PLEATS

Uses

Pleats are used both for trimming and to add fullness to the section in which they are placed. Single pleats are basted and made into the garment, while a series of pleats are usually made with a pleating machine.

Length of material

If pleating is to be sent to the pleater, the length to be pleated will be three times the length of the space to be filled. If a ten-inch space is to be filled, it will be necessary to prepare thirty inches to cover the ten-inch space. As the pleats do not overlap, it requires three inches of material for one inch of space.

Hem pleats

All material that is to be pleated by the machine should be hemmed before it is pleated, as it is difficult to make a perfect hem in pleated material after it has been steamed.

Width of pleats

Pleating is usually made on the lengthwise thread of the goods, and a uniform width is necessary to retain the straight thread down each pleat.
Seams in pleats

If pleated sections are to be made by hand, plan to have all joining seams on the underlap of the pleat. The seam is not pressed open only at the hem.

There are several kinds of pleats, each being popular in its season of fashion. Plain pleats, knife pleats, box pleats, inverted box pleats, sunburst or fan pleats and accordion pleats are some of them.

A box pleat is made with two pleats lapping in opposite directions with the fold of the joining pleats meeting on the wrong side of the garment.
An inverted box pleat is made with the edges of the two pleats meeting on the right side of the goods. An inverted box pleat is often used at the end of skirt seams to produce fullness at the lower edge.
Knife pleats

Several plain pleats made by machine are termed "knife" pleats. There are several combinations that are often used on full pleated skirts. These pleats are made only by the professional pleater. Most large department stores will furnish this service.

A complete skirt made of knife pleating is usually made with a box pleat at the center front, with the knife pleats at the side, lapping to the back or in small groups with a center box. If all the pleats lap to the back and all the skirt is pleated, the material must be prepared and pleated open as in the rules for a middy skirt. The joining seam will be at the center back or under a pleat, and it will be basted to match the pleat edge.

Sunburst pleats are made like the folds of a fan; they are sometimes termed "fan pleats". These can be made at home as an inset and are very effective.
Accordion pleats can be made only by machine. They are made so as to completely overlap one another and do not lie flat. They must be hemmed before they are pleated. A gathering thread is usually run across the top of the pleating to baste to position.
Piquoted edges for pleats

Hemstitching that is split for a piquot edge makes an excellent finish for narrow pleating. If a great quantity is to be used of one material, mark a large piece of material into the width desired, chalk mark the lines with a ruler. Allow three times the running length for the length to be made when pleated. Have these lines hemstitched and cut apart on the hemstitching.

This will make the edge of each strip finished. It will require just half the amount of hemstitching if only every other line is hemstitched. This will leave one unfinished edge on each strip. Each line will be separated. Join the narrow strips under the folds of the pleats, matching the fold of the pleating rather than the thread of the goods, as the material may not pleat even.
Pleated sections

Pleated sections should be made complete and pressed flat before they are set into the garment. If there is a box pleat in the back of the waist, finish it complete before sewing to the yoke. If there is a pleated section in the waist or skirt, finish it complete even to the final pressing before it is set into the garment. All pleats at the end of seams, such as a center box in front, should also be finished before the side seams are joined. (See other lesson on pleats.) An intricate section of pleating may require right side basting to set the pleats correctly into the garment. (See rules for right side basting.)

Marking

Pleats are always marked on patterns either with lines or with symbols. These must be followed. Fold up the pattern into the pleats as they will be made in the garment so that the outer edge of the pleats can be located. This is the important mark to be followed. Mark this line in the material and also its matching line.

Crease-mark all pleats in single sections

Pleats should all be crease-marked in single sections of material as they lie on the garment when finished. The best method of marking is to mark with creases made with a hot iron.
Crease-mark the pleats

Some makes of patterns have printed lines and other makes have lines of perforations to show where material is to be folded to make pleats. A simple way to lay the pleats in the material is to pin the pattern to the fabric along these lines. Then lay the pleats in both pattern and material and crease-mark with the iron or with the fingers.

Chalk mark the pleats

If this method is not used there must be some kind of a straight line to follow. Chalk-mark the goods on the right side of the dress, making a long line with the yardstick the full length of the pleat. This outer line will later be folded back and pressed for a crease on the edge before it is basted to the pleat. This keen edge is so necessary for perfect work and it requires less time for creasing than it does to fold under a wiry piece of material for basting.
Box pleat set in

A pleated section is often set into a slash in the skirt which requires perfect tailoring to make the point perfect. The small pleated section is marked with a crease down the center. This line will be used later.

If the pleats are finished to a point, the seam must be taken very narrow on the skirt side, graduating to an even narrower width at the top and to within two or three threads of the point. The seam is an even width the full length of the inset. Stitch from the slash side of the seam. The pleated section should extend a half inch above the top of the point.

After the pleated section is stitched to the slash, press the seam open to make a perfect turning. The pleat will turn back on the seam, rather than back in a fold of the pleat. After the seam has been pressed open turn back the pleat at
the edge and baste flat and press. Do the same to the other side.

