

# Tucks, Pin Tucks, and Raised Satin Stitch Embellishment

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Tradition In Action | **TRAC**ion  
Traditional Costume Innovation

Grant Agreement: 101099726 - TRACtion - CREA - CULKT 2022-COOP



Funded by  
the European Union

## What are tucks?

Tucks are folds stitched into fabric or a garment. Typically, several parallel folds are added to a garment to reduce bulk or add decoration.

Tucks are shaping devices in dresses, skirts, and shirt fronts. They can be big and bold or small and delicate. When making tucks, the right side of the fabric faces up, and the tucks are sewn on the straight grain of the fabric.

## The structure of a tuck

Both sides of the fold are the same length. The side you can see from the front is called the tuck face, and the other is the tuck back.

The base of the fold is sewn together, and the tuck is pressed to one side. When pressed, the tuck covers another section of fabric the same size. The distance between the folds varies according to the method used. There are many ways to fold fabric with different tuck outcomes.

## Making a plain tuck

Each tuck is made by matching and sewing two stitching lines (A + C). The tuck fold is made when the lines are joined (B).

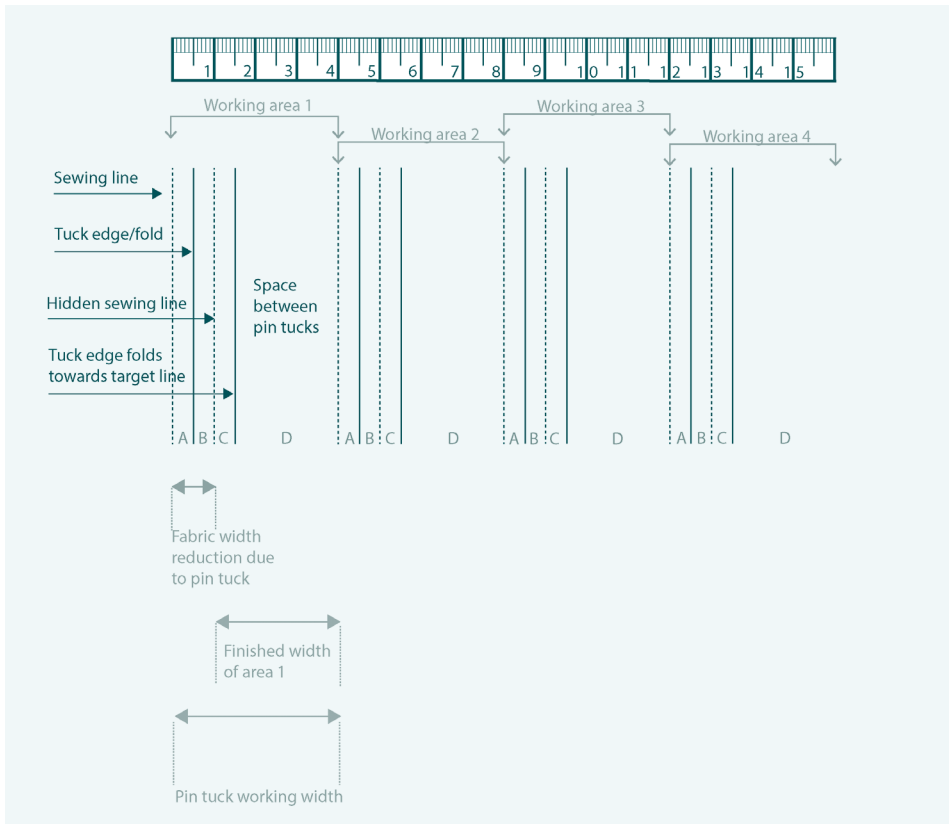
**The working area of each tuck is made up of four parts:**

- a) **Sewing line (A) (the tuck face is between the sewing line and the tuck edge)**
- b) **Tuck edge or fold line (B)**
- c) **Hidden sewing line (C)**
- d) **Back of fold (tuck back)**

