

Regency Underthings Pattern Instructions

Including Chemise, Short Stays, and Chemisette

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Notes:

The patterns contained in this package will give you the correct foundation for your Regency gowns, providing you with the proper silhouette and keeping you accurately clothed from the skin out! The chemise (which had formerly been called a “shift”) did not change drastically in the late 18th century, although the sleeves were shortened and made plain (rather than gathered) to fit under both short-sleeved ballgowns and long-sleeved day dresses. I created my chemise pattern based upon extant garments I’ve seen in two museum collections and the valuable information contained in Cunnington’s *The History of Underclothes*. The chemise is very simple, consisting of only four pieces, and is created for a loose fit. The neckline adjusts with a front drawstring, allowing you to use the chemise under many different types of gowns. It can also be worn as a nightgown and is very comfortable for sleeping due to the underarm gussets that make movement easy. I recommend making your chemise of pima, lawn, or another soft, lightweight cotton. Muslin will work, but it is heavier, and you want to keep in mind that this garment is going next to your skin between you and the stays, so it needs to be light and comfy.

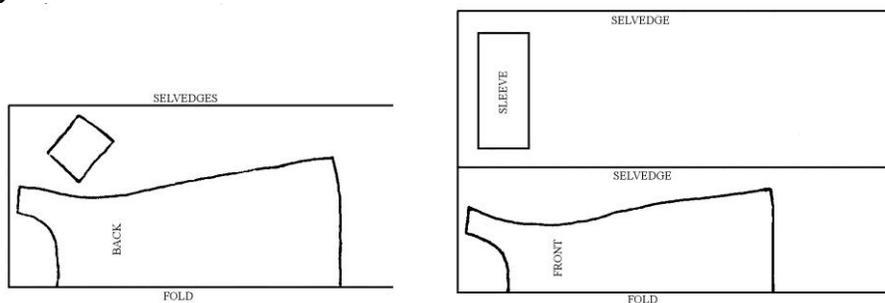
Short stays made their appearance during the transition between the conical, rigid stays of the 1770s and ‘80s and the columnar (though softer) stays of the early 19th century. They also showed up again briefly in the 1820s before the hourglass corsets of the 1830s arrived on the scene. I chose to offer short stays for several reasons. First, they are authentic for the early Regency (I’ve studied extant short stays in the D.A.R. Museum collection in D.C.—thank you, Alden!—and drawings of original front-lacing stays from two other collections, as well as the information in *The History of Underclothes*.) Second, they are much easier to wear than columnar, back-lacing stays, because you do not need a servant to help you into them! Finally, they are more comfortable and closer to the fit of a modern bra than long stays. You can bone short stays, quilt them, cord them, or just leave them plain. I’ve seen examples of every type and will provide tips for each so you can custom-fit your stays to your own tastes and comfort. The stays go over your chemise and provide the “uplift” seen in the Regency Era, with its very high empire waistlines. Stays are made in three layers (outer fabric, interlining, lining). I recommend using coutil or cotton duck for your interlining, which needs to be fairly stiff. You can also use this for your lining, though I prefer muslin or another light cotton. Your outer fabric can be as plain or fancy as you wish. Common choices include silk, linen, and cotton. I like linen best myself, since it “breathes” and has a bit more body to it than lighter materials. If you plan to wear your stays under a white or light-colored dress, you want to keep them white or flesh-colored (the chemise would be made to match). I don’t recommend short stays for full-figured ladies (E or greater), because you just will not get the support you need. My top recommendation is the Regency Stays pattern by The Mantua Maker (www.mantuumaker.com). These are long stays that will provide the full support you need, and they are easy to put together.

Finally, I’ve included a pattern for a chemisette with two neckline options. Chemisettes (also called “tuckers” or “bosom friends”) were worn like a modern-day dickie under the bodice of a dress. They fill in the neckline, which is wonderful in cold weather, and can be made of sheer or lightweight materials for a delicate look. View 1 features a short ruffle or a higher, standing ruffle around the neckline. View 2 features a pointed fold-out “collar” that has a more modern look to it but comes straight from the portraits of the era. Chemisettes are simple undergarments that tie below the bust with a drawstring and fasten up the front with tiny buttons or another tie at the neck. You can make these in lawn, organdy, voile, silk organza, or plain cotton. They make great additions to your Regency wardrobe and enable you to dramatically change the look of a dress with little effort!

Please read all instructions prior to cutting into your material! All seam allowances are 5/8” unless otherwise noted, but take careful note of the correct seam finishes outlined below. Enjoy your sewing adventures!

Section I: Chemise Assembly Instructions

Pattern layout:



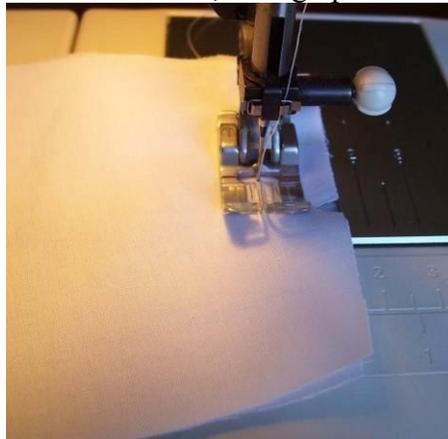
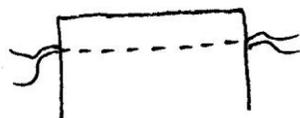
Here is the suggested layout for all pieces on 45” wide material.

You will use the leftover fabric to create the bias binding for your neckline drawstring casing.

Pre-shrink your fabric by washing it warm and tumble drying it before cutting!

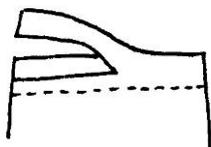
1. **Bodice** [Note: All seams in this garment will be flat-felled. Read on for further help. Keep in mind that garments of this time period would have been entirely hand-sewn. For authenticity, any seams that will show on the outside should be hand finished. However, no one will see your undergarments, so you can use machine stitching. I prefer to hand finish all hems, but those may also be done on the machine if you prefer.]

A. Pin the bodice front and back together at the shoulders. Stitch, taking up a 5/8" seam.



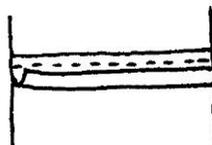
Stitch shoulder seam.

B. Now you are going to finish your seam allowance, making a neat flat-felled seam. First, trim the back portion of the seam allowance down to 1/8":

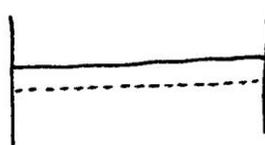


Back seam allowance trimmed.

C. Now press under half of the front seam allowance so that it meets the seam in the center:



D. Use the folded seam allowance to enclose the trimmed seam allowance, pressing both toward the back of the garment:



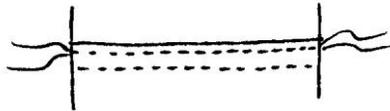


Fold under front seam toward back.



Press front seam toward back.

E. Topstitch the folded edge of the seam allowance to the bodice back shoulder, making a neat, finished seam:



Topstitch the folded edge of the seam.



Flat-felled seam right side.



Flat-felled seam wrong side.

Now you know how to make flat-felled seams! This is the seam finish that will be used throughout the chemise, but you will not flat-fell as you go. After the shoulder seams, you're going to proceed through the rest of the steps *before* flat-felling, so hold off on finishing until you have everything nicely put together.

2. Sleeve and Gussets

[Note on fitting sleeves: The sleeve should be large enough to comfortably go around your upper arm without binding. You can check this by measuring the sleeve width (single notch to double notch) and

comparing that with your arm measurement at the bicep. (You'll lose about half an inch of the sleeve once it is sewn and hemmed, so keep that in mind when you make the comparison.) If the sleeve is going to be too tight on your arm, you can make it larger by adding equal amounts to each notched end. This will not in any way affect the placement of the gusset or the matching of the side seam.]

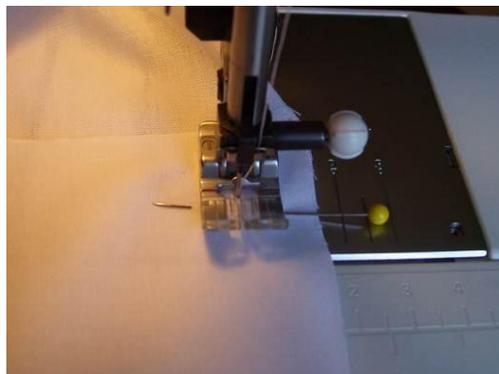
- A. Pin the sleeve to the bodice, matching the * marking on the sleeve to the shoulder seam of the chemise, right sides together (be sure to keep your sides straight, or you'll end up with notches that match up incorrectly when you add the gussets). Stitch, starting and ending $\frac{5}{8}$ " from each end of the sleeve:



Pin sleeve to center shoulder.