**Join to center**

Place the skirt section right side up on the table or over the basting board and place the center crease of the pleated section to the center of the slash. Then baste the edges of the pleats to meet this crease. Cross-stitch the edge at the top so that when the final pressing is given, the pleats will not spread.

If it is too difficult to make a perfect point, open the point and join with right side basting.
Inset pleats with square top

Pleats set into slashed openings can be made with pleats on each side of the slot. The pleated section is creased down the center. Slash the opening to within a half-inch of the top, clip to the sides of the points so as to make the seam one-half inch wide.

Join the pleated section to each side. Press open the edge seams; baste the pleat back at the edge. Bring the pleats over to meet the center crease made in this pleated section before setting into the skirt. Baste flat. Turn under the point at the top and slip-stitch to the pleats. Press all flat. Stitch the top of the pleats to place from the wrong side, following the crease under the point.
Marking hems of pleats

This is one of the tricks of the tailor's trade and it is necessary to make the pleats all fall on an even line at the lower edge.

All pleats should be basted to the bottom of the open hem and will remain basted until after the skirt is hung and the hem is pressed up. The pleats are then pressed up on the hem line as they are basted shut. The bastings are then removed and the crease will be followed for the hem. This will make a perfect hem along the lower edge of the pleats, and will make the back edge of the pleat a trifle shorter than the front. This is necessary for perfect hanging.
Marking box pleats

Box pleats must have a center crease. Press mark the center line and also the outer edge of the pleat, as this center line will be used later when basting.

An inverted pleat should be carefully made; the edges must be straight and should meet perfectly. The pleat should be made in the material while the section lies flat. It must be made complete and flat stitched before it is joined to another section.

Center box cut in one with the skirt

All lines of the pleat should be marked with creases if possible. If the material cannot be creased, draw a chalk line with a long ruler and thread tack. The back edge of the large folds which will be the back center of the pleat should be marked with a crease to make it straight, as this will be the line that will be matched with the two folds of the pleats as they meet.
After the back and edges are marked, open the pleat, place it flat on the table and baste the edges of the pleats to the center line of the fold. Baste the full length of the pleat and do not remove the bastings until the garment is to be hemmed.

**Separate back section**

A box pleat can be made with a separate section at the back. This is often a saving of goods, as this pleat is not cut on a fold.

Mark the edges of the pleats and baste together if pleat is at the lower part of the skirt. Press the seam to one side to crease for perfect stitching. Machine stitch as far as desired to the top of the pleat. Press the seam open and flat.
With the skirt section wrong side up, slide the basting board or magazine under one side of the pleat. When the back pleat section is placed to position, baste it to the pleat as the pleat rests flat on the basting board. If the basting board is not used the stitches will be caught to the front of the skirt. The flat surface will permit the pleat to lie perfectly flat with no puckers. After the side seams of the pleat are stitched, press the pleat flat. Do not press open the seams. The only part of a pleat seam that is pressed open is that portion inside of the hem.

**Stitch across top**

All box pleats that do not extend to the top of the skirt should be stitched across the top of the pleat. This line will follow the pattern indication, or if the material has a definite line of material or stripe, follow this line. Otherwise, the stitching can be straight across, pointed downward or upward. The upward point is more graceful and relieves the strain on the seams. Tack or tie the point well, as there is a great strain on this point in closely fitted skirts.
Seams opened

When an under-lapping pleat is made at the bottom of the side seam of a skirt, it will be handled in the same manner, basting the side seam the full length to the lower edge of the skirt through the pleat. This basting will remain in the pleat until the final finish. This basting insures a keen edge on the pleat, a perfectly straight line down the side, and a perfect edge across the bottom of the pleat. It is necessary to baste the line to the bottom to secure accurate results. Pleated skirts for uniforms or middy skirts that are fitted at the waist are made by a different method.

A middy skirt

The skirt is made open and flat. It is measured from the hip size for the amount of material to have pleated, and the hip size is also used for the measure to which the skirt is
made. Serge is the material generally used. It is fifty-four inches wide and it will require two or more skirt lengths. One length is cut down the fold and half is sewed to each side of the front section so as not to have a seam near the front. Figure three times the size of the hips and this will give the correct amount to prepare for the pleating.

Hem

The seams are pressed open. Press the goods down the center. Decide on the width of the pleat. Measure a center box pleat at this width. Mark all pleats at the hip line and also at the hem line. Chalk lines will connect these marks after the pleats are spaced. Do not mark at the waist as this will be changed later to fit closer.

Mark the pleats

Work from the right side of the material. If the pleats are to be two inches wide, mark every two inches from the center front both at the hip line and at the hem line for the
pleats. Place the material on the table and chalk mark each line the full length, using a yardstick.

