Garment Sewing: Design Details with Amanda Todaro

Chapter 1 - Garment Sewing: Design Details

Overview

- Hi, I'm Amanda Todaro, and I'm a sewing educator with Ditto Patterns. Sewing seams and finishing hems is an important part of creating your handmade wardrobe. The next step is adding design details, like straps, facings, collars, and buttons. (lighthearted music)

Sew simple straps

- You'll want straps on your dresses and blouses when spring and summer roll around. Straps are a quick and easy project. Cut out two strap pieces according to your pattern instructions. If your fabric is lightweight, you'll also wanna cut out some fusible interfacing. Iron the interfacing to your straps. Next, fold your strap in half and pin. Set your strap into the machine and sew with a 5/8 seam allowance. (machine whirs) Next, trim off your seam allowance. I like to cut mine down between 1/8 and 1/4 inch. Use a safety pin to turn your strap right side out. Slide the safety pin through and manipulate the fabric to go through the tube. (fabric rustling) Iron your strap. (iron steaming) (fabric rustling) (iron clattering) I like to iron mine so that the seam allowance is either on the side or centered underneath of the strap. Once you're done ironing, repeat this process on the second strap, and you'll be ready to attach them to your bodice. Use the markings on your pattern to line up your straps. Pin the strap in place. Sew so the strap with 1/4-inch seam allowance. (machine whirs) Back stitch across the entire strap. Pin and sew the other end of the strap to the back of the bodice. (machine whirs) (fabric rustling) Repeat this step on the other strap and you'll be ready to add a facing or lining.

Sew facings

- Adding a facing is a good way to finish the neckline of your garment because it takes up very little fabric. I've already cut out my facings based on the pattern instructions. I have a front piece and two back pieces. I also added fusible interfacing to each piece and finished the edges with my serger. You could also use a zigzag stitch on your sewing machine. The first step is to sew the side seams of your facing. (sewing machine whirring) (sewing machine whirring) Repeat on the other side seam. Press your seams open. Depending on the style of garment, you may also close the center back at this time. (sewing machine whirring) Next, we will attach the facing to our bodice. With right sides together, begin lining up your facing to your bodice. Line up the raw edges as well as the seams. Begin pinning the facing in place. When pinning over seams, be sure that both seam allowances are pressed open on either side. Sew around the facing and the neckline with a 5/8 seam allowance. (sewing machine whirring) If you have a corner, drop the needle, lift the foot, and pivot the bodice. (sewing machine whirring) Next, we need to clip into our seam allowances, especially around these curves. Be sure not to cut into your threads. I also like to cut these corners to reduce bulk. Let's take this to the ironing board and press our facing open. Pull the facing towards the inside of your garment. As I press my facing, I roll it slightly in so that the outer edge of my fabric is showing. This will ensure that your facing won't show from the front. Understitching is an important part of facing or lining your garment. This stitch attaches the facing to the seam allowance and ensures that your facing does not roll out to the front of the garment. When sewing your understitch, you wanna make sure that the seam allowance goes towards the facing. So as I set it

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into my sewing machine, I'll use my fingers to keep that seam allowance on this side. When sewing, use the edge of the foot as a guide and keep it on this folded edge. (sewing machine whirring) I'll occasionally check that my seam allowance stays towards my facing as I sew. (sewing machine whirring) Straps and sleeves will prevent you from going all the way around. So get as far as you can possibly go, pause, and move on to the next section of your facing. (sewing machine whirring) (sewing machine whirring) Clip your threads and give your neckline a good press.

Sew buttons and buttonholes
- Buttons plackets are a common way to close blouses and dress shirts. You can create buttons on your sewing machine, and sew buttons by hand. When creating a button placket, be sure to add a strip of interfacing behind anywhere you're going to put a buttonhole or a button. (sewing machine whirring) Many machines can create an automatic buttonhole. Check your manual to see how to use this feature for your machine. This machine comes with a buttonhole foot. To use it, set your button into the holder. Remove your other foot. Attach the buttonhole foot, pull down the lever. Set your machine to a buttonhole. I have already marked the buttonhole and a stopping point on my piece of fabric. Some machines create buttonholes by working backwards, then forwards. Set your fabric into the machine accordingly, line up your endpoint with the center opening of the foot. Drop the foot and begin sewing. (sewing machine whirring) Do not push or pull the fabric as you sew. Allow the machine to make the stitch for you. (sewing machine whirring) To open your buttonhole, place a pin at the top. Use a seam ripper or a small set of scissors to open the center. The pin will act as a stopper. Your buttonhole is complete, and you can begin sewing your button. I've threaded a needle with a strand of thread, and tied it at the bottom to make it two strands. Pick up one layer of fabric where you wanna put your button, so that your knot is at the top. Use your hand to place your button where you want it to go. Sew across two or three times, picking up the back of the fabric as you sew. Repeat on the other direction. Sew it at least three times in each direction, if your thread is doubled up. You can sew more than that, but you're looking to have at least six strands going across, and then across. Once your button is secure, wrap it around three to four times. This will create a mini shank for your buttonhole to sit in. To finish off the button, grab a little bit of the fabric and a little bit of your thread. Tie a knot, and then tie another knot. Once secure, clip off the rest of your thread. The button and buttonhole are complete. Let me show you how to sew a shank button. Begin like the previous button. Grab a little bit of your fabric to place the knot on top. Send the needle through the hole of the button shank. Begin looping your thread. I like to go around my button four to six times. Once secure, tie two knots. You can have a lot of fun with button closures. Choose something decorative to add a little flare to your next shirt project.

