

Sewing Glossary: How To Draft And Sew Button Bands The Shirtmaking Way

## Description



If you are looking to take your sewing skills to a new level, youâ??ll appreciate this tutorial on how to sew the button bands the shirtmaking way â?? when one front side is simply folded twice and stitched in place, while the other has a separate, sew-on front band where the buttonholes go.

Even though most of our patterns here use the simply fold-up-twice technique for sewing button bands, we believe that a traditionally tailored button front can make any shirt or dress look more elegant and sophisticated. After all, itâ??s small details like this that make your projects look more professional and accomplished.

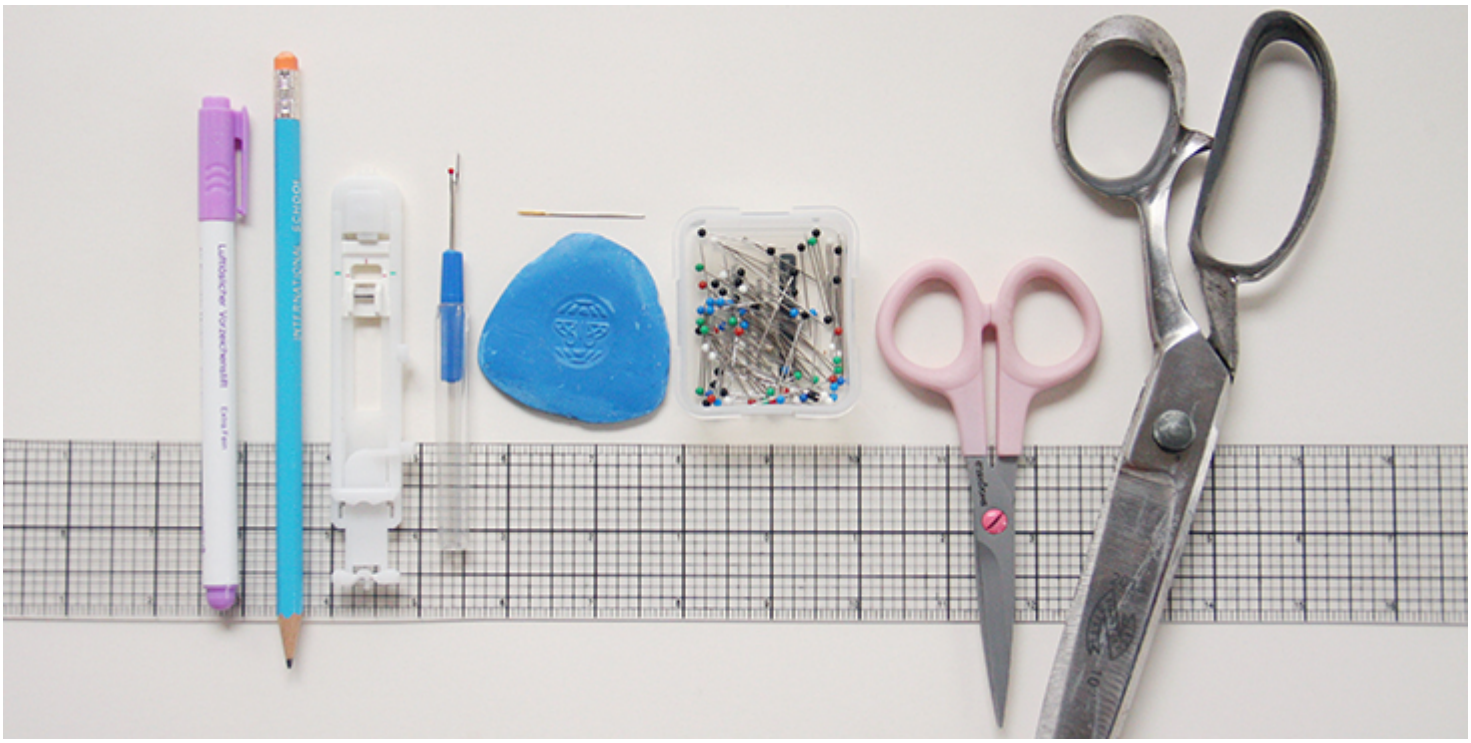
## *Materials*



Fabric of your choice (we are using our medium weight IL042 908 FS Premier Finish Linen)

Matching sewing thread, buttons

## *Tools*



Pattern paper, scissors, ruler, pins, chalk, fabric marker, pen, buttonhole foot, needle, seam ripper, sewing machine

## *Difficulty*

Beginner

## *Time*

1 hour

## *Drafting the Pattern*

If you are working with an existing pattern featuring front button bands, itâ??ll give you all the necessary measurements and cutting instructions.

