

Sleek & Slim Tailored Details

Learn how
to eliminate
buildup in your
seam allowances

BY KENNETH D. KING

Ah, the mysteries behind making those smooth, flat edges on tailored garments. Sometimes, you just can't grade a seam enough to make all the underlayers disappear. In *Threads* no. 137, I showed you how to keep heavy interfacing out of seams even when the seam allowances are exposed for a fringe. Now, I'll show you how to reconfigure a pattern to divert the seam from the edges of tailored details such as pocket flaps. This removes bulk for a sleek and trim edge.

My flap-pocket method is similar to the pocket technique Judy Barlup uses in her excellent work on Japanese tailoring; mine differs most in the interfacing.

The object of the pattern alteration is to turn the edges into foldlines instead of seamlines. This makes for a really flat, clean pocket flap. The seams are converted into mitered corners. All you have to do is prepare your pattern and underlayers, and you're set to go.

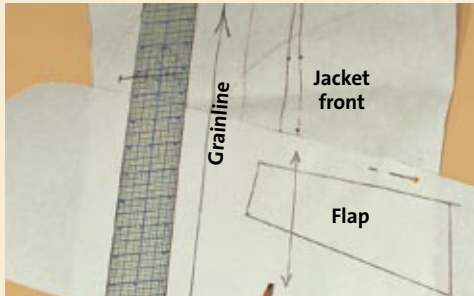
I demonstrate here on a pocket flap because it's easy to see and follow. But once you have mastered this technique, look for other places to use it. It works on all sorts of tailored angles. Try it on a waistband, cuffs, or somewhere a fold can replace a laced edge, and explore the possibilities.

Couture designer Kenneth D. King is a professor at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

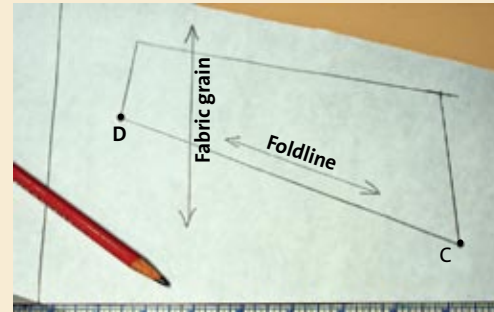
This is the third installment of a four-part tailoring series by Kenneth D. King.

Trace or draw the flap

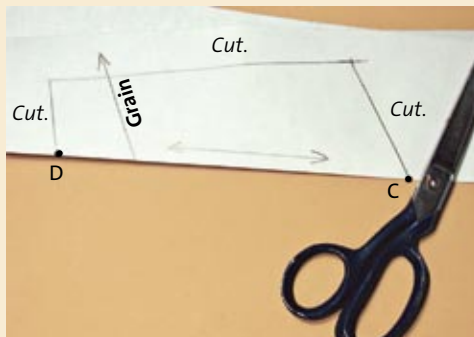
You can follow a commercial pattern or draw your own pocket-flap design. On a commercial pattern, don't include the three exposed edges' seam allowances. Then, in either case, transfer the pattern to fresh paper.



1 Transfer the grainline from the body piece to the flap piece. Position the flap on the front pattern piece, and copy the parallel grainline.



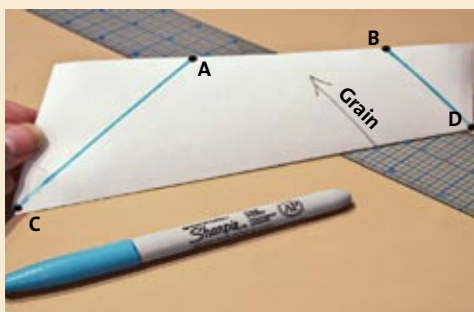
2 On the new pattern, label the bottom corners D and C, as shown. The line connecting them is the foldline for the pattern.



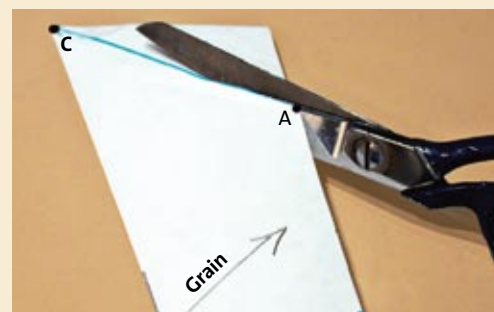
3 Fold the paper, and cut along the lines indicated. This step establishes the shape even though two of the edges get taped back together later.



