

Pattern Hack: Turn a Simple Tank into a Button-Down Top Tutorial

Description



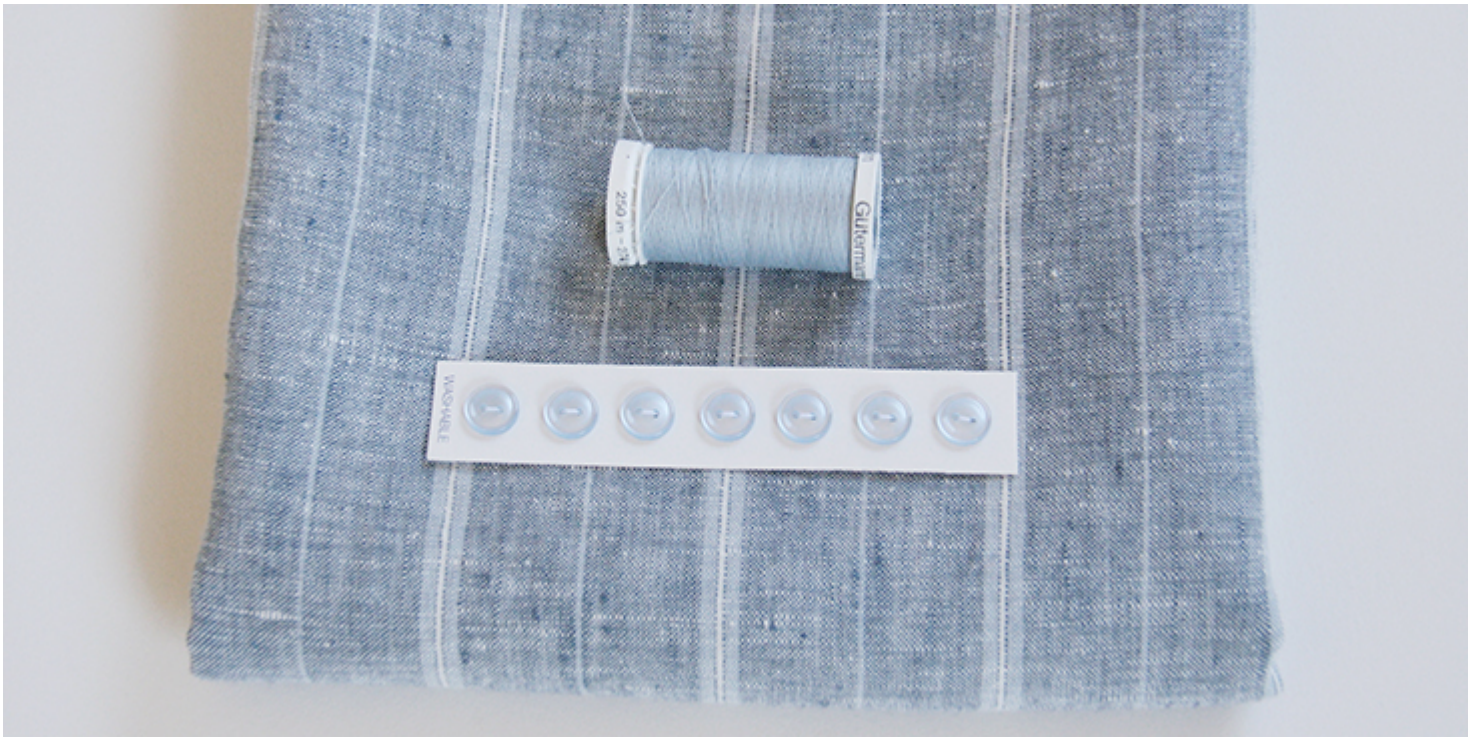


When we get a pattern that we really like, we find ourselves using it again and again, playing with color and fabric to create as many different garments from it as we possibly can. But did you know that with a little bit of creative pattern hacking, you can make small design changes to your favorite patterns and end with fresh new looks for any occasion?

