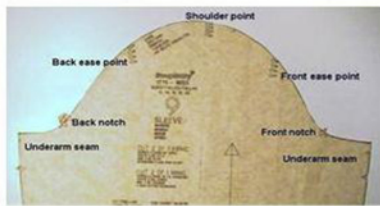
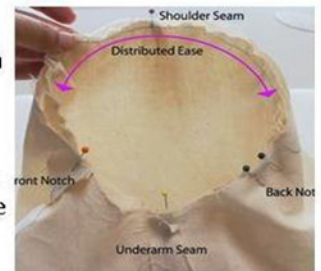


[1] A set-in sleeve is when the sleeve is at or near the natural edge of the shoulder. It is often used in coats and shirts because of its more professional and natural look. It can either lie flat, as it would in a mans formal suit jacket, or be gathered so it rises above the garment eg in a girly-type dress. Whatever way, the top of the sleeve piece is larger (wider) than the armhole opening (more so for the sleeve that rises). This is to give room for the garment to be fitted over the arm, and to allow for movement in the shoulder. A fabric that has stretch would not to have that rise - unless it was for aesthetic purposes. The fabric plays a big part in inserting set in sleeves. Fabrics that has stretch or give (eg all knits and many woollens and fleeces) are much easier to manage. Those with little stretch (eg hard cottons) are much harder to manage.



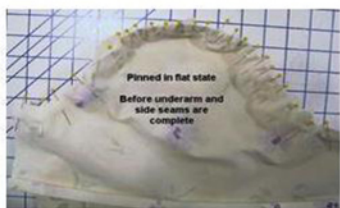
[2] It is important that the markings from the pattern are transferred to the fabric - as there is lots of lining up to do. A double notch is for the back of the sleeve, and a single notch for the front. The top of the sleeve is gathered with long stitches (usually 2 rows) that are used to pull the fabric into small, evenly distributed puckers, which allow the top of the sleeve to fit to the armhole opening. These



stitches won't be seen, as they end up inside the seam (or they can be removed after the sleeve has been put in). These gathering stitches should be sewn with the right side of the sleeve facing up - the gathering is done from the inside of the sleeve and the bobbin stitches are easier to gather. The sleeve will be a better curved shape if it is first tightly gathered and then eased back out. This helps to retain the curve.

[3] The gathering stitch length depends on the weight and texture of the fabric. A stiffer fabric may require a slightly shorter stitch length - this will make smaller gathers and will make the fitting easier. A hard to handle fabric (eg tapestry) or a stiff fabric (eg heavy weight denim) will be easier to manage with a third row of gathering stitching. This third row will be outside the seam allowance and will help flatten the fabric for a bit more control. It is removed once the sleeve is set in.

After sewing the underarm seam of the sleeve, the seam should be pressed flat to meld the stitches, and then pressed open over a roll. The seam can be over-locked to finish. Some sleeves have two pieces (ie they are joined up down the length of the arm so there is an upper and a lower sleeve). Likewise, these pieces should be sewn together before the sleeve is set in. It may be easier to complete any cuffs etc before setting in the sleeve.



[4] Especially if there is not a lot of gathering to do (ie the sleeve is not a lot bigger), and for fabrics that have a lot of stretch, strategic pinning can work as well as gathering.

All these pins can make it hard to sew - hand basting first is a good idea. This also helps ease the fullness in place, so there are no unwanted tucks etc.

Another good trick is to do it in stages. That is, pin between two anchor points (underarm, shoulder point, front and back ease points), sew that section, then repeat for another of the 4 sections. Start

with the more difficult shoulder cap sections. If unwanted puckers do appear, a few stitches can be undone, the puckers can be sorted, and then re-sewn.

[5] When working with fabric with little stretch (eg hard cottons or shirting fabric), it can be easier to set the sleeve in before the garment side seams and sleeve underarm sleeves are sewn together (ie when the pieces are still flat). This is a good method too for when very little ease is required in the look of the finished garment ie for a business shirt.

[6] A second row of stitching (just inside the first row ie towards the raw edge) between the notches in the underarm area will reinforce that area that gets a lot of pressure. This is significant for a fabric that is more loosely woven with little stretch that might tear or pull easily.

[7] The sleeve seam should be pressed flat with steam (if the fabric allows). Then turn the seam towards the cap and finger press or use a sleeve arm. This helps to retain the curved cap shape. Only trim the underarm seam - the rest of the seam supports the sleeve cap. This is especially significant for stiffer and thicker fabric. The raw edges can be finished. If a cap look is not wanted, for example on a mans business shirt, then all the seam should be trimmed back.