



# Controlling or Disposing of Fullness - Gathering and Pin Tucks

Dr Lorraine Portelli

University of Malta

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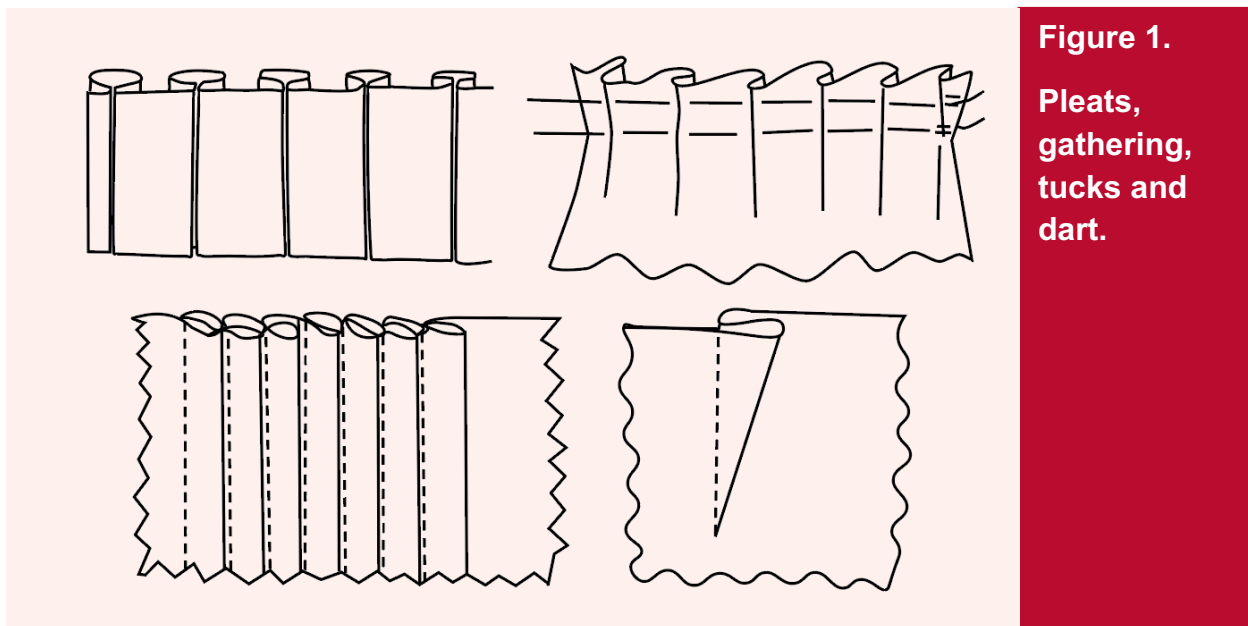
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## Controlling or disposing of fullness

The arrangement or elimination of excess fabric to achieve a desired shape or fit in a garment is referred to as controlling or disposing of fullness. This process involves various techniques, such as, pleats, gathering, tucks, or darts, which are strategically positioned to control the distribution of fabric and create specific design elements. The controlling of fullness plays a crucial role in tailoring garments to fit the body comfortably and stylishly, enhancing their overall appearance and functionality.



**Figure 1.**  
**Pleats,**  
**gathering,**  
**tucks and**  
**dart.**

## What is Gathering?

Gathering is one of the most useful and easily worked methods of creating fullness in a garment. It draws a given amount of fabric into a predetermined, smaller area, along one or several machine stitching lines. This creates a soft, even folds of fabric. Gathering is typically achieved by stitching the fabric in a controlled manner, either by hand or using a sewing machine. Gathered fabric is often used in areas such as sleeves, waistbands, or skirt hems to add texture, shape, or decorative detail to a garment.

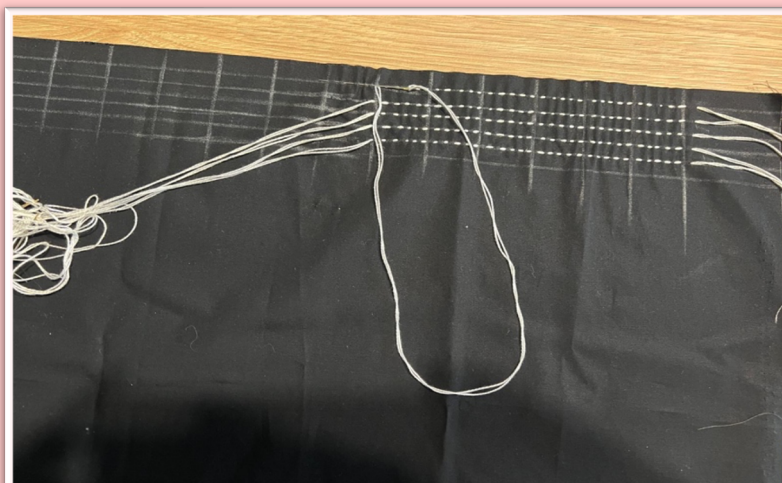
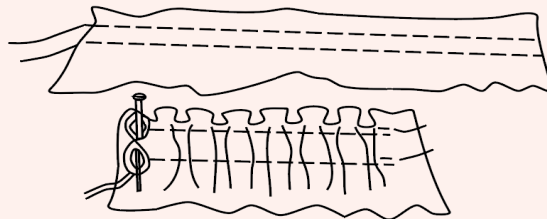
## Working Gathers by Hand