But what if you want to add a button band to a pattern that doesnâ??t call for it? Itâ??s easy to modify front styles by adding a button overlap to your favorite patterns. The button overlap is an extension added to each side of

the opening allowing the edges to cross over each other and to be buttoned up.

Before you get started drafting, you need to decide on the length and the width of the button band youâ??ll be making. For the length, measure the distance from the neckline to the bottom hem and note what seam allowances youâ??ll be adding (3/8â?³Â• for the neckline and 1â?³Â• for the rolled bottom hem, for example). Or refer to your existing pattern and see what seam allowances are required for these edges. Youâ??ll add them later to your diagram. As for the width, the bands on store-bought clothing are usually 1 inch (2,5 cm) wide but you can always make them smaller or larger to go with your design and your buttons. The rule is that the button bands should be wide enough to support your buttons.

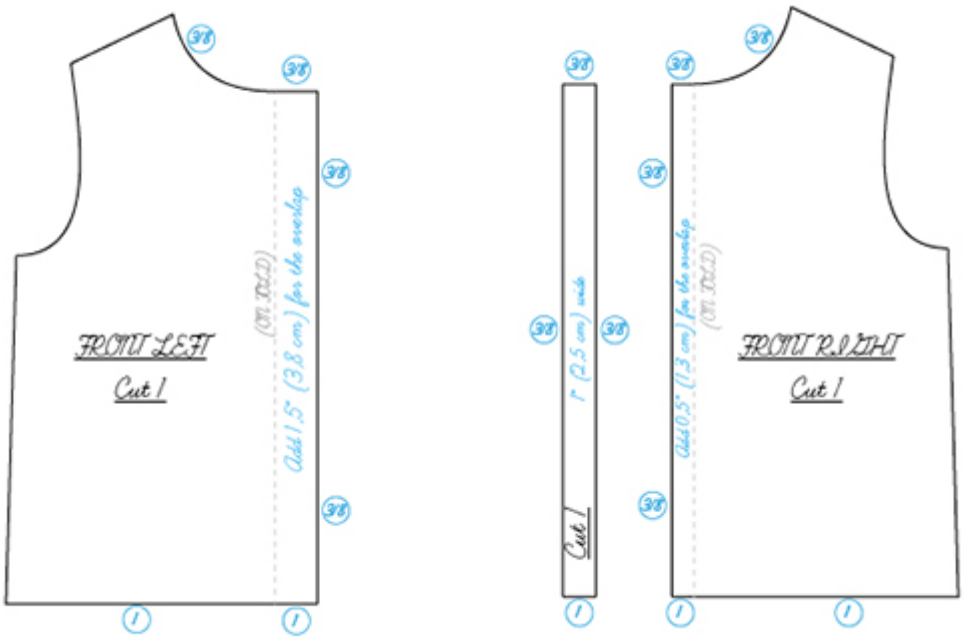
Another important point to consider is the position of the buttons/buttonholes. Tradition puts menâ??s buttons on the right band and buttonholes on the left. With womenâ??s clothing, it is the opposite: buttons left, buttonholes right. It is always a good idea to refer to some store-bought shirts from your closet to for guidance and examples of what the standard is.

If you do examine some of your shirts, youâ??ll notice that the button band area is typically stiffer than some other parts of the shirt. This is due to the interfacing used to stabilize the area and keep it from stretching.

Ok, back to pattern drafting! Letâ??s say you want to transform a simple top into a button-up top with 1â?³Â•-wide button bands. What you need to do is to add some width to the center front (usually itâ??s the line that is cut on fold).