Sew a skirt vent
- A skirt vent can be found in longer pencil skirts and dresses. It gives you a fuller range of motion while wearing. It may look complex, but if you follow these steps, you could make a skirt vent of your own. Sewing a skirt vent starts later in the process. I already have the side seams of my skirt sewn, the zipper installed, and the darts. I've pressed open my vent to either side using the lines as a guide. On my lining, the side seams, darts, and facing are already sewn. I've also already set in my hem. The next step is to pin and sew the center back seam. This pattern has 5/8 seam allowance. We'll start sewing at the zipper stop mark and we'll end at the vent mark. (sewing machine whirring) Bring in your skirt. With your pieces next to each other, line up the raw edge of the lining with the skirt fabric vent. Flip the lining over and repeat on this side. You're pinning only through the vent. To

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confirm your lining is pinned correctly, open your lining and lay it flat. The wrong sides of your lining and fabric should be together. Bring the vent to your sewing machine. Sew from clipped edge to the bottom of your lining hem. (sewing machine whirring) Be sure to backstitch. (sewing machine whirring) Repeat this on the other side. If you need to readjust your pins, do that now. (sewing machine whirring) This next step is a little tricky to see because we're working in such a small area. Line up the center back seam of your skirt with the center back seam of your lining. Pinch it with your fingers and use your other hand to smooth out the lining. What we're looking for is for this diagonal to be flat. Take a pin and pin from your sewing point to the center back seam. Take this to your sewing machine and sew across where you pinned. I like to get everything in place before sewing. Remove your pin and sew across. (sewing machine whirring) Repeat this on the other side. (sewing machine whirring) Clip your threads and turn your skirt lining side out. I've given my lining a good press. Your vent is now complete and you can move on to finishing the waistband and adding a hem.

Attach a lining to a zipper
- When lining your garment, attaching the lining to the zipper encases all your seam allowances. This gives your skirt a nice, professional finish. Begin by unzipping your zipper. Reach in between the lining and the skirt and turn your skirt inside out. Begin at one side of your zipper and line up the raw edges. Pin the lining and facing to the zipper. Work around the waistband to match up notches and seams. With your waistband pinned, we can now sew it on the sewing machine. If you want to get your lining close to your zipper teeth, install your zipper foot. (zipper foot clicks) Start at the bottom of of your zipper and follow your pins to sew all the way around the waist. Your zipper is going to be sandwiched between your lining and your skirt fabric. Use your fingers to feel where the teeth are of the zipper as you line up to begin sewing. (sewing machine whirring) When you get to the corner, drop your needle, lift your foot, and pivot the skirt. (sewing machine whirring) As you go over seams, check that your seams are open flat. (sewing machine whirring) Just like we did before, feel for your zipper teeth before sewing. (sewing machine whirring) Pull your skirt so that the front of the skirt is on the outside. Just like we did in our facings chapter, we're going to understitch the facing. I'm going to switch my foot back to my regular standard foot. (standard foot clicks) Pull the lining underneath the foot. Back the foot up as far as possible, and pull your fabric so nothing but the facing is underneath your foot. Set the seam allowance underneath the facing. When understitching, we wanna stitch our facing to the seam allowance. (sewing machine whirring) As you sew, continue to move the lining out of the way and make sure that your seam allowance stays underneath the facing. (sewing machine whirring) Flip your skirt right side out and tuck the lining in. Pull on your zipper to get a nice, crisp corner. Press around the waistband. (iron swooshes) Remember when pressing a facing, you want to press the facing rolled in so that a little bit of your fabric from the outside shows. (iron swooshes) Continue pressing all the way around and around your zipper. This looks really great. This is what your waistband should look like once it's all finished and your seams are concealed. (zipper zips)

Add a swing tack
- I'm going to show you how to make a thread chain called a swing tack or a French tack. This can be used to secure the lining of your skirt, to your skirt, as well as to make small belt loops. Start by threading your needle so it's doubled up and tie a knot at the end. Move your lining out of the way. Place your needle into the seam. Do not go through the front of the skirt. Loop around two to three

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times. On the fourth loop, hold the loop open. Use your fingers to pull another loop through, and slide the thread to create a knot. Repeat this process again. Grab the thread. Slide the loop down to create a knot. Repeat this process until the chain is the length you want. For skirts, I like to make my chain about a half inch. Once the chain is the length that you want, grab a small amount of your lining and pull. Send your needle through the loop and pull to close the other loop. Complete this stitch by looping around and creating a knot. Repeat this once or twice. Clip your threads and now your skirt lining is secure to the skirt.