Sleeve sewn to bodice.



Start sewing sleeve at five-eighths mark.

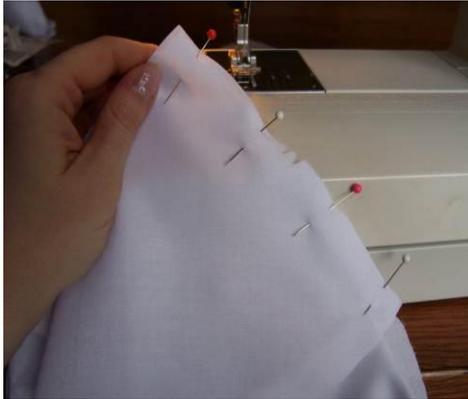


Stop sewing sleeve at five-eighths mark.



Detail of sleeve at five-eighths mark.

- B. Now pin the back edge (double notch) of your gusset to the back edge of the sleeve, right sides together. Stitch from one dot marked on the gusset to the other. **[Note: This is a crucially important step that will prevent any puckering of the gusset as you set it in place. Be sure to start and end your seams right on the dot!]**



Pin gusset matching notches.



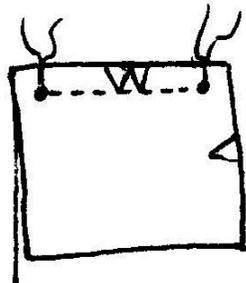
Stitch gusset.



Detail end of gusset seam.



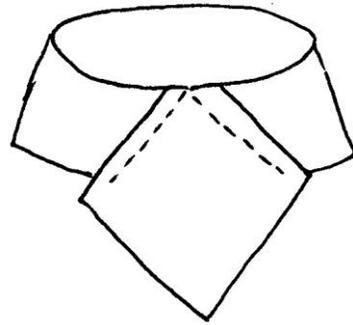
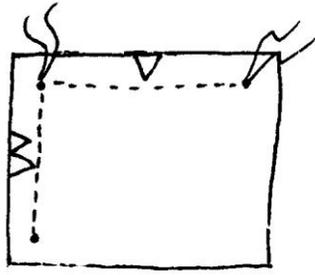
Closer detail end of gusset seam.



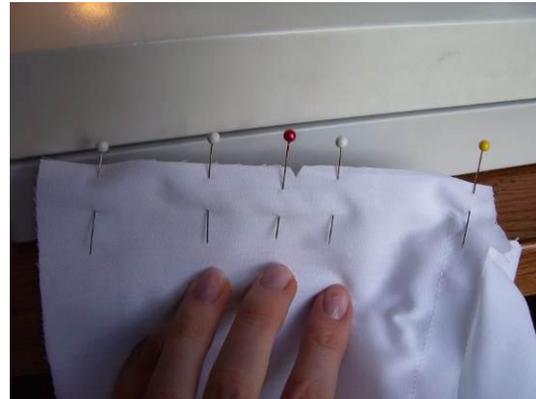
First gusset seam stitched.



- C. Now pin the front edge (single notch) of your gusset to the front edge of the sleeve, right sides together. Stitch as before. You've now created the arm opening for your sleeve and will have the bottom edges of the gusset hanging free:



Match second gusset seam notch.

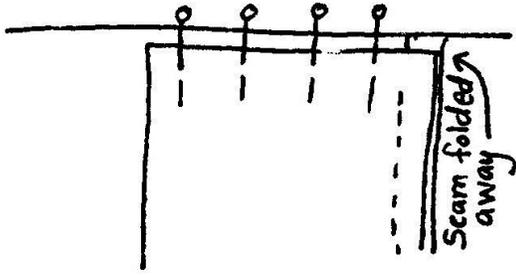


Pin second gusset seam.



Detail of pinned corner bodice side.

- D. Carefully match the free back edge of the gusset to the back side seam of the bodice. This is a very simple thing to do, but it is a little tricky to understand at first. Essentially, you will fold the seam that meets the sleeve back out of your way, and the free edge of the gusset will very nicely and neatly match up to the side seam with no puckers. (This is why you sew only to the dot and no further.) You will be able to pin the gusset in place just as if it was an unconnected, flat piece of fabric. When you have it properly pinned, it will look like this:



Matching bodice to gusset.

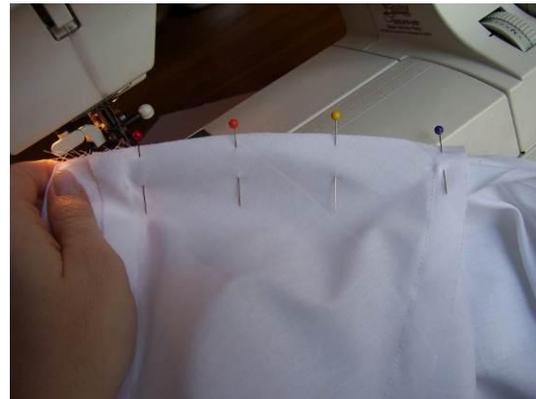


**Detail of gusset seam-
fabric folded out of the way for sewing.**

Detail of gusset seam-fabric folded out of the way for sewing.

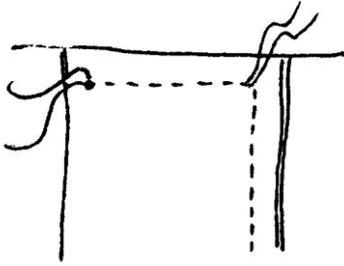


Gusset pinned to the bodice side.



Last gusset seam pinned.

Once you have it in place, stitch from the current seam (at the dot where the gusset meets the sleeve) to the dot at the other end of the gusset:

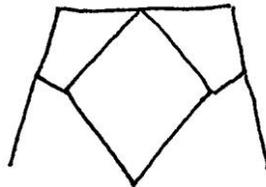


Gusset sewn to bodice side.



Detail of gusset at bodice side.

Repeat these instructions for the front edge of the gusset. Once you have all sides of the gusset attached, you want to check to make sure you did not put any puckers in at the corners. A properly placed gusset will look like a perfect diamond under the sleeve:

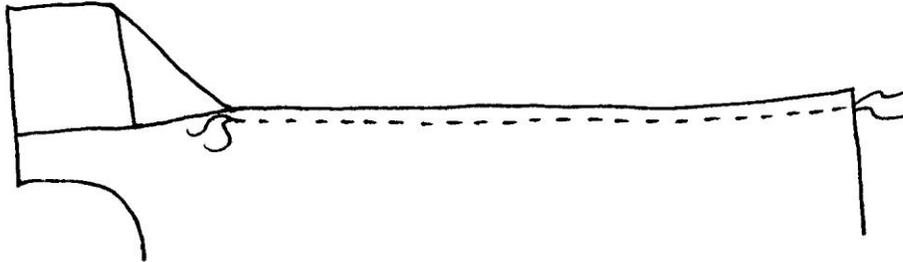


Gusset corner detail.



Gusset sewn to bodice.

- E. Pin the side seam of the chemise, matching notches and folding carefully at the bottom of the gusset to prevent puckers as before. Stitch from the bottom of the gusset down to the bottom of the chemise:



- F. When you have both sides of the chemise together, you are nearly finished! Now it's time to finish all those seam allowances with flat-felling. Follow the steps given in 1B-E, going in the following order:
- ✓ Flat-fell back sleeve/gusset seam *away* from gusset, starting at the sleeve end and stopping at the side seam.
 - ✓ Repeat for front sleeve/gusset seam.
 - ✓ Flat-fell sleeve seam toward bodice (*away* from sleeve).
 - ✓ Flat-fell front gusset seam toward bodice front, stopping at the dot at the bottom of the gusset (top of side seam).
 - ✓ Flat-fell back gusset seam *and* side seam toward bodice back, starting or ending at the gusset, depending on which side of the chemise you're sewing.



Clip underarm corner to flat-fell.



Detail of clipped corner at gusset.



Seam trimmed to flat-fell.



Flat-felling gusset seam.



Flat-felling into corner underarm.



Flat-felling side seam.

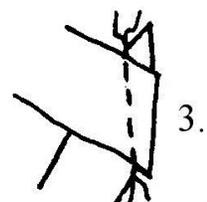
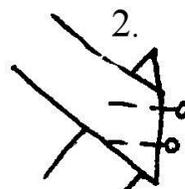
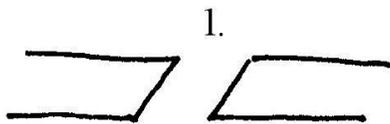


Stitch seam down - flat-fell.