Today weâ??ll share with you a technique for transforming a simple tank into a button down top. Using our Essential Linen Tank pattern as a base, weâ??ll add tailored button bands to the front for a custom spin. All you need is paper, a ruler and a pencil!

Happy hacking!

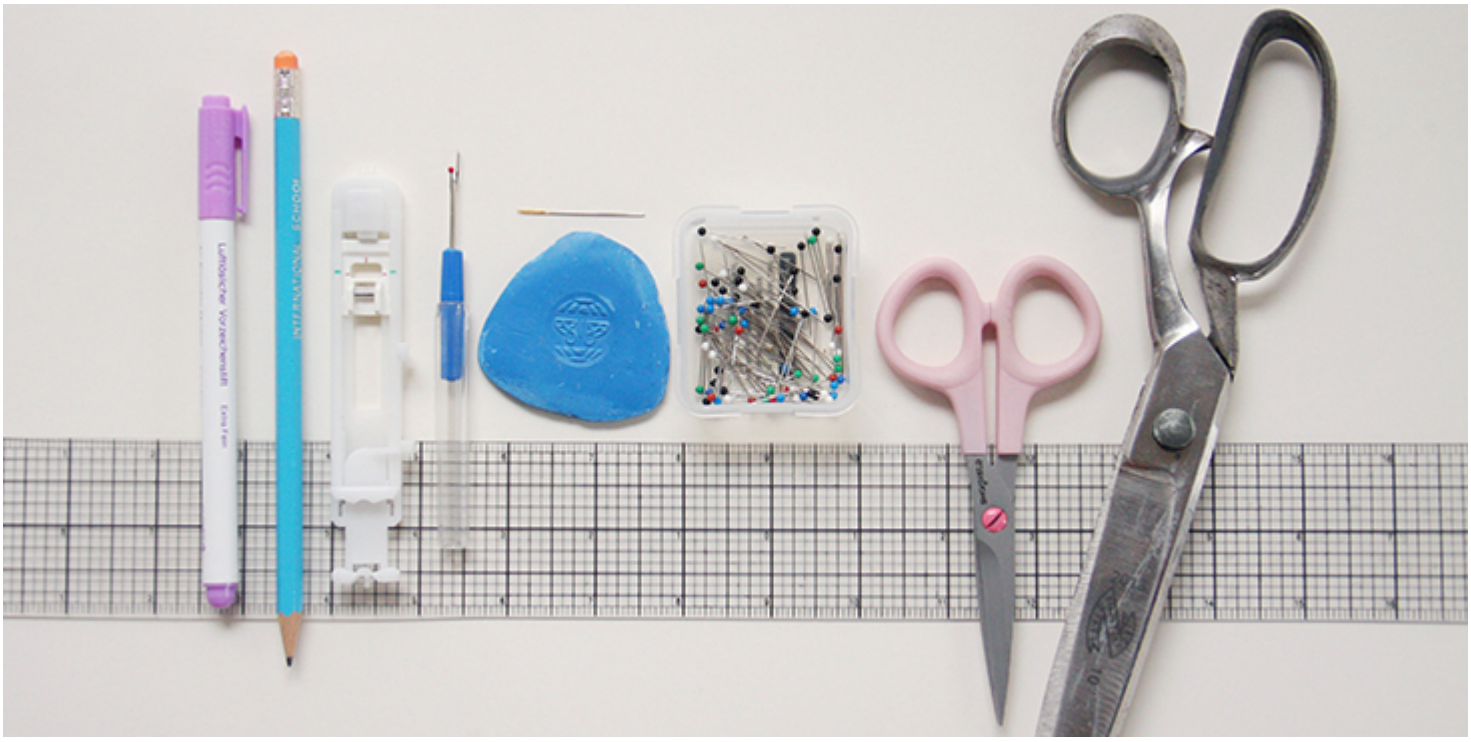
Materials



1 yard of IL042 904 FS Premier Finish 100% linen

Matching sewing thread, 7 buttons, fusible interfacing for the button bands (optional)

Tools



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

Difficulty

Beginner

Time

2-3 hours

Pattern

You can access the multi-sized printable PDF tank pattern by following this link HERE.

