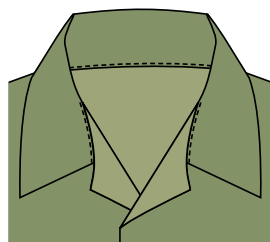
**1** Variation 1: Collar Applied as Band

Options:

1. Edge-stitched neckline

2. Edge-stitched and overlapped neckline

3. Ditch-stitched neckline

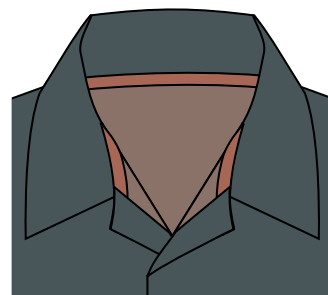
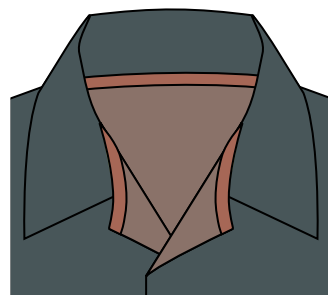


**2** Variation 2: Collar Applied with Neckline Binding

Options:

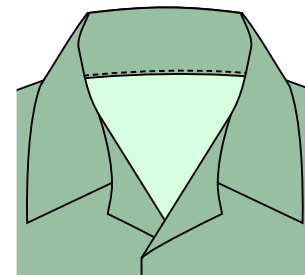
1. Bound neckline

2. Bound neckline with minimal front facings



### Front facings Only

**3** Variation 3: Collar's Back Neckline Edge-Stitched and Facings Secured at Shoulder Seams



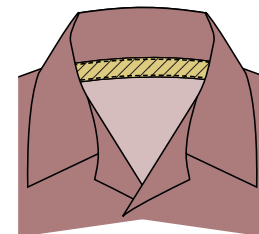
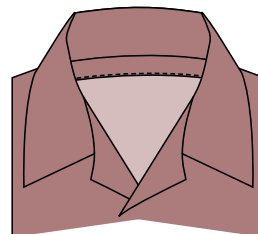
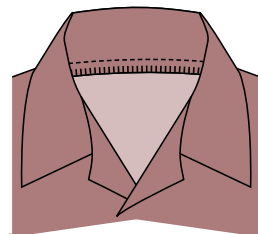
**4** Variation 4: Collar's Back Neckline Overcast or Bound and Facings Secured at Shoulder Seams

Options:

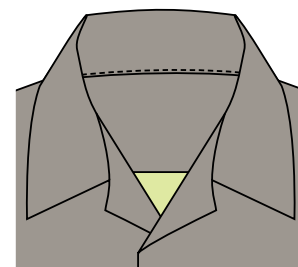
1. Back neckline overcast

2. Back neckline bound with self- or lining fabric

3. Back neckline bound with tape



**5** Variation 5: Front Facings End Before Shoulder Seams and Yoke is Ignored



### Front and Back Facings, or Yoke Used as Facing

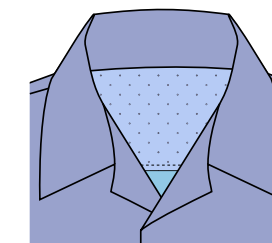
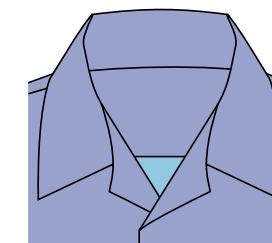
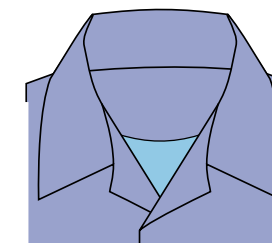
**6** Variation 6: Back Facings

Options:

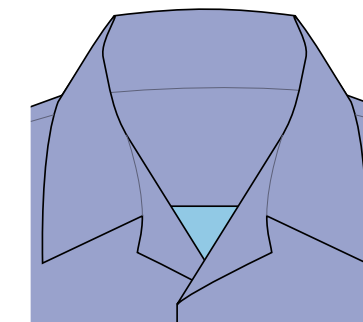
1. No yoke, back facing added

2. Yoke used as facing

3. Facing and yoke joined to armhole in front, yoke hangs free in back



**7** Variation 7: All Collar and Facing Seam Allowances Pressed Open





# Convertible Collar Construction

## Yoke and Facing Options - 1

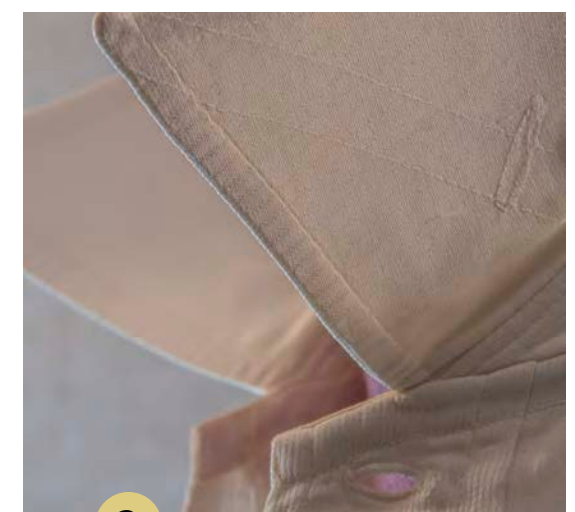
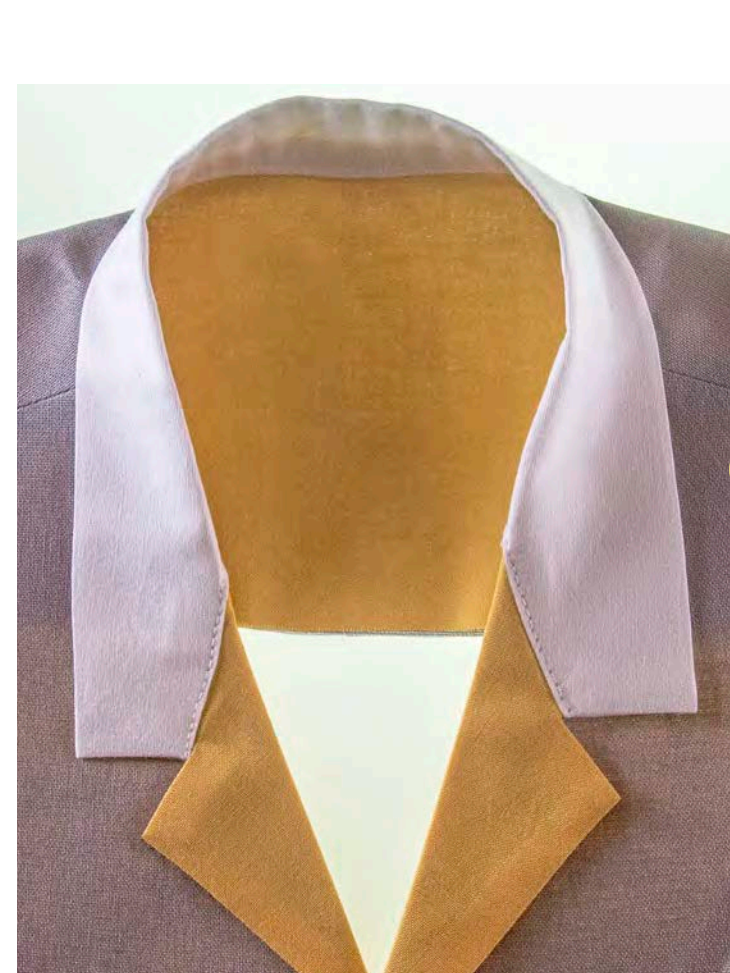
It's easy to see why the standard approach to attaching convertible collars keeps the yoke and the facings from touching, as shown at right in a couple of very different shirts whose collars are installed in exactly the same way. It's simple, it's not bulky, and existing methods for putting in yoke layers—or leaving them out altogether—in back can proceed as usual, since that part of the collar insertion process takes absolutely no notice of whether it's being done on one layer or over a yoke. In front, the facing is also complete once the neckline is closed; there are no hanging-loose bits of the facing left to finish off or to secure anywhere.

There IS a little difference in the way those two blue collars are made, worth pointing out: The Dior facing ends a good inch (2+cm) away from the yoke edge, and the point at which the seam allowances are clipped and switch from going all down to going all up (and consequently where the neckline-closing edge-stitching starts) is about the same distance farther away, towards the CF, from the yoke/facing gap, compared to the Cubavera (surprisingly near the collar end, I thought!)... which simply clarifies that these transition points aren't fixed, and can be made anywhere between the extremes that these two examples provide with no particular consequences. I'd never noticed the difference wearing the two shirts, until I took the time to examine more closely.

Any other collar-joining steps that ignore the presence of yoke layers at the neckline in back clearly also mean that no yoke is required, on the one hand, and on the other, that no matter how complicated your chosen yoke/facing structure is, if you chose to have one, also makes no difference, as you can see in the other pix here, which show all of the mentioned variations in the **No Yoke and No Facings Required** category of examples we'll be examining in step-by-step detail further on.

In these approaches, the finished collar layers are simply stitched in one consistent way or another across the entire neckline seam, all at once, no switching, no clipping, regardless of the presence or absence of a facing or a yoke. All these steps need is a ready neckline edge of any thickness, whether raw-edged where the collar will go, or finished. In most cases, as here, a facing IS involved, simply because facings are an easy and lightweight way to finish any CF overlap, but as you can see in the far-right example (the Arrow evening shirt from the Dress-Block chapter), there can be other reasons—even dressy ones!—why a facing isn't wanted or needed; a dress-shirt's bands or plackets could be there, or a binding, overcasting or serging, or some raw non-raveling edge (leather, felt, fleece...). And the collar length needn't stop short of the opening edges, as these all do, but could extend all the way to the ends of the neckline, or even extend beyond with a tab of some sort, in which case any sort of cuff- or stand-joining technique (burrito!) could work here as well. One or another of these ideas would also be the easiest way to implement an after-thought collar on an already-finished but collarless neckline, without even a need for opening the neckline edge.

Despite the Arrow example, these all tend best to suit workwear and other informal, rugged garments (Levi-style denim-jacket collars are done like this), I'd say. But interesting exceptions are lurking everywhere, no doubt!





5

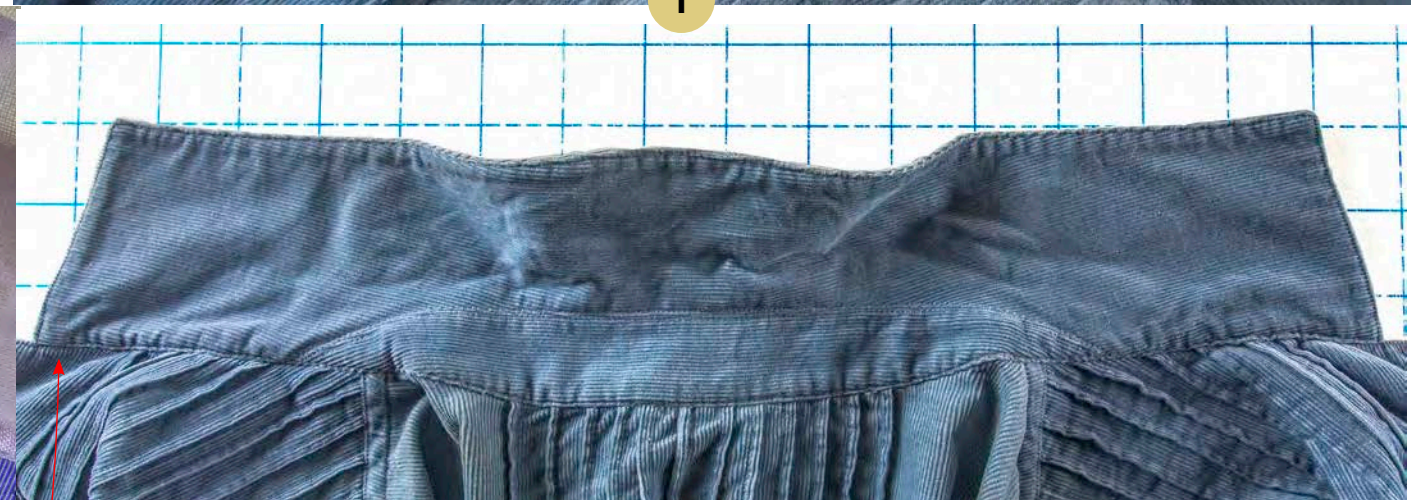
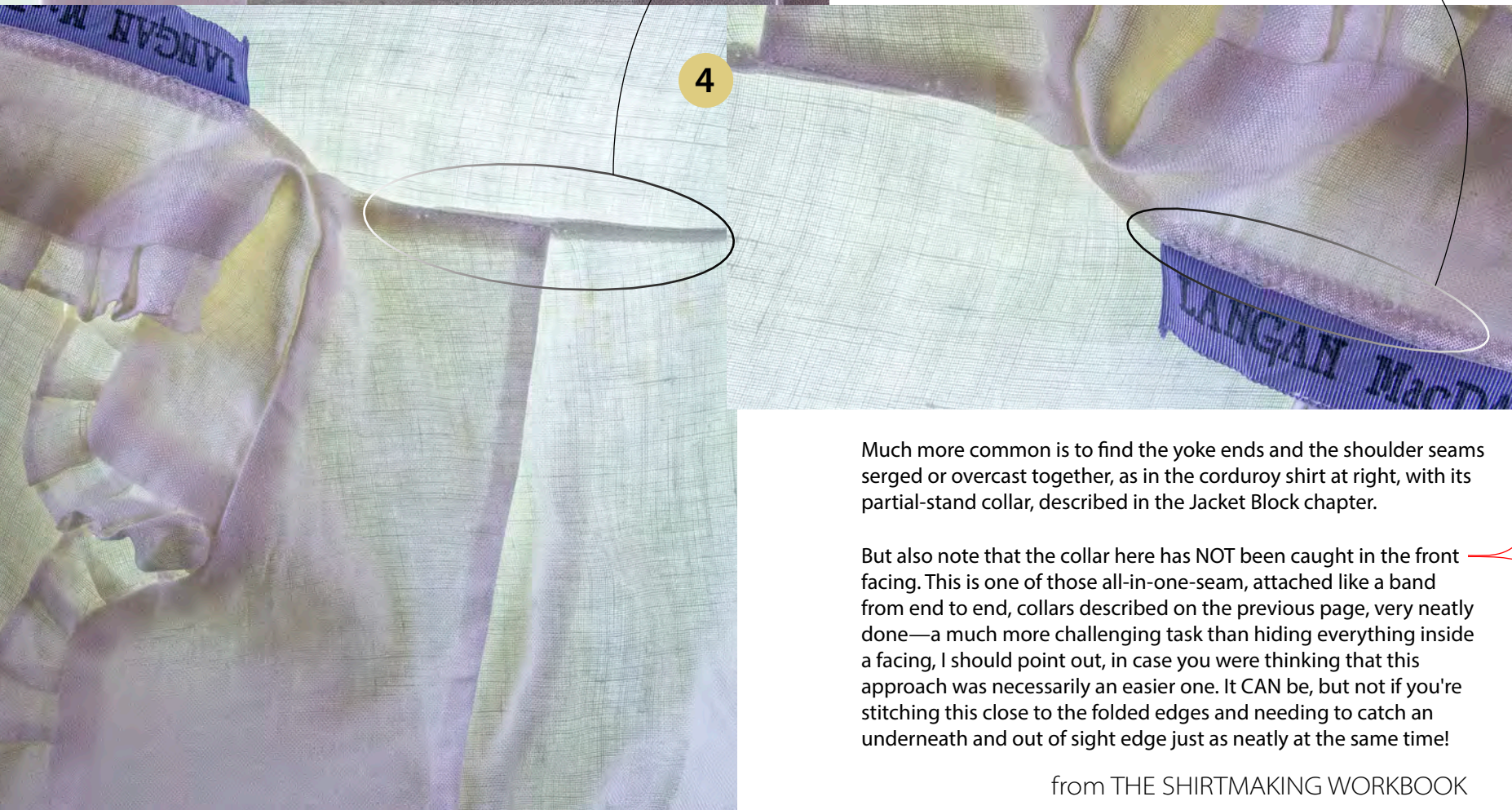
## Yoke and Facing Options - 2

If there's any problem with stopping the facing before it hits the yoke (or the shoulder seams if there's no yoke), it's that this puts the facing edge quite close to the roll line (an "area" really, as you can see at left) and thus increasingly at risk of being exposed as the roll drops when the CF opening increases. There's also a tendency for narrow facing edges themselves to roll outward annoyingly, rather than to lay flat as the neckline is opened and the collar rolls increasingly wider.

So, the obvious fix is to extend the facing so it DOES meet the shoulder seam, also a very common treatment, in which the widened and extended facing edge is simply secured to and usually finished with the shoulder seam allowances.

The un-interfaced linen example below and left has neat French seams at the shoulders (and elsewhere), and facings that were themselves faced with self fabric, which elegantly finished both these edges before they got joined with a short row of delicate stitching.

Note also that the raw collar edge above the label in back has been bound with a very thin, folded-over seam binding, attached only at the seamline, leaving an edge free for joining the label.



Much more common is to find the yoke ends and the shoulder seams serged or overcast together, as in the corduroy shirt at right, with its partial-stand collar, described in the Jacket Block chapter.

But also note that the collar here has NOT been caught in the front facing. This is one of those all-in-one-seam, attached like a band from end to end, collars described on the previous page, very neatly done—a much more challenging task than hiding everything inside a facing, I should point out, in case you were thinking that this approach was necessarily an easier one. It CAN be, but not if you're stitching this close to the folded edges and needing to catch an underneath and out of sight edge just as neatly at the same time!





### Yoke and Facing Options - 3

More examples of the collar/facing types just discussed: Above, note the very utilitarian choice to finish and secure this lab coat's shoulder-seam-ending facing with through-all-layers topstitching, simply pivoting at each end of the back-neckline edge stitching, which was apparently even done from the inside rather than in the ditch from the outside as I'd have done.