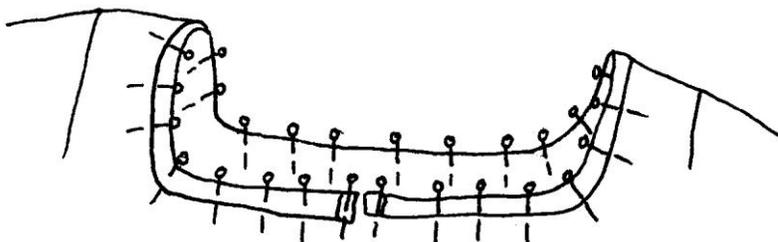
Now iron everything neatly, and you'll have beautifully finished seams all over!

3. Neckline Casing and Drawstring

- A. Using the binding guide, cut two long bias strips of your leftover material. You may need to sew two pieces together in order to get a piece long enough to go around the entire neckline. If that is the case, cut one end of each piece on a 45-degree angle (1), then pin together (2) and stitch together between the little "V" notches (3):



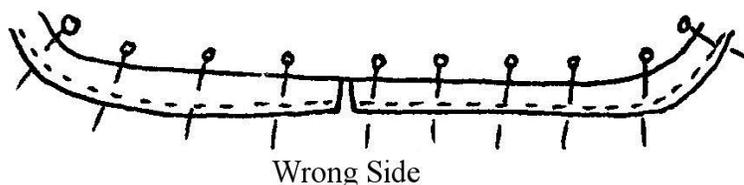
- B. Now pin your binding to the neckline edge, right sides together, beginning at the center front and folding under $\frac{1}{4}$ " of the end of the binding, continuing around the back, and ending at the center front with the opposite edge turned under (you may have to trim away some excess binding):



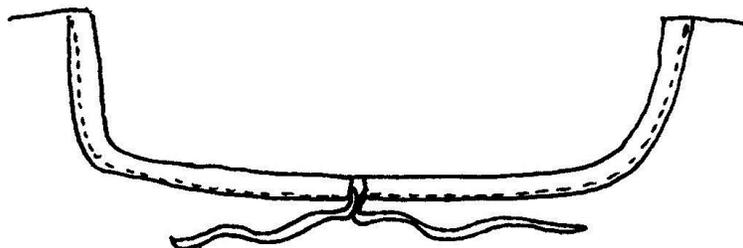
- C. Stitch binding to neckline, taking up a $\frac{5}{8}$ " seam (1). Trim seam allowance down to $\frac{1}{8}$ ", then turn under the raw edge of the binding $\frac{1}{4}$ " and press (2):



- D. Turn binding to inside of neckline, press, then pin in place. Stitch binding to neckline (this will show as a topstitch on the outside), keeping your stitches close to the folded edge of the binding on the inside:



- E. You now have a casing running around the neckline of your bodice with a narrow opening at the center front for your drawstring. Using a large, blunt needle or a bodkin, feed your drawstring through the casing (I recommend thin 100% cotton cord or $\frac{1}{8}$ " ribbon for your drawstring), leaving four inches hanging free at each end of the casing:



When you put on your chemise, you will be able to pull the drawstring and adjust the gathers to make the neckline fit smoothly and invisibly under any gown.

4. Finishing the Chemise

- A. The chemise is meant to come just below the knees, but you can make it longer if you like (as long as it won't show beneath your dress skirt). Mark your hemline, then turn under the bottom of the chemise twice and hem.
- B. Narrowly turn under the ends of each sleeve, beginning at the underarm seam. A half-inch hem is allowed (turning under $\frac{1}{4}$ ", then $\frac{1}{4}$ " again), but you can hem the sleeves shorter if you like. The

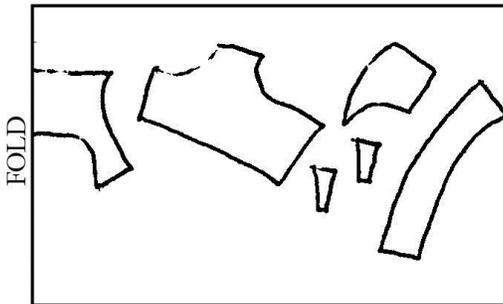
underarm seam area will turn under at a slight angle due to the gusset, but you will be able to keep it smooth and pucker-free if you pin carefully and hem narrowly.

Now you have your first Regency Era undergarment ready to wear! Chemises were not usually embellished with any trims, although there are many examples with initials embroidered into the center front (this helped keep everyone's underwear straight in the family wash). If you are a reenactor and attend many overnight events, I recommend making at least three chemises, since you'll want a fresh one each day. Chemises can be machine-washed and will withstand years of wear with those flat-felled seams.

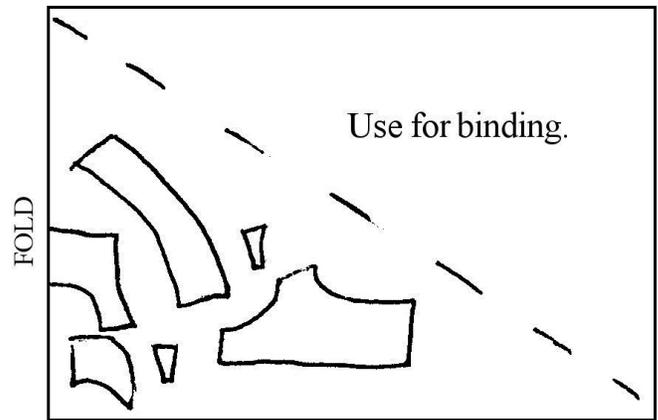
Enjoy your new creation!

Section II: Short Stays Assembly Instructions

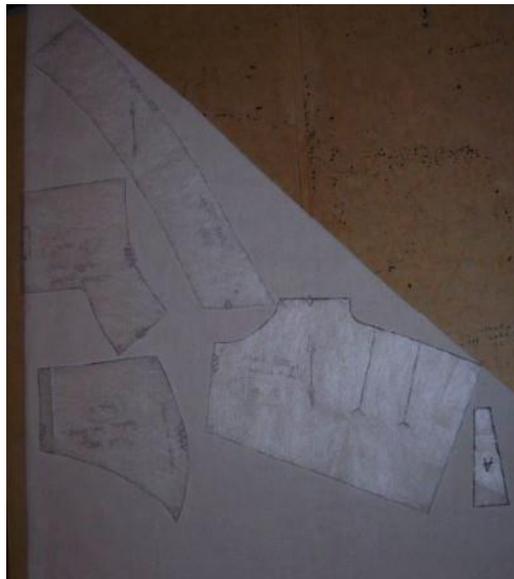
Pattern Layout:



Lining and Interlining



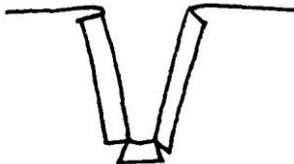
Outer Material



**This is the suggested layout for all pieces on 45"-wide fabric.
Pre-shrink all your fabrics by washing them warm and tumble drying them before cutting!**

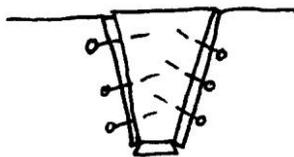
1. **Bodice Front** [Note: Start with your interlining first. This layer will be sandwiched between the others and hidden, so if you have a learning curve, no one will be the wiser! Do the lining second and your outer layer last. By the time you get to the outer layer, you'll be a pro, and your gussets will look perfect. You can also use your interlining for a try-on before you make the other layers.]

- A. Cut the opening for each gusset, following the slash lines on the pattern piece marked for your size. When you reach the bottom of the gusset, clip $\frac{3}{8}$ " snips along the angle lines indicated. Turn the clipped edges to the inside of the bodice front and press in place:



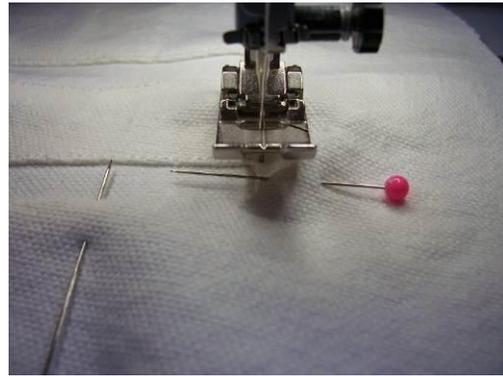
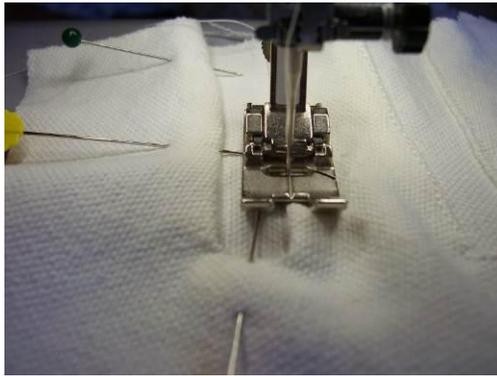
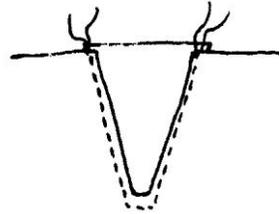
Gussets clipped and pressed.