Please note that youâ??ll also need to cut three continuous strips of fabric on the bias 1.5â?³Â• wide: one for the neckline (26â?³Â• long) and two for each armhole (24â?³Â• long). For more instructions on how to cut your fabric on the bias please follow this tutorial.

If you need help adjusting the pattern for a fuller bust, we have a great Full Bust Adjustment tutorial HERE.

Altering The Pattern

For this tutorial, weâ??ll be using our multi-sized printable pattern for the Essential Linen Tank as a base, and then adding button bands to the center front to transform it into a cute button-down tank. However, you can totally place your button extension at the back or even at the side seam, it doesnâ??t necessarily have to be at the front.

To modify the pattern youâ??ll need to add some extra width to the center line to create a button overlap. How much width youâ??ll ask? Well, the bands on store-bought clothing are usually Â¾â?•Â• â?? 1 inch (2- 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.

Here, we will be showing you how to create a 1â?³Â• placket for a womenâ??s tank. Please note that these instructions rely on you having traced off your pattern first.

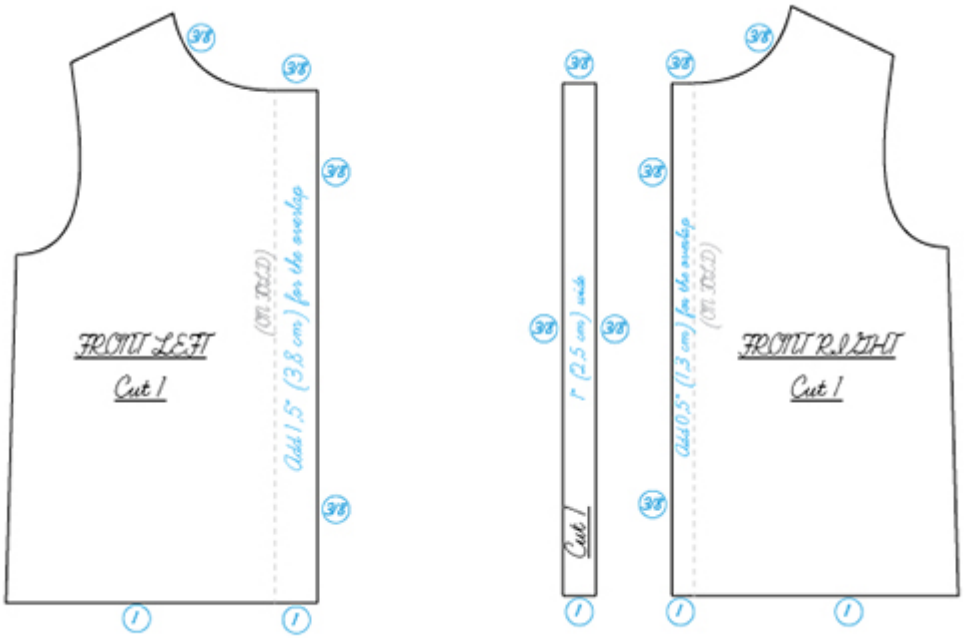
1. Download and print the pattern. Trace the front sloper on a new piece of paper, then flip it over to create a mirror image and trace again. Now you have a front left and a front right pieces. The fold line is your center. So youâ??ll be adding button bands to this center fold line.

2. Even though you could totally use the simply fold-up-twice technique for sewing button bands, we believe that a traditionally tailored button front can make any top look more elegant and professional. So we decided to add

classic button bands 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.

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.

Hereâ??s a little diagram to illustrate the drafting process:



Note: If you are working with lighter fabrics, you might want to interface one or both hidden placket panels and the buttons panel to stabilize the area and keep it from stretching.

Ok, letâ??s start sewing!