4 Tape both short ends closed. Remember, we are diverting the seam. This makes a little envelope with the top opening where the flap joins the garment.



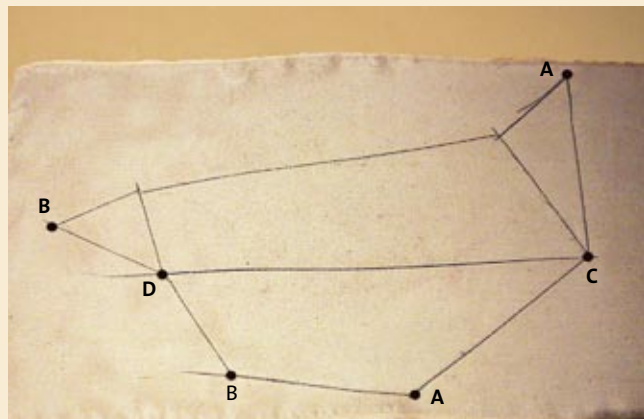
5 Divide the angles from the corner to the top edge. Draw lines to form lines AC and BD. Points A and B are on the open edge. These lines become the new seamlines.



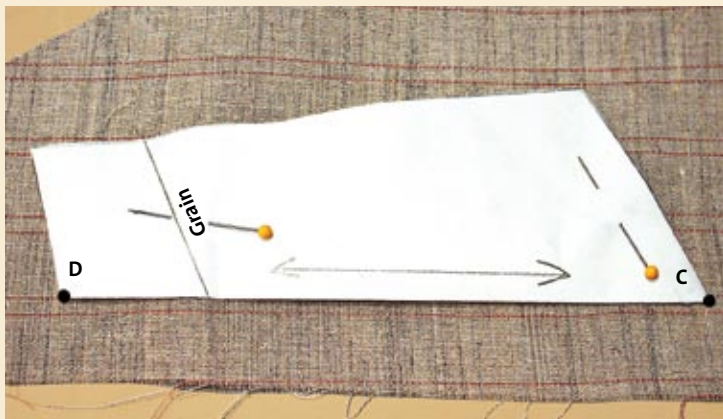
6 Cut through one paper layer along both lines from A to C and from B to D. Open the paper, and flatten it to see your new flap pattern.

Mark and cut the interfacing

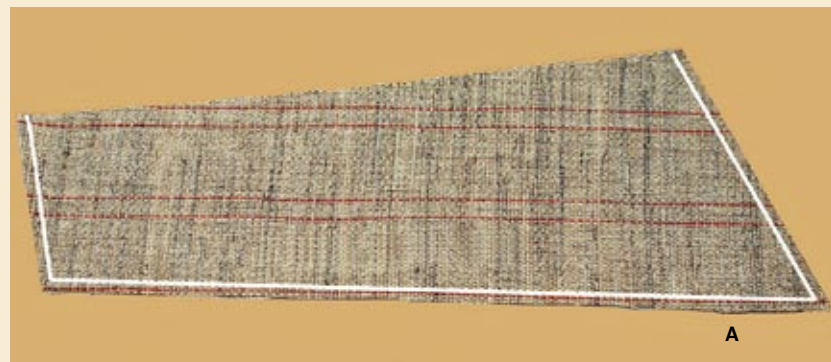
This technique uses two layers of interfacing—one of organza and the other a hair canvas called “hymo.”



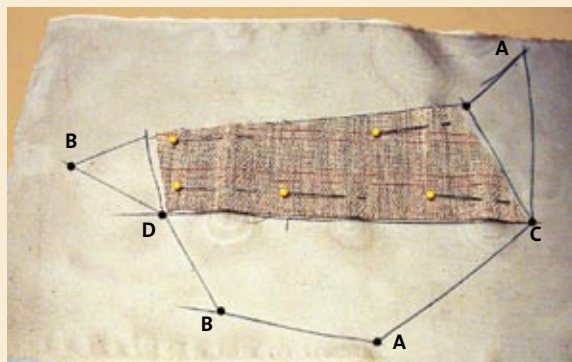
1 For the flap interfacing, first transfer the pattern lines onto organza, as shown above. Place foldline DC on the straight grain of the organza. This grain keeps the flap edge from stretching or distorting. Don't cut out the flap just yet.



