

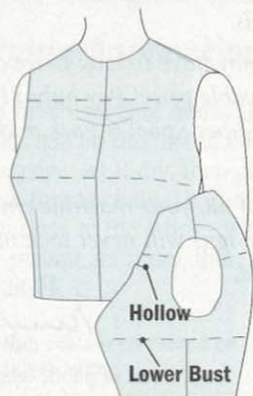
Hollow Chest

Bone structure and posture often combine to create a fitting challenge.

Diagnosing the Problem

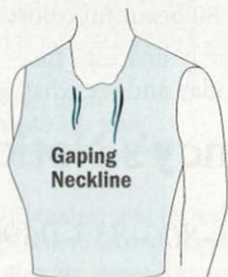
Excess fabric in the bodice between the bustline and the neckline indicates a hollow or shallow chest ❶, one that

❶



is flatter than average above the bust point. The inward body curve above the bust is often accompanied by one or more of these conditions: forward shoulders, a rounded upper back or a narrow upper chest, resulting in excess fabric across the body at the armhole level as well. A gaping neckline also may indicate a hollow chest ❷.

❷



Adjusting the Fit

The easiest way to adjust for a hollow chest is by tissue fitting the pattern first.

▶ Pin the front and back tissues wrong sides together with pins along the

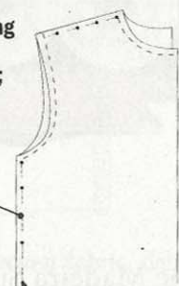


seamline. Point the pins away from the neckline and the underarm. Don't cross the neckline or underarm seamlines with pins to avoid poking yourself during fitting ❸. Pin out tucks or darts in the same manner.

❸ Begin pinning at seam intersection; point pins away from neck.

Point pins down.

Point lower pin up.

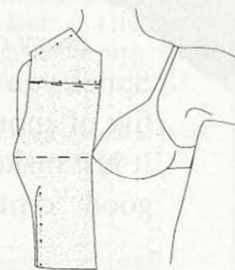


▶ Try the pattern tissue on over the undergarments you'll wear with the finished garment. Have a "fitting buddy" help you adjust the tissue so the center front and back are correctly positioned on your body. Position the side and shoulder seams correctly and then fit the pattern back before adjusting the front. Make any required adjustments for a broad or narrow back as well as a rounded upper back (see "Fit For You," October, 1998).

▶ If there's excess fabric above the bust point in the chest area, take a tuck at the center front, pinning out the excess and tapering to nothing at the armhole ❹. Make a clip in the armhole seam allowance at the tuck point, stopping at the seamline. This releases the armhole

❹

Tuck excess fabric above bust point beginning at center front, tapering to nothing at armhole.



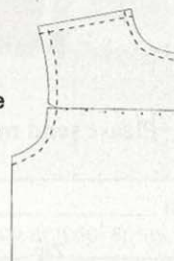
seam allowance so the pattern lies smoothly. *Note:* Make sure your diagnosis is accurate. If you have excess fabric to tuck out across the chest in front and across the back as well, you're probably a petite size (rather than hollow chested) and need to remove the excess in both places.

▶ Remove the tissue, tape in the tuck, and true the center front line ❺.

❺

Clip armhole so tissue lies flat.

True center front as necessary.



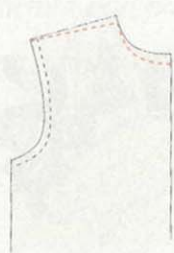
Alternate Adjustment Methods

▶ Measure the center front tuck depth to determine the adjustment amount. Lower the shoulder seam at the neck

edge and the neckline at the center front by this measurement 6.

6

Lower shoulder at neck; lower neckline.

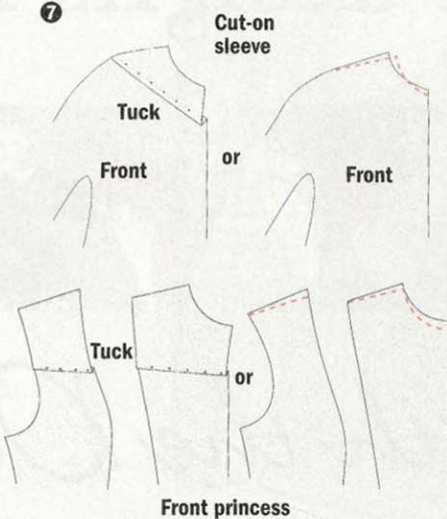


► If you've already cut the garment from fabric and determine a hollow chest is creating a poor fit, you may be able to salvage it using this method.