1. Mark two lines on the top part of the fabric.
2. Thread a hand-sewing needle with a strong thread that matches the fabric or complements it if you want the gathers to be visible for decorative purposes.
3. Fasten on with a double stitch.
4. Using a running stitch, sew along the edge of the fabric from which you want to create gathers. Make sure your stitches are uniform in length and evenly spaced. Stitches in a row should lie one above the other.
5. Pull up both threads together and wind them round a pin until gathers are evenly distributed at the required tension. Fasten off each thread.

A distinction feature of the Maltese traditional costume, the għonnella, is the gathering that is positioned at the top, sometimes to the left or the right of the garment. Gathering is used to control fullness or add shape to the voluminous arch shaped costume.

**Figure 2.**

**Working Gathers by hand**



## The Għonnella Gathering

Picture 1.

(Picture Dr Lorraine Portelli)

## Working Gathers by Machine

1. Thread the sewing machine.
2. Adjust the stitch to its longest length.
3. Mark two lines on the top part of the fabric.
4. Work two rows of stitching using the sewing machine. Leave long thread tails at the beginning and end of the stitching.
5. Fasten off beginning of each thread.
6. Gently pull the bobbin threads (the threads on the underside of the fabric) to gather the fabric. Hold the fabric in one hand and use the other hand to pull the threads. Slide the fabric along the threads to distribute the gathers evenly.

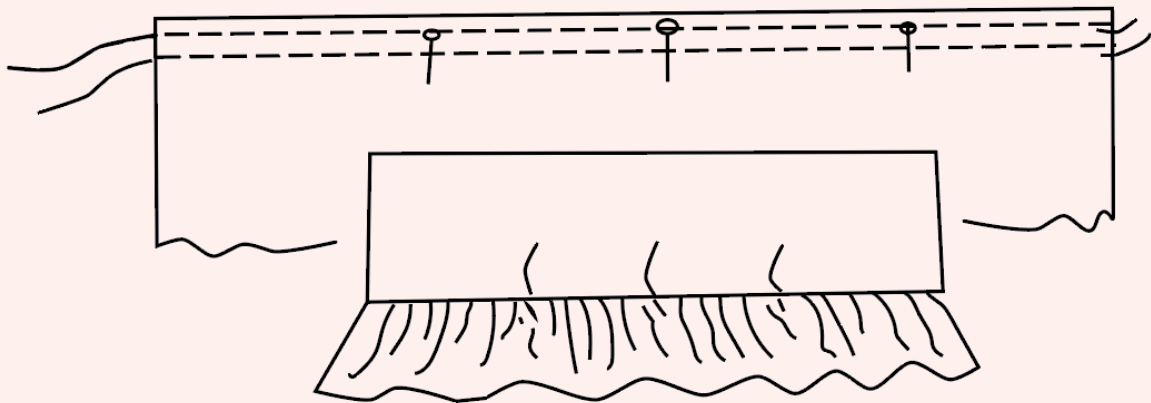


Figure 3.

Working Gathers by machine

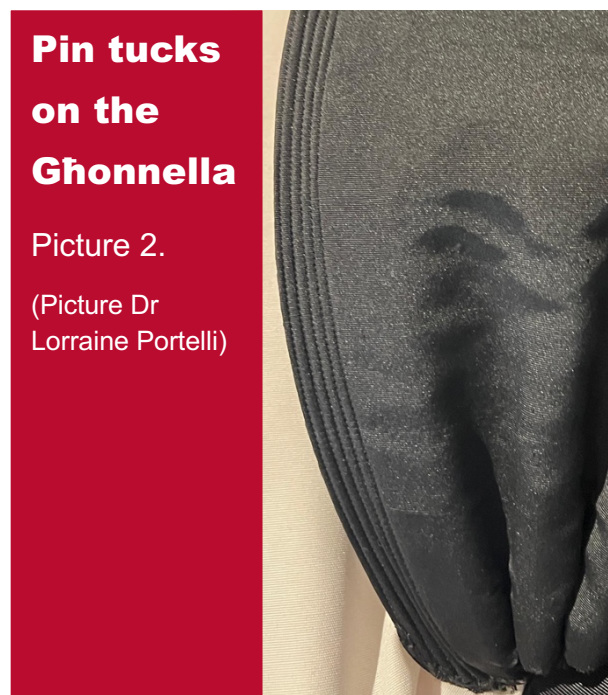
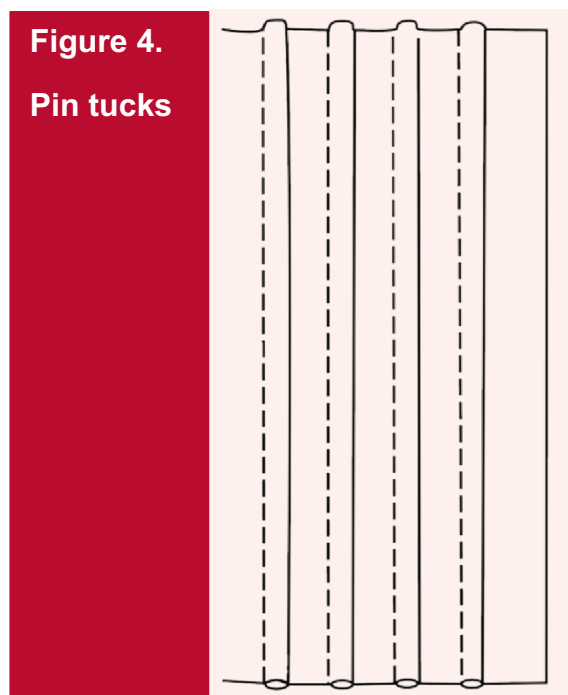
## What are Pin Tucks?