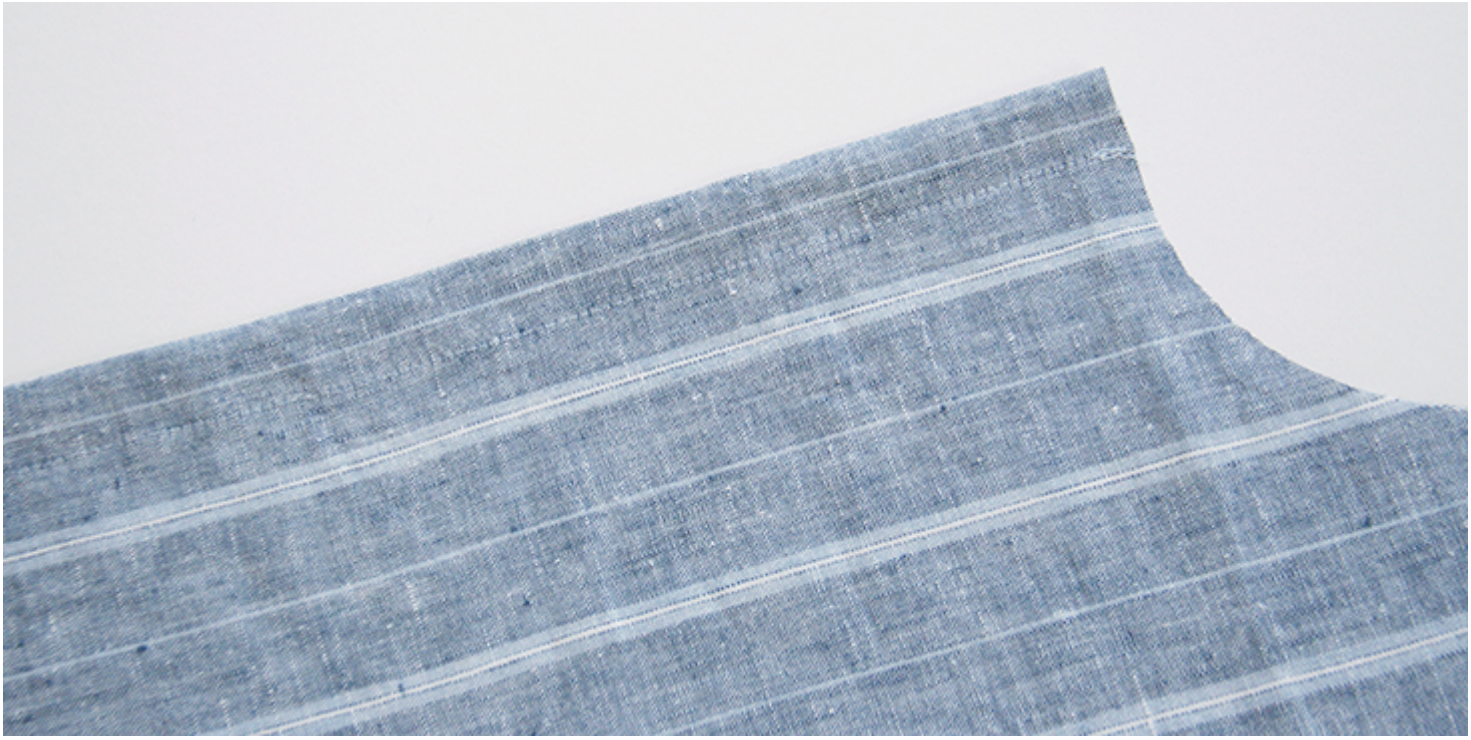
Steps

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.

1. 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.