- B. Pin the right side of your gusset to the wrong side of the bodice, lining up the gusset along the top and having the edges $\frac{1}{8}$ " away from the clipped edges of the gusset slash:



Gussets Pinned.

- C. Stitch the gusset to the bodice on the right side of the fabric, keeping the needle close to the opening and making sure you catch all of the gusset edges beneath:



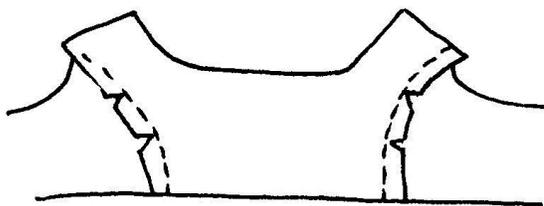
- D. Repeat for remaining three gussets, then iron everything neatly and set aside.
E. Pin side backs to center back, matching notches and easing the curve as necessary (it's not necessary on some fabrics). Clip curves, then press curved seam toward the side:



Back curve pinned.

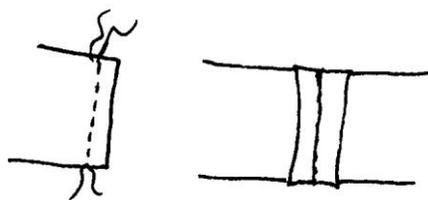


Back curve pressed right side.



Back curve clipped.

- F. Pin bodice fronts to bodice side backs at side seams, matching notches. Stitch, then press seams open:



Side Seam Pinned.



Press Open side seams.

- G. Pin shoulder straps to bodice back with right sides together, matching notches and making sure you have the outside edges of each strap facing the armhole rather than the neckline. Stitch, then press seams open:



Pinned strap.

- H. Pin other end of straps to bodice front with right sides together and notches matched. Stitch, then press seams open.



Sew on strap.

2. **Fitting:** Now your interlining is ready for a try-on. I strongly recommend that you try it over your chemise, since that is how the stays are meant to be worn. Lace the neckline of the chemise to come just below the neckline of the gown you plan to wear. Put on the stays as you would a short vest, making sure the side seams center on the underarm and the back isn't riding up. The top front of the stays should hit you just above the center of the bust, though this will vary a bit depending on your cup size. Pull the fronts together until they are about two inches apart (no more than two and a half). This is a little hard to do without eyelets and lacing, but at this point you just want to see if the gussets support you properly. They should hit at either side of the center bust point and push the bosom in and upward. Stays are meant to be snug, but they shouldn't be uncomfortable. When you have them put together properly, they will also have boning on either side of the eyelets to help separate the bustline in the center (correct for the time period). Check to see if the gussets need to move over in either direction or be lengthened at all, marking any adjustments that should be made as you go (have someone help you do this, since it is hard to hold the stays closed and mark at the same time!). Finally, check to see if the armholes fit properly (no chafing or rubbing in the armpit area). If they are too tall, you can cut the curve down to suit your own needs. Do keep in mind that you will have a drawstring at the bottom of the stays to prevent them creeping up. You will also have the chemise to help hold everything in place without "spillage" over the top of the stays! Don't be alarmed at this point if you find your bosom has turned into a shelf—that's exactly what stays are supposed to do for a proper Regency silhouette. If you don't feel you are being pushed in enough, you can use gussets for the next cup size down, keeping in mind that this will not be as comfortable, though it will definitely provide a more "uplifting" fit. Your goal is not to look like a sausage that is popping out of its skin at the top. There are many satirical cartoons and writings from the Regency Era that decry the ridiculous look produced by some undergarments. Your goal is good, firm support that will allow you to wear the very high waistlines of the era without difficulty. Once you are satisfied with the fit of your interlining, you can repeat all the construction steps above for the lining and the outer stays. Press them all neatly, then proceed through the rest of the instructions below.

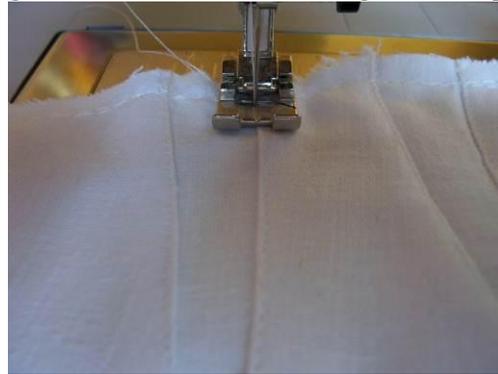
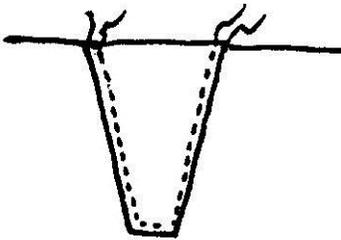
3. **Joining the layers**

- A. Now it's time to put all your layers together. First, place your outer stays on top of the interlining stays with both stays facing upward (wrong side of outer fabric to right side of interlining). Now place the lining behind the interlining, wrong sides together (so the right side of the lining will face your body). Carefully pin all the layers so that the gussets and seams match up. Now you will stitch the layers together from the top (outer layer) thusly:



Matching seams.

- i. Stitch along the inside edge of each gusset next to the folded edge of the opening:



Stitch “in the ditch” gusset.

- ii. Stitch “in the ditch” along each side seam (needle is in the seam itself, leaving no topstitching on the outside layer):

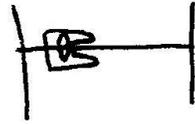


Stitch “in the ditch”.

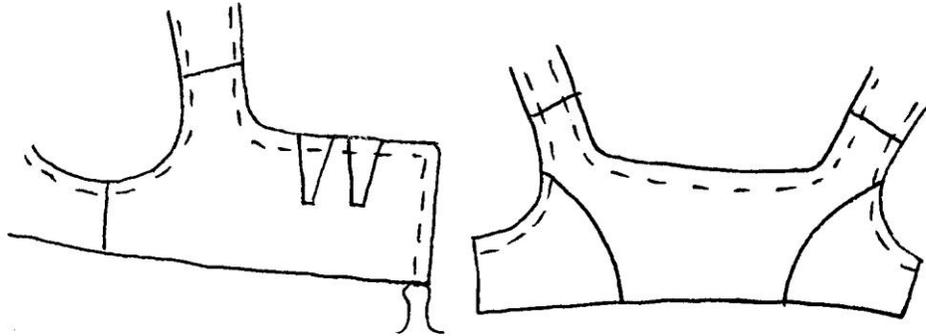
- iii. Stitch in the ditch along each side back curve:



- iv. Stitch in the ditch along each shoulder strap seam (front and back):



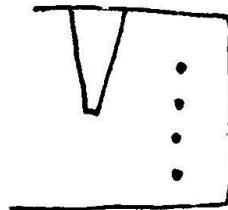
- v. Baste the center front edges, the top edge of the bodice, and both edges of each shoulder strap:



Layers basted.

4. Eyelets

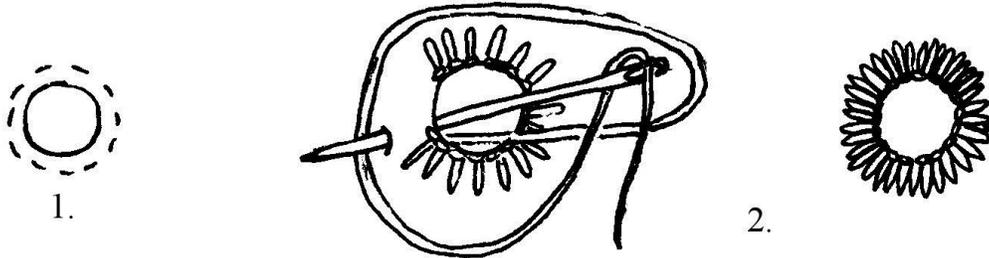
- A. Before you move on to boning channels, quilting, or cording, it's time to make the eyelets for your front lacing. The eyelets go between the boning channels you will create at the center front on each side. Use the eyelet placement guide on the pattern sheet to help you line up your first eyelet (which needs to be spaced far enough from the top and front edges to allow room for your binding). Eyelet spacing seems to be a matter of personal taste in this era. I recommend closer spacing (1" apart) for fuller figures (C and D cups) and slightly wider spacing (1 ¼" apart) for everyone else. Your last eyelet should end no more than 1" above the bottom drawstring (you can "fudge" the spacing to keep the eyelets even as you go, since every set of stays is going to be slightly different depending on the size of the wearer):



- B. After marking the eyelets to your satisfaction, use a sharp awl or ice pick to punch the holes through all three layers of fabric. Push and turn the awl to create a nice, rounded hole for each eyelet:



C. Now you're ready to stitch around each hole to finish your eyelets. [Note: You may, of course, use a sewing machine with an eyelet buttonhole option to create your eyelets. This is, by far, the easiest method. However, if you want authenticity and are willing to go the extra mile, follow the hand-stitching directions given below.] Creating an eyelet is no different from making a buttonhole; you're just working in a circle and in a smaller space. I recommend beginning by taking small running stitches around the border of each eyelet hole (1), then making your buttonhole stitches over this, "padding" your stitching and making a nice, raised eyelet (2). Do also note that conventional thread is not at all useful for eyelets. You will need buttonhole twist or a heavy embroidery floss to make sturdy, smooth eyelets. Go around each hole twice, taking care not to pull your stitches too tight, or your hole will pull itself closed.