Since in womenâ??s clothing the buttons are on the left and the buttonholes are on the right (sewn-on) side, youâ??ll add 1,5â?³Â• to the left center front side and 1/2â?³ to the right center front side + plus a separate band of fabric that will be 1 inch wide and as long as your center line. Add seam allowances around all edges.

See the diagram below:



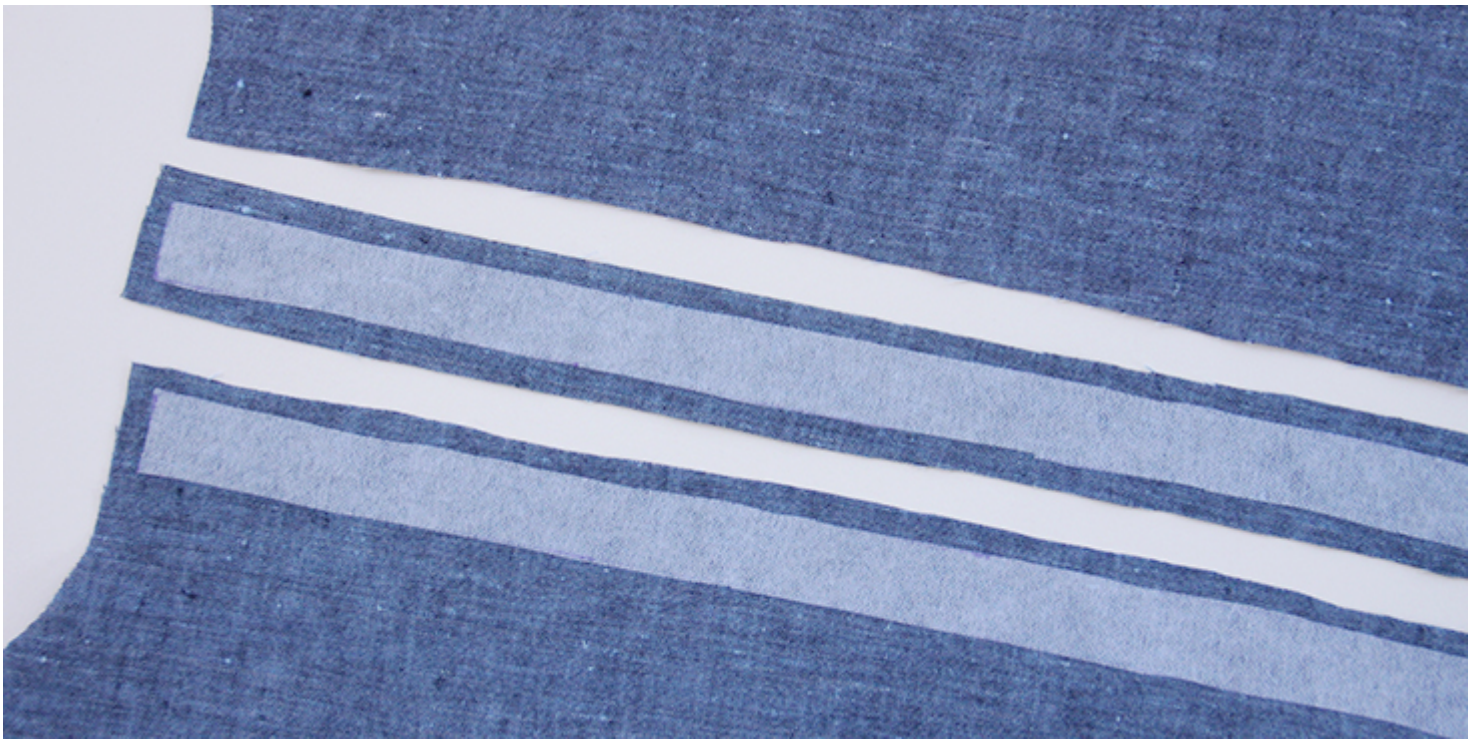

Now that you have your pattern, you can cut your fabric and fusible interfacing (two 1â?³Â• (2,5 cm)-wide bands to the length of your front opening minus the bottom and top edge seam allowances).

## *Steps*

Note: Prewash your fabric and tumble dry it until it is still slightly moist, dry at room temperature. Iron the fabric so it is easier to work with.