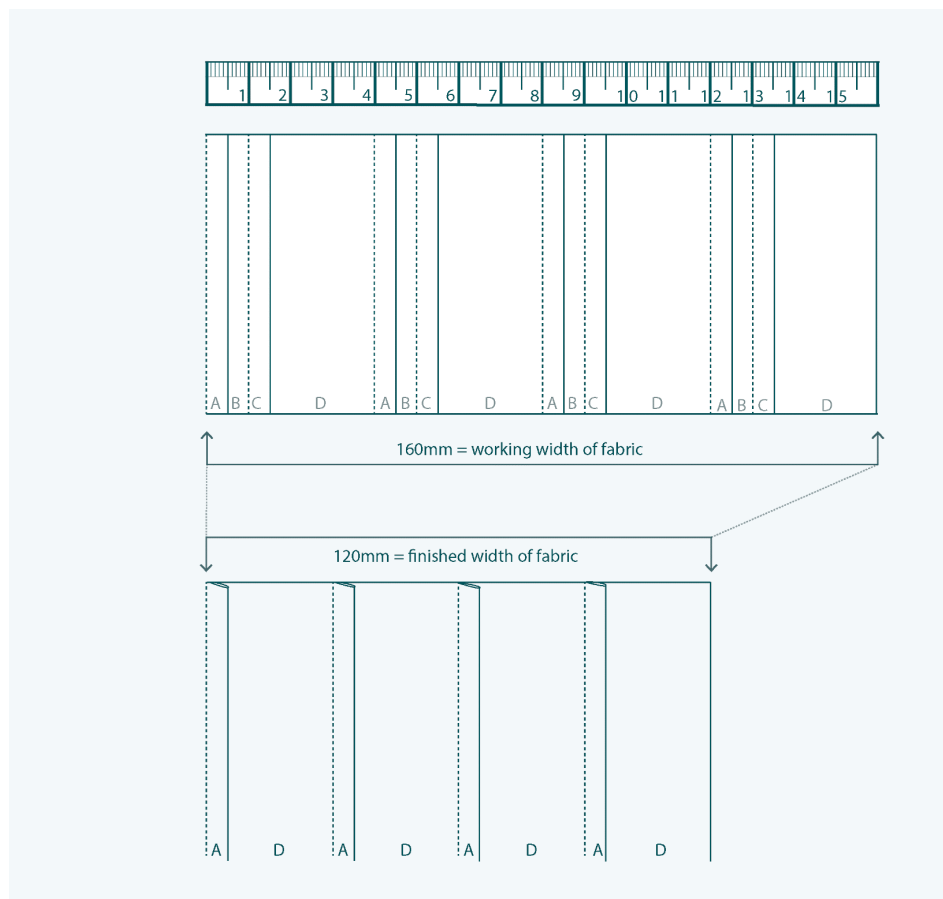
**Figures 1 and 2** show  $A + B + C = 0.5\text{cm} + 0.5\text{cm} + 0.5\text{cm}$ , and each space is 2.5cm. The tuck working width is 4cm, and the finished width per tuck is 3cm.

Each tuck is pressed flat after it is stitched.

**Figure 1.**  
**Plain tuck example**  
 (Picture: Aoife Moriarty)



**Figure 2.**  
**Fabric width before and after**  
 (Picture: Aoife Moriarty)



## Pin Tucks with Raised Satin Stitch Embellishment

This traditional Irish dress features 16 sets of pin tucks. A raised satin stitch is worked over one or two tuck lines in each set for decoration. Each circle is 1cm in diameter.

### What is a pin tuck?

Pin tucks are very narrow and evenly spaced folds of fabric. They are called 'pin' tucks because they are sometimes only a pin's diameter wide (1mm) and never more than 3mm from the fold.

The tucks are stitched close to the fold line. The needle position can be moved closer to the fold, or the pintuck foot can be used on the sewing machine.

### Mock pin tucking

Mock pin tucking can be completed using a double needle. The double needle creates raised double stitching. The tension can be adjusted to pull the stitches closer and make a ridge in front.