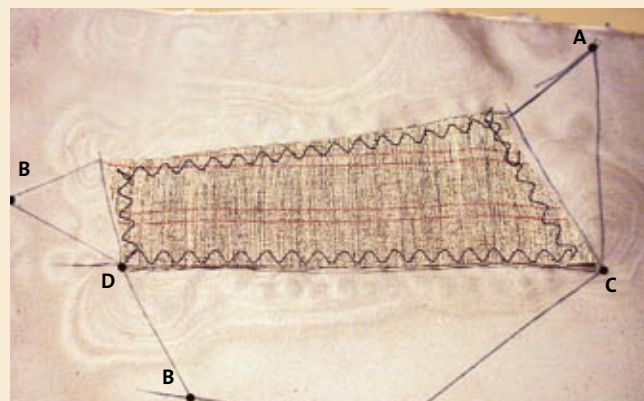
2 Fold all the wings back in place to make the hymo pattern. Again, place line DC on the hymo grainline. Cut out the hymo flap piece.



3 Trim 1/8-inch off the outer edges. This corrects for the turn of cloth and eliminates any bunching that could occur later.



4 Lay the hymo onto the organza you prepared earlier. The hymo goes against the organza on the side opposite the fashion fabric. In the final piece, the organza is sandwiched between the hymo and the fashion fabric. Pin the layers together.



5 Serpentine stitch the hymo to the organza. Then press.

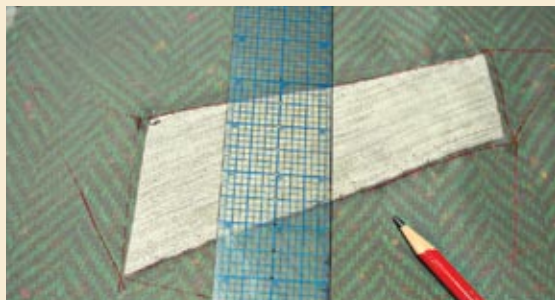
Tip **USE SIMPLE GEOMETRY.** To divide the angles perfectly, just meet the taped edge to the folded edge, and crease to form lines AC and BD.



Match your herringbone

When determining placement of a patterned fabric for the flap, place the organza unit back on the actual fabric front piece to see the fabric design through the organza.

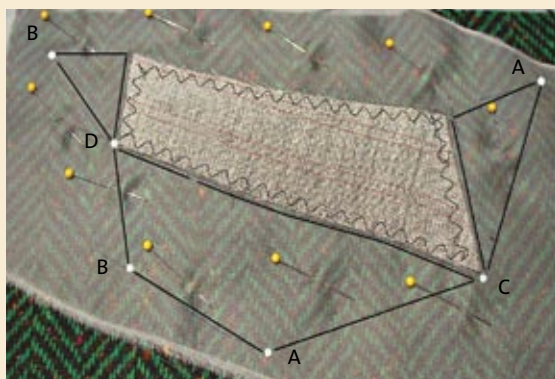
- 1 Position the organza and trace the fabric design—stripes, plaids, herringbone, etc. on the organza.** Copy enough of the fabric design to be able to use the organza to find a duplicate pattern in your fabric.



- 2 Mark the grainline, then use the organza to match both the pattern and the grainline to the flap fabric before you cut.** Turn this unit over, and transfer any markings to the wrong side. Use these marks to position the organza to the wrong side of the fashion fabric. Pin in place.



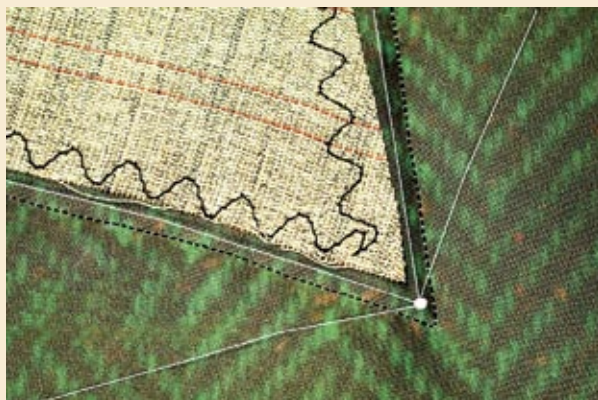
- 3 Place the organza onto the wrong side of the fashion fabric.** You can see below how the organza is sandwiched between the hymo and the fashion fabric.