Please note that weâ??ll be making a womenâ??s shirt so if you are making a menâ??s shirt, inverse the left/right instructions.

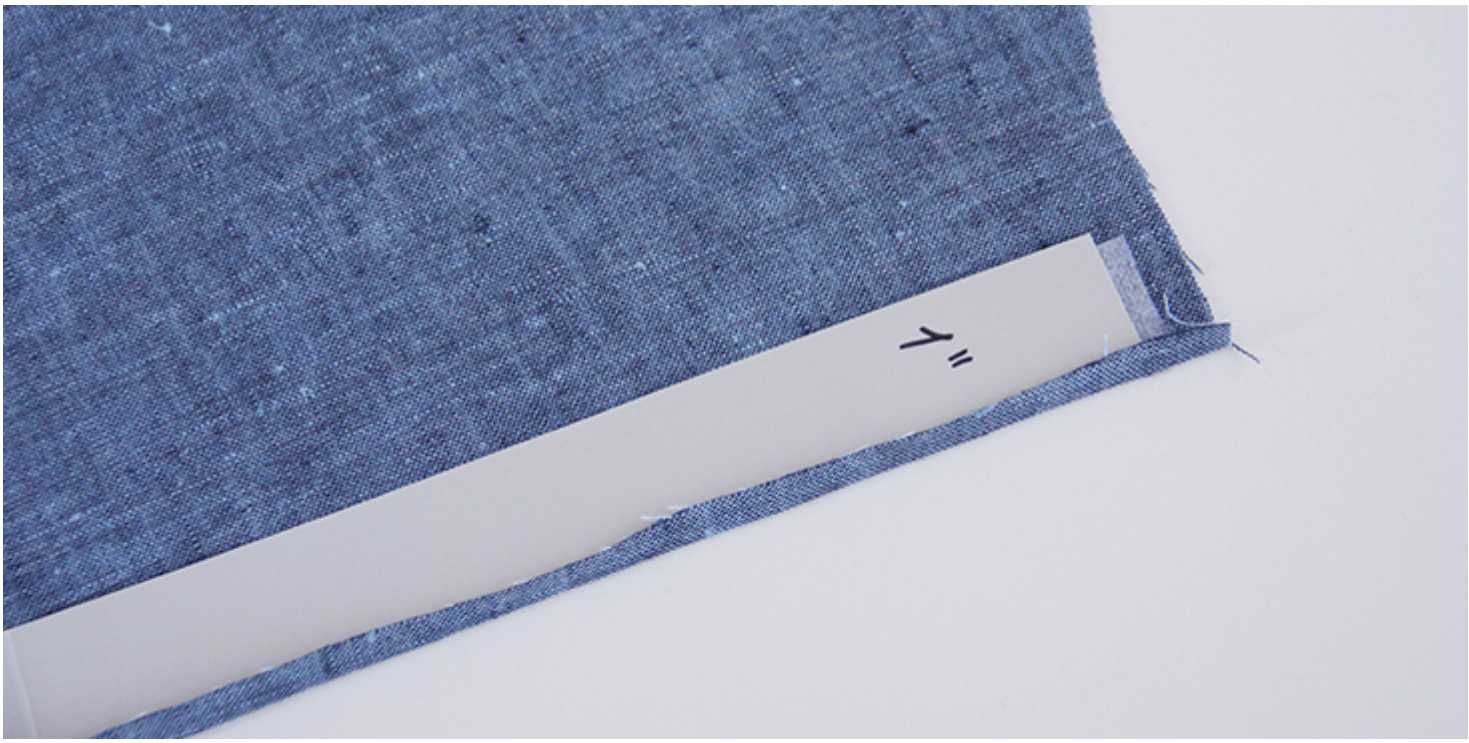
1.â?? Cut two 1â?³Â• (2,5 cm)-wide bands from the fusible interfacing to the length of your front opening minus the bottom and top edge seam allowances. Apply the fusible interfacing to the wrong sides of your button bands, 3/8â?³Â• (1 cm) from the outer edges.



We recommend double-checking the left and right sides by placing it on your body to avoid any confusion.