Below are two author-made coat collars, both involving non-ravelling materials (synthetic suede at left, natural shearling at right), so there was no need to fold under the edges at the necklines, and the edges could simply be topstitched down. Since the shearling is a single layer on both sides of this seam, this is a good example of an overlapping-raw-edges neckline mentioned in the book.

The knit shirts at right both exemplify the most currently typical way full-fashioned (self-finished, one-layer) knit collars are attached, with a narrow self-fabric binding, end to end, with a minimal fold-back CF facing just barely capturing the binding ends and backing the buttons and holes. Note that the red example also has a two-layer yoke, ignored as a finishing option in favor of this very efficient and simple binding solution. Also, the cream shirt's industrial flat-locked facing finish, with the fabric trimmed raw next to it on the inside!





This extended facing shape has very different implications if there's a yoke and not just a pair of seam allowances at the shoulders. This is because it makes a much cleaner finish to join the facing to the inner yoke edge before even sewing the yoke to the shirt, and then to use the yoke as a back facing, compared to simply tacking the facing end to the finished yoke edge, taking no advantage of the yoke's potential as a back-collar finish/facing. Not that this hasn't been done, or couldn't be done neatly, but I've almost never seen it, no doubt because if the project doesn't warrant any more careful finishing than that, why not simply do the default narrow-yoke thing?

If you choose to join an extended facing to the inside yoke before joining the inner yoke or collar to the project, resist the temptation—as I did not, in grey below—to press open the joining seam, and definitely try to catch this before you commit by adding the collar before you notice! If you don't, you'll wind up wondering, as I did, what to do with your exposed seam

allowances, pictured under the question mark below. Instead, press the allowances both toward the yoke, so you won't be missing out on the yoke as the finish for the facing, which will be accomplished with those little faded-out stitches indicated at far right, in a maneuver described on the following page that nails all the layers down at once, invisibly.

Before that step, though, you've got to insert the turned and finished collar layers between the garment and facing layers as described in the construction walk-through steps that follow this intro, and shown above at near right. Once that's turned, pressed and ready for the yoke joining, you might first want to go back inside the yokes and clip the neckline seam allowances, which if you do this my way, i.e., with narrow seam allowances and no preliminary clipping needed, can lead to the non-fatal but potentially irritating tension circled in blue at right, where all four seam-allowance layers are curving around the neck. I think it's easier to clip these after sewing, but the choice is yours.



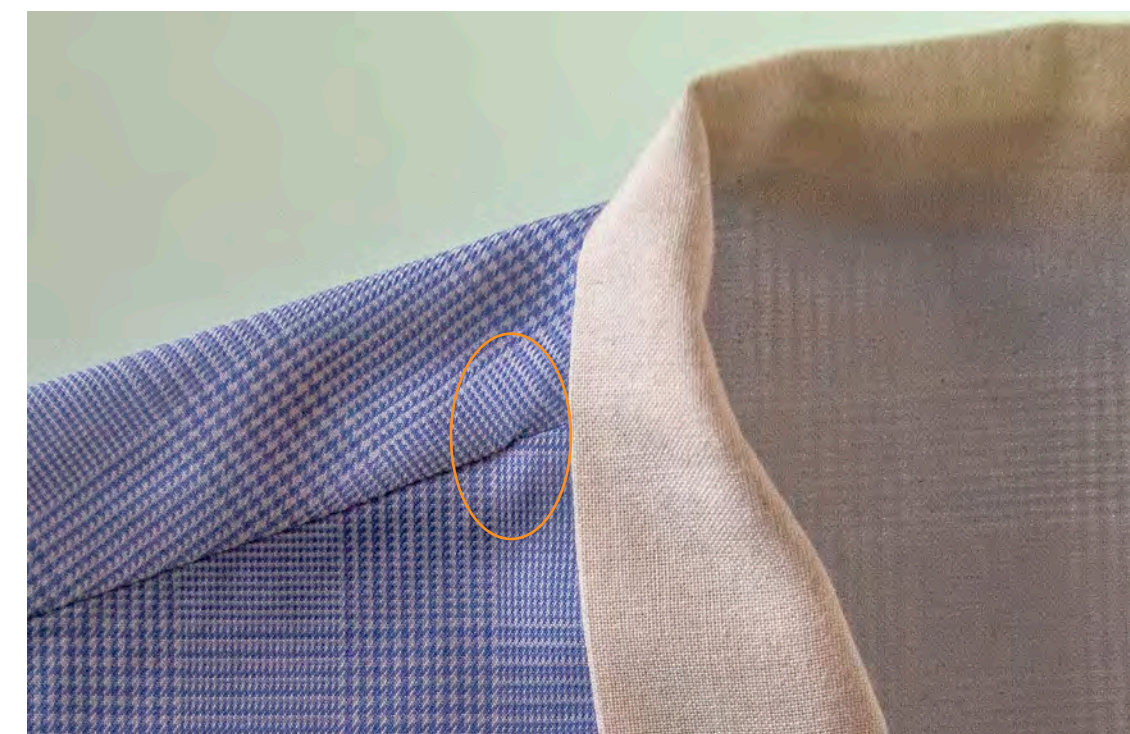
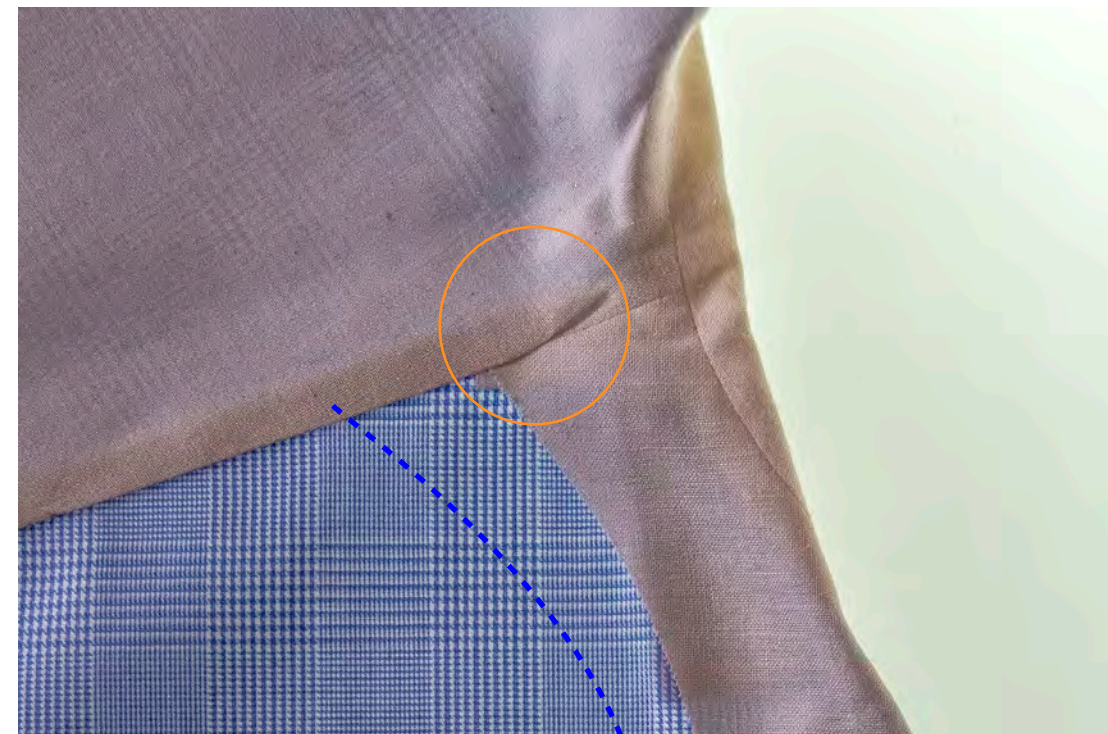


## Yoke and Facing Options - 5 6

Here are the facing and yokes joined and pressed properly, with a collar added, all ready for finally closing those front yoke edges. Note that in this example, the (white) collar layers have been joined individually to each neckline layer, as we'll describe more fully in following pages, so ignore that for the time being, and focus here on those two yoke seam allowances swinging off in opposite directions but happily both pressed in the same yoke-ward direction.

The next step is to swing the yoke-allowance layers face to face with edges aligned, as the arrow indicates at near right, and then positioned with the upper yoke uppermost, as shown at far right, so you can see and follow the existing stitches as you stitch again, right on top of the earlier ones, from the armhole end as far as reasonable towards the neckline. Notice the line I've inserted over the far photo, which indicates where the earlier seamline is about to start curving inevitably into the collar layers, and which you can't straighten out. Nor will it be possible to stitch all the way to that crossing seam, as hopefully suggested by the forbiddingly black gradient that darkens as it extends into the unstitchable zone. There's no reason to WANT to stitch so far, though, as the seam by this point will be safely inside the area where the facing begins to cover all the yoke seam allowances when everything's turned right sides out, so they don't NEED to be joined to be perfectly well finished.

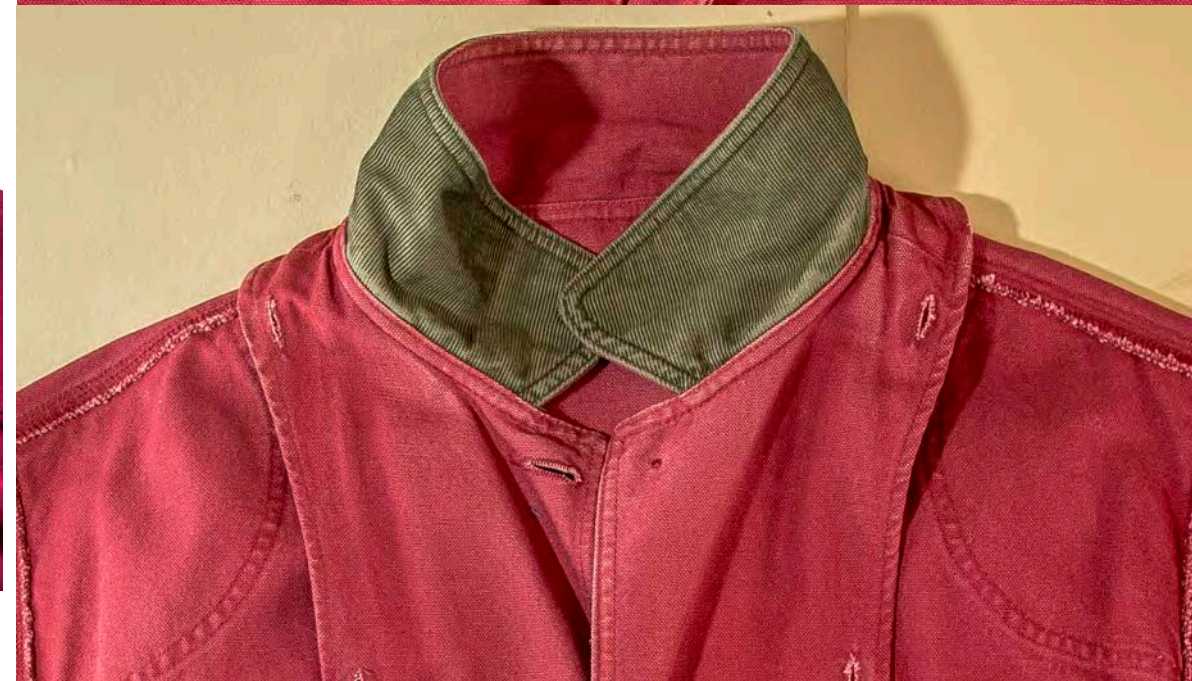
The little ovals in the two lower images indicate your likely, and very visible, results if you insist on pushing past the curving portion of the existing seam. My advice is to stop the joining stitches well before that point, at about the start of the gradient-covered area, and to consider initially redrawing your facing edge so it extends even farther towards the armhole (with an edge something like the heavy dashed line) if your samples indicate that you're inclined to push this boundary too far. Go back to the previous page to see how smooth these seams can look if you stay clear of the curve.







A few examples of garments with extended-width front facings joined to add-on back-neck facings rather than yokes. I'm not sure it's just a coincidence that my examples are all on fairly heavy-weight garments, as these things tend to be sort of floppy, needing to be tacked at the shoulder seams at least, if not topstitched down on all outer edges through all layers, which is not uncommon on work-wear garments.





## Yoke and Facing Options - 7 6

The next logical step in these rethink-your-facing explorations is to extend the facing all the way to the armhole, which pretty much eliminates any tendency for the facings to flop around or poke out. All the examples I'll show here include an inner yoke as well, which gets attached to the entire upper facing edge as shown at right, but you could just as reasonably apply this idea to a shirt without any yoke, securing the extended facing to the entire length of whatever shoulder seam allowances you have, as previously described with a partially extended facing.

One advantage of incorporating a yoke into the plan is that not only will you have a completely faced neckline as before, but you can also now press open the upper-yoke/front seam allowances, for the very smooth and more jacket-like effect shown in the inset at far right and on the example on the next page. That's not been done to this Pendelton garment, not is it a common effect, but I think it's quite an appealing one.

More common is how this means the yoke and facings together can float under the garment and shoulders, not needing to be attached or even tacked at all to the front or back. They're simply caught at the armholes and the neckline when the sleeves and collar are added, as on this plaid shirt-jacket, and even more dramatically on the Orvis jacket on the next page. In other words, this is an easy first step towards adding a lining, or partial lining, to your projects if that's something you'd like. Neither the Pendelton nor the Orvis here actually have outer yokes at all, but even if they did, the inner layer there wouldn't need to be joined to it.





6

## Yoke and Facing Options - 8

Clearly, flatness at the seams was not a priority for the designer of this much-loved Orvis canvas jacket of mine, nor is the lack of it a problem. But it was a priority for me when I made the lined wool shirt-jacket at right, which is why I arranged the construction so I would always have a chance to press every seam open. As you can see, I also included inner and outer yokes on this project, as it was built on my basic over-sized shirt block that has a yoke. Pressing the yoke seams open front and back made them as smooth and unobtrusive as possible, even though each seam was quite shaped, and with non-similar curves along most of their lengths. I did the same thing with the collar-band/neckline seams, which meant I had to attach each band layer to the inner and outer garment layers separately, then join those, along with the collar edges, when I brought the lining and facings together with the fronts and backs along all the CF, hem and collar edges. There's also an interlining on that project, which is why the double topstitching along the inner yoke seam circled below doesn't show on the outside.

7







## Yoke and Facing Options - 9 **6**

Sandwiching your turned collar between the inner-yoke/facing unit and the fronts/outer-yoke unit isn't difficult, especially (I think) if you keep all your allowances narrow and skip all the usually-recommended and too-elaborate pinning, clipping and stay-stitching in favor of the pinless method I describe on page 38 in the book.

Regardless of your preferences, the process depends on careful centering of a finished collar that's really the length needed to extend exactly from one front notch to the opposite one, so that's the first thing I check when arranging the collar at the CB as shown above. I also usually start stitching at the CB and have the facings not

yet joined to the fronts at the front opening, taking care of those edges when I get to the end of the neckline and pivot, letting the layers there fall together as they will, absorbing any minor shifting or other inaccuracies when I get there by letting the front edges mis-align if needed, in favor of keeping the neckline ends beyond the collar edges the same length from collar notches to pivot points, since inaccuracies there will be very obvious, more so than with the allowances inside.



## Yoke and Facing Options - 10 **7**

My personal favorite challenge with convertible collars is to make them as tailored-jacket-like as I can (meaning smooth and flat), when the design and fabric warrant that effect, anyway, which certainly isn't always.

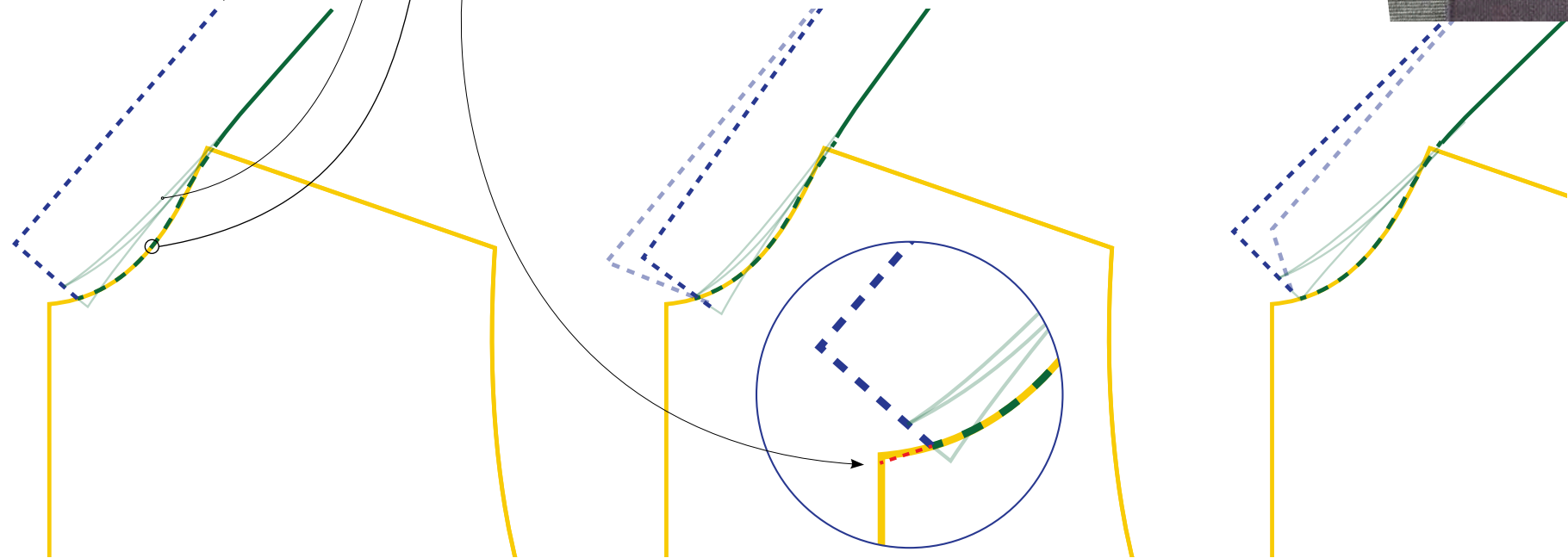
When they do, my first step is to be sure I'm using a collar whose front seamline curves have been adjusted to exactly match the curve of the neckline I'm using, as detailed in the diagrams below. This ensures that when this seam is pressed open, the collar and facing or front it's joined to will together lay, and press, perfectly flat, as shown at left. The smaller images of a white collar at lower right below show how you can immediately see if these pieces are going to be flat with that first press, and in this case, they aren't, nor will they ever be once the collar is complete, either.