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

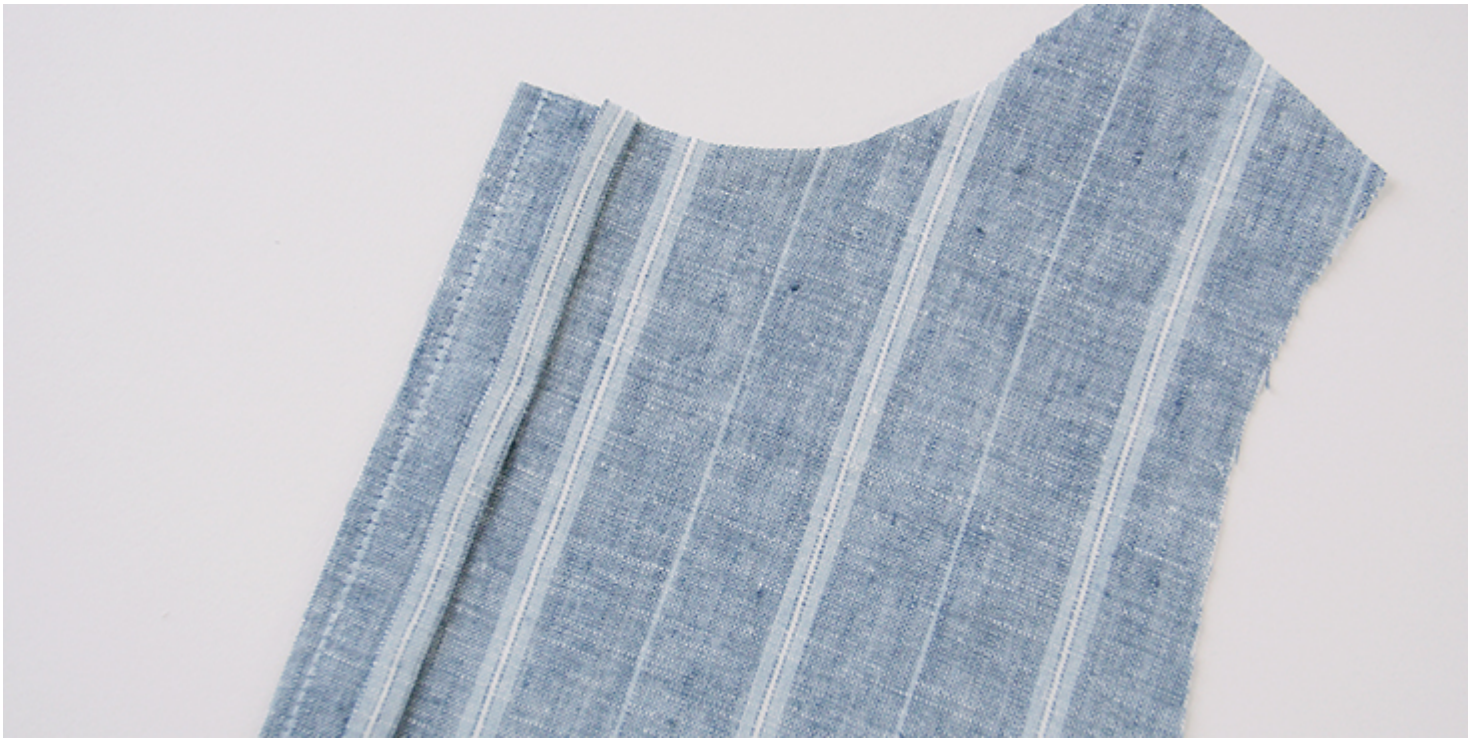


Give your left front piece a good press and set it aside for now.

3. Take the separate strip of fabric 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.



4. Pin the right side of the non-folded (right) button band edge to the wrong side of your shirt front piece and stitch in place along the 3/8â?³Â• (1 cm) seam allowance. Then trim the seam allowance down to 1/4â?³ (6 mm) to reduce the bulk and to allow the piece to sit more smoothly.



5. Press the button band away from the shirt and fold it over to the right side and pin, 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.





