

## **Cravat – Free Pattern and Tutorial**

### **The Cravat**

From the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century, and to this day, the well-dressed gentleman has never considered his costume complete without some form of neckwear. In 1636 the cravat became fashionable – after the custom of the Croats or Cravates serving in the French army, who wore a length of cloth around their necks to protect the throat.

The first cravats were wound around the neck and usually tied in a bow or with a black ribbon. In 1692, the Battle of Steinkirk (in Belgium) introduced a new fashion. The French cavalry, surprised by the enemy, rushed to the attack with the ends of their cravats flying or carelessly twisted and drawn through a buttonhole. The casual style popularized by their victory was taken up by women as well as men.

For several decades following, the cravat gave way to a neck cloth that was pre-folded and fastened in back – the stock. In the 1770s, a vogue for pastoral English tastes brought back the unconstructed cravat in the form of a large triangle or square of the finest linen or muslin.

After 1830 the collar began to turn down over the cravat, which evolved into the bow tie, the ascot, and the four-in-hand.

Today, the cravat is fashionable for men and women. It can compliment your outfit, provide a splash of color, and keep your neck warm. My British father-in-law wears one nearly everyday of the winter – under his dress shirts or denim work shirts. It gives him an air of gentility, and is a fun accessory. The instructions provided below create a cravat similar to what he wears. Simple to make and simple to wear, this pattern is a fun and quick make.

### **Construction**

The size and shape of cravats have varied over the centuries. In their earliest manifestation (c. 1680), they consisted of a rectangular strip of very fine lawn, the ends often trimmed with lace. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a folded square or triangle had been adopted, folded into a band, with endless varieties and subtleties of knots. Early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, cravats were pre-knotted and mounted on a fixed collar that fastened in the back by a button or a pin, although free-tying cravats were still used. Folkwear also offers the triangular cravat pattern in our 217 Poet's Shirt pattern, which is a versatile and adaptable for modern fabrics and fashions.

Choose fabrics that are fine, soft, and have a good drape. Often, modern cravats are made with paisley print silk or other printed patterned silk, with a soft and plain colored cotton lawn as backing.

**Seam allowance for this pattern is 1/4".**

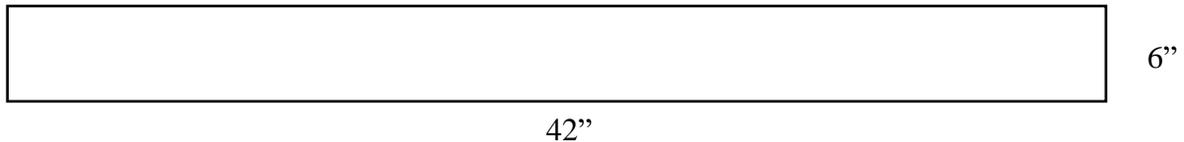
## MATERIALS

- 1 1/4 yard silk print for the outside fabric of cravat (You may also cut this on the cross grain and therefore only need 1/4 yard of at least 45" wide fabric; Or, you can use a scrap of long 6"-8" wide selvedge edge from another project).
- 1 1/4 yard plain colored cotton lawn or poplin for inside of cravat (This can also be cut on the cross grain and only need 1/4 yard of at least 45" wide fabric, or be cut from 6"-8" selvedge edge)
- Coordinating thread
- Pins
- Tailors chalk or your favorite marking tool/pen/pencil

## MARKING AND CUTTING

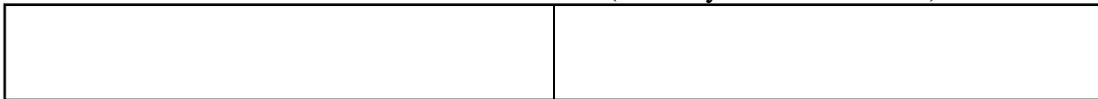
Wash and press fabric before beginning.

Cut one rectangle each from the silk and cotton measuring 42" long by 6" wide, each.

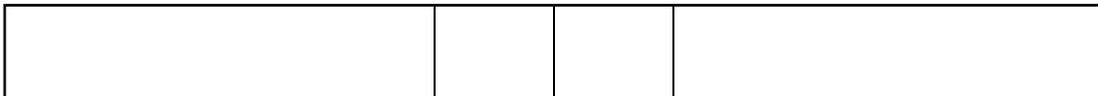


Most markings can be made just on the cotton piece (which can be a plain color and therefore easier to see markings). Use tailor's chalk, or your favorite marking pen/chalk/pencil/etc.

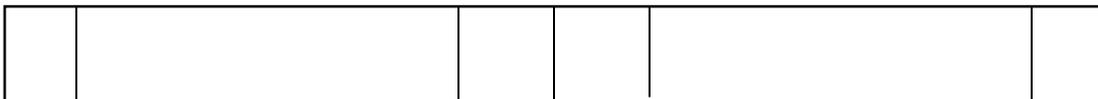
Mark a line down the center of the narrow width (across your fabric at 21").