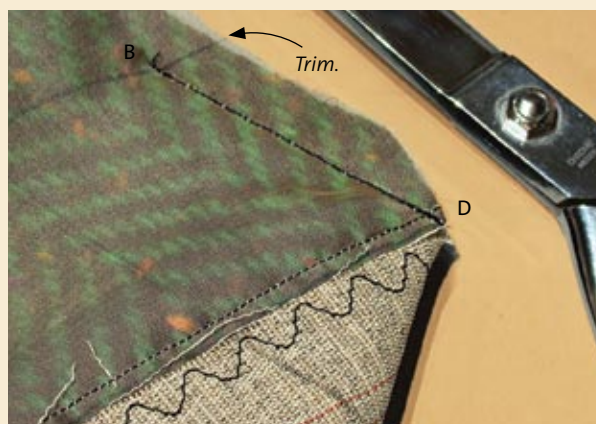
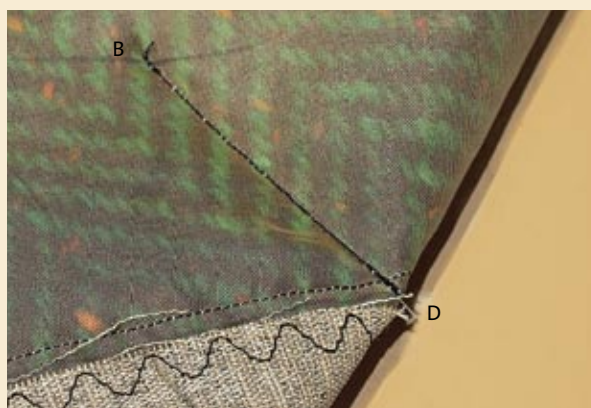
Now stitch it up

All of the preparation makes sewing the flap a breeze. With the organza on the wrong side of the fashion fabric, anchor the stabilizing layer.

- 1 Stitch around the hymo.** Stitch $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch outside the lines drawn onto the organza on all four sides as shown. An alternative to machine sewing here is to sew the organza with tiny running stitches that barely show on the front side of the fabric.



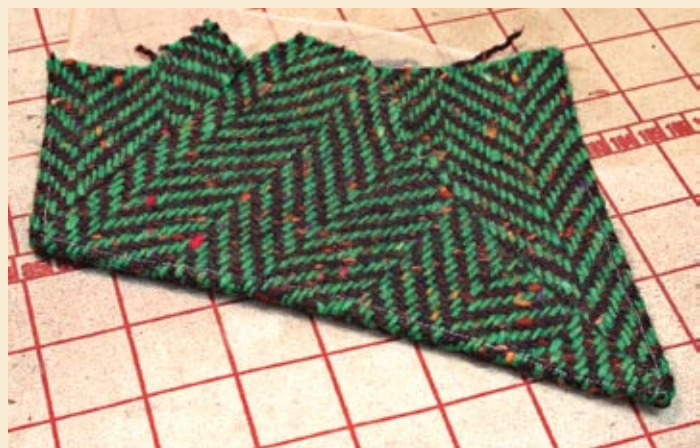
- 2 Match the B points.** Sew from B to D and trim. This miters the first corner. Then match the A points, sew, and trim. This miters the remaining corner.



3 Use a point presser to open the seams. Press both seam allowances open.



4 Turn the flap right-side out and press. With the seams mitered, the flap presses exceedingly flat.



Ready the flap for installation

When you turn the flap right-side out, you can see a line of stitching from sewing around the hymo in step 1 on the opposite page.

1 Sew through both flap layers. Go to the machine and sew along the line through all layers.



2 Trim away the excess fabric from the seam allowance on the top of the flap. Here's the finished flap. It is perfectly flat and ready to install into the jacket.



3 Pin it. When installing this flap in a double-welt pocket, slide the flap into the opening after the welt has been installed but before you sew the pocket bag.