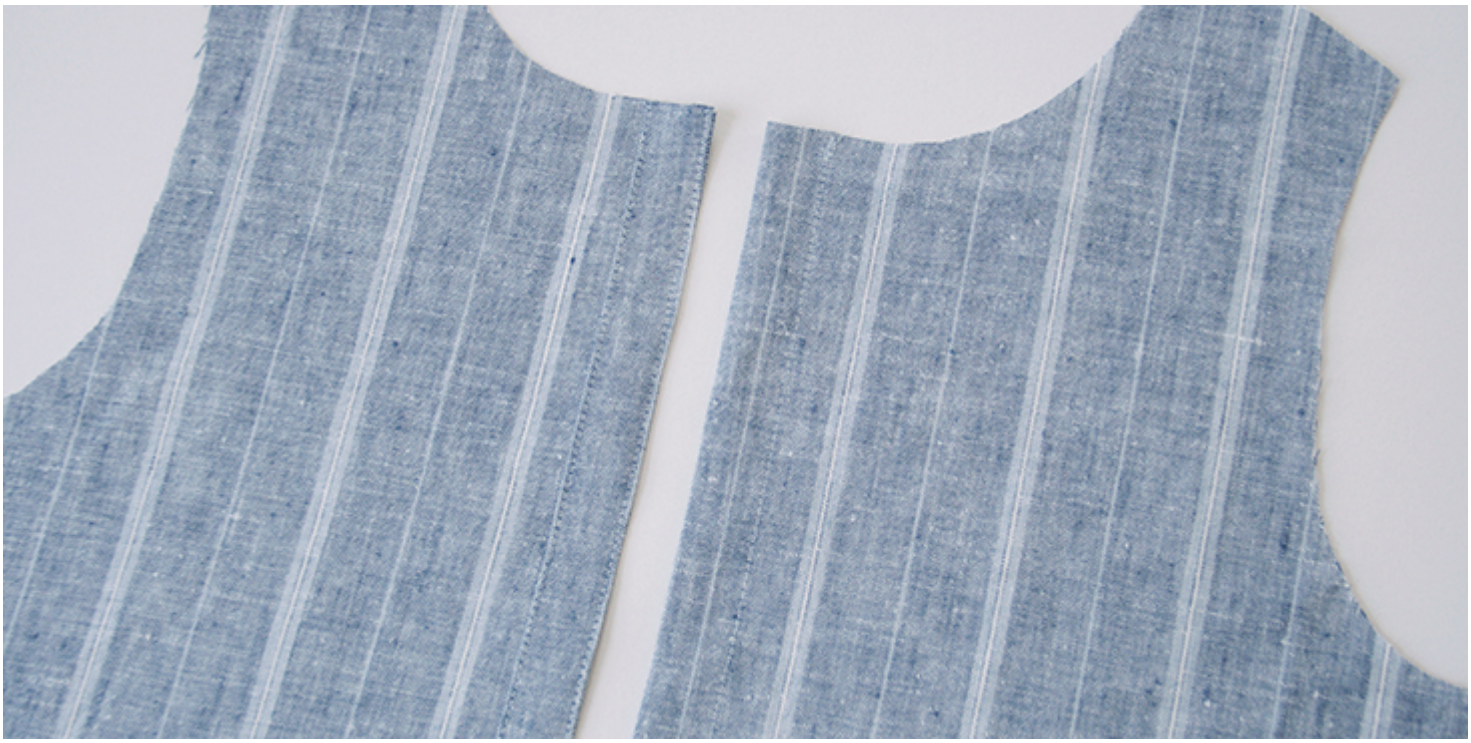
6. Working from the right side, topstitch the pinned edge in place as close to the inside fold as possible.