**Figure 3. A traditional Irish costume design, early 1900s**

(Picture: Kathryn McSweeney)

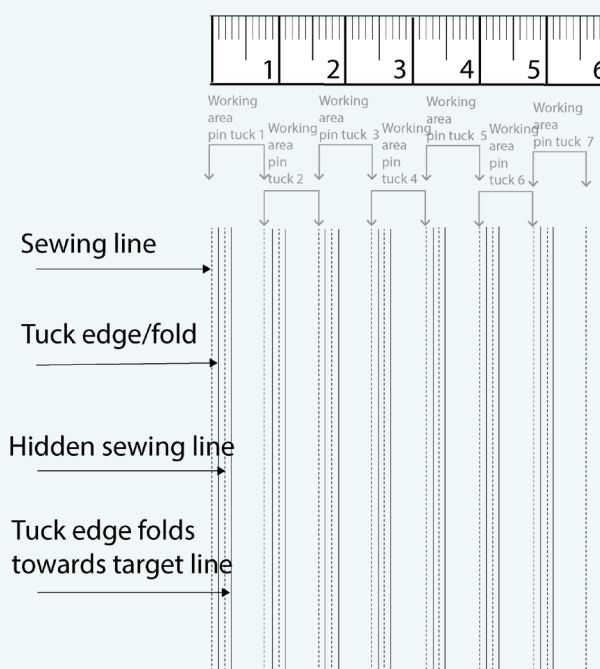
## The costume pin tuck design

In this example, seven rows of pin tucks are completed along the waistline.

Each pin tuck is 1mm deep, 5mm apart, and 24 to 26cm long.

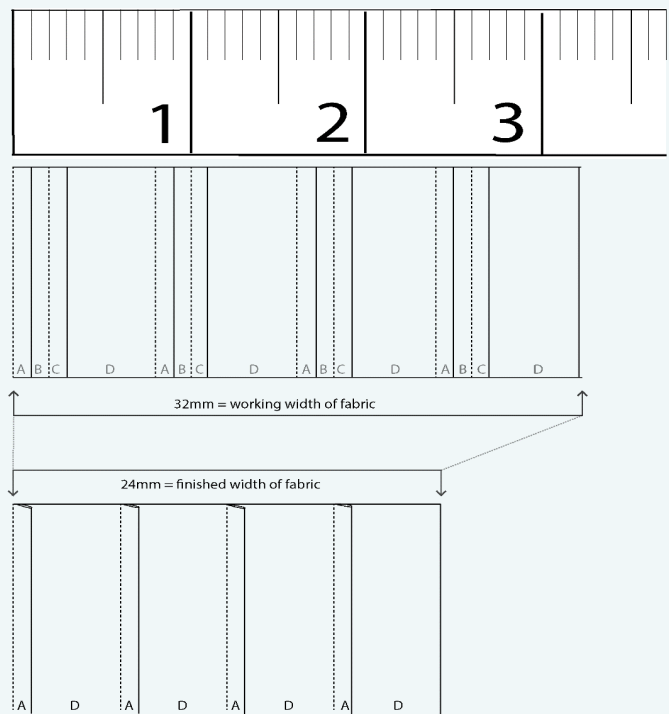
**Figure 4. Pin tuck costume example**

(Picture: Aoife Moriarty)



**Figure 5.**  
**fabric width before and after**

(Picture: Aoife Moriarty)



## Raised Satin Stitch

- 1) An outlining stitch, such as running or split stitch, can be worked around the shape to form the outline underneath and give a raised effect. Split stitch is similar to back stitch except that each stitch is split by the creation of the next stitch.
- 2) Straight stitches are worked across the shape to create 'padding'. Many embroidery threads can be used to stitch the padding. The more that are used, the more raised the shape will be. Satin stitch is completed in the other direction, at a 90-degree angle to the padding. Note that if the padding (straight stitch) is stitched horizontally, the satin stitch should be stitched vertically.
- 3) Start the satin stitch by coming up on the lower half of the bottom edge and go directly across to the top edge. For the second stitch, go back to the bottom edge a little distance from the first stitch and go directly back to the top edge. Continue to make vertical stitches across the shape.