Pin the garment together as described earlier in this article for tissue fitting and try it on. To remove the excess fabric in the chest area, repin the shoulder seam, **taking a deeper seam in the front only** and tapering to nothing at the shoulder edge. Mark a new lower center front neckline as needed.

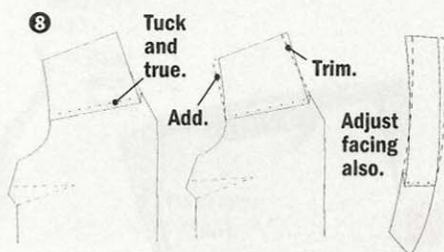
► A princess-line or cut-on sleeve garment can be adjusted for a hollow chest in a similar fashion using the tissue tuck or lowering the shoulder and neckline seam as needed 7.

7



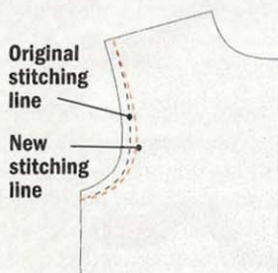
► When adjusting a V-neckline by taking a tuck, first make a tissue tracing of the original pattern's armhole, shoulder and neckline section. After tucking out the excess pattern tissue and trueing the neckline, redraw the neck and armhole to their original positions using your tracing as a guide. Adjust the facing in a similar manner 8.

8



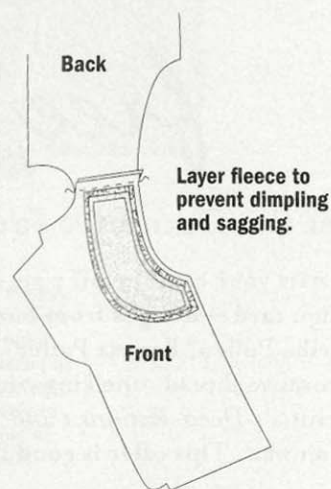
If there's excess fabric width across the hollow chest, redraw the front armhole seam at chest level to remove the excess, tapering back to the original seamline at the shoulder armhole edge 9.

9 For hollow/narrow chest:



► A hollow chest figure may need some additional support and padding in tailored jackets and coats to avoid a dimpling or sagging effect. One or more layers of polyester fleece is all that's required. Use your pattern to cut a piece that begins at the shoulder seamline and extends to the roll line and below the armhole a few inches. Each successive layer should be cut 1/2" smaller than the layer beneath it 10.

10



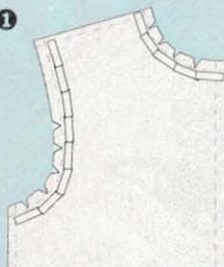
Attach the padding layers to the shoulder and armhole seam allowance by hand with loose, invisible stitches.

If you're not sure whether you need this lift in a garment, wait until it's constructed and then test fit with one or more padding layers until the fabric dimples disappear.

Protect the Tissue

When tissue fitting, follow the advice of fitting experts Pati Palmer and Marta Alto. Place short tape pieces along any curved seamline—armholes for example—to strengthen the pattern for fitting 1.

1



Tape along curved seamlines; clip into seam allowance.

Then clip into the curved seam allowance, taking care not to cut past the seamline and into the tape. The clips allow you to fit the pattern correctly without tearing it.

RESOURCES

This and other fitting challenges are covered in depth in the following books, available from your local fabric or book store or your local library.

Fabulous Fit by Judith Rasband; published by Fairchild Press, 1994.

Fantastic Fit for Every Body by Gale Grigg Hazen; published by Rodale Press, 1998

Fit for Real People by Pati Palmer and Marta Alto; published by Palmer/Pletsch, 1998.

The Perfect Fit; published by Cy DeCosse Inc., 1987.

Barbara Weiland is a nationally known sewing, quilting, and crafts consultant, author, and editor. Her latest book is "Secrets for Successful Sewing," published by Rodale Press, Inc. She also is a contributing author to "Singer Secrets" from the same publisher. ➤