In the drawings, the dashed lines above the neck lines simply indicate how easily these outer collar edges can be reshaped while you're doing the neckline redrawing.

The fainter solid lines above the neck show the kinds of typical seam shapes you'll often find on convertible collars, including some in the patterns I've provided, and all three examples show how you may want to tilt the collar angle to keep the existing length of the front collar edge with different start shapes.

**The dashed line over the neckline curve shows the part of the collar curve that needs to match.**

I also find it helpful to straighten out the neckline curve coming out just beyond the collar ends, as the little dashed line indicates in the circled pull-out, which keeps all the stitching right at the critical junction of collar and neckline as simple as possible. Time enough to experiment with more complex "notch" shapes when all this becomes foolproof.



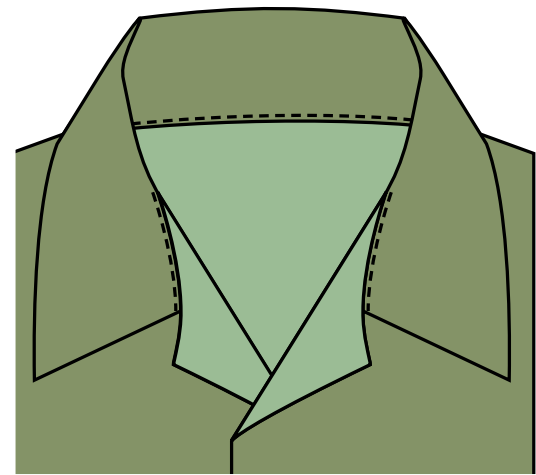




## Yoke and Facing Options - 11

If I'm going to go to all this trouble to make one seam smooth, I think, to carry through with other seams, especially nearby ones. This set of pix shows some subtle but jarring combos, outlined within dashed rectangles, compared to other ones, not outlined, that feel, to me, more natural, simply because they have similar effects at each seam, not distinctly different ones. Once again, this is entirely for YOU to judge, and play with. Have fun!





## Convertible Collar Construction; No Yoke or Facings Required

### 1 Variation 1: Collar Applied as Band, page 1

**1/4" (6mm) seam allowances unless otherwise indicated**

**Preliminary steps:** Fronts and back joined at shoulders, with or without a yoke; shoulder seams and neckline/front edges finished, with or without facings. Neckline seam allowances between the collar notches can be open, pointing towards collar or finished, pointing towards garment. If open, can be stay-stitched and clipped if desired. Even if not clipped, accurate neckline stay-stitching can be a useful guide when attaching the collar.

**Marked:** Collar at CB, neckline at CB and Collar Ends/Center Fronts.

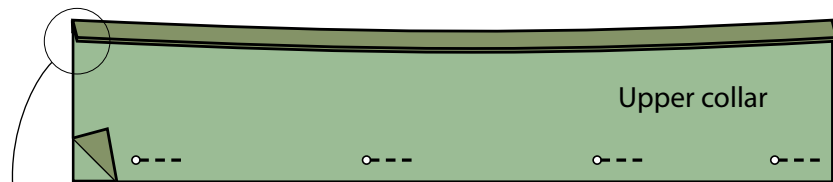
### 1. Edge-stitched neckline

#### 1. Before assembling collar, prepare collar's neckline edges.

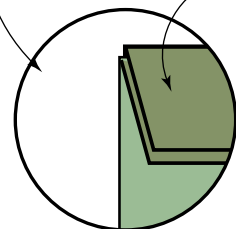
Options for increased accuracy:

##### A. Pre-fold both seam allowances.

1. With collar layers aligned and pinned but both wrong sides up, fold and press both neckline allowances together over the collar layers towards the upper collar. Use a pressing template cut from the pattern for accuracy on curves.



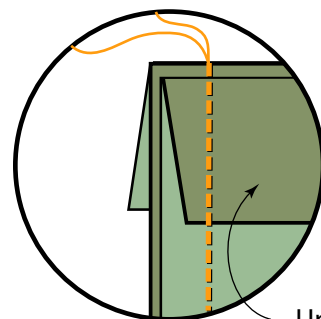
Under collar



This forces the folds to be slightly offset because of the fabric thickness, called "turn of the cloth". Separate the layers and glue-baste to hold folds if you like. I do!

2. Rearrange the layers right sides together with the unfolded edges still lined up accurately so the turn of the cloth difference is preserved at the folds.

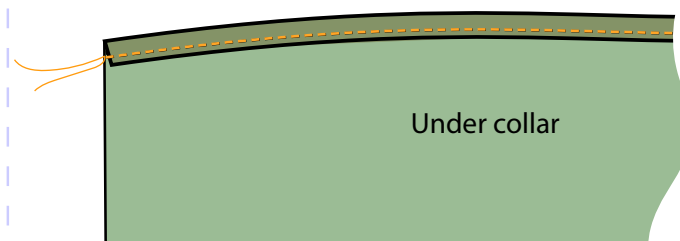
**Stitch around collar catching folded seam allowances. Turn the collar.**



Upper collar

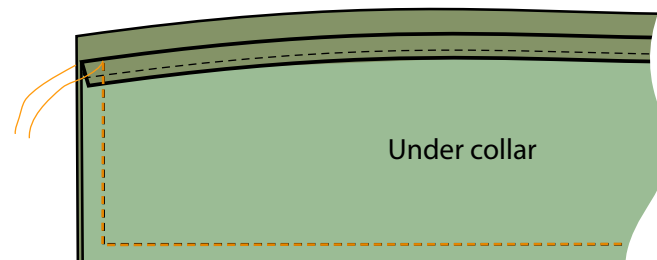
##### B. Machine-fold under-collar seam allowance.

1. With the under-collar wrong side up, fold and stitch its neckline edge seam allowance to the wrong side. I suggest using a wide rolled-hem or felling foot to turn and secure a **single accurate fold**. DON'T make a doubled roll.



Under collar

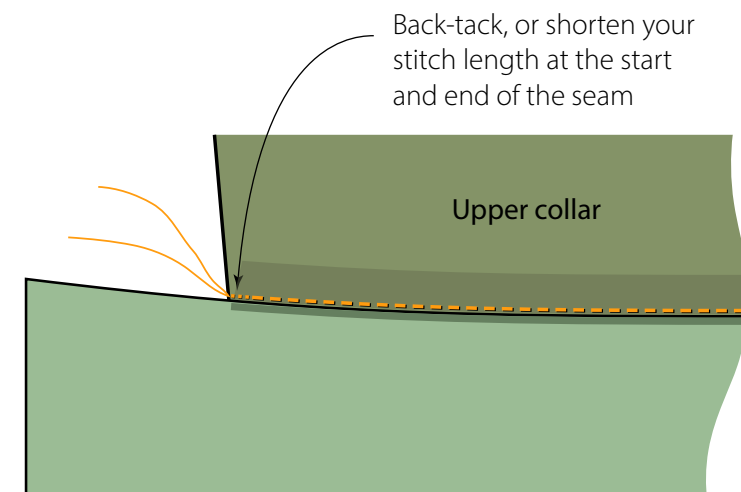
2. Arrange the collar layers right sides together and **stitch around collar catching folded seam allowances. Turn the collar.**



Under collar

#### 2. Stitch collar to neckline

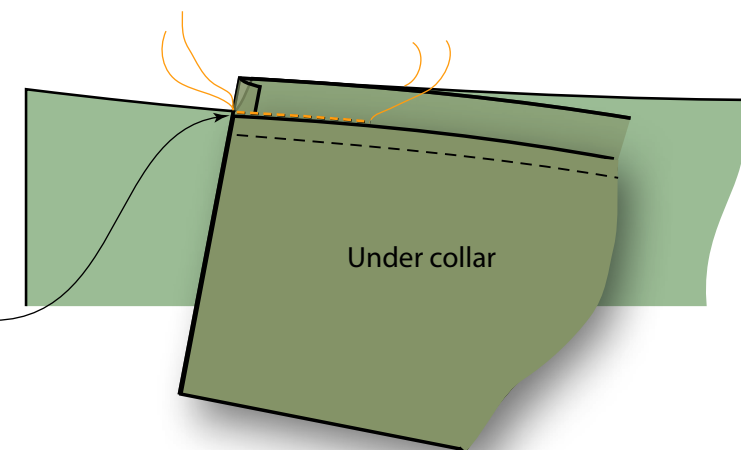
- A** If you used Option A to prepare the edges, slip these edges over the neckline seam allowances with the wider fold on the under-collar side, matching CBs and front-edge markings. Pin, baste or simply hold the layers in place along the seamline as you **edge-stitch through all layers** along the narrower folded edge, catching the wider edge at the same time.



Back-tack, or shorten your stitch length at the start and end of the seam

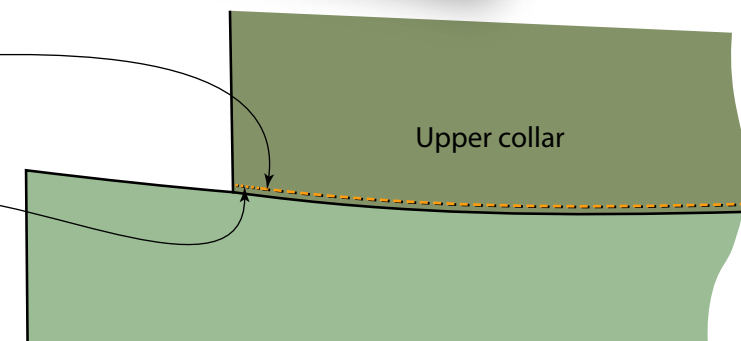
Upper collar

- B** If you used Option B to prepare the edges, line up the edge of the un-folded upper-collar seam allowance with the neckline seam allowance, matching CBs and front-edge markings. Pin, baste or simply hold the layers in place along the seamline as you **stitch as close as possible along the rolled edge** without catching it, through all the other layers.



Under collar

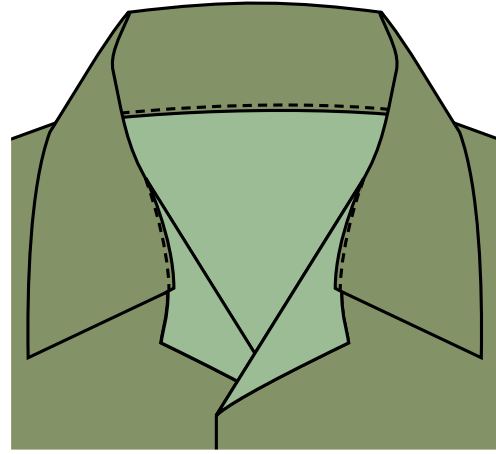
Turn the collar over the seam allowances, tucking them inside it, then **edge-stitch along the collar edge** from the upper-collar side so you stay parallel to the edge, but catch the rolled edge of the under collar at the same time. Start and end with backstitches or a few shortened stitches to secure the seam.



Upper collar



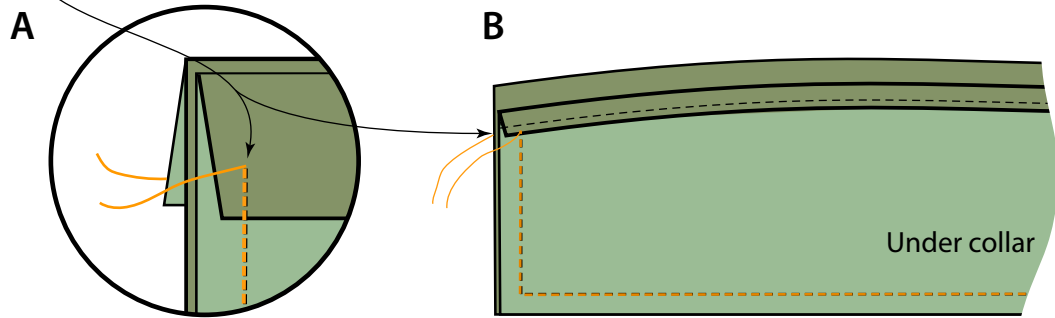
1 Variation 1: Collar Applied as Band, page 2



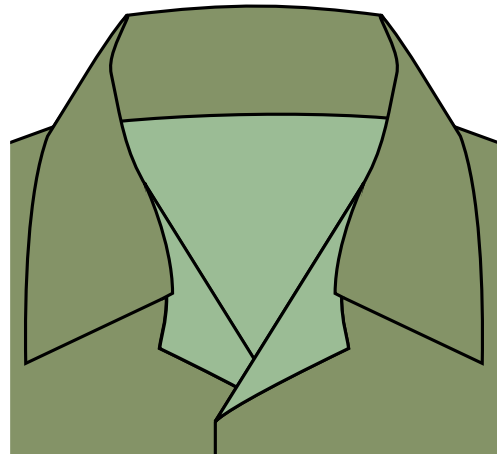
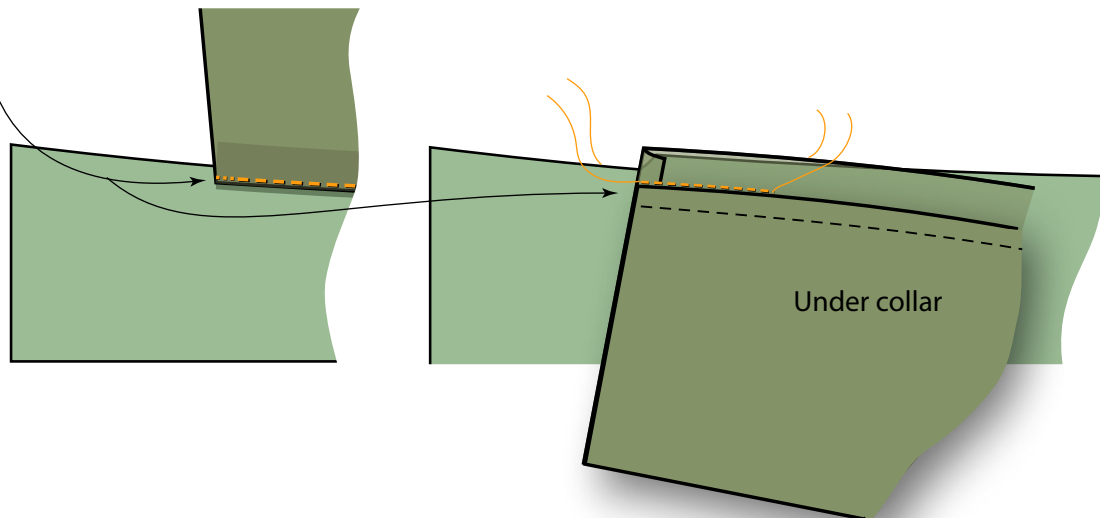
The set-up and installation of this style of collar is exactly the same as for the previous one, except that the seams that connect collar to garment are extended slightly so they overlap the neckline, by 1/8 to 1/4 in. (3-6mm), making it a little easier to seat the collar for stitching, giving a more utilitarian flavor to the entire garment, and requiring less seam allowance width (or none) on the garment neckline.

2. Edge-stitched and overlapped neckline

1. However you choose to prep the collar layers, simply stop a little short of the neckline when stitching the collar ends, as shown below. Cut the pieces a little wider initially if you want to extend the collar seamline to make up for the amount by which the collar will overlap the neckline.

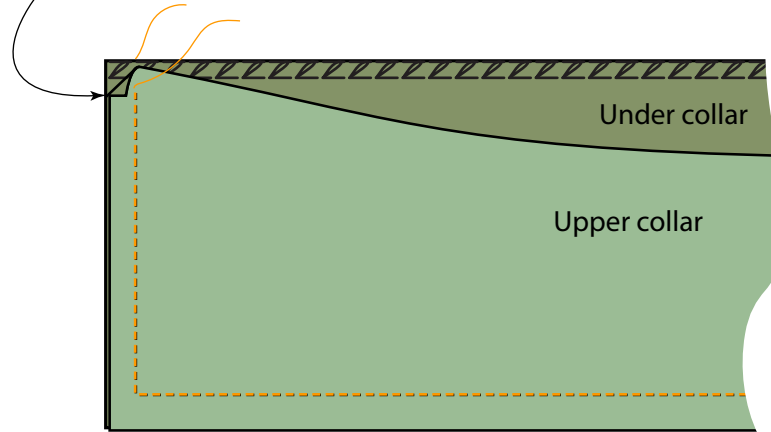


2. Before stitching, position the collar edges you'll stitch a little lower in relation to the neckline edge than as previous described (still centered at CB and ends, of course), then stitch as before.

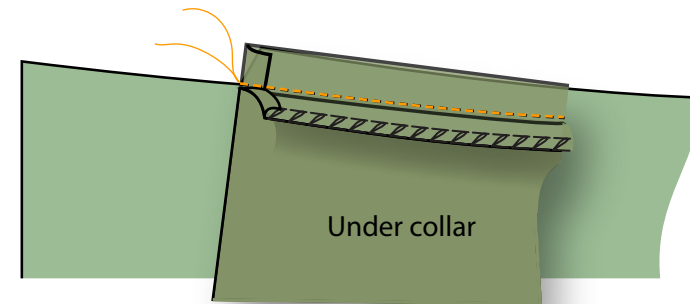


3. Ditch-stitched neckline

1. Serge, overcast or simply leave raw the under-collar's neckline seam allowance, then join the collar layers right sides together, leaving the neckline seam allowance edges unstitched as shown. Turn the collar and press.