Pin tucks are a decorative sewing technique used to create narrow, parallel folds of fabric in a garment. They are typically made by folding and stitching small, even tucks or pleats along the length of a piece of fabric. Pin tucks can be purely decorative or functional, serving to add texture, visual interest, and dimension to clothing.

These are no wider than the width of a pin and can be sewn without the need for tacking beforehand.

Pin tucks are commonly used in garments, such as blouses, shirts, skirts, and dresses, as well as in home decor items, like curtains and pillow covers. They can be sewn in straight lines, curved lines, or arranged in intricate patterns to enhance the aesthetic appeal of the fabric.

Another intriguing feature of the Maltese traditional costume is the 4 or 5 pin tucks that are sewn very close to each other on the edge of the arched part of the għonnella. These are reinforced with strips of baleen, or whalebone, to enhance the flexibility of this section of the costume.



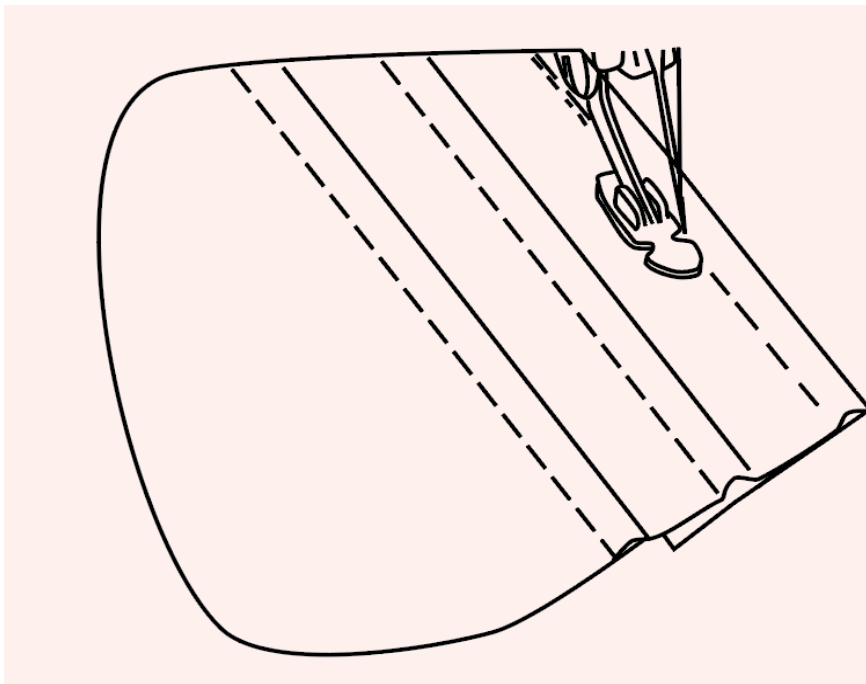
## Working Pin Tucks

To create pin tucks, fabric is first folded and pressed along a marked line. Then, the folded edge is stitched down, either by machine or by hand, creating a raised ridge on the right side of the fabric. Multiple rows of pin tucks can be sewn parallel to each other, spaced apart at regular intervals, to achieve different effects.

1. Fold material along required line of pin tuck and stitch very close to the fold.
2. Bring both machine-threads to the same side, thread into a large-eyed needle and run it back through the tuck far enough to secure a strong finish.

If shaped pin tucks are required, they should be marked out with tacking stitches before sewing them.

Pin tucks can be worked by hand with very fine running stitches. Back stitches are not suitable as both sides of the stitching will be visible.



**Figure 5.**  
**Pin tucks**