5. **Boning Channels** [Note: Regardless of whether or not you choose to bone or cord the rest of the stays, you must place boning at the center front on either side of your eyelets. This prevents strain on the eyelets and helps the stays do what they are supposed to do (the bones take the place of a busk, which is used in long stays). First I'll give the directions for the center front boning, then I'll give options for further boning, cording, or quilting, and you can do whatever you like with your stays. All methods are correct for the era.]

A. You are going to bind the raw edges of your stays, and your center front binding will also serve as the channel for the boning at that spot. You can make your own binding of your fashion material (using the binding guide for the stays on the pattern sheet), or you can purchase ready-made double-fold binding. Just make sure your binding is wide enough to hold 1/4" boning after it is sewn in place. You don't want the boning in there so tightly that it strains the stitching. Once you have your binding folded and ready (1), pin it to the center front edge on each side and stitch it in place (2):





Fold binding to right side.



Binding pinned to neckline.



Stitch binding to front wrong side.



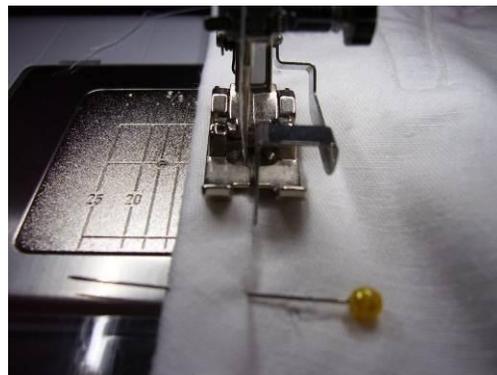
Stitch binding to neckline.



Binding pinned to wrong side.

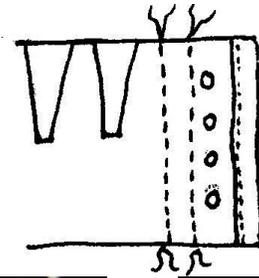


Binding pinned to right side.



Stitch binding to front right side.

- B. Now you'll create the channel for the second piece of boning. Skipping over your eyelets, move your presser foot over toward the first gusset and stitch a straight line from the top to the bottom of the bodice front. Move the presser foot over again far enough to create the channel for your boning—again, not so snug that the boning is going to strain your stitches but narrow enough to hold the boning without shifting:



Stitch boning channel.



Stitch second part of boning channel.

- C. If you don't plan to use any more boning than what is needed in the center front, go ahead and push your bones into their channels (between the fashion fabric and the interlining—not between the interlining and the lining). The bones should be $1\frac{1}{2}$ " inch shorter than the length of your stays so that you have room to sew your binding around the top and bottom of the stays without hitting bones. Once you have the bones in place, skip to the next section on finishing your stays.



Boning placed with room to stitch.

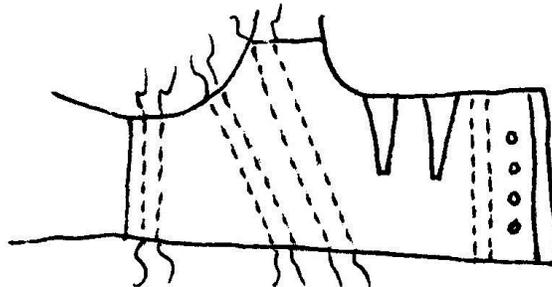


Place boning in channel.

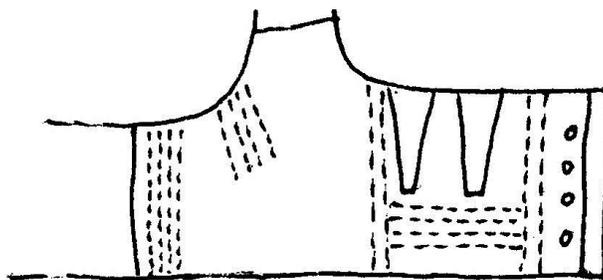


Place boning in front binding.

However, if you like the idea of using more boning for extra support, I recommend making a channel for boning in front of each side seam (on the bodice front). You can also place boning channels diagonally next to the outside gussets to help keep everything in front (and avoid “spillage” at the armholes). Here are my suggested lines for boning the bodice front (no boning is necessary on the back of the stays at all):



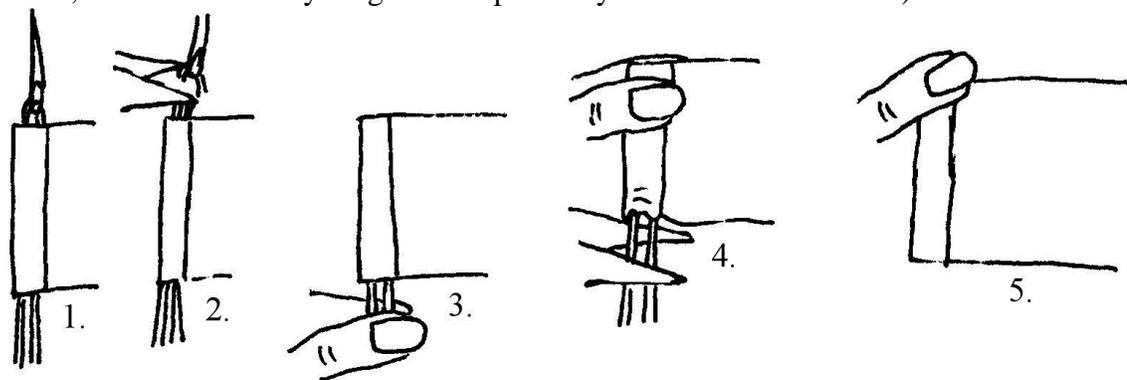
- D. If you prefer softer, more comfortable support or just don't need as much support, you can either use doubled cording in your boning channels or quilt your stays to create stiffer areas next to the gussets and below the gussets. Let's talk about quilting first. There are many examples of beautifully quilted stays (both short and long) in museum collections. Some were elaborately quilted with floral motifs and other designs. Others were just quilted in lines (diagonal, vertical, and horizontal). When quilting is used, it seems to be most commonly located in areas the wearer would like to flatten (just below the bust; next to the side seams; over the tummy area and hip area on long stays). If you'd like to try quilting your short stays, you'll need a strong quilting needle, heavy-duty quilting thread, and the patience to sit down and work your stitches through three layers of fabric. Below are some sketches of suggested quilting layouts:



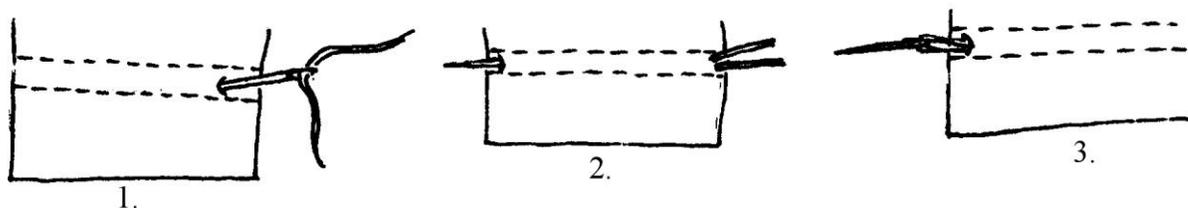
- E. If you choose to use cording, you can follow the diagrams given above for extra boning or quilting. You'll need to use a bodkin or large, blunt needle to feed it through the channels. [Note: You can also make narrower 1/8" channels for cording if you want to use doubled 1/16" cording. I recommend hemp cord, which is easy to find. Run a search on Google.com, and you will find

many inexpensive sources for cording. Also check your local craft supply store, since hemp cord is often used for other projects like macramé.] Once you've created your channels for cording (sewing through all layers as you would for boning channels), you are ready to run the cord. It is fairly easy to run cording through channels that are open at both ends; it's a little trickier to do it through a "one-way" channel (like horizontal ones that run under the gussets).