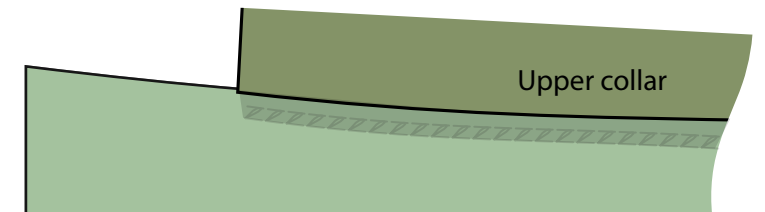
2. With upper collar and neckline seam allowance edges aligned right side of collar to inside of garment, and collar and neckline CBs and front notches matched, stitch upper collar only to garment neckline.



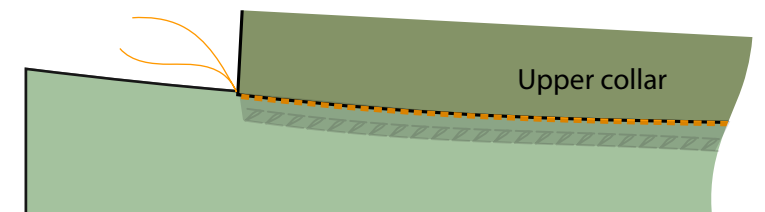
If for any reason, you aren't going to turn under the under-collar seam allowance, but do want to turn under the upper-collar one—perhaps because the fabric is very heavy, or non-ravelling, or both—this simple variation on Option B from the previous methods let's you also eliminate any visible edge stitching on the upper collar. The Filson Double Mackinaw Cruiser shown on pages 160-161 provides a good example.



3. Flip the collar up, tucking the seam allowances inside it, underneath the under-collar's free edge, and press the just-stitched seam open from the right side.



4. Spreading the pressed seam as open as you can, stitch in the ditch of the seam, securing the under-collar's free edge on the other side.





# Convertible Collar Construction; No Yoke or Facings Required

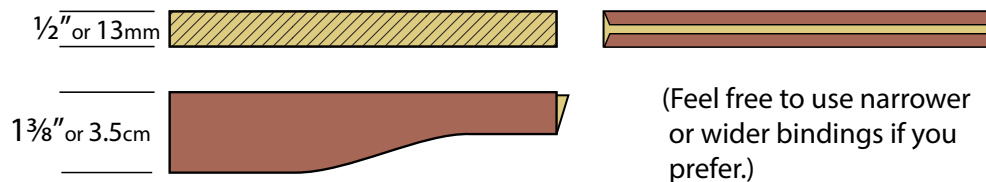
## 2 Variation 2: Collar Applied with Neckline Binding, option 1

1/4" (6mm) seam allowances unless otherwise indicated

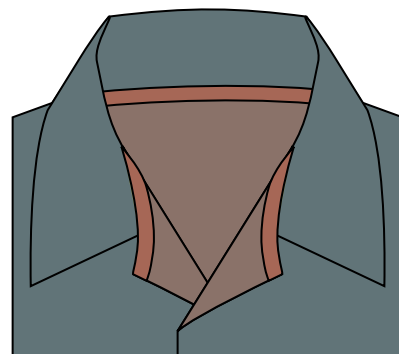
### Binding Options:

(For easiest handling, spray-starch fabric before cutting bias strips.)

1. Cut binding from either *fabric* (self or lighter-weight, bias or straight as preferred) or *tape* (twill or other with selvedge edges) **1" longer than neckline seam**. Press fabric in half lengthwise, wrong sides together, or use bias-tape maker.



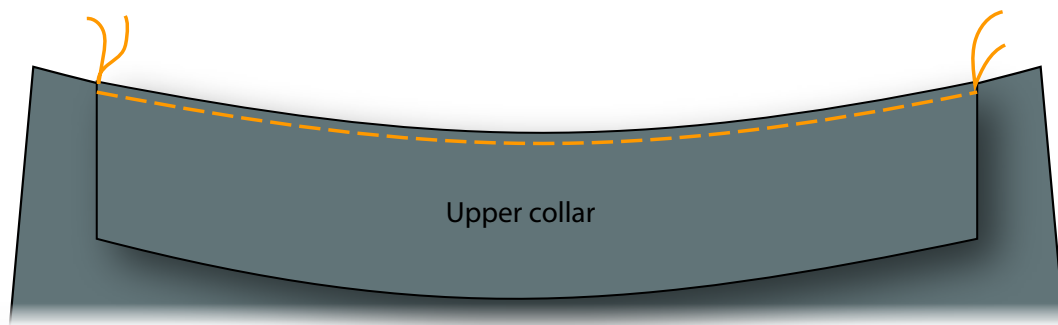
### Option 1. Bound neckline



**Preliminary steps:** Fronts and back joined at shoulders, with or without a yoke; shoulder seams and front edges finished, with or without facings. Neckline seam allowance extends across full neckline, from overlap edge to underlap edge at CF. Can be stay-stitched but not clipped. Accurate neckline stay-stitching can be a useful guide when attaching the collar. **Collar complete, turned, and topstitched if desired.**

**Marked:** Collar at CB, neckline at CB and Collar Ends/Center Fronts.

1. With the under collar against the outside of the neckline and aligned at edges and all markings, hand- or machine baste the collar to the neckline within the seam allowances.

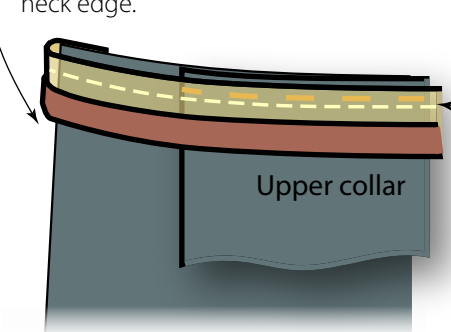
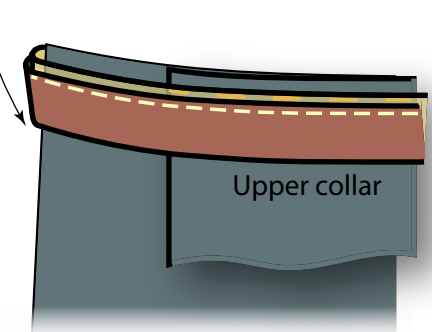
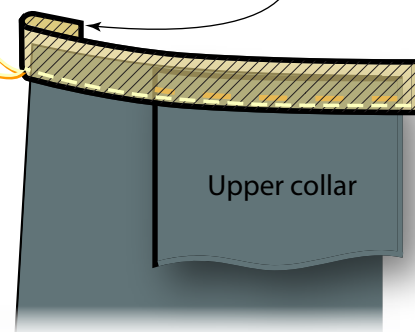


2. Position your binding (see options above) along the neckline seamline as described below, folding its extended ends to the wrong side of the shirt fronts and stitch just below the basting through all layers.

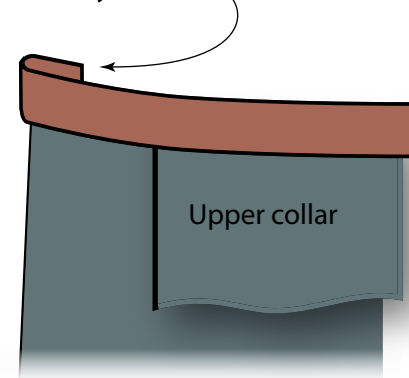
Place tape with free edge extending beyond the neck edge.

Place folded fabric with fold extending away from the neck edge.

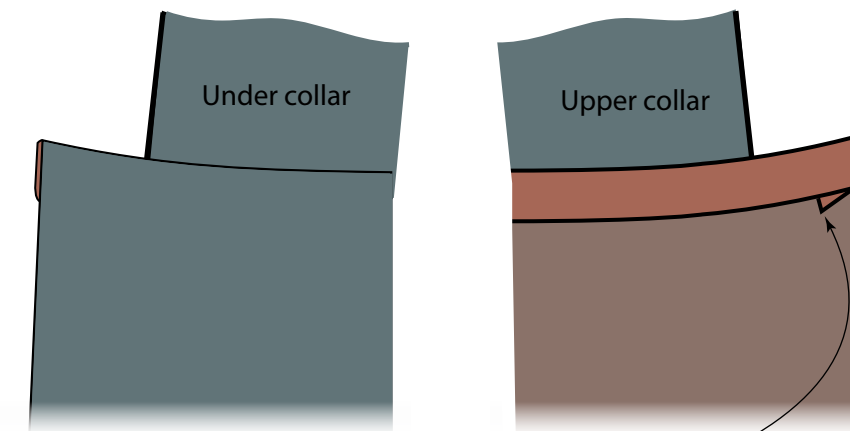
Open one edge of tape-maker tape and place with open foldline on seam and folded edge extending away the neck edge.



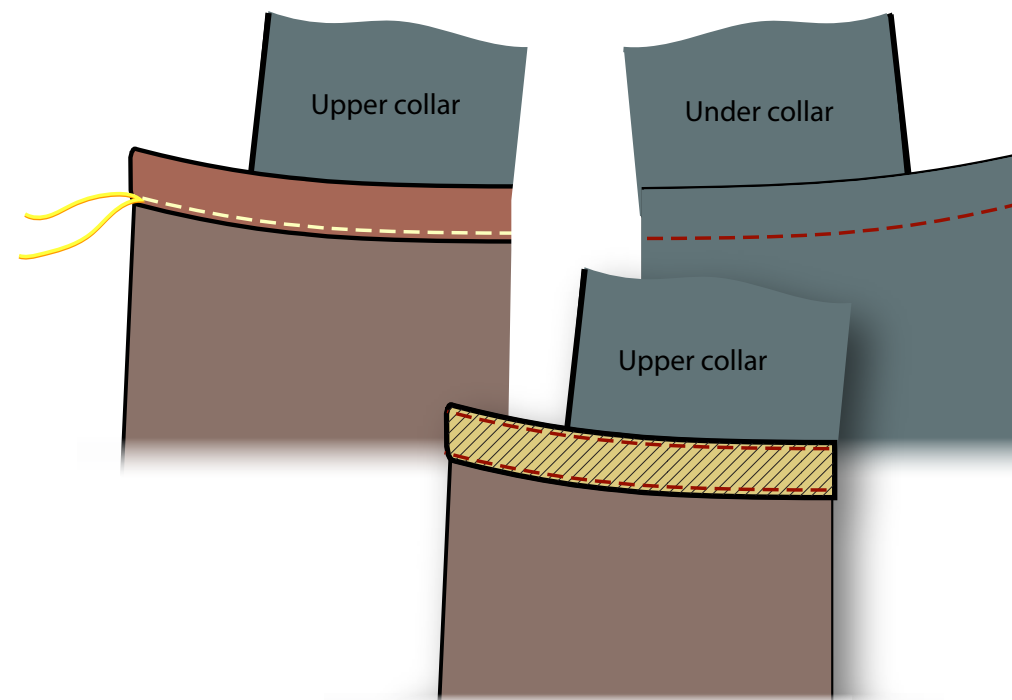
3. Fold either of the fabric bindings over the stitching from the previous step so they extend beyond the neck edge as the tape already does.



4. Fold the binding and the collar along the stitching from Step 2 so the binding is completely on the inside of the neckline and the collar is standing up away from it.



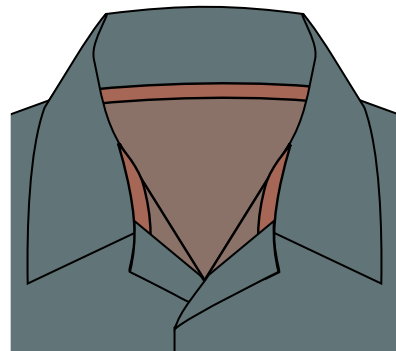
5. Tuck up inside it any parts of the binding that stick out below it, then edge stitch to secure the free edge of the binding, from front to front.





2 Variation 2: Collar Applied with Neckline Binding, option 2

Option 2. Bound neckline with minimal front facings

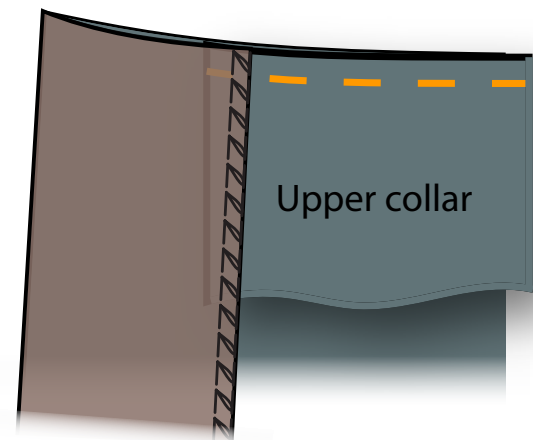


1/4" (6mm) seam allowances unless otherwise indicated

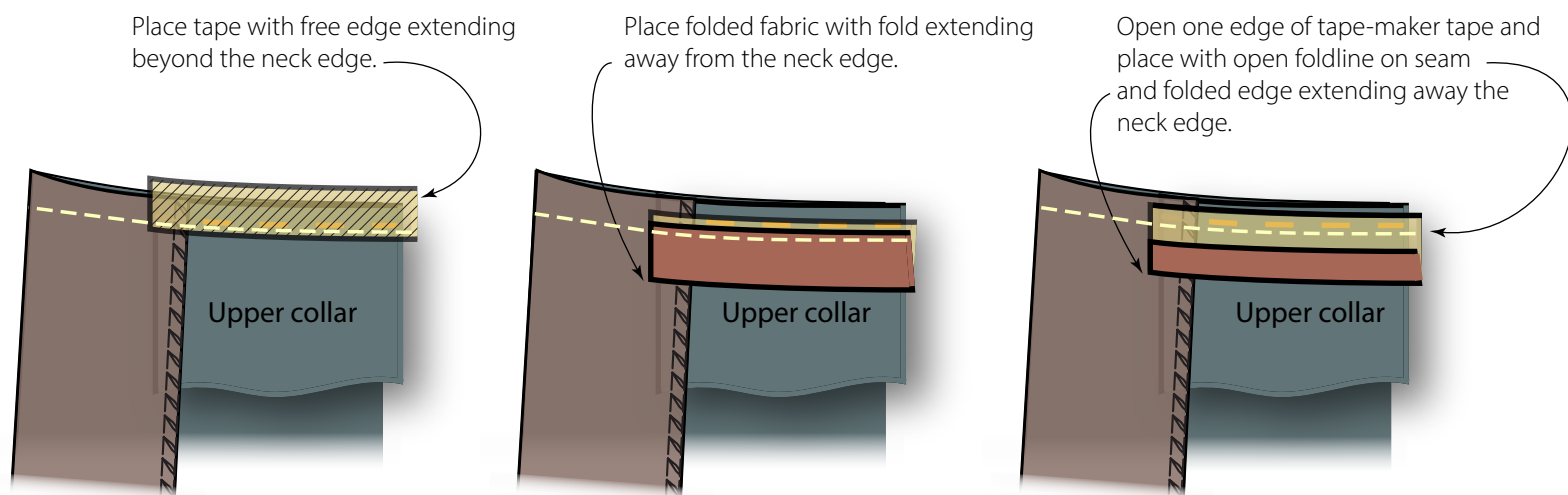
**Preliminary steps:** All the prep and steps for this variation are the same as on the previous page, except that the shirt's front edges here will be cut with narrow fold-over facings, perhaps from a placket if the opening stops short of the hem, and these facing edges will be already finished and ready to be secured on the inside.

**Marked:** Collar at CB, neckline at CB and Collar Ends/Center Fronts.

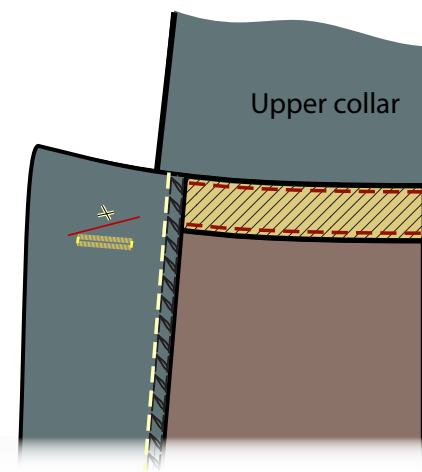
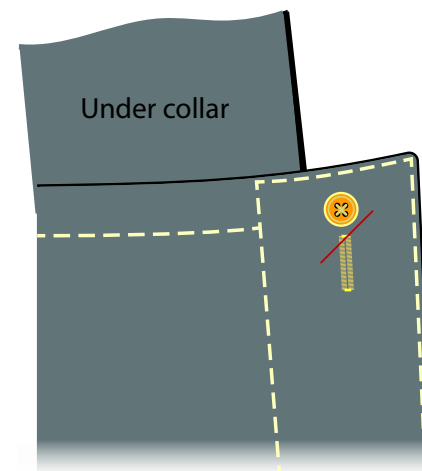
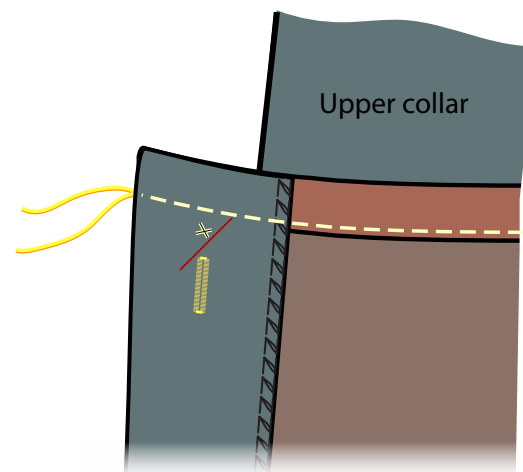
1. Baste the collar to the neckline as described on the previous page.
2. Fold the facing strip right sides together to the inside of the shirt, covering the forward edges of the basted collar.



3. Arrange your binding over the basted edge as previously described, trimming it to extend about 1/4-in/6mm beyond the facing edge and overlapping it as shown below. Stitch along neckline from end to end, just below the basting, through all layers.



4. Turn the facings and binding to the wrong side and the collar so it stands above the neckline, then edge stitch to secure everything; several common options are shown.



As you can see in this RTW example, the position and size of the various elements in this structure can be varied without changing the essentials. The self-fabric binding used here looks like it was applied as I describe for a tape; not sure exactly how this was done, but it may have involved some sort of binding-feeder/stitching mechanism...or just a lot of skill!



