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Tricia Waddell and Katrina Loving show how to sew and press a successful dart.



*Display project:* Suede Appliqué Skirt designed by Paula Corley for *Stitch* magazine

#### **Tips for Successful Darts:**

1. When folding the fabric, right sides together, to match up the dart legs (so that one lies directly over the other), make sure that you are matching the dart legs accurately. To do so, place a pin through a point along the dart leg, then check on the other side to make sure that the pin exits along the other marked dart leg. If it does not, adjust accordingly. Many darts also have dots along the legs to aid in matching the dart legs properly; if these points are present, use a pin (as described previously) to check that each pair of dots is matched properly.
2. Check to make sure that the dart point lies exactly along the fold.
3. It may be helpful to baste darts before sewing the seam. To do so, after checking the alignment of the dart legs, baste the dart inside the marked dart legs/seam line. Remove the basting after completing the dart.
4. Begin sewing the dart at the wide edge, using a regular stitch length. When you come to within  $\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6 mm–1.3 cm) of the dart point, shorten your stitch length and complete the dart, tapering down to nothing at the point; do not backtack. Cut the threads, leaving thread tails about 4–5" (10–12.5 cm) long. Tie a knot and trim the tails.
5. Press darts over a tailor's ham to keep the proper shape and create a smooth point.

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