2. Weâ??ll start with the left front button band and fold it twice to the wrong side using your fusible interfacing band as a guide, 3/8â?³Â• (1 cm) to 1â?³Â• (2,5 cm). Press and pin.

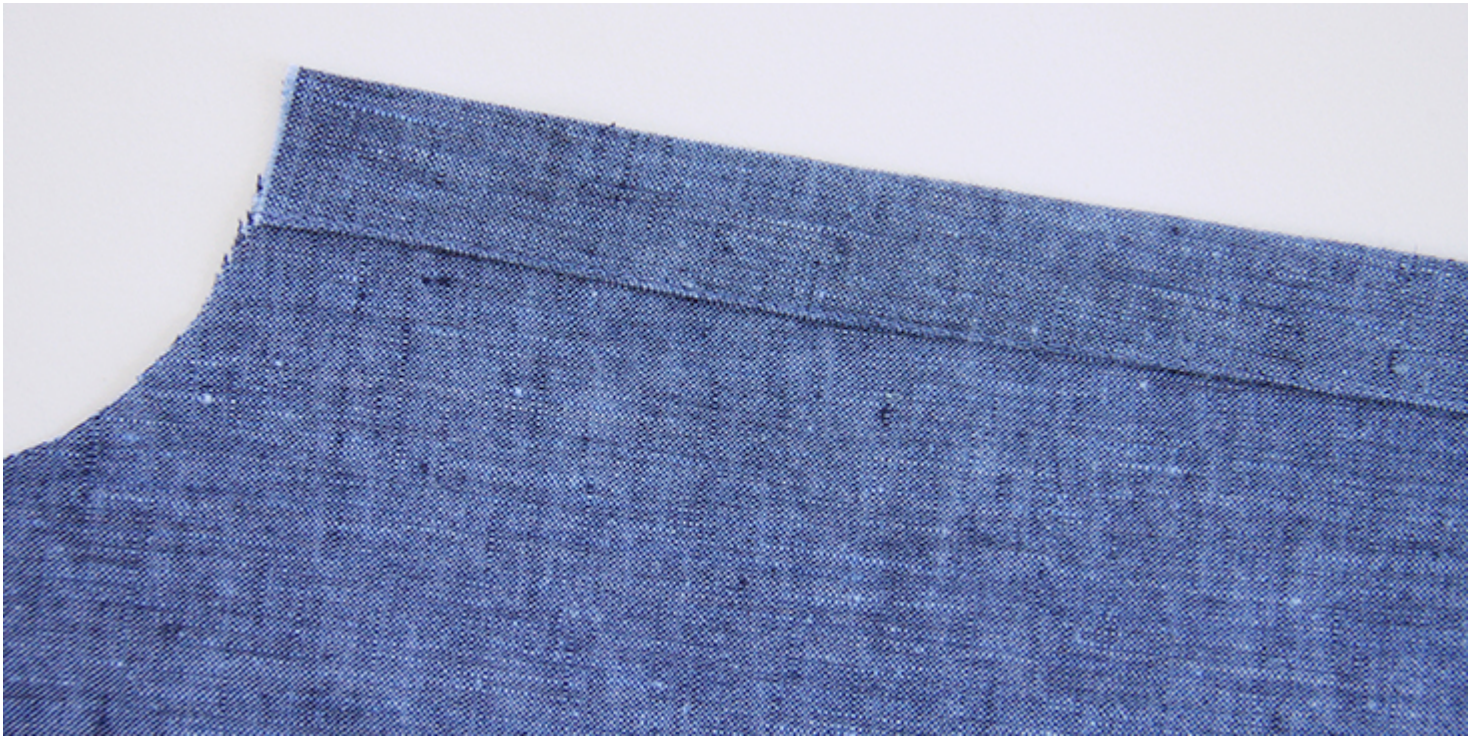
Tip: If you want to create accurate button bands each time you sew, we recommend to make a simple cardboard template to the width of your finished bands. You will be amazed how helpful it is when folding and pressing your bands.

