DRAFTING COLLARS

Excerpted from
GERTIE’S NEW BOOK FOR BETTER SEWING

GERTIE’S NEW BOOK FOR BETTER SEWING
A MODERN GUIDE TO COUTURE-STYLE SEWING USING BASIC VINTAGE TECHNIQUES

GRETCHEN HIRSCH  Photographs by Jody Rogac
Illustrations by Sun Young Park

Available wherever books are sold.
find out more at melaniefalickbooks.com
DRAFTING COLLARS

Collars can also be drafted from scratch and added to your blouse and dress patterns. My favorite vintage-style collar is the Peter Pan collar, which I incorporated into the blouse variation on page 160. It can be added to any blouse, jacket, or dress with a round neckline, and it will make the most basic garment ooze charm! Depending on how you style a Peter Pan collar, it can look ladylike or playful, 1930s glam or 1960s mod.

Once you understand the basics of making a Peter Pan collar, you can apply this knowledge to any shape or size collar you like. For the purpose of this little design project, let’s use a 1940s button-back blouse as our base.

The basic premise of drafting a collar like this is that you use the neckline of your garment as your guide—the basic shape of your collar is right there! So start by laying out your blouse front and back pattern pieces on a table. Use a colored pencil to draw in the neckline and shoulder seam lines on your pattern pieces.

Position your two pieces with the shoulder seam lines on top of each other and the necklines matched up.

Next you’re going to make a sneaky little change: Overlap the shoulder seams by \( \frac{1}{2} \)" (1.3 cm) on the armhole side only (A). This little overlap will help your collar roll properly once it’s sewn on.

When patternmaking, it’s important to keep all your pieces from slip-sliding around. Secure the front and back pattern pieces in position by either pinning through them or thumbtacking them to cardboard or a cork mat, if you have one. Next, lay a piece of tracing paper over the neckline area of your pattern pieces. Secure the tracing paper with pins. Trace the inner neckline edge, as well as the neckline seam allowance (B).

Now for the creative part! You’re going to draw in the style lines of your collar. Decide how wide you want your collar to be. I find that 2" (5 cm) is a nice size, but it’s up to you! You can...
go bigger for a dramatic look or smaller for a delicate vibe—just make sure you take into account the proportions of your overall garment to avoid a collar of a clownish scale.

Begin by using your gridded ruler to mark points 2" (5 cm) out from the neck seam line all the way around the neck (C).

Your collar will begin at center front and end at center back. Now you’re going to bring out your inner *artiste* and draw in the curve of the collar—using your French curve. Position the curve at the center front of your collar, and slide it around until you get a curve you like. Trace around the curve. Remember those dashes you made 2" (5 cm) out from the seam line? Connect your curve with those dashes, and connect your marks all around the front neckline (D). Repeat this process on your center back, having the back curve mimic the curve in the front.

There! Your style lines are complete. Now you just need to add a seam allowance to the outer curve of the collar only—since the neckline already has one (E). This is your completed collar pattern (F).
You’ve just made your upper collar pattern! The very last thing you need to do is make an under collar pattern. Why, you ask? Good question! You want your under collar to be just a teensy bit smaller than your upper collar. This allows the collar seam to roll to the bottom of the collar, rather than sticking out like a sore thumb at the edge of the collar.

All you need to do to make your under collar is trace your upper collar onto pattern paper, but make it $\frac{1}{8}$” (3 mm) smaller all the way around the outer edge—not the neckline edge though (A). Now label your pattern pieces, find your grain line (see page 45), and you’re ready to cut out your fabric (B)!

**Sewing Your Collar**

This method uses a neckline facing, but you can also replace the facing with a bias strip about 1½” (3.8 cm) wide. Use the strip like you would a facing, and then tuck in the raw edge of the strip and hand stitch in place (see page 50).

1. Pin your under collar to your upper collar, right sides together (A). The under collar is slightly smaller, but just match up the outer edges, and pin them, so they stay put. Stitch the pieces together on the outside edges of the collar (not on the neckline side) (B).

2. Notch, grade, and trim the seam allowances (C).

3. Turn right side out, and press. Make sure the seam of the collar falls on the underside, so it’s not visible from the top. Baste the raw edges of the inner collar together (D).

4. Baste the collar pieces to the right side of your blouse at the neckline (E).

5. Construct your facing unit, and baste, right sides together, to the neckline (on top of the collar).

6. Stitch around the neckline, through all thicknesses (F).

7. Notch, grade, and trim the neckline seam allowances.

8. Turn the facing unit to the inside of the blouse.

9. Understitch the facing unit to keep it from rolling to the outside (G, see page 52).

10. Tack the facings at the shoulder seams (H).
A. Pin under and upper collars together.
B. Stitch together on outer edge of collar.

C. Notch, grade, and trim seam allowance.
D. Baste together raw edges of inner collar.

E. Baste collar to blouse.

F. Stitch around neckline.

G. Understitch the facing unit.
H. Tack facings at seam.