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Tailored Trousers

Sew Much More : Episode SMM-160

Host Susan Khalje is joined by Kathy Ruddy from Unique Patterns. Ruddy prides herself on designing patterns and developing techniques that are unique such as adding comfort to tailored trousers. A fine pair of trousers has a clean line, falls nicely from the waist and includes tailored details such as pleats at the waist. A fine pair of trousers can also bind at the waist and be uncomfortable to wear. But the French have found a way to add elastic comfort without sacrificing style by incorporating elastic inserts at the side seams. Ruddy demonstrates how to make a pair of comfortable tailored wool trousers and how elastic comfort can be added to virtually any pair of tailored trousers without detracting from their sleek, sophisticated look.

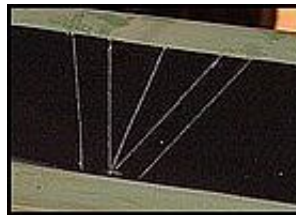


Figure A

Here's the story of how Ruddy found this look. "Wandering through the waterfront market in Marseilles, France, on a recent vacation, I saw a man wearing a fascinating pair of slacks. The pants were fully tailored front and back, but directly above each side seam, at the waist, was a deep, flat, V-shaped elastic insertion. I was so taken with this approach to adding comfort to trouser waists without spoiling the smooth elegance of a traditional waistband finish that I could barely wait to get home and try it out. These pants are the result, adapted to a woman's figure, and they've proven as comfortable as they are sleek."

Materials:

pants pattern with normal belted waistline, Unique pattern #5031, or pants to alter
 2-1/2 yards (45" wide) or 1-1/2 yards (60" wide) pant-weight fabric
 elastic wedges (cut from 6" elastic, 3-3/4" at the top and 1-3/8" at the
 bottom)
 7" zipper

thread
 two buttons (1/2- to 3/4-inch size)
 twill tape or fusible straight stay tape
 soft fusible interfacing like Textured Weft
 French curve ruler
 pattern paper
 See-Thru ruler
 permanent felt marking pen and soap

Tip: If you own a finished pair of pants that is too tight in the waist, slit through the waistband above each side seam, open the side seam to a point 5-3/4" below the top of the waistband, fold back the raw edge of the waistband, pin the elastic wedge into place, and edgestitch.

Steps:

1. To create the elastic waist insert, mark (using soap as a marker) a right angle for the center. For the 2-1/2 inch measurement across the top, mark 1-1/4 inches on each side, adding 1/8-inch seam allowance for the bottom. Be sure to add seam allowances on each side (**figure A**) and cut out the elastic inserts. Tip: One yard of elastic should make six inserts.

2. Converting pants pattern:

- a) For a pants pattern with a waistband, the waistband will be eliminated and an inset opening will be created in step #3.
- b) The pattern requires cut-on fly facing. If it has sewn-on facing, convert to cut-on facing by pinning onto the pattern.
- c) For inseam side pockets, convert to slanted pockets or eliminate pockets entirely.

3. To create the elastic inset opening, remove part of the pants pattern by measuring and marking new sewing guide lines at 1-1/4 inch at the waist, 5-7/8 inches down on the side seam, and allow for seam allowances (**figure B**). Do the same for the back pants pattern; this makes room for the elastic wedge insert (**figure C**). Cut pattern pieces according to pattern instructions with the new side seam shape at the waist. Transfer the markings and darts to the fabric.



Figure B



Figure C

4. To finish the pants waist, create front and back facing. On the front and back, fold all pleats and/or darts to final size. Place pattern paper over each pattern and trace one facing, extending 4 inches deep at the center front and center back, and 8 inches deep at each side seam. Using a French curve, connect these points with a curved line, and transfer markings and grain from pants to facings to create a waist facing pattern piece (**figure D**). Transfer markings and darts to fabric.



Figure D



Figure E

5. Create a front waist tab (**figure E**) pattern. Using a See-Through ruler on pattern paper, draw three parallel lines, 1 inch apart, making a beginning zero point line and a 2-3/4 inch parallel line, and a 3-1/2 inch line; then join the pieces (**figure F**). Cut the tab and interface, mark, stitch, trim, turn, and add a buttonhole.

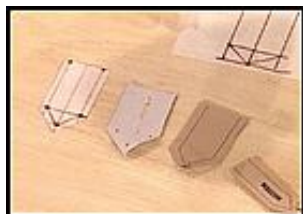


Figure F



Figure G

6. Interface all facings either completely or along the top edge to a depth of 2 inches (**figure G**) and interface the fly extension.

7. Stitch all darts, pleats, and pockets on pants front and back, and join back pieces at center back. Press towards center. Tip: To keep the waistline from gaping, top stitch pocket top about 2 inches down from waistline (**figure H**).



Figure H



Figure I

8. Attach tab just below the waistline by marking the center and the seam line (**figure I**). Pin and stitch tab to extension vertically at center front.

9. Attach zipper, but don't topstitch until facings are attached.
10. Stitch side seams up to insertion point and back tack.
11. Insert 6-inch elastic inset. With right sides together, pin and stitch inset to pants front and back, with top edge of elastic flush with waistline. Stitch from waistline front and waistline back to elastic insertion point.
12. Using fusible tape or basted tailor's tape, stabilize the waistline of facings just below the waistline.
13. Join all facings with right sides together at side seams, up to insertion point.
14. With facing wrong sides together over pants front, fold front edge of facing to clear zipper teeth, mark fold line and corresponding seamline on zipper tape. Turn facing to right side, pin and stitch right sides together to zipper fly and trim. Attach front facings to insets, with right sides together and pants inside out, and backs underneath facings but not caught in stitching. Stitch facing to pants from insertion point to insertion point across front waistline.
15. To attach back facing, with right sides together and pants inside out (and fronts underneath facings but not caught in stitching), stitch back facings to pants from insertion point to insertion point, across back waistline.
16. Stitch the center back seam, trim, turn, and press facings to wrong side. Topstitch the zipper through all layers and around top edge of pants 1/4 inch from edge and attach button.

RESOURCES:

Trousers--Unique Patterns (Model #: 5031)

Unique Patterns system: purchase a membership to Unique Patterns, take a series of 43 measurements. Send these measurements back to Unique. The measurements are stored until you order a pattern. Once you have ordered, Unique uses these measurements to draft a pattern to your measurements.

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elastic - Live Guides

Elastic for the insert comes in two forms:

By the yard - One yard makes 6 pairs of inserts

By the kit includes one pre-cut pair of inserts plus instructions

Elastic comes in black only. It is used as an accent and will go with any color.

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