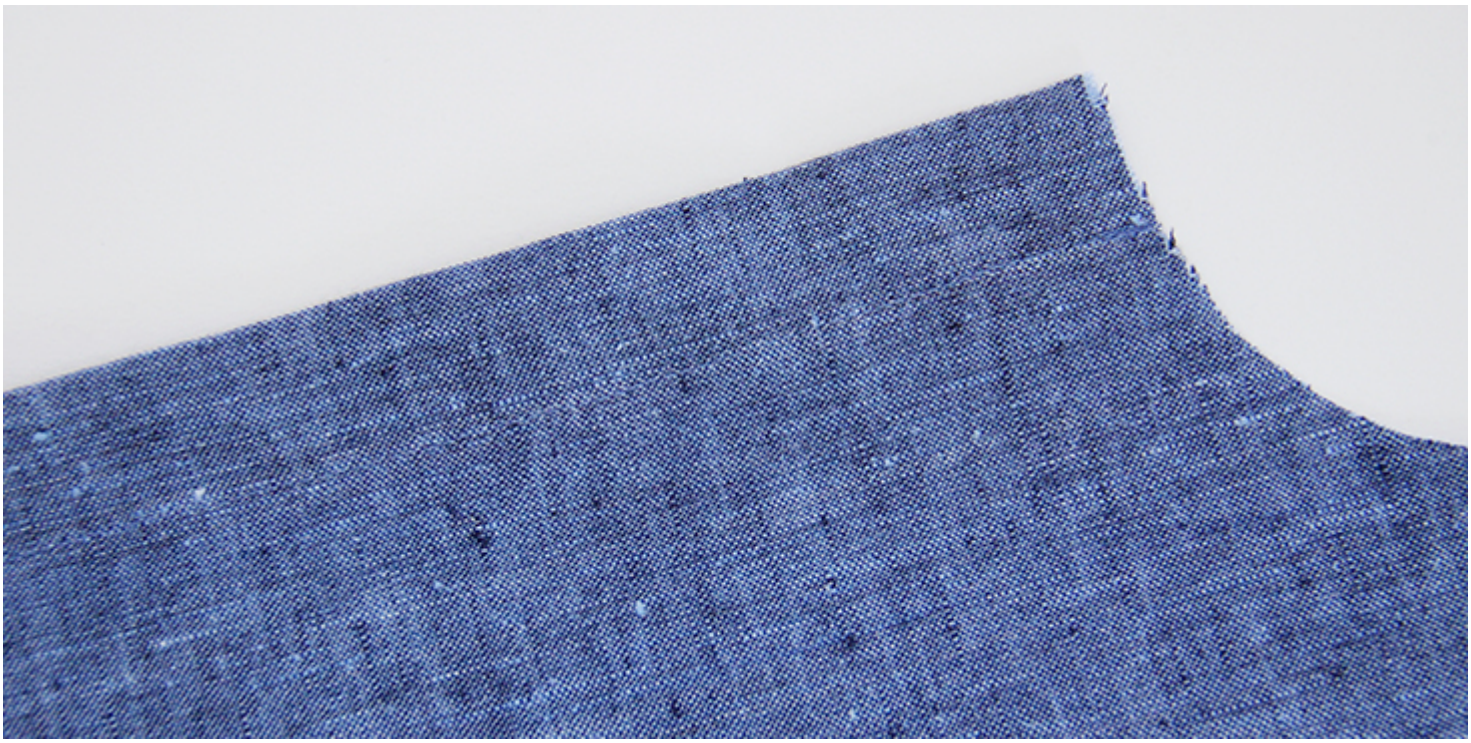






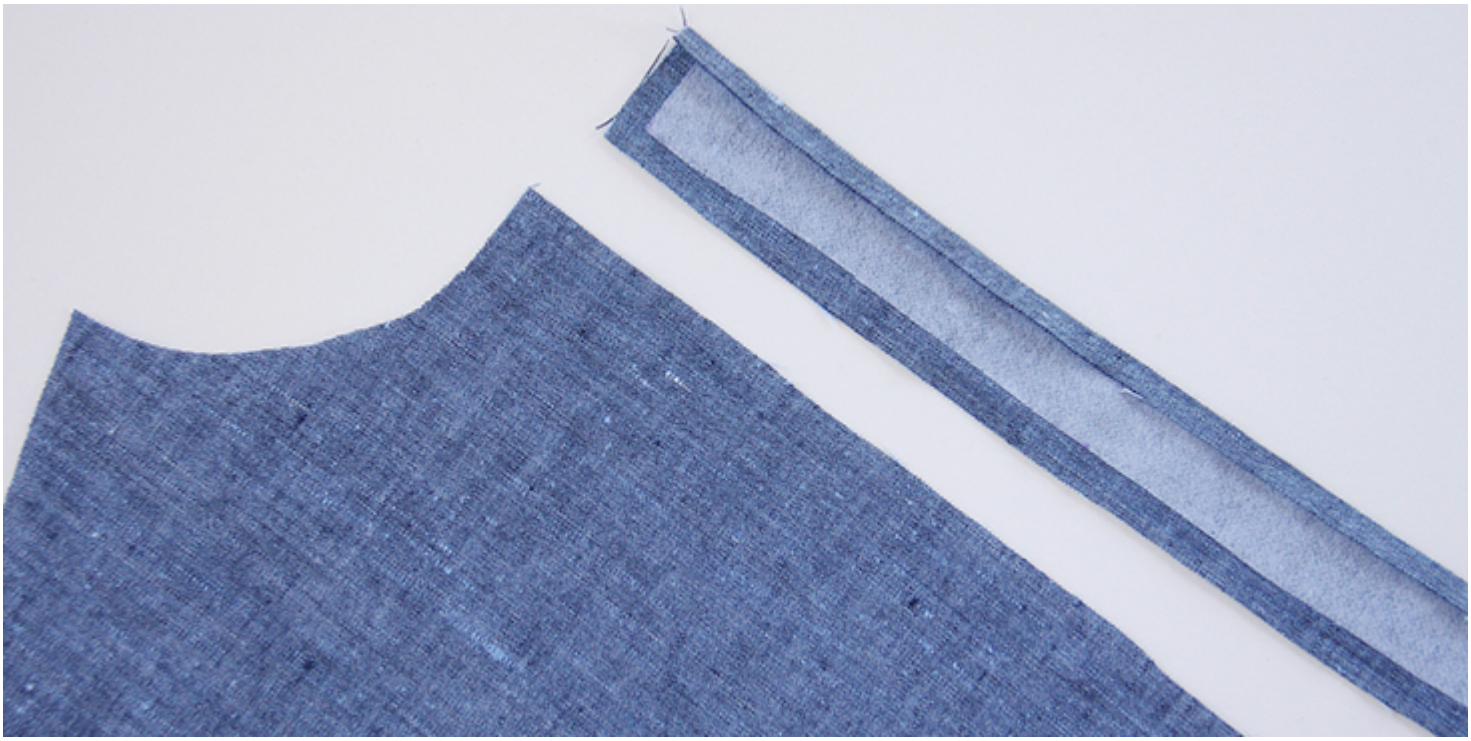
3. Stitch as closely to the edge of the inside fold as possible.





Give your left front piece a good press and set it aside for now.

4. Take the interfaced button band that will be later attached to the right front of your shirt and with the wrong side facing you, fold up and press its right raw edge 3/8â?³Â• (1 cm) to the wrong side.



5. Pin the right side of the non-folded button band edge to the wrong side of your shirt front piece.




6. Stitch in place along the 3/8â?³Â• (1 cm) seam allowance.



7. Trim the seam allowance down to 1/4â?³ (6 mm) to reduce the bulk and to allow the extension to sit more smoothly.



8. Working from the right side, press the button band away from the shirt, so that on the wrong side the trimmed seam allowance is folded towards the band piece.