# Convertible Collar Construction; Front Facings Only

## 3 Variation 3: Collar's Back Neckline Edge-Stitched and Facings Secured at Shoulder Seams

1/4" (6mm) seam allowances unless otherwise indicated

**Preliminary steps:** Fronts and back joined at shoulders; shoulder seams finished. Facings interfaced with edges finished, and joined to fronts if cut separately. Neckline stay-stitched and clipped if desired. Collar layers joined at outer edges and turned; topstitched if desired.

**Marked:** Collar at CB, neckline at CB and Collar Ends/Center Fronts.

1. Pin *under collar only* to right side of neckline at CB matching raw edges. Most critical: **Make sure the collar ends match or are equidistant from the markings in front.** OPTIONAL: Pin or baste both collar layers to the *front-neckline edges* (forward from the shoulder seams), and just the under-collar edge between the shoulder seams (*back neckline*); leave the upper collar edge free along the *back neckline* in either case. See **Sewing without Pins** on page 38 for details on skipping pins or basting. I usually only use one pin at each collar end when initially aligning the collar.

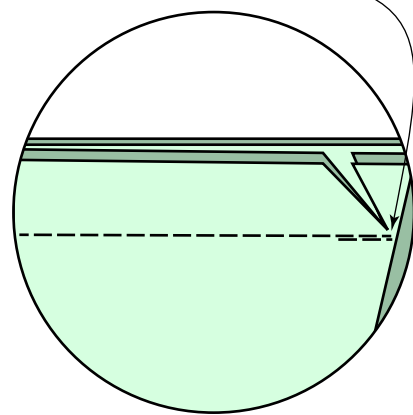
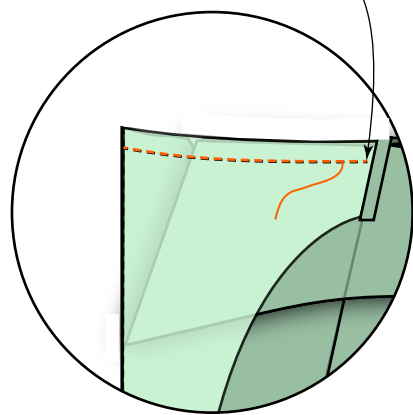
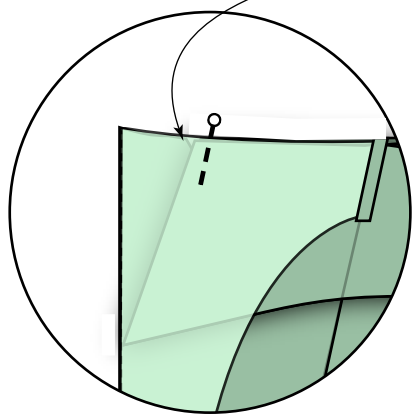
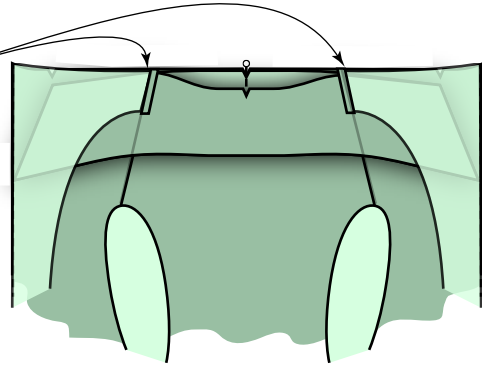
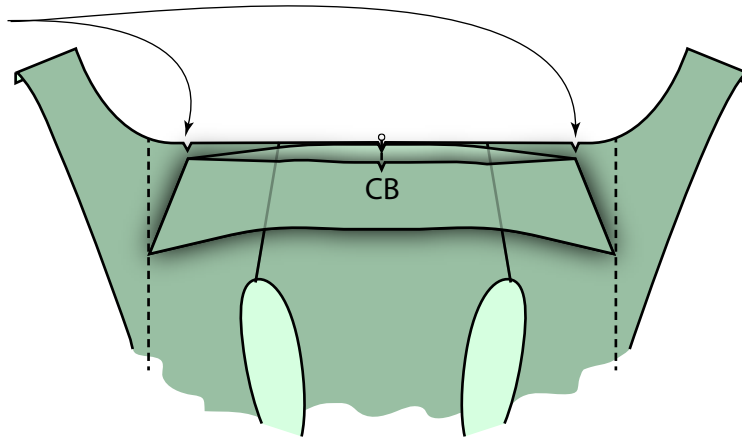
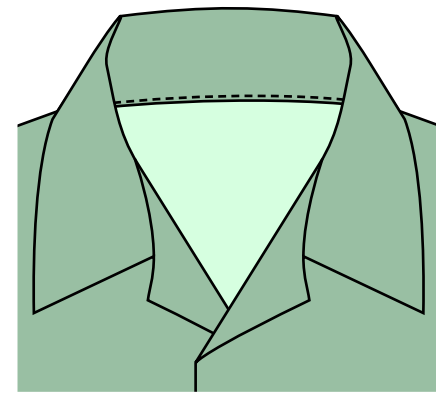
2. Fold facings to the right side along fold lines, sandwiching the collar layers inside. The folded-under facing ends should align with and meet the shoulder seams.

At each front edge...

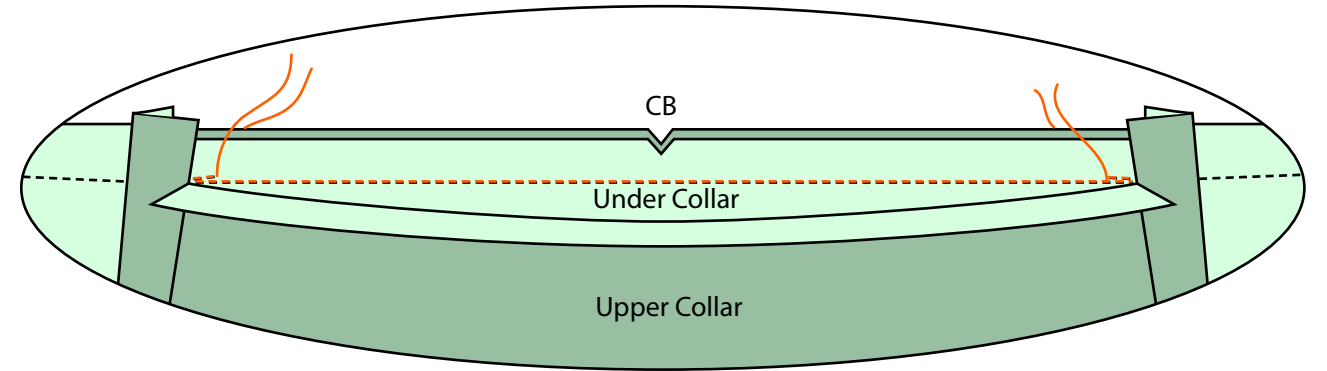
3. ... align the collar raw edges with the facing and front edges.

4. Stitch to about 1/8" (3mm) from the folded end of the facing and backstitch.

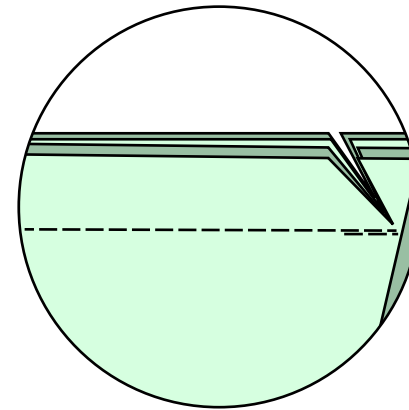
5. Clip at an angle like that shown here, catching just the upper collar and the facing and ending at the end of the stitching.



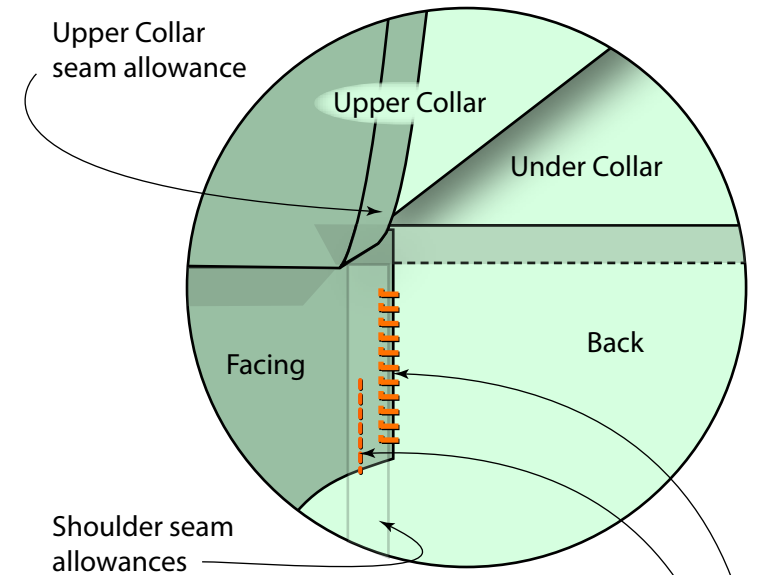
6. Fold the facing ends back over the clips at the ends of the previous stitching, and the clipped upper-collar edge away from the back neckline, then stitch the under collar to the neckline with edges aligned and the CB notches matched, back-stitching and lining up with the front neckline stitchings at each end.



7. Before turning the facings right side out, go back to the clippings at each shoulder seam and clip again at the same point and angle through the previously unclipped layers.



8. Turn the facings and collar to the right side, then tuck the exposed, pointed clipped corners of all layers, along with the back-neck seam allowances, up inside the collar, folding the upper-collar seam allowance so it just covers the back-neckline seam.



9. With the upper collar seam allowance aligned with and just covering the under-collar seamline (I usually glue-baste to hold this edge), edgestitch the collar through all layers from the right (under-collar) side starting and ending just to the front of the shoulder seam, backstitching at start and end.



10. Hand- or machine-tack folded-under facing edges to shoulder seam allowances only.

Or overcast/serge facing edges together with seam allowances.

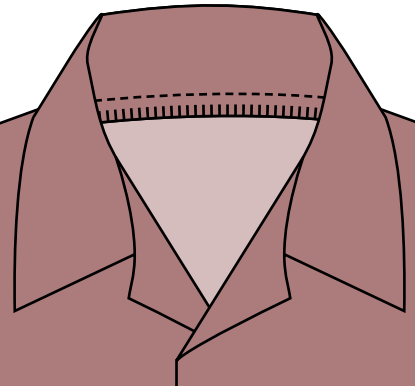


# Convertible Collar Construction; Front Facings Only

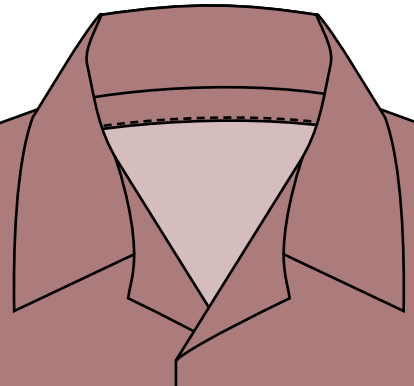
## 4 Variation 4: Collar's Back Neckline Overcast or Bound and Facings Secured at Shoulder Seams

**Options:**

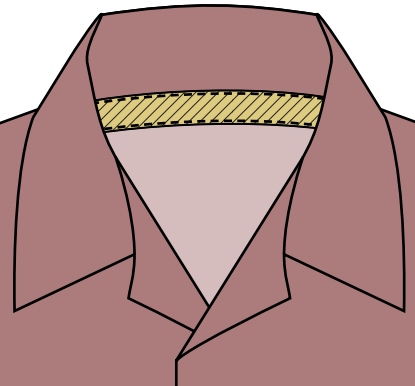
**1. Back neckline overcast**



**2. Back neckline bound with self- or lining fabric**



**3. Back neckline bound with tape**



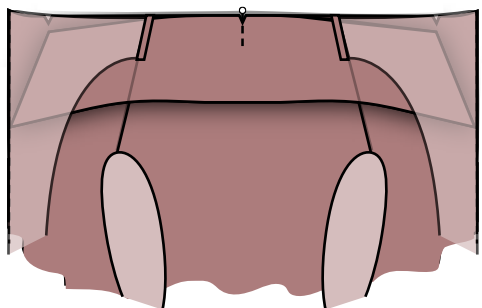
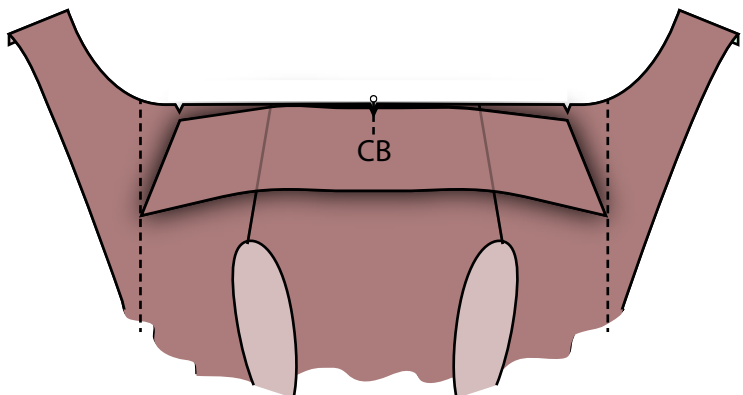
1/4" (6mm) seam allowances unless otherwise indicated

**Preliminary steps:** Fronts and back joined at shoulders; shoulder seams finished. Facing edges finished, interfaced if needed, and joined to fronts if cut separately. Neckline stay-stitched and clipped if desired (usually not needed with 1/4" or 6mm seam allowances; see **Sewing without Pins** on page 38 for details on proceeding without clipping as shown). Collar layers joined at outer edges and turned; topstitched if desired.

**Marked:** Collar at CB, neckline at CB and Collar Ends/Center Fronts.

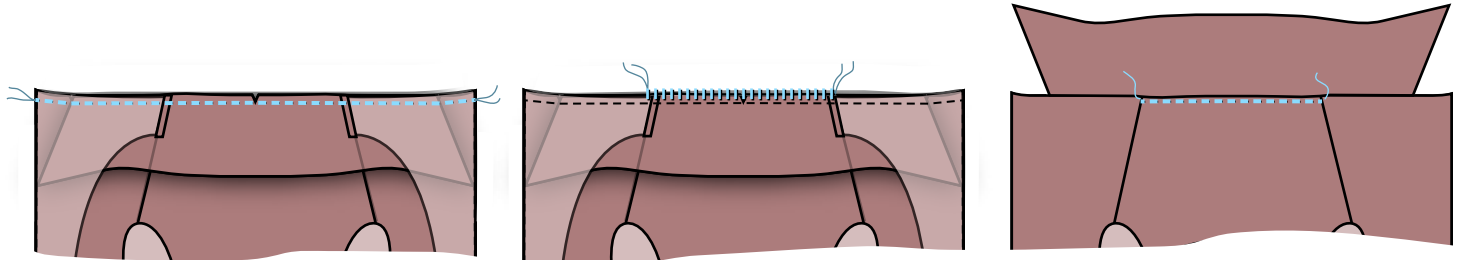
1. Pin *both collar layers* to right side of neckline at CB matching raw edges. Make sure the collar ends match or are equidistant from the markings in front. **OPTIONAL:** Pin or baste collar layers to the neckline edge. See **Sewing without Pins** on page 38 for details on proceeding without pins or basting as shown.

2. Fold facings to the right side along fold or seam lines, sandwiching the collar layers inside. The folded-under facing ends should align with and meet the shoulder seams.



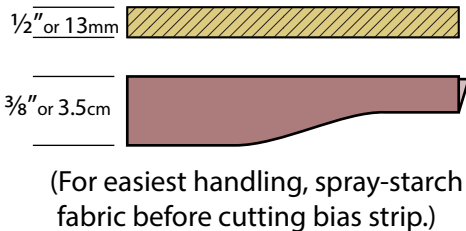
**Option 1, Overcasting:**

1. Align the collar raw edges with the neckline edges as you stitch from front to front—or from CB out to each edge if you prefer—through all layers.
2. Overcast or serge together the raw edges at the back neckline between the ends of the facings.
3. Turn collar and facings right side out, press allowances towards shirt, then secure the overcast edge by stitching from shoulder seam to seam 1/8" or 3mm from the neckline.

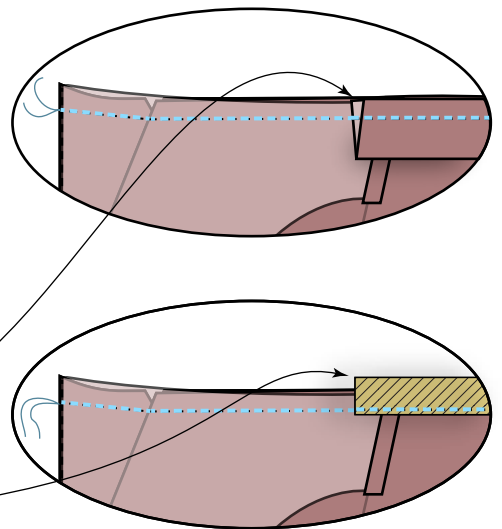


**Options 2 & 3, Binding:**

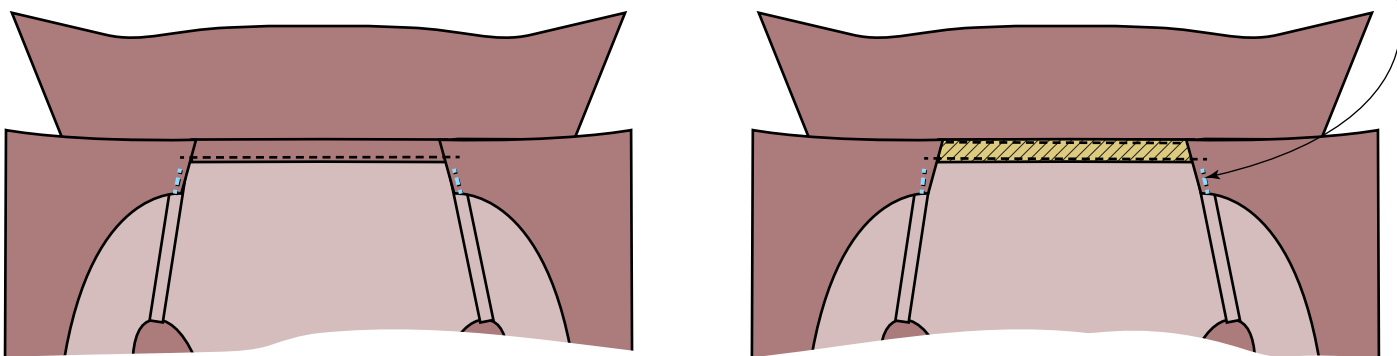
1. Cut binding from either *fabric* (self or lighter-weight, bias or straight as preferred) or *tape* (twill or other with selvedge edges) **1" longer than back neckline seam**. Press fabric in half lengthwise, wrong sides together.
2. Align the collar raw edges with the neckline edges as you stitch from front to front through all layers. Insert fabric or tape as shown when you get to the facing edge, catching all layers including insertion along the full back neckline. Place the fabric with raw edges against the neck edge. Place the tape with free edge extending beyond the neck edge.