- a. **For open channels**, simply double your cording, then pull it through the channel until the needle emerges at the other end (1). Cut the cording to remove the needle (2), then gently pull the cording at the other end until the cords have gone back down into the channel about 1/4" (3). Finally, take firm hold of the top of the channel, pinching the hidden cording to hold it in place, then gently push up the bottom end of the channel 1/4" so you can cut off the bottom of the cording there (4). Continue to hold the top of the cording in place while you smooth out the channel, allowing the bottom ends of the cording to vanish up inside (5). It really helps to have another pair of hands for this process (or you can use a sewing bird, which holds everything at the top while you work on the bottom).



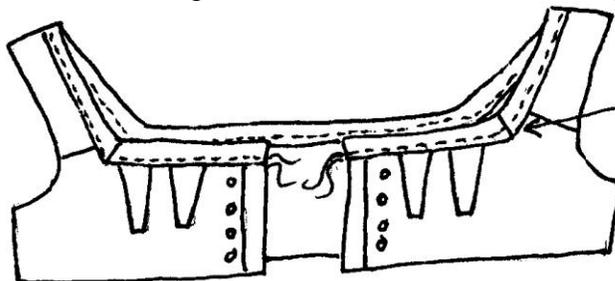
- b. **For a channel that is closed on one end** (or even both ends), you can still feed your cording through. I do not recommend using anything wider than 1/8" (two strands of 1/16" is fine, of course), and you will need a slightly sharper needle to accomplish this task. Thread your needle with the doubled strand of hemp cord, then poke it through one end of the channel, being careful not to go through the other layers of fabric (1). Feed the needle through the channel until it pokes out the opposite end (2). Pull it out just far enough to cut off the cord (3). Now pull the other end of the cording so that the cut ends vanish back into the channel, and smooth the fabric that was pierced by the needle. If you are gentle and careful, the threads will come back together, leaving no hole. Now follow the rest of the steps in i3-5 above to cut the other end of the cording so that it exactly fits inside the channel. Again, smooth the threads back in place. Now your cording is in its channel, leaving no trace on the outside of your stays!



6. Finishing Your Stays:

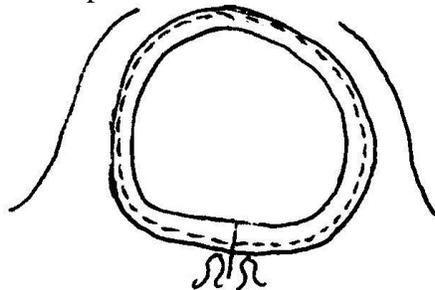
- A. With all boning, cording, or quilting in place, you are ready to bind the raw edges of the stays. You can use self-binding made of your fashion material (as explained above in step 4.A.), or you can

use ready-made double-fold bias binding. Beginning at one side of the center front, turn under the raw end of your binding and place it even with the center front edge. Remember that the narrower edge of the binding goes on top, so you can stitch right next to it and still catch the binding beneath. Stitch binding all the way around the upper edge of the front, over the inside edge of the strap, across the back, over the next strap, and back around to the center front of the other side of the front, turning under the raw end of the binding to finish:

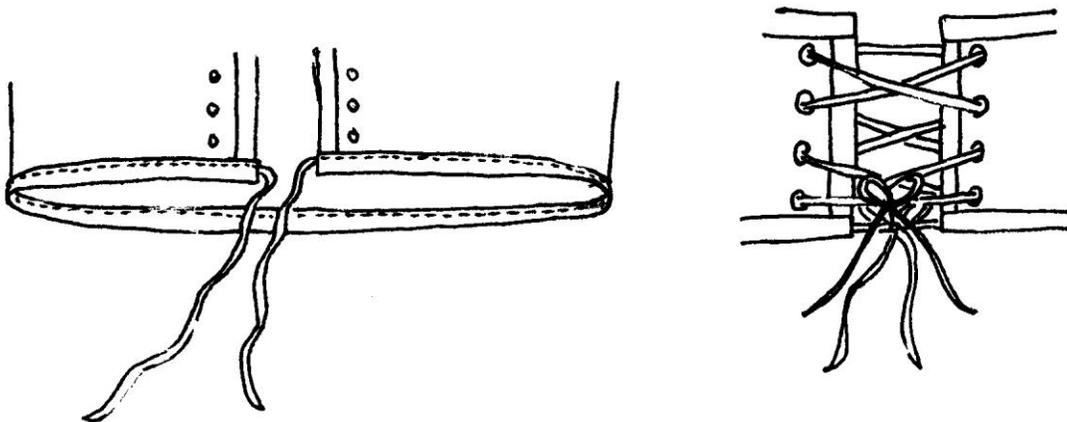


Mitred Corner: Gently fold binding at corner/curve to continue around neckline.

- B. Repeat this for the armholes and outside edge of the straps, taking care as you go around the curves so that the binding does not pucker:



- C. Now you are ready to bind the bottom edge of your stays. This binding is also going to serve as a drawstring casing. Bind the bottom edge, folding under the raw ends of the binding on each side of the center front. When you have finished, you can run your drawstring through the binding, leaving enough on either side to tie (I recommend at least eight inches on each side, since there will be a gap in the center front of the stays that will not meet):



Congratulations! You've now finished your second Regency Era undergarment.



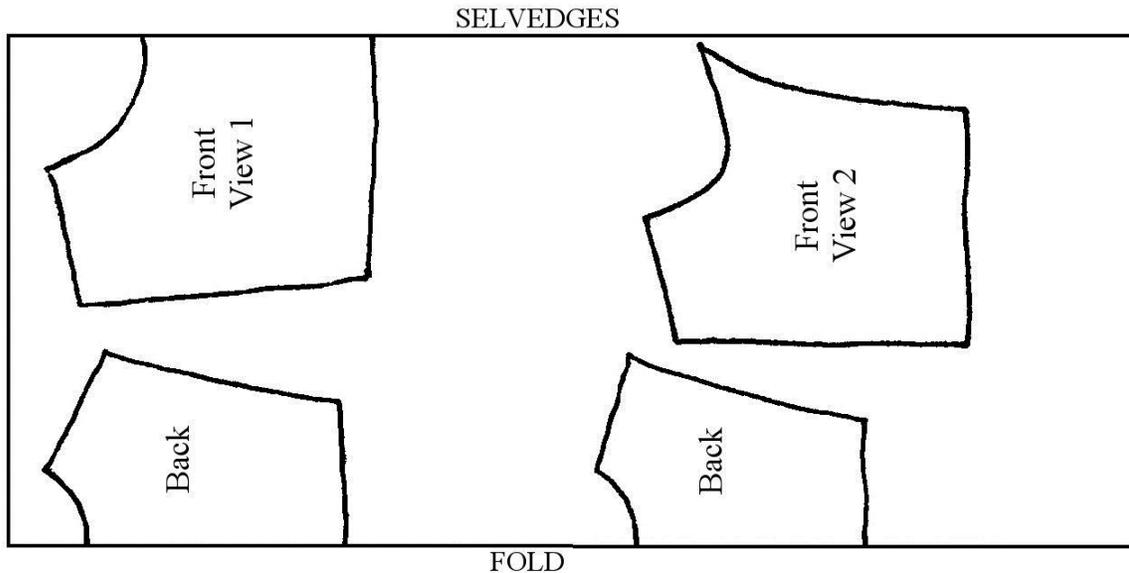
Stay finished front.



Stay finished back.

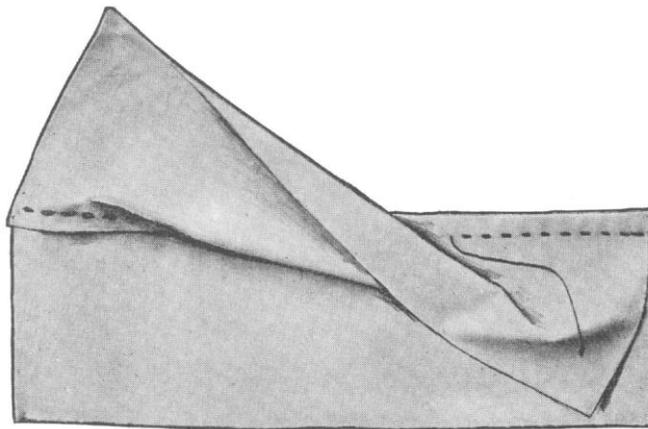
Section III: Chemisette Assembly Instructions

Pattern Layout:



These are the suggested layouts for both views on 45"-wide fabric.
 The bodice front is laid on the selvedge in View 1 to give you a finished edge.
 Pre-shrink your fabric by washing it warm and tumble drying it before cutting!