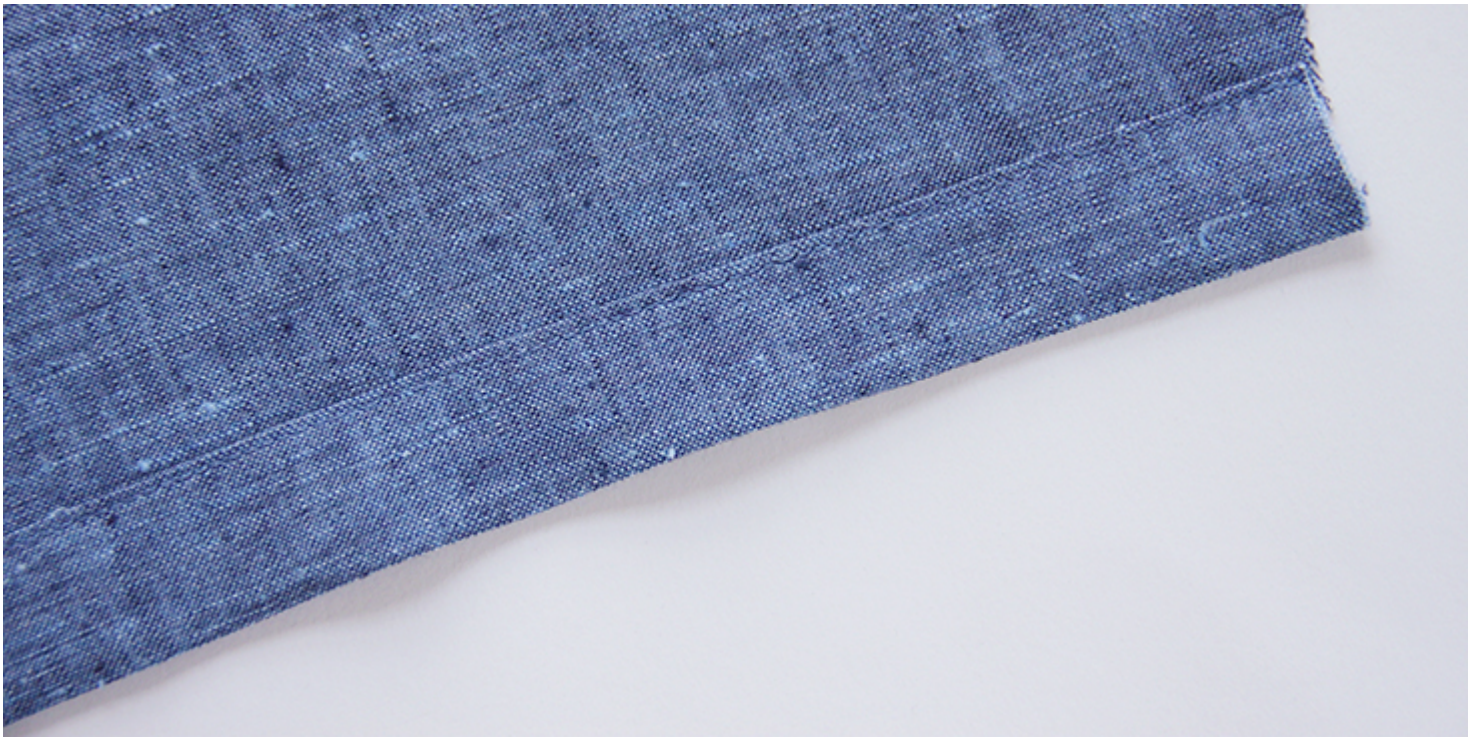





9. Fold the button band over and pin it to the shirt, making sure that the first fold of the fabric either meets or slightly covers the stitching line from attaching the button band. Press and pin.



10. Working from the right side, topstitch the pinned edge in place as close to the inside fold as possible.



11. For a nice final touch, stitch down the other front edge of the button band to match the one that youâ??ve just made.



12. Lastly, follow your patternâ??s instructions to assemble the shirt and sew the buttonholes and attach the buttons. Remember that if you are sewing a womenâ??s shirt, your buttonholes should be sewn on the right button band (with a sewn-on button band) and the buttons â?? on the left button band (the one that was just folded twice).

For the buttonholes, you can follow our detailed tutorial HERE.

As for the buttons, check our tutorial HERE for instructions.

The number and the spacing are really up to you. If you want your buttons closer, just leave smaller gaps between them. Overlap the shirt and place a pin into the center of each buttonhole. This is where youâ??ll need to attach the button.



We hope youâ??ll give this technique a try to design a classic shirt with traditional tailored button bands.

## CATEGORY

1. SEWING ESSENTIALS
2. TUTORIALS

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