(For easiest handling, spray-starch fabric before cutting bias strip.)



3. Turn out the collar and facing, and grade the seam allowances at the back neck. Pull the fabric's folded edge or the tape's free edge snug over the allowances and edgestitch parallel to the neckline from shoulder to shoulder catching the facing's folded edges. Tack or overcast to secure facing ends to shoulder seam allowances only.





# Convertible Collar Construction; Front Facings Only

## 5 Variation 5: Front Facings End Before Shoulder Seams and Yoke is Ignored

1/4" (6mm) seam allowances unless otherwise indicated

**Preliminary steps:** Fronts and back joined at shoulders with a yoke. Facings interfaced with edges finished, and joined to fronts if cut separately. Neckline stay-stitched and clipped if desired. Collar layers joined at outer edges and turned; topstitched if desired.

**Marked:** Collar at CB, neckline at CB and Collar Ends/Center Fronts.

1. Pin *under collar only* to right side of neckline at CB matching raw edges. Most critical: **Make sure the collar ends match or are equidistant from the markings in front.** OPTIONAL: Pin or baste both collar layers to the *front-neckline edges* (forward from the shoulder seams), and just the under-collar edge between the shoulder seams (*back neckline*); leave the upper collar edge free along the *back neckline* in either case. See **Sewing without Pins** on page 38 for details on skipping pins or basting. I usually only use one pin at each collar end when initially aligning the collar.

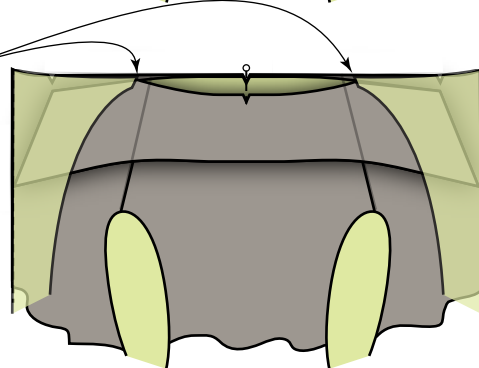
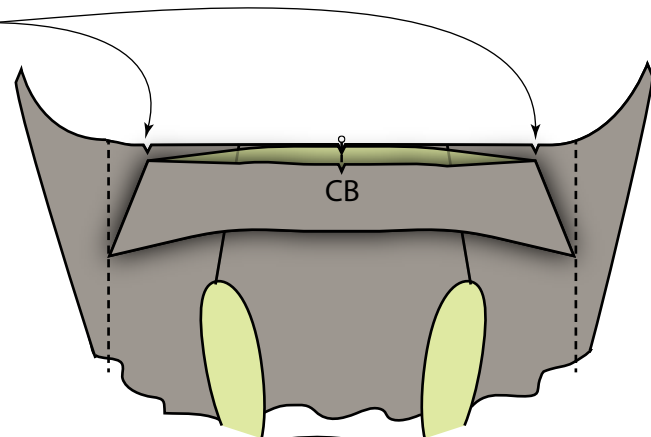
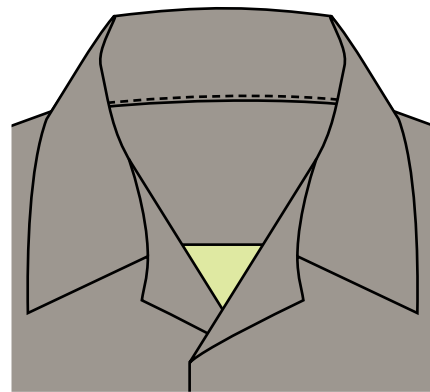
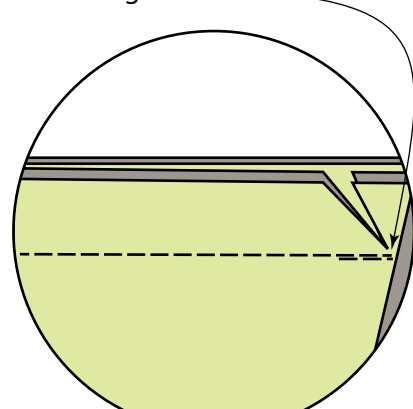
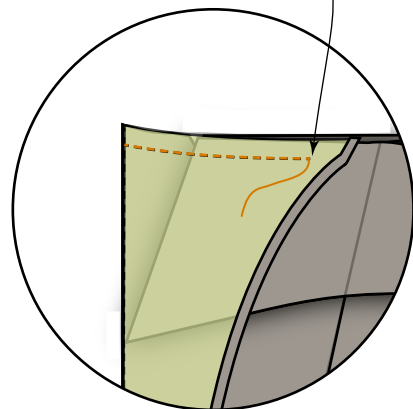
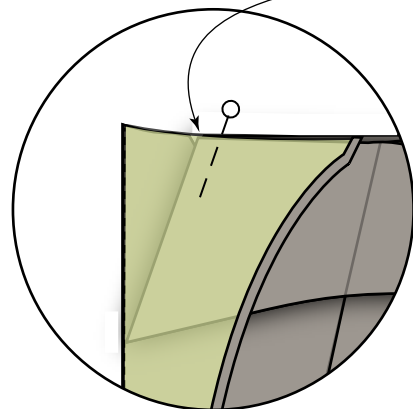
2. Fold facings to the right side along fold lines, sandwiching the collar layers inside. The folded-under facing ends should align with and meet the shoulder seams.

At each front edge...

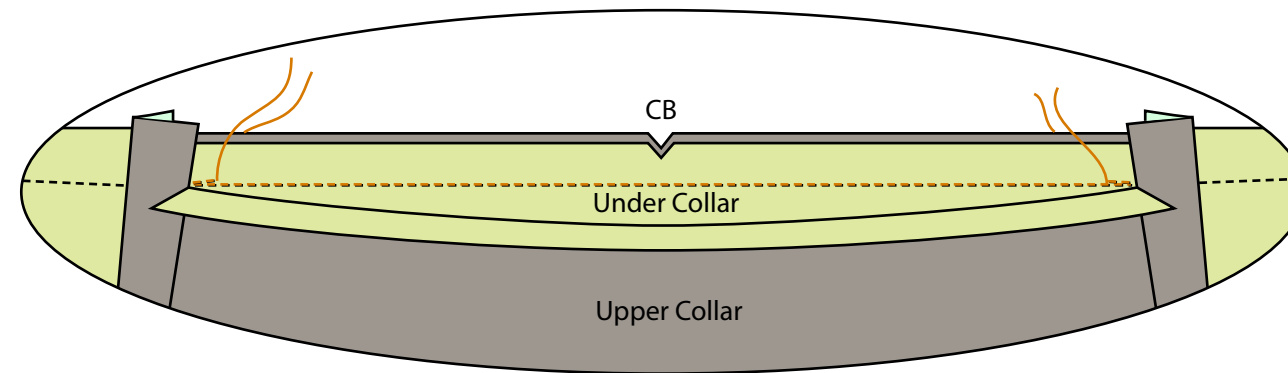
3. ... align the collar raw edges with the facing and front edges.

4. Stitch to about 1/8" (3mm) from the folded end of the facing and backstitch.

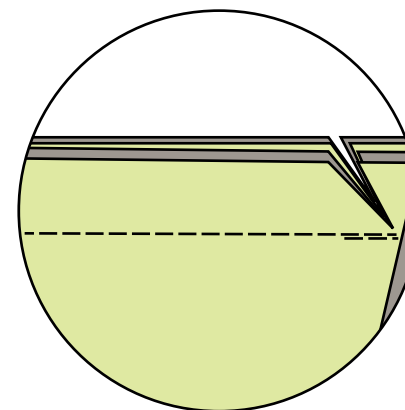
5. Clip at an angle like that shown here, catching just the upper collar and the facing and ending at the end of the stitching.



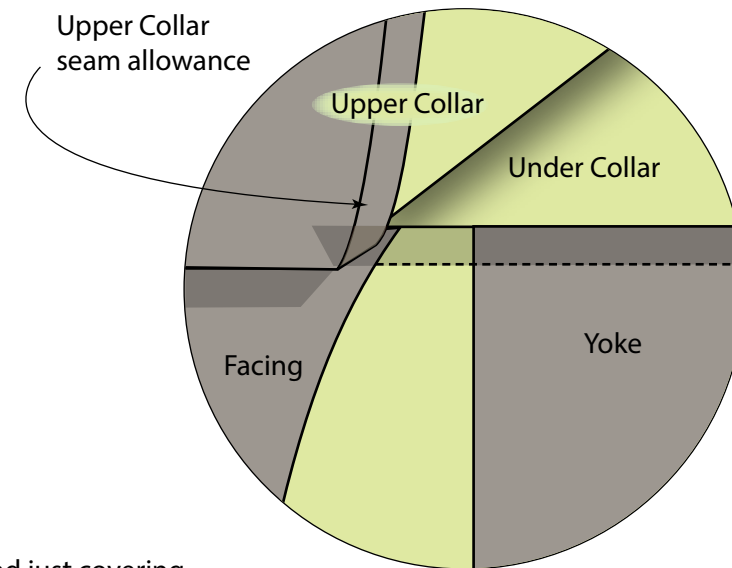
6. Fold the facing ends back over the clips at the ends of the previous stitching, and the clipped upper-collar edge away from the back neckline, then stitch the under collar to the neckline with edges aligned and the CB notches matched, back-stitching and lining up with the front neckline stitchings at each end.



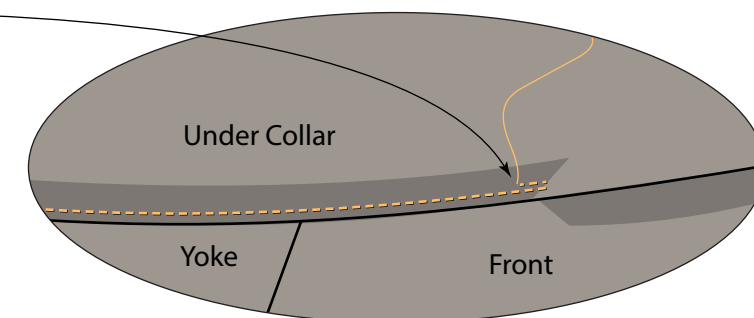
7. Before tuning the facings right side out, go back to the clippings at each shoulder seam and clip again at the same point and angle through the previously unclipped layers.



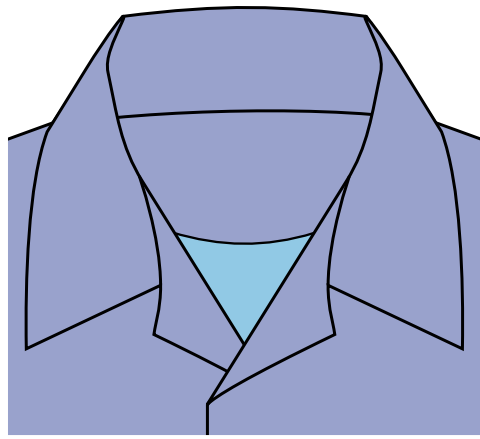
8. Turn the facings and collar to the right side, then tuck the exposed, pointed clipped corners of all layers, along with the back-neck seam allowances, up inside the collar, folding the upper-collar seam allowance so it just covers the back-neckline seam.



9. With the upper collar seam allowance aligned with and just covering the under-collar seamline (I glue baste to secure this edge), edgestitch the collar through all layers from the right (under-collar) side starting and ending about where the seam allowances split, backstitching at start and end.







**Option 1. No yoke, back facing created and added**

**Convertible Collar Construction; Front and Back Facings, or Yoke Used as Facing**

**6 Variation 6: Back Facings, option 1**

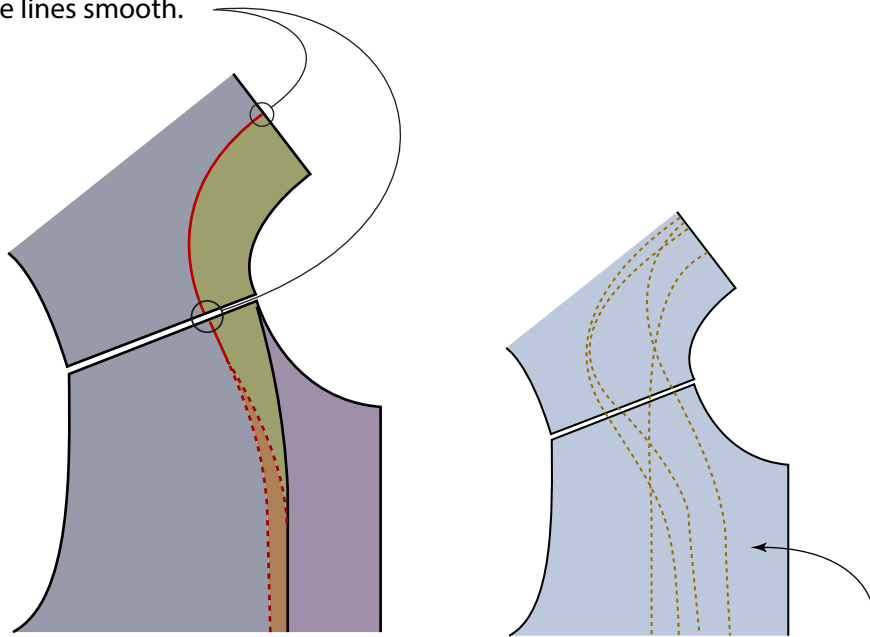
**¼" (6mm) seam allowances unless otherwise indicated**

**Preliminary steps:** Fronts and back joined at shoulders; shoulder seams finished. **Front facing reshaped as described below**, with edges finished, interfaced if needed (or do this all at once after attaching back facing), and joined to fronts if cut separately. Neckline stay-stitched and clipped if desired (usually not needed with ¼" or 6mm seam allowances; see **Sewing without Pins** on page 38 for details on proceeding without clipping as shown). Collar layers joined at outer edges and turned; topstitched if desired.

**Marked:** Collar and back facing at CB, neckline at CB and Collar Ends/Center Fronts.

**1. Draft a back facing that blends and joins with a front facing**

Facings are simply cut from the shapes they face, so you can easily draw new ones or reshape existing ones inside the front and back or back-yoke pieces, as shown below. The angles where the facing lines cross seams and centers or meet should usually be about 90° to keep the lines smooth.

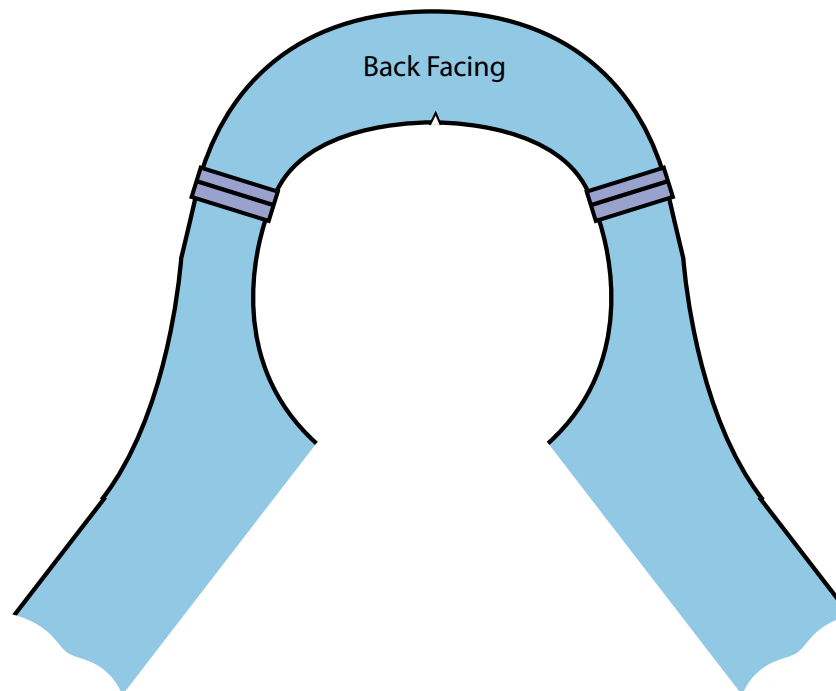


Facings can be any shape and size you want, and are too narrow only if they'll tend to flip out and become visible. They are usually tacked to seam allowances they cross to prevent this.

Or they can be stitched down through all layers, either near the neckline or at the edges, or both, if that suits the style of your project.

