



Pattern
Alteration

Sway Back

*Agri*LIFE EXTENSION
Texas A&M System

Extension Family Development
and Resource Management Specialists

Before attempting this alteration, review Extension publication E-372, *Principles of Pattern Alteration*, for basic instructions.

Sway back is a posture problem characterized by a distinct curve in the spine at the waistline and lower back. This curve actually shortens the length of the back along the spine, causing clothes to fit poorly there. Garments with waistlines will have horizontal folds of fabric along the center back just below the waist and the lower back. In one-piece dresses or jackets, fabric might stand away from the body and/or have horizontal folds along the center back (Fig.1).

Determine the amount you need to alter by having someone pin the excess fabric on an existing garment. Start the tuck at the center back, tapering to the side seam until the wrinkles disappear. Note the total decrease in length that you need at the center back (Fig. 2).

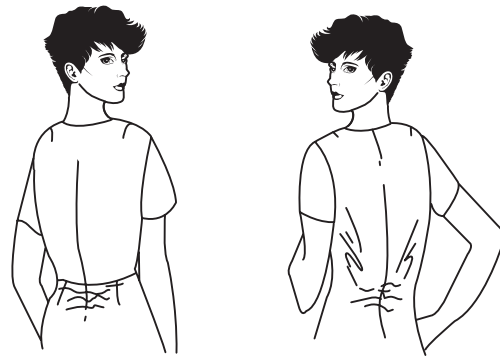


Figure 1. Sway back



Figure 2. Pin excess fabric.

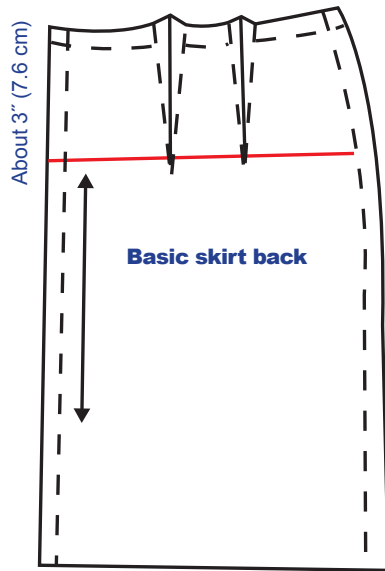


Figure 3.

Skirts, Pants or One-Piece Dresses

1. Draw a horizontal line approximately 3 inches (7.6 cm) below the waistline from the center back to the side seamline at a right angle to the center back or the lengthwise grainline (Fig.3).
2. Slash on the line *to, but not through*, the side seamline. Clip the seam allowance at that point.
3. Lap the pattern horizontally by the amount you need at the center back, tapering to the side seamline. Tape the pattern in place.
4. Redraw the dart(s) and straighten the grainline arrow if necessary. Redraw the seam, cutting and fold lines (Figs. 4a, 4b, 4c).

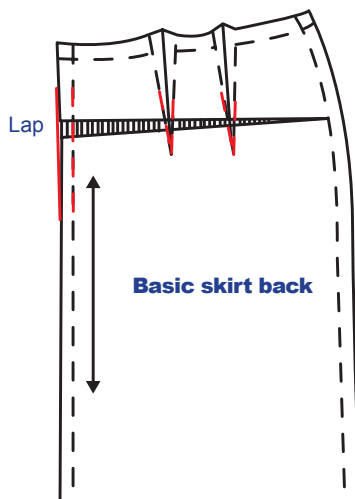


Figure 4a.

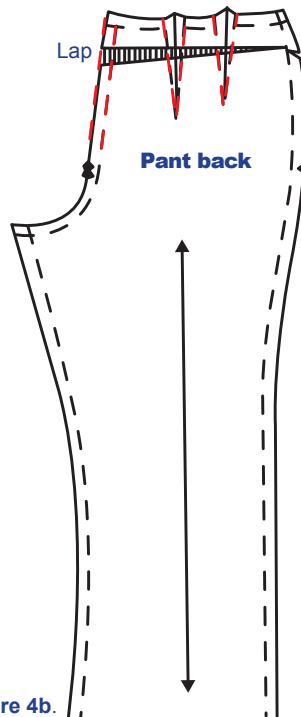


Figure 4b.

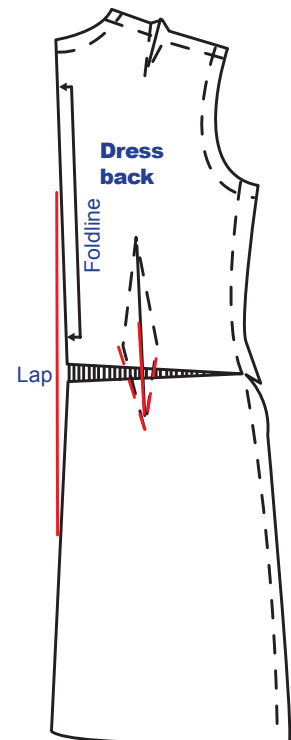


Figure 4c.

Beverly Rhoades wrote the original manuscript for this publication.

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