Pleat edges

Every fourth line will be the outer edge of a pleat counting from the first line drawn. It requires six inches to make one two-inch pleat, three times the width. Time will be saved if the outer edge of each pleat is pressed on the turning, picking up the goods along each six-inch line and as the material is folded double on this line, pressing it folded in one crease. Pin the ends to the press board if so desired. It will hold the ends of the pleat in place. Plan to make the joining seams of the material invisible. If the seams are pressed open they may be placed anywhere under the pleat.

Baste to the hip line

Lay in the pleats with pins as marked, lapping all toward the center back. There will be a seam at the center back or under one of the back pleats after the skirt is finished. When they are all pinned to place at the hip line only, measure to see if the hips are the desired width. If not, slide the pleats
either way a trifle to secure the correct hip size. When the correct size is secured, slide the basting board under the pleats and run a basting thread along the hip line to hold the pleats in position. Then baste each pleat to the bottom of the skirt following the chalk lines.

**Waist line**

Use a belting or tape for a waist stay. (See lesson on belts.) Work from the center. Pin the center box at the center of the belt. Pin each center back to the belting, measuring the exact belt size. There should be an extension of the belting for the underlap of the closing.
All pleats will remain on the straight thread of material on the outer edge of the pleat. All over-lapping will be made on the wrong side of the pleat. The hip pleats should have the greatest over-lap as there is more curve at the hip.

After the hip line and waist line are adjusted to size, catch a tape across the hip line on the wrong side at four inches below the waist line, catching the back edge of the pleat. This tape will remain on the skirt to hold the pleats in place. There should also be a tape around the hip line. The tape is tacked on one edge only to the under-fold of the pleat.

If desired, the pleats can then be stitched from the waist to the hip line, stitching close to the outer edge from the right side of the skirt. Apply the belt as for skirts.
Middy skirts attached to a waist lining can be made of straight pleating without fitting in at the waist line. The skirt is hemmed and pleated as directed and hung from the hem upward.

Practice each lesson by making pleats in crepe paper. The lesson will be quickly learned and will be interesting.

**Questions on Pleats**

- What is the length measured for group pleating?
- Should pleating by machine be hemmed first?
- Are pleats made the same width the full length of the pleat?
- What are knife pleats?
- Where is the closing seam on pleats?
- What is a box pleat?
- What is an inverted box pleat?
- What are sunburst pleats?
- What are accordion pleats?
- Where do they differ from other pleats?
- Are they hemmed before pleating?
- How is the top edge furled in?
- How can narrow pleats be finished on the edge?
- How can several strips be finished?
- How are pleated sections made in a skirt?
- When is a box pleat made in the skirt?
- Should pleats be made complete before the side seams are joined?
- When is right-side basting used?
• Should pleat symbols on patterns be followed?
• What lines of the pleats are important to follow?
• How should all pleats be marked in single or double sections?
• What is the best method for marking pleats?
• Should a straight pencil mark be made on all edges of pleats on pattern?
• What lines are pressed for the pleat lines?
• If crease marks are not used, what kind of a line will be followed?
• Should box pleats have a center mark?
• How far down should pleats be basted?
• When is the basting removed?
• Is the center line basted the full length in all box pleats?
• Is the lower open section pressed back on a box with separate back section?
• How is the basting board used?
• Is all the back section basted flat?
• Are the side seams pressed open on box pleats?
• Is a single box pleat stitched across the top on the skirt?
• In what line is it stitched?
• Should the point be tacked and why?
• How is a small pleated section marked when set into a slash in a skirt?
• Is the seam made wide or narrow?
• How is the material stitched to the slash?
• From which side of the seam is the stitching made?
• How far above the top should the material extend?
• What is done after the extra section is stitched to the sides?
• Where is the side seam turned?
• Is the final basting made with the material right side or wrong side up?
• How are the edges treated and for what reason?
• If difficult to make perfect, what should be done?
• Does the basting remain in the pleats for the hem marking?
• Are fitted middy skirts made the same as other pleated skirts?
• What size is used as a guide?
• Is the skirt made open?
• How many lengths of 54-inch material will be used?
• How are the pieces joined?
• How is the length to be pleated measured?
• When is the hem made?
• Are the seams pressed open in the joining seams?
• If a two-inch pleat is used how will the center box be measured?
• Where are all the pleats first measured?
• Where is the second line of measurement?
• Will the pleats line be marked?
• Are the pleats also marked at the waist line?
• If the pleats are two inches wide how will the pleats be marked?
• How many inches are necessary to make one pleat?
• What is done to each outer pleat edge?
• How is the pleat held to the press board?
• Should the joining seams be visible?
• Are the pleats pinned or are they basted first?
• When and how are they basted?
• How is each pleat basted?
• What is used for a waist stay?
• Where is the belt started?
• Which edge of the pleat remains on the straight thread of material?
• Which edge of the pleat is altered at the waist line?
• Where is the greatest overlap of the pleats?
• Where is the tape stay placed?
• Where is it tacked?
• Can the pleats be flat-stitched as far as the hip line?