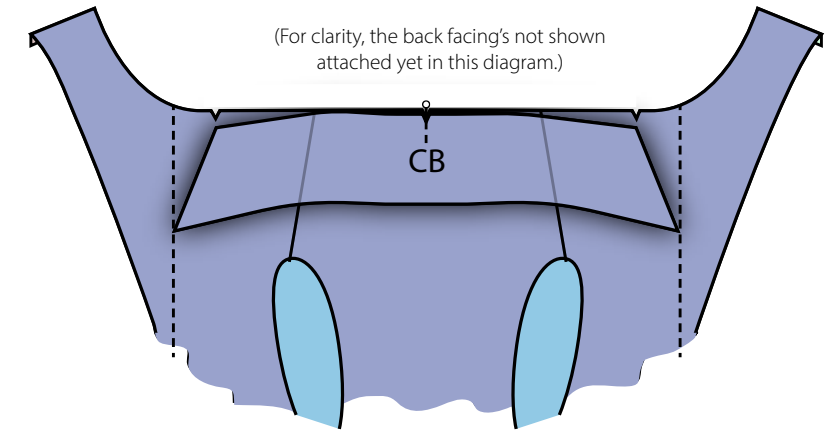
**2. Attach back facing the front facings**

Interface and finish the back facing's outer edges as desired to match front facing treatment. With right sides together, join each end of your back facing to the matching ends of the front facings.

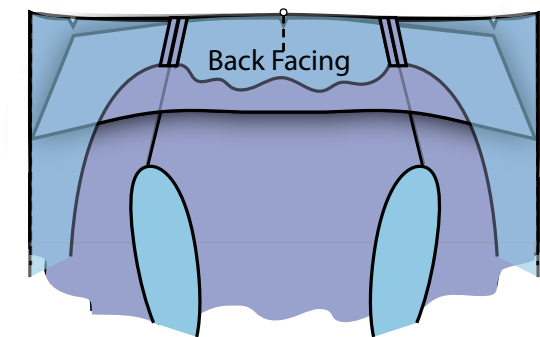


**3. Install collar between facings and garment at neckline**

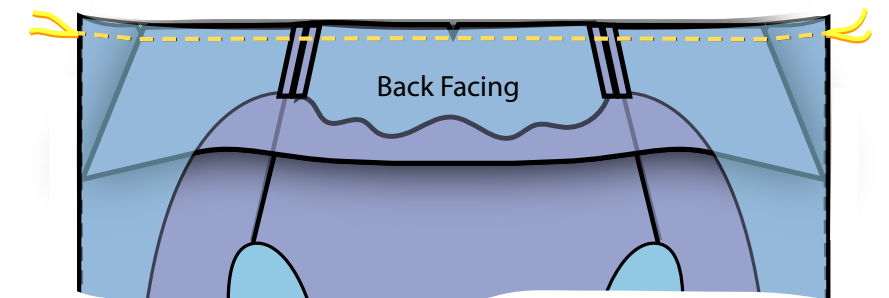
1. Pin *both collar layers* to right side of neckline at CB matching raw edges. Make sure the collar ends match or are equidistant from the markings in front.  
 OPTIONAL: Pin or baste collar layers to the neckline edge. See **Sewing without Pins** on page 38 for details on proceeding without pins or basting as shown.



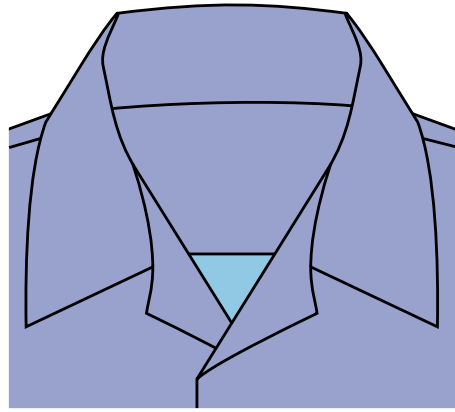
2. Fold facings to the right side along fold or seam lines, sandwiching the collar layers inside. The facing seams should align with and meet the shoulder seams.



3. Align the collar raw edges with the neckline edges as you stitch from front to front—or from CB out to each edge if you prefer—through all layers. Turn facings to wrong side and collar up away from garment. Press, then tack facings to the shoulder seam allowances.







**Option 2. Yoke used as facing**

**6** Variation 6: Back Facings, option 2

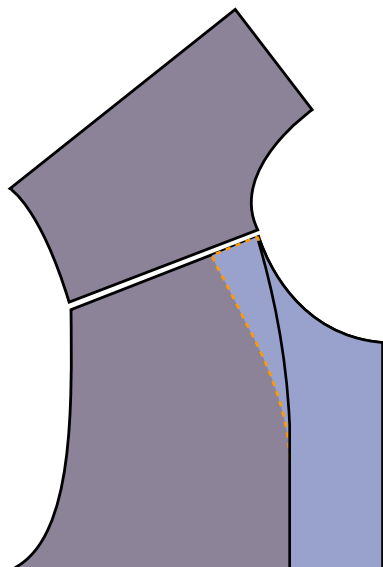
**¼" (6mm) seam allowances unless otherwise indicated**

**Preliminary steps:** Fronts joined at shoulders to the outer yoke layer; back can be attached to the other end of the yoke, or left for later (my preference). **Front facing** reshaped as described below, edges finished, interfaced if needed, and joined to fronts if cut separately. Neckline stay-stitched and clipped if desired (usually not needed with ¼" or 6mm seam allowances; see **Sewing without Pins** on page 38 for details on proceeding without clipping as shown). Collar layers joined at outer edges and turned; topstitched if desired.

**Marked:** Collar and yoke at CB, neckline at CB and Collar Ends/Center Fronts.

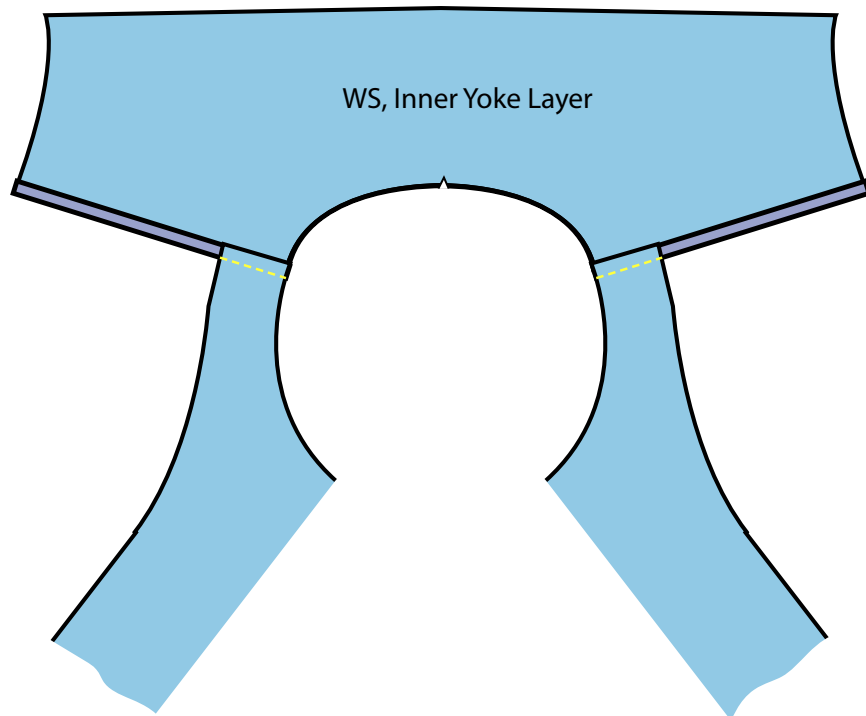
**1. Reshape front facing to meet and join yoke front edge**

Make sure your front facings are extended or reshaped as shown so they can be easily joined to the yoke front edge.



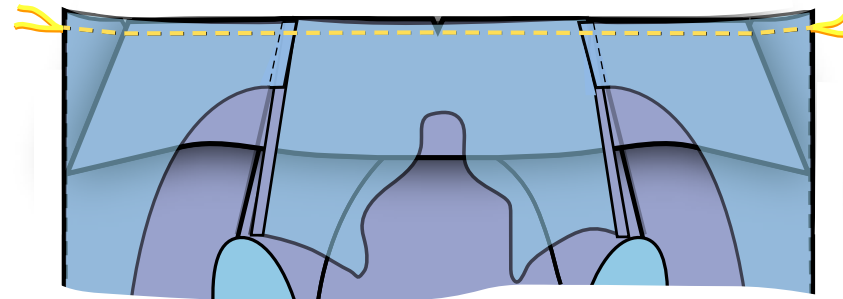
**2. Attach inner yoke layer to the front facings**

With right sides together, join each end of the front facing to the front edges of the inner yoke layer as shown. Press all allowances towards the yoke.



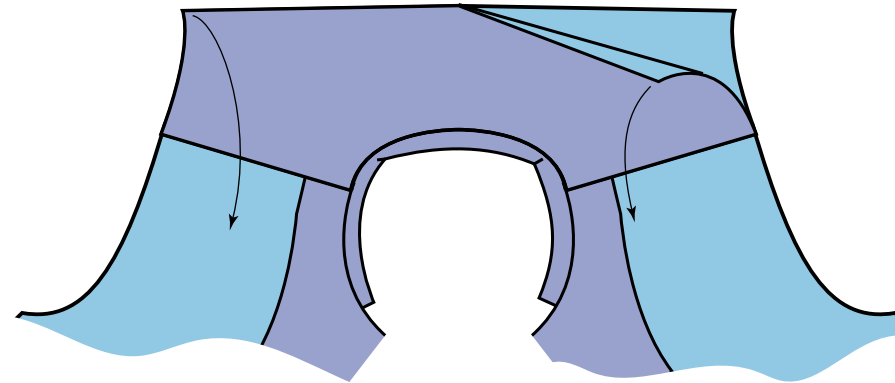
**3. Install collar between facings and garment at neckline**

These steps are done exactly as described on the previous page, except that after turning, don't tack the facings to the shoulder seam allowances. Simply turn and press, then proceed to the next step.

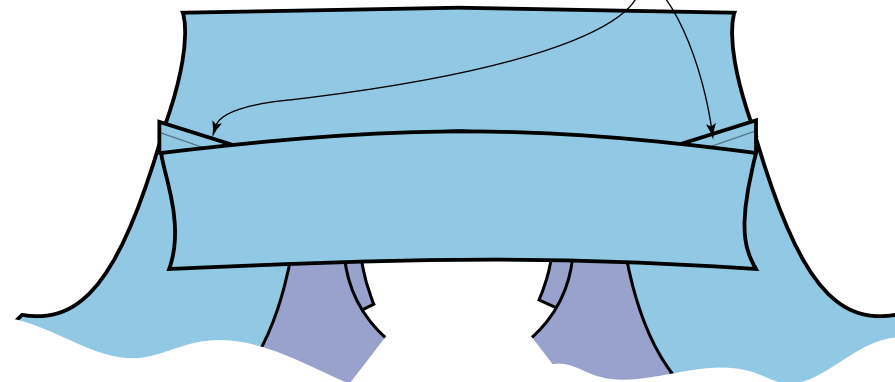


**4. Join yoke seam allowances in front**

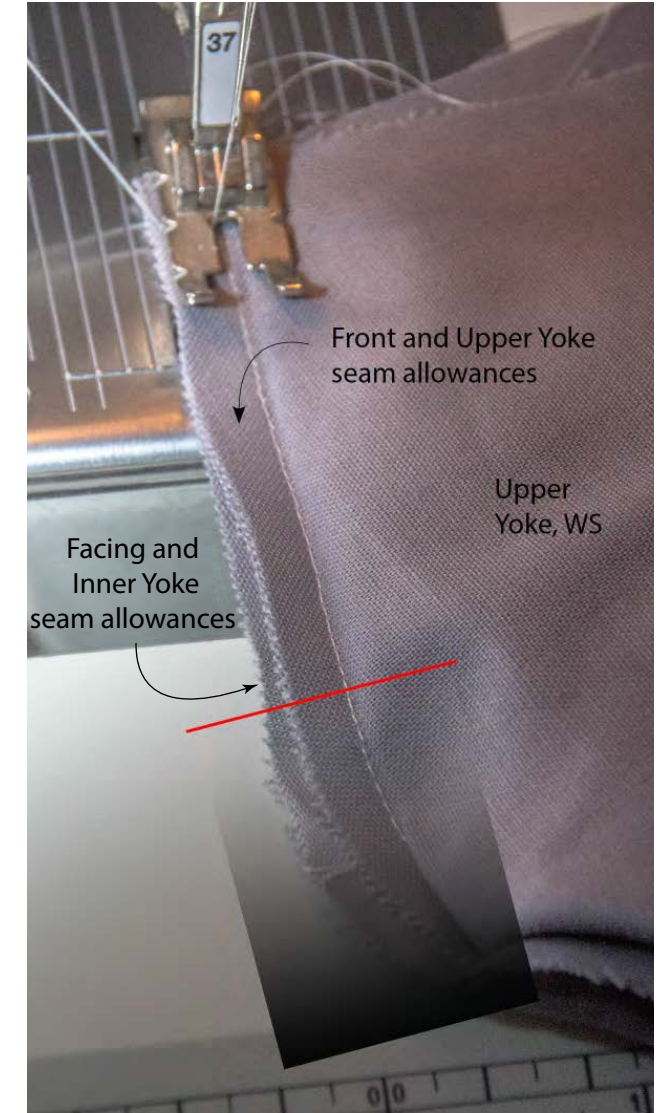
1. With the facings/inner yoke turned wrong sides together against the shirt fronts/outer yoke, arrange the inside of the shirt so it's facing up, then fold the inner yoke away from the outer yoke over the neckline as far as you can...



...exposing the seam allowances of both yoke fronts, which will be laying parallel to each other, right sides together with the free inner-yoke allowances on top.

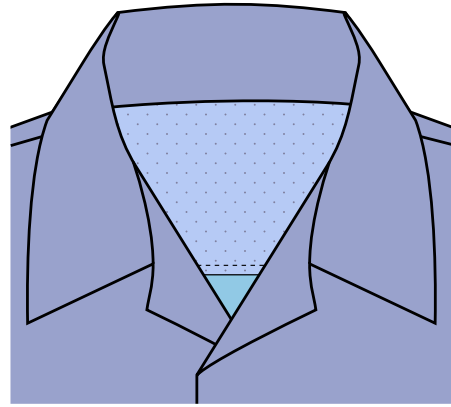


2. Holding a pair of allowances together, flip the whole garment over so the upper yoke seam allowance is on top, with the seam joining it to the front visible, and all the other garment pieces folded out of the way beneath, as shown below. Align the edges, then stitch again exactly on top of the previous seam, from the armseye edge towards the neckline.



As described in the Intro pages, you won't be able to stitch all the way to the neckline, as indicated by the gradient box fading out the seam. Stop stitching just a little beyond the red line above, before the seam line starts to curve, which should be well inside the facing edge attached to the lower seam allowances. Repeat on the other side, turn the yokes back to being wrong sides together, and press.





**Option 3. Facing and inner yoke joined to armhole in front, yoke hangs free in back**

**6** Variation 6: Back Facings, option 3

**1/4" (6mm) seam allowances unless otherwise indicated**

**Preliminary steps:** Fronts joined at shoulders to the outer yoke layer; back can be attached to the other end of the yoke, or left for later (my preference), OR pattern may not have a yoke, in which case the back is joined to the front and an inner yoke needs to be drafted. **Front facing reshaped as described below**, edges finished, interfaced if needed, and joined to fronts if cut separately. Neckline stay-stitched and clipped if desired (usually not needed with 1/4" or 6mm seam allowances; see **Sewing without Pins** on page 38 for details on proceeding without clipping as shown). Collar layers joined at outer edges and turned; topstitched if desired.

**Marked:** Collar and yoke at CB, neckline at CB and Collar Ends/Center Fronts.



**1. Reshape front facing to join yoke front edge and extend to armhole—and add a yoke layer if needed**

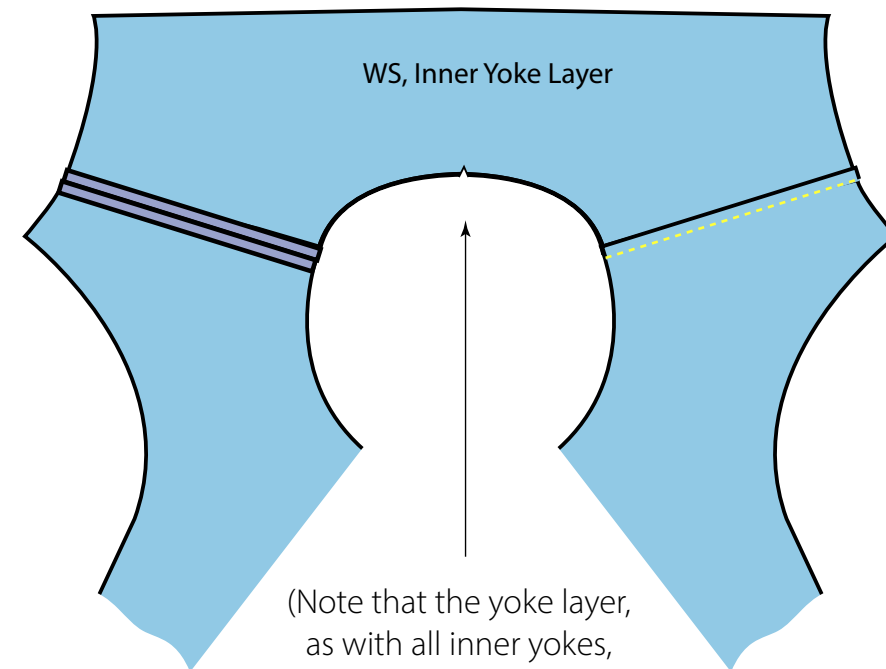
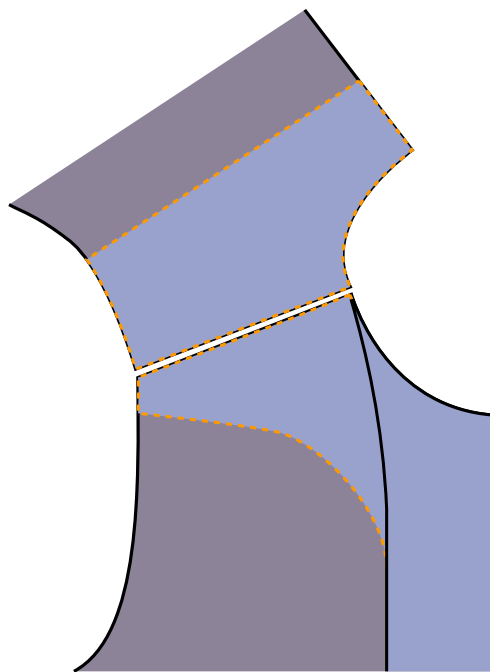
**2. Attach inner yoke layer to the front facings**

With right sides together, join each top edge of the front facings to the front edges of the inner yoke layer as shown. Press all allowances open, or towards the yoke as you prefer.