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



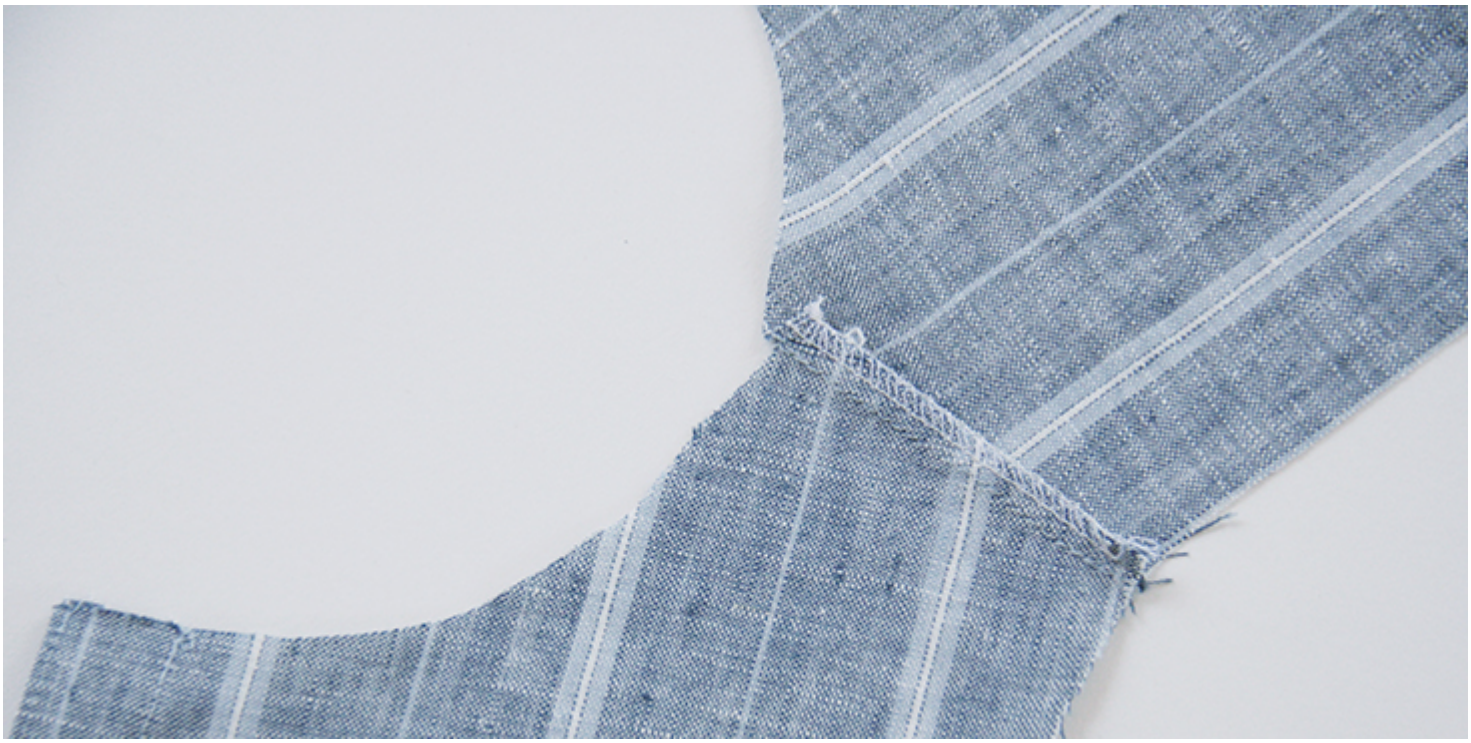
Et voila! The button bands are now complete.



8. Pin your shoulder seams right sides together.



9. Sew at a 3/8â?• (1 cm) seam allowance and trim the raw edges to 1/4â?³ (6 mm). Then serge or zigzag the raw edges together to prevent the fabric from fraying and press the seam allowances up towards the back of your tank.