Make two more lines, one 6 3/4" on each side of the center line. These will be your stitching lines when sewing down the pleats.



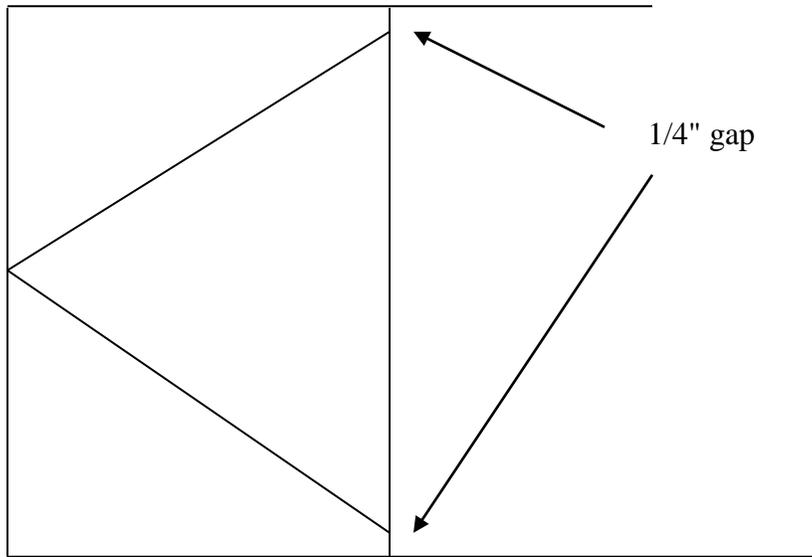
Make a line 3 1/2" from each end of the long rectangle.



Mark the center of each short end of the rectangle and draw a line from the center to 1/4" inside the above line, on each side, to form a triangle. Transfer these diagonal lines to the other side of the fabric also. You will be stitching along these lines in the next step.



Close up on ends:



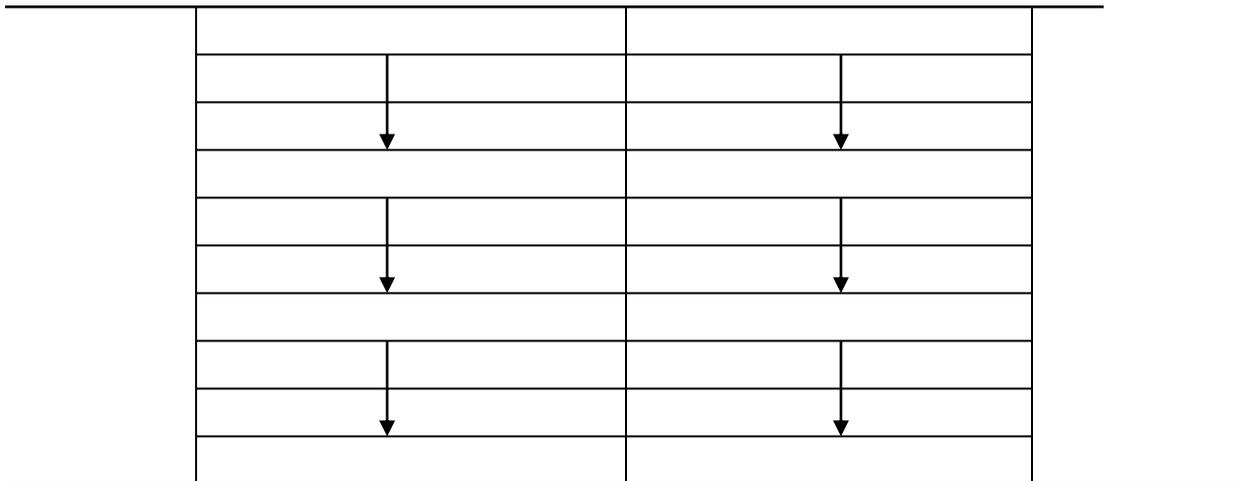
## SEWING THE CRAVAT

Use 1/4" seam allowance.

Place right sides of fabrics together (I would consider the chalk marked side of the cotton piece to be the "right side"). Pin and sew 1/4" seam allowance on the long sides of the cravat, and at the ends, sew along 3 of the 4 diagonal lines formed in the previous step. Turn right sides out. Press so that the ends form a nice flat triangle. You will be hand stitching one side end closed later.

Now it is time to form the pleats.

Draw, with chalk, horizontal lines every 1/2" from the top edge, going perpendicular to the 3 center lines. These marking lines should only go from the left vertical center line, crossing the center, to the right vertical center line. They do not need to go further.



Start folding from the top, place each horizontal line on the second one below it, so that you have 3 horizontal pleats.

Press pleats.

Stitch across pleats along the 3 vertical stitching lines, backstitching at beginning and end.

Whipstitch open diagonal end closed.