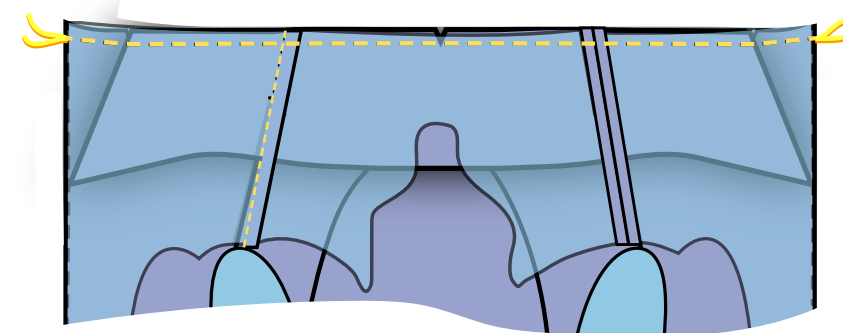
**3. Install collar between facings and garment at neckline**

These steps are done exactly as described on the first page, except that after turning, don't tack the facings to the shoulder seam allowances. Simply turn and press, then proceed to the next step...

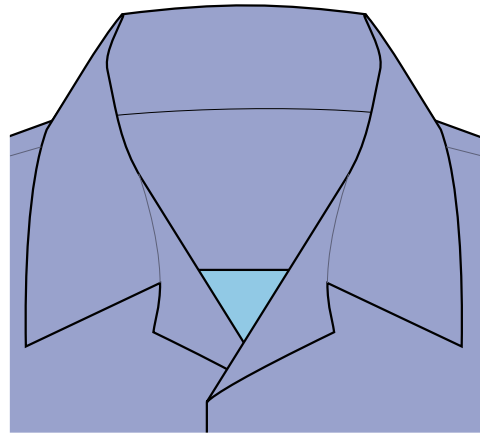
...which in this case, is not a collar-related one, as you can see that there's no reason to secure either facings or inner yoke layer to anything else, except for catching them in the sleeve/armhole seam, unless you want to, or to add some topstitching anywhere...



(Note that the yoke layer, as with all inner yokes, can be cut from a different fabric than the garment or facings.)







## Convertible Collar Construction; Front and Back Facings, or Yoke Used as Facing

### 7 Variation 7: All collar and facing seam allowances pressed open, page 1

**1/4" (6mm) seam allowances unless otherwise indicated**

As discussed in the Intro, it makes the most visual sense to me to combine a collar constructed with neckline seam allowances pressed open, with a yoke also constructed that way. But the collar-joining steps on **any garment with any back facing**, including any of the variations just shown, could be rearranged so the collar layers join not to each other first, for sandwiching between the facing and garment, but join instead to the separate facing and garment layers first and then join each other along with the facing-to-garment stitching, in order to allow pressing open the collar/neckline seam allowances.

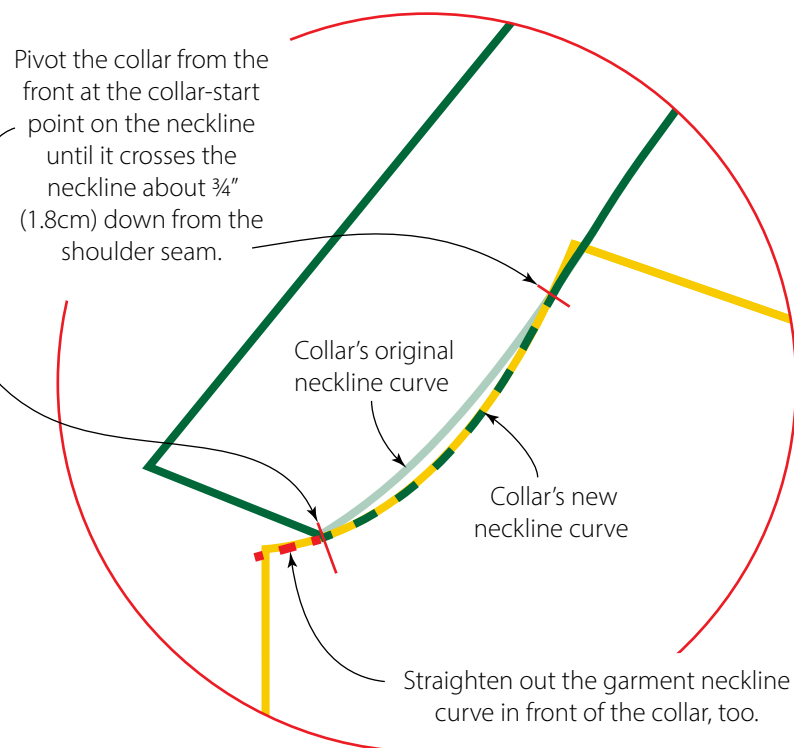
In fact, **you could even do this with no back facing**, by pressing the front facing and collar allowances open from the front edges only back as far as the facing continues, then clipping or pressing the collar seam allowances near the end of the facing so they switched to pointing towards the garment for some kind of finish or binding...or come up with some other solution for the back neckline finish that suits your particular project, fabric, concept, or mood. **What's discussed from here on out, though, will assume at least an inner yoke and facings extending to the armholes, as previously described.**

**Preliminary steps:** Fronts joined at shoulders to the outer yoke layer; back can be attached to the other end of the yoke, or left for later (my preference), OR pattern may not have a yoke, in which case the back is joined to the front and an inner yoke needs to be drafted. **Front facings cut separately and reshaped as described for Option 3 on the previous page**, edges finished, interfaced if needed, joined to inner yoke, seam allowances pressed open, but **NOT YET joined to fronts**. Neckline stay-stitched and clipped if desired (usually not needed with 1/4" or 6mm seam allowances; see **Sewing without Pins** on page 38 for details on proceeding without clipping as shown). **Collar pieces not yet cut out.**

**Marked:** Collar (after cutting) and back facing at CB, neckline at CB, neckline and front facings at Collar Ends/Center Fronts.

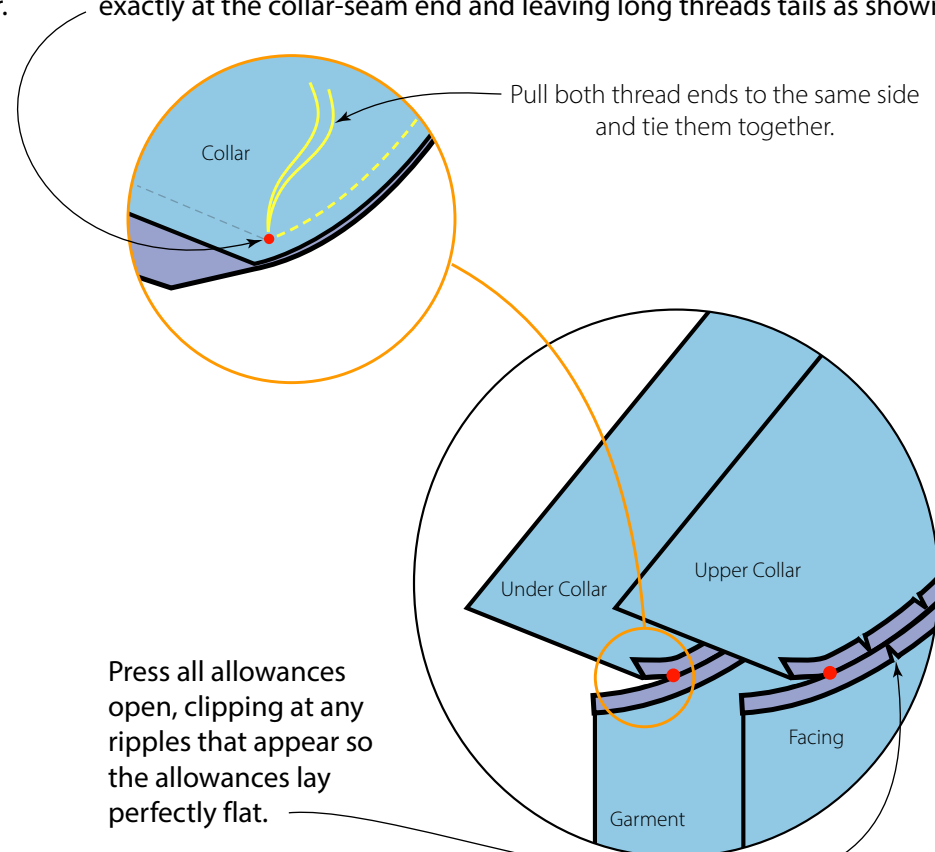
#### 1. Redraw collar pattern's neckline curve to match garment

As described on page 10 in the Intro, you'll get the smoothest possible transition across the neckline seams if you make the collar and garment curves identical in front by tracing the neckline curve onto the collar.



#### 2. Attach under collar to garment, and outer collar to facings

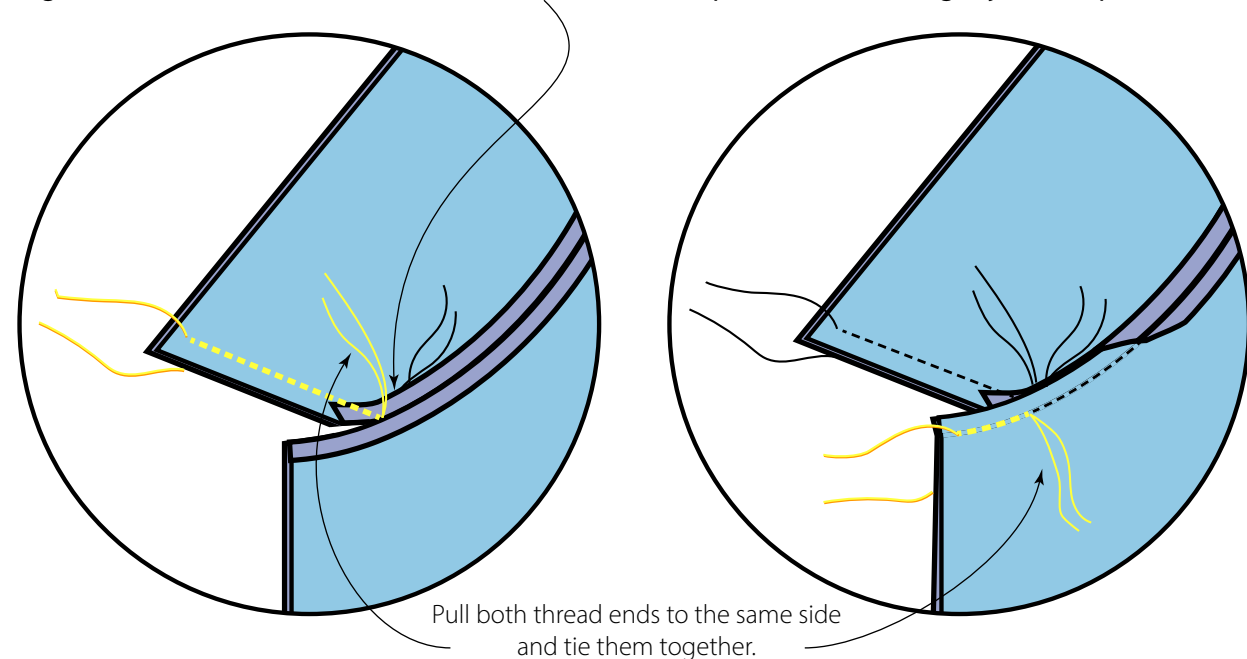
With right sides together, join each collar's neckline edge to the neckline seam on the facings unit or the garment, starting and stopping exactly at the collar-seam end and leaving long thread tails as shown.



#### 3. Start joining collar layers at the collar/facing notch

Bring the collar units together at the points indicated with red dots in the previous step, with right sides together and the seam endings exactly aligned. To keep this corner as smooth and clean as possible when opened up and turned, it's important that the three seams that meet here blend precisely, **without overlapping**, so start the collar-end stitching exactly above where the neckline stitching ended, without hitting it. Stitch right across the collar seam allowances...

...making sure they're flat and well pressed, stopping at the collar point as shown. Next, fold back the pressed neckline allowance at the same point and starting about a stitch-length away from the tied-off seam from Step 2, but exactly in line with it, stitch straight to the corner, and stop, as you did at the collar point. Tie the threads at the start, as you also did with the collar stitches, to protect this still fragile junction point.





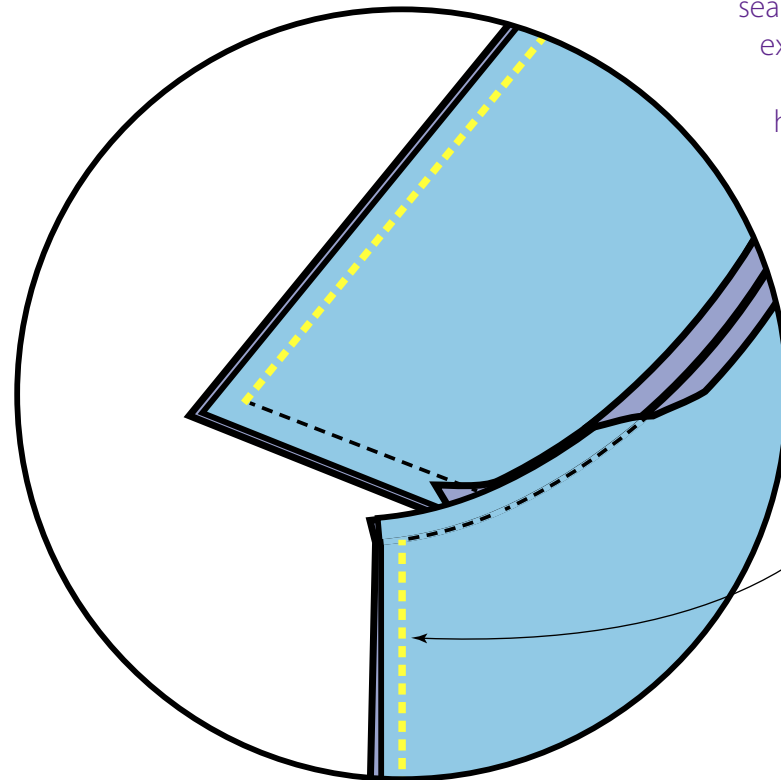
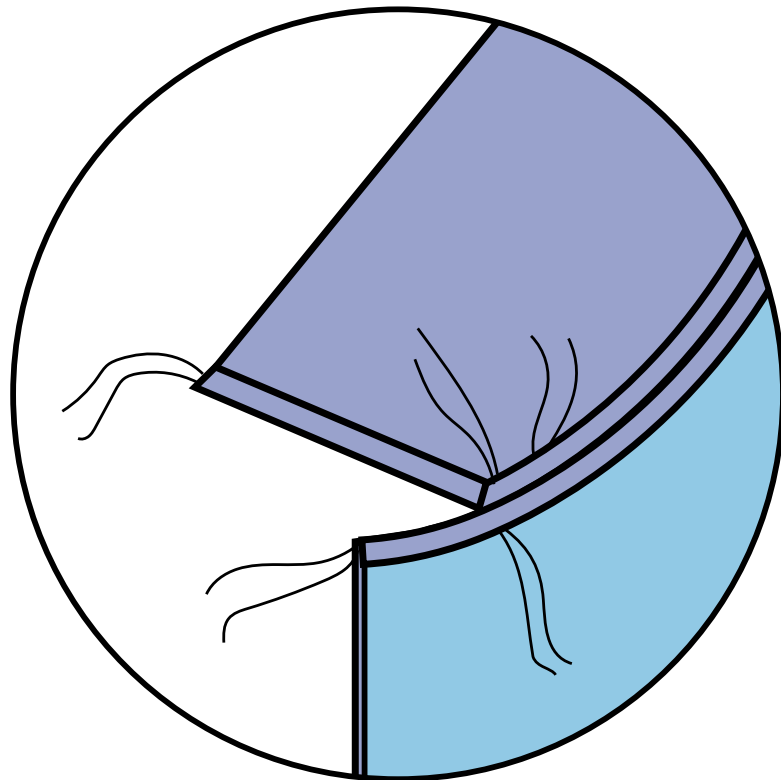
**7** Variation 7: All collar and facing seam allowances pressed open, page 2

**4. Continue joining collar/facing layers**

When new at this, it's a good idea to pause here to check how you're doing, by pressing open the seam allowances at the edges just stitched, and turning them to the right side to see if all is well. If not, clip the knots, rip stitches, press flat, and start over.

If all is good, or if you're confident, start up again at the corners where you left off in step 3, pivoting to complete the collar-edge and the front/facing seams. Press all seams open, turn, and press again.

Note that when you leave the front-edge seam between facings and fronts unstitched until the collar is attached, you've still got a chance to correct any inaccuracies that may have crept in by making sure these seams are made now so they're exactly equidistant from the collar ends, regardless of how the seam allowances sit.



**5. Secure the collar layers**

When everything's nicely pressed, try the garment on, or put it on your form, to see how the collar layers want to settle, and how the turn of the cloth affects the edge of the collar in back, when the collar is rolling as you'll mostly want it to. You'll no doubt need to fiddle a bit to get it all working exactly as you want. Pin the collar layers as they sit when all is well so you can remove it. Baste along the back neckline seamline on the collar side, then lift the inner yoke and tack or stitch the seam allowances together to secure the position, if possible, or hand-stitch into the ditch of one of the seams to secure it invisibly to the allowances behind the seam. Or tack the yoke seam allowances near the neckline... whatever seems best to you.

I hope you can begin to see how these last options bring us well along the path towards making very jacket-like shirts, and even into the realm of lining them...



**A little Knot Tip:**  
To make a temporary thread knot that's easy to undo, yet still quite secure, just take an extra turn around your thread with the other end while making an overhand knot, and don't do the second part that would turn it into a square or reef knot, just tighten.