Sew shirt collars and collar stands
- A crisp collar looks so beautiful on your blouses and dress shirts. I'm going to give you my tips and tricks for getting professional results. I have my blouse already mostly made. The shoulder seams are sewn, the button placket is in, and I stay stitched around the neck line to keep it from stretching as I work on the collar. I've cut out two collar stand pieces as well as fusible interfacing for both. On one collar stand, I like to cut off 5/8 seam allowance of the interfacing only. This will come into play later. You'll also need to cut out two collar pieces and the fusible interfacing. To begin, place your collar pieces on top of each other right sides together. Begin pinning around the outside of the collar. Take your collar to the sewing machine. I like to take a moment to mark my turning point of my collar. Measure your steam allowance, and put a small dot. (fabric rustling) (sewing machine whirring) (sewing machine whirring) When you get to your turning point, drop the needle, lift your foot, hand stitch one stitch, lift your foot, and continue sewing. (sewing machine whirring) That one stitch will actually, give you a nicer point in the end. (sewing machine whirring) Drop your needle, pivot, hand wheel a stitch, pivot, (sewing machine whirring) and continue. (sewing machine whirring) (fabric rustling) Cut down your seam allowance. On collars, we wanna get pretty close. I cut mine down to about 1/8 inch. On corners, cut across. Be sure not to cut your stitches. (fabric rustling) I'm going to use a tool specifically made for turning points. (fabric rustling) Use your fingers to manipulate the fabric and begin opening the collar, and turning it right side out. (fabric rustling) Press the corner out using your tool. (fabric rustling) If you have a very tight point, you can also use a needle and thread. Grab a tiny bit of your corner, and gently tug before pulling the thread out. (fabric rustling) Press your collar. (fabric rustling) (iron hissing) Top stitching your collar is optional, but I find it adds a really nice detail. Repeat the process of marking your point. I'm going to top stitch 1/4 of an inch in. So, I set my hem gauge at 1/4 of an inch. I'm using a pin to mark my stopping point. (fabric rustling) Use your foot as a guide as that is 1/4 of an inch out. For top stitching, you may wanna raise the length of your stitches slightly. (sewing machine whirring) Drop your needle, pivot, and continue to sew your collar. (sewing machine whirring) Place the collar stand on top of your collar. Take your other collar stand and put it underneath sandwiching the collar. Begin pinning through all the layers, matching up your notches as you go. Start by matching up the center notches. Once pinned, move to your sewing machine. Fold the ironed fabric open. Begin sewing at the fold. (sewing machine whirring) Take your time around the curves. (sewing machine whirring) (sewing machine whirring) Stop and back stitch when you get to the fold. (sewing machine whirring) Cut down the seam allowance of your collar stand. (fabric rustling) Turn your collar stand right side out. (fabric rustling) You could use your tool to push out the curve of the collar stand. (tool thudding) Begin pressing the collar stand. (fabric rustling) (iron hissing) As I iron, I use my thumb and index finger to push the collar out from the seam. (iron hissing) (iron thudding) Let's grab our shirt. Match up the notches of the collar stand to the collar neckline. I like to start with my center back. Then, line up the edges of the button placket and the collar stand. From there, you

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can work around the neckline. It's important to get these edges nicely lined up. So, from shirt front around to shirt front. (sewing machine whirring) (sewing machine whirring) Cut down your seam allowance. (fabric rustling) (scissors thudding) Fold your seam allowance into the collar stand and pin the folded part of this collar stand over to cover. Place a pin to hold the fold as you work. (tool thudding) Because keeping this fold in line is so important, I suggest doing a quick hand baste to hold this in place. (fabric rustling) With a hand baste in place, you can remove your pins. To complete the collar, top stitch around the entire collar stand. I like to start at the center back of my shirt. (sewing machine whirring) This top stitch only goes about 1/8 of an inch into your collar stand. (sewing machine whirring) Take your time around to this curve and to this end point. (sewing machine whirring) You may need to readjust your foot a few times to get it in the right point. (sewing machine whirring) Because the majority of your shirt is going to be inside the machine, take note and keep it out of the way as you sew. (sewing machine whirring) Take out your basting stitches and give your collar a final press. This collar has nice even points and top stitching. This process is multi-step, but it really does pay off. With all the garment techniques you have learned, you're now ready to move on and create a unique handmade wardrobe of your own.

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