Note on Seams: Because most chemisettes are made of lightweight or sheer materials, I recommend using French seams in the shoulders. French seams are easy and elegant. With *wrong* sides together, you will stitch a scant seam (with presser foot on the edge of your material). Now turn so that *right* sides are together, and stitch a 3/8" seam. Your raw edge is completely enclosed, leaving nothing to unravel inside your garment. Here is a vintage illustration of a French seam:



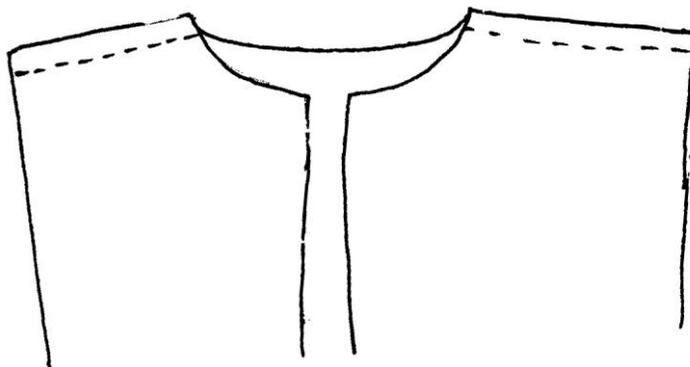
On the left is the first scant seam. On the right is the second seam enclosing the first.



Finished French seam.

i. Bodice (Both Views):

- A. Sew bodice fronts to bodice back at shoulders, using the French seam method. Press seams toward the back.



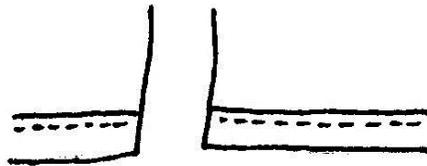


First shoulder seam.

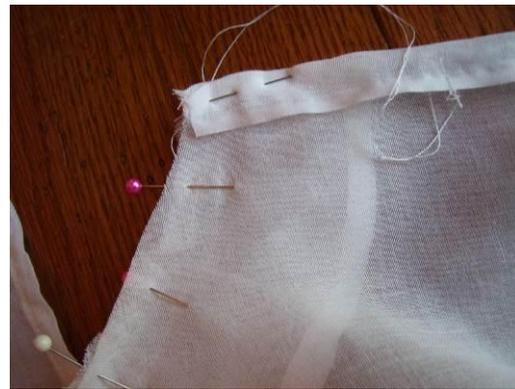


Second shoulder seam.

B. Turn under a narrow hem (1/4" turned under twice to encase raw edge) on each side of the chemisette and iron neatly. Hemstitch in place:



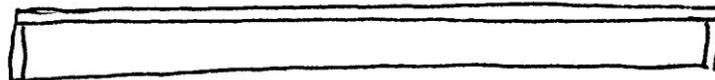
Hem bottom edge.



Front selvedge turned under.

ii. **Neckline Ruffle (View 1)** [Note: Directions are the same, whether you use the narrow ruffle or the high, curved ruffle.]

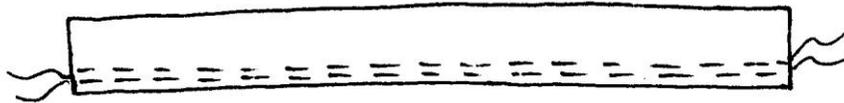
A. Narrowly hem three sides of your ruffle (folding under 1/8" twice to make a 1/4" hem):





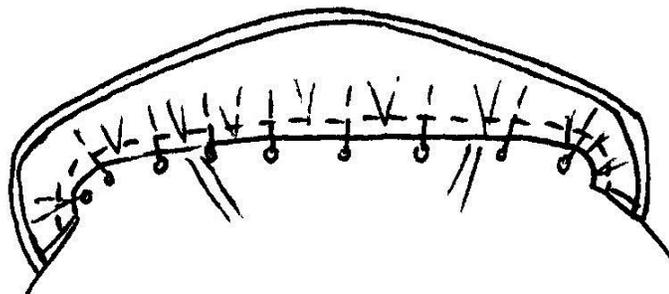
Hem ruffle.

B. Run basting stitches across the bottom of the ruffle:

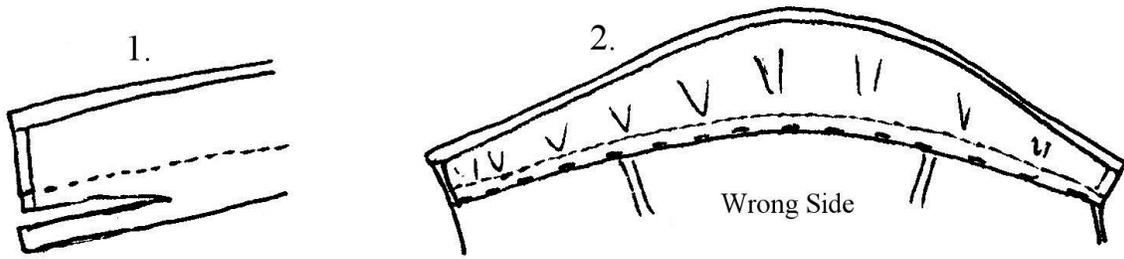


Gathering stitches on ruffle.

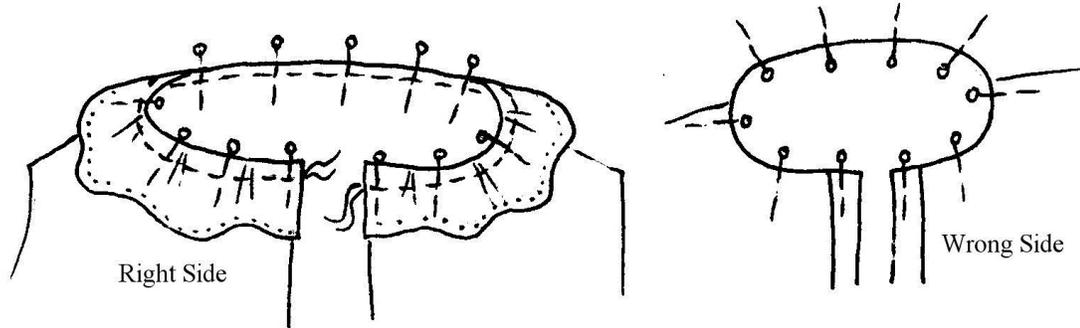
C. **If you want a standing ruffle**, pin ruffle to neckline (right sides together), matching center backs and starting and ending at the center front edge, which should be turned under $\frac{1}{2}$ " (you cut the center front on the selvedge, so there is no need to turn this area under twice). Pull up basting stitches and distribute gathers evenly. Stitch:



D. Trim seam allowance to $\frac{1}{4}$ ", then iron it down toward the bodice (1). Now use hand stitching to secure the seam to the bodice itself, forcing your ruffle to stand up rather than allowing the seam to flip back out (2):



E. **If you want a flat ruffle**, pin ruffle to neckline (wrong side of ruffle to right side of neckline), matching center backs and starting and ending at the center front edge, which should be turned under $\frac{1}{2}$ " as described in C above. Pull up basting stitches and distribute gathers evenly. Stitch:

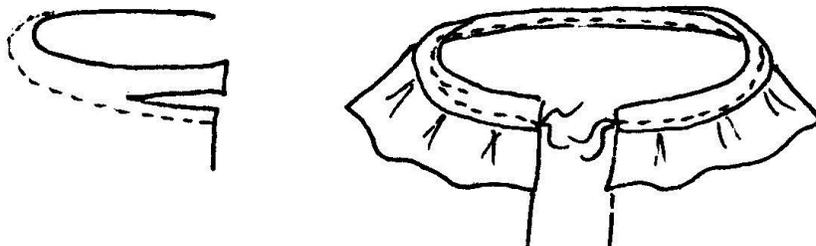


Ruffle pinned.



Ruffle sewn in place.

F. Trim seam allowance down to $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Now create self-binding of your leftover fabric (see step 3.A. in Section I above) and use it to bind the raw edge of your ruffle:





Sew ruffle to neckline.

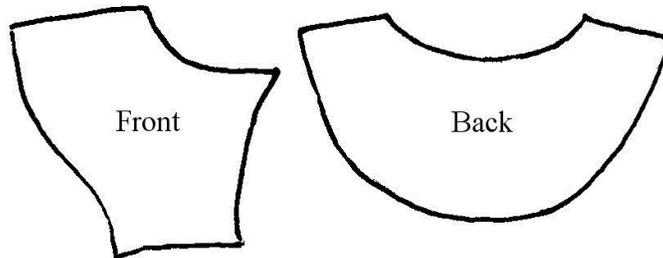


Sewing binding to ruffle seam.

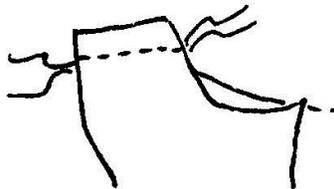
iii. Neckline Collar (View 2)

This view creates a little pointed collar that folds back on either side of the center front. You will need to use a facing or bind the edges of your neckline and bodice front/collar. I've seen period chemisettes with raw edges bound in embroidery stitches (no facing), and I've seen them with facings. If you choose to embroider the raw edges, you can do that now, then proceed to Step 4 to finish your chemisette. If you prefer to make a facing, read on!