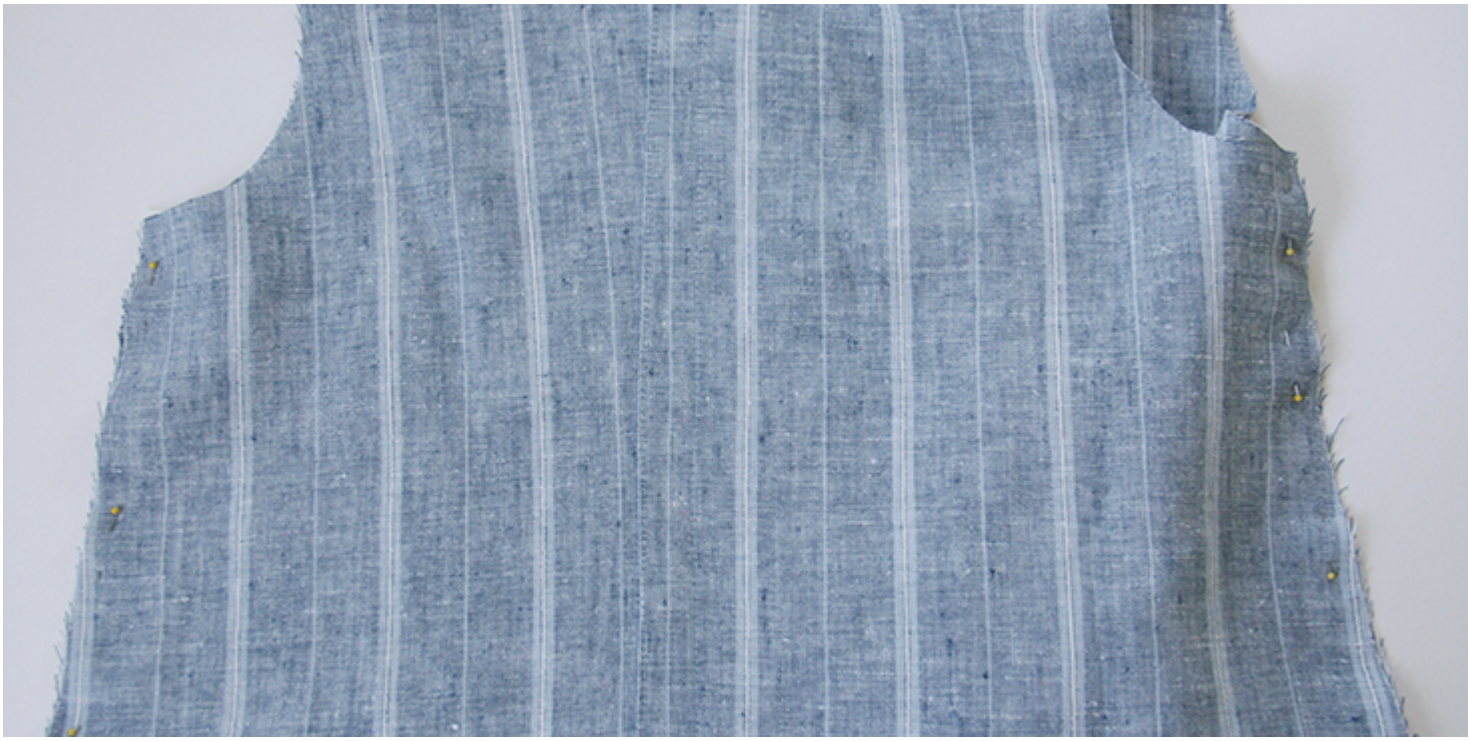


10. Bind the neckline following this step-by-step tutorial HERE. Fold the ends of your bias band to the wrong side to match the edges of your button bands, and stitch the band in place all along the neckline.





11. Now pin the side seams right sides together.



12. Sew the pinned edges at a 3/8â?³Â• (1 cm) seam allowance. Then trim to 1/4â?³ (6 mm), serge/zigzag the raw edges together and press towards the back of your tank.



13. Bind the armholes using the same method as youâ??ve used for the neckline (see step # 10). Join the ends at the underarm.





14. Finish the hem by folding the fabric twice to the wrong side: first 3/8â?³Â• (1 cm), then another 1/2â?³Â• (1,5 cm). Overlap the button bands and make sure that the two ends are even. Press and pin.



15. Working from the wrong side, topstitch the hem as close to the folded edge as possible. Press.



16. Lastly, sew the buttonholes and attach the buttons.

Remember, that the buttonholes are sewn on the right button band and the buttons â?? on the left.

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. We decided to space our buttons 2.25â?³Â• (6 cm) apart.

Overlap the bands and place a pin into the center of each buttonhole. This is where youâ??ll need to attach the button



17. Give your tank one last good press and you are all done!

You have now successfully added a button-down front to your tank! Use this hack to update your favorite patterns and create custom designs!

CATEGORY

1. FS PATTERNS & SEWALONGS
2. TUTORIALS

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Author
rima-khusainova