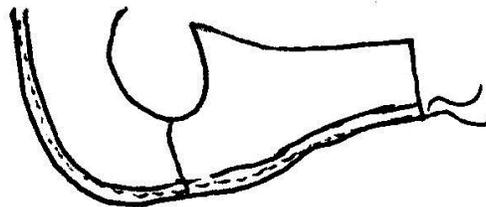
A. Using the dotted lines on the pattern pieces as a guide, cut front and back facings:



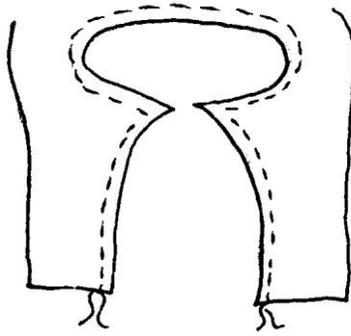
B. Sew facing fronts to back at shoulder area, using French seams:



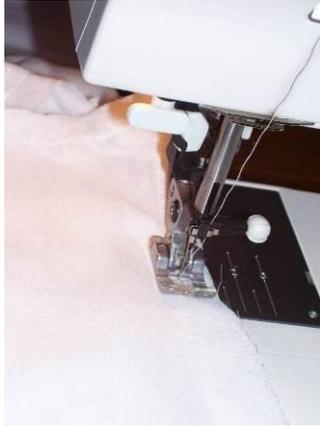
C. Turn under a narrow hem on the outside edges of the facing and stitch in place:



D. Pin facing to bodice with right sides together, matching shoulder seams and front edges. Stitch, taking up a 1/2" seam:



E. Clip curves, then turn facing to inside and iron in place (turning collar point out neatly as you do so):



Sewing collar point.



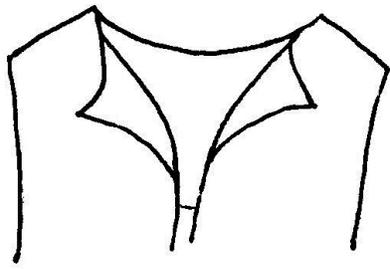
Collar curves clipped.



Turn and press collar.

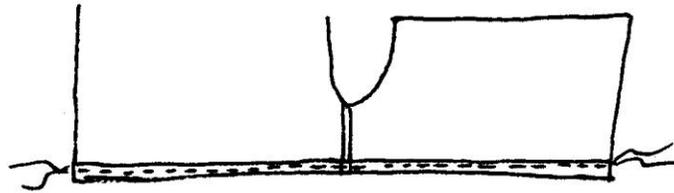


Front Pinned.

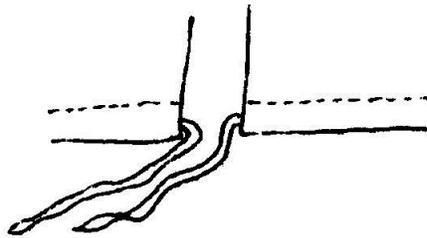


iv. Finishing Your Chemisette (Both Views):

- A. Turn up a narrow hem on the bottom front edges of the chemisette and the back edge, making sure you leave enough room for your drawstring (I recommend a one-inch hem, turning under $\frac{1}{2}$ " , then $\frac{1}{2}$ " again). Iron neatly.



- B. Cut a drawstring to the appropriate length (long enough to go around your ribcage beneath the bust with ends long enough to tie), then use a blunt needle or bodkin to run it through the casings:



Drawstring ribbon in needle.

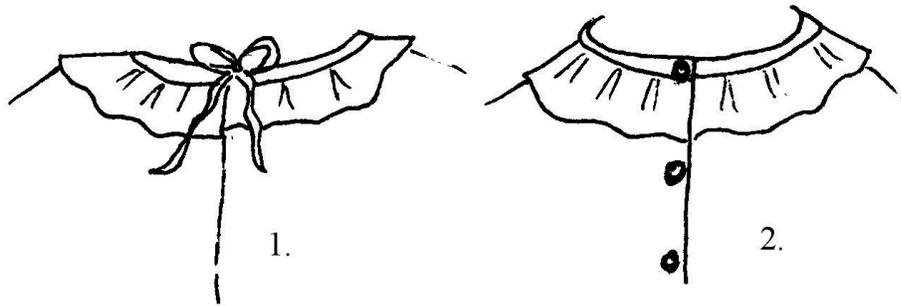


Putting ribbon through casing.



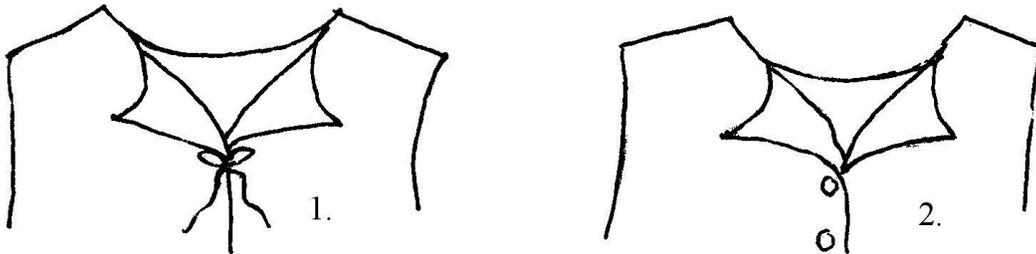
Ribbon at neckline.

C. The upper portion of your ruffled chemisette can close with ribbon ties at the neckline (1), or you can overlap the front edge and place small mother-of-pearl buttons down the front (2):



Ruffled chemisette finished.

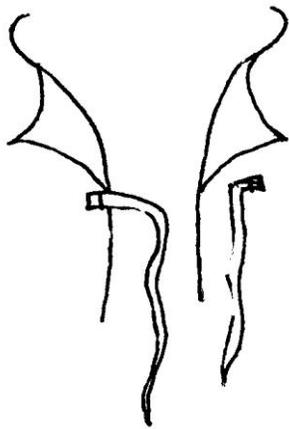
D. The collared chemisette can close with ribbon ties beneath the collar (1) or with small buttons (2):





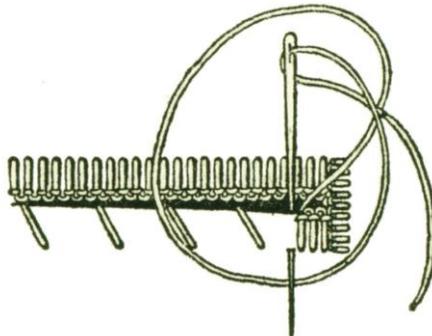
Collared chemisette finished.

If you opt for ribbon ties (or a pretty, narrow cord), you will secure one tie to the outside edge of the bodice front that will overlap (in this example, the wearer's right), then secure the opposite tie to the outside of the bodice front it will join, spacing it to allow for the overlap:



Placing ribbon tie at neckline.

If you choose buttons, work your buttonholes by hand as demonstrated below:



Enjoy your new creation!

Notes on Wearing Regency Undergarments:

Putting on an outfit is fairly straightforward, but there are a few details that will help you achieve a beautiful Regency silhouette as you don your undergarments:

- The drawstring of the chemise allows you to change the shape of the neckline to suit any gown. It is best to tie the drawstring so that the chemise comes just below the neckline of the gown you will be wearing. If it is tied much lower, you'll have a "shadow neckline" beneath your gown bodice. You'll want to experiment with each gown to see how best to adjust your chemise. Pretty soon, you'll be a pro!
- The stays are also meant to go beneath a variety of gowns (day and evening), so the straps are designed to be moveable, even though they are sewed to the bodice. If you wear a gown with a wider neckline, you can simply push the straps closer to the edge of your shoulders. If you wear a gown with a narrow neckline, you can pull the straps in closer. You may notice some buckling or folding where the straps meet the bodice of the stays, but that's normal as you adjust the straps, and any minor folds won't be noticeable outside your dress. It's important to note that you need to "scoop" your bosom up into the gussets once you have the stays on and laced. If your stays are just pushing you flat and not creating the "shelf" for the bosom, then you need to adjust accordingly. Finally, note that it is not at all uncommon to have a tell-tale line on the outside of your dress bodice that indicates you are wearing stays. Most women wore an additional full petticoat to smooth the lines of the stays. You can easily create one for yourself by using my Regency Gown pattern, simply omitting the sleeves (instructions with photos are online at www.sensibility.com/pattern/petticoat.htm). This final garment will give you a great foundation for all of your gowns.
- To wear your chemisette, first put on your chemise and stays (and petticoat if you have one), then put the chemisette over these, tie the drawstring beneath the bust, and fasten your buttons or tie your ribbons. When you pull on your gown, the chemise will stay put beneath it, filling in the neckline of your gown and making a beautiful new look!